

# Utilising the metaverse to provide employment support for the long-term unemployed

Fukuoka Prefecture



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**Circumstances (background, objectives, etc.)**

Fukuoka Prefecture has set up youth support stations to support the vocational independence of young people who have been unemployed for a long period of time. However, there are many *hikikomori*, shut-ins who have withdrawn from society, who find it difficult to go to support organisations on their own. By making use of the metaverse space and enabling people to receive employment support at home, more long-term unemployed individuals might find employment and participate in society. After one year of investigative research, the project was fully implemented.

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**Details (project outline, etc.)**

A dedicated support space called the 'Fukuoka Virtual Support Room' was established in the metaverse to provide employment support for the long-term unemployed, including those who have become socially withdrawn (known as *hikikomori*, or shut-ins), through individual consultations, exchange meetings and skill improvement programmes.

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**Results (features, advancements, future developments, etc.)**

One of the unique features of this service is that individuals can use avatars to receive employment support at home without having to show their faces. In one case, a person who had been a shut-in for more than 10 years found employment through support received from the Fukuoka Virtual Support Room. We hope that more support organisations will use the Fukuoka Virtual Support Room in the future.

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