

## **SECOND PACIFIC REGION ECOVERSITIES GATHERING**

### **FINAL REPORT OCTOBER 2019**



Wai'anae Mountain Range from Kahumana

The 2nd Pacific Region Ecoversties Gathering was held from July 19 through the 21, 2019 at Kahumana, an organic farm on the Wai'anae Coast of the island of O'ahu. This area is known for its high concentration of Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.



Pacific Region Gathering Participants

In attendance were thirty-five educators, leaders, and community/organization members from O‘ahu, Hawai‘i Island, Kaua‘i and Maui, as well as a representative from Sāmoa. Due to travel costs we were not able to sponsor other Pacific Islanders to attend. (This is one of the reasons we hope to hold the next Pacific Region Gathering in Tahiti.)



Large Group Discussions

Attendees came from diverse backgrounds and were excited to talk about the future of education in Hawai‘i and in the Pacific working with the Ecoversities movement. Based on qualitative feedback, the gathering was a great success and participants went home eager to share what they had learned and continue the momentum in their respective communities.



Morning Protocol helping the sun rise over the Wai‘anae Mountains

According to Pacific customs, ceremony and protocol were integrated throughout the three-day gathering in order to help participants feel grounded and focused physically, emotionally, mentally, culturally, and spiritually. This was achieved through a traditional ‘awa (kava) welcome ceremony, at the start of the gathering. As part of this ceremony all participants were asked to introduce themselves listing the places that had shaped them into who they were today and stating their commitment to be fully present during the gathering and contributing their diverse strengths to the process. In addition, every day started and ended with traditional protocol of oli (chants), pule (prayers) and mele (songs), which helped us to connect to the spiritual world, one another, as well as the environment as we chanted the sun up over the mountains every morning. Moreover there was a recognition at all times of the presence of the ancestors.



Uncle Nālei sharing India Experiences

Discussions included the history of the Ecoversities movement in general, as well as an update by Nālei and Kū Kahakalau on the three (3) Global Ecoversity Gatherings to date, with a specific emphasis on a recap of the 2018 Global Ecoversities Gathering at Swaraj University in Udaipur India, as well as Kū and Nālei's stay at Ghandi's Ashram in Ahmedabad. Especially the concept of Zero Waste, experienced at both ashrams, which is in alignment with traditional Pacific ways, was discussed at length along with ideas as to how to incorporate the concept of Zero Waste into our Pacific ecoversities movement, since reusing and re-cycling opportunities are very limited on islands. This is because there is no infrastructure, i.e. recycling plants to receive these materials, and shipping them thousands of miles to such facilities makes no sense. Hence examples from India, where individuals, families and organizations have established spaces where everything is recycled and re-used were of extreme interest to our participants.



Talking Story about Education with Aloha

Another portion of the gathering discussed the history of Education with Aloha (EA), the conceptualization of EA Ecovercity and the proposed launch of its first cohort in the fall of 2020. Specifically the discussion focused on the following areas:

- Aloha ‘Āina (Land Stewardship, Food Security, Patriotism/Political Education, Activism)
- Ho‘ōla ‘Ike Kanaka (Hawaiian Culture and Language, Assessments, Electronic Portfolio)
- Ho‘ona‘auao ‘Ōiwi (21<sup>st</sup> Century Academic Education)
- Pūlehu ‘Ai (Career Development, Organizational Sustainability, Entrepreneurship).



Dyad Discussions

In addition to brainstorming the start-up of EA Ecoversity in fall of 2020, using talk-story, as well as small and large group discussion approaches, we also incorporated “arting”, an integrated approach for culturally and ecologically responsive pedagogy at a very high level during this gathering. In fact, one of the authors of *Arting and Writing to Transform Education*, published in 2018, attended our gathering and provided multiple opportunities for participants to express themselves using this motivating, relevant and place-based approach that combines culture, ecology, arting and writing.



Arting

Throughout the gathering there were also many informal discussions centered on traditional personalized island education and place-based or island-based learning. In addition, participants discussed the need for native language and culture revitalization and how to best support learners to engage hands-on in learning their native language and culture.

Although the ecoversities movement focuses generally on post secondary education, participants also discussed the creation of intergenerational indigenous instruction, curriculum, and assessment approaches and materials, as well as the concept of ancient is modern and the co-relation of ancient/traditional and modern/contemporary ways of learning.

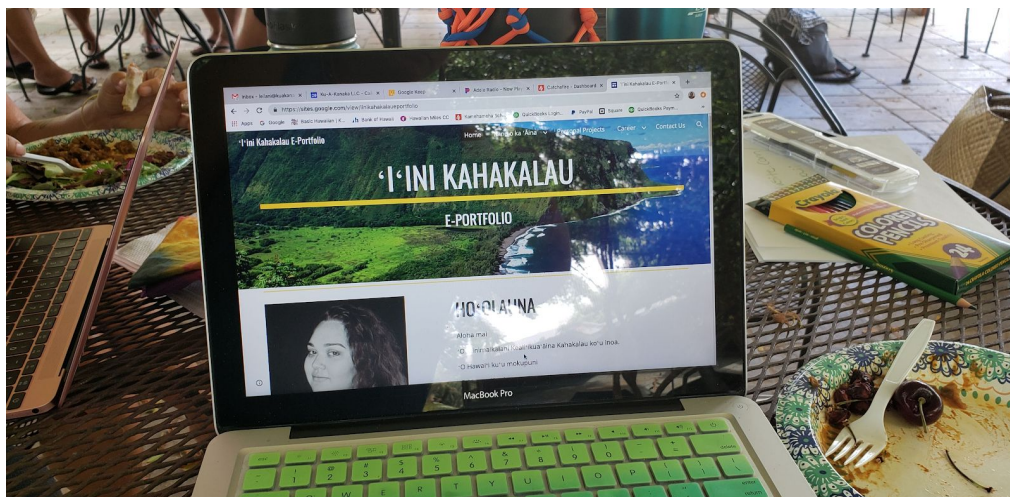
Because we expect EA Ecoversity to be independent and affordable at the same time, there were also intense discussions centering on how to create culturally-driven organizational viability, sustainability and capacity. Specifically the topic of utilizing Kū-A-Kanaka to generate income for EA Ecoversity by expanding our products and services, including the creation of culturally-driven felt stories, was discussed, along with the concept of inviting EA Ecoversity learners to join our social enterprise to learn about entrepreneurship and provide them with real world working experiences.



Creation of felt stories to teach traditional values and generate income



One special topic of discussion centered on micro-credentialing, badges and the creation of e-portfolios. These discussions were led by several young native Hawaiian graduates of Hawaiian-focused charter schools, who presented their e-portfolios covering their learning from middle school, through high school, four years of university learning, as well as in their current jobs. These demonstrations helped to clarify many questions of participants representing the generations who grew up without technology and validated the relevance and pertinence of e-portfolio and digital badges as evidence of learner achievements and skills.



E-portfolio Discussions

Moving forward we aim to continue our efforts to solidify our Pacific Alliance and expand ecoversities throughout the Pacific. In fact, at this time we are planning to hold our third Pacific Region Gathering on the island of Tahiti, to allow those who attended our first Pacific Region Gathering to continue to be involved and to educate our “cousins” in central Polynesia about the ecoversities movement.

In addition, we already look forward with great anticipation to the launch of the first cohort of EA Ecoversity in fall 2020. To prepare for this launch we have identified the following next steps:

- secure and set up online learning/content management system
- create content for online classes and webinars
- continue to build partnerships on all islands so EA Ecoversity learners will have opportunities to follow their desired learning pathways
- continue development of Aloha ‘Āina Badge (micro-credential in traditional Land Stewardship)
- identify and develop outdoor learning laboratories
- identify and train makua (mentors)

After a long day’s worth of intense brain exercises, the evenings were spent singing, playing music, dancing hula and enjoying the cool evening breezes. These informal sessions also helped to build relation among gathering participants and allowed for the exhibition of other skills, i.e. the incredible talents of many of our participants in the performing arts.



Participants exhibit their performing arts talents.

Participants of our Second Pacific Region Gathering also decided to support archipelago-wide demonstrations to stop the construction of a 30-meter Telescope (TMT) on top of sacred Mauna Kea, the tallest mountain in the Pacific, located on Hawai‘i Island, by joining a Friday afternoon demonstration in the nearby town of Nānākuli - the largest such protest in this community ever. This mountain top has always been considered a wao akua, or region of the gods and therefore sacred to Native Hawaiians and our supporters.



Uncle Nālei joining protest of construction of TMT in Nānākuli

In addition to this Final Report we created a video of our Second Pacific Region Gathering, which we invite you to view at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1z20GIb7MCppSJlwMs13DjyFvOtM8zgWq>.

This video, which captured the gathering's processes and outcomes was shared with participants of both Pacific Region gatherings as well as supporters and friends from throughout the Pacific via an e-newsletter.



Thank you again for your support of our efforts to expand the ecoversities movement into the Pacific, a region generally completely ignored by world powers and absent on most global maps.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:

Holding any gatherings in the Pacific is generally extremely expensive since:

- everyone who does not live on the island the gathering is held, has to fly there (FYI: Interisland flights in Hawai‘i are about \$ 200 per round trip, a flight to Hawai‘i from Tahiti, Sāmoa or Aotearo (NZ) is over \$1000 per round trip.)
- the cost of living on all Pacific Islands is extremely high due to the fact that most of our products are imported and housing has become virtually unaffordable for island residents, particularly in Hawai‘i

In fact, the last Pacific Region Gathering caused Kū-A-Kanaka, the sponsoring agency to occur a loss of \$1000.

To address these concerns, and assure that this year’s gathering would not result in a financial loss to Kū-A-Kanaka, the Pacific Region Steering Committee decided to ask most participants to fund their own travel, both air and ground transportation and only pay a total of five (5) roundtrip airfares for elders and gathering organizers who put in countless hours of work without compensation to make this gathering a reality. In addition, participants were asked to contribute food, protocol items and things like art supplies etc., which helped with healthy meals for the gathering, ceremonial protocol, and to implement our arting brainstorm exercises. In fact, as a result of ample food donations we were able to keep the cost per meal at around \$3.00, which is completely unheard of in Hawai‘i, where a simple Plate Lunch costs between \$10.00 and \$15.00. In addition, participants and community members donated the use of cooking equipment, coolers, chairs, tents and other essentials. According to Pacific customs, elders were taken care of with much aloha and respect and not charged for any expenses.



The following is the final budget for the entire gathering. We truly appreciate the generosity of the Ecoversties Network without which this gathering would not have been possible.

## **SECOND PACIFIC REGION GATHERING**

### **FINAL BUDGET**

Received from Ecoversties Network	\$4,487.00 (+\$13 banking fees)
Kū-A-Kanaka Cash Donation	\$ 27.61
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>\$ 4,514.61</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b> 2nd Pacific Region Gathering	<b>\$ 4,514.61 (see below)</b>
<b>Final Balance</b>	<b>0</b>

### **EXPENSES**

Airfare (x5 ppl)	\$1,169.81
Ground Transportation	\$599.22
Lodging	\$1,744.76
Food	\$908.23
	\$92.59
Misc. Expenses	
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Total:	\$4,514.61

Receipts for all expenses are available upon request.