

We have something to share.

“Do you like boys? Or do you like girls” Are you gay?

And then laughter follows.

**Statistics show that about 15% of people in Taiwan fall in the LGBT group.**

Student Wu (aged 16): At school, some less manly boys are called “sissy”, while some manly girls are called “tomboy”. These unfriendly terms are often offensive and very uncomfortable, but we may unconsciously use these words to hurt our classmates. (So, we need to eliminate campus inequality and make the environment warmer.)

Student Lin (aged 17): They may be unintentional jokes, but they still make me feel uncomfortable. Some classmates often tease one another with terms such as gay. Even after becoming junior high school students, going to girl’s schools, some still hold misconceptions like: “Bisexuality means scum who like boys and girls at the same time,” or “if there are gays among my classmates, I’d better stay away, or they’ll fall for me”. Some teachers also unconsciously make some misleading and discriminating speeches either in class or at other public occasions. (Publicly saying that boys wearing skirts are weird at the morning assembly; a deputy magistrate in a speech delivered at a school anniversary said that boys should be like pugs when facing girls; how can people like this teach gender equality at universities?)

Student Tsai (aged 18): One time when I got my school magazine, I read a homophobic speech made by a teacher, saying that homosexual people must not form families. At that time, I thought it wasn’t fair. If teachers with a sexual bias continue to dominate Taiwan’s education system, it will be difficult to engrain gender issues in Taiwan’s children and youth.

Student Lin (aged 17): These past experiences have worsened my inferiority complex. I even began to question myself and close myself off, and I still can’t get over them and let go, even now.

**Besides gender identity issues, children and youth also need to face sexual harassment and sexual assault at school.**

Student Chen (aged 16): What I want to say is: Students without complete and clear gender education may harass and even hurt their peers.

**Campus sexual harassment statistics show that the student-to-student harassment rate is up to 70%.**

Student Chen (aged 16): In my experience, a boy intentionally touched me at random when I was grade 3 or 4. He would pretend to run into me and touch me with his hands, or he would turn around and touch me when I was standing with my back toward him. He would even sit next to me even in music class, so I always put books in my lap. In those days, I was afraid to go to school. Even now, I still can't let it go. When talking about primary school life, I still feel a bit uncomfortable, because this shadow is still here. I don't think young children committing sexual harassment is because of malicious intent, some may feel curious or think it's fun. Because gender differences weren't really taught at that time, or maybe teachers thought that we were too little to understand this, or they were afraid of agitating students and just glossed over the topic, or the class was replaced by Mandarin or Mathematics. No matter what the reasons were, I just hope children can have healthy physical and mental development. As the gender concepts of adults gradually become more progressive and open, I wish children could clearly understand these things through school education.

Student Huang (aged 17): The “Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation Prevention Act” (formerly the “Child and Youth Sexual Transaction Prevention Act”) implemented on January 1, 2017, was amended twice on November 29, 2017, and January 3, 2018. After the second amendment, the scope of child and youth protection has been expanded. Besides sexual intercourse and indecent assault, the scope has been expanded to “child and youth exploitation in sexual performances for public appreciation” to include exploiting children and youth

to make pornographic videos or pornographic matters in the scope of child and youth sexual exploitation. Ironically, the number of reported victims of child and youth sexual exploitation has escalated since the “Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation Prevention Act” was implemented, particularly for primary school students, with an increase of several times from 80 children in 2017 to 283 children in 2020.

News (Number of reported victims of child and youth sexual exploitation in Taiwan: 1,060 victims in 2018, 1,211 victims in 2019, 1,691 victims in 2020): Most victims were junior high school students, then senior high vocational school students. What shocked the judiciary was that the increase in the primary school student group was the highest.

Student Huang (aged 17): Among every six victims there was one primary school student. According to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, cybercrime accounted for up to 71.8% of child and youth sexual exploitation cases. In my opinion, child and youth sexual exploitation should be a matter of concern. With the constantly advancing internet, besides awareness education, what else can we do to prevent more children and youth from becoming victims of sexual exploitation?

### **We are here together**

Student Wu (aged 16): I’m from Taoyuan.

Student Chen (aged 16): I’m from Taichung.

Student Lin (aged 17): I’m from Taichung.

Student Tsai (aged 18): I’m from Nantou.

Student Huang (aged 17): I’m from Taipei.

Everybody: We are the children of Taiwan. Taiwan’s child and youth equality needs your attention.