

JAUW Survey on Work and Life Balance Replies Requested by September 2008

The Japanese Association of University Women (JAUW) is planning to hold a symposium jointly with the Japanese Government's Cabinet Ministry in October of 2008 dealing with the theme "work-and-life balance." This topic has gained considerable attention in Japan due in large to its declining birthrate. Division of roles according to gender has been very pronounced in Japan, with men putting in long hours at work and women being almost exclusively responsible for performing housekeeping and care giving roles—childcare, care of the sick and elderly. The Japanese government is currently attempting to promote the concept of having men and women participate more equally in paid work outside the home and also in work related to maintaining the home as well as care giving work. The anticipation is that if policies are put in place that enable both women and men to achieve a more equitable balance between paid work and home and family life this will have a beneficial effect on Japan's low birthrate.

Our symposium will consist of a panel discussion and also presentations by JAUWs regional branches and committees. The International Committee of JAUW would like to prepare a report on how some other countries are dealing with this issue of achieving work-and-life balance based on the principle of gender equality, and to do so we would like to request the assistance and cooperation of the IFUW members.

Concretely, we want to find out about the kinds of policies your country has pursued in order to enable both women and men to balance work with responsibilities related to the family—policies related to provision of childcare leave, elderly and sick care leave for employees, and policies related to employment, such as options for part-time work, flexible work hours for both women and men, etc., and how effective (or not very effective) those policies have been.

We would be most grateful if you could respond to the following questions, and also send us any additional information that you think might be helpful to us by. We realize not all the questions may be applicable to your country, and also you may not have information regarding all the points. Please answer as many of the questions as you can; whatever information you can give us will be

Since our symposium is scheduled to take place on 25 October 2008, we would appreciate it if you could send your reply by early September to me at the following e-mail address: fankumichan@ybb.ne.jp

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Dr. Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow
CIR & Chair, International Committee
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1. Questions pertaining to employment

- (1) Among what percentage of families in your country do both parents work and earn income?
- (2) What percentage of women in your country is in the labor force?
- (3) What percentage of working women is employed on a full-time basis as opposed to part-time?
- (4) Are more women than men employed on a part-time basis?
- (5) How flexible is the job market in your country in terms of work hours?
- (6) How easy or difficult is it for a woman who has taken 3 or 5 years off from work in order to raise a family to re-enter the labor force?

2. Questions pertaining to policies regarding maternity/paternity/childcare leave.

- (1) Does your country have a system or policy of granting workers maternity/paternity/childcare leave?
- (2) Does the policy/system apply to both public (government) sector employees as well as private sector employees?
- (3) Does the policy apply exclusively to full-time employees or to part-time workers also?
- (4) How many days/weeks/months of maternity or childcare leave is a woman entitled to take?
- (5) How many days/weeks/months of paternity leave is a man entitled to take?
- (6) In some countries paternity leave is compulsory. What is the policy in your country?
- (7) During the period that a woman or man is on leave, is she/he entitled to receive salary? If so, what percentage of the regular pay and for what length of time does the person receive pay? Is the payment made by the government or by the employer or both?
- (8) What percentage of women who are entitled to take childcare leave in fact do take leave? What is the percentage for men?
- (9) Does a man or woman who takes childcare leave encounter any negative consequences in the workplace (e.g., a delay in promotion or pay raise)?

3. Questions pertaining to provision of child day care facilities.

- (1) How adequate is the provision of child day care facilities in your country?
- (2) Is day care subsidized by the state/government? If so, to what extent?
- (3) From what age can a child enter a day care facility?
- (4) How expensive or inexpensive is the cost of sending a child to such a facility?
- (5) To what extent do parents take advantage of such facilities?

4. Questions on policies regarding leave for care of elderly and sick family members.

- (1) What is the dominant opinion regarding care of elderly parents—that they should be cared for at home by family members, or that it is fine to have them taken care of in care facilities?
- (2) Are most elderly parents cared for at home or in public/private care facilities?
- (3) Does your country have a national system/policy that allows working people to take time off from work to care for elderly and/or sick family members? If so, please describe the policy/system in detail.
- (4) Does the policy/system apply to both public sector employees as well as private sector employees?
- (5) Does the policy apply exclusively to full-time employees or to part-time workers as well?
- (6) Does the policy apply exclusively to women or to both women and men?
- (7) How many days/weeks/months of leave is a man or woman entitled to take?
- (8) During the period that a woman or man is on leave to care for an elderly or sick family member, is she/he entitled to receive salary? If so, what percentage of the regular pay and for what length of time does the person receive pay?
- (9) Is the payment given by the government, by the employer or partly by both?

5. Questions regarding attitudes and practices pertaining to gender roles.

Promoting participation by both women and men in childcare and care of the sick and elderly requires not only legislative support but also changes in people's attitudes regarding gender roles.

- (1) How dominant are traditional views about gender roles in your country? (i.e., that "men should be the breadwinners, women should perform housework and care for children and elderly parents")
- (2) To what extent do men in your society actually perform housework and childcare activities? What percentage of housework and childcare are performed by women? By men?
- (3) What efforts are being made to promote progressive attitudes regarding gender roles, especially with regard to the care giving roles? Specifically what is being done in schools to raise the consciousness among children and youth?

6. Question regarding necessary/desirable measures for the future.

- (1) In your own view, how adequate (or inadequate) and effective (or not effective) do you think the current policies in your country are in terms of enabling men and women to realized a balance between work and family life.
- (2) What additional, concrete measures do you think are necessary?

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July 2008