

Developing an Age-Friendly Community in Japan: A case study of T community, Nagasaki City

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Abstract

Japan, a super-aged society, requires a paradigm change in terms of caring for elderly people in communities: elderly citizens are now expected to not only be consumers, but also providers of elder care services. In this presentation, first, a theoretical framework for the paradigm change in self-help community activities in Japan will be explained from a sociological perspective. Second, a case study will be introduced to demonstrate the effectiveness of self-help activity through quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The case study draws upon activities of a volunteer group, named “Suketto-tai,” in T community of Nagasaki City, Japan. “Suketto-tai” consists of middle-aged and older residents in T community, who unobtrusively meddle, and provide a bit of support for the elderly in the community who are frail or who suffer from degenerative diseases and, therefore, cannot manage such activities themselves. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis indicated that “Suketto-tai” is used not only by people who have a high level of social capital, but also by people who are anxious about personal relationships in the community. The “Suketto-tai” group is also an important role model for transferring such activities to the next generation, enabling residents to develop an age-friendly community.

Key words : Elderly, community, T-Community