

KAMIKATSU, JAPAN



POPULATION
1,34 mil.
Inhabitants (2020)

Zero Waste Initiative

In 2003, Kamikatsu, a picturesque village consisting of 742 households, situated in the mountains just an hour's drive from central Tokushima, made history by becoming Japan's pioneer in declaring a zero-waste initiative. Kamikatsu's remarkable journey shifted its waste disposal practices from environmentally harmful open-air burning to a sustainable "reduce, reuse, and recycle" system, with the ultimate aim of achieving carbon neutrality. By 2021, this dedicated community had achieved a remarkable recycling rate of 80%, a significant contrast to the nationwide average of merely 20%.

Kamikatsu's core objectives can be distilled into three key pillars: first, the pursuit of enriching lives through a zero-waste philosophy, emphasizing the importance of waste reduction in daily existence. Second, the community is dedicated to exploring and embracing every conceivable challenge within its boundaries, with the aim of minimizing any potential waste generation. Lastly, Kamikatsu seeks to establish educational systems that promote zero waste knowledge and address broader environmental concerns, while also nurturing individuals to become visionary leaders, prepared to lead the way toward a more sustainable and waste-conscious future.

The Zero Waste Center, founded in April 2020, serves as a hub for Kamikatsu's residents to bring and autonomously sort their waste in 13 types and 45 categories. The town has implemented a points system where residents earn points for recycling, which they can later exchange for vouchers. The Centre is a multifunctional hub serving as the main waste collection point, also housing an active community space, offices, a research center, and accommodations. Kurukuru Kōbō, a boutique within, promotes reuse, rescuing about 550 kilograms of discarded items monthly. The hotel within, known as Hotel Why, offers a zero-waste lifestyle experience, furnished with upcycled materials, TV-free rooms, and the absence of local supermarkets.

Addressing the challenge of organic waste, comprising 40% of household refuse and is prone to odors, households were encouraged to adopt electric composters. With subsidies providing an 80% discount for the machines, four out of five households installed them. The fertilizer produced is highly valued, and local cedar wood chips are readily available for the composting process.

Local initiatives promoting zero waste in the city are also implemented by stores, restaurants and local enterprises.





IMPACTS TO ACHIEVE SDG 11.6.1

- The Kamikatsu zero-waste initiative has a positive impact on SDG 11.6.1 by actively addressing various aspects of waste management, engaging the community, and creating innovative solutions for reducing the environmental impacts on cities.
- Achieved 80% recovery rate in 2021 compared to the 20% national rate.



INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

The main roles in implementing the initiative played Kamikatsu Municipality and the citizens. The approaches used to increase waste recovery is source separation into 13 types and 45 categories, home composting of organic waste, zero waste initiatives by stores, restaurants and local enterprises. The initiative was supported by the formulation of the Kamikatsu-cho Recycle Town Plan adopted by Municipality, the subsidies provided to citizens for home organic waste composting, opening of waste processing centre by the municipality, Zero Waste Declaration and the “No plastic bags” campaign.

TIMELINE

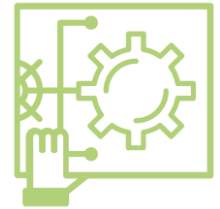
- 1991 Subsidies for the purchase of compost bins were put in place until 1999.
- 1994 Formulation of the Kamikatsu-cho Recycle Town Plan.
- 1995 Subsidies for an electric kitchen waste processor were put in place.
- 1996 Partial closure of Hibigatani treatment plant.
- 1997 Hibigatani Gomi Station opened and sorting of garbage into 9 categories commenced.
- 1998 Closure of two small incinerators and Hibigatani burning site. The volunteer group Recycle Kamikatsu started to assist the elderly in transporting garbage.
- 2001 Closed the small incinerators, commenced sorting into 33 categories at Hibigatani Gomi Station, which was open daily.
- 2003 Zero Waste Declaration.
- 2005 Launched the NPO Zero Waste Academy.
- 2006 Opened the reuse promotion center Kurukuru Shop.
- 2007 Opened the remake shop Kurukuru Kobo.
- 2013 Commenced Chiritsumo Point Campaign (a system for accruing points by sorting miscellaneous paper, etc. and converting them into daily necessities).
- 2016 Changed the official number of sorting categories from 34 to 13 types and 45 categories. Achieved a recycling rate above 80% for the first time.
- 2017 Commenced zero waste certification. Commenced demonstration experiment for selling by weight. Commenced the presentation of cloth diaper starter sets.
- 2018 No plastic bag campaign started.
- 2020 Completed construction of the Kamikatsu-cho Zero Waste Center.

PLANNING & MONITORING

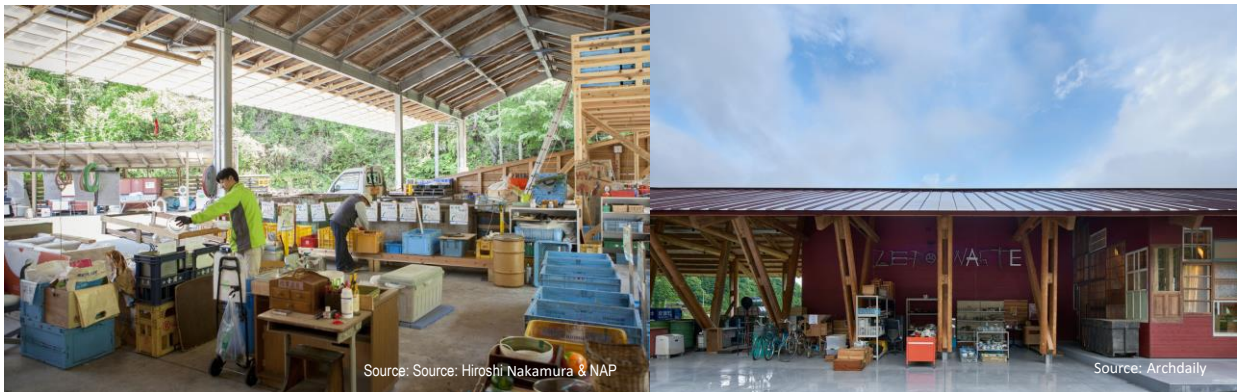


The initiative was integrated into the Municipal Solid Waste Masterplan, and the effectiveness of the initiative is monitored through the recycling rate. By combining thorough planning with continuous monitoring and adaptation, Kamikatsu can maintain and enhance the success of its zero-waste initiative over time.

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY



Kamikatsu's zero-waste initiative leverages a variety of appropriate technologies that are tailored to the community's specific needs and objectives. These technologies contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of their waste management practices. The following technological options were adopted to enhance waste recovery: waste segregation at source, organic waste home composting, the zero-waste center where people bring in recyclables which are sent for recycling. It is operationally sustainable and replicable in similar settings.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Regular financial assessments, strategic planning, and adaptability are crucial for ensuring the ongoing success of Kamikatsu's zero-waste initiative. Community-driven initiatives may have goals beyond traditional financial metrics, such as environmental and social impacts, which are also integral to their success.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT / INCLUSION OF INFORMAL WASTE SECTOR



The main stakeholders in this initiative are the Kamikatsu Municipality, citizens, and the private sector. Effective stakeholder involvement requires communication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to the goals of the initiative, regular engagement, feedback mechanisms, and recognition of the diverse roles stakeholders play in contributing to the overall success and sustainability of Kamikatsu's zero-waste efforts.

The case highlights the community's shift from open-air burning to a "reduce, reuse, and recycle" system, and the involvement of the citizens, visitors, private sector, and other actors, including the establishment of the Zero Waste Center, the points system which includes citizens and visitors, including the boutique for reuse, Hotel Why, and initiatives to address organic waste, which are resulted in the success of the initiative.



SOURCES

- Zero Waste Town Kamikatsu - <https://zwtk.jp/en/>
- Kamikatsu Zero Waste Center - <https://why-kamikatsu.jp/en/>
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- Archdaily - <https://www.archdaily.com/1006535/kamikatsu-zero-waste-center-hiroshi-nakamura-and-nap>
- Washington Post - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/interactive/2022/japan-zero-carbon-village-climate/>
- Nippon - <https://www.nippon.com/en/guide-to-japan/gu900038/> ; <https://www.nippon.com/en/guide-to-japan/gu900257/>



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