



一般社団法人
東アジア初のアショカ U
発足・設立を支援する会
Ashoka U Supporting Team

5426-11 Higashino Osaki Kamijima Toyono Gun, Hiroshima Japan 725-0231

email:Aust.osaki@gmail.com

To Whom it May Concern,

Since 2015, I have been working with a core team of people, including Ōsakikamijima, Japan Mayor Yukinori Takata and officials from College of the Atlantic, to create a new higher education platform on the economically troubled island of Ōsakikamijima.

In 2016, in partnership with College of the Atlantic, we began the first steps in this process by launching the Human Ecology Lab and Island Odyssey (HELIO) program. The program accepts students from COA and other colleges for two weeks every summer to engage with sustainable economic development, launching social enterprises, and community building while they help us design the program.

The new institution on Ōsakikamijima will channel College of the Atlantic's human ecology pedagogy and will be rooted in the local community. In being modeled after the human ecology philosophy practiced at COA, the institution will be interdisciplinary, self-directed, and action oriented, while also principally addressing questions and problems of sustainability as they relate to the wellbeing of both the local community and the world at large.

As per the COA model, participants in each HELIO program are taking part in the development of Ōsakikamijima's new higher education center. They are gaining hands-on skills while helping us to create a new educational model that will upend the Japanese higher education system with an interdisciplinary perspective and an education center that is rooted in community. Japan desperately needs this type of thinking as we move forward into the 21st Century.

HELIO students study a range of topics, including food systems, design, activism, enterprise, and peace studies. Participants are immersed in the island community and learn from local and internationally recognized leaders in government, agriculture, education, activism, and social entrepreneurship. The students are not just studying sustainability and venture creation - they are actively taking part in such activities as the HELIO program develops, and are learning how to build community engagement around their efforts.

Sincerely,

