

Report on the 70th JSSSW Spring Conference

Shinichi Okada, Osaka Metropolitan University
Member of Steering Committee for National Conference (Spring Conference)

Conference Theme: Seeking Approaches for Eliminating Social Disparities

Date: Sunday, May 29, 2022, 13:00-17:30

Venue: Online

The 70th Spring Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare themed by “Seeking Approaches to Eliminating Social Disparities” was held on Sunday, May 29, 2022, from 13:00 to 17:30. This conference was held on the web to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The President of the Society, Hiroto Kuga, gave an opening address to start the conference. This year, there were two winners of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare Academic Award 2021, so each of them gave a presentation. First, a lecture titled “How has Social Work Defined Minorities – Institutional Racism and History of Social Welfare in the US” was given by Midori Nishizaki (Kumamoto Gakuen University). Next, Takayuki Hirano (Nihon Fukushi University) gave a lecture titled “Community Welfare Management – Community Welfare and Comprehensive Support System”. These clear and informative lectures provided an opportunity for the attendees to think about the future of social work practice.

Following the academic award lectures, a symposium titled “Seeking Approaches to Eliminate Social Disparities” was held. First, Aya Abe (Tokyo Metropolitan University) gave a presentation titled “What is Unacceptable Disparity: a perspective of Children's Disparities”, discussing the difference between “inequality” and “poverty”, an analysis of trends in the expansion of “inequality” in Japan since 2000, summarizing the issues of “inequality”, and the status of inequality among children. She stated that various “disparities” are entangled with relative poverty, and that international data suggests “disparities” have an impact on the overall wellbeing of children. Although she could not make definitive statements due to the lack of empirical studies in Japan, she expressed her concern that inequality in Japan is increasing and the trend seems to expand further

especially in a society where “everyone is supposed to defend themselves”. She concluded her presentation by saying that academic discussions on “poverty” and “inequality” would be necessary at academic conferences in the future.

Second, Naoki Kondo (Kyoto University) gave a presentation on “Cooperation between Welfare and Health, Medical Care to Eliminate Disparities”. The presentation included the Population Approach as an approach to correcting health disparities in public health; criticism against the Population Approach; the results of a survey conducted in the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study; policy trends related to social welfare; an introduction of the community based integrated system for children’s welfare; and specific examples of community development aimed at correcting health disparities. He concluded his presentation by stating that the elimination of health disparities needs a social prescribing system which medical care alone cannot complete; it is important that welfare and health, and medical care work together appropriately while creating a universal environment. As commentator, Yusuke Kakita (Osaka Metropolitan University) then summarized the presentations and commented on the issues raised. Afterwards, a variety of questions and answers were exchanged. Finally, the society’s vice president, Tomoko Hosho, gave closing remarks, bringing the 70th Spring conference to a successful conclusion.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the members and others involved in organizing this conference.

Invitation to the 70th JSSSW Fall Conference

Koichi Tsuda, Kansai University of Welfare Sciences
Chairperson of Executive Committee

We are pleased to announce the 70th Fall Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare will be held at Kansai University of Welfare Sciences on October 15 (Sat.) and 16 (Sun.).

We are currently in the process of preparing for this conference with the support and cooperation of many people, including the secretariat of the Society. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to them.

Our aim is to hold this conference on site, taking all possible measures to prevent infection, in combination with live and on-demand via Zoom webinar for some of the programs. We hope that many of you will be able to participate in the conference, either in person or online.

The theme of this year's conference is "A New Normal and Social Welfare: Focusing on the Future of "Tsunagari"". As a symposium led by the host university, it will provide discussions from various perspectives based on the conference theme. The many tragic events that have occurred in the past and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have made us think about the everyday nature of our lives. Our daily routines are changing, and we are forced to seek new ways of living. The role of social welfare, which is heavily involved in people's lives, will become increasingly important. In this context, it can be said that professionals engaged in social welfare are indispensable.

Recently, emphasis is being placed on a community-based society, with the importance of connections between people. On the other hand, it is said that such connections have been diluted. It is inevitable to reconsider the existence and roles of professionals engaged in social welfare, with "Tsunagari" as the keyword, including how they can support people better so as to make the best use of their expertise. Needless to say, professionals engaged in social welfare are essential workers. It is also our mission to support them so that they can fulfill their roles as professionals.

We hope that many of you will join us and actively discuss the roles involved in social welfare in various capacities. We are planning a diverse program that

includes workshops for international students and international comparative research, a start-up symposium, conference planning sessions, specific agenda sessions, oral presentations, and poster presentations. We received more than 150 entries on research themes in various fields for oral presentations, poster presentations, and the specific agenda sessions.

Kansai University of Welfare Science, where this conference will be held, is located in a peaceful residential area in the eastern side of Osaka Prefecture, about one hour from the center of Osaka. This will be the first time in three years that the conference will be held on site, and we look forward to seeing you all.

Toward the Startup of “CS-NET”, a Network for Early Career Researchers

Tsuyoshi Shimasaki, Kurume University
Research Support Committee

“CS-NET”, the network for early career researchers introduced in the March 2022 issue of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare (JSSSW) News No. 89, held a launch event on March 21, 2022.

The CS-NET launch event was an important event not only to promote the network within and outside of JSSSW, but also to demonstrate the significance of CS-NET as part of JSSSW's research support for early career researchers and to gain support for the network.

This event was held in two parts, with the aim of providing networking opportunities for early career researchers by sharing their current status and issues. The online event was held successfully, with more than 80 participants from all over Japan.

In the first part of the relay talk, three early career researchers presented realistic and compelling topics. In the second part, participants were divided into groups for an active exchange of information and opinions on the topics presented in the first part. The participants expressed not only their relief and satisfaction for being able to share their own struggles as early career researchers, but also the encouragement received for continuing their research with passion.

The environments in which early career researchers find themselves and the challenges they face are not limited to the field of social welfare studies. As long as they are involved in the world of research, they are expected to return the fruits to society. Early career researchers face unique challenges such as time constraints and unstable employment status. Despite that, they are also expected to carry out their research steadily. Through this event, we felt that CS-NET could be utilized to provide research support to early career researchers.

In addition to the members of the Research Support Committee, 11 early career researchers served in administrative roles at this event. CS-NET is also expected to function as a platform that prompts active networking of participants,

contributing to the improvement of research, ideas, and planning skills. We plan to continue to circulate information to promote proactive participation and involvement in CS-NET.

Currently, the Research Support Committee's CS-NET management team is preparing its website and mailing list. In addition, based on a variety of opinions gathered at the launch event, we are considering planning a salon where early career researchers can easily participate, such as a roundtable discussion on research grants, paper writing, a life course, and a project on research ethics. Furthermore, we are planning a start-up symposium, "Never Stop Advancing Research: How to Overcome Various Crises," at the 70th Fall Conference of the Japanese Society for the Study of Social Welfare. We hope that CS-NET will be of interest to our members and early career researchers.

監訳

田中 弘美 (武庫川女子大学文学部心理・社会福祉学科講師)

翻訳

小畑 美穂 (聖隷クリストファー大学社会福祉学部社会福祉学科助教)

Supervisor of translation

Hiromi Tanaka (Lecturer, Department of Psychology and Social Welfare, Mukogawa Women's University)

Translation

Miho OBATA (Assistant Professor) Seirei Christopher University School of Social Work