

Sustainable Regional Reactivation Through an experiment on “footpaths” with foreigners in the Ueki area

Introduction

The city of Nogata once flourished as a coal mine town. However, with the recent decline in the coal industry, it no longer has the activity that it once had. Because of this, we researched how Britain used “footpaths” as a way to increase the local activity and how introducing “footpaths” can affect our area. Especially this year, we proceeded to conduct experiments by using similar methods with foreigners. Our research and experiments confirmed that the introduction of “footpaths” may indeed be a way to promote tourism and activity in Nogata.

Research Question

What kind of communication skills have been improved by the footpath experience?

Plan



This survey was conducted with the help of Kitakyushu University and the footpath club at Nakama high school as well as the local people.

Result(1)

The difference between footpaths in the UK and Japan

Footpath means “a path for people to walk along”.

The birthplace of footpaths is Britain.



Footpaths in Japan



Result(2)

1. Questionnaire(Pre)



2. Questionnaire(Post)



3. Feedback comments (Foreigners)

- I had a lot of fun! I learned some things about the history of the local area, I spoke a lot of people, and I enjoyed the surrounding nature.
- It was really fun and beautiful! Without this event I would probably have never visited Ueki! I had a great time! It was interesting to compare UK and Japanese Footpath styles.

Discussion

Result(1)

- Through Japanese style “footpaths”, participants, especially foreigners, can see historical sites and enjoy special local products.

Result(2) – 1, 2

- The experience of using footpaths is very effective in building good relationships with people, even on the first meeting, and in developing the skill to encourage others to communicate with each other.

Result(2) – 3

- At the footpath event with participating foreigners, we saw the students try to communicate with them in broken English and gestures.
- High school students played a role as a guide to connect local people and foreigners.

According to the results, we can say that footpaths can be a useful educational material for high school students and university students to improve their communication skills as a whole.

Future work

- To hold footpath events regularly and encourage more people, of any nationality, to join us.
- To build a system that trains footpath guides in close cooperation with the community and local government.

We hope that this activity will become firmly established as a new means of communication in a globalized local community.