

## **Annex 4: Takeshi Miyagi, Director of the Chiba Polytechnic College, Implementation of Vocational Education and Training**

### **Brief outline of Japan's Vocational Education and Training System**

#### **1. Human Resources Development in Japan**

Human resources development administration is being implemented in accordance with the Human Resources Development Promotion Law for contributing to economic and social development through the promotion and improvement of the vocational abilities of workers, their jobs and status. The objective of this law is to develop and improve vocational ability according to the wishes and aptitude of individual workers and to respond to trends in employment and industries, the advancement of technologies and the globalization of economic activities in a phased and systematic manner throughout a workers' occupational life, thereby being promoted by substantiating and strengthening vocational training and vocational ability tests and through policies for its smooth implementation in a comprehensive and planned manner.

Accordingly, while respecting the voluntary efforts of employers, the government and prefectures provide support in order to promote vocational training conducted by such employers and to promote human resources development conducted by other private enterprises. In addition, the lifelong human resources development of workers is being promoted through measures such as the implementation of public vocational training for involuntarily unemployed individuals and young people seeking jobs, and improvement in the vocational ability evaluation system through trade skill testing.

#### **2. Support for Education and Training Conducted by Employers, etc.**

The following measures are being promoted in order to support education and training conducted by employers, etc.:

##### **2.1 Subsidies for Employers, etc.**

In accordance with a plan for employers to carry out phased and systematic human resources development (in-house human resources development plan), when conducting education and training for employed workers, support such as lifelong human resources development benefits is provided as a partial subsidy toward training expenses and wages during training.

##### **2.2 Support for Accredited Vocational Training**

With respect to the curriculum, training periods or facilities, etc. of vocational training conducted by employers, etc. that meet the criteria prescribed by the ordinances of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, approval of a prefectural governor indicating that the vocational training corresponds with the training criteria may be received through application. Such approved vocational training is called accredited vocational training. If the employer of a small or medium-sized enterprise or

employers' organization conducts accredited vocational training, subsidies toward operating cost, facilities and equipment are provided.

### 2.3 Support for Implementation of Vocational Training

Vocational training for existing workers based on regional needs is implemented at public human resources development facilities, facilities are loaned to employers, etc. and instructors are dispatched.

Furthermore, information, counselling and assistance concerning human resources development are provided at public human resources development facilities.

## 3. Promotion of Ability Development on Workers' Own Initiative

In a situation where increased labour activity or a change in awareness of workers toward their jobs is anticipated, it is important to support measures for human resources development of workers through self-initiative. Accordingly, subsidies, information, counselling and assistance in addition to education and training benefits are provided for employers who support voluntary steps for workers.

### 3.1 System of Education and Training Benefits

- If a worker receives prescribed education and training at his/her own expense, 80% of the required expenses born by the worker is paid upon completion up to a ceiling of ¥300,000. Partial benefits such as unemployment benefits are paid by the Public Employment Security Office (PESO).
- Eligibility: an insured or previously-insured person of Employment Insurance (person must be insured for a minimum of 5 years in total)
- Applicable education and training: education and training designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare based on an application for designation of a course and training facilities.
- Conditions of designation, etc.: while examining whether or not education and training facilities are suitable for education and training in a continuous and stable manner or whether or not the contents of education and training will contribute to stable employment or the promotion of employment (Hobby or cultural education and training and introduction or basic standard education and training are not applicable), as many necessary and wide-range short courses are designated as possible.

[Transition in the number of designated courses]

- 3,445 courses (December 1, 1998)
- 4,068 courses (April 1, 1999)
- 11,199 courses (April 1, 2000)
- 14,848 courses (October 1, 2000)

[Actual payment] (Total from March 1999 to December 2000)

¥35.6 billion for 370,000 workers

#### **4. Promotion of Public Vocational Training**

The government and prefectures, etc. implement vocational training for job seekers, existing workers and graduates, etc. by establishing and operating public human resources development facilities.

Particularly during severe employment situations, the implementation of vocational training is being promoted so that involuntary unemployed job seekers can be re-employed.

#### **5. Promotion of Vocational Ability Evaluation System**

For the development and improvement of vocational ability of workers, in line with the implementation of various types of education and training, it is important to appropriately conduct evaluation of vocational ability. As for the evaluation of vocational ability of workers, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is currently implementing and improving the following:

##### **5.1 National Trade Skill Test System**

Worker skills are tested and authorized by the government.

This system is for trade skills, which are common, nationwide. Many workers are engaged in 133 current job classifications of 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, etc. (Some vocational categories are not graded). Successful workers acquire the title of "Certified Skilled Worker".

##### **5.2 Accredited System for Trade Skill Tests**

Of trade skill tests conducted by public service corporations, etc. (to examine and certify the level of knowledge and skills necessary for jobs), tests to be recommended from the viewpoint of skill promotion are accredited by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Currently, 27 job classifications are accredited. Accredited trade skill tests may be indicated as "Accredited by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare".

##### **5.3 Accredited System for In-house Trade Skill Test**

Of in-house trade skill tests implemented by employers, etc. (to examine the level of vocational ability of employed workers), tests to be recommended from the viewpoint of skill promotion are accredited by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Currently, 146 job classifications are accredited. Accredited in-house trade skill tests may be indicated as "Accredited by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare".

#### **6. Relationship between General Education and Vocational Training in Japan**

An outline of the Japanese education system has been provided because the education system and the vocational training system need to be complementary such as in lifelong education. In Japan, attendance of elementary schools and junior high schools (secondary school) is compulsory, 6 years and 3 years respectively.

After finishing secondary school, the majority of students enter high school. The School Enrolment Ratio of high schools has recently been rated at 95%. The ratio had stepped up from 43% in 1950, 70% in 1965 and 94% in 1975. Therefore, the majority

of the newborn worker's age changes with each generation. Focus on the trend target and implementation of vocational training has to be timely.

In this view, the education system is a very important factor in the design of vocational training.

The chart in the Annex shows the relationship between the education system and the vocational training system.