

17. Study on the Role of Social Education Coordinators and Methods of Enhancing Their Skills

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(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

To survey social education coordinators' learning support activities, clarify the role of coordinators, and develop training programs to enhance their skills.

(2) Outline of Research Results

We conducted a postal survey of prefectural boards of education (in all 47 prefectures) and designated city boards of education (in 17 cities) to ascertain the status of coordinator activities. The results are outlined below.

Coordinator Appointment

- Coordinators had been appointed in 24 prefectural and designated city boards of education (38% of the total). Of these, 18 were in prefectural and six in designated city boards of education.
- In 17 cases (71%) the focus of coordinators' activities was lifelong learning, in 13 cases (54%) it was experiential and volunteer activities, and in nine cases (38%) it was school education support.
- Most coordinators were appointed to board of education secretariats (11 cases or 46%), followed by lifelong learning centers and similar facilities (excluding social education facilities) (10 cases or 42%) and schools (5 cases or 20%).
- A total of 3,966 coordinators have been appointed by prefectural and designated city boards of education. Of this number, 124 have been appointed by prefectural boards of education and 3,843 by designated city boards of education. Among the designated cities, Sendai, Kyoto, and Osaka have programs where teachers or other staff are appointed as coordinators in schools, resulting in a large number of appointees.
- The most commonly-cited duty of coordinators was "Gathering and disseminating information on learning" (23 cases or 96%), followed by "Liaising and coordinating with related organizations" (22 cases or 92%) and "Publicizing learning opportunities in schools and social education

facilities to people in the community” (20 cases or 83%).

- The most important skills that boards of education require in coordinators are “Coordination skills to encourage links among related groups and organizations” (38 cases or 59%), followed by “Communication skills enabling the building of constructive relationships” (37 cases or 58%).

Seminars to Train or Up-Skill Coordinators

- Forty-one boards of education (64%) conduct seminars to train or up-skill coordinators: 34 prefectural boards and seven designated city boards.
- Nineteen boards of education (46%) conduct seminars solely to up-skill coordinators, 15 boards (37%) conduct seminars both to train and up-skill coordinators, and seven boards (17%) conduct seminars solely to train coordinators.

Effects of Appointing Coordinators and Issues Arising

- The most commonly-cited effect of appointing coordinators was “Broadening of networks with related organizations” (16 cases or 67%), followed by “Broadening of forums in which local people can be active” (14 cases or 58%).
- The most common issue cited in relation to execution of coordinators’ duties was “Enhancing seminars for coordinator up-skilling” (35 cases or 55%), followed by “Developing and enhancing forums in which local people can be active” (34 cases or 53%), “Enhancing forums in which coordinators can be active” (27 cases or 42%), and “Enhancing networks with related organizations” (19 cases or 30%).