





Crosswinds

Japan Looks Outward:
How Demographics Are Reshaping Global Higher Education

KUMARAGURU Institutions

K-GEO KUMARAGURU GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

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Japan Looks Outward

Japan's global ambitions are increasingly reflected in its universities, which are building bridges across borders through collaborative education, research and industry engagement.

Our cover story explores this outward-facing vision through Kumaraguru Institutions' emerging partnership with Kansai University, Japan. From innovative global learning initiatives such as IIGE and JIGE to the proposed Centre for Education, Industry and Skills Development, discover how this collaboration could create new pathways for knowledge exchange, talent development and shared progress.

Happy reading!



Japan Looks Outward: How Demographics are Reshaping Global Higher Education

As Japan confronts a shrinking youth population, its leading universities are rethinking internationalisation. The shift offers a compelling perspective on the future of global student mobility, institutional partnerships, and India's growing place in the international education landscape.



A Demographic Shift, A Global Imperative

For decades, Japan has been recognised for its academic excellence, research strength, and technological innovation. Today, however, its higher education institutions face a challenge that extends beyond classrooms and campuses: a rapidly declining domestic student population.

The number of ***18-year-olds in Japan has fallen to approximately half of its peak***, placing increasing pressure on universities that have traditionally relied on domestic enrolments. In response, ***leading institutions are looking outward***—not merely to attract international students, but to rethink their place in an increasingly interconnected academic world.

The ***University of Tokyo***, Japan's leading university, is among those responding to this changing landscape. Its internationalisation strategy reflects a broader recognition that global engagement is no longer an additional dimension of university life; it is central to institutional growth, research excellence, and long-term competitiveness.

Beyond Student Recruitment

Internationalisation is often measured through student exchange numbers, international enrolments, and institutional partnerships. Japan's evolving approach points towards a more comprehensive vision.

At the ***University of Tokyo***, efforts led by its international leadership include ***expanding English-taught programmes***, attracting ***global academic talent, creating more flexible pathways for international students***, and encouraging Japanese and international students to interact from an early stage of their academic journeys.

The objective is to ***build a campus environment*** where ***international perspectives are part of everyday learning and research***. Such an approach also recognises that global talent and cross-cultural collaboration are essential to addressing complex challenges—***from digital transformation to climate change.***



Japan Investment

"Looking outward is no longer simply an internationalisation strategy for Japan; it is an investment in its future."

Why India Matters

Among the countries attracting growing attention is India. Its large youth population, expanding technology sector, and increasing international education aspirations make it an important partner in Japan's global engagement strategy.

For Japanese universities, India represents ***more than a potential source of international students***. It offers opportunities to develop academic partnerships, strengthen research collaboration, and connect with a young and dynamic talent pool.

For Indian institutions, this changing outlook creates opportunities to explore deeper engagement with Japanese universities. These could include **student mobility, joint academic programmes, faculty exchanges, collaborative research, and interdisciplinary learning initiatives.**

The opportunity lies in moving ***beyond conventional exchange*** arrangements towards ***partnerships that create sustained academic value*** for both institutions.



Reimagining the University Experience

One of the University of Tokyo's significant initiatives is the planned **College of Design,** expected to begin in 2027. **Designed as an entirely English-taught, five-year integrated bachelor's and master's programme**, it is expected to admit 100 students in each cohort.

Bringing together engineering, social sciences, and public policy, the programme reflects an interdisciplinary approach to education. Its proposed launch also marks a significant institutional development, as it will be the university's first new faculty in approximately 70 years.

The **initiative signals a willingness to rethink traditional academic structures** and create programmes that appeal to students from different countries and disciplinary backgrounds.

Japan Outward

"Japan's next chapter in higher education may be shaped as much by its global connections as by its academic excellence."

A Lesson for Global Higher Education

Japan's demographic transition offers a glimpse into a challenge that many higher education systems may increasingly encounter: **how to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable in a changing population landscape**.

For universities, looking outward is not simply about compensating for declining domestic enrolments. It is about recognising that knowledge, talent, and innovation increasingly move across borders. **Institutions that create meaningful international connections will be better positioned to participate in this evolving landscape.**

For Indian universities, **Japan's renewed global outlook** presents an opportunity to strengthen institutional relationships, develop new pathways for students, and contribute to collaborative research and innovation.

The future of higher education will not be shaped by geography alone. It will be shaped by how effectively institutions connect people, ideas, and knowledge across borders.



India-Japan

> **"As Japanese universities welcome the world, opportunities for India–Japan academic collaboration are expanding."**

Source: Adapted from Anna Esaki-Smith's Forbes article, "How Demographics Are Pushing Japan's Top University To Look Outward," published on March 18, 2026.
https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2026/03/18/how-demographics-are-pushing-japans-top-university-to-look-outward/
Anna Esaki-Smith is an author and covers higher education. - Forbes.com

Japan Study Abroad: Smarter Investment for Indian Students

Most Indian families choose a study destination the way they'd choose a brand.The bigger the name, the better the bet. That logic made sense for the West. It doesn't fit Japan, and that's exactly why Japan deserves a closer look.

The **US, UK and Australia are largely prestige markets**. Families pay a premium for the name and hope the outcome follows.

Japan is an ROI market. Tuition and living costs are a fraction of Western equivalents. Scholarships are more accessible. And a real labour shortage means employers are actively hiring international graduates. You're not paying for the logo. You're investing against an outcome.

So why isn't more of India looking? Because the decision is harder to make without help. A parent in Jaipur or Kochi doesn't lack information. They lack someone who can tell them whether a university fits their child, how the application really works, and whether their child will be safe, supported and employable after.

When nobody answers those questions, families default to the familiar Western option, even when it's the weaker return.

That's why we built **Sakura Pathways** as end-to-end support, not paperwork. Profile and university fit. Applications done properly. Scholarship and cost planning. Cultural and language prep so students arrive ready.

Three things we believe:

- Good guidance is what turns Japan from "interesting" into "yes."
- Quality has to be built in. Capped caseloads and honest advice beat volume.
- We serve the student, not the sale. If Japan isn't right, they should hear that from us.

Prestige sells a name. ROI builds a future. For a growing number of Indian students, Japan is the smarter investment. Our job is to make that decision clear and confident

Source: From the LinkedIn page post of Mr. Adrian Mutton, Founder and Executive Chairman, Acumen (Sannam S4 Group)
https://lnkd.in/p/gRT3vTHa

Coimbatore × Japan: Building a New Corridor for Education, Talent and Innovation

Japan is looking outward to build its global education and talent networks, and Kumaraguru is taking a concrete step to become part of that engagement.

As **Japan looks beyond its borders** to strengthen international education, research and talent connections, India is emerging as an important partner. Changing demographics, the need for **globally skilled talent** and growing international engagement are encouraging Japanese universities and institutions to build stronger connections with countries such as India.

For **Coimbatore**, a city with a strong industrial and entrepreneurial ecosystem, this presents an opportunity to build meaningful connections with Japan—not just through student mobility, but also through **education, research, industry and innovation.**

Taking a step in this direction, **Kumaraguru Institutions** is initiating the **Coimbatore–Japan Centre**, a strategic **initiative to connect education, talent, research and industry between India and Japan.** The initiative is being developed in partnership with **Kansai University's JIGE and the Institute for Innovative Global Education (IIGE), Japan.**

The initiative builds on discussions and institutional engagement with **Professor Keiko Ikeda**, Full Professor at Kansai University and Vice Director of IIGE, and **Professor Tomoki Furukawa**, including their visit to the Kumaraguru campus.

A significant milestone was reached when **Takeuchi Osamu, Vice President of Kansai University**, and **Shankar Vanavarayar, President of Kumaraguru Institutions**, formally signed the **Letter of Intent**, setting the direction for this collaboration.



Connecting Two Ecosystems

Anchored at Kumaraguru Institutions, the **Coimbatore–Japan Centre** aims to establish a sustained **India–Japan corridor** for talent, education, industry and innovation. It will **connect the talent and industrial ecosystem** of Coimbatore and Tamil Nadu **with Japan's education and SME networks**, particularly in the **Osaka region.**

The Centre represents an opportunity to move beyond conventional institutional partnerships and **create a platform for sustained engagement**—bringing together universities, students, faculty members and industry partners to explore shared opportunities.

An Invitation to Industry

The success of this initiative will depend on **active participation from the region's industry ecosystem**. Kumaraguru invites **Coimbatore-based companies** to join the Coimbatore–Japan Centre as strategic industry partners and contribute to shaping meaningful connections with Japan.

A new chapter in Coimbatore–Japan engagement is taking shape—one built on shared learning, talent, industry and innovation.





Coimbatore-Japan

"Building bridges between Coimbatore and Japan is about more than connecting institutions; it is about connecting talent, ideas and opportunities."

Source: From the LinkedIn page post of Dr. Vijila Edwin-Kennedy, Director, Global Engagements, Kumaraguru Institutions

Digital Innovations for Enhancing Dairy Productivity and Solve Reproductive Issues

Field research from Tamil Nadu shows how data, veterinary care and farmer learning can work together

Turning everyday farm records into actionable evidence

For smallholder dairy farmers, an animal that fails to conceive on time is more than a reproductive concern. It can mean additional breeding costs, longer periods without a calf, reduced lifetime milk production and pressure on household income. Addressing these challenges requires more than a single technology or occasional veterinary visit. It calls for reliable information, timely advice, practical training and accessible animal-health services working together.

This is the focus of a collaborative research initiative supported by the Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC) through its Women Involvement in Science and Engineering Research (WISER) programme. The project, "***Potential of digital innovations and its institutional dimensions to enhance dairy productivity in developing countries***," brought together Kumaraguru researchers, international collaborators, field veterinarians, dairy farmers and the technology team at GormalOne.



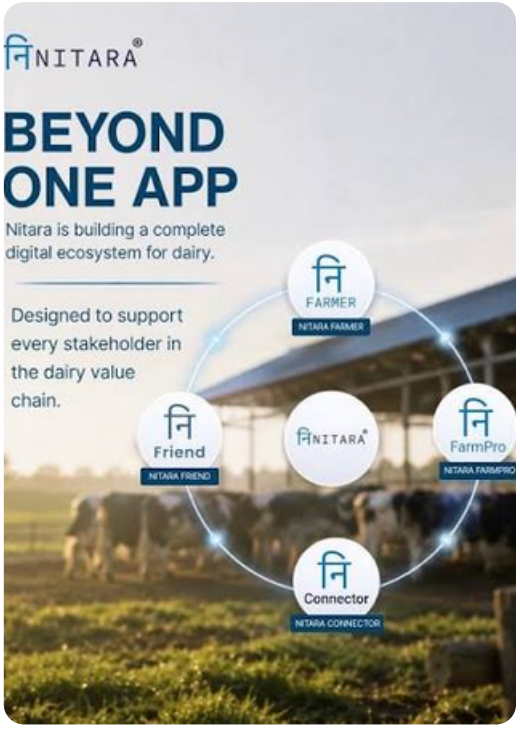
A field study rooted in farmers' realities

The research documented dairy herds across Coimbatore and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu. The published study analysed **data from 2,254 animals** belonging to **579 farmers**, examining reproductive performance alongside species, breed, age, milk yield and management conditions. The findings revealed that **repeat breeding affected 20.4% of animals and infertility was recorded in 44.7% of those assessed.**



Buffaloes showed particularly high infertility, while reproductive challenges also varied by breed and farm conditions.

These figures matter because reproductive performance influences the economics and sustainability of dairy production. Repeated services and delayed conception increase costs and can extend unproductive periods. The study also highlights the environmental dimension: when animals remain unproductive for longer, emissions per unit of milk can rise. Better fertility management is therefore relevant to farm livelihoods as well as climate-smart dairy development.



Combining digital tools with on-the-ground support

The project strengthened the use of **NITARA**, a digital **herd-management application** developed with GormalOne, to register animals and organise information on health, breeding and farm-level progress. Digital records can help farmers and extension workers keep track of breeding events, pregnancy status and animal-health needs, while supporting more timely and specific advice.

Field Engagement

"Digital tools are most valuable when they are embedded in relationships and institutions that farmers trust."

Technology was paired with field engagement rather than treated as a stand-alone solution. Activities included village meetings and focus-group discussions, animal-health camps, farmer master classes, WhatsApp-based advisory groups and distribution of fodder seeds. Across the ***wider project implementation, 633 farmers and 2,455 animals were digitally registered;*** **51 village-level meetings**, discussions and health camps supported outreach, and **2,536 animals received attention** for issues including deworming, body condition and vaccination coverage. **More than 111 advisory messages** were developed and shared through village communication channels.





Measurable Impact

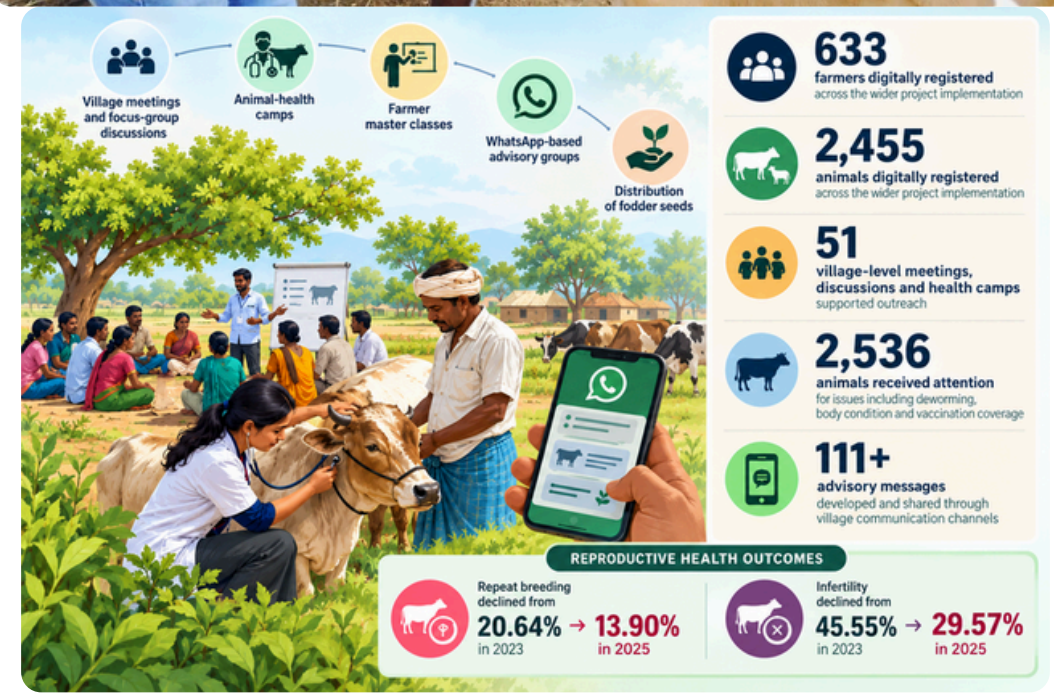
“Repeat breeding declined from 20.64% in 2023 to 13.90% in 2025, while infertility fell from 45.55% to 29.57%”

What changed and what the evidence tells us

A separate longitudinal analysis of the integrated intervention package compared baseline and endline reproductive outcomes. In that analysis, ***repeat breeding declined from 20.64% in 2023 to 13.90% in 2025, while infertility declined from 45.55% to 29.57%.*** These results are encouraging and show the potential of coordinated approaches that connect monitoring, nutrition, training and veterinary support.

The findings should nevertheless be interpreted carefully. The research assessed a package of interventions delivered in real farming conditions; it does not establish that a digital application alone caused the observed changes. The analysis of individual intervention components did not find a consistent statistically significant association with infertility, and engagement with WhatsApp advice may partly reflect farmers seeking help when reproductive problems arise. The lesson is not that technology replaces trusted field services, but that it can help those services become more informed, connected and responsive.





From research to wider engagement

The work demonstrates how research partnerships can link local priorities with international scientific collaboration. It also contributes evidence relevant to extension design, veterinary service delivery and the development of climate-smart dairy systems. Scaling such approaches will require continued collaboration among farmers, veterinarians, technology providers, researchers and dairy-sector institutions along with attention to data quality, usability and regular follow-up.

For Kumaraguru Institutions, the broader opportunity is to translate research into practical solutions that serve communities. Digital tools are most valuable when they are embedded in relationships and institutions that farmers trust.

By combining field evidence with accessible advisory systems and capacity building, dairy innovation can support healthier animals, stronger livelihoods and more resilient production.



Bigger Picture

"The lesson is not that technology replaces trusted field services, but that it can help those services become more informed, connected and responsive."

Research Publication
Ravichandran, T., Digdarshika, G., Chagunda, M.G.G. et al. (2026). "Reproductive challenges in Indian dairy farming: an analysis of repeat breeding and infertility in Tamil Nadu." Tropical Animal Health and Production, 58, 273. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11250-026-05033-6



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KANSAI UNIVERSITY, Japan
Gateway to Asian Excellence



Established in 1886 as Kansai Law School, **Kansai University** is a private comprehensive university located in **Osaka, Japan.** With a history spanning nearly 140 years, the university has evolved from its beginnings in legal education into a multidisciplinary institution offering undergraduate, graduate and professional education across a wide range of fields.

The university's **educational philosophy** is expressed through the motto ***Gaku no Jitsuge,*** broadly understood as putting academic learning into practice. This philosophy emphasizes **connecting knowledge with real-world needs** and preparing graduates to contribute meaningfully to society.

Kansai University combines established academic traditions with contemporary approaches to education, research, international exchange and community engagement. Its location in Osaka, one of Japan's major economic and cultural centres, provides a setting for students to engage with Japanese society, industry and international communities.

Kansai University's academic and international activities are distributed across campuses and specialist facilities in the Osaka region. The university's main campus is **Senriyama Campus** in Suita, Osaka. **Takatsuki and Takatsuki Muse Campuses** Specialised academic centres associated with informatics and societal safety sciences. **Sakai and Suita Mirai Campuses** support focused academic activity in health and well-being, and business data science, respectively.







Internationalisation and Global Learning

International engagement is an important component of Kansai University's educational strategy. Through its **Division of International Affairs**, the university facilitates **student mobility, international research, overseas partnerships and cross-cultural learning.** Its international portfolio includes: Student exchange programmes, English-medium learning, Japanese language and cultural studies, Summer and short-term programmes, International research and cooperation, and Intercultural learning.

These initiatives provide a foundation for partnerships that extend beyond conventional semester exchanges to include collaborative teaching, research and international learning experiences.

Structure and Area of Study

Kansai University offers a broad academic portfolio spanning the ***humanities, social sciences, business, information technology, engineering and applied sciences. Its academic structure comprises 14 undergraduate faculties, 13 graduate schools and two professional graduate schools.***

This breadth offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and collaboration across conventional academic boundaries. Potential areas for institutional engagement include engineering and technology, computing, business and data science, sustainability-related disciplines, and the social sciences. Specific programme compatibility would need to be confirmed at the department level.

Kansai University at a Glance

1886	30,000+	14	13 + 2	7
Year established	Students, approximately	Undergraduate faculties	Graduate + professional	Campuses

Figures compiled from official university materials. Student numbers and partnership totals are approximate or dated as indicated.

Global Education Leadership: IIGE and JIGE

Kansai University has established a strong presence in international collaborative education through two significant initiatives: the **Institute for Innovative Global Education (IIGE)** and the **Japan Hub for Innovative Global Education (JIGE)**.

Established in 2018, IIGE advances Collaborative Online International Learning **(COIL)**, Virtual Exchange and innovative approaches to international academic collaboration. Building on this experience, Kansai University joined Chiba University and Tohoku University in establishing JIGE in 2023, a **MEXT-supported initiative** focused on blended mobility, digital credentials, international internships and future-ready talent development.

Together, these initiatives reflect Kansai University's commitment to taking international education beyond conventional student exchange by integrating digital learning, cross-border collaboration, experiential learning and skills development.

These capabilities offer an interesting foundation for exploring collaboration with Kumaraguru Institutions, particularly in developing the proposed Centre for Education, Industry and Skills Development.

Information and picture courtesy
Kansai University Website
https://www.jungwonuniversity.com/
Kansai University, Osaka, Japan

From India to Belgium: A Journey of Learning and Discovery

Hallo! (Hello!) My Journey in Belgium

I'm **Niranjan Karthikeyan**, a **master's student in Food Technology at KU Leuven and Ghent University, Belgium.** Coming from a background in Biotechnology, I began this journey with curiosity. Little did I know that this experience would teach me as much about myself as it would about science.

Moving to Belgium was more than just pursuing a master's degree in another country. It meant stepping outside my comfort zone, adapting to a new culture, navigating life independently, and learning to find my place in an unfamiliar environment.

From **adjusting to the cold weather** and everyday routines to experiencing a **new language and culture**, every little challenge became an **opportunity to grow**. Over time, what once felt unfamiliar gradually became a part of my everyday life.

One **cool thing about Belgium** and the Netherlands is that, even though Dutch is the main language, **getting through day-to-day life using English is surprisingly easy**. But one thing that took me by surprise was seeing grocery products labelled in Dutch rather than English, unlike what I was used to back in India. Something as simple as grocery shopping suddenly became a little language-learning adventure!



Two Universities, One Learning Journey

One of the most exciting aspects of my journey has been being part of an **inter-university programme** offered by **KU Leuven and Ghent University**. It is popularly known as **Master of Science in Food Technology (IUPFOOD).** Though it sounds interesting the difficult part was to find housing while moving to a different university within the same country.

My educational experience here has been enriching, with a **strong emphasis on research and independent thinking.** The professors are highly experienced and knowledgeable, which is clearly reflected in their **teaching methods and presentations**. They are approachable and always willing to interact with students, clarify doubts whenever we face difficulties in understanding a topic.





Beyond academics, living in Belgium has taught me some of the **most valuable lessons outside the classroom**. Managing daily responsibilities, adapting to a different way of life, and learning to navigate challenges independently have helped me develop resilience and a **greater appreciation for personal growth**. There have been moments of uncertainty and pressure, but each of them has reminded me that **progress does not always happen in a straight line**. Sometimes, the most important lessons come from the experiences that challenge us the most.

I would conclude by saying this: **Sometimes, the greatest opportunities for growth begin when we step into the unfamiliar.** Belgium has given me more than an international education; it has given me the opportunity to challenge myself, explore my potential, and build a stronger foundation for the future. The journey won't be easy, but keep pushing forward and trust the process.

Inspiration

"Sometimes, the greatest opportunities for growth begin when we step into the unfamiliar."



Niranjan Karthikeyan, Batch of 2024,
B.Tech Biotechnology,
Kumaraguru College of Technology

Beyond Borders, Beyond Classrooms: My Journey with Collaborative Online International Learning

How international academic collaborations are transforming the way students learn, communicate, and understand the world.

Education becomes truly meaningful when learning extends beyond textbooks and classrooms and allows students to encounter perspectives different from their own. As a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Science (KCLAS), I have always believed that students must develop an understanding of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. My recent experiences with Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), through partnerships with St. Catherine University and Indiana University in the United States, have given me an opportunity to put this belief into practice.

These collaborations have been more than international academic activities. They have been opportunities to rethink classroom learning, encourage students to engage with unfamiliar perspectives, and explore how shared academic questions can connect students across geographical, cultural, and institutional boundaries.

Understanding the World Through Shared Learning

COIL offers a structured approach to international collaboration in which students from different countries work together through digital platforms, exchange ideas, conduct research, and develop a shared understanding of an issue. Unlike conventional international programmes that require physical mobility, COIL makes intercultural learning possible within the regular academic curriculum.

For our students, this is particularly valuable. Many are experiencing international academic collaboration for the first time. The opportunity to interact with students from another country allows them to move beyond learning about international issues theoretically and begin engaging with people who experience, interpret, and understand those issues differently.

My two COIL partnerships have explored different themes, but both have demonstrated how international collaboration can enrich disciplinary learning.

COIL Definition

“COIL connects more than classrooms; it transforms how students understand knowledge, cultures, and the world.”

St. Catherine University
Connecting Governance, Justice, and Indigenous Rights

The collaboration with St. Catherine University brings together students studying **Civil Services in India at KCLAS** and students enrolled in **Global Search for Justice at St. Catherine University**. The partnership explores the **connections between governance, bureaucracy, institutional accountability, indigenous rights, representation, and social justice.**

The central idea is to examine how public institutions influence the lives of communities, particularly those whose experiences and concerns may not always receive adequate attention in mainstream policy discussions.

Our students have explored topics concerning **the Irular and Kurumba communities**, including cultural identity, socio-economic transformation, Scheduled Tribe rights, the Forest Rights Act, access to justice, environmental change, and the implementation of welfare measures. These topics create opportunities to connect classroom discussions on civil services and public administration with the lived experiences of tribal communities.

What makes this collaboration particularly meaningful is its **interdisciplinary perspective**. Questions of indigenous rights cannot be understood through law alone. They also require an understanding of administrative structures, historical inequalities, cultural identity, environmental governance, and the relationship between communities and the state.

For students of Political Science, this creates an important opportunity to examine governance not merely as a system of institutions and procedures, but as a process that directly affects people's everyday lives.

The **international dimension** adds another layer to this learning. Students can examine how questions of indigenous sovereignty, community identity, institutional responsibility, and justice are understood in different national contexts. The objective is not to assume that the **experiences of India and the United States** are identical, but to encourage students to identify meaningful comparisons, recognise contextual differences, and ask more critical questions.



"International collaboration turns learning from the acquisition of information into an exercise in curiosity, critical thinking, empathy, and shared responsibility."

Indiana University
Exploring the Laws That Shape Family Life

The collaboration with Indiana University takes a different but equally relevant approach by **examining family laws and public policies** in India and the United States.

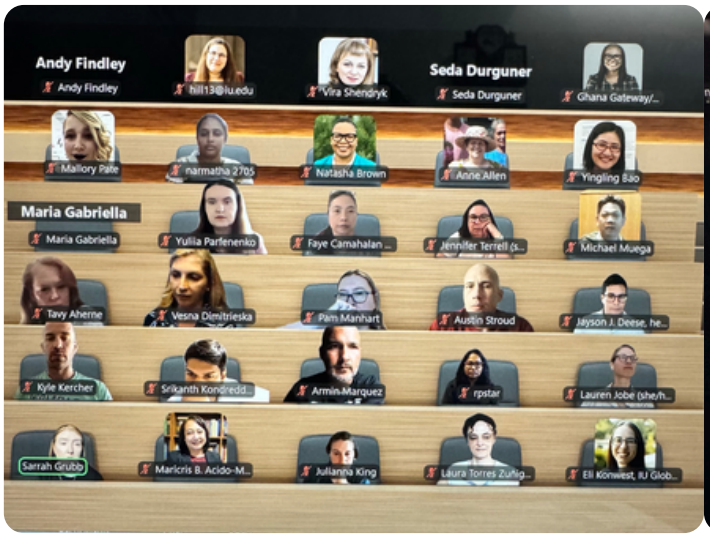
Under the **theme Ties That Bind**, students explore how legal systems, public institutions, and social expectations shape family life. Areas of inquiry include marriage, divorce, child custody, adoption, domestic violence, inheritance, and related questions of family rights and protections.

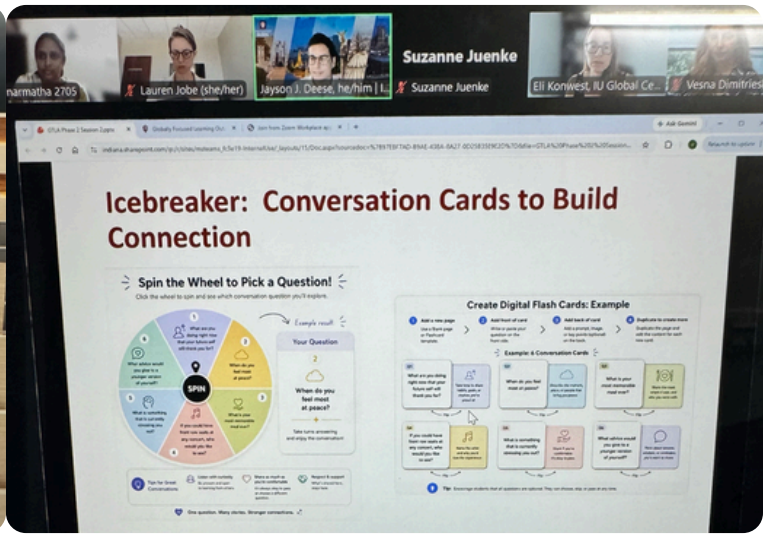
Family-related issues are often discussed as personal or private matters. However, a comparative approach reveals how deeply they are connected to public policy, social justice, gender equality, institutional responsibilities, and access to legal remedies.

Students are encouraged to **investigate how laws and policies operate in their respective countries**, exchange their preliminary findings, and work towards a comparative understanding of the selected issue. The emphasis is not simply on identifying differences between Indian and American laws. Instead, students must consider why these differences exist, how policies are implemented, and whether the protections available on paper translate into meaningful support for families in practice.

This approach encourages students to move from **description to analysis.** They begin to recognise that the same social problem may be addressed through different legal frameworks and institutional arrangements, each shaped by its own historical, political, economic, and cultural circumstances.

The **collaboration also provides an opportunity** to understand how students from another country approach familiar social questions. An issue that appears straightforward within one legal or cultural context may raise entirely different questions when examined through another perspective.





Learning Beyond Academic Content

One of the most valuable aspects of both collaborations has been learning beyond the subject matter. International teamwork requires **clear communication, patient listening, negotiation, shared responsibility, and collaboration—**skills that develop through practice.

For students, interacting with international peers can mean stepping outside their comfort zones. Differences in language proficiency, communication styles, academic expectations, and confidence may initially pose challenges. These experiences have reinforced the importance of inclusive collaboration, supported by clear instructions, manageable tasks, defined timelines, and varied opportunities to contribute.

Digital platforms such as ***Padlet, email, and video conferencing*** enable interaction, but technology alone cannot ensure meaningful collaboration. Thoughtful integration, student support, flexibility, and sustained communication are equally important, particularly when coordinating across time zones and schedules.

Building a More Connected Learning Environment

My experiences with **St. Catherine University and Indiana University** have shown me that internationalisation can become part of everyday teaching, beyond institutional agreements and student mobility. While one collaboration examines governance and justice through indigenous communities' experiences, the other explores how laws and public policies shape family life. Both demonstrate the value of dialogue, comparison, and diverse perspectives.

These **collaborations encourage students to question assumptions,** appreciate contextual differences, and communicate across cultures. Ultimately, COIL connects more than classrooms; it transforms how students understand knowledge, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, empathy, and shared responsibility.

The **world may be divided by geography, language, and culture**, but **learning gives us a common space** in which to understand those differences and learn from them.

Rethinking the Role of the Faculty Member

In a COIL environment, faculty members move beyond explaining concepts and evaluating understanding to facilitating peer learning. This means allowing students to explore questions, encounter different interpretations, and develop evidence-based conclusions, while adapting to group dynamics and communication challenges.

These experiences have encouraged me to design assignments, group work, and participation more thoughtfully, balancing academic rigour with intercultural understanding. Collaborating with international colleagues has also enabled me to exchange teaching practices, reconsider assumptions, and connect disciplinary knowledge with real-world questions.

Conclusion

“The world may be divided by geography, language, and culture, but learning gives us a common space to understand those differences.”



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ARDSICON'26: Humanising Dementia Care, One Community at a Time

From community workshops in **rural Coimbatore to international conversations** on dementia-ready communities, ARDSICON'26 brought together research, compassion, and youth-led innovation.

What does it take to build a world where people living with dementia are understood, supported, and treated with dignity? At Kumaraguru Institutions, Coimbatore, **ARDSICON'26 brought this question into focus** through three days of dialogue, learning, and collaborative action.

Held from 8–10 October 2026, the **International Conference on Humanising Dementia Care** was powered by the **Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India – Coimbatore Chapter (ARDSI-CC)**, in collaboration with the **School of Social Work and School of Psychology at Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Science (KCLAS)**, and the **Department of Psychiatric Social Work at NIMHANS, Bengaluru.** Under the theme Youth, Innovation & Community Strength, it connected clinicians, researchers, students, caregivers, and advocates from six countries.

From awareness to action

The conference began not in a lecture hall, but across learning spaces that brought dementia-care knowledge closer to communities. Four pre-conference workshops reached 180 participants, including students and members of the public. Activities ranged from exploring person-focused care at KCLAS to designing dementia-friendly communities, addressing psychosocial concerns, and raising awareness at a government school in Annur.



The message was clear: ***meaningful dementia care begins by seeing the person beyond the diagnosis—and extends into the communities around them.***

Opening Spread

> **"Dementia care should start with the person and be sustained by the community around them."**



Global perspectives, local relevance

International plenaries brought perspectives from Indonesia, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, alongside Indian expertise. Discussions explored dementia-friendly communities, integrated care, age-inclusive living environments, and pathways connecting hospital and home-based support.



DY Suharya, Regional Director, Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) Asia Pacific, Indonesia, explored global perspectives on creating dementia-friendly communities and translating them into local action. **Prof. Alan Win of the University of Sydney Business School,** Australia, spoke on building integrated, dementia-ready communities. Representing Canada, **Dr. Jeya Thayaparan of Mackenzie Health, Toronto**, shared lessons from Canadian practice in comprehensive geriatric care for people living with dementia. **Dr. Susan Shaw BN of Arvida**, New Zealand, addressed how to create places where older people can truly live, drawing on perspectives from around the world. From the **United Kingdom, Dr. Ganeshmoorthi Arunachalam of Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust** explored integrated care pathways connecting hospital care with support at home.

Together, the plenaries highlighted the importance of dementia-friendly communities, coordinated care, and environments that support dignity and quality of life. Two panel discussions further brought voices from medicine, research, and advocacy together to examine person-centred care and the role of society in creating dementia-inclusive communities. Across these conversations, the emphasis remained on connecting professional knowledge with the realities of people living with dementia and those who care for them.



Research meets youth innovation



ARDSICON'26 featured 51 research papers across ten thematic tracks, spanning clinical advances, mental health, social work, rehabilitation, public policy, technology, caregiver support, ethics, and education.

Youth participation took centre stage through the student hackathon, Innovating Dementia Care: Technology, Community & Compassion. Its 27 participants explored solutions in four areas: caregiver support, youth volunteering, community outreach, and digital assistance. The challenge encouraged students to approach dementia care not only as a clinical concern, but also as an opportunity for technological creativity, community engagement, and compassionate problem-solving.





A shared responsibility

With 317 participants, ARDSICON'26 demonstrated how international expertise, interdisciplinary research, and community engagement can reinforce one another. Its impact lies not only in the knowledge exchanged, but also in the connections created between institutions, professionals, students, and communities.

For Kumaraguru, the conference reflected the power of bringing learning beyond classrooms and research beyond academic boundaries. Humanising dementia care requires more than medical intervention: it calls for informed communities, inclusive systems, innovative thinking, and a shared commitment to dignity.

The conversation does not end with the conference. It continues wherever awareness becomes understanding, innovation responds to real needs, and communities make space for people living with dementia.

317 Participants	**16 Speakers**	**6 Countries**	**51 Research papers**	**27 Hackathon innovators**

Closing Section

"ARDSICON'26 combined community outreach, global expertise and youth participation in one programme."



Report curated by
Dr. Santhosh JS
Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work
Kumaraguru College of Liberal Arts and Scineces

From Ideas to AI-Powered Ventures: Kumaraguru Students Build at Aalto University, Finland

Thirty Kumaraguru students travelled to Finland for an intensive week of AI-enabled entrepreneurship. At Aalto University, they moved from identifying real-world problems to building working prototypes and pitching startup ideas to an international panel.



When thirty Kumaraguru students arrived in Helsinki on 4 October 2026, they had little idea of what the week ahead would demand of them. Five days later, they had formed six teams, **developed AI-enabled prototypes** and **pitched their startup ideas before an international panel at Aalto University**. **One team emerged as the winner**, while all thirty returned with a fresh perspective on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The experience was part of **Aalto SAIL 2026 – AI-Enabled Entrepreneurship and Business Model Innovation**, conducted by Aalto University Summer School at its **Otaniemi campus in Espoo** from 5 to 9 October.

The challenge was ambitious: **in five days**, each team had to **identify a real-world problem**, develop a viable business model, build a working AI-enabled prototype and deliver a ten-minute pitch, with every member contributing.

An Ecosystem Designed for Innovation

One of the first impressions of Aalto was its integrated innovation ecosystem. Classrooms, **A Grid**—the university's startup hub—the **Design Factory,** the **Fablab** and student-led entrepreneurship communities were all within easy reach. The environment reflected a simple philosophy: innovation flourishes when people from different disciplines can meet, experiment and collaborate.



Students formed **six teams of five**, with defined responsibilities across building, product development, research, business and pitching. Sessions on technology entrepreneurship, strategic foresight, design thinking and sustainable business models helped them identify opportunities and understand user needs.



A visit to the **Designs for a Cooler Planet exhibition** introduced students to sustainability-led innovation. They also explored **AI-assisted prototyping** and tested their work with another team. This peer feedback revealed gaps in their initial ideas and reinforced the importance of testing early.



The visit to **Aalto Design Factory** demonstrated how engineering, design and business students collaborate on practical projects. A company visit to **Finnish deep-tech enterprise Isaware** offered further exposure to industry innovation.

Revelation

“With AI, almost anyone can build something today. Knowing what is worth building matters more than ever.”

Six Teams, Six Attempts to Solve Real Problems

The final pitches showcased the diversity of student ideas, ranging from drone-based pothole detection to predicting product-component failures before manufacturing and helping international students settle into a new country.

The ***first-place team, EcoCycle Bio Energy***, proposed a waste-to-energy marketplace that rewards households for segregating food waste. Its model connects households and collectors with biogas plants, using digital scales, electric cargo trikes and graded organic feedstock to support a circular bio-economy.

PotHawk AI – ROADOS developed a drone-based pothole detection concept using a YOLOv8n model, with AI-supported explanations and inspection reports for municipalities.

Endura explored how product engineers could predict component failures before manufacturing. Belongly focused on helping international students navigate a new country through local discovery, community connections and language exchange.
The evaluators recognised the relevance of the problems but emphasised that the next step for every team was validation with real users and reliable data. **The prototypes were starting points, not finished businesses.**





The Most Important Lesson: Start with the Problem

Perhaps the strongest learning from Aalto was not about a particular AI tool, but about knowing what is worth building. With AI-assisted and no-code tools, students **developed working digital prototypes in a remarkably short time**. Yet speed did not replace the need for research, judgement or user understanding. Peer testing helped teams identify weaknesses, while clearly defined roles strengthened collaboration.

The final pitches challenged students to communicate technical ideas in simple, impact-focused language. The experience demonstrated that **entrepreneurship is not just about having an idea**. It requires listening, testing assumptions, accepting feedback and being willing to improve.

Connecting Kumaraguru and Finland

Alongside the student programme, the faculty delegation explored collaboration opportunities with over 15 institutions and individuals across Aalto and Helsinki. Discussions covered joint research with REACT, photovoltaic materials, bio-fibres and textiles, AI-enabled learning and social entrepreneurship. Visits to Aalto Fablab, Design Factory and Aalto Junior offered insights for Kumaraguru's Makers Lab and STEM for Change initiatives.

The delegation also met India's Ambassador to Finland, H.E. Shri Hemant H. Kotalwar.



Aalto SAIL 2026 extends beyond the classroom, with students expected to refine their prototypes, document their learning and share insights with juniors. Selected ventures may progress through REACT or Kumaraguru's incubation ecosystem.

The experience also offered lessons in Finnish values of punctuality, sustainability, equality and respect for privacy. More than an international study visit, it strengthened students' ability to collaborate, experiment and communicate ideas while opening avenues for future academic and innovation partnerships.

The students returned with a valuable entrepreneurial insight: the real question is not what technology can build, but what problem is worth solving—and for whom?



Entrepreneurial

"An ecosystem for innovation does not happen by chance. It is built with intent."





Article curated by
Brathikaran VM, Assistant Professor
Kaviyarasi A, Executive

My experience at Aalto University, Finland, was much more than an international academic visit; it was an opportunity to broaden my perspective, challenge my thinking, and understand how innovation can create meaningful change. Exploring Finland's innovation ecosystem introduced me to new approaches to AI-enabled entrepreneurship, problem-solving, design thinking, and collaborative learning. Visiting Aalto's labs, attending sessions with mentors and industry experts, and building a generative AI solution with my team showed me how quickly an idea can become a working prototype.

Working closely alongside fellow students every day helped me appreciate the importance of teamwork, curiosity, and learning through experimentation. One of my biggest takeaways was that successful innovation is not just about developing advanced technology, but about identifying real-world problems and creating practical, sustainable solutions that genuinely benefit people.

I look forward to bringing these learnings back to Kumaraguru College of Technology by encouraging collaborative projects, responsible AI adoption, entrepreneurial thinking, and hands-on experimentation through iQube and other student initiatives.

This experience has inspired me to think beyond conventional boundaries, transform ideas into actionable solutions, and contribute towards building a stronger innovation culture on campus. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and the perspectives it has given me.



Testimonial on Aalto University SAIL'26
Bryan Dawson
B.E. Computer Science and Engineering
Class of 2029, KCT

Preparing Students for a World that is still Taking Shape!!

A visit from **Adelaide University** to Kumaraguru Institutions offered an opportunity to engage in conversations about the future of higher education, evolving workforce expectations, and the possibilities for deeper India-Australia academic collaboration.



A particularly meaningful part of the engagement was the **master class by Professor Noel Lindsay, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation**, Adelaide University for Kumaraguru students on The Future of Work and the Competencies It Demands- for a **world of work we cannot yet fully predict?** The conversation went beyond qualifications and technical knowledge to consider the importance of adaptability, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and the ability to learn and reinvent oneself continuously.

For our students at Kumaraguru, such engagements bring global perspectives into their learning journey and encourage them to look beyond immediate career choices towards the larger possibilities that lie ahead. Kumaraguru Global Engagement Office thanks **Professor Noel Lindsay and Hari Iyer** for engaging with our students and sharing perspectives.



JASSO Scholarships for International Students – Study in Japan

The Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) offers financial assistance to international students pursuing higher education in Japan. Two relevant schemes are the ***Student Exchange Support Program*** and the ***Monbukagakusho Honors Scholarship for Privately-Financed International Students.***

Details	Student Exchange Support Program	Monbukagakusho Honors Scholarship
Scholarship amount	JPY 80,000 per month	JPY 80,000 per month
Duration	8 days to 1 year	12 months (April–March) or 6 months (October–March)
Eligibility	International students from countries having diplomatic relations with Japan, accepted by a Japanese institution under a student exchange agreement or arrangement. Applicants should demonstrate good academic and personal records, financial need, and intend to return to their home institution to complete their studies.	Privately financed international students enrolled full-time at eligible Japanese institutions, with strong academic performance and character, and financial need. Applicants must meet the prescribed academic and language requirements. Conditions relating to other scholarship support also apply.
Application process	Students cannot apply directly to JASSO. The Japanese host institution submits the application and recommends candidates. Students should enquire with their home institution and Japanese host university.	Applications are made through the Japanese institution where the student is enrolled. The institution determines its recommendation process and available places.

Application timeline

There is no single common application deadline for all JASSO scholarships.

Exchange scholarship: **The application is coordinated by the Japanese host institution, according to its programme and nomination schedule. Students should contact their international office well before the proposed exchange semester.**

Honors Scholarship: **Applications are handled through the institution in Japan; students should check the institution's internal nomination deadlines.**

Important for students: **JASSO scholarships are not generally direct-to-student applications. Institutional nomination is central to the process. Students planning an exchange or degree programme in Japan should check eligibility and nomination timelines with their host university well in advance.**

Official resource: **JASSO – Scholarships for Study in Japan**

Study in Japan: MEXT Scholarships

The Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship, offered by **Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology,** provides opportunities for international students to pursue higher education in Japan.

Scholarship category	Who is it for?
Research Students	Planning to pursue a Master's or Doctoral degree in Japan.
Undergraduate Students	Seeking admission to an undergraduate programme in Japan.
Teacher Training Students	Experienced school teachers interested in professional training in Japan.
Japanese Studies Students	Undergraduates specialising in Japanese language or culture.
College of Technology Students	Students interested in technical and engineering education.
Specialized Training College Students	Students interested in specialised vocational and professional courses.
Young Leaders Program (YLP)	Young professionals, public administrators and future leaders seeking postgraduate education in Japan.

There are two application routes:

1. Embassy Recommendation

Apply through the Japanese Embassy or Consulate in your country.
The Embassy conducts the initial screening, including document evaluation, written examinations and interviews. Available categories and application requirements may vary by country.

2. University Recommendation

Apply through a Japanese university that has an approved MEXT recommendation quota. The university screens candidates and recommends selected applicants to MEXT. Not all Japanese universities are authorised to recommend students.

Ready to explore MEXT opportunities? Start by identifying the scholarship category that matches your academic plans and check the latest application guidelines.

Official website: MEXT Scholarships – Study in Japan

Let's Build Global Connections. Let's Create Opportunities.

Kumaraguru Global Engagement Office (K-GEO) invites universities and higher education institutions across the world to connect with us and explore opportunities for meaningful international collaboration.

We believe that global education is built through shared knowledge, academic partnerships and experiences that transcend borders. We welcome conversations with universities interested in developing collaborations in areas such as:

- **Institutional Partnerships**: Building strategic alliances and academic partnerships.
- **Student Mobility:** Semester exchanges, study abroad programmes, short-term global immersion and progression pathways.
- **Faculty Exchange:** Joint teaching, research engagement, visiting faculty opportunities and academic exchanges.
- **Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL):** Connecting students and faculty across countries through collaborative virtual learning experiences.
- **Academic & Research Collaboration:** Joint projects, curriculum development, knowledge sharing and interdisciplinary initiatives.

Whether you are exploring your first engagement with Kumaraguru or looking to expand an existing partnership, we would be delighted to start a conversation.

Let's connect, collaborate and create global opportunities together.

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🌐 **Explore K-GEO: https://k-geo.kumaraguru.in**
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