FY2025

Waffle College Tech Career Course Impact Report

Project Overview

Specified Nonprofit Corporation Waffle conducted the "Waffle College Tech Career Course," a program for female and non-binary university and graduate students aspiring to pursue careers in technology, over approximately five months from August 12, 2025 to January 17, 2026.

This year, 46 participants enrolled, significantly exceeding the previous year. Through practical learning opportunities such as application development using Python and classes on AI, the program achieved the following outcomes.

Number of Participants	Percentage of students who increased confidence in using IT to address social issues	Percentage of students who articulated concrete next actions
46 (42 completed)	**80%** (34 of 42 completers)	**59%** (25 of 42 completers)

As a result, participants shared comments such as:

"I learned both the difficulty and joy of trying new things and want to continue taking on challenges."

"I would like to apply what I have learned in real-world settings."

About Waffle College

Waffle College is a program launched in 2022. It provides a free curriculum for university and graduate students with no prior IT experience who aspire to become IT engineers. The program aims to cultivate three pillars: Tech Career, Empowerment, and Leadership. Over five months, students develop interest in IT, experience intensive programming training, and aim to secure internships.
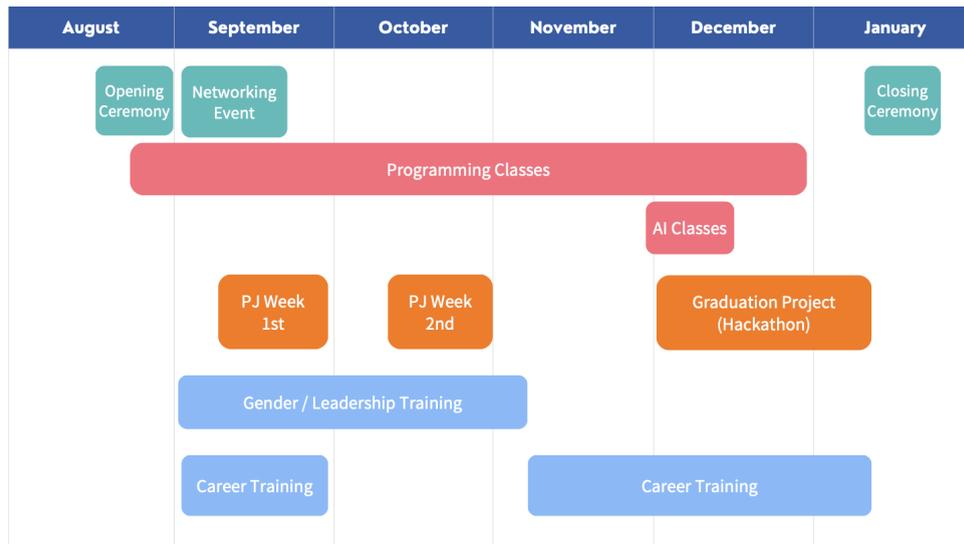
Overview of the Tech Career Course

- Period：
  - August 12, 2025 – January 17, 2026
    - Classes were held once per week for 90 minutes (twice per week during some periods)
- Location：Online
  - Opening and Closing Ceremonies were held onsite. Partial travel expenses were provided for participants traveling from distant regions.
- Participation Fee：Free
- Participants：46
- Eligibility：
  - Women and non-binary individuals aged 18 and above enrolled in universities, graduate schools, junior colleges, technical colleges, or vocational schools in Japan or abroad (working professionals were not eligible)
  - All academic backgrounds were welcome.

Program Content

In order to cultivate the three core pillars—"Tech Career," "Empowerment," and "Leadership"—within a short period of time, and to enable students to secure internships as engineers upon completion, the course implemented the following initiatives.

Program Timeline

August	September	October	November	December	January
Opening Ceremony	Networking Event				Closing Ceremony
	Programming Classes				
				AI Classes	
	PJ Week 1st	PJ Week 2nd		Graduation Project (Hackathon)	
	Gender / Leadership Training				
	Career Training		Career Training		

Programming Classes

As in the previous year, Python was selected as the primary programming language in response to student requests and industry demand. Over approximately three months, students built a blog system through a Project-Based Learning (PBL) format. While learning programming fundamentals such as variables and syntax, students developed a blog application using Flask and deepened their understanding. Weekly office hours were also provided to address questions.

AI Classes

Students learned practical AI skills, including designing effective prompts for ChatGPT and exercises using the OpenAI API to retrieve and display outputs. The program also addressed the relationship between AI and society, discussing gender perspectives and

unconscious bias, and encouraging students to reflect on the values and assumptions underlying technology.

PJ Week

Two PJ Weeks were conducted to promote student-led learning.

During the first PJ Week, students developed app concepts addressing familiar social issues over two weeks and presented their ideas on the final day. Professionals from R/GA Tokyo, JPMorgan Chase, and Morgan Stanley attended and provided practical feedback from industry perspectives, including feasibility and user experience.

During the second PJ Week, students engaged in coding interview preparation using the LeetCode platform. After setting progressive goals (e.g., solving three problems, then ten), students worked at their own pace. On the final day, with cooperation from JPMorgan Chase and Morgan Stanley students participated in pair programming exercises as a culmination of their learning.
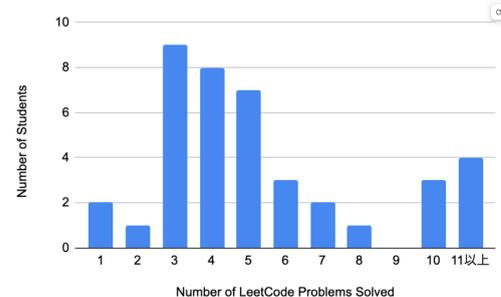
Graduation Project (Hackathon)

As the culmination of the Tech Career Course, students spent approximately six weeks developing web applications in teams of three to six.

During the development period, midterm presentations were held with support from Kyndryl Japan Group. Teams presented their concepts and progress and received feedback from technical, user-experience, and business perspectives.

After further refinement, eight teams produced distinctive web applications, including:

- Music recommendation sharing app "Music Space Musica"
- Habit support app "Habi+"
- Travel assistance app "Trip4U"
- K-POP × Korean language learning app "KoreMelo"
- AI task management app "AI Scheduler"
- University timetable support app "Classease"
- Diary-based music recommendation app "HuGLoG"
- Goal-support app "SAITAN"

Judges from Uniadex, Morgan Stanley Holdings, The Japan Research Institute, Salesforce Japan, and 42 Tokyo evaluated the final presentations and awarded company prizes to outstanding teams.

＜Examples of Graduation Projects＞

SAITAN

HuGLoG

Gender / Leadership Training

Gender and leadership workshops were conducted to strengthen participants' mindsets. Students learned the importance of authentic leadership and the courage to step beyond their comfort zones.

Career Training

To deepen understanding of the IT industry and strengthen career awareness, career talks by IT role models and workshops (self-analysis, resume writing, interview preparation) were conducted.

The career training sessions were conducted with the generous support of the following organizations and individuals:

- Kyndryl Japan Group
- Lenovo Japan GK
- CyberAgent, Inc.
- Cybozu, Inc.
- Two individual volunteers
- Three Waffle College alumni
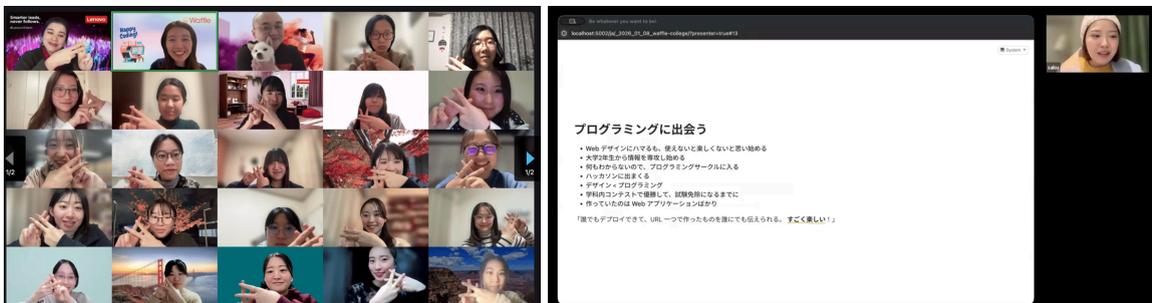
Opening Ceremony

Although the program is primarily an online program, we place great importance on fostering peer connections among participants. For this reason, an onsite opening ceremony was held at the beginning of the program as an opportunity for students to connect in person.

The opening ceremony was conducted with the support of Kyndryl Japan Group. In addition to providing their office as the venue, the company offered a range of enriching content, including a corporate introduction, a talk session by employees, and an office tour. Throughout the event, students actively engaged with one another and were seen building meaningful connections.


Closing Ceremony

At the conclusion of the program, an onsite closing ceremony was held as the culmination of the five-month journey.

On the day of the event, participants presented the outcomes of their graduation projects and shared the results of their learning. In addition to providing an opportunity for participants to connect with one another, the ceremony also served as a chance to engage with the individuals who had supported their learning throughout the five months.

The event was held with the support of Uniadex Co., Ltd., which generously provided its office event space as the venue. Hosting the ceremony in a real corporate office environment also gave participants a more concrete image of their future careers.
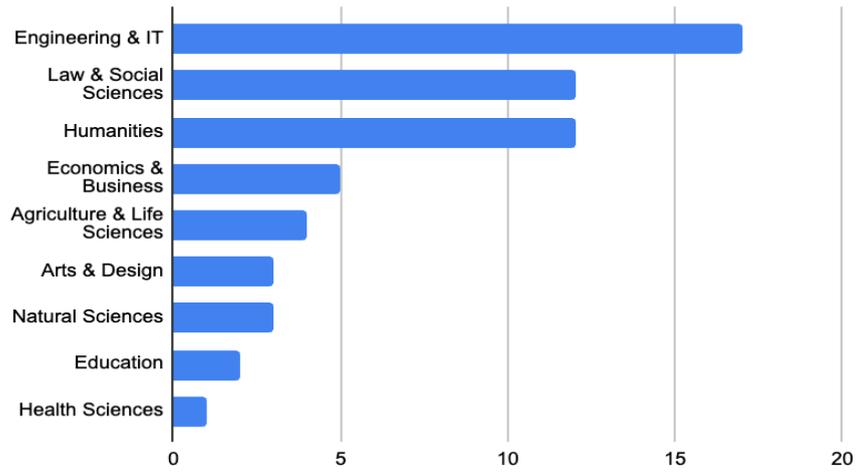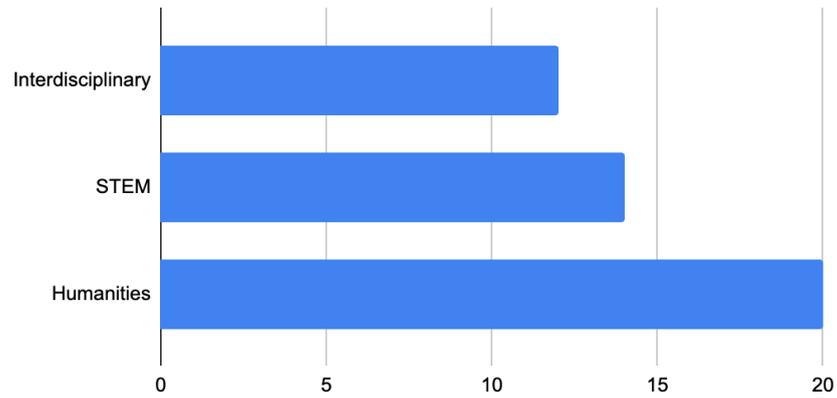

Participant Information
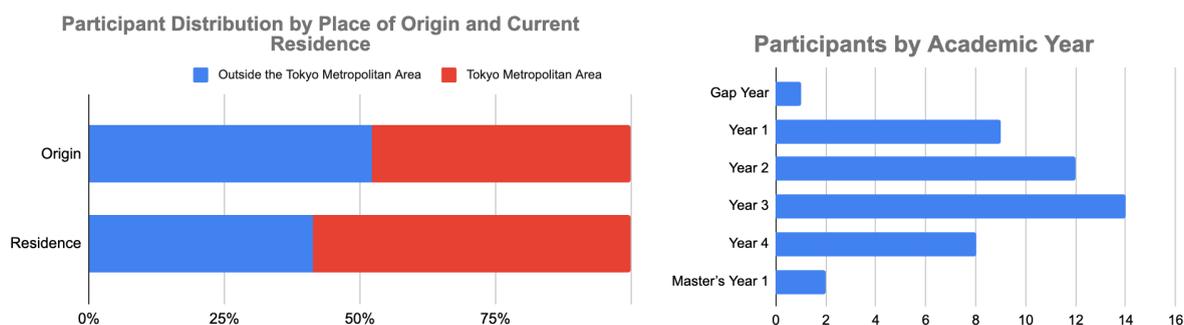
41% participated from outside the Tokyo metropolitan area (including Miyagi, Niigata, Yamanashi, Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Hyogo, Fukuoka, Nagasaki, and Okinawa).

Participants ranged from first-year undergraduates to master's students, with third-year undergraduates being the largest group.

## Participants by Field of Study (Select All That Apply)

Field	Value
Engineering & IT	17
Law & Social Sciences	12
Humanities	12
Economics & Business	5
Agriculture & Life Sciences	4
Arts & Design	3
Natural Sciences	3
Education	2
Health Sciences	1

Participants by Self-Identified Academic Background

Background	Value
Interdisciplinary	12
STEM	14
Humanities	20

36% majored in engineering or information-related fields, while many came from humanities disciplines.

30% identified themselves as STEM-oriented; others identified as humanities or interdisciplinary.

How Participants Learned About Waffle (Multiple Responses Allowed)
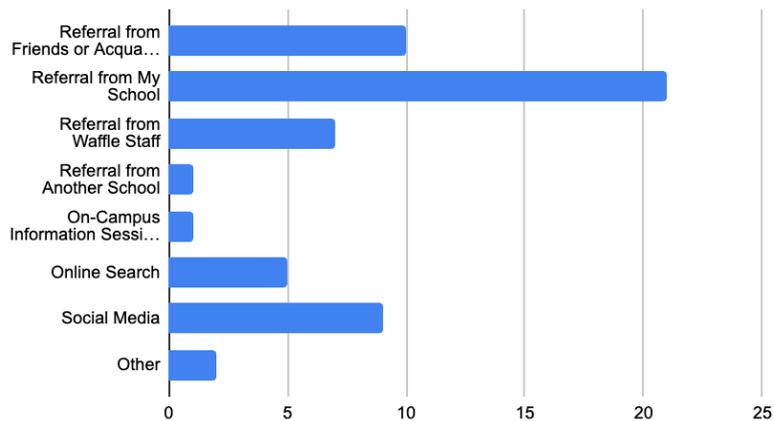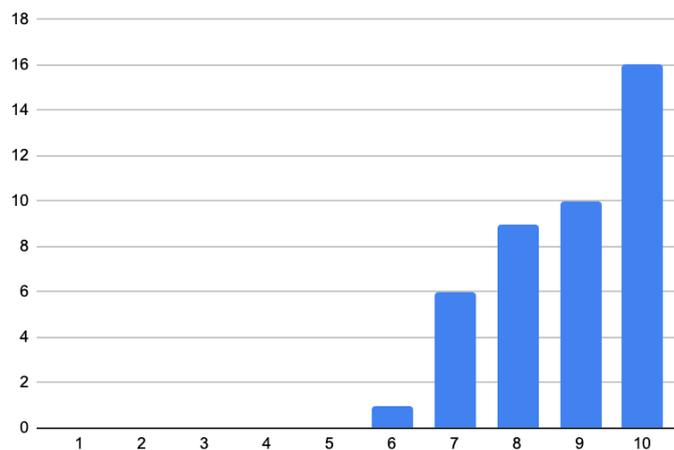

Many students joined the program primarily through referrals from their affiliated institutions (such as their schools). In recent years, the number of participants referred by Waffle College alumni has also been increasing.

Program Evaluation

Among the 42 respondents to the post-program survey, overall satisfaction was high.

Reasons cited included:

- Tangible technical growth

- ○ Ability to develop a web application as a team
- ○ Increased confidence in building applications
- Value as an Entry Point for Beginners
  - ○ It provided a foothold even for those starting with zero prior knowledge.
  - ○ It became an opportunity to begin learning programming, which they had previously been interested in.
- Impact of Role Models and Peers
  - ○ Meeting female IT role models helped reduce feelings of anxiety.
  - ○ Hearing from working professionals helped participants form a clearer image of their future careers.
  - ○ Connecting with peers increased their motivation to learn.

High levels of satisfaction were also confirmed regarding the graduation project.

Satisfaction with the Graduation Project
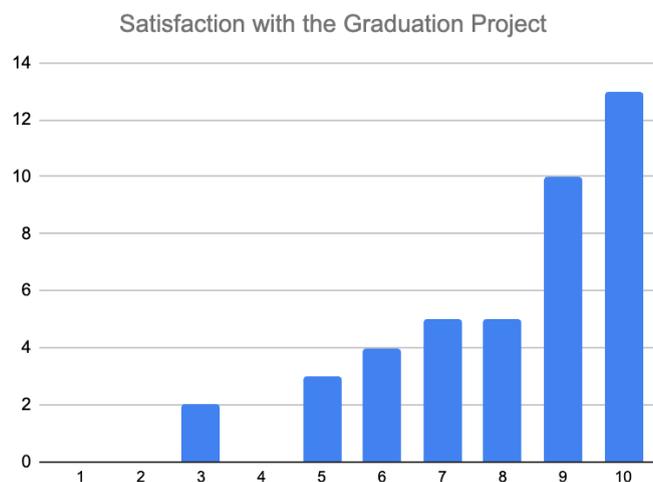
The main reasons for positive evaluations are as follows:

- Learning Unique to Team Development
  - ○ Ideas that would not have emerged individually took shape through discussion.

- ○ Participants experienced the enjoyment of dividing roles and collaborating to create a single product.
    - ○ They gained hands-on experience with collaborative development using GitHub.
    - ○ Seeing the efforts of other team members inspired them and increased their motivation.
- Sense of Growth and Achievement
    - ○ Participants felt a strong sense of accomplishment when the features they implemented functioned successfully.
    - ○ Although the level of difficulty was high, they were able to feel that they were growing as a result.
    - ○ Many experienced, for the first time, the feeling that "development is enjoyable."

Impact of Participation

At Waffle, in response to the severe gender gap in Japanese society, we define "Digital Competency" as consisting of five elements that enable female and non-binary students to participate fully in the digital society:

- Attitude (self-esteem and self-efficacy)
- Digital skill (technical ability as creators)
- Agency (the ability to make choices and take action toward them)
- Normative beliefs (a commitment to gender equality and to creating a better society)
- Community (a sense of ownership and belonging in IT-related career paths)

Below, we compare participants' self-assessments before and after the program with regard to all components except Normative Beliefs.

Attitude (self-esteem and self-efficacy)

Over the course of the five-month program, the proportion of participants who felt that they could use technology to address social issues or everyday problems that interest them increased significantly.

In particular, it is presumed that the experience of developing applications—producing concrete and visible outcomes—contributed to strengthening participants' sense of self-efficacy.
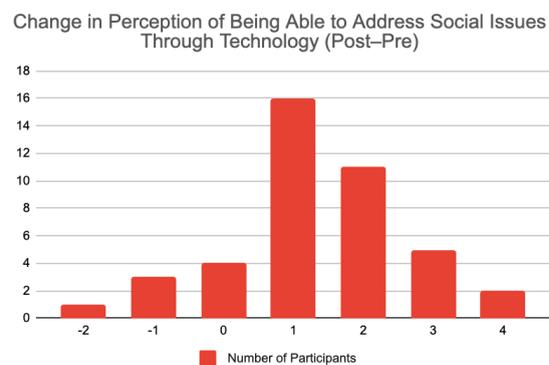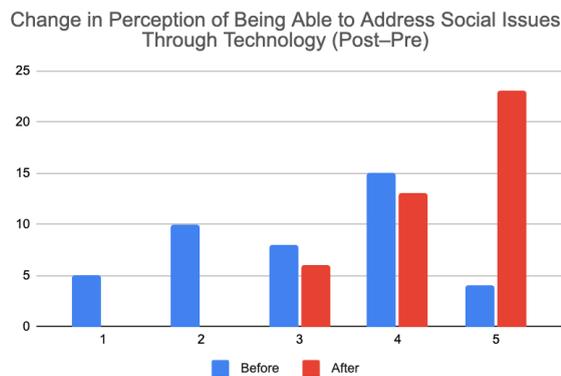

Digital skill (technical ability as creators)

With regard to confidence in taking on the challenge of developing IT products, a majority of participants demonstrated improvement. However, among those who had rated themselves relatively highly prior to the program, some participants showed a decrease in their self-assessment after completion.

One possible explanation is that learning in an environment alongside peers with high levels of motivation and skill in IT may have led some participants to evaluate their own abilities more critically in comparison with others. In addition, through the learning process, participants may have become more aware of the depth and complexity of the knowledge and skills required in the IT field, leading them to reassess their previous

self-evaluations. As a result, their confidence may have temporarily declined as their understanding of the field deepened.

Therefore, the observed decrease in self-assessment does not necessarily indicate a decline in motivation; rather, it can reasonably be interpreted as a shift in perception accompanying learning progress.。
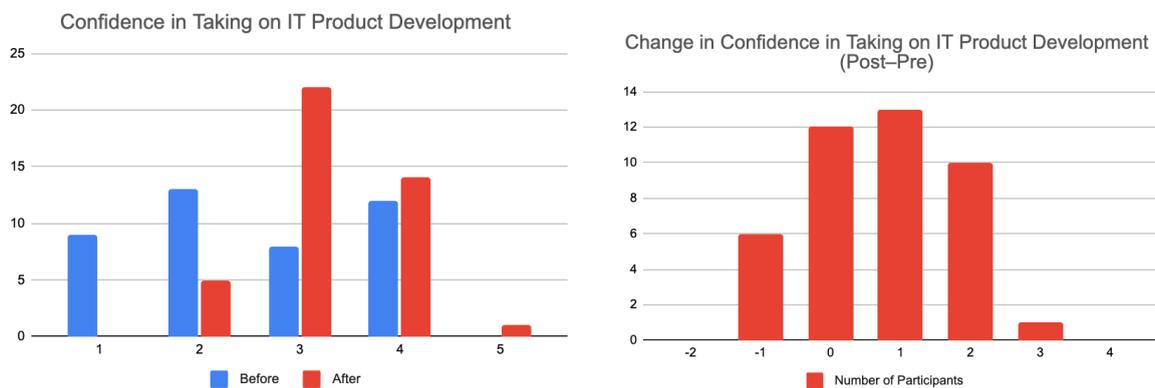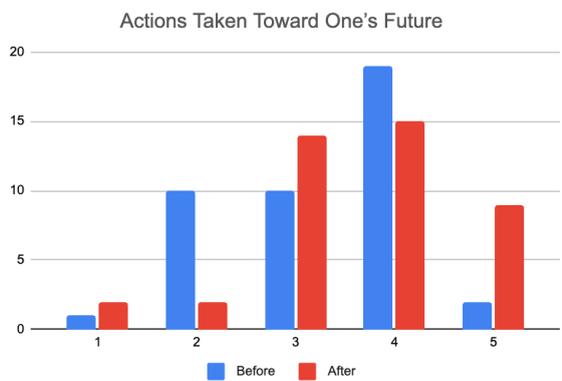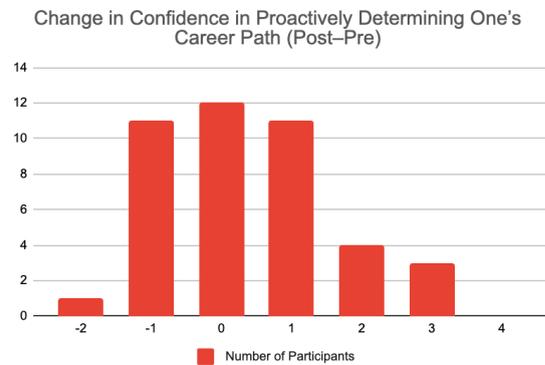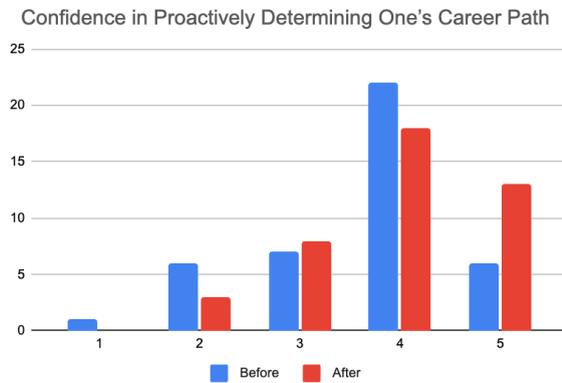

Agency (the ability to make choices and take action toward them)

Both "confidence in proactively determining one's career path" and "the extent to which participants are taking action toward their future" showed an overall upward trend. Although there were no dramatic numerical shifts, a steady increase was observed.

On the other hand, a small number of participants demonstrated a decrease in their scores after the program. One possible factor behind this may be the influence of the career talks delivered by role models within the program. Many of the speakers shared experiences of having acted very proactively during their student years, such as actively participating in hackathons and pursuing internships.

As a result, participants may have compared their own past actions with those of the role models, leading them to assess themselves more critically in relative terms and temporarily lower their self-evaluations. This does not necessarily indicate a decline in
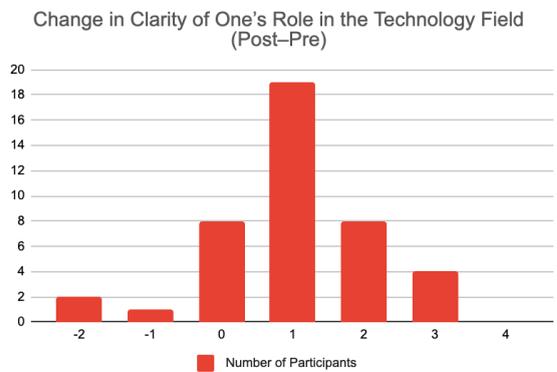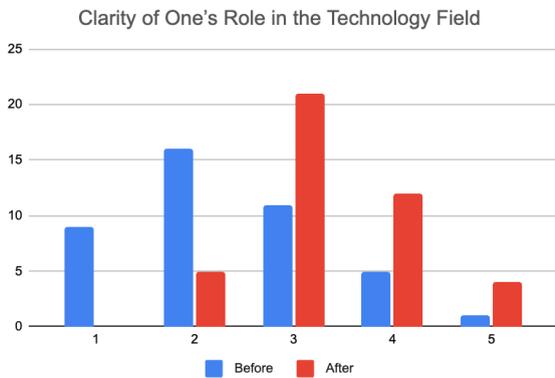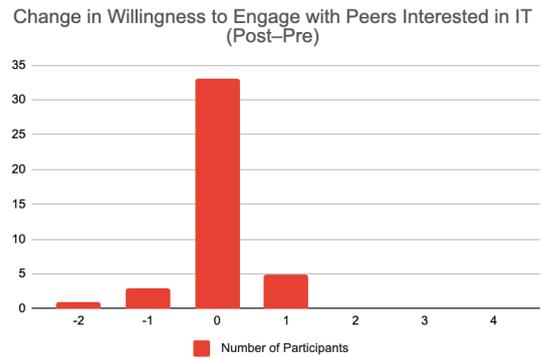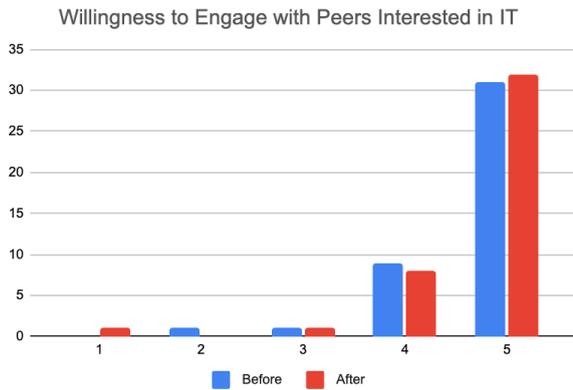
motivation; rather, it may be interpreted as a reassessment that occurred after gaining a broader and more aspirational perspective.

Confidence in Proactively Determining One's Career Path

Change in Confidence in Proactively Determining One's Career Path (Post–Pre)

Actions Taken Toward One's Future

Change in Actions Taken Toward One's Future (Post–Pre)

**Community (a sense of ownership and belonging in IT-related career paths)**

Regarding the item, "Do you feel that you would like to remain connected with peers, mentors, and instructors who are interested in IT even after the program ends?", responses were already at a generally high level prior to participation, and no significant change was observed between the pre- and post-program assessments. This suggests that many participants had already possessed a strong interest in the IT field and high expectations for building professional networks.

On the other hand, a majority of participants reported a strengthened sense of the role they could play within the technology field after completing the program. It is considered that gaining concrete development experience and exposure to role models through the program contributed to clarifying their vision of their future selves.

Willingness to Engage with Peers Interested in IT

Change in Willingness to Engage with Peers Interested in IT (Post–Pre)

Clarity of One's Role in the Technology Field

Change in Clarity of One's Role in the Technology Field (Post–Pre)

As described above, positive changes were observed across all four indicators over the course of the five-month program.

The graph below summarizes the changes in participants' self-assessments before and after the program, visualizing the impact of the program on their digital competency.

Digital Competency
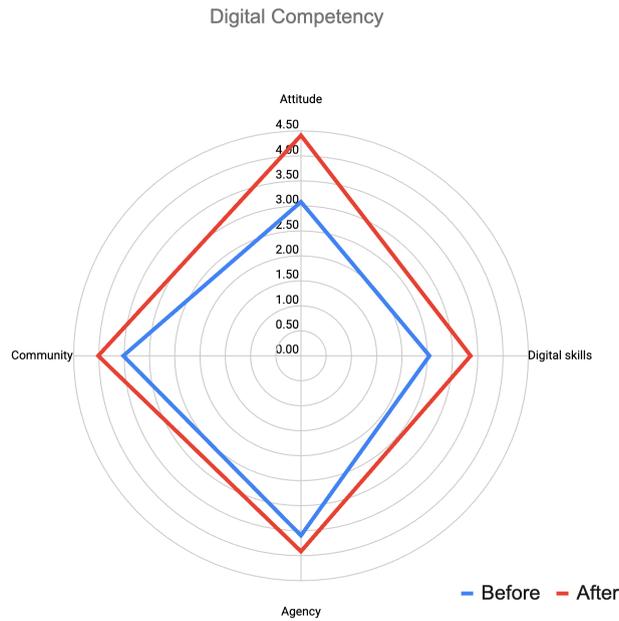
Post-Program Pathways

It was confirmed that many participants continued to maintain a high level of interest in the fields of IT and programming even after completing the program.

59% (25 participants) provided specific examples of "technologies they would like to learn" or "programs they would like to participate in," indicating that their interest had developed into clear intentions for action.

In terms of content, in addition to expressing a desire to participate in practical opportunities such as hackathons, internships, and app development, some participants also mentioned pursuing new areas such as machine learning and data science. Furthermore, several participants named specific programs such as Google STEP and 42 Tokyo, suggesting that their career aspirations had become more concrete.

Level of Interest in IT and Programming
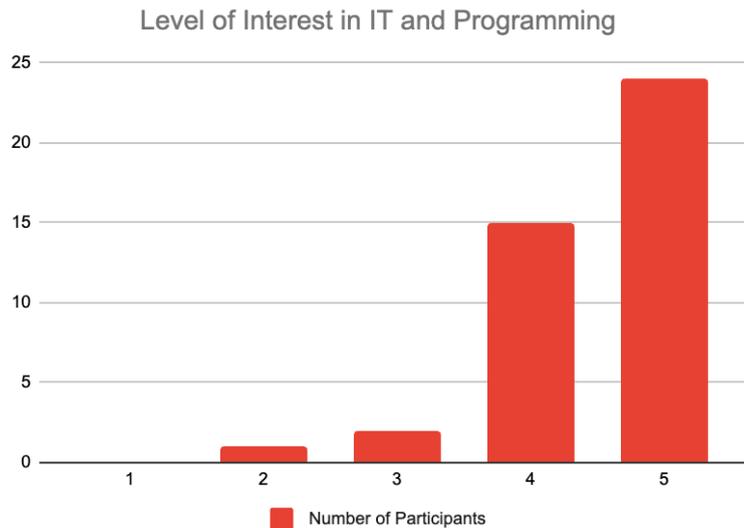
Some participants have already secured job offers in IT-related roles at:

- The Asahi Shimbun Company
- KDDI Agile Development Center
- Sony Digital Network Applications
- ITOCHU Techno-Solutions
- Mitsubishi Estate IT Solutions

Participant Voices

- "I truly loved the warm and welcoming atmosphere created by the program staff. Being surrounded by that supportive environment allowed me to spend the past six months feeling at ease and able to grow freely."
- "Before joining this program, I had come to dislike programming to the point where I was considering giving up on pursuing a career in IT. However, by working together with peers who shared the same aspirations to create a tangible product, I grew to love it again. Having the opportunity to hear valuable stories

from professionals working in IT also greatly changed my perspective and values.”

- “I was able to experience things that I could not have encountered at university or in my everyday surroundings, which broadened my horizons. I am truly glad that I took on the challenge of participating in this program.”

- “Not only the technical support but also the career-related workshops were extremely helpful.”

- “It was such an enjoyable six months that even as a humanities student, I began to feel that I could pursue a career in IT. I am very glad that I had the courage to participate.”

- “Being exposed to the experiences and values of various people made these six months truly meaningful. Even after entering the workforce, I would like to cherish what I learned here and use it to shape my future career.”

Our Corporate Sponsors

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the following organizations for their generous support in making this program possible.
(The organizations are listed in Japanese alphabetical order.)

Sponsors

- Kyndryl Japan
- CyberAgent
- Cybozu
- MetLife Foundation
- Uniadex

Supporting Organizations

- R/GA Tokyo
- JPMorgan Chase
- Salesforce Japan
- The Japan Research Institute
- 42 Tokyo
- Progate
- Morgan Stanley Holdings
- Lenovo Japan