**Mr. Tsukasa Takimoto**

**Date of interview: 30 August 2021**

**Recording starts late , from end of answer 3**

00:29

as to the policy distributing the devices to each children, there wasn't any consultation with teachers that actually even for the devices for the teachers. There is no sufficient numbers devices for teachers and also in fact the teachers didn't have some request to have devices to use ICT

01:04

Question number four? What has been the experience of teachers in transitioning to the remote or online mode of teaching?

02:09

Teachers had teaching online and also they expect their students to watch the class. at are very beginning they are very happy to have to monitor how children are doing like whether they are healthy or their situations are not so he thinks only a part of the schools and teachers who could do an online teaching actually.

02:51

Do you think there were there have been differences in the way male and female teachers have responded to the situation?

03:04

 he doesn't think there isn't a difference is between the men and the women.

03:10

Do you think there have been differences in the way private schools and government school teachers have responded to the situation

04:02

as to the private schools, parents buy their devices for their children and the teachers private schools started online learning for that they are students before COVID-19. So but on the other hand public schools they have to buy the devices but there is a very severe financial problems. So that's why there is a kind of gap between the private and the public schools.

04:40

Okay, thank you.

04:42

Um, question number five. In what, what ways do you think the pandemic has impacted teachers work and their working conditions.

05:40

teachers must respond to the disinfection measures. So which means the teachers work has increased. So, as to the PCL pass they are not positively encouraged to do and also because of the variant. So vaccination , that they are very prioritized to take the vaccination and I man the teachers are very risky to be infected from the beginning of the pandemic even now okay.

06:23

You mentioned some PCL pass What does that mean?

06:52

test you have to get yourself tested before visiting any public place PCR test Okay, I get this

07:09

Okay, question number six. what schools in your location already using digital technology before the pandemic

08:03

Oh, it was completely insufficient. Yes. So for example, I'll show you the results of the survey by country the PC devices only one PC for 5.4 students and also the the schools have of having the Wi Fi and only 40% . Okay, and my internet connection is a 90% of schools but the which was there 30 megabytes per second was very slow.

09:03

Before pandemic, the country had a plan to distribute one PC for three students. That's the plan before the pandemic right by next year. Yes. Okay.

09:20

Question number seven. What are the new digital technologies that have been introduced in your school system during the pandemic?

09:44

In Japan it is the rarity to distribute 1 device to each children. So whoch costs only 50,000, the Japanese yen, which is almost 500 US dollar. That's all for the budget for each student's devices. So this day the Oh what country can do so they are talking about new digital technology is far away from the reality .

10:34

But I'm asking from the perspective that there would have been some online teaching and learning that happened during the time when there were no face to face classes. So during those times, what platforms were being used.

11:44

So he if he thinks only minority here to have an online teaching in reality . The reason is, after May the country encouraged to have on site in person teaching. That's because the teachers cannot have enough equipment and the tools to do online teaching. So that's his suggestion.

12:18

Okay. And we're all students are expected to come to class during these face to face sessions after May 2020.

12:39

Yes, exactly. .

12:47

 Do you think teacher had access to personnel, so you are mentioning that teachers did not have access to personal device and gadget. And also internet connectivity, as you mentioned earlier is is low. so this question actually wants to ask if there were differences from let's say teachers coming from the rural areas or teachers coming from urban areas, or male or female teachers who did not have you know, who had differentiated access to resources as well as Internet is there any such segment of teachers.

14:30

As to the public school, the muncipality must pay and prepare everything as I said. So there is not the gap between their big cities and the rural area. But it's a differences between the municipality who has answered the state to prepare and implemente the policy or not. Okay, okay.

14:55

Question number 10. what challenges have teachers in accessing and using devices and accessing the internet for their work, how did they deal with these challenges? Yeah, so I think what I'm sensing from your responses is that teachers did not have much access to internet. And not all of them also had their individual devices. So there was face to face mode of teaching was encouraged after May 2020. And this continued until there was a summer break.

16:20

So, as I told you that the devices are insufficient but there is more and more municipalities tended to implement a policy. So but in Japan there are almost 32,000 Elementary and junior high schools. almost all of them try to purchase devices at the same time. They cannot already save devices, they have to wait for the devices to come. I guess there is too much demand, the difference of the demand and the supply I think yeah. So teachers must wait that most of the teachers have to pay their the cost, thats the rarity , i think.

17:56

And now section on teachers well being what are the ways in which teachers work have changed compared to the pre pandemic period .

19:22

before last summer, teachers are encouraged disinfect everythin in , schools desk , everything in this school buildings. With the recent variant, more and more infected people coming into town. So the health center of the municipality and they're working. They do not work very well because they're have to respond to too many things. So that's why schools are encouraged to decide who has to conduct classes in person or schools must do in school buildings, this is encouraged by the country. since the last July, our schools are encouraged to the online teaching using ICT.

20:26

There was a little bit of internet disconnection. But what I have understood is that during the pandemic time, schools were encouraged to act as health centers and make provision for testings of effective people to be done.

20:46

Till recently, Everything was done by Health Care Center, of muncipality like decideing who is in contact to the person or implementing tests, but health care centers of muncipality have to deal response to the many patients and then to demand things. That's why schools are encouraged to do such measures and implementations for healthcare centers

22:21

Okay, okay. So so in that are the school teachers suppose to take up some responsibility

22:31

Yes, you're right. You're exactly but we understand the situation very much. We are now trying to consult with the government on that issue. All right.

23:04

Oh, I get it now. Question number 12. What are the current major concerns of teachers with regard to their work?

23:24

So can I make sure that they're you're asking about the present situation current present situation Yes.

23:55

So now number one is how to respond to COVID-19 which are very annoying because they cannot do in person education activity they used to do and also so I say the digital divide. They are very hectic to implement and online teaching.

24:32

Okay, okay. Question number 13. Are there any specific factors that have caused stress amongst teachers? k

25:08

the biggest factor is the long work hours so as you know they have to respond to COVID-19 and they have to spend more and more time to prepare for online teaching. So they're working hour are longer

25:30

Okay, okay whom do teachers reach out to for support

26:16

actually the government believes it's necessary to solve the problem long working hour , in fact fast or they try to decrease the work or and increase the number of teachers. But in reality their workload has not decreased and the number of teachers are not increased very much.

26:46

So, this increase in number of teachers This was done last year 2020

26:55

actually in 2020 the number of teachers are not increased rather the number of teachers decreased.

27:45

actually in Japan this system has decided the number of children linked to the number of teachers but in Japan the number of children have been decreasing. That's why the naturally the number of teachers decrease decreasing but they as I said that the government has a policy to increase the number of teachers , so they try to not so decrease the number of teachers compared with the decrease in the number of children.

28:23

Okay, okay. May I ask what is the reason of decrease in number of children enrolled in school?

29:01

The reason that they're decreasing the number of children, they have many reasons but mainly the everyone want to have children they cannot because of the financial reasons to raise children spend much money in Japan that's their statistics tally showed and also the because of the financial matters that young people cannot cannot marry. So the government has seriously concerns with this issues. They tried to solve this aging society but it's not improved yet.

30:10

Okay, okay. Okay. So as I'm understanding it's it's sort of a it's a phenomenon that is that is prominent across the nation that people are not getting married and they are having lesser and lesser children.

31:14

So, in Japan there the national muncipality budget for education in total is very less. So that's why the parents or the individual bear their educational costs. It's very high in Japan. So that's the main reason.

31:39

Okay, okay. Okay. I think I get it partially. I'm sorry. I'm very less familiar with the context in Japan. Okay. So I want to know, if teachers have approached the Union for any specific purposes during the pandemic.

32:25

So, JTU has implemented several surveys to ask the teachers at the schools what they're annoyed at what challenges they have. So the results of the survey as the main theme of the consultation with the government, between government and oJJT. we will report back to our members what we gain through the consultations. O

34:14

What kind of issues have teachers reported in this consultation? I'll just give an example from Indian context so so that it will contextualize the question for you. So for example, in India, our teachers union, teachers have asked for support in technical matters. For example, if they do not know how to operate zoom, so they approached the Union for some trainings. Sometimes they also approached Union for some support in healthcare. Sometimes, in the case of Sri Lanka, I realized that teachers asked union support for arguing with the government about The salary cut that they were facing during the pandemic. Can you give me some examples of issues that teachers have raised to the unions?

37:32

So we give you many example Actually, so, we tried to the job security, especially for a contract based person and educators. And number two is their working conditions of for all the educators. The number three essay how to take measures for not infected by COVID-19 , our health issues. The number four is asking the the budget for car gas, to distribute the document papers into student houses. Okay, and then number four is the budget for making a telephone call to take the health circumstances of students and number six ,schools can receive the additional budget to buy some equipment, the tools for disinfection. The number seven is it's not sufficient only for teachers to do this disinfection measures so they have additional budget to hire some staff to do this infection measures.

39:23

Just a little clarification about disinfection measures that you mentioned. What is included in it?

39:43

So teachers must disinfect with alcohol, the desk chair, handle of the doors ever past students might touch.

40:18

 Okay. Okay. That is quite a lot of work, I would say. Right.

40:28

Yeah.,so schools need much alcohol. So the budget for that is it's been very high.

40:42

Yes, Yes, I understand. question number 14, during the pandemic, and during the pandemic and a transition to online mode, how have teachers benefited from being a union member? Please share some examples.

41:35

during the pandemic, we had a kind of a routine that JTU repeatedly implemented questionnaires and surveys to our members working at schools. So we try to gather the voices and requests from members and respond to their requests.

42:00

Is this document or any summary of this document available? For me to read, or is it there on the website these efforts that the union has made?

42:30

Yes, we translated them into English and submitted to EI. All right, for you?

42:38

Yes, yes, absolutely. That will be very helpful. Thank you. Question number 15. Has your union advocated for any policy changes for teachers during the pandemic please elaborate

43:52

the country try to implement trainings for teachers during the pandemic. They didn't have much time. But teachers were very hesitant to change quickly and dramatically and also at the same time teacher has so many things to do. So they cannot respond to the quick Change by the government. So JTU intervene with the issue and then try to stop those changes. So which could be said some interest for the members?

44:44

For in the favor of teachers there. Thank you very much. has your union provided any form of support to teachers during the pandemic? Please elaborate and There are some options that are given as examples so you may refer to them by responding.

45:12

So about this question number 16 I think that our reply to the number 14 is very the same , is that alright for you.

45:23

Yes, yes, yes. Okay. Sure. Okay, now coming to the future section 17 question in your region what kind of support will be needed by the teachers for their work in future.

45:53

JTU is a federation ,we do not directly support our members but we have affiliated the unions so we had the financial support for the unions to implement, online meeting and so on. Okay, okay.

46:25

May I request you to please elaborate on what is the meaning of Federation and how do you connect with specific unions.

47:47

So our member unions negotiated with their government and the municipalities to such as how to use the PC . So teachers accept the new PCs better teachers have many things to do so they cannot work with the new PC , so our member unions ask the the ICT companies to set up PCs for teachers.

48:58

Question number 18. Does your organization have any specific plans for supporting teachers and this concerns for the future upcoming plans, if you have any new plans.

49:45

So it's very important to have a human resource , human support so that teachers can fully engage in education and teaching profession.

50:06

Question number 19 What are your main concerns with the teachers work in future

50:27

JTU years planning to have a session to have legal affairs for our members and as to the education we have Institute of Education and Culture. So they suggest research results and their recommendations about teaching practices for our members.

51:18

Okay Question number 20, do you thing the teaching profession will change in future

51:50

so in Japan something some serious issue happens, people tend to think every issue can be solved at the school education. So that's why schools are demanded to solve so many issues and subjects.

52:17

okay. So, is there any particular role that you see teacher will be playing in that.

52:41

So, he wil give you one example. So the schools are demanding teacher financial education and teach how to use money. And also, food education is another example. Okay.

53:06

Question number 21. Do you think digital learning technologies will continue to be used in future in your region?

53:50

Right now the government tried to try to translate from the paper based textbooks to digital textbooks. So he believes that the technology will be used in the future to Okay, thank you.

54:09

Question number 22. What do you think will happen to Okay, so I think this is similar to question number 21. We can let this question be, Question number 21 and 22 are very similar actually. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding the future of teachers work that has not been covered in the discussion so far?

55:53

Actually there is politician or some bureaucrats of the government who do not put Well, they don't think there are no teachers in the future because of the spread of the ICT in schools. But I believe not all the students of elementary junior high students actively engaged in the learning. Not all of them. So that's why , we teachers must teach them, knowledge, not only knowledge, but also we have to tell this to the children that how to learn , how to behave. So those factors need students. So JTU insist that the we need teachers in the future too bad. So introduction of ICT changes the role of teachers. So that's why JTU must insist the significance of teachers.

57:02

Sure, thank you. Thank you so much. I just, I just have two to three clarifications to make quickly, I will just run through them.

57:14

Because I just want to know if you're in the primary classes in Japan, are there more female teachers? Or are there more male teachers?

57:39

Yes, at the elementary school, there are more female teacher, teachers.

57:46

So , is is there a website of JTU you that I can refer to?

57:57

Yes, Yes, there is. Okay. I can try to google translate it into English and maybe I'll send you the URL. Yes, please. Would you recommend any newspaper from Japan, that is available in English, that in which I can find some newspaper reports about teachers

58:46

So there is no main newspaper written in English, but I recommend the Japan Times, which shows everything in Japan in English.

58:58

Okay, that's great. That's good. Yeah, just one last question. Did the JT you conduct any specific trainings for teachers mental health and well being during the COVID times?

59:57

Yes, we do. we have talking abou these themers in the conference about work style or working safety measures. Yes, they're included.

1:00:17

Okay. Okay. So when you will you will be sharing small, brief about the Jq survey. Can you add this information also a little bit about these trainings

1:00:38

 they're very happy to share it with you.

1:00:47

that will help me in understanding the role of JTU you in supporting the teachers in Japan. Thank you very much for that.

1:00:54

 And that's our pleasure. Thank you. So thank you very much with this the interview. And I want to thank you for the for the purpose of the research, but also personally, I learned a lot about the situation in Japan. So I'm very grateful to you. Thank you and just

1:01:28

 Thank you very much. Thank you. T