Expanding Social Capital in a Community by Utilizing Assistive Technology for Waking

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Project Goals

Problems to be solved

- The challenge = To extend healthy life expectancy
- ⇒ Less frequency of outing or limited number of steps in daily life is one risk factor of death and care-requiring condition.
- \Rightarrow Aiming at extending healthy life expectancy, supporting "outing on foot" is our key challenge.
- Toyama Prefecture Toyama City = A regional city which advocates Compact City
- \Rightarrow The elderly are prone to walk less, once their leg muscles are weakened. There is a need of some support for their weakened muscles.
- \Rightarrow We came up with the idea of supporting their outing with the use of "4-wheeled" walkers" of which we take advantage of engineering technology, but at the same time we do not depend on it too much.

Project implementation Project overview

The social model we aim at

The community where everyone enjoys walking

"4-wheeled walkers" could be a local culture, if they assist the life of elderly citizens in the community, and if walking with them becomes familiar sights of the community. To live in one's old community as usual as possible, walking around by oneself with a little help from "a device" – that is the ideal vision of aging society which this project aims at.

R&D Target

Making a community with strolling zones

We define the living area where both energetic senior citizens and the ones with less mobility can go out actively, enjoy lively mingling, and maintain their health, as "a community with strolling zones" and aim at its realization.

Target community



Toyama Prefecture Toyama City











Project achievements and future prospects Project achievements

We presented an example of community-making activities that is the integration of manufacturing and social capital (underlying strength of residents)

Developing an activity model for "a community with strolling zones"



Presenting requirements for bringing out the strength of the elderly in the community

The development of a 4-wheeled walker "Toyama Town Cart"







- Presented actual examples of the effect by "environmental intervention" through the program which supports the elderly's outing on foot
 - ♦ Let's walk and discover project

"Walking-around tour," "Setting walking-around courses and the result study council"

◇ 4-wheeled walker stations (= Sharing system of 4-wheeled walkers)





The 2nd model (for personal/public use)

The 3rd model (for public use) Winner of 2014 Good Design Award

Sales model Selling started since July, 2015



Future developments and prospects

- Disseminating/developing this project to as many communities as possible, both inside and outside Toyama prefecture
- \Rightarrow This activity model can be utilized by other communities, in promoting health of the elderly and in the activities for preventing nursing care.
- ⇒ The response of other local governments: Willing to introduce it after "the success" is verified in Toyama city.

Project website and enquiries:

- The current challenge: To entrench the activities for strolling zones in Toyama City
- \Rightarrow Promoting the utilization of 4-wheeled walker stations and quantifying the usage status
- ⇒ Establishing the support scheme for letting the elderly play an active role in community planning

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