

Strengthening Women's Capacity through Life Long Learning

12th WLN Port Douglas, Australia

Kumiko OBINO

**Member of the Council for Gender Equality
Government of Japan**

Framework for Gender Equality in Japan (1)

1946 The Constitution of Japan

Article 14: All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, ···

1995 The Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing)

Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

1999 Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society

Enacted with unanimous approval of Diet.

2000 Basic Plan for Gender Equality

First comprehensive and cross-cutting policy planning to enhance gender equality.

Framework for Gender Equality in Japan (2)

December 2005

Second Basic Plan for Gender Equality

Promotion of comprehensive and systematic measures.

- Expand women's participation in policy decision-making process.
("Promote efforts to expand women's participation in every field, so that women will take at least 30% of the leadership positions in all fields by 2020.")
- Secure equal work opportunities and treatment for men and women.
(Revision of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law.)
- Eliminate all forms of violence against women.

June 2006

Revision of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law

- Introduction of the concept of and measures to eliminate indirect discrimination.

Strengthening Women's Capacity through Life Long Learning

Outline of the Government Policy

- Responding to diversity among women and the increased sophistication of learning demands, in order to contribute to the empowerment of women the government is working to further enhance learning opportunities throughout women's lives, and expand measures for the promotion of participation in society.
- In particular, efforts are being made to provide guidance on learning paths and in job seeking efforts, based on gender equality perspectives. This is to ensure that bearing in mind the lifestyles, skills and qualifications of each and every person, both men and women are able to acquire new skills and attitudes that allow them to select the ideal path for them of their own volition, regardless of fixed gender stereotypes. In this area, efforts are also being made towards the realization of one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that were agreed in the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000, namely the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education at all levels by 2015.

Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation by Council for Gender Equality

- Based on the Basic Law, **the Council for Gender Equality**, through monitoring and gender impact assessment and evaluation, identifies areas for improvement from the perspective of gender equality and, when necessary, submits opinions to relevant Cabinet ministers.
- Recognizing the importance of strengthening women's capacity through life long learning, since February 2005, the Specialist Committee under the Council for Gender Equality had implemented the monitoring and gender impact assessment and evaluation regarding **“Skills Development and Lifelong Learning Programs that Enable Diversity of Choice”**.
- On May 24th 2007, based on the results from the assessment, the Council submitted its opinions on the 26th Council meeting, which was chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and attended by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Report on Monitoring and Gender Impact Survey for Skills Development and Lifelong Learning Measures to Enable Diverse Choices

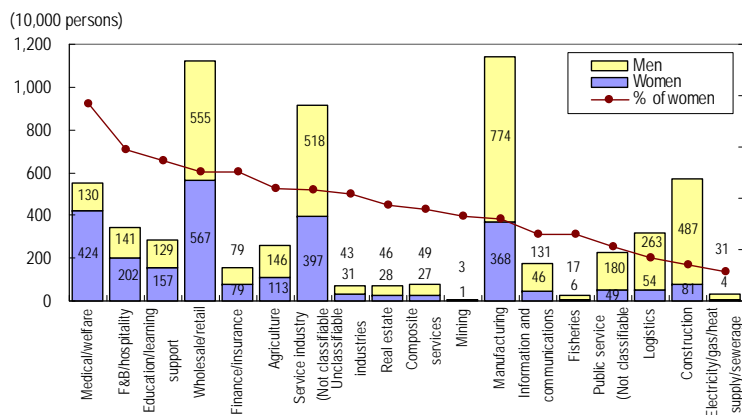
March 2007, Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation

- In the midst of a declining birthrate and aging population it is essential to nurture and develop a diversity of human resources. It is important to ensure that a variety of choices are available to both women and men at each life stage and that they can choose to develop the skills they require in a manner suitable and preferable for each person. By considering the special characteristics of the situation women find themselves in and by implementing effective skills development and lifelong learning measures the aim is to further harness the great potential and capacity of women.
- This Monitoring and Gender Impact Survey considers the current status of the various choices facing women and the challenges they face, and also looks at the current status of and challenges facing skills development and lifelong learning measures. Based on this information, the report provides a proposal on future policy direction and measures for effective skills development and lifelong learning policy.

-There are few approaches that seek to consider clearly and actively respond to the current status and diverse needs of women in various life stages.

-There is variation in women's employment depending on sector (Industries which have a high proportion of female workers include medical and welfare, food and lodging, and education and learning support, etc.). For entrepreneurship, many female entrepreneurs feel that they have a lack of management knowledge.

Figure 1 No. of workers by industry

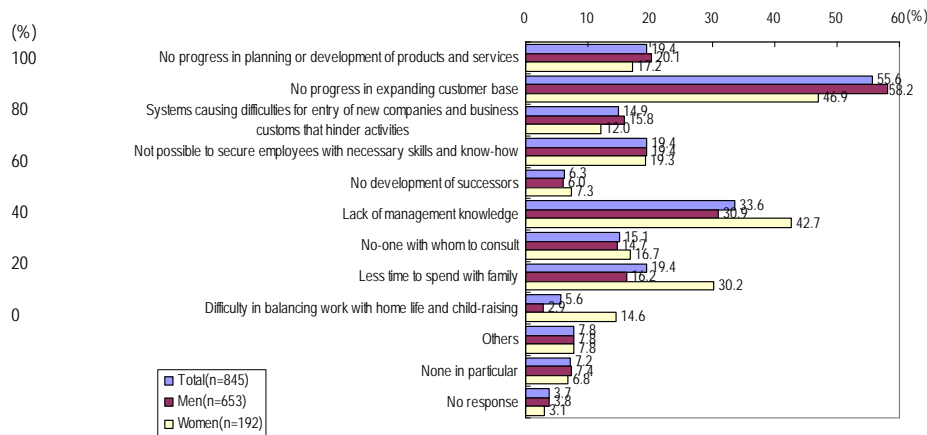


Source: Statistics Bureau, *Labor Force Survey*, 2005

(Policy Direction)

- Information provision to support long-term life planning
- Support for choices in areas in which women's participation is low, e.g., science and technology
- Continuous practical support for female entrepreneurs (business fund procurement, acquisition of management and financial knowledge, etc.)
- Implementation of skills development in tune with corporate needs

Figure 2 Difficulties faced after starting a business (founders of company)



Source material: METI, *Survey on Factors Impacting New Business Creation*, (2003)

Source: METI, *Research Report on Self-employed Women*, (2004)

Approximately 70% of women leave work to give birth, and many women cut off their careers to attend to home matters.

Figure 3 Work status of women around childbirth in household with one child (the baby being born)

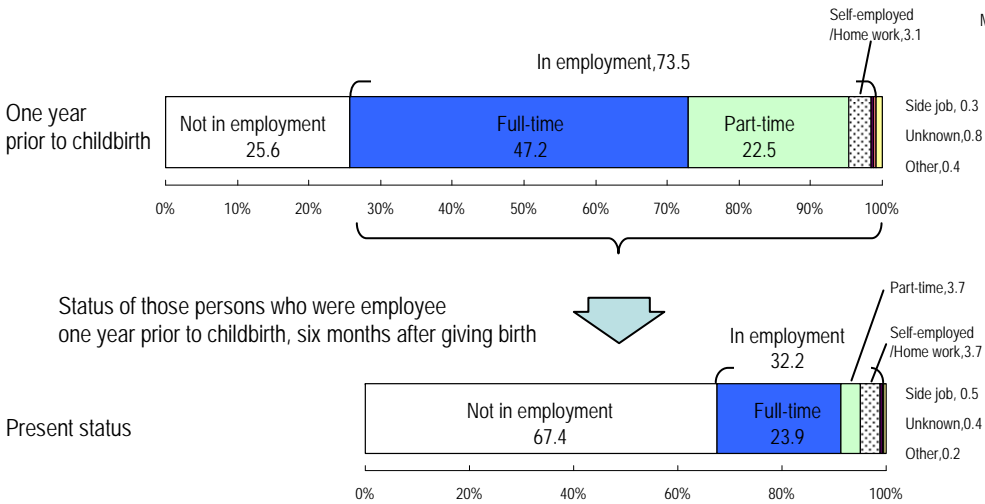
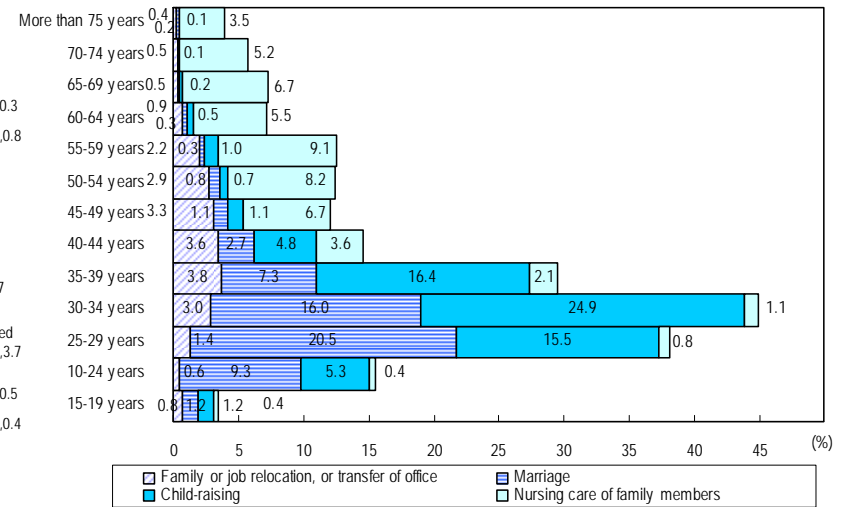


Figure 4 Reason for leaving working by age bracket (Single response) (Women) (%)



Source: MHLW, *First Longitudinal Study of Babies in the 21st Century*, (2001)

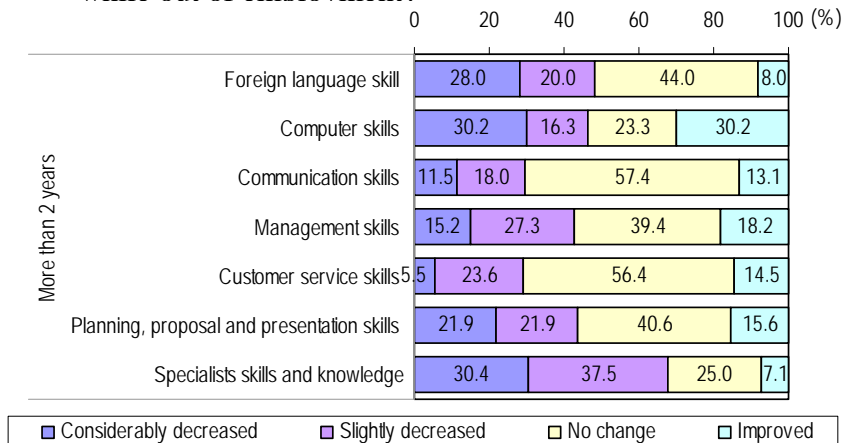
Source: Statistics Bureau, *Employment Status Survey*, (2002)

(Policy Direction)

- Grasp the current status and needs of those not in employment (women who are taking a career break)
- Provision of skills development opportunities for persons taking a career break and support for utilization of skills and capacity after reemployment
- Provision of skills development opportunities using e-learning in the home, etc., having flexible hours, implemented in convenient locations, and also considering the need for childcare

There are many women who feel that if they stay out of employment for an extended period (more than two years) their specialist skills and knowledge deteriorate. At the same time, companies are placing emphasis on specialist knowledge and skills and communication skills for mid-career recruitment.

Figure 5 How do you feel your skills have changed while out of employment?



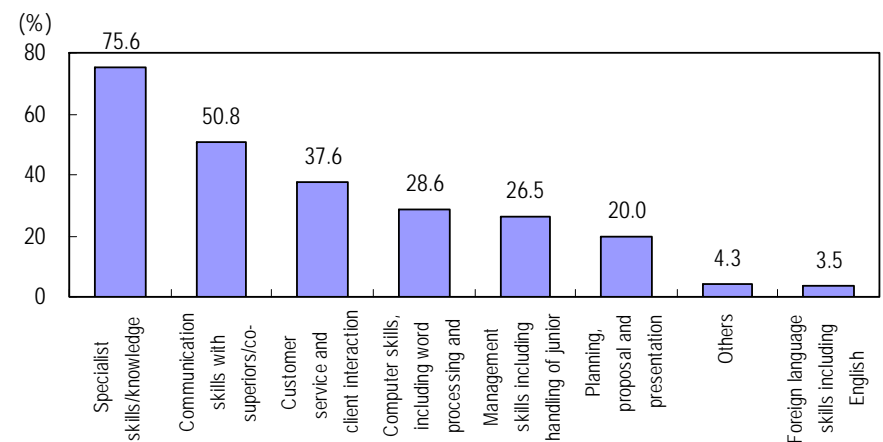
Note) Respondents were 130 women between 20 and 49 who had stopped working for marriage or to have children.

Note) Excludes non-responses and response "I didn't need special skills beforehand."

Source material: Compiled from Cabinet Office, *Opinion Survey on Diverse Working Styles*, (2006)

Source: Cabinet Office, *White Paper on the National Lifestyle*, (2006)

Figure 6 Corporate emphasis on qualities sought for mid-career recruitment



Note) Responses were given in answer to the question: "What skills do you emphasize when engaging in mid-career recruitment (choose up to three)."

Note) 898 companies from around the country with more than 30 employees responded (excluding non-responses and invalid responses).

Source material: Compiled from Cabinet Office, *Survey on Corporate Recruitment*, (2006)

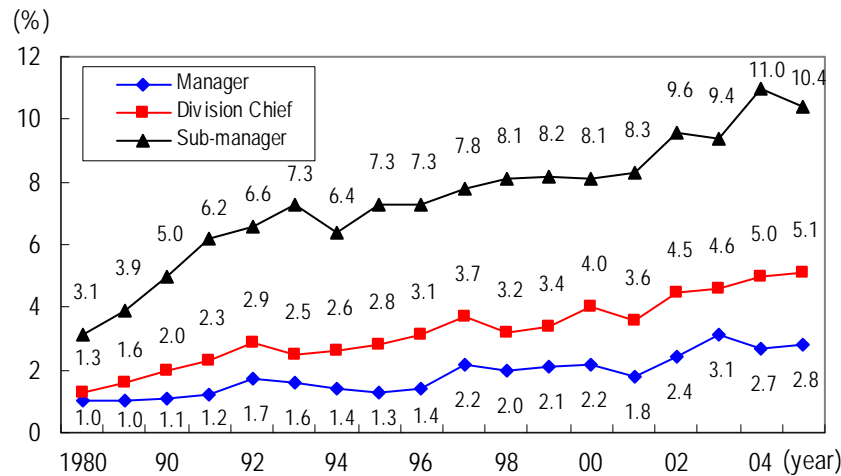
Source: Cabinet Office, *White Paper on the National Lifestyle*, (2006)

(Policy Direction)

- Creation of evaluation methods which positively evaluates skills gained through experiences of child-raising and community activities, etc., as work skills, and implementation of information provision.
- Awareness raising for women to recognize and evaluate their own skills and to utilize these skills as working skills. (a process "mind-up.")

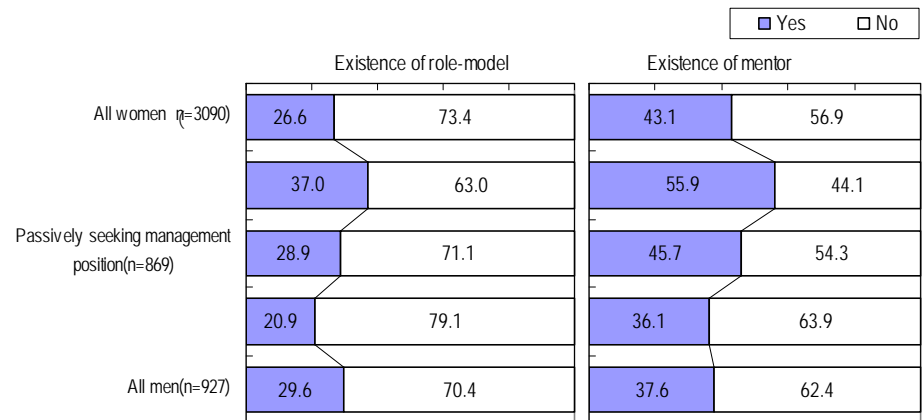
The desire among women to engage in a management position is positively impacted by the presence of a role model or mentor, but the proportion of women currently serving in senior management positions is very low.

Figure 7 Trends in proportion of women working in senior management positions



Source: MHLW, *Basic Survey on Wage Structure*.

Figure 8 Existence of role models or mentors in encouraging work in management positions



Source: RECRUIT, *Perspectives Survey on Desire Among Women to Engage in Management Positions and Selection of Companies*, (2006).

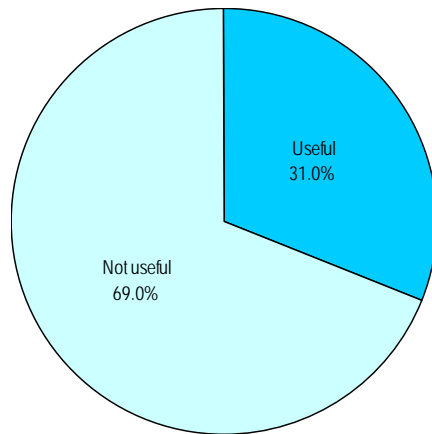
(Policy Direction)

- Nurturing of role models, demonstration of specific career paths, introduction of mentoring systems, etc.
- Provision of information to support long-term life planning

-The number of people who consider that materials, technologies and skills were useful in gaining reemployment stands at approx. 30%.

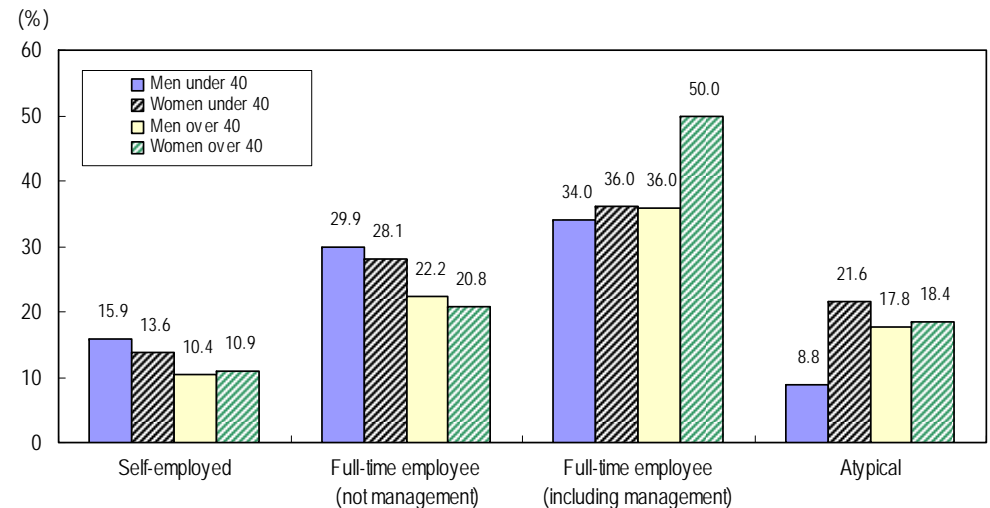
-In addition, the proportion of those non-regular employees with off-the-job-training (Off-JT) experience is low compared to regular (full-time) employees.

Figure 9 Were the materials, technologies or skills you acquired using the system useful in finding reemployment?



Note) The survey targeted women who had found reemployment or who were planning to find reemployment, with a youngest child older than 4 years, but no more than elementary school age.
 Source: Compiled from UFJ Institute, Ltd., *Survey and Research Report on the Various Restrictions in the Labor market in Japan and their Impact on Reemployment*, (2005) (commissioned by Cabinet Office)

Figure 10 Proportion of Off-JT experience in last one year



Source material: Mizuho Information and Research Institute, *Survey on Working and Learning Styles*, (2005) (commissioned by METI)

Sources: Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation (9th meeting) (May 15, 2006)

Kurosawa, Masako, *Status of Women's Work Skills Development*

(Policy Direction)

- Promotion of cooperation between public job skills training and social education facilities, etc., and *Hello Work* (Public Employment Security Office), and local governments; implementation of career education through education institutions such as universities
- Promotion of skills development for non-regular employees
- Securing of equal skill development opportunities regardless of status of employment insurance

Policy Direction based on the Report

Need to “Create a structure that guarantees participation in skills development and lifelong learning for all people (men and women) at any time and in any place”

Skills development and lifelong learning measures that suit the specific needs of women’s life stages

- Implementation of skills development and lifelong learning leading to participation in the workforce, entrepreneurship and community actions

-Continuous practical support for women entrepreneurs, etc.

-Implementation of skills development and lifelong learning that takes into account career breaks for child-raising, etc.

- Provision of skills development opportunities to people who have taken a career break, support to capitalize on skills after reemployment

-Consideration of time and place that enables the balance of work with child-raising (e-learning, provision of childcare facilities, etc.)

- Implementation of Job skill development utilizing experiences of child-raising and community activities, etc.

- Creation of evaluation methods to positively evaluate such skills

- Promotion of awareness raising for women to utilize their own skills as working skills (“mind-up”) etc.

- Improving desire to develop and utilize skills

- Nurturing role models, introduction of mentoring systems, etc.

- Information provision to support life planning, etc.

Approaches to implement measures more effectively

- Promotion of creation of sex-disaggregated data, etc.

Creation of systems and environment to support measures

- Promotion of matching of skills development and lifelong learning with jobs

-Promotion of cooperation with Hello Work (Public Employment Security Office) and educational institutions, etc.

- Ensuring skills development opportunities that are employment-type neutral

- Promotion of skills development for non-regular employees

- Necessity to secure equal skill development opportunities regardless of status of employment insurance