Imagining a Higher Education Institution in the Hamadori Region

Perspectives on Fukushima and Education Inspiration from Abroad

DECARPENTRIE Zoé
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Waseda University Fukushima Hamadori Future Creation Research Center

MATSUOKA, Shunji

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background information and research purpose

The Hamadori region derives its name from “road along the coast” and is located along the eastern coast of Fukushima Prefecture in Tohoku. The region has a rich history, with longstanding traditions and cultural practices (Japanese Government, n.d.). On March 11th, 2011, this region faced a compound disaster caused by the Japan Great East Earthquake with magnitude 9.0 that inclined a tsunami with waves over 15 metres, and is still facing consequences to this day. The tsunami brought extensive destruction to everything on its path, including to the nuclear power plant (NPP) Fukushima Daiichi (1F), leading to a disaster rated, the highest, level 7 on the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale. Over 100,000 people had to evacuate. While no direct deaths or cases of radiation sickness have occurred, official figures indicate 2313 disaster-related deaths among the evacuees from the Fukushima Prefecture (World Nuclear Association, n.d.). Evacuation orders were issued for 12 municipalities[2]. Today, most have been lifted, only the “difficult-to-return” areas remain (Japanese Government, n.d.).

As a part of revitalization efforts, the establishment of a new higher education institution (HEI) in the Hamadori region could be considered. This report explores that possibility from a foreign perspective. First, it examines how selected countries perceive and respond to the Fukushima disaster and its lessons, based on news articles, educational materials, official and scientific reports. In a next step, this report explores the possibilities for the potential Hamadori HEI, by exploring how the lessons from Fukushima are at the core of the mission. More ideas and suggestion for the educational model and offer of the HEI are considered, drawing on examples from all around the world.

1.2 Lessons from Fukushima

As will become clear, the concept ‘lessons from Fukushima’ is a large concept, both dynamic and layered, and heavily influenced by the attitude towards nuclear energy. It may vary according to different domains and different perspectives. The domains may include scientific or technical (e.g. NEA, 2016), sociological (e.g. Hasegawa, 2012; Lochard & Chhem, 2023), organisational/regulatory/political lessons (e.g. Wang et al., 2013), … Multidisciplinary lessons may also be drawn (e.g. NEA, 2021; Yang, 2014). Different perspectives may include academics or scientists (e.g. Ali et al., 2024), civil

society (e.g. Fukushima Booklet Committee, n.d.), political leaders, … So, the interpretation varies strongly, according to discipline, perspective, attitude towards nuclear energy, … In general, the lessons of Fukushima denote 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.

Grasping these lessons from Fukushima is foundational to the Hamadori HEI. The lessons from Fukushima, to be handed over to future generations, are the core of the mission of the university. The burning question is, how can we understand the lessons, even if they are strongly influenced by conflict and tension? We need to discover the core beyond this existing conflict, to act as a pillar of the Hamadori HEI. Moreover, new knowledge can and should be created based on these lessons (S. Matsuoka, personal communication, 25 June 2025). This report will consider the lessons from Fukushima from a foreign, present perspective, as one of the many existing perspectives.

2. Foreign perspectives on (the lessons from) Fukushima

This section outlines how selected European countries engage with the Fukushima nuclear disaster and its aftermath. The focus is on following West-European neighbouring countries with nuclear energy history: Belgium (BE), France (FR), The Netherlands (NL), Germany (DE) and the United Kingdom (UK). Most sources used are published within the last five years, in an attempt to explore the present perspective.

2.1 Media coverage and public discourse

Recent news articles mostly describe following themes: (1) technical issues like treated water release and other decommission challenges, (2) human aspects like stories of evacuated citizens, health effects, compensation claims, and image issues, (3) environmental impacts, like the presence of wild animals in Fukushima, (4) and broader nuclear power debates in Japan and in the world. Firstly, regarding the treated water release, articles appear to range from neutral (e.g. NOS Nieuws, 2023; Redactie, 2023), cautiously critical or emphasizing how there is a lot of criticism, but the risk is low (Heylen, 2023). A mainstream French newspaper writes neutrally about the treated water release (Le Monde, 2025). A smaller French newspaper article is somewhat more direct or

opinionated, calling for maximum transparency from Japan to restore public and diplomatic trust (Courrier International, 2023). In 2024, reports about the robotic waste removal one of 1F's reactors also appeared. In the Belgian coverage also raised questions about whether the decommissioning timeline of 30 to 40 years is realistic, as some experts argue it may take over a century (Rensen, 2024).

Secondly, human-centred reporting includes the Dutch NOS articles on TEPCO's compensation to 3,700 victims and a case filed by six cancer patients demanding a compensation (NOS Nieuws, 2022; Van Der Veere, 2022). In contrast, the UK news channel BBC appears to be more positive, with a story of British luxury retailer selling Fukushima-grown peaches – a part of TEPCO's efforts to help the image issue caused by radiation fear (Armstrong, 2024) and Prime Minister Kishida publicly eating local fish to assure the public and support regional recovery (a.o. Callery, 2023).

Thirdly, the environmental angle is also notable. Articles about the wildlife like wild boars appeared (Waarlo, 2021; NOS Nieuws, 2017). One Belgian piece quite provocatively suggested that the area became a safe haven for wild animal, which can also be a valid reason to leave the area uninhabited and transform into a nature reserve (Waarlo, 2021). Lastly, the broader discussions on nuclear energy vary significantly. The UK newspaper *The Economist* starts by remembering what happened and then describes Fukushima as a turning point in global energy discourse. They argue for well-regulated nuclear power as a part of the climate solution, while acknowledging the drawbacks. One of the lessons from Fukushima; namely 'greater independence for nuclear regulators' is also mentioned as a reason to keep existing NPPs open (The Economist, 2021). An example of a neutral article is the one written by de Vos (2022) announcing Japan' return to nuclear power. An article leaning more towards to the anti-nuclear end of the spectrum was written for VRT news, one of the main Belgian news channels,10 years after the accident. The article is based off an interview a Greenpeace representer, Jan Vande Putte, who criticizes the Japan's emergency governance, including the decommissioning and energy mix and the decision to restart reactors, using the lessons of Fukushima as an argument. He adds that the Fukushima nuclear disaster could and should have been avoided (VRT NWS, 2021). Other articles by Greenpeace Belgium, were also published in 2021 (Greenpeace, 2021a & 2021b). In general, they seem a bit less critical, by saying, for example, that a

much bigger accident has been avoided. They also talk about how Belgium did learn a little bit from Fukushima, but not enough. They argue that NPPs are too vulnerable and that it is incomprehensible that Belgium is debating over the closure of the two last NPPs. They argue that 'the arrogance and naivety of some [in Belgium] resemble the stance that caused the disaster of Fukushima' and that it would be irresponsible to shift away from the plan to close all NPPs in Belgium (Greenpeace, 2021a & 2021b).

2.2 Educational content

The Belgian Nuclear Research Centre SCK CEN published non-compulsory educational material for students aged 16-18 title *Life After Fukushima* (Kenens, n.d.). and the goals is to learn about radioactivity and the impact of a nuclear accident on daily life. It contains four chapters, covering topic like the vents of March 11, the daily life of a fictional Fukushima survivor, emergency responses and radioactivity), civil science tools for measuring radioactivity in civil laboratories and lastly about the link between Fukushima and Belgium; emergency responses in Belgium (Kenens, n.d.). The educational emphasis appears to reflect national worries concerning the densely populated areas and potential mass evacuations.

As for France, one source of educational content for youth is also available online. The Fukushima disaster in mentioned in the (non-compulsory) schoolbook *Histoire-Géography*, in chapter 14 titled *Industrial and Technological Risks*. The book criticizes the mismanagement of nuclear accident and indicates to the human errors. Human, environmental, and political consequences are discussed, including the evacuation, cancer risk, waste problem and protests. It also considers how the Japanese accident influenced security evaluations in France, highlighting several failure scenarios if certain exceptional circumstances were to be united (Lelivrescholaire, n.d.).

No substantial educational resources from the Netherlands, Germany or the UK were found online.

2.3 Governmental reports and country-specific news

Governments and regulators across the selected countries viewed Fukushima as a *safety catalyst*. French (ASN, 2023), British (ONR, 2024), and Belgian (FANC, 2020) regulators all referenced lessons learned and the importance of improving risk assessments and crisis responses.

France's Nuclear Safety and Radiation Authority also emphasized the importance of inclusive post-accident governance. One key observation or lesson was that the decisions made during the emergency response stage greatly impact the long-term outcomes. Involving citizens and local stakeholders in recovery planning was deemed essential to restoring trust and managing complex issues, involving environmental, social, health, and radiological aspects (Repères, 2021). Interestingly, however, results from a project aiming to understand influence of Fukushima on the French nuclear industry, named AGORAS, found that Fukushima had limited impact on France's nuclear governance. Unlike after Chernobyl or Three Mile Island, French authorities viewed Fukushima as specific to Japan's context and instead saw it as validation of their own regulatory system. While some technical and procedural improvements were made, like enhanced crisis response and post-accident planning, these were mostly extensions of existing efforts. Public debate and political decisions in the nuclear sector remained largely unchanged (I'MTech, 2023).

The UK's ONR carried out significant work with the licensees applying the lessons from the events of Fukushima to enhance nuclear safety. They recognise the legacy of Fukushima and the 'good work undertaken by Japan to tackle the challenges on the Fukushima Daichi site and we will continue to support the country in this work' (ONR, 2021).

A significant governmental decision from Belgium became official on May 15th, 2025. A legal text reopens the door for new nuclear capacity (Bihet, 2025) after the 2003 Nuclear Exit Act stipulated a gradual phaseout (SCK CEN, 2025). Belgium may opt for nuclear energy again, a clear turning point in the energy policy (Bihet, 2025). Fukushima seems to not have had a considerable impact on the phase-out and reversing of the phase-out of nuclear energy in Belgium.

In the Netherlands, official reports merely discuss the implementation of the European Union (EU) stress tests, developed in the wake of Fukushima. They mention the good results for the Netherlands and how that these stress tests and Fukushima provide an opportunity to learn (Autoriteit NVS, 2022). A separate government report acknowledges the difficulty of finding a good balance for the protective measures during a nuclear accident, which can also have, often unintended, negative effects, next to the envisioned effect of lowering exposure to radiation (RIVM, 2020). Fukushima's disaster-related deaths are mentioned in this regard.

Next to being a safety catalyst, Fukushima was also catalyst for decreasing (public) trust and even for nuclear phase-out plans. Germany's case is notable, as Fukushima triggered a policy shift toward complete nuclear phase-out – and shift toward renewable energy (Heid, 2023). Although the initial timeline was affected by the 2022 energy crisis caused by the war in Ukraine; the commitment to exit nuclear energy remained Remarkably, Germany reactivated its old coal-fired power facilities and mined more brown coal to cope with the energy shortages. Some critics point at the risks of non-nuclear energy sources, like air pollution and CO_2 emissions. 18 deaths and 25 deaths per terawatt-hour of energy produced are linked with oil and coal sources respectively, compared to 0.03 deaths, due to accidents or air pollution, per terawatt-hour of energy produced by nuclear power (Heid, 2023; NHK World, 2023).

2.4 Concluding notes about the foreign perspectives on the lessons from Fukushima

The foreign perspectives on Fukushima and the lessons from Fukushima reflect a combination of technical interest, policy reassessment, and political agendas. Variability exists within as between countries; not making it straightforward to summarize previous findings. Table 1, however, attempts to make that summary.

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. Inspiration for the higher education institution in the Hamadori region

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

The initial goal of this report was to explore a foreign perspective on the lessons from Fukushima. Understanding the lessons from Fukushima is an essential element for the establishment of the HEI in the Hamadori region, as their core form the mission. Foreign perspectives on Fukushima can provide insight into how the disaster is socially framed, politically instrumentalized, and taught abroad and might help identifying key themes to address but may not reflect local and/or Japanese needs. Topics like sociology (public trust, public opinion, ...), environmental studies (environmental justice, nuclear waste issues, ...), (public) communication management, political studies, and disaster governance could emerge from previous findings. To form the mission of the Hamadori HEI, we need to dig deeper to the core of the Fukushima lesson(s). From a foreign perspective based on the previous findings and author's interpretation, the 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. Explained: Today, globally humanity faces issues more complex than ever before (Apgar et al., 2009). In the Hamadori region, these issues include the decommissioning of 1F, the reconstruction and revitalization of the Hamadori and even creating a legacy of Fukushima to pass on to future generations, are characterised with complexity. Complex problems reveal high levels of uncertainty, multiple perspectives and multiple interlinked processes from local to global scale. Transdisciplinary approaches can help tackle these issues bringing together different stakeholder groups to share and use their 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. The Japanese government, however, has been accused and criticised for not being transparent and honest, by attempting to minimize the size of the accident and withholding information and for unwillingness of expanding the evacuation zone. TEPCO has also been criticised in this area (e.g. VRT NWS, 2021).

Now, the transparency around decommissioning timeline is also questioned (e.g. Rensen, 2024).

The amount and complexity of both global and local issues affecting the Hamadori are not likely to decrease any time soon. The 21st century poses several challenges to higher education, including creating future-proof graduates. Fahey (2012) argues that HEI have the task to cultivate 'future leaders and decision-makers capable of understanding and providing solutions to complex', which is relevant to the Hamadori HEI. As stated previously, transdisciplinary approaches are recommended. A paper by Demerath & Suarez (2019) describes how a course in complexity studies can demonstrate transdisciplinarity across disciplines to identify self-organizing networks and the emergence of bounded systems. 'Teaching complexity allows both students and faculty to connect disciplinary expertise to a wider range of knowledge on how things work, giving them a more consilient approach to solving real-world problems' (Demerath & Suarez, 2019). Trandisciplinarity focuses on this complex (wicked) problems that need creative solutions based on broad stakeholder involvement and socially responsible science (Bernstein, 2015).

Refocusing on the mission of the Hamadori HEI. The core of the mission is the Fukushima lesson, the legacy that needs to be passed on to future generations though education. 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 could itself become the mission of the Hamadori HEI. To this end, the educational model and offer should equip the 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. This knowledge and skill set could then be further applied on other (global) complex issues of the 21st century. To explore the possibilities of educational models and offers, we can draw inspiration from other HEIs around the world.

3.2 Inspiration from abroad

Foreign experiences in establishing HEI in a post-disaster area could serve as inspiration for the creation of a HEI in the Hamadori region, but unfortunately, there are no similar cases to be found. The Hamadori case seems to be a unique one. In Europe, there are some programs to rebuild educational facilities after earthquakes (EU4Schools for Albania, EUSF Croatia) or training programs (Italy RETOURN project) for example, but these are not so useful as examples (EU4School, n.d.; European Commission, 2023; Retourn, n.d.). So alternatively, inspiration may come from other newly founded universities and/or degrees covering relevant topics.

Four examples are proposed to draw suggestions for the Hamadori HEI. Two newly founded future-minded universities and two degrees are discussed. The selection was based on previous findings but might be slightly biased towards the author's background.

3.2.1 Newly founded future-minded universities

Firstly, Krea University in India that was founded in 2018 offers a compelling model for the HEI in Hamadori. With its mission to help humanity prepare for an unpredictable world, the university practices *Interwoven Learning*, an interdisciplinary approach that links art, sciences, past experiences and future readiness. This holistic approach is highly relevant for an area recovering from disaster and engaging in long-term revitalization, as the students learn to understand a messy and chaotic world. Krea's flexible curriculum, allowing students to combine diverse disciplines, encourages ethical and comprehensive problem-solving (Krea University, 2024; Krea University, 2025). This could support Hamadori's efforts to rebuild, foster community resilience, and engage with both local and global challenges. To sum up, the Hamadori HEI could draw inspiration from Krea University's integration of interdisciplinarity and societal engagement to shape a distinct identity for Hamadori's HEI in a unique post-disaster context.

Secondly, the Universidad Del Medio Ambiente (UMA) or University of the Environment in Mexico, founded in 2009, also offers a valuable model for the Hamadori HEI, particularly through its community-driven and practice-oriented approach to education. Their purpose is to build a regenerative, sustainable, and ethical future by preparing individuals to lead socio-environmental initiatives. Its *learning-by-doing* educational model is embedded in all degree programs, where students engage with real projects from their

first year onwards. This approach fosters strong local engagement, practical work skills, and ethical responsibility, which could be components for rebuilding trust and supporting revitalization in the post-disaster Hamadori region. UMA's structured yearly progression of projects show how education can contribute to regional empowerment and ecological resilience, which could inspire similar schemes for the Hamadori HEI (UMA, 2024). Their six faculties focus on human activities essential to face socio-environmental challenges, namely business, construction, agriculture, public policy, education and project development (UMA, 2023).

3.2.2 Undergraduate and graduate degrees

Specific degrees linked to topics relevant for the Hamadori HEI can also serve as inspiration.

The Global Centre for Advanced Studies (GCAS) College Dublin offers, amongst others, an interesting three-year Bachelor in Interdisciplinary studies or Bachelor of Arts that could inspire the curriculum development of the Hamadori HEI. Grounded on student-centred, affordable, and socially engaged education for the betterment of our world, GCAS emphasizes collaboration, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving (Keystone, n.d.; GCAS College Dublin, n.d.). As a 'decentralised liberal arts-based community', they encourage bold and courageous thinking grounded in history and evidence based reasoning, to engage with global and local challenges (GCAS College Dublin, n.d.) such as clear air and water, clean energies and environmental healing, shelter and peacemaking and providing adequate solutions (Keystone, n.d.), relevant for a region facing challenges for its ecological and social recovery. Thinking grounded on history may inspire the Hamadori HEI to encourage context-depended thinking based on the lessons/history from Fukushima. The curriculum is built to step-by-step move from foundational interdisciplinary knowledge to applied, solution-oriented learning (Keystone, n.d.).

Lastly, as for the master's degree, the Master in Environmental Science and Management from the Free University of Brussels shows how higher education contribute to a better future by focussing on sustainability transitions. The specialisation in Environmental Management trains students to address 'the environmental challenges facing our societies, one of the largest projects of the 21st century' by critically assessing and lead

socio-environmental transformation, through a combination of theory, research seminars and optional internships and/or international exchanges (ULB, n.d.). Courses on complexity, systems thinking, socio-environmental dynamics, … are part of the program (ULB, n.d.). These kinds of classes may equip students to deal with complex issues, which highly relevant for Hamadori's unique situation. Furthermore, the master graduates are being prepared to address environmental issues with an interdisciplinary approach (ULB, n.d.). This interdisciplinary and action-oriented approach aligns well with Hamadori's needs for local leadership in ecological resilience, public policy, and innovation, and demonstrates how academic institutions can be platforms for societal regeneration.

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

The example HEIs can help inspiring the mission, values, educational model and offer. Table 2 attempts to summarize features of the example HEIs and degrees as discussed above, and the relevance to the development a HEI in Hamadori. For some parts, the Fukushima Institute for Research, Education and Innovation (F-REI) (n.d.) and the Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework (FIPO) (n.d.) may be relevant, as well as non-governmental initiatives like the Fukshima Renewable Future Fund (FRFF) (n.d.), the project/cafe Nomado (n.d.), and 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. So, this summary mainly bundles suggestions for the creation of a new HEI in the Hamadori region, drawn from 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

3.3 Final suggestions for the Hamadori HEI

To conclude, this chapter presents final suggestions for the Hamadori HEI, based on the Fukushima lesson and the foreign HEIs, from a foreign perspective (the first part of this report and the author's interpretation).

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

The foreign perspectives on the Fukushima nuclear disaster are complex and layered, touching many different disciplines or domains. This report showed how perspectives from five selected countries on the Fukushima disaster and lessons vary widely, often reflecting each country's nuclear energy stance or discourse. Based on these foreign perspectives, this report explores the core of the lessons from Fukushima to form the mission for the Hamadori HEI. Thinking about the Fukushima lesson(s) is not an easy task, as they are overshadowed by the polarized debate of nuclear energy. This report proposes that the lesson from Fukushima is 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. Based on this lesson from Fukushima, the report suggests the following 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. Next to helping to explore the Fukushima lessons for the HEI mission,

the foreign perspectives also underline several topics like sociology, environmental studies, communication management, political studies, and disaster governance that may be relevant for the next step, the exploration of suggestions for the establishment of a new HEI in the Hamadori region.

The situation in the Hamadori region is unique, as nowhere in the world, a HEI was established in a similar region. Innovative HEIs and degrees around the world, however, offer valuable examples for the establishment of the Hamadori HEI. Institutions like Krea University, UMA, GCAS College, and ULB demonstrate how values and missions related to as sustainability, interdisciplinarity, community engagement, and project-based learning can form the 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 offers merely suggestions from a foreign perspective, one of many perspectives relevant to consider for the establishment of a new HEI. Thus, the report is limited in its scope and further research is recommended, particularly from a local or Japanese perspective. Additionally, this report did not go deep into theories and academic works higher education for example. Further research in this realm would also be interesting in light of the establishment of a new HEI in the Hamadori region.

5. Personal reflection

Writing this report was a challenging, yet fascinating and compelling experience. I found it much more difficult than expected to try and talk about foreign perspectives on Fukushima, as nuclear energy in general is a very polarized topic. Reading day in day out about nuclear energy was quite hard as it reminded me about how everything is linked to energy and how the production and use of energy in its largest sense is the main cause of the climate change. Energy is also inextricably linked with power and social issues. With energy in its largest sense, I mean electricity, fossil fuels, as well as food. Many different opinions and perspectives on Fukushima and nuclear energy in general confused me sometimes and I realised that my own view on Fukushima and nuclear

power in general is dynamic, prone to change according to the sources I had been reading on a certain day. It was not easy to think beyond the tension surrounding nuclear energy.

Founding a HEI in a post-triple disaster area is unprecedented, so there is no single perfect model to follow. Yet, I believe establishing a new HEI in the Hamadori region presents a unique opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of the area and can act as a vehicle for change towards a better future by fostering 'future-proof' graduates, people equipped to contribute meaningfully to a better future and to the social and natural environment of Hamadori, Fukushima, Japan, and beyond. The institution may depend on broader revitalization efforts to thrive. I believe we can take inspiration from 'future-minded' HEIs that are closely connected to their environment and local communities. I might, however, be a little bit biased towards environmental studies as it is the master degree I am pursuing at the ULB, discussed previously. Nevertheless, I would always argue for a stronger focus on environment, in any context, as societies do not exist in a vacuum and we inherently and fully depend on the natural environment. Furthermore, I would argue that dialogues with local citizens and other Japanese stakeholders are essential to identify needs and priorities, more important, in fact, than my own foreign perspective. I think building such an institute should happen *with* the people of the region, not *for* them, grounded in bottom-up processes, rather than imposed top-down. Their needs as well as other Japanese citizens' needs should clearly be framed and considered.

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