

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

- 10.00 a.m. Registration
UNESCO Digital Week 2025 Reflections:
AI, Ethnic Studies, and Digital Fluency for
Malaysian Youth.
Presenters: Dr. Nurul Akqmie Badrul
Hisham
- 10.30 a.m. From Cuisine To Communication: The Role Of
Gastrodiplomacy In French Student Adaptation In
Malaysia
Presenters: Krishna Baskaran
- 11.00 a.m. Mobility Program as a Postgraduate:
Global Competence Program, Skills for Future
Ready Talents.
Presenter: Kuroshini Saravanan
- 11.30 a.m. Persidangan AGI Open 2025: Dari Idea ke Impak,
Bukan Hanya Sekadar Visual
Presenter: Nur Hezreen Othman
- 12.00 p.m. Session end

About UNESCO UKM Dialogues

UNESCO UKM Dialogues is designed to highlight research insights, international mobility experiences, and global engagements undertaken by researchers and postgraduate students from KITA. This programme serves as a medium for disseminating emerging research findings, reflecting on fieldwork and mobility activities, and showcasing multidisciplinary scholarly explorations related to ethnicity, culture, identity, and intercultural communication.

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UNESCO UKM Dialogues

Postcards from KITA: The UNESCO Chair Session – Research Insights, Mobility Experiences, and Global Engagements

Presenter:

Dr. Nurul Akqmie Badrul Hisham

Research Fellow & Manager, UNESCO Chair on Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Krishna Baskaran

Student, Master's in Ethnic Studies, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Kuroshini Saravanan

Student, Master's in Ethnic Studies, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Nur Hezreen Othman

Assistant Registrar, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

19 December 2025 (Friday) | 10.00 am – 12.00 pm

KITA Meeting Room, Level 4, Administrative Building, Kolej Keris Mas, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor

This seminar will be broadcast online via:

Zoom & KITA Facebook Live

ABSTRACT AND PRESENTER PROFILE



UNESCO Digital Week 2025 Reflections: AI, Ethnic Studies, and Digital Fluency for Malaysian Youth.

Presenters: Dr. Nurul Akqmie Badrul Hisham

This presentation explores how Malaysian youth, as digital natives, engage with AI-mediated content and platforms through the lens of ethnic studies. Drawing from qualitative interviews with a diverse group of youth, ranging from undergraduate to PhD students of various ethnic, religious, and socio-cultural backgrounds. The study investigates how digital fluency shapes their media consumption, identity expression and intercultural communication practices online. The session will outline three key areas: (1) how digital fluency intersects with cultural identity and belonging; (2) how young users negotiate algorithm-driven environments that often reflect and reinforce social biases; and (3) how AI functions not only as a technological tool but also as a sociocultural agent influencing

intercultural dynamics. A recurring theme across the interviews is the strategic use of bargaining and negotiation by youth to navigate online spaces, suggesting active engagement rather than passive consumption. This work will be presented as a lecture with a PowerPoint slideshow, incorporating selected narratives from participants to humanize the data and ground the analysis in lived experiences. Aligned with the theme of Digital Learning Week, particularly the strand AI in Educational Practices, this research contributes a disciplinary perspective by linking AI and digital learning to the field of ethnic studies. It offers insights into how AI shapes the everyday digital practices of youth and provides a framework for understanding intercultural communication in algorithm-mediated contexts.

Presenter Profile:

Dr. Nurul Akqmie Binti Badrul Hisham is a Research Fellow at Institut Kajian Etnik (KITA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). She also serves as the Chair's Manager overseeing the UNESCO CHAIR on Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion. With a Bachelor's and PhD in Communication from UKM, she is committed to scholarly pursuits and has been involved in various international programs such as the IKMAS UKM-Nippon Foundation Young Scholars Program, YSEASLI, and ASEA-UNINET. Dr. Akqmie has received the prestigious Hadiah Samsudin A. Rahim award for her academic excellence. Her current research focuses on the intersection of intercultural communication, mediatization (digital culture), screen studies, and youth cultures.



**From Cuisine To Communication: The Role Of Gastrodiplomacy
In French Student Adaptation In Malaysia
Presenters: Krishna Baskaran**

The study investigates the interaction of intercultural communication and gastrodiplomacy by examining the experiences of French undergraduate exchange students in Malaysia. Intercultural communication. The study addresses three objectives: to evaluate how French students adapt to Malaysian cultural norms through gastronomy during intercultural encounters; to identify challenges faced by educators and facilitators in supporting intercultural negotiation practices; and to assess the role of gastrodiplomacy in shaping social integration and cultural awareness. This study addresses gaps in literature, where methodological approaches minimally use interactive qualitative methodologies and theoretical frameworks seldom incorporate gastronomy as a mode of intercultural practice. Data were obtained using a qualitative approach through focus group discussions (FGDs) with twelve French students. The FGD uses semi-structured questions to obtain students' narratives on

adaptability, intercultural communication, and views of Malaysian culinary culture. The study predicts that shared culinary experiences will be a significant means of facilitating cultural exchange, fostering openness, and eliminating communication obstacles. Interaction with local cuisine is anticipated to deepen students' understanding of Malaysian values and traditions while fostering inclusive environments for conversation and relationship development. Possible obstacles may be managing dietary restrictions, ensuring cultural authenticity, and balancing their French identity with openness to Malaysian customs. Moreover, educators and facilitators might encounter challenges in maintaining organized intercultural interaction, highlighting the need for strategic instructional practices. This study positions gastronomy as an instrument for intercultural communication, therefore enhancing discussion on how gastrodiploamacy could highlight the significance of food as both a symbolic and practical medium for integration, indicating that culinary engagement offers an accessible means to enhance cultural understanding in various educational settings.

Presenter Profile:

Krishna Baskaran holds an MPhil in Ethnic Studies from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and specialises in gastrodiploamacy and intercultural communication, with a strong interest in how food fosters cross-cultural understanding. Alongside academic research, he works as a part-time Baking Teacher with Wooden Spoon Production Sdn. Bhd. (since January 2024), conducting hands-on baking classes for students aged 7 to 17 from diverse backgrounds in the Klang Valley. He has prior experience as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Research

in Language and Linguistics, contributing to AI-related projects, research methodology, and data analysis, as well as volunteering with Flashes Fighting Hunger to support food distribution for underprivileged communities. Krishna is actively involved in student leadership and global engagement, having served as President of UKMbassadors and held various leadership roles in UNESCO-UKM Club and other student bodies. He has participated in numerous international exchange programmes, youth forums, and leadership initiatives across ASEAN, the United States, Japan, Singapore, and Australia. He is fluent in English and Malay, with proficiency in Tamil and Malayalam.



**Mobility Program as a Postgraduate: Global Competence Program,
Skills for Future Ready Talents.
Presenter: Kuroshini Saravanan**

This presentation explores my postgraduate experience in the Global Competence Program, a structured mobility initiative aimed at developing future-ready talents through international learning and intercultural engagement. Conducted over two weeks in Osaka, the program provided a comprehensive blend of academic enrichment, cultural immersion, and practical skill-building. Beginning with orientation and team-building activities, participants were introduced to Osaka's social landscape and the significance of the World Expo. Academic sessions throughout the week covered critical themes such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Society 5.0, sustainability, business and marketing in Japan, leadership, and entrepreneurship. These sessions were supported by interactive workshops focused on presentation skills, critical thinking, and communication. A key strength of the program was its experiential component. Field visits and on-site fieldwork offered firsthand insights. Cultural exchange activities with

Kansai University students, along with dedicated Japanese language and culture classes, enhanced participants' cultural literacy and cross-cultural adaptability. Special events, including Culture Day, the World Expo visit, and a final presentation showcase, provided additional platforms for collaborative learning, reflection, and personal development. This presentation will discuss the program's structure, key takeaways, and the transformative impact of short-term mobility in preparing postgraduates to navigate an increasingly interconnected and rapidly evolving global landscape.

Presenter Profile:

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**Persidangan AGI Open 2025:
Dari Idea ke Impak, Bukan Hanya Sekadar Visual
Presenter: Nur Hezreen Othman**

Penyertaan dalam Persidangan AGI Open 2025 bertujuan untuk memperoleh dan berkongsi pengetahuan serta pengalaman berkaitan perkembangan terkini dalam industri reka bentuk grafik dan multimedia di peringkat antarabangsa, di samping nilai tambah kepakaran grafik dalam bidang komunikasi visual. Sebagai Pegawai Tadbir di Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) yang turut mempunyai kemahiran dalam grafik multimedia, penyertaan ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kecekapan profesional dan memperluas pemahaman saya terhadap industri kreatif. Persidangan ini juga menyediakan peluang untuk membina jaringan profesional bersama pereka grafik antarabangsa termasuk individu yang menghasilkan jenama MUJI, MUBI, majalah *TIME*, serta penggiat industri yang menghasilkan karya seterusnya memenangi anugerah di Cannes Festival. Memandangkan AGI Open 2025 merupakan penganjuran pertama di Asia, peluang ini amat baik untuk berinteraksi dengan pakar terkemuka dalam bidang

grafik multimedia. Segala pengetahuan dan kepakaran yang diperoleh akan dimanfaatkan bagi menyokong program KITA UKM, khususnya dalam rekaan grafik bagi persidangan, penghasilan bahan media digital dan bercetak, serta aktiviti penerbitan yang akan dirancang pada tahun hadapan.

Presenter Profile:

Ms. Nur Hezreen Bt Othman is currently an Assistant Registrar in KITA and Communication Design Officer for UKM – UNESCO Chair (Social Practices in Intercultural Communication and Social Cohesion). She was also a former Senior Graphic Designer at Dot to Dot Digital Image Sdn Bhd and graphic designer at Corporate Communication at Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN). She engaged with numerous projects and conferences as an advertising media designer from 2015 until now such as “Pameran Wajah Pantun” at University Malaya (2015), Food and Society International Conference (2016, 2017, 2019), Asia Pacific Food and Studies Network (2017), World of Peranakan (2017), Ulam School Project under Toyota Foundation, Antropotek Lab – cooperate with Airbus (2015-2017), Orbicom International Conference (2020), Metropolis International Conference (2024) and Simposium Alternatif Kepada Penahanan Untuk Kanak- Kanak Pelarian Tanpa Penjaga Dan Terpisah (2025).

She was involved as a graphic design for the following publications: Malaysian Human Development Report, Blueprint for “Pelan Perpaduan dan Kesepaduan Malaysia”, “LRGS – Kesepaduan Sosial Negara”, “Dokumentasi Keputusan Pilihanraya Malaysia Ke 13”, and “Advokasi Awam: Idea dan Perlaksanaan di Malaysia”.