

Hawai`i Village of Hope: Using Technology to Build Community Capacity

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Abstract: The vision of a Hawai`i Village of Hope relies on using technology to build community capacity to attract and coordinate an optimal mix of professionals who are aligned to the specific needs of the target audience of homeless individuals. A major challenge for Waianae CARE in designing and developing the Hawai`i Village of Hope is in working with the homeless while respecting the cultural ties and values at the core of Pacific Rim island societies. Eight strategies with corresponding events to build social capital and community capacity are outlined. Trust is also key to building a bridge between generations. The recognition of the generational differences in interests, technology skill sets, financial mindsets, and choices of Millennials and Gen Z are being addressed as intergenerational communication in a long term, community capacity building plan that measures success in future sustainability and maximization of resources.

Introduction

Technology in community building has become a valuable tool for a small non-profit in the middle of the Pacific Ocean that relies solely on retired volunteers, who aspire to drive change in high poverty communities and combat the reality of scarce resources and competitiveness of funding opportunities.

Building community begins with growing social capital through interaction with culturally diverse groups, homeless populations, and their extended families. Community building aligns closely with the mission of Waianae CARE: *to drive action and to inspire an attitude of responsiveness within the community to empower homeless individuals to live more self-sufficient lives.*

Over a decade ago at Harvard University, Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen (2003) shared in their civic engagement report *Better Together*, “As we searched out case studies of *social capital* formation, we found new communications technologies to be most important as support and stimulus for long-standing forms of community, rather than as instigators of radically new virtual communities” (p. 292). Social capital (in the context of this plan) refers to “networks and bonds of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action” (Saguaro Report, 2001, p. 94).

The literature supports the importance of building community capacity and social capital (Noya, Clarence, & Craig, 2009) and empowering families in rural areas to work with persons who have severe mental challenges (Tse, Ran, & Huang, 2013). It also encourages individuals in communities who want to make a difference to use technology: “The best practices of community technology see community members as active producers of community information and content” (Pinkett, 2003, p. 366). Therefore, Waianae CARE developed a community capacity building plan highlighting the use of technology to reach across multiple generations in island communities that often prefer being an oral-based society.

Community Need for a Hawai`i Village of Hope

“For all of our advances in health care and achievements in public health that have contributed to an increased life expectancy, there still remain persistent problems in one’s community that are public health in origin. These persistent public health problems are well studied from an academic standpoint, yet they evade a solution that is practical, economical, and socially just. These are complex, community-based, public health problems that disproportionately impact minority and immigrant populations. Often, the stakeholders that comprise the public health system hold opposing views on not only whether there is a public health problem in the community, but

who ‘owns’ or is responsible for addressing this problem. Furthermore, those community residents are often not invited to join the discussion and be a part of the solution” (Caron & Merrick, 2012, p. 2).

According to Governor David Ige of Hawai`i in his 2017 *State of the State Address*: “We’ve also added \$75 million in gap financing for more affordable rentals throughout the state. My budget for the next two years proposes to invest \$123.4 million to promote new housing starts.”

The State of Hawai`i is trying to assist with affordable housing initiatives; and some legislators have taken an aggressive stance, calling for analysis figures on actual housing development costs to meet the homelessness problem. One such estimate, submitted by Senate Housing Chairman Will Espero in a proposal, was \$2 billion. However, according to figures from Scott Morishige, the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, “On homelessness, lawmakers set aside \$16.6 million for 2018, well above the \$12 million spent in 2017. They only set aside about \$4 million for 2019, but advocates have a chance to push for more money next year.”

Hawai`i in 2017 still has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the nation. According to the 2017 Hawai`i Statewide *Point in Time (PIT) Count*, the numbers on Oahu are as follows:

Total unsheltered persons experiencing homeless	2324
Family individuals experiencing homelessness	1847
Unsheltered and chronically experiencing homelessness	1004
Veterans experiencing homelessness	449
Unsheltered chronically homeless veterans	117

Due to these large numbers above, it is more reasonable to design and build low density, temporary living facilities for persons and families who are used to living homeless on sidewalks, door stoops, in bushes, on beaches, under bridges and viaducts, near harbors, under tarps, and in small tents. While they are living in temporary housing, the homeless can then receive detox, treatment, preventative services and even vocational training to move them forward in life. In the way we envision, the Village of Hope could begin with a small number of residents and expand incrementally when it has assessed that residents are receiving the targeted services they require under a controlled design of detox, treatment and temporary housing.

Using Technology to Build Community Capacity for a Hawai`i Village of Hope

The vision of a Hawai`i Village of Hope relies on using technology to build community capacity to attract and coordinate an optimal mix of professionals who are aligned to the specific needs of the target audience of homeless individuals. “It is important to recognize that meaningful community capacity building does not focus on “top-down” or imposed interventions and activities, but rather emphasizes the importance of community capacity building as a tool for the identification of “bottom-up goals” - ones which are owned by the community” (Noya et al., 2009, p. 11).

Some individuals have been so devastated by the deluge of well-intentioned persons trying to assist them that they would prefer to have little or no contact with the world outside of their own homeless communities; their trust is very low towards anyone who is not like them. Volunteers must be carefully selected to work in the Village of Hope because taking care of homeless individuals not only demands a lot of attention but also a high level of training, patience, and dedication.

An online mentor network, including engagement teams to recruit homeless persons into Hawai`i Village of Hope, will be developed by a partner agency and available to help Volunteers identify the best strategies to handle difficult situations that arise when homeless persons are suddenly brought into an environment with walls. “Using social networking to find out how someone with personal experience of mental illness has learned to function again and find a new role in life may inspire others and help combat stigma” (Tse et al., 2013, p. 615). Because one issue regarding the homeless is their lack of self confidence and trust with outsiders, it is imperative that volunteers learn how to bond (honestly) with residents of Hawai`i Village of Hope for quicker rehabilitation and future employment.

Eight strategies with corresponding events to build social capital and community capacity are outlined below:

Webinars. Board members regularly attend national webinars online that promote viable solutions for homeless populations. Key points learned in webinars are discussed at Board meetings to identify possible areas for possible grants to local foundations and the Hawai'i Chamber of Commerce around the theme of public health. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council (NHCHC) holds webinars online such as "Demonstrating Value: Measuring the Value and Impact of the Health Care for the Homeless Grantees". The Sanford Institute of Philanthropy holds webinars for non-profits like "Cause Selling: Building Donor Loyalty". Board members register for webinars and email lists to collect state-of-the-art information on policy and develop social capital through new relationships with others engaged in working with homeless populations under similar conditions.

Community Forums. In 2018, the Waianae CARE Board members will invite everyone on the Leeward Coast of Oahu to attend a community forum supported by technology and visually documented by knowledge workers on iPads. The focus will be on generating ideas that are culturally sensitive in building social capital to help their homeless neighbors. During the actual forum discussions, "knowledge workers" will capture and record verbal and nonverbal cues of forum participants in "real time" and scribe this data on free-standing white boards with color marking pens. These unobtrusive white boards will be located behind the community group engaging in the forum activities, where it will not be visible during the two-part sessions. At break time between (and after) sessions, the participants will be invited to read the white boards and insert additional comments for clarification of issues around the forum's theme. A visual report will be created from the whiteboard content through digital photos, videos of key discussion points, and disseminated through social media and the Waianae CARE website.

Content materials for the community forum will include a list of "150 things you can do to build social capital" from the highly relevant Saguaro Seminars at the Harvard Kennedy School and Saguaro Report funded by

- The Brookings Institution
- The Carnegie Corporation of NY
- The Ford Foundation
- The Getty Research Institute
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The Lilly Endowment, Inc.
- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Inc.
- The Rockefeller Foundation
- The Charles Steward Mott Foundation
- Sol y Sombra
- The Surdna Foundation
- The Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund

Social Media on Facebook. The President of Waianae CARE created a Facebook page for recording participation in local events such as health fairs, The CAPS Project for teenagers, and the Convoy of Hope. Now community members are using it to "talk story" about personal and professional experiences related to local issues of homelessness, as identified in the community forums. The roll out campaign for collecting stories is in progress; and permissions for sharing these stories are at the legal stage. Agencies will contribute anonymous anecdotes about how their work has made a difference in the lives of their clients at the Hawai'i Village of Hope.

This social media experience will be modeled on the "The Community Health Center Story: a multi-media website of historical documents, photographs, videotaped oral histories, and written histories, which is inclusive of Community, Migrant, Homeless, and Public Housing Health Centers" (RCHN Community Health Foundation, 2017).

Clearinghouse of Newsletters. The person in charge of the Waianae CARE community capacity building plan has developed a database clearinghouse of newsletters showcasing diverse community efforts across the nation to address the needs and issues of populations experiencing homelessness. This relational database will be hosted on the Waianae CARE website with easy access using website links, eventually expanding the database to include search abilities online. Readers will be encouraged to rate the clearinghouse of newsletters for applicability to our local needs in Hawai`i.

Multi-Generational Appreciation Day. The Chairman of the Board of Waianae CARE has “tapped into” his personal and professional networks to facilitate partnerships with other agencies, non-profits and church groups in the creation of an annual event focusing on a “multi-generational appreciation and thankfulness” for the gift of health. It is anticipated that this event will occur during the Makahiki season, when Native Hawai`ians celebrate the “bounty of the land”. For the past seven decades, the State of Hawai`i has also celebrated this season with its Aloha Festivals in September involving block parties, entertainers, and parades with a Hawai`ian Royal Court.

According to the United Health Foundation (2016), overall “Hawai`i ranks as nation’s healthiest state for the fifth straight year”. This one-day event would also include a Health Fair area coordinated by Waianae CARE, where homeless families, kupunas, and elders can have their vision, blood pressure, vitals, and motor abilities checked by doctor and nurse Volunteers. The focus of this one-day event is not on non-profit or commercial wellness products or services, as with similar events. Instead it is simply on expressing “appreciation and thankfulness” across generations for homeless families and elders with little or no incomes.

Connecting Kupunas to ‘Ohana via iPads and FaceTime. Volunteers at the Multi-Generational Appreciation Day will create intergenerational projects with children and older citizens (kupunas and elders) to share stories of what it was like when the older generation was young growing up in Hawai`i, promoting bonding in groups. For island communities, holistic health also means sharing time with ‘ohana. Many families and elders have biological and hānai children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren in extended family units who do not live on Oahu or close by in their community. They do not have the ability to see or talk with them very often, if at all.

Teenage and college-age Volunteers help kupunas connect to their families on other islands or across the ocean, using FaceTime video on iPads. A “sign in” sheet for the event has been designed with a “tear off” list of information about Waianae CARE’s community partners, mentoring opportunities, sustainability programs like aquaponics, and iPad workshops. If the attendees do not know the email address or phone number of their loved ones, the Volunteer can search (and with their signed permission, notate it on the “sign in” sheet).

In addition, once a month, teenage and college-age Volunteers will continue to build relationships with kupunas and elders across Oahu by working on-on-one to teach them how to use iPads during technology workshops. This will provide older generations with a simple level of skills to “look up” medical concerns on healthcare apps, provide feedback online to community issues for local and state agencies, and utilize a free email account.

Aquaponics and Sustainability. Volunteers at the Multi-Generational Appreciation Day will demonstrate how environmentally friendly, and sustainable, farming with aquaponics is for our islands with a sample system set up in a tent. Zoom video-conferencing “field trips” will be arranged for individuals to visit aquaponics farms online. Names and email addresses will be collected of interested individuals for use in future opt-in email campaigns.

Experts at aquaponics farming will be interviewed online in real-time to provide answers to questions from individuals starting their own aquaponics systems, of any size. Interviews will be recorded with permission from the experts and hosted online for future use by anyone interested in this system. Successful aquaponics farms will be photographed and posted online with voice overs by Waianae CARE Board members to document the most effective layouts and symbiotic energy exchanges between water and land based organisms in Hawai`i. For example, many aquaponics systems include fish in their set-ups. The Hawai`i Village of Hope will also have an aquaponics garden where homeless persons will learn how to grow flowers and food, not only a future job skill but also as therapy in healing their mental health issues stemming from long term drug and alcohol addictions.

Keiki (Children) and Parker the Bear (Augmented Reality). Recently, Waianae CARE Board members, along with educational Volunteers, have gone into preschools and kindergartens to engage children in role playing as hospital teams: i.e., children donned medical jackets as part of their role on the "hospital team". Each day, the students rotated between four medical roles (doctor, doctor-in training, nurse, and nurse trainee) using inexpensive stethoscopes to work with Parker Bear as augmented reality and iPads.

The children worked through the scenarios on the Parker Bear app on the iPads and afterwards created their own medical challenge for Parker Bear. This helped them to make the connection between their hands-on experiences using stethoscopes (i.e., listening to their own lungs and those of their peers) and reading a simple book on the lungs. They filled out formative assessment forms for their teachers with smiley faces on how much they learned using augmented reality with Parker Bear and iPads in class.

Students took their own photos and simple videos with the iPads of themselves working with Parker as part of the "hospital team", and the President of Waianae CARE posted them online to share with friends and families around the world. The children and their teachers were excited to see other students across the islands holding Parker Bear as the website expanded with new photos. Later in 2018, Parker Bear will be expanded to the Big Island of Hawai'i, Nevada, California, Vermont, and Washington, D.C. – one site at a time – using the same role playing model of hospital teams with keiki-generated photos and videos.

Using Technology to Increase Community Intergenerational Communication

Waianae CARE is intensely interested in the health of the homeless, elders, and at-risk youth in Hawai'i, from Honolulu to the Waianae/Leeward Coast. In addition to the health concerns, the members of Waianae CARE feel that mentoring opportunities will enrich future pathways to college and university for many students in high poverty communities through athletic scholarships.

A major challenge for Waianae CARE in designing and developing the Village of Hope is in working with the homeless while respecting the cultural ties and values at the core of Pacific Rim island societies. Trust is also key to building a bridge between generations. Waianae CARE has to remain cognizant of the diversity of generations of homeless, as well as its Volunteers, who are from younger generations than the current Board of Directors.

The recognition of the generational differences in interests, technology skill sets, financial mindsets, and choices of Millennials and Gen Z are being addressed as intergenerational communication in a long term, community capacity building plan that measures success in future sustainability and maximization of resources.

Each generation has its own strengths and weaknesses, identified by their community awareness of their neighbors' needs and a willingness to sacrifice for the "common good". In Hawai'i, wartime became an experience that met both of these criteria, often in unforeseen and impulsive ways.

With this in mind, the following list outlines four levels of Western generations, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, used in the evaluation tool described in the next section. Generation Z (born between 1995 and present year); Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999); Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979); Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964); Veterans/Silent Generation (born between 1920 and 1945) (Ibrahim & Asuku, 2016).

Evaluation of Using Technology for Community Capacity Building and Communication

Community capacity building and growth for Waianae CARE depends on the kuleana (responsibility) of future generations for sustainability. With this in mind, the evaluation plan simplified its focus by establishing one primary goal in the area of inter-generational communication, four main objectives by non-profit areas, and five sub-objectives by generation.

Specifically, the four main objectives measure the efficacy of Waianae CARE to increase communication across five generations (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Baby Boomers, and Veterans) in key non-profit areas:

1. Fundraising efforts
2. Volunteer recruitment
3. Board of Director expansion
4. Partnership development

Goal #1: Waianae CARE will utilize media tools to increase communication across multiple generations within Hawai'i in key non-profit areas.

This goal reflects a direction vital for the survival, growth and future success of Waianae CARE in helping the homeless, elders, and at-risk youth improve their lives. The four main objectives and their corresponding sub-objectives (broken out per generation) are quantifiable steps that serve as benchmarks to measure annual progress towards the primary goal above.

The instruments used to measure the goal and its main and sub-objectives include online surveys, focus groups, meeting minutes, and event sign in sheets. Currently there are less than a dozen active Volunteers in Waianae CARE; the youngest are Baby Boomers, retired with a strong sense of kuleana (responsibility).

The benchmarks embedded within the objectives under each key non-profit area record progress towards meeting each main objective, like Fundraising, Volunteer recruitment, Board of Director expansion, and Partnership development, beginning with 2018 established as the baseline year. Identical tables to Table 1, adapted for each main objective as stated previously, measure progress in increasing intergenerational communication.

Goal #1: Waianae CARE will utilize media tools to increase communication across multiple generations within Hawai'i in key non-profit areas.						
Objective 1: [Fundraising] To increase communication across multiple generations within Hawai'i by 50% each year for the purpose of fundraising.						
Objective 1.1: To increase communication with Gen Z by 50% each year Objective 1.2: To increase communication with Millennials by 50% each year Objective 1.3: To increase communication with Gen X by 50% each year Objective 1.4: To increase communication with Baby Boomers by 50% each year Objective 1.5: To increase communication with Veterans by 50% each year						
Tracking number of people in	2018*	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Objective 1.1 Gen Z						
Objective 1.2 Millennials						
Objective 1.3 Gen X						
Objective 1.4 Baby Boomers						
Objective 1.5 Veterans						
Change	*baseline					

Table 1: Sample Table for Tracking Progress in Communication Across Generations Within Hawai'i

Focus groups. Once the first year of data has been collected during the evaluation process, a focus group will be assembled to brainstorm its implications for adjustments, deletions, and/or additions to the original mission, strategies, and initiatives. Resources such as the Homeless Service Utilization Report, produced by the Center on the Family at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and the Homeless Program Office at the Hawai'i State Department of Human Services could be used to promote discussion and generate ideas. Waianae CARE will also host a focus group with only Gen Z and Millennial supporters and Volunteers to identify key success factors for replication each year, to enrich discussion and assure agreement across the span of an intergenerational Board of Directors.

Mid-course Corrections for the Board and Supporters. By July 1 of each year, beginning in 2018, Waianae CARE will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of using technology to build social capital and community capacity and make mid-course corrections. A strong reply from the opt-in email campaign is anticipated, along with the feedback on social media from supporters/Volunteers working at Village of Hope, about the success of

recruitment efforts using technology. In addition, an evaluation table measures the use of technology in six levels of program awareness, impact, client satisfaction, replications, satisfaction levels of the Board of Directors, and effectiveness of the Waianae CARE website along with the evaluation criteria and tools.

Annual Effectiveness Evaluation. In January 2019, Waianae CARE will reconvene the same set of supporters/Volunteers tapped into during July 2018 to learn how well the strategies and tactics to build social capital and community capacity, using technology, worked for the Board members. At that point in time, Waianae CARE stakeholders will be better able to determine the strengths and weaknesses, identify any new obstacles, create and implement new approaches for success, and consult with culturally sensitive technical advisors working closely with homeless populations.

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