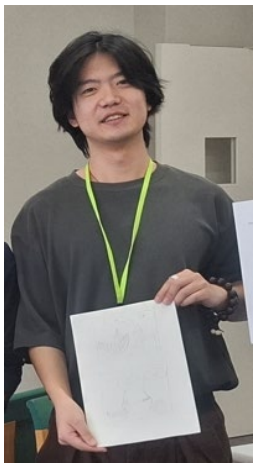
Student Reports of the Global Fellows Programme 2025 in Tokyo



Qingyu ZENG
Information and Communications Engineering
School of Engineering, D3

During this Global Fellows Programme, I worked in a mixed team with three PhD students from Imperial College London and two other PhD students from Science Tokyo. Together, we developed a sub-project under the theme of sustainable food consumption, moving from a rough idea to a concrete poster and final group presentation within a very short time.

Over the week, we attended lectures, joined interactive games, and took part in cultural visits and hands-on activities. These sessions gave us not only technical background on sustainability and food systems, but also many chances to talk, disagree, and then rebuild ideas together. Designing the poster and final pitch as a team was especially intense: we had to decide what to keep, what to simplify, and how to tell a clear story that non-experts could understand.

What I found most valuable was the collision of different ways of thinking. The Imperial students and Science Tokyo students often framed the same problem in completely different ways: some focused on social impact and behavior, others on technical feasibility or data, and others on policy and ethics. I realized that many of my own “default” assumptions come from my training, and that stepping back and listening first often leads to a better solution than pushing my own approach.

I also learned a lot about practical collaboration: how to divide roles fairly, how to make quick decisions when time is limited, and how to communicate across disciplines without relying on jargon. The informal moments, such as chatting during breaks, were just as important as the formal sessions, because they built the trust we needed to work honestly and efficiently as a team.

Overall, this programme made me more confident in working with people from different countries and research areas. It reminded me that sustainability challenges cannot be solved

by one discipline alone, and it motivated me to bring this kind of open, collaborative mindset back into my own research.

M.K.
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society, D3

The Imperial–Science Tokyo Global Fellows Programme 2025 offered a valuable opportunity to engage in an intensive, interdisciplinary training environment focused on "Sustainability Innovation for Food Consumption and Production." The programme's alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 underscored the global significance of sustainable consumption and production, making participation both timely and meaningful.

What attracted me to this programme was its design as a collaborative, problem-solving platform that brings together doctoral students from diverse academic fields across Science Tokyo and Imperial College London. Through structured group discussions, interaction with researchers from different disciplines, site visits, and joint poster presentations, the programme fostered the professional and research competencies necessary to address real-world sustainability challenges. This interdisciplinary and intercultural format helped cultivate practical insights, and diverse collaborative skills that are often difficult to obtain within a single academic discipline.

I was particularly motivated by the programme's emphasis on developing workable solutions through collective knowledge-sharing. I believe that effective collaboration begins with establishing a strong foundation by clarifying each participant's expertise, research interests, and assumptions. Equally important is active participation, which the programme strongly encouraged and facilitated.

Participating in the programme also provided an opportunity to broaden my international outlook. Engaging closely with doctoral students from Imperial both in group work and during the residential activities at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center deepened my understanding of how sustainability challenges are approached in different academic and cultural contexts. I believe that such exposure is essential for developing research with genuine global relevance.

Overall, I found the Global Fellows Programme 2025 to be an exceptional opportunity to enhance my interdisciplinary competencies and contribute meaningfully to discussions on food sustainability innovation within an international setting.

R.A.
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society, D3

Coming from a research background in socio-economic phenomena within waste management systems, this program opened a different but related perspective for me. It was not only a series of scheduled activities, but a real learning process that forced me to reflect, interact, and sometimes struggle to communicate effectively with people from very different academic interests. By the activities done on the first day, I realized it set the tone for the rest of the week: collaboration, patience, and trying to listen.

The main focus of the program was to develop a proposal to contribute in the sustainability of food production and consumption. One main lesson I learned here was that when people are put into a team, especially high-achieving PhD students, almost everyone tries to show their strengths. It becomes difficult to work smoothly if there is no clear direction. Someone needs to step up and lead, but at the same time, others need to willingly follow for the sake of group progress. That balance is harder than it sounds. There were also rounds of debate, brainstorming, rewriting ideas, and learning how to compromise. Honestly, this was exhausting, but it was also where I learned the most — not only about sustainability topics, but about communication, informal leadership, and respecting different expertise. With presentation pitch and final presentation session, I got the chance to watch other teams present and it taught me as much as preparing our own presentation. I saw how some groups managed to create a presentation that was visually appealing yet still rich in content, and we tried to reflect that in our work as well.

However, groupwork is not everything about this program. We had a site visit to a soy sauce factory in Saitama. This was surprisingly interesting, especially seeing the production flow and how traditional food industries adopt sustainable ideas. The team activities that followed were both fun and challenging. The activity also took us to Meiji Jingu Shrine, which added a cultural dimension to the program. We also served with presentations from Nissin company about the “Kanzen meshi” and other researchers with interesting research related to food system.

Overall, joining the Global Fellowship Program was a meaningful experience. I made connections with new fellow PhD students, learned practical lessons about group dynamics, and gained insights into sustainable approaches in food systems — something that I can relate

to my research in waste management, especially circular economy and resource efficiency.
Advice for future participants:

- Be ready to listen, not just speak.
- Leadership is important, but so is the willingness to follow.
- Take notes during site visits; small observations can spark useful ideas later.
- Presentations matter — learn from other teams, not only from your own.
- Networking is as valuable as the academic content, so talk to people even outside formal sessions.

Finally, I want to express sincere thanks to the organizers and everyone involved in making this program possible. Although a short program, it left long-term impressions that I believe will help me in both my research and professional interactions in the future. Hence, I truly recommend for those who have interest to join this program.

Yanghong YU
Department of Mathematical and Computing Science
School of Computing, D2

This was an experience filled with surprises, deep emotions, and countless unforgettable moments. Although two weeks have already passed since the GFP programme ended, every time I think back on it, I cannot help but feel a sense of fulfillment, gratitude, and happiness.

The programme focused on food consumption, and each group consisted of three students from Science Tokyo and three from Imperial College London. Together, we completed a series of tasks and finally proposed a solution to a specific real-world problem. We started as complete strangers, yet within just five days we cooperated, exchanged ideas, and created something entirely new. Looking back, it still feels incredible. I am truly proud of my teammates, and deeply moved by the friendship that grew among us and the subtle ways we influenced one another.

None of us specialized in food-related fields. Even though we are all PhD students, learning and understanding a completely unfamiliar domain in only three days was a significant challenge. Now that I reflect on it, I believe we succeeded because of the inclusive atmosphere within our group, the way we encouraged each other, and the collaborative process through which we iterated and refined our ideas. As a mathematics researcher, I am not very used to collaborative work.

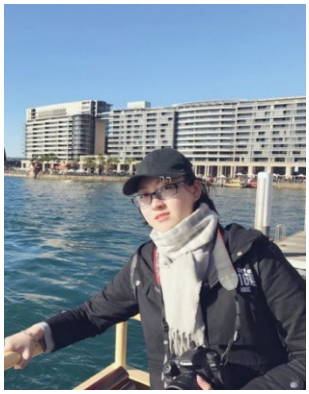
Mathematics is often a solitary journey where you generate an idea and push it forward on your own. You set your own goals and decide your own pace. But this time, everything depended on communication and cooperation. We needed to explain our thoughts clearly, listen carefully to others, and truly understand what they meant, not only in the literal sense but also in the extended meaning, especially when the speaker is a native English user. I realised that such skills can only be acquired through real experiences like this.

I also learned how important it is to sense when to lead and when to follow, and how this balance shapes a productive discussion. We experienced moments of intense thinking, long silences, and even a little awkwardness. But I came to understand that silence in group discussions often carries meaning and power. This was a precious experience of successful collaboration, and I feel deeply grateful for the opportunity. Applying my mathematical knowledge to a food-related context also broadened my perspective and allowed me to reflect more deeply on the meaning and potential of my own research, insights I would not have gained without discussing with researchers from completely different fields.

Beyond the project itself, I realised that our group built a strong and genuine connection. This connection, and the inspiring peers I met during the programme, became one of the most valuable things I took away. The Japanese students from my own university were incredibly brave and kind, and they constantly encouraged me. The Imperial College students were patient, thoughtful, and showed natural leadership. Observing how they conduct research, discuss ideas, express opinions, and interact with others taught me more than I expected. I feel extremely fortunate to have crossed paths with them. With such teammates, we could encourage each other, solve problems together, and most importantly become good friends who shared many touching and unforgettable moments.

For me, this was truly a warm, memorable, and joyful experience. I am very grateful to the university for offering me this rare opportunity, and to all the wonderful people I met. I would also like to thank our coach Stefanie. Without her, we would not have had such a harmonious team atmosphere. The timing of her interventions, her gentle guidance, and her personal presence taught us many things simply through her example.

Since most activities took place off campus, the programme would not have gone so smoothly without the thoughtful arrangements and constant support from Ms. Shihoko Sai and all staff. It is through the dedication of every organizer and staff member that I was able to grow so much and gain such a meaningful and complete experience.



Jiayi JIN
Department of Life Science and Technology
School of Life Science and Technology, D2

I believe that I have gained a memory of a lifetime through the GFP program, an experience that will stay with me far beyond the duration of the event itself.

Over the past week, I not only met many new friends, but also expanded my interdisciplinary horizon and deepened my understanding of how diverse life paths shape the way people grow, think, and make decisions. Through so many conversations, group missions, and discussions, I learned to appreciate the different logics behind each individual's mindset. Especially, every participant brought their own story, background, and academic perspectives, and this diversity allowed me to see problems from aspects I had never considered before. It was also inspired to learn from the wide range of activities arranged in the programme. Almost all tasks pushed me to think critically, communicate clearly, and collaborate effectively.

One of the highlights for me was working with my team toward our final creative presentation mission. Both the process and the teamwork were deeply rewarding. I learned how trust is built within a team, how roles naturally form within a team, and how collaboration can transform scattered ideas into something powerful and intriguing. When our design was awarded the Innovation Award, I was truly amazed and proud. It felt like a recognition with strength not only of our creativity, but of the effort, cooperation, and spirit we shared as a team.

This experience also made me reflect on my role as a PhD student and a future researcher. To become truly qualified in my field, expertise alone is not enough. The ability to communicate, collaborate, and contribute with people from different cultures and disciplines is equally essential. Respect, openness, and cooperation are all not just soft skills, but are foundations for meaningful scientific and global progress. The GFP programme has strengthened my confidence in international collaboration and has encouraged me to continue stepping beyond my comfort zone. It reminded me how much we can grow when we open ourselves to new people, new ideas, and new ways of thinking. I feel genuinely satisfied with what I learned from GFP, and I hope to carry this experience forward as I continue my journey in research and in life.

Jiawei HU
Department of Materials Science and Engineering
School of Materials and Chemical Technology, D2

Experience and Reflections on the Programme
(Imperial–Science Tokyo Global Fellows Programme)

Participating in the Imperial-Science Tokyo Global Fellows Programme was a truly meaningful and eye-opening experience for me. Through academic exchange, teamwork, and intensive interaction with students from different backgrounds, I not only gained new knowledge but also developed new perspectives on research, society, and myself.

One of the strongest impressions I gained from this programme was the difference in the way students from Imperial and I approach academic and social problems. In the past, I tended to believe that as long as one focused deeply on research and technology within their own field, that would be sufficient. However, through discussions and collaborations in this programme, I realized that they always considered a broader perspective: how research transforms into technology, how technology influences society, and whether it is truly feasible and beneficial in real-world applications. This change in perspective had a profound impact on me. As a future researcher and highly skilled engineer, I now strongly feel that having a societal perspective is indispensable.

Another unforgettable experience was the series of collaborative games we completed together. These activities required strong teamwork, careful planning, and mutual trust among all participants. Each member needed to complete their own task successfully, and only when everyone succeeded could the entire team pass the challenge. Because communication was limited during the activity, effective coordination depended heavily on the preparation we made beforehand. Although we eventually completed the challenge just before time ran out, our efficiency was not ideal due to insufficient planning at the beginning. Through this experience, I realized that instead of rushing into action, thorough preparation and calm execution are far more effective. This lesson has been extremely valuable for both my research work and my daily life.

In addition, this programme gave me precious opportunities to meet many outstanding people, including students from Science Tokyo as well as Imperial. These connections have greatly broadened my academic network and international outlook. Motivated by this experience, I plan to participate in an exchange programme for three months between April and August next year. I sincerely hope to continue developing these international connections and to deepen my academic collaboration in the future.

Finally, the poster presentation at the end of the programme was one of the most important milestones for me. Our team received the Collaboration Award, which was a great honor. In the past, whether in English or Japanese, I always relied on scripts during international presentations. Although the presentation time was short this time, it was the first occasion in my life that I delivered a full presentation without a script. This experience gave me tremendous confidence. I now feel much more prepared and confident for future international presentations and academic communication.

Overall, this programme was not only an academic experience but also a personal journey of growth. It reshaped my way of thinking, strengthened my confidence, and clarified my future direction as a researcher.

Qiuhong HUANG
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society, D2

This program has been a rare, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact with doctoral students from diverse academic backgrounds and countries, spanning both Science Tokyo and Imperial. Although the program was brief, it provided ample opportunity to collaborate intensively on innovative solutions addressing pressing challenges in food production, which was this year's theme.

The excursion to the soy sauce factory was particularly eye-opening. Despite having been a student in Japan for the past 1.5 years, this was my first opportunity to participate in such a kengaku, gaining firsthand insight into the struggles local businesses face. It was enlightening to observe how modern pressures push many producers toward mass production to reduce costs, often at the expense of traditional craftsmanship. The highlight of the visit, however, was tasting the soy sauce ice cream, which had a unique flavor reminiscent of burnt caramel.

Beyond the academic and cultural experiences, the friendships formed during this program are invaluable. I am confident that these connections will last a lifetime, and I look forward with great anticipation to participating in the exchange program at Imperial in FY2026.

Maria Suzune OBA
Department of Social and Human Sciences,
School of Environment and Society, D2

Through GFP2025, I had the chance to work closely with students from very different fields and backgrounds. During the one-week program, we did team-building activities, shared our ideas, and tried to combine our perspectives to make a final proposal. Even though our expertise was different, the atmosphere was open and everyone was willing to learn from each other.

To contribute to the theme, we first needed to understand each other's research areas. Interdisciplinary communication was sometimes difficult, but I learned how important it is to listen carefully, ask questions when I don't understand, and respect each person's way of thinking. These small things helped our teamwork a lot.

What I appreciated most was the feeling of connection. In my normal university life, I rarely meet people with completely different career paths, so hearing about others' motivations for their research was very inspiring. It also made me reflect on my own goals and reminded me why I enjoy doing research.

Overall, GFP2025 was a meaningful experience that helped me grow both academically and personally.

Daiki SEKITA
Department of Life Science and Technology
School of Life Science and Technology, D2

In the Imperial-Science Tokyo Global Fellows Programme 2025 (GFP), we had a nice opportunity to discuss a global issue and make friends with students from Imperial College London as well as Science Tokyo. The topic we discussed was “sustainability for food consumption and production” aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals; “Responsible Consumption and Production”.

We had 5 days for this programme and built a closer relationship with international students through various activities in first 3 days. Through the team-building games on 1st and 2nd day, we learned what is important to do well with team members. Even though we had short time and difficult problems in the games, we could overcome it by dividing roles and communicating with each other. Sometimes I could not keep up with the activities because of my insufficient English skills, but I found it is important to share my concerns with team members without hesitation to catch up with the discussion. In the field trips on 2nd and 3rd day, we learned Japanese culture with international students. It was a lot of fun to share our culture with people from foreign countries. Even though I am a Japanese, I had learned a lot of new things about the production of soy source and tea ceremony.

We started discussion of the issue about “sustainability of food consumption and production” and its solution with international students and gave a poster presentation in following 2 days. It was smooth for us to move the project forward thanks to the experience in team-building games and field trips. Our team proposed a small household greenhouse with a smart-phone application named “RE:BLOOM” to tackle with the problems of reuse of household waste or CO2, increasing price of food, and so on. By using this system, people can grow vegetables by themselves with the help of the application which connects to a sensor to check the health condition of the plants. We also provide a carbon capture material which captures CO2 from food waste and reuses it for photosynthesis of the plants. Fortunately, we received an award for our innovative ideas.

I really enjoyed the discussion of a topic which is not related directly to my own research and learned many important things to do well in team activities. Though I still felt some difficulties about English communications, I was motivated to practice more. It was a good opportunity for me to take the first step toward becoming a researcher who works globally.

L.B.
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society, D2

During the GFP program, I learned extensively about Japanese food culture and its preservation. I also learned about the different ways Japanese farmers and food companies, are finding innovative ways to continue and integrate their culinary heritage in an age where preservation is increasingly challenging due to an aging society and technological advancement. We visited the Kinbue soy sauce park in Saitama, where I learned about soy sauce-making that has been preserved through 20 generations and is still thriving in the traditional way, despite many old soy factories going bankrupt. I was inspired by how their director spoke about making soy sauce, and when he said he learned from his grandfather to always say positive things while making soy sauce, because that positive energy would permeate the taste and quality of their product. Another memorable experience was learning about the Japanese Tea Ceremony. It was fascinating to experience the passion that went into making the matcha, which I could taste in the drink itself. The special talks from speakers also gave me great appreciation for the immense effort required to ensure food reaches people's plates across the country and even overseas.

Apart from learning about food production and culture in Japan, I worked with a group of very intelligent people from Science Tokyo and Imperial College London who are passionate about their research and contributing to global challenges related to the theme. The group sessions reinforced my soft skills, particularly during the team-building activities. The different games tested our teamwork, patience, leadership, and trust in each other. The most important lesson I learned from these activities is to never give up and to maintain open communication with everyone (collaborators, lab mates, teammates, etc.), to ensure we're all on the same page, and to extend help when needed. The team-building activities were a fun challenge that prepared us for the upcoming collaboration project.

For the collaboration project, my teammates and I ensured our project incorporated all our expertise, the theme, and all the activities and talks we had participated in. Even though our team didn't win top prizes, it was still very rewarding, and I felt we won because we learned so much and gave our best effort, and I felt that our team was very balanced. I highly recommend participating in the GFP. Even if your research doesn't seem related to the theme, you'll be surprised how different expertise can contribute to one project and how your work can connect with others.

Koki IKEDA
Department of Computer Science
School of Computing, D1

I joined the GFP programme held in Tokyo as a member of a six-person team, each from a different country, and worked for five days on the theme of sustainable food consumption and production.

During the first two days, we mainly participated in workshops designed to build teamwork. For example, we tried to describe a picture to a partner who could not see it, using only verbal explanations. This activity was interesting because it had implications for careful communication in a culturally diverse team. I believe this insight helped our later group work.

During the middle two days of the programme, we also visited several places related to the theme. One of them was a traditional wooden-barrel soy sauce producer. There, I learned that both the craftsmen who make wooden barrels and the soy sauce producers who use them are decreasing, despite the irreplaceable value of the product. The visit made me aware that serious issues can exist even in familiar products, and I believe it supported our group idea of strengthening networks among small producers.

In the last three days, we discussed possible solutions related to the theme in English. I realised something obvious but important that discussion requires a much higher level of English than everyday conversation, as it requires understanding and building on each other's opinions. I now feel that I can never improve my English too much for future similar opportunities. The special classes for students who lack confidence in English, provided before the programme, was more practical than any English class I had taken before, and it has become a guideline for my future learning.

Throughout the programme, some members were always smiling or making jokes, which created a positive and open-minded atmosphere in the team. I realised that my contribution in that sense was limited. In addition, interacting with doctoral students from Imperial College London, international students at Science Tokyo, and Japanese students from different fields inspired me, as they were all lively. I learned a lot from their attitudes.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the kind members of Team "EPIC JIGS" and everyone I met in this precious programme.

Purin PUPROMPAN
Department of Chemical Science and Engineering
School of Materials and Chemical Technology, D1

Spending a week at the Global Fellows Programme was a genuinely fun experience and a welcome break from my daily research routine. The program brought us together with students from Imperial College London to tackle the theme of "Sustainability innovation for food consumption and production". It had been a long time since I last worked with people from such diverse academic backgrounds, and it really helped broaden my perspective.

One of the most memorable parts was actually Day 2, before we even started the main research project. We spent the morning doing team challenges and solving logic puzzles. At first, it felt a bit unusual for a research program, but it was a great icebreaker. It helped us understand how our teammates thought and solved problems, which made the actual collaboration much smoother.

On the first day, the guest lectures gave me a lot to think about. As a chemical engineering student, I found the talk by Prof. Michikazu Hara on ammonia synthesis and catalysts very relatable. It showed me a concrete example of how my specific expertise can directly contribute to sustainability issues. I was also interested in the talk by Mr. Shigenobu Takayama from NARO. Hearing about the use of data science and AI in agriculture emphasized how useful these tools are—something I've been interested in applying to my own research as well.

For the group project, our team worked on an invention idea to address the food sustainability theme. My main role was to provide the technical chemical engineering knowledge to make sure our idea was actually feasible. Since my team members came from different backgrounds, I had to practice explaining complex chemical engineering concepts in simple terms without using too much jargon. The process involved a lot of brainstorming, but our final presentation went very smoothly. What I liked most was how we handled the Q&A session; because we knew each other's strengths, every team member could answer the questions that related to their specific knowledge. I'm also very proud to say that our team won the "Most Creative Project" award.

We also had some time to explore. The trip to the in Saitama was actually my first time visiting a soy sauce factory, and seeing the production process in the cedar barrels was quite interesting. We also visited Meiji Shrine and watched a tea ceremony. Even though I have been to these places before, it was nice to just relax and enjoy the atmosphere away from the busy city vibe.

Overall, the week wasn't just about work; it was about connecting with people. Staying together at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center (NOMYC) gave the week a real 'training camp' atmosphere. Sharing meals and spending free time with the students from the UK has made me want to explore the world outside of Japan more seriously. I feel like I've grown in my ability to brainstorm and present ideas, and I'm leaving the program with a fresh mindset.

Kota ISHIZEKI
Department of Mechanical Engineering
School of Engineering, D1

Imperial-Science Tokyo Global Fellows Programme 2025 was training camp-style international exchange programme themed "Sustainability Innovation for Food Consumption and Production". In this programme, I conducted group work and presentation in teams of six members to devise solutions for the food problems occurring on our planet today. Although our members' expertise differed, through discussion, we focused on a data bank platform for sustainable food production as a solution. I think this idea emerged because our group consisted of members specializing in hardware, software, biology, and social sciences. After deciding on the concept of solution, we discussed the details of the presentation theme, challenges, and goals for the poster presentation scheduled for the final day. The process leading up to the presentation differed from research presentation in my lab, requiring us to organize our idea in a short timeframe. Therefore, it was crucial for the entire team to leverage each member's role and expertise. Through this process, creating the poster was a fresh experience for me.

During this five-days program, I experienced not only discussions but also hands-on workshops and field trips. The event that left the strongest impression was visit to Meiji Shrine. The students from Imperial College London showed great interest in this event, which is common for most Japanese people. Their curiosity spanned a wide range of topics, and spending time together was truly enjoyable. Furthermore, while explaining the shrine visit to them, I found my own understanding of Japanese culture deepened. I felt that thinking about other cultures provides an opportunity to reflect on our own.

In this Global Fellow Programme, I believed I encountered excellent team members and highly motivated doctoral students. I consider this encounter the best thing I gained from the programme and hope to apply it to my future endeavors.

Zixu FENG
Department of Life Science and Technology
School of Life Science and Technology, D1

This programme is a five-day residential retreat in Yoyogi with 30 PhD students from Imperial College London and Tokyo University of Science. We were mixed into five teams of six students. The first two days focused on team building, and the last three days were spent working toward a final group poster presentation.

All communication during the programme was in English. The discussions moved quickly and covered many topics, so I had to stay fully focused most of the time. This was tiring, but the content of the discussions was so interesting that I could keep my attention throughout. It felt like a good kind of tiredness — the kind that comes from learning and thinking together.

The group work experience itself was also very interesting. At the beginning, there was no fixed leader in our team. The roles of “leading” and “following” moved naturally between different members. I realized that good teamwork needs a balance between two abilities: giving clear directions to others, and being willing to follow clear directions after listening to the group.

I started to think about how a leader actually appears in a team. A leader, in my view, is first a good listener. They can sort through a lot of information, find the main goal, and then turn that into concrete instructions that everyone can act on. During our initial topic selection, everyone shared many different ideas during brainstorming, and the amount of information quickly became confusing. At that moment, one team member summarized our ideas and proposed a realistic, coherent plan. The rest of us almost naturally accepted him as the leader from that point. This moment left a strong impression on me and made me think more about how leadership can emerge from interaction, rather than from a title.

I was also very moved by every people I met in this programme. Everyone was open, kind, and willing to contribute. During the farewell session, I actually cried because I did not want it to end. On the last night we went to karaoke together, and the relaxed, happy atmosphere felt like the perfect way to close the trip.

If I have the chance, I would gladly join this program again. I strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in international events and wants to experience intensive collaboration with students from different backgrounds.

Woratat LEELAWORASET
Department of Transdisciplinary Science and Engineering
School of Environment and Society, D1

In this Global Fellow Program, I learned how to work with people from very diverse disciplines. My group consisted of two biologists (gene editing), two education designers (AI chatbot for primary school students and education policy), one electrochemist (fuel cells), and one transportation expert (air transportation and network science). Because our expertise varied so widely, it was challenging to design a project for Sustainable Development Goal 12: responsible consumption and production, with a focus on food. However, everyone put in sincere effort to collaborate. Although I got sick and missed the team-building activities, I did not feel a large gap when I rejoined the group work.

At first, I felt some tension during our discussions. I suggested a few steps based on my previous experience with project-based group work, but the Imperial College students did not listen at first and only followed my advice after losing some time. I think this may be because Imperial College culture encourages students to speak up a lot, but they may have less experience in structured project-based collaboration. This initially made me less motivated about voicing my opinions. However, in the next group work session, we made adjustments by assigning clearer tasks and objectives, which made the process much smoother. In the end, our team received the Collaboration Award for our interdisciplinary project.

Apart from the group work, I learned about current food and agriculture technologies from the National Agriculture and Food Research Organization (NARO), Kinbue Shoyu, and Nissin Food Holdings Co., Ltd. These sessions covered the entire supply chain from agriculture, production, to consumer behavior. I also found the expert sessions on converting wine waste into leather and other agritech innovations very interesting.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. John Pinney for all his suggestions and feedback, which helped guide our team and contributed to us receiving the award.