

For A Better World

JWCU



Japan Workers' Co-operative Union

2012 Edition

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希望之光
協同労働

*For tomorrow, For the future,
A light of hope, The Associated Work*

COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

The whole world is going through the historic revolution.

Some say the great industrial society and the capitalism are about to end.

We are seeing countries plunging into serious financial crises, while young people in Arab and North African countries have been fighting for democracy and equality.

The world population has reached 7 billions, and how to ensure foods, jobs and happiness for everyone is a big question.

Finally, our country is still struggling to recover and reconstruct itself from the earthquake, tsunami and the nuclear plant accident.

We ask ourselves: How should we promote cooperative movement in the middle of these historic transformations?

Now is the time for us to build truly humane societies, and cooperatives can play key roles. Our roles, as worker cooperatives, are to pursue “good work” that can benefit people and communities and to build a society that is filled with hope.

The global community is calling for cooperatives to build a better world, and the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2012 is the greatest opportunity for us to stand up and work together to make social solidarity a reality.



Japan Workers Co-operative Union



The Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (JWCU), founded in 1979, represents and unites worker co-operatives throughout Japan. Each worker cooperative is owned and democratically controlled by the worker-members and dedicated to creating jobs to promote the well-being of communities through associated work of the members and community residents.

JWCU consists of 63 member organizations, including primarily worker co-operatives, older persons' co-operatives and affiliated organizations, embracing 11,867 worker-members in total as of March 2010. Our businesses represent diverse areas and sectors in economy such as social services, building maintenance, environment and food/agriculture. Our turnover in fiscal year 2009 amounts to 27 billion yen.

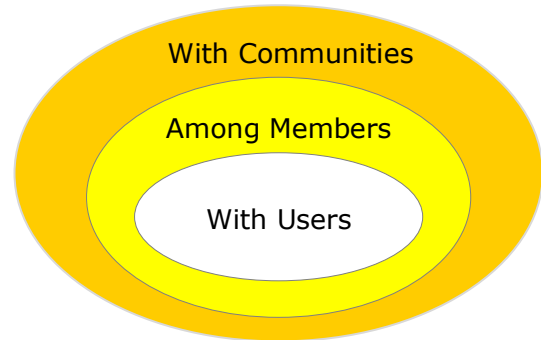
In addition to contributing to the community through the businesses, JWCU seeks to strengthen its bonds to the community through activities for social solidarity. These include organizing seminars and symposia on a broad range of social issues, providing disaster aid and protesting nuclear energy. Our membership in ICA (International Co-operative Alliance), CICOPA (International Organization of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Cooperatives), ICA-AP (ICA, Asia-Pacific) and JJC (Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives) also reflects JWCU's positive solidarity at national, regional and international levels.

■ WHAT IS ASSOCIATED WORK?

An associated worker cooperative is a cooperative in which workers and citizens jointly contribute to the capital, manage businesses democratically, share responsibilities and create jobs that help people and communities.

In associated work, workers cooperate with each other, users and communities.

3 LEVELS OF COOPERATION



Q. HOW IS ASSOCIATED WORK DIFFERENT FROM "EMPLOYED" WORK?

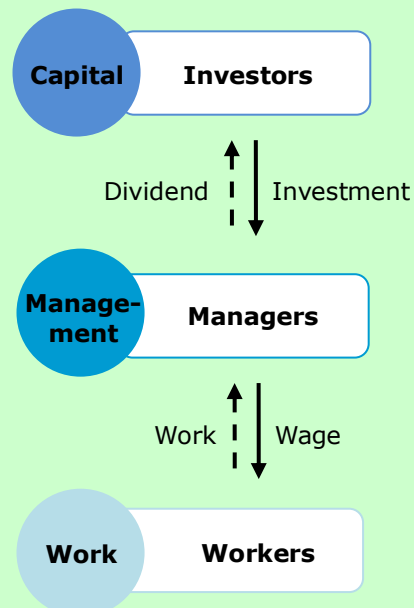
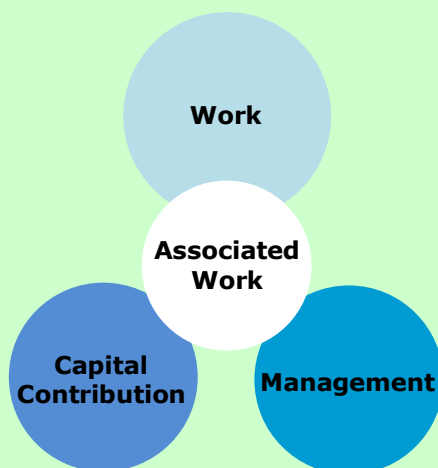
ASSOCIATED WORK


Job Creation and
Community Development
through Cooperation



"EMPLOYED" WORK

Maximizing Profits
Based on Capitalism and
Competition





OUR MISSION

What an Associated Worker Cooperative Aims for

An associated worker cooperative:

1. Places the greatest value on our lives and decent work,
2. Achieves “good work” through practice of associated work,
3. Develops a worker- and citizen-centered “New Business Model,” and
4. Builds “New Welfare Society” where all persons cooperate and coexist in harmony.



OUR PRINCIPLES

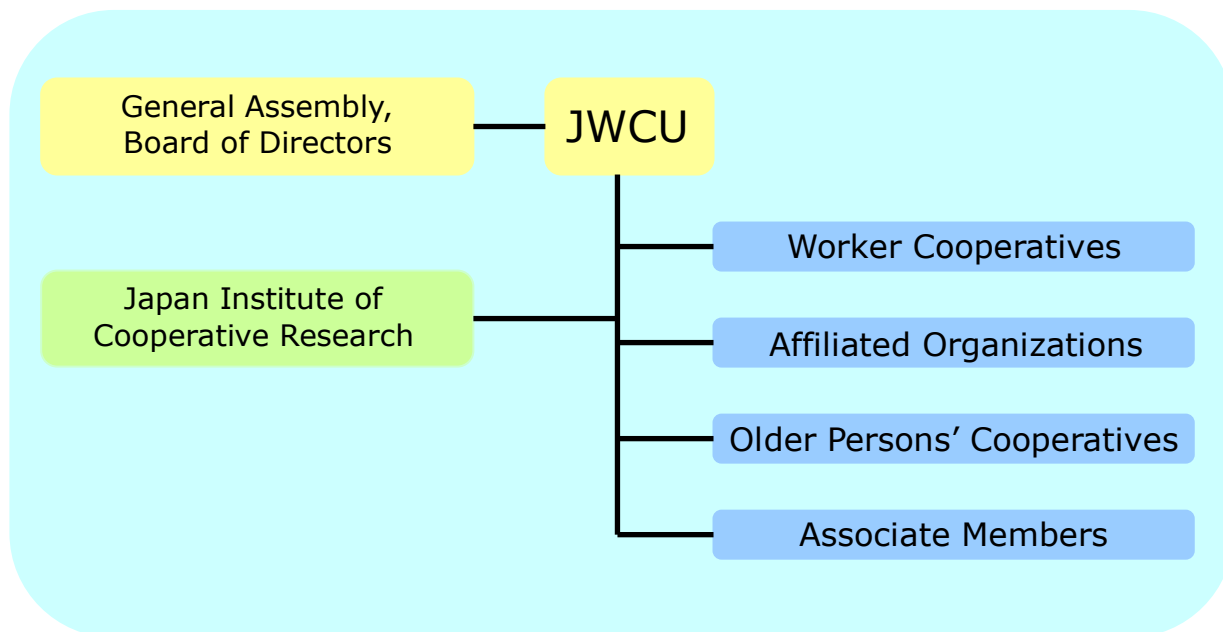
Guidelines for Associated Work, Management and Movement

1. We will create and develop good work with involvement of worker-members and citizens.
2. We will pursue democratic management of, by and for all members.
3. We will promote community development businesses and activities.
4. We will advocate the co-operative spirit through people's growth with “independence, cooperation and compassion.”
5. We will consolidate the associated worker cooperative movement through social solidarity.
6. We will expand the network of “not-for-profit and cooperation.”
7. We will aim for a society with coexistence and cooperation in solidarity with people around the world.

For more details on JWCU principles, please see our web site:

<http://english.roukyou.gr.jp>

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Japan Institute of Cooperative Research (JICR)

Japan Institute of Cooperative Research (JICR) was established in 1991 to exchange information on cooperative and non-profit movements. As of March 2012, JICR has nearly 500 members, including professors, researchers and activists.

The main activities of JICR include: organizing symposia and study groups on job creation, cooperation and other relevant issues; publishing journals; as well as collecting and disseminating information on worker cooperatives throughout the world.

Japan Older Persons' Cooperative Union (JOCU)

Based on the practice of associated work and recognizing the population aging in Japan, JWCU initiated the establishment of older persons' cooperatives with 2 goals: "letting no one become bed-ridden" and "more energetic lives for the healthy older persons." Started in Mie Prefecture in 1995, there are now 35 older persons' cooperatives (as of March 2012) throughout the nation. Their activities (e.g. social services, club activities and advocacy efforts) are based on the common theme "well-being, job creation and Ikigai (life-worth-living)."

Japan Older Persons' Cooperative Union (JOCU) was set up in 2001 to unite the efforts among older persons' cooperatives. As of March 2012, 22 older persons' cooperatives are JOCU members. JOCU is also a member of JWCU.

HISTORY

■ 1971 ~ 1985

Job Creation for, of, by the unemployed, and middle aged and elderly

1971 The forerunner of JWCU, the "Jigyodan" (meaning *business group*) was first established in Nishinomiya City (in the western part of Japan) to create jobs for the unemployed, middle aged and elderly mainly through projects commissioned by municipal governments. Throughout the 1970s, local Jigyodans flourished.



1979 Local Jigyodans formed the National Council.

1982 Upon termination of the public day-worker aid, the National Council launched "direct-control businesses" in hospital maintenance. The businesses developed nationwide rapidly.

1983 The National Council members visited Italy to learn about Italian worker cooperatives, which have over 100 years of history, and started discussions on reorganization.

■ 1986 ~ 1991

Starting a journey as "Worker Cooperatives"

1986 Jigyodans decided to transform themselves into organizations managed by worker-members (i.e., worker cooperatives), in parallel with developing the National Council into the National Federation.

1987 "CENTER Jigyodan" was set up as a model case of worker cooperatives.

1991 Japan Institute of Cooperative Research (JICR) was established.

■ 1992 ~ 1998

Development of worker cooperatives and establishment of older persons' cooperatives

1992 The National Federation's membership to ICA was approved at the ICA Tokyo General Assembly, and the National Federation adopted its own seven principles.

- 1993 The National Federation was renamed Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (JWCU).
- 1995 JWCU established the first older persons' cooperative: a cooperative of, by and for senior citizens and beyond. This movement has spread throughout the country since then.
- 1998 JWCU established a head office to lobby for the law on associated workers' co-operatives.

■ 1999 ~ 2006

Creation of community welfare centers and a new welfare society

- 1999 Preceding a launch of the Long-term Care Insurance System (April 2000), JWCU members started to provide training courses for care workers to obtain the home-helper certificate throughout the country.
- 2000 Worker Cooperative Legislation Civic Council was founded.
- 2001 Japan Older Persons' Cooperative Union (JOCU) was set up to unite the efforts among older persons' cooperatives.
- 2002 JWCU adopted new principles of an “Associated Worker Cooperative.”
- 2004 JWCU celebrated its 25th anniversary and held an international symposium at United Nations University in Tokyo, with ILO’s special cooperation.
- 2006 Cuban ambassador and Mongolia’s First Lady visited JWCU and its members.

■ 2007 ~ present

Realizing the Law on Associated Workers’ Co-operatives and Overcoming Disasters

- 2007- More than 10,000 groups and organizations throughout the nation signed the letters to support the Law on Associated Workers’ Co-operatives. As of March 2012, over 800 municipality assemblies (out of nearly 1,800 nationwide) have also sent the Diet letters recommending the immediate approval of the law.
- 2008- A non-partisan, all-party parliamentary group was founded to promote the legislation. As of January 2012, the group has over 200 members.
- 2011 In the wake of Great East Japan Earthquake, JWCU established Tohoku Reconstruction Head Office in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture.



WHAT WE DO

We have a wide range of businesses and keep growing both in number and scope. The following is a brief overview of our businesses.

■ CREATING CARING COMMUNITIES

Our communities are facing serious challenges, including growing needs for long-term care, child abuse, social isolation and poverty. More than ever, we need to build communities that are supportive and caring.

JWCU members have set up over 300 “Community Welfare Centers” to provide a new type of social services for people across the generations, involving citizens in management and activities in a co-operative style. We also provide training programs to become home helpers so that the graduates can spread this movement.



JWCU members also operate about 160 public facilities throughout the country. It has been almost a decade since the “designated administrator system” started in 2003 to commission what used to be “public” work to the private sector. Our goal is to make these places more “citizen-centered” and “community-oriented” rather than “commercialized.”

- **Services for the Aged:**
Home health and personal care, day care, home delivered meals, preventive care
- **Support for People with Disabilities:**
Day care, job assistance, job creation
- **Services for Children & Parents:**
Day care, after-school programs
- **Education & Training:**
Training to become home-helpers (i.e. home care workers)
- **Operation of Public Facilities:**
Senior centers, community centers, hot spring, funeral homes
- **Operation of Public Child Care Facilities:**
Nurseries, after-school programs, parents-child plazas

■ JOB ASSISTANCE & JOB CREATION



The economic downturn and natural disasters have hit the marginalized people in our society the hardest.

JWCU has been actively involved in vocational training and job assistance for people with disabilities, those on public assistance, disaster victims and young people who have been struggling to become independent. JWCU members also support the graduates of these programs to actually start worker cooperatives.

- **Support for Youth:**
Operation of “Youth Support Stations,” job assistance, Internships
- **Support for People with Disabilities:**
Vocational training, job assistance, job creation (e.g. cleaning, food services, etc.)
- **Support for Public Assistance Recipients:**
Job assistance
- **Support for Disaster Victims:**
Job assistance, job creation

■ LINKING FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

We are committed to promote associated work in this area through positive partnerships with producers who are concerned about the nation’s food and agriculture.

JWCU is also promoting agriculture that produces safe foods and is environmentally friendly.

Through food businesses like home-delivered meals and farmers’ markets, we also strive to restore human bonds and rebuild communities.

- **Direct Sales from Producers**
- **Production and Retail** of organic foods
- **Nanohana (Rapeseeds) Project:**

Grow rapeseeds and produce cooking oil from the 1st extract & biofuel from the 2nd extract



■ MAINTAINING CLEAN & COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT



Building maintenance services, which started as a cleaning service and expanded to the total building management, and environmental services had long been the main businesses for JWCU since its foundation. Our unique “New Cleaning Method” is well received as an effective system to keep buildings beautiful and hygienic. An increasing number of people with disabilities, young people who are trying to rejoin the society and older people are also working in these fields.

- **Maintenance of Hospitals:**
Cleaning, waste management, food services, nursing support and shop management
- **Total Building Management:**
Welfare facilities and office buildings
- **Park Maintenance:**
Cleaning, recycling waste and greening
- **Waste Management:**
Waste collection at parks and hospitals

■ INTER-COOP ACTIVITIES

Our broad network with other co-ops provides inter-sectoral partnerships in operation.

- **Commodity Distribution** at consumer coops
- **Food Processing** at JA (Japan Agricultural Co-operative)

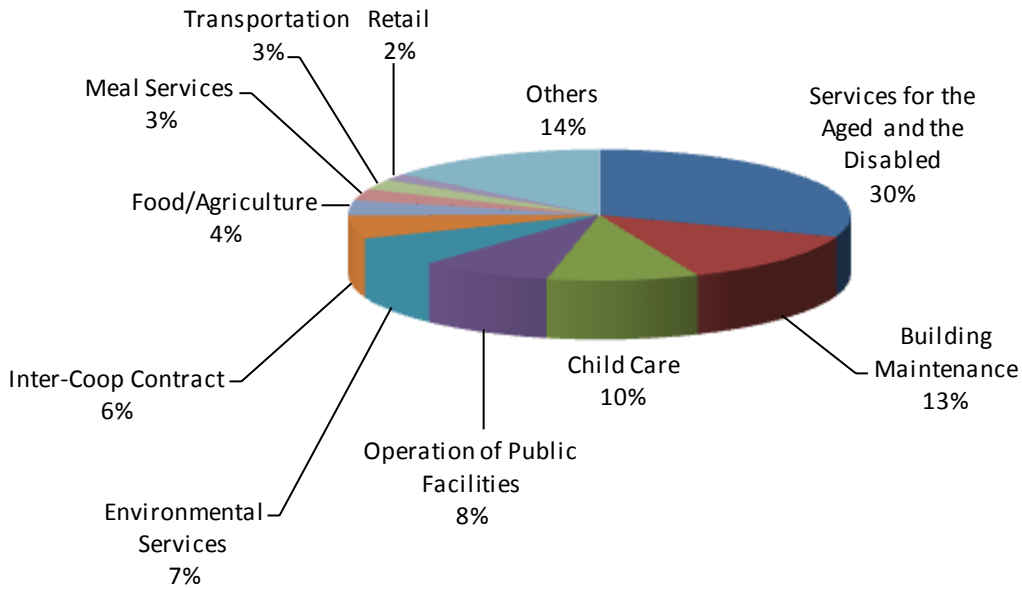
■ OTHER BUSINESSES

Although smaller in number, there are many other cooperative enterprises.

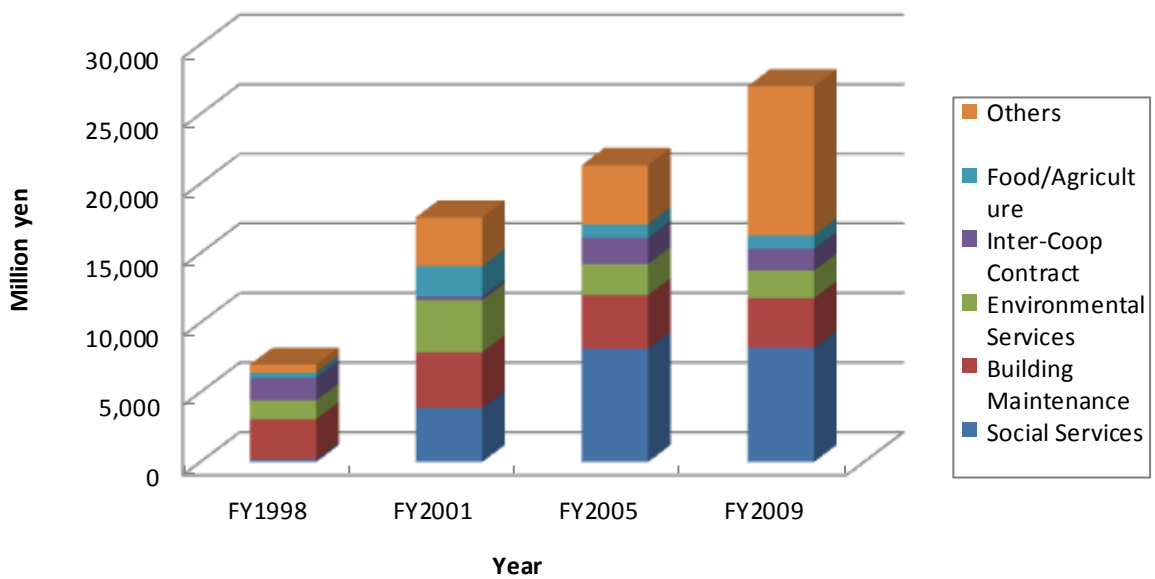
- **Taxi and Transportation**
- **Construction**
- **Publication and Filming**

ANNUAL TURNOVER

Performance in FY 2009: 27 Billion Yen



Turnover Growth: FY1998-FY2009



FOR THE BETTER POLICY ENVIRONMENT

■ Why the Law on Associated Workers' Co-operatives?

Japan is one of the few developed countries without a worker cooperative law. Compared with European countries, the concept of worker cooperative (i.e., people create their own jobs, make capital contributions and have control over management) is still uncommon in Japan. However, the fact tells us that more than 30,000 people are already involved in associated work in Japan.

Work is an essential part of our lives. Yet, it is increasingly treated like merchandise, with little respect, leading to a less respectful society. We believe that this phenomenon has derived from the excessive market economy and competition.

More and more people are now calling for decent jobs. Their urgent message is "We like to work and live like humans." Through the new way of working (i.e., associated work), we seek to create decent jobs which can also revitalize our community and society. With these strong wishes, JWCU proposes a new legislation on associated work.

■ Our Legislative Movement Is in the Final Phase!

JWCU, in collaboration with various organizations, has been working hard for the approval of the Law on Associated Workers' Co-operatives for over a decade, and we are finally in the final phase to win legal recognition.

As of March 2012, more than 800 out of nearly 1,800 municipalities have sent the Diet letters recommending the immediate approval of the law. At a national level, a non-partisan, all-party parliamentary group has over 200 members across party lines to promote the legislation. Moreover, several Diet members, who have been strong supporters of the legislation, now hold important positions in the Cabinet, which seems very encouraging.

The Diet members are currently discussing the details of the legislation to put the final touches.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

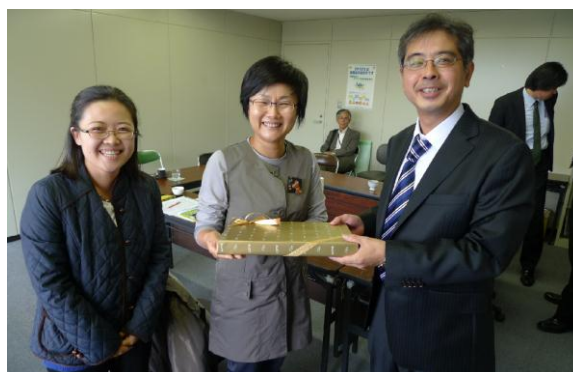


Our membership to International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) was approved at ICA Tokyo General Assembly in 1992. Since then, JWCUC has been its active member and sent delegates to every ICA general assembly at global and regional levels. JWCUC has also been an active player at International Organization of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Cooperatives (CICOPA), the sectoral organization of ICA.

We are grateful for the support from a number of international organizations. Their encouraging messages, valuable information and international solidarity have given us energy to move forward.

■ International Exchange

Welcoming global friends: JWCUC has welcomed guests from USA, South Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Cuba, UK and many other countries, exchanging our experiences and ideas on various issues, including: worker cooperatives, social economy, youth support, active lifestyles in old age and long-term care.



Visiting global friends: Our delegates have visited various countries, including Italy, Spain, Sweden, UK and Cuba, to learn about advanced worker cooperatives as well as a wide range of issues such as agriculture, environment and long-term care.

Information exchange: Thanks to the fellow cooperators across the globe and information technology, JWCUC can also communicate with them electronically, not only to learn about what is going on in other countries (particularly on legislation) but also to disseminate information on our activities (e.g. reconstruction after the earthquake, legislative movement).

■ Organizing International Meetings/Symposia

JWCU has also organized international meetings and symposia on legislation (1999 & 2006), senior citizens (1999) and decent work (2004).

■ International Solidarity

JWCU is committed to support fellow cooperators around the world, particularly in time of crisis. Our fundraising efforts for emergency relief and reconstruction assistance include: Indian Ocean tsunami (2004); earthquakes in Java (2006), Haiti (2010) and Turkey (2011); and a flood in Thailand (2011).



JWCU would also like to thank all the people and organizations throughout the world who have sent us kind messages and donations in the wake of Great East Japan Earthquake (March 11, 2011). They have given us the light of hope in the darkness, and we are where we are thanks to them.

■ International Year of Cooperatives



The United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperative (IYC), highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development. With the theme of “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World,” IYC seeks to increase awareness about cooperatives, to promote growth of cooperatives and to establish appropriate policies to support cooperatives.

JWCU also takes this opportunity to celebrate IYC and to promote cooperatives through a wide range of activities, including: joining Japan National Planning Committee for IYC 2012, enhancing advocacy efforts for Law on Associated Workers’ Co-operatives, organizing promotional events, such as JWCU IYC Launch “Asking for an Immediate Approval of the Law on Associated Workers’ Cooperatives” (January 26, 2012) and the 15th National Gathering of Cooperation 2012 “Cooperation Builds Our Future” (November 17-18, 2012).

WORKING TOGETHER TO OVERCOME THE DISASTER

Massive earthquakes and tsunamis hit Japan on March 11th, 2011, causing devastating damages, particularly in Tohoku (northeastern) region. JWCU has been supporting its members and affected communities they live in, not only for the short-term relief immediately after the disaster but also for the long-term reconstruction of the communities in Tohoku region.

■ Material, Financial & Human Support

Since the devastating disaster, JWCU members and their service users across the county have collected and sent material (e.g. foods, water, gas, clothes, letters of encouragement, etc.), financial (e.g. to supplement wages, purchase/rent necessary goods, etc.) and human support (e.g. to remove debris, clean up the areas, organize events, provide care, etc.) to Tohoku region to support its fellow cooperators and communities they live in.



■ Vocational Training and Job Creation to Reconstruct Tohoku Region



While the emergency phase is over, rebuilding lives and communities remains a serious challenge. In July 2011, JWCU set up Reconstruction Head Office in Miyagi Prefecture to support job creation and community reconstruction there.

One of its major efforts is a series of vocational training programs commissioned by several municipalities in Tohoku. What is unique about our program is that we not only provide training itself but also work with trainees to create actual jobs that benefit communities after graduation, rather than waiting for someone to hire them.

JWCU will stand by people in Tohoku, so that they can create their own jobs to rebuild their communities.

PROFILE

Name	Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (Jigyodan) - JWCU
Foundation	September 1979
Representative	Yuzo NAGATO, President and CEO
Member Co-ops	63 member co-ops
Membership	11,867 worker-members (as of March, 2010) 39,714 Older Persons' Co-ops members (as of March, 2011)
Annual Turnover	¥27.0 billion (Fiscal Year 2009)



Japan Workers' Co-operative Union

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