



In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group Chingusai

# Key Results of the South Korean **LGBTIL** Community Social Needs Assessment Survey



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# I. Introduction

It was 1992, and I was 10 years old when I first encountered the words “homosexual” and “gay.” This was through a television news show, and my eyes and heart were fixed on the screen. However, the prejudiced viewpoint of the program represented gay men’s lives as gloomy and secretive, and that kind of a life was far from what I wanted. Nevertheless, that was all I knew and all I could hope for because I did not know what else was out there. 15 years after my first yet hopeless encounter with homosexuality, I knocked on the door of Chingusai. People I got to know through various activities were leading lives different from those I had first seen 15 years before. Inside the safe zone of Chingusai, people from diverse backgrounds were living happily. Their lives and dreams, which I witnessed and experienced firsthand, expanded my horizons of understanding and my dreams of a gay life.

Nevertheless, as an LGBTI community-based organization, Chingusai decided not to be content with activities based on its internal needs and individual members’ leadership and dreams. We believed that understanding the social needs of the community and using them as the basis of our activities would make possible realistic policies and dreams fundamentally encompassing the needs of the entire community. Though this might sound a bit trite, if I may quote the Renaissance philosopher Francis Bacon, “Knowledge is power.” This implies that whether firsthand or secondhand, lives that we experience and our understanding of them will become a stepping stone for our pursuit of “better” lives.

This understanding was the beginning of the South Korean LGBTI Community Social Needs Assessment Survey. By signing a contract with the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) Legal Policy Research Group, this project came to be equipped with professional human power. The number of participants far surpassed our initial goal of 1,000, and over 3,000 people took part in the survey, thus incorporating more needs and dreams for our future. This survey is the very first project to encompass the entire LGBTI community in South Korea. The fact that it was independently carried out without

any funding or support from the government makes it even more meaningful. Ultimately, its greatest accomplishment lies in the fact that our hopes and dreams of better lives were collectively and analytically expressed and that it can be a legitimate basis for policy-making.

The Key Results is a report published so that the public may have easier access to the South Korean LGBTI Community Social Needs Assessment Survey. The full report will be published at the end of August. Chingusai is putting its utmost effort to come up with ways in which this survey can be used for even more worthwhile purposes. We want to convey to the LGBTI community our mission and inspiration to lead policy-making and to design contents for better cultures and lifestyles of gender/sexual minorities.

I would like to thank all LGBTI survey participants, 184 donors who supported this project over the last 2 years, and countless others who worked on the project.

I would also like to express my respect and appreciation for our predecessors, who established Chingusai 20 years ago, members who have walked together through thick and thin, and everyone who has shown support for the organization. Special thanks go out to our LGBTI friends who are watching us from above. Moreover, I would like to send my apology and love to those who were inevitably left out of this survey due to the limitation of its scope to LGBTI people.

For our human rights and the next 20 years to be more equal and happier, we will not stop our march toward inspirational changes, taking firm steps through means and efforts such as the South Korean LGBTI Community Social Needs Assessment Survey. We are grateful for and count on your interest and support.

**Cho Namwoong**

Representative

Korean Gay Men’s Human Rights Group Chingusai

## **II. Purposes and Methods of the Survey**

## 1. Purposes

What kinds of lives are members of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and other gender/sexual minorities) community leading in South Korea today? Many say that it is difficult to know about the lives and hardships of LGBTI people. This study started with that question and ultimately aims at understanding the present and planning for the future.

People often believe that the lives of LGBTI people are not appropriate for open discussion, and there indeed are but few legal or institutional means to talk about LGBTI lives. The outcome of this survey, which was conducted independently by civil society and which encompasses the entire LGBTI community, will help us to have an accurate picture of the LGBTI community today, to grasp the members' needs, and, ultimately, to present guidelines for the future.

This survey was designed also to share its fruits with diverse target audiences who wish for changes in both gender/sexual minorities' lives and society at large and to urge follow-up actions. We hope that LGBTI activist groups will be able to derive from the results of this survey the direction of their activities and ideas for specific projects.

By grasping the needs of the LGBTI community, policy makers at state and public organs can create laws and policies necessary for the members of the community. We hope that researchers in related fields will further advance their research and studies with this survey as the basis. In addition, the LGBTI public can take action and participate in achieving changes that they and members of the community wish for.

## 2. Methods

### 1) Survey

**Dates** | Online survey: 10/21-11/3/2013; offline survey: 12/9-12/24/2013

**Participants** | Total: 4,176 people; valid survey respondents: 3,159 people (including 36 offline survey respondents)

**Method** | Composition of the survey → consultation and revision → pilot survey → main survey (online/offline survey collection) → data processing and analysis

**Survey items** | Total: 130 questions across 8 themes (demographic information, medical measures/legal sex change, coming out, romance/family, social environment, online/offline communities, health/aging, and society/politics)

**Participant recruitment channels** | LGBTI-related websites, online communities, LGBTI activist group websites, online recruitment through SNS promotion, and offline recruitment through hobby clubs and business establishments for gender/sexual minorities

**Weighting factor correction** | Weighting factors of sex and age applied to South Korea's nationwide Population and Housing Census from 2010 and a Gallup poll of Americans from 2012 (in which respondents were asked whether they identified as LGBTI as a part of daily tracking surveys)

Table 1. **Online survey participant recruitment channels**

No. of respondents: 2,978

	Website A	Website B	Website C	Facebook	Twitter	Daum, Naver Cafés	Kakao Talk	Offline	Others
No. of people	278	224	339	312	410	743	307	126	421
%	9.3	7.5	11.3	10.4	13.7	24.9	10.3	4.2	14.1



## 2) Interviews

### • Focus group interviews (FGI)

**Dates** | 7/13/2012-4/4/2014

**Participants** | Pilot group: 1 session (7 people); lesbian, gay, MTF, and FTM groups (4-5 people each): 3-5 sessions each; total: 31 participants

**Method** | Composition of the interviews → pilot interviews → main interviews → recording → analysis

**Interview items** | 9 themes including coming out/social relationships, romance/right to create families, job/workplace/livelihood, online/offline communities, school/teenagers, media/culture, sexual discrimination/violence, medical services/legal sex change, and aging/generational problems

**Participant recruitment channels** | Introduction through relevant organizations or groups in consideration of age and occupation and recruitment through LGBTI groups' BBS

### • In-depth interviews

**Dates** | 11/9/2012-12/5/2013

**Participants** | Bisexuals, non-operative transgenders, intersexes, people living outside the Seoul metropolitan area, professionals, et al.; a total of 18 people interviewed separately and in depth for 2-4 hours

**Method** | Composition of the interviews → main interviews → recording → analysis

**Interview items** | Experiences according to each identity or socioeconomic condition

**Participant recruitment channels** | Introduction through relevant organizations or groups in consideration of identity, age, area of abode, and occupation

## 3) Consultation and review

• **Interim discussion** | 6/12/2013; staff meeting of Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group Chingusai

• **Experts discussion** | 3/15/2014; consultation from scholars in related fields and experts

• **1st LGBTI community presentation** | 4/5/2014; members of Korean Gay Men's Human Rights Group Chingusai

• **2nd LGBTI community presentation** | 6/14/2014; open presentation as a special event of the 15th Korea Queer Culture Festival (KQCF)

## III. Survey Results

### Lesbians

Women who are attracted to and form deep relationships with other women.

### Gay men

Men who are attracted to and form deep relationships with other men.

### Bisexuals

Women or men who are attracted to and form deep relationships with other women and men.

### Transgenders

People whose gender identities differ from their respective sexes at birth.

They include people who were recognized as male at birth but identify as female (MTF), those who were recognized as female at birth but identify as male (FTM), and those who feel uncomfortable with the sexual distinction of either male or female regardless of their physical conditions.

### Non-LGB queers

Limited to this survey, people who do not classify their sexual orientation as homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual or their gender identity as male or female.

### Intersexes

People who possess organs expressing both male and female sexes from birth or during growth or who have physical conditions that cannot easily be distinguished as either male or female.

#### Notes

- The number of respondents may not agree with the total sum because it was rounded off to the nearest integer after weighting factor correction. In addition, even when the number of respondents thus rounded off is identical, the percentage (%) may differ slightly.
- Because percentages (%) were rounded off to the first decimal place, the total sum of the figures may not equal 100%.
- For multiple-answer items, the total sum of the components may exceed 100%.



# 1. Demographic characteristics of the LGBTI survey participants

## ■ LGBTI Survey Participants

Table 1-1. Sexual orientations and gender identities of the LGBTI survey participants

(Unit: No. of people (%))

Gender identity \ Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual female	Bisexual male	Non-LGB queer	Heterosexual	Total
Non-transgender	929 (29.0)	996 (31.0)	710 (22.1)	172 (5.4)	148 (4.6)	0 (0.0)	2,955 (92.1)
Transgender	17 (0.5)	15 (0.5)	22 (0.7)	26 (0.8)	48 (1.5)	121 (3.8)	249 (7.8)
Intersex	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.1)	4 (0.1)
Total	946 (29.5)	1,011 (31.5)	732 (22.8)	198 (6.2)	196 (6.1)	125 (3.9)	3,208 (100.0)

## ■ LGBTI Interview Participants

Table 1-2. Sexual orientations and gender identities of the interview participants

(Unit: No. of people)

Gender identity \ Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual female	Bisexual male	Non-LGB queer	Heterosexual	Total
Non-transgender	7	19	2	1	-	-	29
Transgender	2	3	3	-	-	8	16
Intersex	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Total	9	22	5	1	-	12	49



Table 1-3. Demographic information on the interview participants

Total: 49 people

		Interview Method	Sexual Orientation	Gender Identity/ Intersex	Age	Occupation	Education
1	A	FGI	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	43	Office work	College graduate
2	B	FGI	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	38	Nurse	High school graduate
3	C	FGI	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	36	Sales	College graduate
4	D	FGI	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	27	Office work	College graduate
5	E	FGI	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	21	Student	College
6	F	In-depth interview	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	40	Service	High school graduate
7	G	In-depth interview	Homosexual	Female (non-TG)	42	Professional	Doctoral degree
8	H	In-depth interview	Homosexual	TG female (MTF)	28	Seeking job	College graduate
9	I	In-depth interview	Homosexual	TG female (MTF)	26	Education	Master's program
10	J	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	43	Researcher	Doctoral program (ABD)
11	K	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	35	Office work	College graduate
12	L	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	30	Office work	College graduate
13	M	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	26	Student	College
14	N	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	21	Student	College
15	O	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	42	Professional	Doctoral program (ABD)
16	P	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	30	Office work	College graduate
17	Q	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	29	Office work	College graduate
18	R	FGI	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	28	Office work	College graduate
19	S	In-depth interview	Homosexual	TG male (FTM)	31	Student	Master's program
20	T	In-depth interview	Homosexual	TG male (FTM)	23	Student	College
21	U	In-depth interview	Homosexual	TG male (FTM)	18	Seeking job	Middle school graduate
22	V	In-depth interview	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	16	Seeking job	Middle school graduate
23	W	In-depth interview	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	52	Designer	College graduate
24	X	In-depth interview	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	29	Professional	College graduate
25	Y	FGI	Bisexual	TG female (MTF)	30	Self-employed	College graduate
26	Z	FGI	Bisexual	TG female(MTF)	22	Sex worker	College graduate
27	AA	In-depth interview	Bisexual	Female (non-TG)	32	NGO activist	Master's program (ABD)



28	BB	In-depth interview	Bisexual	Female (non-TG)	26	Education	Master's program
29	CC	In-depth interview	Bisexual	TG female(MTF)	25	Student	College
30	DD	In-depth interview	Bisexual	Male (non-TG)	21	Student	College
31	EE	FGI	Heterosexual	TG male (FTM)	50	Semi-public service	High school graduate
32	FF	FGI	Heterosexual	TG male (FTM)	40	Professional	College graduate
33	GG	FGI	Heterosexual	TG male (FTM)	32	Office work	College graduate
34	HH	FGI	Heterosexual	TG male (FTM)	26	Seeking job	College graduate
35	II	FGI	Heterosexual	TG male (FTM)	26	Seeking job	College
36	JJ	FGI	Heterosexual	TG female (MTF)	38	Education	College graduate
37	KK	FGI	Heterosexual	TG female (MTF)	30	Professional	College graduate
38	LL	FGI	Heterosexual	TG female(MTF)	23	Service	College dropout
39	MM	In-depth interview	Heterosexual	Intersex female	30	Education	Master's degree
40	NN	In-depth interview	Heterosexual	Intersex female	28	Office/technical work	High school graduate
41	OO	In-depth interview	Heterosexual	Intersex neuter	26	Sales/service	High school graduate
42	PP	In-depth interview	Heterosexual	Intersex male	41	Manufacturing	High school graduate
43	QQ	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	27	Student	College
44	RR	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	33	Office/technical work	College graduate
45	SS	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	26	Student	College
46	TT	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	27	Seeking job	College graduate
47	UU	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	38	Office/technical work	College graduate
48	VV	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	25	Student	College
49	WW	FGI pilot	Homosexual	Male (non-TG)	20	Student	College

## ■ Demographic Characteristics of the LGBTI Survey Participants

Table 1-4. Sexual orientations and gender identities of the survey participants

(Unit: No. of people)

Gender identity \ Sexual orientation	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual female	Bisexual male	Other sexual orientations	Heterosexual	Total
Non-transgender	922 (29.2)	977 (30.9)	708 (22.4)	171 (5.4)	148 (4.7)	-	2,926 (92.6)
Transgender	15 (0.5)	12 (0.4)	19 (0.6)	26 (0.8)	48 (1.5)	113 (3.6)	233 (7.4)
Total	937 (29.7)	989 (31.3)	727 (23.0)	197 (6.2)	196 (6.2)	113 (3.6)	3,159 (100.0)

\* As for intersexes, although they participated in the survey as well, valid responses could not be obtained so that interviews were conducted to supplement them.

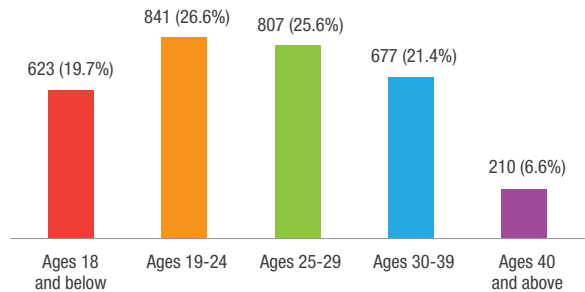
A total of 3,208 people participated in the South Korean LGBTI Community Social Needs Assessment Survey. Out of them, 3,159 participated in the survey and 49 participated in the interviews (both focus group interviews and in-depth interviews), respectively. For this project, all participants were asked to identify their sexual orientations (homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual) and gender identities (non-transgender, transgender, intersex) to classify them into identity groups.

When the total of 3,208 participants are examined by sexual orientation, 946 were lesbians (survey: 937; interviews: 9), 1,011 were gay men (survey: 989; interviews: 22), 732 were bisexual women (survey: 727; interviews: 5), 198 were bisexual men (survey: 197; interviews: 1), 125 were heterosexuals (all of whom were transgenders or intersexes; survey: 113; interviews: 12), and 196 were of other sexual orientations (survey: 196), respectively. When examined by gender identity, 249 were transgenders (survey: 233; interviews: 16), 4 were intersexes (interviews: 4), and 2,955 were non-transgenders/non-intersexes (all of whom were homosexuals/bisexuals; survey: 2,926; interviews: 29), respectively. The above table shows the distribution of the identity groups of the survey participants used for quantitative analysis, excluding the interview participants. By sexual orientation, lesbian amounted to 29.7%, gay men amounted to 31.3%, bisexual women amounted to 23.0%, bisexual men amounted to 6.2%, heterosexuals (transgenders) amounted to 3.6%, and people of other sexual orientations amounted to 6.2% of the total, respectively. By gender identity, transgenders amounted to 7.4% and non-transgenders amounted to 92.6% of the total, respectively.

Fig. 1-1. **Ages of the survey participants**

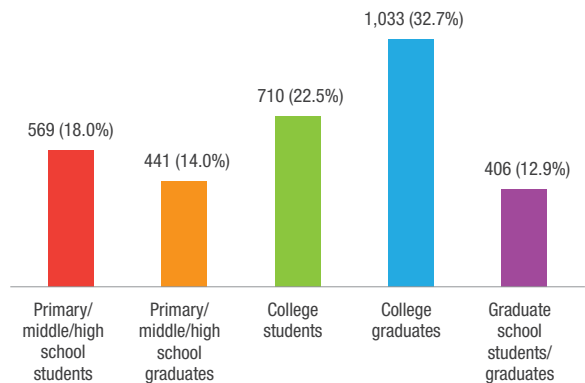
Total: 3,159

Participants' ages ranged from 12 to 61, and the age group with the greatest proportion was the ages 19-24 group, amounting to 26.6% of the total.

Fig. 1-2. **Educational levels of the survey participants**

Total: 3,159

When the distribution of participants' educational levels was classified into five sections—primary/middle/high school students, primary/middle/high school graduates, college students, college graduates, and graduate program (master's/doctoral) students/graduates—the group with the greatest proportion was the college graduates, who amounted to 32.7% of the total.



\* Primary/middle/high school graduates exclude both primary/middle/high school students and college students.

Fig. 1-3. **Areas of abode of the survey participants**

Total: 3,108

Approximately 70% of the total participants were living in the Seoul metropolitan area including Seoul, Gyeonggi Province, and Incheon, and those living overseas amounted to 3.5% as well.

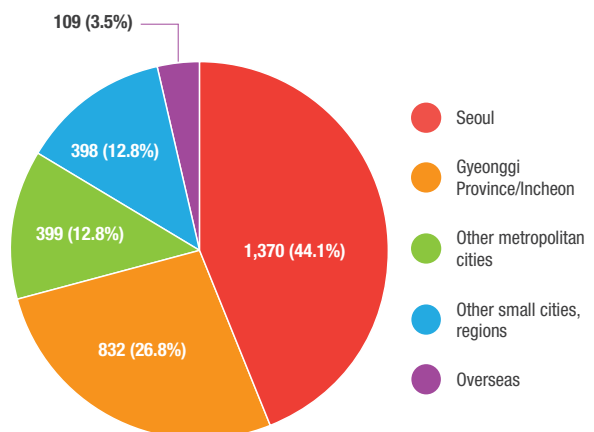


Table 1-5. Occupations of the survey participants

Occupation		No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Office/technical work	I Corporate office work, technical work	555	31.5
Freelancer	I Artist, entertainment industry worker	236	13.4
Professional	I College professor, doctor, lawyer	195	11.1
Sales/service	I Store clerk, salesperson	188	10.7
Education	I Primary/middle/high school teacher, private academy teacher, college lecturer	142	8.1
Self-employed	I Small business owner, taxi driver	100	5.7
Executive/manager	I Class 5+ civil servant, corporate general manager and above, school principal	20	1.1
Technical/skilled work	I Machine operator, lathe worker, woodworker	19	1.1
General work	I Deliverer, cleaner, guard, construction worker	15	0.9
Adult entertainment worker		8	0.4
Homemaker		8	0.4
Job-producing/public works		5	0.3
Farming, fishery, forestry		2	0.1
Others		18	1.0
Unemployed		248	14.1
Total		1,759	100.0

\* Excluding students

When the occupation distribution of the participants is examined, with the exception of students, office/technical work took up the greatest proportion, amounting to 31.5%. It was followed by unemployed (14.1%) and freelancers (13.4%), similar in proportion, then came professionals (11.1%) and sales/service (10.7%).





Fig. 1-4. **Employment types of the survey participants** (excluding students)

Total: 1,752

Out of the employment types of the participants, permanent employment took up the greatest proportion, amounting to 44.0%, followed by contract work (18.7%).

\*\*N/A" means the respondent has never been employed or is not seeking employment.

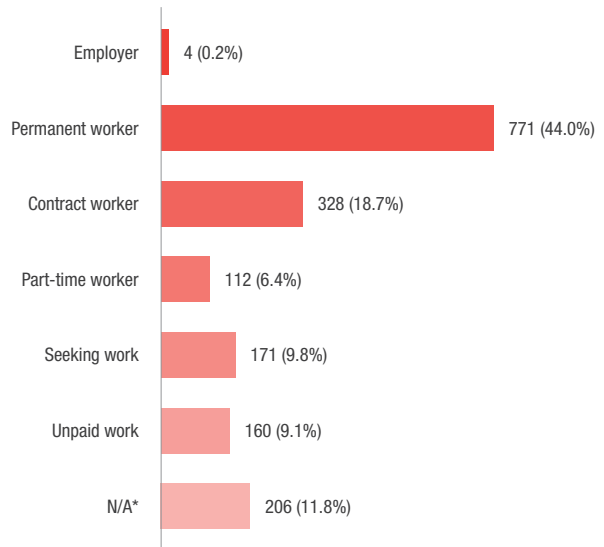
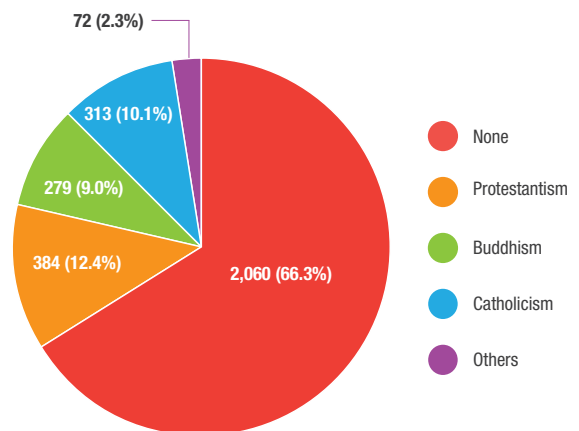


Fig. 1-5. **Religions of the survey participants**

Total: 3,108

A large number of the participants did not have a religion (66.3%). Out of those who did, Protestants took up the greatest proportion, amounting to 12.4, followed by Catholics (10.1%), Buddhists (9.0%), and others (2.3%).



## 2. Coming out and the LGBTI community

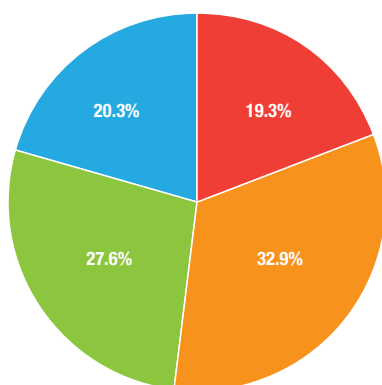
Though there are many LGBTI people in South Korean society, they lead largely invisible lives. Indeed, 20.3%, or 1/5, of the total participants answered that none of the “Important people in [their lives]” knew about their sexual orientations or gender identities, followed by 27.6%, who answered that those around them barely knew, 32.9%, who answered that some knew, and 19.3%, who answered that almost everyone knew. 9.7% of the homosexual and bisexual respondents stated that they had not revealed their sexual orientations to anyone, and 7.2% of the transgender respondents stated that they had not revealed their gender identities to anyone, respectively. While many LGBTI people reveal their sexual orientations or gender identities to those other than important people in their lives, on the contrary, not a few are completely closeted, too.

Out of the 2,455 respondents who had been or were employed (77.7% of the total participants excluding N/A), 57.7% had been or were not at all out to co-workers. Out of the 2,605 respondents who had identified their respective sexual orientations or gender identities while in primary/middle/high school (82.5% of the total participants excluding those who had not self-identified as LGBTI in school or had never enrolled in school), no less than 47.0% answered that neither their friends nor teachers had known of their identities. Even out of participants aged 18 and below, 39.4% said that none of their friends or teachers knew of their identities.

“ When I was in [co-ed] high school, a girl in my class and another girl in the class in front of ours dated each other... in the end, both dropped out. Both the way the school dealt with the case and we were very violent. At the time, I pointed the finger at them, too. “Right now, in such a situation, I mustn’t be found out and must protect myself all the more,” I thought. (M, age 26)

Fig. 1-6. Coming out to important people in their lives

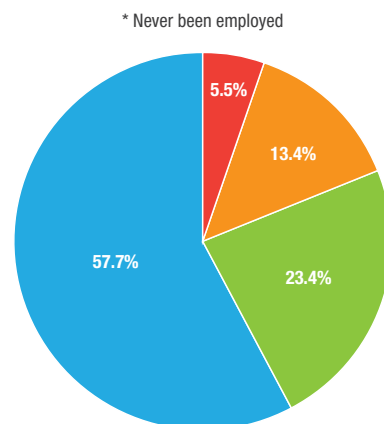
Important people in my life know my sexual orientation/gender identity  
(3,156 respondents)



● Out to most or all ● Out to some ● Out to almost no one ● Out to no one

Fig. 1-7. Coming out to co-workers

Co-workers know my sexual orientation/gender identity (excluding N/A\*)  
(2,455 respondents)



\* Never been employed



LGBTI people were even more secretive toward their families, who generally can be seen as the closest people in one's life. Overall, only 21.8% of the respondents were out to their mothers and only 10.8% were out to their fathers, respectively (excluding "My parents have passed away or relationships with them have been severed"). The figures were even lower for respondents aged 18 and below, with 16.2% out to their mothers and only 7.0% out to their fathers, respectively. However, there were differences among the groups so that transgenders exhibited considerably high coming out rates, with 57.4% out to their mothers and 46.5% out to their fathers, respectively. As for respondents who had come out to their mothers, 18.1% said that their relationships became closer, 47.0% said that there was no difference in the relationships, and 13.9% said that their relationships became more distant after coming out ("others": 21.1%). In contrast, only 10.2% of those who had come out to their fathers said that the relationships became closer, 56.2% said that there was no difference, and 14.7% said that their relationships became more distant after coming out ("others": 18.8%). As for those who had not yet come out to their parents, 23.7% planned to come out to their mothers and only 17.2% to their fathers, thus exhibiting still low figures.

On the other hand, the LGBTI community, consisting of people having the same identities, took up a certain share of the survey participants' social relationships. 90.4% of the respondents said that they had joined online LGBTI communities and 69.2% said that they had participated in offline LGBTI communities, respectively. As for the reasons for participating in such communities (multiple answers possible; choose two), 79.3% of the total respondents cited "Friendship with people with identities similar to mine," 39.1% cited romance, and 35.0% cited information, respectively.

“ If my family finds out, I think my parents will pass out... I don't think it'll be easy to tell my parents while they're alive. (X, age 29) ”

“ I couldn't tell [my family] face to face, so I left a letter and ran away. I didn't explicitly write [that I was transgender], I just said I liked this and that as a woman. Later, I heard my father had burned the letter. After that, I actually didn't keep in touch, you know. (Y, MTF, age 30) ”

“ I thought I could count on [the LGBTI community] if something were to happen to me. (L, age 30) ”

“ It's because I can take off the mask of pretending not to be gay and, here, I don't feel forced to act like the “man” and the “grown-up” as demanded by society. (J, age 43) ”

“ After all, I do feel that there needs to be a [bisexual] community. I mean, something will come of it only after we get together first. (BB, age 26) ”

\*\* Did not identify as LGBTI in school or has never been enrolled in school



Offline LGBTI community participation experience (805 people)

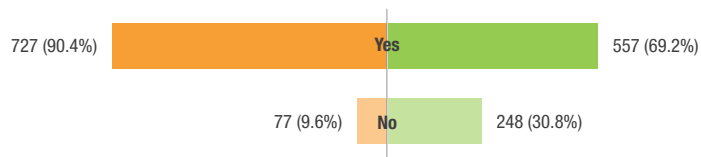
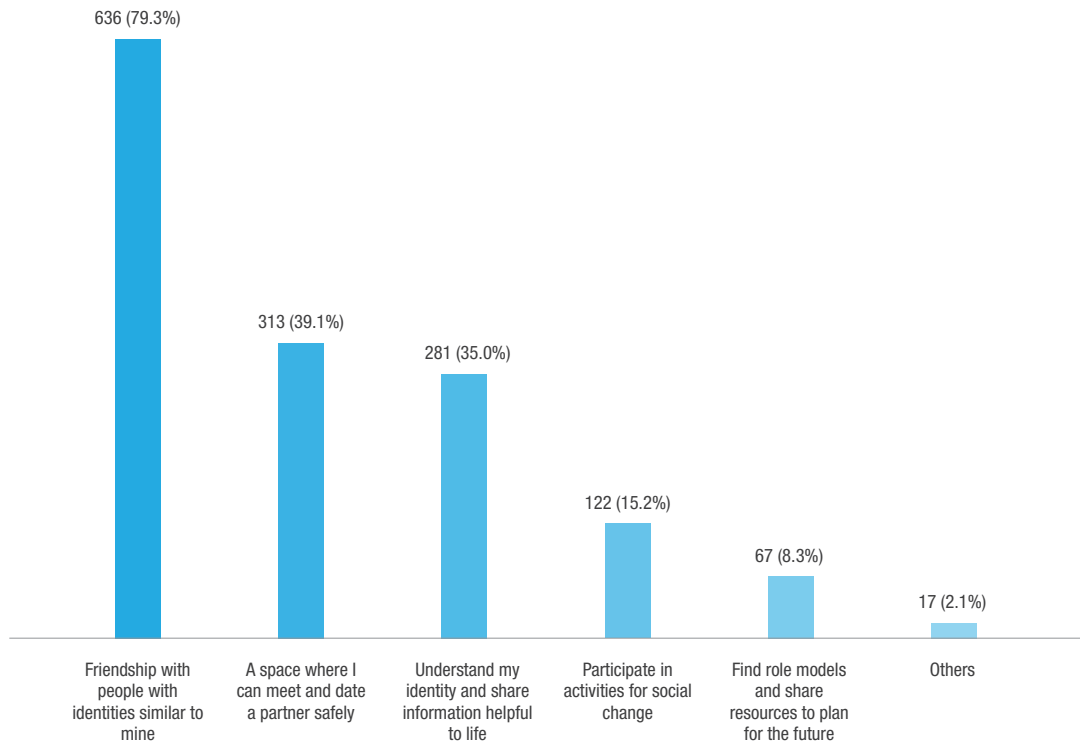


Fig. 1-10. **Reasons or expectations for participation in the LGBTI community**

What are your reasons or expectations for participating in online/offline LGBTI communities? (choose two or less) (802 respondents)



“ What I liked about the [LGBTI] community is that there were resources left behind by my predecessors regarding a path that I hadn’t taken yet. Because I could get resources on those who’d gone down the path before me and information on people with concerns similar to mine. I think the community is quite good for the purpose of exchanging information and the purpose of obtaining information. (KK, MTF, age 30)

”

### 3. Romance and the institution of the family

In South Korean society, a large number of LGBTI people form considerably long-term romantic relationships. Out of the respondents, 45.3% were in such relationships, and the average duration was 30 months (approximately 2.5 years). Out of those who were currently in romantic relationships, 25.5% (11.6% of the total) cohabited with their partners. Out of these cohabiting couples, 33.8% had sustained their relationships for over 5 years and 80.9% were generally satisfied with cohabitation. As a point of reference, according to a social survey conducted in 2012 by Statistics Korea, the government organ in charge of national statistics, 71.8% of the men and 59.2% of the women were satisfied with their respective heterosexual spouses. The figures for LGBTI people above exhibit a higher level of satisfaction with their partners.

To LGBTI people, recognition of the relationships with and cohabitation with their partners hold a considerable meaning. Marriage with their partners or social recognition of their relationships was “very” important to 39.8% and “somewhat” important to 46.3% of the respondents, respectively. In addition, cohabitation with partners was “very much” preferred by 40.8% and “somewhat” preferred by 50.6%, respectively. To the question of “What are the most urgent institutions for you to sustain a partnership or cohabitation as an LGBTI person?” the most frequently chosen answer was “Exercising rights as a family member in medical procedures such as surgery consent” (67.5%), followed by “Recognition of a supporter-dependent relationship in the National Health Insurance” (44.6%). They all are institutions directly related to the rights to medical services and health.

As the second most urgent institution, the survey participants pointed out “Adoption of children by same-sex couples” (37.4%). Indeed, 39.1% of the respondents wished to become parents through childbirth or adoption, and 1.4% (had) had children currently or in the past. As the third most urgent institutions, those related to housing and social security followed: “Lease succession or recognition as a family member in rental housing application” (29.1%); “Family benefits from various insurances/financial instruments” (27.6%); and “Spouse succession to public pensions such as the National Pension/Government Employees Pension” (19.9%).

“ Getting a call at work that my partner had been rushed to the hospital, I wanted to run out. But I couldn’t tell [my co-workers] that I had to go because my “friend” was sick, so it was really agonizing. In the end, I wasn’t able to go, and someone else went and helped her out. In the first place, I should’ve said my mom had been taken to the hospital instead. If it’d been a family member, things would’ve been easier. I think that experience left a scar on both of us. (A, age 43) ”

“ I wish people like us could hide the fact that we’d gone through [legal] sex change and the adoption process would become easier, too... It’s not like people care if your genes are in [your children] these days, either. I just want someone who’ll think of me as Mom. (KK, MTF, age 30) ”

Table 1-6. **Institutions needed to sustain partnerships or cohabitation**

3,158 respondents

What are the most urgent institutions for you to sustain a partnership or cohabitation as an LGBTI person? (choose three or less)		
	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Exercising rights as a family member in medical procedures such as surgery consent	2,132	67.5
Recognition of a supporter-dependent relationship in the National Health Insurance	1,408	44.6
Adoption of children by same-sex couples	1,183	37.4
Lease succession or recognition as a family member in rental housing application	918	29.1
Family benefits from various insurances/financial instruments	873	27.6
Spouse succession to public pensions such as the National Pension/Government Employees Pension	629	19.9
Tax incentives such as year-end tax adjustments	356	11.3
Filing for property division lawsuits when dissolving the union	339	10.7

As a way of institutionally securing the relationships with their partners, many LGBTI people want marriage like heterosexual marriage. When asked whether they wanted “Legal marriage” identical to heterosexual marriage or “institutional recognition other than marriage (e. g., civil union),” 59.8% chose legal marriage and 36.1% chose alternative institutional recognition, respectively. The remaining 4.1% said that they wanted neither.

“ I’d go for the [domestic] partnership. It’s because, as it stands, the institution of marriage isn’t about the relationship between two people, but the scope becomes wider [to include extended families on both sides, with attendant obligations]... I’d like to form a burden-free relationship. (K, age 35) ”

“ I’d introduce the institution of [same-sex] marriage [into South Korea]. It’s because, as a member of society, I want to enjoy the same rights [as do heterosexuals]. (N, age 21) ”

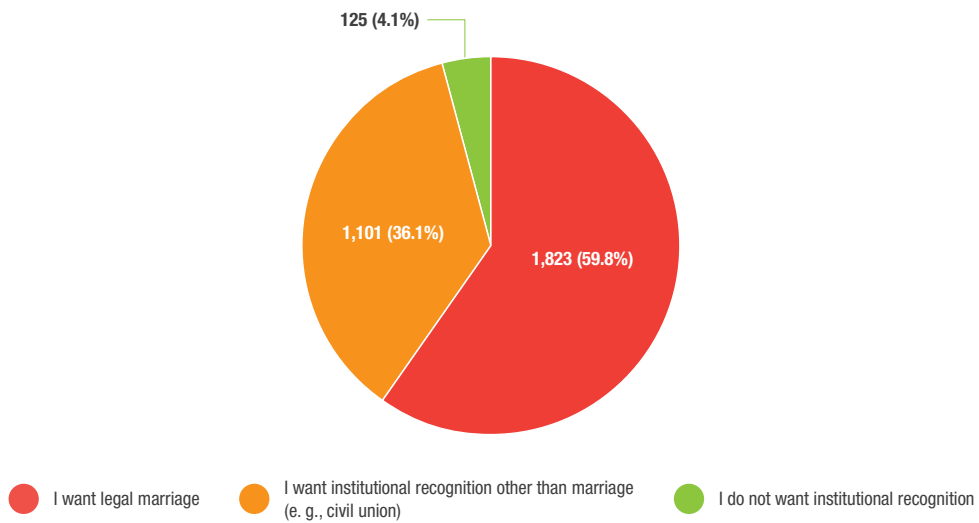
Indeed, for gender/sexual minorities, the issue of institutionalizing the relationships with their partners is one of the top priorities even among LGBTI policy issues. In answer to the question concerning the “most important LGBTI policy issues,” “Legal recognition of same-sex marriage” and “Legal recognition of partnership for same-sex couples other than marriage” ranked second (45.5%) and fourth (35.9%), respectively.



Fig. 1-11. **Need for the institutionalization of same-sex unions**

If the following measures regarding same-sex unions were to become possible, which one would you choose? (excluding N/A\*) (3,049 respondents)

\* N/A: Non-homosexuals, et al.





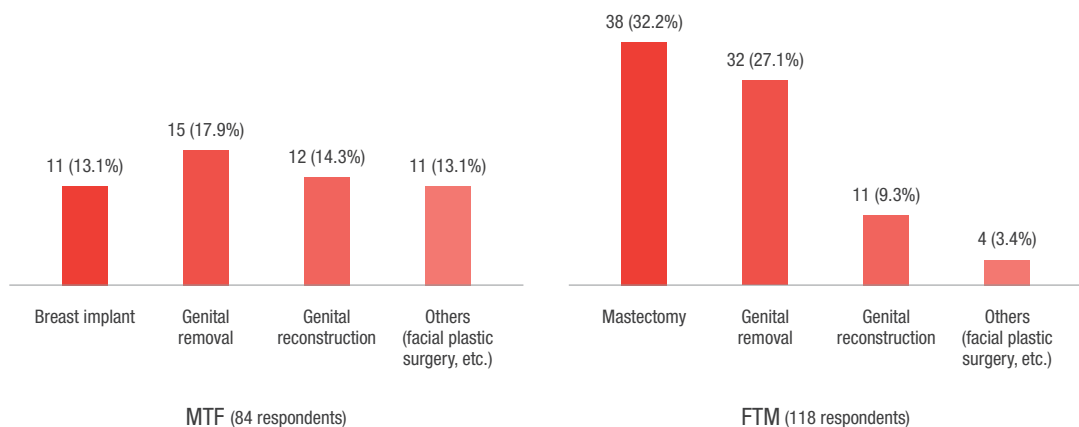


## 4. Recognition of transgenders' gender identities

A considerable number of transgenders who participated in this survey were taking medical measures. 46.9% had been diagnosed with “gender identity disorder” or “transsexualism” through psychiatric consultation or diagnosis, 48.9% had been or were in hormone therapy, and 29.3% had undergone surgeries related to gender reassignment.

Fig. 5-8. **Status of transgenders' gender reassignment-related surgeries**

People who had undergone the gender reassignment-related surgeries below



Transgenders took medical measures for diverse reasons. They pondered on and underwent the necessary medical measures to mitigate or resolve gender dysphoria, to be perceived by society according to their gender identities, and to change their legal sexes.

“ Frankly, to me, SRS [sex reassignment surgery] wasn’t urgent. I thought, “You first have got to look like a woman for SRS even to be effective.” I first had to look like a woman for other women to accept me... Since the plastic surgery on my face, what I’m satisfied with is that women don’t give me that awkward look in the ladies’ room any more. (JJ, MTF, age 38)

”

“ It was after mastectomy that I was most satisfied. You see, [before that,] I actually wore three layers on top [even] in summer. Even with a tank top, a short-sleeved shirt, and another short-sleeved shirt on, I had to do this whenever the wind blew... [hunches his back] And I couldn't go in the sea. Though I love to play in water, if I waded in [and got wet], my figure would show completely... (HH, FTM, age 26) ”

Transgenders faced a variety of difficulties and problems in the course of taking such medical measures, and these difficulties can be gauged by examining the reasons for not undergoing each of the medical measures.

In other words, in the case of psychiatric counseling or diagnosis, the reasons for not taking medical measures were as follow, in this order: “Not necessary right now” (18.4%); “Still undecided” (17.4%); “Financial burden” (15.9%); “Afraid of possible disadvantages from my medical records [stating psychiatric counseling or diagnosis]” (11.8%); “Opposition from family and friends” (10.8%); and “Don't want to be treated like [a person with] a mental disorder” (10.9%). The main reason for not undergoing hormone therapy was “Financial burden” (24.2%), followed by “Afraid of how co-workers or people around me will see me” (20.7%) and “Health reasons” (17.3%).

On the other hand, gender reassignment-related surgeries are costly, too. The most expensive item in gender reassignment-related surgeries was genital reconstruction surgery for FTM transgenders, amounting to an average of US\$ 1,750, and other surgeries (e. g., facial plastic surgery) for MTF transgenders, amounting to an average of US\$ 1,810, respectively. On top of such exorbitant costs, these surgeries have considerable side effects as well. Indeed, 31.1% of all respondents who had undergone surgeries experienced side effects or complications.

On the other hand, 16.5% of the respondents answered that gender reassignment-related surgeries were mostly or completely unnecessary, thus showing that not all transgenders need such surgeries. Furthermore, even when they did want surgeries, the level or extent differed for each person.

To be officially recognized as their subjectively felt gender identities, transgenders must undergo legal procedures where they submit legal sex change applications to court and are approved. Out of 231 respondents, 30 (13.2%) had met these legal requirements and had had their legal sex change applications. 6 people (2.7) had applied for sex change but been dismissed, and the remaining 194 (84.1%) had not attempted it. Out of those who had not yet had their legal sexes changed, 67.5% planned to do so, 17.8% said that they had no such plans, and 14.8% provided other answers, respectively.

Even when a person wishes to have her or his legal sex changed, it is extremely difficult actually to undergo the legal procedures in accordance with the requirements. In the case of legal adults who had reached or passed the full age of 19, which qualified them for legal sex change applications, the most burdensome requirements for legal sex change (multiple answers possible; choose three) were external genital surgeries (58.0%), followed by the difficulty of preparing and completing the necessary paperwork (31.4%) and the burden of genital removal surgeries (31.3%). Then came the inability to obtain a consent form from their parents (28.4%) and the lack of information on how to apply for legal sex change (22.5%).



It is extremely difficult for transgenders to continue public life without having had their sexes changed legally. Indeed, they face lifelong difficulties ranging from the everyday task of visiting government offices to seeking employment and leading a work life, both of which are matters of sustenance.

“ You see, there are two inconveniences [about not having had my legal sex changed]: medical services and government offices. Or credit cards. Nowadays, when I talk to [people at] card companies, they won’t believe me at all. Even when I looked at the address written on my resident registration card [i. e., South Korean national ID card] and read it out loud, they wouldn’t believe me. So, the next time, I had no choice but to ask my girl friends or younger sister to... (II, FTM, age 26)

”

“ In my case, I’m almost 50 now, and since my 20s up to now, I’ve never been able to get a job to begin with. I’ve hardly worked for any kind of organization. I’d just go to my uncle’s, set up a small factory of my own, or run my own store. Because it’s been impossible to be hired... Because I’ve continued to do hard labor, I have inflammations on my shoulders now. I had MRI scans and was told I had inflammations, and the doctor told me to rest. But I can’t because it’d be such a hassle again to try to get a job now. If I can get my [legal] sex changed quickly, I think I’ll be able to do any kind of work even if it’s not the current one. (EE, FTM, age 50)

”

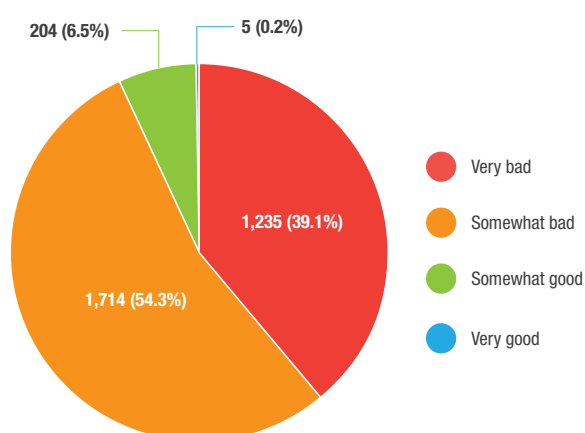
Just because the court had approved of legal sex change did not mean that all of the social difficulties experienced by transgenders had been resolved (“Please choose the two most difficult issues after legal sex change”). There were institutional problems: the disclosure of the fact of legal sex change in official documents (46.2%); and applications for and maintenance of insurances (20.2). In addition, transgenders experienced difficulties even in relationships with people around them such as “My family or friends do not recognize my [legal] sex change” (22.5%) and “I have to hide the fact of my [legal] sex change from my lover or spouse” (12.1%).

## 5. Perceptions of the social environment and major state organs

At present, it would be difficult to say that South Korean society was a good environment for LGBTI people. Indeed, 93.4% of the survey participants said that life in South Korea was bad for LGBTI people, out of whom 39.1% answered, “Very bad” and 54.3% answered, “Somewhat bad,” respectively.

Fig. 1-12. **Perceptions of South Korean society**

As an LGBTI person, how do you find life in South Korea? (3,158 respondents)



Most respondents felt that LGBTI people were targets of hatred, discrimination, and violence in South Korean society. 87.3% said that hate speech against LGBTI people was made in public spaces “often” or “occasionally” and 55.2% said that physical violence and bullying against LGBTI people occurred in public places “often” or “occasionally,” respectively. In addition, 83.7% said that derisive, distorted, or discriminatory representations of LGBTI people by the media occurred “often” or “occasionally,” which is a high figure. When holding hands with same-sex partners in public, LGBTI people would directly experience discriminatory looks from strangers. For this reason, same-sex couples tended not to express their relationships publicly, with gay and bisexual men behaving even more cautiously. Indeed, 65.8% of gay men and 65.6% of bisexual men who were currently in romantic relationships answered that they “avoid[ed] holding hands with [their] same-sex partner[s] in the street due to others’ stares or whispers,” which differed from the responses of lesbians (24.9%) and bisexual women (24.2%).

In the survey participants’ view, politicians and public organs were no different when it came to hatred and discrimination against LGBTI people. 84.2% of the respondents said that politicians or public organs make insulting remarks at or discriminated against LGBTI people “often” or “occasionally.” Likewise, 84.1% said that derision, discrimination, and violence of or against LGBTI people occurred in school “often” or “occasionally.” In addition, 47.1%, or close to half, of all survey participants said that discrimination against or exclusion of LGBTI people occurred at medical organs “often” or “occasionally.”

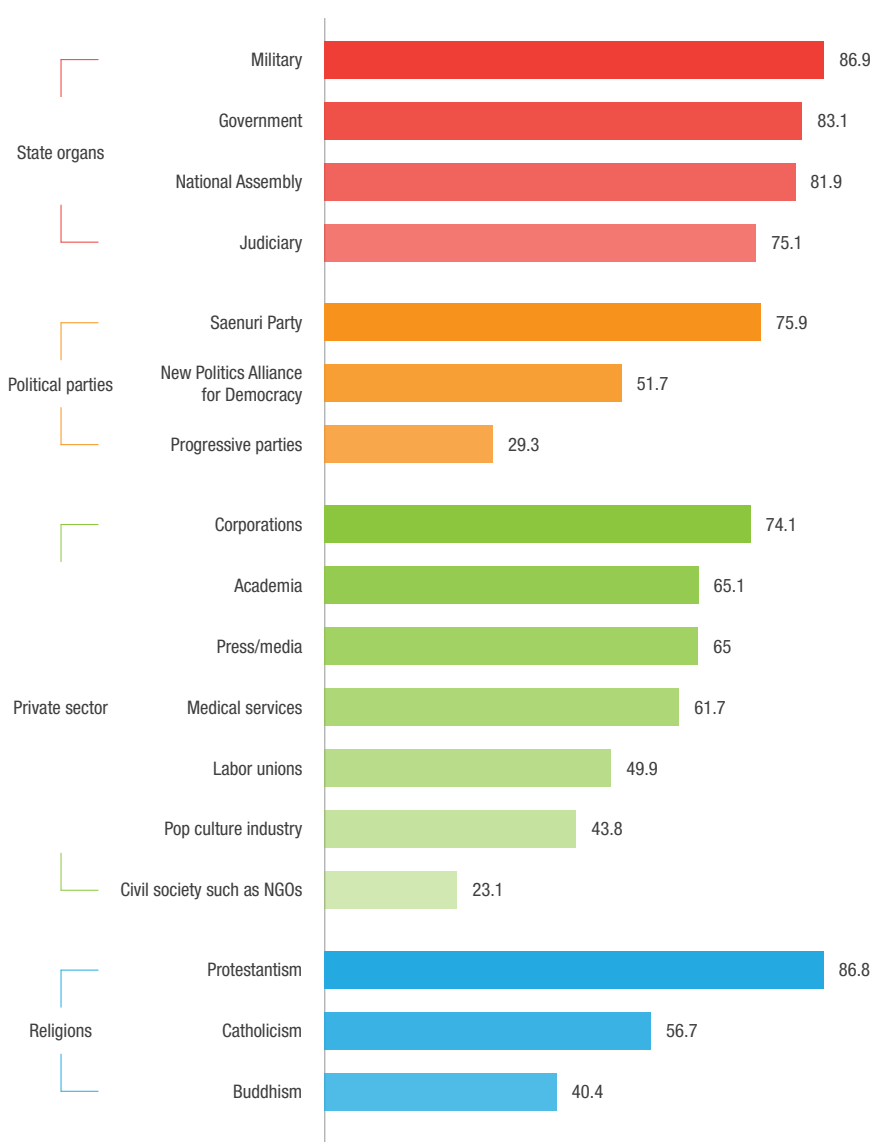
When the survey participants’ perceptions of major state organs are examined more specifically, 83.1%, 81.9%, and 75.1% felt that the government, National Assembly (legislature), and judiciary, respectively, were unfriendly to LGBTI people. In comparison, 74.1%, 65.%, and 65.0% felt that corporations, academia, and press/media—all belonging to the private sector—were unfriendly. Though unfriendly,



these latter institutions were felt to be less so than were public organs. As for religions, 86.5% said that Protestantism was the most unfriendly to LGBTI people, a considerable figure, followed by 56.7% for Catholicism and 40.4% for Buddhism, respectively.

Fig. 1-13. **Spheres felt to be unfriendly to LGBTI people**

Do you feel that the spheres below are generally friendly or unfriendly to LGBTI people? (3,158 respondents)



## 6. Experiences with discrimination and violence and redress

In general, LGBTI people did not feel that the workplace was a space safe from discrimination and violence. 67.7% of the respondents thought that ridicule, discrimination, or violence of or against LGBTI people occurred at work “occasionally” or “often.” Only 13.3% believed that such incidents “never” or “hardly” took place.

“ I’d be called [to my supervisor’s office] during work and get chewed out about my appearance. Because of things like that, I’d get really stressed out, and I’ve quit before for that reason, too. (Y, MTF, age 30) ”

“ I joined [the workplace] as a woman, and [people said,] “Why does she go around looking like that when she’s a woman?”... (FF, FTM, age 40) ”

“ I had an interview once to transfer to a permanent position. But, like I said the last time, my [national] ID always created a problem, and they treated me like a weirdo at the interview. (HH, FTM, age 26) ”

Nor is family an exception. 66.4% of survey participants said that they had “occasionally” or “often” experienced violence, abuse, or neglect by consanguineous family members or relatives. 41.5% had experienced direct discrimination or violence. Experiences with discrimination or violence were even more pronounced among younger generations (45.1% for ages 18 and below, 42.8% for ages 19-29, 37.1% for ages 30-39, and 35.4% for ages 40 and above). Those with unstable employment experienced discrimination or violence more often (48.9% for part-time workers, 47.0% for contract workers, and 33.5% for permanent workers). By region, respondents living in Seoul experienced discrimination and violence more (45.5%) than did other regions such as Gyeonggi Province/Incheon (40.1%), metropolitan cities (35.1%), and other small cities (35.7%).

In addition, people who had come out experienced more discrimination and violence than did those who had not. Out of homosexuals and bisexuals who were not out to anyone, only 16.2% experienced discrimination and violence. In contrast, 73.7% of homosexuals and bisexuals who were out to the random public experienced discrimination and violence. In the case of transgenders who were not out to anyone, 8 out of 17 experienced discrimination and violence, which is a considerable ratio even without self-disclosure about their identities. As for transgenders who were out to the random public, 8 out of 12 said that they had experienced discrimination and violence, which is an even larger ratio.



Fig. 1-14. **Experiences with discrimination and violence**

Have you ever directly experienced discrimination or violence? (3,159 respondents)

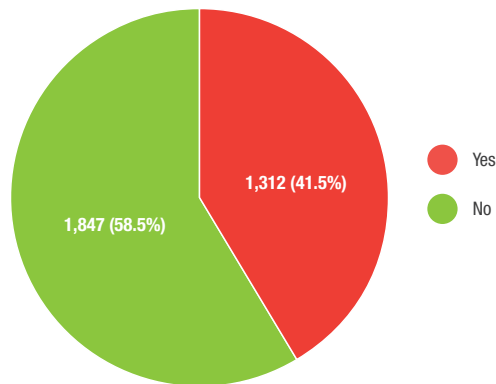


Fig. 1-15. **Reporting rates after experiencing discrimination and violence**

I have reported to or sought help from the police, organs, or organizations  
(limited to survey participants with experiences of discrimination/violence only; 1,312 respondents)

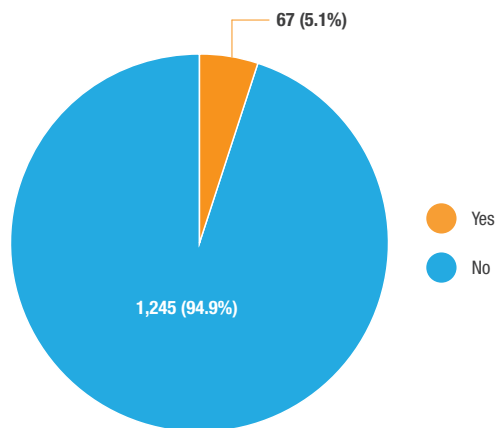
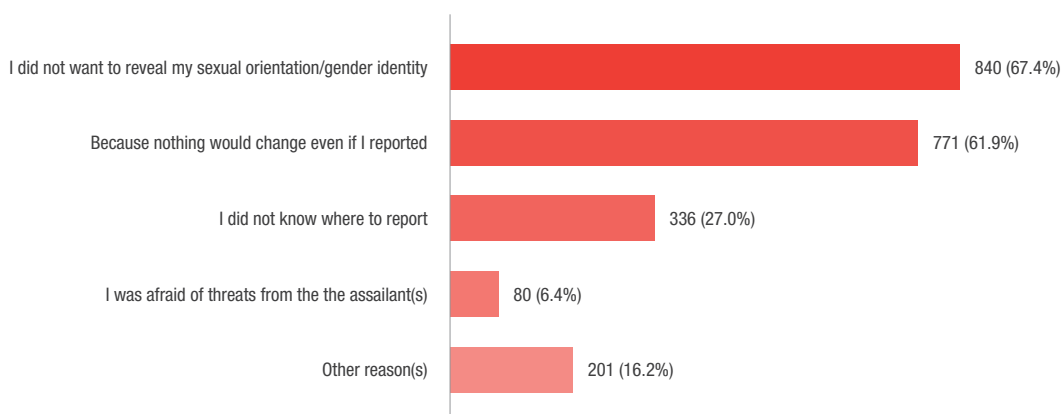


Fig. 1-16. **Reasons for not reporting**

What are the reasons for not making reports or seeking help? (choose all) (1,245 respondents)

\* Out of survey participants who had experienced discrimination/violence, limited to those who had not made reports or sought help only



Nonetheless, in many cases, those who had personally experienced discrimination or violence had not made reports. Only 5.1% said that they had reported to the police, related organs, or organizations. Among younger generations, even though experiences of discrimination or violence were more frequent, reporting rates were actually lower (2.5% for ages 18 and below, 4.4% for ages 19-24, 5.5% for ages 25-29, 6.1% for ages 30-39, and 13.1% for ages 40 and above). As for reasons for not reporting (multiple answers possible; choose all), the most prevalent response was “I did not want to reveal my sexual orientation/gender identity” (67.4%), followed by “Because nothing would change even if I reported” (61.9%). In this context, LGBTI people demanded redress for discrimination and violence as a crucial service and policy task. Indeed, survey participants cited “Redress for human rights violations or discrimination” (45.7%) and “Legal support or counseling” (37.1%) as the services most needed by the LGBTI community. Moreover, they pointed out “Redress procedures or organs for human rights violations or discrimination against gender/sexual minorities” (48.4%) as the foremost necessity of work life (multiple answers possible; choose two) and the “Legislation of the Anti-Discrimination Act” (53.2%) as the most important LGBTI policy issue (multiple answers possible; choose three).



Table 1-7. **Important LGBTI policy issues**

(3,159 respondents)

What are the most important LGBTI policy issues for you? (choose three or less)		
	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Legislation of the Anti-Discrimination Act	<b>1,680</b>	<b>53.2</b>
Legal recognition of same-sex marriage	<b>1,439</b>	<b>45.5</b>
Creation of educational programs providing correct information on LGBTI people	<b>1,219</b>	<b>38.6</b>
Legal recognition of partnership for same-sex couples other than marriage	<b>1,135</b>	<b>35.9</b>
Adoption of children by same-sex couples	<b>699</b>	<b>22.1</b>
Support for organs and organizations that work for LGBTI teenagers	598	18.9
Legislation of laws for transgenders' legal sex change	524	16.6
HIV/AIDS prevention and support for people living with HIV/AIDS	439	13.9
Making schools safe for LGBTI youths	402	12.7
Employment support/counseling and vocational training for LGBTI people	303	9.6
Applying the National Health Insurance to medical measures for transgenders and intersexes	302	9.6
Repealing clauses punishing [consensual] same-sex acts from the Military Criminal Act	304	9.6

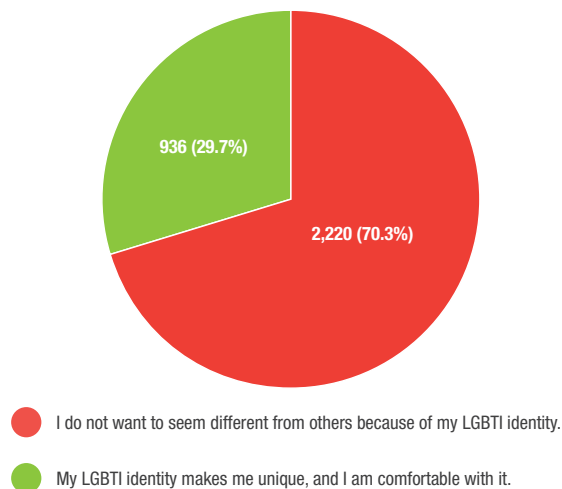
## 7. Health

LGBTI people in South Korea considered their LGBTI identities to be important parts of their lives. These identities were “very” important to 46.9% of survey participants and “somewhat” important to 40.0%, respectively.

In addition, for the most part, the respondents were positive about their identities. 74.8% felt that their LGBTI identities were “very” or “somewhat” positive and 25.1% felt that their identities were “very” or “somewhat” negative, respectively. However, LGBTI people expressed a certain degree of discomfort, rather than comfort, at the fact that they were different from others. Between the two options of “I do not want to seem different from others because of my LGBTI identity” and “My LGBTI identity makes me unique, and I am comfortable with it,” 70.3% chose the former and 29.7% chose the latter.

Fig. 1-17. **Perspectives on LGBTI identities**

Out of the two following sentences, which one is closer to your viewpoint? (3,156 respondents)



Amidst such a situation, the lives of LGBTI people in South Korea today are somewhat gloomy. To the question of whether they were happy, 43% of survey participants answered that they were. This is a figure slightly lower than that of the “South Koreans’ Happiness” poll from 2011 (Gallup Korea), where 52% of the respondents said that they were happy. Indeed, suicide and self-harm attempts were at dangerous levels. Out of the total respondents, 28.4% said that they had attempted suicide and 35.0% said that they had attempted self-harm, respectively. In particular, out of the younger respondents (ages 18 and below), 45.7% had attempted suicide and 53.3% had



attempted self-harm, respectively, thus amounting to nearly one out of two people, a severely high ratio. In addition, out of those who had experienced discrimination or violence due to their LGBTI identities, 40.9% had attempted suicide and 48.1% had attempted self-harm, respectively, which are figures much higher than those for people who had not experienced discrimination or violence (20.9% for suicide attempts and 26.9% for self-harm attempts, respectively).

In such a context, it is understandable that, as services necessary for the LGBTI community (multiple answers possible; choose three), “Counseling regarding identity, romance, etc.” came third (33.0%) after “Redress for human rights violations or discrimination” and “Legal support or counseling.” Demand for “Medical support or counseling,” too, was high, amounting to 19.8%.

Table 1-8. **Services necessary for the LGBTI community**

No. of respondents: 804

What do you think are the most necessary services for the LGBTI community? (choose three or less)		
	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Redress for human rights violations or discrimination	<b>367</b>	<b>45.7</b>
Legal support or counseling	<b>298</b>	<b>37.1</b>
Counseling regarding identity, romance, etc.	<b>265</b>	<b>33.0</b>
Programs to foster interaction among LGBTI people	186	23.1
Support for LGBTI teenagers	168	20.9
Producing and providing cultural contents for LGBTI people	164	20.4
Medical support or counseling	159	19.8
Operating shelters for runaway LGBTI people or victims of violence	106	13.2
Community infrastructures for LGBTI people not living in the Seoul metropolitan area	106	13.2
Support for elderly LGBTI people	88	10.9
Building and providing educational programs and resources for the LGBTI community	72	9.0
Programs to foster interaction among different generations of LGBTI people	72	9.0
Providing spaces and funds for the LGBTI community	66	8.3

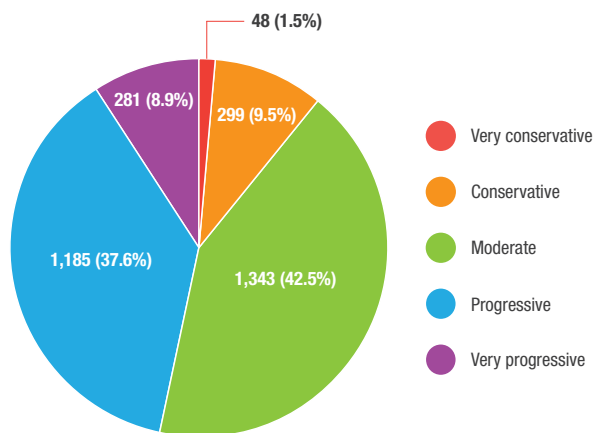
\* “I do not know” (6.6%); “Others” (2.1%)

## 8. Political participation and social change

The political leanings of LGBTI people were complex. While respondents who considered themselves to be “Progressive” far outnumbered (46.5%) those who viewed themselves as “Conservative” (11.0%), those self-identifying as “Moderate” took up 42.5% as well.

Fig. 1-18. **Political leanings**

How would you describe your overall political perspective?



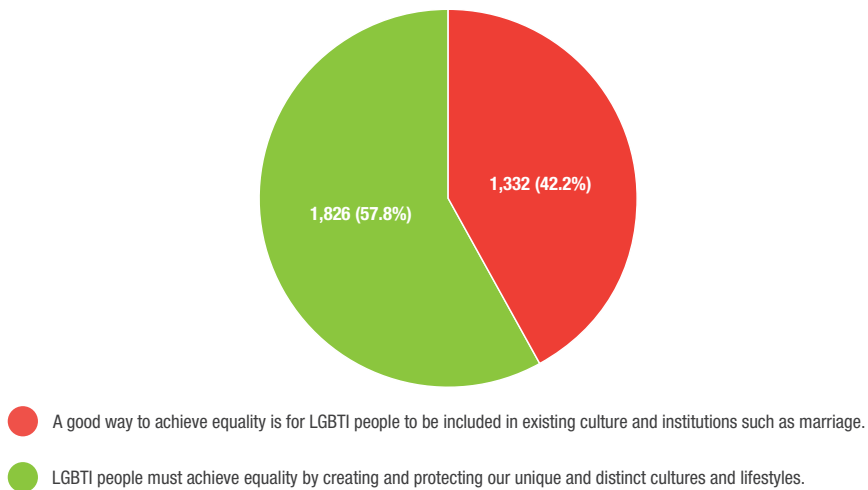
Such political leanings and perceptions of political parties exhibit similar patterns in survey participants' support for each of the parties as well. Over half, or 58.2%, of the respondents did not support any party in particular, 6.6% supported the Saenuri Party, and the remaining 35.3% supported opposition parties including the New Politics Alliance for Democracy, Green Party, Justice Party, and United Progressive Party. Such political topography is similar to the fact that, in the American Gallup poll of 2012, 43% of LGBTI people supported no particular party, 44% supported the Democratic Party, and 13% supported the Republican Party, thus exhibiting considerable support for the former party. In this South Korean survey, responses to “Contribution to social change for LGBTI people” were largely classified into two (multiple answers possible; choose two): they were “Changes in perception through dialogue with people around me” (53.4%) and “Personal success and accomplishments” (47.6%). Relatively few respondents chose “Donations to LGBTI activist groups' activities” (23.0%), “Participation in LGBTI activist groups” (16.5%), “Coming out” (13.9%), or “Political activities such as voting and participating in political parties” (8.2%). 17.7% of them currently contributed membership fees or donations to LGBTI activist groups.



Between two ways of achieving equality, survey participants preferred to be integrated into the existing culture rather than to pursue a separate one. In other words, between “A good way to achieve equality is for LGBTI people to be included in existing culture and institutions such as marriage” and “LGBTI people must achieve equality by creating and protecting our unique and distinct cultures and lifestyles,” 57.8% answered that their beliefs were closer to the former while 42.2% chose the latter.

Fig. 1-19. **Perspectives on equality**

Out of the two following sentences, which one is closer to your viewpoint? (3,158 respondents)



## 9. Lives of intersexes

The term “intersex” refers to people whose bodies do not conform to the typical male or female body. In some cases, chromosomes, sex glands, and genitals, which make it possible to distinguish between males and females physically, either do not agree with one another or cannot be distinguished as matching those of one particular sex. In other cases, the genitals exhibit both male and female characteristics. Intersexuality is discovered, in some cases, by physicians or parents upon birth. In other cases, people seen as belonging to one of the two sexes during childhood are discovered to be intersexed as secondary sex characteristics develop. At times, intersexuality is discovered during chromosome tests or ultrasonography. In fact, the occasions for discovering their intersexuality differed for all survey participants.

Unlike transgenders, for intersexes, understanding their physical conditions and circumstances has a great effect on the perception of their own gender identities as well. This is because, in these people’s case, it is not simply that their physical circumstances and gender identities disagree but that they must first understand their own physical circumstances. It is a process of grasping the reasons for the “natural” changes in their bodies and understanding how such physical circumstances are connected to their perceived sexes when the respective sexes assigned to them at birth and their physical appearances disagree. Through this process, they can decide what kinds of medical measures are necessary for them and whether their legal sexes must be changed.

“ I went to see a urologist at a university hospital, and “Klinefelter syndrome” was the term used to tell me. That’s why my testicles had stopped growing, I was told, and even though I had both, one of them was like this. There are outer testicles and inner testicles, and I had one of each. I can produce [sperm] but can’t impregnate [women]. (NN, age 28) ”

“ I was told before that my mom was happy when I was born because I was a son. But I heard the person who helped the delivery used a really vague expression, saying, “I can’t quite say what [this child] is.” [Interviewer: “But then why did your mother register you as a daughter?”] That, I don’t really know. And when I was little, my mom once said, “You mustn’t pee anywhere you please.” I thought about why she said that, but... (PP, age 41) ”

As for medical measures for intersex children, alternatives are necessary because it is difficult to obtain actual consent from the youngsters themselves and because there is considerable concern that, once they have been made, wrong decisions by parents are difficult to reverse.



“ [Interviewer: “Have you ever regretted getting the surgery?”] I have, a lot. Regret is something you feel over your own decisions. This, [on the other hand,] is resentment. I can’t help but resent my parents... Frankly, I had no idea it’d be this hard. One time, I moaned about it. Why didn’t they treat [the situation] like it was their own lives and think twice? Through various tests, so many male hormones were generated, but that’s not what [my parents] thought. [They thought of] feminizing me by feeding me female hormone pills. But they were irresponsible afterwards about things they should’ve been responsible about... (PP, age 41)

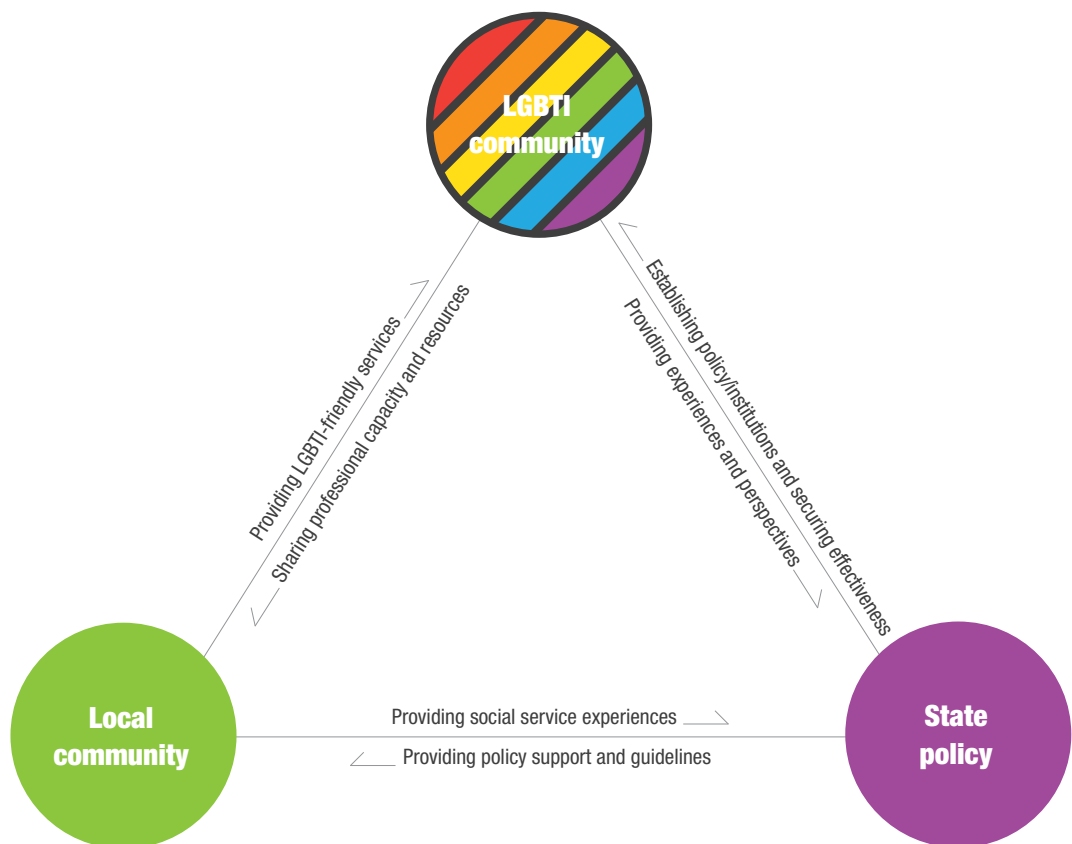
”

Currently, no separate online/offline communities for intersexes have been confirmed. Some intersexes seek out the transgender community for medical knowledge in the process of discovering their identities or for information on legal sex change in case their gender identities and legal sexes differ, thus leading them to participate in the transgender community.

## **IV. Policy Suggestions and Conclusion**



Below is a summary of policy suggestions based on the results of this study. The main point of these policy suggestions is the need to construct a structural virtuous circle through a positive, mutual effect among the LGBTI community, LGBTI-friendly local community, and state policy/institutions reflecting the experiences and perspectives of LGBTI people.



## 1. Strengthening the capacity of the LGBTI community

The possibility for change shown by this study starts with strengthening the capacity of the LGBTI community. According to this study, the LGBTI community is significant as a group and a social network based on identities, which are important to individuals who belong to it. On the other hand, LGBTI people are daily exposed to discrimination and violence related to their identities, thus experiencing hardship living in South Korea. In addition, amidst such a situation, LGBTI people are exposed to high health risks such as suicide and self-harm. However, it is difficult to make use of either people around them outside the community or existing social institutions as a means for resolving problems related to LGBTI identities. As a result, the community inevitably becomes the primary space in which to address diverse problems experienced by LGBTI people. Consequently, strengthening the LGBTI community is the most fundamental task for resolving the problems faced by LGBTI people and for enabling them to live harmoniously with their identities. It is especially urgent to construct the minimal protection system within the LGBTI community and to expand and strengthen the support base.

Such aid and support cannot be the responsibility solely of the LGBTI community. Rather, it can be said that the community has taken charge of the responsibility of the state, local governments, and public organs to a considerable degree. The LGBTI community therefore needs to lead the state, local governments, and public organs by providing them with its already established capacity, resources, experiences, and perspectives so that the local community and state organs may support and aid LGBTI people. In addition, support and aid activities from the local community and state organs will in turn raise the human rights level and quality of life of LGBTI people, thus leading to the strengthening of the capacity of the LGBTI community.

Based on such points, the following tasks were derived to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTI community:



## 1) Building counseling and a support base

- Securing expertise in areas such as law, identities, labor, romance, mental health including suicide, medical services, sex, and youths
- Constructing a crisis intervention system: suicide, running away/expulsion from home, HIV infection, etc.
- Creating peer groups, fostering role models, and developing and implementing programs to mitigate isolation
- Monitoring and intervening in media that strengthen prejudices against LGBTI people
- Provision of counseling tailored to transgenders and intersexes including medical services, employment, vocational training, and legal sex change
- Counseling, support, and networking for families of LGBTI people

## 2) Strengthening accessibility to LGBTI activist groups

- Active promotion of LGBTI activist groups' activities and counseling/support services
- Strengthening fundraising, promotion, member recruiting, and education functions, which serve to strengthen LGBTI activist groups' capacity
- Strengthening LGBTI activist groups' role as a mediator or a channel for LGBTI individuals outside to participate in the community
- Supporting and participating in the creation of communities for bisexuals and transgenders who have relatively less experience with and highly negative views of the LGBTI community
- Concentrating resources on and strengthening support for marginalized groups within the LGBTI community: people in regions other than the Seoul metropolitan area, teenagers, elderly, bisexuals, people living with HIV/AIDS (PL), people with disabilities, et al.

## 3) Strengthening LGBTI activist groups' professional capacity and LGBTI individuals' capacity

- Training experts in diverse areas
- Producing, distributing, and promoting diverse manuals stipulating LGBTI people's rights and ways to respond to human rights violations/discrimination
- Creating and providing reliable information on LGBTI identities and lives
- Preparing common-use programs including the educational experiences and manuals of LGBTI activist groups and LGBTI rights instructors
- Developing, distributing, and promoting practical resources and manuals that will help LGBTI individuals to work actively in daily life for changes in society's perceptions
- Securing LGBTI activist groups' expertise and strengthening LGBTI individuals' capacity by hosting and participating in diverse academic, cultural, and educational events

#### 4) Constructing a cooperation system with related organs

- Developing a cooperation system with related organs and expert groups in areas including law, medical services, education, counseling, social welfare, youths, and suicide prevention and discovering, creating, and promoting LGBTI-friendly organs
- Establishing curricula regarding the LGBTI people within the educational programs of related organs and expert groups and developing and presenting manuals
- Efforts to create and network with LGBTI liaison officers<sup>9)</sup> within state organs and the local community and developing and providing programs to foster a greater understanding of the roles of LGBTI liaison officers

## 2. Building an LGBTI-friendly local community

Building an LGBTI-friendly local community holds an important meaning for LGBTI rights and lives. This is because the local community takes up an especially large share of the everyday spaces in which LGBTI individuals live. As has been examined in this study, regardless of whether or not they are out, LGBTI individuals, as people with such identities, directly associate and live with public offices including community service centers, primary medical organs, schools, police stations, welfare facilities, and financial organs. However, the local community is unaware, in many cases, that local residents or users may be LGBTI people and is often unprepared to respond appropriately when LGBTI people request support as such. As this study has demonstrated, when their identities are revealed in the process, LGBTI people are exposed to discrimination and violence instead. Consequently, it is essential to construct systems where the local community can have a basic understanding of and encounter and support LGBTI people.

In particular, there have often been incidents in recent years where local governments did not allow the use of public spaces for LGBTI events or the posting of LGBTI-related banners. Blocking LGBTI peoples' activities in the local community, such incidents demonstrate all the more the importance of building an LGBTI-friendly local community. In addition, certain localities have become spaces for LGBTI people to gather in and have witnessed the formation of LGBTI residents' groups. In such areas, it is necessary to take special interest in LGBTI people and to establish programs for the formation of an experimental, LGBTI-friendly local community. Experience with an LGBTI-friendly local community thus formed can provide basic examples and information for the state's institutional and policy approaches to LGBTI people.

Based on such points, the following tasks were derived to make the local community LGBTI-friendly:

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<sup>9)</sup> LGBTI liaison officers are individuals who serve as contact points by representing particular organizations/organs and the LGBTI community to each other. The concept of LGBTI liaison officers described here refers not only to an official position but also to individuals who can actually play such a role.



## 1) Developing LGBTI liaison officers

- Developing LGBTI-friendly liaison officers in spheres including the police, district offices of education, community health centers, welfare centers, local lawyers' associations, local governments, civil society, and press/media
- Taking charge of two-way communication when LGBTI individuals and activist groups need to communicate about their identities with diverse spheres in the local community
- Using and applying the experiences and resources of the LGBTI community, with LGBTI activist groups as the medium for LGBTI liaison officers' activities
- Constructing and expanding LGBTI-related education and networks within the local community through LGBTI liaison officers
- Constructing a system for the discovery of successors and the transfer of duties in case of changes to the personnel/departments in charge

## 2) Developing services for LGBTI people and legislating guidelines/human rights ordinances

- Establishing guidelines on services for LGBTI people for each sphere in the local community in collaboration with the LGBTI community and legislating related human rights ordinances
- As pilot projects, first establishing LGBTI-concentrated areas and areas in which related human rights ordinances are to be legislated
- Developing counseling and support programs/organs for employment, medical services, education, and housing for LGBTI people
- Constructing systems that secure effectiveness through continued communication with and monitoring of local LGBTI groups, local LGBTI activist groups, and LGBTI liaison officers

### 3. Establishing state policy and institutions reflecting the experiences and perspectives of LGBTI people

State intervention to secure LGBTI people's human rights holds a considerable meaning. In this survey, LGBTI people cited as the most important policy issues the legislation of the Anti-Discrimination Act, guarantee of LGBTI people's right to create families, and establishment of curricula that were accurate and supportive of LGBTI people. Such institutions have a direct impact on not only the formation of stable LGBTI identities but also the construction of LGBTI lives and emergency responses to discrimination and, at the same time, help LGBTI people to build safety networks. Establishing institutions and policies related to them will serve as important opportunities and methods for changing not only society's perception of LGBTI people but also gender stereotypes as well.

Likewise, on a policy level, there needs to be state intervention on diverse levels, ranging from human rights promotion and support programs based on the concrete reality of LGBTI people to active education and campaigns directed at the entire society that seek to change public perceptions of LGBTI people.

In addition, it is possible to have a broad effect on the entire nation through the following actions: based on experiences in the local community, provide unified guidelines back to the local community; prompt private spheres such as corporations and medical organs also to establish plans for promoting LGBTI rights; and allocate budgets first to institutions and policy for promoting LGBTI rights. To accomplish this, also indispensable is an inspection system to secure the effectiveness of related institutions and policy.

Based on such points, the following tasks were derived to establish state policy and institutions reflecting the experiences and perspectives of LGBTI people:



## 1) Establishing institutions to secure LGBTI rights

- Repealing the “Disgraceful Conduct” clause (punishing only same-sex acts that involve military personnel even when mutually consensual) from the Military Criminal Act
- Establishing laws to prevent discrimination against LGBTI people
- Securing LGBTI peoples’ rights to create families including same-sex marriage/domestic partnership
- Relaxing the requirements for transgenders’ legal sex change

## 2) Establishing equality policy reflecting LGBTI perspectives

- Reflecting LGBTI perspectives in gender equality policies
- Reflecting policies and projects for the LGBTI community across pan-governmental organizations/human resources: Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Employment and Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Security and Public Administration, etc.
- Implementing massive campaigns and education to promote LGBTI rights and to improve perceptions of LGBTI people
- Reflecting LGBTI people in diverse investigations (data collection) on a government level through cooperation with LGBTI activist groups/civil society/LGBTI community
- Constructing systems that secure effectiveness through the monitoring and impact assessment of LGBTI-related institutions and policies

## 3) Developing policy to secure LGBTI rights

- Appointing LGBTI liaison officers to related government departments and judiciary organs and constructing LGBTI liaison officer networks
- Establishing unified guidelines for the local community, government departments, and judiciary organs
- Supporting corporations’ policy-making to secure LGBTI people’s labor rights
- Establishing LGBTI-supportive curricula within educational organs
- Constructing practical systems to secure the human rights of gender/sexual minorities connected to the military and networks with LGBTI activist groups
- Allocation of budgets to human rights activities/culture/research/education for LGBTI people
- Reflecting LGBTI experiences and perspectives in existing policy including shelters, employment support, and vocational training and social welfare service referral systems
- Applying the National Health Insurance to medical measures for transgenders and intersexes

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**Cover photo** A shot of the 2013 International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) project "One Fine Day," in which 116 South Korean citizens sang together to support LGBTI rights

**Courtesy photography** 강윤중