

WAIMEA I KA UA O KAPA'AOA
KAHIKO I LUNA O KA'ALA
KUAHIWI 'ALO ANU O WAIMEA
'OHU'OHU I KE OHO O KA PĀLAI

WAIMEA IN THE PA'AOA RAIN
ADORNING THE TOP OF KA'ALA
MOUNTAIN EMBRACING WAIMEA'S COLD
EMBELLISHED WITH LACEY PALAI FERN

VERSE II OF MAIKA'I WAIMEA BY JOHN KALINO

WAIMEA FUTURES COMMUNITY REPORT

PHASE III

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WAIWAI COLLECTIVE
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**“ NO MATTER WHERE WE
COME FROM,
WE ALL LOVE WAIMEA.**

——— Shawn Saito
Tutu's House

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



MAIKA'I WAIMEA OUR FUTURE, OUR KULEANA

Waimea Futures is a community-led initiative of the Richard Smart Fund at the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) that advances HCF's strategic priorities of elevating community voice, co-creating solutions to root causes of systemic challenges, and building trust-based relationships that support long-term community well-being. Since 1988, the Richard Smart Fund has invested more than \$8.3 million in nonprofit organizations serving Waimea. In 2022, HCF intentionally re-imagined the Fund's grantmaking approach to align with trust-based philanthropy principles, launching Waimea Futures as a three-phase initiative spanning 2023–2025.

PHASE 1

Phase 1 (January–September 2023) prioritized listening, inclusion, and relationship-building, key indicators of trust-based philanthropy. Through 14 community conversations and a community summit, Waimea Futures elevated diverse community voices and lived experiences, strengthened pilina to place, and centered 'ike kūpuna and cultural values in defining community priorities. These engagements honored the legacy of Richard Smart while grounding future action in community-identified needs and aspirations.

PHASE 2

Phase 2 (October 2023–September 2024) advanced HCF's commitment to shared power and community co-creation by establishing a community advisory committee to redesign the Richard Smart Fund grant program. More than \$618,000 was invested through flexible, place-based strategies that emphasized collaboration, cultural perpetuation, and alignment of nonprofit kuleana with collective well-being. These strategies reduced traditional barriers between funder and community, supported experimentation through prototypes, and recognized community organizations as trusted partners in change.





KEY INDICATORS

Key outcomes aligned with HCF's strategic priorities and trust-based philanthropy indicators include:

PHASE 3

Phase 3 (October 2024–September 2025) deepened impact by strengthening community capacity, accountability, and learning, consistent with HCF's systems-change approach. Led by the Waimea Community Weaving Hui, this phase introduced Hui Kumu Waiwai, a learning cohort focused on shared understanding of systems, root causes, and collective action. The Maika'i Waimea Community Summit reconvened the community to reflect on progress, reaffirm shared values, and align future actions. Participation across Waimea Futures activities grew to as many as 1,100 individuals—engaging an estimated 8–10% of Waimea's resident population—demonstrating broad community trust, relevance, and ownership.

As Waimea Futures moves forward, recommended next steps include: a) expanding communication and community-led engagement; b) increasing adoption of the Waimea Community Pledge; c) offering action-oriented learning opportunities; d) continuing cultural recognition efforts; and finally e) sustaining the Waimea Community Weaving Hui as a trusted convener and advisory partner to HCF. Together, these efforts exemplify a trust-based, community-driven model for philanthropy that aligns with HCF's strategic vision and supports Waimea's ability to steward its future in accordance with its heritage, values, and collective aspirations.

- * Elevated community voice and leadership, reflected in community-led decision-making, advisory structures, and learning cohorts
- * Strengthened social cohesion and cross-sector collaboration, supporting collective problem-solving and shared accountability
- * Flexible, relationship-centered grant-making, enabling nonprofits and community members to align their work with shared priorities
- * Cultural perpetuation and place-based values, centered as foundational to long-term resilience and well-being
- * Shared agreements and commitments, formalized through the Waimea Community Pledge



BACKGROUND & SCOPE

Since 1988, the Richard Smart Fund at the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) has received more than \$11 million from the Parker Ranch Foundation Trust (PRFT) and awarded over \$8.3 million to nonprofit organizations “to support health care, educational, and charitable purposes in the Kamuela (Waimea) area,” as directed by Richard Smart’s Trust. Over the past 23 years, grantmaking from the Fund has focused on building social capital, strengthening organizational capacity, supporting educational innovation, providing post-secondary scholarships, and broadly supporting the nonprofit sector serving the Waimea community.

In 2022, as HCF developed a 10-year strategic plan centered on elevating community voice, co-creating solutions to address root causes of systemic issues, and engaging in trust-based relationships, a new grant program for the Richard Smart Fund began to take shape. This work evolved into a place-based community initiative implemented in three phases from January 2023 through December 2025, now known as Waimea Futures.

PHASE 1: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS **(JANUARY–SEPTEMBER 2023)**

Phase 1 focused on identifying and engaging the diverse population groups, influencers, organizations, and businesses within Waimea and inviting them to come together around their shared aloha for place. Fourteen community conversations and one community summit were convened and facilitated by Mahina Paishon of Waiwai Collective in partnership with Diane Chadwick of the Hawai'i Community Foundation.

Participants included long-time and newer residents, educators, nonprofit, business, and faith leaders, cowboys, farmers, cultural practitioners, and astronomers. These gatherings honored the legacy of Richard Smart, deepened participants’ pilina (connection) to Waimea, and surfaced priority issues that must be addressed to move Waimea toward a thriving future that honors and perpetuates the community’s culture.



PHASE 2: PROGRAM REDESIGN AND EARLY ACTION (OCTOBER 2023–SEPTEMBER 2024)

Phase 2 built upon the insights gathered during the community conversations by forming a community advisory committee to partner with HCF in redesigning the Richard Smart Fund grant program. Together, they developed strategies for using RSF funding to convene opportunities that promote greater cohesion, connectedness, and shared agreement around collective values and actions. These strategies were designed to address critical issues, reflect Waimea’s heritage, and sustain its unique identity.

STRATEGY ONE:

Strategy One supported community-led action through a \$100,000 grant to **Friends of the Future**. This funding enabled prototype groups formed at the May 2023 community summit to take action in four priority areas: affordable housing; public access to open spaces; perpetuating Waimea’s culture; and sharing the stories of Waimea. These prototype groups were composed of community volunteers committed to advancing these issues.

STRATEGY TWO:

Strategy Two involved a \$100,000 grant to **Nā Kālai Wa‘a (NKW)**, which provided awards to four organizations exemplifying the perpetuation of Waimea’s culture:

- **Hālau Nā Kīpu‘upu‘u**, for sharing Hawaiian culture through hula and ‘ike kūpuna
- **Kawaihae Canoe Club**, for providing culturally grounded physical activity for all ages
- **Māla‘ai Garden**, for teaching students the importance of food cultivation for Waimea
- **Alex & Duke DeRego Foundation**, for promoting youth safety and well-being

Nā Kālai Wa‘a supported the identification and management of the awards and organized a community celebration attended by more than 300 people.

STRATEGY THREE:

Strategy Three translated lessons from the Phase 1 conversations and summit into a redesigned grant program that brought together diverse members of the community. The program emphasized each nonprofit’s kuleana and how their work contributes to the collective well-being of Waimea while addressing the priority issues identified by the community. In 2024, a total of \$418,270 was awarded to 14 organizations through the Richard Smart Fund.



PHASE 3: DEEPENING LEARNING AND RECONNECTION (OCTOBER 2024–SEPTEMBER 2025)

This report focuses on Phase 3. Lessons from Phase 2 highlighted a strong desire for deeper learning about Waimea’s culture, revealed challenges faced by volunteer-led prototype groups, and demonstrated an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to more intentionally align their work and kuleana with the community’s collective well-being through the redesigned grant program.

In response, the community advisory committee—now calling themselves the **Waimea Community Weaving Hui**—developed two new strategies:

1. **Hui Kumu Waiwai**, a deeper learning opportunity designed to build shared understanding, skills, and relationships
2. **Maika’i Waimea Community Summit**, a gathering to reconnect the community, share progress since the initial conversations in early 2023, and further explore the priority issues identified by the community.

“

**I TOOK WAIMEA
FOR GRANTED.
BEING PART OF THE
COHORT OPENED MY
EYES THAT I HAVE
A GREATER
RESPONSIBILITY TO
THIS PLACE THAT I
LOVE, TO STEWARD
IT WELL.**

— Shirley De Rego
Alex & Duke De Rego Foundation



IMPACT AND INITIATIVES

OUTCOMES

Participation increased from approximately 160 individuals in early efforts to as many as 1,100 participants across Waimea Futures activities. An estimated 8–10% of Waimea's resident population engaged in initiatives advancing the Waimea Futures vision and collective priorities. The following initiatives were funded by the Richard Smart Fund and supported by the Waimea Community Weaving Hui:

- **Discover Your Kuleana gatherings**
- **Hawai'i Public Radio / Hawai'i Radio Hour – Sharing Mo'olelo program at Kahilu Theatre**
- **Wai Forum, hosted by Waimea Hawaiian Civic Clubs**
- **Waimea Resilience Hub workshops**

These efforts expanded the community's social impact network and strengthened coordinated action aligned with a shared vision, values, and priorities. They also increased willingness to collaborate, problem-solve collectively, and share resources and expertise. In addition, the Hui hosted the second Waimea Futures Summit, Maika'i Waimea: Our Future, Our Kuleana.

DELIVERABLES MET

- * Coordinated and facilitated a learning cohort of grantee and interested organizations focused on systems change, root causes of systemic barriers, and co-creating place-based solutions
- * Hosted an in-person summit that articulated a revised community vision and shared values and agreements
- * Established Waimea Community Weaving Hui roles, terms, responsibilities, self-governance agreements, and onboarding/offboarding protocols
- * Worked with HCF to recommend grants for 2025
- * Developed a website, monthly e-newsletter, and social media presence to build connection, momentum, and information-sharing across Waimea
- * Produced a written report describing a revised community vision and shared values and agreements

DELIVERABLES NOT ADDRESSED

The following activities were not completed due to limited budget and competing academic, extracurricular, and family responsibilities of Waimea youth. To address these gaps, Waiwai Collective recommends convening interested organizations to apply for future grants focused on shared priorities identified at the Maika'i Waimea Summit. An additional recommendation is for Waimea Futures to collaborate with the Waimea Education Hui to co-host a Waimea Youth Summit. The Waimea Education Hui includes active participation from all Waimea public and private schools.

- Support for a second cohort of prototype groups addressing food and water security and other identified priorities
- Hosting a youth summit in collaboration with the Waimea Education Hui





MAIKA' I WAIMEA SUMMIT

The second Waimea Community Summit, Waimea Futures, was held on September 27, 2025, at Kanu o ka 'Āina Public Charter School. The summit convened more than 150 community participants and 30 guest speakers and exhibitors.

The goal of the summit was to bring the community together, expand participation in conversations and actions shaping Waimea's future, increase awareness of ongoing initiatives supported by the Richard Smart Fund, and affirm the values guiding Waimea forward.

The program featured an opening plenary, two concurrent learning workshop sessions with four topic areas, guided lunch conversations, and a closing keynote.

LEARNING WORKSHOP: TOPICS AND PRESENTERS

CULTURE/MO'OLELO

Sharing Waimea's Stories & Culture

Naka Nathaniel, Kolby Akamu Moser, Julia Brotman, Dagan Bernstein

Understanding Waimea through Mo'olelo

Momi Naughton, Ku'ulei Keakealani, Ana Bertelmann

WAI

Where are the waters of Waimea?

Kalani Flores

Waimea Futures: Planning in Continuity with Water

Kamuela Plunkett

FOOD SECURITY

Restoring Pilina 'Āina: One Food Forest at a Time

Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Margo Shiroyama, Jake Merkel, Anianikū Chong, Ka'iana Runnels

Supporting Our Food Producers

Eric Batha, Leandra Rouse, Ippy Aiona

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Koai'e Update & Becoming Mortgage Ready

Keith Kato, Jeremy McComber, Shirley De Rego

Community Land Trusts

Carolyn Auwelo, Beth Robinson, Whitney Harvey



SUMMIT SURVEY RESULTS

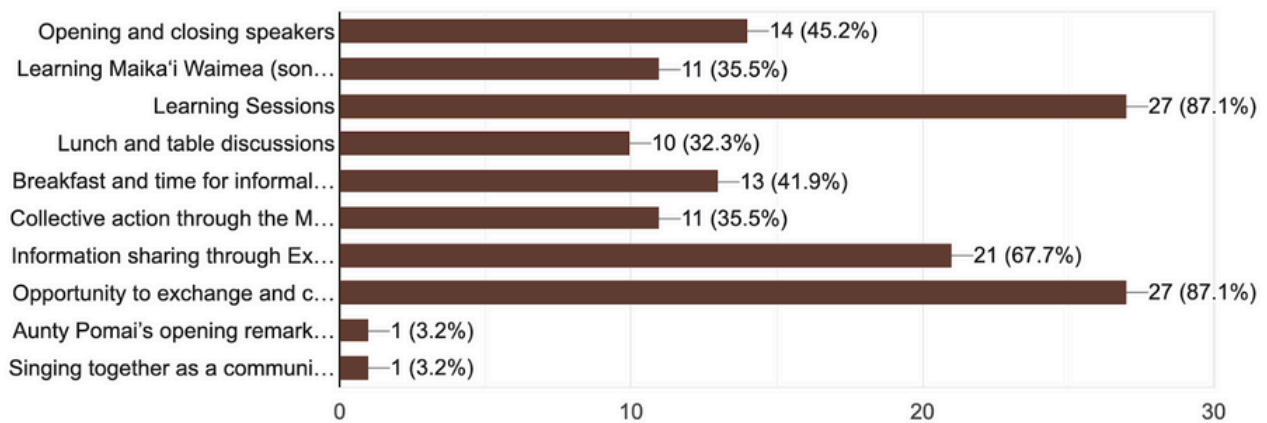
The following describes the responses of 31 Summit attendees which make up 26% of total attendance.

Overwhelmingly, both survey respondents and in-person Summit poll, indicated that a 3rd Summit should be offered in the future. Survey respondents also provided recommendations for refinement, should a 3rd Summit be hosted.

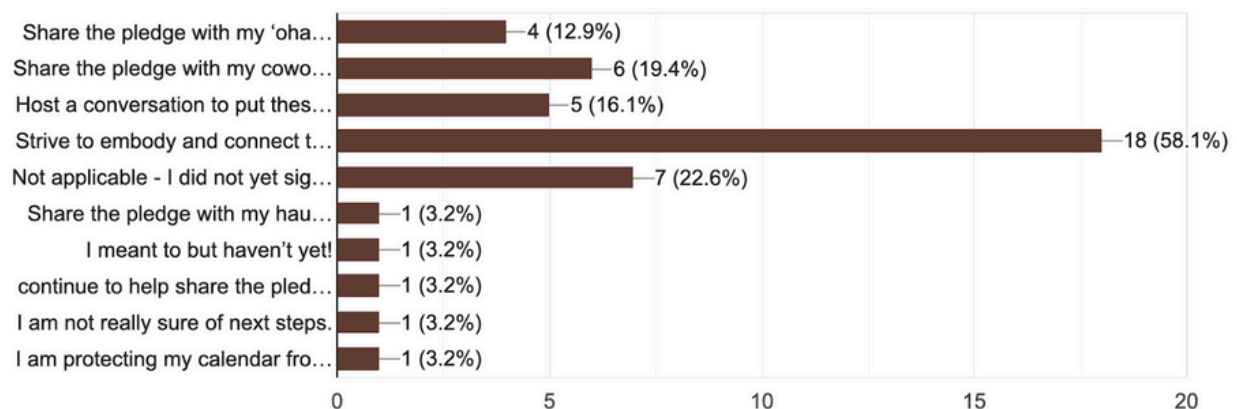


31 RESPONSES COLLECTED:

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT SATURDAY'S "MAIKA'I WAIMEA" SUMMIT?



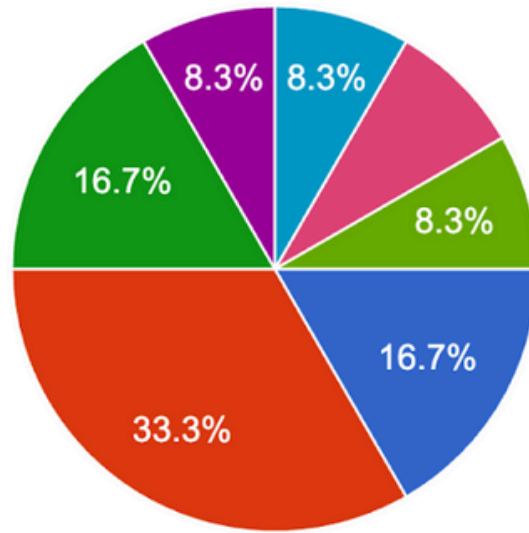
WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR PERSONAL "NEXT STEPS" REGARDING OUR SHARED MISSION AND VISION FOR WAIMEA'S FUTURE





12 RESPONSES COLLECTED:

IF YOU DID NOT YET SIGN THE PLEDGE, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SIGN ON?

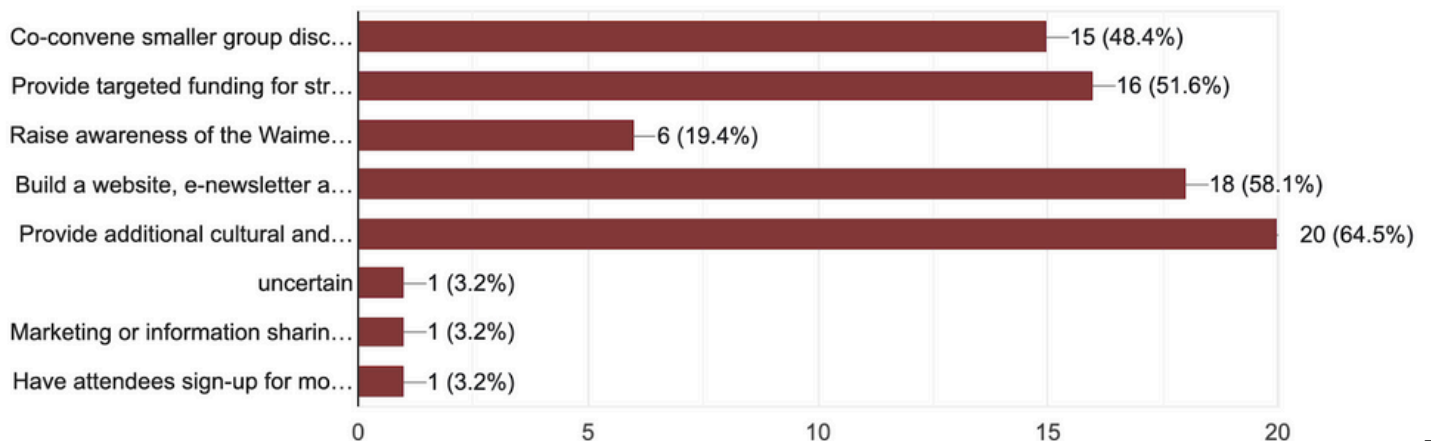


- More information - I do not adequately understand what is described.
- Make it easy to sign-on like using an electronic form or set up the pledge in...
- Edit the Pledge. I would like to see rev...
- Note sure
- just hadn't gotten to it
- like this <https://ponopledge.com/take-t...>
- I signed the pledge, and I appreciate t...
- Sorry, I signed the pledge, but cannot...



31 RESPONSES COLLECTED:

WHAT SHOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS TO BUILD ON THIS POSITIVE MOMENTUM?





Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that a 3rd Summit should be offered.

- **Maintain Momentum and Connections:** A 3rd summit is strongly supported to keep the energy, motivation, and connections going, as well as to continue building relationships (pilina) and fostering community interaction/participation.
- **Action and Learning:** Respondents see it as an opportunity to execute action items, learn about and be part of community priorities, go deeper into topics, and refine goals/action items based on past learnings. Some requested more action-based workshops.
- **Community Growth and Inclusion:** The summit is viewed as a great way to involve community members in community growth, bring organizations and community members together, attract new voices by offering the event at a different time/day, and bring in more people who may be interested in future plans.
- **Improve Representation and Focus:** Suggestions included first holding a series of smaller group sessions to mobilize specific action, and ensuring representation from larger stakeholders like DHHL, Parker Ranch, the farming community, and the hospitality industry.

EDUCATIONAL VENUE AND INFORMATION ACCESS:

THE SUMMIT IS
VALUED AS AN
EDUCATIONAL VENUE
THAT PROVIDES
IMPORTANT
INFORMATION/
INITIATIVES TO THE
COMMUNITY AND IS A
GREAT WAY TO
ACCESS
INFORMATION ON
LIVING IN WAIMEA.

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS



Building on the momentum, learning, and relationships established through Waimea Futures, the following next steps and recommendations are offered to sustain progress and deepen community impact:

-
- * Promote and expand the Waimea Futures brand and communication platforms to strengthen visibility, coherence, and shared identity across the community.
 - * Increase awareness of—and participation in—the Waimea Community Pledge by engaging targeted education, business, nonprofit, and government entities to encourage alignment with shared values and collective commitments.
 - * Provide additional action-oriented workshops that build upon the priorities, ideas, and energy generated at the Maika'i Waimea Summit, supporting practical implementation and collaboration.
 - * Secure funding to host a second “Keeping Waimea’s Culture” event and provide additional awards that recognize and uplift organizations and individuals perpetuating Waimea’s cultural heritage.
 - * Continue to host and facilitate the Waimea Community Weaving Hui to:
 - Serve as a trusted convener that creates inclusive spaces for dialogue, fostering greater cohesion, connectedness, and shared agreement around collective values and actions that address critical issues, reflect Waimea’s heritage, and sustain its unique identity.
 - Develop strategies and activities for using the Richard Smart Fund to support community-driven efforts that address challenges and advance opportunities aligned with the future envisioned by Waimea residents.
 - Provide ongoing advisory support to the Hawai'i Community Foundation for the design, implementation, and decision-making of community grants awarded through the Richard Smart Fund.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPONSORS & COORDINATING TEAMS (6 COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS)

Deviants from the Norm
Friends of the Future
Hui Kumu Waiwai
Richard Smart Fund & Hawai'i
Community Foundation
Waimea Community Weaving Hui
Waiwai Collective

COMMUNITY HOSTS (15 COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS)

Alex & Duke De Rego Foundation
Big Island Mediation
Discover Your Kuleana
Five Mountains Hawai'i
Hawai'i Preparatory Academy
Hawai'i Songwriting Festival
Kahilu Theatre Foundation
Kona Historical Society
Mala'ai - Culinary Garden of
Waimea Middle School
Mālama Kai Foundation
Parker School
Rama Tree
St. James Episcopal Church
Small World Pre-school
Waimea Community Theatre



APPENDIX A: ALIGNMENT WITH HCF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & TRUST-BASED PHILANTHROPY INDICATORS

Appendix A: Alignment with HCF Strategic Priorities & Trust-Based Philanthropy Indicators

HCF Strategic Priority	Trust-Based Philanthropy Indicator	Waimea Futures Actions	Demonstrated Outcomes
Elevate Community Voice	Community-led decision-making; listening first	14 community conversations; community summits; creation of Waimea Community Weaving Hui	Diverse participation; community-defined priorities; advisory body with shared governance
Co-create Solutions to Root Causes	Shared power; flexible funding	Community advisory redesign of RSF grants; prototype funding; learning cohorts	Grantmaking aligned with systems-level issues (housing, culture, food, access)
Build Trust-Based Relationships	Transparency; long-term relationships	Ongoing convenings; Hui Kumu Waiwai; consistent facilitation	Increased participation (8–10% of residents); cross-sector collaboration
Strengthen Community Capacity	Investment beyond programs	Learning cohorts; nonprofit alignment around kuleana	Improved coordination, shared values, collective action
Advance Equity & Place-Based Approaches	Cultural humility; respect for local knowledge	Centering ‘ike kūpuna, aloha ‘āina, and Waimea heritage	Cultural perpetuation embedded as core strategy, not add-on

APPENDIX B: WAIMEA FUTURES THEORY OF CHANGE

Community Context

Waimea faces interconnected challenges related to housing, cultural perpetuation, land access, food systems, and youth well-being, shaped by historical and systemic factors. At the same time, the community holds strong cultural values, deep relationships to place, and a desire for collective stewardship of its future.

Inputs

- Richard Smart Fund financial resources
- Community knowledge, lived experience, and leadership
- Facilitation and backbone support (Waiwai Collective & Friends of the Future)
- Trust-based grant-making practices

Core Strategies

- Deep listening and inclusive community conversations
- Shared governance through the Waimea Community Weaving Hui
- Flexible, place-based grant-making
- Learning and capacity-building (Hui Kumu Waiwai)
- Cultural recognition and storytelling

Outputs

- Community summits and convenings
- Learning cohorts and workshops
- Prototype action groups
- Redesigned grant program
- Waimea Community Pledge

Short-Term Outcomes

- Increased trust between community and funder
- Greater alignment among nonprofits and community actors
- Shared understanding of values, priorities, and systems

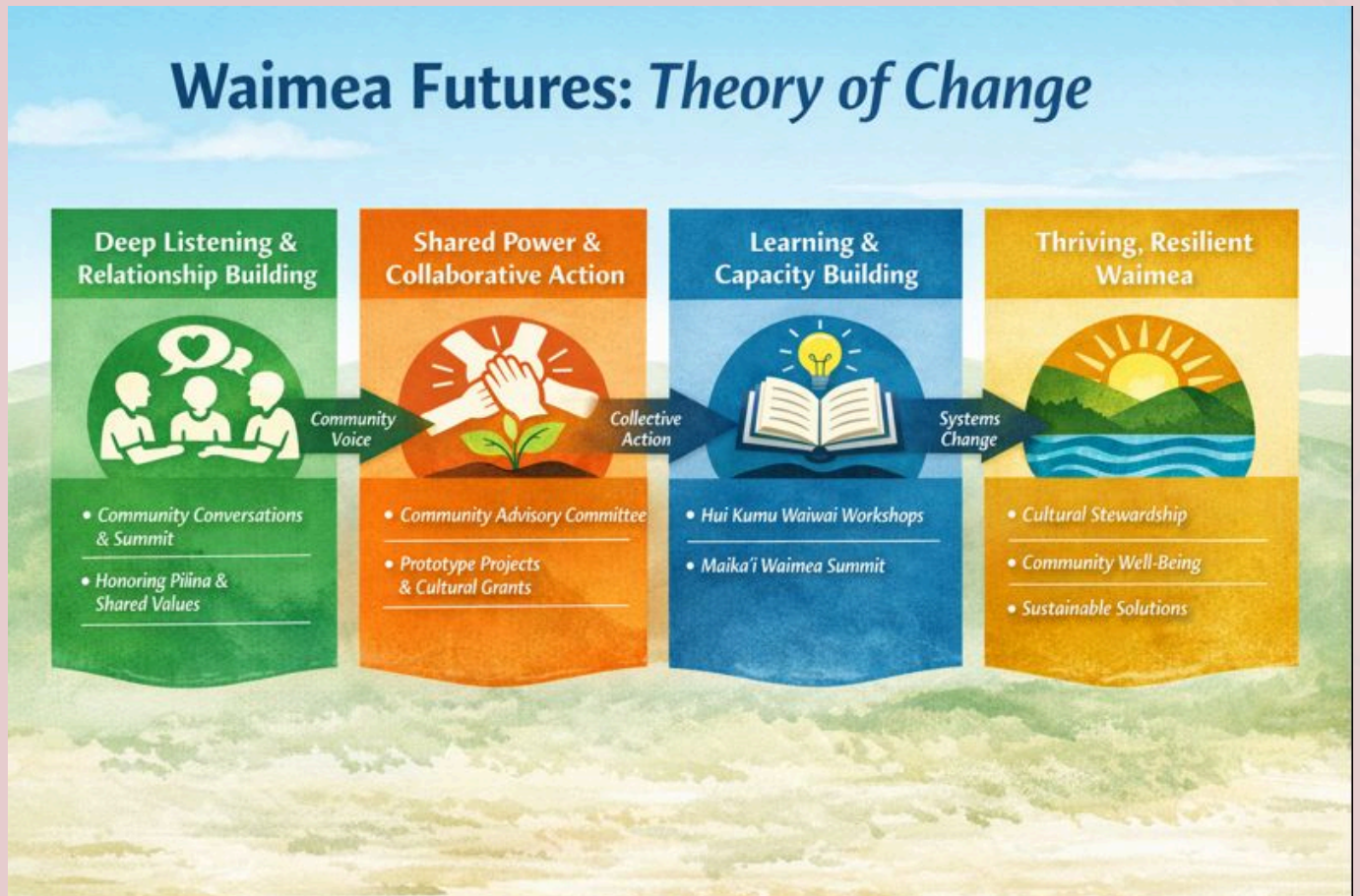
Intermediate Outcomes

- Coordinated action across sectors
- Increased cultural perpetuation and place-based leadership
- Stronger nonprofit collaboration and reduced duplication

Long-Term Impact

Waimea residents steward a thriving future grounded in culture, equity, and collective well-being, supported by trusted philanthropic partnership and community-led systems change.

APPENDIX B: WAIMEA FUTURES THEORY OF CHANGE



APPENDIX C: WAIMEA COMMUNITY PLEDGE

Waimea: Our Future, Our Kuleana Community Pledge

Preamble

Waimea's culture and character are grounded in community values: **mālama 'āina** (care for the land), **kuleana** (responsibility), and **pilina** (relationship). These values are the foundation for how we care for the environment and each other to ensure Waimea thrives for generations to come.

Our Collective Pledge

As kupa'āina, residents, schools, faith organizations, nonprofits, businesses and public policy makers of Waimea, we sign this pledge to express our intention to live by these values that foster kuleana for and connection with our beloved 'āina and each other.

- 1. Protect & Preserve** – Honor and safeguard the integrity, health, and well-being of Waimea's 'āina, wai, spirit, and community as the town grows and changes.
- 2. Unite to Care for One Another** – Come together to support the thriving of all.
- 3. Care for Generations** – Honor kūpuna and nurture keiki as your own, ensuring Waimea remains a beloved place for future generations.
- 4. Be Humble** – Listen, learn, and respect the wisdom of place and people.
- 5. Show Kindness** – Extend compassion, respect, and aloha in every interaction. Welcome all who enter, embracing everyone as part of Waimea's 'ohana.
- 6. Share Our Gifts** – Offer our skills, talents, time, energy, resources and knowledge in service to our community
- 7. Foster a Feeling of Safety** – Protect one another and nurture an environment of trust and well-being, assuring all voices are heard.

Together we commit to upholding these values for the well-being of Waimea now and for future generations.



HAWAI'I
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

WAIMEA
FUTURES
COMMUNITY
REPORT

PHASE III

Designed by:
ALL I SEE IS ART

www.waimeafutures.org