

Study Theme Title	Creating enriched communities through enhancement of health capital to achieve the SDGs
Background and Objectives	<p><b>Background</b> Distressed regional communities due to population decline have become a more prominent social issue, notably in rural areas. Originally, regions had their own local resources and were economically self-sufficient through industries that took advantage of unique regional characteristics. Hot spring resorts such as Beppu City, where this proposal is based, are experiencing a decline in population and a decrease in the number of tourists, resulting in the exhaustion of the local economy. Local issues are a microcosm of overall national issues, and the revitalization of local communities by adding new values focused on improving health and work styles by making the most of local resources in exhausted areas may help solve similar issues throughout Japan. It is a challenge for the entire city to develop a transportation system that contributes to the health and wellbeing of its citizens.</p> <p><b>Objectives</b> Beppu City, the Beppu City Ryokan Hotel Association, and the Kyushu University Urban Institute (UI) are collaborating to launch a joint research project with the aim of medically demonstrating the effect of Beppu Hot Springs in enhancing (i.e., optimizing) immunity (Theme A) and revitalizing Beppu Hot Springs as a medical resort for recuperative treatment (Theme B). Through this project, Beppu City, as well as other hot spring areas, will collaborate with the government to promote transportation and community development that contributes to health (health capital) by utilizing the hot spring areas (natural capital) and the initiatives of each area.</p> <p>Theme A: Sample data collection and analysis, paper presentation. Theme B: 10% increase in number of visitors (year 1) , 15% increase (year 2), 10% increase in health value of the city (year 2), 15% increase (year 3)</p>
Expected Results	<p>Through the demonstration of the scientific basis of local resources and their appropriate use, health of the community and visitors are improved, and the revitalization of the community and human capital are promoted. To date, hot spring resorts such as Beppu have been one of the most prominent regional features in the world, and hot springs have been a major tourism resource. Recently, however, demand for the area as a tourist destination has been declining, and this trend is a problem that all of Japan is facing: an aging and shrinking population. Although it has been recognized that hot springs, an important local resource in the city, are good for the body, this has not been proved medically. The contribution to community revitalization and health is a source of great hope not only for tourists but also for citizens. Together with Mayor Nagano of Beppu City, this project will examine ways to make the city more user-friendly, including updating the transportation system, and to further improve the health and wellbeing of the city, as well as make proposals that will contribute to the development of other hot spring communities.</p>