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Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: Systemic Racial Challenges

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[Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: Systemic Racial Challenges \(georgetown.edu\)
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The G20 Interfaith Forum Anti-Racism Initiative, Fondazione per le scienze religiose(FSCIRE), the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation (IAMC) have hosted, issued, or sponsored the original content in English but have not reviewed or approved this documentation, interpretation, or translation.

Contents

Overview	4
Panel	4
Webinar Summary --- JoAnne Wadsworth, Communications Consultant, G20 Interfaith Forum	5
Notable Messages	8
Introduction	11
The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) --- Krystal Ka'ai.....	12
Acknowledged Entrenched Disparities in Federal Laws, Policies and Institutions to Have Long Denied Equal Opportunity	12
Issued Presidential Memorandum on Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in US	12
NHPI Diversity Has Long Been Masked and Aggregated with the Data of the Asian American Population	13
Compacts of Free Association communities Other Than Hawaiians Has Still Language Access Barriers.....	14

How Racism and Colonial Mindsets Affect NHPI Populations Today, Particularly in Regard to Climate Change --- Upolu Luma Vaai	15
Some Principles of Traditional Slavery Are Still Embedded in Development Models Today, Including Climate Strategies	15
It Is Racial Strategy to Eliminate People and Communities Whose Life Depends on Spirituality of Their Lands and Oceans	15
Need to Consider Indigenous Models and Climate Adaptation Strategies Developed and Tested throughout Many Centuries that Still Work Today	16
Need to Acknowledge Ecological Sin, Climate Sin and Sin of Extractive Economies that Cause Displacement and Statelessness of Climate Refugees.....	17
And, Sin of Nuclear Testing	17
The Washington DC Bureau for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) --- Keone Nakoa	18
Native Hawaiians are the Aboriginal Indigenous, Settled and Founded kingdom of Hawaii as Early as 300 AD with Highly Organized Social System and Sophisticated Language and Culture	18
Kingdom Overthrown by American and European Sugar Planters and Missionary Descendants with the help of Armed US in 19c	19
US Assimilation Policy Banned Native Hawaiian Language in Schools and Legislative Proceedings.....	19
1970s, Musicians, Artists, Historians and Aspiring Politicians Led Movement to Establish the Office of Hawaiian Affairs(OHA)	20
Samoan Studies at American Samoa Community College (ASCC) --- Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila ..	21
Racism Is Institutionalised and Rooted in Life of American Samoa	21
Without Own History, You Don't Know Where You're Coming from	22
Partnership with US whereby We Are Americans, Also Samoans	22
Samoans Are an Integral Part of Environment, Not Above	23
View from Hawaiian Indigenous Education and Epistemology for Worldwide Awakening --- Manulani Meyer.....	24
Though Epistemicide Is a Worldwide Phenomenon Due to Power Ignorance and Racism, Our Native Knowledge System Has Been Recovering	24
Serve Land, Love People.....	25
Conundrums Make Life Worthwhile Calling Forward People Versed in Ancient Well-Being Systems; They Already Know Climate Change.....	25
Equity, Reciprocity and Transparency Will Bring Higher Frequency of Equanimity, Simultaneity and Truth.....	26
Questions and Answers.....	27

Why So Critical to Have NHPI Representation in Government? - Because Otherwise, NHPIs Are Not Reflected in the Policy (“personnel is policy”)	27
Historical relationship between the United States and Native Hawaiians? - Much Improved by Federal Trust Responsibility between US and Native Hawaiians Including Native Language Available for PhD Since 70s	28
Influence of Climate Change and Racial Dynamics to Life in Fiji? - Need to Move Away from Growth-Focused Economic Model That Categorizes Things, and Replace It with the Realization that Everything Is Linked.....	29
How to Use Samoan Language and Culture to Deal with Violence in American Samoa? – Use Them to Remind Juvenile in Facilities of Who We Are to Withdraw from Retaliating, for Instance.....	30
Ways to Approach Conflict? – Regard Conflict as an Opportunity to Forgive, Give Your Excellence and Combine with Others.....	30
How to Participate in Hawaiian Indigenous Course? – Take Care of Your Family, Mother, Brothers, Community for Outward Expansion to Grow.	31
Biden Administration’s Work to Address Inequities Impacting NHPI Community? - Issued an Executive Order to Ensure Equity throughout the Federal Government; DOI's Notice to Enable Native Hawaiian Community to Share the International Traditional Knowledge to Address Climate Change etc.....	32
Conclusion.....	34
Collectively, Our Communities Are Resilient and Strong Showing throughout History --- Krystal Ka’ai	34
No True Humanity without Relatedness, and Source of Lasting Good is Aloma: the Undeniable Source of All Values --- Upolu Luma Vaai	34
First, Take Time to Learn about the Complicated Histories of People Not Just in NHPI but in the Western World to Know that People are Just People --- Keone Nakoa.....	35
Our Past guide Gives Us Direction for Today and Tomorrow --- Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila	35
Wholeness of Our Lives Is Discipline --- Manulani Meyer	36
One Has to Take 100% Responsibility for Everyone's Actions, Not Only One's Own Actions --- Audrey Kitagawa	36

Overview

Indigenous Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island (NHPI) communities are faced with unique challenges. In the Pacific islands and other coastal communities, climate change threatens the land, food security, and delicate ecosystems. Systemic barriers to equity, justice, and opportunity have compromised NHPI families and communities, limiting opportunities and threatening their safety.

A panel of academics, community leaders, and activists engaged in a discussion about the challenges facing NHPI communities and what steps can be taken to overcome systemic barriers. Audrey Kitagawa, chair of the G20 Interfaith Forum Anti-Racism Initiative, served as moderator.

This event was hosted by the G20 Interfaith Forum Anti-Racism Initiative and FSCIRE. It was co-sponsored by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University, World Faiths Development Dialogue, and the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation (IAMC).

Panel

[Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila](#)

Keseta Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila is the director of the Samoan Studies Institute at American Samoa Community College (ASCC).

[Krystal Ka'ai](#)

Krystal Ka'ai is the executive director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI). Prior to this role, Ka'ai was the first person of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) descent to serve as the executive director of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC).

[Audrey Kitagawa](#)

Audrey E. Kitagawa, J.D., is president and founder of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, president of the Light of Awareness International Spiritual Family, a UN Representative for the United Religions Initiative (URI), and co-facilitator of URI UN Cooperation Circle. She is also the chair of the G20 Interfaith Forum Anti-Racism Initiative.

[Manulani Meyer](#)

Dr. Manulani Meyer is the associate specialist of student affairs at the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu. She previously served as director of Indigenous Education at the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu, and works in the field of indigenous epistemology and its role in worldwide awakening.

[Keone Nakoa](#)

Keone Nakoa is the Washington DC bureau chief for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). In this position, he serves as the primary liaison between OHA and the federal government as OHA navigates for the betterment of the Native Hawaiian community. Before returning to DC to take on this role, Keone practiced law in Honolulu, specializing in complex commercial litigation and general corporate governance.

[Upolu Luma Vaai](#)

Reverend Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai is the principal of Pacific Theological College (PTC) in Suva, Fiji, and head of Theology and Ethics at PTC. Vaai is a Fijian theologian and Pacific indigenous philosopher, specializing in Pacific relationality, eco-relational theology, decolonizing education, and relational hermeneutics.

Webinar Summary — JoAnne Wadsworth, Communications Consultant, G20 Interfaith Forum

On Thursday, July 29th, the G20 Interfaith Forum held a third webinar organized by the Anti-Racism Initiative, co-sponsored by the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University; the World Faiths Development Dialogue; the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation; and the Fondazione per le scienze religiose (FSCIRE).

Panelists included Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders; Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila, Director of the Samoan Studies Institute at American Samoa Community College; Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer, Associate Specialist of Student Affairs at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu; Keone Nakoa, Washington DC Bureau Chief of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA); and Reverend Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai, Principal of the Pacific Theological College, Fiji. Audrey E. Kitagawa, Chair of the G20 Interfaith Anti-Racism Initiative, acted as moderator.

Kitagawa began the discussion by welcoming both the speakers and the audience, outlining the purpose of the IF20 Anti-Racism Initiative, and acknowledging the need for the discussion at hand. She asked each panellist to share how systemic racial challenges, including those with links to climate change, are affecting Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities.

Krystal Ka'ai

Ka'ai thanked the G20 Interfaith Forum for its admirable efforts to examine systemic racism and barriers in our society, then provided an overview of White House led recent actions to address racism against and advance equity for NHPI communities—including condemning racism, signing Executive Order 14031 to advance equity and opportunity for NHPI people, and reinstating/reinvigorating the Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

“The past year and a half has been unlike any other, and the NHPI community has been devastated by this crisis. Their diversity has long been masked and aggregated

with the data of the Asian American population, which prevents them from getting the attention they need. One of the mandates of this initiative is to address this data aggregation issue.”

Rev. Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai

Vaai focused his comments on how racism and colonial mindsets continue to affect NHPI populations today, particularly in regard to climate change. He referenced the more subtle Pacific Slavery system of “blackbirding,” and drew attention to the “ecological sins” of deep sea mining, extractive economies, and the loss and damage of nuclear testing, which he maintained are all inextricably connected to principles of racism. He then emphasized how essential spirituality is to science, especially climate science, in order to move it beyond dry data to something with heart.

“For colonialism to work, it must create a narrative where the black and brown ‘uncivilized’ people need to be saved. That narrative continues in the talk around climate change and the Pacific Islands. We need to promote a climate narrative that these island people have a sustainable culture, and we need to make plans that utilize indigenous strategies. Just because these strategies have not been tested in the west does not mean they don’t work.”

Keone Nakoa

Nakoa provided an overview of Hawai’i and its complicated history with colonization and assimilation. He said that the Kingdom of Hawai’i, prior to the arrival of non-native Hawaiians, had a completely self-sustaining society, with a sophisticated language, culture, and religion, and a population more advanced and educated than almost any other society at the time. However, due to its strategic location between the US and Asia, Western assimilation was quick in coming. The Republic of Hawai’i was formed, and eventually ceded all its lands to be annexed to the US, without the consent of the native people or any compensation. The Native Hawaiian language was banned, and policies were adapted to assimilate people into American society.

After going from a population of nearly 1M to 20K at its lowest point, Native Hawaiians experienced a renaissance of culture and values in the 1970s, which led to the establishment of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to protect Native Hawaiian rights and address disparities.

Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila

Fauolo-Manila referenced her experiences teaching and advocating for Samoan culture in American Samoa, pushing for her students and her community to know their history. She said there is ample lip service to preserving the island’s culture and language, but when it comes to the reality of actually trying to implement action and policy, support is very slippery.

“Knowing the story of Samoa is understanding that you are a survivor. Our culture has been around for 3,000 years, and I’m going to make it survive for another 3,000. According to the UN, we’re a colony—but we don’t see ourselves that way. We’re free. We have a partnership with the US, and we would love to keep it that way. We’re

Americans, but we're also Samoans—and we have to know our stories in order to keep that balance.”

Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer

Meyer focused her comments on how indigenous epistemology and spirituality can enable NHPI societies to rise to a “higher frequency” and heal the damage of the past and present.

“If I could summarize indigenous epistemology in one sentence, it's ‘love land, serve people—serve land, love people.’ Equity, reciprocity, and transparency are a great foundation to build on. Once we start to tell the truth, the truth will heal. All of these systems will begin to deconstruct and reconstruct. Eventually these things become the ‘higher frequency’ of equanimity, simultaneity, and truth. The consciousness that solves a problem cannot be the consciousness that developed it, so we must take on this higher frequency.”

Q&A Session

The Q&A session included questions from both Kitagawa and the audience, and covered topics including:

- Why it is so critical to have NHPI representation in government (“personnel is policy”)
- Moving away from a growth-focused economic model that categorizes things for the sake of development, and replacing that with the realization that everything is linked
- How to deal with conflict and racism, and grow through it
- How to support NHPI communities from the outside
- An analysis of current relationships between the US and Hawaii

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, each speaker was asked to offer a few final remarks to the audience.

- Krystal Ka'ai

“I'm so inspired by the discussion that was had today, and it gives me a lot of hope for the future. There are so many barriers to be overcome, but collectively our communities are strong, and we've proven our ability to overcome and resist.”

- Rev. Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai

“Hope is hearing the melody of the future, relationality is dancing to it. Our histories and civilizations didn't begin at our first contact with western explorers and missionaries. We can only truly be ourselves if we accept who we are.”

- Keone Nakoa

Nakoa restated that racism, most times, is merely ignorance, and suggested two things that can be done to move the ball forward:

- Take the time to learn the complicated histories of all of our people. People are just people—and when that understanding is reached, a lot of conflict can be resolved
- From that knowledge, support and empower each other with love—individually and collectively

- Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer

“Relationality is not the opposite of racism. It’s the genesis of how all things heal. And we’ve seen a lot of that today.”

- Audrey Kitagawa

“Your words, passion, vision and inspiration have resonated deep within us, and we are grateful to have our awareness raised by your powerful sharing. It’s uplifting and hopeful to know that these communities have advocates and leaders such as yourselves.”

Notable Messages

Though it is highly recommended to listen or read entire dialogue, there are notable messages listed below, which are highlighted in grey in the report.

They're not facing the same language access barriers that we are seeing with other Pacific Islander populations, you know, from especially, we're seeing that from our COFA communities, our Compacts of Free Association communities in the United States. We do have significant language barriers, and have struggled to get resources from both the federal and state governments in the United States translated into other languages, and to have that a culturally competent outreach to ensure that they are getting the care that they need throughout the COVID pandemic, whether it's to address health disparities, or to address significant unemployment. -- [#Krystal010](#)

The compartmentalization of life into categories, such as science versus spirituality, private versus public, male versus female, secular versus sacred, to name a few, are racial stratification by the colonial masters based on hierarchy of status, and power, to classify what they see as the weakest and uncivilised category. -- [#Vaai010](#)

We are moana people. We are large ocean countries, not small island countries. To change this narrative, we need a spirituality or to bring in spirituality into the climate change picture. -- [#Vaai020](#)

Second, the international climate agreements have often been dictated by the narrative and ideologies are the big and rich, rich countries. For example, when rich Western countries put the Pacific into labels such as small island countries, or sinking islands, drowning peoples or vulnerable Pacific, already, there is an assumption that these islanders and these countries are the uncivilised race that need to be saved. Hence, is the continuation of the notion of a Western Saviour, to save the black and brown, similar uncivilised for the colonial project to work, it needs

to create an ideology that every culture is uncivilised and not up to Western standard therefore need to be saved. This narrative goes back to the colonial missionary mandate where the black and brown bacons and savages need to be saved by a superior race from the curse of their own cultures. — [#Vaai025](#)

The depth of the Christian notion of sin is not touched. If we do not own up to the social and ecological destruction our development economic systems have incurred, anything that destroys life, and distorts the well-being of peoples and the earth is sin. --- [#Vaai030](#)

We need to expose the sin of the violation of human and land rights in West Papua, in Kanak New Caledonia, in Guam, Hawaii, and other parts of Pacific by militarised powerful nations, such as the US, France, Indonesia, to name a few. --- [#Vaai040](#)

Following 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii by American and European sugar planters and the descendants of missionaries with the help of the United States military, the Republic of Hawaii was established. — [#Keone010](#)

But the ongoing process of dialoguing of partnership, because we don't see ourselves as a colony, we're free. We have a partnership with the United States. And we would love to keep it that way. whereby we are Americans, but we are also Samoans. --- [#Okenaisa010](#)

Know the story. Do we have to know American history? Yes, we have to know the American story. But we must also know our Samoan story. And so, you know, and these are the things that I do to inspire to make sure that we still survive the dynamics of our environment. --- [#Okenaisa020](#)

we are a part of the uh environment is an integral part of the environment not above. We're not in. We are part of it. --- [#Okenaisa030](#)

I know you all know that, but to put to call the energetic field of how we're going to get out of this mess, we have to give it something tangible, and that tangibility of course, is the intangible. --- [#Manulani010](#)

currently, there is a Federal Trust Responsibility between the United States and the native Hawaiian people as a native American as one of the three Native American groups with American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians. And so to meet this obligation, Congress has enacted many programmes and policies to promote education, health, housing, and a variety of other federal programmes that together work to enable self determination. --- [#Keone020](#)

And a lot of times that's what what's getting glossed over is they'll get the big programmes will say something but when you actually implement Native Hawaiians somehow get lost in the in the in the shuffle. And I think that's a lot of how the systemic racism can play out. And then the spirit impacts will multiply from there so. -- [#Keone025](#)

we're inextricably linked. When one is affected, that is why we must never treat things as a singular one, or in binary compartments or categories. -- [#Vaai050](#)

We love every one, right when being exposed to the juvenile, and then, oh man, it hurts, it hurts. And so, now trying to and that's how we use history. That's how we use culture, to inspire to make them remember who they once were. -- [#Okenaisa040](#)

One day we know for a fact, if you hit the student with the heart, then you know they will survive. And that's how to address, you know, these issues and we will be at peace instead of retaliating to anything that doesn't go their way. And that's my answer and that's how we're using it. -- [#Okenaisa050](#)

So conflict is a necessary component to our maturity to our combining with each other to our we have olano-er(unidentifiable) that teaches us how to behave? How-Hi-itself-aka-Hello Oh-hey-me(unidentifiable). The first medicine is forgiveness. -- [#Manulani015](#)

when you are able to give consciously your excellence, then you combine with others in a mystical process called awomo. Always channel awomo is procreative potential. So, awomo cooliana. Cooliana is collective transformation to individual excellence. -- [#Manulani020](#)

Now that we are finally with the world, we suddenly see ourselves through the world mirror. Will we see our own true size images, or will we see ourselves in the images in the shadows of others? Will we see ourselves in a long shadows of the dwindling light? And the advanced darkness of evening dusk? Or will we see ourselves in a long and radiant rays or the rising sun? -- [#Vaai060](#)

it's so important to not sweep the different people into the same group. Too often, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander issues get grouped together. -- [#Keone030](#)

I believe, you know, racism a lot of times is just ignorance. -- [#Keone040](#)

the first thing is for people to take the time to learn about the complicated histories of all of our people, not just Native Hawaiians, but all the Pacific Islanders, and in the Western world as well, just knowing histories about people that people are just people. -- [#Keone050](#)

one has to take 100% responsibility for everyone's actions, not only one's own actions, because everything in the external world exists as an outward projection from within the human being. -- [#Audrey010](#)

Introduction

Audrey Kitagawa 0:05

Hello, my call. Welcome everyone from New York City, where I am moderating this webinar on behalf of the G 20 Interfaith Forums Anti-Racism Initiative. My name is Audrey Kitagawa. I was born and raised in Hawaii and still maintain my residence there. The Anti-Racism Initiative explores the ramifications of racism in historical as well as contemporary contexts, and the institutional, systemic and structural ways in which racism is perpetuated.

Today, we will hear how the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island communities face their unique challenges with racism, as well as climate change and the rising oceans which jeopardise their well being an island homes. Our deepest appreciation to Mr Cole Durham, and Ms Katherine Marshall, the president and vice president of the G 20 Interfaith Forum respectively, for their support of the Anti-Racism Initiative. I would also like to thank all of the dedicated and committed members of the Anti-Racism Initiative working group whose mission is to examine racism, its root causes and its solutions and offer its insights and recommendations for consideration by the G 20 leaders.

President Joseph Biden, on his first day in office, signed an executive order advancing racial equity in the federal government, and in his first week in office issued a presidential memorandum condemning racism, xenophobia and intolerance against Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. One of our panellists today is Krystal Ka'ai, who was recently appointed by President Biden to be the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The elevation of the issues of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities at the federal level in the United States is a significant step in bringing these issues forward to national and international awareness. I will be introducing each of the speakers in turn, and our panellists have dedicated much of their life's work, to issues of social and racial justice, and empowering and educating Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island communities.

We will start our conversation today with Krystal Ka'ai in her role as the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, which I will contract with the acronym, AANHPI. She is responsible for directing the efforts of the White House initiative and Presidential Advisory Commission on AANHPI advising the Biden administration on the implementation and coordination of federal programmes as they relate to AAHNPI across executive departments and agencies.

Krystal thank you for joining us today. And you know, you indicated that COVID-19 highlighted the systemic barriers to equity, justice and opportunity that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders have faced for far too long, and have too often been rooted in racism, intolerance and other forms of hate. You also indicated President Biden has reinstated and reinvigorated the historic White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Would you please share with us the systemic barriers to justice, equity and opportunity that you have observed and how your role as executive director of this White House initiative will be addressing this issue? Crystal, you now have the floor.

The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) — Krystal Ka'ai

Krystal Ka'ai 4:16

Well, thank you so much to Kitagawa and aloha-Mike-koco(unidentifiable). I want to thank the G20 interfaith forum, Anti-Racism Initiative for the opportunity to join you today for this important discussion on the systemic racial challenges facing Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. I deeply admire the work of the G20 interfaith forum, and all that you are doing to examine systemic racial challenges and barriers in our society. And I am so honoured to be on this panel alongside so many esteemed leaders, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community, and having the privilege to share the Biden administration's view and vision of the work that we as a society must tackle in order to address systemic racism and inequality both in the United States and internationally.

As We all know the covid 19 pandemic has taken a severe economic health and spiritual toll on all communities. And We have certainly seen this impact in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community.

Acknowledged Entrenched Disparities in Federal Laws, Policies and Institutions to Have Long Denied Equal Opportunity

And so, as part of our whole of government response to addressing inequities that have long standing inequities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, President Biden on day one and office signed Executive Order, signed an executive order to advance racial equity through the federal government and acknowledged that there are entrenched disparities in our laws, policies and institutions that have long denied equal opportunity to many in our country.

Issued Presidential Memorandum on Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in US

Within his first week in office, the President issued a presidential memorandum on condemning and combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. And in March, he issued a fact sheet describing further actions that the administration is taking to combat hate.

In May, during what is considered Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the President issued a proclamation to recognise the month of May, and for the first time actually explicitly named the Native Hawaiian community in that proclamation, defining the month as Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. And later that month, he actually signed the executive order that created my position, Executive Order 1403, one to advance equity, justice and opportunity for the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community and the United States. And the order that re-establish this initiative, which we are calling out which the acronym is we on p delivers on the President's long standing commitment to reinstate and reinvigorate this historic

initiative, but also to ensure that there is an ambitious will of government effort to ensure that there's equity, justice and opportunity for the AA and NHPI community advanced throughout the entire US federal government. And I have the tremendous honour and responsibility to serve as the first Native Hawaiian, Executive Director of this initiative. And it is an honour that I am privileged, again, I am so grateful for because it really does show the President's commitment the President of the United States his commitment to ensuring that the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community has a voice at the highest levels of our federal government.

The work of the initiative, as we know is more important now than ever, as our community and our entire world continues to address the devastating impacts of the covid 19 pandemic. And we all know that the past year and a half has been unlike any other. Unlike other communities of colour, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community has been devastated by the disproportionate health and economic impacts of the covid 19 crisis.

NHPI Diversity Has Long Been Masked and Aggregated with the Data of the Asian American Population

But even long before the pandemic, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have had a harder time accessing health care, accessing a number of programmes offered by the United States federal government, due to a number of barriers, including both language and cultural barriers that have historically made these programmes inaccessible to many within our community. And so because of this, you know, we also have noticed that because the community is extremely diverse, you know, we talk about Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders using that broad term. But we know we're talking about so many more. When we say Pacific Islanders, we're talking about Samoans, we're talking about Fiji, and we're talking about those from the Marshall Islands. And so tomorrow's there's so many, there's so much diversity within the rich diaspora of the native point of Pacific Islander community.

And yet, within the United States, oftentimes that diversity is masked and aggravated with data for the Asian American population. And when that happens, unfortunately, we are unable to see a number of the disparities that exist. And the covid 19 pandemic is a great example of that. Throughout the pandemic in the United States, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community has been among the hardest hit, it has faced significant infection and mortality rates, and in fact, actually has one of the highest mortality rates out of any racial group, including the African American community and Latino community in the United States and several states. And yet, that narrative is something that is not often told, because our data is often masked or not included. So Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are often listed as other or as I mentioned earlier, they are lumped into the category of Asian American and Pacific Islander and you know, which masks again many of the disparities that we have been able to see on the ground.

And so one of the mandates that the initiative is charged with is to address data disaggregation and look at systemic issues and to address these challenges so that we can better understand and address significant disparities that exist between diverse Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander subpopulations. So that is a big charge of what I have been tasked to do through the current initiative.

Compacts of Free Association communities Other Than Hawaiians Has Still Language Access Barriers

Another long standing barrier has been language access and cultural competency. And you know, for the Native Hawaiian population that is indigenous to colonise population has had its language stripped from, you know, culturally and historically and you know, and yet has, again and has worked to revitalise that language, we are seeing a different, you know, pattern there. They're not facing the same language access barriers that we are seeing with other Pacific Islander populations, you know, from especially, we're seeing that from our COFA communities, our Compacts of Free Association communities in the United States. We do have significant language barriers, and have struggled to get resources from both the federal and state governments in the United States translated into other languages, and to have that a culturally competent outreach to ensure that they are getting the care that they need throughout the COVID pandemic, whether it's to address health disparities, or to address significant unemployment.

So these are all very significant things that the initiative is working to do. There is so much work ahead and so much that I am excited to do in this new role as the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. So I want to thank you again, Audrey and the G 20 interfaith summit for inviting you to be a part of today's discussion when mahalo Nui loa(thank you very much).

How Racism and Colonial Mindsets Affect NHPI Populations Today, Particularly in Regard to Climate Change – Upolu Luma Vaai

Audrey Kitagawa 11:18

thank you so much Krystal. And Reverend Dr. Upolu Luma Vaai is a professor of theology and ethics and principal of the Pacific Theological College in Suva, Fiji, which is owned by 20 Pacific churches spread throughout 16 countries of the region, and His research interests, our Pacific indigenous philosophies and spiritualities theology decolonizing education and climate change. He is a pioneer of the Relational Renaissance Movement in the Pacific, to critically address racial coloniality in the dominant development narrative. His publications include *The Relational Self: Decolonising Personhood in the Pacific*, and *Relational Humanetics: Decolonizing the Mindset and the Pacific Itulagi*.

Now, Professor, Reverend Vaai, you had indicated that apart from COVID-19, climate change is a single greatest threat to the livelihood security and well being of the Pacific peoples. You also indicated that the way it is addressed by the international community invites racial divides and dynamics that mostly affect those in the grassroots communities who bear the brunt of climate change. And I'd like you to share with us what you mean by this and how this has affected the grassroot communities in Fiji. You now have the floor.

Upolu Luma Vaai 12:54

Thank you, Audrey. In the Pacific apart from the COVID-19 overwhelming some of the country's climate change, as I said, is the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and well being of the peoples.

Some Principles of Traditional Slavery Are Still Embedded in Development Models Today, Including Climate Strategies

Upolu Luma Vaai 13:11

Traditionally, we used to associate racism with slavery. In the Pacific, Blackbirding was the number one slavery system, where Pacific people were snatched from their homes and shipped to Australia, Fiji, Samoa and away in other parts of the Pacific for indentured labour. While some argue it is not comparable to the transatlantic slavery movement, the Pacific slavery movement was very subtle. However, some of the principles of traditional slavery are still embedded in our development models today, including climate strategies, such as class and status, race and power, and profit to name a few. I want to reflect how these slavery principles shaped climate change today.

It Is Racial Strategy to Eliminates People and Communities Whose Life Depends on Spirituality of Their Lands and Oceans

First, I do agree with science critical a role of raising important information about global warming, and the importance of lowering emissions to 1.5 Celsius, according to the Paris Agreement.

But sometimes also science needs a human face. It needs a spirituality. It needs a core of emotion and feeling, or else it's just a dry system about facts and data. The climate change narrative has been one sided, focusing only on science at the expense of spirituality, which sometimes it's very Western and elitist. Climate change discussion has been influenced by a colonial racial narrative, where spirituality is seen as a threat to legal secular frameworks, because as they say, it's intangible. Therefore hard to measure compared to how they measure GDP. In the Pacific, spirituality is at the heart of faith in indigenous communities. The compartmentalization of life into categories, such as science versus spirituality, private versus public, male versus female, secular versus sacred, to name a few, are racial stratification by the colonial masters based on hierarchy of status, and power, to classify what they see as the weakest and uncivilised category.

To dismiss spirituality is a racial strategy that eliminates peoples and communities whose life depend on spirituality of their lands and oceans. We are moana people. We are large ocean countries, not small island countries. To change this narrative, we need a spirituality or to bring in spirituality into the climate change picture.

Need to Consider Indigenous Models and Climate Adaptation Strategies Developed and Tested throughout Many Centuries that Still Work Today

Second, the international climate agreements have often been dictated by the narrative and ideologies are the big and rich, rich countries. For example, when rich Western countries put the Pacific into labels such as small island countries, or sinking islands, drowning peoples or vulnerable Pacific, already, there is an assumption that these islanders and these countries are the uncivilised race that need to be saved. Hence, is the continuation of the notion of a Western Saviour, to save the black and brown, similar uncivilised for the colonial project to work, it needs to create an ideology that every culture is uncivilised and not up to Western standard therefore need to be saved. This narrative goes back to the colonial missionary mandate where the black and brown bacons and savages need to be saved by a superior race from the curse of their own cultures. Racism around the world is a testament to the continuance of a colonial framework where non Europeans are often viewed as less than or the other.

Pacific Islanders are not doing it to their own brothers and sisters. So Pacific people are not immune from this Racial Discrimination Act. We need to promote a climate narrative that these islanders have a sustainable culture as a system of well-being, a language that is deeply shaped by earth consciousness. We need national adaptation plans that consider indigenous models and climate adaptation strategies that have been developed and tested throughout many centuries that still work today. Because these strategies have not been tested scientifically in the West, does not mean they don't work. This is a racist way to undermine how non Western communities lead. Pacific Islanders have an experiential performance based approach to life, where these traditional climate strategies are tested daily, through action and reflection.

Need to Acknowledge Ecological Sin, Climate Sin and Sin of Extractive Economies that Cause Displacement and Statelessness of Climate Refugees

Thirdly, we need to rethink the notion of sin that the church preaches every Sunday. Moving from a kind of privatised notion of sin that focuses on a series of personal wrongdoings that has embedded Western Christianity to condemn and demonise other non Western cultures to a systemic notion of sin. We need to acknowledge that there is something called ecological sin or in this case, climate sin. The depth of the Christian notion of sin is not touched. If we do not own up to the social and ecological destruction our development economic systems have incurred, anything that destroys life, and distorts the well-being of peoples and the earth is sin.

For example, we need to expose the sin of deep sea mining that is now moving in fast pace in Nauru, in Tonga, in Kiribati, and the Clarion-Clipperton zone south of Hawaii. Mining companies are interested in investing in the Pacific Manus, rich polymetallic nodules that could power a billion electric vehicles in the future. Mining companies in Canada are leading this venture. We need to expose the sin of the violation of human and land rights in West Papua, in Kanak New Caledonia, in Guam, Hawaii, and other parts of Pacific by militarised powerful nations, such as the US, France, Indonesia, to name a few.

We need to expose the sin of extractive economies that have contributed to the displacement and statelessness of climate refugees. We need to discuss in climate international forums and in the UN, to what extent the rights of these refugees have, if they are relocated, would they still have land and cultural rights in their new locations that they will be relocated to?

And, Sin of Nuclear Testing

We need to discuss the sin of nuclear testing. And its relation to the notion of loss and damage, for example, where France for example, continues to deny responsibility for the loss of many lives and consequences on the health and people of French Polynesia during their nuclear testings from 1966 to 1996. All of these climate change related developments are one way or the other, inextricably connected to the slavery principles that I mentioned before of either racial power, class or status or profit. Thank you, Audrey.

The Washington DC Bureau for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) — Keone Nakoa

Audrey Kitagawa 21:39

Thank you so much, Professor Vaai. And I'd like to call upon our Keone Nakoa and give you some background about Keone. He is a Washington dc bureau chief for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a semi autonomous state agency established to the Hawaii State Constitution, and mandated to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. In this position, he serves as a liaison between OHA and all branches of the federal government, as OHA fulfils its mandate through advocacy, research and community engagement at the federal level. Keone's prior experience in Washington DC includes serving as a legislative correspondent and speechwriter for the late US Senator Daniel Akaka. Keone as the DC bureau chief for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and as a native Hawaiian, please share what are the historical disparities and inequities faced by Hawaiians at the local, state and federal levels? Would you indicate it include health, education, housing, the criminal justice system, and violence against women? Keone Nakoa, thank you.

Keone Nakoa 22:56

(Aloha koko mahalo Nui loa, RG for: unidentifiable), and the G 20 interfaith forum for hosting this strong panel today to discuss these important topics, you know, the systemic racism and challenges faced by the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. I really appreciate the opportunity to be with you today. As you mentioned, my name is Keone Nakoa. I'm the Washington dc bureau chief for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. And I guess maybe by way of answering the question, I kind of thought it would be helpful to go over some of the historical contexts of Native Hawaiians and dispel some of the information that I think too often, at least on the hill in DC, we see information that isn't necessarily known, well known or sometimes misunderstood. And so I in that vein, I appreciate the opportunity to help, you know, raise awareness about the history of Hawaii, and Native Hawaiians, our status as the indigenous once sovereign People of the State of Hawaii, who have never given up our right to self determination, and then talk a little bit more about the mission and work of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. So, since that's kind of a lot to cover, jumping right in.

Native Hawaiians are the Aboriginal Indigenous, Settled and Founded kingdom of Hawaii as Early as 300 AD with Highly Organized Social System and Sophisticated Language and Culture

Native Hawaiians are the Aboriginal indigenous people who settled the Hawaiian archipelago now known as Hawaii as early as 300 AD, and eventually founded the kingdom of Hawaii. We exercise sovereignty over our islands in a highly organised self sufficient subsistent social system based on a communal land tenure system, with a sophisticated language, culture and religion prior to the arrival of the non indigenous people of to the Hawaiian archipelago, as many as 1 million Native Hawaiians but a thriving, complex society capable of completely self sustaining itself off of the land and the ocean and one of the one of the most remote locations in the world.

Native Hawaiian society, under the leadership of its government was among the most advanced and educated in the world at its time. By 1839, for example, the Hawaiian education system was so successful that native Hawaiian literacy rate exceeded all but two nations in the world. The Hawaiian Kingdom became just the fifth country to require compulsory education for all youth in 1841.

Kingdom Overthrown by American and European Sugar Planters and Missionary Descendants with the help of Armed US in 19c

Unfortunately, for the Native Hawaiians, the whole Hawaii is located in a very strategic location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean between the United States and Asia. And partially because of that, as a result, for much of the 19th century, Westerners became increasingly involved in the economic and political affairs of the kingdom. Following 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii by American and European sugar planters and the descendants of missionaries with the help of the United States military, the Republic of Hawaii was established. But the Native Hawaiians never relinquished our claims to self determination at the time, and continue to protest the illegal overthrow of Queen Lili' uokalani.

However, Native Hawaiians, despite not giving up our right to self determination, did endure generations of the erasure of our cultural identity. Even in the kingdom days, Western assimilation policies began to enter into the education system through American channels. Their assimilation policies, were a significant part of the United States relationship with the Native Hawaiian community. At the time, it were carried out in American missionary schools, boarding schools and day schools that extended into the territorial government days, and then on through statehood.

US Assimilation Policy Banned Native Hawaiian Language in Schools and Legislative Proceedings

In 1898, President McKinley of the United States sought to implement the existing US policies of assimilation and land allotment against Native Hawaiians by annexing Hawaii to the United States. The self declared republic of Hawaii ceded 1,800,000 acres of Kingdom lands to the United States without the consent or compensation to Native Hawaiian people, or our sovereign government. The historians will additionally know that the territorial government whose legislative structure and executive were dictated by the fact the United States federal government, banned the speaking of Native Hawaiian language in schools and legislative proceedings, and adopted policies to assimilate Native Hawaiians into the American society at the expense of Native Hawaiian language, culture and traditional practices. For decades, Native Hawaiians continue to suffer the increasing erasure of our cultural identity political disenfranchisement by the ruling oligarchy, and degradation as a as um people being called lazy and ignorant. Native Hawaiians were deemed by the governor, one of the governors at the time to be a menace to good government in our own lands.

By the 1920s, the Hawaiian population had decreased to just 20 to 40,000. From again, the time were pre contact, some estimates range anywhere from 600,000 to as high as a million. If not, for the period now known as the Native Hawaiian cultural renaissance of the

1970s and the pioneers and heroes who led that movement, many of them winning of our Native Hawaiian language, traditions, and culture may have been lost forever. In fact, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs is in direct result of the renaissance of the Native Hawaiian culture and values in that state.

1970s, Musicians, Artists, Historians and Aspiring Politicians Led Movement to Establish the Office of Hawaiian Affairs(OHA)

As I said in the 1970s, there is a vast movement of musicians, artists, historians, and aspiring politicians at the time now established politicians that led a movement in Hawaii and established in 1978 the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in Article 12 of our of our Constitution, as you mentioned at the semi-autonomous state agency of the State of Hawaii mandated to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. We're guided by a board of publicly elected trustees. Hawaii State law recognises the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a principal public agency in the state responsible for our performance.

As the Washington DC bureau chief, our office plays an important role in working with members of Congress, federal agencies and partners to address all of the disparities that we unfortunately see today. We primarily work to promote policies programmes to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. And often all Native American communities be that American Indian, Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiians. And one of our main aspects is to identify and address some of those disparities. Unfortunately, I know that I'm running on time. So I'm hoping to be able to come back and speak a little bit more to some of those disparities in health care, violence against women and the criminal justice system as you mentioned.

Samoa Studies at American Samoa Community College (ASCC) — Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila

Audrey Kitagawa 30:26

Thank you so much Keone. And I'd like to now invite Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila who is the director of the Samoa Studies Institute, at American Samoa community college or ASCC. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees and Diploma of teaching in social sciences from Waikato University New Zealand. She has taught history and geography at Samoa Law College, Sacred Hearts College and ASCC. She is a recipient of ASCC Teacher of the Year award. And she published a bilingual Guide to Understanding cancer related terminologies in English and Samoan. Okenaisa, you had indicated that some of the major challenges in American Samoa are inevitable when we think globally and about the need to stay connected. You said there is wisdom in American Samoa's past that we can use to address some of the issues we have today in our society. And I'd like you just share with us what the major changes are in American Samoa that you have observed and how the wisdom of its past can be used to address its issues today. Okenaisa, you now have the floor.

Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila 31:43

Thank you, Audrey. (unidentifiable) Warm greetings from American Samoa the only US territory in the South Pacific. And of course, we are the last island to see the sunset. And congratulations Revelent Vaai for Fiji winning gold for the sevens rugby. It's overwhelming to hear what has been shared so far by our prestigious panel this morning. And I have prepared my seven minutes. But in hearing all that has been said I could only then go back to what Audrey said to me; Be authentic and speak as if you may also hear with my utmost respect as that I dealing with state and whatnot oh man, that's so not my piece of fight.

Racism Is Institutionalised and Rooted in Life of American Samoa

So where we sit when I think of racism, how it's being institutionalised, and well rooted in the processes we live by for us here in American Samoa, just to highlight that challenge. Our language of instruction is English. A couple of years ago, I testify at the Senate for the bill to have the Samoan language used as our primary language of instructions. The bill didn't pass. And I came back and with the thought; If God's gift to Samoa is language, I am not going to work at that level that state where you people are, I'm just gonna go with what I know and the little niche that I have. And so because to even also try in the higher institution of higher learning, because we also answer to accreditation to ask. And while we all speak the importance of diversity, yet our policies takes forever to be inclusive enough to have Samoan language as uh you know, to place our students. Now that has yet to be approved. So in my own small niche that I went ahead and offer placement testing for our for students who are taking Samoa. The result overall, it's well below average. And so having the attitude then and singing Billy Ocean song, that when the going gets tough, the tough get going. We I think prefer to work at this level.

Because the ironies can be so much. We as American Samoa maybe part of a population in when we speak population wise that we are increasing. But in using of our native language,

we are decreasing. So, you know, that's one irony. The other irony is that, yes, we support using of your language inclusion and what not. But when it comes to the reality of trying to embed such, then the support somehow is slippery. And so I'm very thankful for President Biden initiative.

And so, you know, because for me to, to be part of this, it gives me hope. And speaking for myself, it gives me hope, it makes me continue to believe that what I'm working for, is valid. So what can I contribute to our discussion this morning is that and this is my grassroots approach to this issue that the globe way to about me. So at my small niche is that one, I teach the students and I teach the community of being grounded in my Samoan-ness. And my Samoan-ness is part of surviving in our global environment, and I believe, looking at our panel, the mere fact that, you know, before respect to Reverend Vaai, to you, madam moderator, you know, you're from small places, you have made it and hearing you with your introductions and what you know, your culture. And so that's what I push with our students with our community is part of surviving this global environment, is knowing your culture. So in my situation is that knowing my Samoan-ness, and I, my culture has been around for 3000 years, and Lord helped me that I'm going to make another 3000 years more.

Without Own History, You Don't Know Where You're Coming from

And two ways that I know my story. Sometimes we use our story, you know, to keep we repeated story to keep people, you know, feel bad and feel small about themselves. But the story of of Samoa, though, is that knowing the story that you are a survivor, you know, like Bob Marley's, you know, song, I know, Bob Marley is dead. But like when he sings, you know, if you don't know your history, then you don't know where you're coming from. And so this is one major challenge that we know with our students with our community is telling the stories, while there is the issue with the textbook, that we have an issue with that. But you also have to tell them who wrote the story, who benefit from it, okay, now you need to listen to what I am telling you. It cannot maybe it's not because traditionally we oral society, and in this contemporary world, we will still be our own society. So with the need of knowing your language, because then when I speak your story, it will go to your heart. And when the heart speaks, you will survive.

Partnership with US whereby We Are Americans, Also Samoans

So uh, with American Samoa was since 1900, we became unique. And I know from the United Nations perspective, is that American Samoa is a colony and in my head said, No, we are not. I understand what colony needs, what being colonised it, all of us share what it is. But the ongoing process of dialoguing of partnership, because we don't see ourselves as a colony, we're free. We have a partnership with the United States. And we would love to keep it that way. whereby we are Americans, but we are also Samoans. And since 1900, so it's always the more challenge come into place is when is when we when we've tried to find that balance. And so that's the challenge. And so that's why we fit with my approach in my contribution here: Know the story. Do we have to know American history? Yes, we have to know the American story. But we must also know our Samoan story. And so, you know, and these are the things that I do to inspire to make sure that we still survive the dynamics of our environment.

Samoans Are an Integral Part of Environment, Not Above

And my last point I wanted to say to share with our panellists today is that Samoan I've always been and I am so sure Hawaiians have the same. It's just sharing of Moana(unidentifiable) has been mentioned by Revered is that we are a part of the uh environment is an integral part of the environment not above. We're not in. We are part of it. We have Samoanised many things beginning of correlate with the missionaries coming in. We summarise ancient Christianity. We summarised our relationship with the United States because we, we internalise it even more if the climate change and even when people condemn that you're sinking. We know that this is our space and we will continue because we know we are part of it. We will save it. So like the ocean song goes, when the going gets tough. The tough gets going. Thank you so much for my time.

View from Hawaiian Indigenous Education and Epistemology for Worldwide Awakening – Manulani Meyer

Audrey Kitagawa 40:41

Thank you so much Okenaisa for your beautiful sharing. And I'd like to now turn the floor over to Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer, and she grew up on the sands of Mokapu on uh Kailua Beach on the island of Oahu and along the rainy shoreline of Hilo Kili paliku. The Aluli Ohana or family is large and diverse group of scholar activists dedicated to Hawaiian education, restorative justice, land reclamation, Ohana health practices, cultural revitalization, arts, education, prison reform, transformational economics, food sovereignty and Hawaiian music. She works in the field of indigenous epistemology and its role in worldwide awakening. She obtained her doctorate in philosophy of education from Harvard, and she works at the University of Hawaii, West Oahu campus. Malulani, you said these beautiful words; Loving is a practice of an awake mind. You asked what does this have to do with anti racist approaches to issues within Oceania? If Hawaii has a has a say in how the world evolves? Everything. Now please share what you meant by that and your observations about the challenges of Native Hawaiians please now Malunali, you have the floor.

Manulani Meyer 42:09

(unidentifiable) Audrey, thank you for that. Oh my gosh. And Okenaisa, nicer. Mahalo Nui, no ko ek nahi nahi(unidentifiable). Such a beautiful clarity you bring to this cult papa(unidentifiable). Krystal was so proud of you, really. Thank you for being there and being standing steady for our peoples. And Keone, wow, that context you just you we've got so much to talk about. You know, and so you did that really well, Keone. A quasi-official thing of oh, that was kind of funny. What does that mean? And of course, Upolu. oh, you are my beloved friend. Thank you for bringing us to the clarity of all false dualities. That's what I'm talking about, Audrey. I'm talking about what Upolu is bringing forward with his work on relationality. With his work on, on describing the situation we're at, and why we're not responding with ancient wisdom systems.

Though Epistemicide Is a Worldwide Phenomenon Due to Power Ignorance and Racism, Our Native Knowledge System Has Been Recovering

Epistemicide is a worldwide phenomenon, because of power and ignorance and racism. The death of our native knowledge system has been recovering. In the last you know, 50 years since our cousins are beginning to know each other, support each other sail to each other's islands and, and, and be welcomed. And in that welcome, we revive our cultural redo practices.

One of my favourite quotations is for Krishna Murthy, worldwide leader I happen to have met in the 70s in Ohio, California. He said;

it is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.

So here we go. That's what I believe you are saying, Okenaisa, that;

We are technically occupied. But my mind is not colonised.

We are technically a part of the United States. So now it's time for us to help. Now it's time for us to help this youthful society to evolve. So Krystal, you guys are on it. You must bring forward our eco Puna. Keone you know what I'm talking about? and Upolu, the systems of well being that are centred on earth consciousness is Aloha aina.

Serve Land, Love People

If I could summarise indigenous epistemology in one sentence, it's love land, serve people. Love land, serve people. Oh, wait a minute. It's serve land, love people. It's the same differently. So this is what I want to tell you folks in this anti racist initiative.

It's really that is just a moment of discussion because we have; olelo-no-ha-ha-no-cuckoo-eco-Ola out(unidentifiable); Plant a forest and the rains will come. Or Noa hoonah(unidentifiable) is; Share purpose with others and your life will have meaning. Share purpose with others and your life will have meaning. And that's what Audrey, you're doing. You're sharing your purpose with a wider group of practitioners, scholars, scholar practitioners, and everybody has their excellence, everybody.

Here's another olona-al-Hey- Paul-kakani(unidentifiable) is one of my favourites. He-Pu-Coral-A-Kenny-Eye-Nah(unidentifiable). A-Kenny(unidentifiable) is like to make a sound, the coral sounds out for land. Our coral we know grows from one to the many and from the many to the one. And so that is the mystical saying that Upolu's bringing forward in this concept of spirituality, it is not religion, please do not, do not mistake the bureaucracy of spirituality. Religion is the bureaucracy. Spirituality is like the great grandmother. It, she operates in a trans spatial understanding that knows that that things might not be measured, but all my goodness, they can be experienced. Yay, Upolu. And that's the nature of our times, we are bringing forward, we are bringing forward the portal, the consistency of our transformational realities.

And my work is in the efficacy of Aloha. Now people might think that aloha is this that the other but let me tell you. It is the undeniable source of all values, the Genesis, the source, the Alpha and Omega of our thinking and of our being. And in I mean, I know you all know that, but to put to call the energetic field of how we're going to get out of this mess, we have to give it something tangible, and that tangibility of course, is the intangible.

Conundrums Make Life Worthwhile Calling Forward People Versed in Ancient Well-Being Systems; They Already Know Climate Change

I love the conundrums because those conundrums are what makes life worthwhile. And this is the nature, nation, this is the no, this is the time to bring forward our false duality so we can make them whole again. All right. So people who are versed in ancient well-being systems need to be called forward. And that's our indigenous practitioners, indigenous scholars, native people that already know that our climate has changed. We've seen this for decades now decades. Are you kidding? We're at 90 degrees(Fahrenheit: 32 degrees Celsius) in Oafu. So I've come here to plant coconut trees and to take it off the ornamental status in Hawaii, and at liability status. If we have a relationship again, with the new or coconut let things will change, food security, cultural revitalization. conservation. These are

the trilogies that make for our triangulation of meaning, and the triangulation, we are going to get through to get out of this racist discussion. Racism, it for me is a synonym a synonym for ignorance. Racism is a synonym for inequality.

Equity, Reciprocity and Transparency Will Bring Higher Frequency of Equanimity, Simultaneity and Truth

And I'd like to introduce my friend Kamuela Enos's idea of the pivot model, where we're going to get out of this mess. pivot is how is the is the patch in our wooden bowls that create healing in our broken bowls. It's a beautiful butterfly image, it's beautiful. And he describes it as, Kamuela Enos, describes it as equity, reciprocity, and it's called what does he call it equity, reciprocity and transparency. Okay? So those three things, Krystal, are a great foundation for us to look at a telling the truth because once we start to tell the truth, you guys, and like you're doing, Keone, truth heals, truth is recognise, all these systems begin to deconstruct and reconstruct a different system. So when we do that equity, reciprocity and transparency that my friend Kamuela Enos has done in his pivot model. We will get to the higher frequency.

So our kupuna has always taught us describe the higher frequency, describe the higher. And so, on equity, reciprocity and transparency then will become equanimity, simultaneity and truth. Terra(unidentifiable), equanimity, simultaneity and truth. And this is the purpose of Aloha-Hula-Kivalina-archeologia(unidentifiable). Loving is the practice of an awake mind. And now that I've got almost 30 seconds. Did you ring the bell, Audrey? Did I hear it? No, I didn't. I just want to tell you it's really an honour.

I tried to shake these anti-racist panel guys, okay?. Because we've got to recreate a society. We know it's racist. We know it's racist. I mean, like so but let's, let's focus and connect ourselves with the higher frequency because as Einstein said:

the consciousness that solves a problem cannot be the consciousness that developed it.

So let Aloha and Pono let love and truth wash over us today in this panel and let us be rigorous about its centrality purpose and any of our evolution not a revolution. I don't want to revolve. I want to evolve. Let's do it together. Join the evolution, Molyneux-aka-kuwana-kinoko-now-amaco-now-Cooper-no-key-of-what-he-put-mahalo-Nui-everyone(unidentifiable). Thank you, Audrey. I'm done.

Questions and Answers

Audrey Kitagawa 50:42

Thank you so much, Manulani. And we're going to start some conversation now. And I'll lead off the conversation by, you know, asking the panel, each of the panellists a question, and then we'll turn it over to our audience to also ask questions.

Why So Critical to Have NHPI Representation in Government? - Because Otherwise, NHPIs Are Not Reflected in the Policy (“personnel is policy”)

And I'd like to start with the Krystal. You know, Krystal, I wanted to ask, why is it important to have native Hawaiian representation within the US federal government in order to address racism and bias impacting the NHPI? community?

Krystal Ka'ai 51:15

Oh, thank you for that question, Audrey. And, you know, I think it's so critical to have representation across the board. And whether it is within the US federal government, whether it's at the state level, like Q&A with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. And, civic engagement is so critical, and one of the mandates outlined in the executive order that created the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, it's actually focused on fostering recruitment and career and leadership development for traditionally underserved communities, including those within the Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community to ensure that we do have diverse voices in public service at all levels of the Federal workforce in the United States government. That is important because personnel is policy. So having, if we don't have diverse voices at the table, especially in Washington, DC are, you know, the capital of the United States, you know, we don't see ourselves reflected in that policy, if we don't have people who actively understand our history, understand our challenges, understand our needs. And I think that was what was voiced here.

Again, the unique histories of the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community are not something unfortunately, that is often taught in United States history. And that is another advantage of the executive order to ensure that the histories and representation of our diverse Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community is also uplifted as a way to ensure we are promoting equity, opportunity and inclusion for this population that has even within the United States been traditionally overlooked. And we have very complicated histories. I think that's one thing that has, you know, really risen to the surface today. And I think there are oftentimes I speak to those who wonder why someone like me, who is native Hawaiian would want to go into service within the federal government. And I know I have colleagues and peers, you know, who don't necessarily see eye to eye, but I do think it is important to have that representation.

In Congress, we currently have four NHPI, or Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander members of Congress, but in a body that is, you know, 541 people total, that is not a lot of representation. And yet that body determines laws and policies that get enacted that impact not just the United States, but the entire global economy. And then, the other point is making sure again, that there are opportunities for the NHPI community because again, I've seen so many great policies come out of the current administration due to the fact that

we have Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander leaders advocating to ensure that we have inclusive policies that will truly impact our communities. So thank you again, Audrey.

Historical relationship between the United States and Native Hawaiians? - Much Improved by Federal Trust Responsibility between US and Native Hawaiians Including Native Language Available for PhD Since 70s

Audrey Kitagawa 53:54

Thank you so much, Krystal. And Keone, how would you describe the historical relationship between the United States and Native Hawaiians because we've heard a lot now about this, you know, federal relationship. So please proceed to give us how you feel about this relationship.

Keone Nakoa 54:14

So I think I covered a lot of the history and I just want to stop and sorry to say for a second mahalo, mahalo Nui(Thank you) from my honour Dr. Meyer, for showing for sharing all of the things that you said. I very much felt, you know, a lot of that and I was trying to think about just the other day, what aloha means to me in your description was among the best I've heard.

So sorry, I'm to get into the question of so I think the relationship between Native Hawaiians in the United States has had a long history of as I was describing, but currently, there is a Federal Trust Responsibility between the United States and the native Hawaiian people as a native American as one of the three Native American groups with American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians. And so to meet this obligation, Congress has enacted many programmes and policies to promote education, health, housing, and a variety of other federal programmes that together work to enable self determination. I spoke before about how the United States policies had been assimilationist for many, many years, and those policies that led to the near death of many aspects of our culture, but through, you know, that pioneering and leadership of people in the 1970s and through to today, and along with the help of the federal government's programmes, we have seen a rebirth in a lot of the native fine cultural values and native foreign language. For example, University of Hilo University, University of Hawaii at Hilo. Now you can obtain a PhD in Hawaiian language, and not just in the study of language, you can obtain it in whatever study field of study you want. But the native Hawaiian is the medium. And you know, that just knowing that and hearing, Okenaisa talks about how that language is Samoan language is being strongly be being treated back home.

You know, it gives me hope and pride to see that, you know, from where we were prior to 1970s, through the Olelo movement through the Native Hawaiian immersion schools. And and, I think I don't think that this is maybe acknowledged enough, you know, a lot of assistance through the federal government, and the programmes that were initiated by in part, Senator Daniel Akaka, who has a major role model for me and also Senator Inouye. You know, those programmes have lifted the support of the programmes, and our leaders have lifted Native Hawaiian culture and language back up to a place that it is today where there are children who Native Hawaiian has the Hawaiian language has become their native language, essentially, you know, or at least they're complete, they're bilingual, with English and Hawaiian being spoken, primarily in the household.

So, yeah, it is a complicated relationship with the United States. But I think right now, I think the most important thing that our office promotes is that there is of that trust responsibility that exists between the federal government and the Native Hawaiian community. And, and that is what is, is needed to be upheld in federal programmes and in Congress, as we as we work on policies and representation that Krystal was mentioning. It is so important to that aspect, because with the being able to see a person like Krystal in a not just a native Hawaiian initiative, but a much broader initiative and at the White House, I think gives a lot of voice to neighbourhood community and where people maybe grew up, as I did in the 80s, thinking that native Hawaiians still had a lot of the stereotypes of that, that we had.

Now there are uh much more possibilities Native Hawaiians can accomplish, you know, and, and move forward and having a presentation at that level of through Krystal and others will help to address Native Hawaiian issues in the details of policy. And a lot of times that's what what's getting glossed over is they'll get the big programmes will say something but when you actually implement Native Hawaiians somehow get lost in the in the in the shuffle. And I think that's a lot of how the systemic racism can play out. And then the spirit impacts will multiply from there so.

[Influence of Climate Change and Racial Dynamics to Life in Fiji? - Need to Move Away from Growth-Focused Economic Model That Categorizes Things, and Replace It with the Realization that Everything Is Linked](#)

Audrey Kitagawa 59:10

Thank you so much, Keone. And now Professor Vaai, you spoke of climate change and racial dynamics, but how does this narrative influence all other aspects of life and Fiji?

Upolu Luma Vaai 59:22

climate change is not just an effect on earth security or economic security as sung by international agreements and communities because the Vanua the earth, both skies land and sea is integral to us. Anything that affects ecology affects individuals. So the universe is in us and normally the international community normally misunderstands this and still struggle to understand why the why we say that the universe is in us.

So for example, the Fijian iTaukei peoples for example, have a cultural spiritual system where each person has a bird representing the skies, a fish representing the ocean, and a tree representing the land. This is now part of the National Registry system where Fijians are reminded that they are connected to the cosmos, that the cosmos is part of them. This core inherence means that ecology is a transversal that touches every single fabric of life, in the Pacific in in, including spirituality. This interconnectedness and interdependence have already been endorsed and improved and proved by quantum science. And I think Manulani is the one that you know, very perfect on quantum science that because we're inextricably linked. When one is affected, that is why we must never treat things as a singular one, or in binary compartments or categories.

For the sake of development, we must move away from this uncompassionate economic development model that benefits only a tiny minority of the world that is obsessed with endless growth, primarily based on extraction and exploitation, to one that sees life as an integral, integrated whole.

With climate change, it also has consequences on economy, economic, on food, on human on psychological, cultural, and, and spiritual security. So climate change affects every aspects of life. So we're not just talking here about economic or physical security, we are talking about the effects on the whole of life. That's why we need to address climate change, from a whole perspective, whole of life perspective.

How to Use Samoan Language and Culture to Deal with Violence in American Samoa? – Use Them to Remind Juvenile in Facilities of Who We Are to Withdraw from Retaliating, for Instance.

Audrey Kitagawa 1:02:03

Thank you so much, Professor Vaai. And Okenaisa, how are you using the wholesome Samoan language and culture to address some of the issues with respect to the violence in American Samoa?

Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila 1:02:19

Oh, thank you. It's just sharing that we have mentioned so far, it's when we go culturally, to address these issues, because like I said, before, you know, but now I go, we go to the juvenile, and we go to the correctional facility. And a lot of them being locked up has to do with violence. And so it's going there. And this is telling them; Do you know who you are, and uh and picking also up on the genealogies and then reminded them of who they are. Because when they remember who they are, then they go back to the basic of love, of aloha has been. So of being truthful, of buono(unidentifiable), of being honest with yourself, and so and then because once you get to that basic, that basic of it where we respect life, and then the all the other protocols of, of being Samoan of having that relationship with fear, it's a male, between male and male, female, all those should automatically come back to you.

And that so that's how we are using our culture to address these issues, these programmes that we have been quite successful in going into our territorial Correctional Facility, and also working with our juvenile because, honestly, Audrey, I didn't think, you know, I always thought that my culture was perfect. We love every one, right when being exposed to the juvenile, and then, oh man, it hurts, it hurts. And so, now trying to and that's how we use history. That's how we use culture, to inspire to make them remember who they once were. And from there, because once they get that basic of who I am, and then other things fall in place, then the protocols, rituals that comes with our culture, uh a lot more easy to hear. And when I say hear, not hearing with the ears is hearing with the heart. One day we know for a fact, if you hit the student with the heart, then you know they will survive. And that's how to address, you know, these issues and we will be at peace instead of retaliating to anything that doesn't go their way. And that's my answer and that's how we're using it.

Ways to Approach Conflict? – Regard Conflict as an Opportunity to Forgive, Give Your Excellence and Combine with Others

Audrey Kitagawa 1:05:14

Thank you, thank you so much. Okenaisa and, you know, Manulani, you have acknowledged that racism exists and I would like to ask what are the ways you approach conflict? As uh

Kanako Oivie(unidentifiable) which is a native person as a native Hawaiian?. Can you please share with us?

Manulani Meyer 1:05:35

Absolutely, mahalo-Nui-Rd-in-Mahalo(unidentifiable) for those responses Okenaisa. Mahalo-Nui(unidentifiable). Uh,

Conflict is the midwife of consciousness.

That is not me. That's Paulo Freire. And I believe conflict is actually vital for us to understand our gifts. And if we don't work through and with conflict, all we have is conflict. So we here in Hawaii, we've survived a lot of conflict. So we know what Upolu is saying, we know what Keone is trying to access by giving the cultural understanding of our peoples.

We have been at the bottom, you know, when I go into prisons and work with our wonderful women, did you know that like close to 95% of our women in prisons, this is 10 to 15 years ago, with sexual survivors? So, do you understand that as we look at the, the genesis of conflict, we are and we regain our footing, we are the people who will handle?

So conflict is a necessary component to our maturity to our combining with each other to our we have olano-er(unidentifiable) that teaches us how to behave? How-Hi-itself-aka-Hello Oh-hey-me(unidentifiable). The first medicine is forgiveness. And so when we-Auntie-Lynette Pavlina-one(unidentifiable) she's got a free courses on this process called opono(unidentifiable). And when you hold upon with people, when you keep speaking your truth, and you sit with the essence form of what Hawaii is, which is Aloha, you will get to a higher frequency of why conflict is necessary. So I'm a twin, I've had conflict my whole life. My twin is a fraternal twin. Her name is Moana. And she really like to be beef. So but now, she's my best friend.

And so if you're not mentored by difference, all you're going to want to do is Neo, coloniser Neo colonise it. So when when you use conflict as a resource for how to transform into higher frequencies of efficacy of support of collaboration. That's why we call and I'd like to introduce awomo cooliana(unidentifiable). Awomo cooliana(unidentifiable), I'd like to finish with this Audrey, is the concept of we carry our own responsibilities. But when you do that, well, when you are able to give consciously your excellence, then you combine with others in a mystical process called awomo. Always channel awomo is procreative potential. So, awomo cooliana. Cooliana is collective transformation to individual excellence.

And that's what conflict does, it gets me better. Because my whole life has been a different form of conflict, because of my orientation, because of my sibling status. Because of my my own slow reading, I don't think I wrote a good sentence till I was 28. And etc. So thank you for that opportunity to introduce along cooliana and I'll speak more about it later, collective transformation through individual excellence model.

How to Participate in Hawaiian Indigenous Course? – Take Care of Your Family, Mother, Brothers, Community for Outward Expansion to Grow.

Audrey Kitagawa 1:08:42

Thank you so much, Manulani. And we're going to start taking questions from the floor now. But you know, we also have to be mindful of the time. But the first question that was put in the Question and Answer was from David Moore, who says;

I am an African American in California, I have read Hawaiian history off and on since I was a teenager, and white would like to know my place in your course. And my yearning brought me to the zoom today, and how do I support and participate?

So, Manulani, if you could answer that, because you were mentioning about the higher frequency higher consciousness and now you have someone who's from the African American community and wants to know how he can participate. So could you take that question, Melanie?

Manulani Meyer 1:09:30

Thank you for that question. We receive it often here in Hawaii. And you know, what I tell everybody is, be excellent in your own place.

Learn how to be of service to your own family, learn how to plant food in your own neighbourhood. Figure out how to speak the truth and tell the truth at all times. I've done with I'm done with large systems. I'm going in to simple family systems and to your own evolution. Because your own evolution is an energetic spark, that will, that will find others. And I mean it. And I mean it, because Hawaii, Hawaii is going to be pivotal in saving the planet because of our ancient systems that Upolu has actually defined a systems of well-being. And so we know it's about taking care of your family, taking care of your mother, taking care of healing with your brothers, and then taking care of your community. And from that, the outward expansion grows, and I mean it, I mean it. Thank you.

[Biden Administration's Work to Address Inequities Impacting NHPI Community? - Issued an Executive Order to Ensure Equity throughout the Federal Government; DOI's Notice to Enable Native Hawaiian Community to Share the International Traditional Knowledge to Address Climate Change etc.](#)

Audrey Kitagawa 1:10:33

Thank you so much. And we have a question from Kay Day, and she it is supposed to Krystal Ka'ai, and she said;

Beyond the work you're doing through the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, could you speak to additional ways that the Biden administration is working to address inequities impacted, impacting the NHPI community?

Krystal Ka'ai 1:10:56

Thank you for that question. I think that's, you know, there's so much that I talked about earlier that we are doing specific three through the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. But beyond that, you know, I had mentioned earlier in my remarks that on day one, the president, President Biden made it a priority to ensure that he issued an executive order to ensure that there's equity throughout the entirety of the United States federal government, and that has never been done before.

So we are seeing really transformative change happening within the United States federal government right now. Everything from looking at how are we looking at educational and health disparities, economic disparities and poverty, you name it, there have been so many, unfortunately, just 30 is exposed and exacerbated because of the current pandemic. But knowing that we have a president currently in the United States, who is committed to ensuring we are advancing equity throughout the entirety of the federal government has been extremely inspirational to me, and one of the reasons that I am so honoured to have the privilege to lead the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

And one thing I wanted to kind of touch upon, I know this was brought up during our discussion, but climate change is absolutely a threat to our well being not just for our NHPI community, but across the entire globe. And so that is another area where the Biden administration has really made a strong commitment to ensuring that we are centering climate justice as part of the work that we are doing.

And I will say just one thing I wanted to flag really quickly, the Department of Interior, had recently put out a grant notice to solicit ways that the Native Hawaiian community can actually share it's a pilot programme, but on share their international or international traditional knowledge regarding ways to address climate change by using their cultural knowledge and histories to be able to shape how we are doing policy. So a lot of things like that, that are really innovative, are coming to the forefront and is definitely a top priority for the current administration.

Conclusion

Audrey Kitagawa 1:12:57

Thank you so much Krystal while you have the floor, because we will be concluding now. We have so many questions being asked that there is no way we'll be able to cover them all. So we will have to go into conclusionary remarks. And let me just say that to those who have asked questions, we will try our best to have the persons who you have identified posing the question to answer them at a different point in time, and we will see how we can send you answers. Okay, so Krystal while you have the floor, your concluding remarks for today, please.

Collectively, Our Communities Are Resilient and Strong Showing throughout History - – Krystal Ka'ai

Krystal Ka'ai 1:13:33

I just want to thank you again, Audrey and the G 20 inter, interfaith forum for this opportunity to discuss the many challenges facing the native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community but also the opportunities that we have. I'm so inspired by the discussion that was had today, and being able to listen to the model of so many of our speakers, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander leaders that you've identified, and I think it gives me a lot of hope for the future. There are so many barriers that we must overcome, but collectively, our communities are resilient, they are strong, and we have shown that throughout history time and time again, and we have been able to persist. So again, mahalo nui iā 'oe: Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today.

No True Humanity without Relatedness, and Source of Lasting Good is Aloha: the Undeniable Source of All Values -- Upolu Luma Vaai

Audrey Kitagawa 1:14:13

Thank you so much, Krystal. And Professor Vaai, your concluding comments, please.

Upolu Luma Vaai 1:14:21

Well, um, I really admire the sharing that we had today. And thank you to all the panellists. I mean, there is no true humanity without relatedness. The source of lasting good is aloha as Manulani was talking about all Aloha as we say in Fiji, not things. Hope is hearing the melody of the future. Relationality is to dance to it. Not prejudice, but openness. Not supremacy, but service. Not inferiority, but equality. Not resentment, but reconciliation. If you If I may, I would like to end with quoting one of my teachers in Papua New Guinea, the late Bernard Narakobi, who once said, and I quote;

Our history did not begin with contact with Western explorers. Our civilization did not start with the coming of Christian missionaries. Because we have an ancient civilization, it is important for us to give proper dignity and place to our history. We can only be ourselves if we accept who we are, rather than denying our autonomy. Now that we are finally with the world, we suddenly see ourselves through the world mirror. Will we see our own true size images, or will we see ourselves in the images in

the shadows of others? Will we see ourselves in a long shadows of the dwindling light? And the advanced darkness of evening dusk? Or will we see ourselves in a long and radiant rays or the rising sun?

So I leave you those with those words. But thank you very much Audrey and the G 20 Interfaith Forum for this kind invitation, Aloha-and-more-than-Amanda(unidentifiable) from here in Fiji Salva.

First, Take Time to Learn about the Complicated Histories of People Not Just in NHPI but in the Western World to Know that People are Just People -- Keone Nakoa

Audrey Kitagawa 1:16:26

Thank you so much, Professor Vaai. and now Keone if you could give us your concluding remarks?

Keone Nakoa 1:16:35

Sure. I echo the remarks of everyone else modelled to me, though, I really, really appreciate just that you that the G20 and the forum would have this specific forum. And you know, like Krystal was saying it's so important to not sweep the different people into the same group. Too often, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander issues get grouped together.

And I think I would just want to leave you with a couple of thoughts in in, because Manulani was saying, I believe, you know, racism a lot of times is just ignorance. And I truly believe that is generally the case, I think that there's two things that can be done to kind of move the ball forward on this, I think the first thing is for people to take the time to learn about the complicated histories of all of our people, not just Native Hawaiians, but all the Pacific Islanders, and in the Western world as well, just knowing histories about people that people are just people. You know, and I think that's, that's the, when that education occurs, I think a lot of conflict is able to be resolved in itself. And then the second thing is, if people can, from that knowledge, support each other, support one another, demonstrate Aloha. And especially in helping empowering each others, and other communities to choice choose their own self determination individually and collectively. I think that that would be the best, most helpful, effective way forward tomorrow.

Our Past guide Gives Us Direction for Today and Tomorrow -- Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila

Audrey Kitagawa 1:18:25

Thank you so much. So now Okanaisa, if we could hear your concluding remarks, please?

Okenaisa Fauolo-Manila 1:18:31

Okay, thank you. Well, again, thanks again, for this opportunity. This is my first time on being on the webinar like this. So thank you, and can't be profound like the professors that I am in the midst of, but I can only think Samoan and like I said in my statement, if I don't follow it tonight, morning dial, literally translated that our past guide gives us direction for today and tomorrow. And so that encompasses what I believe and what I try and do to make

sure that we will survive for another 1000 more years. Thank you so much, everyone. God bless.

Audrey Kitagawa 1:19:25

Thank you so much. Okenaisa, calling in all the way from American Samoa and of course, Professor Vaai from all the way from Fiji and the appropriate blowing of the conch shell because of course it is a sunrise for all of you out there, even though it may be the afternoon here on the east coast. So thank you so much. And Manulani, if you could give us your conclusionary remarks please

Wholeness of Our Lives Is Discipline — Manulani Meyer

Manulani Meyer 1:19:56

Mahalo Nui, Audrey. I just really want to thank all of you who are in Washington, Krystal, Keone, Audrey. Thank you for being of service to our people so far away from home. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And Upolu for bringing up the sun. That is a whole island for us that in this discussion, the sunrise came that was just brilliant. It's brilliant to hear your thoughts. And Okenaisa, you're you are brilliant in your for Samoa or your volleyno(unidentifiable), at all.

We, we deepen our love for each other by knowing who we are and extending that and connecting that. So relationality that I've learned from my friend Upolu is at the heart of how we will recover. And it is not the opposite of racism. It is it is the genesis of how all things will heal. So what I learned today is that relationality is alive and well, thanks to this anti racist initiative.

We're going to call it something different in the future, okay guys? Because we're on a movement and the movement is to heal by doing something. I've had to call it holographic epistemology, because when we call it Hawaiian epistemology, people didn't feel Hawaiian enough; when we call it indigenous epistemology, it didn't feel indigenous. Now we're calling it a hologram. And it actually synergizes with what every single person has spoken about. the wholeness of our lives is the discipline. And this discipline can be found in policies, Krystal; this discipline can be found in historical accuracies, Keone. So all of you folks are doing it. So let's just sing Ulu-aeh-kevelina-ah-keh-aloha(unidentifiable), shall we? I've got 10 more seconds. Here we go. Okay. So there it is. Ulu-aeh-kevelina-ah-keh-aloha(unidentifiable). Two more times. Ulu-aeh-kevelina-ah-keh-aloha(unidentifiable). Everybody Hammad; Ulu-aeh-kevelina-ah-keh-aloha(unidentifiable).

One Has to Take 100% Responsibility for Everyone's Actions, Not Only One's Own Actions — Audrey Kitagawa

Audrey Kitagawa 1:22:22

Beautiful. Thank you so much. I really wish to express my deepest appreciation to all of our speakers for taking the time to share your wisdom experiences and observations with us today about the challenges as well as the beauty of the Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Your words passion, vision and inspiration are really resonating with us. And we are grateful to have our awareness raised by your powerful sharing and for educating us

and helping us to deconstruct the calcified thinking and mindsets that we may have adapted. And as one of the speakers said, you know, the colonial mindset can also be brought into the minds of the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders. But today's conversation has really helped us to go through the deconstruction and decalcification process of the mindset. So thank you so very much.

And while we have a way to go before we can say that native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are treated fairly and equitably, it is very uplifting and hopeful to know that these communities have advocates and leaders such as yourselves our panellists today.

And, the G 20 Interfaith Forums Anti-Racism Initiative is honoured to have given your voices. It's such important messages, this international platform.

And in Hawaii, there is an ancient practice of healing, called ho'oponopono. And it means to rectify, correct and admin, and seeks to seek right relationships to prayer, confession, restitution and forgiveness. Ihaleakala Hew Len, the former student of renowned healing priest of Kahuna La'au Lapa'au, Manya-Simionoa(unidentifiable) indicated that;

one has to take 100% responsibility for everyone's actions, not only one's own actions, because everything in the external world exists as an outward projection from within the human being.

And he set forth the ho"onponopono prayer, a mantra as:

I'm sorry.
Please forgive me.
Thank you.
I love you.

May these words of wisdom, healing and forgiveness be on our lips and in our hearts. As I close our time together with mahalo, thank you for joining us today; and aloha Nui loa, farewell with much love until we are together again. Aloha, everyone, and thank you from the deepest part of my heart to each and every one of our panellists. You have all made us better people today. Thank you so much. Aloha. Bye bye. Thank you.