

(3) Learning and Social Participation

- In order to ensure that appropriate learning opportunities are provided to people according to various learning demands throughout life, it is important for the government and municipalities, as well as private agencies and organizations, to form a collaboration/cooperation structure, thereby promoting the advancement of lifelong learning proactively and comprehensively. Therefore, the government has taken measures for creating a lifelong learning society in accordance with the “Law for Improving the Systems to Promote Measures for the Advancement of Lifelong Learning” (Law No. 71, 1990) and the reports by the Central Council for Education. The government has also promoted lifelong learning by providing support services for the private sector that take measures for promoting lifelong learning, as well as for municipalities making efforts to create better communities through the promotion of education, culture, and sports. In June 2005, the government consulted the Central Council for Education about “Measures for Promoting Lifelong Learning to Lead a New Era of Prosperity.” In response to this, the Subdivision on Lifelong Learning has discussed measures to promote lifelong learning and develop an environment that allows children to grow up in good health in their households and communities.

- With regard to the dissemination and awareness of lifelong learning, the government provided opportunities for people nationwide to participate in lifelong learning activities by holding the National Lifelong Learning Festival which offered symposiums and experiential workshops. (During the period from October 9 to 15, 2005, the festival was held in Tottori Prefecture under the theme of “Let’s find an oasis of learning in the dreamy dune.”)

- The government has conducted the “Rich Experience Activity Model Program” in order to facilitate the students of elementary schools, junior high schools and high schools to participate in a variety of experiential activities including volunteer activities and other social service activities. One of the programs is to designate schools and regions in each prefecture to promote experiential activities that will serve as models for other schools.

- Many learning opportunities are provided for a wide range of age groups in citizens' public halls, libraries, museums, women's education centers, and other social education facilities, as well as in the Boards of Education. Among these programs are classes or courses for further understanding aging society or those for the elderly themselves. (Chart 2-3-29)

Chart 2-3-29. Number of Social Education Classes and Courses for the Elderly at the Boards of Education and Community Centers

(Unit: course)

	FY2001	FY1998
Number of classes and courses	45,501	37,078
Humanities studies	25,215	23,272
Sports and recreation	9,898	5,036
Family life and education	2,845	2,193
Vocational knowledge and skills	823	350
Citizenship and social solidarity	4,334	4,289
Others	2,386	1,938

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "The Survey on Social Education," 1999, 2002

- It is essential to improve social-environmental conditions so that the elderly may find their own role and actively participate in society with a sense of fulfillment. Therefore, the government provides subsidies for Senior Citizens' Clubs conducting social activities comprehensively in their communities, thereby promoting their activities.

- In order to promote the elderly's fulfillment and health improvement, the government provides support for elderly volunteer activities, while conducting activities for raising awareness and disseminating information about elderly social activity programs held by municipalities. The government also provides subsidies for programs for developing elderly leaders and establishing organizational networks. These programs are conducted by the "Prefectural Offices to Promote a Prosperous Longevity Society" established in each prefecture. Furthermore, the government held the National Welfare Festival for the Aged in Fukuoka Prefecture in November 2005.

- In order to promote voluntary social contributions made by citizens, the government certified and supervised specified nonprofit organizations (hereinafter referred to as "NPOs") under the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities (Law No. 7, 1998), and conducted a survey on the actual situation of civil activities. The government also carried out activities for raising awareness and disseminating information about the Certified NPO System, and conducted a survey on the actual situation of utilization of the system. The Certified NPO System is designed to provide support for the activities of NPOs, especially those with considerable public utility.