

Shimojo Village

Child-rearing support and boosting the local population



Situation



- Hilly areas, or areas situated between plains and mountains play an important role in land preservation and food supply in Japan. However, due to an outflow of young people to urban areas, concerns about the society's aging and depopulation are particularly strong in those areas.
- The village of Shimojo, one of such hilly areas, saw its population decline by 40% over the four decades.

Intervention



Kihei Ito, who became mayor of the village in 1992 insisted that depopulation threatened the existence of the village, worked hard to increase the population.

Attracting young people to increase the population,

- The construction of housing for young people
- The development of land for houses.
- The construction of apartment houses for workers
- The creation of subsidies for housing construction and land development and purchases in the village.

Child-rearing support

- Gradual reduction in nursery school fees
- Medical fees are not charged for children of age up to high school third grade, starting in fiscal 2010
- Providing gifts to those who enter school, starting in fiscal 2014
- Providing baby birth gifts.

Impact

- A sharp decline in the population in other hilly areas is a stark contrast to the situation in the village of Shimojo.
- The numbers of a fertility rate in the village were higher than the national average in general.