

## Ho'olohe Pono - Listening for God in Community

### Portraits from the Journey - Listening and Discussion Guide

This nine-minute video profiles InterVarsity's Ho'olohe Pono immersion project into the Hawaiian community. In Hawaiian, *ho'olohe pono* means "to listen carefully, intently, rightly, and justly." The Ho'olohe Pono immersion proposes the value of listening as a critical element of cross-cultural relationships and ministry. This guide was created to help us listen as we explore how the themes from Ho'olohe Pono can be used as a tool for growing in cross-cultural competency.

#### Listening as a tool for Cross-Cultural Competency

Cross-cultural competency deals with the ability to relate, communicate, follow and lead others cross-culturally. Accompanied with an attitude of *openness* and *humility*, one helpful framework for growing in cross-cultural competency includes these four building blocks:

**Biblical Understanding** - being convinced of the Biblical foundations of culture and ethnicity, as well as God's desire to reach all nations by various means. This includes various modes of ministry (i.e. ministering in ethnic-specific contexts and ethnically diverse contexts).

**Historical Knowledge** - knowing and understanding the history of race and ethnicity, both in the general U.S. context and in a specific sub-context and/or subculture.

**Personal Awareness** - a self-understanding of one's own ethnicity and culture (both currently and historically).

**Skills Development** - using audience and context-specific cross-cultural tools when crossing from one's own culture into the focus culture. These tools relate to language, cultural cues, mindset, time, trust, conflict, etc AND chapter building, chapter planting, leadership development, staff and student training, etc.

We will explore these four building blocks by reading/listening to the words of Native  and non-Native Hawaiians drawn from the video, Ho'olohe Pono participants, and other writings.

As the video plays, pay attention to what resonates with you, what confuses you and what does not connect with you. Ask yourself, "Is there any particular image or quote that strikes me?"

#### Watch Video

Portraits from the Journey: Ho'olohe Pono - Listening for God in Community  
<http://vimeo.com/32536030>

## Listening and Discussion

### I. Biblical Understanding:

*"After Ho'olohe Pono, I started really listening to the students that I met, and I didn't just have the agenda of trying to engage the gospel with them or invite them to InterVarsity. And actually what I found out that when I was really listening intently with no agenda I actually had better connections and conversations." – Brenda (7:38)*

*"This concept of listening without an agenda really speaks into: How do we surrender ourselves to ethnic minorities on campus and to those on campus who are undergoing oppression of their own? And really listen to their struggles, listen to their stories without trying to get to the gospel but believing the gospel is in their stories. Believing the gospel is already at work." – Dora (8:01)*

*"My goal needs not to first and foremost to be to tell my story of why I think Jesus is the answer -but to humble myself to listen to the stories of other people first, to see how Jesus is already at work in somebody's life and to see how Jesus is already at work in a community." – Brennan (8:33)*

*"Sometimes words are not the best way to witness. – Moani ✨ (8:53)*

1. How do these quotes resonate or conflict with your understanding of biblical passages that come to mind about listening?
2. How do these quotes resonate or conflict with examples of people in the Bible who crossed cultures?
3. How do these quotes resonate or conflict with examples of people in the Bible who helped the gospel spread?

### II. Historical Knowledge: "When it comes to really understanding indigenous experience, you can't fully understand it without understanding justice and without actually exploring injustice," asserts Dora in the video (5:25). As the narrator highlights, "A point of focus for the participants is the 1893 illegal U.S. overthrow of the sovereign Hawaiian Kingdom; a critical turning point in welfare and identity of native Hawaiians" (4:00). The following quotes highlight Native Hawaiian voices sharing this painful portion of their history.

*"By the mid-Nineteenth Century, the Hawaiian Kingdom was a progressive, literate, flourishing, peaceful, independent, Christian nation, conducting lively trade and discourse among the nations of the world. Hawai'i's enlightened leaders had instituted a constitutional form of government in 1840 (long before many other nations), and became the first non-Euro/American member of the Family of Nations. The Hawaiian monarchy also entered into formal relationships with the crown heads of Europe, Asia and the Pacific. The Hawaiian Kingdom initiated an association of the nations of Oceania. The Hawaiian Kingdom had more than 90 diplomatic legations around the world.*

*In January 1893, without provocation and without warning, the United States landed marines in Honolulu to support a coup d'état of the Hawaiian Kingdom government by a handful of powerful businessmen. To avoid needless bloodshed, the Queen, Lili'uokalani, wisely yielded to the superior power of the United States — not to the insurrectionists — thus placing the responsibility to rectify the unlawful action, squarely upon the shoulders of the United States.*

*After concluding an official investigation, U.S. President Grover Cleveland, in an address to the U.S. Congress, admitted that the United States' actions in assisting the takeover of the Hawaiian Kingdom was illegal and constituted "an act of war" against a friendly nation, an egregious violation of international law. To rectify this regretful action, Cleveland pledged U.S. assistance to restore the Hawaiian Kingdom. That pledge has yet to be honored."<sup>1</sup>*

- **Leon Siu** ✨, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ke Aupuni O Hawai'i — The Hawaiian Kingdom

*"Congress can't pass a law annexing a foreign country period. ... It's ludicrous if you think didn't understand what a joint resolution was instead of a treaty. Because we were led to believe something that's not true." - David Keanu Sai* ✨ (4:23)

4. How might history be presented differently depending on who writes it?
5. What are ways you can learn about the history and important events impacting a person and his/her community (different from your own)? What can you do to hear more than one perspective of a history?

The voices of two Hawaiian Christian women, separated over 100 years, follow. No questions follow their quotes in order to create to silently contemplate their words.

*"Oh, honest Americans, as Christians hear me for my down-trodden people! Their form of government is as dear to them as yours is precious to you. Quite as warmly as you love your country, so they love theirs. With all your goodly possessions, covering a territory so immense that there yet remain parts unexplored, possessing islands that, although near at hand, had to be neutral ground in time of war, do not covet the little vineyard of Naboth's, so far from your shores, lest the punishment of Ahab fall upon you, if not in your day, in that of your children, for "be not deceived, God is not mocked." The people to whom your fathers told of the living God, and taught to call "Father," and whom the sons now seek to despoil and destroy, are crying aloud to Him in their time of trouble; and He will keep His promise, and will listen to the voices of His Hawaiian children lamenting for their homes."<sup>2</sup>*

- **Queen Lili'uokalani** ✨, Christian, hymnist and beloved Hawaiian monarch, 1898

<sup>1</sup>Leon Siu, "The Basis for the Restoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Report from the Hawaiian Islands," *The Hawaiian Kingdom* (May 2009). [http://www.hawaiiankingdom.net/HawaiianKingdom.net/Basis\\_For\\_Restoration.html](http://www.hawaiiankingdom.net/HawaiianKingdom.net/Basis_For_Restoration.html) (accessed September 27, 2012).

<sup>2</sup>Liliuokalani, *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*. (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898.), <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/liliuokalani/hawaii/hawaii.html> (accessed September 26, 2012).



“Since Ho’olohe Pono began, I’ve just felt a strong sense of somberness - in Kalaupapa, Kalawao, the Queen’s Palace. My heart has been aching for my people. I don’t completely understand why I feel this way. The betrayal to our Queen, the overthrow, the leprosy break outs, the death; it happened so long ago but it’s still fresh to me. The effects of colonialism has set in - will we ever be free...” –**Danielle’s** ✿ diary, 2011 participant

*No questions intentionally offered after these last two quotes. Before continuing, observe a moment of silence to contemplate their words.*

III. Personal Awareness: The following quotes draw from both Native and non-Native Hawaiians voices.



“Hearing the history of the Hawaiian people and the role that my ancestors played in that has brought up a lot questions for me - questions like, ‘Who are my ancestors?’ and ‘Were these my people? Are these my people?’ Knowing that Hawai’i in a lot of ways was negatively affected by the Westerners coming here - descendants of missionaries, what does that mean for me today having just moved to Hawai’i and is here to work on behalf of the kingdom of God? How can I be sensitive to that and how can I use my identity as a White person to reconcile that?” - **Jordan** (4:52)

“My own people - local Japanese, Chinese, local Asians – although we may have not been the ones to illegally overthrow the Hawaiian Monarchy or to bring the first wave of large westernization and development to the island, that we’ve passively just allowed American colonization and occupation to occur and we benefit from that power structure. God is calling me and my people to repentance.” – **Brennan** (5:59)

This generation, my generation is so shallow about our Hawaiian culture. For some reason, not many young people are aware of how history of the Hawaiian people affects our communities to this very day. They are apathetic to the struggles faced back then and are blind to the battle that is still very present among our people. And our kupuna, if we do not listen to them, who will? They must pass down their mana’o (knowledge) and wisdom to secrets of our culture, our people, the ‘āina - gone. When tourists come to Hawai’i, my home, they can’t wait to have the experience of their lives in paradise. Little do they know, they are being lied to. They go to Waikiki and are amazed by the fire dancers at the Polynesian cultural center. But I feel my experience here, this is the true Hawaiian experience, this is the real thing.” - **Danielle’s** ✿ diary, 2011 participant

“Despite dad always telling me to be proud of being Hawaiian, I never was. I was ashamed because when I said it people would tease me since I am mostly Japanese and white and thus show little semblance of being Hawaiian.... Now I am not ashamed for not looking Hawaiian nor having the same experiences as other Hawaiians. I am opening up to our Hawaiian history, language, songs and especially art. Though I am a scientist, I am equally if not more growing as a Hawaiian artist working in wood, bone, block printing, etc. I would not be in the same place as an artist if I did not begin to love myself as a Hawaiian because of Ho’olohe Pono.” – **Isaiah Kiichi Smith** ✿, 2007, 2008, and 2012 participant



6. How might displacing and surrounding oneself with different voices help raise one's personal awareness? How might delving into one's own community's culture and stories help raise personal awareness?
7. Where can you go to listen to: Voices from your community that are telling the community's stories/history? Voices from communities that have tension and difficult histories with your own community/culture?

#### IV. Skills development:

*"One thing that strikes me is that in the video there are some shots of our group standing at doorways of homes chanting. In those moments, the oli (chant) which is part of Hawaiian protocol is in part an introduction and a request for permission to enter someone else's space.... Do we come with an attitude that asks to be invited into another's culture, or do we come with a sense of entitlement that inadvertently suggests our desire to cross cultures is a favor to the other rather than an honor we get to participate in? Every cross-cultural conversation is a privilege. It is holy ground; it matters to ask to be invited. It's a humbling thing, but isn't that the call of Christ in our lives to humbly submit ourselves to one another?" – Dora*

*"I think Ho'olohe Pono has left me far more aware of and sensitive to cross-cultural dynamics. I think humility is the virtue the world needs most in order to heal its incredibly deep, complex and painful wounds across racial and cultural lines. One of the primary ways humility is expressed is in listening to others carefully for their sake, not for your own. During my time in Hawai'i, Ho'olohe Pono not only gave me a historical framework for the issues at work in people's hearts but was extremely helpful in teaching me how I could posture myself as a White, non-local, temporary resident in a way that wasn't perpetuating painful issues." – Jordan*

*"I've been trying to find those opportunities to speak to other non-Hawaiians about our kuleana (responsibility, role) to care about the well-being of Native Hawaiians and other groups that lack political and economic power. As I've spoken up, sometimes I've been well received, and sometimes I've been straight up rejected, accused of being racist, and cut out of people's lives. That hurts badly, and I even doubted whether speaking to people groups in power is even worth the pain because some people only see individuals rather than systems of injustice. However, when it comes down to it, I know that Jesus has stood in the gap for all people, and that he ultimately is the one that is bringing freedom and justice." – Brennan*

*"As we encounter different types of cultures on campus, we can't assume that ministry will look the same way in each setting. As we ho'olohe pono, what is the Holy Spirit showing us about how we can serve and join into what God is already doing?" – Brenda*

*What would it really be like to enter into community not knowing what God is going to do but trusting He will and just listening for his directive in doing so?" – Moani 🌸 (8:58)*



8. How might cross-cultural competency be developed by “listening without an agenda” to other people? To a community? To one’s elders? To God?



9. How does listening carefully, intently, justly and rightly strengthen or challenge the messages have you been taught about listening? (I.e. from family, church, the classroom, pop culture?)

10. Think of a specific context. How can you use listening as a cross-cultural tool to engage, learn and experience Jesus in that context?

## Appendix 1: Resources

These resources are organized using the four building blocks of cross-cultural competency: Biblical Understanding, Historical Knowledge, Personal Awareness, and Skills Development.

### Biblical Understanding

Many different biblical passages can come to mind when reflecting on “listening.” Here’s a possible (but by no means an exhaustive) list:

- *Psalm 19:1-4* What is creation saying? How does one listen to creation?
- *Micah 6:8* How might justice, mercy & humility be part of practicing ho’olohe pono?
- *Isaiah 61* Who is listening/the audience of the messenger and what is the message?
- *Luke 10:38-42* Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. Mary sits at Jesus’ feet listening to him.
- *1 Corinthians 13* How might this Aloha passage inform our understanding of ho’olohe pono?
- *Galatians 5:25* “If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.”
- *Hebrews 3:15* As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion”
- *James 1:19* “You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger”
- *Revelation 3:20* “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”

A possible (but by no means an exhaustive) list of people in the Bible who crossed cultures:

- Moses, Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Naomi, God (Jesus incarnate), Good Samaritan, Peter, Paul

A possible (but by no means an exhaustive) list of people in the Bible who help the gospel spread:

- Jesus, Peter, Paul, Mary, Priscilla, Aquila, Lydia, Barnabas, Mark

### Historical Knowledge

- [Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen](#) by Queen Lili’uokalani 🌸 available online. This history written in 1898 includes 57 chapters and 7 appendices. Of particular interest may be chapters 40/XL ([Overthrow of the Monarchy](#)), 44/XLIV ([Imprisonment – Forced Abdication](#)), and 55/LV ([My Official Protest to the Treaty](#)).
- Siu, Leon 🌸. “The Basis for the Restoration of the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Report from the Hawaiian Islands,” (May 2009). *The Hawaiian Kingdom*. [http://www.Hawaiiankingdom.net/HawaiianKingdom.net/Basis\\_For\\_Restoration.html](http://www.Hawaiiankingdom.net/HawaiianKingdom.net/Basis_For_Restoration.html) (accessed September 27, 2012)

### Personal Awareness

- Quoted Ho’olohe Pono Alumni Testimonies: Danielle Choate 🌸 and Isaiah Kiichi Smith 🌸
- Other Ho’olohe Pono Alumni Testimonies: David Lagilagi Dugucanavanua, Jamie Takushi

### Skills Development

- One Year Later Interviews: Jordan Kologe, Brennan Takayama, Brenda Wong, Dora Yiu

## Appendix 2: One Year Later Interviews

Interviews were conducted in 2012 with some of the InterVarsity staff highlighted in the video one year after they were filmed.

- **Jordan Kologe**, Urbana12 Recruitment Team
- **Brennan Takama**, Chapter planter - University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Hawai'i Community College
- **Brenda Wong**, Area Director - Hawai'i
- **Dora Yiu**, Associate Area Director - University of San Diego and University of California-San Diego



**Jordan Kologe**, Urbana12 Recruitment Team

*"It is important for people, especially for those in the majority culture to look for ways to honor and respect the cultures around them. As Christians, this is a very practical, visible, counter-cultural way we follow the example of Christ, who is the ultimate example of a person laying down his power for the good of the less powerful - us."*

**Current Context:**

I live near downtown Dallas, TX in a multiethnic neighborhood comprised of Blacks, Asians, and predominantly white neighbors. The church we attend is predominantly White.

I have had the chance to share some of the history of Hawai'i with friends and family at home. I am surprised at how little people know, but I was right there with them before my time in the Islands. More than anything, I think it is important for people to see it in action.

It is important for people, especially for those in the majority culture, to look for ways to honor and respect the cultures around them. As Christians, this is a very practical, visible, counter-cultural way we follow the example of Christ, who is the ultimate example of a person laying down his power for the good of the less powerful - us. Sharing a meal across cultural lines is great, but it can also be a simple act of consideration like going out of your way to hold the door open for someone of a different ethnicity. An accumulation of these kinds of habits can foster an environment where cross-cultural conversation is less threatening.

**Reaction to Watching the Video One Year Later:**

My beard! Also I'm just remembering how refreshing it is to be quiet and listen to people.

**What stuck? How Have You Applied Ho'olohe Pono?**

"Listening without an agenda" - it sticks with me because it is so uncommon and so powerful. People need to feel heard before issues of the heart and soul can be effectively addressed. In my marriage I have tried to learn how to listen to my wife without an agenda. Marriage is one of the most cross-cultural experiences of my life!

I think Ho'olohe Pono has left me far more aware of and sensitive to cross-cultural dynamics. I think humility is the virtue the world needs most in order to heal its incredibly deep, complex, and painful wounds across racial and cultural lines. One of the primary ways humility is expressed is in listening to others carefully for their sake, not for your own. During my time in Hawai'i, Ho'olohe Pono not only gave me a historical framework for the issues at work in people's hearts but was extremely helpful in teaching me how I could posture myself as a white, non-local, temporary resident in a way that wasn't perpetuating painful issues.



**Brennan Takayama**, Chapter planter - University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Hawai'i Community College

*"As I've spoken up, sometimes I've been well received, and sometimes I've been straight up rejected .... However, when it comes down to it, I know that Jesus has stood in the gap for all people, and that he ultimately is the one that is bringing freedom and justice."*

### **Current Context:**

I live in Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai'i. The community is a mix of predominantly Haole (Caucasian), Native Hawaiian, Japanese and Filipino with smaller communities of Samoan and Micronesian. The two largest ethnic groups on campus are Haole and Native Hawaiian. Faculty and administration are significantly Haole with smaller proportions of East Asians and Native Hawaiians. Our campuses are overwhelmingly commuter with about 600 students living in dorms. Many students work and have family responsibilities. The four-year graduation rate is about 11%, and the six-year graduation rate is about 32%.

### **Reaction to Watching the Video One Year Later:**

I still agree with what I said! If anything, my conviction is even stronger. I've been trying to find those opportunities to speak to other non-Hawaiians about our kuleana (responsibility, role) to care about the well-being of Native Hawaiians and other groups that lack political and economic power. As I've spoken up, sometimes I've been well received, and sometimes I've been straight up rejected, accused of being racist, and cut out of people's lives. That hurts badly, and I even doubted whether speaking to people groups in power is even worth the pain because some people only see individuals rather than systems of injustice. However, when it comes down to it, I know that Jesus has stood in the gap for all people, and that he ultimately is the one that is bringing freedom and justice. I put my trust in Jesus alone.

God's work through Ho'olohe Pono has transformed my life. I am definitely a better follower of Jesus as I've listened in the Native Hawaiian community and learned about issues of justice. I am positioned to use my role in my heritage to learn and to speak to others of my background.

### **What stuck? How Have You Applied Ho'olohe Pono?**

As I've been planting an InterVarsity chapter at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, I've had my eyes and ears open for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (e.g. Samoans, Micronesians). In the Hawaiian Club I've tried to build relationships with student leaders and listen for how God is present in their stories. Sometimes some Hawaiian legends have parallels to biblical stories, and I can make those connections. Sometimes I just listen as a means to build trust. There are important things for me to learn without needing to speak.

Seeing Jordan Kologe's humility as a White American man spoke to me deeply. I am not Native Hawaiian, but as a local Asian, I was deeply moved by his willingness to listen, learn, and serve. He even publicly apologized and sought to make things right by the way he lives his life. He is an individual, but he also represents something. I believe his actions and words brought about a lot of healing and reconciliation.

I've been participating in Ho'olohe Pono since 2007 every summer except for 2010 when I was participating in a Trek to Cairo. I've been learning more and more how to listen deeply to hear beyond what's being said in words to hear the deeper meaning behind what's being said.



**Brenda Wong**, Area Director – Hawai‘i

*“As we encounter different types of cultures on campus, we can't assume that ministry will look the same way in each setting. As we ho‘olohe pono, what is the Holy Spirit showing us about how we can serve and join into what God is already doing?”*

### **Current Context:**

I live in a multiethnic household in Waimanalo, a predominantly Hawaiian community. I attend a church that seeks to live out God's aloha with Hawaiians and locals in a nontraditional way, integrating faith and culture. I am the Area Director of three campus fellowships: a chapter plant in Hilo, a Polynesian ethnic specific fellowship, and a dorm and commuter fellowship at University of Hawai‘i Manoa. All of these contexts are very diverse ethnically and culturally. At last semester's joint spring break immersion of over 30 participants, I was one of two people that had only one ethnicity.

### **Reaction to Watching the Video One Year Later:**

As I listened to my comments on the video last year, I mentioned the importance of listening to students without an agenda and that when I do this I have better conversations and connections with students. This is still extremely true after being a part of Ho‘olohe Pono for 8 years, but it is often still difficult and challenging. I need the Holy Spirit's empowerment to truly let go of my agenda and listen without being self-centered and with an open heart to receive what the person is offering me. Many times I have to remind myself to not speak, but to first listen with my heart and spirit.

### **What stuck? How Have You Applied Ho‘olohe Pono?**

Being Chinese American and intentionally immersing into the Hawaiian community, I find that every year I gain a deeper sense of the meaning of words like *aloha*, *‘āina* [land], *laulima* [“many hands” – speaks of cooperation and working together] and other Hawaiian words. They are more than mere words but something that becomes more of a lifestyle that is valued and expressed in a deep way in one's spirit and soul.

Learning to ho‘olohe pono is more of an experiential journey for me, than something that is achieved. Every day we have new opportunities to ho‘olohe pono. Even among familiar people and situations, this can be lived continuously in a deeper way. Listening to God's Spirit as a way of life is quite challenging to me and to listen to others without an agenda is equally challenging.

When I listen with one ear to the person and another ear to God's Spirit, that's when I can have a genuine connection to the person I am speaking with. They will sense my aloha, and I will be led by

God how I should respond. This can be true with any student conversation whether they be a student leader, student in the fellowship or student on the campus that I want to reach out to. Beyond students, I feel that when I do this in any interaction, my conversations and connections are better.

As an Area Director, staff and students may share thoughts and ways of doing things that may be different than what I might think or do. I can choose to be open and ho'olohe pono or stick to my own agenda and thoughts. God may be speaking something new to me through my staff and students and I might miss this if I don't ho'olohe pono.

As we encounter different types of cultures on campus, we can't assume that ministry will look the same way in each setting. As we ho'olohe pono, what is the Holy Spirit showing us about how we can serve and join into what God is already doing?



**Dora Yiu**, Associate Area Director - University of San Diego and University of California, San Diego

*"I love the cultural value of understanding that entering into another's life and place is a privilege and not a right.... Every cross-cultural conversation is a privilege. It is holy ground; it matters to ask to be invited. It's a humbling thing, but isn't that the call of Christ in our lives to humbly submit ourselves to one another?"*

### **Current Context:**

I live in a little town home in San Diego we affectionately call "the ministry house." It is about 5 miles from the UC-San Diego Campus, and the doors are open almost at all times to students, staff, and anyone in need of space to rest, to work and to gather together.

San Diego is a laid back town that has an interesting diversity of migrant workers, city dwellers, wanna-be hipsters, and an ebb and flow of college students. They come from all over California to one of the many state schools in the small 40 mile stretch of San Diego County in pursuit of higher education and an escape from home.

### **Reaction to Watching the Video One Year Later:**

I never knew how little I knew. It has been a blessing to serve the Native community in Hawai'i, begin to enter into the struggle of the indigenous who live in a beautiful land with a painful history, and get to look under the Hawaiian 'tourism cloak' to see the heart of these great islands.

Watching this video reminds of the importance of displacement - an experience of being out of your element in order to step into the shoes of another and listen well to what their experience has been, and how it differs from your own. Ho'olohe Pono means to listen rightly or justly, and you cannot listen rightly without an experience of displacement.

One thing that strikes me is that in the video there are some shots of our group standing at doorways of homes chanting. In those moments, the *oli* (chant) which is part of Hawaiian protocol is in part an introduction and a request for permission to enter someone else's space. I love the cultural value of understanding that entering into another's life and place is a privilege and not a right. Sometimes I wonder how often we posture ourselves this way when it comes to cross cultural conversations. Do we come with an attitude that asks to be invited into another's culture, or do we come with a sense of entitlement that inadvertently suggests our desire to cross cultures is a favor to the other rather than an honor we get to participate in?

Every cross-cultural conversation is a privilege. It is holy ground; it matters to ask to be invited. It's a humbling thing, but isn't that the call of Christ in our lives to humbly submit ourselves to one another?

### **What stuck? How Have You Applied Ho'olohe Pono?**

The posture of listening has been an invaluable lesson for our LaFe (Latino Fellowship) students planting a ministry on campus. Ho'olohe Pono is a cultural immersion experience that highlights the importance of getting to know "real people" in their real context; challenging us to understand the gospel on their turf, not ours. To understand the Native Hawaiian experience it is critical to understand the pain of their kingdom being illegally overthrown and the U.S. illegal annexation that followed. This is true of entering into any culture. It's important to know the history that has shaped a person including the way injustice has been experienced by that person and their community. As we seek to minister to all people across ethnic lines, I have come to see that justice and Multiethnic ministry go hand-in-hand.

The students I work with tend to experience a deep polarization when it comes to justice issues. It seems the choices they are presented with are apathy or anger. On the one hand, there is a temptation toward apathy because the injustice in the world seems so overwhelming that it becomes emotionally unbearable leading to inactivity resulting in apathy and desensitization. On the other hand, there is temptation towards anger because the injustice in the world is so horrible and the people responsible for these atrocities seem to go unpunished. This all consuming battle against evil can lead to over activity marked by anger and pain. I have come to believe that if we are not doing social justice with Jesus we'll either burn out or we'll walk out! Ho'olohe Pono stresses the importance of having a starting point of listening rather than activity. It forces us to ask the question "what are people experiencing? What are they seeing? What are they feeling?" and it makes us resist asking the question "What can we do?" Because we will not know what to do unless we first know who it is that is impacted by our decisions. Ho'olohe Pono called me to ponder, "Is my starting point the listening or is it the activity?"

Ho'olohe Pono brings incarnation to another level. You serve while you live within and receive from the community. You submit and take on the cultural cues and norms (even those that feel counter-intuitive) from those within the community. You can't be a light to a community unless you are part of the community. The whole experience has really changed the way I do campus ministry. It challenged me to rethink what it means to lead from a place of humility by depending on God's grace and invitation to listen to the Lord's heart expressed in the experiences, both painful and joyful, of others. It is from that place that we can speak what we hear the Lord saying.

## Appendix 3: Ho'olohe Pono Alumni Testimonies

Testimonies were collected from both Native 🌺 and Non-Native Hawaiian Ho'olohe Pono alumni. Two of those testimonies are quoted in the Video Listening and Discussion Guide.

- **Danille Choate** 🌺, 2011 (quoted in video guide)
- **David Lagilagi Dugucanavanua**, 2012
- **Isaiah Kiichi Smith** 🌺, 2007, 2008, and 2012 (quoted in video guide)
- **Jamie Takushi**, 2012



## Danielle Choate ✦ Ho'olohe Pono 2011

I am a Human Development/Nursing major at the University of Hawai'i - Manoa. I attended Ho'olohe Pono because as a Hawaiian, I felt a *kuleana* (responsibility) to get deeply rooted into my culture and discover more of who God made me to be. I really admire Moani Sitch (also Native Hawaiian and the Ho'olohe Pono director). Her heart for justice and compassion for God's people is an inspiration to me. She encourages all people of all races and backgrounds to own who God made them to be. Ho'olohe Pono immersed me in an environment where I could fully listen to God and experience transformation.

Ho'olohe Pono helped me embrace my identity as a Hawaiian as I grew in understanding this is how God made me. My family lives in a mostly Polynesian community called Nanakuli. At school I help lead InterVarsity's Hui Poly - a Bible study that is primarily focused on bringing God's word to Polynesian students.

Ho'olohe Pono's principle of listening intently without an agenda has stayed with me. I love hearing different languages and experiencing different cultures. For instance, as a student assistant for the Hawai'i English Language Program, I work with many international students from all over the world: Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, China, and more. I always knew listening to people's stories was important; however, after Ho'olohe Pono, I understood more the value and blessing it is to the people who are telling them.

I was able to apply my Ho'olohe Pono experience when I went on InterVarsity's Urban Plunge in Oakland, CA. As we immersed ourselves in low-income, diverse communities, I had the privilege of meeting families who intentionally chose to live there. They did NOT have the whole "messiah complex" persona, but rather simply lived among and became part of the community. They were humble people who knew the rich/poor disparity and did not want to contribute to that gap. I took the opportunity to listen to their stories.

I also used what I learned in Ho'olohe Pono when I went on InterVarsity's Global Urban Trek to the Philippines. Being fully immersed into the Filipino culture, I got to listen to the stories of many: my host family, church members, as well as the pastor and his wife who served the poor.

It is important to ho'olohe pono to one another because it helps people understand the injustices different people face. When we ho'olohe pono we can begin to build a bridge with and help with the healing process.



## Dannie's Diary ✨

Written as she was experiencing Ho'olohe Pono 2012, Danille Choate shares some of her diary excerpts.

*"You don't know where you're going until you know where you come from." This generation, my generation is so shallow about our Hawaiian culture. For some reason, not many young people are aware of how history of the Hawaiian people affects our communities to this very day. They are apathetic to the struggles faced back then and are blind to the battle that is still very present among our people. And our kupuna, if we do not listen to them, who will? They must pass down their mana'o (knowledge) and wisdom to the younger generations or else no one will know their stories. It will die with them. The secrets of our culture, our people, the 'āina-gone. When tourists come to Hawai'i, my home, they can't wait to have the experience of their lives in paradise. Little do they know, they are being lied to. They go to Waikiki and are amazed by the fire dancers at the Polynesian cultural center. But I feel my experience here, this is the true Hawaiian experience, this is the real thing."*

*"Since Ho'olohe Pono began, I've just felt a strong sense of somberness- in Kalaupapa, Kalawao, the Queen's Palace. My heart has been aching for my people. I don't completely understand why I feel this way. The betrayal to our Queen, the overthrow, the leprosy break outs, the death, it happened so long ago but it's still fresh to me. The effects of colonialism have set in - will we ever be free..."*

*"I'm sitting here in the gazebo staring out into the ocean. It is so breathtaking. Moloka'i seems so peaceful and untouched. Yes there is some sort of sadness looming but the beauty gives me hope. I opened my bible randomly to Jeremiah 32- God's promise of restoration. Verses 6, 9-12, I believe the Lord has given me this scripture to remind me that the nation of Hawai'i will be restored. "He will cleanse, He will restore."*

*"As we are spending more time with the kupuna and others in the community I find myself wanting a passion for deeper connection to the 'āina. Hano said "when everyone gets their hands dirty (humble themselves) and everyone views each other as equals, only then will everything be pono." I believe God loves everyone, therefore He loves the Hawaiians. He gave them this 'āina to settle upon. He gave them skills, gifts, abilities, mana'o. They are a strong people. This makes me feel so proud to be Hawaiian. I've never really explored this part of my heritage. I feel a bit ashamed that only now I am only pursuing to know more, but I am glad that I am a part of this experience. I can see the fire in the peoples' eyes when they speak about Hawaiians. They are deeply rooted in the Hawaiian values, 'ohana, community, malama, pono, true aloha for each other."*



## David Lagilagi Dugucanavanua, Ho'olohe Pono 2012

I am Fijian Tongan. I moved to Hawai'i in 2009 after receiving a scholarship fully funded through the East West Center which allowed me to transfer from the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to the University of Hawai'i Manoa's Shilder College of Business (class 2013). I am majoring in Human Resource Management. I believe God has blessed me with an ability to influence people and leadership skills which I can use for ministry and perhaps one day establishing a youth ministry in Fiji.

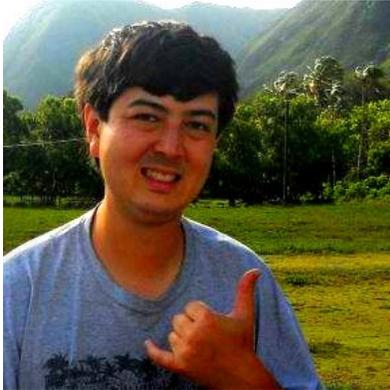
The generous scholarship was a blessing from God as it gave me opportunity to opt out of work and be available for extracurricular activities outside the classroom. As the president of the university's PanPacific Association, I help our club provide a safe environment for Pacific Islanders away from the busy pace of cosmopolitan Honolulu – an environment very similar, yet totally different to what our home country island environments are like.

I also got involved with InterVarsity. During bible studies, I would occasionally hear about this "Ho'olohe Pono." People's stories showed this was like no other experience. People even stumbled over words as they tried to explain it. I decided to see for myself why "Ho'olohe Pono" had made so many minds flushed and spirits moved.

My knowledge of the Hawaiian language foretold me that Ho'olohe Pono was not your ordinary project. Hearing something in a native language creates an almost majestic-like aura. In Hawaiian particularly, words have multiple meanings and trigger various emotions. On a personal level Ho'olohe Pono would be a spiritual journey. For one to ho'olohe pono, one must listen with intent, righteously, and to the voice of the spirit. Our lives nowadays are so distracted. Our bodies ache and our families broken. Yet, we keep on going like nothing is wrong. We get so pre-occupied; we cannot hear the cries of our spirit: for deliverance, for restoration, for Jesus.

Ho'olohe Pono has made me more aware of my surroundings. Sometimes it's just better to LISTEN. Going away to these two very untouched places (i.e. Waimanalo and Moloka'i), I truly felt God's hand moving. It was so easy to sense God in these places – away from the fast pace life of big buildings, fast food restaurants, and work schedules and driven by economic and political influences, that is, money (which Jesus claims the love of to be the root of evil).

Leaving Ho'olohe Pono, I realized how important it is to not allow the world's distractions to keep us from listening; listening with intent and righteously to the people around us, and most importantly to God. Ho'olohe Pono formed relationships that otherwise would not have been created. The friends I made on this trip are some of the closest I have made in my lifetime simply because God shines a light in them. This light is something that no other being, no other spirit, no other entity can do... ONLY JESUS!



## Isaiah Kiichi Smith ✨ Ho'olohe Pono 2007, 2008, and 2012

I majored in botany, minored in Japanese language as an undergrad and botany as a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i – Mānoa. After graduating, I returned to Kona – my hometown. Growing up, the local culture was an amalgamation of my different cultures. I was closer to my mom's mother (my Japanese side) often visiting her home and working on the coffee farm. White culture was present at home since dad was raised here by his mother who was from the mainland. The Hawaiian side was present as well. Though my dad is mostly white, our Hawaiian side has been our heritage for over 150 years. Hawaiian

phrases or words pop up here and there, sometimes words most modern speakers don't use. We often make *'imus*, traditional underground ovens, in a special shed dedicated for the task. When preparing large quantities of food for parties we always listen to the local/Hawaiian music station.

I didn't know what to expect, but went to Ho'olohe Pono because God was calling me to expand my boundaries and know him further in a new way. What I experienced during Ho'olohe Pono was a lot of reconciliation.

### **Reconciling Cultural Identity:**

Despite dad always telling me to be proud of being Hawaiian, I never was. I was ashamed because when I said it people would tease me since I am mostly Japanese and white and thus show little semblance of being Hawaiian. Fellow Hawaiians Moani and IV student Elijah Isaac though did not do this, but rather welcomed me just as I was. Ho'olohe Pono opened the doors for me to see myself as a Hawaiian man of God, as well as all my other ethnicities.

Now I am not ashamed for not looking Hawaiian nor having the same experiences as other Hawaiians. I am opening up to our Hawaiian history, language, songs and especially art. Though I am a scientist, I am equally if not more growing as a Hawaiian artist working in wood, bone, block printing, etc. I would not be in the same place as an artist if I did not begin to love myself as a Hawaiian because of Ho'olohe Pono.

### **Reconciling Relationships:**

Seeing people put down their pride to apologize, has inspired me to humble myself in my own relationships. At my second Ho'olohe Pono, I started judging a participant whose values kept clashing with mine. Towards the end of our week, she shared with the group about a recent tragic experience. Suddenly her attitude made sense; my heart broke. Crying, I bent down on my knees in the most humblest position I knew and asked for forgiveness for judging her. Having taking that extreme (for me) act of humility, I am now much more willing to humble myself.

A few days before attending my 3<sup>rd</sup> and latest Ho'olohe Pono, I witnessed a domestic incident between my friend and his wife. I know domestic abuse happens among our people, but seeing it being my close friend and with his children there, it was too much for me. The whole incident hurt me badly, but I didn't know when/how/who to talk to about it.

As we were working the lo'i (wet-land taro patch), one of the heads was telling us an area legend. To flee her abusive husband, the goddess Hina decided to run away and fly to the moon. But just as she was about to jump to the moon he clubbed off one of her legs. She made it to the moon, but lost her leg in the process. During our group sharing time, I started to share what I was thinking. "What is wrong with our culture, is abuse just a part of it? Why are our people so broken in this?" I continued to explain what hurt me about the situation with my male friend, to have his kids have to go through it as well and asking what was wrong with our people. As I began bawling, a friend started crying because she had been in an abusive relationship.

As Moani and Brennan helped moderate a time of intercessory prayer for our people about domestic abuse, I asked for forgiveness on behalf of the Hawaiian men to the women we have hurt and my friend asked for forgiveness for the Hawaiian women, in the ways that they may have hurt us. Though I hate crying, the whole experience was healing for me and I felt hope again. I felt that though things aren't right in the world, God wants to make it right and that he will honor our prayers for our people.

Listening is the heart of Ho'olohe Pono. It's about "I would like to hear what you have to say," rather than, "I am gonna tell you something." I've been told I'm a good listener, but Ho'olohe Pono has made me an even better one. I want to listen so I can understand why people are the way they are. From that understanding I am better able to love on them. By listening, asking the occasional question, and allowing a person to talk you can get their philosophy on life, theology, history, present and in some ways see the direction of their future. I think that is what most people want in life, someone who will listen and someone who understands.



## **Jamie Takushi**, Ho'olohe Pono 2012

Aloha! I am Jamie Takushi, a Hawaiian Studies and Anthropology major at the University of Hawai'i - Hilo. I want to become a teacher. As soon as I become more comfortable with the Hawaiian language I could be teaching at an immersion school whether it is here or back home on Maui. I attended Ho'olohe Pono because I wanted to experience God in a different place with different people outside the familiar faces of my church and friends.

I was raised with a Catholic background, but was not forced to follow. My mother raised my brother and I well but did not want to force anything upon us. I knew of God but didn't have a solid relationship with God. It was only when I came to Hilo where I met Brennan - IV staff, and the rest of the IV fellowship that my relationship with God grew. I had a network with friends to help me find a home church and started to go more.

During Ho'olohe Pono, I expected to learn more about the community that many people may or may not know about. I sort of knew, but that did not stop me from learning more from a different perspective.

One of the uncles that I talked story with during the duration of the trip was from O'ahu. Back home he has a lo'i (taro) patch that he tends. He told me of his spiritual encounters with his kupuna that came before him and with God. He had amazing testimonies. The people we met on Moloka'i inspired me to perpetuate the culture of this 'āina (land) that I have called home all my life. Although I can't grow my dream lo'i patch now, I can perpetuate the Hawaiian culture as much as I can as I attend school.

I will never forget the kupuna in Kalaupapa. That place has experienced much pain over the years with issues of leprosy. I could see the kupuna there have endured so much. And yet, they have built a peaceful place for themselves. God got them through it all and they have such an undying love for one another. Compared to what they had to endure, it makes all the things I think are huge so small. It has provided me a good example to remember when I am down over something.

I met so many people at Ho'olohe Pono who have inspired me. I can't wait to do it again!