



# NEWSLETTER

Japan International Labour Foundation <http://www.jilaf.or.jp/English-jilaf>  
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## School Projects to Combat Child Labor and OHS Activities for Workers and the Current Situation in Nepal

### ◆Management of FY2005 Projects

In FY2005, JILAF's support project in Nepal has focused on the "operation of non-formal schools" and "promotion of the POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Union Initiative) Program for occupational health and safety," and has been carried out with the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC), our counterpart. Back in fiscal 1996, in order to combat child labor in Nepal, school projects were started for those children who were deprived of the opportunity to go to school. At present, JILAF operates ten schools in cooperation with NTUC. These schools are providing primary basic education to the young boys and girls who are otherwise denied schooling.

With regard to school management, a "teachers' meeting" and "school management meeting" were held in Kathmandu from May 9-15. The intent of the former was to give teachers an opportunity to learn about the contents of classes to be provided at the non-formal schools in the current year. The latter was to discuss how schools can be managed well. It was also attended by three staff members from JILAF: Deputy Secretary Abe, Field Manager Wada in Nepal, and a staff member, Mr. Motobayashi.

At the school management meeting, each of the schools gave a report on its operations during the previous year. Some reporters said that "there were days when we had to close the school" or "we were forced to change the school location" due to the country's political and economic instability. In FY2005, ten non-formal schools are being operated. To ensure that they are properly managed, the management rules were revised and confirmed, and the school schedule was reviewed. Though there is some concern over safety because several schools are located in dan-

gerous districts, JILAF plans to regularly monitor school management and offer careful guidance.

In the area of occupational health and safety, the major issue is how to ensure that NTUC can promote POSITIVE independently, since JILAF's support will end in two years. NTUC intends to place an emphasis on occupational health and safety for workers in the construction industry. Therefore, JILAF's support in the current year will focus on improving the skills of core trainers.

### ◆Outline of the School Project in Nepal

JILAF launched the school project in Nepal in 1996 with the aim of the "elimination of child labor," assisting 12 schools at the beginning. Although the number of schools later increased to 15, in FY2005 this number has fallen to 10 due to the security situation in Nepal as well as the JILAF's tighten budget. At present, a total of 500 pupils are attending classes at the



▲Class at Bhaktapur School



▲Teachers' meeting

10 schools, with 50 pupils each. Until recently the support was provided for nine months each year, but based on strong local wishes, support is being provided to three schools for 12 months a year on a trial basis.

The pupils are children between the ages of 8 and 14 who cannot go to public school due to poverty. Union officials in the areas where the schools are located visit parents to persuade them to allow their children to attend. The scheme involves pupils learning Nepalese, arithmetic and English for one year, so that they can take the exams necessary to transfer to public schools the following year.

In addition, NTUC is carrying out awareness campaigns in the areas where schools are located to ensure that parents and people in the community understand the importance of school education, thus assisting local activities to promote understanding toward JILAF education activities.

JILAF will continue this project for the "elimination of child labor" in cooperation with NTUC.

# Southeast Asian/South Asian Team Invited to Japan

JILAF invited a Southeast Asian/South Asian Team to Japan for 14 days from July 21 to August 3. This was the fifth team to visit Japan through the FY2005 Invitation Program. The team consisted of one person from ICFTU-APRO (ICFTU Asian and Pacific Regional Organization), two from CTUCC (Cambodian Trade Union Coordination Council), one each from two organizations in India, HMS (Indian Labour Association) and INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress), one each from Indonesian organizations ITUC (Indonesian Trade Union Congress) and KSPSI (Confederation of the All Indonesian Workers Unions), one from MTUC (Malaysian Trade Union Congress), one from NTUC (National Trade Union Congress, Singapore), one from the Sri Lankan CWC (Ceylon Workers' Congress) and one from TLUC (Timor Lorosae Trade Union Confederation).

Since its foundation in 1989, JILAF has invited trade union leaders mainly from Asian countries: India and Sri Lanka since 1989, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore since 1991, and Cambodia and East Timor, both new organizations, since 2003. Trade union leaders who participated in JILAF programs are now active in the trade union movements in their own countries.

The latest program was also based on the regular invitation program. Through lectures on labor issues and a visit to RENGO, the participants learned about the history and activities of the trade union movement, labor laws and industrial relations in Japan. A visit to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare gave them an opportunity to deepen their understanding of labor administration in general, and the relationship between trade unions and government. A visit to the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development helped improve their knowledge of the productivity movement that is being promoted in their countries as well. They

also visited RENGO Yamanashi to learn about the activities of Local RENGOs. Further visits were to the Confederation of Japan Automobile Workers' Unions (JIDOSHA SOREN), and to the Shonan Plant of Nissan Shatai Co., Ltd., whose trade union is affiliated to it. The JILAF



program invariably contains a visit to Hiroshima or Nagasaki, with a view to considering how trade unions have been and should be involved in the peace movement. The visit to Hiroshima this year was a particularly memorable experience for the participants, because 2005 marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the atomic bombing, and various events were arranged there. Exhibitions at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Park showed the participants how the atomic bombing had devastated the city. They felt great shock and sadness, and said that they would support RENGO's peace movement and activities in their countries and appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons in order to prevent such a tragedy from ever occurring again.

When visiting the above-mentioned organizations and exchanging views on common problems such as organizing and the treatment of part-timers, the participants said that they hoped to apply the results of these discussions in their future activities. We expect that all the participants will take the initiative in the trade union movements in their home countries.

## JILAF's Survey and Research Activities

Since 1998, under commission from the Employment and Human Resources Development Organization of Japan, JILAF has conducted surveys and research on labor issues. The people involved in these activities are specialists from the academic, industrial and labor worlds who are well versed in labor-related problems. They analyze the current labor situation from a global perspective, and compile reports making recommendations concerning Japan's employment policy.

Research themes for 2004 were "Good Practices Concerning Employment Creation by Community Businesses in Japan and Abroad" and "Employment Management in Information and Service Industries." In order to spread awareness of the survey



▲ Study meeting on "Employment Management in the Information Service Industry." The lecturer is chief researcher Koichiro Imano, professor at Gakushuin University.

results, study meetings on each of the two themes were held in July 2005. The meeting on the second theme had participants, thanks to the cooperation of the Japanese Electrical Electronic & Information Union, Japan Federation of Telecommunications, Electronic Information and Allied Workers, and Japan Information Technology Services Industry Association. We would like to express our appreciation to these organizations and to the participants.

A research theme for 2005 is "International Comparative Study on Employment Creation and Job Quality at NPOs." In Japan, the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities, or NPO Law, took effect in December 1998. Since that time, the number of nonprofit organizations has increased steadily, exceeding 20,000 as of January 2005. At present, however, it is hard to say that NPOs in Japan have played an adequate role in creating employment. Increasing the number of people working for NPOs is an important challenge that will also contribute to reducing unemployment. Therefore, JILAF will take advantage of its considerable experience in overseas research and its human network to study good practices abroad, compare them with Japanese ones, and compile a report on both the quantitative effects and qualitative significance of job creation by NPOs. Surveys will be conducted mainly in countries where NPOs play a substantial role in society, such as the Netherlands, U.S. and Britain. We hope the report will contribute to solving employment problems in Japan.

## Congress of South African Trade Unions Shows Strong Presence

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), whose activities are covered almost daily by major national newspapers, is the country's largest national center, with a membership of about 1.7 million. There is universal agreement that no one can ignore its social presence. During the apartheid era, COSATU not only strove to improve wages and working conditions for union members, but also was heavily committed to the struggle against apartheid, as a representative of non-white people.

Since South Africa's transition to democracy, COSATU has occupied an important position in the government and maintained its social influence as a partner in the Tripartite Alliance together with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party. In the first general election in 1994, dozens of union activists entered politics. Former General Secretary Mbhazima Shilowa is now the premier of Gauteng Province, which includes Pretoria, one of the country's capital cities, and Johannesburg, the largest commercial city in the southern hemisphere. This fact indicates that the connection between COSATU and the government is stronger than what one might imagine.

However, there are some concerns over the future of COSATU. First, the outflow of capable unionists into politics may lead to a lack of future leadership. Second, colleagues who once desperately fought together to end apartheid are now separated into two groups: those holding important posts within the government, and those who remain union officials. As a result, government policies, including measures against unemployment,

### PROFILE



#### Akira Saito

Secretary in charge of internal affairs and the Kingdom of Lesotho, Japanese Embassy in the Republic of South Africa

Born in 1973 in Tokyo. Member of the Executive Committee of the NTT Trade Union Tokyo branch from 1998-2002, at which time he was on loan to JILAF, in charge of field projects. Member of the Executive Committee of the NTT Union Communications Headquarters from June 2002. On loan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from September 2002.

Ad hoc member of the Executive Committee of the NTT Union CH since January 2003

HIV/AIDS prevention, and economic recovery, often face opposition. Third, the organization rate is falling. According to the Organizing Department of the COSATU Head Office, COSATU lost over 100,000 members in 2004 alone due to the lingering high unemployment (approx. 37%) and a growing tendency toward atypical employment. It is making efforts to stop the fall in the organization rate by, for example, expanding various benefits for union members to part-time workers and by introducing a subsidy system for industrial organizations that cannot pay union fees in full.

## International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions – No.8 Working Tour to the Loess Plateau, China

Seiji Sakai

Chairman

Oriental Land Friendship Society

In April 2005, the Oriental Land Friendship Society (OFS), the trade union of Oriental Land Co., Ltd., which manages the Tokyo Disney Resort, made its fifth working tour to China's Loess Plateau (Huangtu Gaoyuan). Twenty-three participants stayed at private homes in the desert region without interpreters and worked with local people to plant trees.

OFS Chairman Seiji Sakai said, "The primary objective of these tours is to plant trees in the desert. However, there is a limit to the number of trees we can plant during a week's visit. What is more important is for participants to have an opportunity to think about the purpose of life and true happiness by learning about the lives and life philosophy of people living under these harsh desert conditions."

Drawing upon efforts by the AEON Labor Union and Suntory Trade Union,

OFS launched this activity in cooperation with an NPO, the Green Earth Network. This was partly because there was a growing desire among union members to join a social action program. The tours have also had an unexpected effect: closer horizontal connections among participants. They live and work together all day long in harsh circumstances quite different from those in Japan. This experience naturally produces a strong sense of unity among them. In fact, many former participants attend the parties that are held each year.

The tours have also had a good effect on local people. It is difficult to describe in words the significance of planting trees. However, local vil-

lagers seeing Japanese people planting trees feel that there must be important implications to the work, since the Japanese teams come all the way out there to plant trees. As the trees grow, more people come to take loving care of them.

Demonstration by action is critical for changing attitudes. The OFS' working tour program teaches us the basics of the trade union movement.



# Report on a Study Tour to India

Keiko Yamanaka, Western Japan Headquarters, All NTT Workers Union of Japan

The Western Japan Headquarters, All NTT Workers Union of Japan, has adopted the "Elimination of Child Labor" as a main theme of our international activities. We sent a survey team consisting of union officials to India for nine days starting from May 27, with JILAF acting as coordinator. The team visited the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), a local NGO (shelter) as well as the ICFTU-APRO Singapore office, and conducted surveys on the actual situation and various activities being carried out at different levels. The team visited an informal school in the Markapur district, which is being jointly run by INTUC and JILAF. We observed classes, talked with pupils and met with teachers and officials, exchanging opinions with them. In this district, trade union organizations and government agencies are working together "under a single umbrella" for the elimination of child labor. It was very impressive to see INTUC's efforts to eliminate child labor as it has been trying to free children (4-7 years old) of poor families from labor by talking to communities and parents and providing the children with opportunities for basic education, with the aim to overcome public "indifference" characterized by the idea that "child labor is natural." Furthermore, since child labor is a cause of unemployment, and as average wages in areas where child labor is rampant are low, we were struck by how this is really an issue that must be tackled jointly by labor and management. During our trip, we were

also able to meet children who had been freed from child labor, and we could see that the shine had returned to their eyes. I would like to respect JILAF's activities. And it's achievement at the same time. I am very grateful for the precious experience we were given. In the future, the children we met will become working colleagues of ours.



▲The author (first row, far right) worked at JILAF in the Invitation Program Department and Field Project Department from October 2002 to September 2004. She has since returned to her original union, Western Japan Headquarters, All NTT Workers Union of Japan, and is working in the Organizing Department.

Child labor is an issue for workers and trade unions. The Western Japan Headquarters, based on the experiences we gained from this study tour, has reconfirmed that trade unions are members of global society, and from a medium- and long-term perspective, we will consider concrete activities to support the elimination of child labor, as one activity aiming for the end of poverty and the achievement of peace.

## JILAF Calendar (June-August 2005)

### 1. Invitation Programs

- Chinese Team June 2-15
- English-speaking African Team June 16-29
- Central America/Caribbean Team June 30-July 13
- Southeast/South Asian Team July 21-August 3
- Asian Labor Training Team August 28-September 3

### 2. Field Projects

- China ACFTU POSITIVE Monitoring

- June 18-24; Jinhua, Zhenjiang Province
- Thailand Industrial Federation Support Workshop June 19-27; Pattaya, Bangkok
- Indonesia ITUC and ITF/KSPSI National Seminars July 5-19; Batam, Jakarta, Surabaya
- Bangladesh ICFTU-BC Seminar for Training POSITIVE Core Trainers July 10-20; Dhaka
- Vietnam VGCL Seminars for Training POSITIVE Core Trainers August 6-15; Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi

### 3. Others

- International Cooperation Study Tour 2005 July 17-24, Cambodia
- ICFTU-APRO/OTC ILS/JILAF 14th Advanced Leadership Course August 15-September 2, Singapore
- Commissioned Research on Industrial and Employment Problems, "International Comparative Study on Employment Creation and Job Quality at NPOs" August 18-29; France, Hungary, Czech Republic, Britain

## Inside Out

I came on loan from JEC RENGO. Three years ago, I completed a one-month training course with JILAF, and although it was quite short, I learned a lot, and now I am very grateful to have the chance to work here for an extended period. I hope to play a small part in promoting the development of the trade union movement in develop-

ing countries, and through this to contribute to social development.

Tomotaka Inoue  
(May 2005-)



I hope to get a deeper understanding of JILAF's action policy and to work hard with a wide perspective. I don't want to be content with simply doing my job, but hope to always maintain the awareness that it is linked with the lives of people in the developing countries, and I plan to do things one step at a time. I am certain that everybody working with JILAF will be of great assistance to me in many

ways in the future. I am looking forward to your advice and encouragement.

Takeru Kato  
(July 2005-)

