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Weaving Stories of Aloha ʻĀina, Collective Efficacy and Native Hawaiian Wellbeing

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Abstract

Truthtelling plays an important role in the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, allowing for reconciliation and healing to occur. This article traces key markers of vitality and growth for Native Hawaiians that provide hope against the backdrop of conventional—often deficit-based—measures of wellbeing. As with many indigenous peoples, storytelling is a vital way for Native Hawaiians to pass on knowledge, values and beliefs. This story of resistance, resilience and renewal is culled from a comprehensive study published entitled, *Ka Huakaʻi 2021: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment.* The authors examine Native Hawaiian wellbeing through available statistics and trends as well as the concepts of aloha ʻāina and collective efficacy.

Truthtelling plays an important role in the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, allowing for reconciliation and healing to occur. As critical as it is to recognize forces of damage and destruction, transformation comes in telling stories of resilience and growth. Every Native Hawaiian[1] living today is a survivor, and despite systemic forces that attempt to silence or oppress, the richness of Hawaiian culture, values, language, and practices continue to shine brightly. The progress achieved in recent decades is palpable in the relentless pursuit of ʻike kupuna (ancestral

[1] Throughout this article, we use various references for Native Hawaiians, including "Kānaka Maoli," "Kānaka ʻŌiwi," or simply "Kānaka" and "ʻŌiwi." For our purposes, these terms are used interchangeably and describe any individual who can trace their genealogy to the original inhabitants (or their descendants) of the Hawaiian Islands, regardless of blood quantum or racial/ethnic identity.

knowledge and wisdom) and aloha ʻāina (patriotism, love for the land), as well as the call that many Native people answer to serve as leaders in their communities.

This essay traces key markers of vitality and growth that provide hope against the backdrop of conventional—often deficit-based—measures of wellbeing. The story is culled from the 400+ pages of a comprehensive study published by the Kamehameha Schools, entitled, *Ka Huakaʻi 2021: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment* (Kanaʻiaupuni, et al 2021). The findings demonstrate an increase in vibrancy and cultural practices among recent generations of Native Hawaiians, which is a promising indicator of wellbeing for the lāhui (Native Hawaiian community). Although these markers are not always easily quantified, the hōʻailona (signs) are visible to those who seek them; they represent a story worth telling.

Storytelling as Methodology

As with many indigenous peoples, storytelling is a vital way for Native Hawaiians to pass on knowledge, values and beliefs. Thousands of years before written language and printing presses, ʻŌiwi composed, memorized and shared mele (songs, poems) and moʻolelo (stories, histories) containing complex layers of meaning and insight. The significance of storytelling persists for Kānaka Maoli and local residents today and fuels a global demand for Hawaiʻi-based creative media. In academic settings, Kānaka researchers have employed storytelling in diverse fields such as historiography (Young, 2014), anthropology (Tengan 2008) and biology (Frank 2016).

Increasingly, researchers are looking to storytelling as a decolonizing method of data collection as well as a tool for analysis and delivery (Archibald et al., 2019). As Chan declares, "Storytelling is a process of reclaiming the story, to own the story, rather than be defined or storied by others. Colonisers [sic] have historically told and shaped the stories of Indigenous peoples" (Chan 2021, p. 171). Indigenous scholars argue that the unique value of "storywork" rests in its power to witness and remember human experience and then, to seek out healing and resolution (Archibald, 2008; Iseke 2013). It is with these considerations in mind that we search for deeper understandings and more transformative ways of telling stories about Native Hawaiian wellbeing.

Setting the Context

A Native Hawaiian saying, "He ʻonipaʻa ka ʻoiaʻiʻo—Truth is steadfast and not changeable,*"* highlights a reverence for facts and, by extension, justice (Pukui 1983, p. 94). Truth and justice are sometimes incomplete, misunderstood, or even purposely withheld. As aboriginal people whose nation was illegally overthrown and whose language and culture were forcibly oppressed, Kānaka Maoli know the agony of colonization and historical trauma (Sai 2013). Nearly every Kanaka alive at the time of U.S. annexation signed a petition protesting the takeover. On the day of annexation, a wail of shared sorrow and loss could be heard throughout ka pae ʻāina Hawaiʻi even as missionaries and white householders from the U.S. celebrated jubilantly (Silva 2004).

The word "extinction" is also well understood by Native Hawaiians. Eugenicists in the early 1900s predicted that Native Hawaiians would die out and cease to exist (Blaisdell 2005). Many hula and traditional knowledge forms were suppressed and/or lost. The Hawaiian language was expected to disappear as a highly endangered language. Similarly, as one of the most biodiverse places on earth, Hawaiʻi is an extinction hotspot as human consumption takes its toll on natureʻs delicate balance of endemic plants and wildlife. Alongside other Pacific Islands, Hawaiʻi lives on the edge of climate change, facing untold threats to food, water, and quality of life. The year 2020 brought a global pandemic followed by racially explosive events throughout the United States, leaving a broad swath of trauma in its wake. These same triggering events also awakened historical trauma for ʻŌiwi, who are not strangers to the destruction caused by pandemics, political divisiveness, stolen lands, and U.S. occupation. Todayʻs Kānaka Maoli face a new kind of extinction in Hawaiʻi as they struggle to survive economically. Too many are forced to leave the islands as economic refugees, hoping to be able to afford to return some day to live in the homeland (Kamehameha Schools, 2022).

Despite challenges, this story of Native Hawaiian wellbeing reveals a collective will to ʻonipaʻa, to persist. Telling this story pulls Native Hawaiian communities and supporters together to ʻai pōhaku, a phrase that literally means to eat stones to ensure the unique cultural and linguistic legacy of Hawaiʻi's aboriginal people remains alive and strong. ʻOnipaʻa was also the motto of Queen Liliʻuokalani, the last reigning monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Her love for her people led her to cede the throne temporarily to avoid bloodshed. Nearly 130 years later, Kānaka Maoli remain steadfast in a shared desire for justice to be restored through a more equitable and culturally revitalizing society.

Looking to the Source

This article summarizes key findings of *Ka Huakaʻi 2021*, a statistical portrait of Native Hawaiian wellbeing. Producing the report is a massive, multi-year undertaking conducted by the Kamehameha Schools, culling data from all major published sources about Native Hawaiians. *Ka Huakaʻi 2021* also represents a forty-year journey to tell the story of Native Hawaiian wellbeing from an ʻŌiwi perspective. Data and trends play a critical role in understanding social change and community wellbeing. However, existing paradigms, measures, and metrics will always be incomplete and partial. To examine outcomes of Native Hawaiians, it is not enough to disaggregate and present the data; we must contextualize it and scrutinize it for gaps and biases.

Presently, data on Kānaka Maoli wellbeing are drawn almost exclusively from sources funded by federal and state governments. As a result, the ways in which the data are collected, analyzed, and reported are often based on assumptions that (1) success defined from a White or Euro-American worldview represents the best outcome for all groups, and (2) if other racial and ethnic groups behaved more like Whites and Euro-Americans, they would experience better outcomes. For these reasons, it is critical to tell the story behind the data with Indigenous eyes and voices.

A Kanaka Maoli worldview encourages the practice of nānā i ke kumu—looking to the source, to learn from the past (Pukui 1983). Having data available to understand the conditions and needs of our people is crucial to inform policy and programs that lift and support Native Hawaiian families and communities. The moʻokūʻauhau (lineage, genealogy) of this work began in 1983 with the first *Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment* produced by the Kamehameha Schools. Each decade thereafter marked a milestone whereby data were examined with new systems, technology and insights. What remains unchanged, however, is the commitment to highlight the unique strengths and challenges of Kānaka Maoli and to identify opportunities to generate greater wellbeing. *Ka Huakaʻi,* which means "the journey," documents this commitment and an ongoing quest to re-establish a thriving lāhui.

Within "huakaʻi" are two powerful Hawaiian words that underscore the purpose of our research on wellbeing. One of the many meanings of "hua" is fruit or seed. Like a seed, data can germinate new ways of thinking and catalyze bold action. The word "kaʻi" also has several meanings, including to lead, to carry, and to walk in formation. Similarly, growth and change

require "lifters" to carry forward ideas that inspire diverse and inclusive coalitions that improve conditions and outcomes for Kānaka Maoli.

The overall findings of *Ka Huakaʻi* underscore that, as a group, Native Hawaiians fare less well than most major ethnic groups on conventional measures of wellbeing. Although individual agency and responsibility are important, it is critical to note the profound effects historical trauma—via colonization, dispossession and assimilation—has on shaping the contexts in which individual choices are made. This deep legacy of historical injustice plays out in present times in limited access to culturally based education, culturally competent social services, physical and mental healthcare, and in structural racism that restrict opportunities and outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in the United States and beyond. Because the trauma of such injustices live in our genetic code, actively deconstructing, dismantling, and rebuilding these systems is a pathway to greater wellbeing and a more just world.

Ka Pua: An Evolving Model of Native Hawaiian Wellbeing

The ability of Kānaka Maoli to survive—and indeed thrive in the future—rests on the collective wellbeing of the lāhui. For Native Hawaiians, wellbeing manifests when pono (balance) is achieved among the many aspects of life. Such a holistic and reciprocal understanding of wellbeing is common among Indigenous peoples, where the health of people is tied closely to the health of the land (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005; United Nations 2006; Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2012; Statistics New Zealand 2013).

In 2005, Kamehameha Schools introduced a model of wellbeing using a pua (flower) to illustrate five interconnected petals: Social/Cultural, Physical, Educational, Material and Economic, and Spiritual and Emotional. "Pua" also is a poetic way of saying "offspring" and this model reminds us that Native Hawaiians are descendants of those who fought against foreign systems designed to subjugate our language, identity, and culture—a struggle that continues to this day. In 2021, the pua model was updated to reflect a more holistic, culturally-centered framework, which we revisit briefly in this paper. Note that whereas social and cultural wellbeing originally were combined in a single petal, the updated version embeds cultural wellbeing across *all* petals (Figure 1; Kanaʻiaupuni et al, 2021).

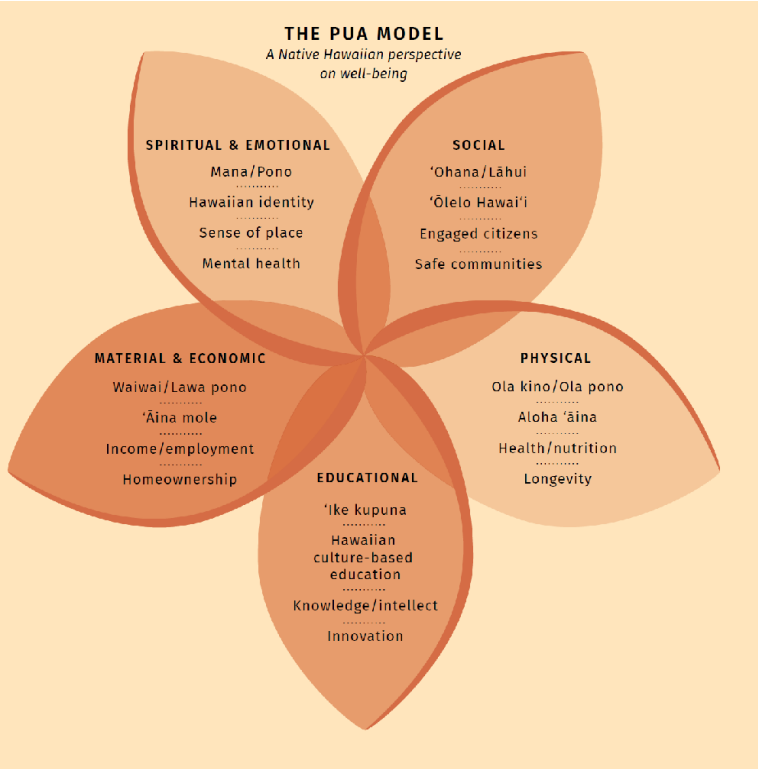

Figure 1: The Pua Model Updated [a Native Hawaiian perspective on wellbeing].

Social Wellbeing

In a Kanaka Maoli world, social relationships are inseparable from individual health and wellbeing. Connections to ‘ohana (families), kaiāulu (communities), ‘āina, and pili ‘uhane (spirits) form the foundation on which a person’s identity is grounded. These connections are animated by mana (life force) and reinforce a deep kuleana (responsibility, obligation) to mālama (care for) others and our honua (world). For Native Hawaiians, individual identity is rooted in collective identity; personhood is peoplehood; and the health of the land is the health of the people.

Material and Economic Wellbeing

Thriving ‘āina is a key indicator of material and economic wellbeing and essential to an Indigenous economy. Western traditions of economics, by contrast, emphasize production, consumption, and transfer of wealth and/or material prosperity. For many, the idea of economics—and money—is rooted in scarcity and the drive to fulfill human wants, even if they

exceed what nature can provide. For Kānaka Maoli, sufficiency is the dominant idea, and abundance is achieved through shared stewardship. Native peoples, like all humans, have additional "wants" for precious items. However, these are generally secondary to securing essential resources for our community and our family. Indigenous economist Rebecca Adamson (2013) refers to this idea as "enoughness;" Kānaka call this idea lawa pono (to be fully sufficient, where enough is plenty).

Spiritual and Emotional Wellbeing

ʻŌiwi perspectives on spiritual and emotional wellbeing focus on living a meaningful and productive life. In the same way that a person's physical health or economic status plays an important role in shaping life experiences, so too does the degree to which they are able to draw strength and guidance from spiritual and emotional sources. Cultural trauma has a particularly deep impact on spiritual and emotional wellbeing. The intensive stripping away of spiritual customs and beliefs, social structures, and political power from Kānaka Maoli since the 1800s is a source of cultural trauma that bleeds into the present day. At the same time, we also see abundance and enduring ancestral wealth in our communities via ʻāina stewardship, restoration, and education efforts across Hawaiʻi (Blaich 2003; Ledward 2013).

Physical Wellbeing

Similar to the other petals of Native Hawaiian wellbeing, good health stems from harmonious relationships among the naʻau (seat of wisdom), the kino (body), and the ʻuhane (spirit). Ola pono (a healthy life) results from balanced relationships among the past, present, and future; among individuals, families and communities, between humans and ʻāina; between spiritual and physical realms; and between traditional lifestyles and present-day contexts. For Kānaka, physical health is indistinguishable from natural ecosystems; healthy ʻāina promotes healthy lives. Mana—both individual and collective—is an integral component of health and wellness.

Educational Wellbeing

Intellectual cunning, articulation, and mastery are highly prized skills among Native Hawaiians. As such, education and cognitive wellbeing remain top priorities for ʻŌiwi leaders seeking social change and betterment—a noble pursuit started by our aliʻi (chiefs) long ago. The

Hawaiian word for teaching (aʻo) is the same as the word for learning, signifying a nuanced understanding of the knowledge transfer. In this worldview, relationships are central to education—a process of learning, applying, and mastering knowledge, in which the highest level of mastery is sharing and creating new knowledge in others.

Strengths

Drawing from available data sources, Ka Huakaʻi 2021 highlights areas of strength and positive momentum for Native Hawaiians. More than half (52 percent) of eligible Native Hawaiian keiki are enrolled in preschool, a rate that is higher than the statewide average. K–12 public schools with high concentrations of Native
Hawaiian students (greater than have lower student-to-teacher ratios, compared with schools with fewer Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiian students demonstrate the largest gains in college enrollment since 2005, relative to rates among Hawaiʻi's other major ethnicities. While newer data suggests COVID negatively impacted some of these data points (as it did for all learners), gains made by Kānaka Maoli over the past decade were real and worthy of celebration.

Bright spots for Native Hawaiians can be found in physical health where the insured rate among Native Hawaiian individuals increased to 97 percent in 2017, a rate on par with the Hawaiʻi total. More than eight in ten Native Hawaiian women receive prenatal care as early as they want. Relatedly, the percentage of low-birthweight Native Hawaiian infants (8 percent) is lower than that of most other major ethnicities in Hawaiʻi. The percentage of Native Hawaiian adults who meet the federal guideline for physical activity (28 percent) is among the highest across major ethnic groups. This healthy habit begins at younger ages where Native Hawaiian youth, compared with other major ethnicities, are more likely to be physically active.

Close ties to ʻohana and ʻāina continue to be areas of strength for ʻŌiwi. In Hawaiʻi, Native Hawaiian adults are the second-most likely to live in a family unit—a stable trend over the past decade. Among Hawaiʻi residents, Native Hawaiians are more likely than their peers to feel connected to their community and to have positive perceptions of community safety. In a survey about migration, Native Hawaiians were much more likely than other respondents to cite social connections to family, friends, community, and ʻāina as reasons to stay as well as return to Hawaiʻi after moving away.

Challenges

Compared with the major ethnicities in Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiians continue to have the highest rates of poverty and unemployment. about half of Native Hawaiian families with young keiki (children) do not earn a livable wage. Although the proportion of Native Hawaiian children with a working parent increased, parents tend to have comparatively lower levels of education and employment. Native Hawaiians are disproportionately employed in lower-wage jobs, even among those with higher levels of education. Native Hawaiian homeownership rates in Hawai‘i have stagnated since 2006, whereas home prices and rents have increased substantially, contributing to increased homelessness and outmigration rates.

Native Hawaiians also face challenging health and social conditions that intersect with economic disparities. For example, although cancer incidence among Native Hawaiians is similar to that of other ethnicities, Native Hawaiians contract cancer at younger ages and have higher fatality rates. Moreover, about one in five Native Hawaiians suffers from poor mental health—a condition that is more pronounced among those with lower levels of education and income, mirroring trends for Indigenous peoples across the United States. Within the foster care system, Native Hawaiian keiki are overrepresented, though recent years have brought slightly lower rates and higher likelihood of keiki being placed with relatives. Among adults, increased arrests and incarceration rates for Native Hawaiians create major obstacles in the path toward a thriving lāhui.

Stubborn health, social, and economic barriers have profound impacts on Native Hawaiian education progress and learning. Educational data show large achievement gaps between Native Hawaiian learners and their peers—a trend that has persisted for decades. Additionally, a “school-to-prison pipeline” in Hawai‘i disproportionately affects Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander children, which can impact in- and out-of-school suspensions. In fact, Hawai‘i has the longest school suspension periods in the nation, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students are more likely than their peers to be suspended, losing 75 days of instruction per 100 students. All these obstacles, in turn, influence educational outcomes such as high school completion—an accomplishment that one in five Native Hawaiians does not achieve.

Although only a sample of the data presented in *Ka Huakaʻi 2021*, these findings highlight areas of momentum and growth as well as stubborn and persistent barriers to wellbeing for Kānaka Maoli. However, if you look deeper and connect critical fragments, a fuller story of Kanaka Maoli wellbeing becomes visible. This narrative focuses on a set of powerful themes relating to aloha ʻāina and collective efficacy that have been building like ocean swells over the last decade.

Aloha ʻĀina and Collective Efficacy

ʻĀina is land, or that which feeds us, suggesting a permanent and nourishing connection between humans and the earth. People are physically, spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally fed by ʻāina. The concept of ʻāina is found in the way we describe ourselves as Kānaka Maoli: kama*ʻāina*, kua*ʻāina*, hoa*ʻāina*, and kanu o ka *ʻāina*, all of which refer to Natives of the land. ʻĀina is considered our one hānau, our birthplace, as well as kulāiwi, our homeland where the bones of our ancestors reside. The intimate connection between ʻāina and people is best embodied by the practice of aloha ʻāina. As Goodyear-Kaʻōpua argues:

> Aloha ʻāina expresses an unswerving dedication to the health of the natural world and a staunch commitment to political autonomy, as both are integral to a healthy existence. Although it is often imperfectly translated to ʻlove for the landʼ and ʻpatriotism,ʼ the aloha part of this phrase is an active verb, a practice rather than merely a feeling or belief" (Porter and Cristobal 2018, p. 201).

We continue to see inspiring examples of aloha ʻāina across our communities that reflect a vibrant sense of wellbeing. In 2015, Paepae o Heʻeia, a community-based nonprofit, gathered thousands of volunteers to close a major puka (hole) in an eight-hundred-year-old kuapā (fishpond wall). This milestone was made possible by the vision and dedication of ʻŌiwi leaders who worked tirelessly for more than a decade to restore the loko iʻa (fishpond) (Fox 2016). From Hāena on Kauaʻi to Miloliʻi on Hawaiʻi Island, community groups and leaders ʻauamo kuleana (shoulder the responsibility) to care for cherished resources and landscapes that teach, nourish, and sustain local communities.

Community-driven, ʻāina-based efforts seek to restore ecosystems, educate keiki, and strengthen food systems. However, studies also show how these efforts improve individual health and wellbeing. MAʻO Organic Farms, a social enterprise in Waiʻanae, Oʻahu, runs a Youth Leadership Training program offering college scholarships and work experience to youth

ages sixteen to twenty-four. Researchers found program participants experienced a 60 percent reduced risk for diabetes and contributed to second-order positive effects on their network of friends and families (Avendaño 2019; Juarez and Maunakea 2017).

Aloha ʻāina allows us to improve community wellbeing by aligning individual contributions around shared values and aspirations. The capacity of people to respond to problems and work together for the community's betterment is called, collective efficacy (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Bandura 2000). In relation to wellbeing, collective efficacy allows community members—operating under shared norms and expectations— to take action, correct injustices, and shape the future. Three powerful examples of aloha ʻāina and collective efficacy are found in the Kū Kiaʻi Mauna Kea movement, the Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage, and advancements in Hawaiian culture-based education.

Kū Kiaʻi Mauna Kea

A call to protect the sacred mountain, Mauna Kea, went worldwide in the summer of 2019. It was issued in response to the proposed construction of a Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT) that would join dozens of other existing telescopes on the slopes of Mauna Kea. The call resulted in local, national, and global demonstrations. It pulled together thousands of protestors across Ka Pae ʻĀina Hawaiʻi (the Hawaiian Islands), many of whom traveled to Mauna Kea to serve as kiaʻi (protectors) and to voice their disapproval of the project via slogans such as "'Aʻole TMT!" and "We are Mauna Kea!"

Early in the movement, leaders made a peaceful, unrelenting commitment to kapu aloha. As an Indigenous philosophy, kapu aloha invokes the sacredness of akua (gods) and ʻāina and challenges us to act in nonviolent, inclusive and healthy ways while remaining firm and vigilant in protest (hoʻomanawanui et al. 2019). As protectors congregated on the mauna (mountain), they formed a small community with bathrooms, janitors, cooks, and road guards. In addition to sharing food, water, healthcare, sunscreen, and rain protection with each other, the protectors organized protocols, training, and even created a school (Van Dyke 2019).

A galvanizing event occurred in July 2019, when police arrested thirty-three kūpuna (elders) who chained themselves to the road to prevent construction equipment from reaching the summit (Puʻuhonua o Puʻuhuluhulu 2019). Displayed across TV and social media, the arrests unified the movement and resulted in greater public awareness and support for the Kū Kiaʻi

Mauna. Still, opponents fought for the telescope project, citing economic and educational benefits for Hawai‘i. There are Kānaka Maoli on both sides of the issue, a sign of authentic diversity and civic engagement across the lāhui.

The Kū Kia‘i Mauna Kea movement catalyzed collective action in other communities across Hawai‘i. For example, the Hūnānāniho movement in Waimānalo, O‘ahu, suc- cessfully halted county development plans for a beachside sanctuary known as Sherwoods. In Kahuku, O‘ahu, a community-led intervention against a wind farm resulted in hundreds of demonstrators being arrested by state officials. Research shows neighborhoods that mobilize and deploy resources collectively are better able to supplement family functions like caregiving and child supervision, have better health (Browning and Cagney 2002), reduced obesity rates and lower health disparities (Butel et al. 2019), report higher perceived trust and reciprocity (Collins, Neal, and Neal 2014), and are better able to control violence and aggressive behavior (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997).

Mālama Honua

The Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage exemplifies aloha ‘āina and collective efficacy on a global scale. Living on a remote island chain teaches us that our natural world is a gift with limits, therefore we must carefully steward our ‘āina and resources to survive. Spanning sixty-thousand nautical miles and four years, the voyage engaged “Island Earth,” bridging traditional and new technologies to promote indigenous values and practices, to champion sustainability and to re-establish global relationships (Kana‘iaupuni 2019). As the canoe sailed, the crew lived and spread aloha ‘āina. Early research shows that the overall wellbeing of crewmembers improved on the voyage, suggesting there are empirical health benefits to ‘Ōiwi cultural practices (Mau et al., 2021).

The traditional Hawaiian sailing canoe, Hōkūle‘a, began its journey to circumnavigate the globe in 2013. The voyage was performed without modern navigational tools, guided only by Indigenous celestial navigation, using stars, sun, winds, swells, and other natural elements. Mālama Honua embodies the power of Indigenous collective efficacy in far-reaching ways. Beyond being a tremendous scientific feat, the voyage came to embody a global compassion for Earth and all of its living and nonliving forms. It did so by connecting people—Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiians—with mana that inspires deep relationships, understanding, and transformation. In the wake of the voyage, a virtual wa‘a (canoe) was formed by nations across

the globe (Pulver and Suthers 2019). Hōkūleʻa and its sister vessel, Hikianalia, stopped at more than 150 ports where stories of hope and inspiration were exchanged. Initial contact in each country was with First Peoples, which further validated Indigenous sources of wisdom and science.

Mālama Honua is a contemporary story of Kanaka education and activism. It highlights the value of blending Indigenous and modern perspectives to solve pressing global challenges such as the climate crisis, economic inequity, and social injustice. While the voyage invited people across the world to learn and care for Island Earth, the genesis of this story was birthed in the practice of aloha ʻāina. Crewmembers say, "He waʻa he moku, he moku he waʻa—the canoe is our island, and our island is the canoe." Just as a deep sea voyage requires conservation of limited resources, a similar approach is needed to sustain life on Earth.

Like Mauna Kea, Mālama Honua garnered international attention and fostered greater engagement and pride among Kānaka Maoli. When Hōkūleʻa returned to Hawaiʻi in 2017, fifty thousand people gathered at Ala Moana Regional Park on Oʻahu to celebrate the historic voyage. The event showcased diversity and depth in our ranks as ʻohana waʻa (canoe families), hula hālau (hula groups), aliʻi trusts, Hawaiian civic clubs, Hawaiian-focused charter schools, kula kaiapuni (immersion schools), ʻāina-based organizations, and community members participated in cultural protocol and exchanges. The voyage deepened collective efficacy by renewing ancient relationships and creating new partnerships that promote local and global sustainability. Native Hawaiians rediscovered that skills, mindsets, and values needed to create a healthier future for the earth are the same as the art and science of wayfinding.

Hawaiian Culture-Based Education

Aloha ʻāina and collective efficacy are learned behaviors, which emerge from the transfer of values and ʻike (knowledge) between people. In recent decades, Hawaiian culture-based education expanded throughout Hawaiʻi's education system forging innovative community–school partnerships. Not surprisingly, Hawaiian culture-based education leaders and advocates can also be found in the Mauna Kea and Mālama Honua movements. That is because aloha ʻāina and Hawaiian culture-based education reinforce one another and give rise to diverse expressions of collective efficacy.

Education plays a major role in the socialization and development of future generations. While learning can happen anywhere, schooling is meant to prepare students to be successful contributors to society. At the same time, education does not occur in a vacuum; schools operate by (and perpetuate) cultural values of the dominant society (Meşeci Giorgetti, Campbell, and Arslan 2017). However, the adoption of mainstream culture within schools may not always reflect the ways minority and Indigenous students see the world. As such, scholars recognize the potential harm done to students when discontinuities exist between school and home cultures (Ogbu 1982; Swisher and Deyhle 1992; Torres 2017).

Hawaiian culture-based education refers to the "grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places, and language that are the foundation of Native Hawaiian culture" (Kanaʻiaupuni and Kawaiʻaeʻa 2008, p. 71). Hawaiian culture-based education is part of a broader Indigenous education movement rooted in a historical and political struggle between Native peoples and "Settler" governments (Demmert and Towner 2003; Lipka 2002; Brayboy et al. 2015). Putting Native Hawaiian values, practices, and perspectives at the center of education not only mitigates cultural discontinuities encountered by students, it also offers competitive advantages (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, and Malone 2017).

Research on Hawaiian culture-based education continues to grow, including studies by school type (Schonleber 2011; Mishina 2017), subject area (Richards 2013; Kukahiko 2019), community settings (Ledward 2013), and from teacher and ʻohana perspectives (Kaʻanehe 2020; Kawaiʻaeʻa, Housman, and Alencastre 2007). When it comes to student outcomes, studies show Hawaiian culture-based education to be positively associated with cultural identity and school engagement (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, and Jensen 2010) as well as community mindedness and college aspirations (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, and Malone 2017). Exciting work is also underway regarding the development and application of culturally relevant assessments among public schools (Espania et al. 2019; Taira and Sang 2019; Sang and Worchel 2017).

Conclusion

The story shared herein is woven from a wellspring of diverse perspectives informed by literature and research, community ʻike (knowledge), and a wide array of national and local data sources. It is tethered to a genealogy of people and mana that spans time and space, and from which emerges evolving understandings of Native Hawaiian wellbeing. At the core of our story

rests a deep aloha (love) and commitment to truth-telling, wisdom sharing, reconciliation and renewal for Kānaka Maoli.

The areas of momentum and concern for Native Hawaiian wellbeing outlined in *Ka Huaka'i 2021* suggest current social, economic and political systems are in need of repair and reimagining. Solving systemic challenges calls for a reactivation of Native people's superpower: strong roots in 'ohana, community, 'āina, and spirituality. 'Ōiwi-led, community-based and inter-organizational efforts are answering this kāhea (call) in areas of policy reform ('Āina Aloha Economic Futures), ancestral circular economies (Pō'ai ke Aloha Project) research and evaluation (Evaluation with Aloha), and wellbeing indicators (Kūkulu Kumuhana, 'Imi Pono Hawai'i Wellbeing Survey).

In the wake of a relentless climate crisis and episodic supply chain disruptions, the resurgence and application of aloha 'āina, as witnessed in Mauna Kea, Mālama Honua, and Hawaiian culture-based education is not only welcome but necessary. Aloha 'āina-inspired examples, such as these, contribute to collective efficacy by strengthening social capital and cohesion among the community. These movements are guided by enduring indigenous values and ancestral practices that form the 'iwikuamo'o (backbone) of Native Hawaiian wellbeing. However, many of these indicators cannot be found in conventional, population-level datasets. They require a different starting point, a different lens, and different storytelling to become fully visible.

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