Imagining a Higher Education Institution in the Hamadori Region

Perspectives on Fukushima and Education Inspiration from Abroad

Decarpentrie Zoé
Research Intern
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Waseda University - Fukushima Hamadori
Future Creation Research Center
Matsuoka, Shunji

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and research purpose

- March 11th, 2011
- Revitalization efforts ~> establishment of a new higher education institution (HEI) in the Hamadori region?
- Foreign perspective
    - 1) Perspectives of selected foreign countries on (the lessons from) Fukushima?
    - 2) Exploration possibilities for the potential Hamadori HEI
        - 2.1) Lessons from Fukushima = core of the mission
        - 2.2) Inspiration for educational model,… drawing on examples from all around the world

1. Introduction

1.2 Lessons from Fukushima

- Concept ‘lessons from Fukushima’
  - Large, dynamic & layered
  - Variations according to domain / perspective / attitude towards nuclear energy => different interpretations
  - In general: *the important things we learned from the nuclear accident and during the recovery process, which we need to pass on to future generations to not only prevent but also react accordingly if a nuclear accident occurs*.
  - (e.g. Ali et al., 2024 ; Fukushima Booklet Committee, n.d.; Hasegawa, 2012; Lochard & Chhem, 2023; NEA, 2016; NEA, 2021; Wang et al., 2013; Yang, 2014)
  - The lessons from Fukushima = core of the mission of the Hamadori HEI
  - How can we understand the lessons, even if they are strongly influenced by conflict and tension?
  - (S. Matsuoka, personal communication, 25 June 2025)

2. Foreign perspectives on (the lessons from) Fukushima (1)

- Selected countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France and the United Kingdom (UK)
- Most sources published within the last five years
- Three subchapters:
  - 2.1 media coverage and public discourse
  - 2.2 educational content
  - 2.3 governmental reports and country-specific news

2. Foreign perspectives on (the lessons from) Fukushima (2)

Table 1 – Summary of Foreign Perspectives

Country	*Media/Public Discourse*	*Educational Content*	*Governmental Response*
Belgium	From neutral towards a.o. treated water release (de Vos, 2022; Heylen, 2023; Redactie, 2023) to mildly concerned about long decommissioning timeline and revitalization plans (Rensen, 2024; Waarlo, 2021); Greenpeace BE critical of Japan and Belgian nuclear plans (VRT NWS, 2021; Greenpeace, 2021a & 2021b).	SCK CEN developed educational materials on Fukushima for ages 16–18, linking Japanese and Belgian nuclear contexts (Kenens, n.d.). Focus on civil society and practical matter. Reflection of national worries.	FANC sees Fukushima as safety catalyst; improved risk/crisis response planning (FANC, 2020); May 15th, 2025, marks a turning point for nuclear energy use (Bihet, 2025; SCK CEN, 2025)
France	Neutral media publications on decommissioning (Le Monde, 2025) issues to emphasizing on need for transparency (Courrier International, 2023).	Schoolbook for geography-history risk education addresses mismanagement and consequences (Lelivrescolaire, n.d.)	ASN sees Fukushima as a safety catalyst; stresses better planning and inclusiveness in post-accident governance (ASN, 2023; Repères, 2021); however, Fukushima reinforced belief in French nuclear model (I'MTech, 2023)
The Netherlands	Neutral coverage about water release (NOS Nieuws, 2023); reports with focus on human aspects – victims & compensation (NOS Nieuws, 2022; Van Der Veere, 2022)	No substantial public educational resources found	Reports on good EU stress test results (Autoriteit NVS, 2022); mentions need to balance protective measures and unintended negative impacts (RIVM, 2020)
Germany	Fukushima triggered major anti-nuclear shift; media coverage on completed phase-out & debates over energy trade-offs (e.g., coal vs nuclear) (Heid, 2023; NHK World, 2023)	No substantial public educational resources found	Fukushima led to nuclear phase-out; increased renewables, although temporary reliance on coal (Based on news report Heid, 2023)
United Kingdom	Balanced or positive coverage (Callery, 2023); promotes Fukushima recovery (e.g., peaches) (Armstrong, 2024); presents nuclear energy as part of climate solution (The Economist, 2021)	No substantial public educational resources found	ONR acknowledges the legacy of Fukushima and applied lessons to enhance nuclear safety. Recognises Japan's good work (ONR, 2021)

3. Higher education institution in the Hamadori region (1)

3.1 From lessons of Fukushima to the mission of a higher education institution

- Initial goal: draw suggestions from the foreign perspectives
  - Insight how socially framed, politically instrumentalized, and taught abroad
  - Help identifying key themes but may not reflect local and/or Japanese needs
  - Topics: sociology (public trust/opinion); environmental studies (environmental justice, nuclear waste issues,…), (public) communication management; political studies; and disaster governance;
- From a foreign perspective:
  - The core lesson of Fukushima highlights the importance of understanding and managing complex systems through inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, greater transparency, and inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders to foster collaborative knowledge creation

3. Higher education institution in the Hamadori region (2)

3.1 From lessons of Fukushima to the mission of a higher education institution

- Globally, issues are more complex than ever before (Apgar et al., 2009).
  - Hamadori : decommissioning of 1F, the reconstruction and revitalization of the Hamadori and even creating a legacy of Fukushima to pass on to future generations
- Complex problems
  - high levels of uncertainty, multiple perspectives and multiple interlinked processes from local to global scale.
- Transdisciplinary approaches bringing together different stakeholders & knowledge
  - Sound dialogue processes and holistic frameworks are needed to facilitate transdisciplinarity (Apgar et al., 2009).
- These dialogues require transparency and honesty, to foster trust and good teamwork.
- 21st century – more complex issues & challenges to higher education
  - Opportunity cultivate 'future leaders and decision-makers capable of understanding and providing solutions to complex, global issues.' (Fahey, 2012)
- Back to mission: Perhaps the lessons of Fukushima are not meant to be precisely defined, as they are, by nature, dynamic. Instead of fixing them in advance, the process of discovering, exploring, and co-creating knowledge around these lessons itself could become the mission of the Hamadori HEI.
- Equip students with necessary knowledge, ways of (transdisciplinary) thinking, skills, and (holistic) analytical tools to think about the complex issue that is the legacy of Fukushima.

3. Higher education institution in the Hamadori region (3)

3.2 Inspiration from abroad

- Four examples: two newly-founded, future-minded universities & two specific degrees – based on those relevant topics :
  - Krea University from India
  - the University of the Environment and Mexico (UMA)
  - Bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies at the Global School for Advanced Studies (GCAS) College in Dublin
  - Master degree in environmental science and management (ULB)

- Potential collaborations for projects
  - the Fukushima Institute for Research, Education and Innovation (F-REI) (n.d.)
  - the Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework (FIPO) (n.d.)
  - the Fukshima Renewable Future Fund (FRFF) (n.d.),
  - the project/cafe Nomado (n.d.),
  - the Futaba Art District (Fukushima Hamadori, n.d.).
  - The purpose of this report is to give a foreign perspective, so the precise application to the Hamadori context is limited and further research recommended.

3. Higher education institution in the Hamadori region (4)

3.2.3 Summary of suggestions for the Hamadori HEI based on example HEIs

Table 2 - Summary of suggestions from the examples HEIs and degrees

Core Element	*Inspirational Elements*	*Relevance for Hamadori HEI*	*Source(s)*
Mission	Prepare humanity for an unpredictable world (Krea, 2024)	The Hamadori region faces high levels of uncertainty due to several complex issues concerning the decommissioning of 1F and demography	Krea
	Foster a regenerative, sustainable, and ethical future by supporting agents of change promoting initiatives for socio-environmental transformations (UMA, 2024)	Aligns with Hamadori's needs for long-term environmental restoration (e.g. forest regeneration, soil remediation), ethical industry rebuilding, and community well-being. Could support local development plans like the FIPO (FIPO, n.d.)	UMA
Values	Emphasis on sustainability, ethics, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and consideration of complexity	May support the mission proposed in 3.2.3, reflecting Hamadori's complexity and local memory	All
Educational Model	Interwoven Learning: bridging arts, sciences, theory and practice (Krea, 2024)	A flexible and holistic learning model may help Hamadori's need of skills for creative reconstruction, sustainable agriculture, disaster resilience, renewable energy, and social innovation, … all interconnected, complex challenges	Krea
	Learning-by-doing: embedded socio-environmental projects from Year 1 (UMA, 2024)	The students could carry out projects in cooperation with FIPO, F-REI, the NPO Nomado, Fukushima Renewable Future Fund, … (FIPO, n.d.; F-REI, n.d.; Nomado, n.d.; FRFF, n.d.)	UMA
	Solution-oriented learning; courageous thinking grounded on history and evidence-based reasoning (GCAS College Dublin, n.d.; Keystone, n.d.)	May encourage students to think about solutions for complex issues faced, based on context-depended thinking grounded on the Fukushima lessons/history	GCAS
Educational offer	Strong interdisciplinary foundation across sciences, humanities, and arts (Keystone, n.d.; Krea, 2024; ULB, n.d.)	Equips students to deal with complexity and uncertainty; highly relevant for Hamadori's unique situation as discussed previously	Krea, ULB, GCAS
	Flexible curriculum (Krea, 2025)	Helps enabling interdisciplinarity	Krea
	Community focus: deep regional involvement through local projects (UMA, 2024)	Models how Hamadori HEI could directly contribute to local communities	UMA
	Courses on complexity, systems thinking, socio-environmental dynamics, …	Again, may equip students to deal with complex issues; highly relevant for Hamadori's unique situation	ULB

3. Higher education institution in the Hamadori region (5)

3.3 Final suggestions for the Hamadori HEI

- **Mission**: The Hamadori HEI aims to discover, explore, and co-create knowledge around the dynamic lessons of Fukushima, as well as to prepare students for the 21st century, through interdisciplinary learning, dialogue, and engagement with local and global communities and environment.
- **Values**: sustainability, ethics, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and consideration of complexity.
- **Educational model**: Interdisciplinary learning and learning-by-contributing (with real local projects).
- **Educational offer**: Strong interdisciplinary foundation, with a focus on community through local projects. Courses in disciplines inspired by previously mentioned topics (sociology, environmental studies,..), as well as courses bundling these disciplines (e.g. socio-environmental dynamics, a ULB course), about complexity and system thinking.

4. Conclusion (1)

- The foreign perspectives on the Fukushima nuclear disaster
  - complex and layered; different disciplines or domains.
- Perspectives from five selected countries on the Fukushima disaster and lessons
  - vary widely, often reflecting each country's nuclear energy stance or discourse.
- Exploration of the core lesson from Fukushima to form the mission for the Hamadori HEI.
  - ~> importance of understanding and managing complex systems through inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, greater transparency, and inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders to foster collaborative knowledge creation
- *Mission: the Hamadori HEI aims to discover, explore, and co-create knowledge around the dynamic lessons of Fukushima, as well as to prepare students for the 21 st century, through interdisciplinary learning, dialogue, and engagement with local and global communities and environment*
- Topics like sociology, environmental studies, communication management, political studies, and disaster governance
- The situation in the Hamadori region is unique, as nowhere in the world, a HEI was established in a similar region

4. Conclusion (2)

- Inspiration from innovative HEIs and degrees around the world:
  - values and missions related to as sustainability, interdisciplinarity, community engagement, and project-based learning
  - => foundation of a university in Hamadori deeply rooted in its local context while preparing students for global challenges.
- A future-facing, community-focused university in the Hamadori region could play a transformative role in regional revitalization and in education adapted to a rapidly changing, complex world.
- This report = merely suggestions from a foreign perspective, one of many perspectives possibly relevant to consider for the establishment of a HEI.
- => Limited in its scope and further research is recommended, particularly from a local or Japanese perspective.

Thank you for your attention

- Any questions?

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