

Consideration of the Outcomes of Partnership-based Community Development in Japan: a Case Study of the Groundwork Mishima's 30 Years of Work

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Abstract The initiatives of Groundwork Mishima (GWM) are reviewed in terms of its achievements, outcomes, methodology, and future challenges. GWM is an intermediary nonprofit organization (NPO) that has led partnership-based community development in Japan for almost 30 years from the 1990s to the present. GWM's activities comprise a diverse range of projects centered on environmental improvement projects targeting waterside areas in the city center and rural areas in the urban suburbs. These activities have produced a variety of outcomes in terms of environmental, social, and economic aspects. From the environmental perspective, these activities include "regeneration of the urban environment based on the theme of springs." From the social perspective, the activities include "regeneration and creation of local communities." Finally, from the economic perspective, the activities include "revitalization of the region through environmental regeneration." The GWM methodology for community development is based on "shared vision," "multi-stakeholder processes," and "strategic environmental management." Future challenges include "organizing the succession of business," "addressing the deterioration of partnerships in Japanese society," and "realizing alternatives to the evolving redevelopment projects." This study confirmed one of the achievements of partnership-based community development in local cities in Japan and the significance of community development NPOs. Furthermore, the new community development issues that need to be addressed in the future were re-acknowledged.

Keywords. *Partnership, Community development, Environmental Regeneration, Groundwork, Nonprofit organization, Social Enterprise*

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1. Introduction

Groundwork (GW), a partnership-based community development mechanism that originated in the UK in the early 1980s, was introduced to Japanese society in the early 1990s.

GW explored community development through public–private partnerships, attracting attention from a wide range of researchers and community activists, including being featured in the government’s White Paper of the time. Against this backdrop, the community development nonprofit organization (NPO) GW Mishima (GWM) (established in 1992, Mishima, Shizuoka Prefecture) developed a pioneering approach to community development in Japanese society, involving a diverse range of local actors. The stream restoration project (Genbegawa Stream) in the city center, undertaken shortly after GWM’s establishment, attracted national attention. Since then, over the past 30 years up to the present, GWM has developed a diverse range of projects aimed at the regeneration of Mishima as the “City of Spring Water.” The achievements of these projects have been continuously featured in textbooks and specialist books related to urban planning in Japan and are positioned as a model for partnership-based community development in Japan.

This study aims to review the activities of GWM, which is regarded as a pioneering model for community collaborative community development in Japan, over the past 30 years and to clarify the overall picture of its activities. By doing so, we would like to clarify one of the achievement points of partnership-based community development in Japan.

2. Research methods

2.1 Previous research

Research on GW in Japan includes overview studies on its development history in Japan and the UK and its project characteristics (Matsushita & Mitsuhashi: 2010, 2011, 2012, etc.) and studies analyzing GWM’s projects until the early 2000s (Watanabe: 2007, etc.). In particular, GWM’s projects are regarded as “pioneering the potential of GW in Japan by growing its projects in a stepwise and multifaceted manner, from environmental regeneration to economic and social regeneration” (Matsushita and Mitsuhashi: 2012).

2.2 Methods

The following perspectives were set up in this study to capture the overall picture of GWM’s projects. The following perspectives were used: (1) what initiatives GWM has undertaken (achievements); (2) what results GWM has achieved through its operations (outcomes); (3) what strategies and methods GWM has used to achieve these results (methodologies); and (4) what challenges GWM will face in the future (challenges).

These perspectives were organized in this study based on the results of action research in which the researchers themselves were involved in the management of the GWM and on their own observation of GWM activities over a long period. The project results and research findings have been compiled and reorganized from the perspective of the researchers as founders and operational leaders of the GWM or as long-term participants. The materials used for the literature review were mainly primary sources (internal documents) of GWM.

3. Research results and discussion

3.1 Groundwork Mishima's approach

(1) Outline of Groundwork Mishima's projects

GWM is involved in a wide range of projects, each of which is characterized by the fact that they are implemented in a chain of interrelated activities.

Table 1 Outline of Groundwork Mishima's operations

Project theme	Projects
1. Familiar environment development, maintenance, and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large and medium scale (linear, areal): Genpei River, Sakai River, Seiju Green, etc. • Small-scale (pointwise): citizens' handmade parks, etc. • The area extends from the central urban area of Mishima City to peri-urban and rural areas. • Environmental improvement and resident-led maintenance and management.
2. Community business (community building)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central city revitalization and community revitalization projects. • Community hubs for senior citizens, community shops using empty shops in shopping streets, operation of private civic halls, etc. • Development of agriculture through activities to restore abandoned farmland (local branding) and green tourism activities. • Development and commercialization of environmental products in collaboration with private companies, including environmental bio-toilets, and technology transfer.
3. Environmental education and local human resource development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental education programs for primary schools and teacher training. • Environmental human resource development programs for residents. • Environmental education field development and development of environmental education materials.
4. Training and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance of training for study tours and in-country networking. • Support for CSR/SDGs' corporate training programs. • Training of professional personnel and social entrepreneurs. • Cooperation with employment creation projects.
5. International networking and exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GW in the UK exchange (GW UK, GW Trusts). • Japan–Korea environmental exchange and Taiwan community development exchange. • Bio-toilets (the USA, Cambodia, and Nepal).
6. Policy recommendations and planning proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for community collaboration projects to Mishima City. • Proposals to Shizuoka Prefecture for projects to revitalize the Mt Fuji area. • Proposal-based response to redevelopment issues in front of Mishima Station.
7. Publicity and awareness-raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of information through public relations media and publication of books. • Organization of symposia, regional events, etc.

The main projects are centered on improving the familiar environment, such as the waterside space in the city center and the *satoyama* environment in the city suburb. In addition, projects related to community businesses are developed, such as projects to support the regeneration of abandoned agricultural land in rural urban and suburban areas and the regeneration of vacant shops in the city center area. The organization has been actively involved in environmental education and human resource development projects by using such diverse sites for a wide range of local residents since the early stages of its activities. In addition, the organization is involved in training programs, such as corporate training, in response to CSR and social entrepreneurship development programs. Furthermore, international exchange activities, such as experience exchange activities with overseas environmental community development organizations, including GW in the UK, and environmental technology cooperation through the overseas development of bio-toilets, are being developed.

The organization is also actively involved in policy recommendations and planning proposals based on the accumulation of diverse activities. For example, in project proposals to Mishima City, ideas for

preserving and utilizing the stream environment in the city center are continuously proposed in a concrete and realistic dimension. Some of these have been realized as collaborative projects.

These wide-ranging activities involve an average of more than 10,000 volunteers per year and attract an average of more than 1,000 visitors from home and abroad each year. In terms of social recognition, the organization has received 30 awards in the field of community development.

(2) Groundwork Mishima's project development process

Table 2 shows the main development of GWM's main project, the environmental improvement project. Including small-scale projects, approximately 70 project practice sites have been developed in 30 years.

Concerning major projects, the Genbegawa Stream Improvement Project and the Sakai River and Kiyozumi Green Space Improvement Project are water environment restoration projects in the central city of Mishima City. Both were relatively large-scale initiatives in the early years of the activities and are still recognized as major achievements. In the mid-2000s, a second Genbegawa Stream project, the "Matsuge River Area Restoration Project," was continuously undertaken in the suburban and rural areas of the city. Furthermore, in the later stages of the activities, in the 2010s, the "Mountains with cherry blossoms Project/Daiba Area Satoyama Restoration Project" in the *satoyama* area in the suburbs of Mishima City was initiated.

Another feature of the project is that relatively small-scale environmental improvements, such as the development of citizen-made parks and school biotopes, were carried out continuously from the beginning to the middle of the project. Furthermore, since the mid-term of the activities, the project has been involved in the restoration of abandoned farmland in the foothills of the suburbs of the city (Hakone area) together with local farmers and is also involved in agriculture-related projects.

Table 2 Development process of the environmental improvement project by Groundwork Mishima

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Large/Mid-Scale Projects	Genbegawa stream improvement / Miyasan stream improvement / Sakuragawa stream improvement																														
	"Mishima ranunculus aquatilis" spring water Garden development															Mishima spring water garden development															
	Sakaigawa-Kiyozumi green space development															Sakaigawa-Kiyozumi water park development															
	Matsuge river area improvement																														
	Abandoned farmland restoration in Hakone district																														
																Daiba Satoyama environment restoration															
																Goten river improvement															
Small-Scale Projects	Fire fly and flower garden development																														
	Garden regeneration																														
	Townscape beautification movement by street flowerpots																														
	Yoroizaka pocket park development																														
	Sawaji Global community garden development / Midorino community garden development / Kagami spring water pond improvement																														
	Sakuragawa stream waterside development																														
	Kaminari well improvement, and development of the surrounding environment																														
	Kosikiri well improvement, and development of the surrounding environment																														
	Nagabuse/Nakazato junior high school biotope development																														
	Mishima Minami high school biotope development																														
	Sakura kindergarten biotope development																														
	Miyasan stream fire fly garden development																														
Kubo spring water pond improvement																															

 <p>1. Genbegawa (源兵衛川) stream improvement</p>	 <p>2. Sakuragawa (桜川) stream improvement</p>	 <p>3. Matsuge river (松毛川) area improvement</p>
 <p>4. Sakaigawa-kiyozumi green space (境川・清住緑地) development</p>	 <p>5. Abandoned farmland restoration in Hakone district (箱根西麓)</p>	 <p>6. Daiba area Satoyama (大場里山) environment restoration</p>
 <p>7. "Mishima ranunculus aquatilis" (三島梅花藻) spring water Garden</p>	 <p>8. Kaminari well (雷井戸) improvement</p>	 <p>9. Miyasan stream (宮さんの川) Fire fly garden development</p>
 <p>10. Yoroizaka pocket park (鎧坂公園) development</p>	 <p>11. Sawaji Global (沢地グローバル) community garden development</p>	 <p>12. Sakura (函南さくら保育園) kindergarten biotope development</p>
 <p>13. Operation of the community café (街中カフェ)</p>	 <p>14. Management of the community hub for seniors (シニア工房)</p>	 <p>15. Operation of the Eco-tour office (せせらぎ環境案内処)</p>

(All photos by Watanabe, T.)

Figure1 Photos of the projects by Groundwork Mishima

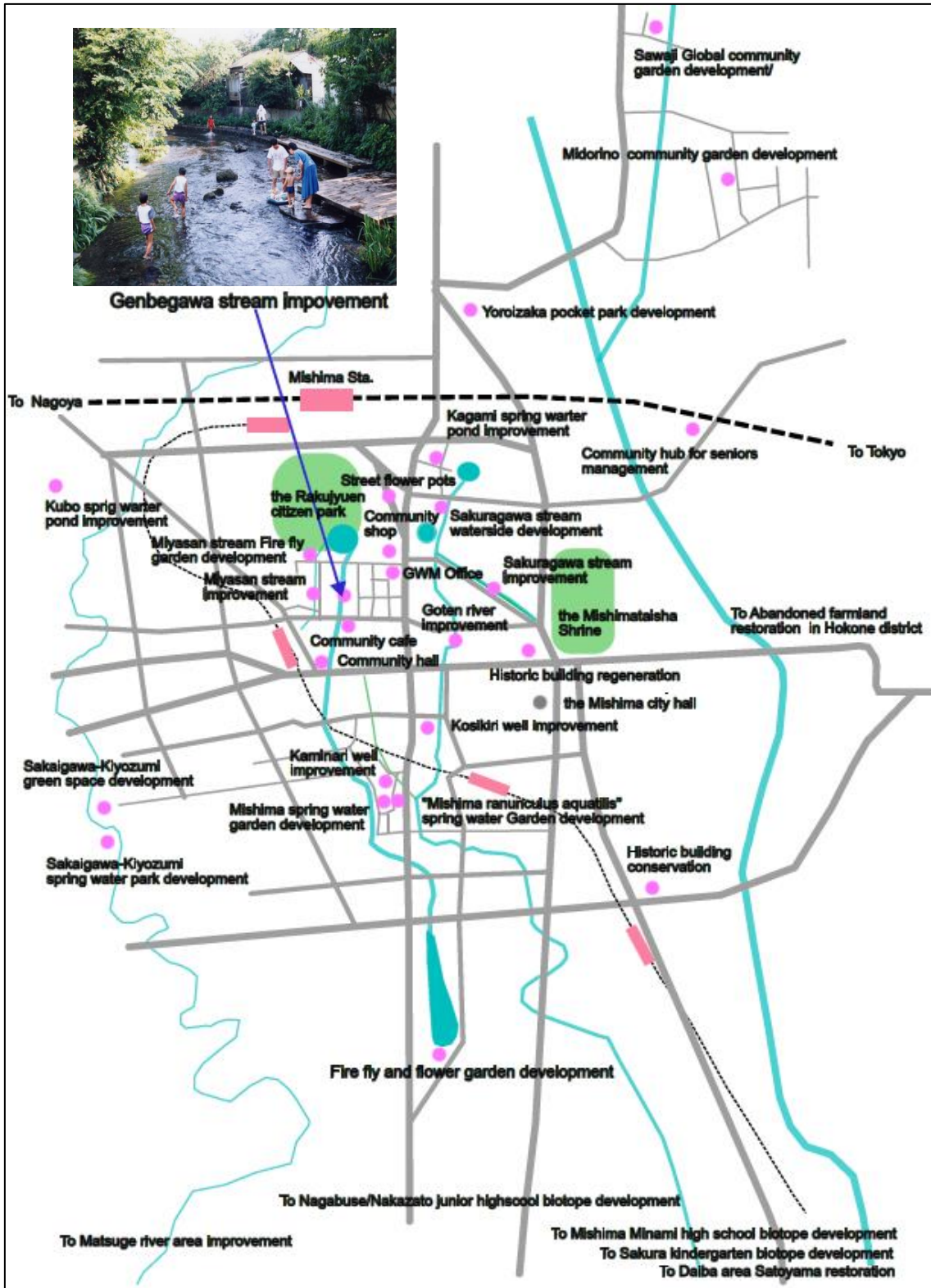


Figure2 Projects map in the city center by Groundwork Mishima

3.2 Project outcomes of Groundwork Mishima

(1) Outcomes from the environmental regeneration perspective

In the 30 years of activities, various environmental improvements have been carried out on a point, line, and area bases, extending from the central urban area of Mishima City to the urban suburbs and rural areas. Many spring ponds have been saved from landfill and restored as a result of GWM's activities. Some of the sites (local resources) were acquired by GWM to escape private sector development pressure. GWM also plays a role as a so-called local amenity society.

Mishima is a regional city with a population of approximately 110,000 and a Shinkansen station. A clear stream flows through the center of the city, where fireflies dance wildly depending on the season. The waterside environment is home to the endangered Japanese loach, and the underwater flower Mishima Baikamo thrives and kingfishers can be seen flying over the surface of the water. The school biotope is home to Japanese killifish and a wide variety of other creatures. Such a thing is rare to see in the city center of a regional city in Japan, and the natural environment of Mishima has improved dramatically over the past 30 years. Furthermore, conservation and restoration projects for the natural environment in a wide range of activity areas have made a significant contribution to the preservation of the ecosystem of the entire region. The Genbegawa Stream and its surrounding environment were registered as a World Water System Heritage site in 2018 as a symbol of these activities.

In addition, the adoption of a process-oriented planning approach by the GWM encourages the organization of the local population by involving many local residents in the process of environmental improvement. Furthermore, the professionalization of local residents is encouraged by implementing various environmental education programs aimed at developing environmental human resources. Together, these have led to the establishment of environmental management organizations by local residents in each project site, and the construction of a system in which they can proactively maintain and manage their familiar environment. Furthermore, GWM's 30 years of activities in the region have accumulated detailed information and know-how on Mishima's urban environment (particularly the spring environment) and gained the local community's trust in environmental management. Hence, a system has been established whereby GWM is responsible for prior consultation on development permission by developers on behalf of the government when development above a certain scale is planned in the city center.

(2) Outcomes from the social regeneration perspective

The activities of GWM are based on small community units (neighborhood associations). A mechanism has been established for local residents by working community development in these units to get involved in specific activities, thereby revitalizing a community that had been weak. In addition, GWM's community development mainly focuses on local residents and socially vulnerable groups. The operation of community shops using vacant shops in the city center has achieved the empowerment of a diverse range of people, including seniors, women, and other socially vulnerable groups. This event has also created new communities in the area. Through these activities, local ties are formed in a multilayered manner, and as a whole, an "environmental community" is being built in which citizens are proactively involved in community development through familiar environmental restoration activities.

As a social network of GWM, a partnership system has been established with GWM at its core, comprising environmental, educational, and international citizens' groups, local SMEs, construction and agricultural organizations, and local authorities, such as the City of Mishima. The number of organizations has grown from eight at the time of its establishment to approximately 20. A system of

cooperation that transcends mutual interests has been established, and a community development mechanism has been built in the region that demonstrates the synergistic effects of the partnership. The GWM project management developed under this structure has formed a human resource network centered on core personnel, such as GWM directors and staff, with experts and volunteers spreading in concentric circles according to their level of commitment to the activities. Furthermore, many young people with an environmental mindset have been developed through various environmental education programs, forming the basis for the human resources that will lead the region in the future. In addition, many human resources from outside the region interested in community development have participated in training programs organized by GWM. Many such human resources inside and outside the region are involved in GWM's community development, forming a multidimensional-related population.

Diverse human resources have been involved through the various programs of community development implemented by GWM. Moreover, a mechanism has been established to train, produce, and activate new human resources. GWM has been working to empower the civil sector while establishing a presence as an intermediary organization for each sector in the local community.

Therefore, a civil society has been formed in which NPOs and citizens are involved in community development through the activities of voluntary local residents' organizations, the development of community businesses, and CSR activities by companies. In a Japanese society with a fragile social sector, GWM has been significant in demonstrating the value of NPOs in the field of community development for 30 years. As a new value in Japanese society, GWM's 30 years of activities provide a concrete model for a vibrant civil society.

(3) Outcomes from the economic regeneration perspective

The various environmental improvements in the city center coordinated by GWM have increased the attractiveness of the city and attracted many consumers to the town. Combined with this, there are almost no empty shops in the shopping streets in the city center of Mishima. In addition, the city is only 40 minutes away from Tokyo by the Shinkansen bullet train. Moreover, the synergistic effect of the environmental improvements in the city center has resulted in the city being visited by many tourists in the 2010s. Specifically, the number of tourists has increased from approximately 1.74 million in 1991 to 7.14 million in 2019. As a result, the density of people walking through the streets and the concentration of shops in Mishima's city center is relatively higher than in neighboring cities, a thriving town center. In addition to the diversity of visitors, the city is also developing a vibrant town development, with many young people starting their own businesses and running their own shops.

Concerning the scale of GWM's operations, the organization has averaged approximately JPY 75 million per year in the last 10 years and has returned approximately JPY 2,285 million to the region since the organization was established. The know-how accumulated under the management system with full-time staff for promoting these projects has become an important management resource for the community development organization. In other words, establishing a business model that adds value to the expertise and reliability developed by GWM has made the community development NPO's business sustainable. Specifically, this case means the development of for-profit businesses, such as consultancy services for private companies and governments, including local workshops, regional environmental surveys, and the formulation of development concepts. In terms of organizational management, the organization has considered the balance between a nonprofit business as an NPO and a for-profit business as a consultant. The organization has also established affiliated companies and agricultural production corporations with the for-profit sector independent of the NPO. The overall management of these

organizations ensures the sustainability of the business. In this way, a business model for community development NPOs, which is considered difficult to establish in Japanese society, is concretely presented.

Finally, a small local economic cycle has been created through GWM's sustainable activities in the region. Examples include the revitalization of shopping streets linked to the regeneration of the local environment, local branding of agricultural products and local production for local consumption, the entrepreneurial development of community businesses, the creation of local employment, and the development of tourism, which has led to interpreters taking an active role. In this way, GWM activities can also be seen to contribute to economic localization.

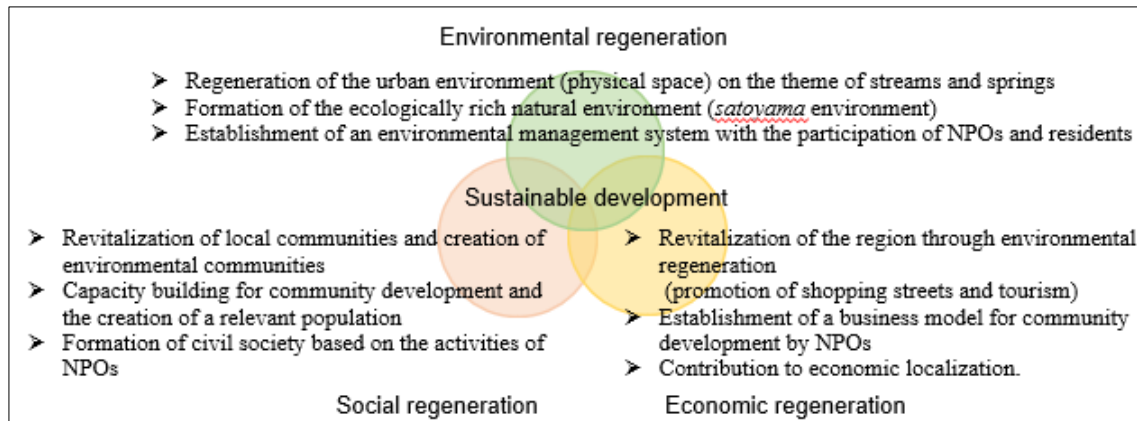


Figure3 Outcomes of activities by Groundwork Mishima from a sustainable development perspective

(4) Generalization

The GWM's 30 years of promoting partnership-based community development has resulted in various outcomes in the environmental, social, and economic spheres. As a result, Mishima City has been positioned as a city that attracts attention as a migration destination for people from metropolitan areas, with an increase in the number of people moving in from outside the region for a period of time (2020), although the population is declining. The revitalization of the local community through sustainable development through partnerships is the basis for creating new values for Mishima as a “good to live in, good to visit” area. In other words, Mishima is now positioned as one of Japan's model regional cities where a rich living environment has been formed.

3.3 Methodology of community development by Groundwork Mishima

The strategies and methodologies of GWM that have contributed to these community development outcomes can be summarized as follows.

GWM's basic approach to community development is first and foremost to ensure that the local community shares the vision of the “regeneration of Mishima as a spring water city.” The aim is then to realize social and economic regeneration based on the environmental regeneration of the region through partnership-based community development. This can be seen from the GWM's slogan: “From a town with a rich (waterside environment) to a town with (economic and social) richness (aiming to create a prosperous local economy and community through environmentally rich urban development).”

Based on this basic strategy, GWM has adopted the following planning and project methods,

including human resource utilization and organizational management methods, in its community development efforts (Table 3). As for planning and project methods, (1) a series of practical and steady environmental improvement projects, (2) a bottom-up approach with resident participation emphasizing the consensus-building process, and (3) a holistic approach in which project plans are assembled from a composite viewpoint of local issues have been implemented. In addition, (4) introducing large-scale public works projects through strong collaboration with the government is being implemented when the time is right.

In terms of organizational management methods and methods of utilizing human resources, the GWM is based on (5) utilizing a diverse range of human resources, from volunteers to experts, while placing full-time staff at the center of the organization. In addition, (6) with a view to actually playing an active role in various sites by GWM, environmental education and professional development programs are implemented to secure human resources in a multidimensional manner. Regarding securing funding, (7) the project has also diversified its funding sources through the compounding of issues and the development of community businesses. Through these activities, (8) the organization has gradually grown as an organization with expertise and has built a new business model that enables sustainable community development.

Table 3 Community development methodology by Groundwork Mishima

Basic concept and strategy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Shared vision of activities by diverse actors: regeneration of “Mishima, the city of spring water” ◆ Partnership-based project and organizational management: multi-stakeholder process ◆ Strategic environmental management perspective: changing places, changing lives 	
Planning and project management methods	Organizational management methods and human resource utilization methods
<p>1) Concrete and practical environment development Action rather than discussion, visualization of results, accumulation of small projects, sense of achievement in activities, and gradual development.</p> <p>2) Bottom-up approach Community-based emphasis on consensus-building processes, various participatory methods, such as workshops, etc.</p> <p>3) Holistic approach Composite response to local issues, combination of social and environmental issues, and design of project chain processes.</p> <p>4) Strategic introduction of public works Strong collaboration with local authorities, effective use of public works, and large-scale environmental improvement.</p>	<p>5) Use of diverse human resources Concentric human resource structure, employment of dedicated staff, cooperation with experts and universities, and active role for women and senior citizens</p> <p>6) Human resource development and active role programs Development of local human resources: organization of voluntary resident groups, development of specialist human resources: interpreters, and multidimensional-related population.</p> <p>7) Securing diverse funding sources Compounding of themes and diversification of funding sources, cooperation with companies, and nonprofit business development</p> <p>8) Phased business model Phased project theming, employment of specialist personnel, incorporation, and subsidiary companies</p>

3.4 Future prospects and challenges

(1) Future urban development concept

GWM’s future projects are envisaged to include water and green space development projects to create a circulation system in the city center and to link the environment of the city center with that of the nearby rural areas to further increase the attractiveness of the city.

Specifically, the first project is the environmental improvement of small rivers flowing through the city center. The Genbegawa Stream, which symbolizes the activities of the GWM, flows through the city center, but other unimproved small rivers are overflowing with spring water. The project aims to improve the circulation and natural environment of the city center and create a rich pedestrian space by improving the waterside environment and linking existing water networks.

The second objective is to extend the water and green network formed within the city center further into the urban suburbs. In Mishima City, where farmland extends into the suburbs of the city, the agricultural water network extends into the suburbs and residential areas are formed within it. In these residential areas, as in the city center, the strategy is to improve the environment by making the most of the water environment.

The third is developing an area-wide environment that will serve as a base for these water and green networks. Large-scale waterside environment restoration projects and *satoyama* restoration projects are already underway in rural areas with the participation of local residents. The concept is to gradually advance these projects while developing green hubs in the suburbs of the city.

The promotion of these concepts aims at an organic linkage between the city center and the urban suburbs.

(2) Future prospects

The effectiveness of the partnership approach of GW, which originated in the UK, has been proven in Japanese society through the activities of GWM over the past 30 years. GWM has so far undertaken environmental, social, and economic regeneration in the region in stages. In community development, GWM has worked to unite the community and create a flat society, entering into the gaps that the government cannot reach, from the perspective of the vulnerable, the local residents, as representatives of the citizens. Similar to GW in the UK, GWM's efforts, which initially mainly targeted projects to improve the environment close to the local area, have come to develop activities deeply related to the regeneration of local communities, along with the universality of the concept of partnership.

GWM is expected to continue to place importance on the field-oriented approach of leaving concrete footprints in the community and on partnership formation, which is the collective wisdom of the community. GWM is also expected to present a model for local collaborative community development in Japanese society.

(3) Future challenges

Finally, one of the future challenges facing GWM, organizationally, is the succession of business to the next generation. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the deterioration of partnerships in Japanese society following the COVID-19 pandemic.

A more pressing issue is the response to the redevelopment project in front of the Mishima station, which applies the urban development methods of the period of population growth currently underway in the central area of Mishima. Specifically, the construction of high-rise buildings in front of the station, mainly residential developments, should be responded. There is great concern that the construction of high-rise buildings in the city center will affect Mishima's identity, such as the underground water veins and the view of Mt. Fuji.

In regional cities across Japan, many of the city centers that were developed after World War II have reached the age of renewal. In the process of shrinking cities owing to population decline, reconstructing urban areas and presenting new town planning models are important issues for urban planning in Japan. Mishima was supposed to have been at the forefront of this process through its water

and green town planning through partnerships. However, the sudden intrusion of external capital is threatening the collapse of local partnerships. The introduction of urban redevelopment projects, a method of town planning during the period of economic growth, has raised concerns about the loss of community assets that have been shared by citizens.

Mishima is an area with an entrenched civic culture, where a constructive civic movement prevented the construction of a large-scale petroleum complex during Japan's period of rapid economic growth. Thus, a movement to disprove the plans with scientific data and present alternative proposals was developed through the independent learning activities of the citizens, involving various generations, from high school students to housewives. The GWM is required to re-explore the power of such local cultures and develop community development with citizens sharing the same values. The implementation of alternatives through partnerships in a better direction is expected.

4. Conclusion

The initiatives of GWM are reviewed in terms of its achievements, outcomes, methodology, and future challenges. GWM is an intermediary NPO that has led partnership-based community development in Japan for almost 30 years from the 1990s to the present.

GWM's activities comprise a diverse range of projects centered on environmental improvement projects targeting waterside areas in the city center and rural areas in the urban suburbs. From the environmental perspective, these activities include "regeneration of the urban environment based on the theme of springs," "formation of an ecologically rich natural environment," and "establishment of an environmental management system with the participation of residents." From the social perspective, the activities include "regeneration and creation of local communities," "capacity building and involvement of community development personnel," and "formation of civil society through NPOs." Finally, from the economic perspective, the activities include "revitalization of the region through environmental regeneration," "establishment of a community development business model," and "contribution to economic localization."

The GWM methodology for community development is based on "shared vision," "multi-stakeholder processes," and "strategic environmental management." From the perspective of planning and project methodology, the methods are "practical environmental development," "bottom-up approach," "holistic approach," and "strategic introduction of public works." From the perspective of human resource utilization and organizational management, the methods are "utilization of diverse human resources," "human resource development and community building programs," "securing diverse sources of funding," and a "phased business model."

Future challenges include "organizing the succession of business," "addressing the deterioration of partnerships in Japanese society," and "realizing alternatives to the evolving redevelopment projects."

This study confirmed one of the achievements of partnership-based community development in local cities in Japan and the significance of community development NPOs. Furthermore, the new community development issues that need to be addressed in the future were re-acknowledged.

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