

# Integrating arts-based experiences for disaster relief: A collaborative approach in Lāhainā, Maui

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**AHAS: Archive of Health, Arts & Spirit**



# Agenda

Introduction - Objectives & Grounding

Background - Context & Methods

Lessons Learned - Results & Implications

Questions



# Objectives

- **Describe** arts-based interventions from Maui's disaster response.
- **Explore** key themes derived from teaching artists' experiences during post-disaster recovery efforts.
- **Examine** how arts-based approaches in disaster settings address historical trauma and foster collective resilience.



# DAILY MANA`O



Maui  
Arts & Cultural Center

# 1 Ancestor Who Inspires You



**“If you woke up this morning, you’ve got a story.” - Margherita Pappas**



# Background: August 8th, 2023

Lāhainā, Maui

U.S. NEWS

**Death toll from Maui wildfire reaches 89, making it the deadliest in the US in more than 100 years**



[SAFETY & SECURITY](#) > [FIRE & LIFE SAFETY](#)

**Nearly 3,000 students in Maui remain displaced after wildfires**

Aug. 28, 2023

State officials say four public schools were

# Background

## **2023 Lāhainā Fires:**

- Displaced families faced severe psychological and emotional distress.

## **Response Initiative:**

- Led by the Maui Arts and Cultural Center in partnership with the Hawaii State Department of Health.
- Incorporated 6 other nonprofit arts organizations and the Hawaii State Foundation for Culture & the Arts.

## **Arts-Based Culturally Responsive Interventions After Disaster:**

- Arts-based interventions have been shown to have positive impacts on health (Baumann et al., 2021)
- Arts have sustained indigenous knowing, combatting impacts of colonization (Tabor et al., 2021)





# Background: Collaborators



**HAWAI'I**  
STATE FOUNDATION on  
CULTURE and the ARTS

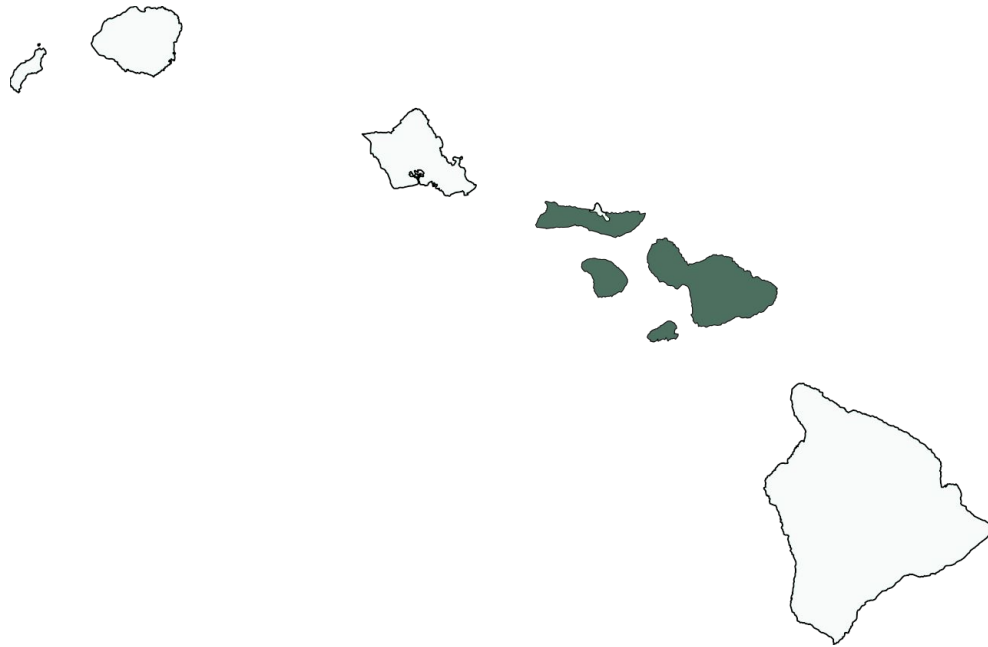
Maui   
Arts & Cultural Center



**PERFORMING  
ARTS READINESS**  
a community served by **+Lyrasis**



# Background: History of Hawai‘i





**Background:  
Mokuhinia  
within  
Moku'ula**





Background:  
Lāhainā Before  
August 8, 2023





Tourism/retail

Lāhainā Harbor

School

Site of Historic Moku'ula

Background:  
Lāhainā After  
August 8, 2023





## Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)




## TE RITO TOI

Te Rito Toi helps teachers work with children when they first return to school following major traumatic or life changing events.

# September 25th, 2023 - May 31st, 2024

## Join us for arts and healing activities.

*All are Welcome. All Ages. No Experience required.*

HOTEL	Hyatt		ROOM	Downstairs Lobby		  		
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 am - 10:30 am	<b>DANCE</b> with Amelia & Ava	<b>HAWAIIAN YOĞA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	<b>HULA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	<b>VISUAL ARTS + STORY</b> with Tanya & Margherita		10am - 4pm	10am-4pm <b>Lomi &amp; Kūhākūkā</b> with Keola Chan & Hui Ho'omalua Practitioners	10am-4pm <b>Lomi &amp; Kūhākūkā</b> with Keola Chan & Hui Ho'omalua Practitioners
10:30 am - 11:30 am	<b>VISUAL ARTS + STORY</b> with Tanya & Margherita	<b>Creative Mouement</b> with Mardi	<b>MELE (MUSIC)</b> with Kaliko + Leialoha	<b>CREATIVE EXPRESSION THROUGH DRAMA</b> with Sally + Molli			11am-12pm <b>HULA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	11am-1pm <b>'Ukulele Lessons and Kanikapila</b> with Uncle Reuben Pali Maui Music Mission and Kanikapila Project
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	<b>'Ohana Rhythm Circle</b> with Margie	<b>HAWAIIAN YOĞA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	<b>HULA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	<b>VISUAL ARTS + STORY</b> with Tanya & Margherita			12pm-1pm <b>HULA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	<b>DANCE</b> with Amelia & Ava	<b>MELE (MUSIC)</b> with Kaliko + Leialoha	<b>MELE (MUSIC)</b> with Kaliko + Leialoha	<b>CREATIVE EXPRESSION THROUGH DRAMA</b> with Sally + Molli			1pm-2pm <b>HULA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	<b>DANCE</b> with Amelia & Ava	<b>HAWAIIAN YOĞA</b> with Kilihune + Leialoha	<b>VISUAL ARTS</b> with Rachael & Husa	<b>VISUAL ARTS + STORY</b> with Tanya & Margherita			2pm-4pm <b>'Ukulele Lessons and Kanikapila</b> with Jason Jerome Lahaina Music and Kanikapila Project	
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	<b>'Ohana Rhythm Circle</b> with Margie	<b>VISUAL ARTS</b> with Rachael & Husa	<b>VISUAL ARTS</b> with Rachael & Husa					
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm		<b>VISUAL ARTS</b> with Rachael & Husa	<b>VISUAL ARTS</b> with Rachael & Husa					

### Arts-Based Experiences:

- Art forms including yoga, hula, ukulele, and poetry.
- Tailored to Maui's multiethnic community, including Indigenous Hawaiians and Asian Pacific Islanders.
- Trauma-informed interventions to complement traditional disaster recovery.

### Community Programming & Special Events

Locations: 6 Hotels  
Total People served:  
2,397 Adults  
2,366 Children







# Methods

## Evaluation and Data Collection

- Teaching artists completed a daily four-question survey to evaluate the program responding to questions on highlights, challenges, issues, and suggestions.
- Program Managers collected monthly reports that were submitted to DOH and other funders.



## Analysis

- An inductive thematic analysis approach was used to identify recurring themes in the responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006)



# Lessons Learned: Results

147 evaluation surveys analyzed through thematic analysis.

Three Key Themes:

1. Emotional and Psychological Impact of the Fire
2. Engagement with Creative Tools and Facilitators
3. Community and Institutional Collaboration



# THEME 1: Emotional and Psychological Impact of the Fire

## Theme Overview

- Codes: trauma response, emotional reflection, impact of fire
- Focused on: feelings of loss, grief, resilience, and personal healing.

## Participant Quotes:

- *“Aloha is healing.”; “Hula is healing”; “Art is therapeutic”*
- *“Play is a source of comfort and diversion.”*
- *“I cannot express how important this kind of program is for our lahui. It’s exactly what is needed.”*
- *“We offer calm activities for everyone...”*



# THEME 2: Engagement with Creative Tools and Facilitators

## Theme Overview

- Codes: Engaging with Materials and specific art forms; Facilitator Impact
- Focus: The importance of interaction between teaching artists, creative materials, and participants in arts-based interventions.

## Participant Quotes:

- *“The calm and easy-going approach allows both children and adults a chance to relax and be playful.”*
- *“I was able to review hula Puamana”*
- *“A little girl came and played with clay, she had so much joy making her own creations.”*



## THEME 3: Community and Institutional Collaboration

### Theme Overview

- Codes: engaging with formal disaster response organizations, appreciation for arts program
- Focused on: engagement with the community support and formal disaster management

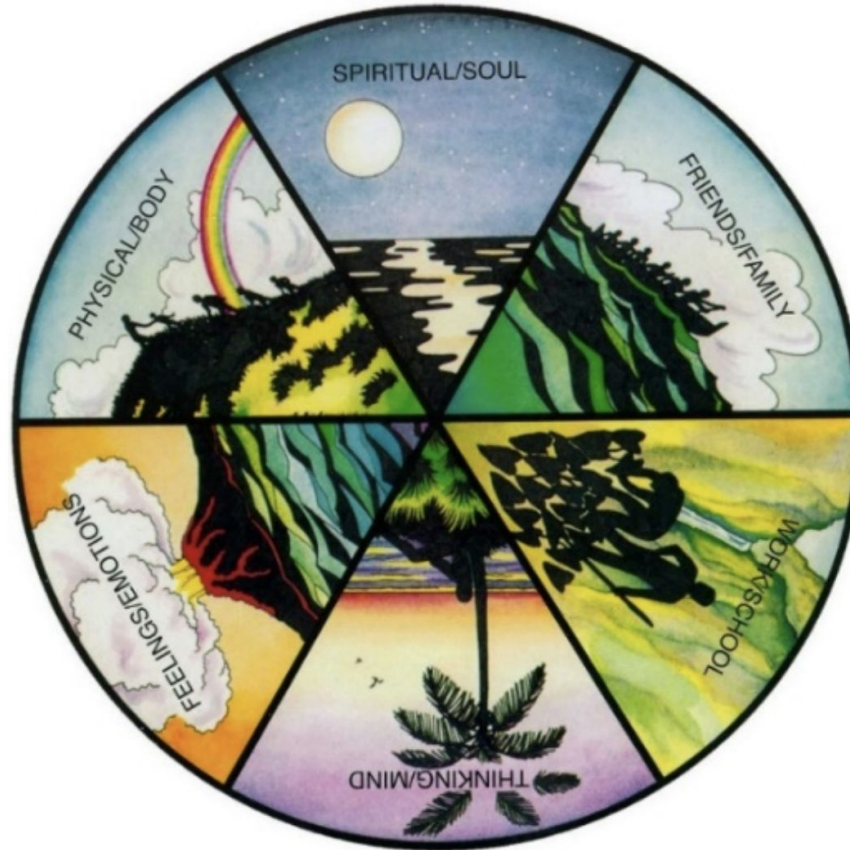
### Participant Quotes:

- *Emergency worker who said ‘you filled my cup’*
- *“Embrace this program, it’s needed.”*
- *“Keep coming back.”*
- *“Mahalo nui loa for all you have done”*



# Lessons Learned: Lōkahi Framework

The Lōkahi Wheel, developed by the Kamehameha Schools' Safe and Drug Free Program, illustrates the Hawaiian concept of balance, harmony, and unity for the self in relationship to the body, the mind, the spirit, and the rest of the world.



# Lessons Learned: Key Themes Through the Lōkahi Framework

- 1. Emotional and Psychological Impact of the Fire** (*Feelings/Emotions - Na‘au*): Teaching artists shared how the fire has impacted them emotionally, helping both themselves and displaced individuals to process loss and grief. *Culturally-based artistic expression* promotes emotional wellness post-disaster (Tabor et al., 2021).
- 2. Engagement with Creative Tools and Facilitators** (*Physical/Body - Kino*): Providing hands-on, physical engagement through art forms like clay, ukulele, and hula is an essential intervention. These activities support participants’ physical and emotional needs in the aftermath of displacement (Mutch & Latai, 2019).
- 3. Community and Institutional Collaboration** (*Friends/Family - ‘Ohana*): Trauma-informed arts interventions foster positive relationships and community connections, complementing formal government responses and building a sense of ‘ohana, or family, within recovery efforts (Burkhart et al., 2023).
- 4. Importance of Indigenous Knowledge in Disaster Response** (*Spiritual/Soul - Pili ‘uhane*): Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and Hawaiian language connects participants to a deeper spiritual understanding, fostering a sense of purpose and grounding in ancestral wisdom. As Ali et al. (2021) highlight, *‘Indigenous ways of knowing hold inherent understanding of healing and connection to the earth.’*



# Lessons Learned: Recommendations

- **Enhance Community-Based Approaches**  
Align research methods more closely with community-driven practices to improve relevance and impact.
- **Prioritize Culturally Responsive Engagements**  
Incorporate culturally responsive activities as vital supplements to traditional and government-led disaster recovery.
- **Build Community Resilience Across Phases**  
Focus on prevention and resilience-building well before disasters, offer short-term immediate training for community support, and sustain long-term recovery efforts, as recovery is an extended process. Across the U.S., communities will benefit from unique, culturally specific approaches that integrate the arts in disaster response.
- **Future Focus on Integration**  
Build on current efforts to further integrate local knowledge, values, and practices into recovery initiatives.







We honor those lost.  
(counted and uncounted)





Be a good ancestor.

Be a good ancestor.

Be a good ancestor.

SALTY CR...

**Mahalo nui loa**



[tinyurl.com/AHAS24](https://tinyurl.com/AHAS24)  
**Survey+ Stay in Touch**  
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