

26. Study on the Duties of Social Education Staff

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(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

To survey the duties of prefectural and municipal social education staff and provide basic documentation for vitalizing their activities, to set out and analyze issues relating to such activities and their future direction, and to help energize such activities.

(2) Outline of Research Results

We conducted a postal survey of all 47 prefectural boards of education and 1,840 municipal boards of education asking about social education staff. The results are outlined below.

- Forty-six prefectures (97.9%) have appointed social education staff, with only one prefecture having no such staff, while 1,801 municipalities (97.7%) have appointed such staff.
- At the time of the survey, actual social education staff numbers were 754 employed by prefectures (an average of 17.8 per prefecture) and 20,591 employed by municipalities (an average of 12.2 per municipality).
- In both prefectures and municipalities, around 65% of staff were in their fifties or sixties. Women accounted for 41.9% of staff in prefectures and 32.7% in municipalities.
- In the three years from fiscal 2003–2005, 36 prefectures (78.3%) and 451 municipalities (38.6%) held meetings where social education staff made policy suggestions or offered opinions.
- Looking at the relationship between the establishment of subcommittees or expert committees and opportunities to make policy suggestions or offer opinions, 94.1% of prefectures that had established such committees held meetings where social education staff made policy suggestions or offered opinions.
- In prefectures, the issues most commonly discussed at social education staff meetings in fiscal 2006 were support for home education and child-rearing (65.2%), enhancing community educational functions (54.3%), annual program plans (43.5%), encouraging local residents to take part in or cooperate with social education activities (34.8%), and

fostering basic lifestyle habits and normative consciousness on the part of children (32.6%). Annual program plans (87.9%) were the most commonly-discussed matter in municipalities, followed by promotion of lifelong learning (77.7%).

- Social education staff conduct research in 16 prefectures (34.8%) and 357 municipalities (30.5%).
- Cross tabulating results for conduct of research and opportunities for suggesting policy and offering opinions reveals a high correlation, with 87.5% of prefectures that conduct research also providing opportunities for suggesting policy and offering opinions.
- Based on the survey results we made several recommendations on the importance of enhancing measures to energize the social education staff system, including seminars on social education for staff newly appointed to the field and study and training sessions for administrative staff.