

SUMMARIES

Lifelong Learning and Women's Empowerment: Results of Comparative Research on Four Countries, Japan, Korea, Norway, USA

OTSUKI Nami

This paper will discuss some results of the “International Comparative Research on Women's Learning Needs and Practices” which the National Women's Education Center conducted with counterparts in Korea, Norway, and the United States between FY 2001 and FY 2004. Five findings are identified as bases for how lifelong learning can promote women's empowerment ; (1) Significant gender difference in the learning programs of Japan and Korea, (2) Women have high awareness of emotional support for learning activities, (3) The learners in Japan and Korea have desire for learning whether it makes advance or not, thus, the learning itself is the purpose of the learners, (4) Comparing the effect of universities and job training institutes of each country, in Japan, the learners would not gain the advance that directly connected to their occupation, (5) The experience of learning of gender equality may be a motive of their participation in social activities, and (6)The effect of learning activities in terms of heightening awareness of gender equality is significant in Japan, and this paper attempts to clarify these findings with gender perspectives.

Characteristics of Lifelong Learning at Learning Institutions in Japan: Survey Results from “International Comparative Research on Women's Learning Needs and Practice.”


FUJIMOTO Takashi

This paper is a part of the results of “International Comparative Research on Women's Learning Needs and Practices” conducted by the National Women's Education Center between FY 2001 and FY 2004. In this paper, only Japanese data were used to analyze by gender and learning institutions, which were women's centers, community centers, professional training college, vocational training centers, the University of the Air, and national/public/private universities.

Focusing on items, such as objective and motivation for starting current learning activity, outcomes of current learning activity, support and consideration for learning activities, and learning activities in the future, the conditions of lifelong learning were examined, making reference to the relation with respondent's attributes, the type of program, etc. As for the result, the feature of each learning institution was reflected in general.

As for objective and motivation for starting current learning activity, outcomes of current learning activity, and learning activities in the future, for example, the response rate of “improve my critical thinking skills” was high in the national/public/private university and the University of the Air, which put emphasis on liberal education. About “acquire knowledge and skills related to family life and daily living,” the response rate of community centers, where more people learn “recreation and leisure-related learning or cultural enrichment,” was high. And in “upgrade knowledge and skills related to my job”, the response rate of professional training college and vocational training centers was relatively high.

Moreover, about the support and consideration for learning activities, it turned out that the cognition of women being supported from the familiar people is higher than men. In an age distribution, the female rate



in 30's and 40's was higher than men. Many of them were thought to enter learning activities after working for a while as a new graduate.

From now on, the increase of adult learners in universities, etc. is expected. In order for learning activities to be more rewarding, in addition to the flexibility of a curriculum and the financial aid, some kind of system, which having learned is formally evaluated in society, is desired.

Gender equality and equity for empowerment: to facilitate a dialogue between women and men

KUBOTA Mayumi

In Japan, the word “empowerment” has been known after the fourth Women’s conference held in Beijing in 1995 through mass media. Since there is no exact translation, it is difficult to understand the concept in Japanese especially for the elderly persons. In general, empowerment is used toward the persons who are depowered because of a certain condition such as war, poverty, ill-treatment, illiteracy and so on. Thus empowerment means to enlighten those people by enhancing their confidence, self-efficacy rather than by giving authority. In the long run, empowerment is the process to enlighten the depowered people and to solve the problem economically, socially, culturally, and politically. It also includes the transformation of the social relations between women and men for the better life.

The women’s empowerment framework founded by Sara Longwe, who received the African prize for a leadership in 2003, is introduced as one of the well-known models in the developing countries. It has five steps such as welfare, access, conscientisation mobilization, control, and gender equality will be achieved by following these steps. In this paper, I added one more element “equity” to this model and diagramed it in order to apply it to the Japanese culture. I believe women’s empowerment means gender transformation and this is the final goal for the gender empowerment. From this perspective, I discussed the importance of equity besides equality, the importance of a dialogue between women and men, the personal feeling of anger, and the role of life long education. As the examples, I also mentioned the consultation service for the women at the women’s centers and family management agreement which is exchanged in the written format within farmer’s own family members.

Men’s Empowerment?: Socio-economic Changes and Male “Crises”

TAGA Futoshi

Men have traditionally been thought to lead a life-course more stable and homogenous than women, but recent socio-economic changes are creating new types of “crises” and diversity. The purpose of this paper is to explore the backgrounds and details of these crises and consider ways of coping that will promote gender equality.

Firstly, the increasing number of employed workers and the prolongation of life are causing men in the latter years of middle-age to grapple with the reality of a “second life,” a life after retirement. A large number of retired men appear to be having difficulty adjusting themselves to the condition of retirement because they had over-adjusted themselves to the corporate environment and the gender division of labor.

Secondly, fathers are being asked to participate more in child-care because of the increasing number of

women who continue to work after marriage and childbirth, and because of governmental policy to promote gender equality and raise the birthrate. However, the majority of families with young children are obliged to adopt the gender division of labor in keeping with economic reality. This places not a few fathers in a dilemma regarding work and parenting.

Thirdly, the polarization of employment caused by economic globalization and corporate downsizing is making it increasingly difficult for men to strike a balance between work and family life. While increasing numbers of men are alienated from work and family, “core employees” are still being forced to work long hours and have little time to spend with families. The number of suicides by men worried about work and money has recently increased markedly.

In terms of the promotion of gender equality, endeavors to help men cope with these crises need to be consistent with women’s empowerment. It is necessary for public policy and companies to redistribute the workload and salaries which are currently concentrated on male “core employees.” It is also necessary for each individual man to rethink materialistic masculine lifestyles ; develop skills of housework and community life ; and design flexible life-plans. Support for the empowerment of both men and women should be provided in consideration of the male-dominant structure at the macro level and the different complex patterns of gender relations at the micro level.

***Retraformer* workshops to Prepare for Reemployment: Providing support for the self-determination of women in difficult circumstances**

KOZONO Yayoi

Providing employment support for women is one of the main pillars of the NWEC. Today, employment support is synonymous with providing support for the self-determination of women who are suffering through difficult circumstances.


This paper looks at how women overcome difficult circumstances, what kinds of program contents and structures are most useful for such women, and what position these kinds of workshops hold among the NWEC’s activities as a whole. The role of the facilitator is also examined.

Men’s Issues from the Perspective of Gender Equality: Case studies of empowerment through lifelong study

NAKAMURA Akira

It has been over a dozen years or so now since I began a grassroots men’s liberation movement and worked to provide a place for men to gather and talk. This kind of activity aims to achieve gender equality by focusing on the man’s side of the equality equation. We have consistently called for the creation of a lively social environment in which men are not constrained by “manly” criteria and women are not oppressed. Having said this, a large part of our activity over the past several ten years or so has been to provide a place of healing, a place where men can seek out their true being and find refreshment of both mind and body.

The reason we have restricted access to men only is that we want to give men a chance to relax their guard, an opportunity to let go of the kind of rigid self-control, strength, and so-called manliness that they feel



compelled to hold on to in the presence of women. Men need to have a chance to confront their own inner weaknesses.

The Character and Issues of Rural Women-owned Business Management

MIHARA Ikuko

Today, the number of women starting their own business is on the increase. Especially, the growth rate of women-owned businesses in rural areas is very high. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the number in 2003 is about six times that in 1997. I think that rural women-owned businesses have four distinguishing characteristics. One is that they tend to be started by small groups. Second is that they usually are making food (for example, *miso* soybean paste or pickles) or selling farm products. Third is that they are organized as a small business. And fourth is that the average age of the workers tends to be older.

Many researchers believe that women-owned businesses in rural areas have many good effects by providing a place for women, as well as revitalizing the local community and rural agriculture. I think that these effects are becoming increasingly widespread.

As the number of women-owned businesses in rural areas increases, and as more of them evolve as agribusinesses, they should be able to overcome many of the problems that they face now. These are primarily problems of management.

These management problems can be perceived in two ways. The typical women-owned business in rural areas is tends to be managed by the family and for the family, and so they must compete against rival families. Secondly, the more advanced women-owned businesses in rural areas have problems of rigid organization and older workers. And, if there is an agricultural cooperative binding the community, the relationship between the cooperative and the women-owned business may be weak. These factors make it difficult for women to continue with the kind of management style their using now. MAFF should work to provide a better environment for women in rural areas who want to start a business or have just begun a business.

The Significance of the Existence of Facilities for Women in Need of Protection and Future Trends From the perspective of changes in users' characteristics

MUTO Yuko

Facilities for women in need of protection are based on Japan's anti-prostitution and social welfare laws. But the women who make use of these facilities today do so only because they have no other choice, even though their problems are very diverse. Since 2001, these facilities have been sheltering victims of domestic violence, indicating that the system is changing to adapt to changing needs, but the change is very slow. The troubles of the women who make use of protective facilities are complicated and diverse, reflecting the issues of society. Contemporary users experience problems such as alcoholism, child abuse, poverty, and mental disease.

This paper compares four groups of protective facility users. The first group is of women who were arrested before establishment of the anti-prostitution law, and second group is of users of protective facilities for women in 1954. the third group is of women surveyed from 1995 to 1998, and the lat group is of women whose data I collected myself. What are the characters and problems of these different groups and what differences and

changes can be observed?

At one time it was thought that protective facilities for women were unnecessary, but in actuality the number of new users is increasing, and the number of women who successfully leave the facilities is also increasing.

New laws have been enacted to protect the victims of domestic violence. Users needs are constantly changing. It is the time to rethink the purposes of protective facilities and the services they offer.

The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Movement against Licensed Prostitution: The Activities of the Japan Woman's Christian Temperance Union

SUNYOUNG Yang


This article examines the development and influence of anti-prostitution activities after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, undertaken by the Japan Women's Christian Temperance Union (JWCTU). As it is generally known, the JWCTU played a major role in the anti-prostitution movement in modern Japan. It was formed in 1893 as a nationwide organization with branches in various parts of Japan, and developed rapidly into a large group with considerable influence. When the great earthquake struck the Kanto plain on the Japanese main island of Honshu on September 1, 1923, the JWCTU immediately embarked on relief efforts for the earthquake victims by rallying women's groups, and it played an important role in organizing the Tokyo Woman's Group Association as well. As a part of this activity, the JWCTU launched a protest campaign against the reconstruction of licensed brothels destroyed by the earthquake, and the research department of the Tokyo Women's Group Union created an association for the abolition of licensed prostitution. Many activists and participants joined and the movement grew into a national pan-woman's movement, and the public outcry against prostitution spread from Japan to Korea. Korean newspapers and Christian magazines picked up on the movement from Japan, and this had a strong influence on the anti-prostitution movement in Korea.

The Empowerment of Women in the Local Community: The Himawarikai in Tsurugashima City

NAKANO Hatsumi

The Japanese Gender Equality Law was enforced in 1999, and it was thought that this would accelerate the progress toward greater gender equality. But in actual fact gender equality measures attempted by local governments have floundered and there appears to be a rapidly accelerating backlash. The enactment of a law alone has not been enough to change people's gender biases. The empowerment of women is essential in achieving true gender equality.

This paper takes a look at the 16 years of activity of the Himawarikai in Tsurugashima City. The Himawarikai is a group of women who engage in agriculture in Tsurugashima City in Saitama Prefecture. For 16 years, this group has had a variety of influences on the family and the local community. In the beginning, the members of the group met to share their pain and distress as brides in farming families. Gradually, their interests spread out and the group began to act as an intermediary between farmers and consumers. The group also took on a public voice as its members acquired seats on the local city council. Most recently, the group has become



involved in promoting family agreements on the management of family businesses, the objective being to raise the status of the women who engage in agriculture and to make a place for agricultural successors.

This paper verifies the importance of the relationship between the Himawarikai and the local government, and discusses the role of the local government in empowering of women.

A Discussion on How Grandparents Build Intergenerational Relationships

ONODERA Rika

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the necessity of a new approach to studies on grandparents today, and to consider the perspective and method of this approach. Examination of previous studies made in Japan & the United States reveal the following two characteristics of studies on grandparents in Japan.

First, there is a tendency to interpret the status of grandparents in terms of their role, and second, there is a tendency to lump grandparents and elderly people in the same category. It is clear that diversifying interpretations of the family have created a gap between the conventional understanding of the grandparents' roles and the reality of their relationships with other generations. We need to examine the subjective choices which grandparents make as they negotiate intergenerational relationships with others in the family. Grandparents are not passive entities but active forces in the building of family relationships. An approach that focuses on family lifestyles affords much insight. It is important to examine the lifelong development of grandparents and to compare their gender identities.

An Analysis of Training Programs for Workers at Women's Facilities in National Women's Education Center of Japan

Working Group for the Development of Educational Programs for Workers at Women's Facilities

This is a systematic analysis of the objectives, contents, program structure, instructors, and participants in the NWECC seminars for workers at women's facilities that were held between 1977 and 2004, made within the context of the trends in women's education and the application of gender equality measures over the same period. We also compared similar workshops held for management and regular personnel from fiscal year 2001 to 2003, after NWECC was reorganized as an Independent Administrative Agency, contrasting the objectives and programs for each year, participants' motivations, and the extent to which topics from one year were carried over to the next year. This study clearly shows that NWECC's training program for workers at women's facilities has changed along with changes in government policies and the changing needs of the program participants. On the basis of our findings, we propose that the following two items will be of major concern in future NWECC training programs for workers at women's facilities.

1. Greater clarification of NWECC's role as a national center for training programs for workers at women's facilities.

2. Establishing new objectives and goals as well as methodologies for women's education that aims for the final objective of the creation of a society with gender equality.

There is a need to develop and systematize two kinds of capabilities : specialized knowledge in issues

of gender and the building of a society with gender equality, and the knowhow to plan and operate programs related to these issues.

The Analysis of the Present State of Women's Information Services and the Planning for Reconstructing the Women's Information Portal Site

ADACHI Kazuhisa, AMAKAWA Yoko, AOKI Reiko, ONISHI Sachiyo and MORI Michi

The Project Committee for Reconstructing the Women's Information Portal Site has studied the content, function, specification and management of the portal site by analyzing the present state of women's information services and the questionnaire survey on databases maintained by the National Women's Education Center (NWEC), with the aim of making the portal site more user-friendly and reliable.

To begin with, the Committee analyzed the present state of the women's information services provided by women's centers via the Internet, and conducted user evaluation surveys of each database on the NWEC web site. The results of these two studies were examined to set up target user groups and to understand their needs for the portal site. Along with consideration of the NWEC's role as a national center, the following objectives in reconstructing the portal were decided upon: To recognize the portal site's function as a focal point of the global network of women's information; to make the site accessible to a wide variety of users; and to make use of existing resources by improving the present databases and information retrieval system.

The Committee also analyzed these studies from the perspective of accessibility, information retrieval, navigation and communication services to understand the desirable functions of the Women's Information Portal Site.

These studies made it possible to define the functional specifications necessary for the portal, and based on these specifications, the Committee made a plan for reconstructing the portal site. It is hoped that this reconstructing of the Women's Information Portal Site will contribute to providing more effective information services for a wide range of users.