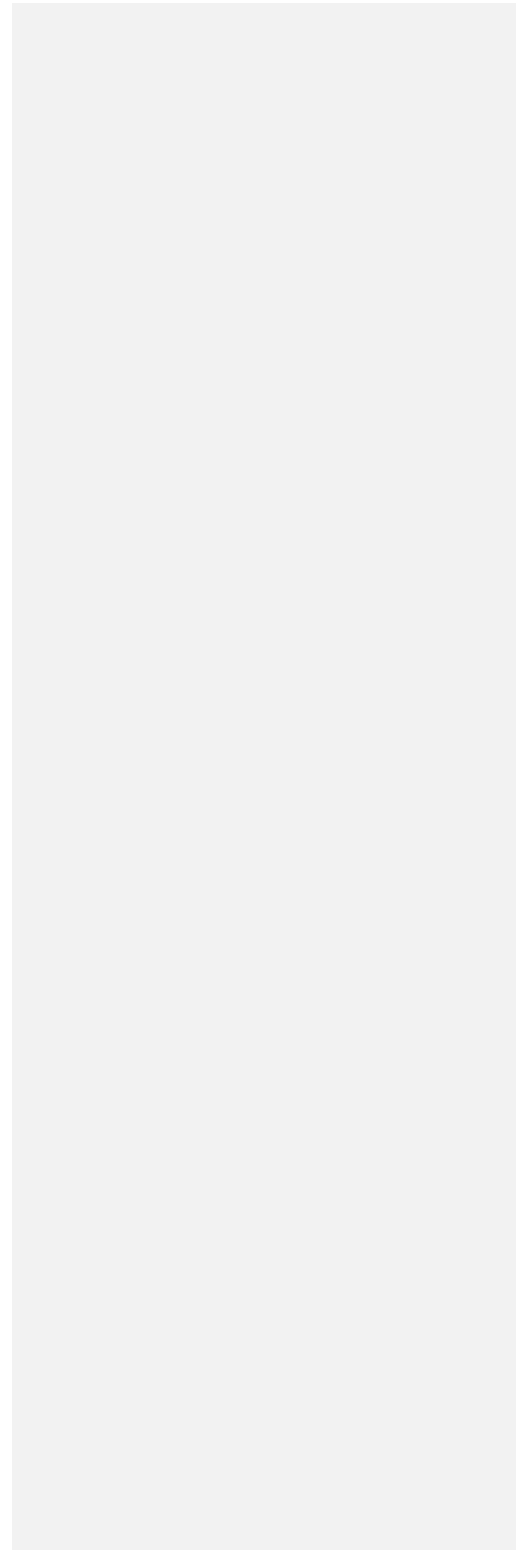


He Leo Wale Nou Ē:
Oral histories of Kohala Kupa'āina & Return to 'Āina-Based Education
Kaiakahinali'i Ka'ōpua-Canonigo
Wahi Kūpuna Internship Program, Huliauapa'a



Abstract

‘Āina-based education, like many different types of ‘ike our kūpuna held, cannot simply be described in a short sentence. ‘Āina-based education is constant and moving, it is the active motions of establishing pilina to place, and therefore to culture. In this paper, we look at ‘āina-based education in Kohala by interviewing four kupa‘āina of Kohala in order to better understand the pre established forms of education there, how ‘āina-based education has developed over the years, and the current need for ‘āina-based education. In order to best capture the findings of this project, I have split this paper into three sections that I felt embodied the work that was done: Ho‘okumu, Ho‘okele, and Ho‘omana. The first of these is Ho‘okumu which includes the introduction and background. The introduction looks at my passion and interest for this project, while the background shares about ‘āina-based education across Hawai‘i and within Kohala. The second part, Ho‘okele, includes the methods and analysis of this paper, as well as the main research method used for this project, community ethnography. After interviewing, the analysis explores the themes around ‘Āina-based opportunities, Challenges Faced, Curriculum, and Program Development as shared by the interviewees. Lastly, Ho‘omana, which discusses the ways in which this project will be used in the future, and a reflective analysis on the project as a whole.

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Ho'okumu: Understanding the 'Āina-Based Education

Ho'okumu, quite literally means to create a sense of grounding and foundation. In this section, we begin to establish the foundations of this project, beginning with why 'Āina-based education is important, and ending with the background information researched to inform our process. Through establishing our kumu (foundation, source), we are able to better navigate our way through processes and create successful outcomes.

Introduction

He leo wale nou ē, here are the voices presented for you. In the traditional 'oli, Kūnihi Ka Mauna, chanted by Hī'iakaikapoliopole at Kaua'i to enter and retrieve Lohiau for her sister Pelehonuamea, she is met with an 'oli pane (response chant) allowing her to enter. The 'oli pane responds, "Eia nō ka uku lā o ka leo, a he leo wale nō, ē" meaning, "Here is the reward for the call, a simple voice" (Emerson 1909). Drawing from this mo'olelo, in the context of this paper, he leo wale nou ē offers this simple voice back to the 'āina, and people from where it came. In this project, we hope to breathe life into these mo'olelo, inoa wahi, kupa'āina, and all of the depth and richness Kohala moku holds, through the power of leo. This project is focused around documenting voices of kupuna, kupa'āina, kumu, and haumāna of Kohala, regarding existing 'āina-based education programs, how more opportunities can be provided, more programs can be developed, and understand previous challenges faced in order to help forward 'āina based education in Kohala towards the future. Through this process, I have had the privilege of interviewing and documenting the mana'o of four pulapula of Kohala, and their experience in the field of education throughout their lives. Ranging from charter school, to 'Āina-Based educational program, to DOE, to aspiring kumu, these kanaka have spent their lives striving to improve the education system in Kohala and the Pae 'Āina through teaching, program development, administration, all while incorporating 'ike 'āina, and 'ike kupuna. No laila, eia nā leo Aloha 'Āina o nā kupa'āina 'o Kohala nei, eia ka uku o nā leo, a he leo wale nou ē.

I was born into a family of educators. Both my mother and father were teachers at the high school and college level. My grandparents both professors in their respective fields, as well as many of my aunts, uncles, and cousins. Needless to say, I was brought up around education and exposed to the benefits and drawbacks to the education system here in Hawai'i from a young age. My parents specifically were involved in the creation of Hawaiian culture-based, 'āina-based Charter Schools, and co-founded one of O'ahu's only existing Hawaiian Charter Schools today, Hālau Kū Māna New Century Public Charter School (PCS). Eventually, by my own decision, I attended and graduated from Hālau Kū Māna, further solidifying my connection to culture-based, 'Āina-based forms of education, and the struggle of Hawaiian charter schools in Hawai'i. Through my experience of 'Āina-based education as a kanaka, a student, and a child of administrators and teachers in this system, I have experienced first-hand the wealth of knowledge, perspective, and grounding that an 'āina-based education gives to young Hawaiians. Prior to attending Hālau Kū Māna, I was a student at Mid Pacific Institute, a prominent private school in the Honolulu area; it was there that I witnessed the lack of cultural education, and inclusivity for Hawaiians and Hawaiian history in our education systems, and realized that these types of institutions were not

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created to nurture and cultivate Hawaiian youth in anything other than standardized Western epistemologies.

Hālau Kū Māna, and many ‘āina-based schools just like it, offer a new form of education that gave me and many other kanaka the tools, knowledge, and experiences to be able to re-evaluate our priorities as modern-day Hawaiians, and solidify our foundation in ‘ike kūpuna (generational knowledge), ‘ike ‘āina (knowledge of environment), and ‘ike Hawai‘i (Hawaiian knowledge), thus creating positive systemic change for future generations. This is my personal experience and testimony to the importance of ‘āina-based education for not just young Hawaiians, but youth in Hawai‘i in general. It is because of my experience that I feel so passionately about this topic, further wanting to have it available to all youth in Hawai‘i and inspiring this project in efforts to interpret the needs of Kohala kupa‘āina (of that place), and their vision of ‘Āina-based forms of education in their wahi. In documenting the voices of these kupa‘āina about existing ‘āina-based education programs in Kohala, we can learn the different perspectives and opinions of kupa‘āina, kumu (teacher, source), and kupuna (elder) of that wahi (place), in regard to how more ‘āina-based opportunities, programs, and curriculum can be developed for current haumāna (student) of Kohala, and future generations.

Thus, in documenting voices about existing ‘āina-based education programs in Kohala, we can learn the different perspectives and opinions of kupa‘āina, kumu, and kupuna of that wahi, in regard to how more ‘āina-based opportunities, programs, and curriculum can be developed for current haumāna of Kohala, and future generations.

Background

Although this project focuses on the leo (voice) of Kohala kupa‘āina looking at how education systems can be improved and ‘āina-based education can be brought to the forefront of schools in Kohala, this is not to say that the existing organizations and schools are ineffective or obsolete, quite the opposite. Prior to conducting these oral histories, in depth research was done on the previous and current forms of ‘āina-based education in Kohala, included foundational organizations like: Kanu o Ka ‘Āina Learning ‘Ohana, Kohala Center, Kohala Institute, and ‘Āina-based programs like Ulu Mau Puanui. Kanu o Ka ‘Āina New Century PCS, is a model source for ‘Āina-based/place-based education, and is the first Hawaiian Charter School ever to be opened; the school was first opened in 2000 after the passage of the 1999 legislation allowing for the creation and funding of Hawaiian Charter schools; along with Kanu o Ka ‘Āina, the first 13 Charter Schools were created across the pae ‘āina- Ka Ana La‘ahana, Kua o Ka Lā, Ka ‘Umeke Kā‘eo, Ke Kula Nawahiokalani‘ōpu‘u, Hālau Kū Māna, Hālau Lōkahi, Hakipu‘u Learning Center, Ke Kula ‘o Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, Ka Waihona o Ka Na‘auao, Kanuikaponu, Ke Kula Ni‘ihau o Kekaha, and Kula Aupuni o Ni‘ihau a Kahelelani Aloha (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua 2013). These first schools, Kanu o Ka ‘Āina especially, were created with the idea of a liberatory education, led by grassroots educators and community members; through this control of curriculum, these Charter Schools were able to develop ‘Āina-based/place-based curriculum that fit the needs of Hawaiian youth and their surrounding environment. As said powerfully by one of the matriarchs and

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champions of the Charter School movement, Dr. Kū Kahakalau, founder of Kanu o Ka'Āina, PCS and Nā Lei Na'auao Charter School alliance stated:

The mission of liberatory Hawaiian education is to promote, protect, and nurture Hawaiian culture in the next millennium, in an ever-changing modern society and work towards future political, economic, social and cultural Hawaiian self-determination. [Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013: page 84]

Āina-based education, as defined by the innovators of the Hawaiian Charter School movement, explain their curriculum and epistemologies as ones of both academic and cultural rigor that intertwines traditional 'ike ku'una Hawai'i with Western forms of academia to strengthen students' knowledge in both. In the book, *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*, written by Dr. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2013), a co-founder of Hālau Kū Māna PCS, she discusses the reasoning and need for this type of education:

Starting an Indigenous culturally based school would allow us to reach out to young people that were thirsting for 'ike Hawai'i by both mainstream public and exclusive private schools. It would also be an opportunity, as the Kahakalau's showed, to prove that Hawaiian cultural education was not remedial. The parents and young educators knew at an experiential level that our Native youth were generally being neglected, if not harmed, by the mainstream school system. [Goodyear-Ka'ōpua 2013: page 87]

In short, Kanu o Ka'Āina, was the beacon and beginning of the Āina-based education movement and served as an example of a successful Āina-based school in Kohala.

Kohala has no shortage of āina-based programs, and it was quite inspiring to see all of the great work that many organizations are currently doing to better the community through many different facets. Some of these well-known organizations in Kohala include: Kanu o ka Āina established in 2000 and located in Waimea, the Kohala Center and Kohala Institute established to service all of Kohala, and Ulu Mau Puanui established in 1998 by Dr. Peter Vitousek.

Through my research I also found many resources of studies already done on the Kohala education systems and possibilities for future schools. One of the main sources that I learned from, besides the interviews themselves, was from a 2009 dissertation titled, "E Ulu Nā Lei Na'auao: Imagining a Charter School in North Kohala", by Trevor Atkins, discussing the need for āina-based education in Kohala. Resources like this were the foundation that I set for this project moving forward into the process of contacting the oral histories and compiling all of the data.

Ho'okele: Oral Histories of Kohala Kupa'āina

Ho'okele, literally meaning to navigate or forge a path, was the second section of this project. In the Ho'okele section, I began conducting this project, and creating the connections and desired outcomes established when setting my foundation. This section is set up to discuss my different

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methods, analysis, and outcomes while attempting to navigate and forge my path through this project.

Methods

When beginning this project, I had a difficult time imagining how I, someone who has spent little time in Kohala, was to give back to this place through the wealth of knowledge that I was privileged to obtain through the Wahi Kupuna Internship Program this summer; let alone all from a distance. Drawing from my education at a culture-based school grounded in 'ae like Hawai'i (Hawaiian values), I was always taught to be humble and cautious when doing anything related to an 'āina that I am not familiar with, out of respect for the kupuna and kupa'āina there, but also for the land itself. With that in mind, I chose to conduct this project predominantly focused in Community Ethnography, interacting and discussing with the community, and learning from their mana'o, rather than trying to draw up my own without extensive time, or pilina to this 'āina. I felt that this was the best way to conduct this project in my current situation, and in a way that was respectful to Kohala and kupa'āina of its places, as well as offering my experiences and passions for 'Āina-based education.

First and foremost, I began this process by evaluating the different groups in the community within education that I wanted to get mana'o from. After reviewing this list, I identified four groups of: 1) kūpuna (elder), 2) kumu kula (schoolteacher), 4) haumāna (student), and 4) kumu 'ahahui 'āina ('Āina-based org. kumu). These four groups encompassed different experiences in the education system in Kohala and could cover multiple perspectives around 'āina-based education. From there, I was able to identify one person from each of these four categories that I wanted to interview for this project to provide a well-rounded perspective about 'āina-based education in Kohala.



Figure 1. Photo of 'Anakala Fred Cachola

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The first person I thought of interviewing, due to his connection with the WKIP, was ‘Anakala Fred Cachola, a kupa‘āina of Kohala āpau, historian, **kupuna**, and lifelong educator. ‘Anakala Fred has an immeasurable amount of knowledge, experience, and perspective not just about Kohala education, but about education systems in Hawai‘i as a whole, and life in Kohala in its entirety. Not many people have the same plethora of ‘ike ‘Anakala has to share, and I was extremely privileged to be able to hear his mana‘o.



Figure 2. Photo of ‘Anakē Kēhaulani Marshall

The next person I chose to interview was ‘Anakē Kēhaulani Marshall. ‘Anakē Kēhau is also a kupa‘āina of Waimea, and currently the Executive Director of the ‘āina-based education organization, Ulu Mau Puanui; a collective working toward managing and restoring the agriculture and field systems of Puanui, Kohala. In addition to being a kumu in an ‘āina-based program like Ulu Mau, ‘Anakē Kēhau was also an educator at Kanu o Ka ‘Āina PCS for 10 years, and then throughout the different schools in Kohala. ‘Anakē Kēhau’s experience not just as a **kumu ‘ahahui ‘āina** but as a kupa‘āina, kumu kula, and kupa‘āina to Kohala.

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Figure 3. Photo of Kumu Trevor Atkins

The third person I chose to interview was Kumu Trevor Atkins; Kumu Trevor is a kupa of ‘Ōla‘a, Puna, but has kupuna and kuleana in Kohala. Kumu Trevor is a **kumu kula** at Hālau Kū Māna PCS for the past 13 years and was even a formative kumu of mine in my years at Hālau Kū Māna. As a kumu, pulapula of Kohala, Kumu Trevor conducted his master’s thesis on Kohala education systems entitled, “E Ulu Nā Lei Na’auao: Imagining a Charter School in North Kohala”. Through his experience as a ‘Āina-based education teacher, and extensive research done on the Kohala education system from his master’s thesis, Kumu Trevor’s perspective was greatly appreciated and important.

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Figure 4. Photo of Pua Souza

Last but not least, I wanted the perspective of a **haumāna**, someone of the new generation and their perspective on how the current state of the schools in Kohala are, and Pua Souza was that person. Pua is currently a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, studying to get her PhD in education. Previously she obtained her MA in Social Work, BA in 'Ike Hawai'i, and graduated from Kohala High School. Pua's perspective to me represented a new generation of educators ushering a new wā for 'Āina-based learning in our school systems. Pua's perspective as a haumāna and kupa'āina of Kohala, and aspiring kumu was exactly the perspective that I hoped to capture, and it was a privilege to be able to hear her mana'o and see the future of Kohala's education.

After solidifying my list and reasoning for contacting these individuals, I drafted specific questions pili to their experiences. Each set of interview questions for every interviewee was tailored to their specific expertise and personal experience (charter school kumu, DOE kumu, 'āina-based org, historian, haumāna, etc.) but still related to 'āina-based education and the main research themes: 'Āina-based opportunities, program development, curriculum development, and challenges faced. These are the series of questions as displayed below:

'Anakala Fred Cachola:

1. In addition to how you mentioned the mo'olelo of Kamehameha and the importance of place names, what other values and histories and Kohala kuana'ike do you feel should be implemented into a culture-based, 'āina-based curriculum? (curriculum, 'āina-based opportunities)

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2. Do you believe new organizations should be created for these types of 'ike? Or should they just be incorporated into the existing schools/programs? ('āina-based opportunities)

Pua Souza:

1. What organization or an 'āina-based education program do you feel the most pili to? But in your case would you mind just explaining how you feel pili to wanting 'āina-based education in Kohala instead? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
2. How do you feel more opportunities can be provided for 'āina-based education in Kohala? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
3. How do you feel about the organization and connection of all of the preexisting programs? Do you feel like there needs to be more of a connection and a system where these organizations and the schools work together, or do you feel like there just needs to be a whole new entity created? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
4. What are some of the values and histories or types of kuana'ike that you believe should be highlighted within the school's curriculum? (curriculum, 'āina-based opportunities)
5. What are some of the things for 'āina-based programs, but also Kohala High that you think are happening that actively hinder the success of creating these types of programs for Kohala students? ('āina-based opportunities, challenges faced)

Kumu Trevor Atkins:

1. What organization or an 'āina-based program do you feel pili to and what kuleana does that give you to Kohala? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
2. How do you feel more opportunities can be provided for 'āina-based educational programs in Kohala? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
3. How do you feel about the organization and connection of all of the preexisting programs? Do you feel like there needs to be more of a connection and a system where these organizations and the schools work together, or do you feel like there just needs to be a whole new entity created? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
4. If we were to build upon 'āina-based programs in Kohala, what values, or histories, or kuana'ike do you believe should be highlighted in that curriculum? (curriculum, 'āina-based opportunities)

'Anakē Kēhau Marshall:

1. What organization or 'āina-based program do you feel pili to? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
2. How do you feel about the organization and connection of all of the preexisting programs? Do you feel like there needs to be more of a connection and a system where these organizations and the schools work together, or do you feel like there just needs to be a whole new entity created? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)
3. How do you feel more opportunities can be provided for 'āina-based education in Kohala, or if there even should be? ('āina-based opportunities, programs)

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4. If we were to build upon ‘āina-based programs in Kohala, what values, or histories, or kuana‘ike do you believe should be highlighted in that curriculum? (curriculum, ‘āina-based opportunities)

After deciding on the questions and main research themes of these oral histories, I contacted each of the interviewees to schedule a zoom interview, due to the current pandemic. Once responding and providing approval of the interview consent form, I had the privilege of interviewing each of these awesome kanaka on Zoom. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed through Temi. These transcripts were returned to teach of the interviewees for review and if needed, further revisions made.

Table 1. List of educators, community members, and ‘āina stewards interviewed

| Interviewee | ‘Oihana | ‘Āina | Date Interviewed |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------|------------------|
| Atkins, Trevor E. | Kumu | ‘Ola‘a, Puna | July 22, 2020 |
| Cachola, Fred K. | Kumu | Ka‘auhuhu, Kohala | July 21, 2020 |
| Marshall, Kēhaulani | Kumu/ED | Waimea, Kohala | August 7, 2020 |
| Souza, Breea P. | Haumāna | Honomaka‘u, Kohala | August 6, 2020 |

Over the course of 3 weeks I was able to interview these 4 kupa‘āina and educators of Kohala. Much discussion, mana‘o, reminiscing, was had and it was truly my privilege and honor to be able to capture the mana‘o and experiences of these Aloha ‘Āina.

Analysis

As mentioned previously, there were four major research themes that were woven into the questions that were asked to the interviewees. These four research themes included, 1) ‘Āina-based opportunities, 2) Program Development, 3) Curriculum Development, and 4) Challenges Faced. Much mana‘o was given about these four themes from each of the interviewees 5) Emerging Topics are revealed.

1) ‘Āina Based Opportunities

Beginning with **‘āina-based opportunities**, when discussing this topic with Kumu Trevor, he stated:

I know Kohala center was doing some good things kind of in between organizations and funding various organizations and projects. So if I was to try and start a resource center, I would first look at what they're already doing. I feel like they

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would have a pretty good sense of all the different programs going on. So that's probably one way to kind of either create or grow the network, it would be through them. I see your leading question is whether a charter school, like Hālau Kū Māna, would function well to bring all of those people together under one network. And I think that's one of the most powerful things about a charter school is that they have stronger community partnerships than public schools. With the right person within Kohala High School, you might strengthen connections with one or even two of those community partners. [Interview with Trevor Atkins]

Whereas Kumu Trevor discussed the benefits of expanding 'Āina-based opportunities through Charter Schools and connecting with resource centers to connect Kohala 'Āina organizations, when asked about 'Āina-based opportunities 'Anakē Kēhau shared:

Yes, there should be. I think that's like kindergarten. You have to go kindergarten first. You should go do some kind of 'āina program at least. I don't see another program because to me that just means another job and more work. It's not very smart. They're already doing the work. How do we connect them? So whatever that might look like, I definitely see a benefit when that happens? And I think that the most disconnected are the schools. [Interview with Kēhaulani Marshall]

Similarly to Kumu Trevor, 'Anakē Kēhau discussed the need for not so much creating new organizations to further 'Āina-based opportunities, but creating a network to connect all of the 'Āina organizations that are currently all doing great work so to have a consistent relationship. Similarly in the rest of the interviews when discussing more 'Āina-based opportunities, the interviewees agreed that a more cohesive network was needed for the existing 'āhahui, creating a more pili community.

I think it's really just partnering with the schools. It's not just somebody coming in and saying, "here we have this program, send your students to me", but really working with the schools. What do they want? How can these programs really work together to uplift each other? [Interview with Pua Souza]

Pua gave examples of the need for consistency within the 'Āina-based program, and how many partnerships happen but what is needed is established pilina between the organizations coming in, and the students. Pua brought up good points about how if we are wanting 'Āina-based programming in schools, we need to establish a relationship with the students, and ask what are the needs of both entities in order to have a successful program. As a former charter school student who had many different organizations coming and going to try and offer services to our students, I strongly agree with Pua's statement about consistency, and establishing those pilina with the school, students, and kumu alike.

2) Curriculum Development

Another research component that was discussed was **curriculum development**, when discussing this topic with 'Anakala Fred, he stated:

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I think all the stories about what it was to grow up in Kohala should be part of the curriculum. If you're going to read about people and what influenced their lives, there are people in Kohala that are wonderful examples. [Interview with 'Anakala Fred Cachola]

Including not just the current events and mo'olelo kahiko of Kohala, but also the mo'olelo and 'ike that kupuna of Kohala had to offer was a big factor in much of the interviews. 'Anakala Fred highlighted the importance of ensuring the stories and experiences of people all throughout Kohala's history be perpetuated and remembered through instilling them in curriculum, a place-based form of learning. Similarly, Pua agreed that there is waiwai (richness) in weaving 'ike kupuna and 'ike 'āina into the curriculum to boost student's identity and pilina to their 'āina. In discussing this she states:

...knowing genealogies of land management in Kohala and how all of these things can be used in our curriculum to help grow haumāna who see themselves as stewards of this land and of their own community. [Interview with Pua Souza]

She went on to discuss how pilina to one's 'āina, establishes identity in the students, helping to form a sense of accountability to not just their 'āina, but their communities, and a larger respect for 'āina everywhere.

I feel like that mo'olelo (Kamehameha Paiea) is a mo'olelo that most people, if not everybody, in Kohala likes. I think that story is pretty ubiquitous in that community where a lot of people heard the story about why each valley has its name. And so I feel like that's a starting point" [Interview with Trevor Atkins]

Kumu Trevor agreed along with 'Anakala Fred and other kupuna, that one of the most essential parts of Kohala kuana'ike and possible curriculum is the mo'olelo of Kamehameha Paiea. That was the majority of what Kumu Trevor had to say about the possible curriculum and what should be in it; he went on to discuss that as a non-kupa'āina of that wahi his kuleana wasn't to say what should be taught, but help to teach whatever the kupa'āina have decided in the best and most supportive way he could.

So the themes that I think are missing are: one, there's very few Kohala people with koko in Kohala, it's a lot of the plantation, for lack of a better term, the remnants of the plantation era is what's there and very prominent there... As a first born being raised by my great grandmother, except for that, everything else was just passed down kinds of things. But I had pride for my Hawaiian side. I don't even see that in Kohala. So the specific things to get there would be just to understand the history of Kohala." [Interview with Kēhaulani Marshall]

When discussing the subject of curriculum development with 'Anakē Kēhau, she went into discussing the need for a shift in mindset of Kohala youth, beginning in the schools. She talked about the lack of pride she sees nowadays in Kohala students, how if we are to begin creating an

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impactful curriculum, we need to reinstall pride and kuleana to Kohala in the students, through pilina to 'āina.

3. Program Development

The third theme that was brought up throughout this project was **program development**, focusing on the different ways that more beneficial programs can be developed to boost 'Āina-based learning in Kohala. When discussing the different ideas and opinions that the interviewees had for program development in the schools some of their perspectives were as follows:

I think the school is the ko'a that not necessarily attracts all the programs, but attracts the i'a that will feed off the programs. And so with a charter school, something like it would definitely function to give more purpose to all of those community groups. [Interview with Trevor Atkins]

Yes. I don't see another program because to me that just means another job and more work. It's not very smart. They're already doing the work. How do we connect them? So whatever that might look like, I definitely see a benefit when that happens. I think it's the schools that are most disconnected from collaborating and networking with these opportunities and it's not even I say the school, but the only time I get connected with the school is if there's a teacher who sees it and then they put in the extra effort to make sure there's a connection. [Interview with Kēhaulani Marshall]

I believe that both Kumu Trevor and 'Anakē Kēhau discussed how the program development from scratch isn't necessarily needed within the schools, but helping to foster meaningful and deep pilina within the schools and the collaborating organizations. Kumu Trevo brings up the metaphor of the ko'a (reef) that attracts all of the i'a (fish) that will benefit from these different programs.

4. Challenges Faced

When discussing the challenges that 'Āina-based organizations and school face, a lot of the issues were not for lack of quality education, but lack of resources, and the bureaucratic policies of the Department of Education currently. Luckily, along with pointing out some of the challenges these entities face, all of the interviewees had mana'o about solutions as well, and the ways in which these schools and organizations are also thriving.

I know that a large reason why these programs haven't gotten to where maybe they need to be is because it's a DOE school. There's so much politics that we don't have to get into around the DOE curriculum and standards and whatnot and I think that's partially a big reason for it. And another is just resources maybe. I wouldn't say that necessarily we need to point out what Kohala schools are doing wrong because we have really good teachers and we have admin who grew up here- for the most part as far as I know- and have really good relationships with the students. And these are the kumu that are going to be able to push this kind of 'ike within

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the school. So I think maybe if you're going to like critique what's hindering student success, it's more on the standardized curriculum that is having to be taught in these public schools. [Interview with Pua Souza]

I believe that Pua brought up an excellent point about how it is not necessarily about critiquing the schools and their capabilities, but about the systems that are put in place that hinder Hawaiian students from getting a certain type of quality education.

The number one thing that I think hinders schools, regardless of their focus, is the fact that they are still antiquated. If they were more connected to their community, they might be able to take a little bit more risks and it doesn't have to look like a multi-age classroom all day long, but have the opportunity for that. [Interview with Kēhaulani Marshall]

Similarly to Pua, 'Anakē Kēhau talked about the antiquatedness of the schools today, and how the systems that are set up within the DOE just do not work for all students and different learning styles. Change needs to be made within these institutions in order to create successful and alternative ways of learning.

5. Emerging Topics

When reviewing all of these interviews, the interviewees different responses to the questions and research topics, I found two common themes that resonate throughout all of their mana'o. These two common topics were Reintegrating 'Ae Like Hawai'i into the schools, as well as creating a larger community network throughout Kohala to connect all of the 'Āina-based organizations doing work throughout the moku. When asked specifically about the idea of a community network and what good that would do for each of these organizations, here is what some of the interviewees had to say:

I feel like we've had programming in Kohala and we've had like little pockets of things, but for myself personally, growing up there wasn't ever this consistent, kīpuka like base. That is what we need. [Interview with Pua Souza]

I think, on the Big Island and especially in Kohala, there's more 'āina than people. And so you have more 'āina-based programs than people that can be serviced, whereas on O'ahu there's actually more people than programs. A cohesive network to bring those programs together would be the way to support all of them at once. [Interview with Trevor Atkins]

And regarding integrating 'Ae Like Hawai'i into schooling,

A lot of the kids, they only see each other in the classroom and right away when you're in a class, everybody has a label regardless of the efforts to be equal in your class, but you put them out on the 'āina and then they see the one who's always in

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trouble, or the one who's academically not performing, doing really well. [Interview with Kēhaulani Marshall]

I think now more than ever, everybody has heard Aloha ‘Āina, but I would love to see kumu really dive into what that means. What does it look like in practice? How do we Aloha ‘Āina outside of the lo‘i? [Interview with Pua Souza]

Summary

Overall, from these four major research themes community members shared about two common topics emerged; The first, that the community should work towards are integrating Hawaiian values and Kohala kuana‘ike into schools to the point where it is normalized. The second, is on creating one cohesive communication network between ‘Āina-based organizations and the schools to build/strengthen relationships and create consistent, lasting partnerships.

Ho‘omana: Empowering Communities through Education

Ho‘omana, quite literally means to empower, and lift up. This section of the paper covers the different ways in which I hope to ho‘omana the community of Kohala with this project. With that, the section mostly focuses on the general reflections of the collecting and compiling this ‘ike for the community, next steps that will be taken to ensure it is contributing positively, and personal reflections of the process and what it has done to connect me as a kanaka deeper to place.

Conclusion

To conclude my findings through these oral histories, I gathered from these community members, the two major themes, and things that the community should work towards are integrating Hawaiian values and Kohala kuana‘ike into schools to the point where it is normalized, as well as creating one cohesive communication network between ‘Āina-based organizations and the schools to build/strengthen relationships and create consistent, lasting partnerships. I chose to conduct a project predominantly focused in Community Ethnography, interacting and discussing with the community, and learning from their mana‘o rather than trying to draw up my own without extensive time, giveback, or pilina to this ‘Āina. I felt that this was the best way to conduct this project in my current situation, and in a way that was respectful to Kohala and kupa‘āina of its places, as well as offering my experiences and passions for ‘Āina-based education. Through my experience of ‘āina-based education as a kanaka, a student, and a child of administrators and teachers in this system, I have experienced first-hand the wealth of knowledge, perspective, and grounding that an ‘Āina-based education gives to young Hawaiians. It is because of my experience that I feel so passionately about this topic, further wanting to have it available to all youth in Hawai‘i and inspiring this project in efforts to interpret the needs of Kohala kupa‘āina, and their vision of ‘āina-based forms of education in their wahi.

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Future Work

When thinking about how to best use this project to improve the community of Kohala in the future, my first thoughts were to use this as a resource for the information available provided by the interviewees. Their mana'o is extremely useful and prevalent to forwarding the movement for 'āina-based education in this moku, and can be useful to future kumu and administrators when wanting to see some of the perspectives of community members, or experiences from the outlook of a kupa'āina of Kohala that is a charter school kumu, DOE kumu, 'āina-based organization, historian, haumāna, aspiring kumu etc. From the analysis, and common needs throughout the four oral histories that were conducted, I mentioned previously that the need for a cohesive network was something that the community felt that they needed; with this research and compilation of mana'o, I hope that it can contribute to developing these I hope that it can also be used as a guiding source to eventually create this needed communication network between 'Āina-based organizations and the schools to build/strengthen relationships and create consistent, lasting partnerships between all Kohala 'Āina programs.

Reflection

When reflecting on my own experiences with this project, I can't help but be thankful for the privilege to be able to hear the mo'olelo, mana'o, lessons, advice, from these well-established people and be able to compile it to create this report. Being able to witness the genuine pilina & Aloha 'Āina that these kupa'āina have for their land is something I strive to instill in every kanaka for their 'Āina; it was very clear in speaking to these kanaka that there was no glory in it for them, they purely do what they do and practice these things for the betterment of 'Āina, and the futures of the generations to come.

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APPENDIX A

Trevor Atkins Interview:

Kaiakahinali'i: [00:32](#) In continuation of what we talked about a week or so ago, about Kohala and 'āina-based education in general and specifically there. I've been talking to different community members. I got to talk to Uncle Fred Cachola. Do you know Kehaulani Marshall? She runs the Ulu Mau Puanui program on the West side of Kohala, it's an 'āina-based program, not so much education, but field work kind of program.

Trevor: [01:14](#) Oh, Puanui. I've heard of that before.

Kaiakahinali'i: [01:16](#) Do you know Fern White?

Trevor: [01:21](#) Yes, I think I interviewed her. She was the student activities coordinator over there. I think so.

Kaiakahinali'i: [01:26](#) Yes. Pua (Souza) recommended her for me to talk to about all of this. I just had a few questions, based on the conversation we had a week ago because of your background and growing up on the Big Island. Also being involved in 'āina-based charter schools, 'āina work in general, and then your dissertation. I thought that you would be a really good person to ask about these kinds of things.

Trevor: [02:05](#) Ok.

Kaiakahinali'i: [02:07](#) I'll just do basic background information first. And then I have about four questions about 'āina-based opportunities, different curriculum, and then some challenges, if that's okay.

Trevor: [02:20](#) Okay.

Kaiakahinali'i: [02:21](#) Would you be able to just state your name and the 'āina that you call home?

Trevor: [02:31](#) My name is Trevor Atkins and I'm from 'Ōla'a, Puna but only in my own generation. My parents and grandparents grew up on O'ahu and I have great grandparents and great great grandparents' settlers that were born and raised in North Kohala, and also in Hāmākua. I'm now residing in Makiki where I'm raising my kids.

Kaiakahinali'i: [03:04](#) What is the name of the organization or 'āina based education program that you are pili to?

Trevor: [03:12](#) I'm a teacher at Hālau Kū Mana charter school in Makiki.

Kaiakahinali'i: [03:18](#) When was it established?

Trevor: [03:24](#) 1999.

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Kaiakahinali'i: [03:27](#) In your best words, why do you believe it was established?

Trevor: [03:32](#) Why do I believe Hālau Kū Mana was established?

Kaiakahinali'i: [03:34](#) Yes.

Trevor: [03:36](#) Go ask you mother. (laughter) To perpetuate Hawaiian culture, language, and values and history. And to create a vehicle towards educational sovereignty.

Kaiakahinali'i: [03:54](#) The first question, diving more into the 'āina-based education programs in Kohala which is kind of a broad one, how do you feel more opportunities can be provided for 'āina-based educational programs in Kohala? What vehicle do you believe 'āina-based educational programs can be provided in Kohala, like through schools or through more different programs or outside of education?

Trevor: [04:38](#) I don't know very much about what's going on right now in Kohala. I don't know how strong the connection is between the public and private schools and 'āina based organizations in that area. I know that there are a lot of programs, probably per capita of a disproportionately large number of programs for how small the population is in Kohala. So, there's a lot of 'āina based programs going on in that area. But I don't know how connected they are to the community. Sorry, can you rephrase your question?

Kaiakahinali'i: [05:24](#) Yes, one of the issues, when I was talking to others, was that they felt like there were a lot of different programs that were offered, but they weren't connected. They were all spread out and doing their own thing. Not very unified.

Trevor: [05:49](#) I see where you're going.

Kaiakahinali'i: [05:50](#) So how can we create or provide opportunities in Kohala that include everything that's already being offered? For instance, creating a network system. Or do you believe there should be a separate organization created?

Trevor: [06:10](#) I know Kohala center was doing some good things kind of in between organizations and funding various organizations and projects. So if I was to try and start a resource center, I would first look at what they're already doing. I feel like they would have a pretty good sense of all the different programs going on. So that's probably one way to kind of either create or grow the network, it would be through them. I see your leading question is whether a charter school, like Hālau Kū Māna, would function well to bring all of those people together under one network. And I think that's one of the most powerful things about a charter school is that they have stronger community partnerships than public schools. With the right

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person within Kohala High School, you might strengthen connections with one or even two of those community partners. But you're not necessarily going to have an overall school pedagogy of 'āina-based or community-based partnerships. And so I think the charter school is the ko'a that not necessarily attracts all the programs, but attracts the i'a that will feed off the programs. And so a charter school, there's something like it would definitely function to give more purpose to all of those community groups. My guess, just a wild guess, is that none of those programs have as many people as they want to host, I'm guessing Puanui wants more keiki, and I think HIP ag. Kauhola. There's a haole-run organization called HIP ag. And I'm sure they would want more keiki. I know Aunty Nani Svendsen down in Niuli'i, at least 10 years ago, is looking for more keiki to be involved in that lo'i. I know that the project in Makapala wants more keiki, and I don't think that the Tūtū and Me program is at full capacity in Kapa'au. And I imagine there's programs I haven't heard about, but I think everyone's always-sorry, I got a phone call to me. I declined Christie over here. I think, on the Big Island and especially in Kohala, there's more 'āina than people. And so you have more 'āina-based programs than people that can be serviced, whereas on O'ahu there's actually more people than programs.

Kaiakahinali'i: [09:25](#) I think the land determines how these different programs are going to be run. So we can't base a program, or O'ahu schools as the blueprint for a Kohala type of education.

Trevor: [09:47](#) You could certainly borrow a lot from all the other charter schools. The current climate for charter schools is, I mean, it seems like they're welcoming. I think there are a new couple of new ones that were just created this past two years. So maybe it's not impossible to get approved, but certainly the easier way would be to work with an existing charter school. Especially one that's in transition. So, looking at what Kanu o Ka 'Āina is doing and how they want to change their program. And uncle Kanoa is a principal over there. Now he's a co-principal now. So that would be the simplest way to connect students to those 'āina-based programs. Ka'ōhā is their online school that's also based out of Kanu o Ka 'Āina learning 'ohana, and Uncle Hayden works there, and his wife just started there. And they're, you know, they're basically writing their program right now. Those are two forms of the same charter school that are already in Kohala that are rapidly changing right now. And maybe looking for new opportunities and partnerships. I would personally like that idea better than trying to start my own school based on the last 12 years of this.

Kaiakahinali'i: [11:28](#) Yeah. That's a lot to think about, I guess that kind of answered my second question in a way, it was just how do you envision more 'āina-based education programs that can be developed in Kohala in the future. And I pretty much covered that one. I feel like there isn't one answer to all of it.

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Growing up, listening to all of the organizing and planning happening for Hālau Kū Māna, it always seemed like there was a clear answer and like a clear right thing to do for 'āina-based education programs, but it's really not. And it's multi-leveled, and it's very complex.

Trevor: [12:23](#) I think the answer is you, it depends what you want to do. I think primarily where do you want to live and how close to your family do you want to live? Because if you can figure that out first, then you can put your energy into something that you can sustain for a long time. And if you still need to travel and maybe don't start any of these kind of projects yet, unless you've got lots of other partners that are going to allow you to go somewhere else, you know, like as a, as a nai'a, are you and I are both going to make decisions about our lives earlier than we probably should. So I'm sure part of these thinking, I'm going to move to Kohala and I'm going to do this and then you're going to get there and then realize, Oh, you know, actually I wanted to be closer to my family or closer to kupuna or closer to the place where I grew up. Or you're also going to realize that as a nai'a, you need to go see the world quite a bit, whether that happens on two week vacations or whether you need to go live abroad for five years, you're going to have to figure that out. But I don't see Hina staying put for a prolonged period of time. And so I think you should factor that into your equation.

Kaiakahinali'i: [13:52](#) As for this project at Kohala, it was mostly just a service that I could do to people from there that I'm trying to work with and offering any research and oral histories that I compile so that I can help in their research. I don't think it's really my kuleana to move to Kohala and, you know, start up a school myself. I'm not from there and I wouldn't want to impose, but I definitely see what you mean.

Kaiakahinali'i: [15:13](#) Based on that, I just had one more question. I think the rest of them are pretty much covered, which is great. And it was something that was really good to ask uncle Fred and people who are very well versed Kohala mo'olelo or kuana'ike. But in your perspective, like how at Hālau Kū Māna everything is place-based and some of the first things we learned are about the ahupua'a of Makiki and Maunalaha, learning the highest pu'u, to the kai that all the water goes to and thing like that. And I think that that was super beneficial for having to learn in that environment, knowing that place. So if we were to build upon 'āina-based programs in Kohala, what values, or histories, or kuana'ike do you believe should be highlighted in that curriculum? Whatever it looks like.

Trevor: [16:32](#) I think Kohala is still very proud of Kamehameha, even though there's another school that tries to own anything and everything to do with him. I feel like that mo'olelo is a mo'olelo that most people, if not everybody, in Kohala likes. And I had heard that the book Kohala Kuamo'o, a children's book that just got made, was created out of a story

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that I had heard from a different kupuna than the one cited in that book. And so I think that story is pretty ubiquitous in that community where a lot of people heard the story about why each valley has its name. And so I feel like that's a starting point, and I've always wondered, well then if all of those places were renamed at the end of the 17 hundreds and what were their names before that, you know, and does it even matter, or is Kohala so proud of Paiea that they don't really care what their old place names used to be called? But you know, I think the first question would be, is that the papa? Is the foundation? Are those going to be the place names that this educational program runs off of? Or is there a layer below that that needs to be explored? I don't know, I cannot answer that, but I feel like that's as far back as, as I understand Kohala and yet it probably has some much deeper history. I remember I think it was before you started Ke Ea (high school student government), we went to Mo'okini Heiau with uncle Kalaniākea (Wilson), and that was crazy for me, that that Heiau has a clear genealogy since the four hundreds. So, you know, there's a lot more to the story. Like there's a reason why I think Kamehameha's mother wanted him to be born at Mo'okini because it already had already had that that level of kapu, you know, so I'd certainly be interested in going back before the story of Paiea and finding out more about Kohala in that time.

Kaiakahinali'i: [19:14](#) Yeah. I don't know Kohala kupa'āina are willing to not highlight that story as like the main part, because everyone that I've talked with, especially uncle Fred (Cachola), he was very adamant that in the curriculum wherever it may be Kamehameha should be at the forefront of that because he's the ali'i nui.

Trevor: [19:36](#) Well, I think his name was Oliver and he was the guy that hosted us at Mo'okini, but that 'ohana that takes care of that heiau, that would be interesting. And yet, you know, if somebody like uncle Fred's going to be at the center of the institution then maybe just listen to what he has to say.

Kaiakahinali'i: [20:04](#) Yeah. It's interesting to get to talk to different kupuna from Kohala, the 'Ōlelo No'eau are definitely true about Kohala kupa'āina, it's interesting to see through all the interviews that I do, how fitting they are to them.

Trevor: [20:22](#) Yup.

Kaiakahinali'i: [20:24](#) Yeah. The last question I had was just about your research specifically, and your discussions with different people throughout the Kohala community. What are some things that you believe are actively hindering the success of 'āina-based education? And that can be in Kohala, but it can also be your own experience as a charter school teacher if you want. But just some really prominent things. I know there are all kinds of different things that get in the way of us doing what we want to do. But

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what are the big things that stick out to you and in terms of what's hindering our successes in these institutions?

Trevor: [21:27](#) Most 'āina-based programs are grant funded and most grants are U S federal grants. So in a giant bureaucracy, it takes time for them to change direction. But if they want to move away from funding these types of programs, they can do so within a matter of years and all these programs are going to dry out. We need to find a way to be economically self-sustainable. What seems like should be the answer is by growing food and value added products, but the American market and products are so heavily subsidized in a supermarket, that it can make it hard to compete. If Puanui is growing kō and pressing their own sugar cane and selling sugar or sugar cane juice, they're never going to compete with third world sugar prices. So it's cool and it's cute and people want to support it. But yesterday I was in a store that has Naked Cow Dairy, and they're selling butter right next to the regular butter, but their butter is four times more expensive. And it's like, wow. You know, I would try that as a treat, but in terms of putting food on the table, I've got to go with the thing I can afford. You know Kohala's prices are no different than O'ahu, it's the real estate market. I think when we start investigating all these quiet titles and taking apart the real estate market and creating affordable housing then that'll open up our economy for other things. But I think the simplest thing is, for us to start putting our taxes into our own government and not American government, if everybody added 20 to 30% to their paycheck, then we could definitely fund 'āina-based programs. We would buy that fancy butter. And I would pay to go to Ho'okua'āina, and I would pay to go to Paepae o He'eia, and I would pay to have a plot at Kāko'o 'Ōiwi if I had an extra 30% in my pocket, you know? So we're just paying the wrong government.

Kaiakahinali'i: [24:06](#) Yes, I agree. That's definitely a big one. Something that's not going to be solved just in this generation-

Trevor: [24:16](#) I think we can do it on a small scale.

Kaiakahinali'i: [24:24](#) Yes. Well, I think that's it for me. That was awesome. Mahalo!

Trevor: [24:42](#) Okay. You're welcome.

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Fred Cachola Interview:

Kaiakahinali'i: [1:45:55](#) Aloha 'anakala! Mahalo nui for sharing everything that you have. I'm so enjoying getting to listen to all of your mo'olelo. I feel like there can be some beautiful mele written about all of the mo'olelo you have to share. Piggy-backing off of what Pua said, all of my questions are similarly related to education in Kohala, specifically Honomaka'u. My first question was: In addition to how you mentioned the mo'olelo of Kamehameha and the importance of place names, in addition to that, what other values and histories and like Kohala kuana'ike, you know perspectives of land in Kohala? Do you feel it should be implemented into a culture-based, 'āina-based curriculum in the Honomaka'u area?

Uncle Fred: [1:46:47](#) If you look at that whole area, La'amaomao, Honomaka'u, what is now Union Mill and all that, it has a history. And like I was saying, I think that should be a part of the curriculum, but are there other kinds of history? There's Faye Mitchell who collected oral histories. My friend Alfonso Mitchell and his wife Haruko, from Mahukona, wrote a book on Armstrong Yamamoto and his experiences in Kohala. She did one of kupuna, Ms. Rose Maeda. I think all the stories that they have about what it was to grow up in Kohala should be part of the curriculum. If you're going to read about people and the things that made them become who they are and what influenced their lives, there are people in Kohala that are wonderful examples. And Faye Mitchell has not published all of them. I helped her to collect some others like the one we saw from Mr. Hayashi who was a teacher there. There is also a book on Mildred Luke who was a teacher from Halawa school. But I think it should be a special part of the Kohala High library that should have all of these stories. They don't only talk about the people, but it's about the 'āina. And if you're talking about 'āina-based curriculum, David Fuentes, he started that whole thing at Kohala (High) and I don't think he's stopped. I think he's still doing something. I'm not sure what his project is called down at Hoesa. He really believes in 'āina-based, project-based curriculum. I think some of the curriculum, like I met two students at Kaiholena who were helping to map out the trails, and who were trying to locate and identify the historic sites. And I look forward to us doing more of that because the more we get students involved in the conservation, and the understanding of their 'āina, the better it's going to be. Their children are going to understand it. It's going to be a way of life. That this 'āina is a special place. They said we need to mālama this place. And so Tony and Gail are working with Kohala High school people right now in trying to get them involved in conservation, and preservation efforts of this coastal area. I really applaud

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that effort. And I wish Kohala people who do more for the high schools that allow students to do more. I hope that that answers your question.

Kaiakahinali'i: [1:51:10](#) Yes! That's awesome, mahalo. I just had one more question. And it's kind of related to what you mentioned earlier about like the history of the kula, Kohala high school itself. Do you believe new schools should be created for these types of 'ike elsewhere? Or should they just be incorporated into the existing Honomaka'u or Kohala High school?

Uncle Fred: [1:51:38](#) No, it should be in Kohala high school. I don't think these values have to be placed in a separate school. I think there were values that are public, they're not private values. We don't have to say that, well, these things are important and if the DOE is not going to do it, we're going to do it on our own. I think the school is so small too. Kohala high senior class is about 60-65. It's so small. And because it's so small, the curriculum is very limited. I mean, there's no choral music, there's no band. I don't know what kind of foreign languages they have. It is very limited because of the size. If we begin making separate private schools, it's going to make it even worse. I think we should make Kohala the best school we can ever make. And if we would begin putting our values of Kohala into the curriculum and trying to isolate that from the public, it's not going to work as well. We, the public, value this. We want this at Kohala High. And the more we do that, the more effective we're going to be. Kohala High is never going to close. I don't think they're going to ever close Kohala high. And of course, the public schools they're going to be small, but that doesn't mean that they can't be effective schools. You're talking my kuleana now because I spent 36 years in education. Classroom teacher to vice principal to principal to director. All that kind of stuff. But most of the time that I was an educator was to convince the DOE to do something different. And it's not an easy task. And when you begin to introduce different ways in which children learn and different methods of teaching, it challenges those who just haven't been trained to think like that. But I think over the years, more and more Hawaiian studies certainly got into the curriculum. When I was teaching, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. In fact, when I looked in the history books, I said, "I'm not going to teach this BS! I'm not going to teach that." But I'm glad you're looking at curriculum and 'āina-based projects. I'm glad you are looking at a project-based curriculum because that's the kind of stuff that, to the kids, is much more meaningful. It's more meaningful to them. And if you can do it on the 'āina, then they grew up in then it's even better, much better. So continue to do the good work you're doing. And all of you, continue to do the good work you're doing. I'm interested just to read your paper when you pau. And I think that would be great. How much more time do you guys have left in your projects?

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Kaiakahinali'i: [1:55:33](#) That was actually our last question. Mahalo nui 'anakala. That was awesome. I think Momi is going take it just to wrap up a little bit. Just from the haumāna mahalo nui, this is so awesome. I am excited to watch it again in the recording.

Kēhaulani Marshall Interview:

Kaiakahinali'i: [00:00](#) Would you mind just stating your name, and the 'āina that you call home.

Aunty Kēhau: [00:12](#) Aloha (laughter). I am Kehaulani Marshall. I'm from Waimea, Hawaii Island. And I was born and raised here. I had the opportunity to live on the continent off and on, and then I came back home in 1997 to raise my son. He went to Pūnana Leo and then Kanu o Ka 'Āina and through his experiences, I learned a little bit more about my culture, so still in my now.

Kaiakahinali'i: [01:25](#) Awesome. First question I wanted to ask was just about an organization that you feel pili to? Whether it be the one you work at now or another one that was foundational to you.

Aunty Kēhau: [01:52](#) Well, the organization that I feel pili to, I believe really no longer in existence, but it was called Kūkulu Kumuhana. And I was introduced to it through, let's see, Pūnana Leo o Waimea. Essentially what it was is a group of people during the time of Kaho'olawe, fighting for the bombing to stop over there. They got together while they were in jail, and then they started talking about how we need to do some, we need to have some changes here for our youth, et cetera, et cetera. And so at that time, in the late seventies, they were like, the very few educated native Hawaiians. And then there were the practitioners also, they just lived on the 'āina. Some of the people included Kū Kahakalau and her husband, Nālei. And then, Kekuhi and her 'ohana from Keaukaha, Hilo side. And this other auntie that I cannot remember her name she's from Pahala, Ka'ū area, and she passed. But those were the three main entities that were explained to me that launched this program. What it was, is they would take the haumāna, multi-age for months into, in this case, it was Waipi'o Valley and some other places like in Ka'ū also, and they just camped. And in that they taught them ma ka hana ka 'ike- by doing we learn- and ho'olohe ka pepeiao, nānā ka maka, all that style of learning on the 'āina. So they had nothing of the conveniences that we have. They had to 'au'au in the river and the pond, stuff like that. So anyways, that was the program. So I came along several years later and this is now 1997, '98, or '99? My son was in the preschool and Kū's girls were the same age. They were three years old maybe. And the kids needed to be at least six or seven years old, or I'm sorry, sorry. No, eight, nine and 10. So third, fourth grade area. They needed to be at least

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that age and ours were too young. So she said, "you know what, if you get a mākuā that can stay with him while we camp that's totally okay". So it worked out for me where my mom was just moving home and she's kind of high-strung, I thought, "Oh great! This would be good for her as well as my son." So they went camping for a whole month. She's straight from Alaska. She was living there for 20 years, if not more, and I just picked her up and transplanted her into the valley. And I had been home probably two years before she came home. So anyways, it was a really good experience for my mom. It's exactly what she needed to chill and get her bearings again. And then for my son, he just excelled. Where in the regular academic world, he was just kolohe. So I was sold on this program already. Here he is, four and five years old going into kindergarten, and he was like doing ha'i 'ōlelo, his kuleana was explaining the lau of the kalo. And so he took us around various lo'i and showed us the difference between the lau and what their use was and stuff in Hawaiian and English. And I was like, damn, I was sold. So I saw that there was something there and I was sold. I was sold on that whole style of learning. Integrating the culture, multi-age so from babies to kupuna, and I saw that as a way of learning that is beneficial for many, not just the kindergarten or, or just the high school, but for all. So the Kūkulu Kumuhana program is something that I'm very close to because of the experiences I had. And then there was like 12 of us that started Kanu o Ka 'Āina, the charter school and Waimea? And I remember Kū coming up to me and saying, "So I'm gonna open a school. I was wondering if you want to be a part of it?" And I said, "doing what?!", and she said "well teaching of course". I was like, oh hell no! Like no ways, man. I was like the regular public school kid just couldn't wait to get out of school and I was done. So when she asked me to teach, I was like, oh man I don't know about this. And I wasn't, I'm still not good at 'ōlelo, so she sent me to some classes and I got trained and I found out that it was a niche that came very naturally to me. So again, though, the reason I said yes to her call is because part of her vision was integrating that multi-age, engaging the students, not just the students, but the family too in learning, in the culture and stuff. So that's my background and everything I do even at Puanui mimics a lot of those practices that we learned at Kanu (o Ka 'Āina). And it was ma ka hana ka 'ike. I mean she just threw us into all kinds of places. I'm not a hula dancer. I'm like Tahitian or the bombastic kind of hula because it hides all the nerves and then your pau. The graceful stuff? She even got me doing that. I'm like, Oh my God. But the whole thing was, we all learned. Just because you're not good at something, doesn't mean you're not good at something. There's something else that you're good at. And so that's my teaching style and that's what we did. And to me, that's 'āina-based. So the 'āina must include the 'ohana, and it must include the kaiāulu, the community. And you are good at something, even if it's at something you think you're not good at, you are good at something. So my job then is to help you find it. And that's 'āina-based to me, and

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ideally you would do that on the ‘āina that you grew up on, or ‘āina that your pili with, or ‘āina that you knew that your kupuna are from, and you always wanted to know something about, or just going on ‘āina and then you discover. So to me that’s ‘āina-based, all of those things I can't just teach online. I got to drag your butt with me to some ‘āina and get your hands dirty. So that's the one I'm pili with.

Kaiakahinali'i: [07:00](#) So my next question, is how do you feel more opportunities can be provided for ‘āina-based education in Kohala or, if there should there be more?

Aunty Kēhau: [07:13](#) Yes, there should be. I think that's like kindergarten. You have to go kindergarten first. You should go do some kind of ‘āina program at least. Oh. And then how do you feel about all the programs that are available and it's connection? Is that what it was?

Kaiakahinali'i: [07:36](#) Yes. It was because a lot of the discussions that I had with people prior, it was either a matter of them establishing a new entity that was something that could connect all the preexisting programs to each other and also to the schools, because they felt like a lot of people are doing super awesome things, but not everyone gets to know about all of them or not everyone is on the same page. So rather than creating a whole new entity, just having someone be like the connecting entity between all of these different pre existing programs.

Aunty Kēhau: [08:15](#) Yes. I don't see another program because to me that just means another job and more work. It's not very smart. They're already doing the work. How do we connect them? So whatever that might look like, I definitely see a benefit when that happens? And I think that the most disconnected are the schools. So here's an example I experienced. I was contracted by Kamehameha Schools for the West Hawaii Island side to teach teachers about our culture and stuff like that. And they were mostly the Teach for America teachers that were brought in. We had a hard time filling those positions with our own and whatnot. And they were a delight to work with. They really saw the benefit of them learning the culture so that they could better connect and provide relevant lessons with their students, local kids. And that was a great program. But when I joined this team who was tasked with coordinating these learning opportunities for these teachers, taking them on huaka'i, engaging them in the culture and stuff like that. I was amazed at the list that they gave me, the places that they went to. I'm like, you are a Kamehameha Schools entity and you guys don't even know about ‘Āina Ulu and it is in your backyard. So, because I was just getting on as ‘Āina Ulu through Puanui, and doing this contract work on the site as a favor for a friend (laughter), I'm like, I don't want to teach teachers they're like the worst! But anyways, so she lured me in and I said, "let's go and make connections with these guys". And plus a lot of

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the teachers were in Kona. So the dry land forest, and also Ka Loko North of Kohala, and then they had the loko i'a around them, it's right there, and it's all Kamehameha affiliated. And so they didn't even know until I came on and they were doing this program for several years before I came on. Kamehameha Schools are huge. You know what I mean? And Kohala is not, so it should be easier to make those connections, but I see that everybody is doing the work and we're so busy doing it that, we see the value of connecting, but for me as the executive director, I am out there weeding cleaning my lua, hosting the groups, you kind of do everything cause we're just small town. And then imagine everybody is like that, doing the good work, but very busy doing it. So I definitely see a benefit for that. And again, I think it's the schools that are most disconnected from collaborating and networking with these opportunities and it's not even I say the school, but the only time I get connected with the school is if there's a teacher who sees it and then they put in the extra effort to make sure there's a connect. And that's the only way I see it happening. And they do get support from their admin. So it's not the administration holding them back, it's just, teachers are comfortable doing what they do from the space that they do it in. And yeah. So I think that's where the fire needs to be lit.

Kaiakahinali'i: [11:34](#) Yes. I agree. It's interesting, you talked about that program though, that Aunty Kū and Uncle Nālei started. I'm pretty sure that's where my parents met- down in Waipi'o Valley with them. So yes I thought that was interesting.

Aunty Kēhau: [11:51](#) Yes, it's touched many lives in a very kind of radical way. And all through Aloha, it was very interesting. Some people that were down there, they were going through some challenges that, that kind of well up inside of them when they are removed from the other challenges that we have to deal with. It's a safe place where they can just be, and discover and rediscover each other and their own. I don't know how to describe it, but I saw a lot of struggles, and how supportive everyone was for those people that have a lot to sort through. And look at how young and 'eleu you are and comfortable and confident in your work. You're doing projects like this, think about your parents doing a project like this. It would probably have been a big struggle. So their effort, the sacrifices they made, the things that they did so that they got out of their comfort zone has provided opportunities for our youth to have that confidence that they didn't have, to take the risks they would never have taken especially academically.

Kaiakahinali'i: [13:14](#) Yes exactly. So for the next question, if we were to build upon 'āina-based programs in Kohala in the schools, what values or histories or kuana'ike, do you believe should be highlighted in a curriculum that would be offered to the schools?

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Aunty Kēhau: [13:44](#) I've had the opportunity to work with elementary students, middle school and high school in Kohala. And, I was very impressed by the elementary, and the cohesiveness that that principal had established in the school with everyone, from the students to the janitorial people, to the office people, very impressed with that. I don't know what he was doing exactly, but that was the impact of a strong leader. So that's one thing I think they need to get established, whoever the leader is amongst the schools, they need to take on some kuleana to grow themselves. When you model that you can grow and you're not perfect, and you do that in a school, everyone realizes they're not perfect and they have room to grow. And so everybody grows. That's my observation. The middle school had an opportunity to be cohesive but the teachers it looked like to me were everywhere. And as far as the high school, they're fully disconnected. I can tell by the behavior of the kids, I was in an ag. class and the way they were misbehaving, and then one kid stole a phone, from one of the adults that was in class. And, it's just an opportunity, it's a temptation, you know what I mean? They just do whatever. So the themes that I think are missing are: one, there's very few Kohala people with koko in Kohala, it's a lot of the plantation, for lack of a better term, the remnants of the plantation era is what's there and very prominent there. And so finding the ones with the koko maybe, and trying to light a fire under their butt is an important thing. So good leadership, finding the people who are truly from Kohala, and hopefully inspiring them to take a leadership role or some kind of positive influence. But what is lacking overall is pride in Kohala. So to me you can be proud of the place. When I was growing up in the seventies, I'm like, I'm proud to be Hawaiian, but I got like six other nationalities in me, and I chose Hawaiian and I wasn't even raised in the culture except for the values. As a first born being raised by my great grandmother, except for that, everything else was just passed down kinds of things. But I had pride for my Hawaiian side. I don't even see that in Kohala. So the specific things to get there would be just to understand the history of Kohala. Nevermind all the islands of Hawai'i. Yes Kamehameha did unite all the island, but let's learn about where he grew up, and where he made friends, and the sacrifices he made, and the stupid things that he did also. Let's definitely learn about him. But not just the fact that he was born near Upolu Point, that's where the birthing occurred, but all of Kohala all of the ahupua'a on the Windward side, had something to do with hiding him until they got him to safety, and that's uncle Fred Cachola. But there's much pride. So let's talk about the people that supported him. Wow. Like how did they be quiet, and how did they keep the baby from crying so that it wouldn't be heard and everybody had something to do with that. So the pride in Kohala, understanding the history, the fact that Kohala was the most populated in all of Hawaii Island out of all the districts. The fact that Kohala had both a wetland, so lo'i farming and dry land, and there's only one other place in the whole archipelago that did that. And that was Maui.

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And at one time Hana, Maui and Kohala were one district. That should peak their interest! Like, what is that about? So they don't know their history. So how can they have pride in that? Those are the specific things that I would say every fourth grader needs to know. And then when they get to the seventh grade, they need to revisit it. And when they're a sophomore in high school, they need to do something to demonstrate it. You know what I mean? Introduce it, know it, act it out a little bit, do something, give back to an ahupua'a in Kohala- there's many. It's so doable to me, but the teachers are tired.

Kaiakahinali'i: [18:38](#) Definitely understand. I come from a Hawaiian charter school myself and I feel like we do those kinds of things, in our daily lives.

Aunty Kēhau: [18:50](#) Yes. So that's where the leadership comes in. So like I said, that elementary school is amazing and Danny Garcia was the principal. He's no longer there. But he's left a very strong legacy. All those people are not going to tolerate anything less than that. He had another principal that was a VP under him. And that guy said it was so easy for him because of what Danny had established, it was easy for him and it made him want to grow also. So that's what we need is some good leaders.

Kaiakahinali'i: [19:27](#) That kind of segways well into the last question about different things that you feel are hindering that vision that we want for those schools, if you could talk about that a little bit.

Aunty Kēhau: [19:42](#) Okay. So the number one thing that I think hinders schools across the nation, regardless of their focus, is the fact that they are still antiquated. Just like the Catholic churches, it is one of the oldest institutions in American history, meaning it has not changed much since the early 19 hundreds, they were doing better off as a one school house school than they did when the industrial era launched. And then they started to create these cookie-cutter kids to fit the industry, the industrial era, where they were going to work in factories and do a clock in and clock out kind of job. So they're still stuck in that mode. I think that's the biggest hindrance. They have this idea of how schools should run, which is all first graders should be together, then all second graders, that is one way, it's a way, it certainly isn't THE way. And if they were more connected to their community, they might be able to take a little bit more risks and it doesn't have to look like a multi-age classroom all day long, but have the opportunity for that. One thing we learned at Kanu o ka 'Āina, the kids would be on the playground and we had everything kindergarten to 12th grade playing on what we call the playground, which wasn't much. And they're just like mingling with one another and stuff like that. And I remember this, communications professor from UH Hilo said, you'll never see that anywhere else in the United States. This would be considered too high risk, too risky, all the across ages, playing together and stuff. And then

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for us it was like wait, that's like family. And it works great as a teacher, I saw the benefits. So those things that they learn about themselves. We had a lot of older kids not performing at their academic level, but we'd have them do something simple as read to the younger kids because they could read, and the younger kids thought that they were magic that they could read that book and stuff. Those kinds of small things that you can only experience in a multi-age environment. Same thing for 'āina-based learning. A lot of the kids, they only see each other in the classroom and you know right away when you're in a class, that's the smart one, that's not the academic one, that's the one that always gets in trouble. Everybody has a label regardless of the efforts to be equal in your class, but you put them out on the 'āina and then they see the one who's always in trouble, or the one who's academically not performing, doing really well. They know how to handle a shovel, they know how to pull the weeds good, whatever it might be. And then the academic one is struggling in that realm and then they help each other. And it's usually the low performer that will reach out to the high performer, he'll say, "Oh, here come, I'll help you", or "come over here and I'll show you how", like no boundaries at all. Just pure kōkua, and aloha. I think schools are just hindering themselves. They're in their own way.

Kaiakahinali'i: [23:19](#) I definitely agree with that. I like that idea of a multigenerational or multi age learning environment. We have that at my kula too, where it's kua'ana and kaikaina relationships, so it also just haumāna old and young a sense of accountability to each other and sense of community. And I think it's really so important.

Aunty Kēhau: [23:39](#) There's so many skills being exchanged in that way, and it's very empowering for the older ones like, "Oh, well the little one is looking up to me", you better straighten out and you got a behavior because whatever you do, they're going to do it to the 10th power. They learned that one quickly.

Kaiakahinali'i: [23:59](#) Mahalo for that!

Aunty Kēhau: [24:06](#) Another thing too, that I always think about, having struggled through high school myself, but I think high school is just a waste of time. I think high school would be better if it were designed the way a BA is in college. Because essentially you're repeating that when you go get your BA. You need the prerequisites of math and written skills, language arts. But if high school were designed that way, the way the BA is now, it matters. It counts already. The high school kids, maybe not until their junior or senior, but they should also hold a part time job within their community. And the community should provide those opportunities for our high school kids where they have to clock in and clock out at a certain time, but have some kind of individual kuleana and yes, and the money should go to

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them, not to the school, not to their parents, it should go to them, that they're working for that. But I really think that a lot of high school kids have to relive their elementary years, and are still being told what to do, how to do it, when to do it. And then they go home and the same thing happens. But I see a lot of people struggling with that and they see the benefits of if only we would give them a little more kuleana, treat them like adults, the adults that they really are. And if we look back in the past, a lot of 15, 16 year olds were having families already. And I'm not encouraging that, but I'm just saying, that they have an adult kuleana, they are developing their skills so that they can provide for themselves, provide for a family, contribute to a better cause, something like that. I think that would be far more beneficial as a part time job, a few classes that, that count, it's not like if you don't go to class, you're going to get sent to the office. How about, if you don't go to class and you don't pass and you can't go to college? Or it doesn't go towards your college degree, something more meaningful that they realize they have to own up to. It's not babying them.

Kaiakahinali'i: [26:32](#) Well when we have our own kingdom, we can make up how we want the schools to be created. But I think that's all of the questions that I have. That was so much mana'o for only five questions. Thank you so much.

Aunty Kēhau: [27:31](#) Yeah. You're welcome.

Kaiakahinali'i : [27:33](#) I'm definitely going to enjoy transcribing this after.

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Pua Souza Interview:

Kaiakahinali'i: [00:00](#) Okay, so just to start off, I'm just going to ask a few questions if you don't mind. So, would you be able to just state your name and the 'āina that you call home?

Pua: [00:14](#) Okay. My name is Breea Souza, but you can call me Pua. I was born and raised in Kohala, primarily in Honomaka'u, and I now live in Kaimuki and go to school at UH Mānoa.

Kaiakahinali'i: [00:27](#) Nice. Mahalo. The first question was, what organization or an 'āina-based education program do you feel the most pili to? But in your case would you mind just explaining how you feel about wanting 'āina-based education in Kohala instead?

Pua: [00:55](#) That's a good question, because the first thing that I thought of was Paepae o He'eia, just because they had such a big influence on me and they're one of the first kind of 'āina-based organizations that I saw, how they ran things and how they incorporated community and I thought, this is exactly what I could model back home in Kohala. So when I think about what kind of 'āina-based education here could look like? I think of the way that they do things. Them and everybody, everybody in that whole ahupua'a (Ko'olaupoko; ex. Papahana Kuaola, Kāko'o 'Ōiwi, Paepae, etc.). Getting 'āina, that we could work on as a community- kind of what Kamana'opono wants to do in Iole- incorporating a specific kind of curriculum that could be used within the schools, community work days, some kind of consistent theme. I feel like we've had programming in Kohala and we've had like little pockets of things, but for myself personally, growing up there wasn't ever this consistent, kīpuka like base. So I guess something like that, my runaround way of saying it.

Kaiakahinali'i: [02:16](#) No of course, I get what you mean. Secondly, diving more into the 'āina-based education programs in Kohala, which is kind of a broad one, but how do you feel more opportunities can be provided for 'āina-based education in Kohala?

Pua: [02:45](#) I guess that there's a lot of different ways that it could be provided. But my first thing is through the schools. It's really just partnering with the schools, it's not just somebody coming in and saying, "here we have this program, send your students to me", but really working with the schools. What do they want? And how can these programs really work together to uplift each other?

Kaiakahinali'i: [03:13](#) And with that, one of the things that came up in a lot of my discussions with other people about the different 'āina-based organizations that are already created, and then creating new ones. How

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do you feel about the organization and connection of all of the preexisting programs? Do you feel like there needs to be more of a connection and a system where these organizations and the schools work together or do you feel like there just needs to be a whole new entity created?

Pua: [03:52](#) Definitely connect. I mean, I've been out of school for a while. I haven't lived in Kohala for the past seven years, so I'm sure that there's existing programs that I don't know enough about. But just from my personal experience, there's a huge disconnect. Like I said about that consistency, it's never this constant observation of these people working together and all have the common goal. It's always just these separate organizations that all kind of have the same goal, but are doing the work separately.

Kaiakahinali'i: [04:28](#) I see, I see. One of the last questions I wanted to get your mana'o on. From my discussions with some of the kupuna from Kohala, especially Uncle Fred, he talked a lot about if there were a curriculum, a new formal curriculum to be developed for schools specifically, he would definitely want to see the story of Kamehameha be a huge component in all of it and kind of the kāhua for 'ike 'āina and kuana'ike Kohala. And so I was wondering in your perspective, what are some of the values and histories or types of kuana'ike that you believe should be highlighted within the school's curriculum?

Pua: [05:29](#) I think the first thing that comes to mind is Aloha 'Āina. I think now more than ever, everybody has heard Aloha 'Āina, but I would love to see kumu really dive into what that means. What does it look like in practice? How do we Aloha 'Āina outside of the lo'i? Because I think that that's what everybody, the majority of students that go to public DOE schools, associate Aloha 'Āina with; Mauna Kea, working at the lo'i, working outside, but really how do they Aloha 'Āina in their schools? Another one I believe is Mo'okū'auhau. Again, not just knowing what that is, but knowing its function and its purpose to us as kanaka. And knowing the Mo'okū'auhau of our ali'i like Uncle Fred talked about Kamehameha, knowing genealogies of land management in Kohala and how all of these things can be used in our curriculum to help grow haumāna who see themselves as stewards of this land and of their own community.

Kaiakahinali'i: [06:42](#) Yes. I definitely agree with that. Mahalo for sharing. Lastly, just to kind of get a perspective on what you think the schools are like now, what are some of the things for 'āina-based programs, but also Kohala High that you think are happening that actively hinder the success of creating these types of programs for Kohala students?

Pua: [07:23](#) I don't know about, um, actively hindering the success, but I know that a large reason why these programs haven't gotten to where maybe they need to be is because it's a DOE school. There's so much politics that

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we don't have to get into around the DOE curriculum and standards and whatnot and I think that's partially a big reason for it. And another is just resources maybe. I wouldn't say that necessarily we need to point out what Kohala schools are doing wrong because we have really good teachers and we have admin who grew up here- for the most part as far as I know- and have really good relationships with the students. And these are the kumu that are going to be able to push this kind of 'ike within the school. So I think maybe if you're going to like critique what's hindering student success, it's more on the standardized curriculum that is having to be taught in these public schools.

Kaiakahinali'i: [08:43](#) I agree. That was always one of our biggest challenges at Hawaiian Charter schools, trying to integrate DOE standards with everything that we want to teach. Well, that was all of my questions, thank you for letting me interview you.

Pua: [09:18](#) Yes that was really quick. Mahalo.

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