Technovation Girls Japan 2025

Impact Report

Introduction

As the official ambassador of Technovation Girls Japan, we are pleased to report that the Technovation Girls Japan 2025 program has successfully concluded this year. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all who supported us, especially our sponsor companies, in making the program possible in Japan.

This year, participants joined from 44 prefectures across the country, with 440 registrants at the time of the deadline and a record-high of 88 teams of middle and high school students completing the six-month program. As a result, seven teams were selected as World Semifinalists, and among them, one team advanced to the Finalist stage.

Balancing schoolwork while meeting peers from across Japan, these students gained invaluable experiences by challenging themselves in new worlds—programming, entrepreneurship, business development, and even AI. We consider delivering such opportunities to many young people as the greatest value of the program, and we are committed to striving for further progress in the years ahead.

What is Technovation Girls?

Technovation Girls is the world's largest technology education program for fostering the next generation of female IT entrepreneurs, organized by the U.S.-based STEM education

nonprofit Technovation (https://technovationchallenge.org/). Since its launch in 2010, more than 55,000 participants from over 100 countries have taken part.

Targeting girls and gender minority students aged 10–18, teams of 1–5 members spend 4–5 months developing a mobile app and business plan to address a problem in their community. They are evaluated across four categories: idea/pitch, technical skills, entrepreneurship, and presentation ability.

According to surveys of past participants, the program is proven to increase students' confidence in computer science, business leadership, and entrepreneurship. The program's official language is English: from official information to submissions, all components are conducted in English.

In Japan, Waffle serves as the official ambassador, supporting teams nationwide together with domestic sponsor companies.

Technovation Girls Japan 2025 Schedule

Dec 8, 2024: Opening Ceremony (Onboarding)

Dec 21–22, 2024 / Jan 5, 11–12, 2025: App Development Basics (5 sessions × 2 hrs)

Jan 18–19, 25–26, 2025: Business Development Workshops (4 sessions × 3–4 hrs)

Feb 15–16, 2025: Advanced App Development (2 sessions × 2 hrs)

Feb 2025 onward: Team-based development begins

May 6, 2025: Submission deadline to U.S. Headquarters

Jun 9, 2025: Announcement of World Semifinalists

Jun 21, 2025: Japan Official Pitch Event (hosted by Waffle)

Jul 9, 2025: Announcement of World Finalists

Sep 2025: World Summit (hosted online by U.S. Headquarters)

2025 Program Highlights

Like last year, we set the goal of recruiting participants from across Japan, and with the help of middle and high schools, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and past participants, awareness of the program grew significantly. Thanks to these efforts, a record 440 students applied within just two months.

However, we did not achieve participation from Aomori, Iwate, and Niigata prefectures. Ensuring that opportunities are equally accessible to students outside major urban centers remains a key challenge. In the coming year, we aim to conduct more focused outreach in these regions.

We also worked to further support returning participants. Students who had previously joined the program and expressed interest in participating again received early support, two months prior to general recruitment. With the mentorship of dedicated professionals, these students showed remarkable growth, winning company-sponsored awards at the Japan Pitch Event.

To support over 400 students, more than 130 volunteer mentors—both professionals and university students—joined this year, marking the highest number ever. Their guidance in business and programming helped 88 teams successfully submit projects to the U.S. headquarters.

App Development Course

Since 2022, Technovation Girls Japan has offered a seven-day app development course using the visual block-based framework Thunkable. This year, we expanded lecture time on AI fundamentals to deepen understanding and interest.

To ensure accessibility, we eliminated pre-study requirements and structured each 120-minute online session with a 1-hour lecture followed by Q&A sessions supported by volunteer teaching assistants (TAs)—professional software engineers from IT companies.

As the program is conducted entirely online, access to a computer and Wi-Fi is essential. Waffle provided free equipment rentals to students in need, lending 72 PCs and 38 Wi-Fi routers for six months.

Business Development Course

For many participants, creating a business was their first experience. With the support of entrepreneur Maiko Kojima (CEO & Founder of Crafter Inc., formerly Chatbook), we hosted a two-day workshop to guide students in transforming their passion for solving social issues into viable business models.

Additional lectures included: Team building & product development sessions, Project management by sponsor Japan Research Institute (JRI), Gender perspectives in business, a signature feature of Waffle.

The course began with identifying social issues, forming teams around shared interests, conducting persona interviews, and building business models. Teams then presented their interim pitch videos, received feedback, and refined their projects through iterative practice.。

Japan Official Pitch Event

In addition to the U.S. submission, the Japan Chapter hosts its own annual Pitch Event. This year, 64 finalists gathered in Tokyo on June 21 for an in-person event.
Each team pitched their mobile app in three minutes. The top 10 finalists from the preliminary round advanced, and for the first time, we introduced a “Challenge Stage” where teams ranking 11th–20th also pitched. One team from this stage advanced to the final round.

Prizes included awards from sponsor companies as well as the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award for the best team.

- Minister of Education Award: Team E-support – AI-powered diary app “DiaLink” for dementia prevention
- MetLife Foundation Award: Team Infiniti ∞ Girls – “TorchVision,” an app to support safe mobility for the visually impaired
- Lenovo Award: Team Sakura🌸Tech – Family-linked app “Beat the Heat” for heatstroke prevention
- NTT Group Award: Team Explore Lab Japan – Multilingual quiz app “Explore Japan” addressing tourist etiquette in Fujinomiya City
- Salesforce Award: Team Sun Varier – Youth-oriented sex education and communication app
- JRI Award: Team NichiCambers – Women-only taxi service app “SHEield”

- Unity Award: Team Life Line Links – “iWant Water,” matching disaster survivors with available water supplies

Event Recording:
https://youtube.com/live/qfUN0AhhJ4M?feature=share

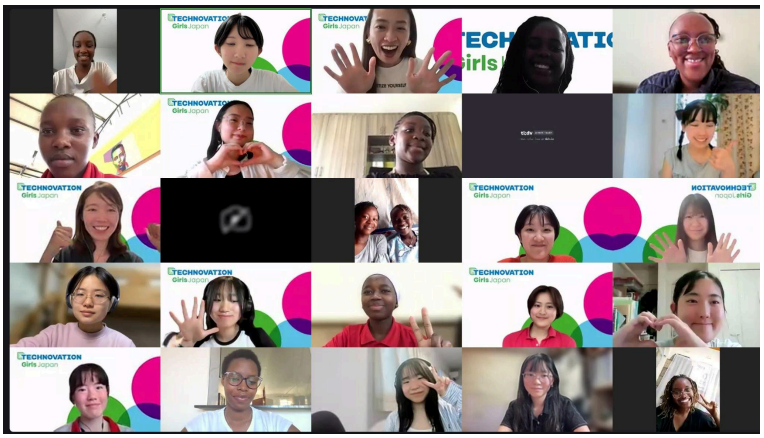
Newly Introduced: Challenge Stage

To increase the number of students who could join the in-person pitch event in Tokyo, we introduced a new Challenge Stage this year. Teams that placed 11th–20th in the first preliminary round—just shy of becoming finalists—were also given the chance to pitch on stage and gain valuable experience presenting their work directly to a live audience.

Judges from four sponsor companies attended, and one team selected from this stage advanced to the final round—making for a highly dynamic and engaging session. The chosen team, “Shigodeki,” developed a clothing-exchange app designed to reduce fashion waste while revitalizing local communities. Their joy at making it this far left a strong impression.

Exchange with the Kenya Chapter

As a program with participants from over 100 countries, we create opportunities each year during the program period to connect with peers abroad, exchange feedback on apps in development, and learn from global perspectives to broaden students' horizons.



This year, we reached out from Japan to the Kenya Chapter, with whom we connected at last year's World Summit, and organized an exchange session. Alongside sharing aspects of middle and high school culture in each country, students split into groups to showcase their team apps to one another. Seeing how far their overseas peers (and competitors) had progressed provided inspiration and extra momentum for the final push toward completing their projects.

Several teams discovered they were working on similar themes. Even with common topics, they observed different approaches; by showing each other their in-progress work, students deepened their understanding of their own projects.

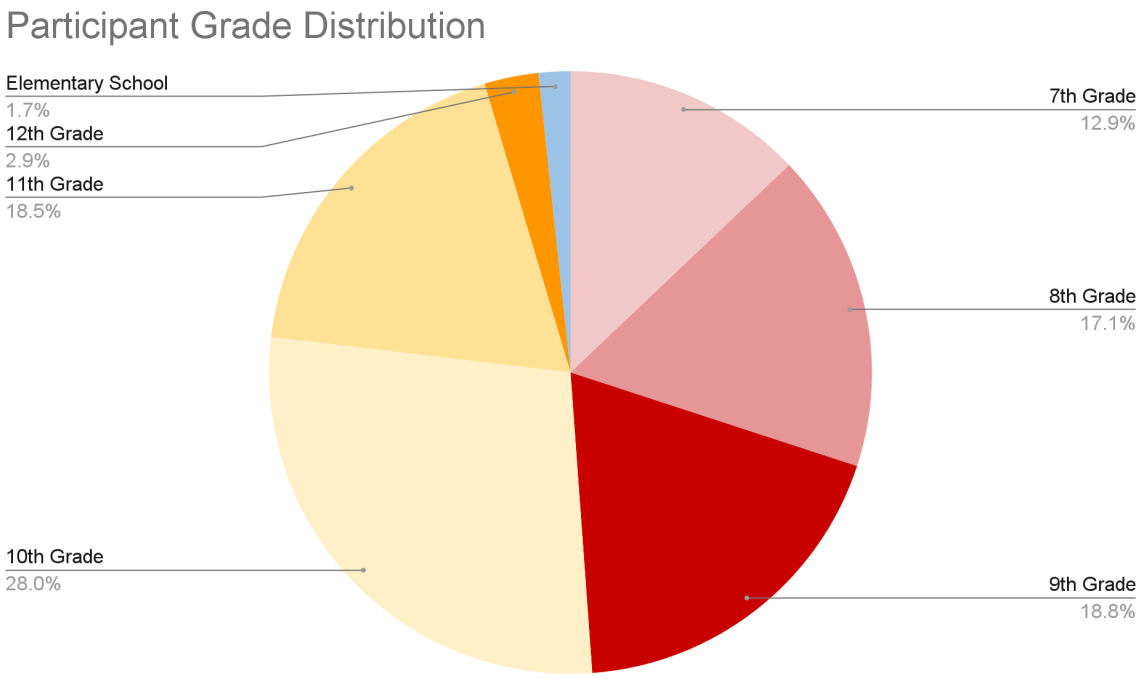
Career Guidance & Speaker Session

Beyond app development, we also focused on providing opportunities that support participants' post-program pathways. This year, with the help of mentors from among our university student and professional volunteers, Miho Kominato of NTT Docomo joined as a guest speaker. She candidly shared her real journey—hitting roadblocks after entering university, then finding areas of genuine interest, and ultimately becoming an infrastructure engineer. The session helped students appreciate that any path involves ups and downs, and that there is real excitement in continuing to take on challenges.

Participants

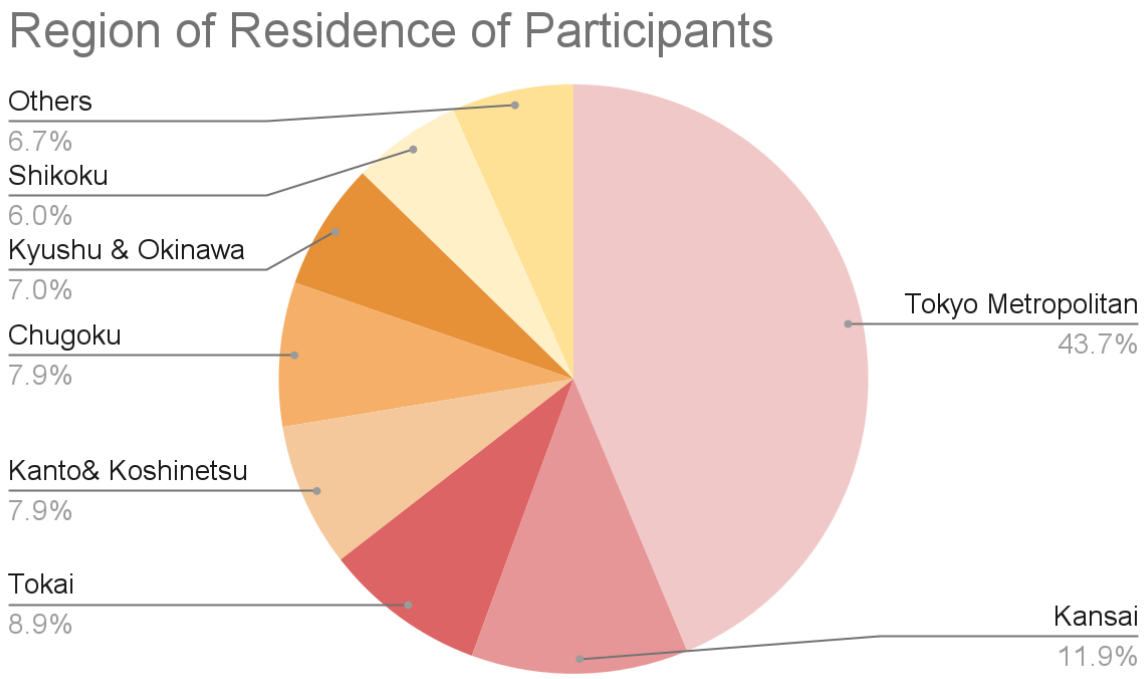
Compared with the previous year (FY2024), the number of participants increased by 31 to 440, with students joining from 44 prefectures.

Because the program runs six months and requires sustained engagement, participation rates tend to be higher among 1st–2nd year high school students who are not yet in their exam periods. At the same time, we had many students from combined junior–senior high schools; 2nd–3rd year junior high students accounted for 35% of all participants. This indicates that the program is providing opportunities to engage with technology well before students choose between humanities and science tracks.



As for regions, as in past years 43% of participants came from the greater Tokyo area (Tokyo and the three neighboring prefectures), followed by a strong showing from the Kansai region. A notable trend this year was an increase in participants from the Chugoku region, largely thanks to significant cooperation from a private high school in Tottori Prefecture. With the school principal's support for the program's mission, information reached students effectively and participation grew.

These results show that, while students still face hurdles to independently gather information and apply, support from schools and guardians makes it much easier for them to take the first step.

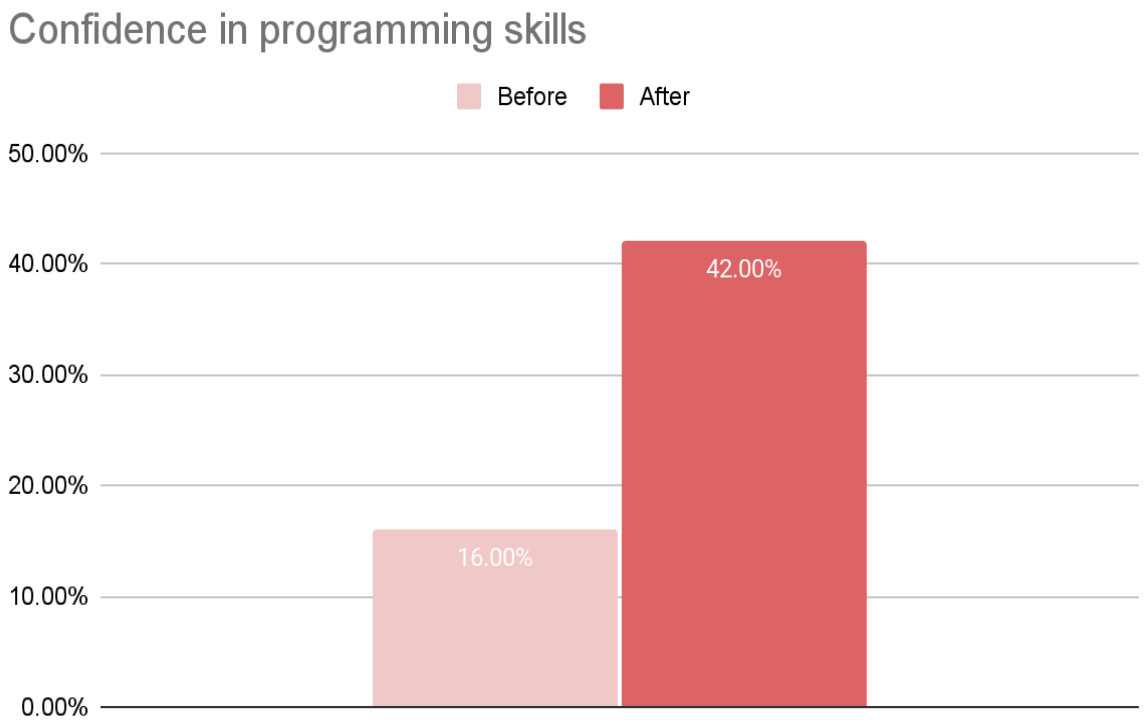


Changes and Trends Observed in Participants

Marked gains in confidence across programming and business-building skills

Pre- and post-program surveys showed a significant increase in confidence related to programming skills. At the start, nearly 74% of students expressed interest in STEM-related pathways (including information science, computer science, and IT), yet their self-confidence in skills was relatively low.

Even when students are interested, the realities of busy school life mean there are limited opportunities to get hands-on, build a product, and take that critical first step. Although our program requires a longer commitment, learning programming through the app development course and progressing with the support of professional engineer mentors led to notable improvement in skill confidence. This year, we increased instructor-led lecture time and offered more careful hands-on guidance for beginners, resulting in around 60 more students completing all course sessions than last year.

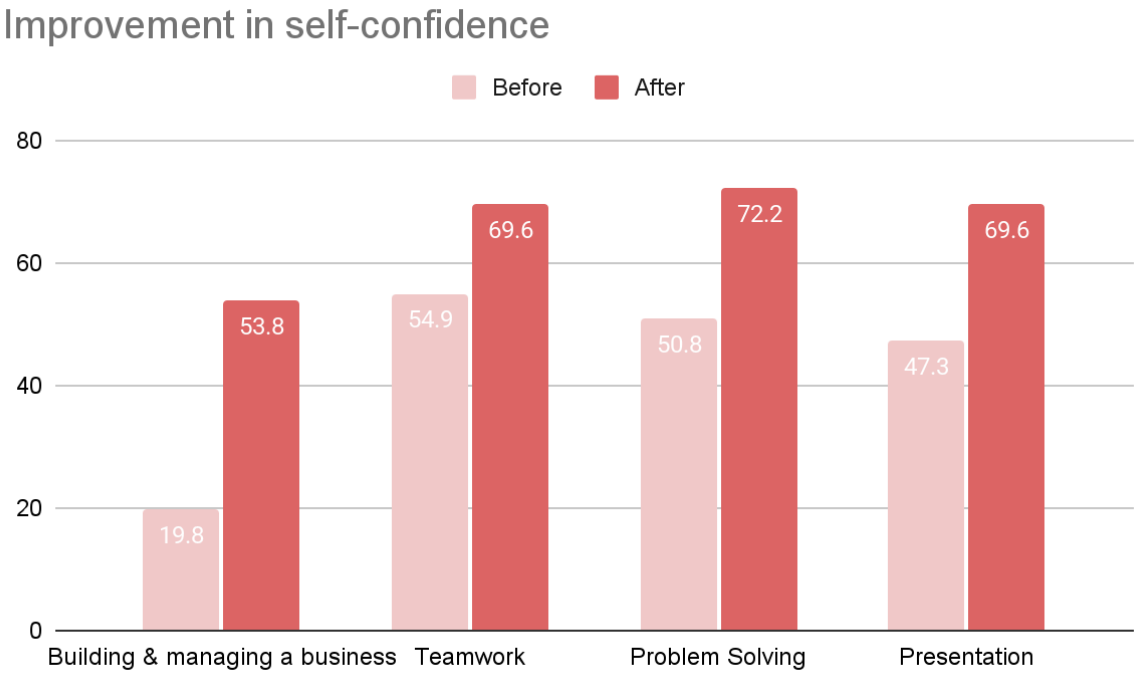


Further survey results confirm that self-assessment (confidence) improved markedly across all skill items from before to after the program. This indicates that Technovation Girls not only strengthens students' practical skills but also enhances self-efficacy and self-awareness.

Overall, through project-based learning that combines entrepreneurial thinking, team practice, and real-world connection, students showed growth in:

- Understanding of business building and marketing
- Improved self-expression and persuasive communication
- Heightened awareness of social issues and motivation to contribute
- Developing a sense of identity as female leaders

We view these results as highly meaningful outcomes in terms of women's empowerment in STEM and entrepreneurship education.



Examples of Shifts in Career Aspirations

Before	After
Software Development	*AI Development*
Programmer	*White-hat Hacker*
Using English at an overseas company	*Engineer in Space Development*

In the pre/post surveys, we also asked about career and future occupations. As shown above, by the end of the program, students could envision more concrete goals for what they want to be or try. Given our emphasis this year on learning AI within the program, we also saw that students who had broadly envisioned “being an engineer” became particularly drawn to the AI field.

In the coming years, we plan to further enrich lectures that deepen learning about AI-powered development, helping next-generation female leaders expand into the AI domain.

Voices from Participants (after six months)

“It was my first time advancing a project with people outside of school, so I learned a lot about the challenges of information sharing, how to conduct discussions, and how to manage a project. Being able to actually develop an app was extremely valuable for my future career.”

“I’m interested in both engineering and social issues, so Technovation Girls—where I could tackle both—was a rare and precious opportunity. It was my first time building an app, and I wrestled with many errors, but I resolved them one by one by asking questions on Discord to coding mentors and the organizers. Having submitted to the U.S., I now hope to try building a more full-fledged app with tools other than Thunkable.”

“I enjoyed working with my teammates toward the same goal and programming together. At first, my parent signed me up and I had zero interest in programming—I even felt forced. But as the lectures and team discussions went on, I realized I could never have had this experience alone; it’s something special. I began challenging myself in areas I wasn’t good at and kept going. What I learned here is invaluable, and I want to make use of it in my life going forward.”

Conclusion

In FY2025, both the number of participants and number of teams reached record highs, reaffirming that Technovation Girls is spreading across Japan year by year. Going forward, we will also focus on building an alumni community so that participants can share the value of this activity within their schools and networks, while raising recognition of the program as something that encourages students to take that first step for their future studies and careers.

Among this year’s recipients of the Minister of Education Award was a student who had been on a humanities track in high school but, through this experience, began

considering entry into an information science faculty. While participation from the second year of high school is not easy to balance with school life, we now see clearly that the program can strongly influence university admissions decisions. We therefore recognize the importance of sharing such stories with future candidates.

Finally, we offer our heartfelt thanks to all the university student and professional mentors who provided mentoring and coding guidance to each team throughout this fully online program. As an organization, Waffle will continue working to ensure that mentors themselves not only give but also learn and grow through the opportunities we provide.

We look forward to your continued support for the FY2026 edition as well.

Sponsors

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the following companies for their generous support of this program (titles omitted; listed in Japanese alphabetical order).

Special Sponsors

- MetLife Foundation
- Lenovo Japan LLC
- NTT Group

Gold Sponsors

- Salesforce Japan Co., Ltd.
- The Japan Research Institute, Ltd
- Unity Technologies Japan K.K.

[Challenge Stage]

Gold Sponsors

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