

Chapter 2

Efforts towards Providing Personal Independence and Sustainable Society in Various Scenes

Section1. Supporting the youth to be independent

Amidst the severe employment situation since the collapse of the bubble economy, job market for the youth has also soured, and the number of job-hopping part-time workers or “Freeters” increased with the so called “employment ice age” taking place. Cases of corporate employment offering withdrawals to new graduates were seen from around the autumn of 2008, triggered by the shaky economic condition. Furthermore, there is the so called “NEET”-Not in Education, Employment or Training.

In this section, we will unveil the situation surrounding independent and will state our efforts to support the youth facing these varieties of issues.

1. Situations surrounding the youth

(Situation of the youth in the employment ice age)

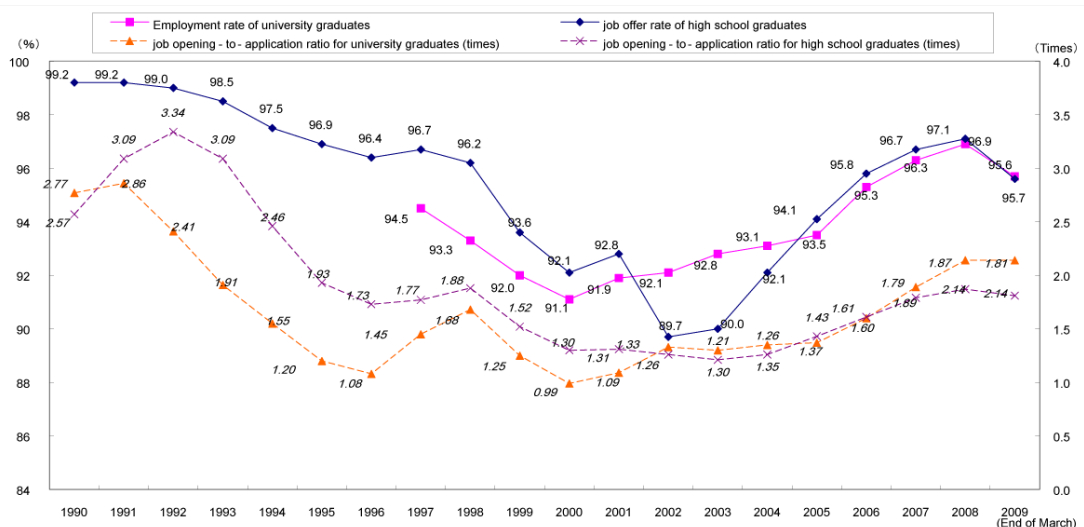
Amidst the severe employment situation since the collapse of the bubble economy, job market for the youth has also soured.

We will overview the situation during this period. First, looking at the employment rate and the job offer rate (proportion of employed and informally-appointed worker to job seeker) and the job opening-to-application ratio, the ratio of job offers to university graduates plunged from 2.77 in 1990 to 0.99 in 2000, while the employment rate dropped to 91.1% in 2000 from 94.5% in the year 1997 when the survey was first conducted. The ratio of job offers to high school graduates also plunged from 2.57 in 1990 to 1.21 in 2003, while the employment rate dropped to 89.7% in 2002 from 99.2% in 1990 (Figure2-1-1).

Looking at the unemployment rate, the young generation tends to be higher on unemployment rate than that of the middle-aged and the elderly in general. The result shows that the unemployment rate for the all aged group reached a peak at 5.4%, 10.1% for the aged group 15-24, and 6.4% for the aged group 25-34 in 2002,

2003 and 2002 respectively and has shown a declining trend. That of the aged group 25-34 has not been improving well, compared to the all aged group, and increased again from the previous year to 5.2% in 2008, remaining at a high level in general (Figure2-1-2). Looking at the number of long-term unemployed (the number of unemployed for a year or more) by age group, that of the aged group between 25 and 34 has the highest number (Figure2-1-3), transmitting the ratio to total long-term unemployed from high 10s to low 20s by 1998 to around mid 20s to high 20s from around 1999.

Figure2-1-1 Employment rate of university graduates, job offer rate of high school graduates and job opening-to-application ratio



Source: "Survey on Situation of Job Offers for University Graduates etc.", Employment Security Bureau, MHLW/ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology "Survey on Situation of New Graduates of High Schools and Junior High Schools etc.", Employment Security Bureau and "College Graduate Recruitment Survey", Works Institute, Recruit Co., Ltd.
 (Note 1) "Employment rate" and "job offer rate" are the proportion of informally-appointed worker to job-seeker (informally-appointed worker and non-informally-appointed worker seeking job). The survey is as of April 1, and the end of March for university and high school graduates respectively. The survey on university graduates started in 1997.
 (Note 2) "Job opening-to-application ratio" is the proportion of the number of applicants to that of job seekers. The survey on university graduates is of the seniors' first FY survey research (April-May). That of high school graduates is of the juniors' year-end fiscal survey (as of the end of March).

Next, looking at the trends of non regular employees to regular employees excluding executives, based on the "Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)" by the Statistic Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, especially the aged group between 15 and 24 among males substantially increased from 1995 to 2005 and have remained at a high level. Those of the aged groups 25-34 and 55-64 also remained at high levels after substantially increasing from 2000 to 2005. The increasing trends of the aged group 15-24 of females are also higher than other aged group (Figure2-1-4).

As stated in Chapter1, hiring cutbacks were in place, amidst harsh business conditions, since the collapse of the bubble economy. The result turned out that the proportion of young generation to business workers declined, while the number of freeters increased.

The Japanese word “Freeter,” combining the English word “free” and the German word “Arbeiter” (part time worker) was coined by a part time job magazine in the late 1980s. What the word had in mind at the beginning was a youth who dare to work as a part timer instead of working full time, to realize some goal or willing not to be controlled by any organization¹. The number of freeters peaked at 2.17 million in 2003. According to the Employment Advance Research Center’s “New generation’s occupational view and career” (2002), nearly 45% out of the youth who got jobs as non-regular employees are unsatisfied with the results or gave up their job hunting (Figure2-1-5). 13.3% of the youth desire to work as “non regular employees” while 64.4% of them desire to work as “regular employees/regular staff members”(Figure2-1-6), according to the Cabinet Office’s “A Survey on Youth Independence in Japan in FY 2004,” and the result shows that increase of working style of the youth working as non-regular is not necessarily due to their working awareness alone.

Figure2-1-2 Trends in unemployment rate by age group

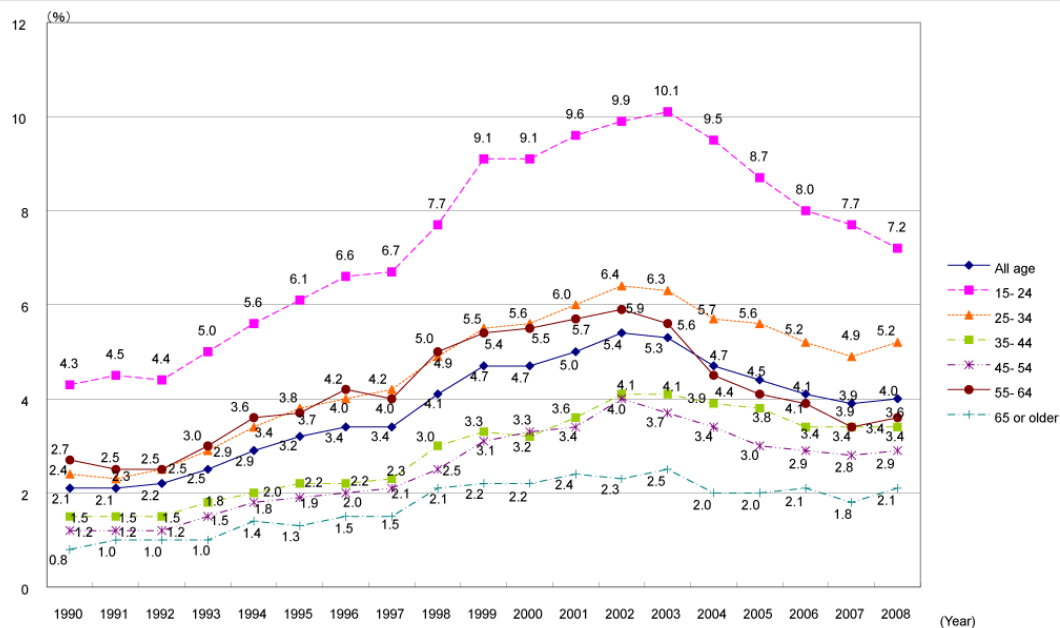
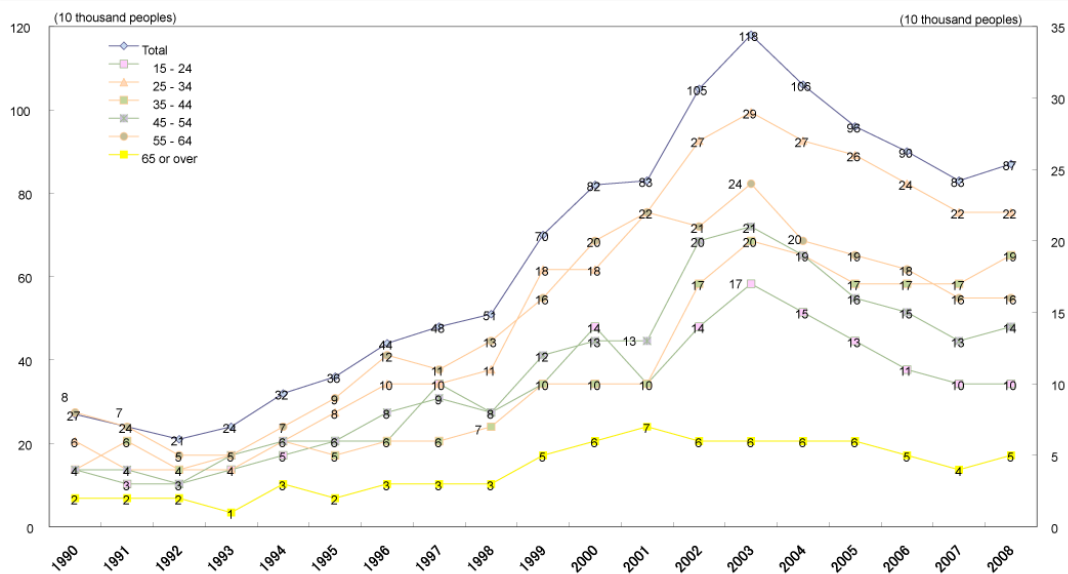


Figure2-1-3 Trends in the number of unemployed for a year or more by age group



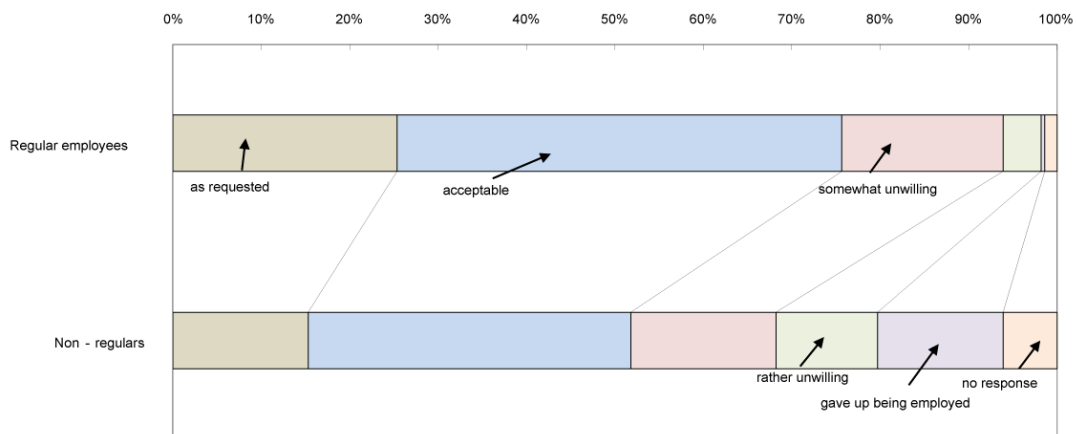
Source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Special Survey of the Labour Force Survey" and "Labour Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)"
(note) 1990-2001 is the February data; 2002-2008 is the yearly average.

Figure2-1-4 Employer's ratios other than regular employee who occupies it to employers except director (non-agriculture and forestry industry)



Source: 1985-1990-1995-2000 years' Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare policy evaluation room making after Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications Statistics Bureau "Labor force survey (February of special investigation)" and 2005 from "Labor force survey (detailed total) one ? average result in March".
(note) Total contains a person of 15?24 years old who is attending school and 65-year-old or more person.

Figure2-1-5 Youth's awareness on their job hunting results

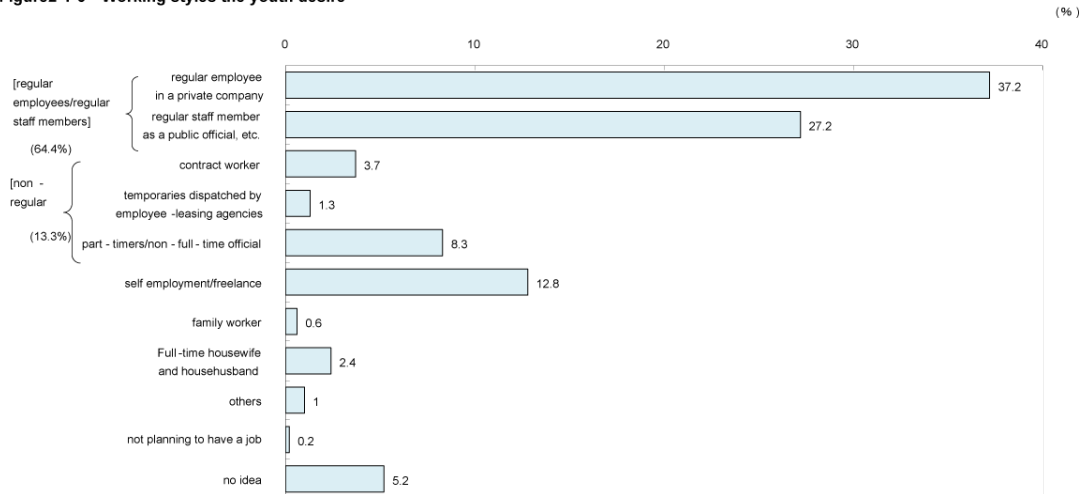


Source: Employment Advance Research Center "New Generations View of Occupation and Career"(2002)

(note) 1) Male or female aged 34 or younger working or living in the Tokyo area.

2) Non-regulars include part-timers, contracted employees, temporary staff and the so called Freeters.

Figure2-1-6 Working styles the youth desire



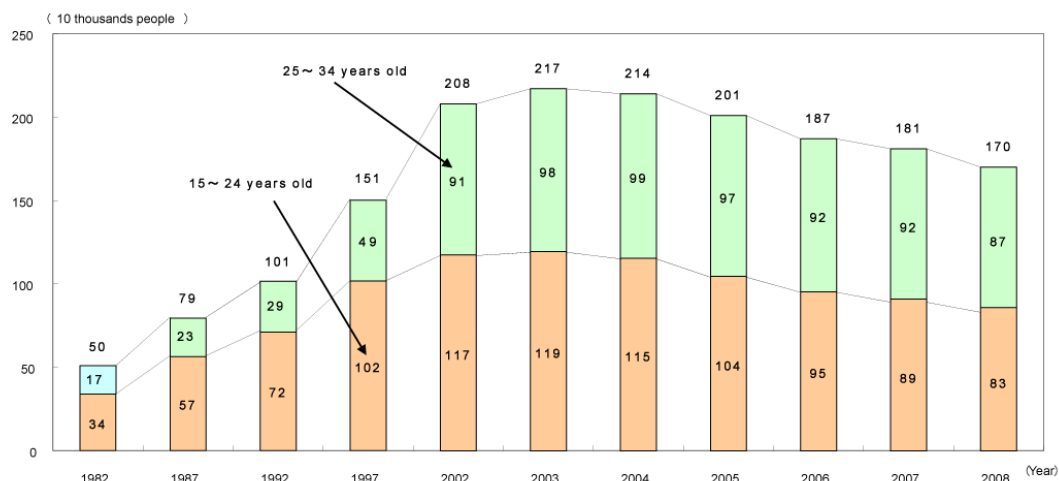
Source: Cabinet Office "A Survey on Youth Independence in Japan" (FY 2004)

(note) Answers are taken from a question "how would you like to work if you can choose your working style freely?"

Although the number of freeters is showing a declining trend since 2004, amidst the recovery trend in the economy since 2002, that of the aged group 15-24 is declining mainly and improvement of older freeters, aged group 25-34, is lagging (Figure2-1-7).

Looking at the number of "Unemployed Youth," a concept similar to NEET, in the "Labour Force Survey" of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, those who were not in the labour force was in the level of 40 thousand people in the 1990s. However, the number increased to 64 thousand people in 2002 and is hovering at the level of 60 thousand-plus people since then. In addition, increase in the number of unemployed mid-30s can also be seen (Figure2-1-8).

Figure2-1-7 Transition of number of permanent part-timers according to age class



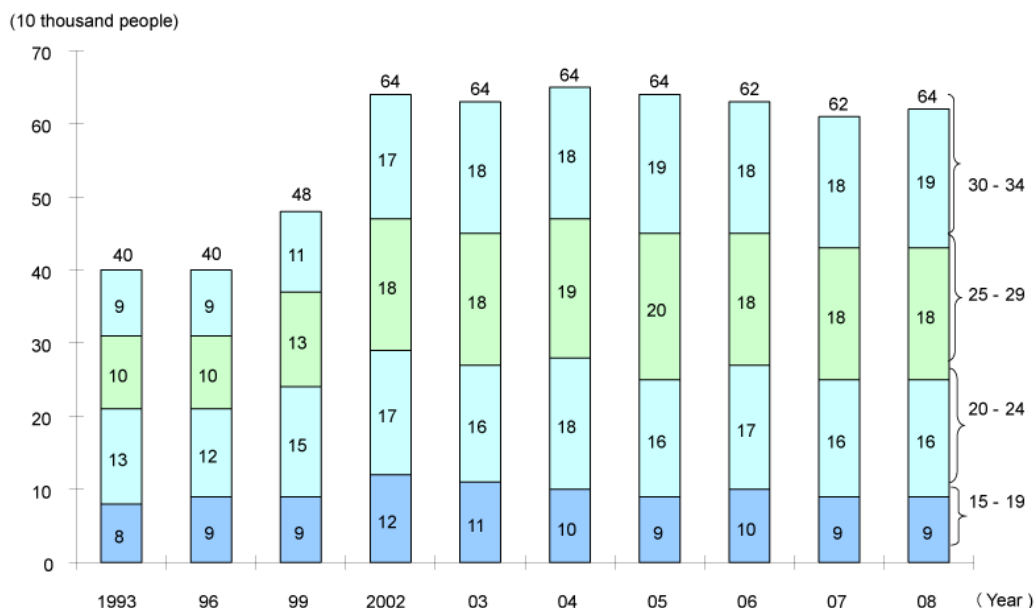
Source: Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications Statistics Bureau in Ministry of Labor Policy Planning and Research Department from the Management and Coordination Agency Statistics Bureau "Structure of employment basis investigation" after a special total ("Analysis of 2000 version labor economy. ") and 2002 for 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997 years "Labor force survey (detailed total)"

(note 1) The age limits the permanent part-timer to 15~34 years old about 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997 years. "Part-time job" or "Part" the name in the office The continuance starting work years do alone about the person in less than 1~5 and the woman as the person who is working chiefly, and about the person of a present no industry, it defines, and it totals it about the man about the person who has found employment now with the person who doesn't go to school by housework and either hopes for the work of "Part-time job part" by the employer.

(note 2) Of single people graduates of man of graduate and female of clarification of point for age to limit permanent part-timer to 15~34 years old, and to exclude enrolment after 2002, ① Person "Part-time job" or "Part" name in office of employers, ② The form of work to look for of the completely unemployed is a person of "Part-time job", ③ It is defined as the person of "Others" in which the form of work to hope of the population not in labor forces doesn't do housework, going to school, and the informal decision of starting work by "Part part-time job", and totals it.

(note 3) It is necessary to note the point not connected from define by the permanent part-timer different by the numerical value and the numerical value after 2002 from 1982 to 1997.

Figure2-1-8 Trends in the numbers of unemployed youth

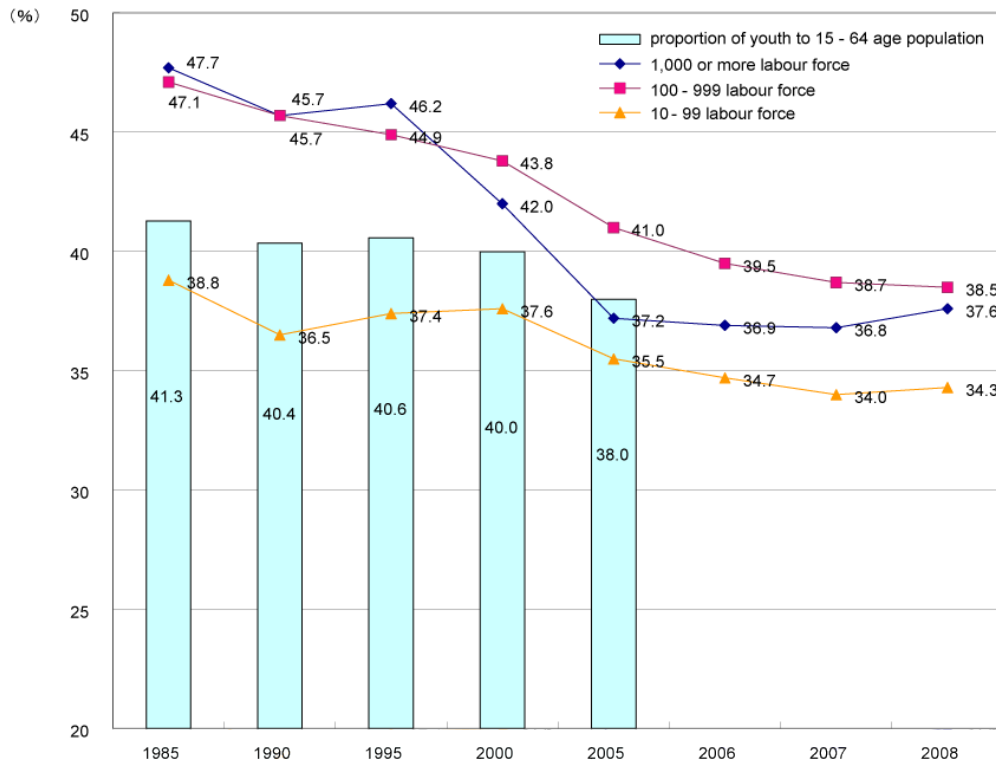


Source: Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Labour Force Survey"

(note) "Unemployed youth" are those not involved in housekeeping nor education among the labour force of 15-34.

Looking at the trends of proportion of the youth (aged 15-34) in regular employees² by sizes of enterprise in the "Basic Survey on Wage Structure" of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, each size of enterprise is showing a long-term declining trend and especially the declining gap of major enterprise with 1,000 employees or more is widening. (Figure2-1-9).

Figure2-1-9 Proportion of youth to workers by scale and that to the 15-64 age population



Source: Compiled by the Counsellor Office for Policy Evaluation, Director-General for Policy Planning and Evaluation, MHLW from its Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat's "Basic Survey on Wage Structure" and the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "National Census."

(note1) "Proportion of youth to workers" is that of 34 years or younger to the total labour.

(note2) "Labours" mentioned here mean regular employees aged 15 or older. Regular employees are those "hired for an indefinite period," "hired for longer than a month" or those "hired for 18 days or more in each month of April and May of those hired by the day or for less than a month."

(note3) "Proportion of youth to 15-64 age population" is that of 15-34 age population to 15-64 age population.

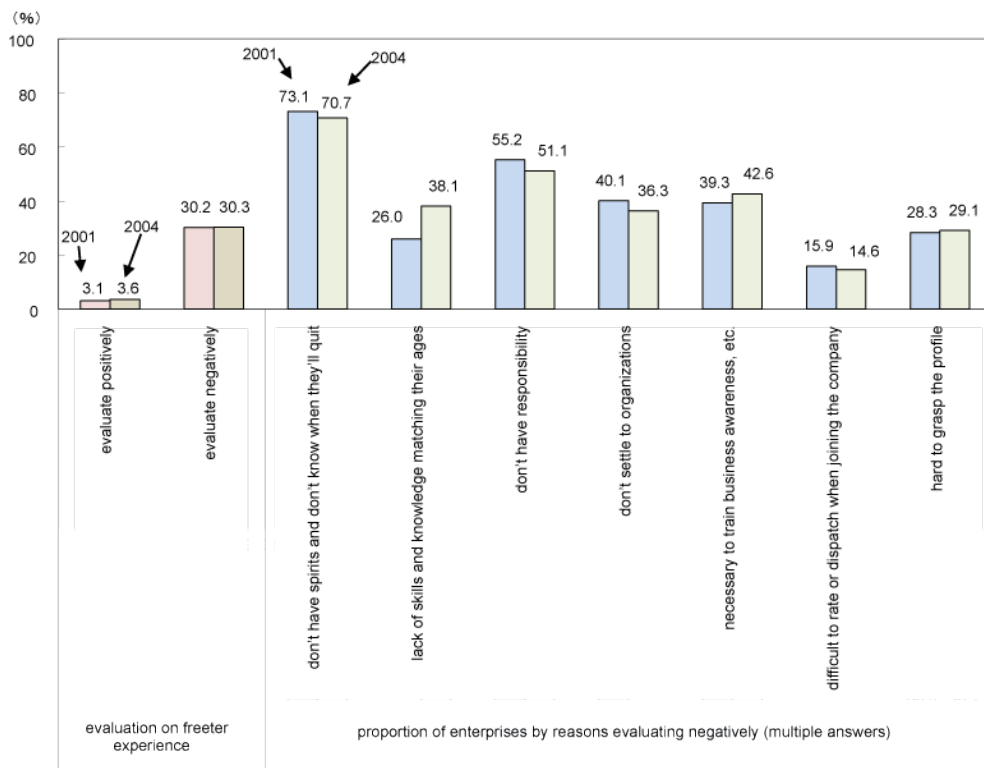
(Background making it difficult for the youth, including Freeters to be reemployed)

As stated in Chapter 1-Section2, the mainstream of employment in Japan especially in major enterprises is the simultaneous recruiting of new graduates and majority of enterprises considers increasing recruitment of new graduates.

While the simultaneous recruiting of new graduates is being accepted by the society as a certain effective practice, supporting new graduates to transfer smoothly to become a working member of society and avoiding them from being unemployed, there remains issues for the youth to "have a second chance" since their recruitment period faced the harsh period for new recruitment, thus having a

difficulty to work as a regular employee or under condition of unsatisfied recruitment. In addition, the background lagging improvement of recruitment conditions of older aged group among the youth group is considered that many enterprises post harsh evaluation on experiences as Freeters. Looking at how enterprises evaluate experience as Freeters on making decisions to recruit Freeters as regular employees, based on the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Survey on Employment Management" (2004), although "does not affect much on evaluation" was the most common choice among enterprises, marking 61.9%, 30.3% of them chose "evaluate negatively," much higher than those who chose "evaluate positively" (Figure2-1-10).

Figure2-1-10 Enterprises evaluation on experiences as Freeters on recruiting them as regular employees



Source: Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, MHLW "Survey on Employment Management"

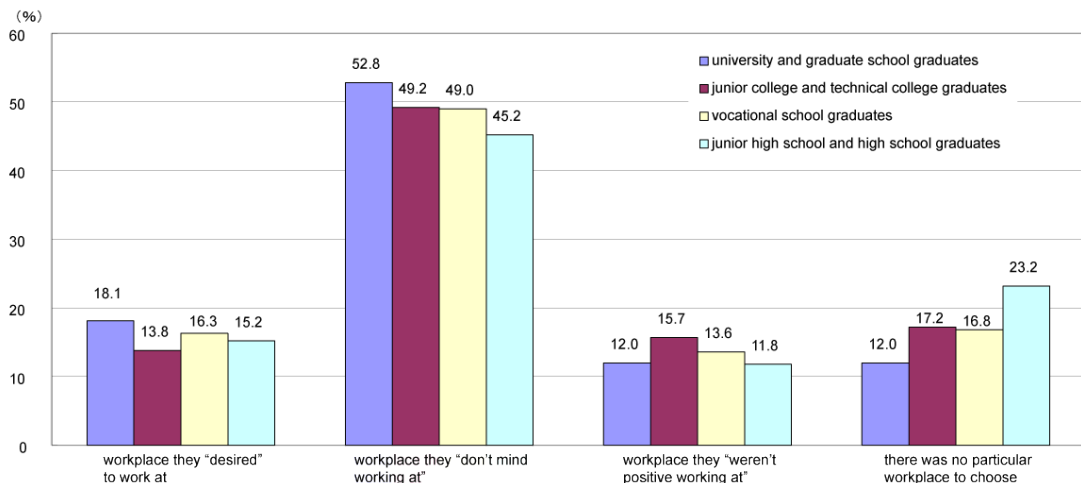
(Formation of job consciousness on the youth)

Next, looking at job consciousness on the youth from the Japan Institute for Labour

Policy and Training's "Survey on the Reasons Why Youth Leave Their Jobs and Work Commitment" (2007), although about 50% of the youth replied that the first work place they chose after graduation were "the work place they do not mind working at," being the most common answer, about 10% to 20% of the youth replied "there were no particular work places to chose," showing that there are people without being sufficiently formed towards job consciousness (Figure2-1-11).

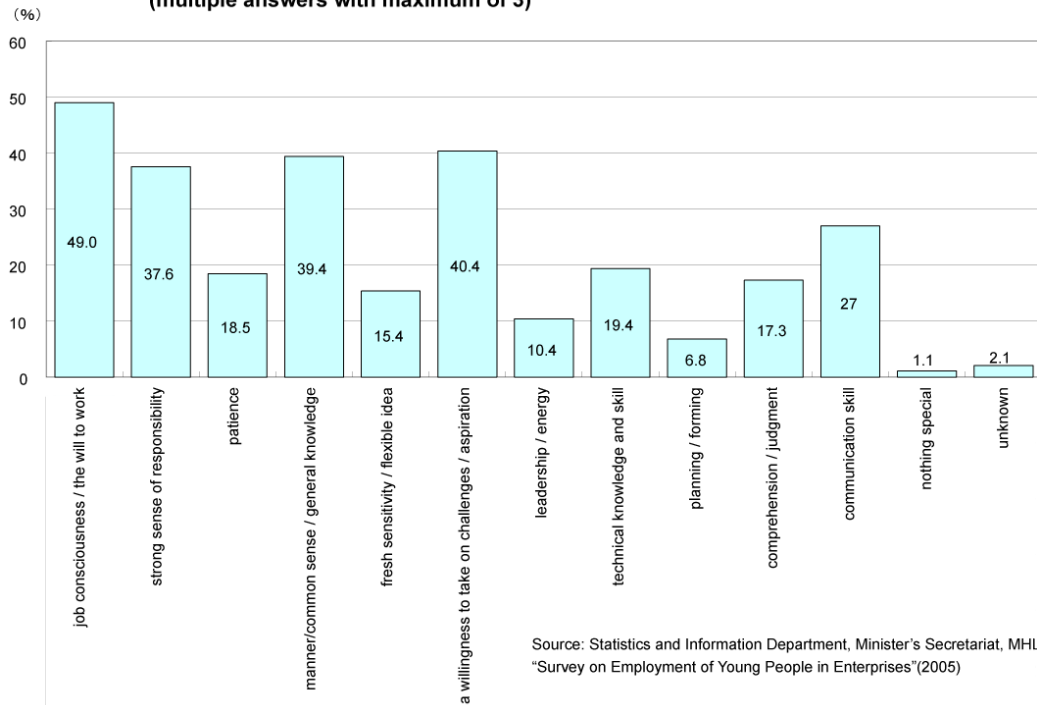
On the other hand, looking at what enterprises desire and what kind of abilities they want young regular workers to have (multiple answers with maximum of 3), from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Survey on Employment of Young People in Enterprises in 2005," "job consciousness/the will to work," "a willingness to take on challenges/aspiration," "manner/common sense/general knowledge" and "strong sense of responsibility" ranked high (Figure2-1-12). It is important to nurture attitude/ability for the youth to voluntarily select their future after graduation, and in order to achieve that, efforts to support formation of job consciousness during their school days are essential.

Figure2-1-11 The first "workplace" they chose after graduation



Source: Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training "Survey on the Reasons Why Youth Leave Their Jobs and Work Commitment"(2007)

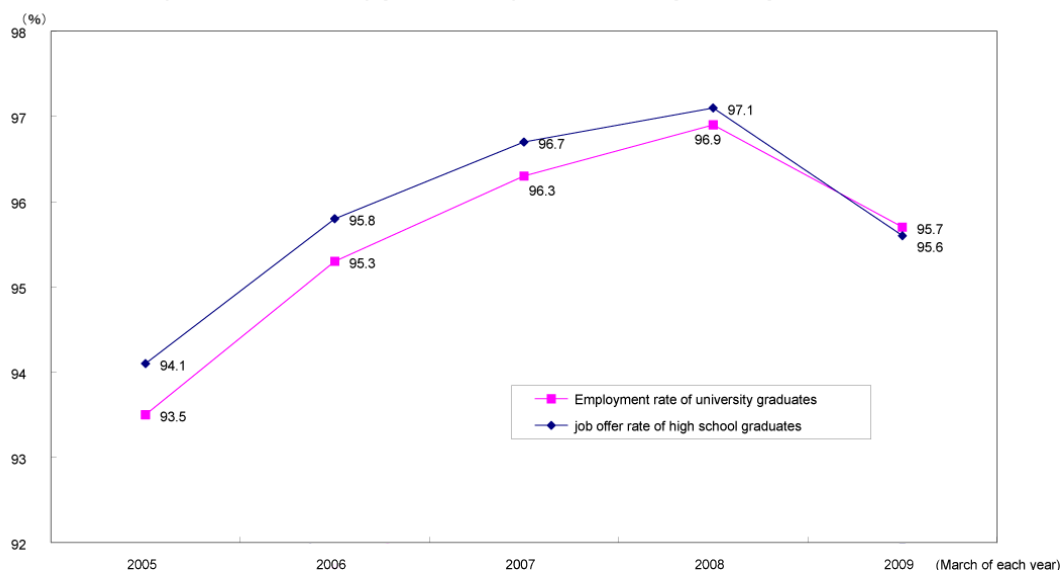
Figure2-1-12 What enterprises desire and what kind of abilities they want young regular workers to have (multiple answers with maximum of 3)



(Employment opportunities of nowadays)

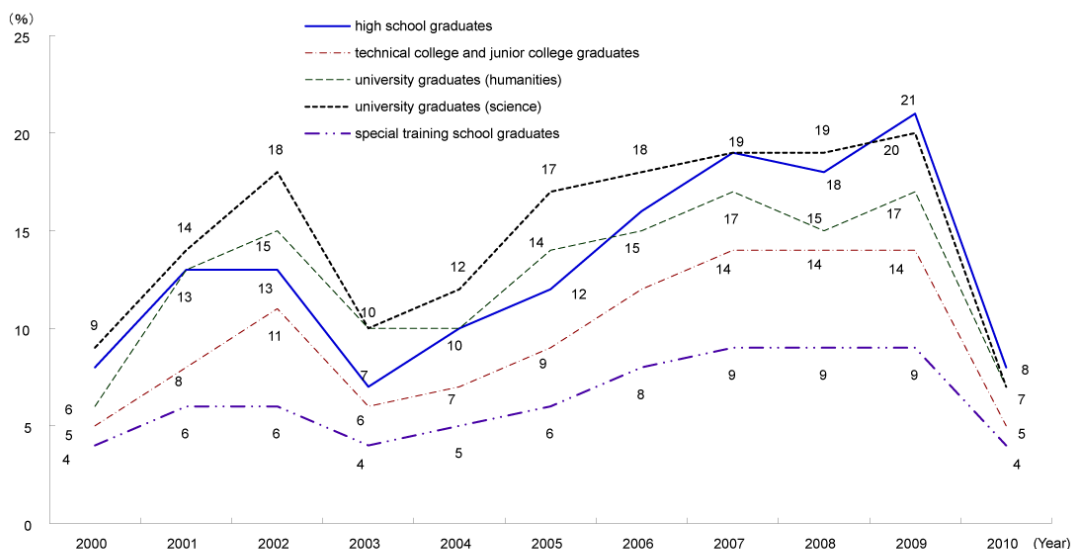
Amidst deterioration in the current economic situation, employment opportunities including new graduates are becoming severe, and the recruitment of university graduates and job offer rate for high school graduates in 2009 dropped from those of 2008 (Figure2-1-13). Furthermore, severe situation is continuously expected with the proportion of enterprises planning to recruit fewer new graduates exceeding those planning to recruit more new graduates, and the number of enterprises planning to recruit more new graduates in 2010 declined from the previous year (Figure2-1-14).

Figure2-1-13 Employment rate of university graduates and job offer rate of high school graduates



Source: "Survey on Situation of Job Offers for University Graduates etc.", Employment Security Bureau, MHLW/ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology "Survey on Situation of New Graduates of High Schools and Junior High Schools etc.", Employment Security Bureau.
 (note) "Employment rate" and "job offer rate" are the proportion of informally-appointed worker to job-seeker (informally-appointed worker and non-informally-appointed worker seeking job). The survey is as of April 1, and the end of March for university and high school graduates respectively.

Figure2-1-14 Trends in the proportion of enterprises planning to recruit more new graduates



Source: Statistics and Information Department, Minister's Secretariat, MHLW "Survey on Labour Economy Trend"
 (note 1) Horizontal figures represent years planning to recruit (surveys are conducted in previous May).
 (note 2) Figures before 2009 do not include "medical and welfare," therefore do not exactly link with the 2010 figure.

2. Efforts on personal independence of the youth

The youth are originally aged group, showing their abilities with hope for the future and making efforts towards its realization. However, the number of older Freeters still remains high, and the youth who could not have a stable job during the “employment ice age” and even could not have an opportunity for vocational capability building since then, have reached their mid-30s. Those youth lacked the chance of being employed right after their graduation amid the cutback on hiring after the collapse of the bubble economy. Since then, they could not have an opportunity for vocational capability building, while working as non-regular employees and have reached their mid-30s, facing a difficult situation getting a job in the mid-career employment market since those corporations seek people who can be immediately effective. Trends of corporations negatively evaluating Freeter’s experiences are also considered to be a factor for making it difficult for the youth to have stable jobs.

Backing independence of the youth so that they can demonstrate their abilities with motivation is necessary. Especially regarding older Freeters (aged25-39), unless stable employment is realized at an early stage, they will lose opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, in addition to bringing concerns that their future independence may be much harder, causing great damage to our society. A situation where the youth playing an important role as supporters of the society can not live a stable life could jolt the foundation of the entire society.

In order to enable the youth to get stable jobs, backing up mainly on job- placement support and vocational capability development are required, and especially supports on older Freeters (aged25-39) are pressing. Therefore, expanding age limitation of the youth to be supported and job-placement support and vocational capability development on older Freeters need to be emphasized. While providing these supports, supports on the practical side of life are also essential, so that they can take job training without anxiety. Although the economic situation is in a shaky position, corporations are expected to open their doors not only to new graduates but also to the youth, in response to their abilities and aptitudes.

A group called NEET is the one facing more challenges than others towards

independence. Since such group is faced with many problems, including job consciousness and fundamental social adaptation, efforts to ferment job consciousness, nurture fundamental ability and to support social adaptation for a start are necessary, as well as providing supports to such group so that they can demonstrate their native willpowers and abilities through these comprehensive supports. Establishment of a network for mutual support among organizations is important for creating a system to support each individual in detail based on their characteristics.

In order to achieve this, older Freeters aged 25-39 who could not find full-time positions during the “employment ice age” are being focused, based on the “New Employment Strategy” compiled in April, 2008, and while promoting “Freeter etc, Regular Employment Plan” targeting “Regular employment for 1 million people in 3 years,” the rate of NEET, etc, who made career decisions at Local Youth Support Stations was set targeting 30%, and enrichment of personal independence of the youth including NEET will be promoted.

Furthermore, since issues on the youth including non-regular employment and NEET are actualized now, supports on the youth to form job consciousness from their school days are important for them to realize their own characteristics and aptitudes and to nurture abilities and attitudes to voluntarily select their careers. Therefore, efforts such as career education are being promoted under cooperation with relevant Office and Ministries at each stage of education from elementary school to universities.

Meanwhile, withdrawals of employment offers to new graduates have become an issue in the recent deterioration in the economic situation. Withdrawals of employment offers to new graduates will greatly impact and disappoint the youth having a dream for the future and their families, which is unacceptable. This will further create difficulties for them, since by the time when their employment offers are withdrawn, they have to seek job-hunting again while other corporations have already finished their recruitments.

Therefore, urgent supports towards the youth whose offers were withdrawn, in addition to take preventive measures beforehand not to cause such issues in the future are pressing challenges.

(1) Promotion of “Freeter etc, Regular Employment Plan” and others

1) Reemployment support focusing on older Freeters and non-regular workers in their mid-30s

(Support the regular employment of Freeters through Hello Work)

In order to support Freeters willing for regular employments through Hello Work (the public employment security office), the office has been implementing consistent supports by combining variety of support menus including career counseling, placement services, job interview revenues and job settlements, according to each target's challenges. Regarding non-regular workers in their mid-30s, realization of stable employment is also pressing, and Hello Work has been making efforts to support regular employments for them as well by expanding the targeted range of the youth from the need to implement measures to support the entire youth.

Regarding the “Regular Employment Preparation Benefit,” provided to those who are less likely to find employment, the scope was extended to older Freeters (younger than 40 years old) and the rate of allowance was raised from 30% to 40%, due to the Law to Partially Amend the Employment Insurance Act, in order to support reemployment for older Freeters (enacted on March 31, 2009).

(Mock interviews aimed at older Freeters and others “Job Meetings”)

In order to promote regular employment for older Freeters in small and medium sized enterprises, “Job Meetings,” which provide mock interviews and others by Human Resource personnel from small and medium sized enterprises are being implemented. Job Meetings foster a better understanding on older Freeters and others for Human Resource personnel from small and medium sized enterprises, providing opportunities to proactively discuss recruiting them, while providing mock interviews and opinion exchange sessions based on the results for older Freeters and others in specific, to support such as how to acquire appealing themselves in job interviews through mock interviews and others. In case Human Resource personnel consider employing older Freeters during the processes of mock trials, Hello Work has been introducing them according to individual requests.

(One-stop job placement service center “Job Cafe”)

The so called “Job Café,” mainly organized by prefectures to provide wide range of job placement menus towards the youth at one-stop has been established in 87 locations in 46 prefectures nationwide (as of April 1, 2009). The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare will implement placement services by attaching Hello Work upon requests from prefectures, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry have been supporting efforts on employment support, taking accounts of regional situations, through cooperation programs between regions on the youth which implementation on corporate explanation and variety of workshop will be entrusted to private organizations.

2) Providing vocational development opportunities

(“Job-Card system”)

Targeting those who are limited opportunities for vocational ability development, the “Job-Card system,” a mechanism used for job hunting activities and career development, was set up in April 2008 by ① Enlightening awareness and identification of problems in developing careers through using a Job-Card and providing attentive career counseling ② Providing practical vocational training combining practical training in a corporate site and classroom lectures at education and training institutions (vocational ability development program) and ③ Compiling after-training evaluation of their vocational abilities and other information including their employment record.

As practical vocational trainings of the Job-Card System, there are 2 types; practical vocational training under the system of Job-Card consists of employment type training in which companies hire trainees and provide training and commission type training in which contracted private training schools provide public job training.

Regarding the commission type training, even those who can not receive employment insurance benefit can receive training without anxiety under the “Training and Daily-Life Support Benefit” system, which provides life security

benefits during their trainings. The system provides benefits to those meeting eligibility, such as the family's principal breadwinner, and those without dependents and with dependents receive 100 thousand yen and 120 thousand yen monthly respectively and provide loans to those running short of living expenses with the maximum of 50 thousand yen or 80 thousand yen respectively.

The youth including Freeters are expected to enhance their abilities and to transit to stable employment with the "Job-Card system."

("Second Chance Course")

"Second Chance Course," development of a vocational training course towards older Freeter and others through contracted public education and training organizations to acquire necessary abilities for industries by conducting effective training, is being implemented in cooperation with each industrial association.

3) Supports towards employers for promoting the employment of the youth (Establishment of a grant to support regular employment among older Freeters)

In order to promote regular employment among older Freeters, establishment of a grant (Special Grant to Promote Regular Employment among the Youth, etc.) was newly financed in the FY 2008 second supplementary budget for employers who will ① proactively hire older Freeters (aged 25-39) as regular employees (A. direct employment, B. utilizing the "youth trail employment" or C. employing those who have finished the fixed-term on-the-job training program of the "Job-Card System's" employment type training as regular employees) or ② hire graduates whose place of employment remain unsettled, due to withdrawal of their job offers, and 1 million yen per person for small and medium sized enterprises and 500 thousand yen per person for large companies will be provided (over 3 years in 3 separate payment periods).

(Subsidies towards corporations implementing "Job-Card System's" employment type training)

Regarding the employers implementing Job-Card System's employment type

training, subsidies are provided at a rate of 4/5 and 2/3 for small and medium sized enterprises and large companies respectively on training expenses and wages on trainees during their trainings (“Career Development Promotion Grants”).

(“Youth Trial Employment”)

In order to transit jobless youth to regular employment and to trigger opportunities for employments, “Youth Trial Employment” has been implemented to employers who conduct short-term trial employment (3 months in principal) towards supports (40 thousand yen per person monthly with maximum of 3 months support). The scope has been extended to those younger than 40 years old under the first supplementary budget in 2008.

(2) Enhanced support for independence of NEET, etc.

(Employment support at “Local Youth Support Stations”)

Regarding the youth including NEET, it is important to back them up so that they can demonstrate their native willpowers and abilities, through seizing issues each individual have and to provide comprehensive supports in response to these issues, including stimulation of job consciousness, training fundamental abilities and support on social adaptation. Development of a structure where extensive and continuous supports are available based on each individual's characteristics by promoting a mutual network system between support organizations is also considered to be necessary.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of supporting various issues that the youth including NEET have on vocational independence with the entire region, a network consisting of regional organizations supporting the youth was created in cooperation with regional public entities, while “Regional Youth Support Organizations,” which serve as its hubs were established, and various employment supporting menus, including technical and continuous consultation, and guidance utilizing networks are being provided. The scope has been expanded to those aged mid-30s since FY 2009.

(Employment support at the “Youth independence private School”)

The “Young People Self-Support School” project has been implemented, aiming at

the youth who have lost their confidence in working due to various factors through working experiences in a training camp styled group life and volunteer activities, to lead them to employment by obtaining confidence and willpower. The scope of this project has also been expanded to those aged mid-30s since FY 2009.

(Enactment of the “Act for Promotion of Support on Children and Youth”)

“Act for Promotion of Support on Children and Youth,” which consists of promoting the creation of regional networks to support the youth such as NEET and withdrawals having difficulties living a smooth social life, and promoting comprehensive measures on each relevant fields, such as education, welfare and employment was enacted in July 2009.

(3) Development support on job consciousness from school stages

Since issues on the youth including non-regular employment and NEET are actualized now, efforts on career education for the youth to realize their own characteristics and aptitudes and to nurture abilities and attitudes to voluntarily select their careers are important. Regarding the career education, the “Career Education Promotion Plan” was settled in 2007 and efforts are being promoted with relevant Office and Ministries.

(Development support on job consciousness towards elementary, junior and high school students)

The Hello Work in cooperation with schools and industrial circles have been implementing the “Career Research Program” as a development support on job consciousness towards elementary, junior and high school students by dispatching workers, such as corporate workers as lecturers, in order to help students understand the reality of vocation and sense of working and to think on their own. The “Junior Internship” in cooperation with high schools is being implemented mainly targeting high school students as a chance to consider the relationships between their own aptitudes and vocations through their short-term vocational experiences.

In order to support smooth recruitment of the youth and to prevent early separation

from services and working easily as Freeters and NEET, “Vocational Guidance for High School Students” has been implemented. Information such as basic knowledge on labour laws, required after employment, in addition to working practices on job selection and recruitment have been provided targeting 11th and 12th grader willing to be employed as regular workers.

(Development support on job consciousness towards University students and others)

Regarding university students and others, variety of seminars to promote self-understanding to select appropriate works, in cooperation with universities and others are being implemented as well as entrusting projects to employer organizations on developing corporations accepting internships.

(4) Cope with withdrawals of employment offer issues

Amidst the severe business environment due to a deterioration of an economic situation, cases of withdrawals of employment offers to new graduates have been seen since around the autumn of 2008, and it is pressing to correspond to these issues properly, while providing supports towards those employment offers were withdrawn and to strengthen efforts on preventing withdrawals of employment offers.

Therefore, special consultation desks were set up at regional student career advice centers, etc., to provide consultation services for university students to cope with those received withdrawals of employment offers and efforts to familiarize the “Guidelines for the Employment of New School Graduates,” compiling points that employers should consider when hiring new school graduates. Efforts on seizing proper information on withdrawals of employment offers and information towards students on special consultation desks are being made under tight cooperation with universities, student career advice centers and Hello Work.

Furthermore, ① as a support towards those whose employment offers were withdrawn, as stated in (1), regarding the “Special Grant to Promote Regular Employment among the youth etc.” the scope was extended to employers who employ graduates, whose employment places are unsettled due to withdrawals of employment offers, as regular employees as a special measure and ② as a

preventive measure on withdrawals of employment offers, a ministerial ordinance was revised in January 2009, and the Hello Work was enabled to disclose the names of the companies under certain conditions, while seizing cases of withdrawals of employment offers unitary.

In cases of maintaining employment by providing educational training programs, temporarily sending its employees to other firms or suspending its business operations, in order to secure stable employment of new graduates, the Employment Adjustment Subsidy program provides subsidies that will finance a certain percentage of wages or fringe benefits (4/5 for small-and medium-sized enterprises) as a special measure.

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Those group who could not work as regular employees during the so called “employment ice age” have reached their mid-30s, who in general should be in the prime of their working life and should be supporting the society. It is important to provide employment supports towards the youth whose supply on the aspect of vocational ability and economy are small, since continuing working as non-regular employees, so that they can acquire abilities to work as regular employees, while providing supports for their living.

Comprehensive supports through networks of relevant organizations are essential towards the youth including NEET who have issues on job consciousness and from the aspect of fundamental social adaptation.

These efforts are pressing challenges on the basis of Japan’s sustainable development not only from the aspect of the youth themselves but also for maintaining Japan’s vitality, while securing supporters for the society over the future.

## **Column**

### **Efforts of Junior Internship (Hello Work Kitakata in Fukushima Prefecture)**

As an effort for career education, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in cooperation with its Hello Work and high schools are conducting “Junior Internship” (hereinafter referred to as “Internship”), and here we will introduce the efforts of the Hello Work Kitakata (Fukushima Prefecture).

3 days Internship were conducted at the Hello Work Kitakata during September through November in FY 2007, targeting 4 regional high school units with 11th grader (316 students in total) participating.

Hello Work officials explained the purpose for conducting the Internship to the students one week beforehand, so that they can be prepared with a sense of purpose when carrying out the Internship, and guidance on manners and status of high school graduates employment and unemployment were also explained.

On locations conducting the Internship, the Hello Work Kitakata got cooperation from 51 businesses by asking wide range of industrial businesses, including regional welfare, health, manufacture, construction, retailer and service industries, with consideration that students can experience their Internship in various industries, according to their requests. Efforts, such as giving reasons for choosing companies – rather than just listing their names, and to write their self introductions and how to commute, during the Internship on submitting their requests, were made so that students can proactively approach the Internship.

3 days Internship was conducted, based on conduction plans of each business. Students in the first place took orientations, including company profiles, office rules, safety protocols, confidentiality, schedule explanations and self introduction, then practical business experiences, such as cooking assistance, shelf stocking and packing - at super markets, bed making, assistance with meals, walking, bathing, using the toilet and communications with patients – at hospitals, had started. Students kept the “Junior Internship Experience Diary” each day during the 3 days Internship and reviewed comments from their training sites on them.

Follow-up lecture classes were conducted at each school – mainly composed of guidance counselors- after the Internship, so that students can reflect their experiences at businesses for their future careers. Students shared and exchanged their experiences at follow-up lecture classes through announcements made by each student, including experience contents, impressions and points for

improvement. Impressions such as “I really felt having contact with people were very important,” “I was anxious of becoming a working member of society, but the on-the-job training lowered my anxiety and I have got a positive mental attitude” and “I experienced difficulty staying in office, as well as enjoying working through 3 days” were sent from the student’s side. Comments such as “I had misgivings about the student being anxious and tensed on the first day, however, the student developed so much to be like another person on the last day through the 3-day experience” were sent from businesses that conducted the Internship, while comments such as “I believe students realized what working is like” and “Experiences on carrying out works at places where they have never met their employees nor worked there before should lead to be irreplaceable confidence for students” were sent from the school’s side.

## **Column**

### **Fresta Co., Ltd**

The fixed-term on-the-job training, the vocational ability development program of the Job-Card System, is aimed for employment of those with less working experiences as a regular member, such as Freeters as regular workers at companies conducting the training and other companies through practical practices.

Companies can utilize the system on conducting trainings for those newly hired or for those working as non-regular employees in the company.

As an example of the latter style, Fresta Co., Ltd is utilizing the system in its supermarkets—mainly dealing with food business—deploying 50 branches mainly in Hiroshima Prefecture. Since development of part-timers is a common challenge in the food industry, Fresta has been utilizing the vocational ability development program of the Job-Card System as its promotion system to promote part-timers to full-time status since FY 2008.

Fresta had invited applicants who are eligible for the training, targeting part-timers “aged below 40 in general,” “who can get referral from their supervisors” and “with



working experience of 2 years or more,” via its in-house LAN, in-house magazines, posters and others, screened 15 applicants—such as by examining their papers, and selected 6 trainees. The breakdown of the trainees was mainly young part-timers aged between 22-25 to the oldest being mid-30s, 3 out of 6 trainees was Freeters and most of them said “while grappling with an employment issue, I have missed the timing for job-hunting and since working by force of habit at the supermarket for 2 years or more, I have found myself enjoying the job, so I applied.”

The training mainly consists of OJT and classroom lectures. The OJT is conducted from November to March, and the training will end in April after taking classroom lectures with the new graduate employees. Fresta impose to pass the “Basic 1st grade Certification Tests on Supermarket (note)” as its promotion terms of being employed as regular workers and trainees—while handling their regular part-time operations and preparing for passing the test at the same time from September—will take the test in November during the training period, and those who have passed the test will be hired as regular employees with an employment contract in April.

Trainees wrote daily reports during the OJT and had an interview with a store manager once a week. Training evaluation were made by the department head, using a company-adjusted model sheet of the model evaluation sheet for supermarket industry, announced by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and the training condition was shared between the department head and store managers.

Fresta lists the advantages of utilizing the Job-Card System as capable of ensuring the transparency of the promotion system employing trainees as regular workers, trainees can look back on themselves through writing Job-Cards and their attitudes towards works changed positively through the OJT. Fresta considers the evaluation sheet, used for evaluation during the training, could be used effectively in the personnel system of the entire company in the future.

## **Column**

**Yamanaka Heavy Machinery Ltd.**

Yamanaka Heavy Machinery Ltd. is a company mainly dealing with industrial vehicle, manufacturing heavy machinery such as crane, special train car and soil improving machine in Chiba City.

The company has 28 employees at present, though their average age is high and ensuring and training young employees has been a challenge with the relocation of a new plant coming up.

Although the company had employed around a dozen mid-career workers via the Hello Work so far, since “welding experience” was its employment condition, most of them were in their late-40s and left the company soon, giving reasons such as the working style did not match my style. In addition, new graduates were making little progress to be its working power, as they were too young to be conscious of working. Thus, the fixed-term on-the-job training of the Job-Card System matched the idea of the company “to hire youth with positive motivation towards working” amid its unfulfilled needs in employment.

The company invited 3 applications for trainees via the Hello Work, and 1 applicant responded to the invitation, actually working while receiving training for about 3 months as a cannery and welding worker in its core business, and was finally employed as a regular worker.

An employee with a 40-year welding career undertook hands on guidance for instructing the trainee, while writing down the training condition in an OJT diary which was reported to the president. The report from the trainee included a comment saying “I have learned the difficulty and the pleasure of working during the training. I hope to be a necessary personnel for the company someday through gaining experience.”

An advantage of the Job-Card System is that “a third-party will evaluate an applicant from an objective position,” according to the company. The company had hired employees without knowing much about their personalities and their attitudes towards working, and they had left the company soon in some cases, job-seekers seriously willing to work will be introduced to companies conducting trainings after a third-party (career counselor including the Hello Work) evaluates their working experience, desire on working and their targets written on the Job-Cards objectively

under the Job-Card System. Companies can hire trainees as regular employees if the both sides decision match, based on evaluations on their trainees after a certain period of training.

Considerations are made on trainees employed as regular workers, so that they will not suffer from the workplace by themselves—through taking them out for a meal with employees of the same age—since it is important for them to adapt to the company and their jobs soon, and the company says “If a trainee has a spirit of carrying on works and makes efforts, there are no particular issues. Although follow-ups are necessary after recruiting them, we can’t move forward unless seeing them work, so we set great value on OJT in the first place.”

The company views “the Job-Card System, a system which expresses job-seeker’s willpower, as a valuable system if a company estimates the system with a mind to ‘train a person’ ,” and is expected to continue utilizing the system.

## **Column**

### **Adachi Ward, Tokyo**

#### **～Operations including the “Adachi Youth Support Station (AYSS)”～**

Adachi Ward has established the “Adachi Youth Support Station (AYSS)” (hereinafter referred to as “AYSS”) in front of Kitasenju Station to support vocational independence of the youth.

AYSS builds up variety of programs for the youth, including job-hunting seminars and career counseling for those aiming to be employed as full-timers, seminars for those who want to start working as part-timers and cleaning volunteer activities to cope with each youth’s conditions and their working needs. AYSS handles consultations with parents especially for those having difficulties to participate in society, so that they can proactively utilize AYSS. In addition to AYSS, the “Adachi Safety Net for Withdrawals” was established in Takenotuka within the ward, as a support window for those who can not come to AYSS, and painstaking supports such as telephone counseling and visiting counseling have been conducted.

Adachi Ward and the Hello Work Adachi, a specified nonprofit organization entrusted the AYSS operation, are cooperatively making efforts, while clarifying their roles on these supports. As an example, PR for bringing the youth to AYSS is fully and proactively carried out under the name of “Adachi Ward,” while the preparation of handouts and variety of program designs at AYSS are undertaken by the specified nonprofit organization, who has a know-how on supporting the Youth. Smooth information exchanges are conducted with the Hello Work, located on the same floor as AYSS, to support employment and cooperative supports towards employment are conducted through three-party counseling including the users.

The results are improving year after year with 180 AYSS users writing letters of appreciation over 3 years saying “Thanks to your assistance I found a position.”

### ～Creation of the “Training Employment Supporter System”～

The “Training Employment Supporter System,” which has started since FY 2009, is an Adachi Ward’s unique effort to bolster the “outlet” point of the independence supports aiming for more practical trainings through experiencing employment at actual companies, in addition to employment training provided at AYSS.

To be specific, those youth using AYSS and have hard time being employed as regular workers will have more practical training at companies that accept trainees and the system is expected to lead to employment with the youth reconfirming their weak and good points through this system.

While obtaining cooperation from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Corporation Association, Adachi Ward is to secure companies that accept trainees as “Training Employment Supporter Companies.”

Although the operation of AYSS is conducted under the training, supports on business conduct will be provided by forming teams, including several specified nonprofit organization’s coordinators, and operations such as at backyards of plants and supermarkets are expected to be started. Coordinators of specified nonprofit organization in trainee’s teams are expected to evaluate achievements and challenges after the training employment, and then the trainees will aim at regular employment or be provided supports at AYSS again.

Experiences under the Training Employment Supporter System will be their

working careers, as they can write them on their resumes. Adachi Ward considers the establishment of the “Training Employment Supporter System” functions as a cross sectional system for AYSS and Hello Work, which could lessen obstacles for the youth to step into the real world.

Thus, we can consider that the distinctive feature of Adachi Ward’s supports on the youth independence is that it has extended the “inlet” point of the employment supports through the “Adachi Safety Net for Withdrawals” and has strengthened the “outlet” point of the employment supports through the “Training Employment Supporter System,” while maintaining supports at AYSS as its main pillar.

## **Column**

### **Harukaze Shoten (Specified Nonprofit Organization, Engagement Yokosuka)**

A specified nonprofit organization, Engagement Yokosuka, is a corporation aiming for the youth such as truants, withdrawals and NEETs, and their surroundings to participate in the society together. The corporation is currently providing comfortable places for truants and withdrawals, and study supports, consultations, counseling and employment supports for elementary to high school students.

A program called the “Kick-Off Project” is a support program towards truants and withdrawals, which urge independency through acquiring the Official Business Skill Test in Retail Sales Level 3 and through actual employment trainings, and the “Harukaze Shoten,” a book store, is operated by the corporation as a place for its training and as a place to experience working for trainees who have finished the training.

The Harukaze Shoten opened in May 2006. Originally a bookstore owner who was dealing books related to welfare for the handicapped within the city in another shopping district proposed using the bookstore as a place for training the youth of the Engagement Yokosuka, and the bookstore was redesigned and opened at the current location, with the owner and distributors cooperation and being subsidized by Kanagawa Prefecture’s “Kanagawa Voluntary Activities Promotion Fund 21.”

The lineup of the bookstore is full of magazines, in addition to books related to welfare for the handicapped, since the bookstore fronts on a main street. Mascot figures and other goods made at sheltered workshops, in addition to picture books and paperbacks are on the shelves.

2 youth who have finished the Kick-Off Project and 2 officials from the Engagement Yokosuka are currently working at the bookstore. Overall business, including book stocking, selling and register is voluntary conducted through discussions among the youth who have finished the Kick-Off Project, and the officials supplement its business. The Engagement Yokosuka considers the bookstore business is “easier than other businesses for the youth who are withdrawals or NEETs to start working,” since the business does not require price negotiations with customers as other selling and the business is not a heavy labour.

Practical business at the Harukaze Shoten will generally be mastered in 6 months, according to the bookstore. The Engagement Yokosuka says “working at Harukaze Shoten for about a year and a half long will be fine,” and expects the youth who have acquired practical training and graduated the bookstore to go their own ways. The Engagement Yokosuka considers that it is important for the youth who are withdrawals or NEETs to look from a wide field of vision “understanding various working styles” through experiencing variety of works at the shopping district, in regard to youth who are withdrawals or NEETs that suffer from employment since they consider “being office goer after graduation means employment.”

“Local understanding,” centralized by the local Uwamachi shopping district is indispensable for the management of the Harukaze Shoten. The council of the shopping district has a deep insight by nature, and has also accepted the establishment of the Engagement Yokosuka unanimously. People of the shopping center’s understanding on the youth have been advancing under the concept of “the youth to take the lead of liven up the shopping district,” and some shops are accepting employment experience among the youth who have finished the Kick-Off Project.

## **Column**

### **Specified Nonprofit Organization, Fukui SELP Promotion Center**

The specified nonprofit organization, Fukui SELP (Support of Employment, Living and Participation) Promotion Center (hereinafter referred to as “SELP Promotion Center”) is a corporation established in 2006 as a base for developing supports on independence of the handicapped, where social welfare facilities within the prefecture cooperate, aiming at independence supports such as affluent social life and employment for the handicapped (46 facilities within the prefecture are the members).

SELP Promotion Center has been operating a “Regional Youth Support Station,” established by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to support social independence of the youth such as the non-employed youth.

The center conducts ①cultivation of markets for products manufactured at social welfare facilities and ②intermediation of businesses to social welfare facilities including carton folding and packaging operations, producing printed matter and fabricating and assembling plastics, entrusted by corporations, targeting handicapped people living in the region. As for the business stated ①, a café named the “1/f” opened in January 2009 as an antenna shop that raises the brand awareness of the coffee beans, which its member facilities shoulders a manufacturing process, to expand the selling business by providing the actual coffee.

### **～Independence Support Program on “Youth Support Station Fukui”～**

“Youth Support Station Fukui” (hereinafter referred to as “Support Station Fukui”) has been conducting consultation supports and independence supporting programs towards the youth who can not find a job even though they desire to have one. The program includes “Group Work,” having discussions in line with the theme, “Support Station Café” (free space), where the youth voluntarily participate and exchange information, “Challenge week,” where lectures and limited labour experience useful for employment are conducted, “Employment experience,” at the “1/f,” a café under direct management of SELP Promotion Center, its work centers for the handicapped

and other facilities, and “introduction and accompanying of employment organizations.” Support Station Fukui through these programs aim to enable the youth to go to job cafes or Hello Work offices as a goal, however in some cases the Station conducts accompanying supports and consultations even they can go to Hello Work offices. Cooperative supports are conducted with relevant organizations, such as the cases of introducing a support center to those consultants at Hello Work offices and in cases of requesting supports to medical and welfare institutions when employments are difficult due to illnesses, handicaps or other factors, to fit each individual’s condition.

### ～Operation of the café “1/f”～

The café “1/f” is an “employment experience” place for the handicapped and the users of Support Station Fukui, in addition to its selling lineups of coffee beans and breads and lunch boxes and other food made at its member work centers for the handicapped, while selling coffees, teas and cakes. Although the store manager will take on the responsibility of brewing up coffee, etc., the handicapped and the users of Support Station Fukui are in charge of serving the customers.

Variety of customers visits the café. Serving the customers for both meeting their needs and making them feel at home will be quite a difficult obstacle for them to overcome. There are many difficult aspects for those just started standing behind the counter, such as they can not talk with the customers. However, SELP Promotion Center considers that “there are an advantages that they will be able to talk with the customers through their every day communication and they will acclimate themselves to the workplace.”

Although the employment experience period is set up from 2 weeks to 2 months, and to step on to their own ways they desire, the café has just been opened at the moment, so they expect the experience at the café will be useful for the future employment.