

The Effects of Workshops to Promote Revitalization of an Urban Area After the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake

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ABSTRACT

The Yamamoto District, a part of Takarazuka City, is a residential area that is famous for being one of the three big horticultural production areas of Japan. After the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake devastated this area, however, reconstruction of town houses, promotion of the horticultural industry and improvement of the environment have been serious issues. In this research, I investigated the effects of workshops held from 2000 on for the improvement of the environment of this area. I investigated the process of the workshops and examined the opinions of the participants to study group characteristics, expectations about participation, and evaluation of the workshop results. I found that expectations about large-scale issues were greater than those for specific issues, but that participants took greater concern with the programs to make specific improvements and evaluated them more highly. Furthermore, communication and understanding were increased as a result of the programs. I also examined the results of citizen efforts and analyzed the connection between citizen organizations and the management of green spaces. From this study, I gained new understanding about the relationships between citizen organizations and the forms of participation in urban regeneration.

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Since the reconstruction after the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake of 1995, the use of various consensus-based methods for the design and planning of parks and public facilities created the foundation for participatory community design in Hyogo Prefecture. One of the methods frequently used in recent years to achieve consensus among citizen participants in the field of community design is the workshop. This method encourages the participation of citizens in making plans for new construction and policies and other activities that had been conducted mainly by government officials and professionals in the past. Workshops allow citizens, government officials, and professionals to discuss issues and work together on an equal level.

Hyogo Prefecture
Takarazuka City
Yamamoto
District



Figure 1. Map of Japan and the Yamamoto district of Takarazuka.

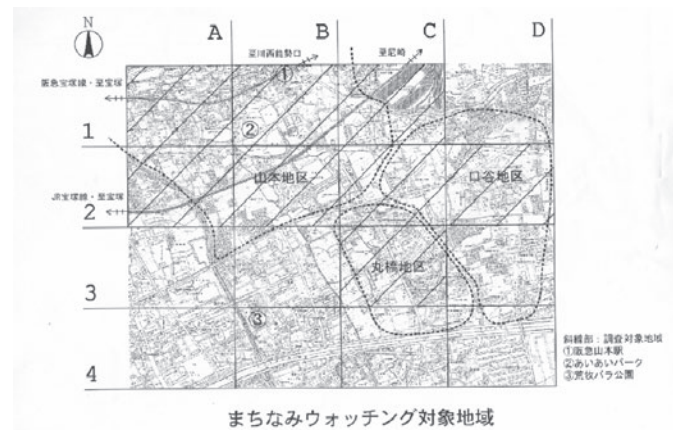


Figure 2. Division of Yamamoto District for community observation workshop.

Prior research and the relevance of this research

Workshops have been used to decide goals for many projects related to landscape architecture and environmental improvement, including park planning, community mapping, consensus building for landscape plans and, in particular, increasing community greenery. Chiba, et al (2003) have evaluated the planning stages of participatory workshops. They conclude that planning through workshops has an influence on the management and the maintenance of parks afterwards. Sakano et al (2000) have evaluated program designs and the effects of workshops on participants, but this type of research is still lacking. Furthermore, most workshops have been conducted by government officials who guide the participants in programs based on goals for various themes that the officials have decided in advance.

No research has been done previously about workshops in which the participants first decided the issues themselves, implemented their own action programs, and finally evaluated the results. In other words, in Japan at least, there has been no research on the process and effects of this kind of workshop.

I examined several such workshops in which the participants chose themes and made appropriate action plans by themselves. I also consider how local citizens can work together with government bodies to plan and take action more effectively to achieve better urban landscapes of their own devising.

METHODS AND RESULTS

This research proceeded as follows. First, I invited participants to a variety of workshops in which they examined community issues and proposed solutions. After that, we summarized the issues and examined their shared perceptions of them. Following this, we implemented action plans based on the consensus among participants about proposed solutions. Then, I examined the effectiveness of the workshops through analysis of questionnaires about the series of activities, while considering such factors as the passage of time since the implementation of the action plans. From this analysis, I also considered possibilities for more effective workshop program design. At the same time, I examined the roles and responsibilities of the workshop participants. Finally, using these results, I analyzed the effectiveness of the program for the workshop process and developed some possibilities for the future.

Identification of issues through workshops

The Yamamoto district of Takarazuka (Figures 1 and 2) has been famous for its horticultural industry since the Muromachi Era (1392-1573), the Japanese medieval period (Takarazuka City, March 2001). In recent years, this area has developed as a residential area for commuters who work in Osaka, creating a mixture of residential and agricultural uses. At present, many horticultural nurseries have been legally designated as Productive Green Lands in order to preserve these important green spaces within the city. However, after suffering heavy damage in the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in 1995, much small-scale housing development, including individual residences and condominiums, has started to appear among the nurseries, putting stress on the quality of the local environment. One of the reasons for environmental quality decline is that the horticultural industry has stagnated, making maintenance of nurseries difficult. A foundation to promote the horticulture industry, including the 1.2-hectare Aiai Park and the Takarazuka Horticulture Promotion Center were opened in Yamamoto in April 2000 with city and regional financial support.

As my goal was to help improve the local environment, for this research I used Aiai Park as the focal point for the workshops. My goals for holding the workshops included, 1) improvement of the local environment, 2) activation of the community, and 3) promotion of the traditional horticultural industries of the area.

Figure 3 shows the main workshops conducted between 2000 and 2002. In the first year, the focus was on identifying local issues and clarifying the possible ways to respond to them. In this way, I sought to develop shared understanding of the issues among the participants. One way this was done was by having the workshop members conduct observations of the community.¹ The community was divided into 8 main areas and groups inspected each of these for about an hour. Within each area, they identified, good points (attractions), problem points (issues), and future prospects (proposed reforms for issues) and marked them on maps (Takarazuka City, March 2001), sometimes with photos and illustrations. At the same time that this work was undertaken, we attempted to develop consensus about the issues. Next, action plans were developed. Figure 4 shows, as an example, key words that were identified in the first workshop.

We used the KJ Method to organize the keywords and prospects identified in the first three workshops. Figure 5 shows the action plans we developed (Hayashi, 2003). We organized the issues into long-term, medium-term, and short-term categories. Most of the long-term issues were government-level issues requiring urban planning projects and infrastructure improvements. Medium-term issues included those related to the nursery industry, community development, the neighborhood environment and other local level issues. Short-term issues were mostly related to the immediate

Year	Date	Contents	
2000	June 6	1st workshop	Town observation 1
	July 22	2nd workshop	Town observation 2 Proposals for improvement
	Nov.11	3rd workshop	Town observation 3 Planning for the action programs
2001	Jan. 29	4th workshop	Planning for the park of Yamamoto Naka 2 Chome
	May 9	5th workshop	Planting the flowerbeds of Shinike Park, Yurinoki Road and other activities
	Sep. 1	6th workshop	Walking map and open gardens
	Sep. 22	Planting activity for the Yurinoki road	
	Oct. 8	Open garden	
	Dec. 8	7th workshop	Planting flowerbeds of Shinike Park
	Dec. 16	Open garden	
2002	Mar. 16	8th workshop	About the activities and open garden
	Apr. 21 - June 2	Takarazuka open garden festival	
	May 7	Party for garden owners	
	Sep. 24	Meeting for core members	
	Oct. 5, 6	Open garden meeting for participants from throughout the country (Awaji Landscape and Planning Horticultural Academy)	
	May 27, 28	Gardening summit	
	June 24	Party for garden owners	
	Nov. 24	9th workshop	Planning for Tenjin River
	Feb. - Mar.	Association for open gardens	

Figure 3. Sequence of workshops and action programs.

About this town . . .

	<u>Good points and likable points</u>	<u>Issues</u>	<u>Hopes and ideals</u>
A-1	Beautiful landscapes, including, nursery gardens and productive green spaces View of the Rokko Mountains Takarazuka cherry-lined streets Yakushido Temple Rare stone paving First American Dogwood trees in Japan	Burden on nurseries and others to maintain scenic beauty Uncared for Jizo Bodhisattva statues Use of signage along the pilgrimage route Gloominess of Yakushi Temple	Tea shop at the herb nursery Peony and rhododendron garden at Yakushi Temple
A-2	Beauty of the gardens of people involved in the landscape business Large trees, including a Japanese-style pine Nurseries Views Garden rocks	area under the elevated JR tracks Reinforcement of the river on three sides	Improve cherry tree-lined streets Replace three-sided river reinforcement with a more natural reinforcement
B-1	River landscape and view from river Beauty of nursery gardens Bamboo grove along the embankment weir Flower plantings in the rotary and flowers in barrels Flower around the monument to Kitugidayu Pilgrimage route guideposts	River pollution Along the 176 National Highway, there are no traffic signals, crosswalks, sidewalks or signs, and the pedestrian bridges are not used Abandoned bicycles	Path around the retention pond Make the shopping street wider and provide signs to Aiai Park National Highway needs improvement Improve sidewalks Move Aiai Park sign at the North Entrance Reform the bus rotary Preserve areas through the rules of the Productive Green Land Law.
B-2	Singing birds Green treasures Symbolic camphor tree Pretty stream Black pine grove Beauty of private gardens	Iron fence blocks passage Amount of traffic Use of area around pond and slope	Green market Path along the stream Open nurseries Natural garden and spaces with plants and water connected with community center
C-1	Plantings in front of apartment buildings Plantings in parking lots View of the Rokko Mountains Foliage and large trees of the nurseries	Adjacent parks without character Heaps of scrap wood Unrefined bare wood River, parking without plants Vegetable gardens along the river	Parks with character Make nurseries attractive Increase plantings along river
C-2	Beauty of the gardens of professional landscape businesses Tulip trees on Yurinoki Road Stone paving	Poor consideration for children going to school Town appearance is haphazard in places Professional gardeners have stone piles that are in disarray and dangerous Parks are dull Open space is 1.2 m below road level, making it dangerous	Harmony between new and old housing Townscape that considers growing children Use of plants as suitable for a town of nurseries Improve landscape and add paths along waterways Increase attractiveness of park Increase street trees and planters
C-3	Traditional buildings Well planted home gardens Well planted housing estates Nursery plantings can be enjoyed from the road side Attractive lanes Apartment buildings with roof gardens that connect to an area park	Land left out of replanning Wall color of housing estates harm the view Field Swell Scrap piles Steel towers and high voltage power lines damage view Housing sprawl and possibility of more Narrow roads Dead-end streets from small-scale Uneven sidewalks	Illumination of Yurinoki Road and low Improvement of sidewalks Make steel towers into columns, bundle multiple power lines together Permanent protection of greenery
D-2/3	Bamboo-lined road Large <i>kuroganemochi</i> trees	Gloomy plantation woods Parks lack sense of openness	

Figure 4. Keywords from the workshop.

neighborhood landscapes. Most of these issues are concerned the nurseries and the use of local resources. Proposals to deal with these included consideration of a long-term master plan and medium-term cooperation between nursery businesses and local residents to achieve tax system reforms for designated Productive Green Lands. Other medium term goals include increasing the appeal of the nursery industry, making use of the watersides and investigating potential locations for planting new vegetation. Finally, the citizens developed possible short-term action plans that they could undertake themselves. See the following figures for more details of these plans.

Implementation and evaluation of short-term programs

In the following year, we considered action plans for several of the identified issues that could be improved with short-term efforts. The action plan development was achieved through a process of organizing the keywords identified in the workshops. As a result, 7 overall goals were established for the Yamamoto District, including 1) street and urban planting and scenic improvement, 2) Aiai Park planting and scenic improvement, 3) planning an area park within the district, 4) Tenjin River scenic improvement, 5) holding open gardens and open nurseries, 6) improving the promenade to Aiai Park, 7) repairing the local Matsuo Shrine and improving the surrounding scenery.

The last two goals, however, were judged to be difficult to tackle with just workshops. For the promenade to Aiai Park, compliance with plans to redevelop the area in front of the station would be necessary. Matsuo Shrine, while being a public open space, is particularly important to the local parishioners, therefore, consensus regarding shrine repair and scenic alterations would be hard to achieve.

We held workshops for the other 5 goals in which discussions deepened consensus that lead to the development and implementation of action plans: 1) For street planting and scenic improvement, we made a planting plan along the Prefectures Road (known as Yurinoki Road) so that flowers would be in bloom throughout the year. 2) For Aiai Park planting, we planted flowers in 120 square meters of flower beds that had been abandoned and planned for continuous planting. 3) For the district neighborhood area park plan we did all planning and design in workshops and made a proposal to the city. 4) For Tenjin River scenic improvement, we conducted repeated observations of the river and made a scenic improvement proposal to the city water bureau. 5) We held the first open garden event in 2001 and are preparing for the fourth this year. From the second year, the open gardens program was expanded to include the entire city. This citywide event is still run through workshops in which core members form a council and leaders are chosen.

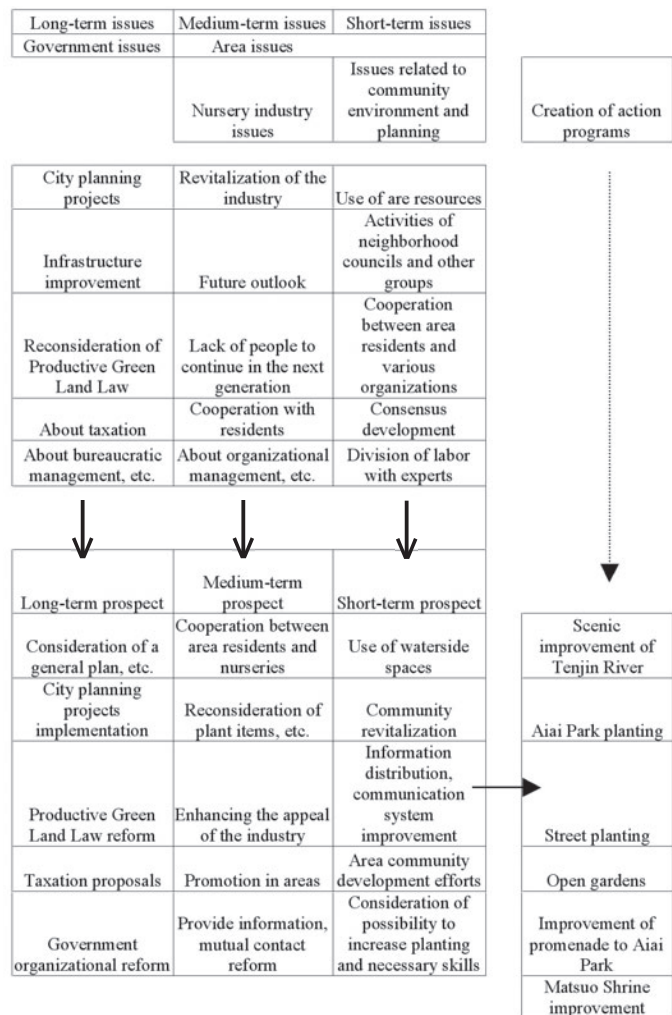


Figure 5. Long, medium, and short-term issues, prospects, and action programs.

Questionnaire

In September 2002, I sent questionnaires to all of the participants of the workshops to investigate the effects and to reflect on community design activities. Professionals and government officials participated as equals with other citizens, and so were also given the same questionnaire. Of the 120 sent out 65 were returned with usable responses. The main items covered in the questionnaire are as follows.

Respondent data

The percentage of men responding was 38% and of women was 62%. The ages of the respondents were in a wide range, with 8% in their 70s, 33% in their 60s, 26% in their 50s, 11% in their 40s, 5% in their 30s, and 8% in their 20s (9% unknown). People from a variety of occupations responded with 20% homemakers, 15% company workers, 15% self-employed, 12% unemployed, 8% working part-time, 5% government employees, and 8% others (17% unknown). The wide range of ages and occupations is probably a result of our initial efforts to

publicize the workshops widely. Groups that the respondents belong to include those working for the improvement of the area environment (3 groups), residents associations, elderly groups, NPOs from the wider area (2 groups) and horticulture industry professionals.

Participant’s expectations for the workshops

For the first question set, “What did you expect from the workshop?” I provided 16 questions and asked for ranked responses with 5 as the highest evaluation. The answers given were quite high with an average of around 4 points, meaning people expected much from the workshops (Fig. 6).

The highest points were for the items like “make the town more beautiful quickly with ornamental flowers in the parks and along the streets” (4.27), “draw more visitors to Yamamoto and make the town more lively” (4.24), and “publicize the history and the splendid resources of the town and make them last into the future” (4.31). These and other items show that expectations to make the entire town more attractive were high.

In contrast, people did not have high expectations for specific themes such as “make a map of Yamamoto” (3.63), “plant flowers on Yurinoki Road (3.46) or “make Matsuo Shrine more inviting” (3.43). This shows that participants had high expectations for abstract purposes, rather than for specific targeted concrete activities. Standard deviation was between 1.16 and 0.69.

Reflections and evaluations of the activities so far

Tangible results were achieved for 4 of the action plans, 1) Walking through and rediscovering the town to find issues and make proposals for improvement, 2) Aiai Park flower bed planting, 3) flower planting along the tree-lined Yurinoki Road, and 4) holding the Yamamoto District open gardens. For these 4, I asked about individual participation, overall activity evaluation and evaluation of the results of the implemented plans. First,

I asked the individuals to rate their own participation on a 5-point scale from 5, made sincere efforts and have a sense of satisfaction, to 1, no efforts or satisfaction. The Yamamoto District open gardens, at 3.7 was the highest, with Yurinoki Road planting and Aiai Park flower bed planting close behind at 3.4. Walking through the town averaged only 2.9 with some range of responses. Although there was not much difference in the average scores, the open gardens and Yurinoki Road planting, projects that required a lot of actual work had a high rate, around 40%, of 5 ratings. These projects also received high numbers of 5s in evaluation of their action plans. Overall evaluations of the results were fairly good, ranging from 3.7 to 3.9 (walking through town 3.7, flower bed planting 3.7, Yurinoki planting 3.9, open gardens 3.9).

Good points about conducting activities using the workshop method

Throughout all the workshops, many people thought that, (2) thinking with others was valuable (57.8%) and a good point of the workshops. Other frequently noted good points were (1) rediscovering the attractions of Yamamoto (50.0%), (3) being happy to have been lead by outside professionals from Awaji Landscape Planning and Horticulture Academy and elsewhere (37.5), and (7) having the cooperation of people from outside (32.8).

Everything that had to do with interaction and cooperation with people was evaluated highly. On the other hand, the scores for the actual implementation activities, including the improvement of greenery in open spaces and flower planting were lower.

Impressions about each of the action plans (multiple response)

Regarding their thoughts about each of the action plans (Fig. 7), 100% of the participants were satisfied to work with others on planting flowers along Yurinoki Road. 91.3% of the participants were satisfied with working together during flower planting at Aiai Park. 70.8% thought that it was good to think things through with others for planning a new area park in Yamamoto Naka 2 Chome. Overall doing things with other people was evaluated highly.

Furthermore, for the open gardens, good points identified include “revealing gardens more widely” (77.8%) and “it was nice to have many guests” (72.2%). Overall it is clear that the interaction and co-operation between people was evaluated more highly than the actual improvements to the environment.

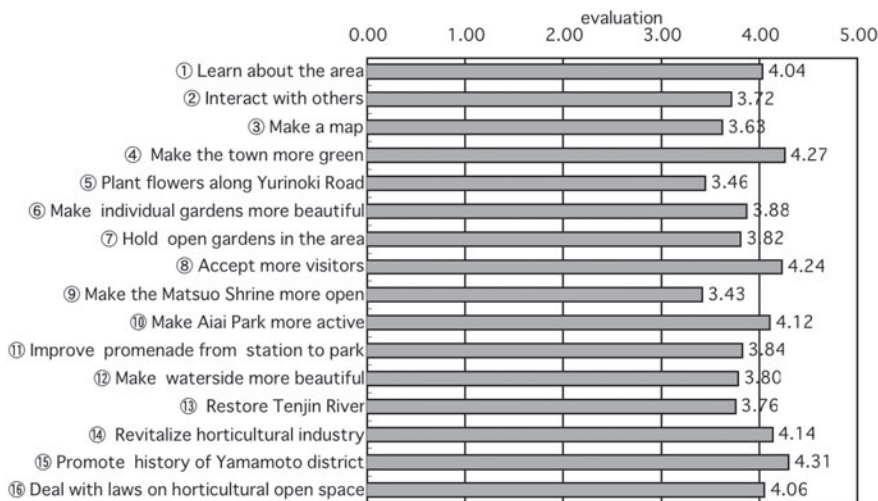


Figure 6. Expectations for workshops.

① Town observation and making proposals for improvement	① Get new information	② Good to make many proposals	③ Wished for more proposals	④ Unrealistic proposals	⑤ Others		
	52.8%	44.4%	27.8%	13.9%	19.4%		
② Planning the park in Yamamoto Naka 2 Chome	① Good to think together	② Good to make many proposals	③ Wished for more proposals	④ Planning process is not clear	⑤ Others		
	70.8%	37.5%	4.2%	8.3%	25.0%		
③ Flower planting at the Shinike Park,	① Good to think together	② Enjoyed planting flowers	③ Continuing this work	④ Wish to attend planning	⑤ Work was too hard	⑥ Doubts about the work	⑦ Others
	91.3%	52.2%	73.9%	17.4%	4.3%	13.0%	43.5%
④ Flower planting along Yurinoki Road	① Good to think together	② Enjoyed planting flowers	③ Continuing this work and do it wider	④ Wish to attend planning	⑤ Work was too hard	⑥ Others	
	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	18.8%	
⑤ Open gardens	① Good to do activities more widely	② Good to have many people	③ good to have the relation to garden summit	④ Wish to have it regularly	⑤ Could not see other gardens; taking care of my own	⑥ Others	
	77.8%	72.2%	55.6%	77.8%	16.7%	44.4%	

Figure 7. Evaluation for the activities (plural answers).

Comparison of expectations, participation and evaluation of activities over time

In order to clarify the changes in the awareness and the desires of the participants over the course of three years and four action plans that lead to verifiable results, I compared the results of the evaluations of the participants for each action plan to identify 1) expectations for the workshops, 2) the degree of each individual’s participation and sense of achievement, and 3) the overall evaluation of the workshops.

At first, from the score for (2) the degree of participation, I subtracted the score for (1) expectations for the workshops, to verify correspondence between expectations and participation. Then, to measure the correspondence between evaluation and expectations, from the score for (3), overall evaluation, I subtracted the score for (1) expectation of the workshops. Finally, I calculated (2) the degree of participation and achievement minus (3) the overall evaluation of the workshop in order to verify whether individuals participated actively even when their evaluation of the activities was lower. (Fig. 8) As a result, I found that expectation and participation levels differed slightly from evaluation. Most of these scores were negative, indicating that most people expected a lot at the start.

The ratings for town observation, Aiai Park planting, Yurinoki Road planting, and the open gardens, respectively, were 4.16, 4.25, 3.79 and 4.27 for starting expectations, 3.58, 3.55, 3.57

and 4.27 for participation, and 2.90, 3.75, 4.00 and 4.13 for evaluation. Looking at the figures for expectation, participation and evaluation over time, people had relatively high expectations for the first workshop in June 2002, (1) walking through the town and making proposals for improvement (4.16), but the evaluation for the program was not so high (2.90). The difference between participation (3.58) and evaluation is 0.68, which means that the whole program was not so valuable but many of the respondents thought that they personally did well. (3) The next two, flower planting in Aiai Park (May 2001), and (4) flower planting along Yurinoki Road (September 2001)

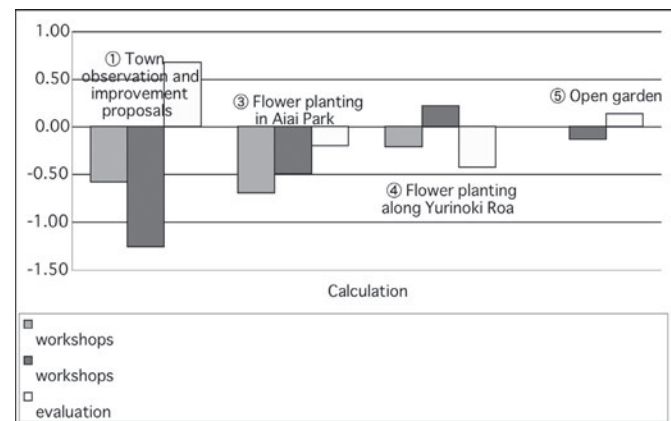


Figure 8. Gaps between expectations, participation and evaluation.

did not have significant differences between expectation, participation (3.55, 3.57) and evaluation (3.75, 4.00) ratings. The difference between participation and evaluation were +.20 and +.43, respectively. These results may be because these two activities required sustained participation. For the open gardens (December 2001), there was almost no difference between the expectation, participation and evaluation scores.

From these results, I can say that at first people held high expectations relative to their weak consciousness about participation. In other words, people were expecting someone else to do the work. Gradually, as the activities continued, the differences between expectations and participation became smaller, showing that people became more proactive in their attitudes toward participation to work for good community design.

Next I analyzed the human element in the workshops. In order to gather a diversity of opinions, involvement of a variety of groups and individuals was necessary in the workshop process. Participation of experts was hoped for because specialized knowledge and skills were necessary in order to draw out issues, prospects and action plans, to make preparations and

to provide equipment, coordination and analysis. Oversight of coordination and cooperation among citizens, government officials and specialists was also important in order to move from prospects and proposals to action plans, through publicity, planning and design, preparation of materials, gathering of opinions, consensus development, etc. For the workshops it was necessary to divide work, strengthen networks and work effectively not only with local citizens with deep affection for the area, but also with citizens with an interest in community improvement from the broader area, government officials, government related agencies, businesses, specialists with coordination skills, experienced specialist NPOs, and educational and research institutions (Fig. 9).

I can summarize the progress in working toward solutions to local issues and changes in participants' perspectives through the workshops as follows. At the start of the activities, workshop participants had high expectations for dealing with large issues, such as "making the town more beautiful," "making the town more lively" and "communicating the history and valuable resources of the Yamamoto District," while expectations for more localized issues were relatively low. At this point,

participants seem to have been counting on government officials and specialists to bring about community improvement, rather than doing it by them. However, as a result of making proposals and undertaking actual activities in the workshops, in contrast to their original attitudes, they expressed higher evaluations and senses of personal satisfaction with individual concrete activities rather than abstract large-scale improvements. Furthermore, through repeated activities, the desire to be involved in such activities seems to have grown. At first, small actions were taken, such as replanting flower beds in the park and planting flowers along Yurinoki Road. Later, in order to implement the open gardens event, citizens took lead roles cooperatively in both preparation and implementation, including holding an open café, distributing maps and making signs. From these results, we can conclude that it is important to start workshop programs with short-term activities that have tangible results.

Government officials and academics announced and coordinated the workshops at first, and each workshop was planned and directed by a

Open Garden Program Workshops	Contents	Participating groups	Roles
Starting point	Initial planning among coordinators (ALPHA staff), City Hall (Aiai Park) and local residents seeking to improve their community environment	Some local residents	Already independently active
		City Hall	Revitalization of Nursery Industry
		Aiai Park	
Workshop to identify issues	Discussion between coordinators and local residents; clarification of places for improvement through community observations and other methods	Coordinators	Consult with citizens and City Hall
		Residents	Sponsor workshops
		Specialist NPOs	Participate in workshops Facilitation roles
Citizen NPOs			
Workshop to identify issues	Discussion between coordinators and local residents; clarification of places for improvement through community observations and other methods	City Hall	Participate in workshops
		Aiai Park	
		Residents	Local coordination
Proposals	Develop concrete plans through workshops involving residents from the wider community and NPOs	Coordinators	Prepare report materials
		Specialist NPOs	Think about plan proposal
		Citizen NPOs	Internal coordination
		City Hall	
		Aiai Park	Handle publicity, etc.
Preparation and implementation	Cooperation among citizens and city agencies; publicity efforts; NPOs, coordinators and other supporting agencies (ALPHA) create preparatory materials	Residents	Invite garden owners
		Coordinators	Synthesize overall plan, map-making, etc.
		Specialist NPOs	Cooperate with map-making, etc.
		Citizen NPOs	Cooperate making plan proposal
		City Hall	
Aiai Park	Inform local residents, etc.		
Future sustained activity	Continue community development by building local networks and leadership, as well as by raising area awareness among residents	Residents	Inform and invite local residents to workshops
		Coordinators	Create a sustainable arrangement
		Specialist NPOs	Support various programs
		Citizen NPOs	
		Aiai Park	Coordinate publicity for Open Garden Program, etc.
City Hall	Financial support, etc.		

Figure 9. Participant groups and roles.

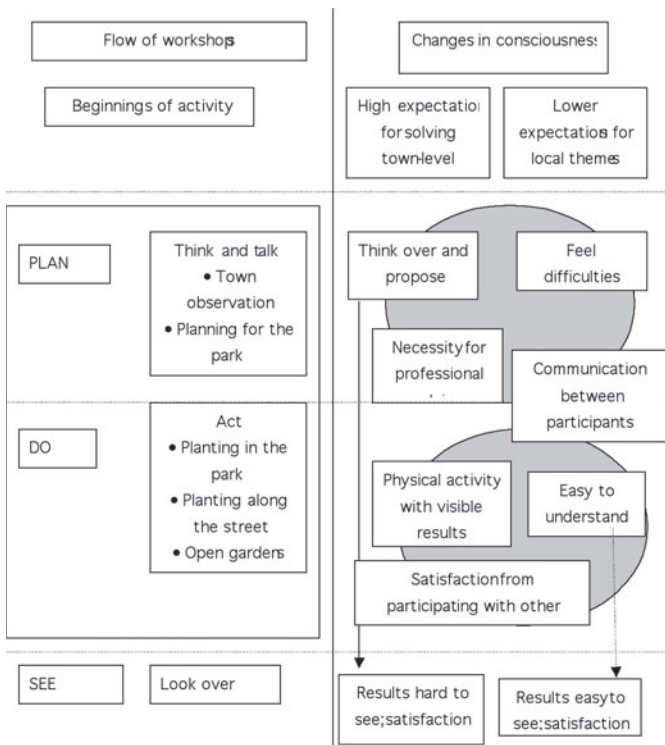


Figure 10 The flow and changes of activities.

coordinator, but after participating several times the citizens became more proactive. The participants happily took on the rolls in the workshops that they could. The following figure shows the results of the workshops and the flow in the change of consciousness toward participation (Fig. 10).

This research also shows that in the future we can expect highly motivated citizens to continue to expand on these efforts. All of these results are because of the increased consciousness of participation and the will to take action that many participants developed.

FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

As a result of accomplishing a variety of action plans, I observed a deepening and widening of community planning activities. The current state and possibilities for future developments as I see them follows.

Beginning with town observations, along with issues, prospects, and action plan execution for each theme, the development and



Figure 11. Discussion in workshop.



Figure 12. Making flowerbeds.



Figure 13. Walking map.

organization of local citizens progressed. The walking map that was made for town observation and improvement proposals was made even more valuable as the basis for a new idea of viewing the town as a tree museum with map making, events, permanent exhibitions and other local revitalization plans being made. As for the Yurinoki Road plantings, local groups have undertaken continuous planting and maintenance. For the planting in Aiai Park, in order to sustain it into the future, there is a proposal to offer plant cultivation, design and other courses in coordination with the maintenance conducted by TGC. For preparation of a scenic improvement plan for the Tenjin River, a committee seems to be forming.

The open garden program that started in the Yamamoto District expanded to include the whole city in 2002. In 2003, an executive committee was formed, and now it is held as the Takarazuka Garden Festival. The workshop created awareness of the possibility and allowed local citizens to develop a consensus for action, which in turn lead to stimulating the support of government officials.



*Figure 14.
Traditional
heritage for
open garden.*

As the open garden program has developed to a citywide level, it has expanded to include not only gardens, but also community planting and promotion of important spots around the city. From 50 private gardens and gardens affiliated with nurseries, the nurseries themselves, and local planting projects in the first year, last year there were 200. Furthermore, the city agricultural and the park and open space divisions, TGC, Inc., Awaji Landscape Planning and Horticulture Academy, various specialists, NPO groups, and other organization are now involved in the executive committee.

Along with the increasing the breadth and depth of the activities, a core member committee for handling workshops is being held with coordinators being chosen along themes. Furthermore, a single locality or agency cannot undertake a large-scale project alone. For this reason, round table meetings have been proposed in order to promote participation and involvement from all relevant government agencies. In order to implement plans, participation and cooperation among government officials, citizens, specialists, and a variety of organizations is indispensable. As a result of action plans implemented through workshops, local self-reliance for community planning and improvement is continuing to deepen in the Yamamoto area.

CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE PROSPECTS

To summarize the entire flow of the series of workshops, we first established long, medium, and short-term issues. Then we settled goals and action programs. Participants shared their opinions and made issues and prospects clear together, and a common sense about the issues developed among the residents, which provided the impetus for the action programs. My conclusion is that, for citizen participation activities, the process of determining the purpose is important.

By participating in the action programs for short-term issues, the consciousness of the residents changed. The expectations for the workshops, the degree of participation, and the evaluation of the whole workshop became more balanced. To solve the issues of the locals and residents, the participation of residents, administrators, and professionals are important, as is sharing of the rolls. Government agencies need to have flexibility and systems to respond to citizen needs to achieve some of the goals of the workshops. Local residents need to have the understanding and willingness to seek independent

and sustained solutions to issues, but they are not always successful on their own. Continuous support and oversight are desirable.

In the future, systems to support more partnerships between residents, administrators, and professionals, and educational programs to raise awareness of issues and determine goals among the participant groups are necessary. Management of the support from the government is still in a trial phase. We should observe the development of similar activities in many places in the future.

ENDNOTES

¹ The holding of workshops was announced in newspapers by the city council, by passing a circular notice around the community, and to the members of a wide range of professional NPOs, and an NPO made of graduates from Awaji Landscape Planning and Horticulture Academy.

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