

ALAKA'INA: FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION  
EXAMINING THE LIVES OF THREE FEMALE LEADERS IN NATIVE HAWAIIAN  
EDUCATION

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# FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

## Dedication

I am from Hawai'i  
I am from Papahanaumoku and Wākea  
I am from Lāhui, 'Ōlelo, and Mo'okū'auhau  
Generations and Generations of Kānaka  
I am from cultural genocide  
From The Great Dying of 1780 to the Overthrow of 1893  
From Kalaniopu'u's tears to Lili'u's tears  
Generations and Generations of Remembrance  
I am from choices made to protect a family  
The sacrifice of a language for their future  
Unheard voices and lost mo'olelo  
Generations and generations of Oppression  
I am from Rosabella, Lehua, Wai'ale'ale, Ka'ie'ie and Laua'e  
From Lani, Miriam and Eddie  
From Marci and Marne  
Generations and Generations of Mana Wahine  
I am from Kūpa'a  
PKO and Kōkua Kalama Valley  
To 'A'ole TMT and NO DAPL  
Generations and Generations of Kū'ē  
I am revitalization  
I am heard voices  
I am the future of my lāhui  
Hoping to inspire  
Generations and Generations of Change  
I am Mia Wai'ale'ale Kanakamaika'i Sarsona  
I am from inherited Resilience  
Not inherited trauma

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I dedicate this dissertation to my daughters, Mia Wai‘ale‘ale Kanakamaika‘i Sarsona and Moani Lehua Kanakamaika‘i Sarsona and my son John David Kamana‘o Kanakamaika‘i Sarsona who inspire me to become a better Native Hawaiian mother and woman every day. This poem, written by Wai‘ale‘ale (2017) reflects ultimately what my life’s work strives to do, not just for my own children but for all Native Hawaiian children. The ability to understand our past and push forward into their future, a future of revitalization for ourselves and our people.

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## **Abstract**

As Native Hawaiian Education continues to grow in our state, so does the need for educational leaders who are able to effectively guide and support the Native Hawaiian Education movement. However, little is known about how leadership in Native or Indigenous education in today's contemporary setting is developed or fostered. Utilizing a qualitative multi-case study approach, this study aims to shed light on how three female Native Hawaiian Education leaders' experiences and perspectives shaped their leadership trajectories. Transcripts from semi-structured interviews with each of the participants were analyzed using cross-case comparative analysis and references to the Kumu Honua Mauli Ola, Native Hawaiian Education Philosophy Statement. While each individual's leadership trajectory was unique, in every case their upbringing included 'ohana (family) values and influences that led to high educational expectations and the practice of Hawaiian cultural values. Consequently, the leadership practices of each of these women are firmly grounded in Hawaiian culture and a commitment to the lāhui Hawai'i, and have resulted in the setting of high expectations for the students attending their schools. Although each of these leaders characteristically understated the magnitude of their accomplishments, and the courage and persistence required of their positions, their conviction that the mission of Native Hawaiian Education is just and righteous led them to be strongly determined, persistent, and courageous in their actions, and enabled them to overcome major obstacles in pursuit of a cause that to this day has yet to gain popularity outside of Indigenous circles.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### *He Hawai‘i Au Mau a Mau*

Born and raised on ‘Āina Ho‘opulapula (Hawaiian Home Lands) in Waimānalo, my learned values of ‘ohana, my cultural practices, my educational journey, my life experiences and my professional choices, all remind me that I am Hawai‘i forever.

In 1978, when many Native Hawaiians were fighting at the Hawai‘i constitutional convention to ensure our ‘Ōlelo Makua, the language of our kūpuna, was recognized as an official language of the state, I was three years old. This single decision changed the landscape and soundscape of Hawai‘i today, and changed the trajectory of Hawaiian language and public education systems forever.

At that time, my mother, who had been conditioned to believe that Hawaiians, and all things Hawaiian, were inferior, had no interest in Hawaiian issues or Hawaiian language. Instead, she believed that my brothers and I should receive a traditional, western education. We attended our local “homestead” public elementary school, called Blanche Pope Elementary, and neighboring public secondary schools thereafter. In high school, I had asked to enroll in a Hawaiian language course offered at Kailua High School. My mother’s response was, “Fo‘ what, who you going talk to?” In the following four years, I was enrolled in Japanese language, “so you can get a job,” my mother explained. By all accounts, I was successful in the public

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education system. I played sports, participated in school clubs, and was the prom queen. After graduating from high school, I attended the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

My educational experience was not rooted in Hawaiian language, Hawaiian culture or Hawaiian identity. In fact, it devalued my identity so much so that when asked one day by a teacher “What ethnicity do you associate with?” to her surprise, I said “Puerto Rican.” My Hawaiian identity was further devalued by the stereotype of Hawaiians living on the “homestead” in Waimānalo, where we were often dismissed as poor, lazy and dumb. I struggled with this stereotype until I went to college. As a student at the University of Hawai‘i, the deepening understanding of my Hawaiian identity through papa ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, ‘āina-based experiences at Ka Papa Lo‘i o Kānewai, visits to wahi pana, and learning about the bombing of Kaho‘olawe changed my perspective and attitude. During this time, I was also surrounded by other Hawaiians at the University who were similarly reconnecting with their Hawaiian self. Graduating in 1998 with my undergraduate degree, I became the first college graduate on both sides of my family.

My story is not unique. It is a reality that many of our kūpuna and mākua were faced with because of the 1893 illegal overthrow and annexation of the Hawaiian Kingdom. American colonization led to the banning of our Hawaiian language and the degradation of our positive Hawaiian image. My mākua and kūpuna learned to assimilate to American culture, which discredited their ways of knowing and being as Hawaiians. However, in spite of all that they lost, they kept the practices of ‘ohana and hula alive. They held fast to the values inherent in these practices and these became the portion of their lives that kept them Hawai‘i and connected to their kūpuna regardless of whether they were conscious of this or not.

## **Purpose of this Study**

Today, as a mother, as an educator, and as a researcher, I am Hawai‘i forever. I spent the past sixteen years in Native Hawaiian Education, and I am still fascinated by the extraordinary leaders that came before me and are currently leading now. Of particular interest to me are the number of females that lead Native Hawaiian education in our Hawaiian Charter Schools today. According to Keehne (2017), of the seventeen Hawaiian Charter Schools in existence today, fifteen are led by women.

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership trajectories of three female leaders in Native Hawaiian Education. More specifically, I sought to answer the following research questions: What are the experiences and perspectives that shaped the leadership trajectories of these three female leaders in Native Hawaiian education? What are their past experiences, current challenges and future desires? How have they planned for the future and/or the continuity of their leadership within their school or organization? What might we learn from these three women about leadership development for Native Hawaiian Education?

The information gathered from interviews with each of these leaders provide a glimpse into elements of their life experiences that have shaped their vision, leadership style, and character. Moreover, the findings of this study provide insight into key leadership characteristics for effective leaders in Native Hawaiian Education.

## **Historical and Current Context of Native Hawaiian Education**

“For indigenous peoples fragmentation has been the consequence of imperialism [and colonialism].” (Smith, 1999)

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The statement above underscores the historical context and political tension of many Native Hawaiians who are fighting against multiple acts of colonization that fragment us from our history, our landscape, our language, our social relations and our own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world (Smith, 1999, p. 28). These acts date back to the arrival of American Calvinist missionaries in 1820 who sought to convert Hawaiians to Christianity.

Although in 1853 nearly three-fourths of Native Hawaiians over the age of sixteen were literate in their Native language, the push to transform Hawai‘i into a Western society resulted in the suppression and near extinction of our Indigenous language as English became the language of business, diplomacy and government. Through the leadership of Richard Armstrong, the Minister of Public Instruction for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i from 1846-1860, government sponsored English medium schools would outpace Hawaiian medium schools across the islands. Kamehameha Schools, an all-Hawaiian school for boys would follow suit by instituting strict rules for “English-only” on the campus (Lucas, 2000, pp. 2-3). Over time, resources for Hawaiian medium schools, such as funding, professional development and instructional materials, were reduced as resources for English medium schools increased.

The overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 led to the passing of HRS 298-2 in 1896 under the Republic of Hawai‘i, forbidding Hawaiian language in public and private schools (Kawai‘ae‘a, Houseman, & Alencastre, 2007; Lucas, 2000). The legislation not only nearly exterminated the Hawaiian language and culture but also had disastrous effects on literacy, academic achievement, and even the use of Standard English among Native Hawaiians (Kamanā & Wilson, 1996). This ban would remain in Hawai‘i’s law until 1978, when several state

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officials successfully sponsored a bill to push for the Hawaiian language to be an official language of the state. In 1987, the Hawai‘i Department of Education opened a pilot program called Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai‘i, allowing for Hawaiian medium education in public schools (Kawai‘ae‘a, Houseman, & Alencastre, 2007). Still under the control of the state, Kaiapuni was governed by the English-medium and American-based expectations of education. Schools were required to ensure success on English-based assessments, which often led to compromising Hawaiian culture-based educational practices in the classroom.

When Manulani Meyer conducted her dissertation research in 1998, she found a continuing duality in Hawai‘i’s education system, with formal education still taught through an American schooling structure and informal cultural education through experience and practices at home or in one’s community. Meyer’s (1998) research supported the growing idea that education should not be an either or choice with respect to Indigenous people’s access to their own cultural knowledge or world knowledge forms (Smith, 2009).

In 2000, Act 62 allowed for various models of public education to be implemented across the state through public charter schools. The Act decentralized Hawai‘i’s single public education system, which was established under the Republic of Hawai‘i, by allowing for the establishment of twenty-five public charter schools. As a result, Hawaiian communities used this opportunity to establish public charter schools with a Hawaiian focus. These schools attempt to bridge the duality of Hawai‘i’s education system by “grounding instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places and language that are the foundation of a culture, in this case Hawaiian culture” (Kana‘iaupuni & Kawai‘ae‘a, 2008).

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These Hawaiian focused charter schools also attempt to restore the holistic health of Hawaiian communities and nationhood (Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, 2013).

In 2015, the Hawai'i Board of Education adopted two significant policies for public education. Policy 105-7 Hawaiian Education set expectations for Hawai'i's public education system to “embody Hawaiian values, language, culture and history as the foundation to prepare students in grades K-12 for success in college, career and communities, locally and globally” (Hawai'i Board of Education, 2015). A Hawaiian education framework called Nā Hopena A'ō was developed that would set expectations for both the students and, perhaps more importantly, for the adults in the public education system to create culturally relevant learning environments for all learners to thrive. Additionally, after 28 years, the Board of Education established permanency of the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'i. These policies triggered the establishment of the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) within the Hawai'i Department of Education. The OHE ensures effective implementation of these two Board policies.

During the same time period, Kamehameha Schools developed a new strategic plan, Kū Hanauna, which centers Hawaiian identity, language and culture as its foundation from which the next generation will thrive. It also developed E OLA! Student Outcomes, which identifies learning outcomes for all students it serves in its campuses, preschools and community-based educational programs and services (Kamehameha Schools, 2016). At the same time, Kamehameha Schools, invested in the establishment of Kanaeokana, a network of 'ōlelo Hawai'i, Hawaiian culture, and 'āina-based schools (preschool through university level) that are engaged in collaborative efforts to strengthen Hawaiian Education (Kamehameha Schools, 2017).

## **Indigenous Educational Leadership**

Clearly, as Native Hawaiian Education continues to grow in our state, so does the need for educational leaders who are able to effectively guide and support the Native Hawaiian Education movement. If Native Hawaiian Education is to be successful, we must move away from western-centered educational approaches and assumptions of success and ground ourselves in relevant Hawaiian Education practices (Kaiwi 2006; Kawakami 2003). Goodyear- Kā'opua (2013) argues that:

[Native Hawaiian Education] is in fact more rigorous [than western-based education] because it draws on the most current academic debates taking place in the field of Hawaiian history and politics, requires investment in and accountability to community beyond the classroom walls, and allows students to integrate and apply their learning. (p. 157)

Such rigorous expectations require leaders in Native Hawaiian Education who have a deep understanding of and relationship to Hawaiian worldviews. However, little is known about how to develop leadership in Native or Indigenous education in today's contemporary setting. Moreover, current leadership development opportunities provided by the State of Hawai'i remain limited to the western construct of educational administrative training. Hohepa (2013) suggests that "Indigenous educational leadership may be best understood as the enactment of leadership that is located in and guided by Indigenous knowledge, values, and practices, in order to realize Indigenous educational aspirations" (p. 619), thereby deeming most western institutionalized training as insufficient to meet Indigenous standards of success.

## **Methodology**

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This research project is a qualitative, multi-case study of three individuals. As defined by Yin (2009) a case study is an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context. The intent of this inquiry is to gain an in-depth understanding of each participant's experiences and perspectives that shaped their leadership trajectories in the context that surrounded their life's journey in Native Hawaiian Education.

Purposeful selection was used to identify participants who have deep knowledge and experience in Native Hawaiian Education . In purposeful selection, participants are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide to the study. Additionally, participants in this study were purposefully selected to enable the comparison of data to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings and/or individuals (Maxwell, 2005).

One-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant for approximately two hours. The interview format provided the participants the opportunity to describe their past experiences, current perspectives and future vision for leadership in Native Hawaiian Education.

The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to identify common themes. Participants were given the option of having either their real names or a pseudonym included in the reporting. However, each participant agreed to use their actual names.

### **Positionality**

The values that form my identity stem from my maui Hawai'i, which therefore shape my ontological and epistemological assumptions. Additionally, as a Native Hawaiian woman who is directly involved in the Native Hawaiian Education movement I am an insider to this research,

which I view as an asset to this study. Greenback (2003) argues that “research methods cannot be value-free in their application because values will always impact upon research” (p. 798).

Therefore, he rejects claims that research is able to uncover the “truth” by adopting a value-neutral approach, preferring instead to accept the existence of different realities due to the influence of values on the research process.

To separate myself from this research is to ask me to ignore my own experiences and knowledge about the research topic, which is a topic that is close to my heart. Smith (1999) notes that Indigenous research is an act of decolonization by which we:

Recover our own stories of the past... to reconcile and reprioritize what is really important about the present. It's about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (p. 39)

This is the spirit in which I proceed with this study.

## Chapter 2

### Kauanoë Kamanā

*“I think it’s really important that we understand that the nation of Hawai‘i during the 1800s was comprised of people of various nationalities, not just Hawaiians...their children, mo‘opuna that are living today are not going to go back someplace else and live. They have the genealogy that links them back to Hawai‘i in that way. They are part of the solution [to revitalize our Hawaiian language].”*

Kauanoë grew up among many cousins, aunties and uncles in Kalihi, O‘ahu and Kalama‘ula, Moloka‘i. Her mother gave birth to Kauanoë in 1951 at the age of forty. The youngest of two children, she had a brother who was thirteen years older than her and she was one of the youngest in her generation of cousins.

Kauanoë’s mother was raised on Moloka‘i and attended Kaunakakai Elementary School where Kauanoë’s grandfather was the principal. Her mother attended school on Moloka‘i until the time when she was accepted to attend Kamehameha Schools. She recalls that two of her grandparents and many of her mother’s siblings attended Kamehameha, but not all of them finished their schooling there. Her father was raised in Kalihi on O‘ahu and was the youngest of three boys. Kauanoë explained, “My father’s life required that he was street smart. His father died when he was one and he grew up under strict conditions and witnessed violence in his life but, he never talked about it in a negative way. There were so many lessons I learned from his

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experiences.” Kauanoë’s tūtū lady was very strict and regal. She didn’t have too much time to spend with her grandparents, not as much as her brother, as they had passed when she was in middle school.

Kauanoë attended the Kamehameha Schools from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. When her parents married, they moved to O‘ahu, where her mother worked as a teacher at Kamehameha while attending college. Her mother taught first and second grade there until she passed away when Kauanoë was in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

The core of Kauanoë’s life is her ‘ohana. She describes the Hawaiian value of wiwo--the value of having a combination of respect and fear for older members of her ‘ohana, especially her parents. This concept is distinct from the English word respect. As a result of wiwo, Kauanoë was conditioned to be observant of her family’s practices, values and expectations. As Kauanoë describes:

The interrelationship between people at the time, the young people and older people, was based on expectations, and I guess the strictness. Strict but still always knowing, okay that’s my ‘ohana. If you step out of line, they will make it clear. You’re going to have to respond to that and get back in line, and... you are expected to understand why that is so. There is a natural order of authority that is organic yet regimented, and I always understood that it was [how] our family functioned and nurtured each other.

Kauanoë recalls one day when she was in middle school, she stayed out late past her curfew at her friend’s house. When she returned home, her dad sat silently in the living room. He didn’t say a single word to her, but she understood that he was not accepting of her behavior.

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Kauanoë's understanding of *wiwo* helped her to see that she didn't meet her father's expectation and she had a responsibility to know that and "self-regulate" her behavior. Her father determined that his non-verbal communication was enough of a reminder for her. She describes this as being trained to anticipate without being told.

Kauanoë's life was surrounded by *'ohana* and church. But what's unique is that she was part of both parents' church practices. Her mother's side were members of the Kala*'i*akamanu Hou Congregational Church in Kalama*'ula* and Kawaiaha*'o* Church in Honolulu. Her father's side were members of the Ke Alaula O ka Malamalama Church, a Ho*'omana* Na*'auao* Hawaiian church, the first independent Hawaiian Christian organization in the state opened in 1853. As a result, she came to understand the Hawaiian church practices in two different ways.

As Kauanoë explains, the values that she believes in today were generated early in her life. She says,

Education and church, or a sense of spirituality and primarily being with Hawaiians all the time at a Hawaiian church, at school... all my friends in the neighborhood were all Hawaiians. I guess that contributed to who I am today.

Kauanoë was fortunate to have members of her *'ohana* who still spoke Hawaiian. Her grandparents, who were born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spoke Hawaiian among their peers. She understood words and phrases by overhearing conversations. She also experienced the love of the language from her father. She remembers her father listening to the *'Ōlelo Hawai*'i** programs on the radio and laughing. She quickly recognized that *'Ōlelo Hawai*'i** was something important

to him because he really enjoyed it. His value of the language influenced her choice to pursue the language herself.

Even at a young age, Kauanoe knew ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i was best understood in context. She explains, “For me, it’s about living, everyday language between people, [it’s] intergenerational. For Hawaiian at that time for me was primarily words and phrases and their connection to particular behaviors, because language is connected to behaviors that are tied to culture.” Kauanoe points out that being raised as a Hawaiian, connected to a tradition and tied to one’s mo‘okū‘auhau or genealogy, will facilitate ‘imi na‘auao, or the seeking to be enlightened, to evolve into the state of na‘auao:

‘Imi na‘auao has a Hawaiian understanding of the English word “education.” Education is rooted in its English understanding. Today, we are holding onto our culture and language, because of how fragile they have become, that is, our language and the way we are as a people. A true understanding of ‘imi na‘auao is critical to the success of Hawaiian medium education in the public school system today.

A pinnacle event in Hawai‘i’s history was the 1978 Constitutional Convention, which established ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i as an official language of the state, and Kauanoe was one of the thousands of community members that advocated for this change. As she explains, “You’ve got to challenge the law before the law is [changed]... You’ve got to take risks, in order to create new laws. Once they are established, issues that arise will determine how to continue.”

While in college, Kauanoe met several others that shared her passion and commitment to ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. They were in post-graduate studies at the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa during

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the 1970s. Over the course of their lives, they saw and experienced the loss of the language. As a result, the loss of ‘ohana and cultural practices followed. As Kauanoë recounts:

Old people are dying, there are no young people speaking the language, we’ve got to be fast, we’ve got to be quick and do something. Also . . . you’re trying to reverse something that’s headed toward extinction. Language was outlawed in the past and that reversed the use of Hawaiian in the schools. We are now in a state of urgency!

Similarly, in New Zealand a group of parents were faced with the same issue and decided to start an Maori medium preschool. Kauanoë and her colleagues decided to “go for it,” too. Kauanoë recalls the urgency of the situation. She didn’t know anything about preschools but was committed to doing “whatever it takes” to reverse the loss of language and culture that she was witnessing. She and her colleagues soon realized that connecting young children with mānaleo (Native speaker) for long periods of time was essential to the transference of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. It was the quickest way for them to address the urgency they felt. Their initial intent was not to start a preschool but preschools soon became a strategy to address their concern.

As they began to establish the Pūnana Leo, Hawaiian medium education preschools, they were faced with many challenges. Community, political figures and early learning professionals were among those that accused them of damaging the lives of children by teaching them in the Hawaiian language instead of English. Kauanoë accepted that this was part of the journey and some of that perspective still exists today, even after thirty plus years. As she explains, “You’ve just got to tolerate all of that and come away from it, and keep going back in.”

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Soon after the implementation of the preschools, Kauanoë and her colleagues were faced with a new dilemma of where these keiki would go after preschool. “One real fact,” Kauanoë explained, “was that once we begin, we cannot stop and start again. Children are not going to wait for you.” Intimately understanding the financial challenges facing the Hawaiian people, Kauanoë and her colleagues decided to pursue Hawai‘i’s public education system as the strategy to take ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i to a greater scale:

We thought we’ve got to do the same thing at a greater scale because our people cannot be paying big money for this, and they have to be able to take advantage of the government for our own good, which is parity, equality. I think our families have benefited from that, financially, not having to pay for that. I think if we didn’t make that decision, we would not have made this kind of impact on the language and the numbers of speakers.

The accomplishments of Kauanoë and her colleagues continue today as the demand for Hawaiian language medium education permeates through Hawai‘i’s education system by Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiian alike. They took many risks and challenged wide-spread assumptions about learning through the Hawaiian language, and they were able to succeed by working together and trusting one another. Kauanoë explains:

We knew each other really, really well . . . Building trust between people was really important because if you don’t have trust in each other, you don’t have a way to talk about what you want to do, and then you don’t have a plan or the skill set, I think, to work with people, which is what this is all about, our people.

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Kauanoë's lifelong commitment to Hawaiian medium education has given her many roles from being a makua (parent), kumu (teacher), po'o kula (head of school), professor and researcher, to name a few. While she currently serves as the Po'o Kula for Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u, one of Hawai'i's first Hawaiian medium schools, her leadership philosophy has not wavered. Leadership for her is grounded in the way she was raised in her 'ohana, by observing and learning. She observed her family's behaviors, interactions and roles. She learned their expectations and knew when she was "out of line" without being told. When discussing her leadership style, Kauanoë explains:

Leading is, for me, more of an observation than leading. Leading is more about watching and responding, and then guiding. I have a sense of what I want. I have a sense of what we're about, and what we are being set out to accomplish.

Kauanoë emphasizes that there is an order to functioning as an 'ohana. Everyone has a role that is distinct, *not* competitive. Those roles or kuleana hana (work responsibilities) are contributing to the nu'ukia (vision) and ala nu'ukia (mission) of the organization. All members of the 'ohana share the same vision and work in unity towards that vision. Commenting on the importance of maintaining a clear vision for Hawaiian medium education, Kauanoë says:

You have to have a real clear sense of the core knowledge, or the core way...Because that's going to affect your decision-making, what you're going to do or not do, and then understand why you're going to do this and not that. If you don't hold onto that [core], when it gets bigger, you're going to rubber band right back, in half the time it took to get this far, to the status quo American mainstream education framework.

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Kauanoë explains that understanding one's role in the kula (school) is learned over time through observation, practice and guidance. She expects those individuals in the kula's 'ohana to "self-regulate" their behavior. She also expects that, like an 'ohana, when there is a need to take on a different role, s/he will. For example, within her 'ohana, when Kauanoë was called upon to manage her family's land, among all her cousins who she deemed as very capable, she did it happily. She would not view that decision as an act of leadership, but as just doing your kuleana because of that time and context. Kauanoë refers to this as understanding all roles of kāne and wahine in fulfilling kuleana that need to be addressed:

There's mana in the kāne and mana in the wahine and I recognize [that, but] you have to be able to do all, because if you don't have kāne, the wahine have to get it done. If you don't have wahine, the kāne have to get it done.

Her expectation is no different for the students and families at their Hawaiian medium preschools. They are expected to understand their role and situation. Kauanoë shared an experience that she had with students and families as they prepared for a neighbor island huaka'i. When she met with the families to share the itinerary and to set expectations for these tenth-grade students, she told them:

We are not going to be looking for your children, they look for us. Does anybody have any questions about what that means? I said, "Maika'i," because this understanding is an old one. It has to do with kids maka'ala their parents, not parents maka'ala their kids.

This perspective reinforces the value of wiwo. As Kauanoë says, "Kids that do have wiwo for elders show you that wiwo is happening in a good way, at home, too." She explains

that *wiwo* is similar to the word *respect* in English but it also implies “an internal sense of regulation.”

Kauanoë’s leadership philosophy is also evident in the way in which she navigates the public education system at both the K-12 and the higher education levels. When Kauanoë and her colleagues made the conscious choice to push for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in public education, they fully understood the compliance issues and boundaries that would be placed on them. However, they also understood the bigger picture of what they were after. Her responsibility as the Po‘o Kula is to ensure that the operational systems within the organization are compliant with all the governmental requirements. As she explains, “That’s our strategy in making sure that we can be compliant and still be authentic or hold the integrity of what we’re trying to do.”

Kauanoë reflects on her leadership and how she has grown through her experiences. As a matter of daily practice, she observes before she acts. She explains that she is constantly taking in information, then reflecting and making choices about how she will react. For her it’s a self-regulating principle practiced every day. She doesn’t believe she would have done anything differently as a leader, but acknowledges she has learned so much along her journey. She practices *ho‘oponopono* (to correct) in her leadership, which provides for a process to take responsibility for her actions. Kauanoë explains,

If you’re wrong, you *mihi* right there. *Pau*. That’s the whole function of *ho‘oponopono*, it is to find our way to resolve our problems and restore *maluhia* (peace). That is one of my principles, I guess, because if something’s not good, I find ways to resolve it. Everyone needs to learn from it, and move on. *Ho‘oponopono* is the Hawaiian way to keep peaceful

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relationships within the family. We find this practice invaluable within the school family, too.

When asked about how she prevents burn-out from the work, she said, “I don’t like to think that there is such a thing, because working gives me satisfaction and, of course, there’s enjoyment along the way...what else would I be doing?” Kauanoë’s husband and children are fully engaged in the perpetuation of the Hawaiian language and culture. For their ‘ohana, it’s a lifestyle. They have their own way of operating as a unit, using those same principles of *wiwo*, self-regulation and *kuleana*. When each of them is called upon to fulfill a *kuleana*, they are expected to step up. She admits that maybe her children would complain, but they’d still do what needs to be done:

For this kind of organization [such as the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo], your biggest investment is your own child because . . . if they have listened and if you have groomed your child in a particular way then, of course, there will be dividends! Our *mo‘okū‘auhau* lives through our children.

For Kauanoë, the practice of ‘ohana brings strength to withstand and overcome any challenges that might come their way. The interdependence and ability to rely on one another creates a system where everyone knows their *kuleana* and knows how to step up as needed to support each other. She recalls many times when she had to call upon others, or they’ve had to call upon her for help. “If something goes down,” she explains, “you’ve got to help. You’ve got to step up, you cannot sit back.” But for this to happen, she notes, there needs to be the actual practice of ‘ohana:

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...It has to be ordered, it has to be understood, it has to be relevant, it has to be true to individuals, and real. It has to be able to sustain and persevere anything that happens. You have to be able to wānana (predict) and anticipate and make sure that people are not going to go in the opposite way when things get tough, because that's when you can tell...who's going to step up, who is going to speak, who's going to exemplify what 'ohana is about, or maybe not talk, or talk about something because you think a particular person wants to hear that, or be true to it. It all takes practice.

Another significant benefit of the practice of 'ohana is that succession planning is automatically built in. It is not a plan on paper that the board approves, but rather the long-term development and investment of others in the organization. Over time Kauanoë observes the readiness and willingness of staff members who understand and operate as an 'ohana. She pushes them to understand themselves and their role, growing their skill set over time. Through this process, she can develop many staff members at the same time over multiple years. "They are the best investment," she explains. "They are the ones that have been there over time. You cannot learn what they know any place else." In fact, it starts as early as a job interview. Kauanoë sees the initial job interview as an opportunity to understand the interviewee's perspective and determine the right fit for the organization. She recalls interviewing a potential staff member who had early experiences with the organization as an intern. She understood the nu'ukia and ala nu'ukia but perhaps just as importantly, she was already practicing 'ohana. Once a staff member is hired, Kauanoë says, "There is no welcome video, you learn by observing and doing."

When asked what challenges she sees facing Native Hawaiian Education today, Kauanoë identifies how 'ohana practices are applied in and out of the school setting. For example, the

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actions of the school when families need support, and how families contribute to the school's success. She also points out that our government systems can make these practices difficult. Therefore, protecting and advocating for this practice within the school is key. Kauanoë concludes,

If you don't have your na'au and mind in 'ohana thinking . . . and its intentional practices . . . and strategic monitoring of that, you're going to get yanked here and there and here and there. If it is the collective understanding of how individuals live and work together, it won't ever be about one person."

### Chapter 3

#### Ivy “Meahilahila” Kelling

*“From mauka to makai, we are a working community. [We] have working community organizations, trying to bring back people to the ‘āina. From school here, mauka, to Ka Papahana to Kāko‘o ‘Ōiwi, Paepae o He‘eia, we really are connected by one wai, one stream.”*

Ivy “Meahilahila” Kelling was born and raised in Makakilo. Like many locals, she began dancing hula at a young age--just four years old. The cultural practices of hula, combined with similar values at home, pushed her to want to learn the Hawaiian language. “All these years I’ve been dancing hula and had no idea [about the language behind the songs]. We get the translation, but it’s different from actually understanding it through the language.” For her, hula and the desire to learn the Hawaiian language was the gateway to her journey in Native Hawaiian Education.

Growing up, Meahilahila was an ambitious student. Education was significantly important for her family. She explains, “I was driven in high school. I did the FAFSA (free application for federal financial aid) by myself. I just had to get my parents’ information.” While in college at the University of Hawai‘i, Meahilahila had her eyes set on the medical field. However, after volunteering at an ‘Aha Pūnana Leo (‘APL) Hawaiian language medium preschool, her desires changed. She began to see herself on a career path that cultivated the Hawaiian language. Meahilahila finished college with a double major in Hawaiian language and Native Hawaiian Health and began teaching at a Hawaiian language medium preschool.

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After teaching for five years at the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, she learned that a new public charter school called Ke Kula ‘O Samuel M. Kamakau (Kamakau) had just opened in Kāne‘ohe and was hiring teachers. The school would be a Hawaiian language medium laboratory school that intended to focus on the restoration of Native Hawaiian health through education. Meahilahila appreciated the beauty of the school’s vision and took a position as a kumu at the school. It seemed like an ideal setting in which her double-major could be applied.

By the time she moved to Kamakau, Meahilahila had already met her husband, whom she described as one of the many influences in her life. As she explains, “His passion in not just the language, but lo‘i (taro patch) work and all these other things . . . exposed me to way more than what’s just in the classroom.” She also talked about the kumu hula she had throughout her life and how they, too, influenced her love and passion for the Hawaiian culture and language. Her peers, people who were leading the movement for Hawaiian focused charter and Hawaiian medium schools, were also really big influences for her.

Eddie Ka‘anana, an icon for many of our people in Hawaiian language and culture, including traditional farming and fishing practices, was another major influence in Meahilahila’s life. She and her husband purchased kuleana lands from a family in Kāne‘ohe who was pleased to know that their family had a strong commitment to restoring these lands with lo‘i kalo. (Kuleana lands are small tracks of land that were provided to Native Hawaiians under the Kuleana Act of 1850.) ‘Anakala Eddie taught Meahilahila and her husband how to mālama (care for) and restore the property. As she explains,

He used to come and disappear into the tall buffalo grass. He was clearly seen talking to whoever. Then he comes out and he’s like “I’m ready to work. They’re all good with

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me.” He brought his spiritual side, because before that I was naive to the pili‘uhane (spirituality) of that side.

Today, she and her husband bring students and families to these kuleana lands to practice Hawaiian culture and language through mālama ‘āina (land).

Meahilahila currently serves as the director of Kamakau, where she focuses her efforts on the school’s external operations. She’s responsible for building relationships with the surrounding community and beyond, while her counterpart manages the day-to-day operations of the school. Even with that division of work, there are so many competing priorities to work through. As a public charter school, Kamakau is required to meet the state educational requirements as well as other requirements set forth by the state charter commission. They also have an obligation to their funders and community partners who contribute to the school’s success. As she explains, “It’s hard to prioritize sometimes because everything is important at once. It always comes down to what’s best for kids at the school, [and] then . . . what will benefit the whole.” One area that challenges her is attending to human resource issues such as having to discipline or release a fellow employee. She explains, “The idea is that we are ‘ohana. You get to know and love the people you work with, and when something happens, it’s hard to have those conversations.”

Meahilahila’s leadership philosophy is grounded in community service and leadership with the community in mind. She has built this philosophy over time through her work in Native Hawaiian Education . As she reflects on the community in which the school resides, she speaks to the way in which they function in collaboration with other community organizations, calling themselves a working ahupua‘a or land division that extended from the mountain to the sea.

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Meahilahila holds relationships in high regard and points out that an inability to build relationships both within the Kamakau school community, and between their school and other community organizations, would be a roadblock to the school's success. She also believes that being a role model is important for leaders in Native Hawaiian Education "because people don't respect leaders who say but are not walking the walk."

Meahilahila believes that her role as a Hawaiian charter school director is more comprehensive than that of a traditional principal. As she explains, "Not only do I have to be the academic and instructional leader, but also be the project manager for facilities development. I can't call the DOE office for assistance. There is no one leading the project other than ourselves." Facilities development and fundraising to fulfill the school's basic needs is a major difference between her position and that of a traditional principal. Perhaps a third difference is having a school-based governing board to support the school's overall strategic vision and its immediate needs. She explains, "We have a governing board who is very involved and active, meets monthly, is attentive to the school's needs and really delivers on what those needs are."

Meahilahila is also active in several networks that bring Hawaiian Culture-Based schools together to strengthen their schools and advocate for student needs such as Nā Lei Na'auao, the 'Aha Kauleo and Kanaeokana. She believes that through these networks, Hawaiian Culture-Based schools are "seeing the broader picture and looking at . . . how to influence more students and more leaders to make the decisions that the students need to become . . . agents of change in [their] communities." When asked what she sees as the value of participating in these "external" networks, she explains, "Instead of accepting what is decided for us, we want to help influence what we can decide for kākou (ourselves)."

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Meahilahila also recently accepted the kuleana of serving as an advisor to the Hawai'i State Charter School Commission. The commission created this advisory position to bring an active voice to its decision-making regarding Hawai'i's charter schools. (The advisor must be a current charter school director.) When asked about her decision to serve in this advisory position, she explains,

. . . that really wasn't something I would have chosen, but in looking at the whole and how we can affect and really inform all the schools, and inform the commission and the staff on how it's like on the ground level, I saw that as kuleana.

One of her personal challenges is balancing the priorities of work and 'ohana. She explains that her husband is part of her support system as she tries to maintain this balance, which seems to be a particular challenge for female leaders. Because he is a kumu, he understands the late hours of preparing curriculum, translating materials and preparing the classroom. As she transitioned into new leadership roles in Native Hawaiian Education, he picked up where she could not to take care of their 'ohana needs. She admits, "If he wasn't a teacher . . . we probably wouldn't be together right now."

Meahilahila acknowledges that her keiki are also actively engaged in supporting the school as well. She explains, "I've had my kids here on weekends shoveling gravel and wheelbarrowing it down the side of the road to fill pukas." At the same time, she tries not to overburden her keiki with school responsibilities. She explains that she once asked her daughter if she would want to be a school director one day, and her daughter's response was, "No. I see the work and I just want a 9 to 5 job and go home." Meahilahila concludes, "I don't want to discourage them from the hard work involved, so I'm trying to find the balance."

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Recognizing the importance of being an active makua in the lives of her children gives Meahilahila motivation to strive for balance in her work and home life. A couple of years ago she made a commitment to be at all of her kids' sports games, and informed the school office of their sports schedules. She also continues to dance hula when possible as well. When explaining the kuleana of her job as the director of Kamakau, she says,

It's a 24/7 job. I have to [set boundaries] because I feel like if I keep going at the rate I was, I probably wouldn't last very much longer. I see it affecting the health of my colleagues . . . you got to find time to mālama.

Looking to the future, Meahilahila and her board have recently begun to give some thought to succession planning. In 2013, their previous administrator suddenly passed away. The administrator was the keeper of key pieces of information for the school, and once he was gone, they could not find passwords, account information, files, and so forth. This incident prompted the school to create a succession plan in the case of emergencies, a file that would allow the school to have a smoother transition with clear direction on the future lines of authority should something happen to one of their top-level staff.

At the same time, she doesn't feel a total sense of urgency in planning for her replacement, because she feels that she still has many years left in her career. As she explains, "I think the succession plan has been a goal since 2013, but I think the challenge is finding the right person." She explains that, with such a complex and demanding role as a charter school director in Native Hawaiian Education, succession planning is difficult across all Hawaiian medium and Hawaiian focused charter schools. Commenting on the need to look to other schools for examples of how to proceed with succession planning, she explains, "I think certain

organizations are [intentionally building a pipeline in Native Hawaiian Education]. We need to look at the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo. They do a great job at . . . look[ing] for people who could be the next alaka‘i.”

Meahilahila explains that another challenge that faces her school, and Hawaiian Education more generally, is simply not having enough qualified teachers. She believes that being a part of larger networks (such as those described earlier), and building relationships with other schools and organizations, will assist in the identification of future teachers and leaders in Native Hawaiian Education overall.

Meahilahila’s vision for the future brought about questions of our readiness to support the kinds of leaders we are creating in Native Hawaiian Education today. She recalled an Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) board meeting where community advocacy against the building of the Thirty-Meter Telescope (TMT) on Mauna Kea was being discussed. Many of those advocates were products of Hawaiian-focused charter schools and Hawaiian medium schools. She believes that just as we ask our students to think outside of the box in the classrooms, leaders must be prepared to make decisions and act upon them in different ways. These new ways may challenge current institutional practices. Also an educational leader’s actions and decisions must be congruent to the foundational values in their schools or organizations.

Meahilahila explains that she sees Native Hawaiian Education not just for Native Hawaiians but for all students and all people in Hawai‘i. She says,

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As a non-Hawaiian, I see the kuleana in learning the culture of this place as I would expect of everyone living here. I don't think the same depth [of knowledge] can be distributed across, but I do think it's for everyone.

She believes that the recent establishment of the Office of Hawaiian Education within the Hawai'i Department of Education is a significant step forward for Native Hawaiian Education and she hopes that it will provide "more 'ike (knowledge), 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language), [and] mo'omeheu Hawai'i (Hawaiian culture)" for all students in public schools.

When speaking to the quality of the education that students receive at Kamakau, she noted that in a previous study, their graduates expressed that the benefit of attending Kamakau was that they left the school knowing who they are, and that they then needed to discover what they wanted to do in life. She believes that this is a better option than knowing what you want to do, but still trying to discover who you are in college. She concludes, "At eighteen, nineteen, twenty, you can get into a lot of trouble if you don't know who you are."

**Chapter 4**

**Faylene Mahinapoepoe Paishon Duarte**

*“I consider myself a student of wa ‘a, fishponds and hula. Those three systems, I consider them the most influential in the way I perceive and construct leadership and the way that I carry out my work and kuleana.”*

Having been born to a set of teen parents, Mahinapoepoe (Mahina) Paishon Duarte explains her childhood as growing up alongside her parents. Her mother, just fifteen years old, and her father, seventeen, quickly went from being teenagers to parents. Their young age and experience had both positive and not so positive effects on Mahina’s life.

Mahina’s mother, being raised in a strong Filipino-American home, was placed against high expectations, and her grandparents’ disappointment in her mother’s early pregnancy was likewise felt by Mahina. Her father, on the other hand, is Portuguese-Hawaiian and was raised in Papākolea. Her experiences growing up with her father’s side of the family are like many of our Hawaiian families, with gatherings around food, music, kani ka pila (playing of music) , inu (drinking) and the kids’ sports games.

Being raised with two seemingly different sets of identities, religions and expectations of success between her parents’ families took a toll on Mahina. She felt the tension between her parents and at times felt that she had to decide which parent to please. At the same time, however, she also saw the diversity as an advantage. Being raised with a strong Hawaiian identity on her father’s side and a strong Filipino-American identity on her mother’s side, she

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was able to appreciate the beauty of both cultures. Also, although her parents were young, both parents instilled within Mahina a very strong sense of work ethic, integrity and focus.

Mahina sees her childhood experience as one of her biggest assets when working with Native Hawaiian communities. Having had life experiences that are similar to the challenges faced by many of our Hawaiian students, she can relate to what they are going through. As a leader today, Mahina reflects on how her early family experiences shaped her contemporary leadership style and professional capacity. She believes that one of the major challenges for leaders in Native Hawaiian Education is to cultivate a sense of identity and self-worth in learning communities that are often fraught with adversity. She draws from her early life experiences to acknowledge that “we all go through challenges and adversity” and that we need to “help and support one another when our students and their families move through challenge and adversity so that they can grab onto their greatest potential, their deepest potential.”

Mahina explains that, prior to attending college, her education was only in independent schools from preschool. She attended a small independent elementary school in Makiki and had a very competitive group of friends that were very concerned with high grade point averages and academic awards. Upon graduating from the school in sixth grade, they would challenge each other to see how many private middle schools they could gain admission to. Mahina was among the lucky few who were accepted into the Kamehameha Schools for the seventh grade. Kamehameha is the nation’s largest independent school. Founded by Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Kamehameha opened in 1887. It applies preference for admission to students of Hawaiian ancestry.

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The summer before being admitted at Kamehameha Schools, Mahina attended Kamehameha's Hoomāka'ika'i Explorations Program. This one week summer boarding program introduces students to Native Hawaiian values through mele (song) and hula (dance) as well as hands-on experiences working at cultural sites within the community. After a culture-filled week at Kamehameha's Hoomāka'ika'i program, Mahina looked forward to attending Kamehameha as a full-time student. "I finally felt like I was going to a Hawaiian school," she explained. "Even though I am Hawaiian and Filipino and Chinese and other ancestries, I identify with Hawai'i first."

Mahina's pride in her Hawaiian heritage was also heightened by her attendance at the Ho'olako Year of the Hawaiian celebration. 1987 was declared the "Year of the Hawaiian," a year-long celebration of the Native people of these islands (Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1987, p. 1). It also marked the 100th anniversary of the Kamehameha Schools and the introduction of Hawai'i's first Hawaiian governor, John Waihe'e. The Star-Bulletin documented perspectives and stories from many revered Hawaiians, describing the context of their time, the value of Hawaiian identity, and Hawaiian struggles as well as successes. Led by Governor Waihe'e, the celebration culminated in the Ho'olako gathering of thousands of Hawaiians at the Aloha Stadium. As a grade school student, Mahina was fortunate to participate in this event and it had a profound effect on her identity as a Hawaiian. She explains, "It was the first time seeing thousands and thousands of other Hawaiians demonstrating their pride for being Hawaiian. It was in those kinds of spaces that I felt totally connected and not confused. I didn't feel the struggle."

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However, upon her arrival at Kamehameha Schools in 1988, Mahina's first experiences were bitterly disappointing. Her experience at Ho'olako gave her high hopes that the same feelings of connection and pride would also be present at her new school. But instead, she remembers shutting off and being totally discouraged in her English class as they learned Greek mythology. She wondered why the stories of her people, our people, were not taught at this Hawaiian school and asked, "Why were other people's stories and history more important than our own?"

When she reached high school, Mahina found connections with the concert glee and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i communities at the school. There she engaged in Hawaiian activism, and was labeled as one of the Hawaiian radicals on campus. Her peer group only wanted to 'Ōlelo Hawai'i during their free time on campus, and they were the first class to go to Kaho'olawe. Her classmates often made fun of them by saying things like, "Ho, you so Hawaiian. You think you so Hawaiian, eh?"

Upon graduating from Kamehameha Schools, Mahina went on to the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Hilo on a scholarship. While in college, she spent her free time on 'āina. She scheduled her classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and used the other days of the week to escape to Waipi'o, fish ponds and wa'a (canoe). Her experiences in working with the wa'a, developing curriculum, and running place-based and 'āina-based experiences with community leaders and UH faculty were crucial to the activation of her learning. As Mahina explains, "It made it real. That's when I wanted to take ownership of my learning."

At the age of 19, Mahina transferred from UH Hilo to UH Mānoa to help take care of her tūtū. In many Hawaiian families, kūpuna (elders) are cared for by their children and

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grandchildren, and this was also the case in Mahina's family. Back on O'ahu, Mahina began volunteering at the He'eia Fish Pond. The fish pond is an 88-acre, large kuapā style pond in Kāne'ohe, owned by the Kamehameha Schools. While still in college, Mahina also began developing K-12 science and social studies curriculum for Kamakau when the school was being formed. She became one of the founding teachers at Kamakau and, just a few years later, she and her friends started Paepae o He'eia, , a leading 'āina-based non-profit organization that has helped to cultivate large scale support for the perpetuation of Hawaiian fishponds throughout the pae'āina (the islands).

Mahina explains that Kamakau and He'eia Fish Ponds provided her with places for applied learning. She could take what she was learning at the University, what she was feeling in her na'au (gut), and lessons from her kūpuna and family, and apply it in real settings such as the Kamakau charter school and the He'eia fishpond.

These places also gave her a pu'uhonua, a safe place, a healthy place where she could go to reconcile her confusion and personal conflicts as a young Hawaiian woman; a place where she could express her mana and be part of the community.

In 1999, after training as a member of Nā Kalaiwa'a, Mahina took her first long voyage on a wa'a called Makali'i from Hawai'i to Micronesia. This voyage would launch the development of her personal framework as a leader. Upon her return, Mahina reflected on her way of understanding the world and organizing the world, and formulated her own worldview.

Shortly after returning from the voyage, Mahina participated in the Kahuawaiola Indigenous Teacher Education Training program at UH Hilo. The program, delivered primarily

through the medium of Hawaiian, is specifically designed to prepare Maui Ola Hawai‘i (Hawaiian identity nurturing) teachers of the highest quality to teach in Hawaiian language medium schools, Hawaiian language and culture programs in English medium schools, and schools serving students with a strong Hawaiian cultural background (Hilo, 2017). There she began to see how much of what she was feeling and experiencing as a learner and an educator was reflected in educational best practices being taught at the University.

Developing as a young Hawaiian wahine in the late 1990s, there were many Hawaiian women in Mahina’s life who influenced the leadership style that she has today. Mahina believes that she learns from every interaction she has with people, and she described several notable Hawaiian women and the aspects of their characters that she aspires to.

Mahina admires Kumu Keiki Kawai‘ae‘a, director of Ka Haka Ula Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the UH Hilo, because she always “does what she says” and “her lifestyle aligns and reflects what she believes.” Mahina explains, “People like her, I hold in high regard.” Kau‘i Sai-Dudoit, a long-time makua of Hawaiian language medium education, who has dedicated her career to preserving and translating our Hawaiian language newspapers, reminds Mahina that lived experience is important. As Mahina explains, “She keeps me in check and makes sure that ‘ike is founded not only in today’s lived experience but in generational knowledge that has been purposely . . . transferred on.” Dr. Kauanoe Kamanā, the first PhD student to complete her dissertation in the Hawaiian language, and one of the early champions for Hawaiian medium education, spent her career and life in the singular pursuit of the perpetuation of the Hawaiian language. Mahina admires Dr. Kamanā for her “boldness, her tenacity, and her perseverance.” As she explains, Dr. Kamanā “is relentless in her single focus . .

. She always says ‘mai kanalua,’ believe in what you believe in and go for it.” Lastly, Mahina appreciates Dr. Lilikalā Kame‘eilihiwa and the mentorship that she gave to Mahina through the UH Mānoa when she was a teaching assistant. Mahina worked with Kame‘eilihiwa to develop the first mālama loko i‘a class at UH and to invite University faculty and students to mālama the pond. As she explains, Kame‘eilihiwa’s network and belief in her was instrumental in “opening doors” for Mahina and her eventual inspiration to found and establish Paepae o He‘eia.

Mahina also notes that early in her career, as far back as college, she formed close relationships with a particular set of friends who shared the same passions and aspirations, and who she calls her “hoapili.” Her hoapili have been Mahina’s support structure throughout her life until today. This peer group is where she and her hoapili can dream big, be held accountable, cry on each other’s shoulders, and be a cheerleader and critic to each other. As she explains, “We’ve always had one another. This is a huge part of my life.” The support structure among her peers provided a safe place for Mahina to grow as a Hawaiian leader along with her hoapili who were also growing into their own space and passion.

Through Mahina’s life experiences, she has begun to formulate the following philosophy of leadership, one that marries her lived experiences with wa‘a, fishponds and hula with the influences of her various role models:

*Have a set, clear vision that everyone believes in.* According to Mahina, when you are called into a leadership role, you hold the vision of that organization. Staff members should also understand the vision and know how to reach it. “If you don’t have that,” Mahina explains, “it makes it really difficult to move forward.”

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*Be a leader that is visible.* As Mahina explains, a good leader “believes in the vision, tries to imbue it, is visibly accountable, and helps everyone see themselves in that vision.”

When describing this leadership trait, Mahina refers to Kamehameha Pai‘ea, who, after waging an effective war campaign, would symbolically turn his ihe (spear) into an ‘ō‘ō (digging stick) and work alongside his people to replant. Mahina explains, “That’s the kind of leadership practice I respect.

*Shared Leadership.* Mahina believes that as an organization strives to accomplish its vision, everyone’s expertise and talent should be honored. This means setting up organizational systems that support the operationalization and empowerment of their staff.

*Alignment of Resources.* Finally, Mahina believes that when moving from the vision to function and operations, spending should not be solely for the purpose of operationalizing the vision, but also for the purpose of creating a shared vision and creating the organizational culture that you want. When you have that in place, people can be more autonomous and self-governing.

When running schools, Mahina points out that her perspective is as a Hawaiian cultural practitioner first. This is the difference between her and a traditional principal. But this also applies to her perspective on running organizations. She explains, “I feel like when I adopt new conventional tools, balance score cards, collective impact, whatever, it’s always in the context of ‘āina and lāhui (nation, race, tribe).” This applies to her desire to both build new Native Hawaiian organizations and transform existing organizations to become Hawaiian ones. Admittedly she says “I’ve only been a part of Hawaiian organizations, so maybe that’s a blind

spot or a weakness.” But she’s been a part of building organizations from the ground up and changing the culture of an organization as well.

Mahina, who is preparing for her second child to arrive soon, shares that her personal journey is finding the balance between working hard and being super engaged with her work, and being super engaged with her family. Understanding that this challenge is particularly difficult for female leaders, she points out a handful of women who she admires for finding that balance, but believes that this will remain as one of the many challenges for her over the next ten years. Now that she is comfortable in her own skin, and with her identity, finding the right balance is her current priority. Mahina explains, “If you just kind of look at what’s happening across the pae ‘āina and across social media . . . people are really thirsty for that, that work-life balance . . . In my 20s and 30s I applied the Filipino professional work attitude. If I worked less than 12 hours [a day] I thought I was a failure.” Now Mahina is looking forward to contributing in other ways.

When she thinks about how she might prepare for someone to eventually take her place, Mahina shares lessons learned from past experiences. She emphasizes the importance of leading from a Hawaiian foundation and worldview, and the ability of Hawaiian leaders to cultivate, sustain and grow relationships.

When first transitioning out of the directorship of Paepae o He‘eia, Mahina had a full year to work with the new executive director. This director was also an employee of the organization who had a deep understanding of the organization’s vision and mission. In contrast, when she was moving from one charter school to the next, Mahina was not involved in the selection process for her replacement at all, and she had only 3 months to work with the new

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leader before transitioning out. Ideally, she wants to be involved in the selection process for her eventual replacement and hopes to have no less than 6-12 months to work with the new leader. In that time, she can support the leader in building trust among key stakeholders in the organization who can continue to assist the new leader after her departure.

As Mahina explains, “You can go through management programs and you can learn those skills, you can learn basic management skills. What is not taught is how to lead from a Hawaiian worldview if you’re going to be in [Native] Hawaiian Education.”

Mahina’s hoped-for future for Native Hawaiian Education is when those who hold Hawaiian leadership roles can coordinate and support one and other. She concludes, “We can be a sounding board together and, if we need to debate, we do so, but in our own safe, respectful, caring spaces. The people that we love and serve deserve that . . . [and for] our own personal well-being, we deserve that and we need that.”

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

*“Reading and interpretation presents problems when we do not see ourselves in the text.”*

(Smith, 1999, p. 35)

I did not start off with a pre-conceived framework when analyzing my interview transcripts. Instead, I’ve spent hours and days trying to analyze the transcripts in an organic way that illuminates the underlying essence of these leaders’ lives. One day, while looking through my research files, I came upon my copy of *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola*. The book documents a Native Hawaiian Education philosophy statement developed by Hawaiian-speaking educators. In 2010, a woman whom I consider a leader in Hawaiian Education, gave me this copy. In the front cover she wrote these words “E Wai‘ale‘ale ē, ‘Ike ‘ia ka na‘au manawale‘a ma kāu hana. ‘O ke aloha na‘auao i loko o ka ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i ke ‘imi ‘ia nei i kākou a pau.” Because most of the book is written in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, I found my handwritten English translations on sticky notes throughout its pages. A well-known ‘ōlelo noea‘u among my colleagues is “Our kūpuna puts things in front of you when you need it.” I’ve had this book for seven years. I believe my kūpuna put this in front of me now for a reason, and so I turned to it to assist me with my analysis.

A study done by Hohepa (2013) on Educational Leadership and Indigeneity points out that fundamental tensions exist when attempting to fit Māori or Indigenous leadership into generic conceptions of educational leadership because generic conceptions of leadership are developed outside of the appropriate worldview, knowledge, understanding and experience. The frame, context and explanation of *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola* provided a deeper relationship to the findings than any other framework that I could find. When I worked as a Po‘o Kula of a

Hawaiian language medium school, Kumu Honua Maui Ola was the kahua (foundation) of the school. While I had read and read through this statement and understood it, I had not yet accumulated enough experience to truly form a deep connection to it--not until this study. In the following sections, my research findings are explained through the context of Kumu Honua Maui Ola. As a learner of the Hawaiian language, I lean on both the English and Hawaiian to build my understanding of the statement and to frame and interpret the findings.

### **Kumu Honua Maui Ola: An Overview**

The Kumu Honua Maui Ola education philosophy statement was prepared in 1998 by a group of Hawaiian-speaking educators to document and to clarify the basis of schools through the Hawaiian language ('Aha Pūnana Leo , 2009, p. 15). At the core of the Kumu Honua Maui Ola foundation is maui Hawai'i, the unique life force which is cultivated by, emanates from and distinguishes a person who self-identifies as a Hawaiian ('Aha Pūnana Leo , 2009, p. 17) Identity is built over time through the experiences a person has. These experiences formulate a set of values or principles regarding how individuals should behave (Parks-Leduc & Guay, 2009). Schwartz (1996) theorizes that human values have three universal requirements: biological needs, requisites of coordinated social interaction, and demands of group survival and functioning. These values are communicated to explain, coordinate and rationalize behaviors. Those who self-identify as Hawaiian have a shared understanding of Hawaiian principles and behaviors which make up their worldview.

The holistic perspective of Kumu Honua Maui Ola ties the spiritual and physical environments together creating a comprehensive Indigenous understanding and connection, noting that every aspect of identity stems from a person's maui. Maui is defined by English

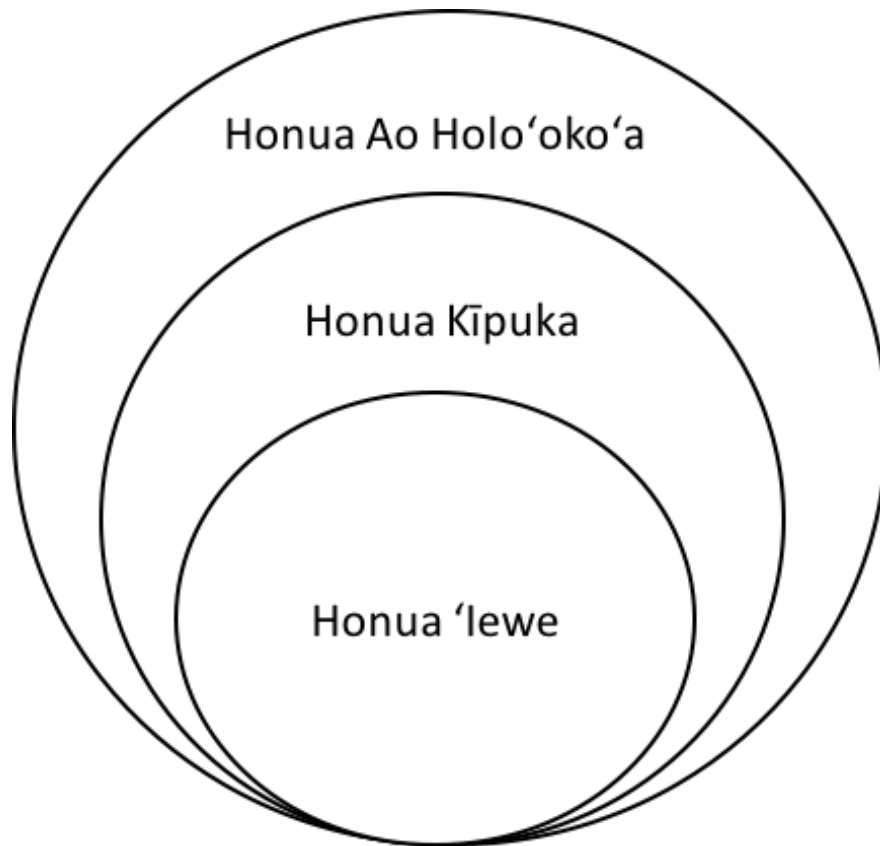
words as placenta, life, heart, seat of life, spirit (Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, 2003). For the purposes of this study, maui can be described as an individual's identity.

An individual's maui is rooted in four parts: (1) Ka 'Ao'ao Pili 'Uhane- relationship with everything in the universe, seen and unseen, (2) Ka 'Ao'ao 'Ōlelo- the language that transmits maui to future generations, (3) Ka 'Ao'ao Lawena- the physical behavior learned through unconscious imitation at a young age, and (4) Ka 'Ao'ao 'Ike Ku'una- authentic traditional knowledge and practices. These four components come together to form an individual's complete maui. (p.17-19)

Kumu Honua Maui Ola also articulates three elements that are shared among a group of people that connect them to the divine, to preceding generations and to generations to come: (1) Piko 'Ī- a baby's fontanel at the top of our heads where we connect to the spiritual beliefs of our people, (2) Piko 'Ō-, the navel that connects us to our ancestors, and is closest to our na'au, the seat of our knowledge and emotions, and (3) Piko 'Ā- reproductive organs which create future generations. Through these three elements, we exist in relationship to one another as members of a group of people.

As noted earlier, individual experiences develop one's maui. Kumu Honua Maui Ola postulates that a person's maui needs the right environment to develop and flourish. Honua 'Iewe, Honua Kīpuka and Honua Ao Holo'oko'a are three basic places where maui Hawai'i can be practiced (see figure 1). In the sections that follow the findings are articulated with respect to these three environments as an attempt to explain the context in which these women's maui were developed and sustained.

Figure 1: Kumu Honua Maui Ola Basic Environments for Maui Development



Note: Adapted from Kumu Honua Maui Ola. He Kālaimana'o Ho'ona'auao 'Ōiwi Hawai'i (p 6) by 'Aha Pūnana Leo and Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani, Ke Kula Nui o Hawai'i ma Hilo (2009).

### Analysis of Results

**Honua 'Iewe- the highly-protected placenta representing the close ties of family and kinship that are the foundation of one's maui (p.21).** The development of one's maui starts with the Honua 'Iewe. Honua 'Iewe is the familial ties we have beginning when we are in the womb of our mother. Traditionally, when we are born, our 'iewe (placenta) is buried in our 'āina hānau (birth place). This is our connection to our kūpuna and to our 'āina.

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Numerous studies on socialization theory point to the learning of values through childrearing as parents emphasize certain values over others (Horwitz, 2011). Similarly, Meyer (2001) points out that knowledge and prioritization of that knowledge end up being the “stuffing of identity,” the truth that links us to our distinct cosmologies and essence of who are as Oceanic people (p. 1250).

Each of us is born into a set of contexts and conditions that begin to shape our maui. These contexts and conditions include, but are not limited to, family demographics, values and practices. Participants of this study were chosen because of their current engagement in Hawaiian Education. They shared similar characteristics such as being the leader of a Hawaiian-focused public school, being fluent speakers of the Hawaiian language as well being married with children. However, each of the three females in this study were born into varying contexts and conditions, which makes their experiences, leading up to their current state, unique.

None of the three women shared similarities in their family demographics. Mahina was born to teen parents and as a result was raised between two families in Papākolea, O‘ahu and Na‘alehu, Hawai‘i. She was raised with two sets of identities, religions and expectations. Although she is multi-ethnic, she “first identifies as Hawaiian.” Kauanoe was raised by her father in Kalihi, O‘ahu and Kalama‘ula, Moloka‘i, due to her mother’s passing at a young age. She was surrounded by aunties, uncles and cousins throughout her life. She describes herself as only growing up around Hawaiians. In contrast, Meahilahila was raised with both biological parents in Makakilo, within a local Japanese family.

*Common Values of Education & Hawaiian Cultural Practices.* Two key family values were identified among the three females: (1) Expectations of educational attainment, and (2) Hawaiian cultural practices.

*Expectations of educational attainment.* The expectation from their ‘ohana that they would pursue high levels of education was prevalent across all three females. Of the three, two have attained their doctoral degrees and one completed her master’s degree. All females received most of their college degrees from universities in Hawai‘i.

Kauanoë came from two generations of educators. She opened her interview by acknowledging her grandparents and parents in her mo‘okūauhau, stating, “My grandpa was the principle at Kaunakakai Elementary school, his children were promoting education . . . My mother went to Kamehameha, my grandmother, too.” While Mahina was born to teen parents, her parents also valued education and, as a result, Mahina was educated only at independent schools, before graduating from Kamehameha. Growing up, Meahilahila was similarly driven to excel academically. She navigated college on her own and she double-majored in Hawaiian language and Native Hawaiian health.

*Hawaiian cultural practices.* Each female had at least one Hawaiian cultural practice valued by their family. Secondly, while not all of them grew up speaking the Hawaiian language, they were all exposed to the language in their family and/or through their cultural practices, and they later studied it in college. Over the course of their lives they also began to learn other Hawaiian cultural practices.

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For Meahilahila, being engaged in the cultural practice of hula since the age of four, combined with similar values at home, put her on her path to Hawaiian language learning and education. She recalled times in her life where her mother forced her to dance hula and how grateful she now is for that encouragement. She spoke about hula and her kumu as having strong influences on her life. Mahina called herself a student of wa‘a, ‘āina and fishponds. She served as a crew member on the Makali‘i like a few of her ‘ohana members. For Mahina these cultural practices “activated learning,” making education much more real. Kauanoë explains her cultural practices as ‘ohana and Hawaiian language. She sums up her practice of ‘ohana in the concept of “wiwo,” the value of having a combination of respect and fear for her ‘ohana, especially her parents. Wiwo is also the understanding of knowing your place and expectations within the ‘ohana. Kauanoë’s second cultural practice was the Hawaiian language. Kauanoë had relatives that still used the language within her ‘ohana on a regular basis. While she herself did not speak fluently till her later years, she understood words and phrases and that Hawaiian language could be best understood in context.

**Honua Kīpuka- the garden-like area where lava flow has left a patch of uncovered forest representing the ties of community, an extended protected environment in which one develops the maui brought from the family (p. 21).** Honua Kīpuka are the multiple environments where your maui develops from childhood through adulthood. These environments include, the home, community, school, church, etc., in which you apply the experiences of your ‘ohana values and expectations. Here the maui becomes firm through experiences and practices, solidifying values and/or standards. It is in these environments where you identify with others who share common values and worldviews, such as your lāhui.

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The value of education and Hawaiian culture, which was identified in the Honua ‘Iewe section, was the foundation for the leadership philosophies and actions within these individuals’ current work as leaders of Native Hawaiian schools. As noted above, there are many kīpuka where this foundational maui can be expressed. The school where these women worked served as a kīpuka for them as well as the many learners and families who attended these schools. As such all feel highly responsible for the ultimate success or failure of their school, as well as its students and families.

The three females expressed their leadership philosophy and their relationship with their lāhui Hawai‘i through their current work in Native Hawaiian Education. While each had a different approach to educational leadership they had two key leadership characteristics in common (1) their leadership practices were grounded in Hawaiian cultural practices, and (2) their strong commitment to the lāhui Hawai‘i led to high expectations for their students.

***Leadership practices were grounded in Hawaiian cultural practices.*** Each leader drew upon their cultural practices such as ‘ohana, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, hula, wa‘a and mālama ‘āina when operating their school. All three believe that there must be a clear vision of success and everyone involved with the school must be moving in that direction. Therefore, everyone has a role and the interdependence and synergy between those roles yields successful results. Pukui and Handy (n.d.) explained this as laulima:

The sharing and divisions of labour in all our work (laulima)--- in planting and fishing, in housebuilding and preparing feasts, in work on the irrigation ditches (auwai), taro terraces (lo‘i) and walls (kuauna), on ponds (loko) and in rituals, the hula, war—was also a way of education, for everyone did his part. (p 178)

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Meahilahila believes that her leadership is grounded in service to the community. She emphasizes the importance of relationships both in and out of the school. The relationship the school has with the community as well as other organizations in that community are highly valued. Meahilahila views these relationships through the Hawaiian practice of the traditional ahupua'a, where kanaka from each region understood their contribution to the whole, including both their positive and negative impacts on one another. Without this understanding of ahupua'a, Meahilahila doesn't believe that the school could be successful.

Mahina points out that when leading schools, she is a Hawaiian cultural practitioner first. She draws upon her experiences in hula, wa'a and mālama 'āina to express her leadership. She believes she has the ability to understand the skillset of her staff and articulate their kuleana towards successful outcomes for all. She compares this to coordinating a crew's kuleana on a wa'a, where skillsets used in the right time and space are necessary to achieve success.

Kauanoë expressed her leadership through the application of 'ohana. When all members are working in unity towards a common vision, their respective roles are distinct, not competitive. Kauanoë also believes that these roles are understood through observation, practice and guidance. As a school leader, she believes her role is to foster that development and provide opportunities for the staff members to grow. Kauanoë also expressed the loss of 'ohana practices as a gap in today's families. Often the students and families at her school are learning this practice for the first time through their membership in the school community.

*Clear commitment to the lāhui Hawai'i leading to high expectations for students.* Each leader expressed her strong commitment to the lāhui Hawai'i, and likewise communicated high expectations for her students to become successful contributors to the lāhui. They view their role

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in education as preparing the next generation of leaders who are grounded in the Hawaiian worldview while also considered highly educated in the Western context. Each leader did not specifically call out their educational expectations in their interview. However, all three of these schools were early adopters of the Early College model and continue to provide their high school students with college courses as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade. While each of these leaders understands the many socio-economic challenges that our Hawaiian families face, they view these challenges as something to overcome, and not as a permanent barrier.

Kauano'e's expectations for her students and their families are no different than her expectations for her staff. She expects her students and their respective families to understand their kuleana and carry it out. For example, she gave two students an exercise of rebuilding an ahu (altar) from a picture. When the exercise was complete, one student called his ahu "junk" because he felt he didn't do a very good job. Kauano'e's response to him was, "When you are not doing your best job, go back there and fix it." That is the kind of self-regulation and quality she expects of her students.

Mahina, believing that her life experiences mirror the experiences of most of her students, sees herself as a role model for these students. She expects her students to "help and support one another when our students and their families move through challenge and adversity so that they can grab onto their greatest potential, their deepest potential."

Meahilahila's decision-making is motivated by "What's best for kids?" and "What's best for the whole?" She explains that when prioritization needs to happen, she first thinks about her expectations for the students and what they need to achieve these expectations. She sees her role

as providing the right tools and kīpuka for them to grow into our future leaders, leaders that will perpetuate the language and culture of their people.

Meahilahila questions whether we are prepared to support the kinds of leaders we are trying to create today. As an example, when graduates of these Hawaiian focused schools advocated against the building of a telescope on Mauna Kea at an Office of Hawaiian Affairs board meeting, they challenged the decisions of current Hawaiian leaders. She asks if we are ready for the challenges that this new generation of leaders will bring to the status quo.

**Honua Ao Holo‘oko‘a- the entire world, which is where an adult who has been raised with a strong maui expresses and shares the distinctiveness of that maui with others from diverse backgrounds (p 21).** The individual’s maui developed and practiced in Honua ‘Iewe and Honua Kīpuka expands to Honua Ao Holo‘oko‘a, environments where maui is expressed in the larger context in which we live. It’s the environment where our maui Hawai‘i interacts with others who may or may not share the same identity and values.

This study focused on the leadership trajectory of three women who currently lead Hawaiian-focused education public charter schools. Their schools, often seen as the Honua Kīpuka for their students and families, are governed by western policies and frameworks embedded in neoliberal conceptions of education. These women’s ability to navigate through this context as well as reshape this context is what distinguishes their leadership in Native Hawaiian Education. All of them identified a future desire to achieve an environment where there is better alignment between Native Hawaiian Education and state policies that govern their schools. As a result, all three women are actively involved in advocating for systems change within our state that would provide for more supportive policies for Native Hawaiian Education .

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Through her life's work Kauano'e has worked towards ensuring that Native Hawaiian Education can be practiced within our government's public school system. She understood the political challenges she would face when advocating for the recognition of Hawaiian language as an official language of the state of Hawai'i. She explains "You've just got to tolerate all of that and come away from it, and keep going back in."

Meahilahila serves as an advisor to the Hawai'i State Charter School Commission. She sees this role as an opportunity to ensure that Native Hawaiian Education has a voice and influence in the development of policies that will ultimately govern the school she leads. She acknowledges that it's not a role she is comfortable in, but she understands the significance that the role has.

Mahina works closely with other community groups to build a collective vision and impact towards systems change for Native Hawaiians. She sits on several community-based organizational boards and is a member of a statewide coalition focused on Native Hawaiian Education. She has also lent her experience and expertise to the development of the State Board of Education Nā Hopena A'o education policy.

**Succession Planning.** For each of these leaders, while thoughts around how to plan for their succession were similar, the stages of enacting that plan differed depending on the current state of their role. All three believed that their successor must have a clear understanding of the school's vision and mission and ideally would have had a close relationship with the school for many years. Because Meahilahila recently experienced the loss of an administrator at her school, she was forced to put together a more short-term succession plan meant to be used in an emergency. However, at this point in her career, she has no immediate plans for leaving her

position. Mahina emphasized the importance of having a successor who will lead from a Hawaiian foundation and worldview. She also spoke of the necessity of cultivating, sustaining and growing leadership. Kauanoë explained that she prefers to build multiple successors and that the cultural practice of ‘ohana allows her to do that. Staff within her school eventually learn multiple roles, which strengthen their understanding of all functions.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

*Indigenous leadership is based on the enactment of leadership which is located in and guided by Indigenous knowledge, values and practices, in order to realize indigenous educational aspirations.* (Hohepa, 2013)

This study lays out the experiences and perspectives that shaped the leadership trajectories of three extraordinary women working in Native Hawaiian Education today. Their maui, which was formed through their ‘ohana and Hawaiian cultural practices, created educational leadership that held high expectations for themselves, their staff, and the students and families they serve. Additionally, all three leaders saw their role as leaders in Native Hawaiian Education in the context of both their people and in the larger society in which we live. In the sections that follow, I conclude with a few implications and recommendations that this study suggests for developing and mentoring future leaders in Native Hawaiian Education.

**Successful leaders in Native Hawaiian Education must value, practice, and have a deep understanding of Hawaiian identity and worldview.**

Limitations exist when applying universal concepts of educational leadership in an Indigenous context. Hohepa (2013) argues that while educational leadership plays a critical role in improving student outcomes for minority and Indigenous learners, *Indigenous* educational

leadership needs to be included in the dialogue. Generic educational leadership conceptions are developed outside of Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, understanding and experiences of leadership. As the participants in this study suggest, and Smith (2009) confirms, we must place Indigenous knowledge, culture and language at the center of Indigenous educational leadership so that emotional and moral energy related to identity may be harnessed to enhance Indigenous student learning. More specifically, leaders in Native Hawaiian Education must practice Hawaiian ways of knowing and being. As Kumu Hōkūlani Holt (2017) articulated in a recent Native Hawaiian Education conference panel on Hawaiian leadership “You cannot be one *Hawaiian* leader if you are not practicing our culture.”

**Successful leaders in Hawaiian Education must be capable of “walking in two worlds” as they are simultaneously accountable to educational expectations of their ‘oiwi kūpuna and the dominant western society.**

Community expectations, responsibilities and accountability place considerable demands on Indigenous women, who are expected to be competent in and capable of “walking in two worlds,” that of their ‘oiwi kupuna and the current dominant society (Hohepa 2013; Fitzgerald 2006; Smith 2009). Moreover, successful (female) leaders in Indigenous education are expected to bring these two worlds together in their schools for the students and families they serve. These expectations of an Indigenous educational leader far surpass western expectations of leadership, which are often limited to raising standardized test scores. Kaulukukui (2016) notes that Hawaiian leaders today must embrace this responsibility as they seek education and experiences in both “modern educational institutions and Hawaiian houses of learning.”

**All leaders who have a role in the education of our Native children should be expected to embrace and perpetuate the traditional knowledge, values and practices of our island home.**

As Meahilahila's inspirational story as a non-Hawaiian leader of a Hawaiian-medium charter school suggests, it is not unrealistic to expect that non-Indigenous leaders serving our Indigenous children should likewise embrace and perpetuate the traditional knowledge, values and practices of our Native home. Likewise, as Kauano'e's opening quote reminds us, *everyone* in Hawai'i is part of the solution for the revitalization of Hawaiian language. In fact, the stories of these three extraordinary educational leaders leads me to conclude that similar leadership expectations should apply to all leaders who have a role in the education of our Native children, not just those in Hawaiian educational settings.

**Stories of these and other inspirational leaders and the lessons they've learned should be shared as part of professional development for emerging leaders in Native Hawaiian Education**

While each of these leaders characteristically understated the magnitude of their accomplishments, and the courage and persistence required of their positions, their conviction that the mission of Native Hawaiian Education is just and righteous led them to be strongly determined, persistent, and courageous in their actions, and enabled them to overcome major obstacles in pursuit of a cause that to this day has yet to gain popularity outside of Indigenous circles. Professional development that involves the sharing of these stories could go a long way towards inspiring other emerging leaders in Native Hawaiian Education.

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