

1. Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1. Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of adult education

1.1.1 to 1.1.6

(General Overview)

In Japan, measures regarding adult education have been taken, as part of efforts to realize a “lifelong learning society.” The creation of a lifelong learning society is intended to enable people to lead a healthy, satisfying life throughout their lifetime and achieve self-realization, against the backdrop of the development of the economy, the advance of science and technology, the growing importance of information systems, the declining birth rate and the aging of society. At the same time, this creation is essential for creating advanced knowledge critical to this era of intense global competition, spurring innovation, and fostering personnel capable of playing an active role in the international community. Article 3 of the amended Fundamental Act of Education (hereinafter referred to simply as the “Fundamental Act of Education”), enacted in December 2006, stipulates that “Society shall be made to allow all citizens to continue to learn throughout their lives, on all occasions and in all places, and apply the outcomes of lifelong learning appropriately to refine themselves and lead a fulfilling life.”

Although the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is the government organ that is responsible for promoting adult education, the authority has been basically devolved, with local governments and private social education organizations actually providing education. In promoting adult education, MEXT cooperates with government ministries and agencies that are responsible for dissemination of and enlightenment about adult education regarding such areas as human rights, gender equality in society, the environment and vocational capability development. Meanwhile, prefectures and smaller municipalities, including cities, towns and villages, who have declined in number from around 3,300 to 1,700 through mergers, are implementing measures regarding social education and lifelong learning, in order to promote adult education.

Japan implements measures to promote adult education through school education, social education and other means of learning, so we will explain the measures that have been taken in these three categories, mainly since 1997.

(School education)

Japan has a robust system of school education for minors, mainly elementary and junior-high-school education, both of which are compulsory, while the importance of school education for adults is also growing.

For example, in fiscal year 2007, Japan started the “program to promote education that meets adults’ needs for re-learning”. This program is intended to meet such needs by utilizing universities’ educational research resources. It is also intended to support excellent efforts to provide practical education to workers seeking reemployment and trying to improve their future career prospects, thereby promoting the dissemination of superior education programs useful for re-learning, and

creating a “multi-track” society that provides various means of learning. In addition, Japan has created the certification system through an amendment of the School Education Act in 2007. The system enables universities to establish a set of learning programs intended mainly for working people, and to award completion certificates of such programs.

Furthermore, the Open University of Japan (which started accepting students in April 1985, after its founding in 1983) provides a broad range of people with the opportunity to receive university education through broadcasting media, such as television and radio. In the second semester of academic year 2007, around 90,000 people across Japan took courses of this university, while a total of around 50,000 people have so far graduated upon the completion of regular-student courses. In 2001, the Open University of Japan opened the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (comprising the Interdisciplinary Cultural Sciences Program, the Public Policy and Management Program, the Education Development Program and the Clinical Psychology Program), which is intended to foster professionals with advanced expertise, and started accepting students for master’s degree programs in April 2002. The cumulative number of people who have taken courses of the Open University of Japan, most of whom are adults, stands at around 1.07 million, with their ages ranging from 15 to the 90s. This university thus plays a significant role as the core institution for Japan’s lifelong learning.

Through the above measures, Japan aims to realize a flexible and diverse society that gives people a “Challenge Again” opportunity (second chance) after a career failure.

(Social Education)

We define social education as systematic educational activity aimed at youths and adults, excluding activity conducted through education courses provided by schools in accordance with laws. Social education includes after-school studies for pupils and students, as well as educational and enlightenment activity at public halls, libraries, museums and the like.

Social education is expected to play a broad and flexible role in adult education, as it features uniqueness and independence.

Under the Social Education Act, established in 1949, the central and local governments have been charged with the goal and mission of “creating an environment that helps all the people to raise their cultural level suited to their lives, by taking advantage of every opportunity and facility.” This provision indicates that social education respects the independence of participants and that it is left to people actually engaging in education to decide specific contents of the education provided.

Article 3 of the Fundamental Act of Education, amended in 2006, stipulates that “Society shall be made to allow all citizens to continue to learn throughout their lives, on all occasions and in all places, and apply the outcomes of lifelong learning appropriately to refine themselves and lead a fulfilling life,” while Article 10 of the same act stipulates that the national and local governments “shall endeavor to take necessary measures supporting education in the family, by providing guardians with opportunities to learn, relevant information, and other means, while respecting family autonomy in education should strive to implement

measures necessary for supporting education in the family.”

In order to improve the ability of families to provide education, MEXT made it clear, through an amendment of the Social Education Act in 2001, that education boards should undertake the task of “establishing courses and holding meetings that provide opportunities to learn about home education.” Furthermore, in June 2008, the central and local governments have been charged with the basic goal and mission of “contributing to the promotion of lifelong learning as part of their efforts to promote social education,” through revisions of the Social Education Act and other acts. Also, it has been made clear that local governments should undertake the task of providing support for school education, using adults’ learning achievements and support for adults’ volunteer activities at libraries and museums.

In addition, various efforts are under way in accordance with revisions of the Fundamental Act of Education and the Social Education Act. First, the amendment of the Social Education Act, made this year, introduced an additional provision that specifies the use of the learning achievements gained through social education (Item 15, Article 5) as a task for education boards. The additional provision was based on the assumption of the implementation of the “school support regional headquarters program”, in which local residents support school education activity as volunteers. MEXT launched this program at 1,800 locations across the nation in the current fiscal year, and aims to further promote the program in line with the aforesaid legal amendment.

In addition, through the “program to create a foundation supporting home education in communities”, MEXT is striving to improve the education capabilities of families, by providing useful information and learning opportunities to parents struggling with child-rearing problems and suffering a sense of social isolation.

Public halls, libraries and museums are social education facilities that play an important role in social education. Various programs that provide opportunities for adult education regarding such fields as human rights and the environment are available at these facilities.

Also, MEXT operates an Educational Information and Communication Network System (“el-Net”), with a view to expanding opportunities for lifelong learning and providing easy access to education and learning information services to anyone, anytime, anywhere. We started providing information to social education facilities across the nation via satellite communications in July 1999. In April 2008, we shifted to an Internet-based information distribution system in response to the remarkable change that has occurred in the information and communications sector in recent years.

Meanwhile, specialized training colleges and vocational schools provide a variety of learning opportunities that meet adults’ needs for re-learning. Since fiscal year 2007, MEXT has been implementing the “program to promote “Challenge Again” (second chance) support using specialized training colleges.” This program utilizes the vocational education function of specialized training colleges, in order to provide young people who have quit jobs after working for a short period of time following school graduation, older workers approaching the retirement age, women who have quit jobs to concentrate on child bearing, and the so-called “NEET”(Not in Employment, Education or Training) people with learning opportunities suited to their characteristics, thereby improving their vocational

capabilities and promoting an expansion of “Challenge Again” opportunities (second chances).

Number of social education facilities by type

(Number of facilities)

Type	Public halls (incl. similar facilities)	Libraries	Museums	Quasi-Museums	Youth education facilities	Women's education facilities	Social sports facilities	Private sports facilities	Culture halls
FY1993	18,339	2,172	861	2,843	1,225	224	35,950 (...)	16,088 (...)	1,261
FY1996	18,545	2,396	985	3,522	1,319	225	41,997 (...)	18,146 (...)	1,549
FY1999	19,063	2,592	1,045	4,064	1,263	207	46,554 (...)	17,738 (...)	1,751
FY2002	18,819	2,742	1,120	4,243	1,305	196	47,321 (27,943)	16,814 (11,553)	1,832
FY2005	18,182	2,979	1,196	4,418	1,320	183	48,055 (27,800)	16,780 (11,129)	1,885
Change (number)	△ 637	237	76	175	15	△ 13	734	△ 34	53
Change (%)	△ 3.4	8.6	6.8	4.1	1.1	△ 6.6	1.6	△ 0.2	2.9

- (Notes) 1. Regarding private facilities, the collection rate was 68.5% for private sports facilities and 70.1% for private culture halls.
 2. The figures for social and private sports facilities in FY1996 or earlier do not include the numbers of gate croquet and gate ball facilities. (The same shall apply in the tables hereinafter)
 3. The figures in the parentheses indicate the numbers of organizations.
 4. The mark △ in the “Change” columns indicates a decrease. (The same shall apply in the tables hereinafter.)

(Other Learning Opportunities)

The government stressed the importance of “achieving growth by utilizing the capability of all human resources to the full” in the “Economic Growth Strategy (June 2008). It also stated in the Basic Promotional Plan for Education (July 2008) that: “International competition is expected to intensify further in the future. In order to maintain and strengthen the vitality of the Japanese society in this situation, it is essential to foster personnel with foresight and creativity, as well as those with outstanding leadership in a broad range of fields. Education is expected to play an important role in fostering such personnel.” As the role of education in fostering personnel is thus increasing, efforts regarding social education and lifelong learning are also being made in a variety of ways other than those described above.

○Policy regarding gender equality

A variety of measures regarding gender equality in society have been implemented in accordance with the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society, which was put into effect in 1999, and the Second Basic Plan for Gender-Equality, which was adopted in 2005 based on this law. One priority matter of the Second Basic Plan for Gender-Equality is “enriching education and learning that promote gender-equality and facilitate diversity of choice,” and MEXT, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and other relevant ministries and agencies are implementing measures in line with the basic principle of enriching education and learning that promote gender equality, and are expanding

education and learning opportunities that facilitate diversity of choice.

○Health-related policy

Regarding health-related policy, the government has been promoting the “national health building campaign for the 21st century” (“Healthy Japan 21”) in order to cope with the threat of lifestyle diseases. “Healthy Japan 21” aims to reduce deaths of middle-aged people, extend healthy life expectancy, and improve the quality of life (QOL), and promotes national health building by setting specific goals regarding nine items: nutrition/diet, physical activity/sports, leisure/mental health, tobacco, alcohol, dental health, diabetes, circulatory diseases and cancer.

○Policy regarding labor issues

Regarding the development of vocational capabilities, Japan has established, in addition to the traditional system of public vocational training, the “job card system” (which enables people to use the certificate of completion of practical vocational training provided by companies and educational organizations as a basis for building their careers, in activities including job-hunting). The centerpieces of the job card system are the program to develop vocational capabilities and the program to provide practical education. In addition, there are “the program to promote the creation of seminars for fostering the independence of the youth,” which supports young people lacking in sufficient self-confidence to work, and the “Youth Employability Support Program” (YES-program), which helps young people acquire basic capabilities necessary for obtaining jobs. As for vocational training for adults, there are programs for capability development at each of the youth, mature and senior stages.

The government also operates the “subsidy system for education and training” which, as part of the employment insurance scheme, is intended to ensure employment stability and promote acquisition of jobs, by supporting proactive efforts by workers to develop their own capabilities. This system provides funds for individuals to cover part of the expenses they pay for education and training.

There is also the “system for fostering personnel with practical skills in order to support small- and medium-size enterprises” and the “industry-academia personnel fostering partnership program”, which is jointly operated by MEXT and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, in order to develop a broader cooperative relationship between academia and industry.

Furthermore, with a view to achieving renewed economic growth in the medium to long term, the government is considering such matters as how to help young people acquire basic capabilities necessary for working members of society, how companies should foster and secure personnel, and how to realize an employment process satisfactory for both companies and the youth. As part of this effort, the government started the “program to foster basic capabilities necessary for working members of society, and develop an evaluation method” in 2007.

As for policy regarding agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the government provides support for practical training and education, intended to foster skills and expertise necessary for obtaining jobs, and support for activity by farm village youth to improve agricultural management and technology.

For details, please see Attachment: Table 1.

○Policy regarding promotion of cultural affairs, particularly cultural and linguistic diversity

Culture and arts enrich the mental lives of the people and play an important role in injecting vitality into society. The Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture, and for the Dissemination and Avocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture was established in May 1997 and was put into effect in July 1 of the same year, in order to realize a society in which the pride of Ainu people as an ethnic group is respected, thereby contributing to the development of the diverse cultures of Japan.

The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture, designated by the government and based on this act, is implementing five policies, through which the government is actively trying to realize appropriate adult education based on knowledge of diverse cultures and traditions.

Through the above measures, the government is actively promoting adult education as part of efforts to realize lifelong learning.

1.2 Financing of Adult Education

1.2.1

a) Budget earmarked for adult education in the education sector

The importance of a budget allocated to adult education in the education sector is growing.

Below, we give examples of budget funds for adult education measures (all of which concern fiscal year 2008).

- Program to promote education that meets adults' needs for re-learning: ¥1.96 billion
- Provision of the opportunity to receive university education via broadcasting
Expansion and enhancement measures for the Open University of Japan: ¥7.862 billion
- Program to create a foundation supporting home education in communities: ¥1.153 billion
- School support regional headquarters: ¥5.04 billion
- Research program to promote education regarding human rights: ¥160 million
- Model project for NEET support at public halls, etc.: ¥3 million
- Program to promote regional revitalization based on "mutual learning, mutual support": ¥268 million
- Educational Information and Communication Network System: ¥96 million
- Program to promote "Challenge Again" (second chance) support using specialized training colleges: ¥728 million

b) Budget funds for adult education in non-education sectors

○Health-related policy

- "Healthy Japan 21": ¥523 million

○Policy regarding the declining birth rate, aging of society and labor issues

- Measures related to the program to develop vocational capabilities: ¥17.419 billion,
- Program to promote the creation of seminars for fostering the independence of the youth: ¥596 million
- Youth Employability Support Program (YES-program): ¥91 million
- Subsidy system for education and training: ¥6.345 billion
- Promotion of the program to register and utilize skilled personnel: ¥295 million
- System for fostering personnel with practical skills in order to support small- and medium-size enterprises: ¥380 million
- Industry-academia personnel fostering partnership program: ¥2.82 billion
- Program to foster basic capabilities necessary for working members of society, and develop an evaluation method: ¥2.82 billion

○Policy regarding agriculture, forestry and fisheries

- Agricultural “Challenge Again”(second chance) support program: ¥586 million (including funds for other related programs)
- Program for supporting organizations that train farm village youth: ¥232 million
- Grant for cooperative agricultural extension service: ¥3.597 billion (including funds for other related programs)
- Improvement of facilities of centers for agricultural training and general agricultural support as part of measures to build a robust agricultural industry: ¥24.914 billion (including funds for other related programs)
- Program to foster personnel for the forestry industry: ¥6.7 billion
- Fisheries “Challenge Again” (second chance) support program as part of a comprehensive project to foster and secure personnel for the fisheries industry:

¥6.7 billion

○Policy regarding promotion of cultural affairs, cultural and linguistic diversity in particular

- Budget funds related to measures to promote Ainu culture
 - *Subsidies and government expenses for the Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture

Promotion of comprehensive and practical research on the Ainu: ¥18 million

Promotion of the Ainu language: ¥34 million

Promotion of the Ainu culture: ¥160 million

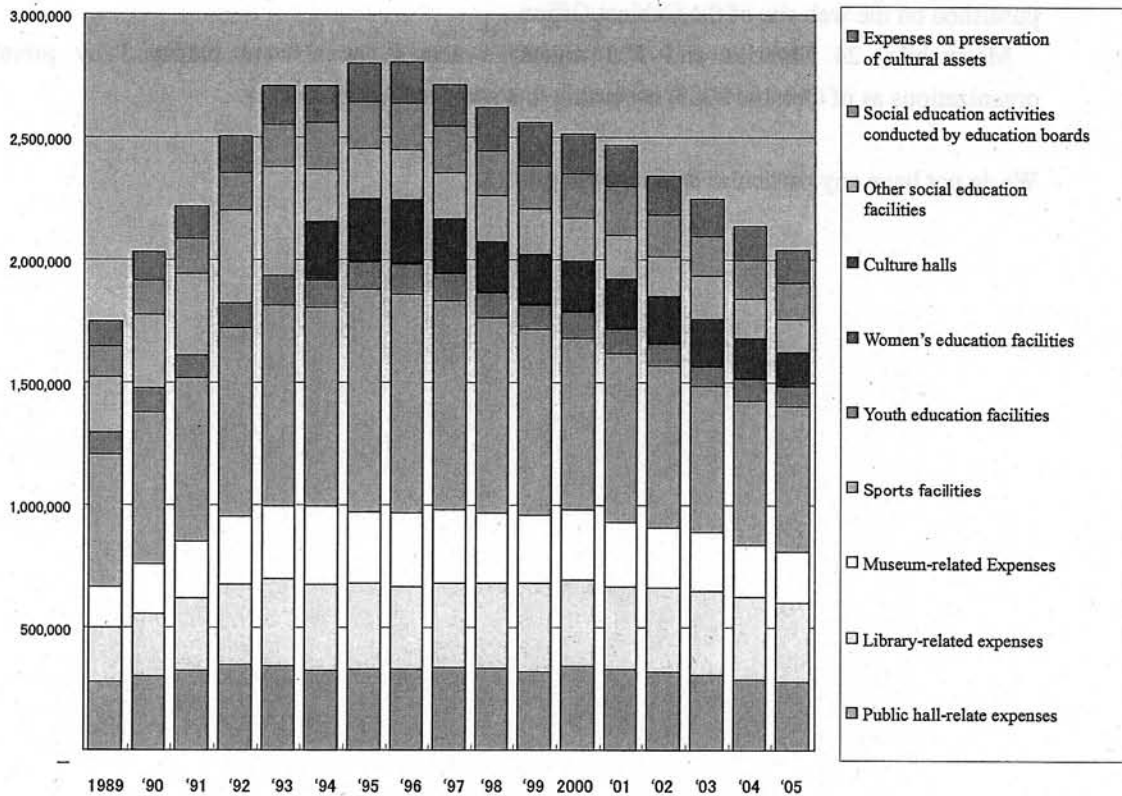
Dissemination of knowledge on Ainu traditions, etc.: ¥56 million

Revival of Ainu traditional life style: ¥70 million

Total: ¥338 million

c) Local government budgets for adult education

Year-to-year changes in social education expenses at local governments (Unit: ¥ million)



(※) Based on a survey regarding regional educational expenses.

(※) There is no data regarding d)

We do not have any particular data regarding 1.2.2.

1.2.3

In recent years, a variety of options have been made available to learners, as private-sector companies have provided a diverse range of learning opportunities.

Specifically, the government is making efforts to promote the dissemination of education by correspondence, a learning method that anyone can use voluntarily without time or geographical constraints, by granting the authorization of the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to courses provided by schools or judicial persons, in accordance with the Social Education Act, that are deemed to be worth promoting from the viewpoint of social education.

1.2.4

Of the 34,371 approved specified non-profit corporations, 15,805 (46.0%) said that they engaged in

activity to promote social education as of the end of March 2008, according to the results of a survey published on the web site of the Cabinet Office.

Meanwhile, 24 libraries and 525 museums across Japan were managed by private-sector organizations as of October 2005, according to a social education survey.

We do not have any particular data regarding 1.2.7.



2. Quality of Adult Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1. Provision of adult education and institutional frameworks

2.1.1.

MEXT is the main government organ that is responsible for the promotion of adult education. It cooperates with other relevant ministries and agencies that are responsible for the dissemination of and enlightenment about adult education regarding such issues as human rights, the environment and vocational capability development.

2.1.2.

In Attachment 1, we specify a) providers, b) areas of learning, c) target groups, d) cost of programs and e) funding sources regarding the various measures mentioned above.

2.1.4.

Some adult education programs provided in Japan involve transcripts or qualifications.

As for the system of certifying the completion of courses at universities, the completion of a certain set of programs intended for learners other than ordinary students, such as working people, results in the award of a certificate.

In addition, in educational services provided by private-sector companies, an examination test is conducted in many cases, in order to evaluate the learning achievements of individual learners.

In this respect, the Central Council for Education recommended in a report issued on February 19, 2008 that “deliberation should be conducted on a mechanism for ensuring the effectiveness, stability, continuity and authenticity of the evaluation methods used in those examination tests for evaluating individual learners’ learning achievements that meet a certain national standard, as a first step toward deliberating how to assure and evaluate the quality of educational services provided by private-sector companies.” Deliberation based on this suggestion is underway.

2.2. Participation in Adult Education

2.2.1.

The Japanese government does not have data regarding an overall ratio of people participating in adult education. Changes in the number of people taking classes and courses related to adult education, broken down by education facility type are as follows:

Number of people taking classes and courses by facility type

Type	Education boards	Prefectural/ Municipal divisions	Public halls (incl. similar facilities)	Museums	Quasi-museums	Youth education facilities	Women's education facilities	(Number of people) Culture halls
During FY1992	5,163,710	12,362,883	9,056,739	...	...	374,038	139,517	1,562,938
During FY2005	5,773,017	13,445,472	8,997,727	...	...	420,446	159,000	1,588,922
During FY1998	6,309,362	10,974,490	10,013,791	...	...	510,365	218,172	1,351,716
During FY2001	8,248,285	10,567,217	11,073,255	...	...	495,532	280,366	1,728,964
During FY2004	7,972,707	8,087,092	12,456,887	1,421,025	1,119,949	615,889	234,325	1,819,415
Change (number)	△ 275,578	△ 2,480,125	1,383,632	...	...	120,357	△ 46,041	90,451
Change (percentage)	△ 3.3	△ 23.5	12.5	...	...	24.3	△ 16.4	5.2
Number of learners per course	48.4	38.9	29.1	80.5	53.9	36.8	31.0	32.1
Number of female learners	5,238,721 (5,428,207)	5,033,360 (6,623,799)	8,281,691 (7,443,259)	...	...	368,609 (300,161)	221,328 (247,904)	...
Change(number)	△ 189,486	△ 1,590,439	838,432	...	...	68,448	△ 26,576	...
Change (%)	△ 3.5	△ 24.0	11.3	...	...	22.8	△ 10.7	...
Ratio of female learners (%)	65.7	62.2	66.5	...	...	59.8	94.5	...

(Note) Figures in parentheses indicate the numbers in a FY2002 survey (covering data for FY2001).

Meanwhile, according to the “public opinion survey on the lifelong learning (May 2005), which asked respondents what types of “lifelong learning” activity they engaged in over the past year, “health/sports (health exercises, medical and nutrition studies, jogging, swimming, etc.)” was cited by the highest ratio of respondents (22.1%), followed by “cultural pastimes (music, fine arts, flower arrangement, dancing, calligraphy, etc.)” (18.9%), and “activities related to personal computers and the Internet” (12.0%). It should be noted that 51.5% replied that they had not engaged in any particular lifelong learning activity.

By gender, the ratio of respondents who cited “cultural pastimes (music, fine arts, flower arrangement, dancing, calligraphy, etc.)” was high among women, while the ratio of those who cited “activities related to personal computers and the Internet” was high among men.

By age, the ratio of respondents citing “health/sports (health exercises, medical and nutrition studies, jogging, swimming, etc.)” was high among people aged between 15 to 19 and those in their 60s, while the ratio of those citing “cultural pastimes (music, fine arts, flower arrangement, dancing, calligraphy, etc.)” was high among people in their 60s. The proportion who cited “activities related to personal computers and the Internet” was large among people aged between 15 to 19 and those in their 40s.

2.2.2. and 2.2.3.

In fiscal year 2006, MEXT conducted a “survey regarding the needs for learning activities, sports and cultural activities and regarding social education facilities.”

In this survey, the most frequently cited reasons for not engaging in learning activities were “no particular need” (cited by 35.3%), “a lack of available time due to work commitments” (35.1%) and

“expense problems” (28.3%).

The most frequently cited reasons for engaging in learning activities were “because it enriches life” (cited by 54.5%), “because it improves knowledge and skills” (53.5%) and “because it provides pleasant leisure time” (46.4%).

(* This nationwide survey was conducted with a total of 1,707 men and women aged 16 or older.

According to the public opinion survey by Cabinet Office, the largest proportion, 53.4%, of the 1,797 respondents who said they had not engaged in any particular lifelong learning activity cited “a lack of time due to their engagement in jobs or household chores”, followed by 15.6% who cited “a lack of a starting opportunity,” 14.5% who said they recognized “no particular need,” and 13.2% who said they found it “bothersome.” (These were the four most frequently cited reasons. Multiple replies were allowed.)

Regarding people aged 20 or older, a comparison with the results of the previous survey shows that the proportion of respondents who cited “a lack of time due to their engagement in jobs or household chores” declined from 58.6% to 55.2%, while the proportion of respondents recognizing “no particular need” rose from 8.9% to 14.0%, and the proportion of those who found it “bothersome” increased from 10.2% to 13.0%.

By city size, the proportion of respondents who cited “a lack of a starting opportunity” was large in small cities, whereas in large cities, the ratio of respondents who cited “no particular need” was large.

By gender, the ratios of respondents who recognized “no particular need” and of those who found it “bothersome” were high among men.

By age, the ratio of respondents who cited “a lack of time due to their engagement in jobs or household chores” was high among people in their 30s to 50s, and the ratio of respondents who cited “a lack of a starting opportunity” was high among people in their 50s.

Of the 2,228 respondents who expressed interest in engaging in lifelong learning activity in the future, the largest proportion, 53.3% said they wanted to “expand their range of pastimes,” followed by 39.1% who said they wanted to “strengthen friendship with other people or obtain new friends,” 37.5% who said they wanted to “enhance their health and physical strength,” 34.4% who said they wanted to “lead a meaningful life in old age,” 34.1% who said they wanted to “become more cultured,” and 30.8% who said they wanted to “make effective use of their free time.” (These were the six most frequently cited reasons. Multiple replies were allowed.)

Regarding people aged 20 or older, the proportion who said they wanted to “expand their range of pastimes” declined from 56.8% in the previous survey to 53.8%.

By city size, the proportion who said they wanted to “become more cultured” was bigger in large cities, while the proportion who said they wanted to “make effective use of their free time” was large in medium-size cities.

By gender, the proportions who said they wanted to “expand their range of pastimes,” “strengthen friendship with other people or obtain new friends” or “lead a meaningful life in old age” was high among women.

By age, the proportion who said they wanted to “strengthen friendship with other people or obtain new friends” was high among people in their 60s, while the ratio of respondents who wanted to “enhance their health and physical strength” was high among people in their 60s and in their 70s or older. Among people in their 50s and older age groups, the proportion who said they wanted to “lead a meaningful life in old age” was high. The ratio of those who said they wanted to “become more cultured” was high among people in their 20s to 40s, whereas the proportion who said they wanted to “make effective use of their free time” was high among people in their 50s and 60s.

2.2.4.

As described in 1.1.1. to 1.1.6., in promoting social education, Japan respects the independence of participants and leaves it to providers of social education to decide the contents of the education they provide. With this as a premise, the central and local governments are implementing a variety of measures to promote lifelong learning.

For example, during the “national lifelong learning festival”, sponsored by MEXT, companies and organizations hold various events, including the “the Lifelong Learning Exhibition,” which provides information and display goods related to lifelong learning, and opens classes for hands-on learning experiences.

2.2.5.

Although individual measures may target specific groups of people, such as baby boomers and NEET people, social education as a whole does not target any specific group or set criteria for participation.

2.2.6.

We do not have any particular benchmark.

2.3. Monitoring and evaluating programs and assessing learning outcomes

2.3.1.

Assessment of learning achievements is conducted by public agencies and private-sector organizations in various ways.

Regarding the system of certifying the completion of university courses, learners who have completed a certain set of programs intended for learners other than ordinary students, such as working people, are awarded certificates. Under the job card system, such certificates are recognized to certify vocational capabilities from the viewpoint of enabling learners to utilize the learning achievements as a basis for their careers. In the future, professional organizations and companies may take advantage of the certification system. For example, they may award qualifications to holders of certificates according to the purpose and nature of the certificates.

In the program to develop vocational capabilities under the job card system, companies issue evaluation sheets to trainees after the completion of training. By looking at their evaluation sheets, trainees can ascertain the level of their vocational capability, the progress toward their training goal, their areas of weakness and so on, and this motivates them to make efforts to acquire vocational capability and carry out tasks. Moreover, when they apply for jobs, the evaluation sheets enable them to be appropriately evaluated by employing companies.

In private-sector programs also, the achievements of adult education are evaluated. Accordingly, a report issued on February 19 by the Central Council for Education, entitled "Measures to Promote Lifelong Learning to Lead the New Era," points out that in order to establish a mechanism for assuring the quality of examination tests through evaluation by third-party evaluation bodies, such as private-sector companies, it is necessary for the government to support private-sector companies' proactive efforts in this regard, by compiling an evaluation guideline intended to ensure objectivity and fairness.

2.3.2.&2.3.3.

In addition, the achievements of adult education are evaluated in the private sector. Accordingly, the aforesaid report points out that in order to establish a mechanism for assuring the quality of examination tests through evaluation by third-party evaluation bodies, such as private-sector companies, it is necessary for the government to support private-sector companies' proactive efforts in this regard, by compiling an evaluation guideline intended to ensure objectivity and fairness.

2.3.4.

We do not have any particular benchmark.

2.4. Adult educators/facilitators' status and training

2.4.1., 2.4.2., 2.4.3.

In Japan, social education directors, librarians and curators are legally designated as professional personnel engaging in social education. The qualifications for these professional positions are specified by the Social Education Act, the Library Act and Museum Act.

Social education directors provide expert and technical advice to providers of social education. All education boards are legally obligated to appoint social education directors. One way to become qualified as a social education director is to gain at least 24 university credits in social education and at least one year's experience in practical work.

Librarians are professional personnel working for libraries. To become qualified as a librarian, it is necessary, for example, to gain at least 20 university credits in library affairs.

Curators are professional personnel working for museums. To become qualified as a curator, it is necessary, for example, to gain at least 12 university credits in museum affairs.

As for the training of such social education personnel, librarians receive training on expert knowledge of copyrights and other matters. Newly appointed library managers are given comprehensive training, including management skills training. Curators receive training on expert knowledge of preservation techniques and other matters. It should be noted that in light of the importance of such training, the Social Education Act, the Library Act and the Museum Act were amended in 2008, so as to require MEXT as well as prefectural governments to strive to provide appropriate training to librarians and curators.

As of October 2005, there were 4,119 social education directors, 12,781 librarians and 3,827 curators.

Regarding social education related to higher education institutions, there are open courses provided by individual universities. As of 2005, 715 of Japan's 726 universities had a total of about 23,400 open courses. The establishment of such courses makes the achievements of university education and research directly open to society, providing advanced learning opportunities to local residents.

In addition, the "program to promote education that meets adults' needs for re-learning" has been implemented since 2007 in order to meet the various learning needs of adults, by taking advantage of the unique features of higher education institutions. Under this program, there are more than 120 ongoing projects intended to help working people seeking re-employment and trying to improve their future career prospects. Specifically, they include the "project to foster personnel who protect the interests and lives of the underprivileged amid the aging society", the "project to foster personnel with coordinating skills needed in a multilingual, multicultural society" and the "project to improve the capability of personnel who form the core of regional small- and medium-size enterprises' human resources."

Among other projects, are those to that foster personnel who implement measures to develop vocational capabilities and support NEETs at "regional youth support stations", those that hold seminars to train personnel who provide career consulting to the youth at support facilities, and those that train personnel who provide "outreach" (home visit) support at "regional youth support stations." Also, the central support center, which assists organizations operating regional youth support stations and seminars for fostering the independence of the youth, provide training to improve the skills of the personnel of such organizations.

Polytechnic Universities, operated by the Employment and Human Resources Development Organization, foster and train vocational training instructors, who serve as instructors at vocational training facilities.

3. Research, Innovation and Good Practice

3.1. Research studies in the field of adult learning

3.1.1.

(1) Regarding academic research organizations involved in adult education

There are numerous academic research organizations involved in education. Of them, the following two have engaged in research for an extended period of time.

- Japan Society for the Study of Adult and Community Education
- Japan Association of Lifelong Education

In addition, the following academic organizations have also engaged in research on adult education facilities and activities.

- Japan Society of Library and Information Science
- Japan Society for the Study of Kominkan
- Museological Society of Japan

Every year, these academic organizations implement a number of research programs in a very broad range of fields in cooperation with universities, research institutes, non-profit organizations and other entities (The Japan Society for the Study of Adult and Community Education, for example, compiles the recent research trends in its annual bulletins.)

(2) Private-sector research institutes involved in adult education

In addition to academic organizations, which mainly comprise representatives of universities, private-sector research institutes, in which people such as social education directors and local community educators are involved in practical social education activities, have long engaged in research on social education.

The National Federation of Social Education, for example, was founded in 1945, immediately after the end of World War II, for the purpose of promoting social education and contributing to the dissemination of a healthy democracy based on the philosophy of the Japanese Constitution. It provides information services, including the publication of such journals as *Social Education*, as an activity necessary for the promotion of social education in local communities and workplaces. The National Kominkan Association, a long-established body that publishes *Monthly Kominkan*, conducts joint research activities with a number of organizations involved in social education, and provides public hall officials with research and training opportunities.

The Japan Association for Promotion of Social Education has also consistently promoted research on social education at the private-sector level and announced the research achievements in *Monthly Social Education*, a journal intended to promote implementation of private-sector social education and research exchange.

The Japan Library Association conducts research on the management and operation of libraries and library-related technologies, provides library personnel with research and training opportunities, and publishes the results of its activities in *Library Journal*. The Japanese Association of Museums

conducts a number of research programs for the promotion of museums, and publishes research papers regarding museum activities in *Museum Studies*.

Meanwhile, the national liaison council for social education personnel training, founded in 1993, is a research organization specialized in the promotion of the exchange of information, consultation and research activities regarding the training of social education personnel. There are also numerous social education research organizations comprising professional personnel working for libraries and museums, and private-sector research organizations that aim to promote practical citizen participation in social education.

However, it is impossible to exhaustively cover the research achievements of the numerous academic and private-sector research organizations. Therefore, we will focus on describing the trends of government-related research regarding adult learning in recent years, as they affect policy-making.

(2) The trends of major government-related research

1) Department for Lifelong Learning, National Institute for Educational Policy Research

- Research on lifelong career development
- Comprehensive research on health education aimed at lifelong enhancement of basic physical strength
- Comprehensive research on the lifelong development of reading ability.
- Research on lifelong reading education aimed at improving language skills
- Empirical research on the career development of higher education graduates in science fields
- Research on the feasibility of using key competencies as lifelong learning policy benchmarks
- Comprehensive research on knowledge creation type learning in a lifelong learning society
- Comprehensive research on media literacy in a lifelong learning society
- Longitudinal research on changes in lifelong learning needs
- Comprehensive research on the process of forming learning support networks between higher education institutions

2) Practical Social Education Research Center, National Institute for Educational Policy Research

- Research on cooperation between lifelong learning centers, etc., and municipalities, 2004
- Research on the actual state of classes and courses provided at public halls
- Research on the implementation of the “going to school from a community lodge” program in local communities
- Research on the development of environmental education programs
- Research on Internet-based social education training programs
- Research on Internet-based research seminars, etc.
- Research on the operation of remote social education training programs at lifelong learning centers, etc.
- Research on hands-on learning

- Research on the actual state of the “going to school from a community lodge” program in local communities, 2007
- Research on the development of training programs for coordinators regarding the program to secure space in which children can play and learn safely during after-school hours
- Research on the actual state of the duties of social education personnel
- Research on volunteer activities

3.1.2.

The above research can be classified by theme as follows:

- (1) Research on motivation for learning and on areas and levels of basic education and learning
 - Health education • Environmental education
 - Career education regarding “Challenge Again” (second chance) in the workplace
- (2) Research on learners’ social participation and group and network activities
 - Research on volunteer activities
- (3) Training of experts and program research and development
 - Utilization of public halls, lifelong learning centers, etc., and program research and development
 - Research on the actual state of adult education instructors and training of instructors
 - Program development and training regarding ICT and media
- (4) Statistics, international comparisons and theoretical research
 - Research on lifelong learning activities
 - International comparative research on key competencies, gender issues, etc.
 - Theoretical research on lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society

3.1.3.

Reports are submitted on individual research, and the evaluation of the reports and issues identified thereby will be used as a reference for the following research.

3.1.4.

The findings of individual research are linked to practice and administrative policies and affect them in a variety of ways, while policies, practice and actual needs lead to the setting of research themes in some cases.

3.2. Innovations and examples of good practice

3.2.1., 3.2.2., 3.2.3.

Below, we will describe good practice adopted in Japan in response to the 10 tasks presented at the Hamburg conference in 1997.

- (1) Examples of citizen participation
 - Learners’ participation in volunteer activities

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation : The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that occurred in 1995 had a significant impact on volunteer activities in Japan. Now, a number of adults are acting as education volunteers and library volunteers, in addition to people acting as conventional welfare volunteers and disaster volunteers. In recent years, the promotion of volunteer activity intended to protect school children from crime as well as education and enlightenment about disaster prevention/mitigation has emerged as a particularly important challenge. The development of volunteer activities and the increasing number of volunteers have led to the establishment of many non-profit organizations related to adult education in various regions. At the same time, opportunities for citizens to have contact with local government officials have increased. This has exposed some administrative problems while providing opportunities for citizens and local governments to cooperate in considering local issues and taking necessary actions.

- Education programs regarding the lay-judge system

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation : The introduction of the lay-judge system as part of the judicial system reform scheduled for 2009 requires citizens' better understanding of and their participation in judicial affairs. Therefore, education boards, courts and lawyers' associations are cooperating in education programs regarding the lay-judge system in various regions.

(2) Example of utilization of new information technologies

- Internet-based citizens' seminars

An Internet-based citizens' seminar in Toyama Prefecture has become an advanced model of a higher education open course for media literacy, and has paved the way for learners to participate in society as adult education lecturers. Internet-based citizens' seminars have also been opened in Tokyo, as well as Tokushima and Kochi Prefectures, and a network of such seminars has been formed. Since 2007, they have served as part of the platform for lifelong learning.

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation: This initiative involves not only cooperation between prefectural governments and universities but also the participation of companies and citizens. It allows citizen learners to develop their own lecture courses with the use of ICT. In addition, it not only promotes the activity of IT volunteers but also helps develop unique local cultures and human resources.

(3) Example of education and learning intended to promote the empowerment of women

- Support plan for women's career development

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation: Under this plan, we have conducted practical research on measures to provide support for women to fully exercise their capabilities in society and develop a diverse range of careers. We have also implemented a model project for the improvement of women's qualifications and capabilities in order to realize gender equality in

decision-making at the local community level, by taking advantage of the achievements of their learning and activities.

In addition, in order to encourage women to choose careers in science fields, where the participation of women is lagging in Japan compared with other countries, we have strived to enhance support for the development of diverse career options for women by conducting research on leading examples of career choices favoring science fields, and providing the research findings.

(4) Example of adaptation to the changing labor situation

• "Challenge Again" (second chance) support program

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation: This program aims to develop IT-based education provision systems, thereby supporting a "lifelong learning platform," which consistently provides education materials and consultations via the Internet, so as to enable young people and baby boomers near the retirement age to make a fresh start in their career, and disseminating the platform nationwide. To this end, we will develop applications software for the management of learning that is essential to Internet-based education provision systems, and compile a manual for the development and operation of the lifelong learning platform.

(5) Example of efforts to create a safe education environment for children

• School-local community joint program for securing space in which children can play and learn safely during after-school hours

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation: In order to prevent crime against children on their way to school and various youth problems, this program seeks to secure space in which children can safely play and learn during after-school hours, thanks to the participation of local adult residents.

(6) Examples of efforts to cope with problems associated with the aging of society

Reason for the citation as an example of innovation: In 2005, the ratio of elderly people in Japan exceeded 20%, the highest in the world. In response to the aging of society, various initiatives are under way, mainly at the local community level. In addition, the adult education policy will become increasingly important in response to the aging of baby boomers.

• "Lifelong learning instructors bank"

The Osaka City has a service to introduce "lifelong learning instructors," who are volunteers, to people looking for lecturers for group learning. There are lifelong learning instructors for a broad range of subjects, including health, living support, foreign languages, photography and postcard making. It also has a service to introduce "senior leaders," who act as volunteers to support learning based on their long years of life experiences by providing lectures on a continuous or as-needed basis. The subjects covered by "senior leaders" range from matters that they have learned in their workplaces and communities to the local history, traditional games, handicraft,

singing, calligraphy and literature.

- "Snow busters"

For the Sawauchi Village in Iwate Prefecture, known as a heavy snowfall area, snow removal for houses in which elderly people live alone is a major community challenge. To tackle this challenge, local residents, including high-school students, have formed a "snow busters" group, which conducts a snow-removal volunteer service. Under the snow busters program, there is a system that enables volunteers from outside the village to pay for lodgings with the use of a "local currency."

4. Adult Literacy

4.1. How is literacy defined in your country? Have there been any changes since 1997 (CONFINTEA V)? Please explain.

(1) Definition of literacy

In Japan, literacy was defined for the first time in 1948, after the end of World War II, in a report jointly compiled by the former Ministry of Education, the former National Institute for Educational Research, the National Institute for Japanese Language and the Institute of Statistical Mathematics. Although the commonsense view is that literacy refers to the reading and writing ability, it has never been precisely defined in Japan.

Literacy is a concept defined by researchers as the most basic language ability essential to human social life. However, the basic language ability essential to social life varies according to the type of occupation. Farmer literacy, for example, is not necessarily the same as government administrator literacy. Therefore, the aforesaid report provides a unique definition of literacy based on the concept of Japanese people's ability to read and write.

This report defines newspapers, notices, fliers and personal letters as "mass communication media" and defines literacy as the "ability to understand and utilize such mass communication media." In addition, it states that when evaluating the reading and writing ability, the evaluation should focus on the ability to understand and utilize mass communication media, rather than special media used by limited groups of people, such as academic publications, financial records and literary works. This is because the "reading and writing ability" is the ability to utilize "mass communication media," according to the report. In other words, the report says, the reading and writing ability serves as a "yardstick to evaluate the effect of mass communication media." In short, literacy as defined in the report is a concept used to evaluate the reading and writing ability required of Japanese people as a necessary minimum skill for leading a social life regardless of their occupation. (P. 3, *Reading and Writing Ability of the Japanese People*, Reading and Writing Ability Research Commission, University of Tokyo Press, 1948).

It should be borne in mind that this report defined literacy for the purpose of evaluating the reading and writing ability. The report stipulated that for people to be recognized as "literate," they must gain full marks in an examination test of the minimum necessary requirements essential to normal social life. The literacy test based on this idea was conducted in 1948 on around 16,000 people aged between 15 and 64 nationwide. Only 6.2% obtained full marks, while 1.7% got no points and 2.1% was found to have an ability to write in the "kana" syllabary but not in Chinese characters. The rest showed a J-shape distribution leftward from the full marks.

(Following this, another survey was conducted in 1955 on around 2,000 people in the Kanto and Tohoku regions, yet it failed to examine the literacy of people in all adult-age groups, as its subjects were limited to people aged between 15 and 24, including senior high-school students and other local residents.

(2) Situation since 1997

Since the aforesaid surveys, no literacy survey has been conducted in Japan. In 1997, the former National Institute for Educational Research participated in the OECD's International Adult Literacy Survey on an experimental basis and has since then engaged in research on international trends in adult literacy. In addition, surveys and research on IT literacy and media literacy, like the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, have been actively conducted in recent years, and IT literacy and media literacy as defined by Japan have much in common with the definitions made by other countries.

Of particular note is that in recent years, "literacy" has often been used by Japanese mass media as a directly borrowed word ("riterasi"), as in "konpyuta riterasi" (computer literacy) and "media riterasi" (media literacy). These words have roughly the same meanings with the original English words, with "media riterasi" used to refer to an ability to interpret what is reported by media with a critical stance and "konpyuta riterasi" used to mean an ability to gather and utilize information through IT equipment. Meanwhile, literacy as used to mean the reading and writing ability is regarded as the very basis of the various kinds of literacy.

In 2002, the Center for Adult Learning, Literacy & Japanese as a Second Language (later renamed as the Center for Adult Learning, Literacy & Japanese as a Second Language, Osaka) was established in Osaka Prefecture with fiscal funding from local governments. This center has been operating based on the following concept regarding literacy and Japanese language. (<http://www.call-jsl.jp/>)

"Acquiring literacy and learning the Japanese language means developing an ability to read and write characters and understand Japanese words essential to social life, and the development of this ability is supported by literacy classes, Japanese language schools and night classes of junior high schools."

4.2. Which new policies have been adopted and implemented?

The following specific policy measures have been taken by the government:

- Before fiscal year 2001, the government implemented measures regarding adult literacy, including the opening of literacy classes, as part of special regional improvement programs. In fiscal year 2002, it terminated special programs limited to specific regions and has implemented necessary measures programs as part of general programs since then, following a partial amendment of the act for special measures for regional improvement. The government is supporting local efforts to improve adult literacy by shouldering part of the cost of opening literacy classes and holding lecture meetings.
- Since fiscal year 2004, the government has transferred the fiscal source for the "program to promote education regarding human rights," a subsidy scheme that includes support for the opening of literacy classes, to local governments, and provided local tax grants to them so that they can operate such classes in ways reflecting their local features, based on their own responsibilities and authorities.

The government has not adopted any particular new policy regarding literacy since the fifth

International Conference on Adult Education, held in 1997. However, the government has continued to provide foreign residents in Japan and Japanese returnees from abroad with opportunities to learn the Japanese language (in accordance with Item 36, Article 4 of the Act for Establishment of the Ministry, Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and Article 19 of the Fundamental Act for Promotion of Culture and Art).

4.3. Please give examples of effective practice and innovative programs?

There is not a government program specialized in adult literacy, because necessary Japanese-language education programs are provided as part of school education.

Meanwhile, it is true that there are people who need Japanese-language education, such as Japanese people who have failed to receive sufficient school education for some reason or other, and foreign people who have settled in Japan after growing up abroad.

Japanese-language schools have been opened in various locations in line with an increase in the number of foreign residents in Japan.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs engages in initiatives such as opening Japanese-language schools intended for foreign people and training local community volunteers and retired teachers as Japanese-language instructors.

In addition, the government supports Japanese-language education provided to foreign refugees and returnees from China, by distributing necessary learning materials.

4.4. Please illustrate how policies and programs focus on gender. Describe the importance given to women and other target groups.

As we explained in 4.3., there is not a government program specialized in adult literacy, and programs to develop necessary Japanese language skills common to men and women are provided through education at elementary and junior high schools. Until now, the government has implemented a number of measures to promote gender equality in society, including a program to improve women's IT literacy in order to promote their social participation and the provision of vocational training opportunities. Meanwhile, in order to encourage men's participation in local community activities, the government has implemented model projects to promote their support for efforts to create a safe local community environment and space in which children can play and learn safely during after-school hours, as well as baby boomers' local community participation.

4.5. To what extent do policies and programs aim at building literate environments? What progress could be achieved?

In Japan, IT literacy is becoming increasingly essential for working people to acquire basic job skills and for adults in general to participate in various local community activities, as globalization and the shift to a knowledge-based society proceeds. Therefore, "Regarding Measures to Promote Lifelong Learning that Opens a New Era", a report presented in 2008 by the Central Council for Education, advocates the

establishment of the “lifelong learning platform,” which provides learning opportunities in a comprehensive manner, by, for example, supporting individuals’ re-learning and providing a diverse range of learning options suited to each stage of life. This reflects the basic concept that it is necessary not only to enable people to pursue something to live for and seek to become more cultured, but also to strengthen efforts to acquire professional knowledge and skills, pass them on to future generations and achieve creativity as a result.

The lifelong learning platform is expected to become indispensable for efforts to enable people to acquire various kinds of literacy essential to the increasingly complex needs of society, as well as for basic literacy and for further improving literacy.

The aforesaid report points out that in order to adapt to the shift to a knowledge-based society, people need to acquire “comprehensive intelligence,” including enriched human character, as well as a problem-identifying abilities, flexible thinking and the ability to solve complex problems based on acquired knowledge and skills. Under existing school policy, the acquisition of these abilities, which may be called “living skills,” has already been set as a goal. Now the government recognizes that adults also need comprehensive skills, and aims to create a favorable environment for lifelong learning that enables the acquisition and utilization of these skills, which would allow them to adapt to rapid social change and lead resilient lives as independent individuals.

The following are specific measures to realize this goal.

- Support for lifelong learning — providing individuals with the motivation to learn
 - (i) Deliberating what kind of learning opportunities to provide in order to enable individuals to acquire necessary skills
 - (ii) Providing a variety of learning opportunities and improving the environment for struggling people to make a fresh start
 - (iii) Improving the social viability of the evaluation of learning achievements
- Improvement in the educational capability of society as a whole — creating a mechanism for cooperation between schools, families and local communities
 - Creating a foundation supporting home education in communities
 - (iii) Promoting society-wide efforts to support schools as regional centers (the school support regional headquarters program and After-School Plan for Children
 - Utilization of social education facilities to improve the educational capability of regional communities
 - Cooperation between higher education institutions such as universities and local communities

By creating a favorable environment for adult education through these measures, the government aims to enable the people to acquire and improve comprehensive skills, including literacy and key competencies, that are necessary for them to lead resilient lives as independent individuals.

5. Expectations of CONFINTEA VI and Future Perspectives for Adult Education

5.1. What outcomes do you expect from CONFINTEA VI?

5.2. Please list the main issues that adult education will have to address, and describe future perspectives for the development of policies and practices in adult education and adult learning.

The Central Council for Education's report issued in February 2008 recommended that as an education policy, Japan should aim to support lifelong learning by individuals and improve the educational capability of society as a whole.

Regarding adult education, the report recommended that efforts should be made to provide a variety of learning opportunities, create an environment that enables struggling people to make a fresh start, and improve the social viability of the evaluation of learning achievements. It expressed hopes that the central and local governments will cooperate with private-sector social education organizations to enhance necessary measures.