



Newsletter 2012.1 – MAY

JAPAN THE FOCUS OF SEVERAL SOCIAL ISSUES

A study mission to Japan was organised by the Education and Solidarity Network between 21 and 28 April. The delegation included members from France (MGEN, a founder member of the Network), Belgium (SOLIDARIS and MUTUALITÉ CHRETIENNE) and organisations representing non-profit social protection (AIM, also a Network founder member and the European Institution of Paritarian Institutions).

- Three main topics were on the agenda for this visit:
- Providing responses to the issues of aging and dependency;
 - A discussion on the future of the social economy in one of the major East Asian countries.



Members of the delegation welcomed at the BELGIAN Embassy

The main challenges facing Japan **in terms of dependency** were identified during a seminar organised jointly with the University of Tokyo and visits to institutions and stakeholders:

- The issue of funding the cost of care for dependants, which is rising sharply;
- Challenges for care in a country where generation replacement is not guaranteed and where women are increasingly torn between their traditional duties to their elders and the need work to the fund cost of an aging population;
- Organising care to avoid isolation among elderly people and dependants and enable the survival of diverse and dynamic local communities;

- Developing technologies to facilitate care such as 'e-health' tools which harness the dynamism and innovations of cutting-edge Japanese companies.



Professor IWAMURA, our host at the University of Tokyo

It emerged from the discussions and visits that although the challenge and solutions have been very clearly identified, the political class has great difficulty taking the necessary financial decisions, particularly in terms of introducing major tax increases. There are plans to maintain relations forged during the mission, notably by organising an international conference on dependency in Paris in 2013.

As regards the future of the social economy, solidarity-based social protection stakeholders, for the main part public service representatives, are concerned that a wave of deregulation will jeopardise the current balance which ensures quality universal cover for the population.

Plans to develop an economic integration area in the Pacific (the 'Trans Pacific Partnership'), in which profit-making insurance stakeholders are very actively involved, raise potential concerns over the current solidarity-based, non-profit model, not just in Japan but in other affected countries such as Australia.

The meeting with the main teaching union, the JTU (Japan Teachers' Union) and the healthcare and insurance mutual societies it is involved in governing confirmed to us that education stakeholders play an important role in healthcare and social protection issues in their



country. In particular, we discussed the issue of occupational health for education professionals, which is a priority for the union.

A visit to the Healthcare Mutual Society for Public-Sector Teachers also provided an opportunity for ties forged 10 years ago with the MGEN to be renewed. Discussions between the various parties furthermore confirmed that education and social protection stakeholders in the Pacific region would benefit from forming a coalition to respond to future challenges and maintain quality health cover and social protection for education professionals.



First photo: Haruhito WATANABE (Manager of the Social Protection Department)-Philippe SWENNEN-Alain COHEUR-Ryosuke KATO (President of the JTU)-Thierry WEISHAUPHT-Hideyuki SHIMIZU (Deputy Secretary General) – Second photo: Tamaki TERAZAWA with the Vice President and the Delegate General of the Network.

If you would like further details of the mission, a summary of lessons learned is available on the Network website:

www.educationsolidarite.org.

TOGO:

Moves to extend the activities of MUGET to health cover

During a mission which took place at the end of April and beginning of May, Network President Jean-Philippe Huchet met the executive director of MUGET, the heads of EI member unions FESEN and FENASYET and the EI regional coordinator. These meetings revealed that Togo demonstrates favourable conditions for the introduction of an initiative on health cover for education professionals:

- A top level health insurance scheme for civil servants is in place managed by INAM (the Togolese National Health Insurance Institute) whose director Mr Huchet met;
- MUGET's ability to extend its activities beyond its original remit (death cover extended to other related services) for education professionals;
- A good relationship between trade union organisations in the education sector.

The plan is to rally all trade union stakeholders around MUGET to form a steering committee which will define MUGET's possible remit with regard to healthcare, supplementing services offered by INAM. If the Steering Committee approves a project and approach shared by all these shareholders, the Network could provide support in terms of methodology and training.

There will be an update on this project in September 2012.