RIJAG Research Institute for Japan's Globalization
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Kusunoki Project: Bridging Japan's Digital Skills Gap through AI-Driven Learning and Intergenerational Capacity-Building

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Why Japan Needs AI Builders: The Kusunoki Project

Japan's developmental-state success → Population decline & growing need for household asset-building → Severe digital-talent shortage (85.1% of Japanese firms report DX talent shortages) → LLMs lower barriers to AI-driven development → Learn by building an AI + blockchain-based automated crypto trading system → Autonomous digital problem-solvers / AI builders



The Learning Loop: From Problem to Independent Development

Define requirements → Prompt & code → Test with real data → Diagnose failures → Revise → Independent development

Algorithmic thinking, real-world uncertainty, and human verification and agency

Trading is an EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT, NOT investment performance or a financial promise.

Intergenerational, project-based learning | RIJAG × IISIA

Registered initiative: UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance — AI Dialogue Partnerships Hub (Bridging AI Divides)

SDGs 4, 10 & 17

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A Learning Model for Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Talent

From a Personally Meaningful Theme to Autonomous Learning, with Continuous Support for All

Why This Design?

- Programming learning can be solitary and hard to sustain.
- We therefore use a personally important theme — **asset-building** through an automated crypto trading system — to keep learners motivated and self-directed.

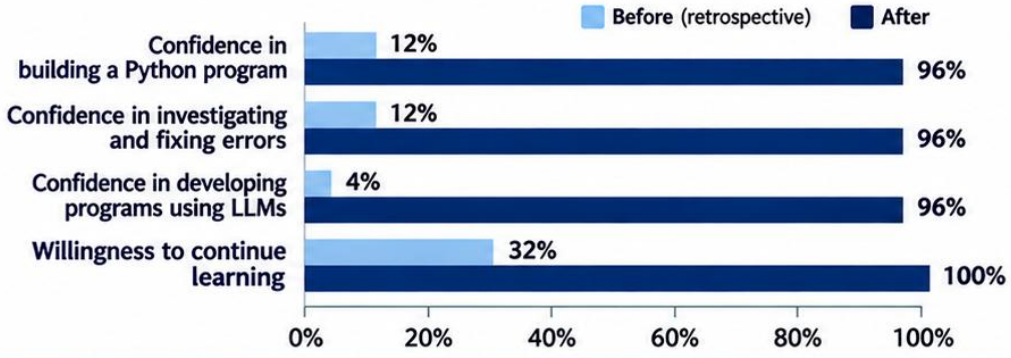
A Holistic and Inclusive Learning Environment

A meaningful theme: asset-building (crypto trading) + **Intergenerational participation** (spouses and participants' children) + **Workshop-style learning** (face-to-face, collaborative, hands-on) + **Ongoing support via a dedicated SNS** (Q&A, advice, peer interaction) → **Sustained, self-directed learning toward autonomous digital talent**

Encouragement and mutual support in the spirit of "No One Left Behind."

Preliminary Results: Increased Self-Reported Capability

Retrospective pre–post survey (n = 25, July 2026 workshop)



Limitations and Future Work

- **Limited scale and time frame:** The program started in September 2025, and so far about 50 participants have joined.
- **Subjective evaluation:** The current results are based on participants' self-reported (retrospective) assessments.
- **Toward more rigorous evaluation:** We will expand the number of participants and employ more objective and quantitative measures (e.g., performance tasks, code quality, and system outputs).

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Lessons for Global AI Education

From AI Access to Locally Relevant AI Solutions in Low-Resource Regions

Key Lessons from Our Experience

- Access to code generation alone does not create autonomous developers.
- Defining requirements, verifying outputs with real data, and iterating are essential.
- A meaningful, real-life theme (e.g., asset-building) and intergenerational, collaborative learning sustain motivation.

Implications for Low-Resource Regions

Access to affordable, high-performance LLMs **(essential)** + Local people identify and frame their own pressing problems → AI-driven development to build practical, locally relevant solutions

- With affordable, high-performance LLM access, people in any region can develop AI solutions for their region-specific needs.
- This can democratize innovation, expand local problem-solving capacity, and support inclusive and resilient development.

AI education should go beyond access to technology.
It should equip people to define problems, build solutions, and act with judgment and responsibility — in their own contexts, and in an inclusive way.

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Thank you for your attention.

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