

TRAINEE SCHEMES IN JAPAN

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Executive Summary

1. While there is a grave shortage of labour in 3Ds (dirty, dangerous and demanding) workplaces, the Japanese government could not allow the free flow of foreign labour in the face of public opposition to the perceived negative impact of foreign workers in the country.
2. The government does not stop Japanese companies and farms from accepting unskilled foreign workers under the category of training.
3. There are some critical feedback from some human rights organisations both inside and outside Japan that human rights of trainees may not be adequately protected.
4. In response to feedback from the United Nations Human Rights Committee and others, the Japanese government revised the frameworks of training programmes for foreigners in July 2010.
5. However, the impacts of this revision are unclear because trainees' position remains comparatively weaker than what some had hoped.
6. As there remains various hurdles for Japanese companies and farms to receive unskilled foreign workers under the training system, labour shortage in some 3D workplaces has not been solved.
7. An overall revision on its policy on unskilled foreign workers based on public policy priorities could be a way out of this dilemma.