

Keiki to Career Kaua'i

Ready to Learn, Ready for Life



CEDS FY2012 Feasibility Assessment Final Report

Prepared for
County of Kaua'i, Office of Economic Development
March 2013



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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction. Kaua`i Planning & Action Alliance (KPAA) convened a group of organizational and business leaders in January 2011 to consider the recently published and inspirational article “Collective Impact – Creating Large-Scale Social Change”.¹ The article’s authors contended that substantially greater progress can be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, government agencies, businesses, and the public work together in a collaborative multi-year effort around a common agenda, common goals and common metrics in order to create community-scale collective impact.

This may not seem like a new idea, but actually it is a transformation of collaborative processes. What makes it different is a commitment to incorporating five factors needed for successful collective impact projects. These include²:

Common Agenda. All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

Shared Measurement. Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities. Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

Continuous Communication. Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

Backbone Support. Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

Among the successful examples is Cincinnati, Ohio where about 300 organizations and agencies have partnered since 2006 to strengthen the education of young people “from cradle to

¹ John Kania and Mark Kramer, “Creating Large-Scale Social Change,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011.

² Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania and Mark Kramer, “Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, January 2012.

career,” in other words from birth until about age 24. A continuum of services needed to accomplish the project goal was identified and the collective impact effort utilized existing organizations and agencies to provide specific support services to back up academic services along the continuum. Existing resources were deployed toward the common effort. The project has been operating for several years, supported by the nonprofit Strive Together, which serves as the vitally-important “anchor organization”, providing support and coordination services. Has this innovative approach been effective? According to an August 21, 2010 article in *The Cincinnati Herald*:

In less than two years, 13 of the 16 “Turnaround Schools” have shown measurable improvement in overall performance. At least five of the schools have jumped two categories in the Ohio report card ranking system. Six of the schools have met all of their federal accountability targets for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Considering a Cradle to Career Initiative for Kauaʻi. Facilitated by Kauaʻi Planning & Action Alliance, the group continued to meet and was named the Collective Impact Team. In June 2011, the Team decided that an important issue for Kauaʻi’s future that would benefit from a collective impact approach is the education and development of Kauaʻi’s young people. The group believed that there was an urgency to undertake such a process, given the academic and social needs of our children and youth. Moreover, they believed the collective impact approach has the ability to generate widespread community interest and support while making a significant difference in the lives of children and youth.

A working goal was developed to guide a collaborative, multi-year collective impact process: *Nurture and develop Kauaʻi children and youth to be healthy, empowered and self-motivated, living a life that matters with the tools they need to succeed cradle to career.*

The collective impact approach and the cradle to career framework, which combines a focus on academic achievement along with family and child support services, are useful tools toward improving these ends. To move forward in a deliberate and well-conceived manner, we decided we would define strategic areas of focus based on the needs of our children and youth, in order to create a robust, responsive initiative. We also recognized that to be successful, we would have to build partnerships among parents/caregivers, the educational system, the organizations that serve children, youth and families and the community at large. We also needed to establish funding mechanisms to support a multi-year collaborative effort.

Why Take Action? Like many in the community, we were concerned about low academic test scores, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, bullying and other risk behaviors among our youth. Employers have expressed frustration that young new employees are unprepared for the daily responsibilities of showing up for a job on time and ready to work.

To help mitigate these issues, the collective impact approach and the cradle to career concept resonated with many here on Kauaʻi, including Bill Arakaki, the Hawaiʻi Department of

Education (DOE) Complex Area Superintendent, Helen Cox, the Kauaʻi Community College Chancellor, and preschool and support services providers. The DOE has a commitment to developing 21st century skills in its students and is beginning to re-invent a few schools toward a new paradigm. We felt that if we could build on these early efforts and expand to other schools, plus foster collaboration with those offering support services to children and families through shared goals and shared measurements, that Kauaʻi could transform its system of education and services for children and youth. Strategies would be designed to meet their needs, build their character, create healthy lifestyles and develop the skills they will need throughout their lives as the future caretakers of the island.

II. FEASIBILITY STUDY AND OUTCOMES

The Collective Impact Team recognized that the scale and comprehensiveness of this initiative would be ground-breaking for Kauaʻi and offer far-reaching benefits. Before undertaking what all knew would be a complex, long-term effort, the group wanted to assess its feasibility.

In October 2011, KPAA received a project grant from the Hawaiʻi Department of Education-Kauaʻi Complex Area to assess the feasibility of a collaborative, cross-sector, collective impact initiative to build a civic infrastructure to help children and youth be successful cradle to career.

In April 2012, an additional grant to KPAA to complete a feasibility study was secured through the County Office of Economic Development to help support the goal in the *Kauaʻi Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2010-2015* to increase workforce readiness.

Feasibility Study Tasks. For this project, KPAA stated it would work with the Collective Impact Team to assess the feasibility of a cradle to career (birth to age 24) initiative by:

- Developing indicators and gathering data for a Kauaʻi youth report
- Identifying the framework needed to provide the infrastructure for such an initiative
- Identifying a planning process for the development of the initiative
- Determining the available support services that augment educational services at pre-kindergarten, kindergarten-grade 12 and college levels and determining gaps in services, if any
- Identifying possible multi-year funding sources
- Providing preliminary training in the planning process, if needed
- Completing the feasibility study
- If feasible, determining the next steps to engage the community and launch the initiative.

Timeline. The CEDS-funded portion of this project took place from April through December 2012.

Project Deliverables. Deliverables included preparation of the *Kaua`i Youth Report*, a final project report, a preliminary plan for funding and the launch of the initiative, if feasible.

Assessment Structure. In addition to the Collective Impact Team, four committees were formed: Strategy Committee, Data for Decision Making Committee, Framework Review Committee and the Support Services Committee. Chart 1 provides an overview of the structure and the tasks for each committee.

Chart 1. Keiki to Career Feasibility Assessment Committee Structure



Ready by 21 Framework. After considering several options, the Framework Review Committee selected Ready by 21. Developed by the Washington, DC-based non-profit Forum for Youth Investment, its principles are in harmony with this initiative. It is very adaptable to the needs of Kaua`i, and it is supported by ample tools and training at no charge. Ready by 21 focuses on identifying leaders willing to change business as usual and to foster accountability for children and youth. These leaders help change the landscape of communities through supports for families, the community and schools in order to improve outcomes for children and youth. Chart 2 shows the Ready by 21 Theory of Change.

Chart 2. Ready by 21 Theory of Change



Determination of Feasibility. At a meeting in February 2012, the Strategy Committee developed a set of criteria to assess feasibility, which included:

- ♦ Multi-year plan and funding in place or very likely to be available for backbone organization and program funding to fill gaps in services
- ♦ Data shows evidence of a need for broad-based, coordinated effort
- ♦ Strong support from service providers
- ♦ Service providers are willing to repurpose some of their existing funding toward activities for the initiative
- ♦ Strong support from family day care providers and preschools, Department of Education, independent schools, homeschoolers, and Kauaʻi Community College
- ♦ Support from parent groups
- ♦ Evidence of sufficient organizations to do the support work
- ♦ Shared agreement on values, preliminary vision and goals
- ♦ Schools and providers are willing to have shared metrics
- ♦ Strong commitment to continuous improvement
- ♦ High alignment to work together with others AND high commitment to action that gets results
- ♦ Backbone organization available to coordinate
- ♦ Initial focus areas selected
- ♦ Adequate progress to date
- ♦ Capacity developed towards results.

A 1 to 4 rating (4 being highest) was given to each criteria. While not all criteria ranked high, it was determined that a strong foundation had been laid, support was in place and the need for collective action was critically needed. At a retreat held in March 2012, it was agreed that this initiative is feasible and we would collaborate to move it forward.

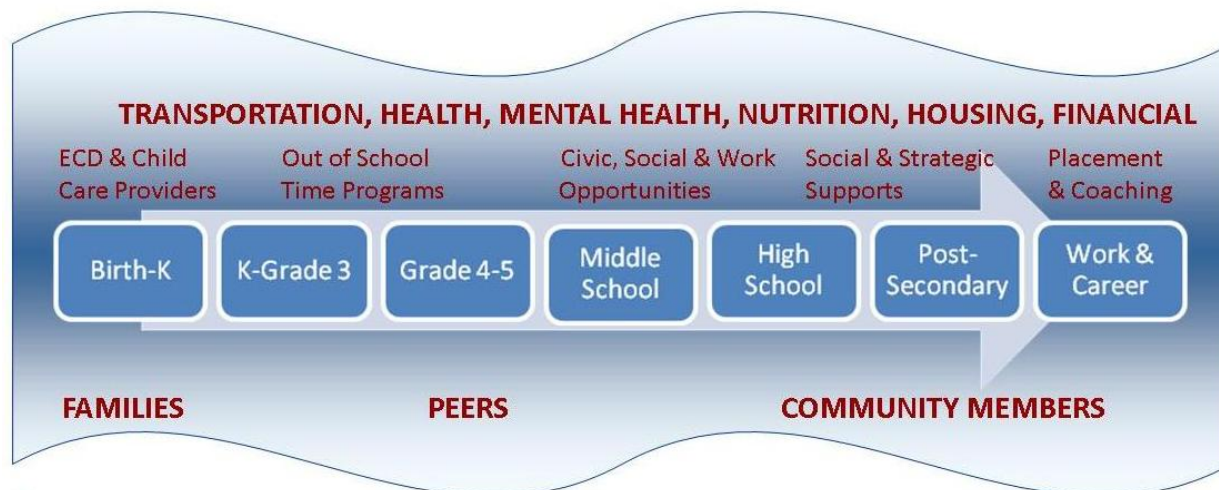
A New Name and Defined Values. At the March 2012 retreat it was decided the initiative would be called **Keiki to Career Kauaʻi** with a tagline *Ready to Learn, Ready for Life*.

A set of values was agreed upon, grounded in the metaphor of *He pūkoʻa kani ʻaina* – which, roughly translated, is “like a coral reef, over time we build a foundation that strengthens into land.”³ The initiative is guided by these values:

- Integrity
- Strong, trusting and healthy relationships
- Open and effective communication
- Unity while honoring diversity
- Holistic and well-rounded approaches
- Continuous improvement and learning
- Commitment to outstanding results
- Dedication to service
- Reaching out with aloha
- Courage

Developmental Continuum. Young people develop in stages, gaining physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills; each stage helps prepare them for the next. These stages can also be seen as transitions and the better prepared a young person is for that transition, the more successful he/she is likely to be. At the March 2012 retreat we adopted the metaphor of the ʻauwai to indicate the concept of the developmental continuum.

Chart 3. Keiki to Career ʻAuwai



³ Mary Kawena Pukui, *Olelo No Keau*, Proverb No. 932, literally translated “a coral reef hardens into land.”

Vision and Mission. A vision and mission for the Keiki to Career initiative were created. Keiki to Career's participating organizations and agencies will align their work with these statements.

Our Vision is an island community where Kaua'i's keiki through young adults are healthy, competent, confident and caring.

Our Mission is to unite the community in nurturing and developing Kaua'i's young people from keiki to career so they are *ready to learn and ready for life*.



Four Focus Areas for First Three Years. We recognize that this initiative is extremely ambitious and very broad in scope. At the same time, it is seen as a long-term initiative that will be expanded and improved over time. To help focus efforts into achievable steps during the first three years, four areas were selected:

- Parent/family engagement and education
- Resilience and life skills
- Birth to Grade 3 curriculum alignment and school readiness
- High school to post secondary curriculum alignment and readiness

Simultaneous with the Keiki to Career focus on these areas, the Department of Education and Hawai'i preschools are undertaking some transformative initiatives of their own that will help support the entire continuum of learning for young people. The DOE has a new strategic plan and curriculum requirements, emphasizing project-based learning and smaller learning community communities and they are expanding their academies. Preschools will be initiating the Hawai'i Early Learning Standards (HELDS) to better support learning in young children and improve their readiness for kindergarten. There is also State legislation under consideration to offer universal preschool for four-year olds in Hawai'i.

Kaua'i Youth Report 2012. Based on the work of the Data for Decision Making Committee, 22 indicators of youth achievement, health and well-being were selected. Data was gathered to: 1) give guidance on strategic areas the initiative should focus on and 2) serve as a baseline for future program and outcome measurements. Among the findings, for example, we discovered that many young people are leaving high school without the skills needed to be successful in college or careers. For example, Kaua'i Community College reports that nearly 86% of incoming high school students tested placed below college level in math, 46% placed below in reading and 62% placed below in writing. Substance abuse and other risk behaviors are inhibiting the education and development of our young people. The *Kaua'i Youth Report 2012*⁴ was published in June 2012.

⁴ This report is available online at www.kauainetwork.org/publications/kpaa-reports-and-publications/.

Based on the data gathered, it was reinforced that the status quo was not achieving desired outcomes for our young people and that an improved, more comprehensive approach was needed. We will issue an updated youth report each year to inform the community of our progress with Keiki to Career.

Inventory of Support Services. A collaborative collective impact approach relies on a robust and comprehensive system of services to meet the diverse needs of young people. An inventory of the island’s services for young people was created to determine what was presently available and the ages and geographic areas served by each program. While it an impressive list, programs change frequently based on funding or need. Gaps will have to be filled to provide greater equity in service delivery. The inventory is updated periodically.

Selecting KPAA as the Backbone. The Strategy Committee identified the key functions and tasks that the backbone organization would have to undertake:

- Engaging, convening and supporting critical constituencies
- Promoting quality standards and accountability
- Brokering and leveraging resources
- Promoting effective policies
- Serving as a secretariat, providing structure and protocols for meetings

A literature review revealed the necessary characteristics for a backbone organization, which include^{5, 6}:

- Must be neutral and focus must be on children through young adults
- Must have a convening power that can influence key leaders to come to the table
- Must be able to work with existing programs and clearly communicate with others
- Must have a strong relationship with others and act in a politically savvy manner to build trust
- Must be flexible and adaptable, creating and adjusting as needed
- Must have a commitment to evidence-based decision-making in order to continuously improve
- Must have a capacity for dedicated, sustained staff
- Must be willing to adhere to the work of the partnership
- Ideally, must be an existing organization from Hawai`i and preferably from Kaua`i County

⁵ Martin J. Blank, Betsy Brand, et.al., “Local Intermediary Organizations: Connecting the Dots for Children, Youth and Families”, <http://www.jff.org/publications/education/local-intermediary-organizations-connect/270>.

⁶ Strive Network, “Lessons Learned: Key Criteria for Selecting the Right Player to Lead,” http://strivenetwork.org/sites/default/files/images/LessonsLearnedSelecting%20RightPlayertoLead_0.pdf.

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- Must have the ability and connections to attract resources to support the initiative
- Connected with other anchor or intermediary organizations.

Several organizations within Hawai'i were considered. The Strategy Committee recommended Kaua'i Planning & Action Alliance as the backbone organization for this initiative and the recommendation was ratified by the Team.

Feasibility Assessment Leadership. The creative, dedicated individuals involved during the Keiki to Career feasibility assessment phase were:

Bill Arakaki	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Bridget Arume	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
LaVerne Bishop	Hale `Opio Kaua'i, Inc.
Jerry Brocklehurst	Leadership Kaua'i
Bev Brody	Get Fit Kauai Coalition
Nancy Budd	Law Offices of N.J. Budd; Board of Education
Lucille Calderon	Child & Family Service
Mason Chock	Kupu A'e
Helen Cox	Kaua'i Community College
Keith Cruickshank	Boys & Girls Club of Hawai'i
Barbara Curl	Kaua'i Aloha Foundation
Jennifer Easterly	
Scott Giarman	Kaua'i United Way
Daniel Hamada	Kapa'a High School
Mark Hubbard	
Jonathan Kalk	Kaua'i Community College & OCET
Kelly Knudsen	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Phyllis Kunimura	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Sharon Lasker	Regency at Puakea
Chuck Lasker	Social Kauai
Jessie Mahorney	
Lisa McDonald	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Lisa Mireles	Consultant, Kapa'a High School Smaller Learning Communities
Jan Miyamoto	Workforce Investment Board, County of Kaua'i
Brent Mizutani	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Owen Moe	Garden Island RC&D, Inc.
Thomas Noyes	Hawai'i Department of Health-Communities Putting Prevention to Work
Anna Peters	Good Beginnings Alliance
Kahealani Peters	Parenting Central Kaua'i
Chrissy Schechter	Kaua'i Family Magazine
Cathy Shanks	People Attentive to Children (PATCH)
Carol Shikada	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
Deborah Swartz	Kupu A'e
Deborah Ullman	Hawai'i State Dept. of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area
JoAnn Yukimura	County of Kaua'i, Council Services Division

III. BEYOND THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Three-Year Action Plan. Keiki to Career was fortunate to catch the attention of The Learning Coalition, a Honolulu-based foundation that supports public education reform. In June 2012 The Learning Coalition provided a grant to KPAA to hire a consultant, Karen Aka of Academy 21, to facilitate the development of a three-year action plan.

Work on that plan is nearly complete; its release is scheduled for April 2013. The draft plan is being shared with the Department of Education and service providers in March. It will be shared with the community in talk story sessions in April, followed by the implementation of the plan's activities. The plan will be available in April 2013 on the KPAA website www.kauainetwork.org.

Partnerships. During action planning, the Keiki to Career group has grown and now includes some 30 agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals. Partners involved will take responsibility for various aspects of the action plan so it becomes a truly collective effort.

Sources of Support. During and since the feasibility assessment process all involved in Keiki to Career have investigated sources of support for the backbone organization. Experience across the country has shown that the presence of a backbone organization is a vital element for a successful collective impact initiative. Yet many communities have found sustainable funding to be a challenge. Upon acceptance of the action plan nearing completion, The Learning Coalition will consider providing a three-year grant, if matching funds can be secured. The Department of Education-Kaua'i Complex Area has made a three-year pledge to provide partial support. The County of Kaua'i's Office of Economic Development approved a grant in March 2013 that will be used as a match to support the Year 1 implementation of the three-year action plan. Private foundation support has been received from the Marisla Fund of the Hawai'i Community Foundation to support Year 1. KPAA is exploring establishing a fund through the Hawai'i Community Foundation to which private donor contributions specifically for the Keiki to Career initiative – both for the backbone organization and to support participating program partners – can be made. We will continue to identify additional sources of support.

An Exciting Collaboration. The work of implementation is before us and it is exciting and humbling to think of the job ahead. The success of this initiative will rely on the dedication and commitment of the partners involved and the support and engagement of all sectors of the community as we collaborative to ensure that our young people from keiki to career are ready to learn and ready for life.