

Yamakoshi area, Nagaoka City,
Niigata Prefecture



Neo Yamakoshi Village Project

Background and Reasons for this Project



Evening landscape

The Yamakoshi area (former Yamakoshi Village) suffered devastating damage due to the Chuetsu earthquake approximately 20 years ago. In the following year, 2005, the village's name and its local government vanished due to a large-scale municipal merger. These two events gave momentum to resident-centred community development, whereas the number of residents which was approximately 2,200 at the time of the earthquake plummeted to about 800. Due to the decline in population, the only nursery school in the area was closed, and elementary and junior high schools have employed a mixed age class system. Clinics have reduced their functions and public transport has been withdrawn from the area. Each of the 14 community clusters has been losing its function to maintain itself and there are many problems such as the neglect of mountains and the debilitation of mutual aid systems.

To overcome this situation, we have abandoned the idea of "resident-centred community development" and have begun a new challenge to

seek new ways to manage local communities by liberating them. It is a big challenge to realise a unique "autonomy zone" by residents in the Yamakoshi area and people who empathise with the identity of Yamakoshi.

Aims of this Project

By acknowledging people who can empathise with the identity of Yamakoshi as the main subjects of the area, these empathisers are going to seek and establish a way to co-create local autonomy together with local residents.

Project Outline



Nishikigoi (coloured carp)

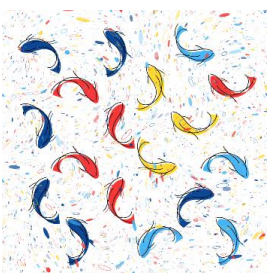
Nishikigoi NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) (tokens also serve as e-resident cards of the Yamakoshi area), the motifs of which are coloured carps originated in Yamakoshi, are issued to gather people, funds and wisdom from all over the world, enabling the formation of the "Yamakoshi DAO" (Decentralised

Autonomous Organisation) (the so-called Neo Yamakoshi Village), a combination of reality and virtual space — the reality where natural resources and the unique culture of Yamakoshi such as coloured carps and bullfighting have been maintained; and the virtual space infinitely expanding beyond physical restrictions.



Bullfighting

This versatile and advanced approach has helped to increase the number of people involved in this project, and there is even a phenomenon where buyers of Nishikigoi NFTs (so-called e-residents) visit the area to “return to their home village”. Since the issuance of Nishikigoi NFTs in December 2021, more than 1,600 people have registered as digital villager (e-residents), which enables us to strive for a new way of community development to maintain the area.



Okazz's work "Coloured Carp"



Generative patterns NISHIKIGOI

Features and Innovations

- Nishikigoi NFTs which serve as digital art and e-resident cards are being issued. The motif of the NFT are coloured carps which are the identity of Yamakoshi.
- NFTs can be purchased from all over Japan and from overseas to become a digital villager (e-resident)/NFT holder.
- Proceeds of the NFTs were initially managed by TART K.K., and are currently managed by Crypto Village, Co., Ltd. So far, 3ETH (Ethereum) has been allotted to implement a regional development plan by digital villagers.

Results of the Project

- The impact of 1,600 digital villagers:
 - Visits to Yamakoshi by digital villagers (the so-called “return to their home village”; approximately 400 digital villagers returned to their home village).
 - Projects carried out both in real and digital: in some projects digital villagers have contributed to the real local village by utilising their fields of expertise.
 - Accepting each other’s culture, we are going to nurture “our” new culture and challenge towards a new local community.

Issues, Problems and Responses

- In Japan, rules and regulations regarding DAOs (Decentralised Autonomous Organisations) have not been established yet.
 - To utilise the potential of a combination of a local area and advanced technology, rules NPOs to make use of the advantages of DAOs need to be formulated for the following matters: opening bank accounts/cryptocurrency exchange accounts, year-end mark-to-market taxation, reforming unincorporated associations to partnerships, securing anonymity, setting a representative, utilising stablecoins, setting definition of new

autonomy organisation, specifying approved local associations, non-profit DAOs and donations.

- Yamakoshi has been offering explanations and proposals to ministries and government offices, and at the Liberal Democratic Party DAO rule-making hackathon regarding the subjects mentioned above.



Evening landscape

Future Developments (expected effects, project vision, and issues)

Japan is in a phase of demographic shrinkage, and every region has issues regarding the decline in birthrate and increase in aged population. We think that local autonomy beyond the borders of administrative districts is necessary.

While the population was increasing, local communities relied on self-help and public help, whereas the current situation in Japan does not allow the reliance on self-help and public help, but mutual help. However, in this situation, we need to change the idea of mutual help. Instead of residents in the area taking on a role in their local community, it is important to work out how we can encourage people who can empathise with the identity of the area to take on a role of mutual help.

We aim to realise a multi-layered local community through DAO under the idea of “being” and “doing”. “Being” means living in the area and therefore

maintaining it; “doing” means the actions carried out by people who are connected by empathy regardless of actually living in the area. We will strive to realise governing our own village through this “being” and “doing”.

URL

<https://nishikigoinft.com/>

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