Kūlana Noiʻi

"A lot of the relationship building happens through having the same values. We recognize that they are busy but it means a lot when they come. Working side by side helps us to understand their question a little better."
KANALOA BISHOP

"The normal trajectory is that researchers develop the questions first and then say 'I want to do my research here'. We want to move towards questions that come from community and research done in collaboration with community."
DR. ROB TOONEN

"Getting dirty, physically being there, listening to voice, sitting and working alongside. It's not always built into people's schedules in the academic world – but you need to force it and sit and listen to understand the issues."
**PARTICIPANT
2017 HE'EIA SCIENCE
TO MANAGEMENT
SYMPOSIUM**

"It boils down to storytelling. The researchers are helping to tell our stories. Them coming to community work days helps them to tell their research stories better."
HI'ILEI KAWELO

"Whether you come from a place or not, if you want to do research in the area, you need to listen to the story that 'āina has to tell. Introduce yourself to 'āina; make a connection to have a relationship and kuleana. Spend time in 'āina so you can listen to what is needed."
**PARTICIPANT
2017 HE'EIA SCIENCE
TO MANAGEMENT
SYMPOSIUM**

"All we are asking for really is to build a good relationship and cleaning up after yourself."
KEAHI PI'IOHI'A

"Every place requires a certain way of acting. For community everything is guided by the place. The research questions are guided by place."
DR. MEHANA VAUGHAN

"It's hard when researchers are so focused on their own research and not the bigger fishpond picture. It's hard. We want people to think on a larger scale at the ahupua'a level."
KELI'I KOTUBETEY

"Scientists can be scared when they are not from here and not sure what to do or what the protocol is. Stewards can be welcoming and help show the best way to come and do research."
**PARTICIPANT
2017 HE'EIA SCIENCE
TO MANAGEMENT
SYMPOSIUM**

"Often times we think of research as an external thing but we do research ourselves. I want to encourage that. Research doesn't need to be only from the outside."
HI'ILEI KAWELO

Cover photo by: Doug Peebles, douglaspeebles.com

Hundreds of University of Hawaiʻi (UH) faculty and students conduct research projects focused on the natural resources of Hawaiʻi's upland, coastal, and marine ecosystems each year. However the consistency with which community perspectives and cultural practices are integrated into research efforts and decision-making processes that impact Hawaiʻi's resources and ecosystems is highly variable. In particular, these natural resources are integral to the livelihoods, cultural practices, and religious traditions of Native Hawaiians who in some cases have not had a voice in decision-making processes involving natural resource management.

With support from the University of Hawaiʻi SEED Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Success Program (IDEAS), the Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve, the University of Hawaiʻi Sea Grant College Program, and Kuaʻāina Ulu ʻAuamo (KUA) established a partnership with a goal of promoting more collaborative and mutually-beneficial partnerships between UH faculty and students conducting research and the local communities who care for and utilize natural resources. The Kūlana Noiʻi (Research Standards) are the result of these efforts and other past and current community-researcher engagement activities.

The Kūlana Noiʻi provide guidance for building and sustaining not just working partnerships but long-term relationships between communities and researchers. These kūlana (standards) are intended to be flexible enough to apply to a range of different communities and to reflect on the perspectives and responsibilities of both communities and researchers.

Each kūlana is broken down into more detailed best practices and guiding questions for discussion. The intention is to facilitate open conversation and clearly articulated expectations between community and researchers through an iterative process. For this process, we are defining community to include anyone connected to and caring for the places and resources impacted by research activities.

The Kūlana Noiʻi draw heavily from a process facilitated by KUA. In 2014, KUA convened an informal committee of friends, advisors, and emerging professionals to articulate thoughts and ideas about how to foster more equitable and productive relationships between communities and research entities (KUA Research Committee, 2014). KUA is a local nonprofit that serves as a backbone organization for community-based natural resources management, and this effort was initiated as a leaping point to empower community discussions around this topic. The committee's work is incorporated throughout this document.

The Kūlana Noiʻi also includes concepts from small group discussions during the 2017 Heʻeia Science to Management Symposium, workshops with stewards and researchers at the Heʻeia Fishpond, the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center Research Project Proposal Review Guidelines, the Waipā Research Guidelines, and the Molokaʻi Climate Change Collaboration Lessons Learned developed by Ka Honua Momona, and the greater body of academic literature on Community-based Participatory Research.

Mahalo

The Kūlana Noiʻi are rooted in the collective knowledge, insight, and many years of effort contributed by communities, organizations, and experts across Hawaiʻi. A special thanks to the individuals and organizations listed here. However, we regret that we cannot come close to acknowledging all those who contributed time, energy, and expertise to developing the Kūlana Noiʻi. Mahalo, we are humbled by your generosity.

Building and Nurturing Pilina

- **Respect:** The history, people, and place must be respected through understanding, acknowledging, and honoring local culture, traditions, knowledge, and wisdom.
- **Reciprocity:** The relationship between researchers and community should be reciprocal rather than extractive.
- **Self-Awareness and Capacity:** Be aware of and address your place, intentions, power, and value to the place both as an individual and a representative of a group or institution (such as a community organization, university, or government agency).
- **Communication:** Inclusive, transparent, and open communication throughout the research process.

A'o aku, a'o mai / Aloha aku, aloha mai

- **Maintain a Long-Term Focus:** All research projects should contribute positively to the effort to mālama (care for) this wahi (place).
- **Community Engagement and Co-Review:** Promote co-learning and co-development of methods, strategies, goals/objectives, and outputs/outcomes to be adaptable to local place, people, climate, resources, and needs.
- **Knowledge Ownership and Access:** Ownership of information and data about a place ultimately belongs to the community. The community has the right to access and utilize data as well as the right to determine how information and data are shared.
- **Accountability:** When a project fails to meet these kūlana the community and researchers should work together to identify problems and adjust the project accordingly.

Respect

The history, people, and place must be respected through understanding, acknowledging, and honoring local culture, traditions, knowledge, and wisdom.

Best Practices

- Respect and protect the interests of the community as the ultimate source and utilizers of research (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- All involved should know the history of people and places where the research is being conducted.
- Knowledge comes in many forms. Traditional and local community knowledge is valid and should be considered on par with data collected by researchers (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Be maka'ala (attentive) and listen as a way of demonstrating respect (He'eia Science to Management Symposium, 2017).
- Researchers should understand the importance of asking permission when entering a place or engaging with community, communicating your intentions with respect, and keeping the community informed of your activities. If denied permission, work to understand why and adjust (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Learn and understand cultural practices and protocol.
- Be cognizant of social roles and act accordingly (for example roles based on gender or age).
- Consider the physical impacts of research activities on the place. Include community in planning for when and where equipment will be deployed or sampling will occur. Remove all equipment and restore the site to its original condition after research is completed (Paepae o He'eia Kūlana Noi'i Workshop, 2017).

Guiding Questions

- What is the history of this place?
- What is the history of wrongs that occurred in this place?
- What are the significant ka'ao and mo'olelo (legends and stories) of this place? What are the wahi pana (storied and sacred places)? Who are the akua (gods), 'aumakua (ancestral guardians), and kūpuna (ancestors or elders) of this place?
- What are the traditional practices of this community?
- How is knowledge produced, recorded, and transmitted in the research context and community context? What or who are trusted sources of knowledge?
- What are the best ways to ask for permission to engage in this research and work?
- How will the place be physically impacted by research activities? How might those activities impact community interactions with place (restoration, resource use, ceremonies)? How can those impacts be mitigated or minimized?

Reciprocity

The relationship between researchers and community should be reciprocal rather than extractive.

Best Practices

- Those who learn from the land should also give back to the land. Researchers should support community efforts, work with the land, touch the land, and spend time hands on (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Community should communicate as clearly as possible to researchers their expectations and specific needs for support (for example participating in work days, conducting educational programing, assisting with grant writing, providing data for permits).
- Both researchers and community should be willing to serve as teachers. Researchers teaching community members and students about their research, even training them to participate, throughout the course of their study (Waipā ʻOhana & Vaughan, 2003). Community members sharing knowledge of the places they steward.
- Articulate the burden of labor and time asked of all project partners. Be mindful of the time communities give for meetings, talk stories, presentations at any scale (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Agree on a method for compensating community members adequately for their contributions and time, if needed. Compensation does not always need to be monetary but can include time spent with the community and supporting their efforts (for example volunteering at work days, attending fundraising events, training staff in research methods) (Paepae o Heʻeia Kūlana Noiʻi Workshop, 2017).
- Researchers should share information about academic deadlines and calendars with the community. Community members should be mindful of the implications of these timelines (for example conducting research in a timely manner so that students can graduate).
- Share the budget fairly among partners (Burhansstipano, Christopher, & Schumacher, 2005)
- Community and researchers should be full collaborators in projects. Researchers may consider including a representative of the community as a Co-Principal Investigator on the project.

Guiding Questions

- How will those involved in the research contribute to the community?
- What investment is being asked of the community and researchers at each stage in the research process (time, labor, etc.)?
- How will community be compensated for their investments?
- How will the budget be allocated among partners?
- What are the direct benefits of research to the community? When and how will the community access those benefits?
- How can community and researchers continue to nurture the reciprocal relationships built through projects? (Oliveira & Wright, 2016)

Self-Awareness and Capacity

Be aware of and address your place, intentions, power, and value to the place both as an individual and a representative of a group or institution, such as a community organization, university, or government agency (KUA Research Committee, 2014; Fletcher, 2003).

Best Practices
- Recognize that a relationship between community and researchers is a long term commitment that requires time and effort to build trust. Do not commit to a relationship if you are uncertain about your ability follow through on that commitment (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Know yourself, your intentions, your value to the place in which you work. These can be evolving, but be aware and use this knowledge to work thoughtfully and effectively (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Introduce yourself as an individual (for example who you are, where you come from, what motivates you, not just your professional title or role) (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Be cognizant of differences between the worlds of the researcher and the community (different time scales, webs of relationships, research priorities, vested interests).
- Recognize that your actions can affect a web of relationships (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Acknowledge that research is not culturally neutral (National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center, 2009).
- Community-based work should be grounded in human rights, social and environmental justice, and equity (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Be attentive to the capacity of other project partners (try not to be unrealistic) and your own personal capacity (avoid overpromising) (KUA Research Committee, 2014).

Guiding Questions
- For researchers:
  - Do you see this as a long-term focus of your research? What are your other commitments?
  - How do your intentions, research, and long term commitment align and support the short and long term goals of the community and the place?
  - What obligations to specific communities, families, individuals, and places do you have in this project? How can you mālama the relationships that precede and extend beyond this particular research project? (Oliveira & Wright, 2016)

- For community:
  - How might this research impact the web of relationships in the community? (KUA Research Committee, 2014)
  - How will the research project contribute to the long term priorities and needs of the community and the place?
  - How will the place and the community benefit from entering into a relationship with the individual conducting the research? With the institution(s) they represent?

Communication

Inclusive, transparent, and open communication throughout the research process.

Best Practices

- Establish clearly defined points of contact for both the community and the research team (He'eia Science to Management Symposium, 2017).
- Identify an emergency contact from both the community and the research team (e.g. who to call if a storm endangers equipment).
- Researchers should consider the community's preference for methods of communication (for example phone calls versus emails, structured presentations versus one-on-one conversations, etc.).
- Agree ahead of time on a plan outlining how and when community and researchers will communicate (e.g., monthly updates, quarterly updates).
- Use language that is accessible to both community and researchers.
- Researchers should be proactive in conducting outreach (working with community organizations, clubs, church groups, and community events) rather than expecting community members to always come to researchers with needs or problems
- Account for diverse characteristics in the community and other stakeholders, including but not limited to: customary practices, traditional/local knowledge and interests, gender, age, ethnic group, language, origin, livelihood, and community engagement type.
- Consider how to reach out not only to community leaders, but also those who want to have a voice but may not be active or comfortable in public forums and can be engaged in other ways (KUA Research Committee, 2014).

Guiding Questions

- What does the community look like (diversity of practices, traditions, gender, age, language, origin, livelihood)? How can communication strategies be tailored to fit that diversity? What are the community's preferred methods for communicating?
- What is the plan for communication at each stage in the research project (pre-project planning, implementation, and sharing results)?
- How often during the research process will the community receive updates? How long after project completion will results be shared and in what format?
- Who should be contacted in an emergency both from the community and the research team?

Maintain a Long-Term Focus

All research projects should contribute positively to the effort to mālama the ahupuaʻa (KUA Research Committee, 2014).

Best Practices

- Approach all research as an opportunity for education, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in the community.
- Researchers should understand that community members are inextricably linked to the ʻāina (land) and that they will maintain this connection for the rest of their lives: the decisions made now will affect future moʻopuna (descendants) (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Strive to understand the potential short and long term impacts of a project on all systems (social, cultural, political, economic, and ecological) to improve decision-making for past, current, and future generations (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Think about the potential long-term impacts of a project on decision-making and the community's ability to adapt to change.
- Articulate the direct and immediate benefits of research as well as the potential harms to the community.
- Identify ahead of time how the community will access benefits and how potential harms will be addressed.
- Researchers should be open to adjusting project plans to provide greater benefit to the community or reduce harms.
- If appropriate for the scope of the study, think about what measures can be put into place to sustain the research after funding ends. Engage community in discussions and plans for using research results to influence and improve action, decision-making, and policy change (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Focus research on issues of importance to the community. Researchers should work to organize and empower community members to identify and communicate their concerns, questions and needs (KUA Research Committee, 2014). Community should work to identify research questions and concerns that are important to them.
- Consider what members of the research team have the ability to make long-term commitments to community partnership and how that impacts outreach and communication plans (Paepae o Heʻeia Kūlana Noiʻi Workshop, 2017).

Guiding Questions

- How will this research contribute to capacity building, education, and knowledge exchange in the community?
- What measures can be taken to help sustain research and knowledge exchange beyond the funding cycle of the specific project?
- How can this research and the knowledge generated influence or improve stewardship and policy at multiple scales (local, county, state)?
- How can this research contribute to the community's ability to adapt to change?
- What are the full implications of this research? Consider short and long-term implications; negative and positive implications; ecological, social, economic, and political implications.
- What are the potential harms of this research to the community?

Community Engagement and Co-Review

Promote co-learning and co-development of methods, strategies, goals/ objectives, and outputs/outcomes to be adaptable to local place, people, climate, resources, and needs (KUA Research Committee, 2014).

Best Practices

- Plan for ongoing consultation and collaboration between community and researchers. Ideally, this should begin well before the start of the project and continue after the project is completed so that every stage of research reflects community perspectives (Ka Honua Momona).
- Create opportunities for the community to actively engage and participate in the research. This can include: research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting and publications (co-authors), and outreach (co-presenters) (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Involve the community in field research where possible (for example training, apprenticeship, hiring of community members especially local youth to work on the project).
- Knowledge generated by co-research should be packaged for publication and public disclosure in a collaborative manner between community members and researchers.
- Agree on a process for community involvement in developing research products to ensure confidentiality of sensitive information and accurate portrayal of community participation in the project. This can take multiple forms such as a review board, consultation with community leaders, or regularly scheduled progress update meetings (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- All research products should have final approval from the community.
- Build capacity in the community to lead their own research projects (Paepae o Heʻeia Kūlana Noiʻi Workshop, 2017).
- Build flexibility into engagement plans, unexpected changes will come up both on the part of researchers and community members (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Integrate local cultural traditional knowledge into research while also being mindful of knowledge ownership and confidentiality concerns.
- Acknowledge community contributions to research and products (for example credits in presentations, authorship in papers, and representation at presentations).

Guiding Questions

- What will be the process for community involvement in knowledge generated by the project? How will the community review and provide input into presentations, papers, and other research products?
- How can research practices and procedures be modified to be culturally respectful and acceptable to the local community?
- How does the research project develop capacity in the community? How does it contribute to self-sufficiency and self-determination?
- What skills, information, or materials does the community need to conduct their own research? How can researchers support community led research?
- What are potential disconnects in timeline, benefits, goals, and outcomes of the project for the community and researchers? How can these disconnects be addressed?
- How will community contributions to research be acknowledged?

Knowledge, Ownership, and Access

Ownership of information and data about a place ultimately belongs to the community. The community has the right to access and utilize data as well as the right to determine how information and data are shared.

Best Practices
- Before research begins, develop a clear plan for data and information sharing and ownership. Establish agreements about plans for publications, credit, authorship, and intellectual property (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Plan for long-term stewardship and ownership of project data and information collected. This should include sharing data with community members in a format that is useful to them.
- Researchers should understand the community's perception of the sensitivity of data being collected. Establish mechanisms and protocols to maintain confidentiality of both participants and sensitive data (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Ownership of data and information about a place ultimately should belong to the community (Ka Honua Momona).
- If appropriate, in light of the communication plans and confidentiality protocol agreed upon by researchers and community, consider creative ways to share to research findings (for example photo books, videos, newsletters, and websites).

Guiding Questions
- What data and information will be generated by this project?
- How will it be stored, analyzed, and managed throughout the project and after the project's completion? Who will have access to this data?
- Will information generated by the project be publicly accessible? In what format? When will it be available and for how long?
- In what format will information and data be most useful to the community (this may change across different segments of the community)?
- What will be the timeline for information sharing?
- Who owns the information? Who has input or control over how information is shared and used?
- What information and data should be considered confidential? How will that confidentiality be maintained?
- What are the potential consequences of outside entities accessing information generated by this project (for example government agencies, insurance companies, media, and funders)?
- What is the plan for developing project products and what are the roles and responsibilities of the community and researchers in this process (for example authorship of papers or community involvement in presentations)?
- How will local cultural traditional knowledge be integrated into the research project while also maintaining confidentiality and intellectual property rights?

Accountability

When a project fails to meet these kūlana the community and researchers should work together to identify problems and adjust the project accordingly.

Best Practices

- Recognize that problems and misunderstanding will come up. Agree on a process for communicating when a project or relationship is not working and identify strategies to correct the problem.
- All research should be undertaken with the understanding that final approval from the community will be required before studies are published (KUA Research Committee, 2014).
- Identify a trusted individual or organization to help facilitate open communication and act as a mediator when issues come up.

Guiding Questions

- What is the process for community members or researchers to communicate that they feel a project is not meeting the Kūlana Noiʻi or other agreed upon standards?
- What is the process resolving problems when behavior is not aligned with the kūlana?
- What individuals or organizations might serve as neutral facilitators to help resolve issues?

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