

CASE STUDY ON THE RESIDENCE FOR SETTLEMENT REUSING VACANT HOUSES AND THE ACTIVITY FOR LOCAL ACTIVATION BY PRIVATE GROUPS

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ABSTRACT. *After the increase in migration candidate from city to rural areas, "Reuse project of vacant house" has been proceeding. Vacant houses are made use of as the residence for them. Most of the projects are grappled by governments, but recently NPO and private groups have started it in small number. The purpose of this study is to clarify the organization of private groups and contents of the activity. We consider the effect of reusing vacant houses by private groups and explain the subjects toward the future development. The results are as follows. 1) The private groups grapple with vacant houses investigation, information service, session at contract, moving furniture and support after migration. 2) In the case of the organization which consists of various occupations, it is possible to support mediation and repair. 3) The activity of private groups is not only reusing vacant houses, but also tours to experience rural living, sale of special products and so on.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the number of people who move from the cities to the countryside has been increasing, and accordingly local governments have started the reuse project of vacant houses as dwellings for them. The present problem of vacant house use is that there are many vacant houses, but so far there have been no offers. The main factors are these four. 1. Compared city areas, the real estate business is un-developed in rural areas, so the supply of vacant house in the rental market is low.: Market circulation of vacant houses, 2. Vacant houses are damaged, so a large sum of money is necessary for repairs.: Improvement charge supply, 3. Building trust between owners and tenants is difficult.: Construction of reliance, 4. Owners have a negative image about renting out their houses. This is in part because these houses whole vacant still often contain excess furniture, Buddhist family and family altars. And owners use own house at the Bon festival and on New Year's Day.: Owner's self reasons.

Usually, the project of vacant houses is managed by local governments. But recently, the activity managed by NPO and regional groups has been started. Activity contents of private groups contain a preparation of house, an employment support, a project to experience country life. Furthermore, the groups help tenants after they moved in. Because private groups can do community-based activities more than local governments, it is easy to get participation and cooperation of inhabitants in the area. In this paper, it addresses private groups which reuse the vacant houses in the Chugoku District. The purpose of this study is to analyze establishment processes and activity contents. And it aims to show an evaluation of the project using vacant house by private groups.

2. METHODS OF STUDY

9 private groups which have grappled with using vacant houses in Chugoku district were extracted by internet (Figure.1). Table.1 shows contents of these groups' activity. The purpose of the activities was divided into these two; a promotion of settlement and a preservation of traditional wooden houses and landscapes. 5 groups which promote settlement are an object of study. The area of 5 groups is divided the following three; hilly and mountainous areas(3 groups), islands(1 group), urban areas(1 group). Management types are NPO(3 groups) and a private group which formed by regional inhabitants(2 groups). Hilly and mountainous areas and islands were focused on. These three groups were selected as a survey object; "NPO *Yuimaru Plus*" in Sakurae town Shimane prefecture, "NPO *Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya*" in Kasaoka Islands Okayama prefecture and "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose" in Hirose school district Hiroshima prefecture. A hearing survey was done about establishment processes and activity contents. From result of the survey, framework and characteristics of the activity were analyzed and improvements to the present issue of using vacant houses were cleared.

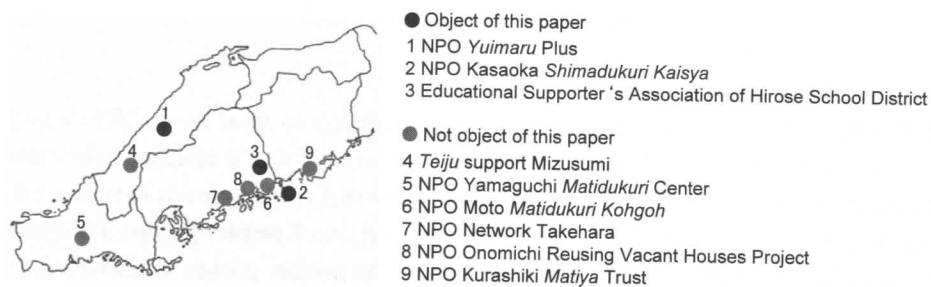


Figure1. Map of Survey Areas

Table1. Summaries of Regional Groups Which Have Grappled with Using Vacant Houses

Purpose	Group name(Establishment year)	Contents of activity except for reusing vacant houses
promotion of settling	1 Sakurae Town Goutsu City Shimane Prefecture "NPO <i>Yuimaru Plus</i> "(2005.2.4)	Management of tour to experience rural living, Window for Consultation of migration, Project of association with local people and urban insider, Development and support for community business, Management of community space "Sakurae salon", Service for old people
	2 Kasaoka Islands Kasaoka City Okayama Prefecture "NPO <i>Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya</i> "(2001.4)	Day-care project, Management of <i>Mushima Ayumi En</i> (preschool), Management of bus within islands, Sale of islands special products and <i>Shimagben</i> (Lunch), Project and management of sightseeing in islands
	3 Hirose school district Hukuyama City Hiroshima Prefecture "Educational supporter's association of Hirose school district"(1992.2.17)	Support of education for preschool, elementary school and junior high school, Transfer students reception for another school districts, JA bazaar (Vegetable and unused goods)
Upkeep of traditional houses and a row of houses along the street	4 Misumi Town Hamada City Shimane Prefecture "Teiju support Mizusumi"(1998)	Window for Consultation of migration, Project of association with private people and urban insider, Management of experience in the country living
	5 Yamaguchi City Yamaguchi Prefecture "NPO Yamaguchi <i>Matidukuri center</i> "(1998.10.10)	Coordination of change the house, Living support for old man who changed the house, Suggestion about local formation reusing vacant houses and vacant stores
	6 Moto Town Hukuyama City Hiroshima Prefecture "NPO Moto <i>Matidukuri Kohgoh</i> "(1999)	Holding "Tomonoura symposium", Execution a map, Promotion for port town network in Setouti, Study about environmental education, a row of houses along the street and creatures within Moto port, Service for old people, Sale of special
	7 Takehara City Hiroshima Prefecture "NPO Network Takehara"(2003.4.20)	Regeneration of region community, Civilizing the local talent, Tradition of local history and culture, Environmental preservation and recycling, Region Information
	8 Onomichi City Hiroshima Prefecture "NPO Onomichi reusing vacant houses project"(2008.1.18)	Upkeep of a row of houses along the street and scenery, Local activation after the increase in migration, Creation of new culture, network and community
	9 Kurashiki City Okayama Prefecture "NPO Kurashiki <i>Matiya trust</i> "(2006.5.3)	Window for Consultation of reusing <i>matiya</i> , Management of house for experiencing country living "Hntyohohsakano ie"

3. ESTABLISHMENT PROCESSES AND CONTENTS OF THE ACTIVITY

3.1 Sakurae Town Goutsu City Shimane Prefecture "NPO *Yuimaru Plus*"

1) Establishment processes

Goutsu city is in the western part of Shimane prefecture, faces the Nihon Sea. Sakurae town merged with Goutsu city in August 2004. The area of town is 110.1 square kilometer, 88% area is forest (Figure.2). The population of town is 3500 and the rate of people older than 64 years old is 39%. The population is decreasing (Figure.3).

In 1999, a woman has moved in Sakuræ town. Her husband is from Sakuræ town, and she is future governor of “NPO *Yuimaru Plus*”. She has started tours to experience rural living and projects to associate with local people and urban insider together with local people for advertisement for rural living in Shimane prefecture since 2000. Also, they have offered vacant house information to migration candidate. Local people and migration talked about what local area should be in 2005. As a result, they set up the “NPO *Yuimaru Plus*” aiming to make a new community business and to activate local area in April 2nd, 2005. And in April 21st, 2005, the group was certified as NPO (Table.2). The NPO consists of 14 people. They are migration, young managers of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and civil, official, and so on, so NPO has expert knowledge and technique. At present, NPO rented uninhabited *Kawado* station as the office “*Sakuræ Slon*” from JR for free.

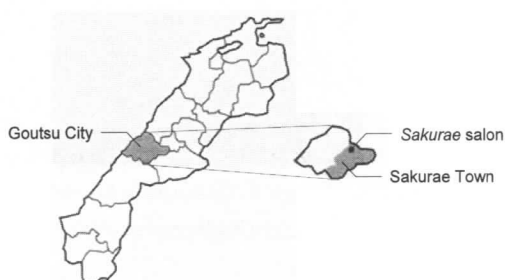


Figure2. Map of Sakuræ Town

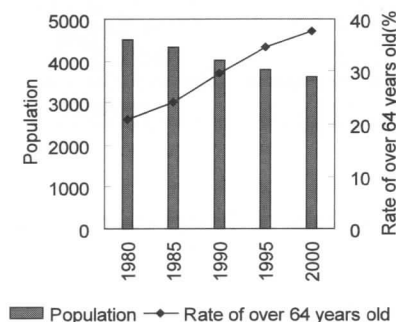


Figure3. Population and the Aging Rate of Sakuræ Town

Table2. Chronology of “NPO *Yuimaru Plus*”

2000	Start on vacant house information service to migration candidate
2000.8	Start on tour to experience rural living
2001	Start on project of association with local people and urban insider“ <i>Wakuwaku Taiken Pack</i> ”
2004.10.1	Affiliation with Goutsu City
2005.1.15	A talk about what local area should be with local people and migration
2005.2.4	Foundation of <i>Yuimaru plus</i>
2005.4.21	Certification as NPO
	Certification as <i>Kouzou Kaikaku Tokku Nintei</i> from the nation
2007.11	Receiving a <i>Soumu Daijin Hyousyoyu</i>



Figure4. “*Sakuræ Slon*” in JR Kawado Station

2) Contents of Basic Activity

NPO grapples with various projects. For example, project of settling promotion, project of association with local people and urban insider, support of community business, class in personal computer, support for migration candidate, home-delivery service for old people, management of restaurant, management of the Webpage for mail order “*Iwami Tonya*” and so on.

“*Iwami Tonya*” consists of 14 producers living in Sakuræ town. They introduce and sell handiworks “*Iwami Kagura flute*”, organic vegetables, fishes and processed goods (tea and jam). We can look Web log of producers and animations of local introduction on Webpage, too. It renders many services to the cause of local introduction(Figure.5).

The tours to experience rural living have been started for settling promotion in 2000. Because of being certified as NPO in 2005, the tours have been grappled with by NPO. 15 tours have been held, 200 people have joined them, 15 people have moved Sakurae town because of the tours until now. There are over 200 references about migration. "Wakuwaku Taiken Pack" as the project of association has been started in 2001, 2000 people have joined it for 6 years.

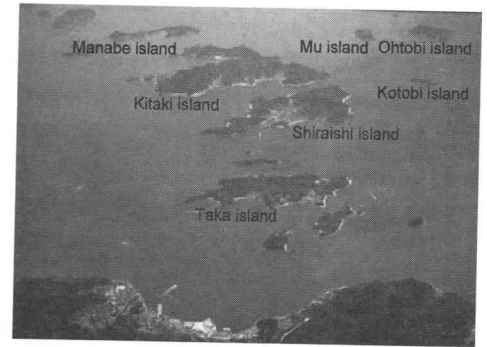
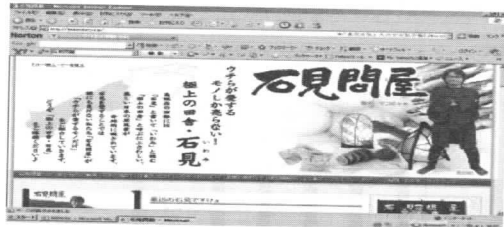


Figure5. Website of "Iwami Tonya" Figure6. Map of Kasaoka Islands Figure7. Panorama View of Kasaoka Islands(Reference: Website of NPO)

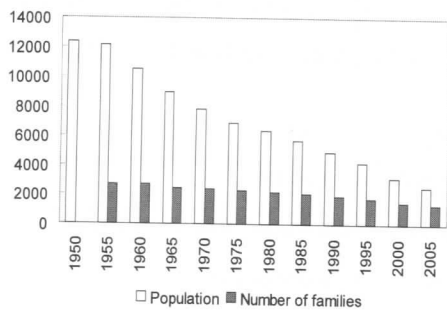


Figure8. Population and Number of Families of Kasaoka Islands

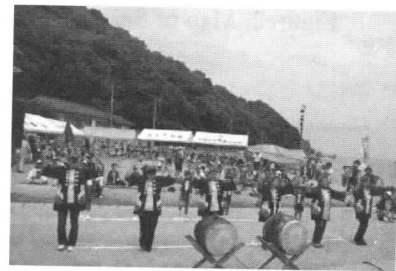


Figure9. Sports festival in 2009 (Reference: Website of NPO)

Table3. Chronology of "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

1997.6	The foundation of "Shimawoqenkinisuru Meeting"
1998.5	Start on the islands sports (in Kitaki island)
2001.4	The foundation of Shimaokoshi Kaientai by Kasaoka City
2002.8	The foundation of <i>Dennou Kasaoka Hurusatodukuri Kaisya</i> by local people
2002.10	The foundation of Kasaoka Islands Film Commission
2003.4	Start on reuse project of vacant house
2005.5	Start on sale of "Shimaben"
2006.9	The foundation of Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya and certification as NPO
2007.2	Start on care office "Kaisya Day-Service Hohoemi"

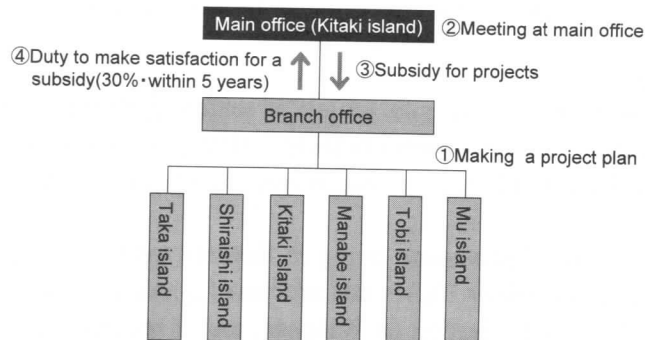


Figure10. The System of "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

3.2 Kasaoka Islands Kasaoka City Okayama Prefecture "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

1) Establishment processes

The Kasaoka islands are in the middle part of the Setonai Sea (Figure.6,7). They consist of 31 islands, the islands where people live are 7 (Taka island, Shiraki island, Kitaki island, Ohtobi island, Kotobi island and Manabe island). There once prospered as sea traffic key point between Kinki district and Kyusyu district. There were over 10 thousand people then. But the 1950's, the population have decreased suddenly with the decline of the stone industry and the Fishery. Now, the population is 2570, and the rate of people older than 64 years old is 58% (Figure.8). We can visit the Kasaoka islands by passenger boat. There are 15 services a day from Kasaoka port to each island. It takes about an hour to go to the furthest Mu island. 6 islands have elementary school. Children living in Taka island that don't have elementary school go to school in the land part. 3 islands (Kitaki island, Shiraishi island and Manabe island) have junior high school. 7 islands don't have high school, so everyone goes to school in the land part.

In May 1998, 1st islands sports have been held in Kitaki island for the purpose of communication between islands people (Figure.9). Besides usually sport games, introduction of islands and concert have been held. April 2001, "Shimaokoshi Kaientai" has been set up by Kasaoka city, and "Dennou Kasaka Furusatodukuri Kaisya" has been set up by local people in 2002 for the purpose of island activation. And in September 2006, "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya" has been set up by Kasaoka city and local people (Table.3). NPO consists of 12 public official and 50 local people.

NPO consists of headquarters and 7 branch offices. Every island has branch offices, because it's possible to grapple with projects that make use of local characteristics. "Kaisya" means company. Every island makes project plans, and discusses the plans in headquarters. So it's possible to estimate the plans and to invest the money in projects useful. When the project is grappled, island get subsidy from headquarters, but island must pay back the 30% subsidy within 5 years (Figure.10).

2) Contents of Basic Activity

Contents of projects consist of independent project and entrusted project by Kasaoka city (Table.4). Independent project has the sightseeing in islands for migration candidate (Figure.11), sale of "Shimaben" made into special products (Figure.12) and special products in antenna shop "Yume port". The turnover of "Shimaben" is 5.4 million yen a year, and antenna shop's turnover is 12 million yen a year. Entrusted project has management of bus within islands, day-service center, management of preschool "Ayumi En". For the support of life of people who live in depopulated island, NPO is grappling with projects.

Table4. The Project Contents of "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

Independent Project	
Project of vacant house	Information service about vacant house
Shimaben project	Making and sale of lunch made into special products each islands (Turnover every year of 5.4 million yen)
Antenna shop "Yume Port"	Sale of special products and Shimaben (Turnover every year of 12 million yen)
Association with local people	Taking place the islands sports for association with between local people Project and management of sightseeing in islands
Workshop	Various workshops for local people Reception of workshops object for outside groups
Entrusted Project by Kasaoka City	
Civilizing children and day-care projects	Management of bus within islands, Management of Day-service center Management of Mushim Ayumi En (preschool) Management of passenger boat between Ohtobi island and Kotobi island
Project of information service and developing the local special products	Making and renewing the Webpage Film Comm issbn (Attracting movie location)



Figure11. A tour of visiting vacant houses



Figure12. "Shimaben"

(Reference: Website of NPO)

3.3 Hirose school district Fukuyama City Hiroshima Prefecture "Educational supporter's association of Hirose school district"

1) Establishment processes

The Hirose school district is located from the center part of Fukuyama City to the north in the plateau of 20 kilometers and altitude 400 meters. The number of families is 120, the population is 250 and the rate of people older than 64 years old is over 60% (Figure.13,14)

Elementary school and junior high school consist of about 70 students, schools are made up of local students until the 1970's. But since the affiliation with Fukuyama city in 1975, the number of junior high school student has been decreasing. In 1980, the number of junior high school student is only 7, the keeping of school became difficult. So, the director of PTA asked the adjacent school districts students for moving in. As a result, 20 students came to the Hirose school district's school every year in around 1987.

January 17th, 1992, "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose School District" has set up by 50 local people for protecting the school from closure. The group paid the rent subsidy and traffic expense subsidy as the reuse project of vacant house. This project was appeared by newspaper, and 3 families (11 people) moved in. Until now about 30 families (80 people) came to visit the vacant house (Table.5).

2) Contents of Basic Activity

For protecting the school from closure due to students decrease, the group grapples with the development of the education. Elementary school and junior high school make the 9 years curriculum together. Junior high school teachers teach the elementary school students national language, music, drawing, manual arts and lifestyle guidance. 2 schools hold the sports and *Haiku* meeting together. Elementary school grapples with English education hard. Native American teacher teaches English 6 years. The local people were invited and *Momotarou* and *Sarukani Gassen* were performed by students in English. Junior high school grapples with education and sport hard. The individual class and the class of the few people have been introduced. Students study population decrease and perform the play about population decrease. Through this study, they can understand local area. Preschool grapples with training of rich mind and sensibility through the association with old people.

In 1992, the number of the student who moved on Hirose by the project and the transfer students has been increasing. Since 2000, 80% students are the students except for the local students (Figure.15). It is thought that it is closing a school if the reuse project of vacant house doesn't grapple with.

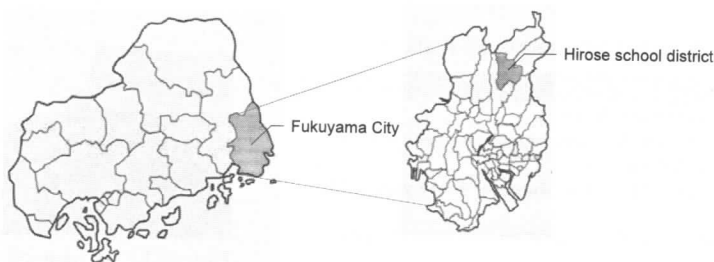


Figure13. Map of Hirose School District



Figure14. Hirose School District
(Reference: Website of Fukuyama City)

Table5. Chronology of "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose School District"

1975	Affiliation with Fukuyama City
1987	Reception of pupils and junior high school students from adjacent school districts Foundation of Educational supporter's association of Hirose school district
1992.1.17	Start on the reuse project of vacant house (Rent subsidy (50% of the rent, maximum 10 thousand yen) and traffic expense subsidy)
1995	Shifting the reuse project of vacant house to the present project system

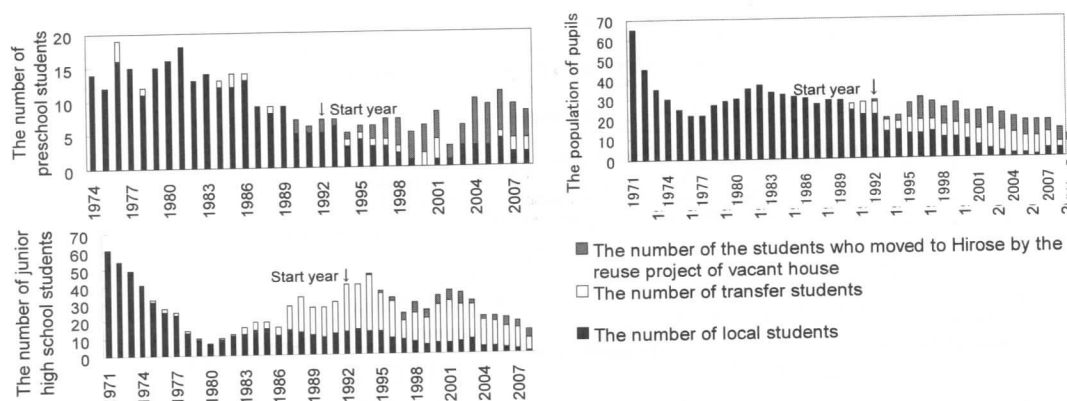


Figure 15. The Number of Junior High School Students

4. REUSE PROJECT OF VACANT HOUSES

4.1 "NPO Yuimaru Plus"

It had to prevent the decrease in population of the village and the aggravation of the landscape due to the decrease in population and the increase in the vacant house. A vacant house was introduced independently every time the inquiry of the vacant house from an applicant for a UI turn was received before an estate agent didn't sometimes deal with a vacant house thing again and became a NPO corporation. But, all the contracts became verbal contracts, and there was fear connected with the trouble in it. When it became a NPO corporation, a city applied for "the recommendation business such as vacant house information service because of the area activation" to the prefecture, and special zone authorization was taken. This is the first trial in the prefecture. It got rid of fear in contract by this. Business trust was taken from the city, and it came to grapple with present form of vacant house bank.

The vacant house investigation was done under the cooperation by Shimane University in 2006, and it found that there were 774 vacant houses as a flow of the system (Figure.16). This is equal to 19% of all the main houses. Under above information, the vacant house collection was appealed in the handbill and advertisement. If an applicant for a move appears, it was judged whether the intention confirmation of the migration, the applicant can melt in the area, then make a contract with the applicant through the estate agent's mediation. When a contract is concluded, an owner pays an estate agent a mediation commission, then "Yuimaru Plus" will be got an introduction fee from the estate agent. Because special zone authorization is taken, it is possible that even a NPO corporation gets income.

Though improvement is done by the tenant burden, there is a thing which has already been repaired by the owner in the inside. There is an example that it spent three months and it was repaired by itself and a fireplace was established, too. An improvement fee is 3,000,000 yen.

19 households 41 people migrate by this. Though employment support doesn't specially grapple, a tenant usually looks for a job by himself, and sometimes used the employment support of the city. Emigrants and local residents gather in the Sakurae saloon regularly, and an information exchange and a meal meeting were being held, and an active interchange was being done

The Minister of Public Management, House Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications commendation in November, 2007 was awarded to it as a thing that it contributed to the gusset-making that a vacant house use business became officials and people unity by the connection with the administration, the self-governing body, and so on. It is understood that it contributes to whether as well to be not only vacant house use but also the activation of the area.

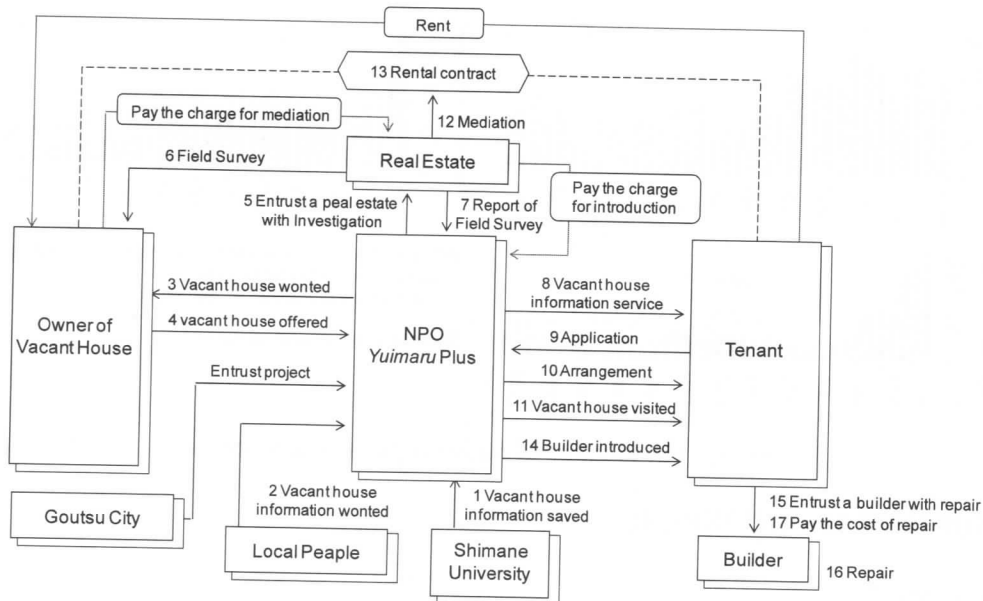


Figure 16. The System Reusing Vacant Houses of "NPO Yuimaru Plus"

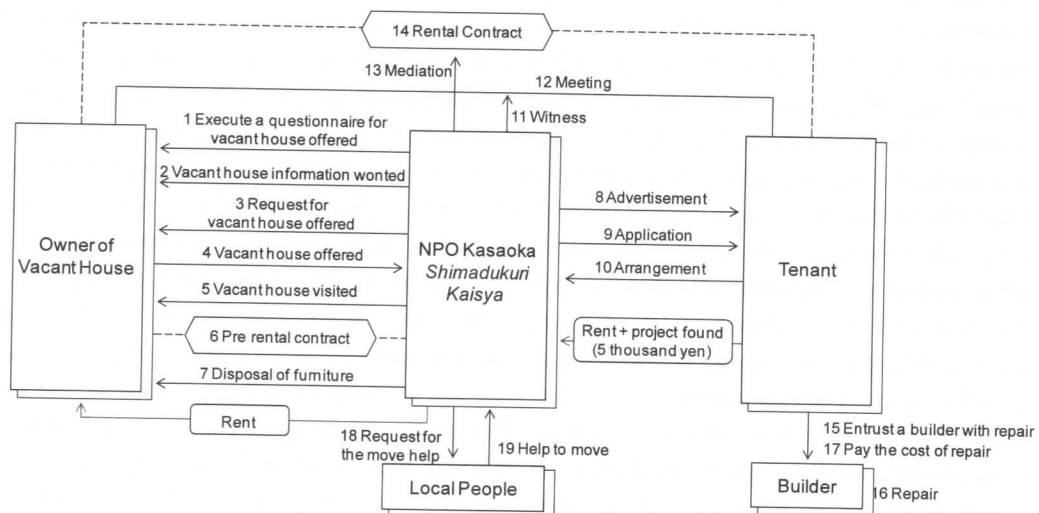


Figure 17. The System Reusing Vacant Houses of "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

4.2 "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya"

When the business for Takashima branch of "NPO Kasaoka Shimadukuri kaisya" to activate an island at that time was examined, it is possible or not to call person to the island through a vacant house, it was proposed in December, 2002. The questionnaire of the vacant house offer was done at Takashima, and four vacant houses were provided in June, 2003.

A system flow chart is shown in figure 17, when it was invited and a thing was provided, the preliminary inspection of the place vacant house of the presence of the owner does a vacant house first. It disposes of a removal, because of the burden of the city, if provisional agreement is connected here and there is a useless thing in the inside. If an applicant for a move appears, it can melt in the area, or a talk such as work on the island is piled up, and suitable for the life of the island, it is judged. *Kaisya* goes into the agency, and this contract is concluded in the contract. House rent occurs in this contract for the first time.

As for the improvement, house rent is restrained in about 15000 yen from 10000 yen for the tenant burden. A

tenant pays 5000 yen into *Kaisya* separately as a house rent and a vacant house countermeasure fund every month, and *Kaisya* pays house rent into the owner. The vacant house countermeasure fund was collected by *Kaisya*, and it was used for a cost of operation of the vacant house use business. 26 households 61 people migrate until now, and 18 households live now, too. It is grappling with the support of the employment minutely because a type of industry and income are limited to the work on the island. *Kaisya* consults an islander when emigrant's hope and a former occupation are understood. An emigrant contributes to the island through the work greatly because a place of employment is decided before surely migrating. The former Sushi craftsman, who migrated from Tokyo, took charge of the manufacture of "*Shimaben*" which was the specialty of the island, and brought a great profit to the island. The fear that order is disturbed must consider whether an emigrant accepts the life of the island and it can melt, on one side because it migrates and it doesn't comply with the culture of the island and every rule and it can think about it as life on the island being not understood, too.

4.3 "Educational supporter's association of Hirose school district"

A rent subsidy (1/2 of the monthly amount, an upper limit 10000 yen) and the transportation expenses assistance (the 10000 yen/month) to go from the outside of the school district to school at the time of the start to the child were being done. A general meeting was held in 1995, and examined about the development of the vacant house bank. It stood up in the goal for the school continuance, and it was returned, and the object of the vacant house bank was limited to the household which had the child who went to the day nursery, elementary school, and changed to the present form (figure.18) as that result. It negotiates with the owner so that it can have it provided if a supporting society does the information gathering of the vacant house and a vacant house is found. A supporting society disposes of a movement, when the place where the inside of the vacant house with the offer has useless furniture and so on gets owner's acknowledgment. If an applicant for a move appears, seems that a talk, an applicant for use can melt in the area or the plan of the life, hope for the thing, a condition, and so on are judged. Minimum improvement such as change of the Tatami is done with the supporting society and the local resident's volunteer if it is judged that it can adapt itself to the area and a place of a move is decided(Figure.19). Because the interior shop, joiner of his occupation is in the member, the improvement which it has even if a dealer isn't entrusted becomes possible. Because material is getting from local resident, it was done without paying repair fee. If tenant hopes for the repair any more, it was be burdened the fee of repair (Figure.20), so house rent was set up with about 10,000 yen. A worry on the employment side and a problem don't specially have it because it is in about forty minutes and the commuting distance by car to Fukuyama city area though employment support isn't being done. 19 households migrated until now, and 8 households 44 people live now, too. An activities cost is paid by the summer festival of the school district and a JA bazaar, the income by the vegetable sales.

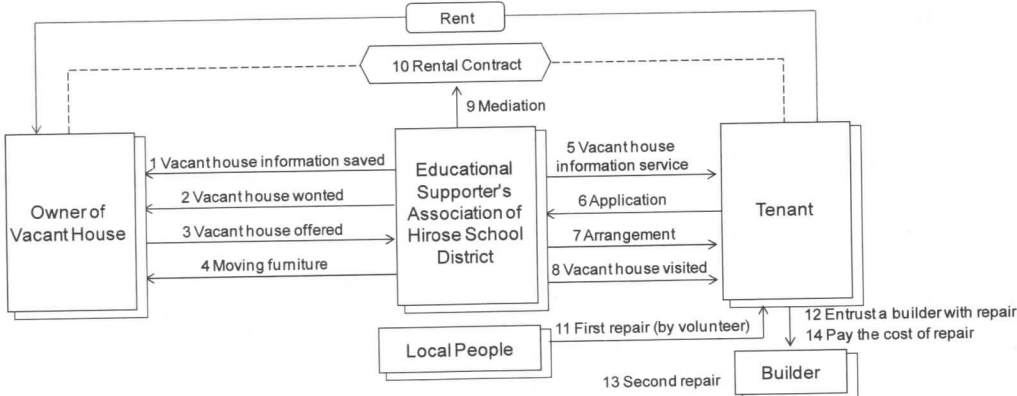


Figure18. The System Reusing Vacant Houses of "Educational Supporter's Association"

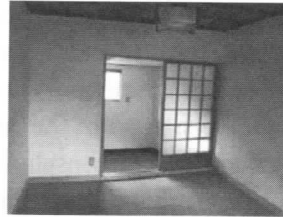


Figure19. Exterior and Interior of the House Renovated by Volunteers



Figure20. Exterior of the House Renovated by a Tenant

5.CONCLUSION

Improvements to the present issue of using vacant houses are the following four.

- 1) Market circulation of vacant houses : As for a request to offer vacant houses, "NPO *Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya*" and "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose" ask for not only the general public of the area but also tenants directly. In case of "NPO *Yuimaru Plus*", a detailed survey of vacant houses was done by University. Consequently, a market circulation has been promoted.
- 2) Improvement charge supply : A repair cost is taken into account, and the house rent is about from 100 thousand to 150 thousand yen. If the project of using vacant houses is done by local government, generally, the house rent is decided by owner's wish, while it is considered to reduce tenant's pay by private groups. Especially, as regards "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose", effect on the improvement cost reduction is large because the repair is done by a local resident's volunteer.
- 3) Construction of reliance : Private groups judge if people who want to move in can understand and adjust the area's lifestyle and culture in advance. So it thinks that an owner's worry toward tenant is eased.
- 4) Owner's self reasons : When there were unnecessary things in a vacant house, members of "NPO *Kasaoka Shimadukuri Kaisya*" and "Educational Supporter's Association of Hirose" throw that away.

From the above, as the effective of reusing vacant houses by private groups, the following two are cleared.

- 1) It is possible to dispose of owner's furniture and repair houses because a lot of people cooperate with these activities in regional.
- 2) An owner can trust a tenant at the contract because the group takes a middle part which is between an owner and a tenant. The way reusing vacant houses by making use of regional talented is expected to not only promote offering vacant houses but also grow newly successors.

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