



# UME-UME TIMES



PROFESSIONAL EDITION, NOVEMBER 2018

## Tackling Hunger with the Saizeriya System

The number of people who suffer from hunger across the globe today is 821 million, according to “Hunger Map 2018” made by the World Food Programme (WFP). The map shows that extensive hunger spreads throughout Asia and Africa. WFP also reports that in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, one in four people may have fallen into chronic food deprivation in 2017.

There are two kinds of starvation. The first one is sudden hunger. This is because of famine caused by natural disaster, population growth, conflict and food speculation. Despite food running out rapidly and extensively under such conditions, it usually draws public attention as a matter of urgency, hence extensive and immediate support. The more serious type is chronic hunger. In this situation, many people are unable to avoid preventable illness and death, causing a significant increase in mortality. It occurs owing to desertification, extreme weather and limited water resources. The solution to chronic hunger has yet to be found because malnutrition caused by it tends to go unnoticed.

To solve the issue, developing countries should establish reliable food production. If people suffering from chronic hunger could grow crops steadily and have stable incomes, the hunger rate would decrease, leading to realizing Sustainable Development Goal 2: “Zero Hunger.”

### ‘Planned Production’

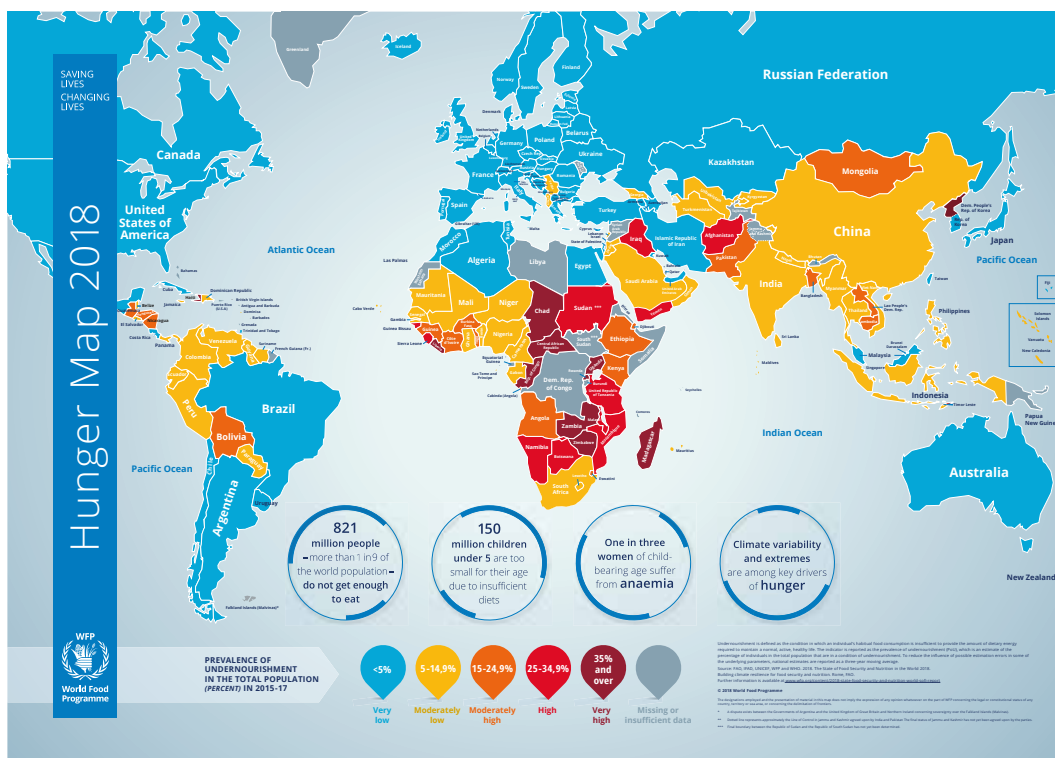
Saizeriya is a restaurant chain in Japan known for its low prices. For example, you can eat pasta for just 400 yen. There are good reasons why the chain offers food at such reasonable prices.

The company makes inexpensive dishes through a system called ‘Planned Production.’ For example, imagine a

situation whereby you have a wheat field and want to sell flour for making pasta. Which would you choose, a contract whereby you can sell 10 kg of flour for 10 dollars on a single day, or the same amount for 8 dollars over a year?

If you choose the former, you can get more money today, but it is not certain that you can also get such an amount tomorrow. On the other hand, if you choose the latter, although your flour will be sold at a cheaper rate, you can surely earn an income for twelve months. It is obvious that the latter is would be more profitable.

The ‘Planned Production’ mechanism makes produce cheaper by using long-term contracts. Therefore, the price is constant, whether farmers have a bumper harvest or a poor one. In addition, they can make production plans since they are able to forward the same amounts of farm products for an extended period of time.



Credit: Official website of the World Food Programme

### Application in Africa

A group belonging to Ochanomizu University Senior High School proposed that African governments apply the unique system of planned production to the food business. The students suggested that the governments should encourage companies and local farmers to make long-range contracts. Moreover, they think that planned production will lead to expansion of trade between African countries and the rest of the world.

However, a few obstacles, such as poor infrastructure, remain in the way of putting the system into practice. The group emphasized that advanced countries must cooperate with developing countries in order to tackle the problem.

*By Saki Ayata, Serika Kameyama, Sae Kawasaki, Rurino Doi, Hitomi Nakazawa and Nina Miyazaki*

## NOTICE TO READERS

This newspaper was produced by 39 students in the Ume class at Ochanomizu University Senior High School. “Ume” means plum in Japanese. The name of the class comes from a classical proverb and is the origin of the title of this

newspaper. Through the title, the students hope to share the lively atmosphere of the classroom.

As the school has been registered as a Super Global High School (SGH) by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

since 2014, the students passionately work on the SGH program. The curriculum aims at cultivating the value of the students as global citizens who can engage in contributing to achieving peace and welfare in the international community.

When they were in second year, they conducted a study on social issues that interested them. The newspaper is the students’ final SGH project, and most of the articles are based on second-year research by members of the Ume class.

## DOMESTIC ISSUES

# Hands-on Efforts Seek to Boost Japanese Forests

There have been various reports these days on the destruction of forests around the world. Japan has its own issues surrounding forests.

In Japan these days, an increasing number of forests have not been trimmed, and as a result have become dilapidated. The two major reasons are a decline in demand for domestic timber and a decrease in the number of forestry employees. If there are too many trees, they work against each other and do not flourish. To protect the functions of forests and increase demand for domestic timber, such timber must be used. However, domestic timber is inferior to foreign types because of its price.

To overcome this problem, a company called “Yumekodo” is trying to use domestic timber in a new way. The company is located in Owase, which is famous for the local timber Owasehinoki. Ito Masashi, the head of the company, has worked on various projects related to domestic timber, such as a “World Heritage bath” and a “100 thanks bath.”

An entire tree registered by the United Nations as a World Heritage is used for the former. It is floated on the bath directly, and users can enjoy its smell and touch. The

latter is a project for older people. Children write messages on the circular-shaped domestic timber and float it on the hot water. One of the goals is to spread awareness of the advantages of domestic timber and increase its use.

Students of Ochanomizu University Senior High School were impressed by Owase’s projects. They believe that having young people understand Japanese forests is significant. Moreover, they thought touching timber directly is the most effective way to understand the good points.

To use domestic timber and to have young people become aware of it, they held an event called “Let’s make coasters made with domestic timber.” The timber they used was 20 years old and was processed in the shape of a circle. Ten elementary and junior high school students took part in the event and completed their unique coasters with water-based ink pens, spray and adhesive tape.

While the children were drawing, they touched the coasters repeatedly and smelled them. Almost all of the children said that they liked timber’s warmth and smell. They also became interested in domestic timber through the project.



Photo by Chieno Kurokawa

Children paint on coasters made with domestic timber.

The Ochanomizu students who planned this activity said, “This project is not only for using domestic timber, but also for making people interested in it.” In their opinion, spreading this project leads to raising the awareness of younger generations about the issue and the sustainability of Japanese forestry. Running this project regularly is no doubt a key to resolving the problem.

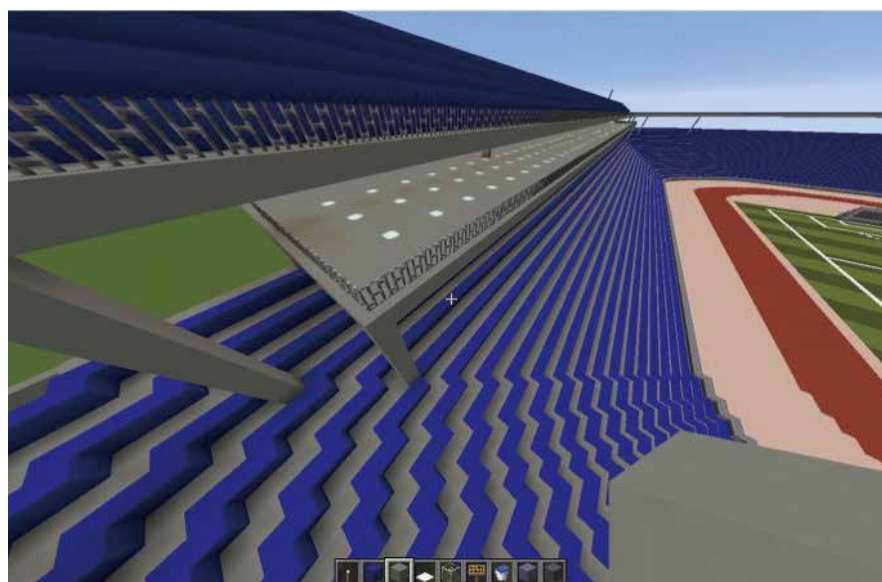
By Shiori Akira, Shiori Umino, Chisato Urushibara, Yukako Ogino, Sei Horiuchi and Rinka Yamaguchi

## A Stadium Friendly to the Physically Challenged

In recent years, the importance of ‘barrier-free’ has become widely known. However, when it comes to recreation, people who are physically challenged still have difficulties.

According to a public opinion poll by the Cabinet Office in 2017, 83% of people thought that physically challenged people faced discrimination and prejudice. On the other hand, a survey conducted by the same agency in 2015 indicated what people expect from the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics the most is ‘improving understanding of physically challenged people.’ These surveys showed the importance of making better societies for everyone through the sports activities.

Four students at Ochanomizu University Senior High School focused on the structure of stadiums to improve their usability. They devised a completely new structure of sports



Credit: Rio Isobuchi

A 3D model of the new stadium

stadium for wheelchair users. They chose such users as the target because the number of wheelchair seats in a stadium was laid down in the guidelines for a barrier-free policy in 2020 by the Japanese Olympic Committee.

First, the students conducted research on the original condition of stadiums in Japan.

After that, they created a 3D model of the new stadium, using the software “Minecraft,” which is a game for making architecture by placing blocks.

At some stadiums, wheelchair users face three problems. First, gates become crowded because such users and other people share the same ones. Second, wheelchair users have to take

steep aisles to reach the seats. Finally, there are few means for them to go upstairs safely. The new stadium (picture) designed by the students would resolve these problems. It has an area for wheelchair users and has full flat seats that widen the visual angle. If wheelchair seats are situated on a steep incline, it is difficult to reach them, and thus the students designed flat seats on flat ground.

The students also suggested installing a lift for wheelchairs on the left side from the entrance. The machine, similar to a ski lift, lifts the person sitting on a wheelchair. It moves more slowly only when wheelchair users get on and get off.

The students will continue to conduct this research aiming at putting the idea into practice.

By Hikaru Endo, Sae Sumida, Haruka Nojima and Natsumi Noda

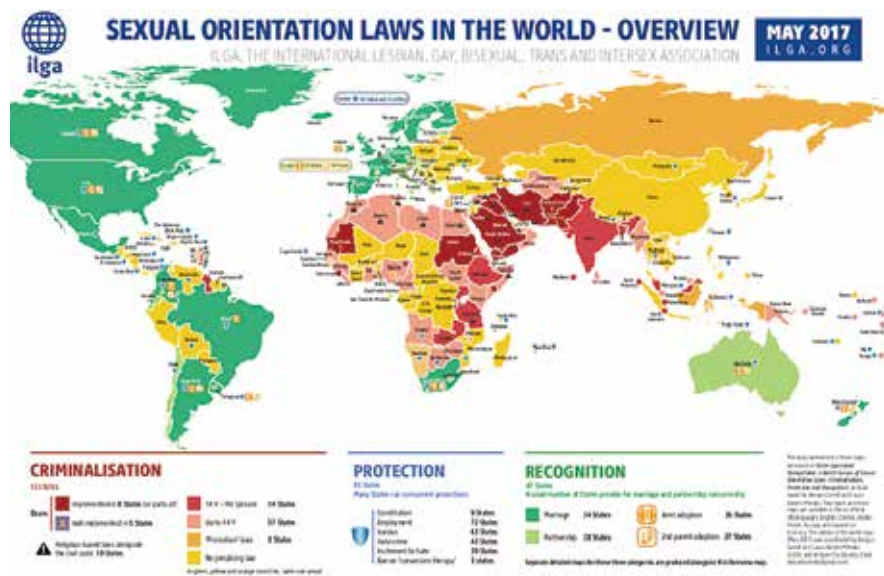


# Raising the Bar for LGBTQ+ Recognition

These days, you might often hear the words ‘gender’ and ‘LGBTQ+’. The latter, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer, or sexual minority, refers to a group whose sexual identity, orientation and practice differ from the majority or the surrounding society. Sexual identity is how one thinks of one’s sexuality, regardless of physical features or social roles. This is strongly related to sexual orientation, which is what gender you are attracted to.

The movements of recognizing the diversity of sexuality and approving the rights of sexual minorities are becoming increasingly active. According to the distribution map made by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, 24 countries—for example, the Netherlands and South Africa—have legalized same-sex marriage. On the other hand, it is illegal in 76 countries, including 13 that impose the death penalty.

In Japan, LGBTQ+ couples’ rights are not protected by the law. Sexual minorities are suffering from thoughtless discrimination and prejudice in society.



There are LGBTQ+ issues in the educational field as well. Generally, in Japanese schools, students must wear their uniforms according to their inborn sexuality. Not only students, but also teachers, do not have enough knowledge of sexual minorities. Owing to the lack of knowledge, sexual minorities are living in difficult circumstances. Under extreme stress, some of them are absenting themselves for extended periods of time or even dropping out from school.

In 2015, a university student committed suicide after having been outcast from his friends because he was a gay.

It is obvious that achieving a comfortable society for all sexualities is an urgent matter. Members of the research project team at Ochanomizu University Senior High School say that local governments should approach the issue from legal and educational standpoints. They said that each local government should start by offering “Same-sex partner certificates,” as Shibuya Ward has done since 2015, since it would be easier and faster to guarantee sexual minorities’ rights, compared with changing the national law.

To raise awareness of sexual minorities among young

people, they also suggested an educational policy, such as changes in school facilities. According to them, choices in uniform between skirts and trousers, and unisex toilets, should be provided to all students.

In March 2018, four out of eight textbook publishers mentioned sexual minorities in the moral-studies textbooks to be used at junior high school from 2019.

“We think physical education and biology textbooks should also mention sexual diversity, so that children have a better understanding of sexual minorities,” one of the members said. “Then it would be easier for them to accept, or express their sexuality, when they grow up and establish their sexual identities.”

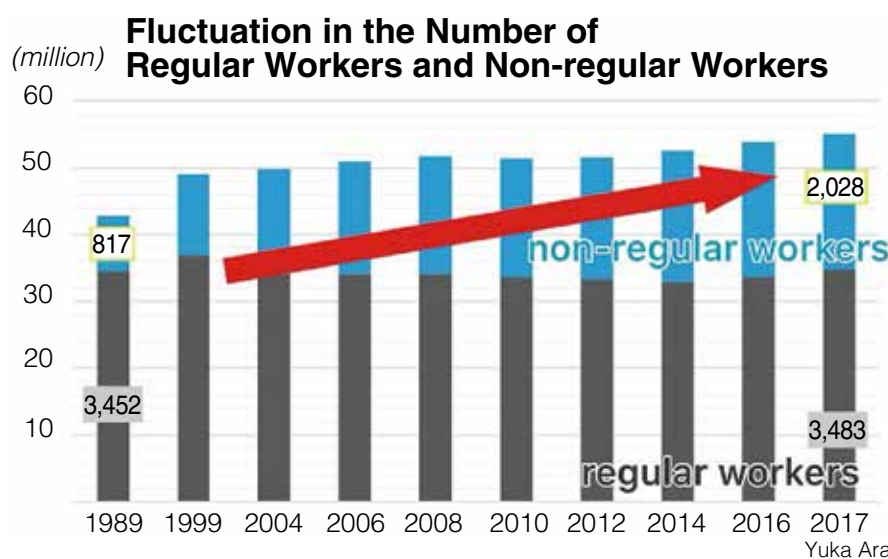
All human beings are different and have the right to express what and who they love. By accepting differences and cultivating a deeper understanding of sexual minorities, all people can live comfortably in society.

*By Mana Akita, Maria Kai, Moe Kamigochi and Rei Kamiya*

# Flex Systems Essential for Work–Life Balance

The number of non-regular workers is increasing year by year, as seen in the graph at right. On the other hand, the wage gap between regular workers and non-regular workers remains wide. The rate of pay non-regular workers receive is about 70 percent that of regular workers. Compared with regular workers, non-regular workers have lower incomes and lower chances of receiving social benefits such as insurance and pension. Nevertheless, some people have no choice but to work non-regularly because they are too busy to take 9-to-5 jobs.

To resolve the issue, Japanese company Cyboze has introduced



a “Selection Personal System” whereby workers can select their own working style from nine patterns regardless of office hours or place. The system enables workers to start at the office

in the afternoon or to work at home, allowing for adjustments to individual working situations, such as nursing, childcare and even schoolwork or side jobs.

In the near future, an increas-

ing number of people will have to balance working and taking care of their children or parents. This is mainly as a result of the serious situations of the aging population and chronically low birthrate.

To address these dire situations, Japanese companies would have to take drastic measures. It is thus essential to introduce a new flexible working pattern. If people are not bound by working time and place, not only workers, but also companies can reap the benefits.

*By Yuka Arai, Mayuko Ichiki, Mao Okamura and Ayaka Saito*



# Lost Dreams: Himeyuri Girls in Wartime Okinawa

Seventy-three years ago, 222 female students and 18 teachers were assigned to the Okinawa Army Hospital as members of a nursing unit called Himeyuri Student Corps as the Battle of Okinawa started in March 1945. Although they served devotedly, more than 200 were ultimately killed.

About 100 years ago, two high schools in Okinawa were established—The Okinawa Female Normal School and The Okinawa First Girls' School. People called these schools "Himeyuri." For those who had just passed difficult entrance exams, a delightful and promising school life was waiting.

At the "kizome ceremony," senior students made and gave the first-year students new clothes. They held other unique events such as a 'beauty contest' in their dormitory. However, after the start of the long-lasting war, the army gradually affected their education. English classes were abolished, and the students' uniforms were changed to monpe, or working pants for women. On March 23,

1945, the United States forces began landing operations in Okinawa. The students and the teachers were assigned to the hospital as nursing personnel. They were forced to undertake extremely difficult duties, such as nursing wounded soldiers, drawing water and carrying food. They even removed maggots from the wounds of soldiers and buried the corpses.

The students sometimes assisted with surgical operations. Since there was no anesthetic during the war, the wounded soldiers screamed in pain and the students had to hold them down. Moreover, they were exposed to the danger of a military attack when they went outside. At first, many of them screamed at the sight of blood, but then came to feel "nothing," even when confronted with the death of a friend.

Suddenly, the girls were told to leave the hospital on June 18 because the Japanese army issued a deactivation order. They had to run through the battlefield surrounded by the U.S. Army.



Photo by Hikaru Endo

The Tower of Himeyuri

Some of them were killed by bombings and some committed suicide with hand grenades. The number of victims amounted to more than 200.

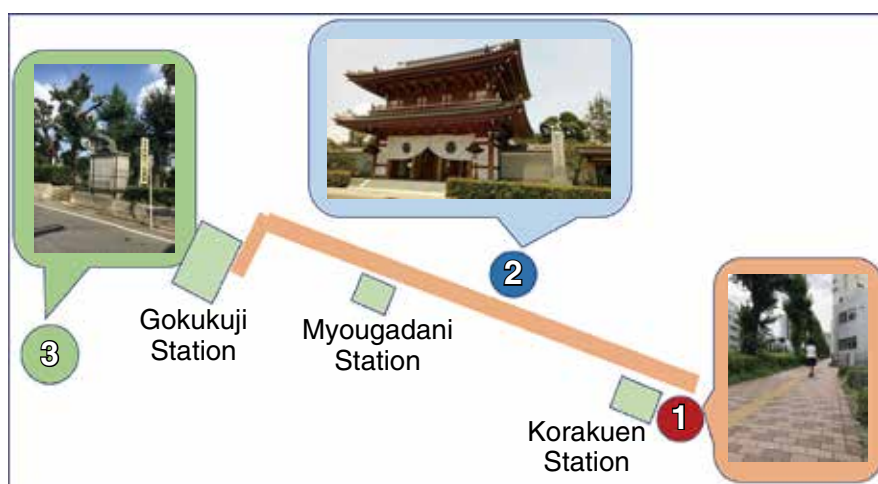
The third-year students at Ochanomizu University Senior High School learned about the Himeyuri Student Corps at the Himeyuri Peace Museum in April 2018, where photos of the Himeyuri girls during peacetime are displayed. Also displayed are various toiletries and stationery

that belonged to the students.

Had it not been for the war, the girls could have led delightful school lives. War completely changes how people think, causing them to disregard life, which is the very thing people should always respect. We, the Japanese, shall never forget this.

*By Akiko Kamigaito, Aiko Shioda, Honoka Shibata, Miko Tanaka and Mayo Yamazaki*

## Bunkyo Ward, the Heart of 'Kokoro' by Soseki



Credit: Lynn Takahashi

"Anyone without spiritual aspirations is a fool."

This sentence comes from "Kokoro," a novel written by Soseki Natsume, one of the most famous authors in Japan.

"Kokoro" is the story of a man called Sensei, which means 'teacher' in Japanese, and his agonies over friendship and love. This article will introduce you to Bunkyo Ward, the very

area where the story took place.

First, Masago slope (Map: 1) is the slope where Sensei walked around in the story. Now, it is near Korakuen station, where we can enjoy a modern panoramic view. Meanwhile you can feel the richness of nature from the protected camphor tree on top of the slope.

Second, Denzu-in temple (Map: 2) is the traditional temple

that Sensei lived close to. As can be seen from some events such as the "Bunkyo, Japanese morning-glory and ground cherry fair" held at the temple every year, the site is loved by local people. In addition, as the temple was rebuilt in 2010, you can see the wonderful new gate and precincts. These sites draw all kinds of people who visit Bunkyo Ward.

Last but not least is Zoushi-gaya Cemetery (Map: 3), where the grave of K., another character in the novel, is said to be located. It is so quiet that you may forget you are in the middle of the city. In the cemetery many people of culture, including Soseki Natsume, rest in peace.

These are only a few of the fascinating points of Bunkyo Ward. There are many other great ones. For those who are unfamiliar with this area and interested in culture and history, this wonderful

town will welcome you with the atmosphere of "Kokoro."

*By Kotomi Ochiai, Shizuka Kasai, Hinoki Sakai, Lynn Takahashi and Haruka Nobuoka*

### UME-UME TIMES

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