

Session with Japanese Delegates from Sophia, Seisen, and Ferris University Faculties and Scholars

On January 20th, 2025, St Joseph's Research and Innovation Council (SJRIC) and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences organized a session featuring esteemed delegates from Sophia, Seisen, and Ferris Universities in Japan. The event was held in the Board Room at 10:30 AM and was attended by the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar, PhD scholars from various Humanities and Social Sciences departments, as well as undergraduate students from International Relations, Public Policy, Journalism, and Sociology. The session included 40 participants and was coordinated by Dr. Chandni Bhambhani, with several distinguished speakers contributing to the discussions.

The session commenced with a thought-provoking presentation by Prof. Kathy R. Matsui, Professor in the Department of Global Citizenship at Seisen University, Tokyo. Prof. Matsui shared her peacebuilding journey and the genesis of Global Citizenship Studies at Sophia University. She reflected on her experiences as the daughter of a US Army personnel during the Vietnam War and discussed how witnessing the devastating effects of war on civilians shaped her interest in conflict resolution. Emphasizing dialogue-based strategies for peacemaking, she inspired the audience to explore non-violent approaches. During the Q&A, students engaged with her on the varying definitions of peace, and she responded with insights referencing Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.

Dr. Tatsuya Hikichi from Ferris University, Yokohama, followed with a presentation on media literacy for people with disabilities. Using a unique exercise, he illustrated the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and showcased how technology can foster inclusive online learning environments. Dr. Hikichi's research emphasized aligning inclusive education with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlighted the importance of including marginalized groups, particularly those with disabilities. A rich discussion ensued, covering topics such as emotional distress in disability engagement, the role of music in education, and Japanese governmental initiatives for inclusive education.

The third speaker, Mr. Hirakita Kotaro, an MA student from Sophia University, presented his research on the role of universities in global governance, focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). He detailed Okayama University's approach to integrating SDGs and shared recommendations for universities to incorporate SDGs into their work comprehensively. The session invited thoughtful dialogue on the complexities of defining sustainability in a globally interconnected world.

The final presentation was delivered by Ms. Yoshitaka Nozomi, a PhD scholar from Sophia University. Her research focused on social media literacy among young people, examining the widespread use of social media across age groups and its associated risks. She advocated for greater awareness and regulation to mitigate the harms of social media usage among youth, stressing the need for responsible digital engagement.

The event concluded with remarks from Rev. Dr. Victor Lobo SJ, Vice Chancellor of St Joseph's University. He highlighted how the themes of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and inclusivity align with the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences and the Karnataka Province Apostolic Preferences. Rev. Dr. Lobo underscored the shared vision between the universities as a foundation for future collaborations toward global peace and inclusivity. The session ended with a group photograph, symbolizing unity and a collective commitment to addressing global challenges.

For the Images of Session with Japanese Delegates from Sophia, Seisen, and Ferris University Faculties and Scholars, kindly refer to the Photo Gallery: <https://www.sju.edu.in/gallery/116>