Program Overview

A program of Kupu and Kōkua Hawai‘i Foundation, the Hawai‘i Youth Sustainability Challenge is an initiative that empowers Hawai‘i youth to create solutions to conservation and sustainability challenges in their schools and communities. Students in grades 9-12 receive funding, coaching, and training to support their innovative and grassroots environmental initiatives.

This year, "Readiness Workshops" were piloted to better prepare students for HYSC by providing them with inspiration, support, and technical assistance; new Community Partner Challenges were tackled; and training sessions were held to ensure impactful and successful project implementation. The new HYSC logo was also unveiled (see above right!)

### By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>$10,980</th>
<th>Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Funds Awarded</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Student Leads</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223</td>
<td>Active Student Participants</td>
<td>1,751</td>
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</tbody>
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### List of Awarded Schools

**Hawai‘i Island**
- Hawai‘i Preparatory Academy  
  - Nutritious and Delicious: Helping One Kid at a Time ($1,000) *
- West Hawai‘i Explorations Academy  
  - Mushroom Cold Ag ($200)

**Independent**
- Seed 2 School ($1,000) +
- Sustainability Squares ($500)

**O‘ahu**
- Campbell High School  
  - Sustainable Water Based Energy ($975)
- Hawai‘i Technology Academy  
  - Coral Reef Rover Project ($700) *
  - DTM (Defend The Mano) ($400)

**O‘ahu Cont.**
- Kaiser High School  
  - Backyard Native Seed Orchard for Conservation ($450) *
- Kalani High School  
  - Beseech the Beach and Keep its Reach ($150)
- Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama  
  - Health Through the ‘Āina ($200)
  - Wave Energy Buoy ($990)
- Kapolei High School  
  - Mālamalama Pālehua ($500) +
- Maryknoll High School  
  - Mālama Hawai‘i’s Animals ($720) *

**Nānākuli High School**
- Restoration of the Sacred Pu‘uloa ($400) *
- Cardboard Shreddahz! ($1,000)

**Punahou School**
- The Kōkua Tree ($990)

**Sacred Hearts Academy**
- Climate Change: Lets Get Involved! ($55) *

**Waipahu High School**
- Think Globally, Act Locally ($750)
PROGRAM IMPACT

Reflecting upon their projects, the impact they had in their schools and communities, and their overall involvement in HYSC, of student participants:

91% felt their project helped increase their environmental awareness/understanding

86% feel a greater responsibility for stewarding our environmental resources

95% are encouraged to continue to volunteer or serve their school or community

82% built and/or strengthened connections with other students in their school and community

100% improved their leadership and communication skills

"I have really enjoyed being part of HYSC and I have learned so many valuable tools and made endless connections that I know will serve me well as I go into college and eventually my career. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity"
- Olivia Rose, Hawai‘i Preparatory Academy

"What HYSC did for me, is give me an opportunity to "get a taste" of [the conservation] field. I am now more passionate about sustainability, and the impact I can make on our future through this kind of work"
- Kaylee Osbun, Kamehameha Schools - Kapālama

"I like that students are given the resources and help they need to create projects that can positively impact their community. Giving students the platform and resources they need is invaluable experience and will hopefully encourage more students to take problems into their own hands and create future solutions"
- HYSC Student, Independent

"Knowing that we were able to make a difference one step at a time was the most fulfilling thing about participating in HYSC. Also, being a part of something bigger than ourselves"
- Sean Valencia, Waipahu High School

"I liked the opportunity to make my ideas come true as without [HYSC] I would’ve never tried the project"
- Nick McTurnan, Campbell High School

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COMMUNITY PARTNER CHALLENGES

This year, we had 4 teams take on new “Community Partner Challenges” in which organizations from across the state identified the top problems they confront that would benefit from creative solutions developed by students.

- **Climate Change: Let’s Get Involved!**: Tehana Maurice and Tehya Ordonez, Sacred Hearts Academy + Elemental Excelerator. Tehana and Tehya created curriculum about Climate Change that they presented to lower grades in their school. They also tree-mapped their school’s campus to create a tree inventory.

- **Coral Reef Rover Project**: Sincere Bolling, Hawaiʻi Technology Academy + Mālama Maunalua. Sincere worked on prototyping a rover to monitor the health of coral reefs. He intends for the rover to be fully autonomous and utilize AI to analyze data to determine the health of coral.

- **Mālama Hawaiʻi’s Animals**: Ethan Kimura, Maryknoll High School + National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Ethan designed and developed an interactive game to teach tourists and locals alike about safe viewing distances for the endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal.

- **Restoration of the Sacred Puʻuloa**: Khrysdyn Kalaau, Nānākuli High and Intermediate School + Mālama Puʻuloa. Khrysdyn created planting kits to distribute to local families to grow akulikuli that will be out-planted to promote native plant growth and land restoration.

Mahalo to all of our community partners who submitted challenges for HYSC 21-22!
CREATING LASTING LEGACIES

We had 4 projects return to HYSC this year to build upon past years' work. Projects were either continued by students involved with the project previously or they were handed down to new students taking on the kuleana (responsibility) their peers piloted.

- **Backyard Native Seed Orchard for Conservation**: Yongjin Lee, Kaiser High School. Yongjin built upon the work he started last year in his school's native plant garden by researching information on the plants he helped grow that was then incorporated into informational signs installed in the garden to help increase student knowledge of the plants.

- **Mālamalama Pālehua**: Kainui Walker and David Ornellas, Kapolei High School. Kainui and David continued the work started by Pono Bailey last year with HYSC by removing invasive plants, planting over 120 native plants, seed banking lama seeds, and expanding the site's fire barrier. They also arranged 5 volunteer days to care for the site at Pālehua.

- **Nutritious and Delicious: Helping One Kid at a Time**: Olivia Rose, Hawai‘i Preparatory Academy. Olivia took on and expanded the produce box project started by last year's HYSC student, Sarah Newcomb. Olivia developed the produce boxes into a cohesive meal kit that includes all necessary ingredients to make a complete meal sourced from locally grown and produced food.

- **Seed 2 School**: Tyler Levine, Independent. Tyler expanded her work around seed saving by piloting an app that would connect teachers from schools across the islands to facilitate the exchange of seeds. She also sent seed saving kits and presented to classes about the importance of seed saving.

83% of teams want their HYSC project to continue in some capacity.
This year offered new trainings and supports to provide student teams with tools to strengthen their HYSC projects and continue them beyond the term of the program. These virtual training sessions to hone and develop skills covered topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion; project planning; and effective communication and community engagement. Mahalo to our amazing training partners: Elemental Excelerator, Ceeds of Peace, Connect Consulting, and Nā Hopena Consulting!

**1. EQUITY IN/EQUITY OUT - DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

**2. SMART GOALS & ACTION PLANNING**

**3. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**4. ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATIONS**

Teams were also introduced to partner organizations that could provide opportunities for further funding and mentorship to promising projects. This year, Landon Choy and Ethan Kimura are continuing their projects through VentureLab’s Spark Mentorship Program and Landon is participating in a summer STEMworks Internship.

**Right**: Landon (far left) at the national Junior Science and Humanities Symposium where he presented his project. **Far Right**: Ethan coding his project.

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Seven (7) exemplary student teams presented (virtually) at the Hawai‘i Conservation Conference (HCC) in July 2022. Teams presented their outstanding work during a special 1-hour forum called "Teens Creating Conservation Innovations: Students Share Their Hawai‘i Youth Sustainability Challenge Projects." Participating in HCC provides students with the opportunity to share their ideas with a larger audience and begin building a network of conservation professionals they can draw from going forward.

The Presenting Teams:
- **Backyard Native Seed Orchard for Conservation**: Yongjin Lee, Kaiser High School
- **Nutritious and Delicious: Helping One Kid at a Time**: Olivia Rose, Hawai‘i Preparatory Academy
- **The Kōkua Tree**: Sophie Chen and Shay Mokulehua, Punahou School
- **Health Through the ‘Āina**: Kaylee Osbun, Kamehameha Schools - Kapālama
- **Climate Change: Let’s Get Involved!**: Tehana Maurice, Sacred Hearts Academy
- **Project Save Hawai‘i’s Animals**: Ethan Kimura, Maryknoll High School
- **Wave Energy Buoy**: Landon Choy, Kamehameha Schools - Kapālama

"One of the best forums I’ve watched yet!"
- Session Attendee

"This program was super helpful in taking my project from a starting idea to where it is now"
- Sophie Chen, Punahou School
  HCC Presenter

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