



HAROLD K.L. CASTLE
FOUNDATION

FOCUS GROUP
REPORT

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020



Background

Acknowledging the range of pandemic related challenges, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation (Castle Foundation) contracted ‘A’ali’i Alliance (A’A) in October 2020 to engage with the Windward community in virtual focus groups. The Castle Foundation conducted this rapid community listening tour in anticipation of additional grantmaking focused around a pandemic response.

The Castle Foundation hypothesized that residents of Windward, O’ahu are experiencing stressors stemming from the health, economic, and social crises of 2020. The Castle Foundation wanted to understand how residents have been affected, the extent to which residents believe these challenges will get better or worse, and what or who residents see as helping to mitigate these issues. By gaining a broad understanding of the needs of residents, the Castle Foundation could position resources to support some of these challenges.

Methodology

Both the Castle Foundation and A’A generated lists of important stakeholders and networks to recruit as focus group participants. Key informants were asked to provide additional contacts where our own networks were weaker. Over one hundred potential participants were contacted continuously during two weeks—October 20 to November 4—and offered opportunities to attend. Those who were able and willing to participate were provided with link to the Zoom meeting. Though individual meetings were available, almost all participants joined a group in order to benefit from hearing the opinions of others.

Focus groups were hosted during the day and evenings in order to accommodate participants. Groups with more than 7 participants required about 90 minutes. Groups with fewer participants took between 30 and 60 minutes. Because large focus groups were broken into smaller breakout sessions on Zoom, the quality of conversation did not vary because the number of participants in any conversation was limited to 3 to 6 individuals.

Table 1. Focus Group Schedule	
October 23, 6:15 PM – Pilot Group	October 30, 12:00 PM - Open
October 26, 12:00 PM – Employers	November 3, Students/Youth
October 26, 2:15 PM – Employers	November 5, Students/Youth
October 27, 6:00 PM – Community	November 6, 8:00 AM – Education & Health care representatives
October 28, 5:30 PM – Students/Youth	November 6, 2:00 PM, Students/Youth
October 29, 6:00 PM - Community	

All focus groups except one were held online in order to comply with City and County of Honolulu COVID-19 guidelines to avoid gatherings and unnecessary close contact. One in-person focus group was held for opportunity youth. This interaction utilized strict physical

distancing practices. Most if not all groups acknowledged the limitations virtual gatherings have on their abilities to engage thoughtfully with others, and the findings presented here should take into consideration the inherent limitations of virtual engagement.

Participants were provided a Zoom link prior to the meeting and received a mahalo email for their participation. Youth participants also received a “mahalo snack” administered by program staff after the focus group.

The focus groups asked participants the following questions:

- What are the most pressing issues for residents of Windward, O‘ahu?
- What/who is helping to make things better? What/who is making things worse?
- Who could provide leadership on these issues?
- How would you rank and assign weighting to the most important issues?

Knowing that there are issues that rise to the top of people’s minds, the Castle Foundation and A‘A team created a listing of issues for participants to rank and weight. The list of issues are:

- The economy, jobs, employment
- Education, childcare, job training
- Health – both physical and mental/emotional health
- Housing and homelessness
- Social, spiritual, and cultural connections
- Infrastructure – roads, sewers, erosion, etc.
- Strong families (support for moms, dads, grandparents, and kūpuna)
- ‘Āina and food security

As will be explained later in the findings section, this exercise of forced ranking was not easy for participants to complete.

Demographics

Over 70 participants came together in 10 focus groups between October 22 and November 6, 2020. Participants ranged in age from 15 years old to kūpuna and covered many walks of life: pastors, incarcerated youth, teachers, ‘āina practitioners, bankers, students in high school and community college, nonprofit staff and leadership, decision makers, the military, retirees, elected officials, small business owners, unemployed individuals, and a few who consider themselves homeless.

For the purposes of this project, the team defined Windward, O‘ahu as Waimānalo to Kahuku. Out of the 70+ participants, approximately 20 did not consider themselves residents of the region, though many noted strong ties to the region as where they work, the home of their ‘ohana, where they grew up, or—in the case of the incarcerated and street youth—their temporary residence.

Except for the 20 individuals who did not consider themselves residents of the region, most participants noted they have lived in Windward, O‘ahu for more than 15 years. Even “recent” transplants noted having lived in the region for 20 years.

The groups included leadership from the faith community, civic groups, large employers, and community associations. Community members—particularly those with the kind of deep connection to important issues—often wear many hats. There were numerous participants with a variety of kuleana for important work in the region.

Data Analysis

The responses of the participants were collected for each question and coded based on the initial list of 8 issues outlined above. Through coding, the list was expanded to include 16 additional codes shared in the small group discussions. Each code was checked and discussed by the A'A members to ensure rigor and sense-making. Pivot tables were utilized to understand the frequency of the codes to see what rose to the top of priorities.

Results

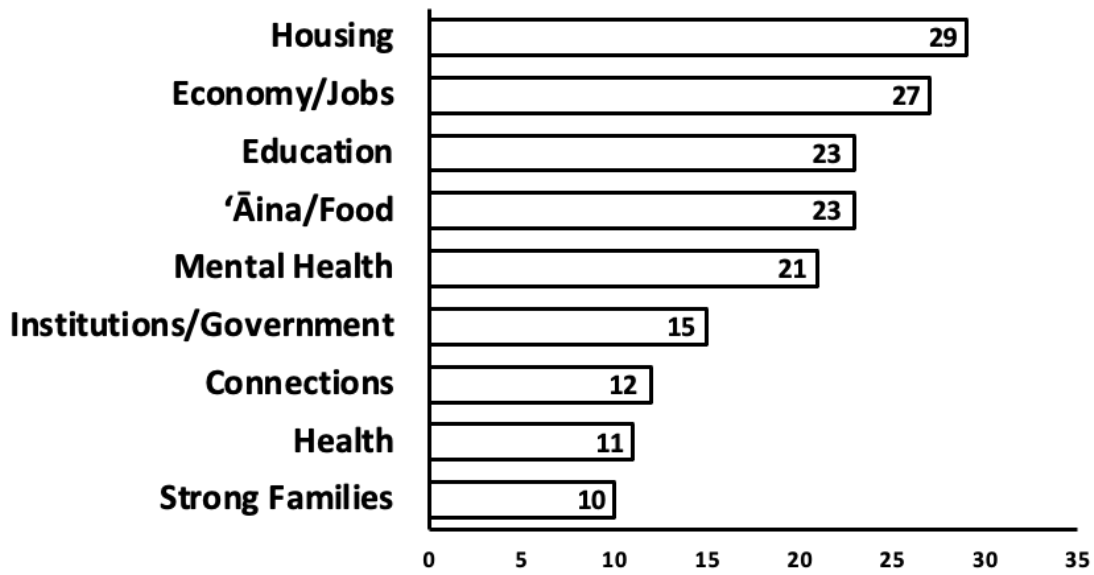
The Most Pressing Issues

When asked about the most pressing issues, most important issues, or for youth “the biggest things on your mind”, housing, homelessness and affordable housing issues arose most frequently. Next, participants mentioned the economy and jobs, education, ‘āina/food security, and mental health issues (see Figure 1 below).

When asked to rank and weight the most important issues, participants ranked the following as priorities: 1) economy, 2) housing, 3) education and 4) mental health issues. The alignment between the issues most discussed by participants and this forced ranking exercise shows that the discussion centered around important issues and also what they think deserves the greatest attention.

With regard to housing, participants mentioned issues like being worried for themselves or others to afford rent, land scarcity that makes affordability seem impossible, homelessness increasing as more people lose their jobs or become evicted, the flow of newcomers to Hawai‘i that pushes life-long residents and Native Hawaiians to the continent, and the inability of the city to meet the demand for housing. One Native Hawaiian resident said, “we need to figure something out [because] even those of us with good jobs can’t afford to buy...and [renting is] still a struggle.”

Figure 1. Most important issues for residents of Windward, O‘ahu [October 2020]



Even when there have been projects in Windward, O‘ahu to increase affordable housing or transitional housing for those with mental health issues, the projects have failed. As one participant stated, “there was a project in Hau‘ula, but it was done terribly; we need that kind of housing, but the process [and communication with the community] was so bad I didn’t want it either.” Needless to say, housing was the most common issue raised by participants, and no one expressed optimism that the problem would get any better.

The Section 8 waiting list did open up to eligible Hawai‘i residents for a short window during the time of focus groups. Participants in some groups encouraged each other to apply for the new lottery. Unfortunately, there was a data error in the awarding process and the Hawai‘i Housing Authority had to rescind awards to redo the lottery, potentially fueling the overwhelming pessimism of Hawai‘i residents toward housing issues.

The second most frequently mentioned issue was the economy and jobs. Participants talked about disappointment that the economy will probably revert back to being tourism dependent, that Windward residents are highly concentrated in government jobs (HGEA and UPW) and vulnerable to upcoming public sector furloughs, a strong desire to increase food production and its share of the overall economy, the high cost of living being beyond what current jobs pay, and that economic struggle feeds into social issues like poor mental health, unstable families, low educational attainment, and disconnected communities.

Some participants talked about the economy during COVID-19 lockdown and the increased need for their neighbors and communities to survive. One participant in Waimānalo said “let’s be careful of what we’re considering ‘normal’ because this [crisis] reminds us of the wealth of our communities...Ko‘olau is known for being ‘āina momona and so how do we include in that new definition of normal a decreased reliance on everything outside the community?”

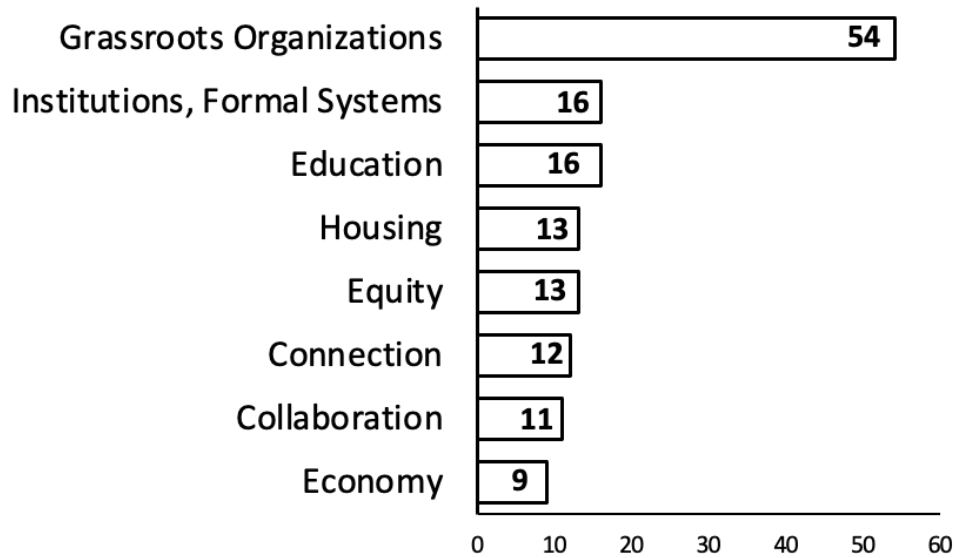
Other participants want to see better economic opportunities for Windward, O‘ahu, especially in the way of micro industry, home-based businesses, and services geared toward neighbors helping neighbors like auto repair, family child care, and growing food. One long time educator and community leader said, “Windward folks seem to be super creative and can both steward and create resources for their families through small businesses.” Unlike housing, there seems to be more efficacy and hope with regard to the economy and jobs.

The third most commonly mentioned issues are education and ‘āina or food security. The challenges and inequalities of distance education and affordable childcare came to the forefront with this crisis. One participant questioned the effects of distance learning on students, “How will this change our kids and their outlook towards school, especially those without support?” It also brought to light for many in the community the dependency on food from outside sources. Community organizations banded together to feed the most vulnerable through food boxes, grab and go lunches, and kupuna lunches. Several Windward families are invested in growing their own food but need the support and land to increase ‘ohana food production. Education and ‘āina are critical issues: the focus group participants want to see more support for distance learning and an expanded, locally-sourced food system.

Factors that help or hurt

Participants were asked whether they witnessed any person, organization, institution, or civic group successfully addressing any of the issues mentioned in the previous question. By far, participants mentioned grassroots organizations, small nongovernmental organizations, and community-focused organizations most frequently including churches, Blanche McMillion, ‘Ilima Ho, the Hau‘ula Community Association, the Kahuku Community Association, the Ko‘olauloa and Ko‘olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Clubs, Kapili like, and Lāhui Foundation. Participants also saw the community health centers, Castle Hospital, and other community health providers as being critically important, perhaps due to the dependence on health providers for flexible, reliable, and trusted information and services during the COVID-19 crisis. There was a sense of ownership, efficacy, and pride in the Windward-serving nongovernmental organizations and community groups.

Figure 2. Factors that are helping the most important issues



It is important to note that though Ko’olauloa residents felt like their community organizations have been successful in supporting residents, they believe they are “the most underserved community on the whole island.” Participants mentioned their small nonprofits receive no City and County Grants in Aid and they feel like there are too few large and medium-sized human serving institutions to help draw resources into the community. As such, they feel like their community organizations are overworked, inequitably resourced compared to other regions on O’ahu, and undervalued. One participant said, “Services that are rightfully deserved because we are taxpayers do not trickle down to us; it’s super frustrating.” Participants noted that because they lack manpower from large and medium sized nonprofits, they have no infrastructure supporting smaller nonprofits, which makes it harder to draw large grants and opportunities closer to the community. If there is an investment to be made in supporting the organizations that seem to bring the highest positive value to Windward residents, it might be in building the capacity of Ko’olauloa civic groups to draw more resources to their community.

The second most important factor helping to support residents of Windward, O’ahu are the large institutions and nonprofits like Castle Foundation, Kamehameha Schools, the YMCA, Hau’oli Mau Loa, Pacific American Foundation, and Kama’aina Kids. Participants wanted to stress that philanthropists and large nonprofits have been helping during the pandemic. The impact of larger organizations have not been helpful to the extent that grassroots organizations have been helpful, but large institutions have an overall positive standing with participants.

When it comes to factors and organizations not helpful, participants stated that the public institutions, particularly the state of Hawai’i has not been helpful. As one participant stated, “the pandemic has exposed some serious gaps in the capacity of government to respond to emergencies in a timely and flexible way, particularly to get resources out...and the bright spots have been community-based actors.” A fellow participant chimed in “the bright spots point the way forward.” Many participants did not want to spend a lot of time talking about

government's shortcomings; those failures seemed evident, universally understood as unacceptable, and a waste of energy to revisit. Participants did want to talk about the community organizations they saw as being most helpful, though one participant employed by a state agency cautioned that it is important not to let government off the hook infinitely:

There are people who need things, and I can't get them things from my [public] organization. It shouldn't be [this way], but it is. The pandemic points out the life we've been living and we've been accepting, and this life should never have been accepted. We need to find ways to make [red tape] not so any more. We can do this by working with our community organizations...

While there are both positive feelings toward formal institutions, there are also negative feelings. Supporting communities to find agency and voice with their formal institutions will be very important to the long term trajectory of the community-government relationship.

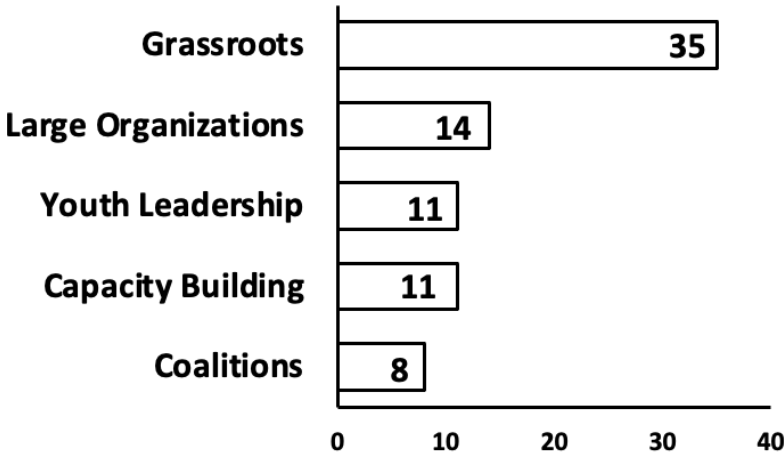
Leadership

The final question for participants was to suggest which organizations or individuals were capable and trustworthy to lead the Windward community through the difficult issues highlighted in the first question. Participants emphasized again the importance of community groups, grassroots organizations, churches, and civic groups to lead. Furthermore, participants from Ko'olauloa believe that for the most part, community groups are their only option.

Even though participants put a high value on supporting community leaders at the front, they also cautioned the significant responsibility delegated to a volunteer workforce is not sustainable. Hence, the third and fourth most mentioned issues around leadership are youth or younger leadership to succeed the long time community leaders and the need for capacity building to develop informal organizations or smaller nonprofits. A few participants called for the Castle Foundation to "help prepare the community to receive money, develop leaders, and to help grow administrative capabilities like budgeting and accounting" to strengthen community leaders.

Participants want to stress that community and grassroots organizations have taken on the brunt of work during the COVID-19 crisis. They have been distributing food, helping students with distance learning, bringing groups together to strategize, checking on their neighbors, helping kūpuna, and much more all without any formal authority or financial resources. Though there is a strong sense of pride in taking care of each other, the facilitators also sensed some resentment among participants that the community has had to fill in the gaps not taken care of by government, large institutions, and philanthropy. They are proud of themselves, but they are also bitter. If these feelings go unvalidated, unnoticed, or underappreciated, our social fabric may tear. A little bit of humility and acknowledgement of the sacrifices the community has made for each other may help to go a long way in repairing the hurt feelings between community leaders and those they believe have resources to make their work easier.

Figure 3. Recommendations from focus group participants on who can lead on the most important issues facing residents of Windward, O’ahu



The second most mentioned leaders are formal institutions, philanthropy, and large nonprofits though participants primarily want help from large organizations to move resources to their community organizations. For example, one participant said “Leaders should be community-driven with government support” and another said, “the best progress [happens] when government funds and brings resources and then different groups come together and carry out the work.” A viable path forward could be to do exactly as the participants recommend: lead by providing resources and let them do what they do best. All organizations want to be seen as The Leader, but as one faith leader noted when “everyone’s hands are inside the pot the stew is spoiled.” The strong recommendation from the community is to help them get resources, and let them lead.

To summarize the question about who can lead, there is no shortage of motivated formal and informal organizations from which the Castle Foundation can choose. The bigger challenge will be to determine how to collaborate with these organizations in ways that utilize their strengths and honor the fact that they have vision, commitment, and missions that drive them in ways that may not align with the Castle Foundation’s strategies. Assuming the Castle Foundation believes in the work of these organizations, perhaps rather than looking to other organizations to lead on any given issue the best investment might be to build their capacity to lead.

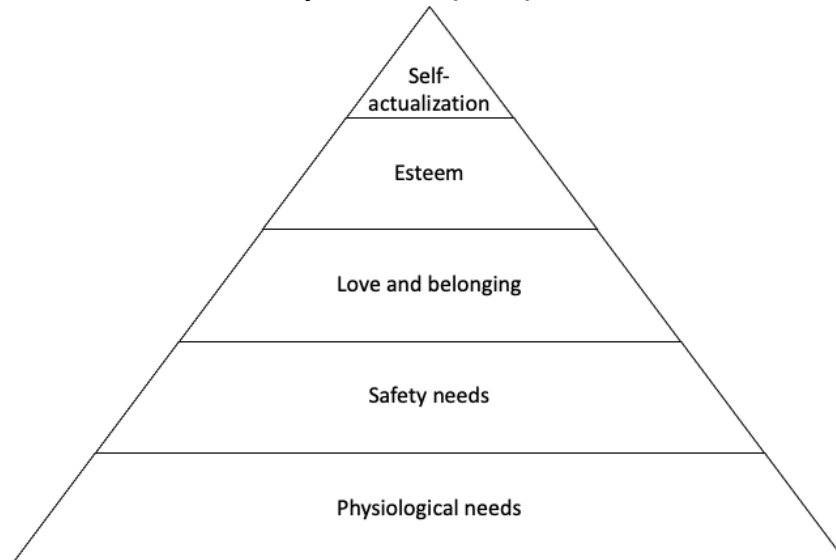
Reflections

The mana’o shared by focus group participants has left us both inspired and perplexed. How do we capture the breadth of emotions, innovations, criticisms, praise, optimism, and suffering, and what might this mean for the Castle Foundation’s work in 2021? After sitting with this mana’o for a couple of weeks, we offer the following reflections as a means of helping the Castle Foundation find a path forward with community.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

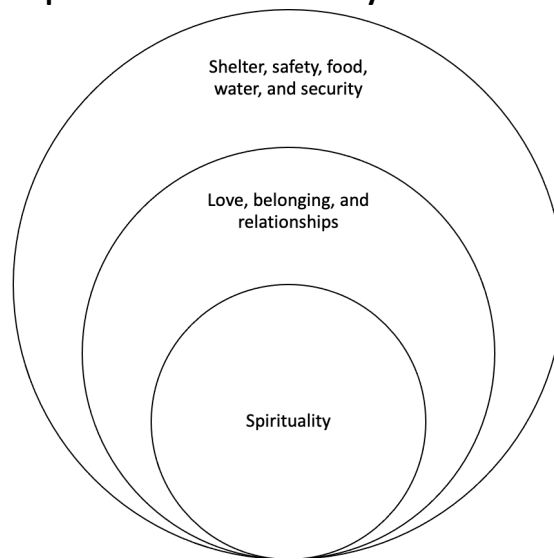
Many human serving organizations have come to understand and adopt the principles of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The hierarchy posits that physiological needs--air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, and reproduction--secure an individual's progress to safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Figure 4. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)



A closer examination of how Maslow came to this hierarchy may help us understand the disconnect between government or organizations and communities. Even though Maslow drew upon the wisdom of the Siksika Nation, he missed critical pieces that have since been reinterpreted by Terry Cross (2007) who stated, "that human needs are not uniformly hierarchical but rather highly interdependent in nature with cultural values and laws defining how balance is achieved on personal and collective levels."

Figure 5. Cross (2007) reinterprets Maslow’s hierarchy of needs through Indigenous eyes



Cross does not place Maslow’s “deficiency needs” as a precursor to all other needs, and perhaps this provides a key to understanding and working with communities. We assume that people will want to protect their own physical safety first, yet time and time again focus group participants talk about the financial--and physiological--sacrifices they make in order to “belong” or strengthen their ties with community. Focus group participants said they sacrifice food for themselves in order to provide for food for kūpuna. Neighbors are helping neighbors even when they have little to give. And everyone is trying to chip in with distance learning in what ever ways they can. We heard lots of sacrifice and themes of sticking together, and not a lot about how participants were supporting themselves.

Maslow’s hierarchy may be leading us astray: would it make more sense to blend the hierarchies of Maslow and Cross so that in the absence of community, physiological safety will be the most important need, but in community, belonging is more important than one’s own physiological needs? Or said another way, the community takes care of its members and members take care of the whole such that individual needs fall away and the only focus is on the full capabilities of the group.

It is because of the sacrifice for others, lack of physiological and safety needs in Maslow’s hierarchy among focus group participants that we focus our reflections on a blended hierarchy as a framework for reflecting on the Castle Foundation’s options for moving forward. Certainly, the Castle Foundation could choose any of the important issues mentioned by focus group participants--housing, economy/jobs, education, ‘āina/food--as areas of investment. This is indeed how organizations usually create program strategies, and it would be acceptable to continue on this path. But given the opportunity to provide an alternative, we suggest a separate blended framework, because we heard so loud and clear the call from the community to pursue work that puts belonging at the center.

Focus group participants mentioned a few of the ideas presented below. The facilitators from ‘A‘ali‘i Alliance have also added a few options not mentioned in focus groups but sure to be supported by participants. We also want to stress that if the Castle Foundation sees itself as a part of the Windward community, these are ideas intended to foster a sense of belonging between the Foundation and residents. If the blended framework holds true, a kuleana that fosters belonging should create pathways for the Foundation and the community to work toward progress in housing, the economy, education, and ‘āina. In other words, our suggestions are both an end--for the Foundation to belong and the community to feel more strongly that the Foundation belongs--and a means to an end--to help support finding solutions to the community’s most pressing issues.

[Add Community-Based Board Members to the Castle Foundation](#)

Consider expanding board membership to include seats that represent community associations, especially Waimānalo, Hau‘ula, and Kahuku to stay close to the issues of Windward residents. This may be infeasible, but it is worth suggesting. The community has significant insight in the work the Castle Foundation would like to pursue. The Foundation may consider leveraging this insight and allowing board membership to be a way to grow the capacity of community leaders. Finally, we do not recommend creating a second tier of board membership for the community: this will give the impression that you want them there, but not recognize them in a way that is equitable to other board members.

A focus group participant also suggested adding a young person (age 16-24) or young persons from community groups onto the Board. More and more, civic groups, neighborhood boards, and nonprofit organizations across the United States are recognizing the need to put youth voice at the center of their leadership as the current world moves rapidly away from what adults know and understand. The Castle Foundation would need to invest in the skills of any youth members, but we also guess that the Foundation would gain valuable 21st century generation insights—including someone to run your social media accounts and engage other youth—that would make such an addition worth any costs.

[A Community “Train the Trainer” Approach](#)

Invest directly in a community building position at the Castle Foundation or housed in an appropriate organization. The primary kuleana of a person in this position would be to increase the technical capabilities of community organizations and civic groups through training, technical support, and networking so that the overall capacity of the Windward community grows. Participants said they wanted help drawing state and federal funds into the community. One Ko‘olaupoko resident called it “a big kickstart” as opposed to smaller grants over long periods of time which is sustainable for funders, but never achieves the full potential of its purpose. If the community could get this big kickstart, they believe they will use the funds wisely to take care of the needs of their members.

Create a Community Fund for Professional Advisers

Participants said they lacked access to affordable attorneys, accountants and bookkeepers, financial advisors, strategic financial planning, property managers, data scientists, evaluators, and insurance agents to help grow the professionalism of their organizations and qualify them to receive larger grants. They want a chance to match the level of professionalism of large nonprofits but deploy community-specific interventions which they see as something large statewide nonprofits as incapable of delivering.

Encourage and Fund Succession Planning

Many participants wanted youth or younger members of the community to play a more central role in deploying community solutions. They also acknowledged the challenges young people face providing for their families. With help to transition kuleana and create more professional opportunities in community-based work, they could accomplish both. If the Castle Foundation could fund both out-going and in-coming leaders for a period of time--one or two years--in order to transfer knowledge, relationships and networks, and for incoming leaders to gain experience. Even without funding, the Castle Foundation's board members and staff have deep expertise running organizations, and supporting other organizations to transition to new leadership could help community sustainability in the long run.

Growing Community-Owned Resources

The current relationship between philanthropy and community is parallel to owner and employee, creditor and debtor, giver and recipient, and most uncomfortably, have and have not. Perhaps the best investment Castle Foundation could make in the community is to provide technical assistance for communities to learn how to grow their own resources through financial investments, property management, social enterprise, or other means. The Board and staff could do this themselves, or partner with other organizations to mentor communities to grow the technical skills needed to acquire and manage an endowment. Communities and small nonprofits focus so intensely on making it to the next grant. Stuck in this cycle of adapting to and meeting requirements, they lose line of sight to their mission and strategies, and we as a society lose our chance to make progress toward building what we say means so much to us: community-driven lifelong learning, access to health care, a place for everyone to call home, and social and emotional support from caring neighbors. Focus group participants did not ask for help to grow their own endowments, but the facilitators of this project strongly believe if they knew it was an option, they would want this type of help.

One final note on these reflections: thinking that greater investment today "steals from the future" assumes that your services will be needed in the future, or that what's needed from the Castle Foundation in the future will be the same as today. This has become a fairly common norm among philanthropists and investors. But if the future never comes--which is a reality for many vulnerable youth we spoke to in these focus groups--why are we saving money for a future that our vulnerable children will never see? If we could end a problem today, why would we wait a minute longer so that we could stretch it out to the future? If we fail to reverse the most challenging issues of today, we will guarantee inequity for future generations not because

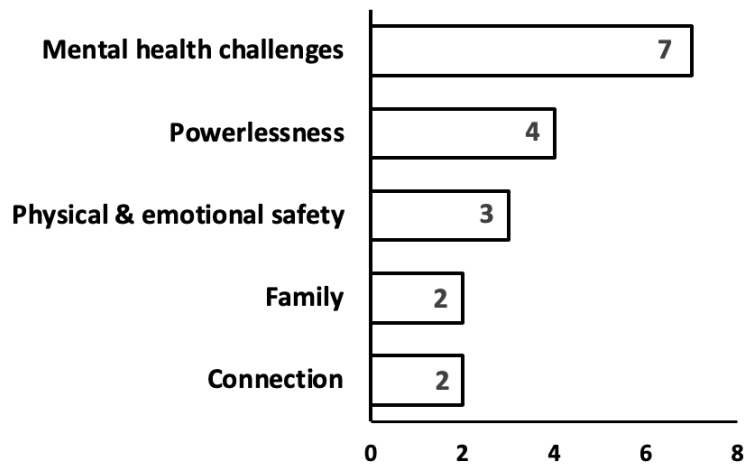
we spent too much this year, but because we didn't do enough to counteract the exponential growth of our most pressing challenges. Counteracting our challenges will require significant investment because social challenges grow exponentially. If we fail today, surely we will also not have enough resources for tomorrow as the solutions to our problems become increasingly intertwined and complex. And we need no more proof of what we are up against than to look at the additional challenges COVID-19 has created for us in less than a year. We leave that for your reflection as community change agents hoping to get this work done sooner rather than later.

Deeper Dive - Youth Mana‘o

We provide a summary of findings from young people below, because they had such rich and divergent feedback from adult participants. Youth participants ranged in age from middle school to young adulthood (12 to 24). We recruited them through the staff at Hawai‘i Youth Correctional Facility, RYSE, Hakipu‘u Charter School, and Windward Community College.

The youth participants did not focus on the economy or larger social issues, but rather used their own understanding of what goes on around them to frame up the issues important to them. They focused on the mental health challenges they face: drugs, developmental challenges, stress, bullying, and fear of their physical safety. They talked about their life on the streets, being sex trafficked, watching younger children become hooked on drugs, and watching their classmates take out their anxieties from stress at home on their peers. One middle school youth said “kids bully because something is going on at home [and] if those kids had a place they could talk about or not be ashamed of it, it would help a lot of people.” Echoing this sentiment, an incarcerated youth said “younger generations [are] using drugs, young young, young bucks” potentially for similar reasons and with little interventions other than to be arrested. Mental health issues are significant concerns for youth participants, and they are crying out for help. They are looking for adults to care about them in meaningful ways.

Figure 6. Most important issues for youth participants



The second most important issue for youth was a sense of powerlessness and being caught up in a system that does not help them. One youth said “I’ve experienced [sex trafficking] first hand...Everyone knows about it but will never do anything about it [and] the girls have to get out of it by themselves.” Other youth talked about their encounters with law enforcement: “Cops get too violent for no reason..[we want them to] understand where we coming from. We tell them we getting our [money to pay] our bills and they no listen to us and [tell us] we all bulls--- and that’s why we turn to the streets.” Another youth said “I wish I had someone to talk to, someone who cared, and isn’t just there to get a paycheck.” We fall short in supporting

these youth, which leads to their suffering. Because they have little standing as members of the community, they are often unable to extricate themselves from danger.

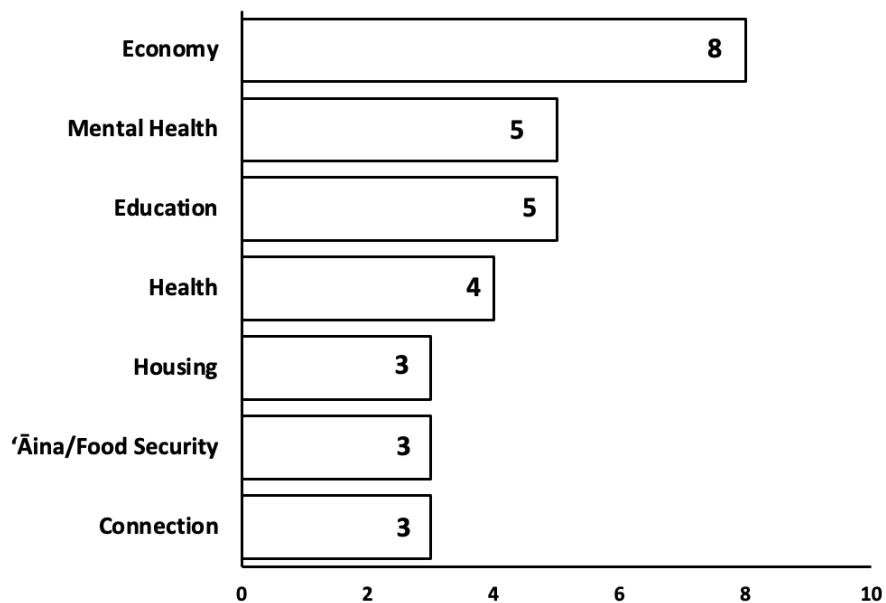
The youth did not offer much in the way of praise for our educational system or social services programming. One youth said, "It's the program [that sets me up to fail]; to stand at salute and I'm "downing." The system does dumb sh-- sometimes." Another youth said, "I [was] sent to Bobby Benson 5 times, I graduate 3 times but *boom* I still stay [here], never work." Finally, many agreed with this youth who said "school not working; I hate school. I never did like school, the comprehending part. People used to laugh at me. I used to get mad. I hate it." The links between their mental health, social, cognitive, and developmental challenges and successful participation in school and programs is stark. At least from the perspective of these youth, rethinking the way we approach youth development, learning, and education is essential to their success.

Our mahalo to Mark Patterson, Malvea Hardy, Carla Houser, Kathryn Boyer, Michael Nakasato, and Sarah Akina for helping us amplify the voices of our youth.

Deeper Dive - Employers, Business Community, and Organizational Leaders

Disaggregation of the employer and business group yielded an important distinction from participants as a whole. For the most part, the employer group conversation stayed at the macro level. They talked about jobs and the economy, the public health needs both for COVID and mental health, and the macro challenges posed by distance learning. We believe their perspectives are important, because how they conceive of the issues faced by community members drives their behavior as leaders of organizations.

Figure 7. Most important issues for employer participants



First, many talked about jobs and the economy: “All these [other] issues, they’re all intertwined--food security, loss of housing--all of these stem from employment.” They wondered how upcoming furloughs with HGEA and UPW workers would affect the Windward side: “We have a high percent of government or union workers...there are already lots of people suffering [and] the government workforce with furloughs and any cuts to wages will decrease economic security.” Participants echoed the sentiment that they do not see things getting better: “[the most important issue is a] worsening economic environment and job loss, which I think will continue into 2021.” A final note on the economy is the fact that the participants did not talk much about what direction the economy in Hawai’i should be heading. Some believe “everything will not go back to normal” and we need “less dependence on tourism to attract youth to stay in the community,” but not many mentioned participation on task forces to help support economic development. Perhaps engaging with Windward employers on how to create greater economic opportunity for the community is a productive starting place. It could also be that employers failed to mention their work in economic recovery during our session.

Employers are also seeing the mental health challenges of Windward residents as a major issue. Some of them worried about kūpuna and multigenerational households: “We have to consider the mental health issues of tight living quarters [because of multigenerational households in our community]. There hasn’t been much in mental health resources [during COVID-19], and it’s starting to show itself in people killing each other...I would add mental health is a bit of a concern, including access to mental health services.” They also mentioned the importance of substance abuse and adolescent mental health as important issues facing the community.

One final note for employers is the nuance with which they talked about the question on what is working and not working. Some participants praised the Castle Foundation, other funders, and fiscal sponsors like Hawai’i Community Foundation for supporting them: “Castle Foundation has been very helpful” when that organization needed pandemic-related support in March. They also like having larger intermediaries: “Government has found that getting [funds] to HCF...[or] organizations who are very seasoned has been the best way to go” and “Philanthropic organizations and intermediaries like HCF who have stepped into this gap where we need mature, seasoned organizations to receive funding because the procurement process is so difficult.” Employer participants see and acknowledge the good work being done by private and public actors, and yet they still acknowledge the important role of community: “We’ve seen [COVID-19] unfold for the last 6 to 7 months and the bright spots have been community based actors.”

Appendix A. List of “Who can Lead?”

The following list is a comprehensive listing of organizations and individuals who can lead through the pandemic. An asterisk indicates organizations included in our “grassroots” list

Hina Mauka	HANO	Youth!
Job Corps in Waimānalo	Aunty Tessie and Aunty Dotty*	Ko’olaupoko Hawaiian Civic Club*
‘Āina leaders and farmers*	Ke Ola Mamo*	Adventist Health*
Castle Foundation	KEY Project*	Sustain Hawai’i
My Kailua*	Lāhui Foundation*	Aunty ‘Ilima*
Aunty Blanche*	Ke Kula Nui o Waimānalo*	Kama Hawai’i*
Waimānalo Canoe Club*	the Halau Hula*	Becky Soon
Jeff Gilbreath and HCA*	Kapili Like*	Scotty Wong*
Junior Coleman*	Kina Sai	Mary Oneha*
Waimānalo Community Health Center*	Hawai’i Executive Collaborative	Hawai’i Chamber of Commerce
Hawai’i Community Foundation	Pacific American Foundation*	the Community Health Centers*
Boys and Girls Club*	YMCA*	Kama’āina Kids
Aloha Harvest Food Bank	Catholic Charities	AUW
Helping Hands	Hale Kealoha	Ho’okua’āina*
Windward Legislators	Compassionate Ko’olau*	Hau’ula Community Association*
Kahuku Community Association*	Windward Community College*	Churches*
KAA*	Hui o Hau’ula*	Hau’olu Mau Loa
Hawai’i Health and Harm Reduction Center	IHS/Kalihi Pālama homeless outreach teams*	Daybreak Church*
Bobby Benson*		

Appendix B. Focus Group Participant Quotes

Ko'olauloa

What are the most pressing issues?

- “Dottie has been great at directing everyone’s energy, helping us organize, and creating pathways to opportunities for our community.”
- “My biggest issue is creating resiliency for our community to be prepared for natural disasters, to lack certain kinds of services, and not be accessible because of the roads [being damaged by acts of nature].”
- “Hui O Hau’ula has been taking the brunt of heavy lifting for this side of the island. The church has a presence, but there are a lot of people who aren’t LDS. It’s unfair to be relying heavily on [the LDS Church] too when some of the support should be fundamental services, yet we inherit things like a wind farm that we don’t benefit from. People have to be resilient but take on more work too just to keep the lights on and keep the kids fed.”
- “Past Kahalu’u accessibility and availability is very poor.”
- “If you look at the GIA’s, there’s not one small nonprofit [from Ko’olauloa] funded by GIA’s. They don’t reach into Ko’olauloa. HCAP is the first one to reach out to Ko’olauloa because we were able in 2016 to start a nonprofit and work with the city to contract with them to manage Hau’ula Community Center. The space has been so valuable in bringing services and creating services.”
- “People with disabilities don’t have services in Ko’olauloa.”
- “There are people who can provide [more services] in Ko’olauloa, and they just need the space to do it.”
- “Hurricanes and climate change will destroy 85% of homes. The city says we’re on our own for 30 days or more. We’ll be like Puerto Rico. Douglas almost served us.”
- “We need help with power, water, and food because of our vulnerability.”
- “We have multi-generational issues and isolation, even living with other people, people feel very lonely. That’s what I’m hearing from youth and seniors.”

What is helping? What is not helping?

- “Community members--leaders who make things happen is what works.”
- “What isn’t working is the state. If we get services, it’s because of Hui O Hau’ula or Kahuku Community Association; they hustle. The state doesn’t make much of an effort. Services that are rightfully deserved because we are taxpayers do not trickle down to us; it’s super frustrating.”
- “I wonder if there’s any community that has to go and get it for themselves. The state just leaves us to our own demise until someone goes and burns their doors down.”
- “If it wasn’t for community leaders to lift up the community and let them know that they can have these things too, they wouldn’t know. The state is not present.”
- “As a grant writer, I don’t know what grants are available.”
- “We’re so small. Kahuku is so small....There are a lot of natural resource grants, but we’re not a coastal community, so maybe that’s for North Shore Land Trust, but not for us.”
- “Networking is super important.”

- “We’re trying to put together an advisory council to help us achieve one of our goals which is collaboration. In collaborating, perhaps we can seek grants in the millions to help all of us get our tasks done.”
- “Give us the money and let us do what we’re good at, which is serve our community.”
- “It’s a handful of people like Aunty Tessie and Aunty Dottie doing it themselves.”
- “We’re not asking for handouts. We need some kind of infrastructure, it’s so lacking for us. Maybe that’s why we’re rough around the edges, because we always gotta beef for what we need.”

Who can lead?

- “We all need to work together and lead together.”
- “We shouldn’t be trying to outdo each other.”
- “There are so many incredible seniors who donate their time, but younger people are in their jobs and working as hard as they possibly can to keep food and shelter. I support them, but seniors are going to pass on and a new set of leadership needs to come in. We should all work to do these things.”
- “We need to bring youth along.:
- “When you have a strong NGO that understands the needs of the community and the government is ready and prepared, that’s when things become strong.”
- “[Philanthropy is] trying to find [a] path in[to the community], rather than asking the community what they have and read our plans. ‘We hear you have this; let’s work together’ [is what we prefer].”
- “There’s a generational gap there. When I’m looking for volunteers, I try to tell them that the older people need help. We need to find a way to make this into jobs for younger people, we have to turn it into a sustainable thing for them to do this in their community as a career. Not everyone can volunteer. That’s part of the problem. Make it sustainable so we can provide jobs in our community.”
- “It’s embarrassing for kūpuna to be passing out food to mākuā sitting in their cars, but I get why it’s happening. There’s something not right about that.”

Ko’olaupoko

What are the most pressing issues?

- “Reintegration back into schools and community; in-person programming. Ko’olaupoko runs really hard, and community organizations are a big piece of the heart of this moku, and being able to make sure we’re reintegrating families back into programs in the safest way possible and supporting them will be very important.”
- “Getting back to normal will be a challenge, or to go back to work for those who lost jobs. Or getting our kids back to what we thought was normal. Getting everyone back on their feet.”
- “Our kids transitioned to a new baseline [with distance learning]...The pandemic is a struggle for mākuā and kids and work needs...Distance learning is real in their life. My son is going to transition in 2 days back to school, and I’ve had to talk to him about the importance of wearing his mask [and the dangers of coronavirus]. It’s a big deal.”
- “If we can create structures that can protect people we can have some semblance of normal. If we wear masks can the kids play together again? What adjustments can we

make and not totally shut down and have some medium space where it's a little easier to have emotional connection. We've been separated for so long. It's been so hard because our culture is so together and close."

- "We need to be careful of what we consider 'normal' because this [pandemic] reminds us of the wealth of our communities, what we have right next door."
- "Our communities are showing up for one another."
- "We will kāko'o our own."
- "Be careful not to forget the major strides we took during COVID in strengthening communities and making sure to include that in our definition of new normal."
- "Ko'olau is known as 'āina momona, and so how do we include in that new definition of normal a decreased reliance on everything outside the community?"
- "We should grow food, educators, community services, and money."
- "We have what we need. We need to look toward ourselves to realize it. If we keep that mindset moving forward that would be great in our new normal."
- "If we could create or identify areas to build to create economic development, businesses that serve our community, services, and products that everyone needs, we can really help people become more entrepreneurial. It's one thing to grow for your family or neighbors; how do we create co-ops?"
- "One of the things that's hard to see is the impact of drugs. For me the people experiencing homelessness are still being touched by meth and we need to address that in a way that's culturally grounded. The kinds of treatment offered don't connect with people that well."
- "Support for trauma. Trauma was already high in Hawai'i, especially at this time. Domestic violence. Children who are afraid. How do we continue to provide those supports?"

What is helping? What is hurting?

- "The Kama 'Ohana is trying to fill those gaps in childcare."
- "Aunty Blanche's kauhale for homeless."
- "Hui Mahi'ai Community garden with Aunty Blanche...Limu Hui and Pā Honu."
- "Waimānalo Health Center and the other health centers have been great."
- "Faith Communities have been great. We tend to partner with them a lot to deliver services and to integrate different services together."
- "Partner with a church in Kahalu'u to shelter women. That's a good resource. Family Promise. They have kind of changed their model for COVID. They leased out different places instead of housing people in their churches."

Who can lead?

- "Waimānalo Health Center and Mary Oneha, they could be a community hub for multiple services and resources."
- "Sustain Hawai'i has COVID and contract tracing"
- "The leaders in our communities"
- "I'm not sure who I trust. I'll follow certain families, but the information is not trustworthy."
- "We have to look to ourselves because no one knows how to keep us safe."
- "Don't look to new organizations or programs--look to the existing programs."
- "We can learn from other people [on the continent] but it has to fit with our community."

- Aunty Ilima and food distribution
- 'Āina Organizations
- Aunty Blanche
- "Leaders are here doing it. Leaders know how to use resources they have, learn from kupuna who did it before"
- "Next generation can shadow, be a part of the community, know their kuleana and place in the community, What are my gifts to this place? Why are you here?, What can I bring?, It's in our DNA"
- "Nalo organizations can lead because they already lead"
- "Funders like Castle Foundation can be less prescriptive on grants and let community do what they need to do it, empower the community"
- "Empower community to help with houseless outreach (IHS has 2 staff for Windward side with assisted 185 homeless individuals from Jan 1-today)"
- "Leadership needs to be acknowledged on all levels [and supported] from micro to macro. It's not one person."
- "All levels need to be more connected. Work in unison."
- "The legislature needs to help lead the connections. They fund, but they also need to help organize. They also need to decrease bureaucracy."

Youth

Youth were not able to get to all 3 questions in the same format, and some groups were unable to answer the questions with great detail.

What are the most pressing issues?

- "Even though we're kids we know a lot about things adults don't know anything about. It's real. You don't believe us."
- "Too many people getting affected by [sex trafficking] so they won't do nothing about it. When you're out and about, if you have a toddler, keep your kid close to you. I used to be the kid that ran away from my grandma in the store. The youngest boy I've seen was 9 years old. We were in there about 2 months. I can't remember where I got picked up...[They] take girls and boys up and down [the stairs] and do what they need to do and leave. Some girls or boys didn't come back down. I jumped out of a car. I ran and ended up [at the edge] of [a town]. A lot of people are disappearing."
- "Housing. Windward side is either Hawaiian Homes--Waimanalo, Hau'ula--or too many people live in apartments. With the rent freeze, people won't be able to afford rent."
- "COVID is the pressing issue. We don't know what's going to happen. In December our funds run out for unemployment. Where are we going to get help for living, housing, eating?"
- "I live in Kailua. We have a lot of non-locals. A lot of people coming and living in Kailua, foreigners too, and we can't afford to live here. We do have to go to Wai'anae and Waimānalo, places that we're going to be able to afford...that's what I'm looking at, being a local in my home."
- "[COVID] is going to cause a lot of problems with anxiety and depression. With our kupuna and their preexisting condition, we don't know where Obama care is going to go. This is taking such a toll on health."

- “Where are the kids going to go? I have real concerns about my children’s education. I’m an essential worker so I have to work. But my kids are at home. I see my daughter not where she should be. I’m not there to be with her either. I’m concerned for the future of children--how does this affect their education? Are they going to fail? That’s a big concern for me.”
- “I’m afraid of rent going up. We’re looking for our own house, but already, the prices are going up. Even in Wai’anae we couldn’t find an affordable house. There are lots of homeless. People are losing jobs and losing their house and now they’re homeless. We see this in Waimānalo. It’s scary.”
- “I think that with all the borderline-extreme climate change going on, the Windward side of the island could be focusing on hurricane preparation since Hawaii hasn’t been hit with a hurricane for a long time. Also, rising sea levels is a problem for all islands, and it’s not necessarily a problem for next year, but some preparation for that could go a long way.”
- “What’s going to happen to our school... I love WCC. I’m a full time student, I work on campus, and my babies go to daycare there.”
- “I came from prison, I’m starting my life again. [COVID] could be a barrier for me to grow.”
- “The cops. Cops getting too violent for no reason.”
- “Poor people getting more poor and rich people getting more rich.”
- “Our president, he doesn’t respect LGBTQ and we are threatened with violence and institutional violence against us; I am not safe.”
- “drugs”
- “Bullying affects kids mentally which is never a good thing. You want a kid to be confident or proud, but when they go where someone’s tearing them down telling them they can’t do it”

What is helping? What is not helping?

- “Section 8 is opening tomorrow. Applications are opening tomorrow morning. It’s a lottery. It’s being opened for the first time in a long time.”
- “ASUH – they get consulted on cases like this, they bring it to the larger system. If you need help. If you want to check them out and ask them what’s going on.”
- “WCC has been helping. They’ve been giving out food. We’ve been working with Lunalilo getting kupuna food.”
- “Food drives help.”
- “The United Way helps”
- “Trio and HINET”
- “Kamaaina Kids is trying to help with childcare.”
- “I’ve been fortunate enough to stay with my aunt and uncle in ‘Ewa when the Job Corps dorms in Waimanalo closed earlier this year, otherwise, I’d be on the streets.”
- “I hear a lot of help is available from Trio and HINET, I just got an email from them”
- “In terms of help on the federal level, stronger leadership that calls for unity and science-lead responses for the pandemic responses could go a really long way. Yeah, the federal level needs to be more consistent and united.”
- “We have to hit people up in leadership, political leadership, because they have to hear our story more.”

- “Venting, we gotta talk about this. How we’re doing right now. We said it causes depression. You gotta find an outlet.”
- “Community is trying to help, trying to keep small businesses afloat. Buying local. Things like that. Community support. That is helping.”
- The government is not working. They’re holding onto all the resources and we’re drying up. There’s not really a long term plan. Let’s plan for the next few weeks. Even with kids school, kids can’t just learn online. It’s not working, it’s not fair to the kids. We need a long term plan. If COVID is here for the next 6 months, let’s fix it. The uncertainty is driving the mental [health] problems.”
- “Those who don’t qualify for unemployment because they’re first responders, they’re supporting themselves and they’re not getting any benefits. They’re not getting the Restaurant Cards. There’s the cards to help farmers, but only those with unemployment benefits qualify. Workers [on the front lines are] still feeling the burden plus COVID [is a threat to their health].”
- “Getting locked up [is not helping], not for even major kine [reasons I’m locked up]. Violation of probation. You should go to rehab, not jail. You need rehab, not jail.”
- “There are so many people who have come through [HYCF] successfully and left.”
- “There are some good reasons why we’re here. We’re gonna run. That’s why. There have been so many places that haven’t worked [for us] in the past...we keep burning the bridge and it leaves [the system] no option. Maybe not for a year or two years [should we be locked up].”
- “I haven’t lasted [at all the programs]: Bobby Benson, Hale Kipa, Interim home Big Island. Kona. Youth Challenge.”
- “It’s not the programs, it’s the drugs.”
- “Oh no, it’s the program.”
- “What we like is right here [in this focus group where] we can talk about what is important. I don’t want to make paper airplanes.”
- “This COVID s---- is irritating. You can’t be in person and read body language. We have to do these on the phone. But when you bring us snacks we listen more.”
- “I like be with my family. I like be with my dad at home. But if I was still smoking home would be a stop by shower, leave, go with my friends, smoke.”
- “Making everyone stay home; quarantine helping. Less people on the streets roaming, less the cops f----- with you. Young ones stay home they not going to be plugged into drugs.”
- “Give poor people food that is not working. People take ‘um for granted. They just think they no see nothing out of it. I should get my life started, but instead they think they can depend on these people. Become dependent.”
- “Stimulus checks [are] too little. At the same time you get ‘um but it’s only for the people that work and they get laid off. The people struggling already? They couldn’t work and they aren’t getting any [stimulus checks]. They getting homeless.”
- “JobCorps works, they give me a job and I can go to community college if I want. I can work in the same industry but I don’t have to.”
- “Having someone to talk to helps.”
- “Having a place like RYSE to sleep at, even though it’s only a little better, at least the roof doesn’t leak like the old school bus I was sleeping in.”

- “A counselor...They help them talk about their emotions, bring out what’s inside so it’s not stuck deep down inside. So they don’t feel like they’re nothing. They feel like that, life gets hard. That emotional help support would be best for kids.”

Revised Question: What could help you? What would you like?

- “A program that takes us to the beach.”
- “All the programs are meant to be one size fits all. What about the people who don’t sheep together? What about the people who need programs catered to us? Individualized programs.”
- “Their idea of that is a therapist...art therapy was therapeutic for some of the girls. I absolutely hate that. Why am I required to go there? I like to talk a lot. There was only one or two therapists I would click with. I know I need something else that isn’t what I’m getting now.”
- “If they stop locking us up like caged animals. Let’s climb out there. There’s worse people than us, killing, raping people. We’re not the worst of the worst.”
- “We need good cops. There’s no cops that’s good. There’s all bad cops. CRUs. F--- the CRU. They do the most lick us. Drop us off far away from our [homes]. They f----- mobbing us inside the car. We’re not even of age. Catch cracks. Most of us locked up we’ve been cracked dirty lickins making us more mad and more rebellious.”

Employers

What are the most pressing issues?

- “Families are accumulating a big sum of debt.”
- “COVID and unemployment will last 9 months or more”
- “Federal assistance is unpredictable and will not last as long as Hawai‘i’s economic downturn”
- “Economic rebound is rooted in leadership”
- “There should be better use of space for our people. We see different demands for space: less office space, and we need more places for people to be”
- “Housing and people not being able to pay for rent”
- “Distance learning, access to high speed internet, laptops, these gaps are based on economic status [and there will be] better outcomes for kids with access and resources”
- “The associated social issues that go with people having economic strife.”
- “Distance learning - how will this change our kids and their outlook toward school, especially those without support?”
- “Rental assistance and homelessness is bound to get worse.”
- “Food sustainability - how long can we sustain food giveaways?”
- “We can’t do cultural gatherings and it affects our social and emotional wellbeing.”
- “Virtual learning--I feel sorry for the teachers!”
- “Childcare seats are decreasing so even when parents go back to work, where are their kids going?”
- “We live in multigenerational households because we need caregivers”
- “Community tension and NIMBY issues”
- “Development from outside the community”
- “A surge of COVID will bring much more mental health concerns”

- “Houselessness especially when federal funding runs out.”

What is helping? What is not helping?

- “What is helping is our community has been so supportive of one another, businesses, schools, neighbors, individuals and families. The culture of this community is to stick together and help”
- “Communication process: we need accurate information on what’s good or not good [COVID-safe practices]”
- “Boys and Girls Club provides support to children and their parents”
- “Kids of essential workers need support, help with anxiety”
- “Waimānalo grandparents are having to teach distance learning which is hard”
- “Parents have had to leave work due to lack of childcare and there is an increase in women-owned businesses closed during COVID”
- “The community is resilient. It bands together, is tight knit. They rely on each other, not just state or federal funds.”
- “There are a lot of different players now. The people I thought would be the ones helping are not helping.”
- “Lots of churches are ministering outside of their congregations.”
- “Students who need after school activities the most are the ones who can least afford them.”
- “Students need at least 30% of my time as an educator to just help them with their emotional and social challenges. Forget academics, we can’t get to academics if I don’t let them spend time on the things that are hurting them the most.”
- “Need more community learning centers.”
- “Residential treatment homes stopped drug testing since COVID so a lot of guys starting using again once there was no accountability. They get kicked out and now the homes are short on rent.”
- “State government has failed miserably in processing unemployment. The process is way too cumbersome to navigate.”
- “When prisoners were let out it increased the immediate housing crisis and destabilized programs that were serving more stable client”
- “There is a lot of help out there but its very hard to find and navigate. There are too many hoops to jump through, so many barriers to secure rental assistance. Some clients don’t have the right paperwork, or lack access to a computer. It is taking 1-2 months to get someone help. I see clients 2-3 times a week and usually spent 4-5 hours per client”

Who can lead?

- *silence* “The long silence is why we have a problem. My first reaction is to think through the local and community leaders that persist on the Windward side. They are very effective at moving blocks of people around.
- “We have to realize that no one is coming to save us. We need to agree that this is the perspective. We need to save ourselves.”
- “It’s easy to point out capacity issues with government...we should look at the responsibility we have to rally around and support each other...looking toward those organizations in the community that have the connection to people on the front lines,

reinforcing them, and giving them some recognition that usually only the big organizations get.”

- “Direct head-to-head competitors are saying how we solve for this, putting aside differences, this is larger than any of the smaller [disagreements] we’ve had brewing.”
- “Our small organizations are not built to move millions of dollars...but look how important they’ve been in this pandemic! We need to strengthen them to do this type of work, some of the work needs to be building internal capacity so they need that overhead money especially given the large demands put on them.”
- “[Small nonprofits] are not sophisticated enough to have an accounting system in place that meets the federal spec. That’s not the capability of a mom and pop two person nonprofit. There is a case to be made for midsized ‘containers’ in the community to scale up a little bit because all the puzzle pieces are shifting a little now. Small nonprofits aren’t going to be able to do anything with all this federal money to spend in short amounts of time. So we need larger organizations to interface with them.”
- “If the [federal] funds don’t get replenished, all these businesses and orgs will still need help next year. Foundations will need to help transition and bridge as we seek more help from the federal government.”
- “We need to open up tourism. We can’t wait to diversify the economy. Changing the workforce takes long term.” *this was not a widely-shared sentiment*
- “[We should look at] re-employment based on ‘āina and stewardship of land”
- “Farming is a viable economy”
- “Castle Foundation’s role could be the catalyst to convene groups to work together or after the federal grants dry up.”
- “We need to build community capacity to access money.”
- “Leaders should be community-driven with some government support”
- “Private communities have stepped up the most, philanthropy too”
- “The best progress is when government funds and brings resources, and different groups come together and carry out the work”
- “It’s hard to think of who can lead”
- “We need more ways to facilitate and bring together the community to work together to address issues.”

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