



May 28, 2021
Keio University

KGRI Establishes the “Research Project Keio 2040” to Disseminate a Global Standard for Sustainable Aging Societies

Japan’s population of elderly persons is projected to reach around 40 million in 2040, with Japan then destined to become a super-aged society unlike any other in the world. Due to the increasing seriousness of various social challenges, such as a rapid decrease in the working population, increases in the numbers of people requiring long-term care, and in social security costs, it is predicted that Japanese society will no longer be able to sustain itself in its current configuration.

At KGRI (Keio University Global Research Institute), after careful scrutiny of this situation, we have launched the “Research Project Keio 2040” as an initiative to maintain the “Independence and Self-respect” of individuals and Japan as a whole, as well as to formulate a healthy and robust society.

“Independence and Self-respect” is the founding spirit of Keio University, and signifies the maintenance of one’s personal dignity and acting on one’s own judgement with the responsibility this entails in all matters. This project aims to integrate diverse research domains, such as the sciences and technology, medicine, and the humanities and social sciences, to offer solutions to this problem of national importance by means of dialogues in increasingly multilateral contexts within academia, including student bodies, as well as with industry, governments, and overseas institutions. Furthermore, it will posit ideals of a new nation and pursue true independence by having Japan lead global society.

1. Aims of this project

- The creation of social systems whereby each person has individual self-respect and a healthy livelihood
- The emergence of new technologies which make a reality of integration and harmony between humans and machines
- The proposal of a new order which ensures the protection of self-respect for the individual and nation in the network space with its vastly expanding platforms

2. Project Overviews

Three projects will mutually complement each other to seek out methodologies for the solution of these challenges around the core spirit of “Independence and Self-respect.”

■ Extending Healthy Life Expectancy Project

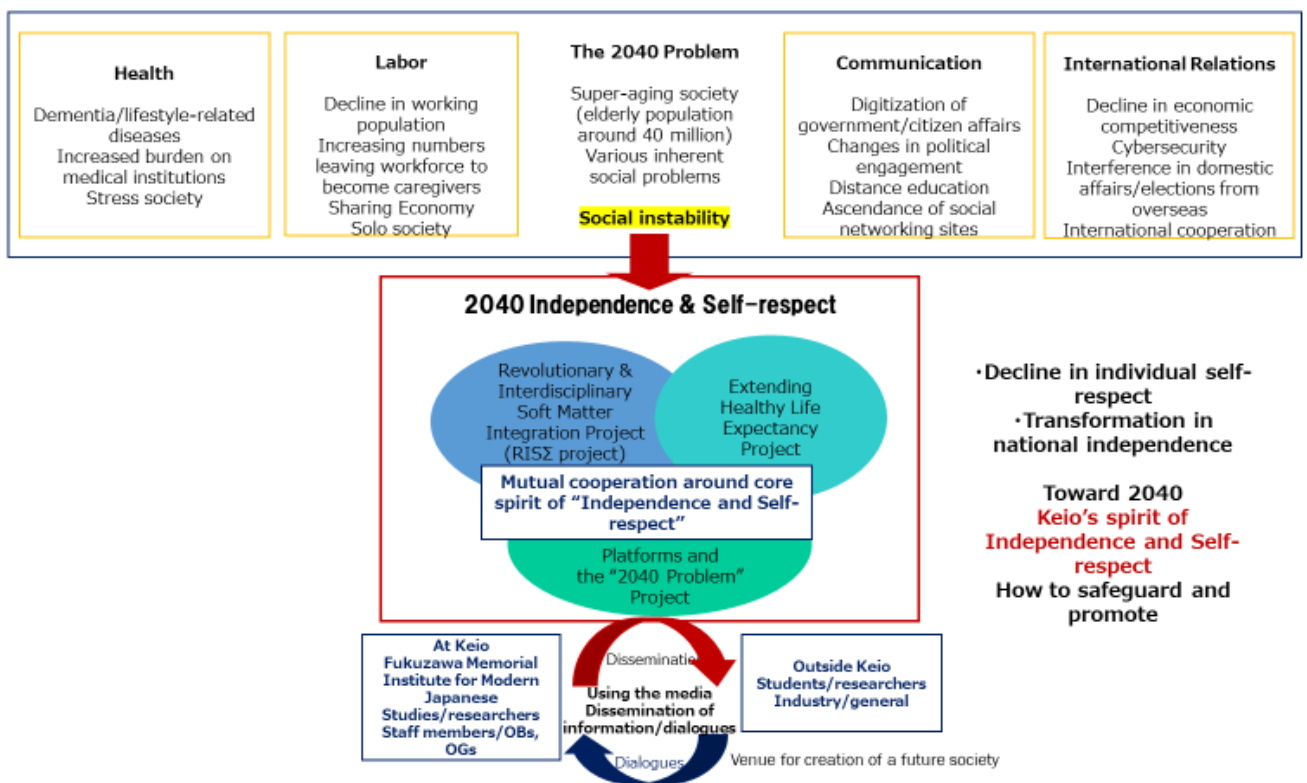
We will promote system design and demonstration experiments which deploy diverse technologies, and propose systems from health perspectives with the aim of formulating social systems that ensure that the elderly and household care givers, who it was to date difficult to incorporate in social planning, can work in a reasonable and healthy manner as well as safeguarding global competitiveness for the nation.

■ Revolutionary & Interdisciplinary Soft Matter Integration Project (RISΣ project):

By making full use of the new technology known as “soft matter,” whose familiar forms include protein and other pliant substances, we will devise technologies which make a reality of the harmony and integration of humans and machines, and, by creating basic technologies which support sustainably aging societies, we will pave the way for new societies that will surmount the impending global challenge of super-aged society.

■ Platforms and the “2040 Problem” Project:

Platforms such as social networking systems and internet media, which have achieved rapid growth, will be evaluated in terms of both their positive and negative facets as countermeasures for the 2040 Problem. We will devise, test, and verify varieties of legal and ethical frameworks and how these should be deployed in order to maintain and promote democracy, freedom, social environments, and external independence on platforms, while incorporating perspectives from overseas and platform industries.



3. What is the venue for creation of a future society?

This project aims to surmount the national crisis of a super-aged society and create a new normal, while positioning Japan as the global forerunner. In order to achieve this, systems transcending the traditional frameworks of universities as locations of cutting-edge research and scholarship will be required to both disseminate visions of the future as elucidated by researchers, as well as the mindset behind their conceptions, and to flexibly incorporate social responses into project activities. To this end, the consistent participation of a diverse range of actors across frameworks, including national borders, generations, regions, and industries, combined with advanced research bringing together know-how from the sciences, engineering, medicine, and the humanities and social sciences, will be instrumental. This project will also function as a venue for the creation of a society in which all its members are imbued with individual self-respect and live both robustly and flexibly in the face of a super-aged society.

We plan to share regular details and reports on these activities on the following website going forward.

<https://www.kgri.keio.ac.jp/index.html>

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