

# Danish Youth Councils as a Model for Encouraging Citizenship by Participation in Local Democracy in Japan

Akiko HARADA

Doctoral Program, Graduate School of Education,

The University of Tokyo

[akikoharada1019@gmail.com](mailto:akikoharada1019@gmail.com)

Key Words: Danish youth council, citizenship, political literacy, youth participation

The issue of the political literacy of young people is directly relevant to Japan, which enacted a law lowering the voting age to 18 from 20 years of age in June 2015. Japanese young people do not have enough opportunities for learning political literacy but little has been written about this issue, including the possibility of citizenship education.

This research examines how to encourage citizenship in young people through participation in local democracy by studying the case of Denmark, where participation by citizens in political decision-making is extremely active. It reviewed the literature of youth participation and youth policies, accessing information in Danish such as *Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd* (Danish Youth Council) and *Netværket af Ungdomsråd* (Network of Youth Councils). This revealed the historical development of youth councils and key elements of continuity. It found that the experience of Denmark offers a potential model for citizenship to Japan; in Denmark people's rights to represent their opinions to public institutions are guaranteed by law and there are youth councils which have dialogues with municipalities in the area of youth policies. Further research will be carried out using semi-structural interviews with members of youth councils around 15-20 years of age, and their adult supporters.