

The Changes of the Model of Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood and Youth Policy

Michiko MIYAMOTO

This paper argues that a number of youth issues that have arisen since the 1990s are a result of changes in the pattern of transition from adolescence to adulthood, and considers the ways in which effective social policies may be developed in order to accommodate the new model of transition. The paper begins by presenting an overview of the changes in the transitional process in Japan, then it reviews the new pattern that emerged in the 2000s, and finally, the paper examines various youth policies that were implemented during the decade. Youth issues were originally addressed in four separate policy areas: employment (including career education and vocational training), youth support, social inclusion of youth at risk, and shoshika- the alarming decline in Japan's birth-as a result of the reluctance of young people to start a family due to the lack of state support. These issues were initially perceived separately but as the extent of the problems became apparent, the government's approach began to be more inter-departmental and policies became more comprehensive. The paper concludes by suggesting that currently, youth policies are at the stage where wide ranging youth problems such as education, housing, social insurance, family, and citizenship, need to be addressed as inter-related issues and policies developed accordingly. In short, youth policies must aim to create an inclusive society in which young people are systematically supported in all areas of their lives and encouraged to become valuable members of society.