

Initiatives to Promote Diversity & Inclusion

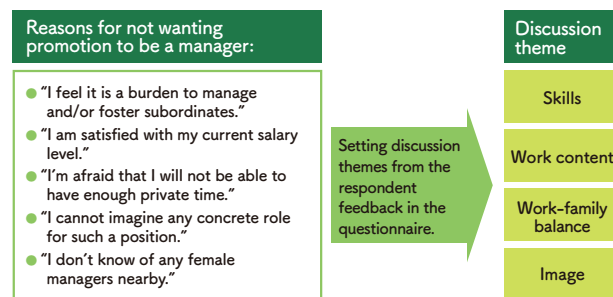
The Bank designated 2022 as “the first year of diversity” to engage in active efforts to form an organization where not only females but also other diverse employees can work and play active roles.

Initiatives during Fiscal 2021

Questionnaire for female employees

The Bank conducted a questionnaire in July 2021 to monitor how female employees viewed their worksites and work style (number of respondents: 1,036 persons, response rate: 77.3%). Asked “What are the good things about working at the Bank?,” the most frequent response was the salary and benefit package, followed by the amiable and inviting atmosphere and the Bank’s stable management. Regarding “Are the various programs for employees on pregnancy and childcare leave sufficient?” and “Are those programs easily accessible?,” 80%–90% of the subjects responded “fulfilling” or “easily accessible.”

In response to “Do you want to be a manager?,” approximately 20% of the respondents said, “Yes, I want to be” with comments such as “I feel that it would be attractive to have more discretion than my current situation.” Conversely, some responses indicated negative opinions regarding the anxiety of managing and fostering subordinates, uncertainty about the specific role of a manager and an uneasy feeling about having sufficient private time.



Women’s Empowerment Working Group

In August 2021, we launched the Women’s Empowerment Working Group (WG), which consists of 22 persons affiliated

with 14 divisions and branches, to study specific initiatives based on the responses from the female employee questionnaire. Four WG meetings have been held until now. As a result of the WG’s deliberations, four initiatives were proposed to the management of the Bank together with a plan on how to realize these initiatives. Specific policies are forthcoming based on the respective proposals. Furthermore, we intend to expand this WG’s activities and extensively reorganize it as the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group, which will be a forum to discuss the active participation of female and other diverse employees. We will therefore continue to discuss the relevant themes in fiscal 2022 and beyond.

Four Proposed Initiatives

1) Enhance awareness reform to encourage autonomous career formation of employees

The Bank shall clearly describe the skill sets that it expects employees to cultivate and disseminate that information in convincing messages from management.

2) Create opportunities for each employee to craft his/her career path

The Bank shall provide employees with specific guidance for optimizing their career advancement effort to clear their doubts.

3) Implement equality-based, objective assessment systems

The Bank shall equally evaluate employees who aim to improve their careers while taking care of housework and/or childcare in the pursuit of better work-family balance as the importance of achieving results in a short time is spreading throughout the Bank.

4) Review current in-house systems to support employees’ career advancement

The Bank shall review the current systems to support employees who are actively involved in further career advancement by raising their awareness of balancing home and work, regardless of gender.

From the Front Lines

Human Resources Division.
SHIINA Saki



The Bank has supported the ability of its employees to both raise a child and have a career with the early formulation of the General Employer Action Plan and being recognized with the platinum Kurumin Certification from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for its relevant systems. Moreover, in fiscal 2021, we launched various activities to further promote the active participation of women.

After conducting the questionnaire and addressing other diverse WG activities, we concluded there is a real need for awareness reform. In addition, several other needs emerged, for example, identifying a role model for women’s career advancement; establishing a new mechanism to evaluate the home-work balance of employees being engaged in short-time jobs; and further improving relevant systems. In March 2022, we held a panel discussion of female employees that include young employees who joined the Bank one or two years ago and those at mid-career and manager-level positions. This event was positively received as a good opportunity for senior employees to share their experiences with younger employees. In fiscal 2022, the Diversity Promotion Group was formed within the Human Resources Division to move forward with the Bank’s intention to fully promote diversity. Although the Bank mainly focuses on the promotion of active female participation currently, I intend to strive for a workplace where the diversity of people with disabilities, foreigners and LGBTQ+ individuals is reflected and where each employee can carry out his/her duties with confidence and a sense of inclusion.

Topics

Training of Officers

To promote the active participation of women and strive for work-style reform, awareness reform from management is essential. Accordingly, in December 2021, the Bank held an officer training by inviting managers nationwide and the members of the Active Female Participation Working Group, who attended as observers. At the training session, KOMURO Yoshie, President, Work-Life Balance Co, Ltd., delivered a lecture titled “Why Are Active Female Participation and Work-Style Reform Important Now for The Norinchukin Bank?: Promotion of the Active Participation of Women and Work-Style Reform to Improve Corporate Performance and Productivity.” Following her lecture, several officers expressed their opinions. One said that “a priority task should be to achieve a 100% rate of parental leave taken by male employees as part of work-style reform for male employees.” Another officer said that “the issue we need to prioritize is assessing and recognizing productivity per hour.” Several managers weighed in on the assessment of employees in terms of productivity per hour and how to make that information known to all employees. Opinions were also exchanged on what officers expect from managers and what managers expect from officers. This training session fostered an awareness that could be the foundation for future efforts.



A snapshot of the training

Future Orientation

It is important for an organization to transform itself into an entity that has and respects diversity where every director or employee, regardless of gender, can play an active role and work efficiently. The Bank announced the following three targets as core initiatives to be addressed from fiscal 2022 to fiscal 2024: “Achieve a 100% rate of parental leave taken by male employees,” “Implement and entrench various measures to promote work-style reforms” and “Increase the share of women in career-track/specified role new graduate hires to approximately 40%.” (See the General Employer Action Plan relative to the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation on page 62.)

As one of the “various measures to promote work-style reforms,” the Bank has expressed support for the “Work Interval Declaration” of work-life balance and thoroughly complies with the specified work interval of nine hours between working hours. In addition, we are determined to conduct further training on diversity promotion targeting senior management and employees at different layers of the organization. The Bank thus aims to create a corporate culture in which diverse human resources are recognized by others, talented employees can maximally demonstrate their capabilities and every employee feels worthwhile.

Rate of Women Hired	Career track	26%
	Specified roles	100%
	Regional	78%
Share of Female Employees	34.9%	
Share of Female Managers	6.6%	
Rate of parental leave taken by male employees	94%	

(Results from fiscal 2021)

Message from the Chief Diversity Officer

Managing Executive Officer (CDO)

UTSUMI Tomoe



In the New Year’s greeting for 2022, President OKU of the Bank declared that “2022 is the first year of diversity,” clearly indicating the promotion of diversity as an important management issue both inside and outside the Bank. I believe my role as CDO is to disseminate this approach to more senior management and employees so that they can better understand what is required for the further growth and development of the Bank.

I did not imagine having a role as management when I joined the Bank. Along the way, I was helped by understanding superiors even as I had to sometimes trust my child with a babysitter late into the night. I really feel how the words and encouragement of people around me and my superiors were important for me in those days. As I examined the circumstances at other companies after having assumed the CDO post, I’ve concluded the Bank’s handling of diversity is rather slow. It will be necessary, therefore, to foster an awareness of labor productivity per unit time company-wide.

We have introduced hourly paid leave and flextime systems as part of our work-style reforms. I am sure now is a good time to implement some innovations as the public understanding and practice of diversified work-style reforms, not limited to female employees, has grown in recent years, reflecting the social situation that forced remote work options during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fiscal 2022 and beyond, the Bank must promote new initiatives while removing any anxiety that our employees might feel. I will also accelerate inclusion-oriented initiatives. I would like to create a desirable labor environment in which everybody can work in a vibrant manner via the vigorous exchange of views while respecting each other.