

# Social Education in Japan



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,  
CULTURE, SPORTS,  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-JAPAN



# Outline of Social Education

## 1. Definition of Social Education (Social Education Act, Article 2)

“Social Education” in Japan covers the areas of adult education, community education, and education for children and youth that takes place outside of school.

## 2. Japanese Legal Code Regarding Social Education

There is a multi-layered system under the Constitution of Japan. The Basic Act on Education (Act No.120 of 2006) provides the principle on which the Social Education Act (Act No.207 of 1949) is based and the Social Education Act provides the principles on which the Library Act (Act No.118 of 1950) and the Museum Act (Act No.285 of 1951) are based.

## 3. Social Education Facilities

Kominkan [Community Learning Centers], libraries, museums (including science museums, art museums, zoological gardens, aquariums, etc.), centers for children and youth, women’s education centers, social physical education and sports facilities, etc.

## 4. Present State of Social Education Facilities (2005)

	Kominkan	Libraries	Museums
Number	17,143	2,979	5,614
Number of Employees	About 52,000	About 31,000	About 45,000
Number of Users	About 240 million	About 580 million	About 270 million

- (Note) 1. The “number of users” column for libraries is the number of books borrowed  
2. The numbers of users and number of books borrowed are the values for FY2004

## 5. Nationally-accredited Professionals Involved in Social Education

Japan has systematized the designation of various specialized professionals involved in social education by establishing nationally-accredited qualifications for Social Education Coordinators (Social Education Directors), librarians and museum curators.

## 6. Number of Professionals (2005)

	Social Education Coordinators	Librarians	Museum Curators
Number	4,199	12,781	3,827

## 7. The Present State of Social Education Costs

FY2006: Y1.861 trillion (annually 2.5% decline since 1996)



# Kominkan

## 1. Outline (Social Education Act, Article 20,21,23)

Kominkan are social education facilities that have a base in law. After the WWII Kominkan were established for local residents generally by local governments, in accordance with the Social Education Act.

The purpose of Kominkan is to conduct various projects for the cause of education, science and culture, meeting the daily needs of the residents in municipalities and other specific areas to develop their attainments, improve their health, cultivate their sentiment, elevate their cultural life, and increase the social welfare of the community.

Standards necessary for the establishment and operation of Kominkan is provided by the Minister, with a view to promoting the sound development of Kominkan.

## 2. Number of Kominkan and Users

The number of Kominkan has been declining annually in recent years.

	FY1999	FY2002	FY2005
Kominkan	18,257	17,947	17,143

The number of users of Kominkan throughout FY2004 came to about 240 million. This is a state of usage meaning Kominkan were used twice during the year per citizen of Japan.

	FY1999	FY2002	FY2005
Users	241,229,322	238,289,483	244,349,217

## 3. Classes and Courses

The number of classes and courses has been increasing annually. Around 410,000 classes and courses were held in FY2004. About 253,000 courses (61.7%) for “improving the level of cultivation” were held. Among them, around 171,000 courses related to “hobbies, artistic pursuits” were held.

	FY1999	FY2002	FY2005
Improvement the level of Cultivation (Hobbies, Artistic pursuits)	160,934 (97,285)	200,623 (126,688)	252,973 (171,238)
Physical education/Recreation	34,086	49,415	51,815
Home education/Home economics	29,285	34,679	39,519
Improvement of professional knowledge/skills	4,780	18,379	16,742
Public spirit/Spirit of social solidarity	19,986	19,936	24,388
Others	14,727	18,180	24,577
Total	263,798	341,212	410,014



## 4. Social Education Coordinators (Directors)

### Outline (Social Education Act, Article 2, 9-2)

Specialist staff of social education who are required to be placed in the respective Boards of education of prefectures and municipalities (cities and towns/villages with a population of over 10,000) prescribed by the Social Education Act.

### Number of Social Education Coordinators

The number of Social Education Coordinators has been declining annually.

	FY1993	FY1996	FY1999	FY2002	FY2005
Social Education Directors	6,766	6,796	6,035	5,383	4,119

### Job Duties (Social Education Act, Article 9-3)

They plan/implement social education activities in the regions and are in charge of providing specialized technical advice and guidance to those engaged in social education.

### Qualifications System (Social Education Act, Article 9.4)

- (1) University training course (provided by 160 universities (FY2007))

Attendance of universities for two years or more, acquirement of 62 credits or more, completion of university training course (24 credits over 4 courses) and 1 year of work experience

- (2) Training course (provided at 14 universities etc. (FY2008))

Attendance of universities for two years or more, acquirement of 62 credits or more, completion of Social Education Coordinator training course (9 credits over 4 courses) and 3 years of work experience

## 5. Kominkan Chief Coordinators

### Outline (Social Education Act, Article 27)

Chief Coordinators shall carry out Kominkan activities, as ordered by the Kominkan Director.

No nationally accredited post about Chief Coordinators exists prescribed by the Act.

Chief Coordinators shall be appointed by the relevant municipal board of education, with the recommendation of the superintendent.

### Number of Kominkan Chief Coordinators and Employees

The number of Chief Coordinators has been declining annually in recent years.

The number of employees has also been declining annually.

In FY2005, they came to about 52,000, making for an average of 3.0 employees per Kominkan.

	FY1999	FY2002	FY2005
Chief Coordinators	6,954	6,546	5,760
Employees	54,289	54,596	52,230