

Ano Minshuku Association Project in Obama City



Background and Reason for the Project

Ano in Obama City is a small settlement located in the mid-west part of Wakasa Bay, and is a region rich in fish farming thanks to its deeply-indented coast line. The bay is especially known as the northern limit of fish-farming for Wakasa fugu (puffer fish), which along with Echizen crab is a highly-acclaimed winter delicacy in Fukui Prefecture. There are a lot of guesthouses run by fishermen, which provide various types of farm-raised fish at reasonable prices and they've had a steadily increasing number of guests until the 1990s. However, because of the decreasing number of beach visitors due to the diversification of leisure activities, sluggishness in the fishery industry and a shortage of successors brought about by the continued low birth rate, more and more guesthouses are closing down every year. The management efficiency of guesthouses in this region was originally poor because people mainly visited there for the beach in summer and puffer fish in winter, while spring and autumn are off seasons. Therefore, the city decided to increase the number of guests and enhance the business stability of the guesthouses by setting their eyes on and trying to attract hands-on educational trips of primary and middle schools, which are often held during these two seasons.

Project Aims

- Provide dietary education in the area where people are actively developing the city, which sets the importance of diet as the pillar of the project.

- Provide children with opportunities to experience both the joy and difficulty of fishing and cleaning fish, and enjoy the great taste of fresh fish from the Sea of Japan while valuing all the lives we take from living beings.
- Provide students with opportunities for career preparation by offering students the experience of staying in guesthouses and talking with the owners (landlords and landladies) who can talk about the attraction and hardship of their work.

Project Outline

To accommodate the school trips, the Ano Minshuku Association, consisting of 13 guesthouses in Ano, was established in 2006. Using their own funds, they built Blue Park Ano, which included a fishing pond, a facility for cleaning fish and a barbecue area. The park allows 150 people to 1. catch snappers at the fishing pond, 2. clean the snappers by themselves, and 3. eat the fish that they prepared, all at one place. Allowing for the time lag between activities, it can accommodate up to 300 people. Although some facilities provide similar services across Japan, not many of them can accommodate such a large number of people.



Blue Park Ano



Sea kayak

Features and Innovations

The association has earned the trust of schools by responding to their detailed needs through trial and error and showing that the entire region was working together. Also, it is worth mentioning that the association has grown and reached the current scale mostly through word-of-mouth; for example, school principals who had experienced Ano chose it again as the school trip destination at their newly appointed schools.

In Obama City, which leads the country for being involved in city development utilising locally produced foods and dietary education, the project still continues to grow as a unique project that realises the concept of dietary education and tourism.

Results of the Project

Although only one school with 170 students participated in the first fiscal year (2007), thanks to their business operations and the diverse selection of travel and school trip destinations every year, the number of schools has continued to steadily rise, reaching 28 schools with 5,107 participants in 2018. The project gained a great deal of acceptance especially from middle schools in Gifu Prefecture, where there is no ocean. It is also remarkable that the project has secured a new income source for guesthouses in the off-seasons, which has helped them to stabilise and level out their operations throughout the year.

In addition, younger generations are becoming involved in this project and staying in the region, which has revitalised the settlement.



Cleaning snappers 1



Cleaning snappers 2

Issues, Problems and Responses

As one perspective of regional revitalisation, tourism is often used as the basis for city development across Japan, and hands-on educational trips in rural areas are actively being provided across the country. To further expand hands-on educational trips in Ano, the region has to differentiate itself from others with similar services and secure its identity rooted in the local community. The region would like to put substantial effort into getting ready to develop new programmes and accept overseas tourists, responding to changes with the times.

Future Developments (expected effects and project vision and issues)

Obama City, which promotes city development utilising local produced foods,

will continue refining these hands-on educational trips, and aims to have 7,000 participants every year, who will come to appreciate the rich resources of the city, including food as well as nature, history and culture.

Reference URL

Blue Park Ano “A Stage in the Ocean” in Wakasa Bay
<http://bluepark-ano.com/>

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