

Declaration for the IITGN-JAIST International Workshop

On the 8th day and the 9th day of March in the year 2021, 34 participants consisting of students and members of faculty and staff from Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) in Gandhinagar in India and Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST) in Nomi, Japan have held an online international workshop to discuss “Education under the Pandemic Era and in the Post-pandemic Era” with a particular focus on how we can utilize our new experiences and approaches in the unprecedented global crisis of COVID-19 pandemic to design the development of education for the post-pandemic era.

The global surge of the COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented threat to everyone’s life in general and education in particular. In desperate efforts to protect students from infection, schools were closed, students were confined in a limited space and opportunity for activities, and online classes were introduced, where possible. The intensity and speed of the changes instantly threw educators and students into great confusion and let them simply wish to go back to “Normal” educational environments. The changes were considered temporary substitutes for what had been lost.

Through intensive group discussions and group presentations in eight hours over the two days, however, we have shared a clear understanding that despite the prevailing negative feeling, the changes we have experienced contain profound implications for the development of education in the post-pandemic era. The pandemic stressed the importance of life, communication, supports from others, cooperation and collaboration, sharing, empathy, and equality. The reconfirmation of the importance of those concepts will guide us to a new direction of educational development. And the online approaches in education proved to be possible even though many improvements and adjustments need to be made in technology, equipment availability, and pedagogy. The online approaches in university education can open up tremendous opportunities for sharing lectures, learning without a physical presence on campus, exchanging opinions with diverse students, reducing the cost of university education, promoting academic cooperation and collaboration, and many others.

All of us, the participants in this international workshop, swear here that we will maintain positive thinking and make every effort to develop a new dimension in education in the post-pandemic era by making the best use of what we have experienced and acquired in this critical period.

This declaration has been approved by all the international workshop participants on the 9th day of March in the year 2021.