

Abdelghani El Asli

Associate Professor of Biology
Al Akhawayn University
Morocco



Abdelghani El Asli is an associate professor of biology at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. He has experience in sustainable development, biomass estimation, transboundary water management and water integrity. His current work emphasizes on the valuation of biomass with a focus on bioenergy mainly the second generation of bioethanol and second and third generation biodiesel as well as composting. He developed expertise in the field of Zero Emission, and he co-supervised the developing of the ZE campus concept for AUI. He is managing a dual masters' degree program between AUI's master's in Sustainable Energy Management and the German Trier/IfaS master degree in International Material Flow Management with partners from Japan, Brazil, Mexico, and Taiwan. He was granted the Fulbright scholarship twice and has published many scientific articles. He is affiliated with many international organizations such as German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), and Global Alliance for Education.



Tell us a bit about yourself, and how you got involved with nature, environment and trees.

I am Dr. Abdelghani El Asli, associate professor of biology at the School of Science & Engineering, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. My research interest falls in Biomass valorization (bioenergy: biogas, bioethanol, and biodiesel), environment issues, sustainability, and circular economy. I am very passionate about environment and trees especially that I live in mountainous area 'middle atlas' which host one of the largest cedar trees in the world. I also participated in projects dealing with forest protection and poverty alleviation.

How did you know about hibaku jumoku? How did your partnership with Green Legacy Hiroshima start?

Our partnership with Green Legacy Hiroshima started after the visit of my students Samir Rouini to Green Legacy and from where he brought me seedling of trees that resisted and survived the Hiroshima bombing.

What does the partnership and deepening connections with Hiroshima mean for you personally and professionally? And how does the unfolding of COVID-19 influence your thoughts about Nature in general, and the hibaku jumoku in particular?

It means for me that nature has a strong resilience to overcome the foolishness of what man has created for its own destruction. I personally consider the COVID-19 pandemic as both a blessing and a curse that humanity needs to learn from. On one hand, because our economy was badly affected during the confinement and regardless of the government financial support, people suffered a lot and still are facing harsh financial difficulties. On the other hand, thanks to low industrial and traffic activity, the level of pollution dropped and the effect on nature was visible.

What does the presence of the saplings mean at Al Akhawayn University? What is your vision for these saplings there in the future? What kinds of activities or partnerships can you cultivate surrounding the hibaku jumoku?

The presence of the saplings at Al Akhawayn University means a lot for our community in term of friendship, hope, peace and love. My vision for these saplings here in the future is to keep the same message for all Moroccans. In the near future, we will organize some activities in collaboration with Japanese embassy in Morocco and the hibaku jumoku to strengthen our partnership.

How do your students and colleagues think about a nuclear-free world and reverence of nature around the world? Do you sense a shift in the ecological awareness and activism of your students? What can we as GLH do to help nurture that?

A nuclear-free world is the ideal. Indeed, there is a shift in the ecological awareness and activism of our students after the positive change that accompanied the COVID 19. We actually have witnessed a flourishing forest, clear sky. We appreciate if GLH could contribute and help with this concern.