

# Sophia School Corporation SDGs & Sustainability Report 2024-2025

—English edition—



上智大学  
SOPHIA UNIVERSITY



# Sophia School Corporation SDGs & Sustainability Report 2024-2025

## Table of Contents

- Chancellor’s Message ..... 01
- President’s Message ..... 02
- Chapter 1: Initiatives of Sophia School Corporation ..... 03
- Chapter 2: Initiatives of Sophia University ..... 13
- Chapter 3: Initiatives of the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability ... 27
- Chapter 4: Initiatives of Educational and Research Organizations ..... 37
- Chapter 5: Research Outcome Report Contributing to the SDGs ..... 57
- Chapter 6: Initiatives of Extracurricular Activity Groups ..... 73

List of SDG Goals (Icons are shown for corresponding examples)





## Chancellor's Message

### Chancellor, Sophia School Corporation Sali Augustine

Sophia School Corporation has declared 10 commitments in its long-term plan, “Grand Layout 3.0 – Towards 2030” (2023–2030). These commitments are rooted in the university’s founding philosophy, “Sophia—Bringing the World Together,” and its educational spirit of “For Others, With Others.” They aim to foster a global community and nurture students capable of addressing complex global challenges. This vision resonates deeply not only with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—which seek to build a sustainable society—but also contributes to the realization of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) set forth by the global Society of Jesus.

The challenges we face today—climate change, poverty, inequality, and conflict—require more than technical solutions. They call for a reexamination of the values of human dignity and coexistence. In response, Sophia School Corporation seeks to connect knowledge with action through education, research, and social engagement.

During his visit to Sophia University in 2019, the late Pope Francis left a powerful message referring to his encyclical *Laudato Si'*:

“This institution should not only be a place of intellectual education, but also a space for shaping a better society and a future full of hope. It should express an intellectual and forward-looking concern for the protection of our common home, the Earth, with love for nature.” *Laudato Si'* echoes the SDGs’ core principle of “leaving no one behind” and offers profound guidance. Inspired by this teaching, Sophia University continues to address global challenges through academic inquiry and practical initiatives.

This report introduces the activities and achievements of Sophia School has undertaken to achieve the SDGs while responding to the founding principles, educational spirit, and the calls of UAPs and *Laudato Si'*. These efforts are not merely means to achieve goals—they serve as a compass for each of us to live “for others, with others.” By embracing diversity and striving for peace, we walk together with our students toward the realization of a sustainable society.

Finally, we hope this report not only shares our initiatives but also inspires new actions in collaboration with individuals and institutions. Let us move forward together with hope to build a better future.



## President's Message

### President, Sophia University Miki Sugimura

The concept of sustainability is being addressed today from a wide range of perspectives. With only five years remaining until the target year of 2030, efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are accelerating among various stakeholders.

For Sophia School Corporation and Sophia University, which it operates, considering sustainability and determining how to achieve the SDGs is one of the university's key missions. Founded in 1913 by the Catholic Jesuit order, Sophia University upholds the educational spirit of "for others, with others," based on Christian humanism, and carries the mission of "Bringing Wisdom to the World." A central focus of this mission is the unique Sophia value of engaging in activities that support the socially vulnerable. When considering this idea of "accompaniment," an important perspective is the respect for diversity, along with attention to equity and inclusion. Today, this is further expanded to include a sense of belonging, expressed as DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging).

This concept involves respecting and accepting differences in race, gender, age, nationality, religion, language, disability status, and values; supporting equal opportunities for all; creating environments where diverse individuals can participate and express their views safely;

and fostering a sense of acceptance and value within organizations and communities. Sophia University places great importance on these four aspects and announced its "DEI&B Declaration" in August 2025. Respecting diversity while simultaneously considering inclusion and equity is a complex challenge, but it is a crucial perspective for respecting human dignity and contributing to a peaceful and sustainable society.

This report introduces various initiatives at Sophia University in education, research, and social contribution. One of the university's core efforts is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which encourages students to view global issues as personal concerns and take proactive action. As part of this, the university has implemented innovative approaches such as "student staff" who work alongside faculty and administrative staff to consider university management and the creation of an inclusive campus. These student staff members also played a vital role in the preparation of this report.

We hope this report provides insight into the direction Sophia University is taking toward the SDGs and sustainability. We look forward to receiving your feedback and advice as we continue to develop new initiatives that reflect the unique spirit of Sophia.

# Chapter 1: Initiatives of Sophia School Corporation



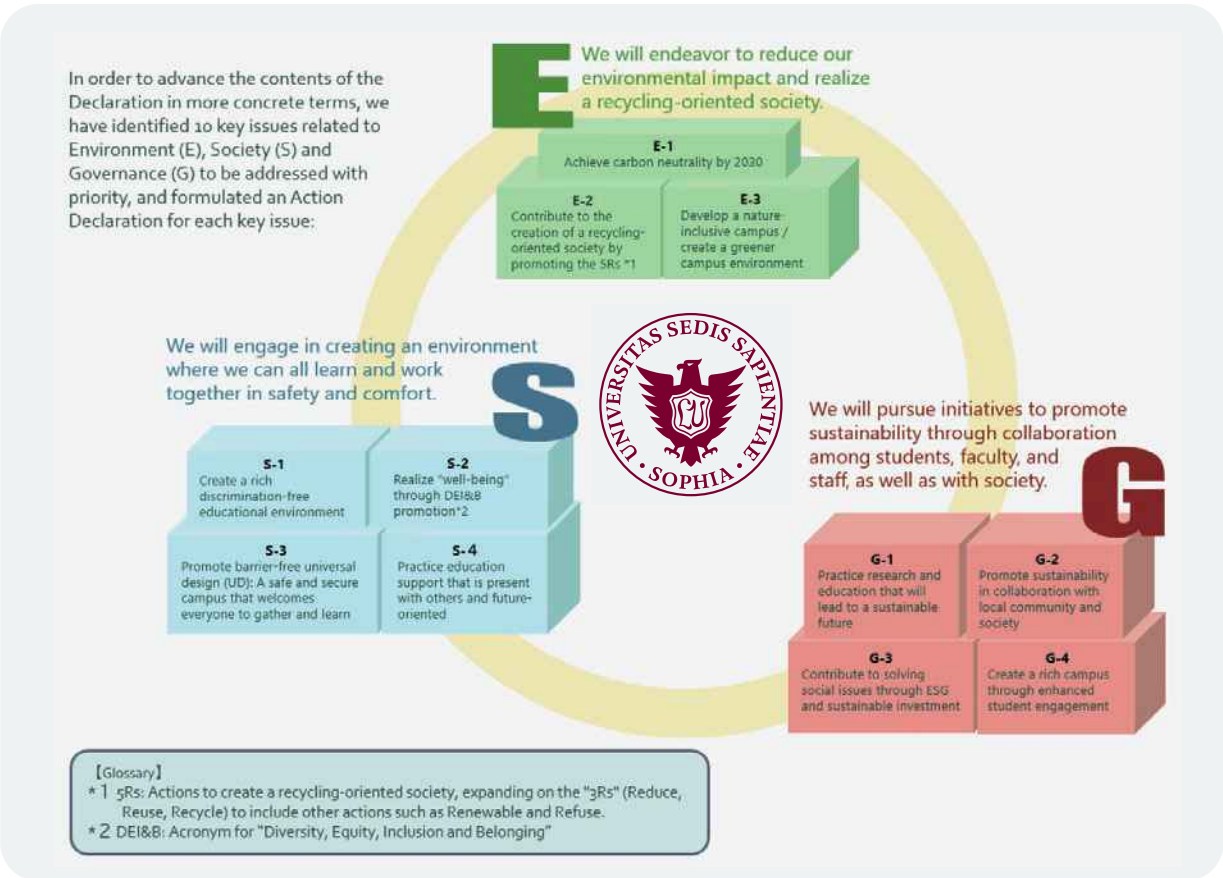
# Sophia School Corporation Declaration on Promoting Sustainability

Sophia School Corporation has been committed to human education based on “Christian Humanism”, where each student, faculty and staff mutually recognizes the dignity of the human personality and basic human rights, and aims to be a person who serves the development of the world with responsible behavior and a humble spirit. Never taking a bystander attitude, each school is committed to nurturing individuals who strive to solve global-scale problems through dialogue.

When Pope Francis visited Sophia University in 2019, He referred to his 2015 encyclical, ‘Laudato Si’, and left a message stating, “This university should be a center

not only of intellectual formation, but also a place where a better society and a more hope-filled future can take shape” and that “Love for nature should here find expression in a sapient and foresighted concern for the protection of the earth, our common home.”

Committed to the educational spirit of “For Others, With Others” and the seven goals presented in Laudato Si’, Sophia School Corporation will contribute to solving social issues, creating value, and protecting and preserving the environment through its research and education activities.



## The Role of “Laudato Si’ Universities”

Sophia University has signed its commitment to Pope Francis’ “7-Year Journey Towards Integral Ecology”. In order to achieve the goals of Laudato Si’, members of

signatory universities are expected to learn, practice, and share, with the broad participation of students, faculty, staff, and all relevant stakeholders.

**Laudato Si’ Goals – LSGs**

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth	5. Ecological Education
2. Response to the Cry of the Poor	6. Ecological Spirituality
3. Ecological Economics	7. Community Resilience and Empowerment
4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles	

## Responsible (Sustainable) Investment Initiatives

In alignment with Sophia University's educational philosophy—"For Others, With Others" and "Sophia – Bringing the World Together"—we are committed to practicing responsible investment, which incorporates ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) considerations. These guiding principles are not limited to education and academic research; they form the

foundation of all Sophia University activities. Based on our membership in the United Nations Global Compact and the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), we aim to achieve both social and financial returns. Through asset management, we strive to contribute to solving global environmental and social issues and to building a sustainable international society.



## JCI message delivered to Minister of the Environment Asao

On December 11, 2024, the Japan Climate Initiative (JCI) visited Environment Minister Keiichiro Asao and handed over the JCI message, "JCI calls on the Japanese government to set an ambitious 2035 target that is consistent with the 1.5°C goal," endorsed by 236 JCI member organizations.

Mr. Kato, Co-representative, requested the Minister that in addition to the JCI message delivered this time, the government should reflect the calls for the high emission reduction targets and renewable energy targets raised by non-state actors, mainly companies inside and outside Japan, such as the Japan Climate Leaders Partnership (JCLP), RE100, Clean Energy Buyers Association, and SEMI, in the next NDC and the 7th Strategic Energy Plan of Japan. In addition, he stated that in order to simultaneously achieve the benefits of promoting economic growth, ensuring energy security, and breaking away from dependence on expensive fossil fuel imports, as well as carbon neutrality, a transition to clean energy through the expansion of renewable energy is imperative.

JCI members, Mr. Kitahara of Brother Industries and Mr. Hikima of Sophia University, spoke from the per-

spective of their respective efforts about the importance of ambitious government targets and policies for companies,

universities, financial institutions, and others to achieve the 1.5°C target, and also expressed concern about the impact on international competitiveness and Japan's position in the international community, and stated their support for the JCI message.

Minister of the Environment Asao stated that he would like to continue discussions while listening to the opinions of various stakeholders, including companies and young generations, in order to achieve net zero by 2050, and expressed his hope that cooperation with non-state actors from other countries will also be promoted.



## First Among Private Universities: Declaration of Acceptance of the “Asset Owner Principles”

In September 2024, Sophia University became the first private university to declare acceptance of the *Asset Owner Principles*, formulated by the Cabinet Secretariat’s Headquarters for the Promotion of a New Form of Capitalism. Alongside this declaration, we publicly announced our policy for implementation. The

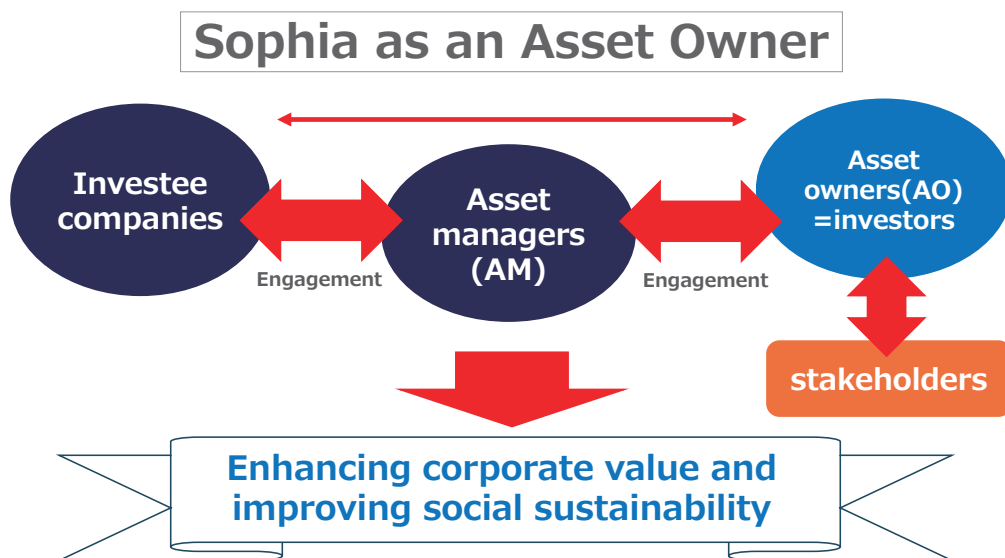
*Asset Owner Principles* outline common standards for asset owners (institutional investors who hold assets) regarding investment management, governance, and risk management.

### 〈Significance of Sophia School Corporation’s Declaration of Acceptance〉

1. For universities and educational corporations to function effectively as asset owners within the investment chain, it is essential to gain the understanding and interest of stakeholders.
2. This declaration serves as an opportunity to effectively communicate Sophia’s philosophy, initiatives, and role in society as an asset owner, helping stakeholders better understand our position.

Based on the Asset Owner Principles, we will continue to make appropriate and transparent disclosures moving forward.

※For more details, please visit the official website of Sophia School Corporation.  
<https://www.sophia-sc.jp/disclosure/esg>



## Signed the “Global Investor Statement to Governments on the Climate Crisis”

In October 2024, we endorsed and signed the “2024 Global Investor Statement to Governments on the Climate Crisis” through the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). This statement was developed by The Investor Agenda, a coalition of institutional investors committed to a net-zero economy.

(The statement was supported by 534 institutions, representing a total of \$29 trillion USD in assets under management — approximately ¥4,079 trillion JPY.)

The statement emphasizes that effective government policies are essential to accelerate the flow of private capital into transition plans that consider climate change, natural capital, and a just transition to net zero.

It calls on governments to step up their climate action ahead of the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) held in November 2024.

## Introduction of Investment Case Studies

### Impact Investment in Clean Energy



Impact Investment Promoting the Energy Transition Through Private Capital, Targeting Credit and Real Assets in the Renewable Energy Sector Primarily in North America and Europe

### A Strategy That Prioritizes ESG Factors While Pursuing Stable Returns and High Dividends



A Quantitative Strategy Based on ESG Scoring, Targeting High-Dividend, Stable, and Growth-Oriented Stocks

### Investment Strategy That Generates Stable Returns Through Music Copyright Royalties



Aiming for Stable, Recession-Resistant Returns by Acquiring Music Copyrights and Artist Brand Rights, Monetized Through Streaming Revenues and Experiential Businesses. Classified as an Article 8 Fund under SFDR (ESG Fund).

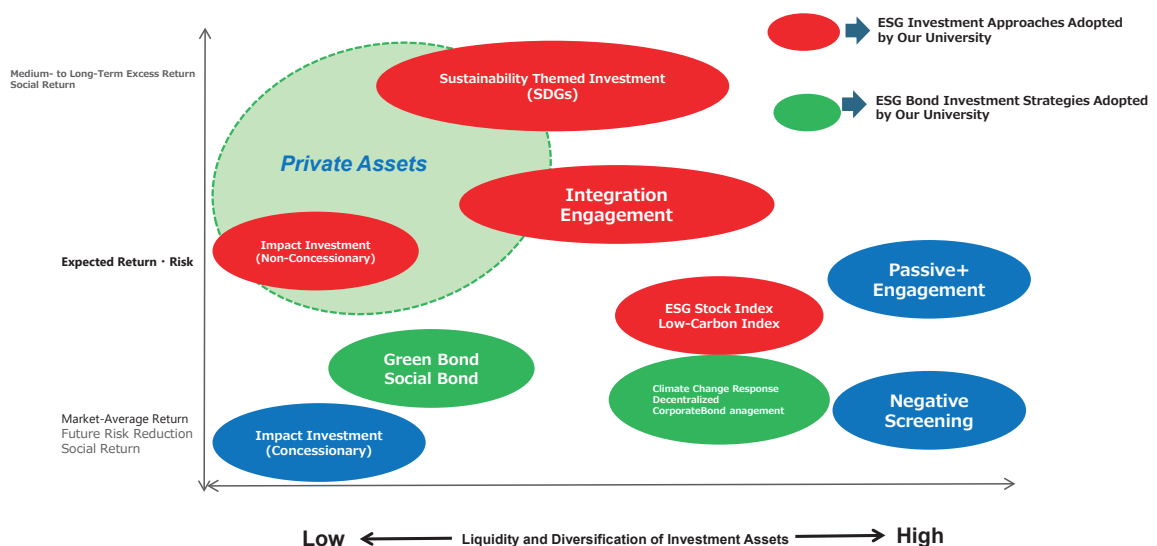
### Private REIT Strategy Focused on Environmentally Certified Real Estate



A Domestic Diversified Private REIT Strategy Pursuing Sustainability Through Environmental and Social Considerations and the Acquisition of Green Building Certifications, Aiming for Stable Income and Growth

## Alignment Between Investment Approaches and Portfolio Strategy

-How to Define the Objectives and Positioning of Each ESG Investment Strategy, Considering Asset Diversification and Liquidity-



## Major Initiatives Related to Sustainable Investment

Sophia School Corporation is a member of multiple initiatives related to sustainable investing. The purpose of this participation is to enhance the institution's knowledge and expertise in sustainable investment practices, and to contribute to the improvement of corporate value among investee companies.

### General Overview of Sustainable Investment

Signatory of:



#### Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)

A code of conduct for institutional investors established with the support of the United Nations.



#### Japan Sustainable Investment Forum (JSIF)

A non-profit organization working to promote and develop sustainable investment in Japan. It conducts regular surveys on the balance of sustainable investments in the country.

### Environment



#### Climate Action 100+

An initiative that engages in collaborative dialogue with major global companies that have high greenhouse gas emissions, calling for stronger climate action and enhanced information disclosure.



#### PRI Spring

A collaborative engagement initiative focused on biodiversity-related issues (such as deforestation and land degradation), in which companies with significant environmental impact are selected and supported in addressing these challenges.



#### Japan Climate Initiative

A network aimed at strengthening information sharing and dialogue among Japanese companies, local governments, and NGOs that are actively working on climate change initiatives.

#### Investor Statement on Amazon Deforestation and Fires

Signed in response to the issue of forest fires in the Amazon, this statement was initiated by the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), supported by the United Nations, calling for action to address deforestation and wildfires in the region.

#### Global Investor Statement to Governments on the Climate Crisis

Signed in 2021, 2022, and 2024 (with no statement issued in 2023), this declaration was developed by The Investor Agenda, a coalition of institutional investors advocating for a net-zero economy. Its purpose is to unify the voice of investors and the financial sector in urging governments to take comprehensive action on the climate crisis.

#### Financial Sector Statement Calling for an End to Plastic Pollution

Signed in support of the "Financial Sector Statement Calling for an End to Plastic Pollution," this declaration was jointly developed by UNEP FI, the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), the Finance for Biodiversity Foundation, the Business Coalition, VBDO, and CDP. It was issued ahead of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4) to establish an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution.

### Society



#### PRI advance

A platform for collaborative engagement by institutional investors on human rights and social issues.

# Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions ~Initiatives Toward Carbon Neutrality~

Sophia School Corporation’s higher education division operates three main campuses: Yotsuya Campus, Mejiro Seibo Campus, and Hadano Campus. The Yotsuya Campus serves as the central hub where students from all faculties and graduate schools of Sophia University engage in education and research. The Mejiro Seibo Campus is used by some students from the Department of Nursing in the Faculty of Human Sciences, while the Hadano Campus houses Sophia University Junior College Division.

In terms of energy usage at Sophia University,\*1 the Yotsuya Campus accounts for 94.0% of total consumption (Figure 1). The types of energy consumed are primarily electricity (74.5%) and city gas (LNG\*2) at 25.4%. Fuels such as kerosene are mainly used for heating at the Hadano Campus, but their overall share is minimal (Figure 2).

Greenhouse gas emissions from the main campuses are primarily associated with energy use, as well as water and sewage usage and waste disposal. These emissions were estimated based on energy, water, and waste data from FY2023.\*3 The total greenhouse gas emissions (in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) for FY2023 were 13,615 tons, with electricity accounting for approximately 73.2% and city gas (LNG) for about 22.4% (Figure 3).

Since FY2020, Sophia School Corporation has transitioned to electricity that is effectively 100% renewable at its main campuses. In FY2021, the city gas used at Yotsuya and Mejiro Seibo Campuses was also switched to carbon-neutral LNG.\*4 As a result, greenhouse gas emissions from electricity and city gas usage have been effectively reduced to zero for most facilities,\*5 leading to a significant reduction (approximately 95.7%) in overall emissions at Sophia University.

While Sophia School Corporation has made substantial progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy use, the continued reliance

on energy sources that are considered “effectively emission-free” due to environmental value credits may be affected by future energy market fluctuations. Rising environmental value costs could lead to increased prices. Therefore, behavioral changes such as promoting energy conservation are essential from a cost-efficiency perspective as well.

Due to its annual energy consumption exceeding the threshold defined by the *Act on the Rational Use of Energy and Conversion to Non-Fossil Energy Sources* (commonly known as the Energy Conservation Law), Sophia School Corporation has been designated as a Specified Business Operator. As such, it is required to actively promote the rational use of energy. In accordance with this designation, the Corporation submits annual reports to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (Agency for Natural Resources and Energy) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, detailing its energy usage and plans for reduction.

Additionally, under the Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures, Sophia School Corporation reports its greenhouse gas emissions annually to the Ministry of the Environment. It is also subject to mandatory total emission reduction obligations under the Tokyo Metropolitan Environmental Ordinance for the Protection of Citizens’ Health and Safety.

\*1 Based on FY2023 energy usage data  
 \*2 Liquefied Natural Gas  
 \*3 Water usage estimates are based on emission factors from the Tokyo C&T system. Waste estimates focus on Yotsuya and Mejiro Seibo Campuses, referencing the LCI database IDEA Version 2.3 (developed by AIST IDEA Lab and the Sustainable Management Promotion Organization).  
 \*4 Carbon-neutral LNG offsets greenhouse gas emissions from extraction to combustion through credits, resulting in net-zero emissions.  
 \*5 Excludes leased facilities and student dormitories.

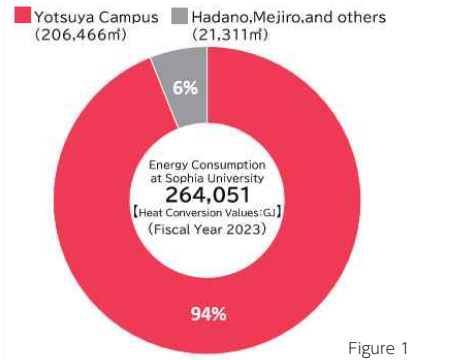


Figure 1

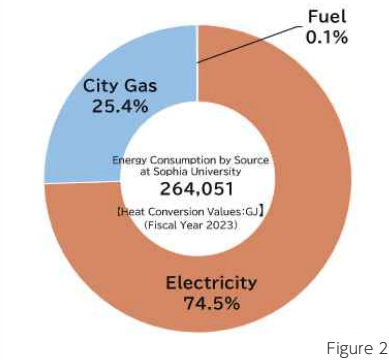


Figure 2

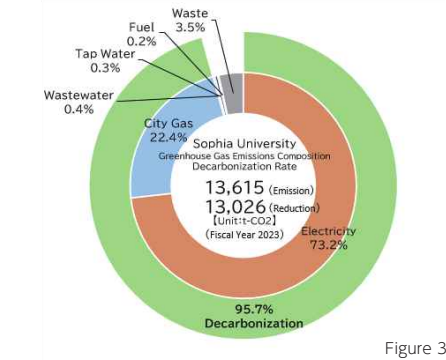


Figure 3

# Introduction of Renewable Energy-Derived Electricity at Sophia University's Yotsuya Campus Using an Offsite Physical Corporate PPA

In December 2023, Sophia School Corporation signed an Offsite Physical Corporate Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)\*<sup>1</sup> with Mitsui & Co., Ltd. and Leben Clean Energy Co., Ltd. (now MIRARTH Energy Solutions Co., Ltd.) for the supply of electricity generated from solar power. Prior to this agreement, Sophia had already transitioned to electricity derived from 100% renewable energy at all campuses\*<sup>2</sup>, starting with the Yotsuya Campus in June 2020. The new PPA further accelerates the university's efforts toward decarbonization.

Under this PPA, Mitsui & Co. supplies Sophia University's Yotsuya Campus with "additionality-based"\*<sup>3</sup> renewable energy (live green electricity\*<sup>4</sup>) generated at a newly constructed solar power plant by MIRARTH Energy Solutions. In addition to this supply, Sophia School Corporation also receives electricity bundled with non-fossil certificates with tracking, enabling compliance with the international RE100 initiative, which aims for 100% renewable electricity usage by businesses.

This marks Sophia's first use of a corporate PPA and represents a pioneering initiative among higher education institutions. With this agreement, starting June 1, 2024, the electricity used on the Yotsuya Campus has been gradually transitioned to power derived from 100% virtually renewable energy with additionality under the

PPA. The transition has now been fully completed, and the campus is powered entirely by renewable energy.

As a result, approximately 22 million kWh of electricity used annually across all campuses is now supplied by energy sources that emit virtually no CO<sub>2</sub>.

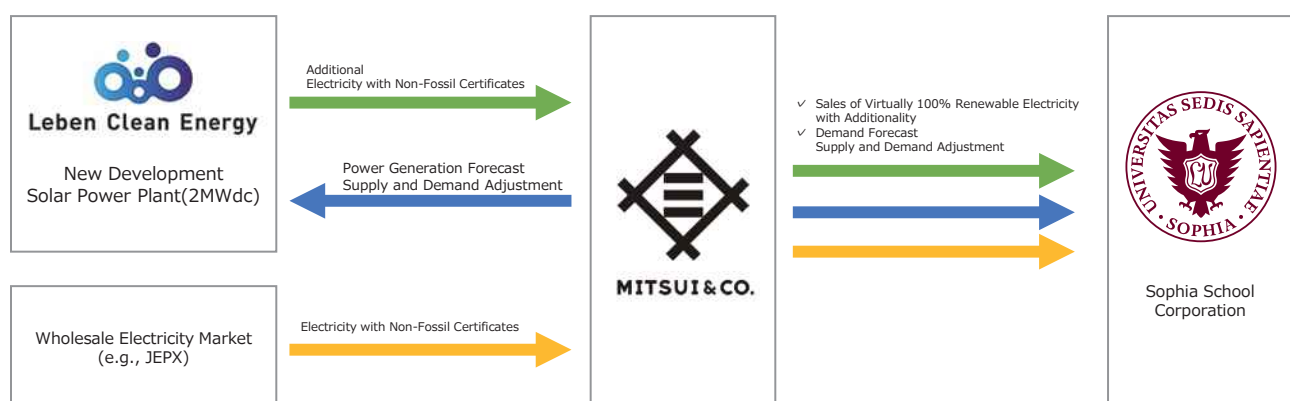
To raise awareness of these initiatives among students, we have shared information through posters and a documentary video. In addition, in order to further increase student engagement and help them feel more connected to renewable energy, we set up limited-period solar-powered mobile charging stations on campus in November and December 2025.

\*<sup>1</sup> A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is a long-term contract to purchase electricity from a power generator. An offsite PPA refers to electricity procured from a remote power plant via the general transmission and distribution network. A physical PPA includes both the electricity and its environmental value supplied directly to the consumer.

\*<sup>2</sup> Excludes student dormitories located off-campus, leased areas not under Sophia's management, and areas under flat-rate or metered lighting contracts.

\*<sup>3</sup> Refers to renewable energy that contributes to an increase in the total supply of renewable energy through the development of new sources.

\*<sup>4</sup> "Live green electricity" refers to renewable energy where the amount generated and the amount supplied to the consumer are matched in 30-minute intervals, allowing the consumer to be considered as using real-time renewable energy. Excludes Buildings 6, 13, and 14.



## Regarding Waste Management and Emissions

### 1. Waste Regulatory and Disposal Responsibilities

Waste treatment is classified according to its characteristics, type, and emitter, and is regulated by various laws (see Table 1) and local government ordinances to prevent environmental pollution and promote effective resource utilization.

Industrial waste generated by Sophia School

Corporation must be properly handled under the responsibility of the emitter, which is Sophia School Corporation itself. Therefore, the corporation contracts with licensed operators—those who have received permits based on relevant laws—to entrust the collection, transportation, and disposal of the waste.

Table 1: Major Applicable Laws

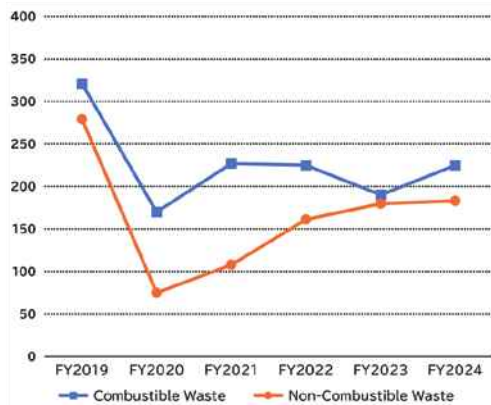
Classification	Major Applicable Laws
Solid Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Act on Waste Management and Public Cleaning</li> <li>● Basic Act on Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society</li> <li>● Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources</li> <li>● Act on Recycling of Specified Kinds of Home Appliances</li> <li>● Act on Promotion of Recycling of Small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment</li> <li>● Act on Special Measures Concerning Promotion of Proper Treatment of PCB Wastes</li> </ul>
Liquid Waste (including wastewater)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Act on Waste Management and Public Cleaning</li> <li>● Water Pollution Prevention Act</li> <li>● Sewerage Act</li> </ul>
Gaseous Emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Air Pollution Control Act</li> <li>● Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures</li> <li>● Act on Rational Use and Appropriate Management of Fluorocarbons</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soil Contamination Countermeasures Act</li> </ul>

Furthermore, by utilizing digitized information from the industrial waste management manifest system, the three parties—the waste-generating business operator, the collection and transportation operator, and the disposal operator—can share information efficiently. This enables streamlined communication and allows for comprehensive tracking of the types and quantities of waste, from generation through collection and transportation, to final disposal.

**2. Waste Emissions and Reuse Rates**

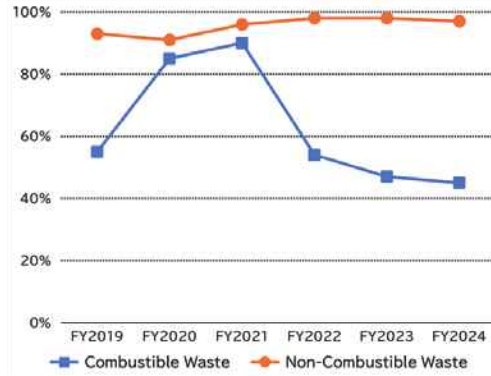
Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Yotsuya Campus generated approximately 600 tons of waste annually. In fiscal year 2024, the amount decreased to around 408 tons. The transition in waste emissions from FY2019 to FY2024 is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Trends in Waste Emissions



Regarding reuse rates, paper contaminated with food residues continues to pose a challenge, making it unsuitable for recycling and contributing significantly to the decline in reuse rates for combustible waste. On the other hand, reuse rates for non-combustible waste remain at a high level. (See Figure 6)

Figure 6: Trends in Waste Reuse Rates



**3. Initiatives for the 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)**

At Sophia School Corporation, the recycling rate for PET bottles and cans has reached 100%. Currently, the institution is actively engaged in the following initiatives, some of which were proposed by students:

1. A circular system in which paper generated from the dissolution of confidential documents is recycled into toilet paper, which is then purchased by the university.
2. Installation of water dispensers to reduce PET bottle waste.
3. Placement of clearly labeled waste bins to facilitate proper sorting.
4. Reuse and recycling of computer equipment.
5. Collection and recycling of PET bottle caps.

Moving forward, faculty and students will continue to collaborate in promoting the 3Rs—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle—with a strong awareness of SDG Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.



## Progress on Campus Development

To enhance the campus environment, we are steadily advancing the development of the Yotsuya Campus.

### Breeze Lounge (4th Floor, Building No. 2)

In September 2024, the “Breeze Lounge” opened on the 4th floor of Building No. 2 as a space designed to be naturally comfortable and welcoming for everyone, inspired by the concept of openness and airflow. The lounge is equipped with a variety of furniture types and environmentally conscious materials to support diverse learning styles. It offers flexible spaces suitable for both individual and group use. Additionally, three fully enclosed, private restrooms—accessible to all users—have been installed within the lounge, expanding user options and accommodating a wide range of needs.



### Main Street Renovation Project

As part of the “Creation of a Global Campus,” one of the goals of the Grand Layout 2.1, we have been implementing a three-year exterior improvement plan based on the Yotsuya Campus Environmental (Exterior) Development Concept. Since the start of construction in FY2021, we have collaborated with student staff from the Office for Sustainability Promotion (now the Office for Diversity and Sustainability) to exchange ideas from the perspectives of the SDGs, environmental considerations, sustainability, and universal design.

A plaza (green space) with grass and trees has been created around the symbolic tree inside the North Gate, providing a natural atmosphere even within the urban campus. In addition, a three-dimensional “SOPHIA U” letter monument, symbolizing Sophia University, has been installed in the plaza.



### Building No. 15

Completed in May 2022, Building No. 15 is the newest facility on the Yotsuya Campus. In consideration of reducing environmental impact, lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and promoting the sustainable use of forest resources, a wooden structure was adopted for its construction. The exterior design features a lattice of intersecting timber of varying thicknesses sourced from the Tama region. This design symbolizes the university’s founding principles of diversity, dialogue with others, truth, and tradition. In recognition of its design and sustainability, the building received the Encouragement Award of the Tokyo “Wood City TOKYO Model Architecture Award” in FY2022, and the Wood Design Award (Architecture and Space Category) in FY2023, presented by the Japan Wood Design Association. The Wood Design Award honors outstanding architecture, spaces, products, initiatives, systems, and research that reimagine the value and appeal of wood through the power of design.



### Basement Lounge of Building No. 12

The lounge space located in the basement of Building No. 12, next to the convenience store, has been renovated. From the early planning stages, student staff from the Office for Sustainability Promotion (now the Office for Diversity and Sustainability) actively participated in identifying and analyzing existing issues and discussing the desired vision for the renovated space. Based on these discussions, a design competition was held and evaluated, resulting in a comprehensive and collaborative renovation process.



# Chapter 2: Initiatives of Sophia University



# Announcement of the Publication of Sophia University DEI&B Statement

Sophia University is committed to human education grounded in Christian humanism, fostering students, faculty, and staff to respect fundamental human rights, recognize the dignity of each individual, and act with responsibility and humility to contribute to the betterment of the world. Guided by our unwavering educational spirit, "For Others, With Others," we will continue to take necessary and reasonable actions to realize a society in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive and where people live together in mutual respect.

August 2025  
President of Sophia University, Miki Sugimura

## 1. Diversity

Sophia University does not tolerate any acts of discrimination or behavior that undermine the dignity of others based on differences such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, gender, sexuality, religion, or physical characteristics. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the diversity of each individuals' experiences, values, and perspectives is respected.

## 2. Equity

Sophia University is committed to providing all members with access to a wide range of information and opportunities, creating an environment where they can fully realize their potential. We also strive to address and rectify discriminatory social structures in education,

research, employment, and other areas.

## 3. Inclusion

Sophia University is committed to creating an environment where the voices of each and every member are heard, psychological safety is ensured, and diverse values are co-created in a spirit of coexistence and mutual respect. We strive to nurture individuals who contribute to the building of an inclusive society, and, together with those who share this vision, we will work toward the realization of a truly inclusive and harmonious society.

## 4. Belonging

Sophia University aims to be a community where all members are respected, feel a sense of psychological safety and acceptance, and can express their thoughts and concerns without fear. By fostering such an environment, we will strive to continue being an institution that brings out each individual's full potential and leads to the creation of new values.

※1 "Equity" involves adjusting the resources provided based on individual differences and circumstances to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities and environments. On the other hand, "Equality" refers to providing the same resources to everyone, however this approach is only effective when everyone has the same needs or are from the same circumstance.

※2 "Belonging" refers to a state in which each individual feels a sense of connection to their community and experience reassurance that they have a place where they truly belong.



# Handbook Published to Promote Respect for Diversity and a Safe Learning and Working Environment for Students and Faculty

In response to the "Sophia University DEI&B Statement" announced in August 2025, Sophia University has compiled its concrete initiatives into a single publication.

Sophia University has released the Sophia University DEI&B Handbook - Toward a Place Where We Respect One Another, a handbook designed for students, faculty, and staff.

The university has long pursued various initiatives that respect diversity, such as support for minorities and work-in-life balance, aiming to create a society where individuals can fully express their uniqueness and abilities. This handbook consolidates information on relevant systems, consultation services, the university's journey so far, and its fundamental approach to DEI&B.

In August 2025, Sophia University publicly declared its commitment to DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging), clearly expressing its intention to realize a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and live together in mutual recognition, guided by the educational spirit of "For Others, With Others."

The publication of this handbook is part of the university's efforts to translate that philosophy into concrete action.

## Contents of the Handbook

The handbook introduces campus systems and

initiatives across six key categories. By presenting specific support for students and faculty, campus facilities, and educational and research efforts, it aims to foster an environment where every member of the university community can feel, "This is where I belong."

1. Promotion of gender equality
2. Support related to LGBTQ+
3. Systems supporting multicultural coexistence
4. Assistance for disabilities and health-related needs
5. Support for balancing childcare/caregiving with study/work
6. Creating spaces for intergenerational exchange and activities

Moving forward, Sophia University will promote the use of the handbook in daily operations, conduct DEI&B training for all faculty and staff, and create opportunities for dialogue with students and faculty. Through these efforts, we aim to deepen understanding and respect for "differences," and build a rich and creative learning environment.



## Implementation of the FY2025 DEI&B Training

Sophia School Corporation has positioned the promotion of DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) as one of the key priorities in its Grand Layout 3.0. As part of this initiative, Sophia University launched a foundational on-demand video training program for all faculty and staff members starting in June 2025. The purpose of this training is to encourage individuals to internalize the principles of DEI&B, enabling each faculty and staff member to understand its significance and reflect it in their daily work and behavior.

In addition, an experiential training program aimed at promoting behavioral change was conducted, with joint participation from the university's executive leadership—including the Chancellor, Trustees, Auditors,

President, and Vice Presidents—as well as managerial-level staff. Through simulated experiences of minority perspectives, participants sought to develop the ability to view situations from diverse viewpoints.

Sophia School Corporation will continue its efforts to embed the values of DEI&B throughout the organization.



## Sophia University United Nations Weeks

As a member institution of the United Nations Academic Impact, Sophia University has been hosting “Sophia University UN Weeks” annually since 2014. These events take place in early June and around United Nations Day (October 24).

Under the theme “Thinking Together About the World and Our Future Through the Work of the United Nations,” the university organizes a variety of programs such as international symposiums, lectures, photo exhibitions, and film screenings.

These events are open not only to Sophia University students but also to the general public, attracting many working professionals and high school students each year. Since the 2016 academic year, the UN Weeks have increasingly focused on events related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/jpn/aboutsophia/global/weeks/unweeks/>



## Sophia University United Nations Weeks October 2024 (October 8–24, 2024)

From October 8 to 24, 2024, Sophia University hosted the 22nd United Nations Weeks October under the theme “Reflecting on the World and Our Future through the Work of the United Nations.” A total of eight diverse programs were held, including a photo exhibition.

### October 8

**Lecture: “Advanced Chemical Technologies Contributing to the SDGs”**

Topics: Carbon-neutral fuel technologies and catalytic technologies for reducing food loss.

### October 15

**Online Lecture: “Reconstruction and Peacebuilding for Gaza”**

Topics: Peace and reconstruction in Gaza, impact on the regional economy, and the need for recovery planning.

### October 17

**Symposium: “War Crimes and Human Rights Protection”**

Topics: Addressing war crimes, human rights violations,

and breaches of international humanitarian law.

### October 18

**Symposium: “Local Responses to Climate Change by Municipalities and Corporations”**

Topics: Decarbonization, renewable energy adoption, and regional development.

### October 21

**Career Workshops on International Organizations and Cooperation**

Topics: Careers in international organizations and working in the field of international cooperation.

### October 23

**Symposium: “World Heritage: Towards more peaceful and sustainable societies”**

Topics: Contributions of World Heritage to peace and sustainable development.

October 24

**Symposium: “Innovation in Humanitarian Actions (IHA): why necessary and for whom?”**

Topics: Innovation in humanitarian aid, utilization of technology, and challenges in scaling up.

For more details, please visit the official report:

<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/jpn/aboutsophia/global/weeks/unweeks/unweeks-202410/>



## Sophia University United Nations Weeks June 2025 (June 10–24, 2025)

From June 10 to 24, 2025, Sophia University hosted the 23rd United Nations Weeks under the theme “Reflecting on the World and Our Future through the Work of the United Nations.” A total of five diverse programs were held during the period.

**June 10**

**Symposium: “JICA and Human Security: Philosophy and Practice – Including Collaboration with International Organizations”**

**June 10–24**

**Exhibition: “UN IOM Rohingya Cultural Memory Centre World Tour”**

Content: Embroidery works by the Rohingya, initiatives of the Cultural Memory Centre, and scenes from refugee camps.

**June 12**

**Symposium: “International Human Mobility: Current Status and Challenges”**

**June 17**

**Workshop: “Career Workshop on International Organizations and International Cooperation”**

**June 20**

**Refugee Film Festival: Screening of *Viva Maestro!* – The Challenge of Conductor Gustavo Dudamel**

Content: A documentary film portraying the journey and challenges of conductor Gustavo Dudamel.

For more details, please visit the official report:



<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/jpn/aboutsophia/global/weeks/unweeks/unweeks-202506/>



## Sophia University Africa Weeks 2025 (May 10–23, 2025)

Sophia University hosted the 9th annual Africa Weeks from May 10 to 23, 2025, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote understanding of the African region and strengthen collaboration with those engaged in Africa-related activities. Throughout the period, a diverse range of programs were held, including lectures, symposiums, and student-led events.

**May 10**

**Talk Session: “Me and Africa”**

Students and alumni shared personal experiences related to Africa.

**May 12**

**Seminar: “Introduction to African Research at Sophia University”**

An overview of research and activities focused on the African region.

**May 13**

**Symposium: “Working in Africa Utilizing Language Skills.”**

Speakers with professional experience in Africa discussed the importance of language acquisition.

**May 15**

**Symposium: “Climate Change and World Heritage Sites in Africa”**

A discussion on the impact of climate change on Africa’s World Heritage sites.

**May 18**

**Workshop: “Exploring African Diversity Through the Dining Table”**

An interactive session to learn about Africa’s cultural diversity through its food traditions.

May 20

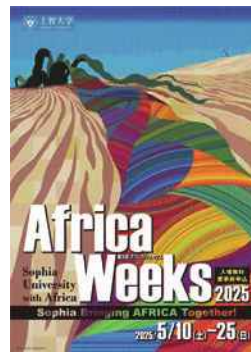
### Symposium: “Considering International Cooperation and Business in Africa”

Exploring solutions to social issues and business opportunities in Africa.

May 23

### Talk Session: “Approaches for Our Future: Talk Session with African Youth in Japan”

A dialogue aimed at deepening mutual understanding between African and Japanese youth.



For more details, please visit the official report:

<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/jpn/aboutsophia/global/weeks/africa-weeks/africa-weeks-2025/>



## United Nations Global Compact

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is an initiative proposed in 1999 by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and officially launched on July 26, 2000, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It provides a global framework for organizations—primarily businesses—to act as responsible and creative leaders in society and to contribute to sustainable growth.

Currently, over 13,800 companies and organizations across 161 countries have signed the UNGC. These entities engage in activities based on the Ten Principles in four key areas: **Human Rights**, **Labour**, **Environment**, and **Anti-Corruption**, while also implementing various measures to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Sophia University signed the UNGC in May 2015 and joined the Global Compact Network Japan (GCNJ), the local network in Japan. Since then, the university has actively participated in GCNJ activities, including co-hosting numerous symposia during UN Weeks in collaboration with member companies and UN agencies.

### The Ten Principle of the United Nations Global Compact Human Rights

- Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

- Principle 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

#### Labour

- Principle 3: Uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Principle 4: Elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- Principle 5: Effective abolition of child labour.
- Principle 6: Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



#### Environment

- Principle 7: Support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.
- Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.
- Principle 9: Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

#### Anti-Corruption

- Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



## Participation in SDG-UP ; SDG Universities Platform

The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Studies of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) established the SDG-UP ; SDG Universities Platform in 2020 as a collaborative forum for Japanese universities committed to actively promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sophia University is a participating member of this initiative. On March 27, 2025, a public symposium hosted by SDG-UP was held. Representing Sophia University, Mr. Otsuka, Executive Director for General Affairs, spoke in the “University Management” session, while Mr. Aioi, Director of the

Institutional Research Promotion Office, presented in the “University Evaluation and Accountability” session. Their presentations highlighted initiatives such as Sophia’s student staff system within Office for the Promotion Diversity and Sustainability, as well as case studies on the university’s use of generative AI. These examples served as a basis for discussions on how Japanese universities can further advance the SDGs.

Related Website : <https://ias.unu.edu/jp/sdg-up>



## Sophia University Ranked 75th Worldwide in THE Impact Rankings 2025 for SDG 13: Climate Action

THE Impact Rankings assess universities' contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across education, research, operations, and societal engagement.

SDG 13: Climate Action is recognized as a vital response to the global environmental crisis, placing Sophia University 75th out of 1,089 institutions worldwide in THE's 2025 evaluation.

### Education & Research Programs Addressing Environmental Challenges

At the undergraduate level, Sophia offers the English-taught Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures (SPSF), an interdisciplinary degree centered on sustainability education, climate science and hands-on fieldwork to equip students to respond to environmental issues.

At the graduate level, the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies drives advanced research and education that comprehensively explores the complex interactions between environment and society through interdisciplinary coursework, empirical studies and policy analysis.

Planning to launch a Digital Green Technology Department in the Faculty of Science and Technology in 2027 to train next-generation engineers in AI and data science for climate solutions.

### Carbon Neutrality Initiatives

Sourcing Yotsuya Campus electricity 100% from renewable energy since June 2020 and achieving campus-wide RE100 compliance in November 2023.

Introducing carbon-off-set city gas in December 2021 and off-site solar power via corporate PPA in 2024.



### Campus Engagement

Establishing the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability in July 2024.

Launching a student-staff system in 2021 to empower students as co-creators of eco-campus initiatives and sustainability events.

### Responsible Investment

Among the first Japanese universities to leverage asset management to address climate change, signing the UN Global Compact and the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) to drive ESG and impact investing.

Participating in stewardship statements calling for government climate action and submitting policy recommendations via the Japan Climate Initiative (JCI).

This ranking reflects Sophia University's commitment—"For Others, With Others"—to addressing global climate challenges through education, research, sustainable operations, and ethical investment.

Related links:

Official Website of Sophia's Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability

<https://diversity-sustainability.sophia.ac.jp/efforts/5553/>

Official Website of Sophia School Corporation

<https://www.sophia-sc.jp/disclosure/esg/casestudy>



## Sophia University UNESCO Chair on "Education for Human Dignity, Peace, and Sustainability"

The UNESCO Chair is a project led by educational and research institutions in collaboration with UNESCO, aimed at addressing social challenges. The Sophia University UNESCO Chair on "Education for Human Dignity, Peace, and Sustainability" was established in February 2024 with the goal of promoting education and research that contribute to the realization of peace and a sustainable society, centered on the concept of human dignity.

Sophia University's UNESCO Chair collaborates with three international organizations and five overseas universities, and engages in the following five academic and research exchange activities:

1. Based on UNESCO's initiatives, with a particular focus on the revised 2023 UNESCO Recommendation centered on "Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainability," the Chair promotes education and research related to human dignity, peace, and sustainability.

2. To foster North-South and South-South cooperation, the Chair organizes opportunities for dialogue and exchange through universities and related institutions, promoting networking and collaboration.
3. The Chair advances joint research in comparative and international education, focusing on efforts to achieve inclusive and sustainable positive peace.
4. Through activities related to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education, the Chair facilitates the sharing of educational experiences and best practices among international educators and practitioners.
5. The Chair works closely with UNESCO, other UNESCO Chairs, and the UNITWIN network on related programs and activities.

<https://sophia-unescochair.jp/>



Symposium Celebrating the Establishment of the UNESCO Chair

### SACRU: The Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities

SACRU (The Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities) is a global network composed of eight Catholic research universities from around the world. Guided by Catholic values, SACRU is committed to excellence in research and education, and to addressing global challenges. Sophia University is the sole representative from Asia in this alliance.

To promote international collaborative research among member universities, SACRU has established interdisciplinary working groups. These groups engage in research focusing on topics such as the relationship between marginalized populations and healthcare systems, Catholic identity in relation to environmental and social justice, philosophical and technological inquiries into AI, humanity, ethics, and agency, and rethinking the internationalization of higher education with proposals for new models.

In July 2025, the SACRU Executive Board Meeting was held in Guadalajara, Mexico, where Professor Miki Sugimura, President of Sophia University, was elected Vice President of SACRU. As a member of SACRU and a leading university in Asia, Sophia University actively demonstrates leadership in addressing global issues and continues to contribute to the creation of a sustainable future by engaging with the international community.

<https://www.sacru-alliance.net/>



SACRU : Executive Board meeting held in Mexico

### MIRAI: An International Consortium of Japanese and Swedish Universities

MIRAI is an international collaborative research project involving seven universities from Japan and ten universities from Sweden. Its primary goal is to establish a long-term research partnership between Japan and Sweden, positioning both countries as key players in leading large-scale global research initiatives.

In Phase 3 of MIRAI (2024–2026), building upon the strong bilateral ties developed in previous phases, the consortium aims to contribute to solving global-scale challenges that require international cooperation. Specific efforts include activities within the Global Challenge Teams focused on four major issues, the development of environments that promote long-term joint research, the enhancement of research exchange among doctoral students and early-career researchers, and the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship in education and research. These initiatives actively engage academia, industry, and external partners.

In December 2024, Sophia University hosted an in-person workshop for the Global Challenge Team working on “Materials for Energy Conversion and Storage.” Researchers from participating universities presented their work, and lively discussions were held on the potential for joint research toward the development of next-generation sustainable energy solutions and the future direction of the team’s activities.

<https://www.mirai.nu/>



MIRAI : Workshop hosted and conducted by Sophia University

### RENKEI: Japan-UK Research and Education Network for Knowledge Economy Initiatives

RENKEI (Japan-UK Research and Education Network for Knowledge Economy Initiatives) is a collaborative network established in April 2012 between universities in Japan and the United Kingdom. The current membership includes ten universities—five from Japan and five from the UK—with its secretariat housed within the British Council. RENKEI serves as a partnership platform for sharing knowledge and facilitating international joint research, not only among universities but also through active collaboration with governments, industry, and non-profit organizations, aiming to advance research that addresses global societal challenges.

In May 2025, the “RENKEI Just Transitions to a Net Zero World Workshop” was held at Newcastle University and Durham University in the UK. Three doctoral students from Sophia University participated, engaging in lively discussions and delivering presentations. Professor Makoto Ikeda, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Sophia University, attended the General Assembly held concurrently. The assembly brought together around 30 participants, including representatives from member universities and the British Council, to exchange ideas on priority areas for RENKEI’s third phase starting in FY2025,

and to discuss plans for upcoming activities aimed at strengthening Japan-UK research collaboration.



RENKEI: Workshop hosted and conducted by Durham University

<https://www.britishcouncil.jp/programmes/higher-education/university-industry-partnership/renkei>



## Global Conversation with the Catholic University of Chile

### “Analysing our call to action as young people in today’s world”

Kimura Goro Christoph, Professor  
Faculty of Foreign studies, Department of German Studies

Hataya Noriko, Professor  
Faculty of Foreign studies, Department of Hispanic Studies

On May 14th/15th (Chilean Time 8 pm, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> - Tokyo Time: 9 am, Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>) an online event using the format of “Global Conversation” was held as part of the activity of the SACRU Working group 2 “Catholic Identity and Laudato Si’: The Common Home and Social Justice”, organized by the staff from UC Chile and Sophia University. On the Sophia side, the Catholic-Jesuit Center of Sophia University and Prof. Maria Manzon (Department of Education) supported the main organizers.

The main objectives of Global Conversation are to engage students in intercultural dialogue, stimulate the integration of diverse perspectives, reflect on global challenges, and explore actions that contribute to the common good and sustainable development.

A total of 42 people, mainly students from the two organizing universities, participated in the event. Selected texts for prior reading included messages delivered by Pope Francis during his visits to UC Chile and Sophia University. The event was conducted bilingually in English and Spanish.

After greetings, an icebreaker, and an introduction to the topic of sustainability and ecology based on the SDGs and LSGs, the participants chose a breakout room on either social inequality or ecological challenges. Both topics had an English-speaking and a Spanish-speaking room. Finally, the results of each group were shared in a joint session.

Student leaders joined the organizing committee and helped design the conversation, contributing to the development of its structure and schedule. The student leaders also managed the session with great skill, facilitating over 90 minutes of engaging and dynamic dialogue that included active participation from the entire group.



## Nobel Peace Prize Conference in Tokyo: “Responding to the Threat of Nuclear Arms” Held at Sophia University

On July 27, the Nobel Peace Prize Conference in Tokyo, titled “Responding to the Threat of Nuclear Arms,” was held at the Yotsuya Campus. This conference was organized by the Norwegian Nobel Institute—the secretariat of the Norwegian Nobel Committee—and co-hosted by Sophia University and the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo). Approximately 700 attendees, including Sophia students, faculty, staff, high school students, general attendees, and media representatives, participated in the event. The conference was also streamed live on Sophia University’s official YouTube channel.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, and with Nihon Hidankyo receiving the Nobel Peace Prize last year, global interest in nuclear weapons is-

sues has been growing. This summer, the Norwegian Nobel Institute decided to send a message on nuclear issues and disarmament from Japan to the world. Sophia University

was approached as an academic platform for this initiative, leading to the co-hosting of the conference. Notably, this was the first time the Norwegian Nobel Institute held an event outside Norway in collaboration with a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The conference began with an opening address by the



Chancellor of Sophia School Corporation, Sari Augustine, S.J., followed by the first session moderated by Professor Naoki Umemiya of the Center for Global Education and Discovery. The session featured keynote speeches by Jørgen Watne Frydnes, Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee; Terumi Tanaka, Co-Chairperson of Nihon Hidankyo; and Michiko Kodama, Assistant Secretary-General of Nihon Hidankyo.

### Keynote Speeches

Chair Frydnes delivered a keynote speech titled “Upholding the Nuclear Taboo — a Call to Humanity.” He emphasized the significant role that the testimonies of hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) have played in conveying the inhumanity of nuclear weapons to the world and in establishing the “nuclear taboo,” which morally condemns the use of nuclear weapons. He stated, “Hibakusha are not only victims of war — they are witnesses and teachers. As we stand at the edge of an unstable nuclear age, we must return to the messages of the hibakusha.” He concluded with a powerful call to action: “To the young people in this room: You are the future custodians of this memory.”

Next, Mr. Tanaka of Nihon Hidankyo gave a keynote titled “The Legacy of Nihon Hidankyo and the Future of the Nuclear Abolition Movement.” He introduced the history of Nihon Hidankyo, which was established by victims who endured censorship under the postwar occupation and faced social discrimination after the bombings. He urged, “Nuclear weapons, being extremely inhumane, must be abolished immediately. I hope young people will inherit the stories of atomic bomb survivors and work together toward a nuclear-free society.”

Following this, Ms. Kodama of Nihon Hidankyo shared her vivid memories of being a seven-year-old hibakusha in a speech titled “Passing on a World Without Nuclear Weapons or War to the Next Generation.” She stated, “Japan is expected to lead the world toward nuclear abolition. The very existence of nuclear weapons on this planet is a humanitarian violation. Humans create and use nuclear weapons, and it is also within our power to eliminate them. Let us entrust this beautiful blue planet to future generations.”

After the three keynote speeches, a commemorative performance of “Eine kleine Nachtmusik” was presented by

a student quartet from the Sophia Philharmonic Orchestra.

### Speeches and Panel Discussion

The second half of the conference featured speeches and a panel discussion. The panelists included Kristian Berg Harpviken, Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute (moderator); Asle Toje, Vice Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee; Professor Nobumasa Akiyama of Hitotsubashi University’s Faculty of Law; Associate Professor Keiko Nakamura of Nagasaki University’s Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA); and Professor Taro Komatsu of Sophia University’s Faculty of Human Sciences. The discussion focused on nuclear weapons issues in the context of rapidly changing global dynamics, offering academic perspectives.

Dr. Toje analyzed the current state of “great power politics” in international relations, highlighting how U.S.-China tensions, Russia’s nuclear threats, and the constraints on U.S. military options are destabilizing the international order. He argued that the existence of nuclear weapons exacerbates instability and called for their abolition.

Professor Akiyama pointed out the declining credibility of the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) framework, identifying geopolitical conflicts, proliferation risks, and divisions in nuclear disarmament as key challenges. He proposed institutional reforms and inclusive dialogue to restore trust.

Associate Professor Nakamura highlighted the limitations of peace education in Nagasaki and proposed the introduction of disarmament education. She emphasized the importance of fostering young people’s ability to engage with nuclear issues proactively.

Professor Komatsu discussed the need to incorporate long-term thinking and intergenerational ethics into peace education, drawing on global trends. He stressed the importance of sharing the impacts of nuclear weapons and fulfilling responsibilities to future generations through education.

The subsequent discussion explored topics such as the role of education, how to share memories globally, and areas to focus on with hope. The program concluded with final comments from Mr. Tanaka and Ms. Kodama, wrapping up the two-hour event.



## Delegation from Georgetown University’s Institute for Women, Peace, and Security Visits Sophia University to Meet Women Scholars



On April 15, a delegation of 13 people, including Ambassador Melanne Verweer, Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, and Security (GIWPS), visited Sophia University. They met with Chancellor Sari Augustine, President Miki Sugimura, Vice President for Global

Academic Affairs Mariko Iijima, Professor Tamao Saito (Department of Materials and Life Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology), and Professor Makiko Deguchi (Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Studies), and had a fruitful discussion on various topics including gender roles and diversity. After the discussion, a campus tour was given by Sophia female students.

GIWPS is an institute within Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service that hosts global conferences and with the goal of promoting a more peaceful and equitable world by focusing on the vital role women play in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, economic growth, and addressing global threats such as

climate change and violent extremism, as well as fostering strategic partnerships. Dr. Melanne Verveer was the U.S. Ambassador for Global Women's Issues, appointed by the Obama Administration, and has a long history of advancing the rights and status of women.

Sophia University is closely associated with Georgetown University, both founded by the Society of Jesus, and it was to Georgetown University that Sophia sent its first exchange student to study abroad in 1935. Later, in 1975, a Student Exchange agreement was signed between the two institutions, and since then there has been active exchange of students and scholars, including the exchange program and the Special Admission Program for the Georgetown Graduate School. During the GIMPS delegation's visit, the delegation exchanged views with President Sugimura, who recently became the 17th and first female president of the university, and other female researchers and leaders at the university on promoting women's activities at institutions of higher education and research.



Prior to the discussion, Chancellor Augustine welcomed the delegation, followed by an introductory presentation on Sophia by the Center for Global Education and Discovery.

President Sugimura followed by speaking about her career as a researcher and the importance of promoting the advancement among female students, researchers, faculty, and staff.

Ambassador Verveer congratulated President Sugimura on her appointment and expressed her high expectations for the first female president of Sophia. The two universities not only share the educational spirit of "for others and with others" as Jesuit educational institutions but also have a strong perspective on international peace and service.



A question-and-answer session between the delegation and President Sugimura followed, with questions focusing on equal educational opportunities for men and women in Japan, fields of study to which women are more likely to apply, career paths after graduation, and career support. President Sugimura spoke about the current situation in Japan, including case studies of other universities, and pointed out that while there are not many apparent issues in terms of gender gap in college enrollment and employment rates, the underrepresentation of women in science and engineering fields, including medicine, and the lack of women in managerial positions after employment are notable and are deep-rooted social problems that are also related to the patriarchal culture in Japan.

After the Q&A session, Professor Saito gave an overview of the "Diversity Promotion Model in Private Universities," a project jointly conducted by Doshisha University



and Sophia University under the Diversity Research Environment Initiative (Survey and Analysis) by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Professor Deguchi presented specific initiatives and findings on "majority privilege" conducted at Sophia University. Vice President Iijima described her own area of research and university-wide effort.

Professor Saito pointed out that, according to the project's survey, private universities in particular are behind in terms of developing decision-making processes to support female researchers, and that the voices of researchers struggling to balance work and life events are not easily reflected in policy. She concluded that the main reason for this is the low percentage of women in leadership positions at private universities. To address this issue, she noted that Sophia University aims to foster servant leadership, that is, leading the organization through service and support.



Based on the premise that discrimination is a problem of the majority, Professor Deguchi discussed the issue of how to make the majority, or those on the side of

power, view "discrimination" as their own issue, citing the example of the general studies course she teaches, "Psychology of Position." She explained that by visualizing and teaching the "privilege" of the majority in this course, she has helped to change the awareness of each student and promote diversity on campus as a whole.

After the presentations by the three speakers, President Sugimura spoke about her works as UNESCO Chair, noting that the University is promoting education and research on human dignity, peace, and sustainability based on the activities of UNESCO, with a special focus on "Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainability," and suggesting that an important perspective is how to combine this with promoting women's activities. The discussion was followed by an exchange of views with the delegation, including a question-and-answer session on balancing work and family life for women in Japanese higher education and research institutions. The delegation provided detailed information on the attractiveness of American universities as study abroad destinations from the perspectives of education and research, as well as support systems for international students, including initiatives at Georgetown University.



They concluded with an agreement to continue working together on women rights and empowerment, and peace and security. The meeting ended on a friendly and warm note and closed after a brief tour of the campus guided by two female Sophia students.



## Sophia University Hosts 30% Club Japan University Group Seminar

### A Dialogue : Supporting Female Students' Career Choices — Exploring Careers and Graduate School Pathways

On June 26, Sophia University, in collaboration with the 30% Club Japan University Group, hosted a seminar titled “Career Development and Graduate School Pathways for Female Students,” aimed at fostering female leadership and addressing gender disparities.



The event was conducted in a hybrid format, combining in-person participation at our Yotsuya Campus with online streaming. Approximately 120 participants, including female university and high school students from both inside and outside the university, attended.

Especially, in the humanities and the social sciences many students hesitate to pursue graduate studies due to concerns that it may disadvantage them in the job market. However, learning at graduate school can be highly beneficial for long-term career development and solving societal issues in an increasingly globalized world.

This seminar aimed to share insights from graduate school alumnae and corporate representatives, creating opportunities to reflect on the significance of graduate education and career development for female students.



Prof. Miki Sugimura, President of Sophia University

She expressed her hopes that the seminar would inspire each student to re-examine their potential.

Ms. Yukiko Fukushi, Director of the People and Organization Development Department in the People and Culture Division at NEC Corporation, delivered the keynote speech.



Ms. Yukiko Fukushi from NEC

Introducing statistics on graduate school enrollment rates in Japan and abroad, as well as examples of female leaders, the speaker emphasized, “Women around the world continue to pursue education,” and highlighted that “the willingness to learn is increasingly valued by companies.”

In the following talk session, three Sophia alumnae who completed their master’s degrees at the university and are now active in private companies took the stage.

Ms. Kie Yoshitake, who graduated from the Graduate School of Global Studies (Area Studies major) and now works in research at PwC Consulting LLC, shared, “The logical thinking based on accurate information that I de-

veloped during my master’s studies is the foundation of my current work,” emphasizing the value of her academic experience.

Ms. Harmony Wada, who completed her studies in the Biological Sciences field of the Graduate School of Science and Technology and now works as an Abema TV original drama producer at CyberAgent, Inc., described her career as “a journey connecting the dots.” She encouraged students by saying, “Fully engaging with what’s fun right in front of you can expand your confidence and possibilities.”

Ms. Anna Kondo from Dentsu, who graduated from the Molecular Biosciences field of the Graduate School of Science and Technology and now works in animation investment, production, and sponsorship sales at the Corporation, shared a warm message: “My parent’s words — ‘Better to regret doing something than regret not doing it’ — encouraged me to pursue graduate studies. That decision gave me confidence before entering society.”

In the latter half of the seminar, a panel discussion was moderated by Professor Tamao Saito from the Department of Materials and Life Sciences. The panel candidly discussed the benefits and challenges of graduate school, differences from entering the workforce directly after undergraduate studies, and concerns related to life stages.

Participants shared comments such as:

- “I was worried about the cost and falling behind as a working adult, but seeing the confident alumnae made me realize I want to be like them.”
- “I learned that master’s students come from diverse backgrounds and are not confined to the stereotype of ‘researchers,’ which deepened my understanding of their broad potential in the corporate world.”
- “It was striking how all the speakers transformed their graduate school experiences into personal confidence.”

In the closing remarks, Vice President for Student and General Affairs Prof. Kyoko Yokoyama took the stage and said, “It’s often said that women tend to underestimate their abilities (Correll, 2001), and many female students think, ‘I’m not good enough.’ But I hope they cherish the honest feeling of ‘I’m not sure why, but I want to keep learning.’ When students feel that way, we want to be



Ms. Kie Yoshitake from PwC Consulting LLC



Ms. Harmony Wada from CyberAgent Inc.



Ms. Anna Kondo from Dentsu



Prof. Kyoko Yokoyama, Vice President for Student and General Affairs

a university that supports them.”

This seminar provided female university and high school students with a valuable opportunity to encounter diverse perspectives on career choices and to think flexibly about their future possibilities.

### About the 30% Club

The 30% Club is a global campaign founded in the UK in 2010, aiming to increase the proportion of women in key decision-making bodies, including corporate boards. It operates in over 20 countries, and “30% Club Japan” was established in 2019.



## Five Students from the Graduate School of Science and Technology Receive the 2025 “Global Development Award for Women Researchers”



The Global Development Award for Women Researchers is designed to support female students in the Graduate School of Science and Technology as they take their first steps toward becoming internationally active researchers. The award aims to encourage students to engage in rigorous academic exchange with researchers both in Japan and abroad, fostering significant growth and advancement. This year, seven students who had demonstrated research achievements through international conferences and academic publications, and who received recommendations from their academic advisors, applied for the award. Among them, five were successfully selected for recognition.

On June 2, 2025, the award ceremony was held at Sophia University’s Yotsuya Campus. President Miki Sugimura delivered a congratulatory address, stating:

“The term ‘global’ in the award’s name does not only refer to activities overseas, but also includes the expectation that you will pursue research domestically and



make an impact on the world. We hope you will continue your research with a broad perspective and the spirit of ‘Sophia,’ which values inclusivity and leaving no one be-

hind, for the benefit of society and humanity.”

Each recipient received a certificate and a prize directly from the President. The awardees expressed their joy, reflected on the significance of their research, and shared their aspirations for the future.

Finally, Professor Kenichi Takai, Chair of the Graduate School of Science and Technology, concluded the ceremony with words of encouragement:

“The reason this ceremony is held at a different time from other awards is because we have high expectations for your research over the next ten months. Please aim to submit your work to academic journals and contribute to society through your research.”

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### Five Award Recipients

- Ms. Mizuho Kawabata, 2nd year, Master’s Program (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) (Supervisor: Professor Kazuya Nakamura)
- Ms. Hinaki Sugiura, 2nd year, Master’s Program (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) (Supervisor: Professor Akihiko Kikuchi)
- Ms. Yukari Sakakibara, 2nd year, Master’s Program (Applied Chemistry) (Supervisor: Professor Masahiro Rikukawa)
- Ms. Rumi Nishimura, 2nd year, Master’s Program (Applied Chemistry) (Supervisor: Professor Yuko Takeoka)
- Ms. Suzuka Yoshida, 2nd year, Master’s Program (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) (Supervisor: Professor Tomoaki Takao)



## Sophia Mirai Juku 2025

Since May 2024, Sophia University has been offering the “Sophia Mirai Juku” an online program for high school students. This innovative initiative provides students with the opportunity to engage in

dialogue with current professionals from international organizations such as the United Nations, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World



Bank, as well as experts with experience working in these institutions.

In the Spring Semester of the 2025 academic year, five lectures were held. Over 500 students from high schools across Japan registered for the program, and more than half participated in the online sessions. Many students showed a strong interest in global issues, and numerous questions were raised toward the end of each lecture. The program offered a valuable opportunity for students to think critically about the changing world and the challenges facing global society, together with experts in the field.

### Lecture Schedule – Spring Semester

1. May 10 ◆ *Tetsuo Kondo*  
Director, Sophia University Human Resources Center for

- International Cooperation  
Former United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Representative, Tokyo -*Coordinator-*
2. May 17 ◆ *Koichi Omori*  
Senior External Affairs Officer, World Bank Tokyo Office
3. May 24 ◆ *Ritsu Nacken*  
Chief of Mission, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Tokyo
4. May 31 ◆ *Tomoo Hozumi*  
Former United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Officer
5. June 7 ◆ *Kaoru Nemoto*  
Director, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Tokyo

Sophia University Human Resources Center for International Cooperation

<https://dept.sophia.ac.jp/is/shric/news>

For the latest information, be sure to visit the Sophia University website



## Sophia Global Citizen Program

Starting in the 2024 academic year, Sophia University launched a new public program titled the Sophia Global Citizen Program. In its second year, the 2025 academic year, the university offered a total of 52 lectures—26 in the spring semester and 26 in the fall—centered around three key themes: *Social Issues, Technological Innovation, and Social Transformation*. More than 1,000 participants enrolled in the program, with several lectures delivered online, attracting attendees not only from the Tokyo metropolitan area but from across Japan.

Selected Lectures Related to the SDGs:

- *From a Conflict System to a Peace System*  
Hideyuki Koyama, Special Contract Professor, Faculty of Theology
- *Sustainable Regional Development*  
Rokuro Tabuchi, Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences
- *Introduction to Social Policy for Social Change*  
Hiroya Hirano, Associate Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences
- *How to Work and Live in the Future Capitalist Society thinking with a Behavioral Economist*  
Satoshi Kawanishi, Professor, Faculty of Economics
- *Cultural Heritage from Local and Global Perspectives*  
Masako Marui, Professor, Faculty of Global Studies

Participants shared highly positive feedback, such as:

- “Through this learning experience, I was able to deepen my understanding of how to apply knowledge in practical and realistic ways to contribute to society.”
- “I realized that welfare is not just for people with disabilities, the elderly, children, or those in poverty—it’s something we all are involved in and must engage with.”
- “I often feel challenges in working and living. Thanks



to this program, I was able to resolve some of my questions and gain new direction for the future.”

In the third year of the program, the 2026 academic year, the lecture lineup will be renewed. The traditional format, where one lecturer conducts a series of sessions, will be categorized as

- ① **Standard Lectures** (4 sessions, 90 minutes each).  
In addition, two new formats will be introduced:
- ② **Topic Lectures** (1 session, 100 minutes): Single-session lectures that explore current events and trending topics from expert perspectives, designed to appeal to a wide range of participants regardless of age or experience.
- ③ **Special Omnibus Lectures** (5 sessions, 90 minutes each): A rotating lecture format that approaches a specific theme from various academic disciplines, encouraging interdisciplinary thinking and the development of multifaceted perspectives and skills.



Related Website:  
Sophia Global Citizen Program  
Official Website: <https://sgcp.sophia.ac.jp/>



## Ecotour including mangrove planting conducted in Uken Village, Amami Oshima



An eco-study tour was held from March 14 to 17, 2025, offering participants the opportunity to experience the nature and culture of Amami Oshima's Uken Village, as well as participate in mangrove

planting activities. This tour has been conducted since the 2023 academic year and is part of a collaborative initiative based on the industry-academia-government partnership agreement signed in September 2023 by Sophia University, Uken Village, Japan Airlines, and ITOCHU Corporation, aimed at environmental conservation and regional revitalization in Uken Village.

Ten students from Sophia University joined the tour, engaging in activities such as a night monitoring tour of the endangered Amami rabbit—a designated natural monument—and mangrove planting, to deepen their understanding of ecosystem protection and environmental conservation. Through various traditional cultural experiences and interactions with local residents, students also learned about the traditions, culture, and challenges faced by the Uken Village community.

On the third day, following a lecture by a Uken Village government official, students gave group presentations to the village staff on topics such as "Environmental Conservation," "Regional Revitalization," and "Vacant House Issues," based on their pre-tour research and experiences during the tour. The village officials responded positively, saying, "There were many ideas and proposals we'd like to implement immediately—they

were very insightful," and "We were deeply moved that people from outside Uken Village thought so seriously about ways to support our community."

Additionally, Professor Akemi Ori from Sophia University's Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies gave a lecture on the SDGs, followed by a workshop using a card game to explore sustainable development. Participants, including village officials and Japan Airlines staff involved in planning the tour, were divided into four teams and took on the role of representatives of fictional countries, considering how their projects would impact the world in terms of economy, society, and environment.

Student feedback included comments such as: "Before the tour, I couldn't imagine what it meant to build an environment where people and nature coexist just by researching online. But through the tour, I realized that Uken Village is full of hidden natural and cultural value, and I now believe it could become a model for sustainable community development. Through interactions and experiences with local residents, I discovered a profound richness that cannot be bought with money." Another student shared, "There was a gap between what I had seen in the news and what I actually heard during the tour. I realized the importance of listening to the voices of local people when engaging in community development and environmental conservation activities."

This tour will continue to be improved and conducted regularly, contributing to environmental conservation through reforestation and promoting regional development in Uken Village.



## Updating Office Terminals: A New Step Toward Operational Reform — Enabling Flexible and Efficient Workstyles with Mobile PCs —

Starting in the summer of fiscal year 2025, staff office terminals have been updated, marking a significant evolution in the university's work environment. This update involved a complete transition from traditional desktop computers to lightweight mobile PCs, dramatically enhancing both flexibility and efficiency in daily operations.

### Toward a "Mobile Workstyle" with Mobile PCs

Previously, bringing a desktop PC to on-campus meetings was impractical. With the introduction of mobile PCs weighing less than 1kg, staff can now easily bring their devices to meetings, allowing for smooth document review and real-time note-taking. Additionally, a single cable connection enables access to displays and wired LAN, maintaining a comfortable desktop-like work environment while ensuring portability.

### Boosting Work Efficiency with Dual Displays and High-Performance PCs

The newly introduced dual-display setup allows users to operate multiple applications simultaneously, significantly improving productivity in tasks such as document creation and data analysis. Moreover, the adoption of high-performance PCs has resulted in smoother operation of Office applications and business systems, enabling stress-free work.

### Robust Security and BCP Measures

On the security front, endpoint protection and remote

lock features have been implemented, allowing swift response in case of theft or loss. Furthermore, by migrating file servers to the cloud and data centers, and establishing regionally distributed backup systems, risks during disasters or system failures have been greatly reduced.



### Environmental Considerations and Efficient Resource Use

The widespread use of mobile PCs has promoted the digitization of meeting materials, significantly reducing paper usage and contributing to environmental sustainability. Additionally, staff no longer need to purchase personal PCs for remote work, enabling more effective use of existing resources. This not only reduces financial burden but also supports efficient resource management across the organization.

This update to office terminals goes beyond mere hardware replacement—it represents a major step toward rethinking workstyles and building a more flexible, secure, and efficient operational environment. With added focus on environmental responsibility and resource optimization, further reforms leveraging this new foundation are anticipated in the future.



# Chapter 3: Initiatives of the Office for the Promotion of Diversity and Sustainability



## About Student Staff

We have introduced a “Student Staff System,” designed to foster leaders capable of proposing solutions to social challenges and contributing to the realization of a sustainable society. Under this system, undergraduate and graduate students are hired as paid temporary staff and take part in campus improvement, public relations, event operations, and other activities. Through hands-on experience that draws on the creativity and unique perspectives of students, they engage



in tasks such as system design and public relations activities.

### Main Tasks of Student Staff

- 1) Realizing universal campus design
- 2) Initiatives to shrink environmental footprints
- 3) Planning of diversity and sustainability-related events
- 4) Planning industry-academia and community partnerships
- 5) Reporting on activities and initiatives
- 6) Disseminating event information

## A Seafood Event to Promote Sustainability Through Thoughtful Eating and Ocean Awareness



On November 7, 2024 a Sustainable Seafood Event was held on the Main Street of Sophia University’s Yotsuya Campus, featuring special guest Karibu Suzuki, Director of the Young Fish Aquarium.

In addition, a one-day-only pop-up restaurant called FISH A WEEK: Weekly Fish offered dishes centered around environmentally friendly Blue Seafood (\*). Visitors had the opportunity to attend a talk show by Mr. Suzuki titled “Sustainable Eating – For Your Health and the Ocean’s Wealth”, where they reflected on marine environmental issues while enjoying delicious seafood that contributes to the SDGs.

Nowadays, the depletion of marine resources has become a serious issue due to rising sea temperatures caused by global warming, marine pollution from plastic waste, and overfishing. On the other hand, since more than 3 billion people are said to rely on marine resources for their livelihoods, solving these ocean-related problems is essential. Furthermore, protecting marine resources is one of the key initiatives under SDG 14: “Life Below Water”, and requires cooperation across society as a whole.



The bento boxes and cups provided were made primarily from paper and bamboo, reflecting efforts to reduce plastic waste. (Provided by: FISH A WEEK)

The talk show was

held during the lunch break and hosted by Mirai Nakajima from the Department of English Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages, who won the Grand Prix at the *Sophians Contest 2024*, a competition where participants showcase their appeal and share their views on social issues as influencers. Many students passed through the venue, naturally drawn to Mr. Suzuki’s engaging talk about fish and the ocean, as well as the eye-catching kitchen car adorned in vivid blue.

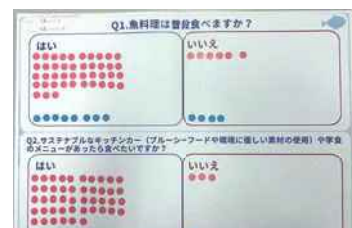


Mr. Karibu Suzuki vividly introduced juvenile fish with enthusiasm and charm.

To begin, Mr. Suzuki introduced various types of juvenile fish and their unique characteristics through videos and photos, using original categories such as “Cute Division” and “Grumpy Division” as creative entry points.

He then shared his observations, saying, “When you’re near fishing ports, you often notice changes in the marine environment.” He explained that rising sea temperatures caused by global warming are affecting both fish catch volumes and their market value. Using the example of yellowtail migrating northward in search of colder waters—only to be undervalued in Hokkaido due to the lack of local consumption habits—he emphasized, “The value of fish depends on regional culture. About 30–40% of the catch is discarded as underutilized fish, and one reason is simply that people in the area are unfamiliar with them. By learning about these fish, we can create value and foster a more sustainable seafood culture.”

“Please try to think of changes in the ocean as



Student staff conducted a survey among students lining up at the kitchen car, gathering insights into the awareness and attitudes of Sophia University students.



The kitchen car sold 103 meals in a single day, with many students enjoying the seafood dishes.

This event was planned by Soyoka Tsutsumi, a student staff member of the Office for Diversity and Sustainability Promotion. Noticing that the cafeteria menu was heavily focused on meat dishes and lacked options featuring seafood or environmentally conscious ingredients, she developed the concept from scratch and proposed it to the staff in her department. After approximately four months of preparation, the event came to life.

“The idea behind this event was to let Sophia students know that contributing to sustainability through food can be simple and accessible,” Tsutsumi said.

One of the biggest challenges, Tsutsumi said, was finding ways to engage students who may not be highly aware of environmental issues.

“This time, we invited Mr. Karibu Suzuki to help make the topic of marine issues more relatable by presenting it in a fun and engaging way. By offering a kitchen car serving delicious sustainable seafood, we showed that contributing to the environment can be easy—and that it also benefits the health of the consumer. We wanted

something that affects you personally. Start by developing a love for marine life, actually visit the ocean, and take sustainable actions while enjoying the experience. I hope this event serves as a first step toward that journey.”



students to understand that supporting the SDGs can bring personal benefits as well.

We also put a lot of effort into publicity, including creating posters that clearly conveyed the purpose of the event and sharing information through our website.”

Although many students at Sophia University are highly aware of the SDGs, Tsutsumi noted that their engagement tends to be concentrated in certain areas, and while some students are eager to learn, they may not yet be taking action.

“There are individual differences in how students approach these issues,” she said. “That’s why I want to regularly create spaces where many students can come together and think about SDG-related challenges as their own.”

Under its educational philosophy of “For Others, With Others,” Sophia University actively promotes sustainability initiatives. These efforts are not limited to the Office for Diversity and Sustainability Promotion, which organized this event, but are also reflected in classroom activities, extracurricular student groups, and various other settings.

\*Blue Seafood refers to marine products that are recognized as sustainable—caught through well-managed fisheries, with relatively abundant resources and practices that protect ecosystems. By actively consuming seafood listed in the Blue Seafood Guide, we can help restore depleted marine resources.



## Sophia Diversity Week 2024 Event Report



including December 3 (International Day of Persons with Disabilities).

Now in its eighth year, this year’s theme was “Identity and Diversity: Reflecting on Identity and Stereotypes within the Understanding of Diversity.” The event served as a platform for students, faculty, staff, and members of the public to collectively envision an inclusive society.

### Nov 27: Immersive Workshop in Collaboration with Herbalby

*(Organized by the Office for Diversity and Sustainability)*

We welcomed Herbalby Co., Ltd., a rapidly growing company in the “Welfare x Art” sector guided by the mission “Unleash Your Exceptionality,” for a riddle-

Sophia University held “Sophia Diversity Week 2024,” spanning from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day),

solving workshop. Participants were split into teams and experienced simulated challenges, such as playing roles with visual impairments or limited vocabulary. The workshop was led by Ms. Fumi Kikunaga, a Deaf employee at Herbalby who designed the game (which has a notoriously low success rate). Through the session, participants learned actual sign language and perspectives on building a symbiotic society. Many students noted that the experience prompted them to rethink their daily actions and consider what mindsets are necessary to engage with “difference.” It was a profound session that went beyond textbooks, allowing participants to experience the barriers faced by those with disabilities and re-evaluate the very concepts of “majority” and “minority.”



## Nov 28: Thinking with Generative AI: How I Want to Be Seen vs. How I Am Seen

(Organized by the Student Executive Committee)



This project explored the dynamic that “one’s identity belongs to oneself, yet requires recognition from others to be established.” Participants first entered five prompts representing their “ideal self” into

ChatGPT to generate an image. These images were then shown to other participants, who guessed the original prompts. These guessed prompts were then fed back into the AI to compare the new images with the originals. By visualizing “self-identity” through AI, participants experienced the gap between how they see themselves and how others perceive them. This revealed that biases in AI training data often mirror the unconscious stereotypes we hold in the real world, illustrating how these stereotypes affect the recognition of identity. It was a valuable opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the self and the outside world.

## Nov 28: Interactive Workshop on Self- and Interpersonal Awareness: Identity and Belonging Through Expressive Arts

(Organized by the Student Executive Committee)



Led by Beatrice Melo (Special Researcher at the Graduate School of Global Studies) in collaboration with the Student Executive Committee, this art workshop focused on identity. The event

was held in both English and Japanese, attracting a diverse group of students and public participants from various cultural backgrounds and nationalities. Through individual and group art creation, participants reflected on self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and their consciousness of social issues. In the group activity, teams chose themes such as gender, race, or roots to create posters conveying strong messages. The final presentations provided an opportunity to deepen discussions on embracing diversity and building a more inclusive community.

## Dec 4: Do Stereotypes Have a Big Impact?

(Organized by the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Human Sciences)

From a psychological perspective, this event explored how to prevent common stereotypes—such as “person X must be Y” or “one should act like Z”—from becoming tools for prejudice, discrimination, or stress. Participants took part



in a simple experiment on impression formation. Given only fragments of information—“Teacher, researcher, intellectual, cold, decisive”—they were asked to draw the person they imagined. Many participants drew a male figure wearing glasses. The project highlighted that while some stereotypes are widely shared, others are deeply personal. Participants learned the importance of recognizing the difference between their own values and those of others without imposing them.

## Dec 5: A New Era of Gender Expression: Decoding Diversity through Fashion

(Organized by the Student Executive Committee)



We hosted a lecture by Ms. Shiori Tanaka, CEO of Keuzes Co., Ltd. Her company specializes in made-to-order men’s-style suits tailored for female bodies. Ms. Tanaka

shared her personal story of skipping her own Coming-of-Age ceremony because she couldn’t find anything she felt comfortable wearing. Even when suitable clothing became available, she noted that many clients still hesitated to attend events for fear of how they would be perceived. This led her company to produce “SEIJIN-SHIKI” (Coming-of-Age ceremonies) where everyone can celebrate in their true form without anxiety. Participants remarked that the talk “lightened their own burdens” and “broadened their horizons” through stories rarely heard in standard lectures.

## Dec 8: Self-Love: Secrets to Spreading Positivity with Alan Takahashi

(Organized by the Student Executive Committee)

Alan Takahashi, known for his inspiring appearance on the Netflix series *The Boyfriend*, joined us for a talk on self-love and identity. The panel-style event, which included student organizers, drew a large audience from



both inside and outside the university. Alan shared that self-love is not something completed in isolation; rather, doing what is good for oneself benefits others, and acting for others eventually returns to oneself. Regarding the current emphasis on diversity, he offered the encouraging advice to not be “bound” by the word itself, but to approach oneself and others with a softer, more relaxed, and joyful attitude. The session ended with a warm Q&A and a heartfelt message for students to cherish the present moment despite the anxieties of the future.



## Production of the Official Sophia University Sustainable T-Shirt

In recent years, our society has faced increasingly serious challenges, including environmental issues. In response to these global concerns, we wanted to create an opportunity for people to pause and reflect—seeing these issues as their own. With that intention, Sophia University has created its official sustainable T-shirt.

This product uses recycled cotton T-shirts provided by Takihyo Co., Ltd. The material includes “recycled cotton” made from fabric scraps that would otherwise be discarded during the production process. Additionally, the shirts are produced and distributed through a supply chain that minimizes environmental impact and ensures



fair labor practices, as certified by the Global Recycled Standard (GRS), which guarantees social and environmental responsibility, quality, and legal compliance throughout production.

The T-shirt design was selected through a public contest open to Sophia University students and faculty. In the first round of screening, entries were evaluated based on three criteria: “Sophia-ness,” concept, and how well the concept was expressed in the design. Four designs were shortlisted, and after a second round of voting within the university, a student’s design was chosen as the grand prize winner and adopted for the final product.

The sustainable T-shirts were sold at the Patine Sports store on campus and at university events—and have completely sold out.



## We delivered an outreach lecture on diversity for students at the four affiliated junior and senior high schools of Sophia School Corporation.

From November 14 to December 7, 2024, the Office for Diversity and Sustainability Promotion and the Secondary Education Office of Sophia School Corporation conducted lectures on diversity for students from four Jesuit-affiliated junior and senior high schools: EIKO GAKUEN (Kanagawa), Rokko Gakuin (Hyogo), Hiroshima Gakuin (Hiroshima), and Sophia Fukuoka (Fukuoka).



Scene from the lecture held at Sophia Fukuoka

These lectures were held as pre-learning sessions for the Ideathon Contest for Sophia’s four affiliated schools, which took place on March 22–23, 2025. The goals were to convey the fun and creativity of ideathons and to give

even those students who were not participating in the contest an opportunity to engage with inclusive perspectives.

The content of the lecture was designed by student staff members who also took charge of moderating and managing the sessions on the day. Thanks to the close age proximity between the student staff and the participants, students quickly warmed up to them. At every school, the sessions were filled with smiles and lively discussions, making for a highly engaging and enriching learning experience.

The lecture was themed “Learning Compassion” and featured



Scene from the lecture held at Hiroshima Gakuin

an interactive program designed to explore the concept of universal design. Students learned to consider universal design from both the “hard” aspect—designing facilities that are easy for everyone to use—and the “soft” aspect—creating environments where everyone can feel comfortable.

Activities included a quiz titled “Who Is This Universal Design For?” and an ideathon called “Let’s Design a School Everyone Can Enjoy! – New Ideas to Break Down Invisible Barriers”, encouraging students to think creatively and inclusively.

During the ideathon, each group was given a set of characters with diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Students brainstormed and presented ideas from the perspective of “How can each character enjoy school life?” The session generated a wide variety of creative proposals, including suggestions that incorporated school events, improvements to facilities, and small everyday considerations. The atmosphere was lively and engaging across all venues.

We hope this lecture helped students recognize that even within familiar school environments, some individuals may experience “invisible barriers.” By encouraging them to think about how to remove those barriers and take action themselves, the program aimed to inspire a sense of empathy and initiative.



Scene from the lecture held at Eiko Gakuen



We held the “Let’s Design a Compassionate Journey! Ideathon Contest – Teamwork for Our Actions”, bringing together students from Sophia School Corporation’s four affiliated junior and senior high schools and Sophia



On March 22–23, 2025, Sophia School Corporation hosted an Ideathon Contest at the Yotsuya Campus for students from four Jesuit-affiliated junior and senior high schools: Eiko Gakuen (Kanagawa), Rokko Gakuin (Hyogo), Hiroshima Gakuin (Hiroshima), and Sophia Fukuoka (Fukuoka).

The contest was held under the theme “Learning Compassion – Stepping into Others’ Shoes to Build a More Inclusive Society”, and was developed in collaboration with Japan Airlines Co., Ltd. (JAL), a corporate partner of Sophia School Corporation. The event focused on the concept of “Diversity Tourism.”

From over 90 applicants, 30 students from the four schools were selected through a preliminary screening. They were joined by 8 student staff members from the Office for Diversity and Sustainability Promotion, who served as facilitators. Six mixed teams were formed across schools and grade levels, working together to develop their ideas.

Day 1 began with a lecture by Professor Kozue Shindo from the Department of Social Welfare, Faculty of Human

Sciences, who provided academic insights into the social positions of people with disabilities and minority groups. This was followed by a panel discussion featuring Yukie Usuba from Mirairo Inc., Tsuyohiko Seki from JAL, and Professor Shindo, who explored the challenges of building an inclusive society and how these issues appear in everyday life.

In the themed workshops, each team was assigned one of six attributes: “physical disabilities,” “intellectual disabilities,” “older adults,” “foreign residents,” “religion,” and “LGBTQ+.” Starting from the challenges these personas might face during travel or tourism, students developed new tour concepts, activities, and services. They also considered promotional strategies to enhance feasibility. In the evening, a social gathering was held, where students from different schools and Sophia University connected over food and games.

On Day 2, teams continued their work and presented their ideas. The Grand Prize was awarded to the team that proposed a tour for older adults titled “Will You End Your Life Without Connection? – A Journey to Rediscover Meaning”. The Excellence Award went to a team that designed a stress-free tour for Muslim travelers: “Welcome to a No-Stress Journey – A Europe Tour During Ramadan.” Both teams received certificates and prizes.

This meaningful initiative brought together junior and senior high school students, university students, corporate partners, and experts—demonstrating the power of collaboration in promoting inclusive thinking and action.



A special event was held for the winners of the Ideathon Contest organized for the four affiliated junior and senior high schools of Sophia School Corporation



On March 22–23, 2025, Sophia School Corporation hosted the Ideathon Contest for students from four Jesuit-affiliated junior and senior high schools: Eiko Gakuen (Kanagawa), Rokko Gakuin (Hyogo), Hiroshima Gakuin (Hiroshima), and Sophia Fukuoka (Fukuoka). Following the contest, a special event was held on August 8, 2025, for the five students who won the grand prize.

This event was organized with the cooperation of

Japan Airlines Co., Ltd. (JAL), a corporate partner of Sophia School Corporation, just like the original contest. The program included a visit to the JAL Sky Museum and an aircraft hangar tour, as well as an aviation-themed workshop related to the contest’s theme: “Learning Compassion – Stepping into Others’ Shoes to Build a More Inclusive Society.”

Participants had the opportunity to learn about JAL’s initiatives in promoting diversity and inclusion.

The winning team members reunited from across Japan for this special day. Although it had been nearly four months since they last met, they quickly reconnected as teammates who had shared an intense two-day experience. The atmosphere was warm and lively, with students catching up, sharing stories, and taking photos together.

In the aviation workshop, students took part in activities such as practicing in-flight announcements and answering quizzes about cabin crew duties. While having fun, they also showed a sincere interest in learning about JAL’s initiatives in Diversity Tourism, which left a strong

impression.

After the experience, students shared their reflections, with one commenting,

“This was an incredibly valuable experience for me. Sustainable diversity is expanding globally, and JAL is becoming more and more integrated into that movement. I feel inspired to support JAL even more!”

These responses revealed that the event offered not

only enjoyment but also meaningful learning and new insights.



## Student staff members gave a talk at the All Sophians' Festival lecture event



On May 25, 2025, the All Sophians' Festival (ASF), an annual homecoming day for Sophia University alumni, was held.

During the event, a lecture titled “*Finding Happiness at Sophia – Sustainability, Regeneration, and Well-being*” was delivered by Mr. Kazumasa Sashide, the chairperson of the ASF Executive Committee. In the latter half of the session, three student staff members from our office took the stage.

The students presented their own proposals—designed to improve Sophia University—to Mr. Sashide in a “wall-pitch” format, engaging in a lively exchange of ideas. Drawing on knowledge gained through classes and extracurricular activities, as well as their own curiosity, the student staff offered multifaceted proposals aimed at building a more sustainable future for Sophia University. These included addressing sleep-related issues among students, promoting long-term collaboration between academia and government, and introducing wind power generation using the strong winds on campus.

In the proposal on “Addressing Sleep Issues Among

Sophia Students,” the students focused on the presence of students sleeping in classrooms or unused spaces, and the high CO<sub>2</sub> levels in some classrooms. They suggested improving classroom environments by reviewing room capacities and enhancing ventilation, as well as creating designated spaces for short naps (power naps).

In the proposal titled “Promoting Academia-Government Collaboration – A Sophia-Style Approach,” they pointed out that Japan’s strong research and educational capabilities are not being fully utilized. They advocated for Sophia to serve as a hub connecting local governments and researchers, thereby opening up new possibilities through long-term collaboration.

In the “Wind Power Generation Using the Main Street Wind” proposal, they suggested installing vertical-axis, bladeless wind turbines that are suitable for urban campuses, to harness the strong winds blowing through the main street (commonly known as “Men-St”) of the Yotsuya Campus. This initiative would not only strengthen the university’s decarbonization brand but also serve as a “living teaching tool.”

Mr. Sashide offered valuable feedback based on his own experiences and insights from other young innovators, such as: “Young people launching new projects in Shibuya often use catchy names like ‘Super Homecoming’ or ‘Death Fest’—maybe you should consider something more attention-grabbing.” His practical advice inspired the student staff to seriously consider how to bring their ideas to life.

Going forward, the student staff will continue to contribute to promoting diversity and sustainability at Sophia University by planning and implementing new initiatives.



## We visited a solar power facility that generates electricity for Sophia University

Since FY2020, Sophia University has been sourcing 100% of the electricity consumed on its Yotsuya Campus from renewable energy.

In March 2025, a new solar power facility was established, adding “*additional renewable energy*” to the electricity supplied to the campus. The term “*additionality*” refers to the positive impact of renewable energy use that leads to the construction or introduction of new power generation facilities, thereby increasing the overall supply of renewable energy that did not previously exist. Rather than relying solely on existing renewable energy certificates, the establishment of this new solar power plant further strengthens Sophia University’s contribution to the

spread of renewable energy across society and enhances its efforts to combat climate change.

Prior to the start of electricity transmission, in January 2025, student staff members visited the solar power facility for an on-site inspection.

In preparation for the visit, the students organized a list of questions in advance and conducted direct interviews with employees from the partner company on the day of the tour. They learned that the facility was built on the site of a former stable, eliminating the need for deforestation and minimizing the risk of landslides. They also heard that the project was carried out with the understanding and support of local residents, following



community briefings held during the planning phase. Through the visit, the students were impressed by the scale of the power generation facility and gained

a renewed appreciation for the fact that the supply of renewable electricity to Sophia University is made possible through collaboration with many companies and organizations. The experience provided a valuable opportunity to learn firsthand that energy issues cannot be solved by a single university alone, and that cooperation among diverse stakeholders is essential.

Based on the insights gained from the visit, the student staff created educational materials and held an exhibition introducing Sophia University’s renewable energy initiatives. The exhibition was held on the first floor of Building No. 2 on the Yotsuya Campus from March to April 2025.



## We participated as an exhibitor in the 2025 Open Campus event



We participated in the 2025 Open Campus event in collaboration with the NPO organization “BEUFA.”

Our exhibit introduced Sophia University’s initiatives toward achieving the SDGs, alongside BEUFA’s displays on topics such as lookism and proper disposal methods for cosmetics. Many visitors expressed interest in the SDGs and the activities of student staff, making it a valuable opportunity for meaningful dialogue.

The first talk session was themed “Connecting with Society Through Embracing Your True Self.”

It began by highlighting how standards of beauty vary across countries and eras, questioning the notion of a single, universal beauty ideal. The session touched on the confusion young people feel when confronted with idealized images on social media, as well as emerging movements that encourage embracing one’s facial features as part of one’s identity. The importance of affirming both oneself and others—without excessive comparison—was emphasized.

One student staff member shared a personal story of studying abroad, which prompted deep reflection on what it means to be “true to oneself.” They explained that authenticity is not something defined by comparison with others, but rather something discovered through personal experiences.

The session concluded with a discussion on “What kind of environment allows everyone to be themselves?”, introducing Sophia University’s efforts to promote multicultural coexistence.

The second talk session, titled “Sustainability Through the Lens of Waste – Rethinking What We Throw Away,” featured presentations by both student staff and BEUFA.

The student staff introduced initiatives such as redesigning campus trash bins and installing water dispensers to reduce environmental impact. BEUFA shared their awareness-raising efforts regarding the issue of cosmetic waste.

The discussion revealed how mass consumption and disposal are often driven by social trends and economic factors. Participants shared that “using things for a long time” not only benefits the environment but also contributes to personal satisfaction and happiness. The message that “cherishing a single item can enrich the heart” left a strong impression.

In BEUFA’s workshop titled “Impression Fukuwarai,” participants rearranged facial features to recreate their own or others’ faces. They then exchanged positive impressions with one another, encouraging a mindset of respecting and accepting the unique beauty of both oneself and others.



## We carried out a project as part of the GLP (Global Leadership Program)

We participated in the Global Leadership Program (GLP) together with student staff from the Center for Global Education and Discovery.

GLP is a leadership development initiative aimed at fostering future global leaders and deepening understanding of international issues. It is primarily

conducted among five Jesuit universities in East and Southeast Asia. The program’s content varies each year depending on the theme, and it is highly popular among students. The host university rotates annually, and this year, Sophia University served as the host, welcoming 40 students from across the region.

Our team was responsible for planning and executing the program held on August 6 at the Yotsuya Campus.

At the beginning of the session, we introduced the student staff system and its activities using a video we had created. This was followed by an English version of “Campus Quest,” a puzzle-solving game where participants searched for SDG-related facilities on campus using clues. To ensure international students unfamiliar with the campus could enjoy the activity, we adjusted the difficulty level from the Japanese version used during the Open Campus and assigned one student staff member to each group to provide support.

After the game, participants were divided into groups for discussions. Based on the order in which they completed the Campus Quest, each group selected one of the following topics:

- Should schools completely eliminate plastic products?
- What are the barriers to implementing sustainable practices?
- How can international students contribute to creating a sustainable and inclusive environment?



Following the discussions, each group shared their vision of an ideal university. Presentations were diverse and creative—some groups composed and sang a school anthem, others used visual imagery effectively, and some passionately described events they would host at their ideal university. Hearing fresh perspectives from international students was a valuable experience for us.



## Beach Clean-Up Activity Held at Kasai Rinkai Park



On September 26, 2025, employees from Toagosei Co., Ltd., staff from the Sophia University Office of Diversity and Sustainability, and student staff members jointly conducted a beach cleanup activity at Kasai Seaside Park as part of the “Zero Marine Waste Week” initiative.

Mixed teams of company employees, university staff, and students worked together to collect marine debris while deepening mutual understanding and collaboration.

The theme of the cleanup was “Tracing the Journey of Everyday Items.”

Six student staff members participated in the activity, using the opportunity to reflect on where the items we use and see in our daily lives ultimately end up. As part of the initiative, we pre-dyed sustainable-material T-shirts with indigo and wore them on the day of the event.

Upon arriving at the park, we were surprised to find the beach cleaner than expected. However, according to

park staff, the accumulation of debris varies depending on wind direction. As we walked along the shore with cleaning tools, we began to notice many small plastic fragments that were not visible from a distance. This made us realize, with mixed feelings, that such fragments—if left unattended—could eventually become microplastics.

This activity was carried out in close collaboration with Toagosei employees, from planning to execution.

One student staff member reflected, “It was an incredibly valuable and inspiring experience to work alongside professionals from a company committed to sustainability, from the preparation phase through to the day of the event.” Another commented, “I hope to continue collaborating beyond the university setting—with companies and other external partners—to take action toward building a more sustainable society.”

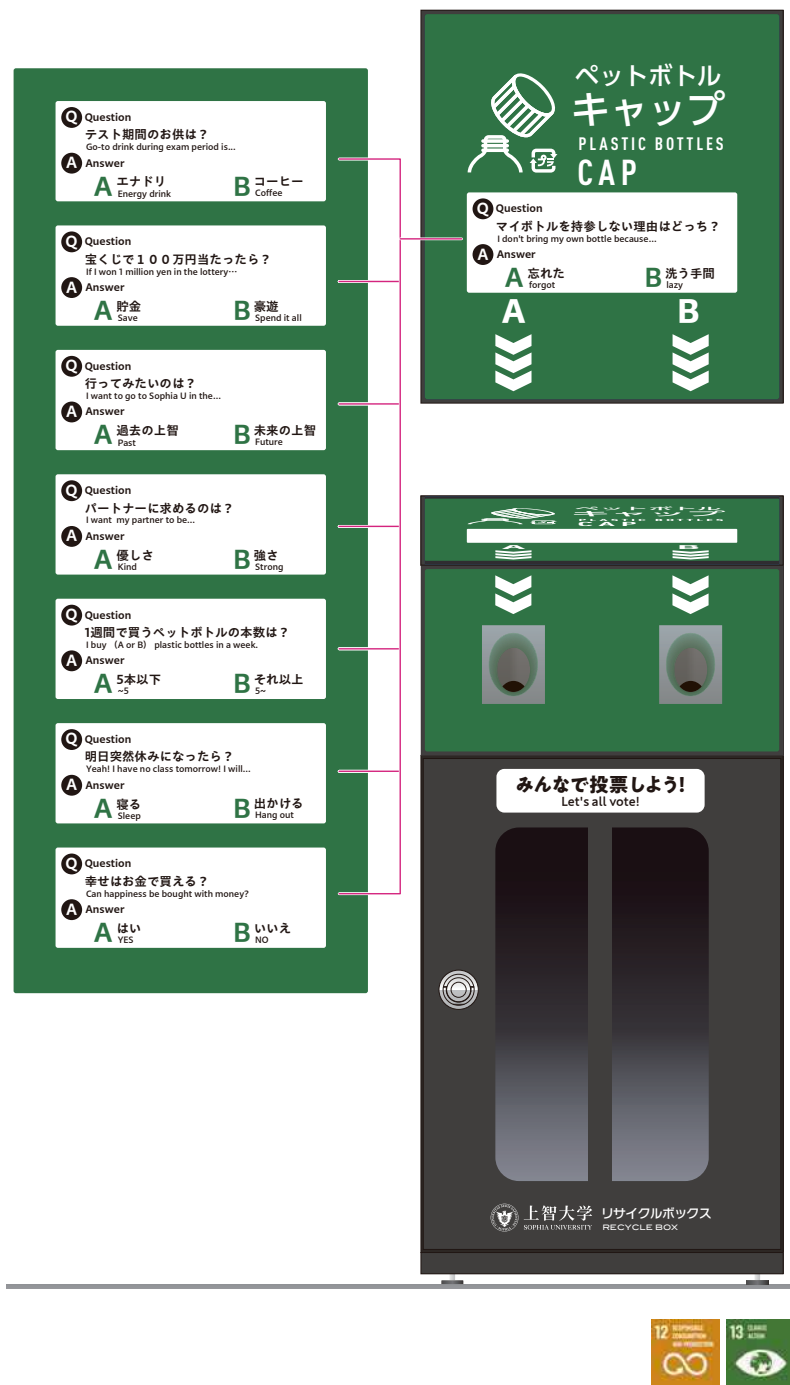


## Introduction of new plastic bottle cap collection boxes

Sophia University introduced a new plastic bottle cap collection box at the end of January 2026. These new boxes are an improvement on the simple collection boxes previously installed, with the aim of enhancing the awareness of waste separation among students and faculty members. To achieve this, an interactive mechanism has been incorporated into the design.

The new collection boxes allow users to “vote” on two choice questions such as “If I won 1 million yen in the lottery...” or “Go-to drink during exam period is...” by depositing bottle caps. The collected answers, along with the number of caps, are visible through the window of the collection box, allowing everyone to get excited and wonder, “What did others answer?” while visualizing the interests and trends within the campus. This playful initiative encourages students and staff to participate in recycling and sorting in an enjoyable way, naturally raising awareness about environmental issues.

The collected caps, made from highly recyclable materials such as polypropylene and polyethylene, are transformed into new products like files and planters. Burning 1kg of caps would release approximately 3.15kg of CO<sub>2</sub>, therefore, recycling them helps prevent global warming. Additionally, the value of 1,000 caps can fund a vaccine for one person as part of a donation initiative. To date, Sophia University has collected 48kg of caps (approximately 20,000 caps), contributing to a reduction of about 151kg of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the donation of vaccines for 20 people. A small action, such as placing caps in the collection box instead of discarding them as waste, can be a significant step toward both environmental protection and social contribution.



## Conducting SDGs Interviews

We have launched a new project called the “SDGs Student Interview.”

Many students at Sophia are actively engaged in initiatives related to diversity and sustainability. However, these efforts often go unnoticed, and there are limited opportunities for students to learn about each other’s activities. To address this issue, the interview series aims to highlight the diverse efforts of Sophia students and share their stories both within and beyond the university community.

By showcasing these students, the project also seeks to resonate with a wide range of audiences and inspire younger generations. In particular, the interviews are designed to serve as a source of motivation for junior high and high school students who are considering applying to Sophia University. Through this initiative, the university hopes to foster greater awareness of the SDGs and encourage more students to take action toward a more inclusive and sustainable future.

# Chapter 4: Initiatives of Educational and Research Organizations



# SPSF (Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures)

As a part of “Top Global University Project”, the Sophia Program for Sustainable Futures (SPSF), an English-taught, collaborative course among six departments, started in 2020.



Through SPSF, we aim to develop students’ ability to overcome challenges in the future by building a curriculum that considers solving not only the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations, but also issues such as war and conflict, economic disparity, poverty, environment, and education, and global issues that occur beyond countries and regions in today’s rapidly globalizing society, as well as complex and difficult issues where diverse values collide. This curriculum is designed so that in the first year after enrollment, students learn about a sustainable future in relation to academic disciplines, in the second year, gain diverse learning and experience, in the third year, they bring together the knowledge, skills, and experience they have acquired to work toward a sustainable future, and in the fourth year, each department conducts creative graduation research.

In September 2025, the second cohort graduated, and 70 new students have just joined as the sixth cohort.

As a result, the total number of students across the six SPSF departments has now reached approximately 190. Students from different departments will study together, identifying the challenges they face in creating a sustainable future, thinking about ways to solve them, and exploring what actions they should take.

During their four years of learning, students will study a wide range of subjects, including not only their own department’s subjects that deepen their knowledge in their own field but also subjects offered by other departments in SPSF and departments other than SPSF. They will also utilize practical educational programs both on and off campus, including study abroad and internships, to learn perspectives and ways of thinking not only in their department’s specialized field but also in other fields, fostering the sensibility to learn with diversity. SPSF is an educational program aimed at realizing the core theme of a sustainable future.

### About SPSF

- Concept
  - ✓ Enhancing your expertise in your department
  - ✓ Broadening your horizons with global and local approaches
  - ✓ Aiming to build a sustainable future together with peers
- Features
  - ✓ Interdisciplinary approach
  - ✓ All departments learn at the same campus in Tokyo One Campus (Yotsuya Campus)
- ✓ All classes conducted in English
- ✓ Offering Bachelor’s degree in specialized fields of study
  - JOURNALISM -----B.A. in Journalism
  - EDUCATION -----B.A. in Education
  - SOCIOLOGY -----B.A. in Sociology
  - ECONOMICS -----B.A. in Economics
  - MANAGEMENT -----B.A. in Management
  - GLOBAL STUDIES -----B.A. in International Relations
  - B.A. in Area Studies



Visit SPSF Website:  
<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/>



## Interviews with Six SPSF Students on Their Graduation Theses

As the second SPSF cohort approached graduation, six students who completed their theses in July 2025 were interviewed by three first-year students. The project fostered intergenerational dialogue and offered insights

into each student's approach to sustainability and their messages for future cohorts.

Please find the article featuring all six interviews below:



■ **PENGPENG Cai**  
(Department of Journalism)

*Taking Notes Across Borders  
– A Roller Coaster of Cultural Exchange*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-taking-notes-across-borders-a-roller-coaster-of-cultural-exchange>



■ **Natsuki Hibi**  
(Department of Sociology)

*Turning Disability into a Vision  
of Diversity*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-turning-disability-into-a-vision-of-diversity>



■ **Iku Nakamura**  
(Department of Education, Early Graduate)

*Early Leap to the Next Stage – Exploration of the  
Complex Relationship Between Education and Politics*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-early-leap-to-the-next-stage-exploration-of-the-complex-relationship-between-education-and-politics>



■ **Ducnhat Le Minh**  
(Department of Economics)

*From Japanese Craftsmanship to  
Global Perspectives*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-from-japanese-craftsmanship-to-global-perspectives>



■ **Shuto Hara**  
(Department of Global Studies)

*From Global to Local  
– The New Responsibility for Stable and Reliable Energy*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-from-global-to-local-the-new-responsibility-for-stable-and-reliable-energy>



■ **Keita Robert Hooker Yoshikawa**  
(Department of Economics)

*From Edinburgh to Waseda  
– Shaping an Economist's Path*

<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/20250918/graduation-thesis-interview-from-edinburgh-to-waseda-shaping-an-economists-path>



Furthermore, a promotional video featuring highlights from the interviews and the SPSF Graduation Thesis Poster Conference has been produced by a first-year SPSF student to share with prospective applicants. It is currently available on the SPSF website.

View it via the following link:  
<https://spsf.sophia.ac.jp/student-projects>



Interviewers:  
Shintaro Takagi (Journalism),  
Ikumi Nagase (Sociology),  
Osuke Sakuma (Global Studies)

Videographer:  
Liu Ruoshi (Economics)

# Report on Environmental Conservation Activities in Lake Kamo, Sado

In 2022, Sophia University signed a comprehensive partnership agreement with Sado City, aiming to promote the conservation of the natural environment at the regional level, advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), foster human resource development, and encourage international exchange through collaboration in various fields. One concrete initiative is the water environmental survey in Lake Kamo.

Lake Kamo, located in the center of Sado Island, is the largest lake in Niigata Prefecture, with a surface area of about 4.9 km<sup>2</sup> and a circumference of about 17 km. It has long played an important role in the local community as a base for fisheries—particularly oyster farming—as well as a tourism resource. However, in recent years, problems such as lake eutrophication, the loss of seaweed beds, and the deterioration of the lakeshore environment have become evident, highlighting the need for conservation efforts to ensure sustainable use of the lake. In addition, concerns have been raised about potential impacts on the ecosystem from the Noto Peninsula Earthquake.

In recent years, the Research Institute for the Study of the Global Environment at Sophia University has been working in collaboration with local environmental organizations to investigate the temporal and spatial variations of water quality in Lake Kamo. In addition to conventional water quality parameters, surveys on algae community and microplastics have also been conducted. Furthermore, three-dimensional bathymetric surveys using ADCP have been carried out to assess changes in the lakebed topography caused by the Noto Peninsula

Water Quality Survey Sites and a Portion of the Results (May 2024)

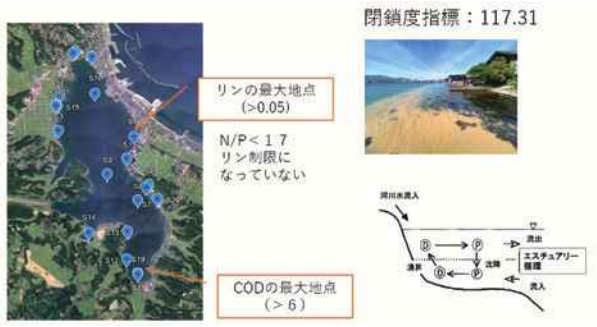


Fig.1 Water quality survey in Lake Kamo

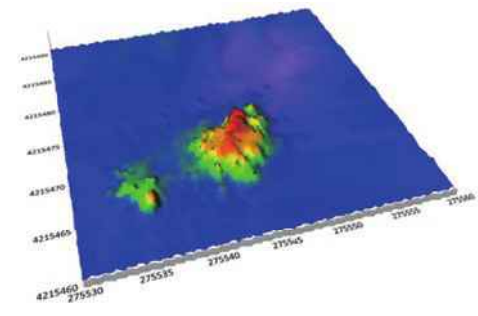


Fig.2 The lakebed topography around the seawater inlet of Lake Kamo has been revealed for the first time

Earthquake. It is hoped that these research outcomes will contribute to environmental conservation planning in Sado.

Huang Guangwei, Professor  
Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies



## “Want to, but can’t”: A new model to explain the gap in waste separation behavior

Incorporating external factors and heterogeneous moderators into the Theory of Planned Behavior to explain discrepancies in household waste separation.

The gap between people’s intention and behavior in separating household waste is not adequately explained by existing behavioral frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

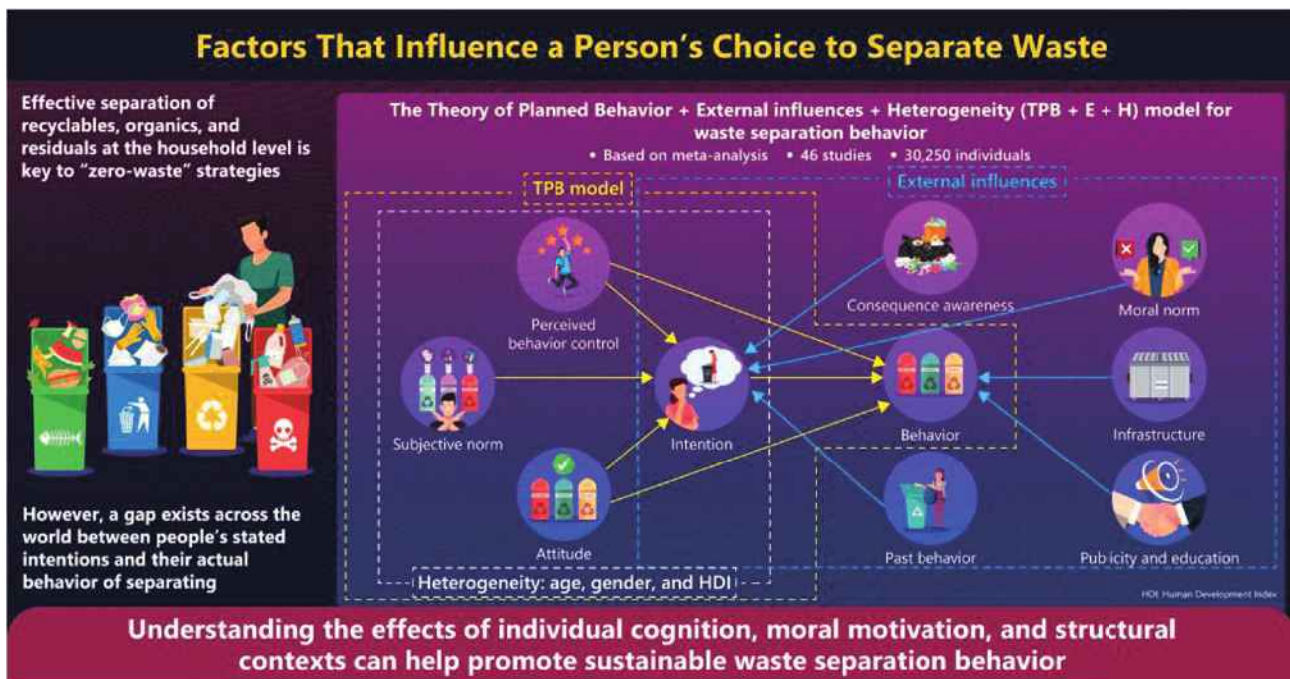
By analyzing studies from around the world, researchers have expanded the TPB framework to include external factors and demographic differences.

This expanded framework can help researchers and policymakers accurately identify factors that will bring the greatest improvement in waste separation compliance in specific regional contexts.

Household waste constitutes 30–40% of municipal solid waste globally. Separating waste at the household level into compostable, recyclable, and non-recyclable is a crucial first step for local governments to process

solid waste effectively. However, large gaps between a person’s willingness to separate waste and actually separating waste have been seen across the world. Understanding the factors that affect people’s intention and behavior of separating household waste can help create more effective policies regarding household-level waste separation.

However, existing theoretical frameworks, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), do not fully account for external factors that affect waste separation behavior. Drawing from the existing research, a team of researchers led by Professor Xuepeng Qian from the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies (GENV) at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan, has developed a new behavioral model for waste separation. Other collaborators on the team were Assistant Prof. Nkweuseh Reginald Longfor and Jiarong Hu, also from GENV, and Prof. Liang Dong from the Department of



Beyond Theory of Planned Behavior: A Meta-Analysis of Psychological and Contextual Determinants of Household Waste Separation  
 Hu et al. (2025) | Environmental Impact Assessment Review | DOI: 10.1016/j.eiar.2025.106987



Public and International Affairs and the School of Energy and Environment, City University of Hong Kong. Their work was made available online on July 14, 2025, and will be published on January 1, 2026 in Volume 116 of the journal *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*.

According to the authors of this paper, "Researchers have no clear guidance on which external variables should be prioritized when extending TPB, and policymakers are unclear which levers are likely to yield the greatest behavioral gains," and hence the team was motivated to conduct their study.

In their study, Prof. Qian's team analyzed 46 papers on waste separation covering 30,250 participants in various geographies. The team drew from two other behavioral frameworks to understand differences in intrinsic characteristics not covered by TPB. They also looked at the effect of external factors such as waste collection infrastructure, consequence awareness, publicity and education programs, and previous recycling habits.

The team found that some intrinsic characteristics, such as a person's belief that they will be able to successfully separate waste for collection, have a large effect on their behavior. They also found that heterogeneous demographic variables, such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status, moderate the impact of intrinsic characteristics on the intention to separate waste.

Based on these findings, Prof. Qian's team has developed an expanded framework that they call the Theory of Planned Behavior + External influences + Heterogeneity or TPB + E + H. Incorporating the effects of external factors along with the three internal factors of the original TPB, increases the framework's

explanatory power with regards to waste separation. They also account for the influence of heterogeneous demographic variables on the effect size of the internal factors. As a result, this is not a one-size-fits-all framework and the impact of each individual factor will vary based on local contexts.

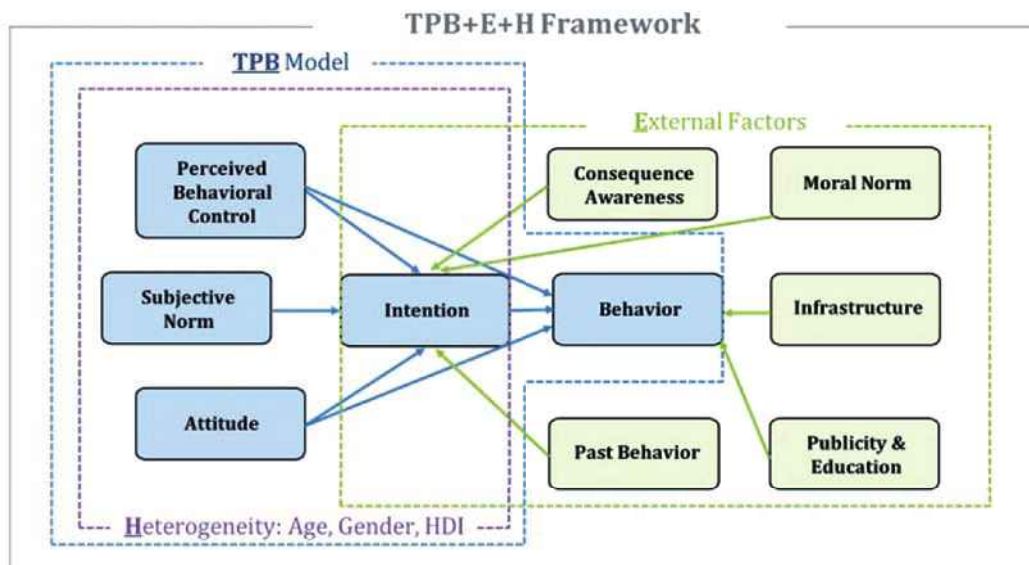
As concluded in this research, "The proposed TPB + E + H framework provides a flexible platform for the integration of intention, external factors, and social contexts, allowing future studies to systematically incorporate policy-level and institutional variables into behavioral models... and to facilitate meaningful behavioral change," According to the team, the TPB + E + H model can guide policymakers on specific interventions that will ease and encourage greater participation in household waste separation. "Future studies can move toward more actionable, context-sensitive, and intervention-oriented models of sustainable behavior," the team describes.

Looking forward, Prof. Qian notes that a lot of the current research on waste separation behavior is from developing countries with newly established environmental policies. "Future research should actively incorporate evidence from underrepresented developed regions to build a more balanced and inclusive understanding of global waste separation behavior," the team shares.

### Reference

- Title of original paper

Beyond theory of planned behavior: A meta-analysis of psychological and contextual determinants of household waste separation



The framework provides a flexible platform for the integration of intention, external factors, and social contexts

• **Journal**

Environmental Impact Assessment Review

• **DOI**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eiar.2025.108087>

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Xuepeng Qian, Professor  
Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies



## Research on Regenerative Tourism in Hawaii



In Hawaii, “sustainable tourism” that respects the natural environment and local culture has long been promoted. In recent years, however, efforts have progressed

further toward “regenerative tourism,” which aims to create positive impacts on local communities. This form of tourism not only minimizes environmental burdens but also encourages tourists to actively participate in nature conservation and cultural preservation, thereby contributing to the revitalization of local society.

On Oahu Island, popular tourist destinations such as Diamond Head and Hanauma Bay have introduced online reservation systems that limit the number of visitors. These areas had faced concerns over environmental degradation due to overuse, but the reservation system helps balance nature conservation with a comfortable experience for tourists. In particular, Hanauma Bay has implemented strict regulations, including increased entrance fees, mandatory viewing of an orientation video before entry, and a ban on sunscreens containing ingredients harmful to coral reefs,



all aimed at preserving the marine ecosystem.

Programs such as beach cleanups in Waikiki and the North Shore, tree planting of endangered species like koa and sandalwood, and cultural experiences offered at hotels—such as hula dancing, ukulele playing, and lei making—are also expanding. These initiatives provide tourists with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Hawaii’s nature and culture and to feel a sense of contribution to the local community.

This research involves field studies in Hawaii and surveys of potential Japanese tourists to explore the possibilities and challenges of regenerative tourism.

Takahiro Tsuge, Professor  
Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies



## Learning Together: Nature and Local Culture for Businesses, Tourists, and Citizens —Initiatives through the Activities of “Famille Nature Conservation”



“Famille Nature Conservation” is a volunteer organization based in the seas of Okinawa and also active in the fields of Saitama. It is supported by community-based companies and organizations, including MS Famille Co., Ltd. (Naha City, Okinawa), which offers scuba diving lessons and tours, as well as by tourists and local citizens through volunteer efforts. The organization is also registered under Okinawa Prefecture’s “Okinawa SDGs Partner” program.

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, I have studied the history, culture, and society of Indigenous peoples and border regions within U.S. territories. As one way to apply the insights gained from this research—particularly regarding the preservation of traditional cultures, regional histories, and the natural environments that support them—I have been involved in the activities of Famille Nature Conservation.

Between 2024 and 2025, the following activities were carried out:

### **Lecture on Environmental and Cultural Conservation and the Tourism Industry in Okinawa (Sophia University)**

In September 2024, I gave a lecture titled “*Environmental and Cultural Conservation Activities Starting from the Seas of Okinawa — Current Practices in the Tourism Industry and Challenges for Collaboration with Universities*” at Sophia University. Together with Mr. Junichi Fukuda of MS Famille Co., Ltd., we discussed rising corporate interest in marine conservation, sustainable ways for tourists to participate, and challenges in university collaboration, using concrete examples.

### **Marine Conservation and Coral Planting in Ginowan, Okinawa**

In October 2024, about 40 scuba divers gathered at the call of MS Famille Co., Ltd. to collect marine debris, remove coral-damaging shellfish, and plant coral species resilient to rising sea temperatures. The coral reefs in

this area play a vital role in protecting the southwestern coast of Okinawa Island from erosion and supporting local fisheries that sustain the economy

and food supply. The area is also important for traditional Okinawan events such as *Hari*, a boat race and ritual.

Beyond these events, volunteer divers regularly collect underwater debris and monitor coral reefs along the coast of Okinawa Island and in the Kerama Islands National Park. In December 2024, the initiative was

also introduced at EcoPro 2024, held at Tokyo Big Sight, through the booth of Sophia University’s Institute for Global Environmental Studies.



### **Lecture at Université de San Pedro (Côte d’Ivoire)**

In February 2025, I gave a lecture on marine conservation efforts in Okinawa, focusing on sea turtles, at Université de San Pedro in Côte d’Ivoire. The lecture was streamed live from Japan and attended by many students studying tourism and economics.

### **2024 (5th) Pope Francis Commemorative Award**

My involvement with Famille Nature Conservation was recognized as an “outreach activity contributing to the protection of Okinawa’s natural environment, history, and culture,” and received the Pope Francis Commemorative Award from Sophia School Corporation. The award ceremony was held at Sophia University in March 2025.

### **Agricultural Experience Event for University Students, Primarily International Students (Saitama Prefecture)**

In May 2025, an agricultural experience event was held in Saitama for students at Sophia University, mainly international students. Through planting vegetables in the fields, participants were introduced to Japanese nature and culture. Okinawan vegetables and the natural environment supporting Okinawan cuisine were also featured. A hunter from Yamanashi Prefecture gave a talk on the growing game meat industry and hosted a venison cooking and tasting session. A mobile sauna inspired by traditional Japanese styles was brought from Shizuoka Prefecture to help participants relax after farm work.

These activities will continue beyond 2025.  
Famille Nature Conservation website: <https://famille-nc.com/>

Yuka Mizutani, Professor  
Center for Global Education and Discovery



## Participatory Irrigation Management in Response to Climate Change



Climate change is intensifying shifts in precipitation patterns and increasing the frequency of droughts across the globe. In certain regions, particularly in Africa, securing water for agriculture has become an urgent issue at the very heart of food security. In this context, growing attention is being directed toward Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM)—an approach in which farmers themselves take the lead in managing their water resources.

PIM represents a fundamental departure from top-down water governance, empowering farmers—those directly engaged in agriculture—to actively participate in decision-making processes.

By involving farmers who best understand the local conditions, PIM enables sustainable and efficient water use, while also contributing to local empowerment.

This approach directly supports SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

Since April 2022, at the request of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), I have served as a member of the Issue-specific Committee for Promoting Climate Change Measures in Agricultural and Rural Development Cooperation (a thematic advisory body), contributing to the development of the Basic Guidelines for Promoting Participatory Irrigation Management in Response to Climate Change.

Japan's participatory irrigation management draws on

a long history of practice-based knowledge and is recognized as one of the country's important vehicles for international cooperation. Together with the Reference Document for *Participatory Irrigation Management Project Activities* developed concurrently, these guidelines will continue to serve as a valuable foundation for international cooperation in the years to come.

In July 2025, I visited a project site in Atari District, Uganda, to assess the practical effectiveness of the guidelines. I observed numerous conditions conducive to equitable and efficient use of limited water resources, with farmer organizations independently undertaking canal maintenance and the formulation of water allocation rules.

Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) is more than a mechanism for technology transfer—it is a model of sustainable development grounded in collaboration that respects the agency of local communities. Through our research and network, we continue to build knowledge in community-based water resource management, contributing to support for communities around the world as they confront the challenges of climate change.

Mikiko Sugiura, Professor  
Center for Global Education and Discovery



## The course “*International Higher Education*” is related to the SDGs from three perspectives.

First, the course provides an overview of the history of higher education in Japan and around the world by region, examining how higher education systems have been shaped by changing societal demands over time, and conversely, how higher education has contributed to the formation of society. Based on this foundation, the course aims to discuss the role universities should play in addressing global challenges such as climate change and achieving the SDGs, especially in the context of rapid globalization and advances in information and communication technologies. Through these discussions, students explore how higher education can contribute to other SDG goals, such as Goal 13: “*Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*” and Goal 9: “*Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.*”

Second, the course discusses the current state and challenges of higher education worldwide. Over the past 25 years, the number of students enrolled in higher education globally has tripled. This growth has been driven by the expansion of primary and secondary education, economic development in emerging countries, industrial advancement, and the rise of knowledge-based societies. However, this expansion has not occurred evenly across all regions and countries. In fact, disparities between low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries have widened, and even within countries, gaps in access to higher education persist between different social groups. Particularly in low- and middle-income countries, the

rapid expansion has outpaced efforts to ensure quality. The course engages students in discussions on how to address these issues and ensure inclusive and equitable quality higher education for all, in line with SDG Goal 4.

Third, the course incorporates COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), an educational method that facilitates international, interactive learning through online platforms. In two of the fourteen sessions, students connect online with classrooms in universities in Malaysia and Kenya to present and discuss, in English, the current state and challenges of higher education in each country. While the internationalization of higher education has progressed significantly over the past 20 years—evidenced by a threefold increase in international students—studying abroad remains costly and inaccessible to many. This has led to growing disparities between students who benefit from international experiences and those who do not. COIL, which eliminates the need for physical travel, is gaining attention as a more accessible alternative. Although it cannot fully replicate the experience of living abroad, it still provides students with opportunities to learn alongside peers from other countries while remaining in Japan. This initiative also contributes to SDG Goal 4: “*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*”

Professor Naoki Umemiya

Center for Global Education and Discovery



# COIL Connecting Global Health and Medical Students Online in a Turbulent Global Era ~Interactive Collaborative Learning (ICE) for Sharing Knowledge, Dialogue, and Living Together Across Borders

Since the fall of 2019, the Department of Nursing has launched online COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) programs with ten universities worldwide: five in the United States—Marquette University, University of Portland, Boston College, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and Oregon Health & Science University—as well as Khon Kaen University (Thailand), Dornogovi Branch of Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico), Xavier University (Philippines), and University of Shizuoka (Japan). In addition, we have invited global health practitioners and experts as guest speakers from organizations such as the United Nations (WHO), international NGOs (International Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, SOS Méditerranée, and a Los Angeles-based medical support NGO for the homeless), and the African Alliance of Nurses and Midwives (NGO), to participate in COIL sessions. Over the past six years, we have conducted a total of 56 sessions in various formats of international collaborative learning.

This program emphasizes not only learning about advanced healthcare systems and nursing practices in developed countries, but also building close partnerships with universities in low- and middle-income countries. It focuses on understanding the social determinants of health by listening directly to the voices of people in each country, including their cultures, religions, and customs. Through this approach, students gain insights into the values, beliefs, and lived

experiences that are not visible in statistics, reports, or academic papers. By engaging in open dialogue and mutual learning, the program aims to cultivate empathy and deep understanding across cultures.

In the global healthcare field, the increasing specialization of expertise has led to a decline in human-centered care, prompting a reevaluation of patient- and family-centered approaches. For the past decade, the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration has been highlighted. In our COIL program, we collaborate not only with international nursing students but also with students from diverse academic disciplines such as medicine, sociology, nutrition, and ethics. Together with our partner universities and Sophia University students and faculty, we select topics that reflect global challenges—such as economic and health disparities, the health impacts of climate change, sex education, geriatric care, child abuse, and end-of-life care. Through these interactive classes, students from around the world gather online to learn, share, and discuss common issues from multiple perspectives, engaging in collaborative dialogue to explore solutions.

Yae Yoshino, Associate Professor  
Faculty of Human Sciences Department of Nursing



Interdisciplinary COIL between Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico) and Sophia University: Nursing and Nutrition Collaboration Initiatives for Preventing Frailty in Older Adults in Mexico and Japan: Support from Nursing and Nutrition Sciences



Invited to Mexico for a Lecture and Workshop (March 2024)



Invited to the COIL International Sophia Symposium (July 2025)



## Educational practice to learn about Indigenous peoples in North America and the Pacific region through viewing crafts and COIL

According to the United Nations, over 370 million Indigenous peoples currently live in approximately 90 countries worldwide. Furthermore, the period from 2022 to 2032 has been designated by the UN as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, during which activities aimed at protecting Indigenous languages and advancing the rights of their speakers are being undertaken.

I have conducted research focusing on the social conditions surrounding Indigenous peoples and ongoing cultural revitalization efforts, particularly in the U.S.-Mexico border region, throughout North America, and in U.S. territories in the Pacific. At Sophia University, I teach undergraduate courses directly related to my research: one in Japanese (“Cultural Revitalization and Ethnicity: The Present State of North American Indigenous Peoples”) and one in English (“Cultural Revitalization and Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in North America”).

In these courses, students read texts and watch videos about Indigenous issues. Additionally, these courses offer special activities. In the Japanese-taught course, I bring crafts that represent Indigenous cultures in North America and the Pacific region, as well as picture books and textbooks developed for learning Indigenous languages, to the classroom. Students are given opportunities to interact with these items, applying the knowledge gained from reading textbooks. This activity helps them to deepen their understanding of Indigenous cultures, the economy in Indigenous communities, and the historical transition and significance of museum exhibitions.

In the English-taught course, I create opportunities for students to listen to talks by Indigenous people and experts who support them, and ask questions, by connecting the classroom with universities abroad via the internet. Particularly, there is an ongoing exchange with Santa Clara University, located in Silicon Valley, California, USA. SCU, founded by the Jesuits, is a partner institution of Sophia University. This university collaborates with the Muwekma Ohlone people, the Indigenous people of the region, to conduct education, research, and outreach activities. In 2024 and 2025, Ms. Isabella ‘Amne Gomez, a member of the Muwekma Ohlone people and SCU student, gave guest lectures to the class. Many participants described their interactions with Ms. Gomez as “the most memorable experience in this course.”

Sophia students live geographically far away from California, and they are not members of the Muwekma Ohlone. However, many of them could relate their lives to the story of Ms. Gomez, another university student living today.

Any students, including international exchange students, are eligible to take these two courses. I hope more students will enroll in these courses in the future.



Yuka Mizutani, Professor

Center for Global Education and Discovery

### “Support for Building Inter-University Exchanges with U.S. and Other Overseas Institutions through COIL-Based Education” (2018–2022)

COIL stands for Collaborative Online International Learning.

It is an educational approach that connects universities across borders through online platforms, enabling students to learn in an interactive, international environment. Even students who find it difficult to study abroad—due to financial reasons, global circumstances, or restrictions within their academic curriculum—can gain opportunities to learn alongside peers from overseas while staying in Japan.

Through collaborative learning among students from diverse cultural backgrounds, participants develop multifaceted understanding of issues and cultivate the ability to think from multiple perspectives.



## Record of SDGs-related Activities

The Gaza conflict that erupted in October 2023 has resulted in approximately 1,200 deaths on the Israeli side and, as of September 2025, over 66,000 deaths and nearly 170,000 injuries on the Palestinian side. It is also estimated that thousands remain buried under the rubble. As the devastation is reported daily around the world, the scale and intensity of the military operations and destruction in Gaza are unprecedented since World War II.

I have long specialized in diplomatic efforts to end armed conflicts—commonly referred to as “peace mediation”—and in activities aimed at building sustainable peace afterward, known as “peacebuilding.” Following the outbreak of the Gaza conflict, I have appeared in various media to explain the reasons behind its prolonged nature and to propose solutions. These include a six-minute interview aired on NHK’s “Ohayo Nippon” in January 2024, a 50-minute special on NHK’s “International Report” in April 2024 marking six months since the conflict began, and an interview article published in Asahi Shimbun’s “Kouron” series in October 2024, one year after the conflict started. In all these appearances, I emphasized the importance of Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, the need for an international monitoring force to ensure security for both Palestinians and Israelis, and the potential application of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” project—jointly implemented by Japan, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Israel in the West Bank—to Gaza’s post-conflict reconstruction.

Following these domestic engagements, I spent about two weeks in Amman, Jordan, in late October 2024, conducting lectures and field research with full support from the Embassy of Japan in Jordan. One of my lectures was held at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, a body under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended by around 40 senior officials including directors and section chiefs. The session lasted two hours and ten minutes, including a lively Q&A (see photo). On November 3, I gave a lecture sharing my research on Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, and the war in Ukraine, while also proposing the deployment of an international monitoring force to Gaza and the application of the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity. After the lecture, the director of the institute expressed interest in using my second English-language book, *Inclusivity in Mediation and Peacebuilding* (Edward Elgar, 2022), in future training programs for Jordanian diplomats. On November 5, I also gave a lecture at the University of Jordan to an audience of about 100 students. Professor Momani, Director of the University’s Strategic Studies Institute, who hosted the event, has continued to collaborate with me. In May 2025, Sophia University and the University of Jordan signed an MoU to engage in ongoing dialogue toward sustainable peace in Gaza and the broader Middle East. The November lecture served as a catalyst for this partnership.

I also conducted interviews with key figures, including Mr. Al-Qataneh, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Jordan, Ms. Anab, the Minister of Tourism, heads of universities and think tanks in Jordan, and diplomatic representatives such as the Deputy Representative of the Palestinian mission in Jordan, the Deputy Ambassador of Egypt in Jordan, and the Deputy Ambassador of Qatar in Jordan. These interviews focused on ceasefire efforts and post-conflict reconstruction in Gaza, the mediation roles of Egypt and Qatar, Palestinian perspectives, and

potential future cooperation between Jordan and Japan.

The findings were published in the January 2025 issue of the journal *Gaikou* (Diplomacy) under the title “Exploring the Gaza Conflict and Peacebuilding in Jordan.” The article was read by many senior officials in Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including directors and deputy directors of the Middle East and Africa Bureau, who shared that they were encouraged by Japan’s potential role in the region.

After my activities in Jordan, I visited South Sudan for a week of research and lectures. At the South Sudan National Public Broadcasting Corporation, which has received over a decade of support from JICA, I gave lectures on “Peacebuilding and the Role of Media” on November 12 and 13. I also conducted interviews with First Vice President Machar, Vice President Gai, and Deputy Representative of the United Nations in South Sudan, Mr. Cong.

Upon returning to Japan, I was invited to lecture on “Peace Mediation and Ceasefire Negotiations” at the National Defense Academy’s annual course for Self-Defense Forces officer candidates, organized by the Ministry of Defense’s National Institute for Defense Studies. On January 15, 2025, I spoke to about 100 officer candidates, sharing insights from my research in Jordan and South Sudan. I was also invited by Mr. Shotaro Yachi, former Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and National Security Advisor, and current Chairman of the Fujitsu Future Studies Center, to give a lecture on my findings.

On February 21, 2025, I appeared on NHK Radio’s morning news segment to discuss “One Month into President Trump’s Term—Prospects for the Ukraine War and Gaza Conflict.” On February 28, I appeared on NHK’s international English-language program *NHK Newsroom Tokyo*, broadcast worldwide, to provide analysis on challenges to ending the war in Ukraine.

Through field research, lectures, publications, and media appearances, I have continued to contribute—however modestly—to resolving conflicts such as the Gaza conflict, the war in Ukraine, and the civil war in South Sudan. My lecture in Jordan led to the signing of an MoU between Sophia University and the University of Jordan, and we have since held online seminars on June 4 and October 21, 2025, facilitating international dialogue on Japan’s potential contributions to conflict resolution in the Middle East and Africa. For several years, I have advocated for Japan to play the role of a Global Facilitator—a promoter of international dialogue to address global challenges such as armed conflict, climate change, and infectious diseases, which cannot be solved by any one country alone. Through my work at Sophia University, I continue striving to fulfill that role in a small but meaningful way. I am deeply grateful to the Chancellor of Sophia School Corporation, the Directors of the Institute of International Relations and the Institute for Human Security, and many colleagues who have supported these efforts.

Daisaku Higashi, Professor  
Center for Global Education and Discovery



# Formation of an International Center of Excellence in the Realization of Human Security (Sophia Institute for Human Security / Successor Branding Project)

## 1. Overview of the Institute

Sophia Institute for Human Security was established as the core research body under the 2017 Private University Research Branding Project titled “Sophia University Branding Project for Formation of an International Center of Excellence in the Realization of Human Security.”

Even after the conclusion of the branding project, the institute has continued its activities as a university-affiliated research institute, supported by the ORION Fund since 2022.

The institute identifies five key global challenges—poverty, environment, healthcare, migration and refugees, and peacebuilding—as critical issues in the realm of human security. It aims to address these challenges by designing effective policies and systems using social science research methodologies, thereby contributing to the realization of human security through academic research.

## 2. Project Overview

“Human Security” is a concept that expands the traditional notion of security—once focused solely on the state—to include the safety and well-being of each individual. In today’s globalized world, where various issues transcend borders and interact with one another, human security has become a vital principle for the international community.

This project reinterprets the diverse research conducted at Sophia University through the lens of human security, positioning it as a central theme for disseminating research outcomes and enhancing the university’s brand. A distinctive feature of the project is its integration of research efforts aimed at realizing human security with education and career development support. By creating a space where students and individuals actively engage in research and connect it to future career paths, the project

seeks to build a broader and more robust Sophia University brand that goes beyond academic achievements.

## 3. Main Activities

Research Promotion:

The institute is composed of five research units: Poverty, Environment, Healthcare, Migration and Refugees, and Peacebuilding. Each unit conducts fieldwork primarily in Africa, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, and publishes its findings in international academic journals.

Dissemination of Research Findings:

Research outcomes are shared not only through academic conferences and journals but also via seminars, workshops, and discussion papers.

Event Hosting:

The institute organizes a variety of events such as seminar series, symposiums, and lectures to broadly communicate issues and initiatives related to human security.

In FY2024, symposiums included topics such as:

“The Visas for Life, the Spirit of the UN and the Commitment of the Netherlands”

“Reception of Refugees by Developing Countries amid Prolonged and Complex Crises: Current Status and Future Prospects”

“New Peace and Reconstruction in Gaza: Inviting the UN Assistant Secretary-General”



(UN Photo / JC McIlwaine)

Sophia Institute for Human Security  
<https://dept.sophia.ac.jp/is/sihs/eng/>



# About The Institute of Inclusive Community

The Institute of Inclusive Community (IIC) is a relatively new research organization established in April 2020. Its founding purpose is rooted in one of the four priorities outlined by Father Arturo Sosa, the 31st Superior General of the Society of Jesus, and approved by the Pope as part of the *Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus*:

“To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, and those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.”

This mission aims to realize a society where people live together in mutual respect, transcending differences in ability and culture. It also aligns with Sophia University’s educational spirit of “For others, with others.” The institute seeks to clarify the challenges faced by those who are excluded or whose dignity is compromised due to disabilities, cultural or religious differences, both in Japan and abroad. It aims to become a research hub that proposes solutions to these issues and shares them globally, through the work of researchers, educators, and practitioners.

A distinctive feature of the institute is its operation through industry-academia collaboration with Aioi Nissay

Dowa Insurance Co., Ltd., aiming to translate joint research outcomes into practical societal applications. While Sophia University hosts many research centers with a strong focus on international issues, few address domestic social challenges. Moreover, while many industry-academia collaborations focus on “creating products,” this institute represents a new challenge by focusing on “developing people” and “building communities.”

From 2024 to 2025, the institute has worked on the following key initiatives:

- Promoting sports for persons with disabilities and realizing an inclusive society
- Supporting children with disabilities or medical needs and their families (especially siblings)
- Investigating the functions and structures of safe spaces for children and the elderly
- Supporting Japanese people living abroad and foreign workers employed in Japan

Mitsuru Hisata, Director  
 Institute of Inclusive Community



# Protecting the Environment of the Angkor World Heritage Site — Environmental Education for Children

The Sophia University Asia Center for Human Resource Development began water quality surveys in the Angkor region in 1991 and has since been involved in environmental conservation activities. From 2003 to 2006, the Center contributed to the introduction of the international standard ISO 14001 Environmental Management System in cooperation with the Cambodian government agency responsible for the Angkor World Heritage Site, the APSARA National Authority. As of 2025, among the 1,248 World Heritage Sites worldwide, Angkor was the first to obtain global standard certification.

## Environmental Education for Children Can Save Angkor — Aiming for Harmony Among Environment, Culture, and Local Communities

The Angkor archaeological area is home to many residents. To create a region where cultural heritage (the ruins), human life (villages), and nature (forests) coexist in harmony and sustainable development is possible, it is essential to engage in activities together with the local community. As an extension of our ISO 14001 efforts, we launched the Cambodia Children’s Environmental Education Program in 2006, in collaboration with the Japan Quality Assurance Organization (JQA) and the APSARA National Authority, with the goal of educating the next generation and spreading environmental awareness to families, villages, and the broader community. Since 2018, at the request of the Siem Reap Provincial Department of Education, Youth and Sport, we have been conducting pilot programs to integrate

environmental education into local school curricula.

## Six-Month Environmental Education Program for Children (Nov. 2024 – May 2025)

The program targets 4th to 6th grade elementary school students, as well as principals, homeroom teachers, and support staff from the APSARA National Authority and Siem Reap Province. This approach ensures that the initiative is led by the local community. The children are divided into groups and work on various environmental issues over a six-month period. In this cycle, we visited three elementary schools and delivered lessons to nearly 400 students on local environmental issues such as waste management. In addition to classroom learning, we incorporated outdoor games and physical activities to make learning more engaging. Textbooks and worksheets were created and explained by the local Sophia Asia Center, but the main instruction was carried out by APSARA staff and homeroom teachers — a deliberate choice to root the program in the local context. This environmental education initiative aims to help children become familiar with their surroundings, develop the ability to think critically about environmental issues, and grow into adults who will shape the future of their communities. At the same time, we hope the program will foster life skills and problem-solving abilities. Although the program was temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been implemented in 33 schools with a total of approximately 2,400 participating students as of 2025.

Dr. Lao Kim Leang  
Sophia University Asia Center for Research and Human Development



# ISLAND SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE SDGs REPORT

Sophia University Island Sustainability Institute (ISI) brings extensive experience in field-based research across the Pacific and Caribbean regions, working closely with small island states and territories that are on the front lines of climate change and food security challenges.

ISI's projects emphasize resilience, vulnerability, and adaptive capacity, combining community-level data collection with applied policy design and implementation. The Institute also undertakes analysis of biodiversity conservation strategies—including protected areas and nature-based solutions—and develops climate change adaptation approaches tailored to small-scale farming and fisheries communities.

Central to ISI's mission is action-oriented, participatory research. The Institute works with a wide range of stakeholders—from local communities to national governments and regional partners—to co-develop context- and place-specific solutions. This approach ensures that community empowerment is not only an outcome but also a process, advancing inclusive pathways that leave no one behind.

## Key Contributions to the SDGs:

- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** Promoting sustainable small-scale aquaculture, agroforestry, and farming systems to strengthen food and nutrition security.
- **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being):** Linking food security to public health through resilient and sustainable local food systems.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** Advancing women's leadership in agriculture, fisheries, and community decision-making.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Building resilience and adaptive capacity in frontline island communities.
- **SDG 14 (Life Below Water):** Promoting sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and marine conservation.
- **SDG 15 (Life on Land):** Enhancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.
- **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals):** Strengthening collaborations across local, national, and regional levels, and between Japan and island partners.

Specific key examples of ISI work related to SDGs 2, 3, 5, 13, 14, 15 and 17 include:

### • **Measuring Climate Policy Commitments of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to Nature-based Solutions**

Involving 25 researchers from the Pacific and Caribbean Region, partnering with Javeriana University, Aruba University, University of the West Indies, The Nature Conservancy and Micronesia Conservation Trust, ISI initiated and is leading a research project on nature-based solutions (NbS) for Islands States and Territories. The key aim of this research is to understand the levels of commitment to NbS as a meaningful approach to climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster management amongst SIDS as reflected in their integration into national climate policies.

The following were achieved in July 2025 and were first shared at the 3rd International XXXXX, an interdisciplinary academic conference co-chaired by ISI, Prince Edward Island UNESCO Chair for Island Sustainability and Aruba University. The team of researchers are currently co-

writing the findings, target publication date summer 2026:

1. Develop an NbS policy scorecard that can be used to evaluate the depth of integration of/commitment to NbS for climate action by SIDS as detailed in their climate policies and legislation.
2. Apply the scorecard to those climate-specific policies and legislation from all SIDS to identify:
  - a. Which countries demonstrate the greatest commitment to NbS for climate
  - b. Which countries would benefit from expanding their commitment
  - c. Which facets of NbS for climate are the highest and lowest scoring.
3. Build a baseline of data for all SIDS, identifying areas for increased commitment to/integration of NbS.



### • **Boston College Program on Global Ethics and Social Trust — Climate Change and Migration Working Group**

In 2023, Boston College launched the *Program on Global Ethics and Social Trust*, an international initiative that convenes faculty across disciplinary and institutional boundaries to examine the ethical dimensions of urgent global challenges and their implications for academic, political, and religious communities. ISI Director Anne McDonald was appointed as a member of the Program's *Climate Change and Migration Working Group*, led by Dr. Katherine Young of Boston College. The group seeks to foster collaboration among scholars of climate change and related fields to address the worsening conditions faced by vulnerable populations worldwide.

As Dr. Young has observed, *"There may be no ethical challenge more immense than that wrought by our changing, and in some places now unlivable, climate. Migration due to environmental degradation or extreme weather events is often forced on the world's most vulnerable people, who are least responsible. Our Working Group brings together renowned experts from Boston College and across the world to grapple with this profound challenge, and I look forward to the insights that will come in bridging the environmental and earth sciences, ethics, human rights, social work and law."*

Building on this vision, the Working Group agreed in June 2024 to develop a comparative, field-based case study project focusing on small islands and territories at the frontlines of climate change, food security, and migration. Field research scoping was conducted in November and December 2024, followed by initial studies in San Andrés and Providencia, Colombia (May 2025) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (August 2025). A third field study in Vanuatu is scheduled for March 2026.

### • **JST Sakura Science – Connecting Japan and Micronesia through Sustainable Aquaculture and Environmental Literacy**

The Island Sustainability Institute (ISI) was selected by JST Sakura Science to coordinate *"Connecting Japan*

and Micronesia through Sustainable Aquaculture and Environmental Literacy” in October 2024. The program responds to the urgent challenges of food and nutrition insecurity, overfishing, and ecosystem degradation in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), one of the world’s most climate-vulnerable small island developing states. Working with the Pohnpei State Department of Resource Development, the College of Micronesia-FSM, the COM-FSM Land Grant Program, and the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, the initiative integrates government agencies, scientists, and conservation NGOs to promote small-scale aquaculture and community-based approaches to marine resource management.

Program activities included field visits to aquaculture sites in Ama Town, Shimane Prefecture, Japan, seminars on marine ecosystem restoration, and interactive workshops at Sophia University focused on sustainable food systems, eco-literacy, and community empowerment. These exchanges strengthen Japan-FSM academic and research collaboration, while also enhancing community capacity to improve food security, restore coastal ecosystems, and build resilience to climate change. By providing opportunities for youth and women, raising environmental awareness, and piloting sustainable aquaculture practices, the initiative contributes to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

ISI is currently finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pohnpei State Government to build on the above initiatives and advance other SDG-related activities. Based on the achievements of 2024, the partners have agreed that the coming year will place particular emphasis on strengthening the role of women in fisheries.

• **Takahashi Industrial and Economic Research Foundation Research Grant Exploring Small-Scale Aquaculture and Environmental Literacy through Community-Based Participatory Research: A Japan-Marshall Islands Exchange**

Aquaculture in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) holds significant potential for expansion and diversification, offering opportunities to strengthen food security, build climate resilience and adaptive capacity, support sustainable food production systems that safeguard coastal ecosystems, and generate new economic opportunities for women. This initiative builds directly on the RMI Pathway Report prepared by the Island Sustainability Institute (ISI) for the 2021 UN High-Level Food Systems Summit, where *blue foods* and employment opportunities for women in resource-based sectors were identified as key national priorities. In line with these priorities, the current project was designed to help realize the RMI Food Systems Pathway targets and has received three years of funding from the Takahashi Industrial and Economic Foundation.

The overarching goal of the project is to explore the potential for community-level expansion and diversification of aquaculture in RMI in ways that reinforce food and nutrition security, climate resilience, and sustainable food production. In its first year, the project has placed particular emphasis on assessing baseline knowledge and perceptions, and initiating cross-learning opportunities with Japan, where small-scale aquaculture practices have been developed in ways that are both

environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

Year 1 activities began with a series of online seminars held in August and October 2024, accompanied by an online survey to scope awareness of small-scale aquaculture and levels of environmental literacy among participating communities. These sessions provided a baseline understanding of community perspectives on aquaculture potential, perceived opportunities and limitations, and the possibilities for diversification. In December 2024, a scoping visit was conducted in RMI to meet with community representatives and refine priority areas of engagement based on local contexts.

A key milestone was the initiation of learning exchanges between RMI and Japan. Representatives from RMI traveled to Japan, where they visited the Shizugawa Fisheries Cooperative in Miyagi Prefecture — the first cooperative in Japan to receive sustainable certification in small-scale aquaculture (AFC). This provided first-hand exposure to community-based aquaculture models that balance environmental stewardship with economic viability. The RMI representatives also met with government and fisheries stakeholders and participated in knowledge-sharing workshops designed to highlight practical lessons for adapting and expanding aquaculture in island contexts. Building on this foundation, further workshops are planned for February 2025 in Japan and August 2025 in RMI to continue the process of knowledge exchange, pilot activity development, and institutional collaboration.

Together, these activities have laid the groundwork for the next phase of the project. They provide baseline data on environmental literacy and aquaculture perceptions, introduce practical models of sustainable aquaculture through direct learning exchanges, and establish a framework for ongoing cooperation between RMI communities and Japanese counterparts. This foundation will guide Year 2 and Year 3 activities aimed at strengthening food systems, advancing gender-responsive economic opportunities, and enhancing climate resilience in the Marshall Islands through sustainable aquaculture.

• **Shimoda City, Japan - Thinking Global Acting Local to Advance the SDGs**

Since 2022, ISI has collaborated with the Shimoda City Government (Shizuoka Prefecture) through monthly meetings, policy dialogue, and joint initiatives under a comprehensive partnership agreement. In June 2023, ISI presented key findings and recommendations, which have informed ongoing city-led sustainability planning.

In 2024-25, the focus has shifted toward satoyama and satoumi community projects. Study sessions and field-based activities have aimed to raise awareness and strengthen collaboration to ensure sustainability in these interconnected land-sea systems. Ongoing efforts include beach ecosystem rehabilitation project at Irita Beach, regular beach clean-ups, and hands-on satoyama agriculture experiences. Together, these initiatives connect local community action to broader SDG goals, highlighting how grassroots engagement can drive marine conservation, eco-tourism and scientific tourism development, and sustainable use of natural resources.



## Service-Learning Activities at the Junior College Division

At the Junior College Division, we actively promote service-learning activities that deepen learning by integrating “off-campus learning” gained through community service with “on-campus learning” from classes and other academic experiences. These activities include support for English education for elementary school students and support for Japanese language and academic subjects for children and citizens with foreign backgrounds.

In the English education support activities, we launched the “Sophia English Day Camp” at the Hadano Campus in 2023. Sixth-grade students from all 13 elementary schools in the city were welcomed to our campus, where they participated in various English activities. In 2024, we hosted one school per day—seven schools in the spring semester and six in the fall semester—welcoming over 1,200 children in total. As the importance of English continues to grow in a global society, our support for English education provides all children in the region with access to quality English education and opportunities to use the language.

Furthermore, support for Japanese language and academic subjects is conducted as part of four practicum courses. In “Service-Learning (Japanese Language Support for Elementary and Junior High Schools A/B),” students visit elementary and junior high schools in Hadano City to support children with foreign backgrounds who struggle with differences between Japanese school culture and their home languages. In “Service-Learning (Community Japanese Language Support A/B),” students provide Japanese

language support at public facilities in the community, tailored to the needs of citizens and children with foreign backgrounds.

As Japan faces a declining birthrate and aging population, foreign nationals are becoming an indispensable part of the local workforce. However, children of the second generation growing up in Japan still face lower high school enrollment rates compared to Japanese students nationwide, and educational disparities are widening. Through service-learning activities, students witness the economic structure of the local community, the lives of foreign residents, and the challenges faced by children who move across countries during their school years. They develop the ability to identify local issues, analyze their causes, and take action to solve them, while considering what is necessary to coexist with people of different cultures and values.

Service-learning also plays a role in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), aiming to foster individuals who promote the SDGs by deepening their understanding of human rights, peace, global citizenship, and cultural diversity. The multicultural coexistence skills and problem-solving abilities cultivated through service-learning are essential for living in a society that strives to achieve the SDGs on a global scale.



## Fukushima Hamadori Study Tour EIKO GAKUEN Junior and Senior High School

From March 27 to 29, 2025, Eiko Gakuen Junior and Senior High School conducted a Fukushima Hamadori Study Tour for 40 volunteer first-year high school students.

On the first day, the group visited the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum, followed by a tour of the Fukushima Robot Test Field. In the evening, students participated in a networking event with young entrepreneurs actively engaged in regional revitalization.

On the second day, students visited the TEPCO Decommissioning Archive Center and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. They also attended a lecture and Q&A session led by Mr. Kino, Counselor at the Local Office of the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters / Decommissioning and Contaminated Water Management Office, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. This session offered a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on Japan’s energy challenges and to consider the importance of engaging with energy policy, including nuclear energy.

On the final day, the group visited Ukedo Elementary School and an incubation facility in Ōkuma Town



Scenes from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Tour

that has been established through the repurposing of a former school building. Through interactions with individuals dedicated to preserving the memory of the disaster and advancing regional recovery, students developed a deeper understanding of the efforts required to overcome adversity and the significance of regional revitalization. Overall, the tour provided meaningful insights into future contributions to society and community development.

[https://note.com/fukushima\\_bu/n/n1192f048f9ad](https://note.com/fukushima_bu/n/n1192f048f9ad)



## Cambodia Study Tour 2025 Rokko Junior/Senior High School



From July 28 to August 4, the second Cambodia Study Tour was held, with 24 students from the first and second years of high school participating. The tour was designed around three main objectives:

1. To cultivate a spirit of service by engaging with people living in poverty and learning from those who dedicate themselves to supporting them.
2. To develop an international perspective through exchanges with students from Jesuit sister schools, interactions with alumni of Rokko Gakuin active in Cambodia, and visits to Sophia School Corporation's archaeological restoration projects.
3. To deepen understanding of Cambodia's history of genocide and civil war.

Due to military tensions between Cambodia and Thailand, the group had to cancel the planned visit to a sister school and rural support project in Sisophon, located near the border. Although this was unfortunate, the group was instead able to make a last-minute visit to the Antier Preschool in Siem Reap. This preschool prioritizes the enrollment of children from impoverished families, and the students had the opportunity to interact with the children there.



All 24 students participated with a high level of awareness, having engaged in preparatory learning before the trip. During the tour, they deepened their reflections based on what they saw and heard, sharing their thoughts each evening during reflection sessions. Their sincere engagement with questions such as “What is poverty?”, “What is happiness?”, and “What does it mean to live?”—prompted by witnessing life near a garbage dump, interacting with children who smiled innocently, and confronting the tragic history of civil war—left a lasting impression.



## Revitalizing the “Green Exchange Space” in Akitakata City — Exploring Regional Revitalization Through Hands-On Experience Hiroshima Gakuin Junior and Senior High School



Akitakata City is a regional municipality located in northern Hiroshima Prefecture, with a population of approximately 26,000. It is a typical mountainous rural area centered around agriculture and tourism. Despite its convenient access—just about an hour's drive from Hiroshima City—it faces serious challenges common to depopulated regions, such as declining birthrates and an aging population.

In response, Akitakata City has launched various regional revitalization projects. Our school is participating in one such initiative: the restoration of

the “Green Exchange Space,” a collaborative effort between government, industry, and academia.

This area was originally developed about 30 years ago as a green park where visitors could enjoy the rich natural environment. However, it has since been neglected, overgrown with vegetation, and rarely visited. While large-scale redevelopment is not feasible due to limited resources, students are contributing by brainstorming ideas to redesign the park and physically working to restore it, aiming to transform it into an attractive tourism resource.

At the end of the year, students are scheduled to take part in an ideathon hosted by Akitakata City focused on regional revitalization. Having experienced the local nature and cuisine firsthand, and having engaged in physical work themselves, we hope that students will

be able to generate meaningful ideas from a more grounded and empathetic perspective.



## Understanding Poverty in the Philippines Sophia Fukuoka Junior-Senior High School



At our school, overseas language training is conducted for third-year junior high school students in November. In the 2024 academic year, the program was held in Manila

over a period of seven days. During one of those days, with the cooperation of the NPO ELDA, students visited a slum area in Tondo, formerly home to Smokey Mountain, and had the opportunity to interact with local junior high school students.

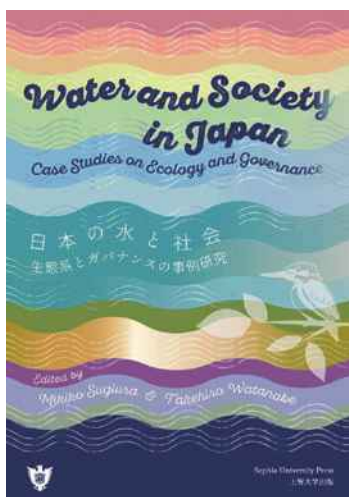
Despite living in poverty beyond imagination, the people we met were cheerful and striving to live with dignity. The students realized that the vast difference in living conditions was not due to personal choices, but simply because they were born in Japan and the others in the Philippines. This led them to reflect deeply, with many expressing that they would not be able to endure such poverty themselves. They came to appreciate the

everyday life in Japan as a precious blessing they had previously taken for granted.

Moreover, the students were emotionally affected by the pain endured by the people of Tondo. They experienced a complex mix of feelings—gratitude for their own privileges, guilt, anger at the stark inequality, and a strong desire to take action. Through this firsthand experience of poverty not seen in Japan, we hope that our students will develop the sensitivity to feel others' pain as their own, and the strength to live with and for others.



## Publication of Water and Society in Japan: Case Studies on Ecology and Governance by SUP (Sophia University Press)



### An Interdisciplinary Journey Through Japan's Water Environment

Water defines Japan—its landscapes, its communities, and its future. In the face of increasing environmental pressures, this volume explores Japan's diverse waterscapes through interdisciplinary lenses, examining how communities have adapted to and shaped their aquatic surroundings over time.

Editors: Mikiko Sugiura, Takehiro Watanabe

Price: ¥2,310 (tax included)

Note: This book is written entirely in English.



# Chapter 5: Research Outcome Report Contributing to the SDGs



Research Outcome Report aims to widely disseminate the research achievements of Sophia School Corporation across various fields, regardless of discipline. Its purpose is to contribute to solving diverse social issues and to provide information that meets societal needs, thereby promoting collaboration among industry, government, and academia.

Below, we introduce research from Research Outcome Report. For more details, please visit the website listed below.  
URL <https://sophia-seeds.jp/en/>

## Research on Participatory Community Development for People in Financial Hardship

Faculty of Human Sciences / Department of Nursing  
Associate Professor Nahoko Okamoto

### Keywords

Social Medicine and Nursing

### Abstract

Specialized in community health nursing, public health, and international development studies. Conducting research on homelessness and individuals in financial hardship in Japan to elucidate how not only economic poverty but also social poverty impacts human health.

In collaboration with Kobe University, participating in a

research project that predicts stress levels of caregivers for elderly individuals with dementia using environmental sensing data, AI data, and health data. This research aims to discover new values in the application of AI data in aging societies and enhance the scientific and social significance of AI data.

### Applications

Project on creating spaces and a sense of purpose for people in financial hardship



## Research on Collaboration Between School Stages and Between Schools and Society to Support Students Experiencing Maladaptation

Faculty of Human Sciences / Department of Education  
Professor Akira Sakai

### Keywords

School Absenteeism / Dropout / First-Year Elementary School Problem / First-Year Junior High School Gap

### Abstract

This study addresses various issues related to school maladaptation, including school absenteeism, high school dropouts, the “Grade 1 Problem” at the start of elementary school, and the “Grade 7 Gap” during the transition to junior high school.

It investigates how collaboration between different school stages and between schools and external organizations can be achieved to support affected students. In cooperation with boards of education and schools, the research examines specific support measures and reflects on how school maladaptation is understood in order to identify what forms of support are truly necessary for children’s development.

The research focuses on the following topics:

#### 1. Building Networks to Support Students with School Absenteeism

Various external institutions, such as adaptation guidance classrooms and educational counseling centers, provide support for students experiencing school absenteeism. School counselors also offer regular assistance through regular visits. This research examines how schools can effectively collaborate with those resources to enhance support for each individual child.

#### 2. Support for High School Dropout Issues

Although the number of high school dropouts has

declined in recent years, a substantial number of students transfer to other institutions after leaving their original schools. This research explores support measures for these students, including those who have withdrawn from schools. It includes surveys on the situation in Tokyo and initiatives in Okinawa to prevent dropouts. Additionally, many students who leave their original schools transfer to private correspondence high schools. The study also examines the significance and challenges of these emerging support systems.

#### 3. Research on the Grade 7 Gap and Elementary-Junior High School Collaboration

The phenomenon of school maladaptation during the transition to junior high school is known as the “Grade 7 Gap.” To address this issue, boards of education are promoting collaboration between elementary and junior high schools to ensure a smooth transition. At the national level, this issue has prompted the institutionalization of integrated elementary and junior high schools, leading to the establishment of a new school type called “compulsory education schools.” This research empirically examines the educational effects of integrated elementary and junior high schools and provides advice on collaborative practices in various school settings.

#### 4. Research on the Grade 1 Problem and Preschool-Elementary School Collaboration

Various instructional and adjustment issues occur at the start of elementary school, commonly referred to as the “Grade 1 Problem.” While the cultural differences between elementary and junior high schools pose challenges in elementary-junior high collaboration, the gap between early childhood education institutions

(kindergartens, nursery schools, and certified childcare centers) and elementary schools is even greater. This study investigates the current state of preschool-elementary school collaboration and examines ways to establish specific objectives and practices for effective coordination.

### Applications

Comments and discussions related to this research can be found on various websites:

- *The Future of Educational Systems for Elementary-Junior High School Transition and Their Impact on Learning*  
<http://berd.benesse.jp/berd/focus/3-shouchuu/activity5/>
- *Discussing Collaboration and Connection Between School Types: Overcoming the Grade 1 Problem and Grade 7 Gap*  
<https://www.manabinoba.com/index.cfm/6,12399,12,html>

### Related Patents, Publications, and Research

#### Books

- Sakai, Akira (Ed.), 2021, *Modern Society and Education*, Minerva Shobo.
- Sakai, Akira, 2014, *The Potential of Educational Clinical Sociology*, Keiso Shobo.
- Sakai, Akira & Yokoi, Hiroko, 2011, *Principles and Practices of Preschool-Elementary School Collaboration: Supporting Children During Transition* (Co-authored), Minerva Shobo.
- Sakai, Akira (Ed.), 2007, *Educational Clinical Sociology for Advancement Support: Action Research in Commercial High Schools*, Keiso Shobo.

#### Papers

- Sakai, Akira, 2010, "Crisis During Transition and Challenges in Collaboration Between School Types: Rethinking 'Smooth Transitions'," *The Japanese Journal of Educational Research*, 77(2), 132-143.
- Sakai, Akira, 2015, "Exclusion and Inclusion in Education," *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, 96, 5-24.
- Sakai, Akira, Ito, Hideki, & Tanigawa, Natsumi, 2016, "Research on the Potential and Conditions of Facility-Integrated Elementary-Junior High Schools: A Case Study of A Academy with Attention to Equal

Educational Opportunities," *Sophia University Journal of Educational Studies*, 50, 15-37.

Sakai, Akira, Tanigawa, Natsumi, & Hayashi, Akiko, 2020, "Changes in Children's Lives During the Transition from Early Childhood Education to Elementary School," *Sophia University Journal of Educational Studies*, 54, 89-108.

Sakai, Akira, 2021, "Children's Lives and Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Health Science*, 63(9), 580-584.

Sakai, Akira, 2022, "What the Novel Virus Questions About 'Schools': From the Logic of Selection to the Logic of Care," *Sekai*, 955, 194-203.

Sakai, Akira & Suzuki, Ayame, 2023, "Schooling for Parents of Children with Disabilities: Focusing on Enrollment in Special Support Classes," *Sophia University Journal of Educational Studies*, 57, 37-54.

#### Other Publications

Sakai, Akira, 2003, "Considering Preschool-Elementary School Collaboration: Efforts Aimed at Smooth Transitions," *Education for Young Children*, July Issue, 24-31.

Sakai, Akira, 2003, "Examining Challenges in Preschool-Elementary School Collaboration," *Elementary Education Materials*, October Issue, 68-71.

Sakai, Akira, 2007, *Research on Building Regional Collaboration Networks for Supporting School Absenteeism*, FY2006 Child-Related Services Research Report, Kodomo Mirai Foundation.

Sakai, Akira, 2011, "Mutual Understanding and Curriculum Development in Preschool-Elementary School Collaboration," *Kindergarten Journal*, 39(9), 12-18.

Sakai, Akira, 2014, "The Grade 1 Problem, Grade 7 Gap, and Connections/Collaboration Between School Levels," *Educational Outlook*, 60(5), 46-50.

Sakai, Akira, 2014, "Learning Challenges During the Elementary-Junior High Transition and Collaborative Measures," *Junior High School*, No. 728, 4-7.

Sakai, Akira, 2014, "On Instructional Approaches to Foster Creative Thinking," *Elementary Education Materials*, No. 917, 98-101.



## Possibilities and Challenges of Transnational Education in the Era of Migration

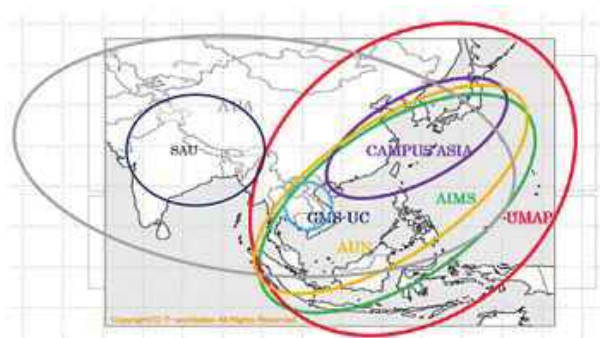
Faculty of Human Sciences / Department of Education  
 Professor Miki Sugimura

### Keywords

Comparative education / International education / Migration / Higher education / Transnational education / International educational collaboration / International educational and cultural exchange / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) / Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

### Abstract

In the era of migration, transnational/cross-border education has developed along national education. Given that the mobilities of students, faculty and



Transnational Higher Education Zone in Asia

staff, researchers, and educational institutes, multiple countries and/or regional organizations have created cross-border programs among themselves. While these mobilities are related to global competition to attract talented people, the people-to-people connectivity and cross-cultural exchanges have enhanced relationships among members by establishing educational and cultural exchange platforms and building networks of learning. This research aims to clarify the possibilities and challenges of transnational education with a focus on higher education in the world and as a new arena of comparative and international education.

### Future prospects

The process of transnational education development has generated cross-border education programs. We are observing mobilities of not only students and

faculty, but also programs, institutions and providers. In addition, online learning systems like the Collaborative International Learning Program have recently enhanced the opportunities of higher education. These various learning models enable the realization of Global Citizenship Education, which is mentioned in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and they can prompt us to consider the complicated issues of “inclusion” and “equity” in education. How should we strike a balance between local and global contexts in the process of internationalization and globalization, and how can we realize co-existence in a diversified society amid emerging discussions of protectionism and nationalism? These are the new challenges faced by comparative and international education.



## Social Psychological Approaches to Promoting Human Behavioral Change Overview

Faculty of Human Sciences / Department of Psychology  
Professor Masataka Higuchi

### Keywords

Health behavior / Preventive behavior / Screening / Behavioral change / Risk perception / Norm consciousness

### Abstract

There are numerous actions that humans can take to maintain or restore their health and well-being. However, for various reasons, these actions are not always carried out appropriately. This research examines the mechanisms behind these behaviors and explores intervention methods to promote their implementation.

The specific behaviors analyzed so far include preventive actions against COVID-19, cervical cancer screening, condom purchasing behavior, and measures to prevent special fraud, among others.

### Related Patents and Publications

Factors associated with behaviors to prevent COVID-19 infection during the declaration of emergency: A study among Tokyo residents  
Masataka Higuchi, Hirokazu Arai, Taku Ito, Nanako Nakamura, Yuko Kai  
*Japanese Journal of Public Health*, 68, 597-607, 2021.

Cognitive appraisals explaining stages of change for cervical cancer screening behavior using motivational and behavioural enaction models

Haruta Yuka, Masataka Higuchi

*Journal of Health Psychology Research*, 32, 31-41, 2020.

A RCT study of Effects of internet training using watching-video methods on purchasing condoms

Masataka Higuchi, Nanako Nakamura

*The Journal of AIDS Research*, 20, 146-154, 2018.

Effects of Internet-Based Video-Feedback Training for Reducing Embarrassment When Purchasing Condoms: One-Year Follow-Up

Higuchi, M., Nakamura, N.

*Proceedings of The 14th European Congress of Psychology*, July 2015

Embarrassment as an inhibiting factor in condom purchasing: Effects of group training using video materials

Masataka Higuchi, Nanako Nakamura

*Contemporary Japanese Social Psychology and Emotions*, 77-95, October 2014



## Innovation, deployment and transfer of clean energy technologies Economics/Finance/Management Sustainability

Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies / Master's (Doctoral) Program in Global Environmental Studies  
Suzuki Masachika Professor

URL <https://genv.sophia.ac.jp/faculty/faculty-1773>

### Keywords

Clean energy technology transfer / technological innovation

### Abstract

How Japanese companies can contribute to deploying clean energy technologies, including renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements, in Asia is a critical essence of Japan's growth strategy. However, it is also true that the recipients of these technologies are challenged with many obstacles.

This research studies the obstacles pertaining to the development and transfer of individual technologies

(see figure below). Obstacles are varied among countries, depending on the development status of each technology, country-specific circumstances and how they are incorporated in the supply chain.

The deployment of clean energy technologies would ideally be supported not only by bilateral and multilateral policies but also by business arrangements by enthusiastic private companies.

### Expected applications

Policy proposals for the overseas deployment of environmental technologies.

### Future prospects

Consideration of not only large-scale clean energy but

also potential for the deployment of environmental and energy technologies that will lead to improved quality of life in remote areas in developing countries.

### Research facilities and equipments

Rich research network comprising mainly overseas and domestic researchers.

### Collaboration with external organizations

Joint research with private companies to perform case studies of deploying specific technologies.



## Development of a Method for Quantifying Environmental Carrying Capacity in Ramsar Wetlands

Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies/  
Master's(Doctoral) Program in Global Environmental Studies  
professor Guangwei Huang

URL <https://genv.sophia.ac.jp/faculty/guangwei-huang>

### Keywords

Migratory birds / Eutrophication / Prediction model

### Overview

The protection of migratory birds is crucial from the perspective of global ecosystem conservation, which led to the establishment of the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty. While research on the protection of migratory birds is actively conducted, studies focusing on the “carrying capacity” of wetlands collectively utilized by migratory bird populations remain insufficient. Compared to studies on nutrient loading from terrestrial sources, research on nutrient loading caused by the mass arrival of migratory birds is still very limited.

Currently, there are 54 Ramsar-registered wetlands in Japan, and many of these serve as wintering sites for tens of thousands of migratory birds. For instance, more than 10,000 migratory birds winter annually at Sakata Lagoon in Niigata. While the importance of conserving migratory

birds is self-evident, the large-scale congregation of birds in a single location can potentially impact the nutrient cycling in closed water bodies due to bird droppings. Given the relatively small scale of Japanese wetlands, their water quality is likely to be significantly affected by the collective use by migratory birds.

Therefore, quantitatively understanding the environmental carrying capacity of these wetlands is a critical issue for their sustainable use. Our research lab is working on formulating the impacts of migratory birds and the environmental carrying capacity of wetlands, aiming to contribute to effective wetland management.

### Applications

At Sakata Lagoon, we developed a formula for evaluating the environmental carrying capacity of wetlands, considering the impacts of migratory birds, and proposed practical evaluation indicators.

### Prospects

We aim to establish a generalized method for estimating the environmental carrying capacity of wetlands, considering the impacts of migratory birds, and to integrate wetland conservation with regional planning.

## Research Equipment

Hardware: Multi-parameter water quality meters  
Software: Lake current simulation models, nutrient loading estimation models for migratory birds, water quality prediction models

## Collaboration and Expectations for External Partnerships

- Assisting local governments with environmental planning
- Collaborating with environmental consulting firms

## Related Patents and Publications

*Carrying capacity of wetlands for massive migratory waterfowl*, Hydrobiologia, Vol. 697, 5-14, 2012.

*Study on nutrient loading in closed water bodies caused*

*by the mass arrival of migratory birds*, Journal of Japan Society of Civil Engineers B, Vol. 63, No. 3, 249-254, 2007.



# Waste Recycling and European Resource Policy

Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies/  
Master's(Doctoral) Program in Global Environmental Studies  
Professor Akemi Ori

## Keywords

Environment / Waste / Resource Recycling

## Overview

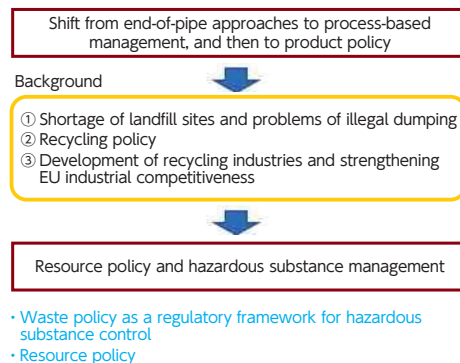
Traditionally, “waste” has been addressed within the closed framework of the “waste” domain, with solutions sought solely within this confined perspective. However, in the face of global resource challenges, the efficient utilization of waste as a resource has become a critical issue. Furthermore, waste is a key theme in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent a new approach to solving global environmental problems.

When addressing current global environmental issues, it is no longer sufficient to view waste problems solely within the traditional closed framework. Instead, waste issues must be examined from various perspectives, including resources, energy, and environmental governance. However, in Japan, the rigid interpretation of “waste” under the Waste Management and Public Cleansing Law has hindered the utilization of waste as a resource.

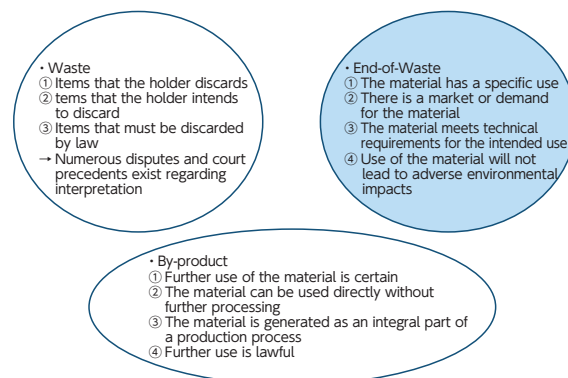
In contrast, the European Union (EU) has developed policies that bridge the gap between the “waste” and “resource” domains. The concept of “Resource Efficiency (RE)” has been actively discussed in EU policy frameworks. In December 2015, the EU announced the “Circular Economy (CE) Package,” an action plan aimed at transforming waste into resources. This strategy is based on the recognition that waste issues impact various fields, such as water pollution and global warming, and that addressing waste problems ultimately leads to resource issues. The CE Package integrates “waste strategies” with “resource strategies” to create a comprehensive environmental strategy.

Additionally, the 2008 revision of the EU Waste Framework Directive introduced the concepts of “End of Waste” and “By-product,” redefining the boundaries between “waste” and “resources” to remove barriers to resource utilization.

## Recent trends in EU waste policy



## Definition of Waste, End-of-Waste Criteria, Definition of By-product



This research analyzes the factors hindering resource recovery in Japan's recycling systems for packaging, home appliances, and automobiles from an international and legal-sociological perspective. The goal is to develop concrete policy recommendations.

## Collaboration and Expectations for External Partnerships

- Joint research on international resource policies
- Legal-sociological studies to promote plastic recycling
- Lectures and workshops on recycling and resource policies in Japan and other countries



## An Empirical Analysis of Factors Considered by Patients When Choosing a Medical Institution

Faculty of Economics / Department of Economics  
Professor Ken Aoki

### Keywords

Hospital choice / Hospital competition / Quality of medical services

### Abstract

This study analyzes the factors that patients consider when selecting a medical institution, using data to

examine which information—such as distance to the facility, reputation, availability of advanced medical equipment, and nursing standards—plays a role in their decision-making process. The analysis focuses on the determinants of demand for hospitals. The findings are not only useful for developing optimal strategies for medical institutions but also contribute to the formulation of healthcare policies by considering interdependence among medical institutions.



## An Interdisciplinary and Empirical Study on the Impact of Community Conditions on the Economy and Society

Faculty of Economics / Department of Economics  
Professor Satoshi Kawanishi

URL <https://communitycapitallabo.jimdo.com/>

### Keywords

social capital / social impact / community / community capital

### Abstract

While research on social capital has demonstrated

that positive human relationships have beneficial effects on society, there is still an insufficient understanding of how such positive relationships can be cultivated. This study aims to integrate insights from an interdisciplinary research team, including social psychology, sociology, and economics, to measure the conditions of various communities, examine how these conditions impact the economy and society, and identify methods to improve community conditions.



## Impact Evaluation of International Cooperation Projects

Faculty of Economics / Department of Economics  
Associate Professor Masamitsu Kurata

### Abstract

I am conducting impact evaluations using economic methods to analyze how various international cooperation projects implemented under Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) have affected beneficiary countries. Specifically, I am evaluating a wide range of projects previously carried out by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), including: (1) administrative improvement projects (e.g., the "Project for Improving Public Services through TQM" in Bangladesh), (2) small-

scale infrastructure development projects (e.g., the "ARMM Social Fund for Peace and Development Project" in the Philippines), (3) large-scale infrastructure projects (e.g., the "Saigon East-West Highway Construction Project" in Vietnam), (4) renewable energy projects (e.g., the "Renewable Energy Development Project" in Bangladesh), (5) basic education support projects (e.g., the "Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education in Primary Schools Project Phase 2" in Bangladesh), and (6) afforestation projects (several projects in India).



## Development of Energy Management for Transportation, Logistics, and Conveyance Systems to Promote Energy Conservation and Load Leveling

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Professor Masafumi Miyatake

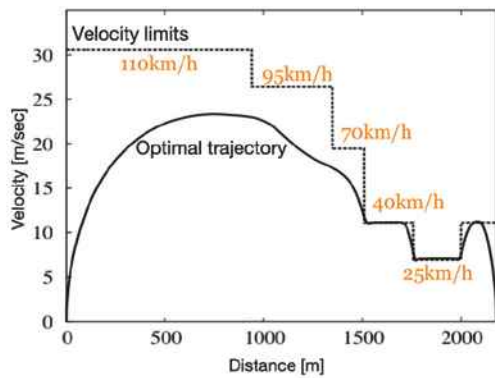
URL <https://miyatake.main.jp/>

### Keywords

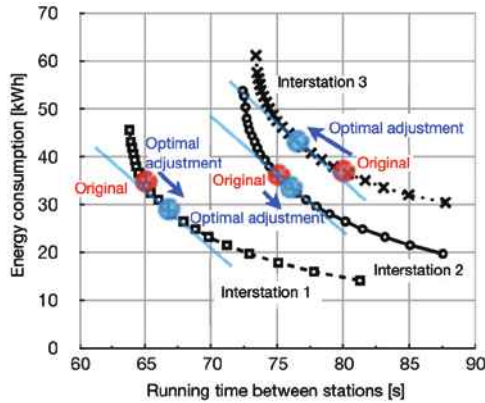
Energy conservation / Load leveling / Control / Transportation

### Overview

This research focuses on energy management in various systems, including electric railways, Light Rail



Velocity trajectory during eco-driving using numerical solution of optimal control problems



Energy saving by adjusting the operating time for each section using the law of equal incremental energy consumption

Transit (LRT), public transportation systems, road traffic, and logistics/conveyance systems. The aim is to achieve energy conservation and load leveling through multiple approaches, such as optimizing acceleration and deceleration control, revising operational timetables, and utilizing environmentally friendly devices like energy storage systems.

Specifically, the research involves:

- Solving eco-driving methods such as numerical optimization problems to adjust acceleration and deceleration for energy savings (as shown in the top diagram).
- Optimally adjusting travel times between stations based on the “Equal Incremental Energy Consumption Rule” (as shown in the second-top diagram).
- Effectively utilizing regenerative energy through environmentally friendly devices.

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by leveraging renewable energy sources.

## Applications

Studies conducted on electric railways suggest the potential for achieving energy savings of several percent through individual measures and 10–30% through comprehensive approaches. These methods can also be applied to related fields, such as LRT, Automated Guideway Transit (AGT), and other track-based transportation systems. Additionally, they can be extended to road traffic systems utilizing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), logistics systems, and conveyance systems in factories and warehouses.

Energy waste often exists in unexpected areas. These energy-saving methods are believed to have broad applicability beyond transportation and logistics.

## Prospects

Considering global environmental issues and the challenges posed by power supply problems following the Great East Japan Earthquake, this research has gained significant attention. Moving forward, the focus will expand beyond energy consumption to include load leveling, aiming to achieve “smart” transportation and logistics systems.

## Research Equipment

- Computational servers and workstations are equipped with analysis software such as MATLAB.
- Measurement instruments for analyzing energy flow, including voltage, current, and power.

## Collaboration with External Organizations

This research is expected to contribute to addressing Japan’s power supply challenges following the Great East Japan Earthquake and nuclear power plant accidents, as well as global environmental issues. Energy conservation is an urgent issue, and collaboration with external organizations to develop innovative solutions is highly anticipated.

## Related Patents/Papers

M. Miyatake and H. Ko: “Optimization of Train Speed Profile for Minimum Energy Consumption” IEEJ Transactions on Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Vol.5, No.3, pp.263-269, 2010.



# Hydrogen Embrittlement of Social Infrastructural Materials

Faculty of Sciences and Technology / Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Prof. Kenichi TAKAI

## Keywords

Hydrogen / Hydrogen embrittlement / Delayed fracture / Metallic materials

## Overview

To build a resilient and safe carbon-neutral society,

there is a growing need for innovative mechanical and structural materials that support automobiles and social infrastructure. Enhancing the strength of automotive materials enables vehicle weight reduction without compromising safety, leading to improved fuel efficiency and contributing to a low-carbon society. Furthermore, the widespread adoption of hydrogen-powered vehicles, ships, and power generation systems can help realize a decarbonized society with zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. However, hydrogen embrittlement—where

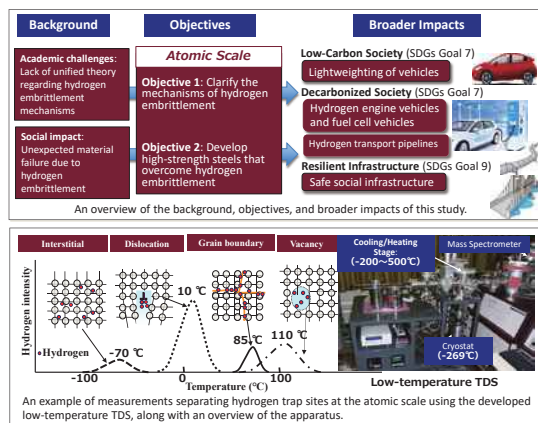
materials suddenly fracture after prolonged use under stress—has emerged as a significant societal issue. This research aims to elucidate the mechanisms of hydrogen embrittlement and develop new high-strength steels that overcome this challenge.

### Applications

- Development of high-strength steels with high resistance to hydrogen embrittlement for lightweight transportation equipment, including automobiles
- Overcoming hydrogen embrittlement in infrastructure materials to support a hydrogen-based energy society
- Countermeasures against hydrogen embrittlement in structural materials supporting social infrastructure, such as electricity, telecommunications, and gas

### Expectations for Collaborative Research and Partnerships

- Proven track record of collaboration with manufacturers in steel, materials, automotive, construction machinery, electricity, telecommunications, gas, and related industries



### Research Introduction URL

<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/eng/article/feature/the-knot/the-knot-0031/>



## Research and Development of Next-Generation Automotive Fuels Aiming for Ultimate Thermal Efficiency and Zero Emissions

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Professor Kazuo Takahashi

URL <https://redb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/cvclients/researchers/takaha/>  
<https://sophia-seeds.jp/researcher/277/>  
<https://www.sophia.ac.jp/jpn/article/feature/the-knot/the-knot-0140/>

### Keywords

Combustion chemistry / Environmental chemistry / Combustion reaction model / Super-lean burn

### Research Overview

Japan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 46% by 2030 (compared to 2013) and to become a carbon-neutral society by 2050. These declarations requires effective global warming countermeasures for automobiles, which emit large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>. Electric vehicles are one example of this, but it will still take a long time before they can generate electricity without emitting CO<sub>2</sub>. In this situation, improving the thermal efficiency of automobile engines is an extremely effective and immediate measure to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Currently, commercially available gasoline hybrid vehicles have a thermal efficiency of only 40%. This means that the remaining 60% is wasted as heat into the atmosphere without being effectively utilized. Therefore, various government research and development projects are currently being actively conducted to develop high-efficiency engines with low environmental impact, and our laboratory is also contributing from a chemical perspective [1,2].

However, to fully utilize the performance of these engines, conventional automotive fuels must be reconsidered. So new automotive fuel recipes optimized



Fig.1 Japan's most advanced high-pressure shock tube.

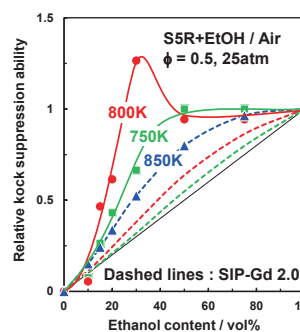


Fig.2 Knock suppression effect of ethanol on gasoline.

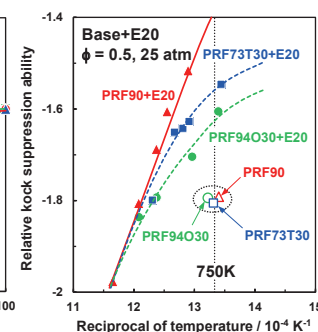


Fig.3 Dependence of base fuels on knock suppression of ethanol.

for high-efficiency engines are being designed with the aim of being introduced to the market around 2030.

The fuel performance required for a highly efficient gasoline engine is that it is resistant to auto-ignition (anti-knock properties) and that combustion is completed quickly after ignition (fast and stable flame propagation). These two requirements may seem contradictory from a scientific perspective, but it is not impossible (though by no means easy) to satisfy them simultaneously. Our laboratory owns a special device (high-pressure shock tube) that can maintain engine combustion conditions for up to 32 milliseconds, the longest period in Japan (Fig. 1), and we are conducting research to design next-generation gasoline recipes that meet both of the above requirements.

## Research Results and Outlook

Performance screening of candidate components for next-generation gasolines revealed that light olefins and bio-based components are effective. Furthermore, we found that the anti-knock performance of bioethanol is nonlinear with the amount added to the base fuel, and that even a small amount of bioethanol has a significant knock-suppression effect (Fig. 2). On the other hand, we also found that the anti-knock performance of bioethanol varies depending on the components that make up the base fuels (Fig. 3). The knowledge about the compatibility between fuel components like this is extremely important for creating next-generation gasoline recipes. Therefore, we intend to continue challenging ourselves from the perspective of chemical

interactions in order to elucidate phenomena with more complex components.

## Participating Public R&D Projects

- [1] Japan Science and Technology Agency, Cross-ministerial Strategic Innovation Promotion Program for Innovative Combustion Technology (SIP, 2014-2019).
- [2] New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization, Green Innovation Project (NEDO-GI, 2022-present).
- [3] Petroleum Association of Japan & Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc., Automobile and Oil Innovation Project (AOI, 2020-present).



## Evolution of Reproductive Strategies in Fish Applications

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Associate Professor Mari Kawaguchi

### Keywords

Bioactive substances / Organogenesis / Gene expression / Fish / Evolution / Cell differentiation / Pouch

### Abstract

The first organisms arose 3.8 billion years ago, leading to the varieties of life on Earth today. How different phenotypes (morphologies) evolve; which genes play a role in evolution? These are important questions, and we still don't know many of the molecular mechanisms involved. In our lab, we conduct research on "the formation and evolution of novel organs" with a focus on the brood pouches characteristic of seahorses.

The morphology of the brood pouch ranges from simple to complex, with varying types in between. Considering that only the syngnathid species possess the brood pouch, this novel organ was established within a short evolutionary period.

Despite the fact that many genes are common among vertebrates, how was it possible for this unique novel organ to develop during the process of evolution? Was the expression of existing genes changed to facilitate new organs? Perhaps a new gene was born in order to do so? We believe that both of these occurred during the evolution of syngnathids and we are conducting research to clarify the developmental and evolutionary processes of these brood pouches.

### Examples of Applications

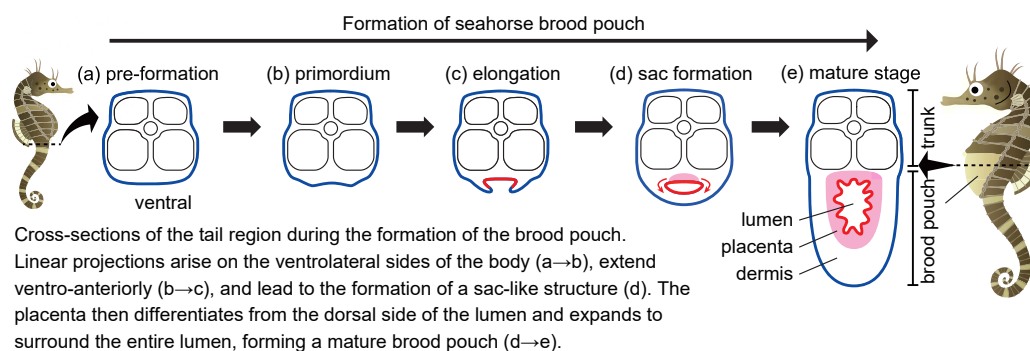
- The application of bioactive substances extracted from fish to pharmaceuticals is possible, such as the exploration and functional analysis of substances with anti-inflammatory effects.
- By producing recombinant proteins with retained activity using an *E. coli* expression system, applications such as drug development and functional analysis are feasible.
- The production of various antibodies is being conducted, which holds potential for applications in protein localization analysis and the development of diagnostic agents.

### Prospects

- Through functional analysis of genes involved in brood pouch formation, understanding the evolutionary mechanisms of organogenesis will advance, providing new insights into developmental and evolutionary biology.
- The exploration of bioactive substances derived from fish holds potential for applications in drug discovery and regenerative medicine, with expectations for practical implementation through collaboration with industry.
- By utilizing technologies such as comparative genome analysis and transcriptome analysis, applications to other fish species and vertebrates are possible.
- This research also holds promises as a subject for science communication.

### Research Equipment

Microtome, cryostat, fluorescence microscope,



stereomicroscope, confocal laser microscope, high-speed microcentrifuge, clean bench, thermal cycler, image analyzer, HPLC

### Expectations for Collaborative Research and Partnerships with External Institutions

- We can provide technical support for protein purification and activity measurements. These techniques can be applied to functional analysis and drug discovery research.
- This research is open to collaboration with various fields, including molecular biology, evolutionary biology, and pharmacology. We welcome joint research on the exploration and functional analysis of bioactive substances.

### Related Patents/Papers

Mari Kawaguchi, Wen-Shan Chang, Hazuki Tsuchiya, Nana Kinoshita, Akira Miyaji, Ryouka Kawahara-Miki, Kenji Tomita, Atsushi Sogabe, Makiko Yorifuji, Tomohiro Kono, Toyoji Kaneko and Shigeki Yasumasu. (2023) Orphan gene expressed in flame cone cells

uniquely found in seahorse epithelium. Cell and Tissue Research, 393: 47-62.

DOI: 10.1007/s00441-023-03779-1

Akari Harada, Ryotaro Shiota, Ryohei Okubo, Makiko Yorifuji, Atsushi Sogabe, Hiroyuki, Motomura, Junya Hiroi, Shigeki Yasumasu, and Mari Kawaguchi. (2022) Brood pouch evolution in pipefish and seahorse based on histological observation. Placenta, 120: 88-96.

DOI: 10.1016/j.placenta.2022.02.014

Mari Kawaguchi, Yohei Okazawa, Aiko Imafuku, Yuko Nakano, Risa Shimizu, Reiji Ishizuka, Tianlong Jiang, Tatsuki Nagasawa, Junya Hiroi, and Shigeki Yasumasu. (2021) Pactacin is a novel digestive enzyme in teleosts. Scientific Reports, 11: 7230.

DOI: 10.1038/s41598-021-86565-9

Mari Kawaguchi, Ryohei Okubo, Akari Harada, Kazuki Miyasaka, Kensuke Takada, Junya Hiroi, and Shigeki Yasumasu (2017) Morphology of brood pouch formation in the pot-bellied seahorse Hippocampus abdominalis. Zoological Letters, 3: 19.

DOI: 10.1186/s40851-017-008

0-9



## Chemical Processing of Inorganic Materials Using Supercritical Fluids

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Professor Hiroshi Uchida

### Keywords

Inorganic materials chemistry / Materials processing / Thin film deposition / Material properties (dielectrics) / Supercritical fluids

### Overview

Supercritical fluids, which are high-temperature and high-pressure phases of specific substances such as water and carbon dioxide, possess various unique properties that differ from conventional fluids. These include high density, low viscosity, high diffusivity, solubility and decomposition characteristics, and low toxicity. Due to these features, their industrial applications as functional media for material synthesis have garnered significant attention in recent years. This research focuses on developing processing techniques for various inorganic

materials (e.g., thin films, fine particles, mesoporous materials) using supercritical fluids.

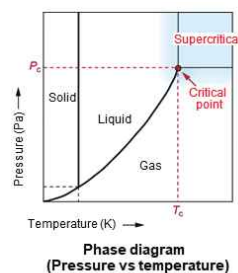
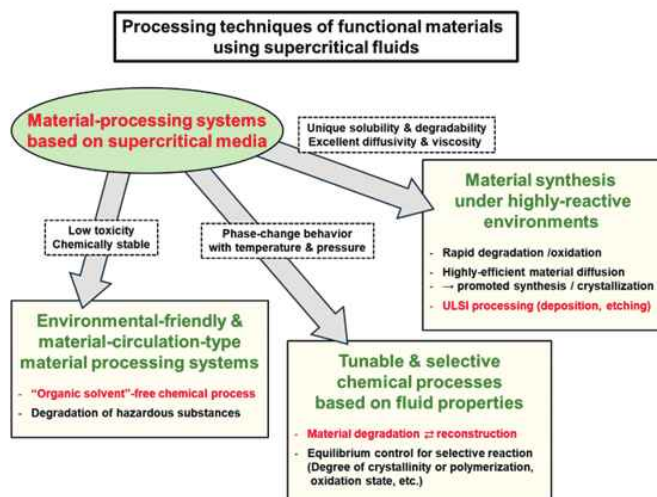
### Applications

- A thin-film deposition system utilizing supercritical carbon dioxide fluid has been developed, establishing a thin-film deposition method with excellent performance in low-temperature deposition and step coverage.
- A supercritical carbon dioxide fluid processing system has been developed for applications such as the treatment of sol-gel materials and the dissolution and extraction of organometallic compounds.

### Prospects

By leveraging the unique properties of supercritical fluids, this research contributes to achieving material processing that is challenging with conventional methods.

(Keywords: low-temperature synthesis, micropore infiltration and coating, multi-component materials)



Batch-type film-deposition system using supercritical CO<sub>2</sub> fluid

## Research Equipment

- Supercritical Fluid-Related Equipment: Thin-film deposition systems, material processing systems, solubility measurement devices, etc.
- Material Processing Equipment: Spin coaters, dip coaters, electric furnaces, infrared heating furnaces, vacuum deposition systems.
- Material Analysis Equipment: UV-visible spectrophotometers, infrared spectrometers, optical microscopes, X-ray diffractometer, impedance analyzers, and ferroelectric evaluation systems.

## Expectations for Collaborative Research and Partnerships with External Institutions

Development of novel material processing methods

using supercritical fluids and the creation of new functional devices that leverage their advantages.

## Related Patents/Papers

H. UCHIDA, A. OTSUBO, K. ITATANI and S. KODA, "Low-temperature Deposition of Polycrystalline Titanium Oxide Thin Film on Si Substrate using Supercritical Carbon Dioxide Fluid", *Jpn. J. Appl. Phys.*, 44, 1901-1906 (2005).

F. KANO, H. UCHIDA and S. KODA, "Low Temperature Deposition of Titanium Oxide Containing Thin Films in Trench Features from Titanium Diisopropoxide Bis(dipivaloylmethanate) in Supercritical CO<sub>2</sub>", *J. Supercrit. Fluids*, 50, 313-319 (2009).



# Hydrogen Generation Using Artificial Leaves

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Professor Masahiro Rikukawa

URL <http://www.mls.sophia.ac.jp/~polymer/>

## Keywords

Photocatalysis

## Overview

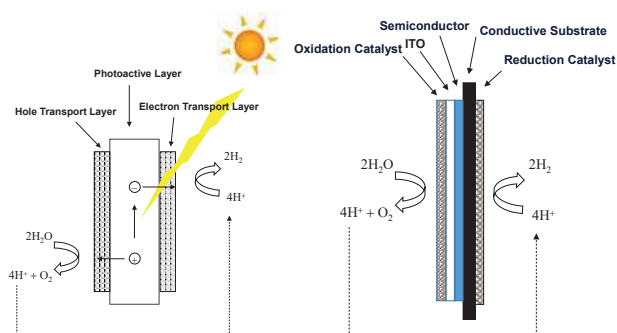


Figure Schematic diagram of artificial leaves

Among next-generation scientific technologies, energy issues are considered one of the most critical challenges. However, it is impossible to solve all these issues from a single perspective, making research into diverse clean energy sources indispensable. Among clean energy options, the utilization of solar energy is considered one of the most promising methods, with

technologies such as solar power generation and solar thermal utilization being explored. While these methods are environmentally sound, they face challenges related to sunlight availability and the scale of power generation, necessitating some form of energy storage. Although energy storage using secondary batteries is straightforward, it has issues in terms of energy efficiency and cost. This is where photochemical conversion comes into play. By converting light into high-energy chemical substances and using these as fuel for power generation, it is possible to create a highly efficient energy system. This research aims to leverage individual research strengths to develop materials (artificial leaves) that enables water splitting through the combination of inorganic and organic semiconductors.

## Applications

- Hydrogen generation

## Prospects

- Development of a sustainable energy system through hydrogen production and fuel cell power generation

## Research Equipment

- Atomic Force Microscope
- Solar Simulator

## Expectations for Collaboration with External Institutions

- Special Grants for Academic Research Promotion



## Development of a Carbon-Free Engine Using Ammonia Fuel

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Professor Takashi Suzuki

URL <https://fst.sophia.ac.jp/faculty/takashi-suzuki>

### Keywords

engine / low carbon

### Overview

Ammonia, which can be liquefied under relatively easy conditions of 8.5 atmospheres at room temperature, does not emit carbon dioxide when burned. Therefore, replacing gasoline and diesel fuel, currently used in automobiles, with ammonia, is expected to contribute to the urgent task of reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

However, ammonia presents several challenges, such as being difficult to combust, highly corrosive, and producing significant nitrogen oxide emissions. As a result, only three groups worldwide are currently engaged in its development.

By leveraging the research expertise of its members,

this project aims to enable integrated research covering combustion chamber design, combustion evaluation, nitrogen oxide emission reduction, corrosion countermeasures, and degradation assessment. Furthermore, by prototyping an ammonia combustion engine, the project seeks to establish a research hub for carbon-free engines, positioning itself as a flagship research initiative of the university.

### Prospects

The establishment of single-fuel combustion technology for ammonia offers significant societal contributions through the decarbonization of automotive fuels and is highly innovative. Currently, Japan relies on fossil fuels for 93% of its primary energy supply. To achieve an 80% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050, it will be necessary to import large quantities of hydrogen and ammonia from overseas. Therefore, the urgent development of technology to combust imported ammonia is essential, and the societal significance and ripple effects of this research are expected to be substantial.



## Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Based on Chemical Analysis

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Professor Yoshikazu Kikawada

URL <http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/geochem/>

### Keywords

Water pollution / Soil contamination / Atmospheric environment / Material circulation / Environmental dynamics / Environmental assessment

### Overview

Through field surveys and sample collection related to water quality, soil environments, and atmospheric environments, along with the chemical analysis of collected samples, we conduct comprehensive environmental assessments—from detecting environmental pollutants to identifying their origins and analyzing dispersion processes—and construct regional and wide-area models of substance transport and circulation. This research enables a comprehensive environmental assessment by handling all steps from sample collection to chemical analysis. For chemical analysis, we combine wet chemical analysis with instrumental analysis to handle the trace analysis of all types of environmental samples—from solid samples like rocks, minerals, and soil to liquid samples such as groundwater, river water, and even high-salinity samples like seawater. For example, we can quantify harmful elements such as arsenic, selenium, lead, and cadmium, as well as geologically interesting elements like rare earth elements, uranium, and thorium, at the sub-ppb level. Furthermore, by incorporating isotopic composition analysis, we can assess the origin of specific substances

and evaluate their migration processes.

### Application examples

Monitoring of volcanic activity and constructing of volcanic hydrothermal system models based on long-term and temporal variations in the water chemistry of the crater lake and hot spring water of Kusatsu-Shirane Volcano.

Environmental impact assessment of the acid river neutralization system in the middle reaches of the Agatsuma River and quantitative evaluation of the riverine environment in the watershed.

Verification of tropospheric and stratospheric transport of residues from nuclear test explosions based on temporal and seasonal variations in uranium isotope composition in atmospheric fallout samples collected in Japan.

Verification of tropospheric transport pathways of continental-origin crustal substances based on strontium and lead isotope ratios in atmospheric fallout samples collected in Japan.

Evaluation of the impact of Sakurajima volcano's eruptive activity on the atmospheric environment at Kagoshima City using the concentration of the naturally occurring radionuclide potassium-40, derived from volcanic ash in atmospheric fallout collected from Kagoshima City, as an indicator.

### Future tasks

Developing new, highly sensitive, and accurate analytical methods based on chemical speciation analysis to achieve environmental assessments that more accurately reflect actual conditions.

Investigation of new indicator elements and isotope pairs applicable to constructing substances transport

and circulation models in the environment, and establishing their analytical techniques to achieve more reliable environmental assessment.

### Equipment

UV-vis spectrophotometer, ion chromatography, atomic absorption spectrophotometer, ICP (Inductively Coupled Plasma) Emission Spectrometer, ICP Mass Spectrometer, Laboratory Bench and Equipment for wet chemical analysis, Hand Corer, Van Dorn Water Sampler, Ekman Birge Bottom Sampler, High-Volume Air Sampler

### Publications

Kikawada, Y. "Acid Rivers in Volcanic Regions and Efforts

to Improve Their Water Quality", Journal of Geography (Chigaku Zasshi), 2022, vol.131, No.6, 625-645.

Kikawada, Y., Hirose, K., "Effects on local atmospheric environment of volcanic ash from Sakurajima volcano, inferred from atmospheric deposition of Potassium-40 at Kagoshima City, Japan," Journal of Environmental Radioactivity, 2024, 278, 107471-107471.

Kikawada, Y., "Geochemistry of Hot Springs Around Kusatsu-Shirane Volcano: Long-Term Water Chemistry Fluctuations and Compositional Characteristics of Arsenic and REEs," 2025. In: Kusatsu-Shirane Volcano, Active volcanoes of the World, Springer, Cham.



## Development of Soil Microbial Functions for Environmental Purification

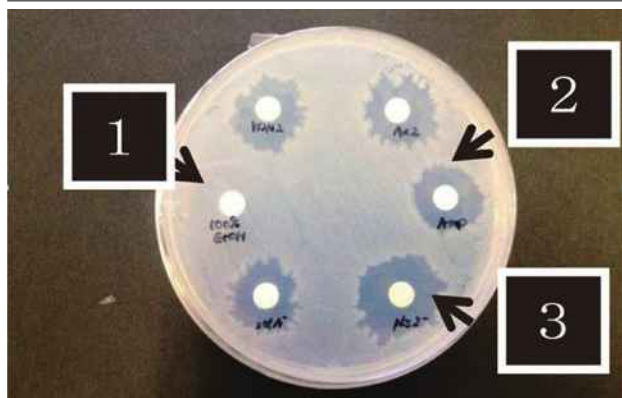
Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
 Professor Tamao Saito

URL <https://fst.sophia.ac.jp/faculty/tamao-saito>

### Keywords

Polyketide / Cellular slime mold

### Overview



- 1: Control (filter paper only)
- 2: Ampicillin (positive control)
- 3: Cellular slime mold extract

Cellular slime molds, a type of soil microorganism, are widely distributed and inhabit both vertical and horizontal dimensions of the soil.

Recent genomic studies have revealed that cellular slime molds possess more polyketide synthases than any other organism. Polyketides are the core components of antibiotics and antitumor agents, a group of compounds that have long been recognized for their utility.

The soil environment is often referred to as a battleground of chemical substances, where active chemical communication occurs between organisms. If the chemical communication abilities of slime molds can be elucidated, it may lead to the development of novel bioproducts. The photograph below illustrates an example of antibacterial activity observed in extracts from cellular slime molds.

### Applications

We discovered that extracts from certain species of cellular slime molds can kill soil bacteria (see photo 3).

### Prospects

- Development of bioproducts to control harmful organisms in soil environments.
- Discovery of novel compounds and elucidation of their biosynthetic mechanisms.

### Expectations for Collaborative Research and Partnerships with External Institutions

- Development of soil purification methods: Cellular slime molds possess unique dichlorination enzymes, which are rare among soil microorganisms.
- Development of bioproducts to control harmful soil organisms: Beyond antibacterial activity, the potential for pesticide development is also being explored.

### Related Patents and Publications

Austin, MB., Saito, T., Bowman, ME., Haydock, S., Kato, A., Moore, BS., Kay, RR. and Noel, JP (2006) "Biosynthesis of Dictyostelium differentiation inducing factor by a hybrid type I fatty acid-type III polyketide synthase" Nat. Chem. Biol. 2:494-502



# Molecular mechanisms underlying responses of plants to environmental stresses

Faculty of Science and Technology / Department of Materials and Life Sciences  
Nobuhiro Suzuki

## Keywords

plant molecular biology / environmental stress

## Abstract

As sessile organisms, plants cannot escape from harsh environmental conditions (environmental stresses) and must instead adapt to them. Plant adaptation to environmental stresses is regulated by networks involving various genes, proteins and metabolites. Elucidating these complex mechanisms is considered essential for improving tolerance of crops to environmental stresses and enhancing yield. In our research, we focus particularly on uncovering the molecular mechanisms that regulate plant responses to heat stress. Furthermore, in natural environments, plants are often exposed not to a single stress but to multiple stresses that simultaneously occur. Therefore, we are also investigating responses of plants to such combined stresses.

## Expected Application

Crop breeding, or establishment of new cultivation technology

## Prospects

We believe that the findings from our research can be applied to efficiently improve stress tolerance of crops. In addition, they are expected to contribute to preventing yield losses caused by recent global warming and various extreme weather events.

## Research facilities and equipments

Growth chamber, PCR etc. We can also provide techniques and expertise related to research on plant stress responses.

## Collaboration with external organizations

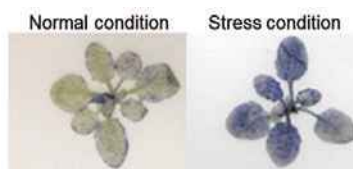
We are advancing collaborative research with universities abroad, including those in the United States and the Philippines. We are also strengthening cooperation with domestic research institutes.

## Related patents/papers

Anee et al. (2025) A combination of salt stress and waterlogging provides protection to tomato plants against the negative effects of waterlogging individually applied. *Physiol. Plant*, 177 (1), e70116

Suzuki (2023) Fine tuning of ROS, redox and energy regulatory systems associated with the functions of chloroplasts and mitochondria in plants under heat stress. *Int J Mol Sci*. 24(2):1356.

Oshita et al. (2023) Attenuation of negative effects caused by a combination of heat and cadmium stress in *Arabidopsis thaliana* deficient in jasmonic acid synthesis. *J Plant Physiol*. 281:153915.



Increased accumulation of reactive oxygen species (ROS, stained with Blue) in *Arabidopsis* under stress condition



*Arabidopsis* mutant with enhanced tolerance to a combination of heat stress and drought





# Chapter 6: Initiatives of Extracurricular Activity Groups



## Student Organization alku

alku is an organization that collaborates with administrative officials, companies, and private individuals to support single-parent families. Since the establishment of the organization, we have been providing food and material support, and so far, we have held five support events, assisting approximately 300 single-parent households who participated.

In addition to food and material support, our organization also conducts experiential education support for children. We began this activity with the belief that learning for children expands their future options and ultimately helps break the cycle of poverty. In recent years, entrance examination formats that emphasize not only academic ability but also “experience” have been increasing. We also believe that opportunities to develop interest arise when children can engage in something. Therefore, we carry out support activities in collaboration with companies and other organizations that share our vision. For example, we have jointly provided programs where children can learn about space by building rockets

or experience music by making musical instruments.

We believe that collaboration with administrative officials and companies is essential for continuing our activities.



Regarding the common issue of poverty among single-parent families, we believe that we can co-create support events by combining our respective values through discussions. We will build a cooperative framework so that we can lead to the fundamental resolution of social issues, starting from our activities.

Moving forward, we will continue to work to identify the latent needs of single-parent families and their children and provide ongoing support to meet those needs.



## Student Organization NAMIMATI



Our student organization, NAMIMATI, serves as a platform for Generation Z to engage with nature, the environment, and social issues through their five senses and take proactive actions. Our mission goes beyond mere environmental conservation or promoting the SDGs. We aim to awaken an inner “aspiration” through encounters with nature and people, creating new waves of change in society through the actions from this inspiration.

Our origin lies in beach cleaning. While the term “beach cleaning” is now widely recognized, this was not the case just a few years ago. Our current leader, Saito, began activities in Shonan with the question, “Why is it that only elderly people and families are cleaning the beaches? Shouldn’t students, who will shape the future of society, be more concerned about environmental issues?” What started as a small group of just three people has now grown into a nationwide organization with three branches in Kanto, Kansai, and Tokai, and a total of approximately 300 members actively taking part in daily activities.

Our activities are built on three main pillars:

### 1. Experiencing Nature

We provide opportunities to fully experience nature through nature camps and monthly beach clean. These activities allow participants to engage in their five senses and reflect on environmental issues.

### 2. Hosting Events

We organize events with themes closely tied to daily

life, such as clothing, food, and housing. These events are planned and managed by students themselves, offering hands-on learning experience aimed at solving social issues.

NAMIMATI also has three specialized sections in addition to clothing, food, and housing: The Business Section, which collaborates with local governments and companies to create impactful projects, the Clean Section, which reimagines the concept of cleaning by exploring new approaches, such as cleaning streets or stadiums and the Creative Section, which stylishly shares our activities on social media to engage more members of Generation Z.

With our growing membership and history, NAMIMATI now provides an environment where members can think about and act on sustainability from various perspectives.

### 3. Education

Our activities not only enhance literacy on environmental and social issues but also focus on developing skills such as problem-solving and project management, which are valuable in future careers. While schools often teach about “global challenges” in a way that leans heavily on theoretical knowledge, NAMIMATI bridges the gap by turning that knowledge into action, offering a more practical and concrete learning experience.

Through these initiatives, NAMIMATI contributes to building a sustainable society while also fostering the growth of participating students. Rooted in local communities yet keeping a global perspective, our organization serves as a new model for social engagement for the next generation of young leaders.



# Sircle

The student organization Sircle has set forth two missions: “Act for others with Football” and “Show what Football can do.” With these goals in mind, the group aims to put into practice the J.League’s promoted initiative, “Sharen!” (Social Collaboration Activities). In their efforts to address social issues in collaboration with professional soccer clubs and various external organizations, the perspective of sustainability is of utmost importance.

In December 2024, Sircle hosted a fashion show at Sophia University, featuring a project that gave new value to disused soccer uniforms by remaking them into new clothing. This initiative connected soccer with fashion and communicated the importance of sustainability both within and beyond the university community. Furthermore, in August 2025, Sircle held an indoor event titled “Let’s Learn About Global Warming Through Soccer,” in cooperation with an international environmental NGO. Targeting elementary school students and their parents, the event offered workshops on heat protection and indoor soccer experiences, providing participants with opportunities to deepen their understanding of climate change.



Moving forward, Sircle remains committed to creating spaces where learning and action can spread through soccer, contributing to the resolution of regional and societal issues and the achievement of the SDGs. The challenge to make society better by harnessing the power of soccer connections continues.

Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/sircle/>  
Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/sircle\\_sophia/](https://www.instagram.com/sircle_sophia/)



# Sophia University Sign Language Circle Tenohira

Sophia University Sign Language Circle Tenohira aims for a diverse society through sign language.

Our main activity is to have a study session which is held two to three times a week. We invite a hearing impaired instructor from outside of our university, we strive to improve our skills and knowledge by learning sign language expressions directly through themes and topics that align with seasons and events. Every year, we have the new performer showcase in June and the Sophia Festival in November. Our sign language plays and songs are based on Disney and Ghibli works. Our events are a culmination of our skill improvement while they serve as an opportunity to convey the charm of sign language to many people, both inside and outside the university, promoting understanding.

As a place to put our sign language skills into practice, we devote every year to volunteering at D’LIVE, a charity concert hosted by Koyama Driving School every December. D’LIVE is a sign language concert where more than ten groups of hearing impaired performers from across the country express their heartfelt emotions through sign language songs and dances. At this event, we did everything we could to meet the needs of the moment from setting up the venue to guiding performers and audience members in sign language and providing basic interpretation. Through this experience, we came to understand more deeply that sign language is not just a means of communication, but a vital tool that transcends language barriers and connects people heart to heart.

Building on the hands-on experience we gained through D’LIVE, we also devoted ourselves from beginning of the year to sharing our sign language knowledge

and skills with others at the Minato City Takanawa Children and Youth Plaza (TAP). As volunteers, we taught activities such as sign language songs to popular tunes like Doraemon and Paprika, as well as picture book readings, we introduced children, preschoolers, and their parents to the joy of sign language. It was a great pleasure for us to be able to share the value of diversity with the next generations.

Through these activities, we have not only learned sign language but also gained a deeper understanding of how to communicate with diverse individuals and the joy of contributing to society. Sign language transcends language barriers and serves as a first step toward respecting each other’s cultures. Moving forward, we aim to continue harnessing the power of sign language to connect with more people and contribute to the realization of an inclusive society.



# Sophia University Go Beyond



Sophia University Go Beyond project was launched in connection with the Tokyo 2020 Games, guided by the philosophy of “creating a society where everyone can shine in their own way.” The project promotes a

wide range of activities that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, with a particular focus on organizing events and workshops aimed at fostering understanding of disability and diversity and communicating the importance of an inclusive society both within and beyond the university.

One of our key initiatives is hosting para-sports experience sessions for elementary school students. Through sports like goalball and boccia, children are given opportunities to “understand and embrace differences.” These events allow participants to naturally learn about inclusive communities while enjoying the fun

of sports and have received high praise from parents.

On campus, we also provide opportunities to engage with multifaceted social issues through lectures and exhibitions. By exchanging ideas among students, we encourage them to view these challenges as personally relevant, helping to cultivate individuals who can contribute to building a sustainable future after graduation.

- These efforts align with several SDGs, including:
- Goal 4: Quality Education for All
- Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Rather than being bound by rigid frameworks, we value the mindset that “even small steps can lead to a better future,” and continue our activities with that spirit.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand our initiatives by leveraging the unique perspectives and energy of students, working in collaboration with many others to help realize a sustainable society where everyone can live with peace of mind.



# Athletic Association Fencing Club



The “Wheelchair Fencing Experience Event,” which launched the previous year, was held again on June 29 this year by inviting current Paralympian Shintaro Kano.

This event was planned by the Fencing Club with the thought of “wanting to energize the Paralympic sports world and the fencing world.” Because last year’s event received the 2024 commemorative award presented during the ceremony for the Visit of Pope Francis to Sophia University, As a result, under the co-hosting of Sophia School Corporation Catholic Jesuit Center and Piece Times Inc., and with the cooperation of the Japan Para Fencing Association and Tokyo Sports Association for Persons with Disability, it was realized.

This event aims to promote understanding of people with disabilities by experiencing sports from the viewpoint of people with disabilities, and to provide an opportunity for people with physical disabilities, whose access to sports is limited, to experience fencing and to know “parasports as an option.” On the day, university faculty and staff and wheelchair fencing experienced persons also participated, and in the end, it attracted

more than 40 participants.

During the event, Paralympian Kano, who participated in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Paralympics, gave a lecture. He introduced valuable episodes such as his upbringing, encounter with para-fencing, and thoughts at the time of Paralympic participation.

Next, a panel discussion was held with Kano, Mr. Kiyoshi Wada, Executive Director of the Japan Fencing Federation and alumnus of the Fencing Club, and members of the Athletic Fencing Club, exchanging discussions on “Comparison of parasports in Japan and France” and “Fencing as a minor sport.”

Mr. Wada spoke about fencing, which tends to be classified as a minor sport in Japan, “Recognition has increased due to the Olympics. There is hope for the future toward popularization.” Also, Kano pointed out the difference between fencing and wheelchair fencing, saying that even Olympians find it difficult to immediately master the upper body usage in wheelchair fencing, and talked about the appeal of wheelchair fencing where people can compete regardless of disability.

After the discussion, participants, including Kano, experienced wheelchair fencing together. Matches using competition wheelchairs also used in tournaments were held, and all participants regardless of disability, age, or gender spent valuable time enjoying wheelchair fencing.



## Sophia Vegan Society

Sophia Vegan Society organizes events where not only vegans and vegetarians but also those interested in food and sustainability can interact and connect. Specifically, the circle participates in the monthly Natural Vegan Marche held in Kanda and the Vegan Gourmet Festival held in Kiba Park during spring and autumn. These events provide opportunities to interact with vendors and students from other universities, creating a space to share opinions on food, the environment, and health.

In addition, at the Sophia Festival held in November, the circle sold vegan paninis. We received feedback from customers including, “I thought vegan food would taste bad, but this was good which changed my impressions to vegan food,” and “The patty inside was juicier than I expected and very satisfying.” These responses made us feel that we were able to gradually dispel some of the negative ideas stemming from unfamiliarity with veganism.

While many of the circle members are not vegan in their daily lives, through these activities, they have become more aware of the environmental significance of reducing the consumption of meat, fish, and dairy products. They have also developed a greater interest in nutrition and ingredients. Some members have started to adopt healthier lifestyles, not only by changing their



eating habits but also by paying attention to exercise and sleep. Many have shared that they now see veganism not as something special but as “an option that anyone can easily incorporate into their lives.”

Moving forward, we aim to continue expanding our interactions both within and outside of the university, spreading the potential of veganism to more people. We believe that promoting veganism can lead to reducing environmental impact and fostering healthier lifestyles, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and diversity-respecting society.



## Peacebuilding and International Cooperation Club

Our circle, the “Peacebuilding and International Cooperation Club,” was established in 2019. It is instructed by Professor Daisaku Higashi at Sophia University’s Center for Global Education and Discovery, an leading expert in peace mediation and peacebuilding in Japan. The group holds monthly study sessions and organizes one or two study tours annually.

During the monthly study sessions, we read textbooks such as “How to End the War in Ukraine? Limitations and Possibilities of Peace Mediation” (Daisaku Higashi, 2023, Iwanami Shoten) and “Civil War and Mediation” (Daisaku Higashi, 2020, Chuko Shinsho), while discussing current global affairs. Together with Professor Higashi, we explore topics such as the causes of war, how ceasefires can be achieved, the effectiveness of economic sanctions, challenges in building sustainable peace after conflicts, and the roles that Japan can play. Students from various departments participate, and we find great value in regularly engaging in these discussions and deepening our understanding.

We have also conducted two study tours to South Korea, visiting institutions such as Sogang University, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. These tours focused on exploring areas where Japan and South Korea can collaborate in international cooperation. Additionally, Professor Higashi proposed the introduction of offshore wind power to Iwaki City following the Great East Japan Earthquake and played a key role in mediating between local fishers

and government officials to realize a pilot project. Since 2023, we have conducted annual study tours to the Hamadori region of Fukushima, including Iwaki and Namie. (From this academic year, the tour has become open to all Sophia University students.)

In the 2024 tour, we held discussions with the Deputy Mayor of Iwaki and other city officials about reconstruction challenges. We visited Hokutaku’s Fukushima office, a leading wind power maintenance company, the hydrogen power demonstration site in Namie, agricultural farms, and TEPCO’s Decommissioning Archive Center. These visits allowed us to learn about the real disasters of the nuclear accident and efforts to promote recovery through renewable energy. We also had in-depth conversations with executives from the Iwaki and Fukushima Prefectural Fisheries Cooperatives about the current damage caused by the release of treated water from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and explored ways to harmonize offshore wind power with the fishing industry. These study tours emphasize dialogue with local communities and provide rich learning experiences.

Through these activities, we are able to study both the theory and practice of SDG-related issues alongside Professor Higashi, who volunteers his time, and we feel that this embodies the spirit of Sophia University.



## Sophia Diverse Colors (SDC)

Sophia Diverse Colors (SDC) is a student organization responsible for organizing Sophia University’s official event, Sophia Diversity Week. While it had previously operated as a temporary group formed annually, SDC officially launched as a permanent student organization in the 2025 academic year. Many of the initiatives held during Diversity Week are planned by SDC members themselves.

SDC aims to create a society where diversity in all fields is considered the norm, starting from Sophia University. Past Diversity Week events have included lectures by prominent figures and workshops in collaboration with companies committed to promoting diversity. By inviting well-known advocates and diversity-conscious companies

to speak, SDC has helped foster momentum for diversity promotion both on and off campus.

The organization also seeks to collaborate with researchers and institutions engaged in diversity-related research, education, and initiatives to further enhance Diversity Week. In the future, SDC hopes to contribute to raising awareness and implementing diversity-promoting efforts in society.

Student-led workshops are also a key part of SDC’s activities, empowering each student to take ownership in building a university that actively promotes diversity.



## Kyodai ji Support Circle “Ren”



Have you ever heard of the term “*kyodaiji*”?

These siblings—referred to as “*kyodaiji*” in Japanese—are brothers and sisters of children with illnesses or disabilities.

They are often perceived as “good kids” who are responsible, not selfish, and caring. However, many of them face difficulties such as struggling to express their needs, constantly suppressing their emotions, feeling lonely due to a lack of attention from parents, or being made to take care of their siblings or handle housework in place of their parents.

To create a space where such children can express themselves freely and spend time however they like with university student mentors, we launched our group: the “*Kyodaiji Support Circle Ren*.” At Ren, we organize events like summer camps and Christmas parties to help these children step away from their daily lives and create unforgettable memories.

For the 2025 Summer Camp, held over three days from August 13th to 15th at an accommodation facility in Ibaraki Prefecture, 18 children (ages 5 to 13), 40 university students, 3 nurses, 7 alumni members, and 2 faculty advisors participated. That’s 52 adults for 18 children—more than double the number.

Behind this large adult-to-child ratio lies Ren’s core philosophy of “*Child-Centered Principle*.” This means that all adults, including students, place the children at

the heart of everything and do their utmost to fulfill each child’s wishes.

Based on this principle, we implement the following four practices:

1) Pair System

Each child is paired with at least one university student, ensuring they always have someone they can rely on and feel safe to express themselves with freely.

2) No Rule is Only Rule

We eliminate as many rules and restrictions as possible, allowing children to prioritize what they truly want to do. Participation in programs is never mandatory.

3) Pre-Visit

Before the camp, we visit each child to build familiarity and reduce anxiety. We also meet with parents to discuss health and safety information to ensure proper care and risk management.

4) Pick-Up and Drop-Off Support

If parents are unable to leave home for various reasons and cannot handle transportation, our student volunteers take care of picking up and dropping off the children directly.

This year, once again, many children didn’t want to part from their student partners, and we received countless stories from parents about how excitedly their children talked about the camp afterward.

While there are still areas for improvement, we remain committed to continuing our efforts to bring joyful and memorable experiences to *kyodaiji*.



## + Re:

+Re: operates with the motto of “involving 80% of people.” The “80%” refers to those who, in our estimation, do not have a particularly strong interest in environmental issues. Based on the 2:6:2 rule, we believe that approximately 80% of the population falls into this category. Therefore, instead of focusing solely on the small group of people who are highly interested in

environmental issues, we strive to develop activities that many people can participate in casually, with fun and ease.

One specific initiative we undertake is the “collection and distribution of used clothing.” We collect used clothing from faculty, staff, and students through a box located in the Active Commons on campus. The collected clothing is then

distributed for free at the Active Commons or on the main street at regular intervals. This creates a cycle of clothing reuse, and since students can obtain clothes for free, the initiative is highly in demand and well-received by many.

Another distinctive activity is the “collection of contact lens cases.” We have set up collection boxes in three locations on campus, as well as one in the Aozora Bank office in Building 6, for a total of four locations. The collection boxes on campus are designed with a penguin motif and are named “Penta.” Initially, the boxes were plain, but after redesigning them, they gained more attention, and the collection volume doubled. The total amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced through the recycling of the collected cases has exceeded one ton, which is equivalent to the emissions generated by a flight from Tokyo to London. This demonstrates how the accumulation of small actions, like collecting individual cases, can lead to significant, visible results.

Additionally, in classrooms on campus, we have posted energy-saving posters with “witty one-liners” to encourage

people to turn off lights when not in use. These small touches create opportunities for people to stop and take notice. Furthermore, we are currently preparing a beach-cleaning event in the form of a game, aiming to create new mechanisms that allow participants to enjoy themselves while contributing to environmental conservation.



In this way, +Re: does not simply call for “eco-friendly actions” but incorporates humor and the concept of “nudges” (mechanisms that naturally encourage behavior) to design activities that people find “fun” or “beneficial.” By devising ways to naturally involve more people, we continue to contribute to the creation of a sustainable society from the perspective of students.



## MEGUKO

“Meguko” provides educational support to approximately 2,000 children in India and the Philippines who are unable to receive primary education due to financial reasons. We regularly conduct street fundraising activities at the Kojimachi Exit of Yotsuya Station, and we welcome donations not only from “Meguko” supporters but also from the general public.

As part of our activities, we also organize and host charity concerts. Every year, in addition to a glamorous stage featuring special guest performers, we hold original events unique to “Meguko,” sell Indian and Filipino goods, and conduct fundraising activities, inviting participation from our supporters and local community members.

Furthermore, we believe that the true value lies not

only in delivering financial support but also in visiting the local areas and interacting with the children directly. This embodies one of “Meguko’s” principles: “Support with a Face.” Although the study tour to the Philippines scheduled for 2025 has unfortunately been canceled, we are planning a study tour to India in March 2026. The purpose of this tour is to visit the facilities we support, assess their current conditions and the children’s situations, and consider the future direction of our support.

Moving forward, we will continue to strive to provide educational opportunities to children, expand their future possibilities, and grow together as fellow companions.



## ASANTE PROJECT



The Asante Project is a student organization that provides educational support for pre-school children in Tanzania, Africa. Guided by three principles—1) prioritizing local needs, 2) providing sustainable and future-oriented support, and 3) creating social change through the power of students—we carry out our activities.

In Tanzania, the number of public kindergartens is limited, and the quality of education is low, making private kindergartens essential. However, private kindergartens face the risk of being forcibly closed if they fail to obtain government accreditation. To address this issue, the Asante Project provides construction support to help private kindergartens in Tanzania meet the requirements for government accreditation.

In Japan, we primarily use African fabric called kitenge, purchased locally in Tanzania, to create items such as pouches, pen cases, book covers, and earrings, which we sell at free markets and other events. Additionally, we conduct workshops at elementary schools to raise awareness about Tanzania.

In our activities in Tanzania, we focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1: “No Poverty,” Goal 4: “Quality Education,” and Goal 6: “Clean Water and Sanitation.” Specifically, we support the construction of toilets, classrooms, and windows for private kindergartens to ensure a safe environment for children.

In our activities in Japan, we emphasize SDG Goal 10: “Reduced Inequalities” and Goal 17: “Partnerships for the Goals.” Through product sales and workshops, we not only share the current state of educational environments in Tanzania but also highlight the many charms of the country to people in Japan.

Through these efforts, we aim to dispel the negative

stereotypes about Africa that many people in Japan may hold. We hope to foster a relationship where, despite the physical distance, we can join hands and support each other.



## The MLT Kodomo Project

The MLT Kodomo Project has been operating since 2014 with the motto, “A space for children, with children, like a perch where a tired little bird can rest its wings,” and celebrated its 10th anniversary last year. Initially, the project focused on supporting children from single-parent or stepfamily households living or studying in Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo. However, it has since evolved to also serve as a safe space for children with foreign roots or those in need of psychological or academic support.

Every Thursday, we borrow a salon space from the Chiyoda Council of Social Welfare, where students take the lead in planning menus and cooking meals together with the children. Everyone gathers around the lively dining table to say “Itadakimasu” and enjoy the meal, during which the children share stories about their hobbies, school, and family, and sometimes even open about their worries. We also cherish celebrating birthdays and seasonal events. Before and after meals, participants engage in activities they enjoy or bring their homework to receive help from the students with areas they find challenging.

In the fall of 2024, we organized a field trip to the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan), where the children explored the exhibits and later enjoyed playing games like tag and frisbee in a nearby park. During spring break, we held a picnic at Yoyogi Park, where not only the children but also the students and adult staff joined in outdoor activities unique to the setting.



The activities of the MLT Kodomo Project are also shared on social media, and we have been receiving increasing support from companies and other universities. We have even heard children say, “I want to become a staff member when I go to university.” We look forward to the day when the children who have grown up through this project will take on roles to support others, creating a positive cycle of giving back.



## carutena

Carutena is a student organization established in April 2020 with the aim of addressing the social issue of mass clothing waste. We are operated primarily by university students and fashion students, with all processes from product development to sales being carried out solely by students.

The organization’s name, “carutena,” was derived from the Spanish word “carutera,” meaning “tote bag,” combined with the name of our founder. Since our inception, we have focused on two main pillars of activity: “selling upcycled products” and “raising awareness of the issue of mass clothing disposal.”

Specifically, we collect used clothing and upcycle them into tote bags, drawstring pouches, and other small items for sale. Additionally, through social media outreach and outreach classes, we widely share information about the current state of clothing waste and the potential of upcycling.



As part of our outreach classes, in June 2025, we held a workshop for pre-school to elementary school children at “Musashino Eco Resort,” operated by Musashino City. Furthermore, in February 2026, we plan to conduct a class and workshop for elementary school

students at “Eco Gallery Shinjuku,” operated by Shinjuku City. These efforts were recognized, and we received the Excellence Award in the Group Category of the 2024 (Reiwa 6) Shinjuku Eco-One Grand Prix.

Our products are created seasonally and are available for purchase on our e-commerce site year-round. With prices ranging from 700 to 3,000 yen, the products are designed to be affordable and accessible, especially for young people of the same generation as our members. Since all items are made from used clothing, no two designs are the same, offering a diverse lineup. On Instagram, we share the appeal of our products and the stories behind their creation, striving to gain support for our overall activities.

In August 2025, we introduced a new brand concept, “upcycled for every you,” aiming to reach a broader audience with our products and activities. We continue our efforts to become the “first upcycled brand” for those who may not have previously been interested in sustainability or ethical practices.

In October 2025, we held our largest-ever POPUP STORE. The event not only allowed visitors to directly experience Carutena’s products but also provided a space to immerse themselves in our brand’s philosophy.

Moving forward, we will continue to upcycle clothing that would otherwise be discarded, giving it new value and purpose.



## Summer Teaching Program (STP)

Summer Teaching Program (STP) is an educational support initiative aimed at conveying the “joy of learning English” through English lessons during the summer vacation period. The program operates in six regions in Japan (Muroran, Morioka, Ashikaga, Onoda, Shimonoseki, and Fukuoka) and one region in Cambodia (Siem Reap), targeting elementary and junior high school students.

Our circle is composed solely of students from the Department of English Studies in the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University. Since its establishment in 1968, the program has a history spanning over 50 years, with more than 150 members currently participating. Approximately 25 students are assigned to each region, and they prepare for the summer activities through weekly meetings. All aspects of the program, including lesson planning and the creation of original teaching materials, are carried out independently by the students.

Lessons are designed by groups of 3-4 students and include not only English instruction but also event-style lessons incorporating elements of physical education, art, and more. In Cambodia, we conduct activities that combine English learning with cross-cultural understanding, such as the “Japanese Festival,” where students experience Japanese culture, and “World Heritage” where they explore Cambodia’s intangible Heritage and World Heritage sites.

We believe that our activities address educational challenges in both Japan and Cambodia. In Japan, we aim to provide English learning and international understanding lessons to children in rural areas, helping to mitigate the educational disparities caused by regional differences. In Cambodia, we offer lessons to children who lack sufficient access to English learning environments, supporting them in expanding their future opportunities for higher education, employment, and international exchange.

By sharing the “joy of learning English,” students from



the Department of English Studies, who understand both the challenges and pleasures of learning English, aim not only to impart knowledge but also to foster the ability of children to shape their own futures and actively participate in society.

This year, in addition to reporting on our activities, we sought to revive the vertical connections within the Department of English Studies that were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. To commemorate the 58th anniversary of our establishment, we hosted a classroom exhibit at the university’s cultural festival. The event featured displays introducing our past activities, a lecture by our founder, Professor Emeritus Kensaku Yoshida, and a panel discussion featuring Professor Emeritus Yoshida and our students. These activities provided an opportunity to reflect on and discuss the future direction of our program.

Moving forward, as a circle within the Department of English Studies, we will continue to value our connections with local communities and the department, striving to contribute to society through education.



## Sophia University Wakatake Circle

The Sophia University Wakatake Circle engages in activities where members play and interact with children from the “Wakatake Class,” a special needs class at Aburamen Elementary School in Meguro Ward. In addition to biweekly activities in the classroom, the circle organizes excursions, seasonal events, and individual outings tailored to each child. The students are responsible for planning, conducting preliminary visits, and creating pamphlets, all while prioritizing safety and enjoyment in their preparations.

The circle is guided by two core principles. The first is “Trinity.” This term, cherished since the circle’s founding, signifies that the activities are made possible through the cooperation of three parties: the students, the children, and their families. The connection extends to alumni, and during the six annual events, many individuals associated with Wakatake gather, fostering relationships that continue even after graduation.

The second principle is “Overcoming barriers of disability to enjoy together and individually.” Rather than

adopting a one-sided approach of “doing something for” children with disabilities, the circle values a mutual sharing of joy. One example of this is the planning of outings to places the children express a desire to visit, with students accompanying them.



Discovering the children’s interests and strengths, as well as seeing their joyful expressions, brings great happiness to the members during their activities. Moving forward, the circle will continue to cherish its connections with the children who look forward to activity days, striving to ensure that Wakatake Circle remains a place filled with smiles.



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### SOPHIA Fund for the Future Support for SDGs & sustainability promotion

Since its foundation, Sophia University has been committed to promoting sustainability based on the Catholic spirit of “For Others, With Others,” which indeed coincides with the philosophy of “leaving no one behind,” as stipulated in the SDGs.

The funds raised during this campaign, targeted primarily at promoting sustainability and achieving the SDGs as well as at supporting ecology, people with a disability, LGBTQ+ and gender equality, human rights, health (physical and mental), disaster preparedness, and the like, will be spent on a range of on- and off-campus awareness raising activities, supporting the implementation of such projects, and revamping on-campus facilities with universal design.

<https://giving-sophia.jp/donate/494/>

