



2013 Edition

JWCU

Japan Workers' Co-operative Union



OUR ROLES IN THE MIDST OF TURBULENT

It has been over 2 years since the devastating disasters and nuclear plant accident on March 11th, 2011. Yet, the reconstruction work has been making little progress, which also has kept the whole Japanese society in uncertainty and fear. Facing these disasters, most people have felt a strong urge to change our lives and society, that is, to build “voluntary and altruistic new communities.”

As one of the key players in building such communities, the United Nations has recognized the contribution by the cooperative sector and declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). In Japan, various cooperative sectors have come together and formed Japan National Planning Committee for IYC 2012 to increase public awareness about significant values of cooperatives. We have been one of its active members.

Meanwhile, Japanese worker cooperatives’ “Associated Work” has also been receiving growing attention. A documentary film on Japanese worker cooperatives “Workers” and a 30-minute TV program by the national TV station (NHK) on Associated Work, both of which became available in February 2013, were extremely well received with voices of support coming from all over the country. What would be the sources of such support? The answers would be the facts that Associated Work is a humane way of working and that our work directly supports and enhances people’s lives and communities.

In order to create inclusive communities and to rebuild our society, Associated Worker Cooperatives regard “work, capital and management” as one unified concept and aim to create meaningful jobs, so that citizens can manage the community as their own and build a better world. We will make every endeavor to accomplish this goal.



WHO WE ARE

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 59 member organizations, including primarily worker co-operatives, older persons' co-operatives and affiliated organizations, embracing 12,765 worker-members in total as of March 2012. Our businesses represent diverse areas and sectors in economy such as social services, building maintenance, environment and food/agriculture. Our turnover in fiscal year 2011 amounts to over 30 billion yen.

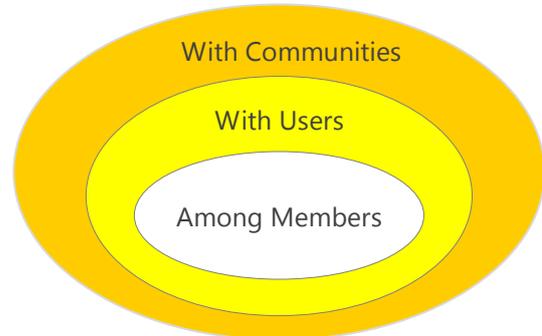
In addition to contributing to the community through the businesses, JWCU seeks to strengthen its bonds to the community through activities for social solidarity. These include organizing seminars and symposia on a broad range of social issues, providing disaster aid and protesting nuclear energy. Our 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.

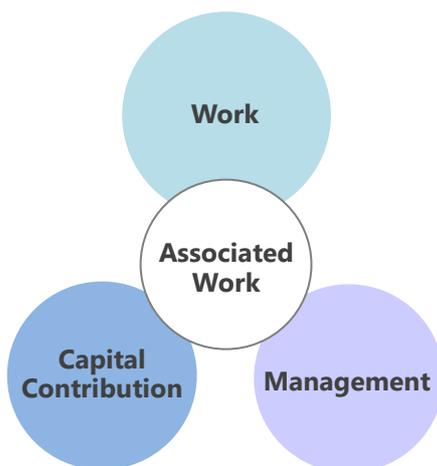
3 LEVELS OF COOPERATION



HOW IS ASSOCIATED WORK DIFFERENT FROM “EMPLOYED” WORK?

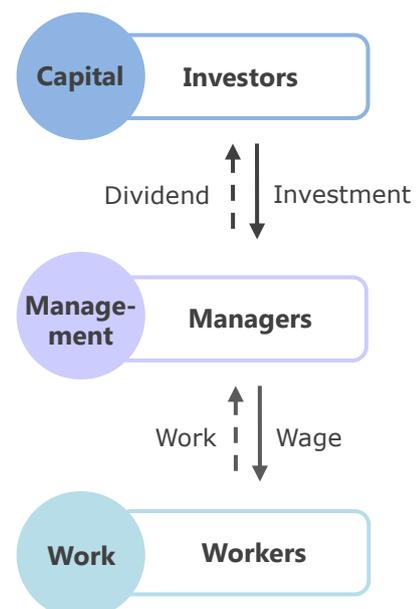
ASSOCIATED WORK

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

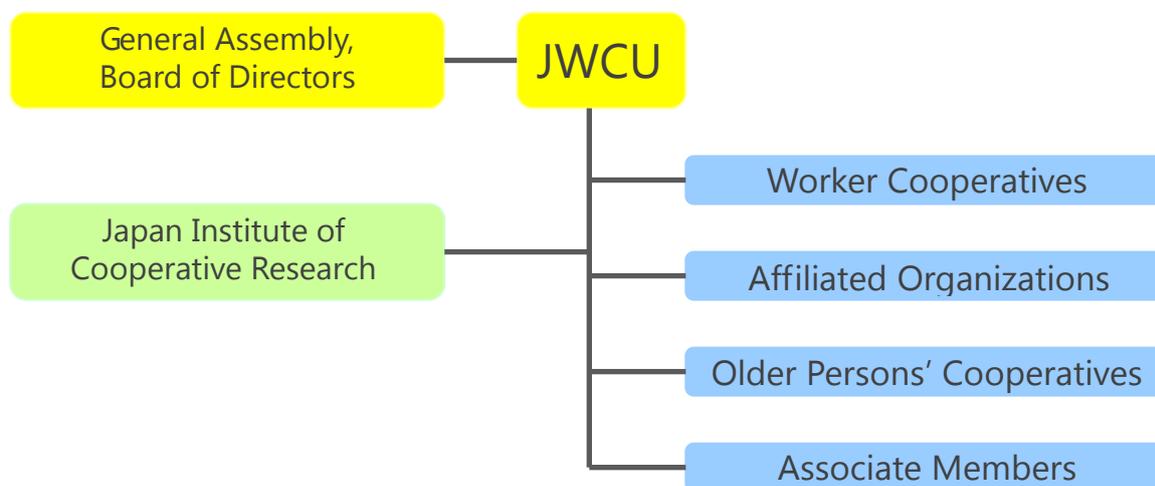
Guidelines for Associated Work, Management and Movement

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 May 2013, 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.



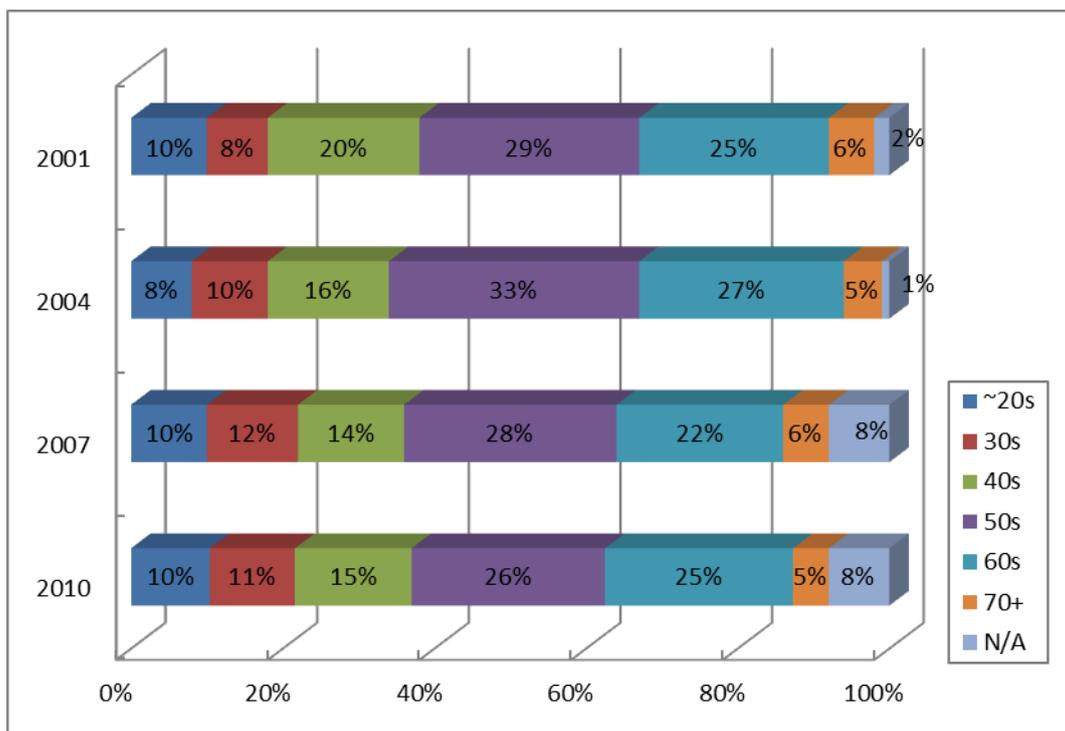
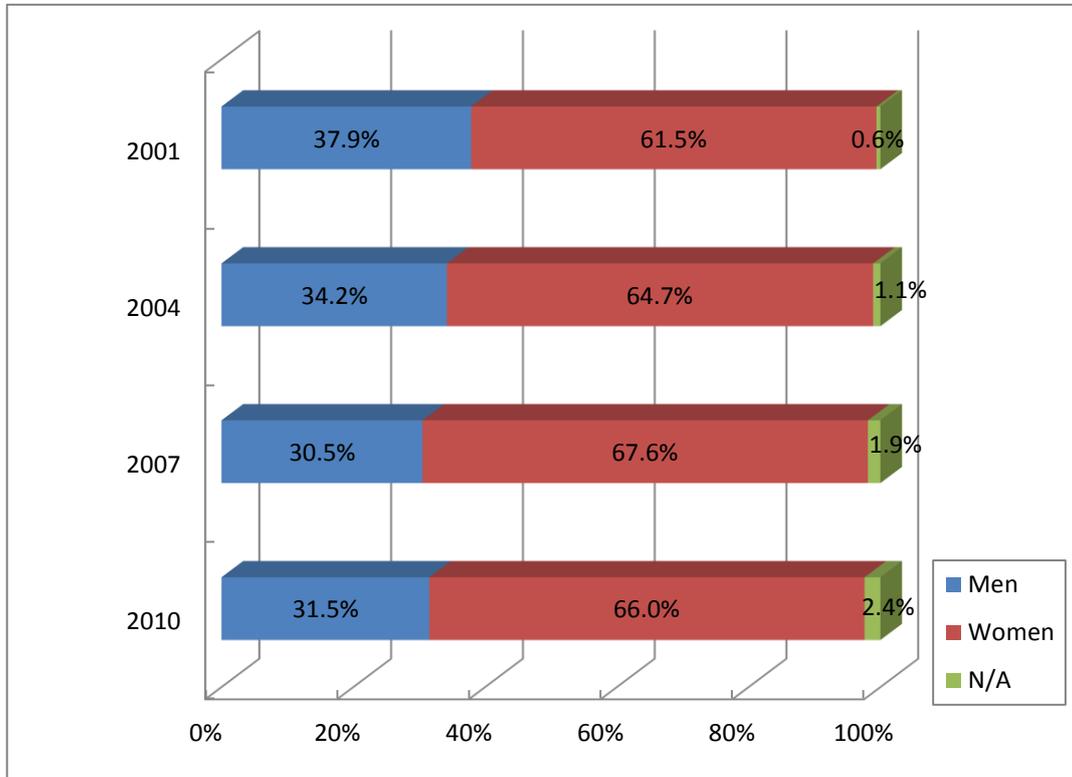
Japan Older Persons' Cooperative Union (JOCU)

Based on the practice of associated work and recognizing the population aging in Japan, JWCUC 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 31 older persons' cooperatives (as of July 2013) 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)."

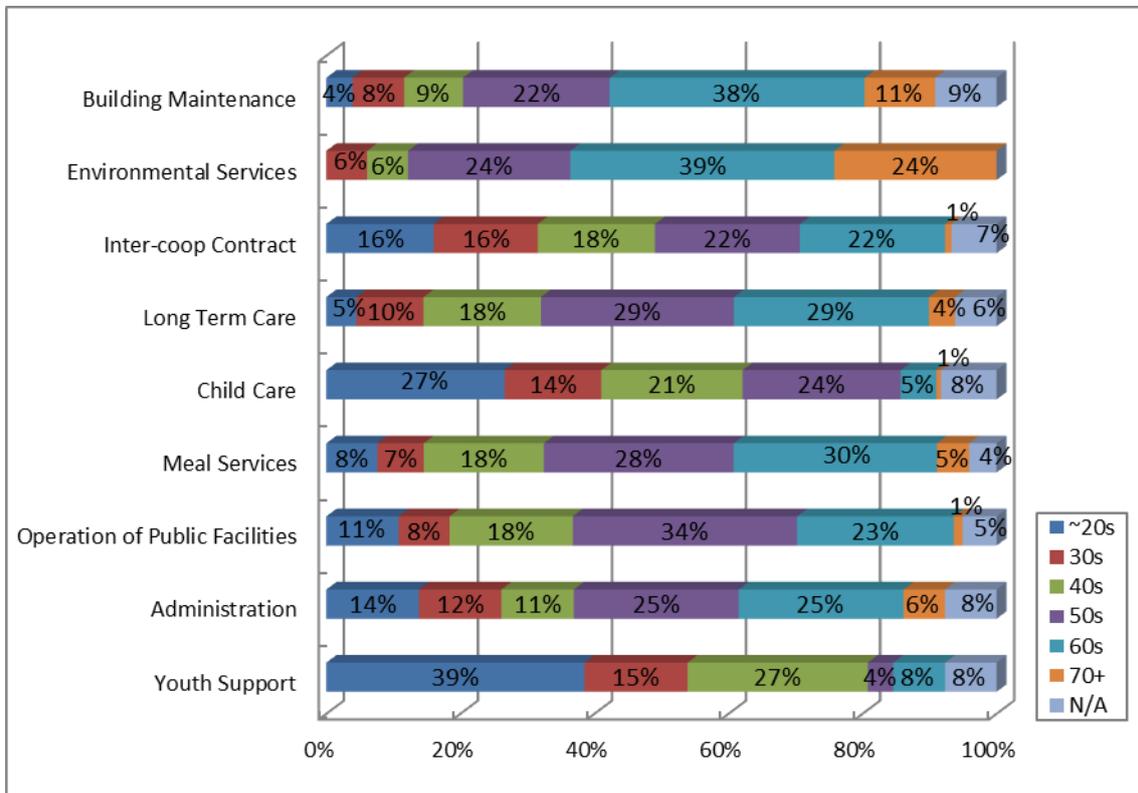
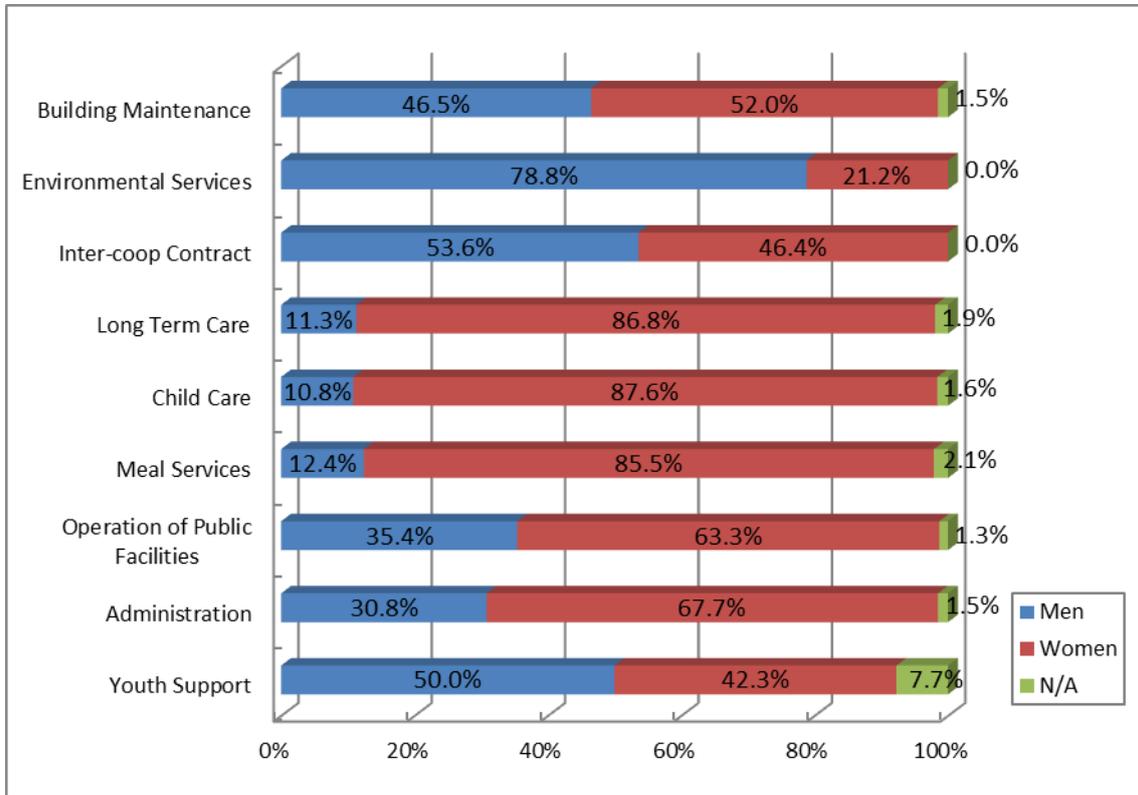
Japan Older Persons' Cooperative Union (JOCU) was set up in 2001 to unite the efforts among older persons' cooperatives. As of July 2013, 21 out of 31 older persons' cooperatives are JOCU members. JOCU is also a member of JWCUC.

MEMBERS

Overall Member Characteristics: 2001-2010



Member Characteristics by Business Area 2010



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" mainly 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 JWCUC 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), JWCUC 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 JWCUC adopted new principles of an "Associated Worker Cooperative."
- 2004 JWCUC 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 JWCUC 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 July 2013, 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 July 2013, the group has over 100 members.
- 2011 In the wake of Great East Japan Earthquake, JWCUC established Tohoku Reconstruction Head Office in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture.
- 2012 JWCUC co-hosted National Gathering of Cooperation, which brought nearly 3,000 people together and invited distinguished international guests to discuss the significant roles of cooperatives in our society. The concept of Associated Work was promoted through movie, TV program and book.
- JWCUC actively participated in the national inter-cooperative initiatives to promote the International Year of Cooperatives.
- 2013 JWCUC General Assembly was held in Sendai City (the disaster-hit area) with focuses on disaster reconstruction and rebuilding communities.

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 230 public facilities throughout the country. It has been 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, parent-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, job creation
- **Support for Disaster Victims:**
Vocational training, 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.

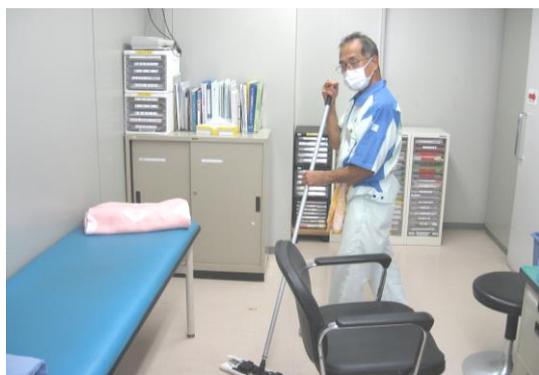
JWCU is also promoting agriculture that produces safe foods and is environmentally friendly.

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



- **Direct Sales from Producers**
- **Job Training and Job Creation** in agriculture
- **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 of 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, shop management
- **Total Building Management:**
Welfare facilities, office buildings
- **Park Maintenance:**
Cleaning, greening
- **Waste Management:**
Waste collection at parks and hospitals, recycling waste

■ 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)

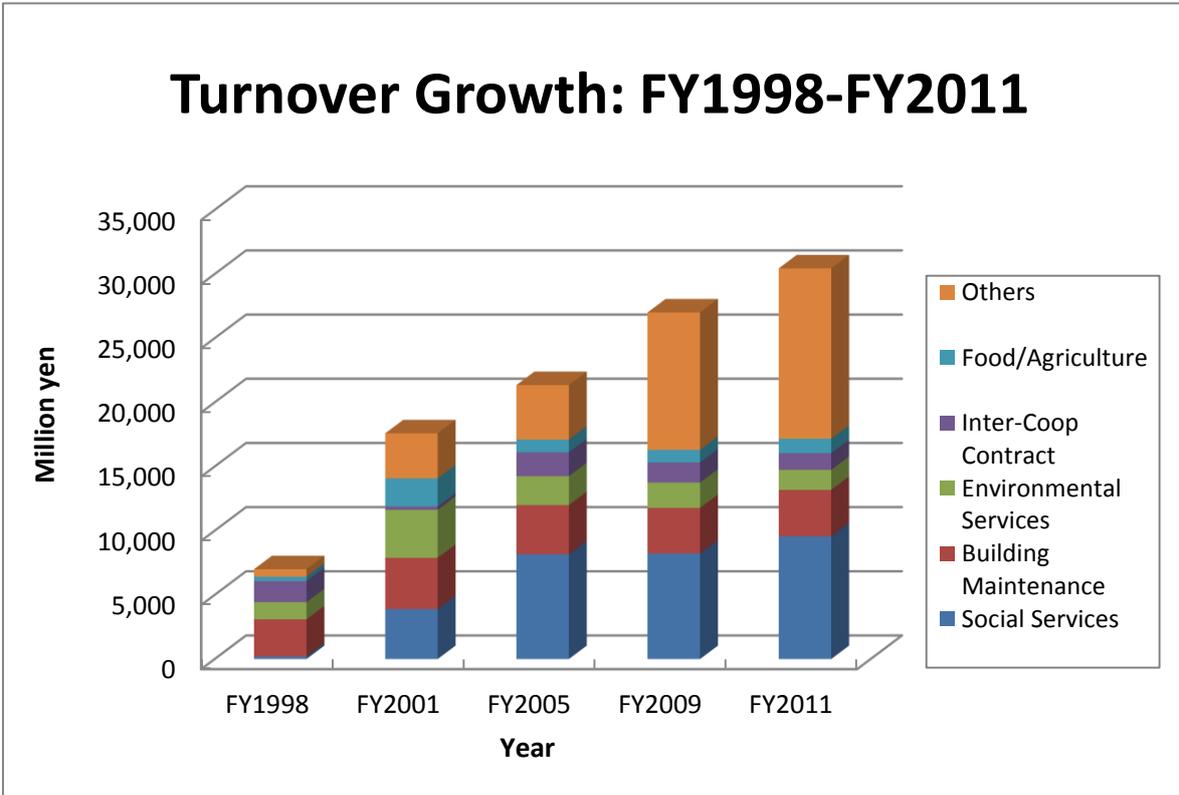
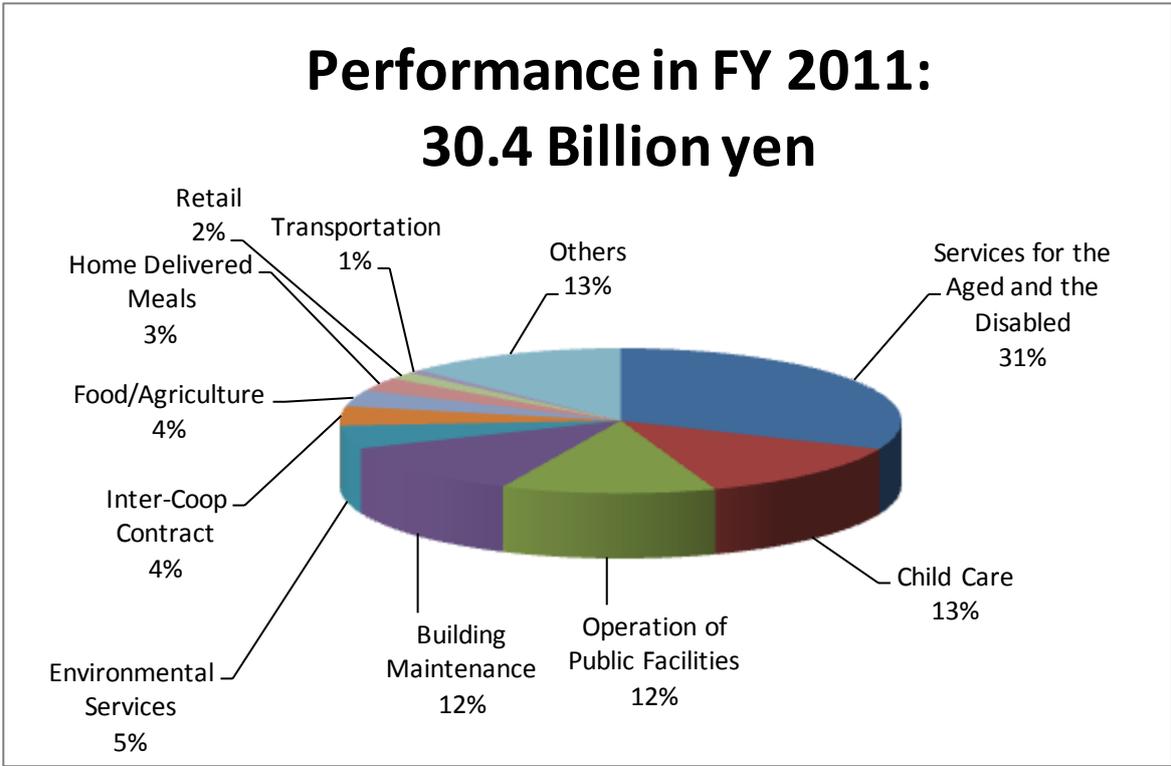
■ OTHER BUSINESSES

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

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



ANNUAL TURNOVER



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, JWCUC proposes a new legislation on associated work.

■ Unstable Political Situation and Inter-Coop Efforts

JWCUC, in collaboration with various organizations, has been working hard for the approval of the Law on Associated Workers' Co-operatives for over a decade. As of July 2013, 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 100 members across party lines to promote the legislation. However, the unstable political situation in Japan, with frequent changes of the dominant party and Prime Minister, has been making our legislative movement extremely difficult to move forward.

Meanwhile, a new national cooperative alliance "Cooperatives Japan," succeeding the Japan National Planning Committee for IYC (International Year of Cooperatives) 2012 and consisting of 24 national cooperative organizations, has recognized the significance of the Law on Associated Workers' Co-operatives, and it has included "Promoting understanding of legislation on associated work" as one of its action plans. Through such efforts as workshops to raise awareness and other necessary actions, the whole co-operative sector is hence taking a step to support this legislative movement.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES



Our membership to International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) was approved at ICA Tokyo General Assembly in 1992. Since then, JWCU has been its active member and sent delegates to every ICA general assembly at global and regional levels. JWCU 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: JWCU has welcomed guests from South Korea, China, Malaysia, USA, 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, long-term care and disaster reconstruction.



Visiting global friends: Our delegates have visited various countries, including Italy, Spain, Sweden, UK, South Korea and USA, to learn about and exchange our experiences as worker cooperatives as well as to discuss 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, JWCU can also communicate with them electronically, not only to learn about what is going on in other countries (particularly on legislation and innovative practice) but also to disseminate information on our activities (e.g. reconstruction after the earthquake, legislative movement, success stories, unique initiatives).

■ Organizing International Meetings/Symposia

JWCU has also organized international meetings and symposia on legislation (1999 & 2006), senior citizens (1999) and decent work (2004). At our biennial National Gathering of Cooperation in 2012, which brought the total of nearly 3,000 people together in 2 days, we also invited distinguished international guests to discuss the significant roles of cooperatives from the international perspective.

■ 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 floods in Thailand (2011) and Philippines (2012).

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 and Beyond

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



JWCU also took 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, and organizing promotional events such as JWCU IYC Launch “For the Immediate Approval of the Law on Associated Workers’ Cooperatives” (January 26, 2012) and the 15th National Gathering of Cooperation 2012 “Creating Communities to Revitalize Humanity” (November 17-18, 2012).

While 2012 was one of the greatest years for the cooperative movement, it was just a starting point for the cooperative development in a real sense. In Japan, a new national cooperative alliance, Cooperatives Japan, was formed by 24 national co-operative organizations in May 2013, replacing the Japan National Planning Committee for IYC 2012, to commemorate the spirits of the IYC and to continue pursuing the goals set by the National Planning Committee for IYC 2012: to increase awareness about co-operatives and to promote growth of co-operatives. JWCU is an active member of Cooperatives Japan and engaged in various activities such as organizing workshops and creating Cooperatives Japan’s web site content.

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 Tohoku Reconstruction Head Office in Miyagi Prefecture to support job creation and community reconstruction in the region.

For example, JWCU has been commissioned by several municipalities in Tohoku to provide vocational training programs in various fields such as caregiving, forestry and Tofu-making. 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. Some of the graduates have actually launched their businesses, including day care centers for the elderly and food processing businesses using local products, to revitalize their own communities.

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	59 member co-ops
Membership	12,765 worker-members (as of March, 2012) 42,243 Older Persons' Co-ops members (as of March, 2012)
Annual Turnover	¥30.4 billion (Fiscal Year 2011)



Japan Workers' Co-operative Union

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