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WANG LI-CHING, TSENG YU-HSIEN, CHO KENG-YU,
WU CHENG-TING, AND LIN YI-CHIA

The Shadow Report for the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)” with Topics on Gender Diversity Education, Sex Education, and Female Participation in Exercise and Sports

Abstract: This report primarily responds to the content of the Articles 10 and 12 regarding gender equity education in the governmental report made by the Taiwanese government in 2014 for CEDAW. In order to observe the obstacles and challenges facing gender equity education in our nation today, this report focuses on three aspects: gender diversity education, sex education, and female participation in exercise and sports. In each topic, the current situation and difficulties are discussed first, followed by concrete recommendations.

Wang Li-Ching is an associate professor in the Department of Education at National Pingtung University. Tseng Yu-Hsien is an assistant professor in the Department of Athletics at National Taiwan University. Cho Keng-Yu is a counselor at Kaohsiung Municipal Jhong-Jheng Industrial High School. Wu Cheng-Ting is a counselor at Taipei Municipal Wanhua Junior High School. Lin Yi-Chia works at the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association (TGEEA). In addition, Wang Li-Ching is now the chairperson, and Tseng Yu-Hsien, Cho Keng-Yu, and Wu Cheng-Ting are board members of the TGEEA.

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Prologue

Introduction of the Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association

The Taiwan Gender Equity Education Association (TGEEA) (hereinafter, referred to as “the Association”), established in November 2002, is a nationwide nonprofit organization. Its members consist of not only school teachers, scholars, experts, college and graduate students, but also social workers, psychologists, artists, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers. For many years, we have endeavored to connect social groups, cultivate qualified teachers, expand educational resources, and supervise practice related to governmental policies. The Association strives to make gender equity education effective by undertaking actions to sponsor speeches and seminars, make publications and exhibitions, hold press conferences and public hearings, and so on.

Scope and Summary of the Report

This report primarily responds to the content of Articles 10 and 12 regarding gender equity education in the governmental report made by the Taiwanese government in 2014 for the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In order to observe and recommend about the obstacles and challenges facing gender equity education in our nation today, this report focuses on three aspects: gender diversity education, sex education, and the stimulus to female participation in exercise and sports.

From the perspective of the Association, though Article 10 in the governmental report partially proposes some concrete approaches and effect on “realizing equality in educational opportunities,” “encouraging women to participate in the professions of education and research,” and “protecting women’s rights of education,” it rarely addresses the approaches in education on how to respect gender diversity and how to eliminate discrimination and prejudice against it, which technically avoids factual prejudice against and fear of homosexuality as well as the pressures and discrimination that burden many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex (LGBTI) students on campus. In fact, the most challenging and least realized mission in the gender equity education of our nation is to eliminate discrimination and bias against LGBTI.

As for sex education, the part in Article 12 of the governmental report: “advancing sexual health for youth,” refers to some related measures in sex education, which on the other hand, it singles out the bottleneck and impediment of the practice and implementation of the sex education of our nation. Today, the practice of sex education in schools, by and large, still lingers at the level of merely teaching anatomical and biological knowledge of the body. Some of the school workers even instill the monolithic view and value of “the supremacy of virginity,” or use extremely negative and coercive teaching materials in order to terminate the

curiosity and exploration of intimacy by teenagers. The above practices not only fail to respond to the needs of adolescents but also negatively affect health of the adolescent mind and body.

As for female participation in exercise and sports at schools, Article 10 of the governmental report only sketches the initiatives to motivate women to undertake exercise and sports activities. Yet, these descriptions delineate only the ordinary scenarios of exercise and sports developed by the schools for physical education without proposing any concrete measures or plans on the propagation of female participation in exercise and sport. In fact, the document in this part of the governmental report exemplifies the lack of strategies from related governmental agencies in encouraging females to undertake exercise and sports. Furthermore, it indicates a dearth of attention to realizing and mainstreaming the gender policy into the field of physical education.

Due to the aforementioned circumstances, the Association presents this shadow report based on current observations, and provides concrete recommendations to the related work of development by the national government on three aspects: gender diversity education, sex education, and stimulus to female participation in exercise and sports.

Gender Diversity Education

The Shadow Report on Article 10 of CEDAW

In the governmental report on CEDAW, Article 10, it is written that:

To expand the dimension of gender equity on campus, the curricula of gender equity education shall include gender diversity education to teach students to recognize and respect the differences in gender orientation or gender identity, and assure those with differences to have equal rights to receive education. (Section 10.8)

In Section 10.50, it also states that:

The outline of the coursework on “Health and Nursing” at senior high school has the core potential to “enhance sexual health” and incorporates education on sexual orientation. The coursework shall be a requirement for both male and female students.

However, looking closely at the development of diversity education in our nation and the predicaments that LGBTI students encounter, these statements are exaggeratedly optimistic.

The Gender Equity Education Act of Taiwan has stated that differences in sexual orientation cannot be discriminated against, and the educational rights of students with different sexual orientations are equally protected (Articles 12–14). In the Enforcement Rules for the Gender Equity Education Act, it is explicitly stated that gender diversity education shall be included in gender equity education, and

gender orientation shall be included at all school levels. However, only words of the law will not make reality. This report lists the articles on human rights in the law that are relevant to gender diversity education. The present situations facing lesbian students as well as the current conditions and predicaments of gender diversity education in Taiwan are delineated. Concrete recommendations for gender diversity education of Taiwan are made.

Laws and Regulations

The rights of those with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities in recent years have been officially introduced into the United Nations Human Rights Conventions. The Committee of the Forty-Seventh Session of CEDAW issued General Recommendation No. 28 in 2010, which placed sexual orientation and gender identity within the range requiring elimination of discrimination:

Intersectionality is a basic concept for understanding the scope of the general obligations of States parties contained in article 2. The discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. States parties must legally recognize such intersecting forms of discrimination and their compounded negative impact on the women concerned and prohibit them. They also need to adopt and pursue policies and programmes designed to eliminate such occurrences.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 2, Item 2, states:

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Recommendations No. 20, the “other status” in this statement includes sexual orientation and gender identity. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comments No. 3 and No. 13, the principles forbidding discrimination are expressly listed, protecting children age eighteen and under from being discriminated against due to sexual orientation, external appearance, and behavior.

In 2012, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a manual titled *Born Free And Equal*, which elaborated diverse dimensions of human rights for LGBTI people. The manual points out that discrimination, exclusion, and stigmatization in the field of education grievously injure the rights of LGBTI students to receive education as well as their life on campus. In the face of this kind of prejudice and intimidation, the curricula and educational practices of the schools and related institutions should even more proactively incorporate the

concepts of nondiscrimination and diversity. Given that one of the nation's obligations is to protect the rights of everyone without discrimination of any form or due to anyone's status and to provide that everyone should receive equal rights in education, it only makes sense for the nation to integrate complete and comprehensive measures to promote awakening awareness and eliminate discrimination against differences in sexual orientation and gender identity, which thereby thoroughly realizes the spirits of antidiscrimination mentioned by CEDAW and ICESCR.

The Predicaments of Lesbian Students

In April 2012, the Friendly Taiwan Alliance, an alliance of some dozen LGBTI organizations and supporters, made public the preliminary results of its survey, "Questionnaire on the Conditions of Pressures Facing Taiwan LGBTI People" (consisting of 2,785 respondents, among whom 35 percent identified themselves as lesbians). Among the respondents, 58 percent indicated in the survey that they had been harmed by others; the incidence experienced was 59 percent in junior high schools, 43 percent in senior high schools, and even 36 percent in primary schools. Moreover, the number of those who, by reason of their LGBTI identity, have engaged in self-harming or suicidal behavior is alarming. As much as 29 percent of total respondents have had suicidal thoughts; 18 percent of them have attempted suicide. Self-harming behavior occurred mostly during junior high school (59 percent), in senior high school (53 percent), and in primary school (15 percent). These high percentages demonstrate that LGBTI adolescents generally lack the resources for self-identification. When they suffer from the malevolence of the environment, they feel powerless to cope with it by themselves. Bullying caused by gender nonconformity can often be seen on campus in the atmosphere of monolithic heterosexuality and negativity toward lesbians/gays.

Though lesbian students on campus are reserved and retiring in general, they feel uncomfortable and unfit when the schools require that they wear skirts as part of the regulation uniform. From 2008 through 2013, the TGEEA received repeated telephone calls from lesbian students complaining that the schools had forced them to wear uniform skirts, or they would be charged for violating school regulations. For this we held a press conference together with national legislators in October 2008. However, again in 2012, some schools demanded that female students present proof certified by psychiatrists in order for them to obtain permission to wear trousers to school. It was not until November 2013 that the Ministry of Education started to tackle this problem.

Moreover, it has often happened that, once an intimate relationship between lesbian students was discovered by the school, students were punished. Following the case in 1994 when two senior high school girl students committed suicide together because their relationship could not be socially recognized, history repeated itself again in 2010 when two girl students made a pact to commit suicide in Pingtung. They wrote in their last testament: "We both are truly in love, which receives no

acceptance from our families. The only choice for us is to end our lives with the first and last life partner!” The neglect and unfriendliness of schools weigh down LGBTI students with heavy pressures. Nonacceptance and discrimination from the society makes adolescents feel they have no way out. If either school or societal education can pay more attention to the predicament facing LGBTI students with care and understanding, and if they can vigorously put antidiscrimination into practice, then similar tragedies can be prevented from happening again.

The Current Situation and Difficulties of Gender Diversity Education in Taiwan

According to the Gender Equity Education Act, Article 14, Item 1:

The school shall not discriminate against students on the basis of their gender, gender temperaments, gender identity, or sexual orientation in its instruction, activities, assessments, rewards and penalties, benefits, or services.

And Article 14, Item 2:

The school shall proactively provide assistance to students who are disadvantaged due to their gender, gender temperaments, gender identity, or sexual orientation with the aim of improving their circumstances.

No matter what biological sex, gender characteristics, gender identity, or gender orientation school members have, schools are obligated to provide and support a secured environment with respect, through teaching curricula and learning activities to encourage diversity and recognize difference. Sexual orientation, as a human right, has been incorporated as one of the major concepts within gender equity education in the curricula for nine-year compulsory education (primary and junior high schools) as of 2008 and that of senior high school education later. With the effects of the Gender Equity Education Act and its educational policies, gender equity education should incorporate the issues of diversity in sexual orientation and gender temperaments. Sex education should address the diversity in sexual orientation. School members should be united in their efforts to establish and participate in a school culture and atmosphere that is friendly to gender issues.

However, in recent years, conservative religious groups (certain right-wing Christian religions) have now and again demonstrated their opposition to the implementation of gender diversity education at school. Not only are LGBTI school clubs obstructed from the establishment, but also the implementation of the latest standards of curricula of 2008 for gender equity education was postponed. The teacher manuals for the materials and resources of gender equity education published by the Ministry of Education were defiled and even censured by the committee members of the Control Yuan of the central government. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has recruited some board members who have notoriously been known as openly homophobic and opposed LGBTI education to the highest national level of the Gender Equity Education Committee.

The Establishment of LGBTI School Clubs Obstructed

On February 6, 2010, in accordance with the attached instructions of the resolution on LGBTI policy by the Taipei City Council, the Bureau of Education in Taipei City issued an official document to local junior and senior high schools, stating that:

It is requested that all schools fortify their understanding and supervision of social club activities to prevent social clubs from becoming undercover schemes for seducing and inducing students to inappropriately undertake homosexual activities. This request is for the benefit of maintaining healthy and proper sexual behavioral development for students.

This move triggered ripples of strong criticism and opposition. On March 2, 2010, many civic organizations (including the TGEEA) held a press conference to protest this action of the Taipei City government and the Taipei City Council that in effect isolated LGBTI youth and led the way to discrimination, in violation of the law.

Sexual orientation cannot be easily changed by seduction/induction. Confusion about sexual orientation is not a matter of age. This official document in fact not only demonstrated that the educational authorities had been ineffective in establishing a friendly environment for gender equity but also implicitly implicated discrimination and homophobia behind this incident. The establishment of lesbian/gay student clubs has not merely been obstructed at the level of middle schools; certain religious universities in our country have refused to approve the establishment of lesbian/gay student social clubs as well (e.g., Fu Jen Catholic University).

A structure with discrimination restrains the opportunities and channels for LGBTI youth to seek resources. The resources and opportunities for LGBTI friendship are very limited to begin with; thereafter, how much more of the living space for LGBTI adolescents will be suppressed or eliminated due to this official letter?

Gender Diversity Education Halted by Conservative Religious Groups

The latest revision of curriculum standards for gender equity education of 2008 incorporated sexual orientation into the conceptual framework of education. However, it triggered many contentious debates on whether or not to apply gender diversity education at the level of elementary and middle schools from 2011 to 2013. The conservative religious groups as an opposing force contended that it was inappropriate to include in the curricula of elementary and middle schools materials that still trigger vehement debates in our society. They argued that students should not be instructed to approve of or identify themselves with homosexuality. This antagonistic group fabricated false information and distorted the teacher manuals of the materials and resources for gender equity education. They initiated and spread a drive for collective signatures on the Internet to support their petition to oppose gender diversity education.

The Ministry of Education held eight public hearings on this issue in order to encompass a broad range of views and opinions in the society. Members of those opposing groups all started their statements with “We very much respect gays and lesbians . . .” yet followed by sentences that equated homosexuality with terms such as “sexual debauchery,” “AIDS,” “sexually transmitted diseases,” and “the destroyer of the nation and terminator of the blood line.” Those who supported gender diversity education pointed out the ridiculousness of the logic in such arguments from the opposing groups: “gender diversity education = sex education = sexual liberation = infection with AIDS = destroyer of the nation and terminator of the blood line,” in which attacking and slandering the characters of LGBTI people was also an evident violation to the human rights of LGBTI people.

It is the core value of gender equity education to learn and have understanding and respect for differences in biological sex, gender temperaments, gender identity, and sexual orientation. To incorporate gender diversity education into school education is to enable the observation of differences and understanding of diversity, which aims to achieve the goal of “respecting diversity in gender differences” of the Gender Equity Education Act. This educational intent ultimately echoes the universal value of human rights.

The newly revised curriculum standards for gender equity education were postponed for eight months by the Ministry of Education and the Legislative Yuan (it should have been implemented in August 2011, but was instead delayed to April 2012), which caused a postponement in realizing gender diversity education, sex education, and relationship education in the domains of the elementary and middle schools. The revised versions of the teacher manuals of the materials and resources for gender equity education, published by the Ministry of Education, were not delivered to schools until March 2013, with the deletion of certain sections concerning LGBTI issues. The teaching materials and resources allocated to gender diversity education for primary and middle schools by the Ministry of Education remain extremely deficient.

In Taiwan, it seems that prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are often regarded as a matter of different opinion instead of a human rights issue. The most shocking incidence is that the Ministry of Education, in its 2014 Gender Equity Education Committee, recruited some board members who have notoriously been known as openly homophobic and have opposed LGBT-friendly education at schools. This most unfortunate incidence not only is a huge setback regarding Taiwan’s Gender Education Act but also undermines the implementation of CEDAW. These board members not only challenged the definition of gender (i.e., gender only means men and women) but also disregarded the CEDAW principles and standards. It is almost impossible to propose any substantial improvement in the status of LGBTI students, given that quite a few youngsters have been harmed based on their gender identity and sexual orientation and a few of them have attempted suicide each year. Many civil organizations protested the above wrongful appointments, but the Ministry of Education refused to make any

change. They contended that those people were just expressing opinions rather than opposing LGBTI and gender diversity education.

In the storm of debates over gender diversity education, we firmly rooted our position that gender equity education should never leave out gender diversity education and that the nation must thoroughly carry out its duty to ensure the right to receive education for all students as well as to effectively strive to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Teacher Manuals of Materials and Resources for Gender Equity Education Censured by the Control Yuan

In the 2013 international review of Taiwan's compliance with the two human right covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the international panel of experts in their concluding opinions exhorted the Ministry of Education to develop suitable teaching materials as part of the utmost efforts to eliminate prejudices against or even homophobia toward those with different gender identities (Points no. 28 and 29).

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to develop educational materials with diversity in sexual orientation and to provide teachers with relevant teaching resources. However, the three teacher manuals that the Ministry of Education had commissioned professors of national universities to compile for gender equity education from 2006 to 2009 were censured to be corrected by the committee members of the Control Yuan in November 2013.

The official reprimand mistakenly documented these teacher manuals of resources as the learning materials for students. Moreover, the reprimand questioned the content of gender diversity education from the standpoints of the conservative religious groups. Although the authors of the manuals repeatedly clarified the mistaken readings and understandings, and civil organizations reiterated the necessity for the diversity of education, the Control Yuan members did not give free rein to these arguments.

Due to the fact that the Control Yuan holds independent powers of impeachment and censure over all administrative institutes and agencies of the nation, this move from the Control Yuan members is very likely to intimidate and prevent all of the government agencies from voicing opinions, or cause them to avoid tackling such matters as needed. The censure has cast a very unfavorable shadow on promotion of the Gender Equity Education of our nation, and even affects the further advancement of the gender policy to be mainstreamed.

Concrete Recommendations on Gender Diversity Education

To conclude the observations and analyses above, we present seven recommendations for gender diversity education:

1. The Ministry of Education should take the lead in developing and implementing effective information and initiatives to raise awareness of equal rights for everyone regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.
2. The Ministry of Education should ensure the implementation of the Gender Equity Education Act by requiring schools to undertake targeted measures for the protection and promotion of the rights of students who are marginalized and disadvantaged because of their gender identities.
3. Research and develop teaching materials for gender diversity education that are appropriate for all levels of schools.
4. Review textbooks for heterosexist prejudice and incorporate diversity into gender identity and related human rights issues: If the curricula present only heterosexism as the single norm of gender relationship, then it will be very difficult to introduce the diversity and dynamics of gender identity into the structure of knowledge for students.
5. Include in gender equity education topics of sexual orientation, gender identity, and antidiscrimination. The current curricula neither allow students to correctly or fairly recognize diversity in the development of human emotions and relationships nor help them establish the ability to respect differences. Very few students have had opportunities in curricula and teaching to unmistakably acknowledge their own feelings and positively identify their sexual orientation.
6. Incorporate subjects of antihomophobia and antiheterosexism into teacher training and qualification programs, to help teachers bring the topics of cultural diversity, antidiscrimination, and social justice into class discussions.
7. Unite school staff and faculty in the establishment of a gender-friendly culture and atmosphere, to respect the rights permitted in education and campus safety for students with nontraditional gender characteristics and to encourage the formation of school clubs that are friendly to lesbians, gays, and students of other identities.

Sex Education

The Shadow Report on Article 12 of CEDAW

In the governmental report on CEDAW Article 12, the report regarding “enhancing adolescent sexual health” (Section 12.42) merely links sex education with the topics of reproductive health and premarital pregnancy. Yet, the important concepts with which sex education should be endowed, including the awareness of gender equity, sex education without reproductive orientation, and sex education that assists students in establishing sexual autonomy, are omitted in the governmental report.

Courses on sex education in Taiwan, though involving some social and cultural aspects of sex, still emphasize the anatomical knowledge of sex, the topic of pregnancy prevention, the control and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, and so on. The current focus of sex education overemphasizes the anatomical

differences between men and women so that abstinence is applied as a primary precept of sex education, ignoring the power relations of gender and centering on heterosexuality. The stereotypical concepts of “preservation of virginity” and “negligence of sexual orientation differences” are devoid of gender sensitivity and the autonomy of sex for adolescent girls and distanced from the reality of their lives.

The Current Situation and Difficulties Facing Sex Education in Taiwan

In accordance with the Enforcement Rules for the Gender Equity Education Act of our country, the content of gender equity education shall encompass three aspects: sex education, relationship education, and gender diversity education. However, the government has taken only a surface role in dissemination. A careful examination of current practices at the elementary and middle schools of Taiwan, reveals that the multifold subjects of sex education are still neglected.

The present situation is discussed below in four points:

1. Based on physiological differences between sexes, educational policy and orthodox curricula emphasize hygienic teaching, promulgate the avoidance of pregnancy and prevention of disease, and dismiss the power relations of gender.

At present, the majority of sex education for teenage girls focuses on courses such as “Health and Physical Education” in junior high schools and “Health and Nursing” in senior high schools. However, examining these courses in detail, the health education course in junior high schools clearly adopts opposing perspectives, such as “healthy versus unhealthy” and “safe versus unsafe,” to illustrate its ideology of sex education. For example, the textbook approved by the Ministry of Education, *Health and Physical Education* (Kang Hsuan edition), demonstrates that sex education emphasizes physiological differences between the sexes but ignores commonalities in the sexual development of the sexes. The course “Health and Nursing” at senior high schools revolves around discussions of pregnancy and avoidance of pregnancy and ignores the real life of teenage girls along with the diversity of needs on the topic of sex. On the topic of relationships and interactions, it only addresses the importance of mutual respect, boundaries of the body, behavioral decorum without violation, and so on, with no profound discussion of the power relations of gender issues.

2. Religious groups have entered campuses to promote chastity education,

Conservative religious groups promote the notion of preserving virginity, as illustrated by the saying: “True love is worth waiting for.” The propagation of this concept is seen not only in textbooks but also is widely dispersed in primary and high schools by providing free teaching resources and materials in series of editions that systematically and vigorously propose chastity based on abstinence education.

For example, the Rainbow Family Life Education Association employs its storytelling volunteers, “Rainbow Mamas,” to promote its form of sex education in primary schools, which is packaged as “life education,” focusing on biological differences and heterosexuality. The Champions Education Association also promotes similar classes in junior high schools. These “True Love” educational courses all compel students, by semicoercive means and group pressure, to sign chastity pledges in class, declaring that they will refuse to engage in sexual behavior before marriage.

The monolithic educational approach that merely values virginity neglects the needs and situations facing students due to the complexity and complication involved with factors of gender/class/ethnicity at the adolescent stage. The avoidance of talking about safe sexual behavior results in inaccurate and insufficient contraceptive knowledge. On the campuses of elementary and middle schools in Taiwan, cases of unexpected pregnancy among young girls continue to appear unabatedly. Virginity education may well create a sense of guilt and social pressure for pregnant female students, which hinders them from effectively seeking resources to resolve their problems, and thus indirectly harms the health of young girls. At the same time, school staff and faculty may also be influenced by these moral admonitions to suppress sensuality. When they encounter young pregnant girls on campus, the strategy they adopt to tackle the problem may not only damage the self-esteem of the students, but often deprives students of the right to receive education (e.g., advising the pregnant student to withdraw from school).

3. The courses center on heterosexual males and neglect adolescent girls as an active subject as well, let alone the needs of lesbian girls.

School courses primarily presume heterosexuality. The textbooks give nary a word on lesbians, but are biased toward the discussion of male physiology and sexual desires (such as male masturbation and wet dreams). This bias not only ignores exploration of the female adolescent body and sensuality but also dismisses the intimacy of alternative sexual orientations. In addition, coercive teaching on the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases usually portrays women as the victims and reinforces dogmatic discipline of the female body. The curricula and textbooks that take women as the subject often illustrate knowledge about pregnancy and delivery so that female bodies are implicitly positioned as instruments of procreation for future generations or for carrying on the family name. This assumption hardly serves to establish autonomy for adolescent girls.

At the level of social education, the Ministry of Education set 2013 as the Year of Family Education in Taiwan and implemented an educational content that centered on heterosexual families throughout all school levels. The aim of this program is to demonstrate family ideology and to embrace premarital education only in regard to heterosexuality. Under this education

policy, the message received by adolescent girls dwells on the traditional role of procreation for future generations (fertility), which is no help in helping adolescent girls to positively recognize and develop a perspective of family with diverse values.

4. The materials for positive sex education are criticized by religious groups.

The educational environment of Taiwan has long sought righteous perspectives on sex education that would include positive affirmations of self-identity of gender, the establishment of self-esteem and self-confidence, the exploration of values of all kinds, and the learning of negotiation, mutual respect and consensus in intimacy, and so on. When private organizations (e.g., the Association) and experts and scholars advocated positive sex education in primary and high schools, objections arose from right-wing Christian religious groups. They mobilized parents to put pressure on the government and school officials to obstruct courses on sex education from incorporating perspectives that did not suppress sexuality or LGBTI issues. As one example to illustrate, the Association raised funds and produced a film on sex education. The film, titled *Shall We Swim?* portrays a young girl's exploration of her body and intimate relations in a positive light, but it was misrepresented and smeared as pornography by conservative religious groups. The groups further appealed to the government (including the Ministry of Education, the Executive Yuan, the Control Yuan, national legislators, and local councils) to ban the film, which is considered a most antidemocratic appeal. These backlash forces have continuously misled public opinion and have smeared first-line practitioners who have advocated positive sex education. These incidents have left Taiwan's sex education behind and without improvement.

Concrete Recommendations for Sex Education

Based on the above explanations and critiques, we have three recommendations:

1. Government agencies should actively design and promote programs for sexual health and sex education that is gender sensitive.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Welfare should actively design and promote counseling service centers for adolescent sexual health, eliminate the current discrepancy in the distribution of resources between urban and rural areas, and enhance the gender sensitivity of professional counselors working for sex education and sexual health. At the same time, educational policy should effectively implement gender-sensitive in-service training programs for teachers of the subject of sexual health. It may help prevent some schools and parents (in particular, parents belonging to some conservative and antigay/lesbian Christian religious groups)—who are supported by the rationale of parents' supervising right in education and the right of religious freedom—from resisting sex education, relationship education, and gender diversity education that has been mandated under the Gender Equity Education

Act. Taiwan is not a nation founded on religion; even less should it be thwarted on the matter of gender equity by the religious values of some minority groups that obstruct both the spirit of the law and educational policy.

2. The nation's curricula of sex education should emphasize a positive perspective of sex education.

Sex education is not just a subject or discourse of dealing with the problematic issues of reproductive health or unexpected pregnancy of adolescent girls. Rather, it is an official subject introducing positive perspectives on sex education with solid curricula that encompass the affirmation of self-identity, the establishment of self-respect and self-confidence, and the examination of values of all kinds. It also helps in learning the negotiation, mutual respect, and consensus sought in intimate relationships.

3. Schools should steadfastly maintain a neutral position to realize education with an awareness of gender equality and equity.

At present, the majority of the free courses on sex education or gender education offered on the campuses of elementary and high schools are injected with a discourse of chastity or the preservation of virginity by conservative religious groups. Schools, as part of the body of the country, should strictly adhere to Article 6 of the Educational Fundamental Act and abide by the principle of neutrality; that is, to prevent religious influence in students' education. Likewise, schools should prevent the curricula of sex education from being substituted by the hidden values of religions and heterosexism, which would thus negatively affect the right of every student to education.

Stimulus to Female Participation in Exercise and Sports

The Shadow Report on Article 10 of CEDAW

The Gender Equity Education Act asserts that the individual in the educational environment shall be accorded the opportunity of equal resources, and its spirit extends to the opportunity of gender equity provided in physical education and sports. And CEDAW Article 10 clearly states that the States Parties shall ensure that women enjoy equal rights in education. Included among these is the right to "participate actively in sports and physical education." But, to the contrary, in the realm of physical education and sports, women encounter major restrictions on resources and are influenced by traditional social and cultural values so that the proportion of female participation in exercise and sports remains relatively small.

The current situation and difficulties of female participation in exercise and sports in Taiwan

According to a 2011 survey on students' sports participation, female students' participation in school teams and sports clubs at all levels of schools was lower

than that of male students. From 2006 through 2012, the Executive Yuan Sports Affairs Council, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, and the National College Sports Federation signed on to the Brighton Declaration, pledging that in the future Taiwan would begin to augment the opportunities for women to participate in exercise and sports, with strategies and action plans related to gender equity. However, under the circumstance that the relevant information and resources were not sufficiently put into practice and with the shortage of real measures and actions, the government did not come up with a mechanism for follow-up and subsequent guidance. Therefore, it remained difficult to effectively raise the numbers of female practitioners in sports and to achieve the goal of promoting female participation in exercise and sports.

The present situation is discussed below in four points:

1. The statistical data on female participation in exercise and sports are inadequate or insufficient.

The governmental report (Section 10.37) refers to the situations and conditions for sports competitions of different kinds that are participated in by females in physical education at school. These numbers only represent the conditions and participation of female students in physical education classes on campus. The governmental report fails to provide statistical data for overall female participation in exercise and sports in the country as a whole and for female participation in the networks of sports leagues or athlete competitions. The report also fails to explain how to promote female students' participation in exercise and sports and what the training programs and development are for female athletes. Though Taiwanese female athletes have had extraordinary performances in international competitions, female participation in competitions in school sports leagues of all levels has not grown correspondingly, but in fact decreases as the athletes grow older. The phenomena indicate that extraordinary performance and achievement is a guarantee of continuous female participation in competitions at all levels. They also indicate a long-term deficiency of opportunities for females to participate in exercise and sports and the adverse environment for female participation in sports at the national level.

The governmental report (Section 10.37.3) refers to the increased number of female students participating in physical education classes at colleges and universities, which was viewed as an indicator of the development and promotion of female participation in exercise and sports. In writing the governmental report, the student ratio between males and females and the requirement for physical education are neglected. In fact, physical education classes are generally required classes. The gender structure of the students who enroll at the school may reflect those who take the physical education classes. The increment of female students is the result of the structural change in the

gender ratio of enrolled college students, which has no correlation with the achieved promotion of female participation in exercise and sports.

2. The promotional plan for enhancing female sports is ill-defined with no concrete measures.

In the two reports, the investigation of students' sports participation and the annual reports on sports statistics commissioned by the Ministry of Education show that at all school levels, female sports participation and numbers (in school teams and school sports clubs) tend to be low (see the Appendix), but the educational authorities have not yet provided sufficient opportunities for female students to participate in sports or physical activities, nor have they offered any measures for improvement. The governmental report on appropriate concrete measures (Section 10.39) illustrates the gender ratio regulated as a norm for sports competitions at elementary and middle school levels to be the strategy for promoting female participation in exercise and sports. Yet, it does not present any effects or results of actual practices or any types and items of sports competitions held under such regulation, not to mention that the competition-oriented sport may not fit the needs or preferences of female students. In Section 10.43, the report also refers to the addition of a shower room and dressing room, and the use of an unoccupied room for females who need facilities in the process of participating in exercise and sports, but the report ignores the uniform regulation in many middle schools in Taiwan. As for school regulations on the uniform skirt code, female students need to change their clothes for physical education in the ten-minute recess time. Given that friendly space provided, it is not feasible to effectively use the resources or the facility in such a short time. In addition, the White Paper announced in 2013 on physical education policy proclaimed the midterm and long-term strategies for sports development from 2012 to 2023. A few words were mentioned in regard to women's rare opportunities to undertake physical activity due to family responsibilities, but nothing was mentioned about improvement.

3. The design of curricula for physical education and fitness tests influences female students' participation and interest in exercise and sports.

The Ministry of Education fitness tests for cardiopulmonary endurance set the running standard for male students at 1,600 meters and for female students at 800 meters. There is no explanation for the difference between the two standards. Most physical education teachers mistake the physiological differences between female and male students to be a difference in their physical abilities and interests, so that they provide unequal opportunities for participation in physical activities. In class, they explicitly or implicitly express prejudice against female participation and motivation in sports since they are weaker physically. These kinds of course designs and grading standards are very likely to be duplicated in regard to different items in physical education courses. Physical education teachers tend to grade male students by higher

standards and pay more attention to their performance, but are less likely to encourage female students to actively participate and practice. In our opinion, these fitness test designs should be reevaluated. For example, set the fitness tests for heart and lung capacity at three minutes of step-climbing or twelve minutes of running, which would provide an equal testing opportunity for male and female physical activity. It should also reevaluate overall curriculum designs and tests that stem from similar assumptions based on gender differences between males and females.

4. Teacher education/training programs in the field of physical education lack the integration of gender issues.

At all levels of training courses for physical education teachers, no programs instruct these teachers in how to increase/promote female participation in exercise and sports. The design and action plans to cultivate qualified teachers and teaching workshops on physical education do not contain gender issues or topics. At present, the knowledge and ability of physical education personnel are insufficient to incorporate topics of gender equity into the physical education curricula. The teacher education programs for physical education rarely provide coursework related to gender equity. And for teachers who have formally entered the teaching profession, no such teacher in-service training courses or workshops exist that are related to promoting female physical education or female sports participation, let alone courses to recognize gender diversity or gender characteristics.

Concrete Recommendations for Female Sports Participation

We have four recommendations based on the above observations and critiques:

1. Establish a national database for female sports participation with regular updates.

This database should provide detailed statistics, with comparisons of gender participation rates, proportions, and structural changes among students, athletes, coaches, and administrative personnel, in order to show the development and trend of female participation in exercise and sports and female employment in sports professions.

2. Establish and realize action plans to increase the numbers of women participating in exercise and sports.

The government should integrate the efforts of administration, sports organizations, and resources at schools of all levels to encourage female participation in exercise and sports clubs at schools and to increase hours and space for female physical activities. The plans should also provide necessary training, appropriate resources and information for all levels of female athletes, female coaches, and female administrators in exercise and sports. Assistance should include help in fostering networks that support female sports and

implement programs to increase the numbers of females in exercise and sports.

3. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to incorporate gender equity education into the training curricula for physical education teachers and coaches.

Headquartered at teacher training institutions and central schools of physical education resources, the comprehensive plan should provide curricula and workshops to teachers-in-training, teachers in the profession, and sports coaches, in order to promote knowledge and ability of sports professionals and personnel in physical education at all levels so that they are equipped with the capability to provide equal opportunities for women to participate in exercise and sports, and they have an improved understanding of gender diversity and gender characteristics in the activities of exercise and sports.

4. Establish a dedicated agency to track and supervise the implementation of programs, to enhance female sports participation, and to regularly update the relevant data and reports for reference.

This agency should research the strategies and policies of other countries in promoting female participation in exercise and sports at schools of all levels and in sports organizations of all kinds. It should also encourage federations of school sports leagues at all levels to establish work groups for female sports with an aim to promote the number of females participating in exercise and sports as well as to develop and mentor female athletes with a comprehensive plan that provides suitable channels and resources.

[Appendix follows]

Appendix: Participation of Girls in School Sports and Teams, Calculated from Government Census Statistics for the 2010 School Year

Table A1

Students Participating in Class Sports Teams, by Level of School (%)

School level	Boys	Girls
Primary	52.4	46.2
Junior high	47.4	45.8
Senior high	45.8	45.2
College	36.6	29.6
Average	45.3	41.2

Source: Data are taken from www.sa.gov.tw/wSite/ct?xItem=4599&ctNode=249&mp=11/.

Table A2

Students Participating in School Sports Teams, by Level of School (%)

School level	Boys	Girls
Primary	22.1	16.1
Junior high	9.5	6.6
Senior high	8.8	4.2
College	8.1	4.3
Average	11.4	7.2

Source: Data are taken from www.sa.gov.tw/wSite/ct?xItem=4599&ctNode=249&mp=11/.

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