

Innovation through social inclusion of people with disabilities: The case of “Taiyo no Ie” and its special subsidiary companies

障がい者の社会的包摂によるイノベーション: 太陽の家とその特例子会社の事例

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In this case study, I will take up an example of how social inclusion of people with disabilities has led to innovation through interviews with "Taiyo no Ie", a social welfare corporation headquartered in Beppu City, Oita Prefecture, and special subsidiary companies in Japan jointly invested in by "Taiyo no Ie" and large companies in Japan.

Just as responding to the global environment and responding to an aging society, which have previously involved cost burdens, are now becoming industries that drive innovation, it is expected that social inclusion of people with disabilities, which is recognized as requiring cost burdens, can lead future innovation.

In addition, creating new value through social inclusion of people with disabilities is considered to be an important activity for sustaining and developing social inclusion. Furthermore, the impact of this case study is so great, because it is predicted that the number of people with disabilities in the world will reach 17% of the worldwide population by 2030.

"Taiyo no Ie" is a social welfare corporation established in 1965 by the late Dr. Yutaka Nakamura, a former professor at Kyushu University School of Medicine who served as the head of the Japanese delegation at the 1964 Tokyo Paralympics, under the philosophy that people with disabilities need to have jobs and become independent, and the motto "No Charity, but a Chance!".

Among the special subsidiaries of "Taiyo no Ie", there are already some companies that have an idea of linking the social inclusion of people with disabilities to the creation of new value, but their activities are not well known to the public, even in the Beppu area where "Taiyo no Ie" is located.

Against the abovementioned background, I will take up the activities of "Taiyo no Ie" and its special subsidiaries as examples to investigate disability support activities, which have tended to remain hidden as tacit knowledge until now. Specifically, I will investigate related literature and interview the chairperson, president, executives, and employees of "Taiyo no Ie" and its special subsidiaries. The results, including the possibility of creating innovation, will be made explicit knowledge, written as the case, so that it can be widely publicized as pioneering examples of innovation creation activities by people with disabilities.