



who we are

Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike is an award-winning construction skills training program for at-risk youth in Hāna, Maui, an isolated community on the island's east coast with over two-thirds its population of Native Hawaiian ancestry.

our approach

We teach academic subjects through real-life, hands-on application, where students can understand the concepts they're learning through tangible examples. But these aren't just examples for learning's sake. Our projects meet real school and community needs, so our students' education immediately serves all those whose lives it touches.

self-sustenance, sustainability

These are some of the principles we aim to pass on to the next generation, as we create caretakers of our community, future leaders of our islands.

our mission

To provide at-risk youth with a way to learn that makes sense to them, that builds their self-esteem and shows them they have the power to change their future.



how to help

Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, run solely by grants, private donations, and in-kind support.

A collaborative effort, we partner with public and private foundations, government agencies, individual donors, island businesses, and local building experts, who provide funding and donations of materials, tools, and time—we couldn't do it without everyone's generous *kōkua*.



To support our work, please contact us:

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Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike

"In Working, One Learns"

On the outside,
we build structures—
on the inside,
we're building lives.



what we do



It started at school—a way to teach academics beyond the “four walls,” where students can see the concepts they’re learning come to life. It’s how we change our youth’s relationship with learning—and with themselves.

As one first-year student said: *“I feel like I can do something in school when I go to building class.”*



taking learning outside

Building and construction is now part of the Hāna High curriculum through our programs. After school, students work for stipends, part in cash, part in credit toward tools—an investment in their future.

a formula for success

By teaching that work is more than just trading hours for a paycheck, or just doing “good enough,” our youth discover pride in accomplishment. Striving for excellence becomes a way of life, and the feeling of success becomes one they want to repeat—again and again. In the words of a parent: *“They don’t even know it yet, but you’re instilling a seed within them that will last a lifetime.”*

positive alternatives

Under the guidance of skilled mentors and cultural experts, our students experience the power of *laulima*, many hands working together. It’s a new way to “feel good” without turning to drugs or alcohol, to feel hopeful about the future.



“Creating something so beautiful makes me feel proud.” —second-year student

strengthening community caretaking kūpuna



By adding community projects to our curriculum, we give our students the experience of helping and being valued by others, with the aim of getting youth “high on giving”—hooked on the feeling of helping others for life.

- When a roof caves in due to years of rot, or when an uncle is rushed to the hospital and needs his home to now be handicap accessible, our student builders are the rapid response team.
- The many kūpuna (elder) cottages our youth have built are helping solve our local housing crisis, one kupauna at a time.

*“I’m now known as a person who made a difference in my community . . .”
—fourth-year student*



- Creating a ramp, bathroom safety rail, or doorway enlargement for a wheelchair or walker means an elder can “age in place,” instead of being relocated to a nursing home on the other side of the island.

Our focus on kōkua (helping others) forges bonds between generations, and reestablishes the role of our youth as strong, capable caretakers of their community.



awards

• 2010 •
Hawai’i State Governor’s
INNOVATION AWARD

• 2009 •
Hāna Community’s
TINY MALAIKINI MEA KŌKUA AWARD

• 2009 •
Maui County Council’s
RESOLUTION FOR NATIONAL TV COVERAGE ON
THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

• 2004 •
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement’s
NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR AWARD

• 2001 •
The Maui News’
1 OF 10 PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Past Projects:

On Campus—
Alternative Energy Lab
Athletic Trainers’ Complex
Bamboo Pavilion
Computer Lab
Counselors’ Quarters
Hāna Arts Facility
Polynesian Pavilion
Principal’s Office
Substance-Abuse Center

In the Community—
Dialysis Center
Recording Studio
Senior Center Wing
Sober Living House
Youth Center Remodel
Kūpuna Services:
Cottages, Safety
Improvements,
Solar Energy Systems

“three-day house”

When the family home of a single mother of five unexpectedly burnt to the ground, the whispers began: *“Could we build them a new house?”*

In just a few days, the students’ ideas were turned into drawings and plans, and the whispers became confident statements: *“Thanksgiving weekend.” “Three-day house.” “We can do anything!”* Calls were made to local contractors, island suppliers, friends and relatives. Lumber, windows, and roofing appeared on trucks sent from the other side of the island. By the end of the week, 40 volunteers were ready for work.

On the morning after Thanksgiving, amidst blowing rain and wind, 80 eager hands began sawing, drilling, hammering, and sanding. Platters of food poured in from kitchens all over Hāna. By the time night fell on Sunday evening, the last shingle was pounded into place. A home had miraculously risen from the ground.

“Teamwork is what it takes. We need to work as a family.” —third-year student

“Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike changed me by making Hāna a better place, and myself a better person.” —graduate apprentice

a sustainable future

By training our students on green design, they’re learning how to maximize the natural assets of our island environment; by teaching about renewable and local materials and resources, youth discover that sustainability is not new—it’s the tradition of their ancestors.

skills of self-sustenance

We teach not just job skills but life skills, to prepare youth for any future endeavor—whether employment, higher education, or the ability to build their own structures. We also train students on traditional woodworking crafts, such as canoe paddles and *‘ukulele*, to perpetuate Native Hawaiian heritage. And to address our isolated region’s need for both shelter and food security, we offer a sustainable agriculture component, where students experience the same hands-on principles as in our core building programs.

tomorrow’s leaders

By bringing youth and community together, we’re developing role models in our students. And once graduated, older students are invited back, to be apprentices and mentors to our younger kids.

In the words of a community recipient of one of our training projects, *“You give a hungry man some fish, you feed him for a day, however, you teach him how to fish and you feed him for life. Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike is an investment that can be utilized for a lifetime.”*

