

Social Enterprises and CSR in Japan: The Hybrid Strategy of the East Asian Model

Abstract

The East Asian model of social innovation is characterised by three distinctive features: a strong orientation towards collaboration among the state, corporations, and local communities; a community-centred ethos that privileges social bonds and harmony over profit maximisation; and a clear divergence from the market-driven logic prevalent in Europe and North America. Within this context, efforts to build a sustainable society have generated hybrid strategies that transcend the conventional boundaries between profit and non-profit. This involves bridging corporate social responsibility (CSR), understood as the internal responsibilities of firms, with social enterprises, which represent external forms of community entrepreneurship. Such a strategy can be described as an integrated approach that combines offence and defence, innovation and protection. A compelling case is Ogata Village in Akita Prefecture, Japan. Established on reclaimed land from the former Hachirogata Lagoon, it represents a symbolic space where the relationship between water and human settlement has been reconstructed. The Ogata Akita Komachi Producers Association exemplifies how community-based initiatives embody this East Asian hybrid strategy in practice.