

NORINCHUKIN

農林中央金庫

Diversity & Inclusion Book

Empowering All Individuals to Pursue a Bright Future

Empowering All Individuals to Pursue a Bright Future

Dedicated to sustaining all life.

Guided by our Purpose—which starts with the above words—we aim to support food production and consumption, and the daily lives of local communities by contributing to the development of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (AFF) industries.

In doing so, we believe it is important to generate new value by empowering individual employees to demonstrate their unique characters and personalities, and then combining the strengths of all these individuals.

A bright future for all individuals should lead to a bright future for the Norinchukin Bank.

It is this conviction that inspires us to actively pursue greater diversity & inclusion.



Defining diversity & inclusion (D&I)

The word diversity refers to the range of differences among individuals in terms of not only obvious attributes such as gender, disability, nationality, age, and LGBTQ identification, but also in terms of less obvious characteristics such as abilities, experience, and values.

Inclusion refers to an organizational culture and mindset that enables individuals with such a range of differences to be welcomed as valued members of the organization and to trust others and enjoy peace of mind as they demonstrate their abilities.

Diversity & inclusion (D&I) is the concept that combines these two elements; it refers to a world in which individual employees of all kinds can demonstrate their unique characters and personalities to the full and participate actively in the workplace, inspired by a sense of purpose.

Index

4p Messages

6p Initiatives to Achieve D&I

↳ 8p Current Progress

12p Raising Awareness and Changing Workplaces to Embrace Diversity

↳ 13p Initiatives in Action

↳ 17p Employee/Workplace-Led Initiatives

18p Facilitating Continued Active Participation and Growth for Diverse Human Resources

↳ 19p Attribute-Based Diversity | Active Participation of Women

↳ 20p Training and Other Support for Career Advancement

23p Improving All-Round Diversity

↳ 24p Attribute-Based Diversity | Active Participation of People with Disabilities

↳ 26p Attribute-Based Diversity | Active Participation of Global Human Resources

↳ 27p Attribute-Based Diversity | Active Participation of Older Human Resources

↳ 28p Attribute-Based Diversity | Deepening Understanding of LGBTQ Issues

29p Seeking to Enable Work-Life Integration

↳ 30p Initiatives Targeting Flexible and Diverse Ways of Working

↳ 31p Initiatives Facilitating Work-Life Integration for Continued Active Participation and Growth

↳ 32p Initiatives in Action

36p Epilogue

Messages

Interaction among people of all kinds focused on sustaining all life produces impactful chemical reactions.

In December 2023, the Norinchukin Bank (the Bank) will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding. Seeking to use this landmark occasion as an opportunity for growth and evolution, we have been working to transform the Bank in a range of ways. Our aim is to reorient ourselves from looking inward to looking outward, from thinking of our own interests to prioritizing the interests of our colleagues and other people, from focusing on the past and the present to focusing on the future. And the culmination of all these efforts is diversity & inclusion (D&I).

Ultimately, diversity is about how individuals can work with enthusiasm and demonstrate their abilities. As societies have become more prosperous in recent times, jobs that benefit society and offer people a sense of purpose have become increasingly important. And societies are made up of both men and women, children, and the elderly; they include people with disabilities and of various nationalities. If organizations are to contribute to societies of such great diversity, they themselves need to be diverse.

On the other hand, we are also living in uncertain times that make it impossible to know the right thing to do. Even if we make plans, we cannot predict what might happen during the course of their implementation. In such an environment, therefore, we must avoid imposing a way forward from the top down, and must instead engage in a dialogue by encouraging individuals, who interact with society in their own ways, to actively communicate how they feel. When people of all kinds are able to exchange opinions and demonstrate their abilities, chemical reactions will occur, and these could be described as the source of innovation. I want to bring about exciting chemical reactions by making our organization one in which individuals can act with greater personal initiative and autonomy.

Nonetheless, it is also true to say that, if individuals with a lot of energy have free rein to do whatever they want, the result is chaos. In such a situation, what shows us the way forward is the Bank's Purpose, which begins with the words, "Dedicated to sustaining all life."

If a diverse range of people come together and collaborate, all identifying with the shared goals of doing something good for the planet and working to invigorate the AFF industries, I am sure that impactful chemical reactions will be produced. I hope all our stakeholders will join us in helping to strengthen the vitality of both the planet and the AFF industries.

OKU Kazuto

President and
Chief Executive Officer

奥 和登

Our sights are set on the next 100 years. There is no end to the pursuit of greater diversity.

Having designated 2022 as Diversity Year One, the Bank started pursuing greater diversity in earnest during that year. Society in general currently places great emphasis on diversity, but unless all the Bank's employees and directors, understand why this is crucial to the Bank's future growth, it will be impossible to bring about genuine diversity.

The first step in this regard is changing our mindset, and to this end, we implemented initiatives such as lectures by external speakers targeting mainly executives and managers, and distribution of an internal newsletter. Feedback from those who had attended the lectures included comments such as, "The lecture brought home to me the reasons why diversity is important." I think these lectures gave many people a new sense of urgency when they realized that, as Japan's labor force undergoes major structural transformation, the Bank is unlikely to survive another 100 years unless it changes itself into an organization in which a diverse range of human resources can demonstrate their talents.

Using this change in mindset as our starting point, during the first fiscal year we prioritized the active participation of women in the workplace, and inclusion, as our main areas of action. Specific measures included offering training for women in leadership positions and for their managers, given the still-limited number of women at management level. We also organized working groups to enable us to take on board a range of opinions, not only from women, but also from many other employees facing constraints of one kind or another. We are now focusing on incorporating the comments expressed during the working groups into our policies, and are also introducing and extending measures such as paid leave by the hour and the flextime system to enable employees to work flexibly.

One gratifying change as we have implemented these measures is that some divisions have started considering steps that they could take on their own initiative based on suggestions from their staff and putting these steps into practice. To make diversity a reality, I believe it is crucial that individual employees take action and proactively express their opinions.

Furthermore, the most important thing of all when pursuing greater diversity is continuity. Even companies with a history of striving to improve diversity for over 20 years state that they still have more to do. Even Europe and the United States—which are believed to be more advanced than Japan in terms of diversity—continue to face a great many challenges in this regard.

There is no end to the pursuit of greater diversity. In an ever-changing world, we too must continue striving to change our mindset and behavior. As we strive to achieve the Bank's Purpose, which begins with the words, "Dedicated to sustaining all life," I want us to make diversity into a strength for our organization and to continue evolving for the sake of the next 100 years and beyond.

UTSUMI Tomoe

Managing Executive Officer
Head of Operations
Chief Diversity Officer (CDO)

内海智江



Initiatives to Achieve

D&I

Surely everybody has encountered ways of thinking that differ from their own and experienced the excitement of expanded horizons and a sense of new possibilities. At the Norinchukin Bank, we are working to create an organization in which individuals can demonstrate a diverse range of abilities and personal value and be inclusive of each other as they participate actively in the workplace and grow.

Objectives

Maximize organizational vitality, create added value, and innovate



The bank we aspire to be in a world where diversity has been achieved (and how we envisage our employees will work)

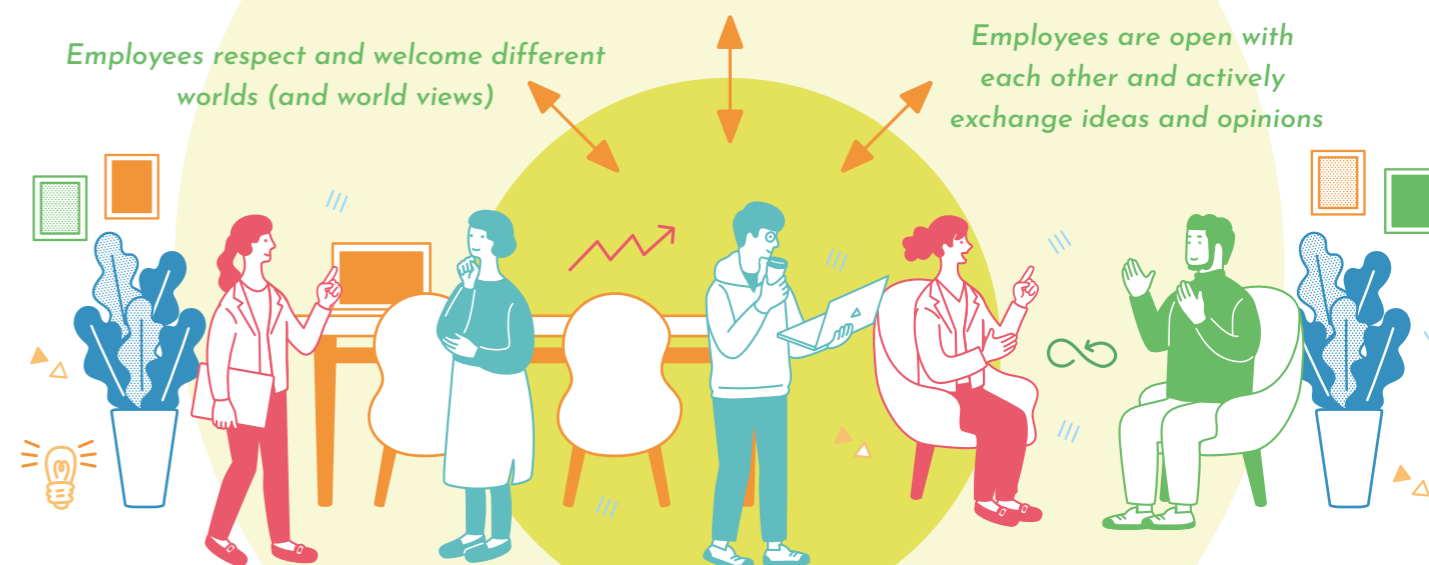
A bank where a constant stream of new approaches and ideas is generated and put into practice

Organizations & Teams

Employees enjoy their differences and actively embrace alternative perspectives and approaches

Employees respect and welcome different worlds (and world views)

Employees are open with each other and actively exchange ideas and opinions



A diverse range of employees (with unique characters)



Features of an organization required to become the bank we aspire to be



The organization is chosen by human resources with a wide, diverse range of values and welcomes such people (and has an organizational culture that attracts a diverse range of human resources with appealing personalities).



A variety of flexible ways of working are available and are practiced, enabling individuals to demonstrate their unique characters and personalities to the full and with enthusiasm.



Interaction among people espousing a range of different values is supported and encouraged both inside and outside the organization, generating synergies (organizational vitality, added value, and innovation) through the interplay of diverse characteristics.

Current Progress

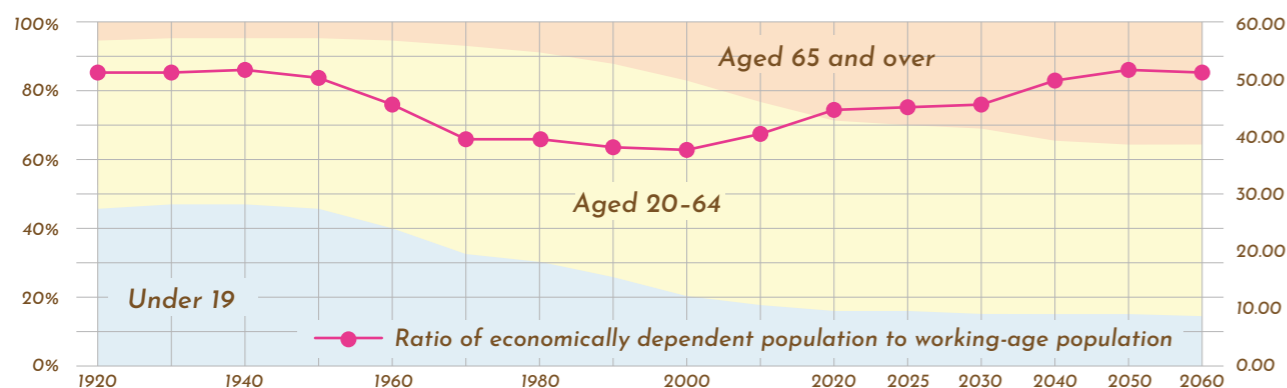
2021

Background to the Bank's Pursuit of Greater Diversity

Creating an organization in which individuals can demonstrate a diverse range of abilities as they participate actively and grow

Structural change in Japan's population

Based on estimates in the Population Census and Population Estimates of the Statistics Bureau of Japan, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the projections assuming medium fertility (medium mortality) in the Population Projections for Japan (2023 revision): 2021 to 2070 of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research



Over the next 40 years, Japan's working population will undergo major structural change, decreasing to two-thirds of its current level. Moreover, among the younger generation, work-related values are changing significantly, with the majority of both men and women wanting to prioritize their families and personal lives over their jobs.

Amid such change, we believe it will be important to further improve our diversity to transform into an organization in which everybody can continue to participate actively and grow, overcoming their various constraints and demonstrating a diverse range of abilities to the full. Only then can we ensure that everybody, male or female, can gain fulfillment from raising children and other life events, as well as their private lives in general, while also continuing to participate actively and grow at work, achieving sustainable development for the organization alongside a team that shares the same objectives. Above all, we believe that in these uncertain times, diversity can serve as a wellspring for maximizing organizational vitality, creating added value, and generating innovation by acting as the driving force that ensures a range of opinions and approaches are included within discussions and decision-making, leading to improved outcomes.

At the Norinchukin Bank, we have always strived to create an environment that empowers employees to participate actively regardless of such factors as gender or disability. Given the increasing importance of pursuing greater diversity in this way, in November 2021 we appointed our first Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) as the executive officer in charge of promoting diversity. The CDO has launched initiatives with a strong focus on diversity, listening carefully to the views of a broad range of employees and making an effort to create an environment

that allows them to express a variety of opinions and enables them to participate actively and grow.

Amid increasing public interest and expectation with regard to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Bank has set diversity-related goals among its Medium- to Long-Term Goals for achieving sustainability management (i.e., a 13% share of female managers by FY2030 and a 30% share by FY2040). We are pressing ahead with our efforts to make sure that we exceed these targets and that diversity within the Bank advances in various areas in addition to the active participation of women.

Increasing public interest in and demands concerning the SDGs

- 
Goal 3 Good health and well-being
D&I Initiative Health and productivity management
- 
Goal 4 Quality education
D&I Initiative Support for personal and career development
- 
Goal 5 Gender equality
D&I Initiative Promotion of active participation by women
- 
Goal 8 Decent work and economic growth
D&I Initiative Reform of work styles to enable everybody to participate actively
- 
Goal 10 Reduced inequalities
D&I Initiative Resolution of inequalities and initiatives to promote inclusivity

2022

Diversity Year One

What is Diversity Year One about?

A diverse range of individuals strengthen the organization

Action to achieve this

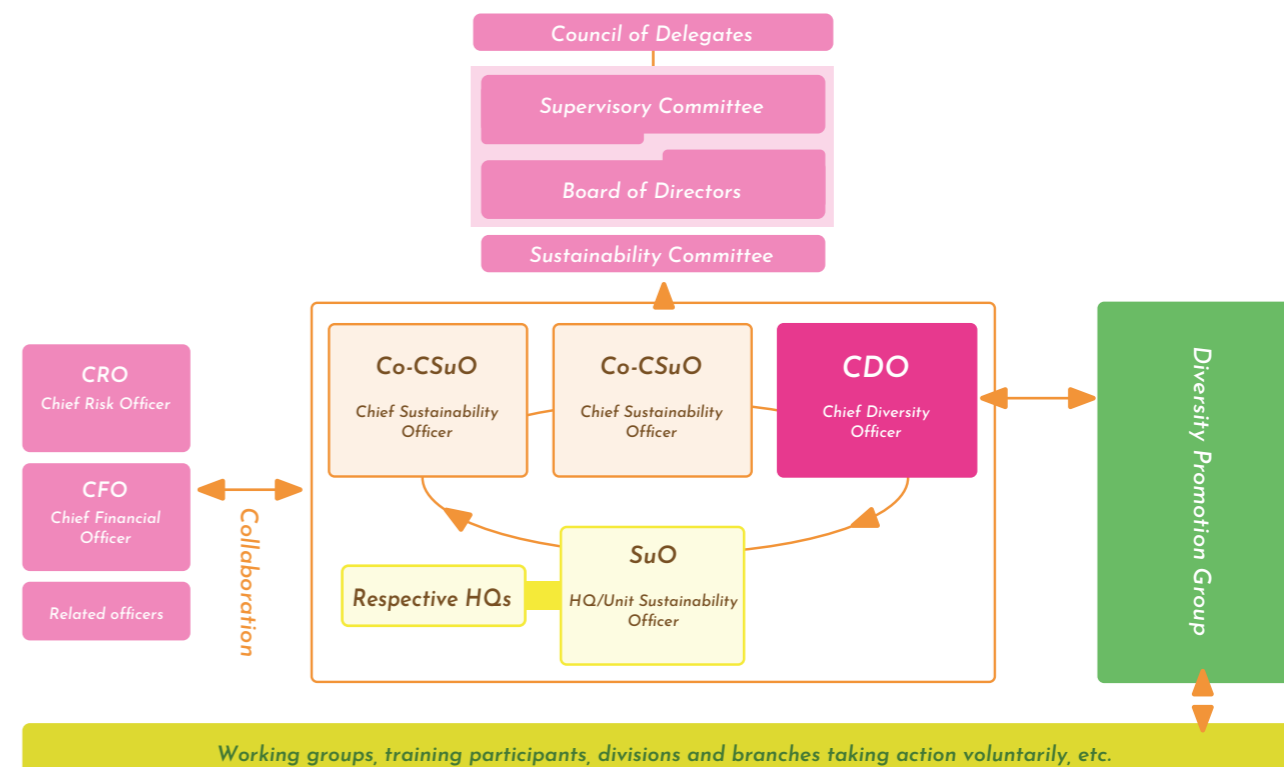
Publicly commit the Bank to listening carefully to the opinions of a diverse range of employees and create an environment that allows everybody to express a variety of opinions



Start by laying the groundwork for the Bank, including identifying its objectives in pursuing greater diversity and the direction in which to proceed

The Bank has positioned the pursuit of greater diversity as one of the three key pillars of its sustainability management. Executives personally convey the value and importance of pursuing greater diversity to all the Bank's employees including those in Group companies. The CDO in particular, as the executive officer in charge of promoting diversity and the active participation of women, is working with the Diversity Promotion Group to plan a variety of workplace-related measures and implement concrete initiatives.

Diversity promotion structure



Current Progress

From 2022

Becoming an organization that embraces diversity of all kinds

Having designated 2022 as Diversity Year One, the Bank set its objectives, defining what we want to achieve through diversity (i.e., maximize organizational vitality, create added value, and bring about innovation). We then envisaged how our employees would work once diversity was achieved, as well as the organization required to support their active participation in the workplace, and implemented initiatives accordingly.

Refer to:
p.07

We are promoting D&I in line with our conviction that everybody must become more aware of the need to accept and embrace (i.e., be inclusive of) variety and differences if we are to achieve diversity that enables individual employees of all kinds to demonstrate their unique characters and personalities to the full.

Refer to:
p.12

The D&I initiatives of the Norinchukin Bank and its Group companies are described hereafter.

Specific areas for action and order of priority in Diversity Year One

During Diversity Year One, we decided to tackle a wide range of initiatives addressing attribute-based diversity (e.g., gender, age, nationality, disability, and LGBTQ identification) that comprises diversity in the wider society. We started measures prioritizing the active participation of women in the workplace, an area particularly in need of action by the Bank, where there was ample room for improvement.

Refer to:
p.18
p.23

In conjunction with this, we also implemented measures focused on inclusion-related areas: helping employees to combine work with personal commitments (such as facilitating male employees' involvement in parenting and caregiving) and work-style reform (to create an environment in which everybody can participate actively and grow).

Refer to:
p.29
p.30
p.31

The outlook for D&I promotion: The future direction of our initiatives

Going forward, our D&I initiatives will continue to address the active participation of women, as well as inclusion, aiming to offer equal opportunities for everybody to participate actively and grow. In addition to this, however, we are aiming to increase our concrete measures and initiatives addressing various other types of attribute-based diversity as we promote wide-ranging D&I.

And alongside pursuing such diversity based on attributes, we will consciously promote multifaceted diversity within our organization that also encompasses knowledge-based diversity (in terms of abilities, experience, etc.) and mindset-based diversity (in terms of values, etc.).

Initiatives to improve D&I in collaboration with Group companies and overseas offices

The Bank aspires to improve its D&I at the Group-wide level synergistically by valuing the various D&I initiatives that individual Group companies and overseas offices undertake and encouraging them to exchange information and opinions as a means of learning and absorbing better approaches from each other.

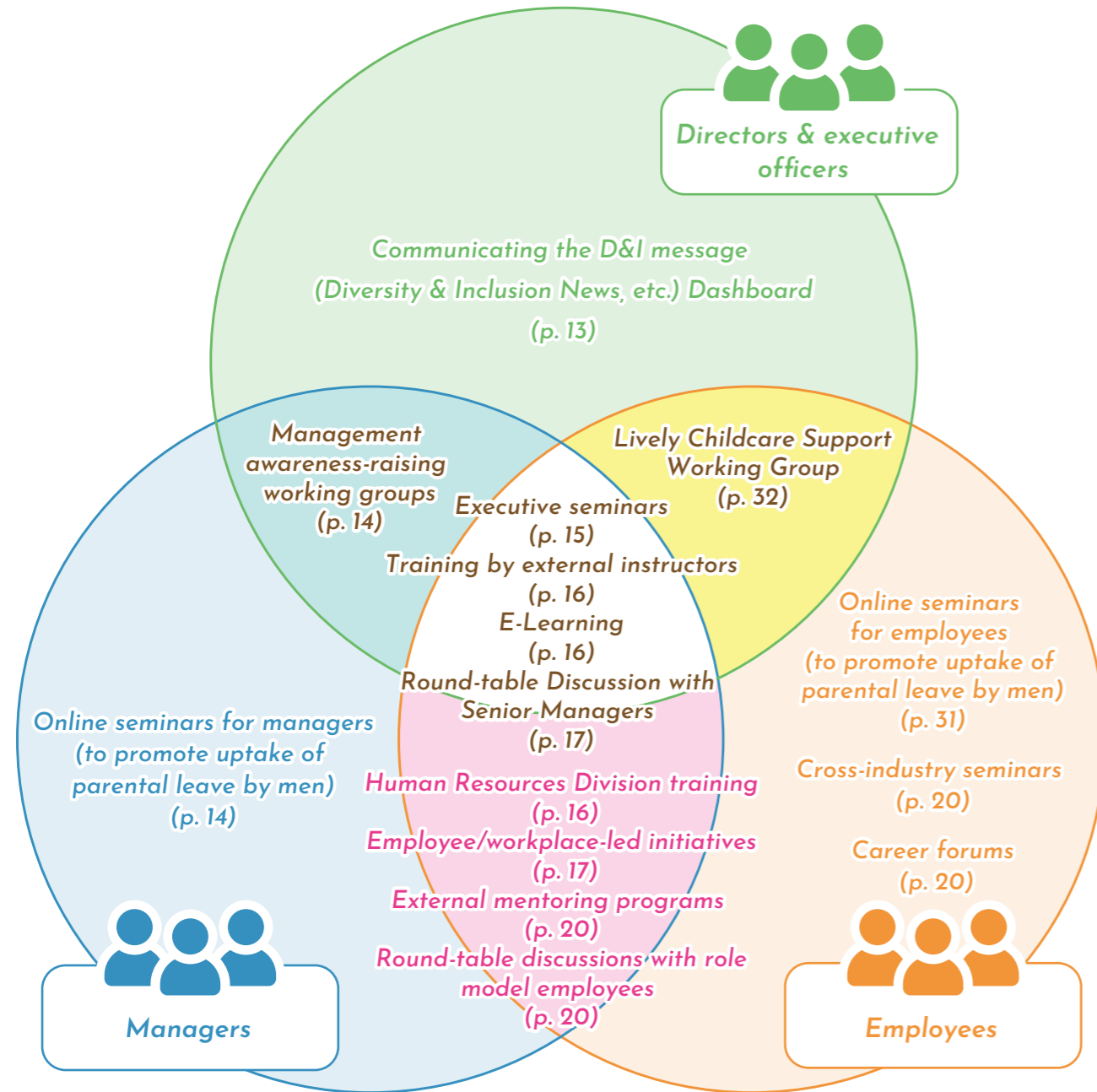
For example, the Bank is raising Group-wide awareness of D&I by distributing an internal newsletter, Diversity & Inclusion News to the entire Group including overseas offices, and is offering its D&I-related training (including e-learning and some training by external instructors) to Group companies as well, in order to facilitate efficient and effective D&I initiatives.

This Diversity & Inclusion Book includes "Columns" that feature examples of D&I initiatives at Group companies in Japan and overseas in addition to those of the Bank itself.

Refer to:
p.21
p.22
p.25
p.26
p.28
p.35

Raising Awareness and Changing Workplaces to Embrace Diversity

(Improving inclusion)



The importance of raising employee awareness and fostering a workplace culture when promoting D&I

Making the most of diversity requires an organizational culture within which everybody accepts each other's differences and individuals can trust others and enjoy peace of mind as they demonstrate a diverse range of abilities to the full.

The Bank believes it is important to raise awareness among directors and employees around embracing diversity, and to establish flexible ways of working and supportive workplaces that enable people of all kinds to participate actively, demonstrating their unique characters and abilities regardless of any constraints. To that end, it is pursuing a range of initiatives.

Initiatives in Action

Executive initiatives (communication of the D&I message and awareness-raising by directors and executive officers)

✔ **Communication of the D&I message by executives**

The Bank's directors and executive officers communicate the importance of D&I in various ways through key meetings and dialogue with employees. The *Declaration of Board Members' Actions* of 2022 stated that the Bank would treat diversity as an asset and value teamwork based on mutual trust and respect.

✔ **Diversity & Inclusion News**

The Bank's directors and executive officers communicate their thoughts and expectations regarding D&I to all employees including those in Group companies and overseas offices in the form of videos and an internal newsletter.

Example of Initiative

Tell Us about Your D&I!

We release articles of interviews with directors to encourage all employees to take more personal responsibility for D&I and regard it as an everyday part life. The first such interview was with the Bank's president, OKU Kazuto.



Advice to help employees assume personal responsibility for pursuing greater diversity

My advice would be to take a step outside your comfort zone. I'd like our employees to make a conscious effort to experience places they wouldn't normally go to and encounter new people, so that they have plenty of opportunities to realize that there are people whose way of thinking differs from their own.

The president's expectations of employees

I want our employees to take plenty of time to talk about what diversity actually means. It's important to think of the positive effects of diversity in contrast with the weaknesses of monoculturalism. At the same time, however, everybody shares 99.8% of their DNA. So, I think the idea that we're all the same in that we are human beings is also important, and that's what leads to inclusion.

✔ **Visualization of work style-related metrics at the senior management level**

Achieving Diversity & Inclusion that enables people of all kinds to participate actively in the workplace will require the Bank to transform itself into an organization where everybody can continue to excel and grow over the long term. Employees would make their own autonomous, flexible choices about how they work, making adjustments along the way in order to deal with various constraints and life events over the course of their careers.

As one of our initiatives to implement work-style reform by changing the way employees work and embracing a diverse range of working practices, we are visualizing metrics relating to work hours and other working practices at the executive level. The aim of this visualization is to enable executives to monitor individual divisions' progress in reforming work styles as we seek to establish new ways of working. Such new ways of working would be sustainable and compatible with changing values in relation to work; they would enable all employees to continue participating actively and growing in various fields of endeavor regardless of any constraints they may face, and without worrying about how to combine their work with personal commitments.



Initiatives in Action

Initiatives to raise awareness among managers—who hold the key to promoting D&I within actual workplaces—and help them support the growth of employees they manage

The Bank organizes D&I-related training and working groups for managers, who are key influencers in terms of D&I within workplaces.

Management awareness-raising working groups

For managers to encourage the employees they manage to participate actively, achieve growth, and be willing to take on challenges, they must overcome their own unconscious bias in terms of gender, and make absolutely sure that both men and women in their teams are set expectations, given opportunities, and trained. The Bank organizes awareness-raising working groups for managers as opportunities for them to gain insights and acquire knowledge that will be useful in keeping D&I in mind as they support active participation and growth among the employees they manage.

Example of Initiative

The management working group process

STEP.1

An external instructor gives an overall lecture for all managers

Topic: Why D&I and the active participation of women are necessary, and examples of companies that are leading the way



STEP.2

The instructor sets a preparatory assignment for all managers due to participate in the working group

Topic: What is required to promote D&I in your division, and throughout the organization as a whole?

- What can be done to raise the share of female managers?
- What can be done to ensure that employees gain fulfillment from both their work and their private lives?



STEP.3

The management working group meets and a group discussion takes place

- (1) Participants identify the challenges of promoting D&I in their divisions, and throughout the organization as a whole
- (2) They explore the challenges identified and consider possible steps to address these challenges
- (3) They make presentations, and all insights are shared and discussed with the entire group (with the participation of the CDO)

STEP.4

Further discussions take place in workplaces

Participants take their lessons and insights from the working group back to their workplaces and hold briefing sessions involving non-management employees. They elicit different perspectives from all employees, regardless of age or position, to consider practical D&I measures that can be implemented in their workplace. They then share such measures with the employees, together with any new insights gained from the discussion.

Feedback from working group participants

- It was useful to hear about initiatives in other divisions
- I realized that the active participation of women in the workplace will make it easier for men to manage their work too
- These working groups will spur progress in D&I
- I found it very worthwhile to exchange opinions with employees of all ages who have a range of different values in my own division

Other training for managers

Other examples of training offered: online seminars for managers (seminars by external instructors addressing the importance of men taking parental leave, active participation of women, and work-style reform) and training to improve managers' ability to support the growth of the employees they manage

Raising awareness and communicating initiatives through dialogue between directors and employees

Dialogues between directors and employees are valuable opportunities for all involved to deepen their insights, understanding, and awareness by sharing alternative perspectives regardless of differences in position or age.

Executive seminars

The Bank organizes executive seminars, at which employees talk with directors in small groups. At the executive seminars during Diversity Year One (2022), lively discussions took place on the topic of pursuing D&I

The opinions expressed during the executive seminars served as valuable feedback for achieving better D&I.



Feedback from participants

- It was a good opportunity to deepen my understanding of D&I, which I had often heard about, but generally hadn't given much thought to.
- I sensed the determination of the directors to transform the Bank into an organization in which both men and women can participate actively and grow.
- I became more aware that it is both important and necessary to promote the active participation of women and other forms of D&I within the organization.

CDO's D&I working groups

The Bank holds D&I working groups led by the CDO for employees. During these working groups, participants exchange opinions about various D&I-related topics, and the employees share and discuss with the CDO issues they are tackling and suggestions to promote D&I. Thus, the working groups offer opportunities for directors and employees to join forces in thinking about and working on D&I.



Such working groups involving employees also provide opportunities for networking among the employees themselves. Besides the working groups, the CDO also strives to maintain dialogue with employees in other ways such as visiting workplaces in person to give lectures in response to requests for independent diversity seminars or other awareness-raising sessions in individual workplaces.

Feedback from participants

- I realized that the Bank's diversity-related initiatives are more wide-ranging than I'd imagined. Such initiatives benefit both the Bank and the employees who work here, so I'd like to see them continue. And I myself would like to get involved in some capacity or other.
- I learned that colleagues I look up to are dealing with various problems in addition to their work, which made me relate to them more. It also made me realize that I too might encounter obstacles at some point, so it's important to keep my future career in mind as I work, starting now while I'm still young.
- Given the need for work-style reform, I got the impression that there would be greater potential for working in diverse ways going forward. I also felt that we would probably be given more opportunities to take on challenges to encourage our own personal growth.
- I got the impression that those who fail to change their mindset at work will be left behind. During the round-table discussion I found out what employees younger than me are thinking, which is not something I usually get to hear. I also spoke with the CDO, which convinced me that executives are paying attention to employees working in the Bank's branches.
- It was great: I understood the Bank's aim of establishing a workplace environment in which diversity is valued.
- The very fact that there are opportunities to talk directly with the CDO made me feel that the Bank is really serious about the active participation of women and diversity.

Initiatives in Action

Human Resources Division training

- ✓ The Bank offers various training courses organized by the Human Resources Division to a wide range of employees at all levels including executives, managers, leaders, and young employees. In Diversity Year One (2022), D&I was addressed during training for the first time, and 12 D&I-related training sessions took place. Through activities including lectures by external instructors and groupwork among participants, the Human Resources Division is providing opportunities for employees to improve their awareness and understanding of D&I and gain insights into how to practice D&I in the workplace.

E-learning for all directors and employees

- ✓ All directors and employees at the Bank undergo training via e-learning on key D&I-related topics. We seek to raise awareness and promote understanding among individual employees by enabling them to acquire knowledge relating to D&I.

Lectures by external instructors for all directors and employees

- ✓ The Bank invites external instructors knowledgeable about promoting D&I to provide training to all directors and employees. Lectures cover a range of topics, including D&I in the wider world and work-style reform, which is the key to promoting D&I; they serve as opportunities to raise awareness among directors and employees and spur them to take practical action in the workplace.



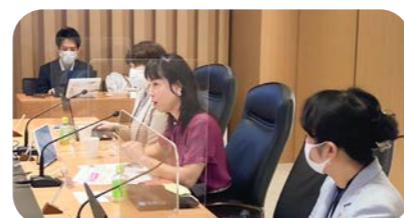
Management of Parental Leave for Men to Improve Both Business Results and Motivation

Instructor: KOMURO Yoshie
President
Work-Life Balance Co., Ltd.



Reconsidering the Meaning of Diversity

Instructor: MURAKI Atsuko
Vice Chair and Director
Japan Agriculture and Welfare Partnership Association (former Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare)



Why D&I and the Active Participation of Women are Necessary, and Examples of Companies That Are Leading the Way

Instructor: HABU Sachiko
Visiting Researcher Nikkei xwoman

Group companies' collaborative efforts to educate and raise awareness about D&I

The initiatives below, targeting education and awareness-raising, are conducted collaboratively by Group companies, ensuring that not only the Bank itself, but also all its Group companies, are involved in promoting D&I.

- ✓ Distribution of Diversity & Inclusion News to Group companies
- ✓ Participation of Group company employees in Human Resources Division training
- ✓ Provision of e-learning training materials to Group companies
- ✓ Participation of Group company employees in lectures provided by external instructors for all directors and employees
- ✓ Participation of Group company employees in placements on external training programs

Employee/Workplace-Led Initiatives

In Diversity Year One, executives started to raise awareness of D&I among employees; this initiative is gradually taking root in workplaces and showing signs of developing into autonomous behavior change among individual employees. Examples of such D&I initiatives led by employees and workplaces are described here.

Workplace holds "brown bag" (informal lunchtime) meetings and issues a Declaration of Diversity

The Risk Management Division drew up and announced its own Declaration of Diversity by means of bottom-up discussions in the workplace. The declaration established a shared vision for the workplace in terms of D&I, stating that its employees would work inclusively, recognizing and valuing each other's diverse range of values resulting from differences in age, position, and constraints affecting their work, in order to strengthen the division as an organization and enhance added value. The division also held "brown bag" brainstorming meetings to address such key D&I-related issues as what should be done to establish varied ways of working catering to different life stages so that all employees can participate actively.

Examples of initiatives

Initiatives (first half of fiscal year)

Held interviews and round-table discussions with division employees to hear directly from them about their differing values



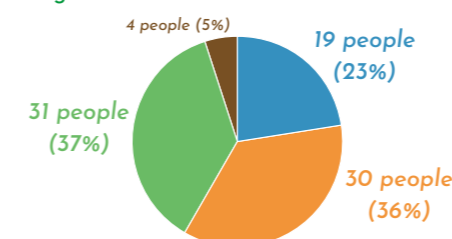
Initiatives (second half of fiscal year)

Investigated and implemented initiatives to resolve the identified communication gaps



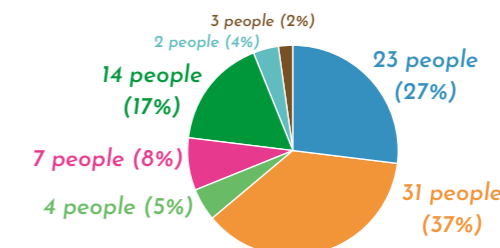
Survey conducted within the unit

Q. What measures do you think the Risk Management Unit could implement to increase the share of female managers?



- Raise awareness about promotion of women to management
- Create an environment that encourages employee retention following life events such as marriage or childbirth
- Retain employees by providing training opportunities to enhance expertise within the Risk Management Unit
- Other measures

Q. Which of these measures to improve work-life balance is closest to what you think must be done?



- Change the approach to employee appraisal to focus on results rather than time spent working
- Eliminate imbalances between divisions in terms of work flexibility (constraints on working hours)
- Hold one-on-one meetings with line managers regarding life events (e.g., childbirth or caregiving), and make the entire team's work and tasks visible to all
- Promote proactive use of the systems for parental leave and caregiving leave by men
- Set workplace rules to make it easier to use the flextime system
- Improve work efficiency through digital transformation (DX), etc.
- Other measures

Communicating the appeal of management positions

The JA Bank System Business Transformation Division is planning and holding its own interviews and round-table discussions to communicate the appeal of management positions and offer perspectives from role models. This was what inspired our Round-table Discussion with Senior Managers, for which all employees are eligible to apply.



Such initiatives led by managers and individual workplaces are one of the keys to enabling work-life integration.

— Refer to p. 29 for details



Facilitating Continued Active Participation and Growth for Diverse Human Resources

If diversity is taken to include not only obvious attributes such as gender, nationality, and age, but also less obvious characteristics such as abilities and experience, values, and career aspirations, it comprises many different aspects. The Norinchukin Bank Group is taking its initiatives forward one step at a time, seeking to pursue all-round diversity that encompasses all these aspects.

Attribute-Based Diversity

Active Participation of Women

Current situation

Gender diversity needs to be pursued as a matter of urgency to enable diverse perspectives and values to be incorporated into the management of the Bank

The Bank defined the objectives it aims to achieve through pursuing greater D&I (p. 07), set Medium- to Long-Term Goals for the active participation of women (p. 08), and determined an action plan that it is implementing with the commitment of the president.

The Bank will further boost the active participation of women through a range of initiatives including: promoting equal opportunities, primarily by providing more chances for training; establishing an environment conducive to diverse, flexible ways of working; and transforming awareness of gender-related issues and behavior throughout the organization.

Data

March 30, 2022
Announced action plan for promoting active participation by women

We drew up and announced a General Employer Action Plan pursuant to Japan's Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life. We will continue to implement multifaceted initiatives to enhance the vitality of the organization by creating a workplace environment in which employees of all kinds can fully demonstrate their abilities and unique characters, and participate actively over the long term.

April 5, 2022
Expressed support for the Work Interval Declaration initiative

A work interval refers to a minimum period of rest time set between finishing work one day and starting work the following day to ensure that working people have enough time for their personal lives and for sleep. Work intervals are expected to help in establishing balance between work and private time, maintaining concentration during work hours, and improving productivity.

- Target 1** Take-up rate of parental leave by men: **100%**
- Target 2** Implement and entrench various measures to promote work-style reforms
- Target 3** Share of women in career-track, specified role new graduate hires: **Approximately 40%**



April 20, 2023
Expressed support for the Keidanren initiative targeting a 30% share of female executives by 2030

Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) is accelerating the promotion of active participation in the workforce by diverse people in order to achieve inclusion and co-creation of diverse value—the keys to sustainable capitalism. Keidanren has set the aspirational target of a 30% share of female executives by 2030, and the Norinchukin Bank has expressed its support by committing to the following action:



1. Positioning diversity and inclusion as key corporate strategies, we will carry out initiatives that lead to business impact.
2. By focusing on boards of directors—the decision-making bodies of companies—we will accelerate initiatives to apply the perspectives of a diverse range of people, including women, to the execution of operations and governance.
3. We will provide support in line with each career stage, from hiring to leadership development (including identifying candidates), in order to strengthen the talent pipeline.
4. We will pursue the creation of organizations and environments that can maximize the performance of all employees by breaking away from previous employment practices and reforming the organizational culture.

Training and Other Support for Career Advancement

Extending measures to promote equal opportunities such as mentoring programs and training to encourage further active participation and career advancement among women

External mentoring programs to develop leaders

These programs comprise career design seminars run by professional mentors, one-on-one mentoring, and talk sessions with various female role models playing active roles outside the Bank. They enable employees to understand that all kinds of ways of working and careers exist and also to identify which career would allow them to make the most of their personal strengths as they map out their own career design and action plan together with their mentors. These programs provide opportunities to encourage greater awareness and action with regard to future career targets.



Cross-industry seminars to develop the next generation of female leaders

We send female employees to cross-industry seminars including coaching, which help provide opportunities for them to learn, have new experiences, take on challenges, and grow in preparation for active roles as the female leaders and managers of the future. By sending potential leaders to these seminars, we provide them with opportunities to network with female employees in various industries who are working toward leadership roles and to acquire the practical business skills and mindset necessary for career advancement.



Career forums

Female directors with roles both inside and outside the Bank (i.e., role models playing active roles in business management) give lectures about their careers, followed by group discussions among the participating employees. These forums offer an opportunity for employees to envisage an overall picture of their future working life at an early stage in their careers, leading to greater awareness regarding future career development, and increased motivation to participate actively and grow.



Round-table discussions with role model employees

These discussions provide younger employees with an opportunity to interact and talk in a small-group roundtable setting with more experienced employees (role models) playing active roles in a range of workplaces. Listening to the role models enables the younger employees to gain a more detailed idea of their future working life, increasing their motivation to advance in their careers. The discussions offer an opportunity to improve understanding of how to combine work with one's own life events and deal with new challenges, leading to greater awareness regarding future career development and increased motivation to participate actively and grow.



Columns

Column 1

Norinchukin Zenkyoren Asset Management Co., Ltd.

This company is a joint venture between the Norinchukin Bank and JA Zenkyoren (National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives); it is a unique entity that serves as an asset management company for the JA Group. The company brings together directors and employees with all kinds of backgrounds, who hold open and vigorous discussions on a day-to-day basis with a view to creating new business models.

In April 2022, following an exchange of opinions by all employees, the company decided to incorporate sustainability into its business management, aiming to help realize a productive and prosperous future in which pursuit of customers' medium- to long-term interests and creation of a sustainable environment and society form a virtuous cycle. D&I is also a key consideration within the company's management. Aiming to create an organization in which not only women, but employees of all kinds including those with disabilities can participate actively and grow, everybody in the company from the president down is pulling together in an effort to successfully combine work and private time, as well as to establish work practices that maintain a balance between time spent working and time off. To create a workplace culture and environment that enable both men and women to be fully involved in raising their children while also pursuing fulfilling careers, the company encourages all its employees including men to proactively take parental

leave and paid leave.

In addition, the company is working to obtain Kurumin certification (official recognition by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of companies that support their employees in balancing work and family). At the same time, it is taking steps to employ more people with disabilities and empower them in the workplace.

Within an organizational culture that values diversity, the share of female managers at the company now exceeds 10%; among these female managers are some who successfully extended the scope of their activities by switching from the administrative track to the career track. As the company has many business partners overseas, employees regularly experience the power of diversity through exposure to creative work involving different languages or values.



Column 2

The Cooperative Servicing Co., Ltd.

This company contributes to more efficient and advanced loan management operations, primarily by purchasing and collecting the non-performing loans of JA Bank and JF Marine Bank and seeking early repayment of delinquent loans.

The company's call center, which is responsible for seeking early repayment of delinquent loans including loans by JA Bank, is required to provide customer service that is courteous and reliable. It must also work rapidly: for example, it needs to contact several thousand debtors on busy days.

In 2022, a female employee took up the senior leadership position in the call center for the first time as its director. The role requires estimating the anticipated number of delinquent loans from day to day and drawing up work shifts including nights and Saturdays. It also entails providing support to employees who play key roles in call handling according to their individual experience and skills, and addressing employees' individual requests for guidance in detail. Drawing on her expertise and outstanding

communication skills backed up by many years of experience, as well as the deep trust she commands from her team members, the new director is very effectively managing the call center.

In the words of the call center director herself: "When I was first offered the position of director, I was very surprised as there was no precedent for a female director, and I also remember feeling unsure about whether I was actually up to the role. But I have the support of my colleagues, and we are running the call center smoothly by all working together."



Column 3

Norinchukin Facilities Co., Ltd.

This company is a wholly owned Group company of the Norinchukin Bank that supports the Bank and the JA Group through creation of office environments and building management (i.e., facilities management services), primarily in relation to office relocations or changes in office layout by companies in the Norinchukin Bank Group. The company is also responsible for purchasing and managing movable property and equipment, managing housing for employees, and managing leased assets.

The company previously offered two separate employment categories—career-track and administrative-track—and most female employees worked on the administrative track, providing support services for the career track. In 2019, however, the company revised its personnel system, making the move to a single employment category. Its aims in so doing were to become an organization to which all employees could contribute in a range of different ways and to adopt a fair employee appraisal system focused on abilities and contribution in the workplace rather than seniority or gender.

As a result, the company now boasts a workplace environment in which all employees both male and female can take on a variety of work according to their own motivation, abilities, and aptitude, and this has led to their involvement in a wider range of work.

One example relates to changes in layout and management of construction projects at the Bank's main office and branches. Female employees would previously have been tasked mainly with clerical work relating to construction contracts and payments, but now they are involved in a wide range of tasks as personnel responsible for negotiations with construction contractors, and they participate in on-site meetings regarding facilities management, including making long-distance business trips.



Column 4

Nochu Business Support Co., Ltd.

This company is also a wholly owned Group company of the Norinchukin Bank, and it specializes in performing the Bank's financial administration within Japan. Nochu Business Support shares the Purpose common to all Norinchukin Bank Group companies, which begins with the words, "Dedicated to sustaining all life." Guided by this Group-wide Purpose, the company set what it refers to as Our Company's Purpose, based on the opinions expressed by all its employees: "We will provide administrative support to help sustain all life in tomorrow's world. Each of us will focus on our own future potential to provide high-quality financial administrative services as professionals."

The company is endeavoring to create a workplace environment in which all kinds of employees can participate actively; its corporate purpose, as cited above, was decided by drawing not only on the opinions of female employees, who play a key role within the company, but also on a diverse range of opinions from other individuals. Many people with disabilities are playing active roles within the company, and employee-led inclusion initiatives to create a

workplace in which everybody can participate actively include organizing regular sign-language courses.

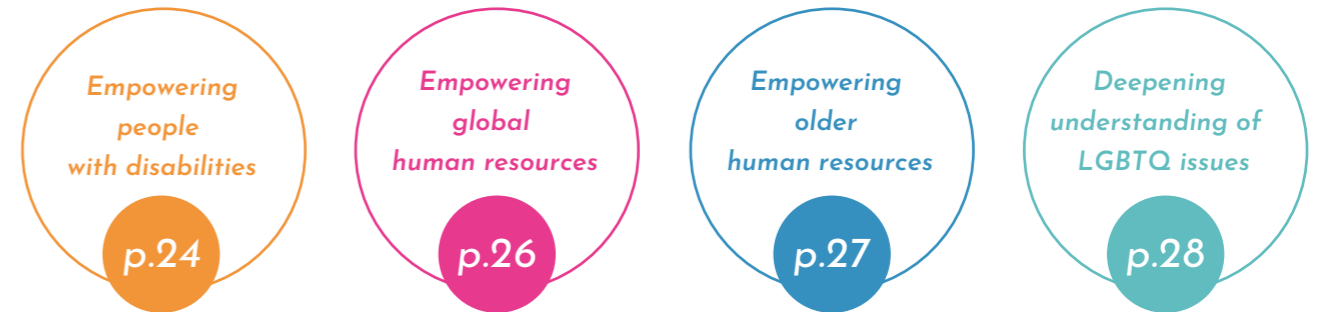
Nochu Business Support is working to develop its human resources and establish an organization in which individual employees of all kinds—regardless of gender or disability—can deal with life events in order to continue participating actively in the workplace and growing.



Improving All-Round Diversity

The word diversity comprises many different aspects such as (1) diversity in terms of obvious attributes including gender, nationality, and age, (2) diversity in terms of work-related attributes such as abilities and experience, and (3) diversity in terms of mindset such as character, values, and career aspirations. The Bank is aiming to pursue multifaceted diversity that encompasses all these aspects.

Attribute-based diversity



Aiming for equal opportunities that enable everybody to participate actively and grow, the Bank is continuing to pursue initiatives addressing inclusion and the active participation of women, while also seeking to promote all-round diversity by enhancing its concrete measures and initiatives in regard to various other forms of attribute-based diversity.

Knowledge-based diversity

Diversity in terms of abilities and experience

One way in which we are working to improve our knowledge-based diversity in terms of skills, abilities, experience, and other factors is by increasing opportunities for various forms of on-the-job and off-the-job training to encourage every single employee to participate actively and grow. We are also making a point of hiring and promoting external human resources with specialist expertise who have built up careers and experience in other organizations

Active participation of external human resources (mid-career hiring)

Given the need to improve knowledge and skills of all kinds in every business domain, we are striving to empower employees with various abilities and experience in the workplace and boost organizational vitality. To that end, we are actively pursuing mid-career hiring of human resources with specialist expertise from outside our organization, as well as the hiring of local specialists at our overseas offices.

A large number of employees hired mid-career are now serving as directors and executive officers, as well as playing active roles in various divisions within the Bank.



Link Mid-career hiring website (in Japanese only) <http://www.nochubank-saiyo.com/career/>

Mindset-based diversity

Supporting autonomous career development

Developing an organizational culture that embraces a diverse range of values

In fiscal 2023, the Bank adopted a new personnel system that enables individual employees to choose their own career paths autonomously and enhance their expertise as they participate actively in the workplace and grow. We are aiming to be an organization in which employees espousing a range of values and career aspirations can better demonstrate their various unique characters through career development.



◆◆ Attribute-Based Diversity ◆◆

Active Participation of People with Disabilities

The Bank offers training to improve understanding around disabilities and is working to establish a workplace environment in which employees with disabilities can continue working with peace of mind over the long term. Through such initiatives, the Bank aims to be an organization in which employees with disabilities can demonstrate their capabilities and unique characters to the full and enjoy job satisfaction while continuing to participate actively and grow.



Initiatives in action

✔ Initiatives including training for all employees to improve understanding of disabilities

We hold regular training for all employees on the topic of disability, offering them the opportunity to improve their understanding. In addition, Diversity & Inclusion News provides details of initiatives to empower people with disabilities in the workplace.

✔ Introduction of speech recognition software

In response to requests for speech recognition software from hearing-impaired employees, in April 2022 we introduced a speech recognition app. We are extending use of the app to directors and the employees' managers, and seeking to promote effective use by listening to feedback from users and compiling advice and specific examples relating to its utilization into a handbook.

✔ Other initiatives

In May 2023, the Bank entered into a sponsorship agreement with the Japan Agriculture and Welfare Partnership Association, aiming to support the association's work to increase and further develop partnerships combining agriculture and welfare, and to improve our knowledge of associated initiatives. The Bank's Purpose and promotion of D&I (including empowerment of people with disabilities) are highly compatible with such agriculture-welfare partnerships. We therefore intend to improve our knowledge and understanding of the association's initiatives in order to do more to support active participation in the workplace by people with disabilities, as well as to contribute to resolving societal issues.

Partnerships combining agriculture and welfare are initiatives that give people with disabilities and others opportunities to become involved in the agricultural sector, thereby enabling them to participate in the wider society with confidence and a sense of purpose

✔ Flexible work arrangements including working from home

We are increasing options with regard to work hours and work locations by adopting remote working and introducing the flextime system in more workplaces. Through these initiatives, we aim to be an organization in which everybody can autonomously and flexibly choose or adjust how they work, overcoming various constraints to continue participating actively and growing.

✔ Establishment of consultation desks for people with disabilities

We established consultation desks for people with disabilities after setting guidelines for the desks' inquiry handling, and are currently working on appropriate operation of the desks.



Info

The Bank now sponsors the Japan Agriculture and Welfare Partnership Association!

The Japan Agriculture and Welfare Partnership Association was set up to serve as a platform encompassing organizations involved in partnerships combining agriculture and welfare throughout Japan.

ノウ フク

日本農福連携協会

農業と福祉の連携のプラットフォーム

Sponsorship by the Bank

As an annual sponsor, the Norinchukin Bank is providing strong support for the association's activities throughout this year, making a huge contribution to the promotion of partnerships combining agriculture and welfare.

Columns

Column 1

Norinchukin Business Assist Co., Ltd. (NBA)

This company was set up as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Norinchukin Bank Group in December 2016 to promote the employment of people with disabilities and contribute to creating an inclusive society. It is a company in which a diverse range of employees work together as they participate actively in the workplace. Around half of NBA's employees have disabilities and the company also employs a large number of women and older personnel with extensive work experience.

NBA undertakes a variety of outsourced work including dealing with account inquiries from public authorities and other organizations, issuing promissory notes and checks, and managing dispatched temporary staff. It keeps a close eye on the strengths and potential of each employee with a disability as employees of all kinds cooperate and work in partnership to perform such work.

Moreover, NBA continually endeavors to take on new outsourced work in order to create a workplace that offers job satisfaction for people with disabilities, thereby striving to offer more opportunities for them to participate actively. Having received a new contract in November 2021 to undertake part of a work project for the Bank's Global Investments (GI) HQ and performed the work reliably, the

company received the GI HQ prize in the Bank's fiscal 2021 business awards.

By outsourcing work to NBA, the Bank and its Group companies can divert their own human resources to work that offers higher added value or generates earnings. Meanwhile, NBA can take advantage of such outsourced work to hire more people with disabilities and create a workplace that offers job satisfaction, and as a result is able to comply with the statutory employment rate for people with disabilities on a stable basis. Going forward, NBA will continue seeking to forge win-win relationships of this kind, as it redoubles its efforts to promote the employment of people with disabilities and contribute to creating an inclusive society.



Column 2

Aiming to create a supportive work environment for everybody: sign language classes in the workplace

The world we seek to achieve by promoting D&I is one in which individuals value and welcome worldviews that differ from their own, enjoying and actively embracing differences in terms of gender, age, nationality, and other attributes. One example of an initiative to create a supportive work environment for everybody is the sign language classes held in the workplace each month.

Message from an employee (instructor) who teaches sign language classes

I think that what will help in promoting D&I is to further strengthen connections between deaf people and hearing people by always trying to find ways of communicating that are better for both, in order to create a supportive work environment for everybody. We hope that employees who have even the slightest interest in sign language will get in touch with us. Your courage to get involved can change the world!



Attribute-Based Diversity

Active Participation of Global Human Resources

The Norinchukin Bank operates its food and agriculture business globally with a focus on Asia, and more than 70% of our invested assets under management comprise investments made overseas. Global business expansion and internationally diversified investment are therefore key pillars of the Bank's business. In light of this business model, we have stipulated a global approach as one of the values that directors and employees should prioritize.

In Diversity Year One (2022), the president visited the Bank's overseas offices. Through dialogue with local employees, the president shared his expectations regarding the role to be played by the overseas offices—which are a step ahead in terms of D&I—in further enhancing D&I throughout the Norinchukin Bank Group from a global perspective.

Aiming to be an organization in which global human resources can participate actively and grow, the Bank is making use of its systems for overseas assignment and study to actively develop global human resources, as well as locally hiring and promoting overseas personnel with specialist expertise.

Examples of initiatives

- ✔ Offering cross-cultural training to enable culturally diverse employees of different nationalities to deepen their understanding of each other
- ✔ Accelerating D&I in workplaces by proactively hiring locally overseas
- ✔ Empowering global human resources through promotion to management and executive positions in overseas offices
- ✔ Drawing on the global perspective of local overseas employees to revitalize the Bank's organizational operations and management



Column

D&I Initiatives at Norinchukin Bank Europe N.V.

Norinchukin Bank Europe (NBE) is a bank established in the Netherlands that conducts financial business throughout Europe; it is a wholly owned Group company of the Norinchukin Bank. NBE is one of the Bank's most diverse Group companies: its ratio of men to women is nearly equal and its employees hail from 16 countries; each individual brings their own different background in terms of career, education, family situation, and so on, as they participate actively in the workplace, demonstrating their own personality.

At NBE, it is considered important to understand each other's thinking, goals, vision, and unique character by listening to each other with open minds and without judgment, showing interest and curiosity in those one interacts with, and demonstrating understanding and respect. That mindset is also reflected in NBE's Corporate

Values: Openness, Sensitivity, Engagement, and Cooperation (OSEC).

NBE's corporate culture of embracing diversity is sustained by a range of initiatives including (1) executives setting an example with attitudes and behavior that are open-minded and accepting of diversity, (2) hiring and training employees who identify with NBE's purpose and culture and can contribute to diversity, (3) offering interactive training to promote understanding of different cultures, and (4) brainstorming meetings to bring in opinions and feedback from new perspectives.

NBE's D&I initiatives also help to improve employee engagement and create a workplace in which employees can participate actively with peace of mind by uniting an extremely diverse range of individuals to create a strong team culture.



Attribute-Based Diversity

Active Participation of Older Human Resources

At the Norinchukin Bank, older human resources are active in a variety of fields, making the most of their rich knowledge, experience, and abilities. The Bank provides support for career and capacity development through training and other programs to enable individual employees to choose a career that would make them continuously active inside and outside the organization in line with their own career perspectives and working styles, while autonomously enhancing their expertise.



Examples of initiatives

- ✔ Career-related training to facilitate active participation inside and outside the organization
- ✔ Capacity development training that leads to autonomous learning to acquire expertise (e.g., knowledge or skills)
- ✔ Continuous employment system

Column

Below are some comments and advice provided by the Bank's long-serving employees, who have drawn on their extensive knowledge and experience to continue working for 40 years or more.

Messages for young employees

- ✔ You spend a major portion of each day in the workplace, so enjoy your work.
- ✔ It's not good to be bound by old ways of doing things, but when working on something new, it's important to take past events and experiences into account and incorporate the positive aspects. I suggest combining the great ideas of young employees with the useful knowledge of experienced employees.
- ✔ I think it's important for managers and older employees who have plenty of experience to guard against making hasty judgments when they speak to younger employees, and instead to be mindful of the need to listen to younger employees' opinions while sharing their own experiences.

What do you try to bear in mind when working in a team?

- ✔ I'm mindful of simply paying attention to what others say to me. As a result, I'm often asked all sorts of things by employees in other lines. I try to create an atmosphere in which it's easy to talk by speaking to colleagues when they pass by.
- ✔ The less people speak out about struggling with their work, the more likely I am to worry about them and make a point of engaging them in conversation. Whenever there's a big project that places certain people under the spotlight, there are always others in the background supporting them. I think it's important to acknowledge and praise those people in supporting roles.



Attribute-Based Diversity

Deepening Understanding of LGBTQ Issues

We are providing education to promote a deeper, more accurate understanding of LGBTQ issues among our employees. This education is also intended to create a workplace where everybody can enjoy peace of mind and feel safe to work as they like, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, remaining free from harassment and discrimination.



Info What does LGBTQ stand for?

Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Transgender
Questioning

In addition, people sometimes use the terms LGBTQ+ (with an added plus sign) or LGBTs (in the plural). These usages imply that, despite LGBTQ being a collective term for sexual minorities, the term encompasses a diverse range of individuals who cannot easily be grouped together under the same label.

Examples of initiatives

- Educational activities to promote understanding and training to raise awareness
 - Educational activities via Diversity & Inclusion News
 - Deepening understanding of LGBTQ issues via e-learning
 - Lectures for employees by external experts active as LGBTQ representatives



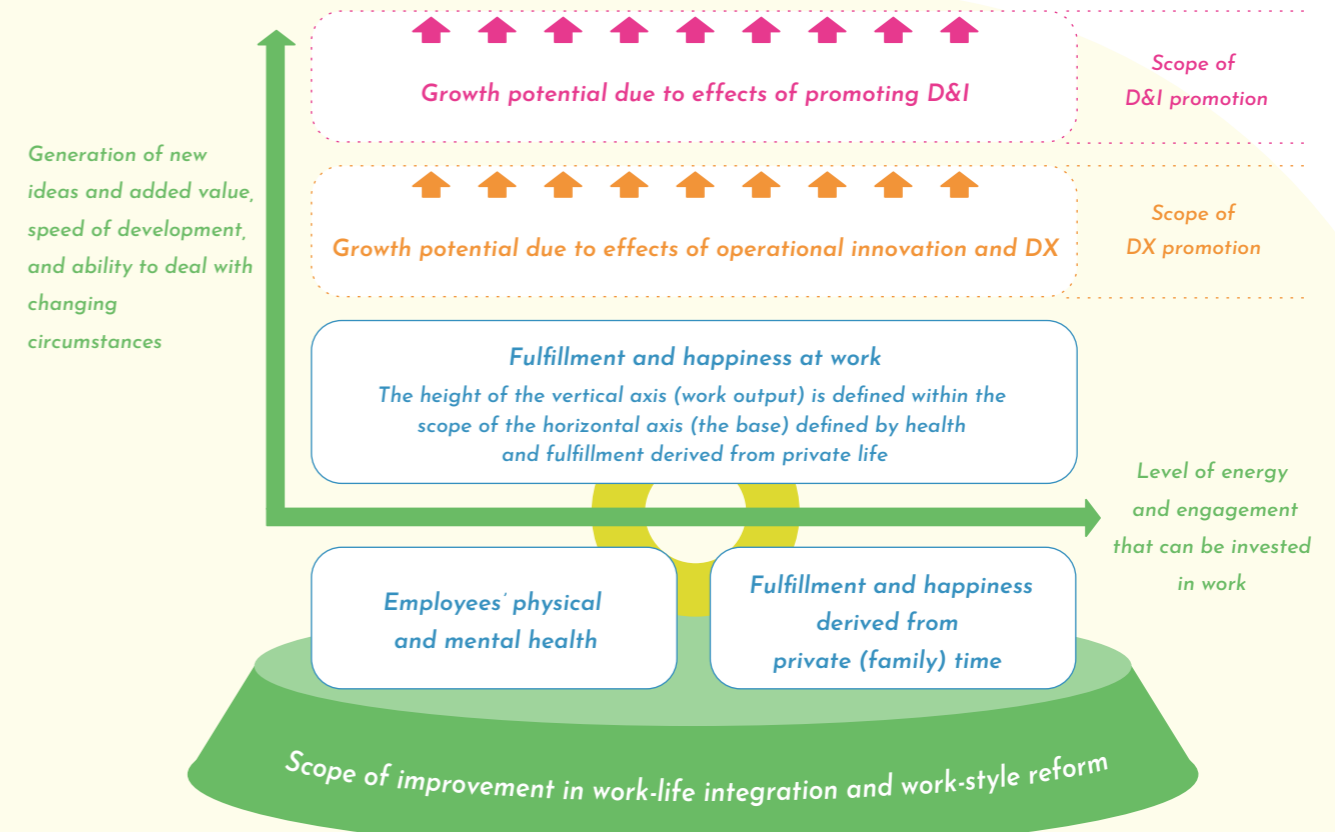
Column

Kyodo Housing Loan Co., Ltd.

The company provides loan and guarantee services as a residential mortgage specialist firm in which the JA Bank Group including the Norinchukin Bank are major investors. In light of the increasing interest in diversity throughout society in recent years, in 2021 Kyodo Housing Loan sought to meet the diverse range of customer needs by starting to offer residential mortgages for couples that include same-sex partners within their definition of the term spouse. Aiming to realize financing for everybody, the company is contributing to the creation of a sustainable society in which everybody can live with peace of mind.

Furthermore, in 2023, Kyodo Housing Loan also started offering its residential mortgage for parents, which allows borrowers to make interest-only repayments for up to two years after taking maternity or parental leave. This product for employees of corporate clients is designed to help the generation who are actively involved in parenting to acquire housing with more ease. By offering products that help workers to combine parenting with work, the company assists working men and women in participating actively in the workplace and growing over the long term, supporting the wider society's D&I initiatives from a financial perspective.

Seeking to Enable Work-Life Integration



The phrase work-life balance may conjure an image of balancing a scale by placing greater emphasis on either work or life while reducing the emphasis on the other. However, at Norinchukin Bank we are seeking to establish organizations and workplaces conducive to work-life integration that enables employees to fully combine their work and private lives, deriving fulfillment from both.

The keys to better work-life integration that will support promotion of D&I



- Support for work-life integration and active participation**
 - Support via parental leave, caregiving leave, flextime, and other systems relating to work hours
 - Support via remote working, ICT, and other infrastructure and systems relating to work location
 - Support for work-life integration and active participation through autonomous choice and adjustment of work hours and work location
- Time-conscious and balanced ways of working**
 - Management of work assignments and hours worked (reduction of constant long work hours) to address the needs of employees whose working life is time-restricted
 - Improvement of time-based productivity by eliminating time wasted, prioritizing, and sharing information
- A workplace culture with awareness**
 - A workplace in which employees are accepting of diverse values and lifestyles and try to understand that others have personal circumstances (e.g., life events such as parenting and caregiving, or self-development) just as they themselves do

Initiatives Targeting Flexible and Diverse Ways of Working

Awareness-raising and pursuit of flexible ways of working to reform work styles

Introduction of systems that enable employees to overcome constraints in terms of work hours or work location to participate actively

The Bank is rising to the challenge of establishing flexible and diverse ways of working to enable individual employees with all kinds of backgrounds to demonstrate their abilities to the full. To that end, we aim to be an organization in which everybody can autonomously choose or adjust their work hours or work location, overcoming various constraints on their career development to continue to play a highly productive role and grow.

Systems available

Flexitime system (no core hours)

This system enables employees to exercise their own discretion in deciding what time to start and finish work, as long as they continue to perform their work assignments and responsibilities properly. Since 2022, we have introduced the flexitime system in more workplaces. We are therefore offering an environment in which even employees with time constraints can avoid giving up their career and continue to work and participate actively in a way that suits them by autonomously choosing or adjusting their work hours.

Systems facilitating autonomous choice or adjustment of work location

Our initiatives to support flexible ways of working unconstrained by specific work locations include establishing an environment that allows for working from home (telecommuting), introducing a hot desking system, and establishing satellite offices in order to overcome various location-related constraints as we aim to be an organization in which employees can continue to play highly productive roles and grow over the long term.

Feedback from users of these systems

Work hours: Flexitime system

- I appreciate the flexibility of being able to choose working hours that enable me to combine work with my private life, including dropping off and picking up my child at daycare.
- As I can adjust my work hours, I decided to switch back from reduced hours to full time employment.
- When my workload is particularly busy at certain times of the month, or when work needs to be done early in the morning, I can adjust my workload or the time of day at which I work to maintain a balance between time spent working and time off.

Work location: Working from home (telecommuting)

- I'm now able to put the time and energy I previously used for daily commuting into work instead.
- When it comes to projects that require research or analysis, I can concentrate for hours at a time, so it's easier to make progress.

Time-conscious ways of working to maintain balance between time spent working and time off

We are enabling sustainable, healthy ways of working by pursuing business operations focused on curtailing total working hours and improving productivity to allow for balance to be maintained between time spent working and time off.

- Visualization of work hours at the executive level (p. 13)
- Introduction of the work interval system (p. 19)
- Initiatives focused on improving productivity (e.g., work-style reform)

Cultivating an organizational culture conducive to work-style reform

As a means of enabling work-life integration, we are calling on all workplaces to encourage planned use of paid leave, including consecutive days of leave.

Refer to the web page below for details of paid leave take-up rates

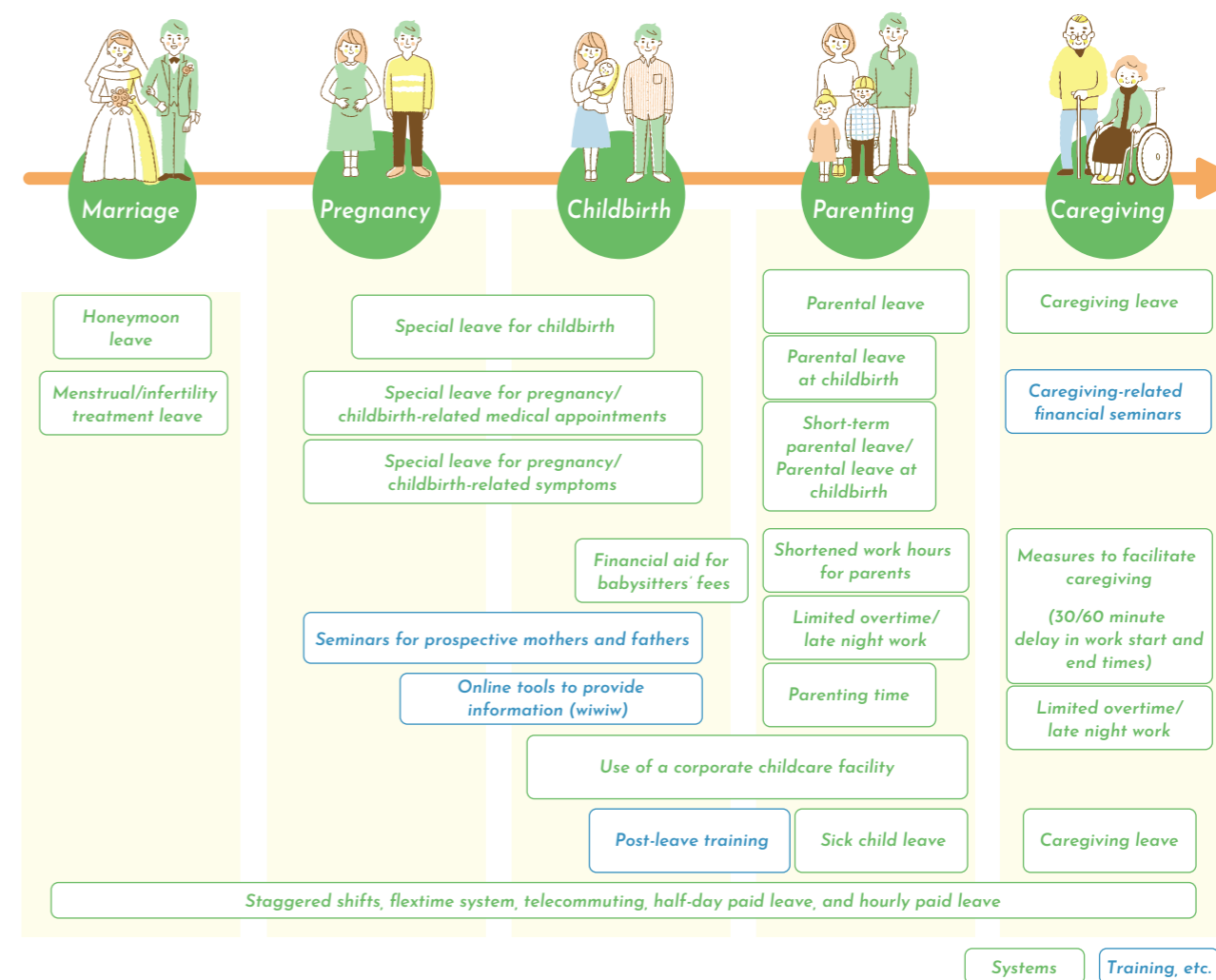
Link [Link ESG Data https://www.nochubank.or.jp/en/sustainability/disclosure/esg/](https://www.nochubank.or.jp/en/sustainability/disclosure/esg/)

Initiatives Facilitating Work-Life Integration for Continued Active Participation and Growth

Combining Work with Parenting or Caregiving

We are seeking to enable work-life integration that allows employees to pursue fulfillment in both their work and private lives by improving our systems to help them combine work with personal commitments and striving to cultivate a positive workplace culture in which such circumstances receive understanding and support. Through these efforts, we aim to help employees continue participating actively and growing without having to worry about how to combine their work and home lives, or give up their career, due to parenting or caregiving commitments.

Systems and training to help employees combine work with parenting or caregiving



Initiatives Supporting the Raising of the Next Generation

In February 2021, the Norinchukin Bank received the Platinum Kurumin Certification (official recognition by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) as a company that is implementing initiatives of a high standard to provide a sound environment for raising the children who will be the next generation of citizens and to support employees in combining parenting with work. We will continue striving to create a healthy, dynamic workplace and further improve our employees' work-life integration.



Initiatives in Action

Lively Childcare Support Working Group

This working group, attended by male and female employees who had returned to work after parental leave, was held four times to discuss the measures necessary to enable both men and women to combine fulfillment at home through parenting with fulfillment at work and retain their motivation to participate actively and continue their careers. On the final occasion, proposals from working group participants were discussed with the CDO. Comments expressed during the working group meetings provided the basis for an improved range of support and measures to help dispel employees' concerns about losing their careers or work responsibilities while on parental leave.

Initiatives resulting from the working group

Updated guide detailing support for combining work with personal commitments

We completely updated the Bank's guide to maternity, parenting, caregiving, and other leave based on the comments of working group participants. Our key principles in doing so were to create a reference that would be easier to understand and that employees would make full use of. The guide provides useful information on support for combining work with personal commitments.

Provided opportunities for connecting with the workplace and for learning

Participants in the working group meetings also discussed ideas for dispelling employees' concerns about losing their connection with managers and colleagues or falling behind in terms of work-related knowledge and skills, and their worries about how to combine parenting with work as they prepare to return to the workplace. Prompted by these discussions, we put in place the communication infrastructure necessary to connect employees with the workplace during maternity and parental leave, and before they return to work. In addition to reassuring employees that they can make contact with their managers and colleagues whenever necessary, this infrastructure also enables them to access training for self-development or upskilling even during their leave, or as they prepare to return to the workplace. We have now established an environment that provides employees with reassurance about returning to work even if they have had to take time off from their career temporarily due to a life event.

Other initiatives implemented or expanded in response to working group participants' comments

- Improved training to prepare for life events
 - ➔ Seminars for prospective mothers and fathers, external career-design mentoring, etc.
- Improved training following life events
 - ➔ Post-leave training, etc.
- Improved access to flexible ways of working to facilitate work-life integration and active participation
 - ➔ Flextime system, etc.
- Understanding of work-life integration in the workplace and support for work-life integration and active participation following return to work
 - ➔ Training and seminars on related topics for employees and managers, e-learning, etc.



Feedback from working group participants



I heard about the working group and wanted to be of help in some way, so I decided to participate. And I was very pleased to find that the Bank is more determined to make positive changes than I had expected.



I'm very grateful that the Bank offers opportunities for a diverse range of employees to have their comments listened to, as was the case during this working group. It left me feeling confident that the Bank is set to become a more supportive work environment and motivated me for the future.



I found it valuable to make contact with other people in the same situation as me and talk with them, while it was also a good opportunity to examine my own way of working. I look forward to seeing the comments expressed during the working group being reflected in the Bank's future initiatives.



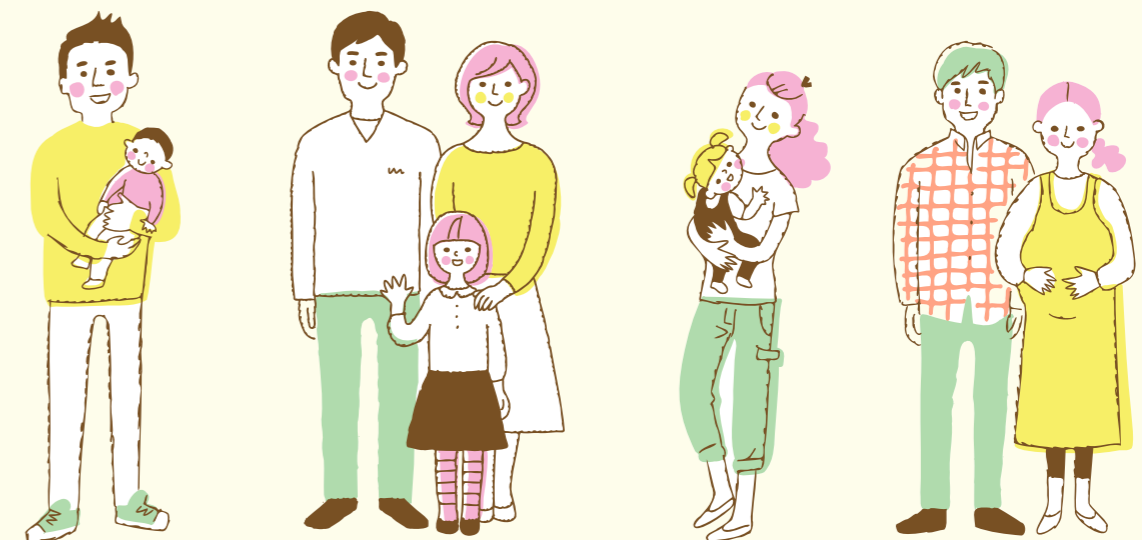
Although I returned to work because I enjoy my job, I ended up not being able to work for days on end because my child would catch colds and couldn't go to daycare, and that got me down sometimes. In the midst of dealing with that, I participated in this working group, and was encouraged by hearing the comments of other people who were parenting at the same time as me, and those who had finished the early-childhood stage of parenting.



It was refreshing to hear the comments of people who, like me, had returned to work after maternity or parental leave, and were combining work with parenting. I hope the comments that came up will be taken on board so that the work environment will be more supportive for people who take maternity or parental leave in future.



I welcome the Bank's efforts to gather comments from employees who have actually taken maternity or parental leave and put this feedback to good use for the future. And I found it valuable to exchange views with other people in the same situation as me and share my concerns. Thank you.



Columns

Diversity & Inclusion News: Feature on an ikumen father

Aiming to raise the take-up rate of parental leave by men to 100%, the Bank is striving to create a workplace in which work-life integration is understood and supported. Associated initiatives include offering seminars by external instructors conveying the importance of men taking parental leave. Feedback from fathers who have taken parental leave include comments such as, "I was grateful for the understanding and support of my colleagues when I was on leave. I'd like to give the same solid support to my younger colleagues when their time comes." and "The constraints that come with parenting made me more aware of how to work productively and effectively."

Below are the comments of an Ikumen* father who took parental leave for over a month.

*Ikumen is the Japanese term for a man who enjoys parenting and grows through parenting.

How did your wife feel about you taking leave?

After the birth, my wife was often physically exhausted, so having another adult around day and night to take care of our baby seems to have helped. I think it's only possible for a father to help out for a long time during the day if he

takes parental leave.

What were the benefits of taking leave?

As a result of experiencing the post-birth ups and downs as a couple, my wife and I gained a greater understanding of each other and became closer. I established an atmosphere that will enable my younger colleagues to follow in my footsteps. And I became more considerate of my colleagues.

What household and parenting skills did you acquire?

My household skills—particularly cooking—improved dramatically. As it was our second baby, I started looking for shortcuts.

Was there anything in particular you tried to do prior to taking leave?

I spoke to my manager about it as soon as possible, and told my team as well. I asked them to get involved in my tasks and collaborate with me. I also took steps such as providing information on who would be taking over from me to the people I deal with outside the Bank so that they wouldn't be inconvenienced during my leave.



..... The Norinchukin Bank's Personnel System

The Bank offers a variety of options within its personnel system to enable employees to combine work with life events such as childbirth, parenting, and caregiving while participating actively and autonomously developing their own careers.

✔ Employee transfer opt in/opt out

We introduced an option for employees themselves to choose whether or not to be transferred to a different work location, subject to certain rules, so that they can accommodate life events such as childbirth, parenting, or caregiving. This has been accomplished by excluding locational transfer from career track requirements.

✔ Leave for transfer of spouse

We introduced an option for employees to take a leave of absence in order to accompany and live together with their spouse at the same address or residence, subject to certain rules. (This helps employees to continue participating actively in the Bank, whereas previously, difficulty in combining work with life events such as childbirth, parenting, or caregiving might have forced them into choosing to give up their job completely when their spouse was transferred to a different work location.)

✔ Reentry by former employees

We introduced an option whereby employees who gave up their job at the Bank due to their spouse being transferred to a different work location far away, or due to life events such as childbirth, parenting, or caregiving, may be rehired if they so wish, subject to certain rules. (In addition to targeting former employees who gave up their job due to difficulty in combining their work and home lives, this option also offers former employees who left to take on new challenges elsewhere greater opportunity to work at the Bank again).

Column 1

Nochu Information System Co., Ltd.

This Group company develops and operates all the Group companies' IT systems, as well as one of Japan's biggest retail banking systems, designed to deliver the various financial services offered by the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA) across the country. Nochu Information System is taking positive action to employ women and when women join the company, colleagues already working there are assigned as their mentors to provide a range of support. Moreover, progress has been made in terms of the areas in which female employees work and their opportunities for personal growth: for instance, they are now assigned to the Norinchukin Bank's branches in Japan and overseas, which was not previously the case.

The increase in its female employees prompted the company to start new training specifically for women. Recently, the company has strived to improve its training options, including offering career-design training requested by

employees (in the form of a lecture on diversity in relation to women's working practices.)

In addition, the company is improving its systems to help employees combine work with personal commitments and encouraging use of these systems. Employees including female managers and men make good use of systems such as parental leave and shortened work hours, and these systems underpin a supportive workplace environment.



Column 2

Kyodo Housing Loan Co., Ltd.

At this company, the president and other executives are leading efforts to create a workplace in which employees of all kinds can continue to participate actively and grow while dealing with various constraints. In its operational plan each year, the company sets target rates of annual paid leave taken and monitors progress with a view to establishing ways of working that maintain a balance between time spent working and time off. Monitoring of progress by executives has led to a change in the awareness and behavior of employees, enabling the organization as a whole to work together toward achieving the targets.

Other initiatives to offer greater flexibility in terms of work hours and work location include the introduction of systems for staggering shifts in blocks of 30 minutes and for parents to shorten their work hours in blocks of 15 minutes, as well as ways of working that enable telecommuting. One comment received from an employee who makes use of these systems was, "As employees can choose their working hours flexibly according to their own family's circumstances, I'm able to work with peace of mind, while being eternally grateful for the understanding and help of my managers and colleagues."

In addition, the company seeks to encourage employees who take leave from their careers for reasons such as childbirth or parenting to return to the workplace as soon as possible by offering systems for provision of financial assistance that help employees to combine work with parenting after their return, such as the babysitter fee subsidy system and the daycare fee subsidy system. In the words of an employee

who uses the daycare subsidy system, "Daycare fees are higher than I expected, so I'm very grateful to receive a subsidy from the company during the period before I become eligible for free childcare."

Besides these systems, the company offers the special event leave system, which enables employees to take leave separately from regular annual paid leave for special events such as the birthday of the employee or a family member, or an event at their child's school. It also offers the reentry system for former employees who want to return to work at the company after leaving due to circumstances beyond their control, providing them with information about vacancies at the company whenever it is recruiting, according to their requirements.

An employee who took special event leave described it as follows, "My paid leave tends to get used up with things like illnesses—whether my own or my child's—but as this leave can be taken separately from regular paid leave, I can take leave for special occasions such as my child's school events without having to worry."





臆せず挑戦
Don't hesitate to try something new

助け合える
チームづくり
Create teams of people
who can help each other



体験に勝る教科書なし。
No textbook can beat personal experience



周りとお自分の
笑顔大切に
Value happiness—for yourself, and for others



子どもに負けない
好奇心
Be as curious as a child

一日一笑
A smile a day



All is well
All is well



「存在意義」なんです！
Our Purpose is key!

一所懸命
Give it all you've got



一期一会
Treasure every encounter



信じてみる
Just believe



行動力×共感力×没頭力
Dynamism x empathy x ability to immerse oneself



Empowering All Individuals to Pursue a Bright Future

The Norinchukin Bank will continue initiatives to increase D&I within its organization, encouraging all the individuals united in commitment to its Purpose to pursue a path toward a bright future and attainment of that Purpose.



NORINCHUKIN

農林中央金庫