

Making All People Full Members of Society:
New Direction of Lifelong Learning Policy and Practices in Japan

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The recent character of the changing direction of lifelong learning policy of Japanese government:

The bottom-up approach from the grassroots-community

The transformations of social structure,
especially marketization and individualization of the society

The focal point: the community in which residents live

Key-phrase: "making all people full members of society."

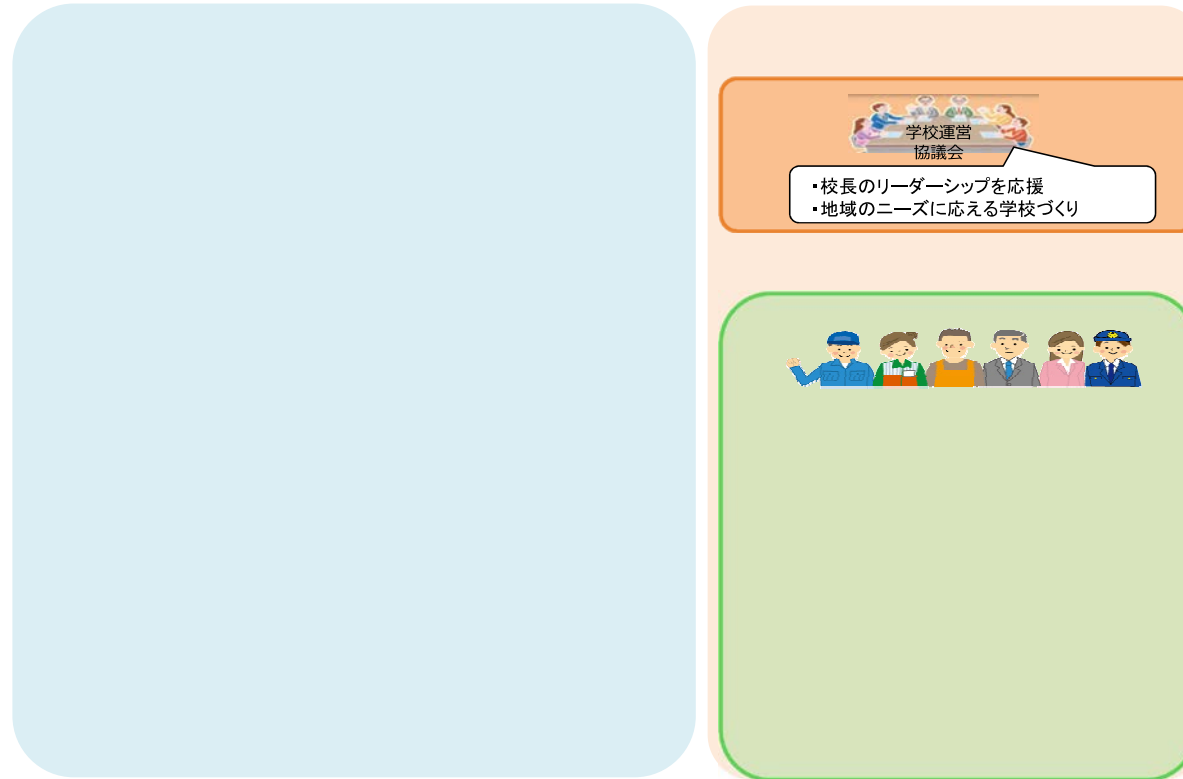
1. Community-school collaboration on child education

Central Education Council, Ministry of
Education, Dec. 2015

Three simultaneous reports called:

The Community-School Collaboration Report,
The Team-Based Schools Report,
The Educator Skills Improvement Report.

School-community collaboration on Child Education



The new direction of education and lifelong learning policy of Ministry of Education, Japan

Three simultaneous report have been launched:
Community-school collaboration report
Team-based schools report
Educator skills improvement report

These three reports incorporate fundamental value judgments.

The educational process should no longer be completed by schools alone and should be played out in the community as well.

Focal point:

Schools seem to no longer be institutions of “**education**” and are becoming “**social welfare**” institutions.

Poverty rate for children: 17%, at the worst level of OECD countries

Relative poverty rate: households that earn less than the half of the median value for the national household income are deemed to be in relative poverty. Currently, household with an annual income of 2.2 million yen fall into this category.

Single mothers' families: Poverty rate rises above 50%

A rapid increase in the number of children eating inadequate breakfasts.

Many children make do with junk food in the evening and many rely on school lunches for their nutrition.

Due to both parents being employed, employment instability, or a mother who works nights.

The reality for schools is that they have these children for students and are supplying lifestyle instruction and meals that come prior to education.

The core of these reports is to move away from having educational curricula wholly completed by schools, and rather to have communities involved in educating children, thereby **guaranteeing children rich social experiences.**

2. The Transformation of Social Structure that Education is Facing

First: Rapid aging, low birth rate, and shrinking population.

Aging rate: 2016 26%

2015 30%, 2060 40%

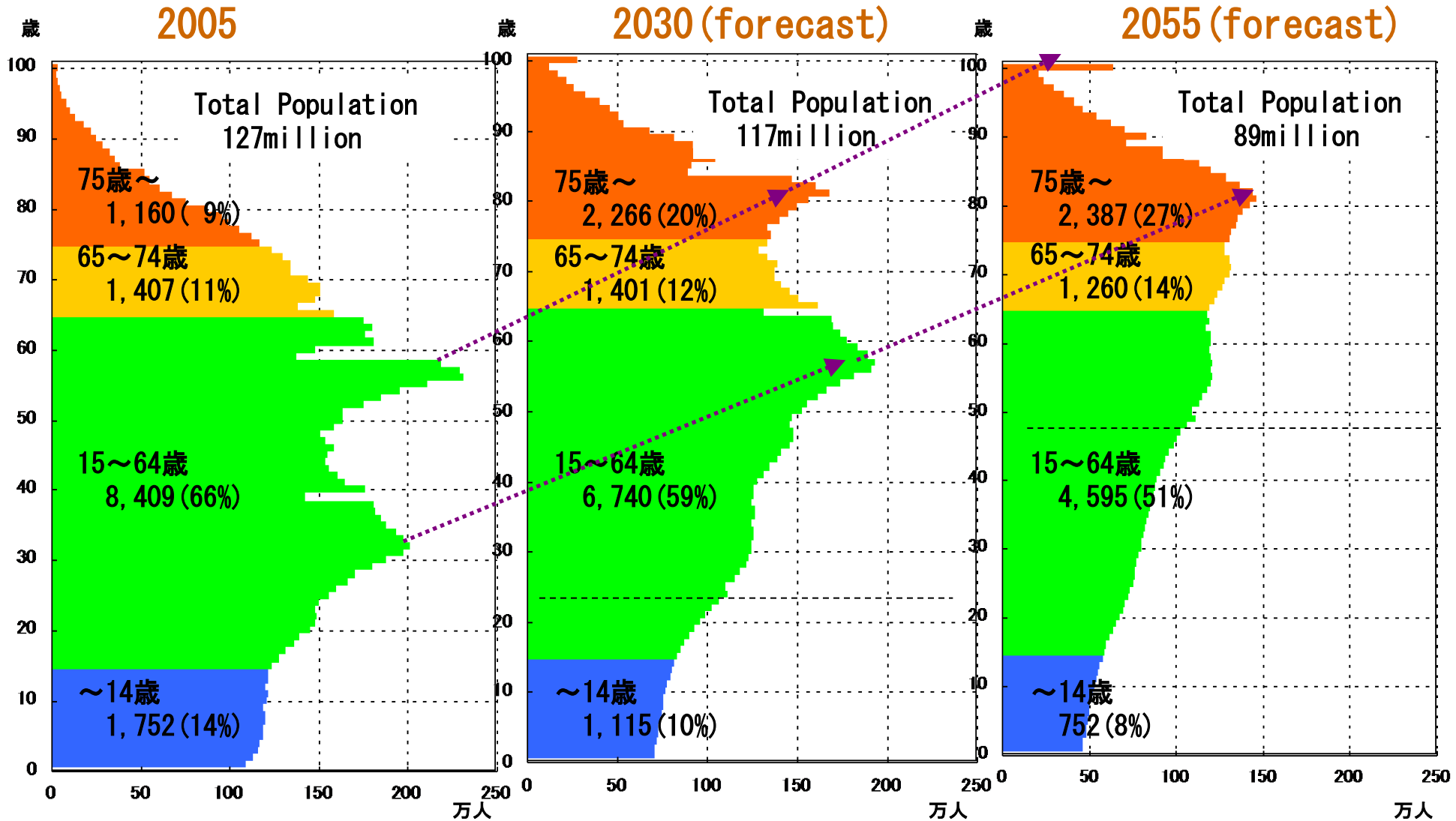
Total population: 2016 127million

2030 117million, 2050 97million

2060 87milliom, 2100 50million

Rapid aging, low fertility rate, and shrinking population

Aging of elder population



注: 2005年は国勢調査結果。総人口には年齢不詳人口を含むため、年齢階級別人口の合計と一致しない。

Second: Transformation of society from an industrial society to a consumer society focused on financial and service industries

Increasing non-regular (non-full-time contract) employment and employment instability.

The uniformity of the domestic market had been lost. The prolonged economic downturn brought a rapid increase in non-full-time employment contracts that came to exceed 40% of employed workers.

Third: Urgency of massive fiscal debts for federal and local governments, combined with the need for municipalities to become more self-sufficient.

In this way, as people stop feeling a sense of placement in their own communities, children in particular no longer feel cherished by adults other than their parents and no longer receive a sense of positive affirmation.

This leads to an ill-defined sense of one's relationship with society.

Moreover, the social message being communicated is that people must take personal responsibility to become independent and survive society as a fiercely singular individual.

This independence can easily lead to isolation.

3. Running the Community through Citizen's Effort

To leverage social education and lifelong learning to integrate administrative territories related to the different spheres of residents' activities.

To reconfigure the management of communities by utilizing residents themselves, creating new community leadership, and stabilizing society.

A majority of society has actually been marginalized in the high growth economic model. Outside the mainstream of society have been those who were not salaried male workers.

These groups include children, the elderly, and women. Moreover, the arena of activity for these non-mainstream actors was not the corporate sphere.

Their actions were played out in the local community, in the town and village municipalities, in childcare circles, volunteer groups, NPOs, and other diverse gatherings.

“Multi-Generational Community” Formation

Creating a community café as a hub for “multi-generational community” formation.

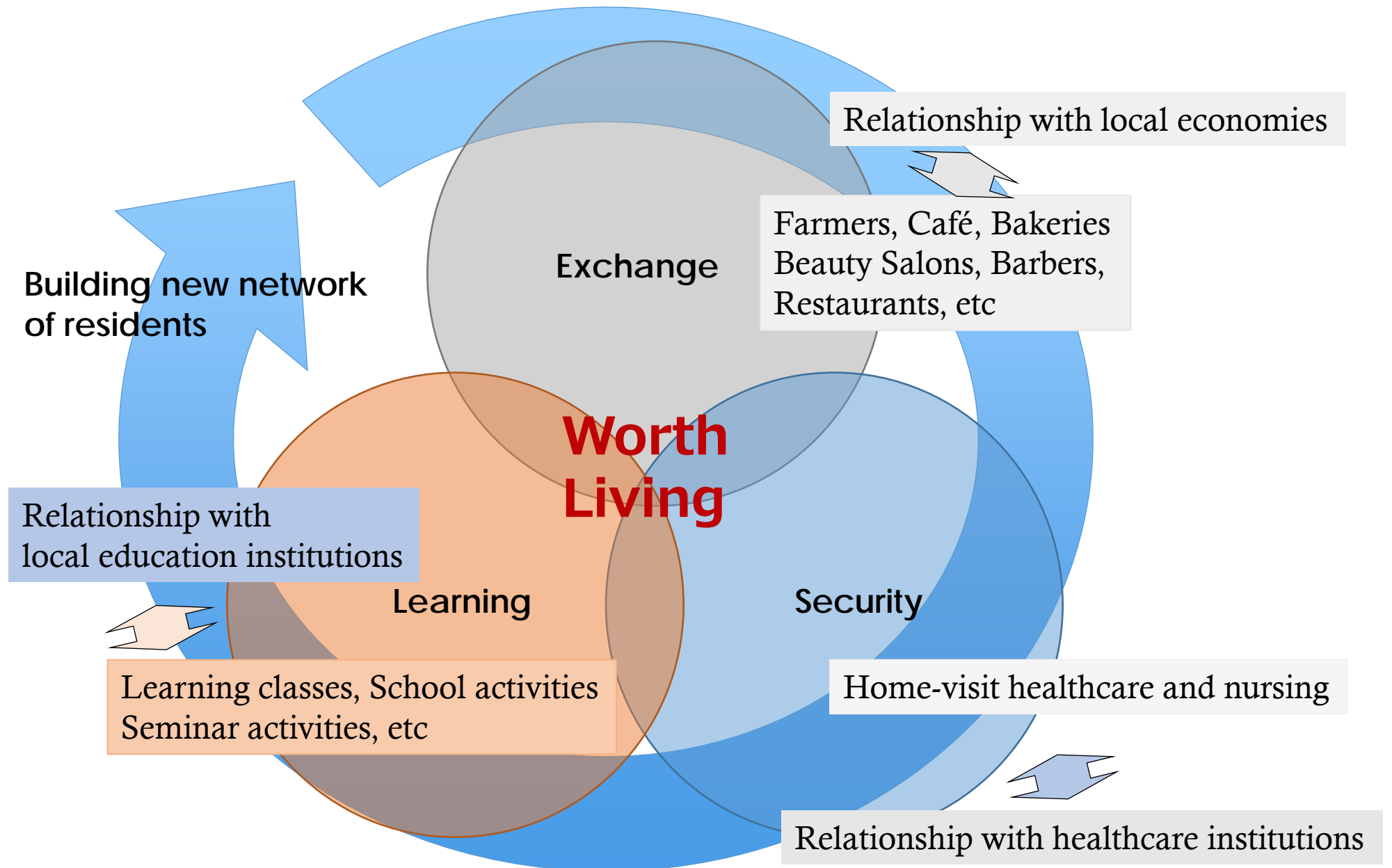
4. A Community Conducive to Childrearing and Active Seniors

The café opened in May 2012, since then, activities have continued until today.

On average, a total of 120 visit the café each day.

Children have also started stopping by the café daily.

Local senior citizens help out by acting as crossing guards at intersections and keeping an extra eye on the children, who are also invited to join group activities such as crafts projects and neighborhood cleanups.





Participants of international youth leader program visited the community café. Feb. 7, 2013

The schools also are moving towards conducting educational practice by valuing their relationships with the seniors.

This ensures interaction on a multi-generational level.



These initiatives show a clear improvement in human relationships within the area, including reports that children smile and happily greet other residents.

Due to these changes, the area has received a reputation for being well suited to childrearing.

Many visitors involved with childcare have come to observe the situation and some have even ultimately built homes and moved in.

Residents have been able to form ties, recognize each other, support each other, and grow into being actors in charge of their own community.

This has allowed them to live with enjoyment and purpose, which attracts more people into the locale.

In this community, men and women, young and old, can enjoyably fulfill their roles as full members of the neighborhood while forming mutual ties and being affirmed as individuals.

5. Community Development with High School Students Playing Key Roles

The result of students' research: there is a large number of seniors, and the area does not have retail stores like supermarkets, more and more residents are becoming unable to go out to shop, and support is needed in this regard.

The proposal: To rent a bicycle-drawn cart, stock it with goods from stores, and go out into the community as peddlers serving the senior population.

Students' realization: While pulling the carts around the area, they realized that seniors gathered to buy things not so much for the purpose of shopping for necessities, but more so for the chance to converse with the high school students.

The issue facing the seniors was not one of lifestyle services, but one of severed ties with their neighbors.

People had lost their sense of a clear place in society and the important chance to receive affirmation.

Students saw that this was not unique to seniors, but a shared challenge for themselves as well.

Bicycle-drawn carts serve as communal gathering points for students and seniors.

Because the students were paying them visits, the older residents came out into town, spoke with them, mutually recognized each other, and items were sold as part of the interaction.

Other high school students also rented out shuttered shops in town and opened cafés, bakeries, etc.

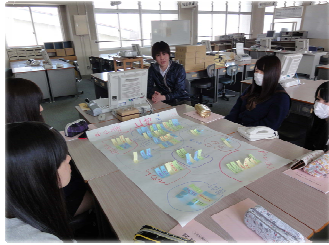
Making Children Full-member of the Community

High school students were involved in community building activities.

They realized the critical issue is not so much the difficulties to go out and shopping, is so more the cut-off of human relationship among the residents.

Human relationship is the basis of commerce that they learn.





店街で喫茶

3 年生課題研究
下久堅ひさかた和紙でランプシェードづくり





**Sturdy Egg:
Students' community
development circle
&
share space as a base
of their activities**

Himetama: Local Brand created by high school students



All of students started with the intention of selling goods, but gradually came to see that sales came from people initially recognizing one another and forming bonds.

In this process, they recognized the small society that they formed is replete with people who are mutually aware, take care of each other, and are able to put their trust in one another, which is the basis of commerce.

6.Creating Many Small Societies

Today in local communities, which are the bedrock of Japanese society, we are seeing stronger movements toward addressing society's structural changes and linking social education and lifelong learning with people's lives, with self-initiated effort to handle local administration, and with a reconstruction of the underpinnings of residents' daily activity.

It is necessary for all of us to move away from relying on a greater, transcendent authority (e.g., central government) that restricts our future and instead rearrange our fundamental lifestyles toward joy and energetic health.

That is the great challenge for lifelong learning to address.

The key phrase inherent to the task is "making all people full members of society."