



Spring 2023

## Program Report

The Creating a Village Project

Prepared By: Manca Sustarsic, MA and Sothy Eng, PhD

*This report covers the Spring 2023 program evaluation and team planning discussions on sustainability.*



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## PROGRAM SUMMARY

Guided by the 4-H positive youth development and thriving models, the Creating a Village program is a multi-level educational intervention supported by the Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) grant. All levels of the program incorporate content relevant to educational and career pathways to support youth in workforce preparedness, including soft skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

The Village offers education and hands-on training to at-risk middle schoolers, supported by direct guidance of teen mentors and adult partners.

## Program Goals

### Short-Term Desired Outcomes:

- Youth participants will show increased scores between pre and post measures of life management skill demonstrations and Workforce Preparation goals.
- Teen Mentors will show increased scores between pre and post measures of Leadership Development and Thriving Developmental Outcomes.
- Youth Mentees will show increased scores between pre and post measures of Leadership Development and the Indicators of Thriving.
- Adult Partners will show increased scores between pre and post measures of Leadership Development and Program Quality.
- Youth Partners will show increased scores between pre and post measures of Workforce Preparation and Thrive Developmental Context.

### Long-Term Desired Outcomes:

- Youth program participants will show increased readiness for workforce and/or academic success on a six-week follow up survey.
- Youth mentors will show increased leadership skills and community connectedness in a 3-month follow up focus group.
- Adult partners will show increased leadership skills and community connectedness in a 3-month follow up focus group.

## Curriculum Overview

<b>JAN 31</b>	<b>FEB 2</b>	<b>FEB 7</b>	<b>FEB 9</b>	<b>FEB 14</b>
<b>Team Building</b>	<b>Pre-Evaluation Team Building</b>	<b>Choosing a Career</b>	<b>Community Service and Volunteering</b>	<b>Travel</b>
<b>FEB 16</b>	<b>FEB 23</b>	<b>FEB 28</b>	<b>MAR 2</b>	<b>MAR 7</b>
<b>Physical Activity</b>	<b>Deciding a Location</b>	<b>Etiquette</b>	<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>Spending Choices</b>
<b>MAR 9</b>	<b>MAR 21</b>	<b>MAR 23</b>	<b>MAR 28</b>	<b>MAR 30</b>
<b>Self-Care</b>	<b>Building a Resume</b>	<b>First-Aid</b>	<b>Disaster Preparedness</b>	<b>Sewing</b>
<b>APR 4</b>	<b>APR 6</b>	<b>APR 11</b>	<b>APR 13</b>	<b>APR 18</b>
<b>Safety</b>	<b>Gardening and Social Skills</b>	<b>Health and Hygiene</b>	<b>Applying for College</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship and Home Management</b>
<b>APR 20</b>	<b>APR 25</b>			
<b>Meal Planning/ Preparation</b>	<b>Post-Evaluation and Program Reflection</b>			



## METHODOLOGY

Participants	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle Schoolers (n = 11)</li> <li>• Teen Mentors (n = 3)</li> <li>• Adult Partner (n = 1)</li> <li>• Site Coordinator (n = 1)</li> <li>• Parents (n = 5)</li> <li>• School Admin (n = 1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups (n = 3)</li> <li>• Interviews (n = 2)</li> <li>• Questionnaires (n = 15)</li> </ul>

## List of Questionnaires

Questionnaire	Participant Group	Pre/Post
1. Resilience Measure	- Youth - Teen Mentors & Adult Partner	Pre-post
2. Life Skills	- Youth - Teen Mentors & Adult Partner	Pre-post
3. Career Interests	- Youth	Pre-post
4. Youth Leadership Assessment	- Youth	Pre-post
5. Leadership Self-Assessment	- Teen Mentors & Adult Partner	Pre-post
6. Pro-Social Orientation	- Youth	Pre-post
7. Workforce Preparation Skills	- Youth	Pre-post
8. Program Quality	- Youth - Teen Mentors & Adult Partner - Staff	Post
9. Engagement Survey	- Youth - Teen Mentors & Adult Partner	Post
10. Youth Sparks and Sense of Belonging	- Youth - Teen Mentors	Post
11. The Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationship	- Youth	Post
12. Youth-Adult Interaction Indicators	- Teen Mentors & Adult Partner	Post
13. Youth Engagement	- Site Coordinators	Post
14. Parents Feedback	- Parents	Post
15. School Admin Feedback	- School Admin	Post

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The mix-method program evaluation indicated successful implementation of the Village program. The youth's attendance was **81%** which indicates a relatively high program retention.

The outcomes demonstrate that the Village promoted **peer and adult-youth relationship building** among participants. There were notable improvements for each group.

**Youth** increased **leadership skills by 12%**, feeling supported by their friends by 4.22%, work preparedness by 1.56%, prosocial behavior by 1.11%, and goal setting by 0.5% at the end of the program. **Teen mentors** showed positive changes in **resilience (4.43%)**, and in life skills, in areas such as goal setting (3.62%) and problem solving (2.68%). There also was a slight improvement in teens' leadership skills (1%). The **adult partner** showed **13.64% increase in decision making** and 10.21% increase in problem solving skills.

The bivariate correlation analysis showed **statistically significant correlations between youth's life skills and resilience ( $r = .57, p < .01$ )** as well as **teen mentors' life skills and resilience ( $r = .82, p < .01$ )**, suggesting that higher levels of life skills were associated with greater resilience.

We also found **statistically significant correlations between youth's work preparedness and leadership ( $r = .74, p < .01$ )**, and **teen's life skills and leadership skills ( $r = .95, p < .01$ )**. The improved life and workforce preparation skills among at-risk youth are essential for their successful transition to adulthood.

Youth did not diversify their career interests at the end of the program. This suggests that the Village did not provide enough opportunities for the youth to interact with adult expert volunteers in the local community.

While several challenges were mentioned related to classroom management, teamwork, and expert volunteer recruitment, the qualitative indicated mostly positive outcomes corresponding to **peer relationship building, youth mentoring, and personal growth**.

## POSITIVE IMPACTS

### Peer Relationship Building

Youth and the YAP team stated that building peer relationships across different grade levels was the most positive experience for the youth in the Village. These relationships grew closer each club meeting within a supportive youth-adult environment that enabled youth to socialize, to trust each other, and ultimately, to make friends.

We're all able to trust each other and trust that we wouldn't hurt each other or like to be hostile to each other. That's a good thing because you don't have to worry that someone's going to be mad because it's human, like the actions that we do.

*~ Middle Schooler*

In the beginning, they were so so shy, and then towards the end, they did not want to stop talking and they wanted to share what they're doing and share their thoughts... As a group, they all got really comfortable with one another. When they had issues in school, they came to their classmates for help. It didn't matter whether you were in sixth grade or you were an eighth grade, they kind of were all friends.

*~ Adult Partner*



A personal thing that I learned was how to be more talkative with people, and how to be more confident in making friends.

*~ Middle Schooler*

Our students have really enjoyed this program and made some good friends.

*~ School Principal*

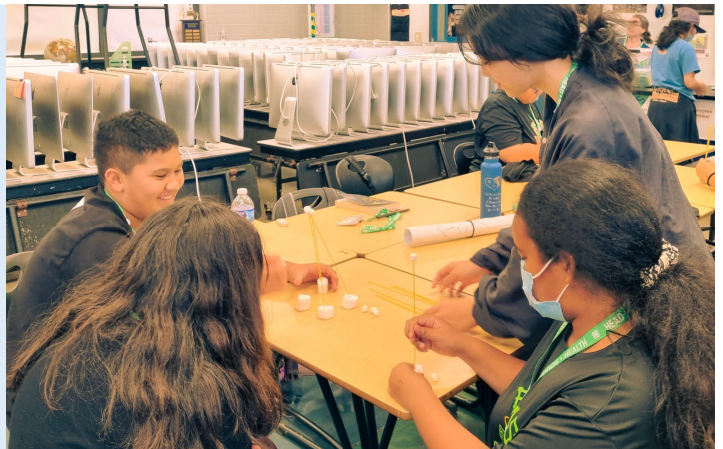
## Youth Mentoring

Youth perceived teen mentors as positive role models to whom they could relate, and turn for support and advice. All three mentors stemmed from the same community and attended the same middle school as the youth.

The youth and the teens reported common instances of informal, private, one-on-one mentoring related to the youths' personal, behavioral, and interpersonal issues.

I'm in 8th grade and they [teen mentors] are in high school, and they're about to graduate high school. It's really good to know about like, their experiences. And I feel like I really relate to [teen mentors].

~ Middle Schooler



They definitely gravitate towards the teen mentors more than me. They're more comfortable sharing a hard time in school or a hard time at home with the teen mentors first than me.

~ Adult Partner

We're the older cousins and they're the younger ones who like to look up to the cooler cousins. They like to come to us when they have problems.

~ Teen Mentor

I didn't have to try so hard into trying to build a relationship with them. I was just able to talk to them and be like, open with things with them. And they wouldn't be judgmental or think too much of a kid talking to them... I feel like they treated me like an equal person to them!

~ Middle Schooler

## Personal Growth

Youth thought that the inclusive group setting helped them improve social skills, which led to experiences of personal growth. The areas of improvement included communication skills, open-mindedness, and confidence. This theme was supported by trustworthy youth-adult relationships within the Village. Teen mentors also reported improvements in their communication and organizational skills.



[I learned] cooperation and how to think for yourself! And how to do things on your own and with people even if you don't have the same opinion or idea.

*~ Middle Schooler*

I learned not to judge people too quickly, like when they're really loud and I thought they make fun of you or something. So I guess I tell myself not to make a judgement before getting to know them.

*~ Middle Schooler*

We gained much more communication skills with younger people than older because they go through stuff during the class so then they would always have to step out and we would have to be the ones who have to listen to them.

*~ Teen Mentor*

They love being in the group. And I think so on a social skill level. They learned that they had to be respectful. You know, they caught themselves when they were saying mean things to each other and things like that.

*~ Adult Partner*



## Beyond the Program Impact

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There's a lot of times where the kids hated advice but there was one time when one of them thought something happened where they said they confided in someone about something and that person told other people and made like a whole scene about it.

She felt really bad because the thing she can find about was about someone and she felt like she made the person look really bad. And she was blaming herself and she started crying because she was like, 'Oh, I'm a terrible person.'

I just sat with her and *I let her talk and get her feelings out...* And then try to tell her, it's not that and then I had her put everything in perspective first to like, so that she could like see everything more clear now that she has like everything in her mind out. And so she was, 'Oh, it really isn't. It wasn't really my fault.' It just like *added perspective. She felt better.*

~ Teen Mentor



## CHALLENGES

### Classroom Management

The YAP team was new to working with middle schoolers. Despite classroom rules that had been established, the youth often tested the boundaries. As the students grew more comfortable with each other, the team sometimes struggled to draw a line between friendship and authority. While the team wanted to create a safe and supportive environment where students felt comfortable, they also needed to manage conflicts, and be fair and consistent in enforcing the rules.



More things on how to deal with gossiping, or having conflict with each other would have been helpful.

~ Teen Mentor

I feel like there's some level of disconnect, because if I don't instill some kind of ground rules, or I don't calm the class or try to get everybody focused, it will be chaos.

~ Adult Partner

Make sure that you don't get too close to the shy people, make sure you don't get too friendly at first, because you want to give them time to warm up. Don't make them uncomfortable.

~ Middle Schooler

## Teamwork

The adult partner found it challenging to work with the teen mentors who were not always responsive to taking initiative, responsibility, and accountability in a group.

They [teen mentors] mostly saw me as a friend in this role. So any communication that I had or showed they need to take initiative, they need to take responsibility, was met with nothing... My expectations were that we are going to meet weekly to go over the following week's lesson plan, and each of us would take a part and then go from there but then it wasn't completed or done. So I started having to do all of it.

~ *Adult Partner*

Our location from across the island for us to access inventory we have it's so hard for us to realize, "Oh, what can I do with this to make activities more engaging?"

~ *Teen Mentor*

## Expert Volunteer Recruitment

The location of the program was a challenge for many experts, which made it difficult to commit to volunteering. Moreover, the youth wanted to learn more about topics that were relevant to their lives, and had difficulty retaining the information.

Having it at Ewa Makai was hard. A lot of the experts were like, "Okay, where is it again?" To spend the time in traffic... Yeah, that's where I kind of stopped.

~ *Site Coordinator*

They [youth] already know how to do laundry and stuff, they want to learn how to build their own business or they want to learn online finances or content creation.

~ *Teen Mentor*

They couldn't remember or recall the topics that we had like, Tuesday or Thursday.

~ *Adult Partner*

## EVALUATORS' OBSERVATIONS

During the post-evaluation of the final Village Club meeting, we observed that the middle school **youth were anticipating a joyous last day** with the YAP team. However, the post-evaluation on this day seemed to dampen their spirits, as the youth felt it encroached upon their time spent with peers and teen mentors.

Notably, one of the youths was visibly emotional and declined to participate in the focus group. Another youth appeared highly distracted during the evaluation process, frequently checking their phone and engaging in conversations with friends, making it challenging for them to focus on the task at hand.

We recommend **moving future post-evaluations to the second-to-last day of club meetings**. The youth will have more time to unwind, celebrate their achievements, and foster a sense of closure.

This additional time will allow the youth to reflect more thoughtfully on their experiences in the club, free from any feelings of haste or disruption.

Ultimately, this adjustment aims to:

- Create a **more positive and meaningful evaluation experience** for the middle school youth,
- Foster a **greater willingness of the youth to engage** in the process and to provide valuable feedback.





## PROGRAM COMMUNICATION

### THAT'S A WRAP!

Ewa Makai Spring 2023

#### THANK YOU FOR BEING YOU!

WE'RE SO HAPPY YOUR STUDENT JOINED US FOR VILLAGE THIS SPRING! WE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT EACH OTHER, FROM ONE ANOTHER, AND FROM EXPERTS IN THE COMMUNITY. MY TEAM AND I HAD A GREAT TIME AND WE HOPE YOUR STUDENT HAD FUN AS WELL. MAHALO, KELSEY, TYLER, YOLENE AND NICOLE!

#### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Spread the word! Tell your friends and family about upcoming Creating a Village programs in the summer and Fall at Ewa Makai Middle
- Continue the conversation with your student about life skills they may benefit from as they grow up
- If you could please fill out the program survey it will really help us in future sessions



### This Week In the Village

This week in the Village we learned about etiquette and the importance of self-care.

We are honored to have your student be a part of our Village this spring. We are committed to introduce life skills they can carry with them as they continue to grow. Please keep in mind we expect them to attend club days unless notified. This allows them to get the most from the program and to ensure the safety of all members. If your student is not present and Kelsey has not been notified, she will reach out to check in.



Ewa Makai

### Creating a Village NEWSLETTER

#### What We're Up To

In a flash, we are at our 6th club meeting this spring. Our team and I have had the pleasure of collaborating with your student. During this time, we have learned about team building, choosing a career, community service and volunteering, travel, and physical activity! We have shared a lot of information with your student so don't worry if they don't remember everything.

#### Contact Info

- knakao@hawaii.edu
- (808) 344-4653

#### You Can Help!

I encourage you to talk with your student about what they learned during our club meetings. This helps develop their ability to express themselves and understand concepts. Here are some ways to support the process:

- Allow time for students to process information before giving a response
- Ask open-ended questions

#### Upcoming News

No club meeting on Tuesday, February 21st!

The YAP team developed and distributed **four Newsletters** for the youth's families.

The Newsletter kept families informed of developments during the program, provided upcoming news and program staff's contact information.

## PROGRAM QUALITY

The Village program has strived to maintain overall **smooth communication channels** between all program staff to keep everyone abreast of any developments during the program. Feedback from the staff indicated a need to increase the variety of ways to communicate. In addition to the **monthly staff meetings** with the CYFAR Coach, the PI, Co-PI, and site coordinators held **weekly meetings**, which served as a good way to update the team and problem solve, if need be, on a regular basis.

Both the program staff and the YAP team utilized **secure cloud systems** such as Dropbox and Google Drive to save working documents and photos.

Moving forward, it is important that all staff continue to work together to plan, evaluate, and adjust the program through regular meetings and established communication channels.



## PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

As the program strives to ensure long-term viability beyond the current grant funding, the program staff has explored the possibility of introducing a **program fee based on a sliding scale**. We sought input from parents regarding their willingness to contribute financially to the program. Two parents expressed interest in paying for the program, while three others might consider it. We also gathered input from teen mentors and adult partner on the same matter. They feared **the fee may undermine the program's mission to serve at-risk youth**, typically in lower economic communities.

Based on these insights, we recommend that the program consider these three strategies:

### **Strategy 1: Maintaining a Free Program**

This option is to keep the program free for all participants in order to ensure continued service to at-risk youth across various economic backgrounds. This will require securing on-going external funding.

### **Strategy 2: Implementing a Program Fee**

A sliding-scale, fee-based system could generate revenue to support the program's operations. The program can create a flexible fee structure based on the income levels of the participants. Families with higher incomes can be charged a higher fee, while those with limited financial resources can pay a reduced fee. This approach allows ensures the program remains accessible to a wide range of audiences.

### **Strategy 3: Diversified Funding Support**

Another way is to approach businesses and corporations to seek sponsorship opportunities. Companies with a social responsibility focus might be willing to contribute financially to support the program's mission and activities. This can also be funded through donations and partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

Moving forward, we recommend that the program persistently gather feedback from various stakeholders, including parents, mentors, partners, and the communities it serves. This iterative process will allow us to better understand the evolving needs and dynamics of our participants and make well-informed decisions that align with the program's mission.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **YAP Team:**

- The YAP team should work on addressing classroom management challenges to ensure a safe and supportive environment while maintaining appropriate boundaries between friendship and authority. The team can collectively brainstorm solutions and implement strategies to overcome such challenges.
- Mandatory weekly meetings should create a structured approach to mentorship, ensuring that the program's objectives are consistently met, and the youth participants receive the best possible support and guidance on their journey of personal growth and development.
- The program should provide additional training and support to teen mentors to enhance their ability to take initiative, responsibility, and accountability in the group. This will help them better fulfill their role as positive role models for the youth.

### **Evaluation of Peer Relationship Building:**

- The program should continue to prioritize and assess the positive outcomes related to peer relationship building, youth mentoring, and personal growth, as they are key aspects of the program's success.

### **Expert Volunteer Recruitment:**

- Recruit volunteers from a local community who bring unique insights, cultural understanding, and a vested interest in the well-being of the youth they will be supporting.
- Partner with local organizations to make it more convenient for experts to volunteer.
- Provide tips for expert volunteer visitation, to prepare topics and activities relevant to today's youth.

### **Retention and Engagement:**

- While the program's youth attendance rate was relatively high (81%), efforts should be made to maintain and further increase program retention.
- Creating an engaging and supportive environment will help youth feel connected and motivated to continue participating.

### **Post-Evaluation Timing:**

- It is recommended to move future post-evaluations to the second-to-last day of club meetings. This will give the youth more time to unwind, celebrate their achievements, and foster a sense of closure, leading to a greater willingness to engage in the evaluation process and provide valuable feedback.





# Creating a Village



## Hawaii State 4-H Program

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# Creating a Village

Families often face challenges that affect the inter-generational support that youth can access during adolescence. This disconnect can leave them without role models or mentors to support their transition from youth to adult.

The Creating a Village program offers training in life management skills such as financial literacy, self-care, maintenance, and healthy living in an environment supported by teen mentors, youth-adult partners, and content experts.

The small, selective cohorts allow youth to develop relationships with the support team and with each other, and strengthens social, leadership, and resiliency skills and knowledge.



**Spring 2021**


**Kalama Intermediate Makawao, Maui**



The program was delivered virtually due to COVID.

**Summer 2021**

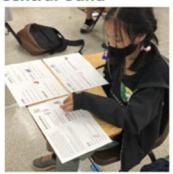
**PACT Hawaii Kalihi, Oahu**



Gardening expert Josh talks about seeds and soil health.

**Spring 2022**


**King & Washington Central Oahu**



Youth practice budgeting and making spending choices.

**Summer 2022**

**UH Extension Kahului, Maui**



Youth learn safety and nutrition while preparing a meal.

**Fall 2022**

**Lokelani Kihei, Maui**



Youth learn mindfulness through self-defense by practicing jujitsu.

For more information, visit [The Creating a Village website.](#)



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