

**Fifteenth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
May 9th-20th, 2016
New York City**

Intervention of the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies

Endorsed by:

Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies

Ka Lāhui Hawai'i

Ka Lei Pāpahi 'O Kākuhihewa

Nā Kū'auhau 'o Kahiwakānekapolei

Peace Child International: Hawai'i

Aloha kākou! My name is Hau'olihiwahiwa Moniz and I am a student at the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

I want to extend my warmest greetings to the original people of these lands on which we stand upon today and to the Chair and the members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies strongly endorses the UN PFII study on *Study on how the knowledge, history and contemporary social circumstances of indigenous peoples are embedded in the curricula of education systems [E/C.19/2013/17]*. The study provides an excellent study and overview on how to fuse traditional indigenous knowledge into a modern day educational curricula.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. However, there are still many challenges that hinder Native Hawaiians from accessing forms of indigenous education that are taught through their own language and cultural lense, a flagrant violation of Article 14 of the UNDRIP Therefore, the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies requests that the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples come to Hawai'i to witness this abuse of indigenous peoples rights in accordance with this Article.
2. We request that the Permanent Forum collaborate with and urge member states to support and fund research in the revitalization of traditional modes of learning that can be implemented as an alternative form of education for indigenous students struggling in a western-centered education system, in accordance with Article 15 of UNDRIP
3. We request that the Permanent Forum coordinate with UNESCO to urge member states to support the expansion of K-12 indigenous language immersion and culture based schools in order to provide more indigenous children with the opportunity to institutionalize the teachings of traditional knowledge and to support the efforts to help children re-claim their cultural identity as indigenous people at an earlier age in accordance with Article 13 of UNDRIP
4. We request that the Permanent Forum urges member states to provide adequate and comprehensive funding for indigenous peoples to attend colleges and universities

where they can be competently trained as bilingual (in both their mother tongue and the language of their colonizers) and also be trained as culturally competent world learners in both the western-centered and language/culture based education styles in accordance with Article 11 of UNDRIP

5. Finally, Mr. Chair, the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies calls upon the Permanent Forum to reinscribed Hawai'i onto the list of non-self-governing territories. While at the same time calling upon the United States of America to take a much more active, honest and comprehensive role in providing reparations for past and current human rights violations against Native Hawaiians, our culture and our islands as well as to continue to provide Native Hawaiians with a process towards our own self-determination.

CHALLENGES FOR NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN EDUCATION

1. Due to the colonization of Native Hawaiians by the United States, Native Hawaiians continually suffer from various educational disparities. In the Hawai'i educational school system, Native Hawaiians make up for a majority of the student population.¹ However, Native Hawaiian teachers only make up about 9% of the teacher population². Thus, many Native Hawaiian students suffer a disconnect between themselves and their teachers. One of the main challenges that Native Hawaiian students face is that the majority of these teachers are unable and unwilling to learn or even recognize their culture. This means unwilling to understand our customs, the way in which we learn or even something as basic as trying to pronounce their native names correctly.
2. In the data provided by the Public School Student Performance Under the Strive HI Performance System in Hawai'i, on average, Native Hawaiian students do not meet the set satisfactory scores in reading, math and science. They consistently rank at the bottom two in all three of these categories compared to other ethnicities. This is due, not only to the pervasive cultural barrier between student and teacher but also due to the lack of services provided for Native Hawaiian Student
3. The State of Hawai'i does not provide enough opportunities for Native Hawaiian students to actively engage with their language and culture in a formal educational setting. Native Hawaiian language immersion schools make up 7%³ of all schools in Hawai'i while Native Hawaiian focused charter schools only make up about 6%⁴.
4. Native Hawaiians are also under-represented in the attainment of a bachelor's degree. Only 12.7%⁵ of Native Hawaiians hold a bachelor's degree. This is consistent with the enrollment of Native Hawaiian students University of Hawai'i Mānoa where they make up 14% of a student population that consists of about 19,507 students.⁶ Native

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs. *Native Hawaiian Data Book 2015*. Rep. Office of Hawaiian Affairs, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

² Ibid

³ "Kaiapuni Schools — Hawaiian Language Immersion." Hawai'i State Department of Education. Hawai'i State Department of Education, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

⁴ "Community Education and Services." Hawaiian-focused Charter Schools. Kamehameha Schools, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2016.

⁵ Office of Hawaiian Affairs,

⁶ Ibid

Hawaiian faculty only makes up about 3.4% of the faculty positions at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

5. The average income for a Native Hawaiian family is \$70,179 compared to that of the State of Hawai'i average at \$77,245. 12.3% of Native Hawaiians live in poverty compared to the Hawai'i average at 7.8%. Due to large families, a high poverty rate and a limited family income, Native Hawaiian students have a hard time financing their college education especially when it costs students about \$6,342 a semester to attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
6. Finally, with Native Hawaiians having a lack of accessibility to social capital and higher education, we continue to face high rates of incarceration, drug use, unemployment and poverty. In order to improve the overall wellbeing for Native Hawaiians, we need to have our people educated and adequately prepared to face life challenges.

Mahalo nui!