

## 18. Study on Development of Training Programs to Enhance the Expertise of Social Education Directors

Leader: BABA Yujiro, Director, Practical Social Education Research Center

### (1) Purpose and Aim of Study

Social education directors require expertise encompassing a broad range of qualities and skills. To assist with local government efforts to promote lifelong learning and social education, this study surveys the status of prefectural training for social education directors and examines training programs to enhance their skills and raise their level of expertise.

### (2) Outline of Research Results

A questionnaire on current training practices for social education directors was posted to the departments responsible for lifelong learning/social education in the boards of education of all 47 prefectures. The valid response rate was 100%, and the results are outlined below.

- Approximately 60% of prefectures conduct training seminars one to four times a year.
- While most training is conducted by prefectural boards of education, quite a few programs are conducted by voluntary organizations such as the Social Education Directors' Association.
- Only slightly less than 20% of training is targeted solely at social education directors, with most programs including a broad range of other related workers in their target groups.
- Most training is intermittent and of short duration. One-day programs are the most common, and 80% of programs are conducted over three or fewer days.
- Forty percent of training content consists of briefing on relevant national and prefectural programs and study of practical examples, and in most cases the instructors are local government employees.
- Course expenses are commonly less than 50,000 yen, with more than 20% of programs falling into this category.
- In response to a question on issues that social education directors will need to study in future training programs (multiple-choice question, multiple answers permitted), 90% of prefectures selected "Building

frameworks for cooperation among schools, households, and communities to enhance the educational functions of society as a whole.”

- In response to a question on skills required by social education directors (multiple-choice question, multiple answers permitted), approximately 70% of prefectures selected “Ability to identify and plan learning opportunities” and “Coordinator skills.”

As the above results show, it is difficult to regard in-service training opportunities for social education directors as comprehensive in terms of either frequency or content. To improve the situation by enhancing the effectiveness of the limited number of group training opportunities available in prefectures, there is clearly a need to examine pre-program and post-program training measures, to actively develop new training styles and programs such as group training involving neighboring prefectures and centralized training courses to which participants travel, and to enhance specialized courses for social education directors at the national level. The study also confirmed that enhancing directors’ coordinator skills and their ability to identify and plan new learning opportunities are currently key requirements for training program development.