

Taiwan Tech's Indigenous Issue Workshop: Deepening Diverse Identity and Fostering a Friendly Atmosphere

The Resource Center for Indigenous Students at Taiwan Tech recently organized a workshop entitled "Issue Board Game: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Forum." This workshop employed a board game as a creative and engaging medium to facilitate discussions on topics related to multiculturalism, gender, and cultural diversity.



Group photo of "Issue Board Game: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Workshop" at Taiwan Tech's Resource Center for Indigenous Students

Yu-Jie Huang, a fourth-year student majoring in Applied Foreign Languages and a member of the Atayal indigenous community, shared her perspective. Prior to attending university, she felt a significant sense of disconnection from her indigenous identity. She questioned whether she should benefit from preferential admissions policies that allowed her to enter Taiwan Tech. However, through further exploration, she realized that preferential admissions were implemented in addition to existing enrollment quotas, ensuring that educational resources were not compromised and non-indigenous students' admission opportunities were not affected. This realization gradually dispelled her initial reservations and challenged the stereotypical labels associated with her indigenous background. Yu-Jie Huang expressed that through involvement in indigenous youth organizations, she had the opportunity to meet exceptional indigenous senior students who surpassed societal expectations.

Participating in the board game activity provided Yu-Jie Huang with valuable insights. She discovered that indigenous communities, rooted in traditional tribal cultures, tend to exhibit conservative attitudes toward issues of gender diversity, particularly under the patriarchal structure. Furthermore, she gained a clearer understanding of the indigenous admissions policy. Yu-Jie Huang recognizes the necessity of this policy in improving the overall socioeconomic status of indigenous students from remote areas. As a result, she actively participated in summer camp activities aimed at assisting indigenous elementary school students in Hualien, devoting her time and effort to making a positive impact.



The participants of the "Issue Board Game: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Workshop" at Taiwan Tech's Resource Center for Indigenous Students engaged in discussions and exchanged ideas with each other.

Li, a fourth-year doctoral student at the Graduate Institute of Applied Science and Technology at Taiwan Tech who does not belong to an indigenous community, raised a significant observation. Initially, he perceived the term "indigenous" as a divisive label that hindered ethnic integration and expressed a sense of envy towards the privileges afforded to indigenous students. However, through engaging in in-depth discussions during the workshop, he critically reconsidered his viewpoints and recognized their limitations. Li had assumed that indigenous communities would

strongly reject discussions on gender diversity. To his surprise, during the sharing session, he discovered that some tribes were embracing consensus-based decision-making, resulting in increased visibility and acceptance of diverse perspectives on these issues. He also noted the diverse student population at Taiwan Tech and suggested that by bridging language barriers, integrating discussions on indigenous topics with foreign and immigrant students would result in even more enriched and inclusive dialogues.

The board game activity featured three open-ended questions. The first question was, "Does shaping distinct impressions of different ethnic groups contribute to better intergroup interactions?" The second question addressed the participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in cultural activities and their role in preserving traditional cultures. For example, Li pondered whether gender norms should no longer restrict roles such as male hunting and female weaving in indigenous cultures. The final question prompted participants to critically evaluate the historical context and examine whether indigenous students having preferential treatment in the education system can be justified.



Throughout the workshop, the participants engaged in fruitful discussions with the facilitators on the content of the topics.

Lahok Ciwko, the indigenous facilitator responsible for leading the activities, noted that non-indigenous students often expressed concerns about inadvertently offending their indigenous peers and, as a result, may hesitate to share their thoughts. Similarly, indigenous students appeared less willing to share their experiences and perspectives in an unfamiliar environment. The anxiety surrounding interethnic discussions on

ethnic issues may stem from long-standing misunderstandings and a lack of communication between different ethnic groups. Therefore, it is crucial to create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages open expression.

Lahok Ciwko believes that "stories are powerful tools for influencing policy." Often, society lacks a comprehensive understanding of the situations and issues faced by indigenous communities. Through this workshop experience, Lahok Ciwko aims to provide participants with a platform to practice sharing their life experiences, listening to others' stories, and engaging in dialogue. It is essential to apologize for any unintended offense caused by unfamiliarity and remain humble by seeking guidance from others. By engaging in continuous dialogue, Lahok Ciwko believes that relationships can grow stronger, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and ethnically friendly social atmosphere.



The participants of the "Issue Board Game: Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Workshop" at the Resource Center for Indigenous Students at Taiwan Tech actively engaged in discussions while utilizing board game materials as a facilitation tool.