



# The NGK Street Journal

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## Gender equality in school

There are 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). One of them is GENDER EQUALITY. Achieving gender equality can create a fairer society for people of different genders, a safer environment for women and girls, and an improved economy due to equal job access and pay.

Is Japan gender equal? The gender gap index, a measurement of gender disparity introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Program, revealed that Japan ranked 125 th out of 146 countries in 2023 with a score of 0.647. Unfortunately, it seems that Japan is not currently achieving gender equality.

To better define gender equality, we need to understand what gender means. What is gender? Gender is made up of the social and cultural differences between males and females. In other words, gender is unconsciously created by everyone, and exists everywhere. Therefore, it also exists in schools.

Students are often separated by gender. For example, males are listed before females on the class roster, and school rules about students' appearance differ depending on gender in



Photo by Rina Tomita

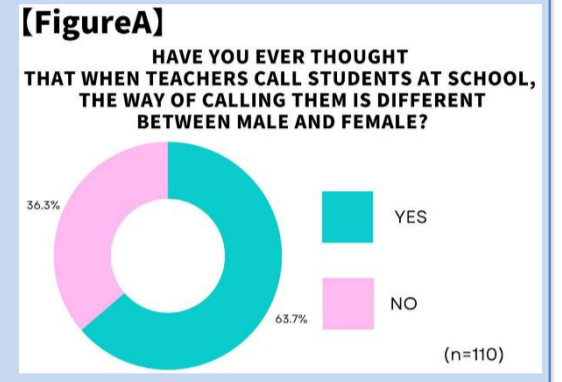
Nishogakusha Kashiwa senior high school. Students are aware of these gender-based differences.

First-year students at Nishogakusha were asked "Have you ever thought that when teachers call students at school, the way of calling them is different between male and female?"

About 64% of students answered Yes to the question (FigureA). Being aware of

differences based on gender can impact how individuals feel they are valued by society.

While seemingly small, such distinctions reinforce gender stereotypes in schools, which can be seen as representative of wider society. Shinya Teramachi, who researches education and gender at Miyazaki Municipal University, believes that gender differentiation should be reduced



in public education settings such as schools, because it can negatively influence students' lives. For instance, it may make you think that you can't or must do something because you are a male or a female.

Hopefully, many people will discuss the efficacy of gender distinction in schools – if they realize the negative impact such distinction has on individuals, perhaps we can find a new way to engage with each other in an equitable way. This gives the chance for society to become more gender equal.

By Mauna Kurosawa  
Yuki Kawaguchi

## Unlocking the Cages of Discrimination



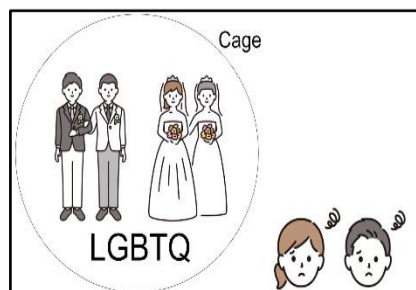
Despite living in the 21st Century, why are there still many instances of discrimination? Even though the world is more connected than ever, wide-spread discrimination based on appearance, personal preference and race is still prevalent.

Recently, the Disney movie The Little Mermaid was made into a live-action movie. In the animated version, Ariel is depicted as a mermaid with white skin, but in the live-action version of The Little Mermaid, actress Halle Bailey, who has dark skin, was chosen to play Ariel. Her appearance was completely different from her original appearance, sparking many people to speculate that her casting was based on a conscious effort to reduce discrimination against black people. This effort to increase diversity was

seen as positive discrimination by some critics, however it can also be argued that it is important to provide platforms for those who have been marginalized in society.

People can be naturally categorized based on their race, appearance, or preferences (for example, white, black and LGBTQ). As a result, people may become overly focused on things that reinforce their identities, promoting discrimination against those who have different identities.

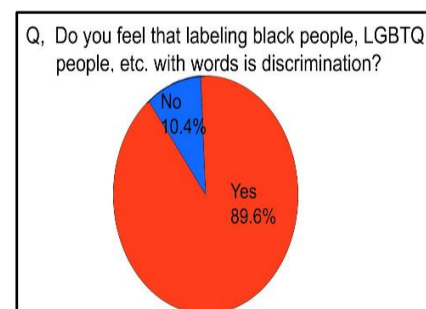
Focusing on aspects related to differences in appearance or preferences can be an issue, because on the inside the majority of people are the same. Now, more than ever, people should not create cages of discrimination that they unconsciously trap other people in. There are SDGs specifically designed to reduce discrimination



against others based on their identities.

However, in Japan there is low awareness of identity-discrimination. Therefore, a survey was conducted to find out the level of awareness the students of Nishogakusha Kashiwa have about discrimination.

The survey contained the following questions:



The survey respondents suggested they have few opportunities to experience and meet people from differing backgrounds.

As a result, the idea of "spread yourself" was suggested by the researchers. "Spread yourself" is the idea of being proactive in meeting and experiencing people with different backgrounds and identities, and then applying newly acquired perspectives to the world in order to reduce the impact cages of

discrimination create among people. Also, Nishogakusha serves as a representation of wider-Japanese society – while there are some opportunities to meet people from different backgrounds (for example, study-abroad programs) the majority of students cannot take part in these efforts. Therefore, we should also look to create more opportunities to "spread ourselves" and engage with people who are different from us.

The world needs to develop and become more accepting; the minority should not have to change to please the majority. The quicker this is realized the better: as time moves on, newer and different ways to discriminate continue to proliferate - without a great deal of effort, discrimination may never end. By leaving behind the cages of discrimination, we can move into a better future where nobody is left behind.

By Minori Nakazima  
Momoka Maruyama  
Yuzune Nishitani

# ♥ Saving Sleepy Students

Have you ever fallen asleep in class? Perhaps it was because of a lack of sleep? Maybe you were bored in class? There are many reasons why people sleep in class or at work; the most common reason is because they are tired.

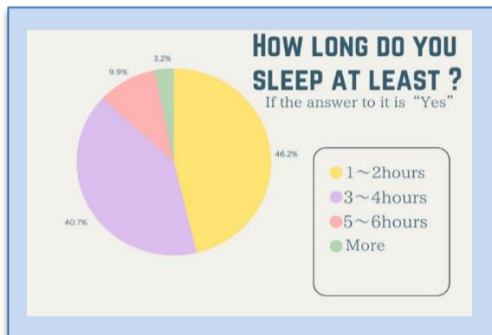
But why do people sleep? All animals that have a brain sleep, as it is necessary to recover from the tiredness of the body and the brain. Sleep also helps to make memories and clear one's mind. Furthermore, it is now widely known that even animals without brains like jellyfish and mollusks also sleep. It shows that sleep is not dependent on having a brain, and that sleep is necessary for all animals.

However, how much sleep is necessary to function well in daily life? A survey was conducted at Nishogakusha High School asking students whether they feel sleepy in class, and about their sleeping habits at night.

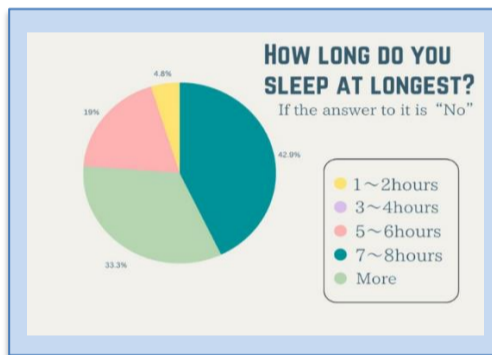
82% of the respondents stated they are sleepy during the classes.

Most of these students reported they sleep a minimum of 3-4 hours each night (figure A). Conversely, 18% of the respondents said they were not sleepy during classes. Interestingly, they reported they sleep a maximum 7-8 hours and more each night (figure B).

**FigureA**



**FigureB**



This raises the question: what is the optimal amount of sleep required to avoid feeling lethargic during the daytime? It is believed that sleeping between 6 and 7 hours each night reduces the risk of mortality in both men and women (figure C).

Yet, the exact number of sleep hours required varies from person to person - it is difficult to give an exact number that is beneficial for everyone. Therefore, the quality of sleep is perhaps more important than the amount of it.

**FigureC**



In order to get a good quality of sleep, there are various things that can be done like reducing the use of blue light, having a regular

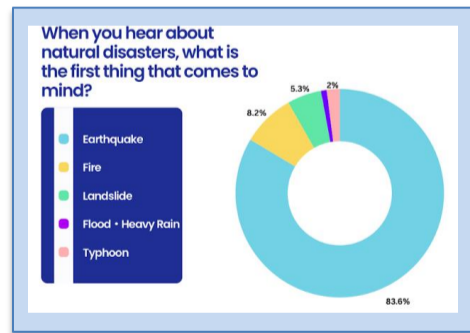
routine, or not eating before going to bed. One of the most important things to aid with sleep quality is maintaining a good room and body temperature. Contrary to popular belief, it is in fact a good idea to have an air conditioner on to regulate the room temperature. Doctors believe a temperature between 15 and 22 degrees Celsius is best for promoting good sleep. Furthermore, taking a 10 to 20-minute bath at around 38-40 degrees Celsius will help to simulate our parasympathetic nerves, leading to a better quality of sleep.

If you feel sleepy during the day, why not try and change your actions before going to bed, along with controlling your sleeping environment's climate? It may have a huge impact on your daily life!

By Hana Saito  
Mako Harada

# 🔥 Raising Awareness of Natural Disasters

When you hear about natural disasters, what is the first thing that comes to mind? A team of researchers at Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School asked over 100 students this very question. The results in Figure 1 show that the respondents were more concerned with earthquakes and fire.



**(Figure1)**

Surprisingly, the respondents were less interested in typhoons and floods – a problem given the area where the school is situated.

Nishogakusha Kashiwa Highschool is located near a large body of water, Lake Teganuma. There are no embankments around Teganuma which is connected to many other rivers, so it is easy for water to flow into residential areas in the event of rain deluge. As a matter of

fact, in 2023 a large part of the park around Teganuma was flooded because of the heavy rain (Chiba Nippou Online 06/21/23).

Even though there was substantial damage, students in Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School are not concerned by destruction caused by heavy rain. In a country that often experiences damage and destruction caused by rain and flooding, the lack of concern demonstrated in the survey was alarming. This resulted in the researchers making an original hazard map (figure2). The map covers an area 5.0m around Teganuma.

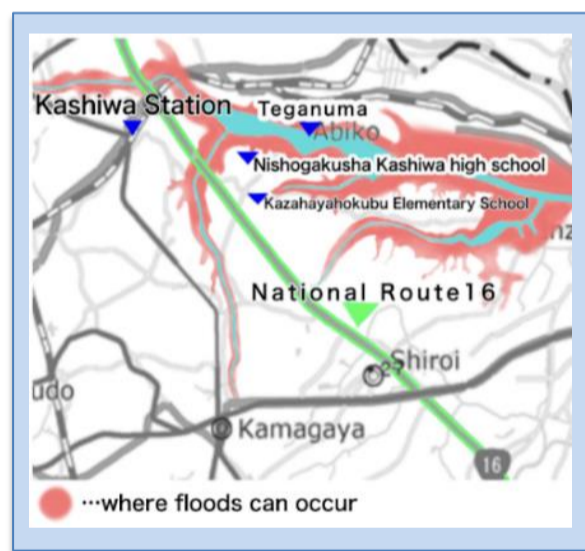
It was found that a depth between 0.5m to 3.0m of excess water can be expected in areas surrounding Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School. An additional safety measure ensures that in the event of the school becoming flooded, students and staff are expected to evacuate to a nearby elementary school in order to be safe.

Furthermore, the many of the roads used to connect the school with central Kashiwa, including National Route 16, may also be submerged in the event of heavy

rainfall. In such an event, students can expect to experience huge delays returning home, possibly even having to stay at the school until the floods subside. Therefore, it is important be familiar with hazard maps that depict evacuation shelters and dangerous areas, to check SNS and the news to be informed of developments and to prepare emergency supplies.

Because interest amongst the respondents was low, it is important to highlight other safety measures provided by the Kashiwa Disaster Prevention and Safety Division. Elderly people living in their houses prone to flooding, are expected to cooperate local people by going to an evacuation center.

Nishogakusha High School is one of local evacuation shelters. The school said it has necessary items prepared to support residents in the event of disasters, such as partition plates to protect their privacy, water, food, and three generators with floodlights. However, it does not have sanitary products or milk.



**(Figure2)**

Knowing what provisions are available in evacuation shelters is vital for people to know exactly what they should stockpile. The research shows the importance of being aware of the risks that can occur in the area you live, work, or study. Knowing the risks, and the services available to provide support, can save lives in the events of natural disasters.

By Miwa Tanaka / Yu Abe  
Himeka Ito



# Sinking Marine Debris

Recently, increased pollution and the continuing effects of global warming have caused a number of environmental problems. Among them, one important issue is marine debris, or more simply put, trash in the sea. Humanity relies on the sea as a vital source of food, and up to 80% of all life on earth can be found under the sea's surface. However, human-created waste, the most harmful of which is plastic, has become more prominent in the sea. Marine debris undoubtedly causes environmental problems.

However, is it only areas near to the sea that contribute to these problems? How does so much waste find itself in the sea? It is possible that even places far from the ocean contribute to the proliferation of sea debris, through river pollution.

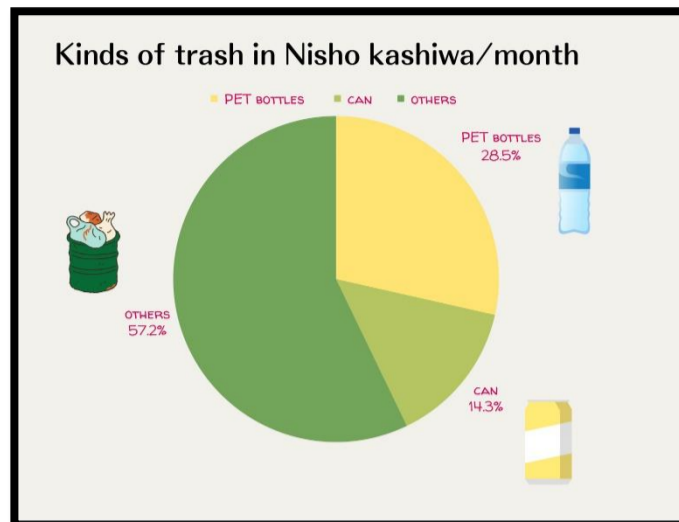
To research this issue, students decided to investigate how trash management and water treatment is carried out in Kashiwa City, where Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School is located.

First, students interviewed the

River Drainage Division of the Civil Engineering Department of Kashiwa City Hall. According to the interview, there are water gates between the river and the sea, where most of the trash is collected, so trash rarely flows from the river to the sea. If this is the case, where does the trash come from?

In Kashiwa City, businesses that emit a large amount of trash have the responsibility to summarize the type and amount of trash discharged and submit the information to the city.

Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School is an example of a large organisation that is required to provide such details to the local government. This led students to contact the company responsible for the trash and waste management of Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School. Questions were asked about how trash generated by Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School is handled. It was found that Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School emits a sizable amount of trash, a large



proportion of which being burnable trash, pet bottles, and cans. Also, a monthly average 700~800 kg of trash is generated, of which 200kg are plastic bottles and 100 kg are cans. Moreover, at Nishogakusha Kashiwa High School, water bottles are often thrown away with water in them, making it difficult to recycle effectively.

Therefore, it is vital to reduce the amount of trash that contributes to sea debris by correctly separating recycling resources. We must reduce our dependence on one-use plastics,

reuse items as much as possible before discarding them, and adequately prepare recyclable materials so they can be repurposed easily.

By doing such a thing at home or school, people can reduce the

trash that is produced in daily life. If more and more people do such things, trash around the world will decrease leading to a reduction of sea debris.

By Naoya Otomo  
Tsubaki Akimoto  
Rumiko Ichimura  
Yusuke Koshiishi  
Kota Sato

## ⚡ Harnessing “Wasted” Energy

Modern society faces a possible energy crisis, one of the most challenging aspects being the decreasing availability of oil. Some scientists predict oil reserves could run out in as little as 54 years, leading to an increase in development and use of renewable energy resources such as solar or wind power.

The amount of resource varied in the world



Data from JAEA

One area of renewable energy that has a great deal of potential is the use of “waste” energy – for example, excess heat or kinetic energy generated by movement.

There are many things we use in daily life that require electricity, and in Japan, a country that is prone to many natural disasters, flashlights are incredibly important. However, regular flashlights require batteries which are not environmentally friendly, and can also be unreliable – a problem when needed in the event of an emergency.

Therefore, a light that does not require batteries was designed by students at Nishogakusha High School. It uses a light emitting diode (LED) and is powered by energy generated by body movement. The light makes use of “marble clanging power generation.” Marbles are placed in a tube which has piezoelectric speakers glued to the bottom. As you move, the marbles bounce against the piezoelectric speakers in the tube, generating electricity which in turn powers the LED.

Furthermore, the students discovered that more excess energy was created with their feet when walking or running so it was decided

that the light should be easily attachable to shoes. The light uses five marbles, one piezoelectric speaker, one tube, one 2-volt LED and a thick rubber band. As shown in the picture, people using the light can be easily seen at night with the added benefit of the noise generated by the marbles providing another easy way to bring attention to the wearer. The light is friendly to the environment as it does not require batteries. This also makes it ideal for use in natural disasters as it requires no additional resources.



Photo by Vijfwinkel Iori Amilia



Created by Vijfwinkel Iori Amilia

Making the non-battery LED will not solve the energy crisis, but it can help by making people think about alternative methods of energy production. It shows there is potential to harness the power of “wasted” energy and can act as a step towards a more sustainable society.

By Vijfwinkel Iori Amilia  
Meiko Takekawa  
Yuta Kanabe

# Understanding Rules, Understanding Cultures

How much do you know about schools in foreign countries? If you imagine something like the high schools you see in a movie or TV drama, you might be wrong. A survey conducted by Nishogakusha students researched the differences between schools in Japan and foreign countries. Firstly, participants were asked which topics they were most interested in. The highest number of votes went to “Subjects taught” and “school rules”. Then, former students of Scottish, Welsh, English, American, and Lebanese schools, were asked questions about these topics.

One rule that is similar is related to the wearing of designated socks. However, the outcome for breaking the rule is different. In England, if students wear the wrong socks to school, they need to go home again and change to the correct socks.

Nishogakusha also expects students to wear designated socks, but students who break the rule do not need to go home. Why are the outcomes so different? It likely stems from different cultural values; in the UK, schools tend to set the rules of dress codes very strictly as it creates a sense of equality and

improves modesty, which can lead to a reduction in bullying.

Conversely, smart-phone policies are broadly more similar. Most schools around the world allow smart phones to be brought to school but prohibits their use in class. Previously, many US schools didn’t allow students to bring smart phones, because it was a distraction from studies. Yet, due to the need to call police with smart phones in case of emergency, schools reviewed the policy and now smart phones are generally allowed at school, leading to lowered crime rates in schools, as students can quickly report crimes if necessary.

In terms of subjects taught, Nishogakusha has a unique subject called “Rongo”, to learn valuable teachings from The Analects of Confucius. On the other hand, some foreign schools teach religious studies. This difference comes from the societal importance of religion. It is also thought that religious studies can expand people’s perspectives of life. The ideals of various religions can make for an education that brings great advances to children’s minds whilst they are still sensitive to learning from such issues.

Other differences can be found



## No phones allowed at school

when compared to Lebanese schools, which have 20 minutes of “snack time” between the 2nd and the 3rd periods and lunch is eaten after the 4th period. There is also a repetition system of education from year 3, leading to a wider age range of students in one grade.

School rules are different around the world, and these rules are used to help develop their students into talented and respectful people. Good quality education is crucial for each country’s development. Various educational approaches are used in each country, which inform and reflect each culture and their respective values. As a result of globalization, more people from different cultural backgrounds will interact.



Confucius : The father of Rongo

By knowing about the similarities and differences of educational backgrounds, culture and values, people can avoid conflict while deepening each other’s understanding.

By Momoko Ogasawara

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