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A Collaborative Project Between the Marble Student Group and Morioka City to promote understanding of sexual and gender diversity

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Applicable principle

Principle 10: A commitment to promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the unlearning of intolerance, through education.

1. Outline

This year, Marble, an Iwate Prefectural University student organisation that promotes the understanding of gender diversity, had their initiative to produce an informative booklet on gender, sexual orientation and gender identity accepted as part of Morioka City's collaborative promotion project. The promotion project, which is intended to promote collaboration between the city and local citizen groups, recognized Marble's theme of gender inclusivity and understanding as one which the city considered to be an important social and regional issue and provided support.

In collaboration with Morioka City's Gender Equality Office, an awareness-raising booklet on gender, sexual orientation

and gender identity, such as LGBTQ+, was produced and disseminated via social networking services in order to raise understanding and interest in gender diversity and help eliminate discrimination and prejudice against sexual minorities. The booklet was placed at public facilities in Morioka City and was also made available for download from the official website of Morioka City. This online format was an effective way to overcome the limitations imposed by the coronavirus, and the results of an anonymous questionnaire made available via QR code showed that the goals of the booklet project were achieved well.

2. Activities

In order to further understand gender diversity, Marble held weekly discussion sessions on books and other media concerning themes related to gender and gender identity. The series of discussions provided students with a forum to reflect on their own thought processes and the way they see, perceive and understand things. The results of these discussions were summarised in the booklet 'Suki na iro de ikiru'. The booklet was culmination of a variety of learning and hands-on experiences as well as communication with other gender diversity awareness groups via social media.

The title, which translates as 'Live in your favourite colour', reflects the students' belief that the individuality of each person and the nature of sexuality itself, can be thought of as a gradient of colour where no two points are exactly the same. The title also expresses their wish that sexual minorities be treated with equality as human beings, as well as the idea that all life is precious and that each person can cherish their preferred gender identity or sexual orientation or 'favorite colour'

3. Results and moving forward

The results of the online questionnaire after the distribution of the pamphlet indicated the the project was effective in three main outcomes.

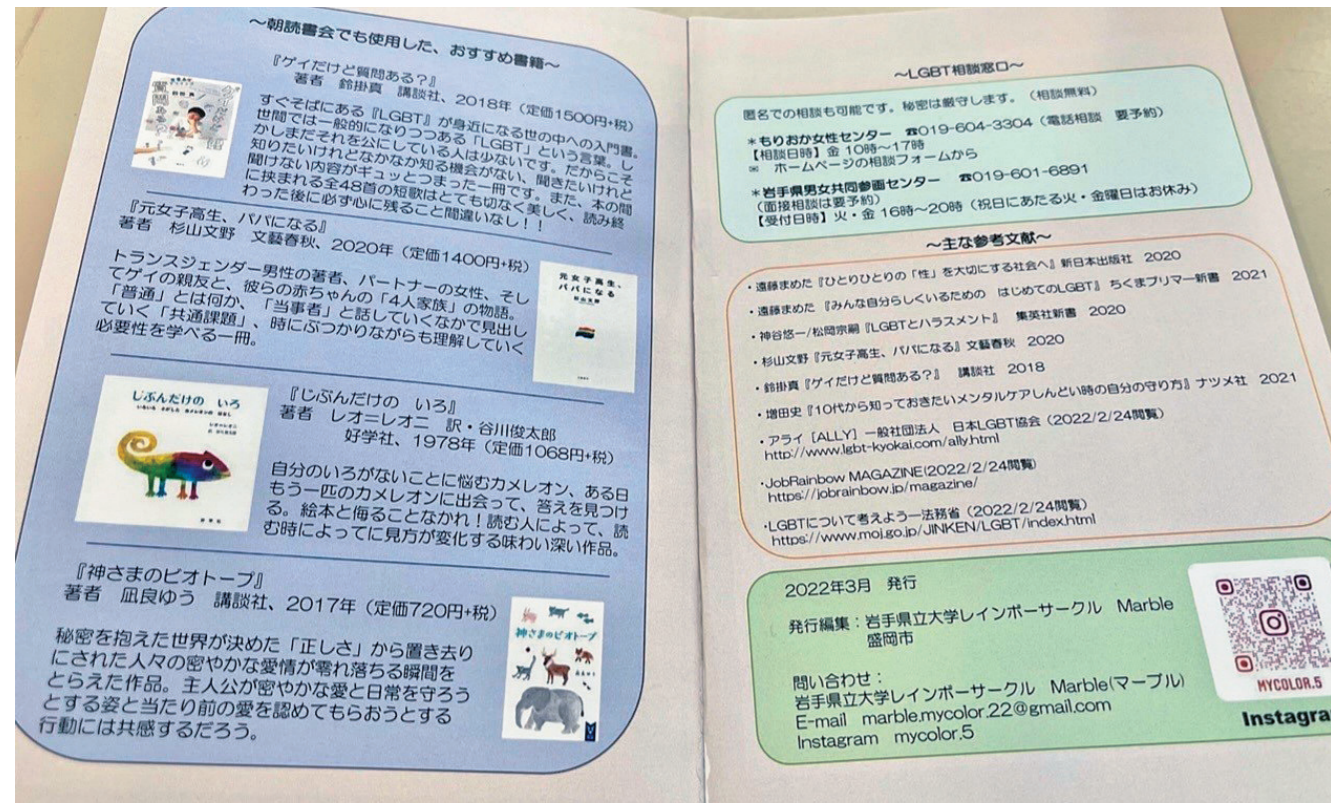
1. Alerting people to discriminatory 'language' and suggesting concrete examples of how to avoid discriminatory terms.
2. Providing specific, easy-to-understand information about the dangers of outing a person without their consent.

3. Introducing literature and other resources to help an understanding of sexual minorities as being made up of a range of diverse personalities and to learn about the importance of everyone being able to be true to their own self, gender, and sexuality.

The results of the 'Live in your favourite colour' project have made clear that there is a need to disseminate 'words' to young people who may feel uncomfortable or are struggling with their gender identity. In this, the Marble students found a new goal for their activities: to give advice to those who are beginning to be aware of their gender identity, sex, and life. This advice can show people how to empathize with others and convert their own feelings in ways which can touch others.

Even when extracurricular activities were restricted due to the Corona Disaster, it was very significant to be able to share information and exchange information online with other related organisations. We would also like to thank the Morioka Gender Equality Office and the Morioka Women's Centre for their collaboration, which enabled us to gain a wider reach, and convey information from a number of different perspectives to those living in Iwate.

We need to remember that we are living in a diverse society. We have learnt from this project that there are still many people who are feeling 'difficulty in living' because of the gap between what is taken for granted as being normal, or "ideal" and the realities of how individuals actually feel and live. Moving forward, we will continue to think about this in order to build a society where we can listen to, empathize with and support one another.



Produced booklet



Produced booklet