

The Open Studio: Making a creative community space in rural Japan

Tackling the education and digital divide through a studio space for local and international creators.

KASAI CITY, HYOGO, JAPAN, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From afar, Japan is known as the land of anime, kawaii, and advancement.

However, forget what you have heard about Japan for a second, and step out of the glow of the metropolitan areas.

Those artificial lights often leave many blind to the true reality just beyond the city. All that shine quickly fades to large stretches of sun-kissed forests and farmland.

It's a reality where many are left behind, with potential talent stifled under the weight of the shrinking population and dwindling tax revenue that used to keep the schools up-to-date and afloat.

Less money means more cuts, and they are almost always aimed at the creative fields.

In Kasai City, this has become the truth over recent years.

"The first to go was the community classes in the mall, where art, language, programming, and dance classes were held everyday, but it was shuttered to make room for more retail shops," said Lee, an English teacher and designer who moved to Kasai eight years ago from the Tokyo area, "Then many of my students began expressing their discontent with the lack of art and programming clubs at school, which were also shut down due to the lack of after school teachers. That's when I got to thinking."



Top: Concept floor map for the studio. Bottom: The building to be used for the community space after renovation.

She decided to make a change, even if it was small, by drawing up a plan for a creator's community space. Unfortunately, convincing the city and school board to support the project proved difficult.

So, with the remnants of her savings, she bought an old abandoned house, yet another tangible reality of Japan's shrinking population, with the hopes of making it by herself.

"I may have been a bit gung ho and in over my head," she laughed while looking at the extensive repairs needed for the building, "But I'm not ready to give up yet."

The space, which she calls "The Open Studio", hopes to bridge the digital and educational divide affecting her adoptive community. Once renovations are completed, it will serve as an accessible learning environment, offering on-demand and live instruction in tech and creative disciplines that are often unavailable in rural schools. Every inch of the space has been mapped out, with art, fashion, computer, and music labs planned.

Beyond the educational aspect, the studio aims to become a vibrant community space with a cafe, startup space, lounge, and mini inn for international creators, developers, and local residents to collaborate, learn, and rest.

Now, Lee just needs to source the help and funds to get it all done.

"I've been saving, crowdfunding, and posting up flyers in-between work, but not much progress yet," she said, "So I hope other people will become interested in building this community space together."

The Open Studio crowdfunding campaign is currently live and boasts rewards meant to attract creators from every field. Artists, writers, musicians, fashion designers, and tech developers look to benefit from creator residencies offered to backers to hone their craft in the quiet Japanese countryside.

If interested, visit the studio's [website](#) to learn more and consider helping create The Open Studio via [Kickstarter](#).

Lee Scott
The Open Studio
info@openstudiojp.com
Visit us on social media:
[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/932560237>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something

we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.