

## **Solidarity Network with Migrants in Japan (SMJ)**

### **2007 Annual Report (January – December 2007)**

#### 0 . Introduction

Recent debates surrounding the declining birthrate and “ageing society” have spurred further debates regarding the “reception” of migrant workers. This year was a year in which the government’s consideration of using the Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program to allow for the systematic “reception” of foreign workers became clear. For example, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Justice have both submitted official reports on the Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program, and the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy/Labor Market Reform Expert Committee’s “Second Report” has considered the possibility of using the Trainee Program as a program for the utilization of “personnel from overseas.” The Council for Regulatory Reform’s “Secondary Report” has stated that legislative efforts concerning changes to be made in the Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program will be made by 2009, at the latest.

At the same time, antiterrorism measures and foreign resident control have been strengthened. On November 20, the Japanese version of US-VISIT was implemented, requiring almost all foreigners to be fingerprinted upon entry/exit. Additionally, under such reasons to improve convenience for foreign residents and to streamline the government, in the aforementioned “Secondary Report,” the decision to reexamine the foreigner registration system and create a proper foreigner register was also made, and amendments to the law are planned for 2009. It is likely that the policy environment concerning migrants and foreign workers in Japan will drastically change over the next few years.

Under these recent developments, SMJ, which celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, has continued in its efforts to establish the necessary human rights that migrant workers living in Japan deserve.

#### 1 . Advocacy Activities

##### **1 . Comprehensive Policy Proposals and Activities for their Realization**

As usual, in October, we submitted requests to relevant government ministries and agencies. These negotiations have been conducted over the past 10 years, and have come to be established as regular activities. We received the strong impression that as considerations on the “reception of foreign workers” have been made, the government ministries and agencies in attendance have started to consider problems surrounding migrant workers to be concerns of their own. Regarding the issue we have long pursued concerning the establishment of a government office in charge of foreigner policies, we were able to establish an agreement that in effect, the current office for such matters is the Cabinet Secretariat.

On the other hand, we were not able to accomplish our goal we set forth in the 2007 Activity Plan of establishing periodic forums for information exchange and dialogue with relevant ministries and agencies. However, regarding trainee issues, requests for the protection of DV victims, and US-VISIT operation problems, we have made individual requests. With regard to trainee issues, the Advocacy Network for Foreign Trainees (formerly known as the “Kenshu Mondai Network,” which was a sub-network of SMJ that became an independent organization in June) conducted several activities that sparked the public’s awareness of issues concerning trainees. As a result, the content of the Networks’ constant appeals were partially

reflected in the guideline revisions.

Additionally, regarding the requests for the protection of DV victims, several close exchanges with the National Policy Agency, Ministry of Justice, and the Cabinet Office were held primarily on the protection of DV victims who do not possess legal residence statuses, and the content of these exchanges have been partially reflected in the “Basic Policy for the Protection of DV Victims” which was announced in January, 2008.

Regarding the creation of “pipelines” with various Diet members, a study session on the Employment Promotion Law and “Immigration” policy was held with a Diet member secretary.

## **2 . Establishment of a Legal System which Ensures the Human Rights of Migrants**

### ( 1 ) Measures to enact the “Basic Law on Human Rights for Foreigners” and the “Law on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”

At the Network for Human Rights Legislation for Foreigners and Ethnic Minorities meeting in December, we invited members from the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) and held workshops in Tokyo and Osaka. Additionally, the NGO Network for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was founded, and SMJ will become involved as a facilitator.

### ( 2 ) Measures to utilize international treaties on human rights

Participated in negotiations (counter-report) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding government reports on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

## **3 . Responses Against Antiterrorism Measures and the Enforcement of Foreign Resident Control**

### ( 1 ) Measures to try to stop the enforcement of the Japanese version of US-VISIT Japan

In accordance with its enforcement on November 20th, we invited Mr. Barry Steinhardt from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and co-hosted a symposium, an in-House meeting, and a workshop with Amnesty International. On the same day, we protested in front of the Ministry of Justice.

### ( 2 ) Efforts made against the Employment Promotion Law revision bill

Held study sessions with Diet member secretaryies and staged a sit-in demonstration in front of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare during Diet deliberations.

### ( 3 ) Efforts made against the tightening of foreigner control

Currently planning *The Noose Around Foreigners Part II*. Regarding efforts made against the Japanese version of US-VISIT, networking with other NGOs has become possible.

## **4 . Measures Concerning the Issues of Detention and Forced Deportation**

With regard to issues concerning detention and forced deportation, apart from the October negotiations with relevant ministries and agencies, SMJ was not directly involved.

## 2. Networking

### 1. National Forum

In preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> National Forum in Kanagawa, the Planning Committee was formed. It has been decided that the Forum will be held in Kawasaki City on June 14 and 15, 2008.

### 2. National Workshop

The 6<sup>th</sup> National Workshop was held in Tokyo on June 9 and 10. In commemoration of SMJ's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a lecture session and a reception were planned, and 240 participants came (first day 150, second day 148, lecture session 136, and reception 106). In accordance with this, we published the 100th issue of *M Net* as a commemorative issue.

### 3. Network Building

- (1) No new developments in building networks in local areas were made.
- (2) There were also no new developments in building networks with organizations in which migrants play a central role.
- (3) Partnerships with project networks

#### ① “Violence Against Women” Project

Submitted public comments against the Cabinet Office's Basic Policy for DV Prevention. Additionally, with regard to the protection of “DV victims without legal residence statuses,” several deliberations with relevant ministries and agencies were held. These efforts were partially reflected in the “Basic Policy for the Protection of DV Victims,” and the ensuing release of the National Police Agency note, “Regarding the Announcement on the Basic Plan of Measures for the Prevention of Spouse Abuse and the Protection of DV Victims.”

#### ② Trainee Issues Project

In June, the Kenshu Mondai Network, which was a sub-network of SMJ, became an independent organization and was renamed, the “Advocacy Network for Foreign Trainees.” In conjunction with this, an inauguration meeting was held on June 11, and in the following December, requests were made to the relevant ministries/agencies and JITCO.

#### ③ Medical Issues Project (Okawa)

Regular meetings have continued on a once per month basis. Additionally, a seven-lecture course on “Thinking about on-site NGO responses from the fundamental vantage point of providing casework assistance,” was co-hosted with the Association of Institutions for Community and Occupational Health Care. More than 10 members from NGOs specializing in casework participated in each lecture.

#### ④ Xenophobia Watch Project

*The Noose Around Foreigners Part II* has been scheduled for publication in 2008.

#### ⑤ Solidarity Day for Migrant Workers

The Annual event was held in March, and negotiations with relevant ministries and agencies were conducted.

#### ⑥ Japan Network Against the Trafficking of Persons

Headed one of the working sessions at the National Shelter Symposium in November.

⑦Participated in the Network for Human Rights Legislation for Foreigners and Ethnic Minorities meeting (mentioned above)

⑧Participation in the NGO Network for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (mentioned above)

In addition to these activities, strengthening partnerships with children's education support organizations and refugee support networks was included in the 2007 Activity Plan, but there were no concrete developments regarding this.

### 3. The Division of International Human Rights

#### 1. Attendance at International Conferences

August Sachi Takaya (secretariat) attended an international conference on the organization of migrant workers, hosted by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

December Tomoko Ishii (Amnesty International) attended a workshop on MFA about migrants, detention, and deportation.

#### 2. Cooperation with the SMJ Main Organization

There were no particular developments in the Japanese government's fifth report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

### 4. Public Relations and Information Dissemination

#### 1. M-Net Publication

(1) We published 900 copies in 2007, but actual sales have seen little progress.

(2) The July issue marked the 100<sup>th</sup> issue and was published as a commemorative issue.

(3) Hifumi Okunuki (secretariat) became editor in chief, and we were able to strengthen the editorial organizational structure.

#### 2. Management of the "migrant-j" Mailing List

As decided last year, from March 2007, the referral requirement for individual memberships was discontinued.

#### 3. Homepage/Website Improvement

The Japanese site was remade to improve ease of reading, and periodic updates were carried out. The English, Korean and Tagalog sites were also improved.

#### 4. Editing and Publication

(1) Published the *Survival Manual* in October. Sales are going well, but we received a number of inquiries about the omission of the "list of consultation centers" that was printed in the previous editions.

(2) Published *Living Together with Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Japan – Policy Proposals by NGOs* in Korean and English.

### 5. Organization, Management and Finances

#### 1. Organization and Management

(1) In conjunction with the National Workshop in June, the general meeting was held, marking the 6<sup>th</sup> term.

(2) Organizing joint representative meetings

Did not organize any.

(3) Holding steering committee meetings

1/13 Tokyo 3/10 Tokyo 6/6 Tokyo 9/29 Kawasaki 12/8 Osaka: Held a total of 5 meetings.

(4) Strengthening the secretariat organizational structure

Held the first secretariat meeting. Following the resignation of Manami Yano, the former Secretariat Chief and Full-time Officer, Ippei Torii and Sachi Takaya assumed the posts of Secretariat Chief and Full-time Officer, respectively. Additionally, Mikako Kurose and the former treasurer, Machiko Kanno resigned, and Hifumi Okunuki and the new treasurer, Toshiko Tamiya joined the secretariat.

## 2. Finance

(1) Increasing the number of members and subscribers

We were able to increase the number of individual memberships to a certain extent, but efforts to increase organizational memberships and organizational subscribers have made little progress. With regard to individual subscribers, the number of individuals deciding to become members has also largely decreased.

<b><u>Number of Members and Subscribers</u></b>	
End of 2006	Individual Members 275 (289 units)
	Individual Subscribers 77 (78 units)
	Organizational Members 86 (100 units)
	Organizational Subscribers 12 (25 units)
End of 2007	Individual Members 302 (313 units)
	Individual Subscribers 64 (64 units)
	Organizational Members 88 (106 units)
	Organizational Subscribers 16 (28units)

(2) Securing project income

The 2006 publication on policy proposals has somewhat served as a source of income. With regard to the Lecturer Dispatching Program, each request to the secretariat was processed on an individual basis.

(3) Applying for project subsidies

We applied for the Daiwa Securities Subsidy offered by the Civil Society Initiative Fund, and was selected as one of the finalists, but unfortunately our application was rejected.

(4) Request for contributions according to our financial situation and activities

Collected summer and winter term voluntary contributions. There were also irregular contributions.

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*Translated from Japanese by Ralph Hosoki*