

## Efforts and Direction of Employment Support for Young People

### -- Support models and desired profile of supporters --

#### Summary

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Members of the “Study Group for Service Models of Employment Support for Young People and Requirements of Supporters”

(All members are just the same as above authors)

## **Research Period**

April 2006 – March 2007

### **1. Research Objective**

This report summarizes the results of the “Study on Service Models of Employment Support for Young People and Requirements of Supporters.”

In recent years, there is a growing concern about “freeters” (young people in unstable non-regular employment) and the NEET issues (young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training) attract much concern in Japan. Support for the independence of these young people is currently framed as a national policy issue and various measures have already been launched by related administrative bodies in a wide range of areas, including labor, industry, education, welfare and others. Moreover, voluntary efforts to support the independence of young people are already being made in the private sector (NPOs and some companies).

When the vocational issues, such as unstable employment or unemployment of young people in every part of Japan, are successfully resolved by activities in various fields, it will make a significant contribution to the future development of Japanese society which faces an aging population and decreasing birthrate.

The objective of this study is to clarify the nature and role of specific services in activities of NPOs and other organizations that provide individual consultations and support for young people who are in unstable non-regular employment or unemployment despite having motivation and ability to work.

The service providers who are directly in touch with young people and the organizations/associations which serve as a center of activities of these service providers play an extremely important role in terms of ensuring high quality services in the actual scene. This study, therefore, organizes the details of activities of employment support services implemented by individual supporters in coordination with organizations and associations acting as their activity centers and then clarifies the requirements expected of these supporters as service providers.

### **2. Research Method**

We have conducted interviews on the details and methods of support services provided by ten NPOs, two private companies and public organizations (job cafés (3), public employment security offices (4), and Youth Support Center (1)), which implement employment support services for young people.

### 3. Outline of Research

(1) Cases of a support provided by NPOs which provide employment support for those who feel indecision about whether they will be able to find a job

Three cases of NPOs which implement unique and specific activities have been selected for analysis: an organization initiated by students, an organization composed of career counselors, and an NPO which runs a private school for the independence of young people by expanding their activities beyond the provision of support to truant students. The following common features have been observed in all three cases, despite the differences in individual services:

Aspect of objectives: Restoration of confidence and motivation, Awareness and expansion of perspectives, Social participation

Aspect of methods: Meeting with adults and “peers,” Emphasis on “cooperation,” Provision of “opportunities,” Utilization of local resources

Aspect of supporters: High quality assessment, Association based on specialty, Links with local community, Self-development orientation, Coping with mental worries

(2) Cases of support provided by NPOs dealing with different age groups

Two organizations have been analyzed: an organization targeting students (of elementary, junior-high, and senior-high schools) who still have some time before starting to work, and an organization targeting young people seeking for jobs. These two organizations provide group-based guidance. Their points of support and services provided by the supporters have exhibited the following characteristics.

The programs of these organizations focus on activities in which members of the organizations use their own work experience and career in local activities to raise healthy awareness in young people by giving them opportunities to think about work and life. One of the points of the support is to encourage voluntary awareness by having young people with little work and life experience participate in projects with themes related to work and employment and have them experience the actual implementation of programs as a stakeholder, not just as a participant.

The primary service provided by the supporters is to create opportunities for young people through scientific research or the wisdom of seniors with well-versed experience. The secondary service is so-called facilitation activity, which is to take direct and indirect approaches according to the situation, so that young people can act smoothly in given circumstances and gain valuable experience.

(3) Cases of support provided by NPO aiming at social adaptation of shut-ins

(Hikikomori; social withdrawal)

Analysis was made on an organization which aims to encourage young shut-ins— i.e. Hikikomori, who stay in their rooms and houses, to cohabit with other shut-ins by sending staff members for the purpose of communication. In addition to sending staff members, the organization has established various types of companies and operating bodies including provision of voluntary cohabitation opportunities, establishment and management of companies where shut-ins can have work experience, establishment of a skill coordination high school, and development of welfare community. They are the source of income for the organization, and also of opportunities for learning and training for young people. Such diversity would be an effective tool to increase the learning options of young people and to improve the flexibility and richness of the learning experience.

Although there is a wide range in social adaptability and vocational capacity of the learners, one of the characteristics of the organization is the fact that learners include shut-ins, in particular, those who have isolated themselves from the outside world for a long period of time.

What the organization provides is different between before and after the cohabitation. Before the start of cohabitation, the support is to have the shut-ins be willing to leave their completely isolated room, to outside the room and the house. After the start of cohabitation, having the shut-ins realize the fascinating aspects of human beings is considered as an important support. The young people proceed with the learning through voluntary cohabitation, contact with foreign people, and work experience. In cohabitation, a wide range of experiences in human relations are offered through contact and interactions with others as well as work experience.

(4) Cases of support provided by NPOs which support people with different paths to employment

Analysis was performed on the cases of support provided by NPOs which provide support to young people with different employment readiness and in different local employment circumstances. One is an organization represented by a housewife who has experienced school truancy, with an aim to create a society where truant students and their families can live with trust through support activities. The other is an NPO established by a proven company with experience in vocational training. The company had to shift the weight to employment support when it faced difficulty in reemployment of the trainees, and thus it had to provide full-fledged employment support specializing in young people. The following six factors are the common points of support observed

from the analysis of the two organizations: (1) support incorporating their families, (2) support for daily routine and communication capacity, (3) presentation of specific tasks, (4) accurate advice at appropriate timing, (5) provision of opportunities for social activities in accordance with trainees' interests, capacity and adaptability, and (6) use of public assistance, such as pension for the disabled. What the organizations provide include (1) accurate assessment, (2) sincere attitude and listening skills, (3) knowledge and information on employment, and (4) special skills for exercise and recreation.

(5) Cases of support provided by NPOs with programs emphasizing work experience

Analysis was carried out on two organizations offering employment support to young people who have intentions to work but are in unemployment or are without employment after leaving a job for some reason.

The programs offered by these two organizations commonly identify practical and physical work experience of young people as a center of activities. Since the programs emphasize the acquisition of power for independence through their own work experience, support is provided constantly at different stages: namely, before the start of work, during work, and after achieving independence, such as acquiring a part-time job or full-time position.

The supporters at both organizations design various schemes tailored to individual conditions, ranging from the provision of mental support for a certain period of time to remove mistrust and lack of confidence to the immediate provision of incentives for work. The main program comprises work experience at an actual workplace. The work experience is not confined to work by employment status. For young people under certain circumstances, it is to look for a place and role in a local area with a certain level of social participation, without aiming to become employed workers. In the work experience, the supporters continue to forcibly encourage the young people by controlling the pushing force according to the conditions of the young people.

In the provision of support according to the conditions of the young people, well-coordinated support is thought to be effective for the continuation of work experience; for example, if one supporter has been too strict on a young person, another supporter intervenes to provide follow up care, which is made possible by sharing the progress of a case among supporters.

(6) Employment support services as a part of corporate activities

Analysis was made on one small firm in contract-based construction and one large company engaged in workers dispatch service as a main business. The major common

factor found in these two cases is that private companies implement employment support for young people, making full use of know-how obtained from their main business. What the supporters provide responds to both the needs of service recipients and the objectives of service providers, to put it simply. The most characteristic common service is experiences directly linked to career preparation, despite differences in employment forms. Specifically, the following three experiences are observed: (1) to actually work and to gain experience in earning income, (2) to pay necessary fees for work out of their own income (including usage fee for residential space or training fees), (3) to observe basic morals and rules as a member of society even with supporters.

The forms of support are structured in such a way so as to respond to the positions of individual service providers and recipients and to the implementation conditions of services.

The characteristics of the services are summarized as follows: (1) understanding of needs, (2) understanding of situations, (3) provisions of services responding to needs, and (4) other services implemented in association with the above services. All of them make the most of the characteristics of the companies providing individual services, and the services providers are selected in accordance with individual services.

#### (7) Support provided at **Job** cafés

**Job** café is a popular name used for centers established based on the Youth Independence and Challenge Plan developed by the government in 2003 as one-stop service points for providing a series of employment support services. Analysis was made on specific support cases for young people of three job cafés with different management styles in the aspect of implementation forms. The first is one with a management style in which employment guidance and employment referral services are commissioned by a venture corporation and other operations such as front desk operations are commissioned by a local NPO. Here, it has an element of “general counseling office” with a back-up function of counseling for young people, and at the same time, it puts particular emphasis on counseling after being employed.

The second is directly implemented by a Prefecture and a prefectural officer acts as a manager. Agencies comprising this system include prefectural labor bureau, public employment security offices, the Employment and Human Resources Development Organization of Japan, and prefectural employers’ associations. All of them serve as one-stop service centers which provide necessary services for job search for young people by making full use of the information of each organization.

The third is the one commissioned by prefectural small business associations and it is

located on the same floor as the reception of public employment security office, which allows coordination to provide better support.

Though the management forms are different, all three have developed full-fledged individual counseling systems to smoothly provide services, including vocational aptitude testing, employment referral, and employment support seminars. Persons with experience in corporate personnel administration are assigned as supporters, and corporate views are effectively reflected on the specific employment support for young people.

#### (8) Support provided by public employment security offices

Analysis was conducted on the services provided by four public employment security offices for young people with unstable employment. The types of those who seek support vary and individually tailored services are offered in accordance with such diversity and local employment conditions. Six types of support services are observed: (1) dialogue with a job seeker (listening and questioning) to formulate a support plan, (2) presentation of knowledge on job selection and transfer of experience for the promotion of self-awareness, (3) provision of a wide range of job opportunity information to promote occupational understanding and provision of information to help better understanding of the current labor market situation, (4) provision of practical knowledge and skills, for job seeking activities such as how to fill out application forms, and provision of knowledge and skills for choosing the right job, including perception, etc., (5) counseling for choosing the right job to improve the possibility of finding the right job to better serve as an employment referral source, and (6) conducting confirmation of employment retention and provision of guidance by visiting workplaces, etc. in order to promote employment retention.

#### (9) Support provided by youth support centers

Youth support center programs are commissioned by prefectures to municipalities. They deal mainly with junior-high students with difficult issues, helping them with rehabilitation through learning and employment support. The centers support children who are reluctant to return to school or proceed to higher education to receive working experience or find employment with an aim to regain confidence. The service provided is well-selected/planned work experience in accordance with the desire and ability of students, in coordination with families and schools. Support members prepare for live-in work opportunities and connect students with recreation groups. They also visit the workplace, meet the young people and show them that they care as a way to provide

continuous support.

#### **4. Service models and requirements of supporters**

Support services are put into two groups: a model of support for job search activities for those facing employment issues and a model of support for growth from youth. Then, these models are translated into a conceptual diagram.

<Model of support for job search activities for those facing employment issues>

Details of support

- a. To confirm intention of a service recipient
- b. To understand employment readiness of the service recipient
- c. To formulate a support plan
- d. To promote incentives for work and employment
- e. To provide information to promote self-awareness and occupational understanding
- f. To help the service recipient acquire knowledge and skills for job search
- g. To encourage and support job search activity
- h. To organize the details of support so that the service recipient can gain experience required as a worker when he/she actually works in general society, such as in their local community, while keeping coordination and communications with related organizations and companies during the process from (c) to (g). When there is still no positive prospect at the stage of (g), the support plan should be reviewed.
- i. To express joy and congratulations when the objectives are achieved, and to clearly show expectations for realization of stable working life.
- j. To respond to refusal of support, etc.

<Model of support for growth from youth>

Details of support

- a. To provide concepts and basic knowledge on work and employment
- b. To provide knowledge on work and relevant matters
- c. To provide basic knowledge on the structure and rules of the labor market
- d. To assess project effect



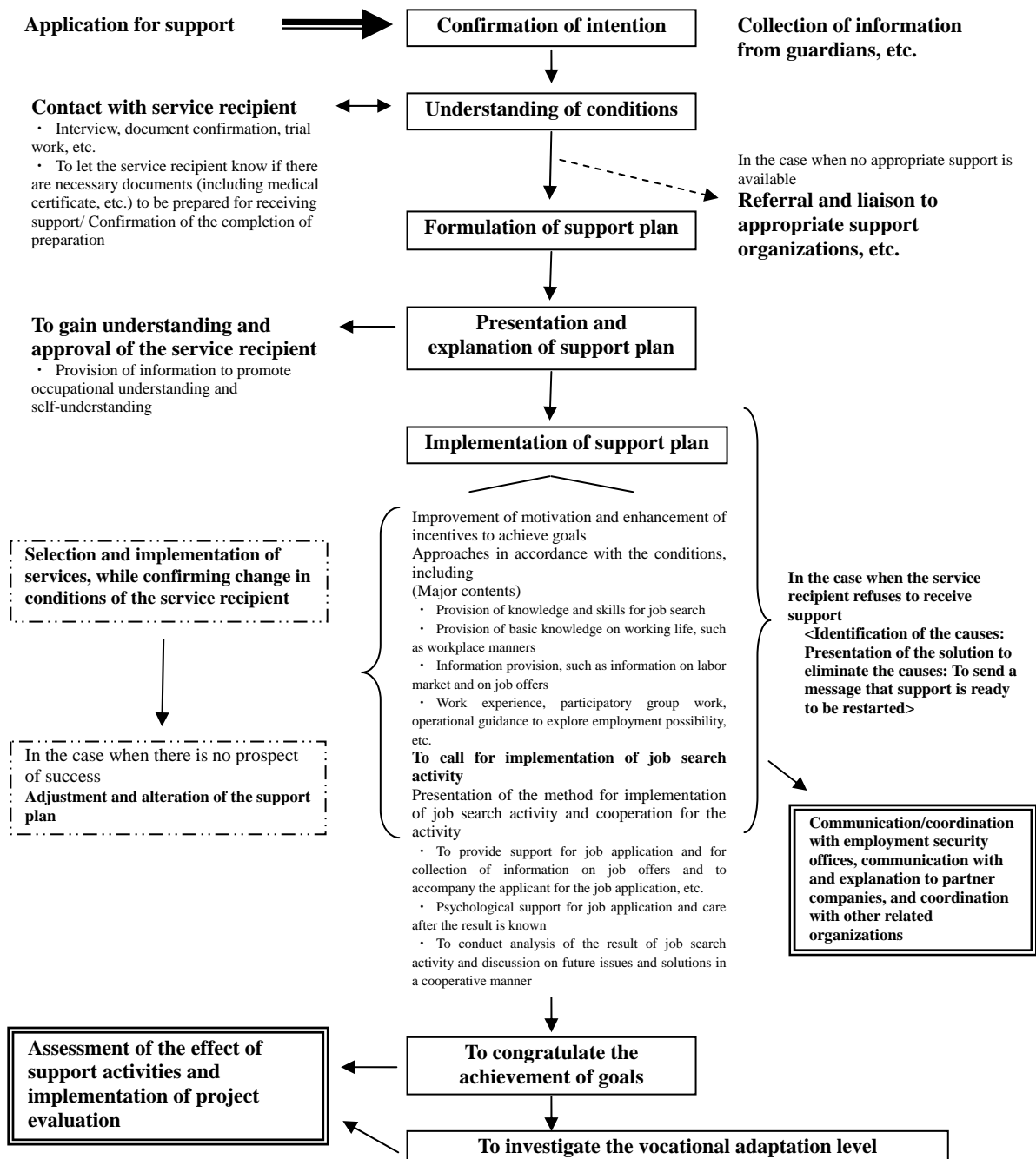


Figure: Composition of Support Services

<Requirements of supporters>

The requirements of supporters with a focus on the knowledge and skills required of NPO staff members who provide employment assistance directly to young people.

These requirements are not those required of each one of those who provide support

services at the NPOs, but those necessary for support provided to recipients within the framework of the entire support functions of the NPO. The level of capacity and skills is supposed to meet the objectives of the respective requirement criteria.

a. Knowledge on labor market and occupation

Knowledge on labor market mechanism, social systems of labor supply and demand adjustment, companies and job offers

b. Knowledge on working life and reality of employment

(1) Having knowledge on social practices, social rules including laws, reality of work and corporate employment management in line with such rules

(2) Latest knowledge on rules and manners associated with working life, labor regulations, and corporate principles

c. Practical knowledge on job search activity

(1) Having a wide range of knowledge on actual occupations and sufficient knowledge and skills for procedures of specific job search activity

(2) Having practical experience and knowledge on job search, formulation of CVs, and manners associated with job search activity

d. Skills and knowledge on consultation

(1) Understanding the conditions of counselee

- Ability to find true incentive and desire for work (qualification)
- Knowledge and understanding about disabilities that hinder psychological stability and taking a job
- Knowledge and ability to detect problems related to borderline level, such disorders as mild developmental disorders, and behavioral handicaps such as hyperactivity

(2) Ability to solve problems and accurately determine the appropriateness of the available services and their level

Knowledge and ability to determine whether the available services are suitable for resolving the problems of counselee

(3) Capacity of referring to other suitable persons or organizations/associations in the case when the available services are not appropriate

Ability to collect knowledge concerning specialty organizations and networking ability on a daily basis

(4) Counseling skills

Ability to listen to stories, etc.

Ability to grasp problems

(5) Ability to formulate a support plan to solve problems

(6) Attitude to have objective views and judgment

Attitude to have objective views and judgment concerning the presence of problems and solutions, while respecting and accepting counselee

e. Ability of group management in the case of group counseling

(1) Ability to facilitate and manage opportunities where each individual can play his/her role towards common goals of a group

(2) Ability to give incentives to each individual member of the group so that he/she can address their issues in a participatory manner

f. Internal and external factors contributing to continuous support

(1) Trustworthy personality

Person with tolerance and ability to accept counselee. Person trusted by the related organizations. Person with tolerance who can stand by the counselee without giving up easily even if difficulty persists

(2) Person with opportunities to have contact with new information of the real world

(3) Person who can accept the evaluation of specialists or specialty organizations on the activities in a composed manner

g. Scientific knowledge on behavioral characteristics of young people

(1) Having the latest knowledge on health/nature of young people and changes in the views of young people

(2) Having knowledge on theories, such as career development

h. Having scientific knowledge on occupational career and vocational experience

i. Having a positive attitude towards cooperation with public organizations and specialists

Public organizations and specialists have a wide information network and reliable special skills and tools. Some of them also have crisis management know-how in the related area. Thus, although NPOs are independent private organizations, it would be effective to be positive about cooperation with public organizations and related stakeholders in order to bring about high stability and reliability of the activities of the organization.