

Japan National Council of Social Welfare

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

FEATURE ARTICLE

Promotion of Social Welfare in the New Era, *Reiwa*

-Towards the prosperous welfare society where we live together-

In this new era, *Reiwa*, we still face to the low birthrate and aging population problem. While daily life issues have been complicated and getting serious, some new needs arise, and we need new countermeasures for them. In this article, we would like to introduce you how Japan National Council of Social Welfare (JNCSW) tackles priority issues aiming at the prosperous welfare society where we live together.

Progress and Challenges of Social Welfare in *Heisei* Era

The drastic change in social welfare field in *Heisei* Era is the transformation from the poor relief social welfare to the universal social welfare. Conducted were the amendment of so called “8 laws of social welfare,” the reform of social welfare basic structure, i.e., changing the use of social welfare service from the placement base to the contract base, the introduction of long-term care insurance, etc. With the quantitative expansion of social welfare service, it made possible that everyone could use care service, childcare service, etc.

On the other hand, the basic ideas of how a family should be or how a community should be have changed drastically because of the unsustainable employment affected by the long economic recession, decreasing population, progress of the low birthrate and aging population, expansion of regional disparity, etc. Consequently, arisen are many problems that cannot be solved only with individual effort;

people sunk into poverty because of illness, unemployment or family care, working poor, etc. Serious daily life issues such as abuse or DV, social withdrawal, isolation from the community, etc. are also revealed.

Movement towards the Establishment of a Sustainable Social Security System

Since 2009, the population of Japan has got lesser and lesser. In 2017, the total population of Japan was 126,710,000, and it is estimated that it will be decreased to 110,920,000 in 2040 when the junior baby-boomers generation become elderly¹. After 2025 when the baby-boomers generation reaches 75-year-old, elderly population will increase gradually, whereas the productive working population (15 ≤ 65) will decrease steeply.

Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare established “Social Security and Work Style Reform Headquarters for 2040” in October 2018 to promote an initiative to realize a sustainable all generation type social security so that everybody can live longer an active life. It discussed

- ① the realization of a whole consultation (consultation without refusal),
 - ② the promotion of initiatives good for inclusive community,
 - ③ the facilitation of service (living together service) both the elderlies and people with disabilities can use,
- to realize an inclusive community society.

Promotion of Cooperation and Collaboration Initiatives to Realize an Inclusive Community Society

Inclusive community society means a society in which all the people including children, elderlies, and people with disabilities can create and enhance a community, life, and raison d'etre together. To realize

such society, fixed role as “giver” and “taker” is useless. It is necessary to develop a community where people have their own role and can live

¹ *Population Projections for Japan 2017*, National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

in their own ways supporting each other occasionally changing their positions from “supporting side” to “supported side” and vice versa. Also it is required to live in collaboration with public services such as social welfare.

Social welfare system in Japan has been subdivided and specialized according to the target beneficiaries such as the elderly, people with disabilities or children, etc. and developed in it separately so far. It was not bad; however, because of that, many people cannot have enough public service or support as they fell in a gap between those divisions.

For a long time, councils of social welfare, commissioned welfare volunteers, commissioned child welfare volunteers, social welfare foundations, social welfare institutions, etc. have been working on the development of welfare towns. Now, utilizing their own expertise as well as communicating and collaborating each other, they proceed various practices to detect complicated and serious new social welfare problems in their early stage so that they can provide necessary support immediately.

Based on it, towards the realization of an inclusive community society, the establishment of comprehensive community care system, enhancement of the self-reliance support system for needy persons, local contribution activities by social welfare foundation, etc. are promoted aiming at the accomplishment of “the prosperous welfare society where we live together” advocated in “JNCSW Social Welfare Vision 2011.”

Strengthening of the Disaster Prevention/Disaster Support Activities in Social Welfare Field

In *Heisei* Era, large-scale disasters occurred in various places, and since the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred in 1995, a large number of volunteers have involved in support activities for victims in disaster areas. Therefore, 1995 is called as “the first year of volunteer.” The way of support (or how to support) at the time of disasters has been changed drastically, and the role of social welfare becomes more

significant today; long-term support such as the establishment/management of volunteer centers, watching service for victims, life consultation service, etc.

In 2018, large-scale disasters such as earthquake or heavy rain occurred one after another in various places in Japan. Working together with councils of social welfare or social welfare personnel/organizations in disaster areas, JNCSW collected and distributed information on damage or support needs, and developed activities such as the establishment/management of disaster volunteer centers in damaged areas, special loan of welfare life fund (emergency small loan) for victims, implementation of necessary support for damaged social welfare institutions to continue their service, etc.

JNCSW will make efforts to get ready for possible large-scale disasters in the future by preparing a system of social welfare personnel even in the time of peace towards the strengthening of the disaster prevention/disaster support activities in social welfare field.

Attractive and Challenging Social Welfare Jobs and Securing Human Resource

To address present challenges required for social welfare, an urgent problem is to secure human resource working in social welfare field. According to the estimate of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, it is necessary to secure approx.60,000 care workers per year towards 2025 fiscal year². Concerning child care services, it is planned to accept 320,000 more children within 5 years from 2018 to 2022 fiscal years to eliminate the waiting list of children and to support the employment of women. Hence it is also required to secure child care workers³.

JNCSW Policy Committee formulated “Measures to be taken for securing, training, and settlement of social welfare human resource supporting community,” and encourages social welfare foundations all

² *Necessary Number of Care Workers based on the 7th Care Insurance Project Plan*, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

³ *Parenting Relief Plan*, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

over Japan to take specific actions.

Also, social welfare personnel is encouraged to deliver information on fascination and gratification of social welfare jobs (in other words, three positive “ing”s of social welfare, i.e., touching, moving and appreciating) outward for the positive evaluation for social welfare jobs. Initiatives to deepen understanding of welfare workplaces, such as internship or work experience program in a nursing care office, in a community or education site are also important.