

# Bulletin

Aug. 2007  
No. 12

## ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE! ORGANIZE!

UNI-LCJapan Affiliates Step Up Its Efforts for Organizing Takaaki Sakurada, Chairperson, UNI-LCJapan	2
Organizing Workers in the Commerce Sector	4
Japanese Affiliates in the UNI Finance Sector	6
Organizing Atypical Workers in Postal Services and a New Consolidated Union Organization	7
Trade Unions in the Information and Communication Industry	8
Organising Efforts at FANLU	9
What is UNI-LCJapan?	10



Participants for the UNI-LCJ Youth English Camp at the Peace Park in Nagasaki

---

## UNI-LCJapan Affiliates Step Up Its Efforts for Organizing

**Takaaki Sakurada**  
Chairperson, UNI-LCJapan



**Q: Could you tell us about the trade union situation in Japan?**

**A:** The so-called global standards, based on neo-liberalism and market fundamentalism, have taken root in Japan like in other places. Economic performance may temporally improve under market principles, but our society is being divided into two groups; the winners and the losers, the rich and the poor. Surprisingly, the government still refuses to admit the existence of poverty in Japan, but in fact a group is emerging known as the “working poor.” If we ignore those people, the social disparities will never be closed. Trade unions need to tackle this problem. Japanese trade unions organize the Spring Struggle for a Better Life every year. We carried out the Spring Struggle this year under the banner of “Stop the Widening of Disparities.” I believe we have succeeded in raising awareness by delivering a clear message to the people: “We should not leave everything to the market.”

Labor legislation reform is also being discussed. Various amendments of the labor laws have been submitted to the National Diet. Labor law reform must uphold, before all, the principles of social justice and dignity of labor. Unfortunately, the actual discussion has not upheld these principles.

The government has trumpeted its policy of giving people a second chance. However, once

people fall into poverty, it is not easy to escape. Therefore, we must focus on the issue of the minimum wage. We need to achieve a substantial increase in minimum wages, which now stand at 610 yen at the lowest.

Actually those struggling to make a living are atypical workers. Their number has increased to 17 million, including 12 million part-time workers. Their wages are not far above the local minimum wages.

Not just the government and companies, but Japanese trade unions are also to blame in this regard. Our traditional movement has ignored atypical workers, because only regular full-time workers of major companies belong to unions, and their problems have been our major concern. We lagged behind other industrialized countries in responding to changes in industrial and employment structure accompanying increasing global competition.

RENGO, and most of the Japanese trade union movement, recognize the reality of the free market economy. Our concern is excessive market fundamentalism. Social rules covering justice, the dignity of labor, human rights, and decency should be also guaranteed. It is only with such a balance that a sustainable society will be realized.

Employers bring up global standards and international competition, but when it comes to the rate of overtime pay and the percentage of

used paid leave, they themselves fall far below international standards. They conveniently ignore the lack of balance between working and family life. Our society is aging with fewer children. To build a sustainable and stable society, such basic issues have to be reviewed.

**Q: What, in your opinion, is the reason for the fall in the unionization rate?**

**A:** Traditionally, the trade union movement in Japan failed to deal with structural changes. Companies outsourced their operations, but unions did not organize workers at the outsourcing companies. The number of middle-level managers has increased, but unions failed to reconsider the scope of union membership. The biggest cause is, however, as I stated before, our lack of commitment to organizing atypical workers.

Today, the organizing rate is 18.2%. But at small and medium enterprises, it is only 1%, and for part-time workers, 4.4%. We should intensify our organizing activities toward people with “flexible work styles.”

**Q: What is the role of the national center, RENGO, in organizing activities?**

**A:** RENGO gives general directions to the industrial federations. The real action is taken by industrial federations and their affiliates.



The service sector is generally labor-intensive, and thus it should be the first to tackle the issue of organizing diverse forms of employees. The 2006 Spring Struggle marked a watershed. RENGO established a “Joint Struggle Committee for Part-time Workers.”

Organizing leads to improvements in working conditions. The government, companies and academia are advocating “diversity.” That nice sounding word makes it seem as if workers have chosen diverse working styles based on their own wills. But in reality, they are coerced into working flexibly and being used as cheap labor. To address all working people, not just the 18.2% who are unionized, we will deliver a clear message to all people and make our activities more visible in society.

**Q: Lastly, tell us about the current developments in UNI-LCJ.**

**A:** We are now making every effort to achieve a membership of “one million by Nagasaki in 2010.” We are steadily nearing that goal, with the full support of our affiliates.

That is our immediate objective. For the more long-term future, we are committed to building a solid foundation and developing human resources with the spirit of internationalism in line with our action plan. Our hope is to contribute to the global UNI movement.

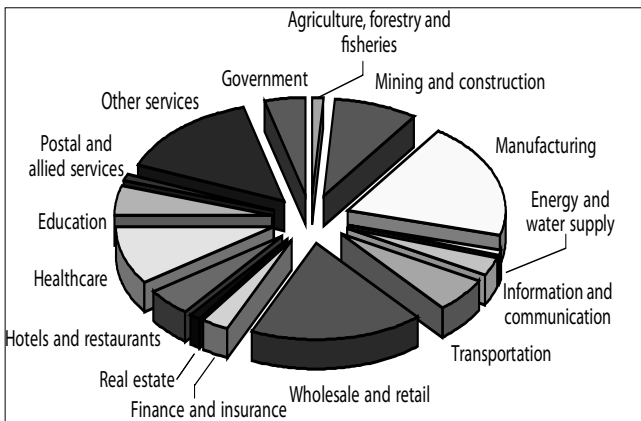
In closing, I would like to express my deep sorrow for the death of Mr. Itcho Ito, the mayor of Nagasaki city, who was assassinated by a gunman this April. I have renewed my determination to attain peace. Also, we would like to continue to maintain a good relationship with the newly elected mayor.

# Organizing Workers in the Commerce Sector



## One in five workers are engaged in the commerce sector

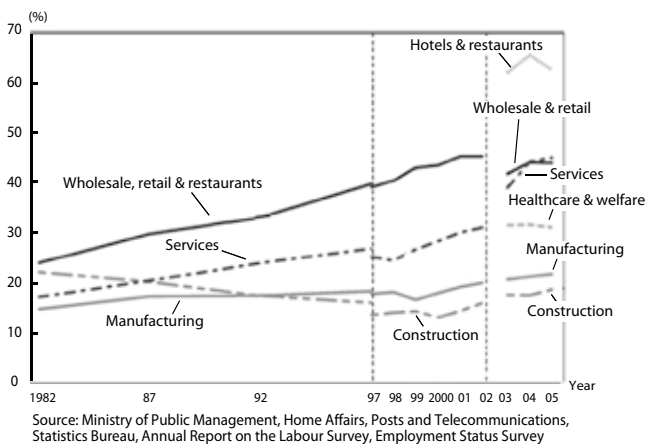
Among Japan's 55 million employees, 9.74 million work in the commerce sector, which is a huge source of employment. The general trade union membership rate has declined to 18.2 % in 2006 as a result of downsizing in the manufacturing sector, which parties the core of organized labor. Despite the fact that many people work in the commerce sector, only one in ten workers are organized (0.99 million organized labor among total 9.74 million workers [Basic Survey on Labour Unions (2006), Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare].



## Increasing number of non-regular employees in the commerce/service sector

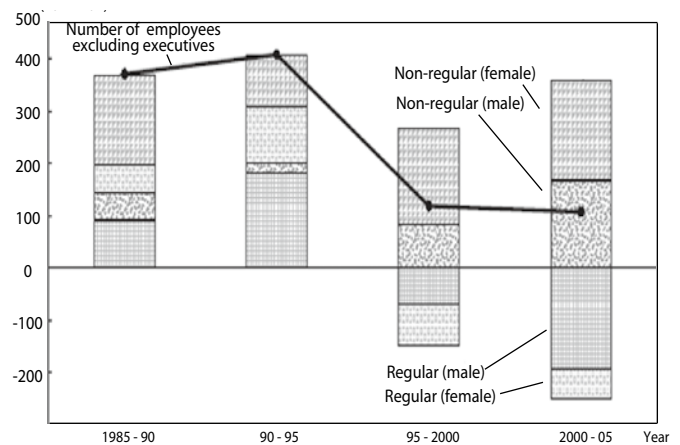
The low organization rate in the commerce sector can be explained by the fact that most of the increase in the labor force in the sector is accounted for by non-regular workers (part-timers, temporary staff, contract workers), which we have faced difficulties in organizing.

Changes in Non-Regular Employees by Industry



During the ten or so years since 1995, the number of regular workers has continued to decline while that of non-regular workers has increased regardless of gender. At present, approximately 30% of total employees work on a non-regular basis. Particularly in the commerce sector, the ratio of non-regular workers is about 40% and organizing part-timers and contract employees is an urgent task.

More Men and Women in Non-regular Employment



Source: Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications, Statistics Bureau, Annual Report on the Labour Survey, Report on the Special Survey; Figures are as of February for 1985-2000, January to March in 2005.

## JTUC-RENGO, our national centre, intensifies its efforts

Against this backdrop, RENGO established a "Joint Struggle Committee for Part-time Workers" as a part of the 2006 Spring Struggle for a Better Life, and declared its resolve to take actions to improve working conditions for non-regular workers, including part-timers. At this meeting, the members confirmed that they would demand measures: (1) to set a minimum wage within a company and raise the standard; (2) to increase hourly wages; and (3) to organize part timers. These goals were set in order to achieve the basic objective of equal and fair treatment through labor-management negotiations, by excluding any discriminatory treatment stemming from the perception that "part-timers, by their very nature, are different from regular workers." This proactive commitment by RENGO conveys a social message to the public. Ever increasingly, the media has covered non-regular workers and their working conditions, and social inequality in general, leading to an increase in public awareness on these issues.

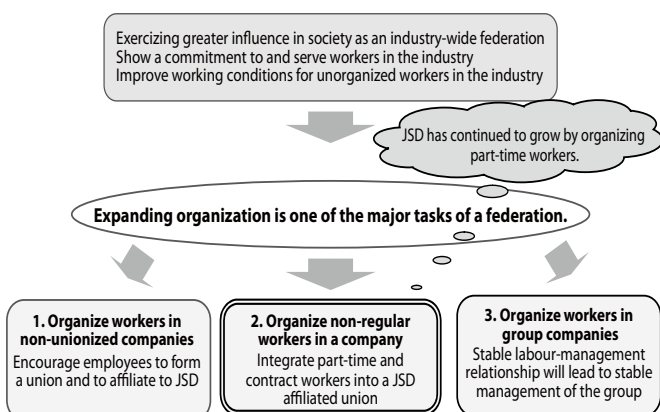
**Achievements of the 2007 Joint Struggle for Part-time workers**

Results of the RENGO Coalition of Part-time Workers		
Demands (number of unions)	2007	2006
Launch activities for equal treatment for part-time workers	1,904	848
Negotiate eliminating inequality without rational reason and achievement of equal or equivalent treatment	589	287
Increase hourly wages	952	574
Start consultation on organizing part-time workers	181	113
<b>Results</b>		
<b>1. Elimination of inequality without rational reason, and realization of equal and equivalent treatment</b>		
1-1 Developing personnel treatment system including part-time workers	588	116
1-2 Improvement of welfare system including allowances, days off	211	114
<b>2. Positive change in hourly wages</b>		
2-1 Hourly wage increase	219	201
2-2 Agreement of minimum wages for all including part-time workers	441	
<b>3. Organizing part-time workers</b>		
Newly organized members among part-time workers	2007	2006
	125,113 (141 unions)	20,421 (27 unions)

**JSD's Initiatives for Organising**

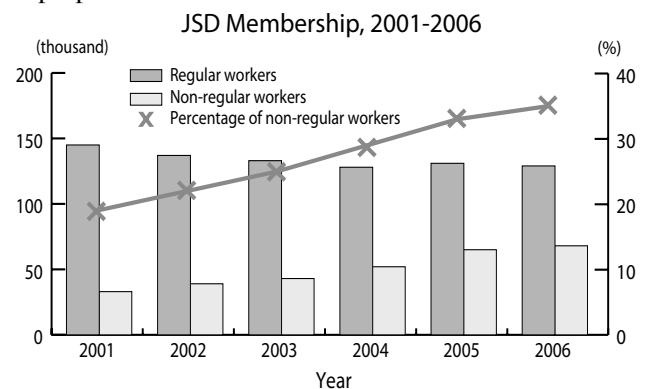
Organizing is one of the important jobs of the industrial federations. The Japan Federation of Service and Distributive Workers Unions (JSD), which represents workers in the service-, retail-industries, endeavors to fulfill this responsibility and role through a commitment to organizing. We have set three major target groups of our organizing effort (see Chart 1); (1) workers in non-unionized companies, (2) non-regular workers, and (3) workers in group companies. Among these, the recruitment of non-regular workers (part-timers, contract workers) in companies where JSD affiliate unions exist has led to an increase in membership.

Chart 1 JSD's Initiatives for Organising



More and more part-time workers are being organized into unions, and in 2006 the ratio of part-timers in our union membership reached 35%. Now that one in three members is a part-timer, we are working to improve their working conditions. Our goal is to achieve equal or balanced treatment between regular and part-

time workers. Labor and management begin by agreeing to rational criteria. Based on these criteria, when a part-time worker is identified as doing the same work in a same environment/conditions as a regular worker, he or she should be treated "equally." But in most cases, the work-styles of part-timers vary from those of regular workers. For the latter, we are demanding "balanced" treatment including wages that satisfy workers. We believe it is important to clarify the relationship between work (quality of jobs) and wages, and to implement a necessary evaluation system and employee training in an appropriate manner.



**Organizing activities of UI ZENSEN (The Japanese Federation of Textile, Chemical, Food, Commercial, Service and General Workers' Unions)**

Contrary to rapid increase of part-time workers, the organizing rate among them remains extremely low level of 4.3% in Japan. UI ZENSEN has been making further efforts to organize part-time workers in recent years. It organized 78,500 part-time workers in 2006. Now, UI ZENSEN represents 400,000 part-time workers in commerce and other sectors, which make up 40% of its total membership of 950,000.

On top of it, other forms of non-regular works such as dispatched and contract work are prevailing. It is difficult to apply Japanese traditional form of union, enterprise-based union, to these new forms of employment. Therefore, UI ZENSEN has started organizing them through cross-company unions, as its new organizing strategy.

In February 2002, NCCU (Craft Union for Nursing Care Workers) was formed. It is a union which represents nursing care workers across companies. The current membership of the Union is 62,000 majority of which are part-time workers who commute from their home directly to customers' houses to provide nursing service. Another initiative taken by UI ZENSEN is establishment of JSGU (General Union for Dispatched Workers) in 2004, as a cross-company union for dispatched workers. Currently, it represents 43,000 workers of temporary agencies.

## Japanese Affiliates in the UNI Finance Sector



Japanese unions in the banking sector are not affiliated with UNI. UNI-LCJapan Finance, thus has been working to strengthen the relationships among trade unions in the finance sector to give them familiarity with UNI and have them understand the significance and importance of UNI activities.

Having selected CSR as an issue that binds the financial unions together, we adopted the objective to study and research overseas situations surrounding CSR. In other words, we are stressing the importance of trade unions making a commitment to CSR, and consider research activities on CSR as one of the important tasks for industrial federations.

As a part of these research activities, in March 2005 UNI-LCJapan Finance invited Mr. Sandy Boyle, former President of UNI Finance Global Union and Mr. Oliver Roethig, Head of UNI Finance Global Union, to present lectures at the “First Europe Finance Seminar” to discuss CSR.

In our view, working on CSR is not something different from what we have done in the past, but rather involves a re-organization of our past activities and accomplishments from the viewpoint of CSR. We will reconfirm the meaning of trade union activities and if necessary enhance or enrich them with additional values or objectives. One participant in the above seminar, an officer from a bank union, stated; “I now feel like what we used to do was nothing more than narrowly-defined union activities to protect the vested interests of our members. . . I came to realize that we must transform our activities to those in the broad sense of the term.” This seminar was a good opportunity for participants to take another look at their union activities and broaden their perspective.

Up until now, we have held five these seminars: the second in July 2005, third in October 2005, fourth in March 2006 and fifth in October 2006. The theme of the first and second seminars was “European Financial Unions’ Commitment to CSR.” They were followed by the third seminar entitled “Addressing the Challenges European Financial Unions Are Facing,” and the fourth, “European Financial Unions’ Experience in Improvements in Working Conditions,” where we heard how changes in the environment surrounding the finance sector have affected working conditions and the workplace environment, and how unions are addressing these issues and through that process how unions are earning and maintaining the trust of members. At the fifth seminar, we focused on work-life balance, especially its practical implementation, reviewing the

significance and importance of a commitment to CSR.

We have succeeded in earning a high evaluation from the banking unions that participated in above seminars. What they are saying is “In terms of the challenges lying before financial unions, we are increasingly sharing common issues and concerns with those of Europe as globalisation moves forward, cultural and historical differences notwithstanding.” “We can learn important lessons from overseas experiences. Just focusing on domestic issues is not enough.” “The activities of the European finance unions are highly informative for us.” From this feedback, we can see that these seminars are of great significance as they can give a new perspective to Japanese financial unions.

Along with the events mentioned above, we invited some officers from the banking unions as observers to UNI Europe Finance Sector Conference in Rome (Italy) in March 2005 and UNI Finance Global Union Conference held in Geneva (Switzerland) in March 2006. In the first, the tour included a visit to AMICUS in the UK for interviews.

This year in June, UNI-Apro created a chance for the banking unions in Japan to visit their counterparts in Singapore. This is surely a great opportunity to strengthen the bonds between banking unions and UNI-Apro.

We have made certain progress in promoting active participation by women in union activities. In particular, a series of “Finance Women’s Seminars” were held in March 2006 and January 2007. The lecturers of each seminar were Sister Alice Chang, Director of UNI-Apro Women and Youth for the first, and four union officers from the Singapore DBS Staff Union including Sister Nora Kang, President of DBSSU, for the latter. These seminars not only helped develop the relationship between female members but also gave the financial unions a renewed outlook.

In December 2006, Sister Angela Macaso, a member of UNI-PLC Youth committee and the Standard Chartered Bank Employees Union, visited Japan to conduct a lecture at the “Seminar on Social Contribution.” On that occasion as well, we reconfirmed the social dimension of trade unions. In May 2007, her colleague, Sister Correyn Flores also attended the UNI-LCJ Youth course.

Our efforts to build ties with banking unions are steadily making progress. We are firmly convinced that these efforts will not only strengthen the bonds with unions in the banking sector, but also bring about happiness for workers all around the world!

# Organizing Atypical Workers in Postal Services and a New Consolidated Union Organization



## Progress in Organizing Effort

Today, a total of 256,500 regular workers and estimated 124,000 atypical workers work in Japan's postal service. The number of atypical workers fluctuates substantially depending on the workload in the postal service over the course of the year.

In the postal services, like other Japanese industries, the globalization of markets, coupled with an industrial and economic trend dominated by "market fundamentalism," has led to the massive hiring of atypical workers including irregular, part-time and agency workers working at hourly wages, and this atypical workforces has become an elemental source of manpower that is absolutely necessary for postal service operations.

JPU (Japan Postal Workers' Union) and Zenyusei (All Japan Postal Labour Union), the two major trade unions representing workers serving at Japan Post, have launched full-fledged organizing efforts to address these changes in the labor environment and ensure job security and improvements of labor conditions for atypical workers, based on the policy of JTUC-RENGO, the national labor center.

Through strenuous organizing efforts at both JPU and Zenyusei, a total of 38,000 atypical workers have joined the two trade unions to date. As a result, some 30% of atypical workers at Japan Post have been successfully unionized.

These unionizing efforts for atypical workers have led to remarkable accomplishments, such as equal and fair treatment for atypical workers and their recruitment as regular workers, through labor-management talks on personnel affairs, welfare programs, compensation package and other diverse issues related to the new privatized postal service companies.



## Privatization and Consolidation of the Two Unions

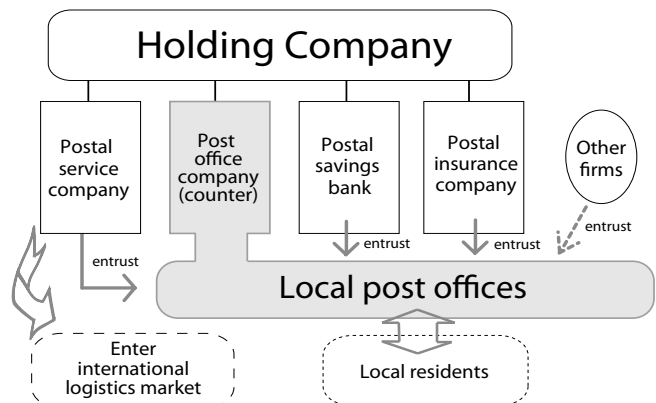
Japan's postal service will be privatized on October 1, 2007. In anticipation of the privatization, JPU and Zenyusei are carrying out discussions toward the consolidation of the postal labour movement.

When this consolidation is realized, the scope of workers to be organized will be further expanded. It is believed that the privatization of the postal services will lead to the creation of new private-sector businesses — logistic services run by the postal service, financial services run by the postal savings & postal life insurance, and agency services offered by teller window of post offices. Our immediate aim will be focused on organizing the 300,000 workers.

We are determined to make all-out efforts to organize workers serving at post offices and allied businesses nationwide as well as improving their working conditions.



Structure of Japan Post from October 2007



# Trade Unions in the Information and Communication Industry



Expanding the circle of fellow workers and strengthening solidarity among them are the foundations and source of the vitality of trade unions. The membership of JOHO-ROREN (Japan Federation of Telecommunications, Electronic Information and Allied Workers) is 225,179 (including 7,834 part-time and other atypical workers), down 912 from the previous year. There is a potential for future increases in membership, as employment in this industrial sector grows thanks to the economic recovery, but JOHO-ROREN is no exception that faces the “Year 2007 Employment Problem” as the baby boomers retire. If organization is limited to new graduates, it will be difficult for JOHO-ROREN to apply brakes to the decline of its membership.

On the other hand, according to the “Labor Force Survey (Detailed Tabulation)” compiled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the number of part-time workers (average for the year in 2006) was 16.77 million, an increase of 440,000 from the previous year. They accounted for 33.0% of the total employed workforce and approximately 69% of them were women. There are substantial disparities in working conditions between regular employees and part-time workers, and this disparity was confirmed by a 2006 survey conducted by JOHO-ROREN.

If we fail to deal with this difficult situation suffered by part-time and other workers in fixed-term employment, who are mostly engaged in short-time labor, we will inevitably see a deterioration of overall working conditions, having a serious impact on the entire workforce. Along with the diversification of employment patterns, the organization of these part-time and fixed-term workers is an urgent challenge to us that we cannot circumvent.

Consequently, JOHO-ROREN has positioned expansion of membership as a top priority, with the immediate target to achieve a membership of 250,000. To this end, JOHO-ROREN has posted full-time organizers and designated an “Organizational Expansion and Strengthening Month” for the staging of concentrated efforts on unionizing throughout the organization. Individual JOHO-ROREN affiliates have been implementing specific organizing efforts suited to actual conditions at their respective workplaces, with the aim to eliminate non-unionized workers within their companies, and these affiliates have been making strenuous efforts toward unorganized workers in affiliated and peripheral businesses. The following describes the unionizing activities of NWJ (All NTT Workers Union of Japan), KDDIWU (KDDI Workers

Union) and JOHO-ROREN:

## NWJ

NWJ has made its efforts for unionization and membership expansion as an utmost priority related to its very *raison d’être*, and throughout the organization, members acknowledge and share a “sense of crisis” and the “importance of unionization,” and are endeavoring to intensify their organizing efforts.

NWJ’s goals for fiscal 2006 are: (1) to organize all new employees and unorganized regular workers; (2) to further expand organizing efforts for part-time and fixed-term workers; and, (3) to strengthen organizing efforts toward non-unionized companies in the NTT Group and companies newly incorporated into the group through M&As. In order to achieve these goals, the NWJ national headquarters has defined the roles and responsibilities of individual units within it. The company branches, which are set up at each of the eight major companies in the NTT Group, proactively carry out organizing efforts based on the “yearly action plan” that they have developed, and the NWJ national headquarters provides support for unionizing efforts run by these branches.

One of the important challenges for NWJ unionizing efforts is to strengthen the follow-up scheme for the newly unionized part-time and fixed-term workers. For this purpose, NWJ seeks to: (1) develop a favorable climate for labor-management talks to discuss the improvement of working conditions for these workers; (2) carry out PR activities in the union newsletter and other publications that deal with problems faced by part-time and fixed-term workers; and, (3) provide daily support and consultation services for these workers. Based on these follow-up activities, which “make the union’s role and functions visible,” NWJ is endeavoring to enhance its services toward its membership and to provide distinctive benefits for members.



**KDDIWU**

With the October 2000 consolidation into KDDI of three telecommunications corporations — DDI, primarily engaged in domestic long-distance communication, KDD, engaged in international communication, and IDO, in mobile communication — KDDIWU came into existence. In October 2001, it incorporated the union at au, a mobile communication subsidiary of KDDI. KDD, which adopted a union shop, had a trade union that organized 100% of the company’s eligible workers, whilst DDI and IDO were not unionized, so that the newly formed KDDI adopted open shop. Since the workers from the former DDI, IDO and au had never experienced union activities, they lacked knowledge of what kind of organization trade unions were and what roles they performed.

KDDIWU held explanatory meetings on the theme of trade unions at workplaces around the country, explaining the necessity, roles and specific activities of trade unions in order to gain the understanding of both managers and non-managerial employees, and then tried to get non-managerial employees to join. At each KDDI workplace, diligent efforts for union expansion have been carried out: key organizers have been assigned, and they have encouraged their colleagues at the workplace to join the trade union.

In October 2001 when au was merged into KDDI, the unionization rate fell below the 50% level, marking a grave situation for the trade union, but since then through KDDI’s consolidation of the three TU-KA companies (mobile communications, non-unionized) in October 2005, and of POWEREDCOM (domestic long-distance communication, unionized with 1,200 members) in Jan-

uary 2006, the unionization rate at KDDI has recovered to a level exceeding 60% as of April 30, 2007.

Currently, with the immediate goal of achieving a unionization rate target of 70%, KDDIWU is stressing the necessity of the trade union and inviting unorganized workers to join KDDIWU, through union activities addressed closely the needs of workplace.

**JOHO-ROREN**

As part of its efforts to fulfill its role as an industrial federation in the information industry, since 2002 JOHO-ROREN has been using the Internet to implement the “i-net club,” delivering a wide range of services ranging from counseling on workplace problems encountered to living-related services on leisure and tourism.

The i-net club invites union members and their families, retired members and a wide range of general workers, including unorganized workers as well, to subscribe to the services offered by the club, and those general (non-union) members can afford ample services for payment of a fixed subscription fee. Also, the i-net club runs the “JOHO-ROREN i-net union,” a trade union that individual workers can join. When a union member needs to talk with management, the i-net union can represent him or her.

The i-net club has been used by JOHO-ROREN affiliates as a useful tool to provide services for union members and to expand their membership. In the future, JOHO-ROREN will continue to support its affiliates’ activities and will make strenuous efforts to expand union members through its information and public affairs activities and the development of a favorable climate for union activities.



## Organising Efforts at FANLU (Federation of ALL-NHK Labour Unions)



A total of 15 unions including NIPPORO are affiliated with FANLU which organizes workers in public broadcasting (NHK). One of these affiliates is NHK Union (Joint Labour Union for ALL NHK Workers). Membership in this union is open to anyone who works for NHK, including foreign newscasters, actors and actresses, and art staff who work under individual business consignment contract. There are cases where individual members of this NHK Union actually belong to the same company. In such cases, we recommend that they jointly form an individual union within that company. So far, three unions have been established.

Some of the NHK group organizations do not have unions. At those workplaces, officers of FANLU and affiliates organize meetings to talk about the necessity

and benefits of trade unions. The mutual relationships and ties created through business activities help in this endeavor. Three unions have been formed in this way.

The staff of NHK group organizations, with the exception of NIPPORO, are relatively young on average and are not at all familiar with union activities. Even so, they do understand why unions are necessary, but do not know “how to establish one.” Therefore, FANLU has created a “tool kit for union formation” which is sent to participants of meetings for their consideration. This project was just started this March and has yet to produce any concrete results. However we are determined to continue our efforts until we see the establishment of unions in all organizations in the NHK group.

# What is UNI-LCJapan?

## A Domestic Consultation Body and Coordination Body -- UNI-LCJapan

UNI-LCJapan (UNI Liaison Council Japan) is the domestic council where UNI affiliates in Japan discuss their involvement in UNI activities and harmonize their opinions and positions. In conjunction with UNI consolidation, UNI-LCJapan was formed in January 2000. With 14 trade unions as affiliates with a total of approximately 1 million members, UNI-LCJapan carries out activities in close cooperation with UNI/UNI-Apro.

UNI-LCJapan convenes an annual general meeting in January of every year to discuss and make decisions on its activity programs and budget; its officers are elected at the general meeting every two years. Pursuant to the decision made by the general meeting, matters related to its management

and activities are discussed and implemented by the steering committee composed of 25 members from the 14 affiliates.

With around 960,000 members, many Japanese affiliates hold key positions in UNI. Many of them are involved in UNI decision-making bodies, and in particular they are very much responsible for promoting UNI activities in the Asia-Pacific region.

Since 2000, many overseas projects have been run by UNI-LCJapan. Seminars with national liaison councils in the Philippines, Mongolia, and Thailand have been conducted, while regular UNI-Apro workshops have been held in Vietnam and Indonesia in close cooperation with UNI-LCJapan.

