

Chapter 1 To Raise Self-Independent and Strong Children

Section 1 Dealing with Issues of Youth Employment Support

1. Comprehensive and Continuous Career Development and Employment Support Measures from Education through to Work

- From fiscal 2005 on, in the “Career Start Week” project, workplace experiences over 5 or more days have been provided to mainly junior high school students, where through building regional cooperative systems attempts have been made to promote career education. Furthermore, from fiscal 2008 on, a project for training and evaluating coordinators between schools and businesses has been implemented at eight regions in the country.
- At various universities and so forth too, and in order to cultivate students’ vocational views, efforts are being made to introduce an internship system. In addition, in promoting high quality career education at the higher education stage the “Promotion of Practical Comprehensive Career Education” was established and financial support is being provided to excellent efforts by universities, junior colleges, and technical colleges (In fiscal 2008 the financial support will continue to be provided to reward 63 excellent efforts).
- In order to promote career education etc, under the cooperation of economic organizations, the PTA, NPOs, etc., and in coordination with related ministries and agencies, career education is promoted from the elementary school stage.
- Regarding future career and vocational education at schools, in December 2008, consultations were provided to the Central Education Council.

2. Maintenance of Various Employment Systems That Support Career Paths

- From fiscal year 2008, making use of the know-how of the private sector, a forum for senior part-timers who are not able to effectively look for work was set up to enable interaction among them for the purpose of finding a suitable job and learning about job hunting. Also, “Job Clubs” (i.e., job hunting clubs) were set up to support senior part-timers in acquiring full-time employment by promoting job hunting activities through seminars, group work, and the like.
- Through providing special benefits for the realization of the regular employment of young people etc (1 million yen per person to small businesses and 0.5 million for big businesses) to business operators actively employing senior job-hopping part-timers etc as regular workers concentrated attempts shall be made over the next three years to secure employment opportunities for senior part-time workers etc.
- From fiscal year 2005, a private independent school for youth was established. This school gave them work experience in a training camp format. By giving them the necessary confidence and motivation, they are encouraged to work. In fiscal year 2008, 30 organizations are being supported.
- From fiscal 2005 on regional youth support institution networks have been formed under the lead of local authorities and regional youth support stations established as a basis for those networks (at 50 points in fiscal 2007 and 77 in fiscal 2008).

3. Infrastructure Developments in the Youth Labour Market, which Enable Matching Based on Abilities.

- The development of the youth labour market was consolidated to eliminate employment mismatch, by accurately understanding what kind of human resources a company needs, by setting up ability evaluation standards in specialized fields such as IT and Management of Technology (MOT), by developing relevant curriculums and materials, and by carrying out demonstration research.

4. Development of One-Stop Service Center (or Job Café) for Young People

- Local governments and business communities, under the cooperation of local schools, in response to an approach by the prefectures, have set up Job Cafes that provide a series of employment support services from counseling to training young people. In FY 2008, Job Cafes have been established in 46 prefectures(87 places) (as of April 2008). According to a quick report as of December 2008 the number of service users throughout the country totaled about 1,207,000 while that of persons that had found jobs through the service 33,000.

5. Promotion of the National Youth Self-Improvement Campaign

- The National Youth Self-Improvement Campaign has been in development since FY 2005 to solve the problem of youth unemployment. There is a need for a united effort by concerned parties in the business community, the labour sector, the educational field, mass media, local communities, and government offices.

Section 2 Enhancement of the Scholarship Project

- Attempts have been made to improve the Scholarship Project each year. FY 2008 saw a student increase of almost 75,000 over the year to 1.219 million, registering additional expenses of around 80.1 billion yen to scholarships granted, for a total of approximately 930.5 billion yen.

Section 3 Cultivating rich humanity through experience

- In order to attempt to raise independent youths that will be the next generation, the “General Plan for Youth Experience Activities” has been implemented from fiscal 2008 on. While the making the effort to provide the necessary support such as in leadership training for long-term nature experience activities at elementary schools, experience activities corresponding to various youth problems such as the following are also being promoted: experience activities for youths who need support to be independent, nature experiences according to the developmental stage of youths, regional network type experience activities in cooperation with related ministries and agencies, and so forth.
- Measures are being taken to attempt to develop the environments necessary for children to succeed and develop Japanese culture while cultivating children’s sensitivities and personal qualities by providing opportunities for them to come in contact with authentic stage art and traditional culture and to provide them with moving and/or stimulating experiences that they cannot experience in their daily lives.

- In cooperation with local governments and enterprises, the “Junior Eco Club” is being promoted, where children can enjoy learning about the environment in their region and what they can do to voluntarily help protect it (as of the end of fiscal 2008 the number of registered clubs and children was respectively 4,126 and 184,710).
- From FY 2006 young people from cities and rural areas have been interacting and exchanging experiences of their activities, implemented to foster social skills and independence through agricultural experience and the experience of working in a natural setting.

Section 4 To Support Children’s Learning

- In March 2008 the Guidelines for Kindergarten Education and the Courses of Study for Elementary and Junior High Schools were revised. In those revisions, and based on the Revised Act on Education and reports from the Central Council for Education, with a view to cultivating children’s “power to live”, while maintaining a good balance of the intellect, virtue and fitness, attempts to increase the number of lesson hours and reform the content of instruction have been made. In addition, the Course of Study for High Schools and Special Support Schools and so forth were also revised in March 2009.
- Regarding high schools, it is important to promote the development of schools with a variety of characteristics, and hence the development of high schools with characteristics that include integrated courses and a credit system is being promoted. The integrated program course was introduced in fiscal 1994 as a course that provides general and special education in an integrated manner, and by fiscal 2008 334 schools of those schools had been established. At high school level, it is very important to diversify the schooling system by promoting a characteristic high school education systems, such as a credit-system, or an integrated course. The integrated course was institutionalized as a department providing integratedly general and technical educations since FY 1994 on and by 334 schools had set up such departments by FY 2008.