

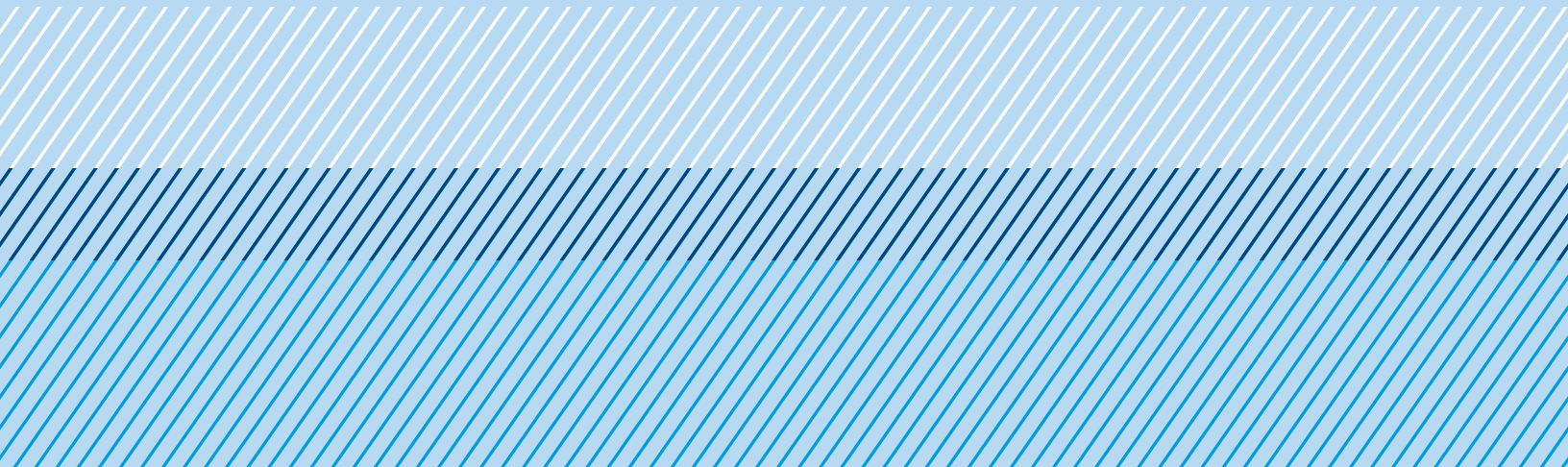


HIKI NO: Youth Journalism to Foster Digital Literacy and Build Diverse Community Stories

February 2013

Prepared by FSG and Network Impact
for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation





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HIKI NO: Youth Journalism to Foster Digital Literacy and Build Diverse Community Stories



The Hawaii Community Foundation supported the establishment of PBS Hawaii’s HIKI NO program, the nation’s first statewide student news network. HIKI NO (meaning “can do” in Hawaiian) builds digital media skills that allow young people to use technology and share their stories. Over three seasons, it has become a popular PBS Hawaii program and has invested heavily in teacher training and established relationships with over 80 schools across the state. The project has advanced the community foundation’s work in youth development and helped celebrate Hawaii’s dispersed island cultures. As Hawaii Community Foundation President Kelvin Taketa observes, “[HIKI NO] serves the state by bringing stories to light that would otherwise not be seen. Because of HIKI NO, we are learning more about the diverse communities that make up Hawaii.”

An Island Community: Shifting Education and Information Needs

Hawaii faces challenges common to geographically dispersed communities. Roughly 70 percent of the state’s residents and most news outlets are based in Oahu, often leading to Oahu-centric coverage. “You’ll only see stories [about the other islands] if something huge happens, which doesn’t allow people to get a sense of those communities,” said Robert

Pennybacker, a PBS Hawaii vice president.¹ In talking about Hawaii’s multiethnic population, Donna Tanoue, HIKI NO funder and president of the Bank of Hawaii Foundation, notes that “there are stories unique to every community on every island. Yet a representative mosaic of news coverage across islands and cultures has been difficult to achieve.”

¹ Klinefelter, M., “Tying the State Together,” *American Journalism Review*, September 2010. http://www.pbshawaii.org/Press%20Release%20PDF%20%20/AJR_Hiki%20No.pdf

The 2009 merger of Honolulu’s three commercial television news operations, and the 2010 closure of the Honolulu Star Bulletin, the second largest daily newspaper in the state, further reduced the number of reporters and the diversity of voices covering community issues. In addition to these challenges, the state has been plagued by public education cuts. In 2009, under the weight of a \$1 billion state deficit, Hawaii became the first state to institute “furlough Fridays,” trimming 17 days off the academic calendar. Drastic cuts to enrichment activities such as art, music and after-school sports followed. As a result, many youths – particularly those from low-income backgrounds – were unable to access quality opportunities for growth and development.



HIKI NO: A Strategy Emerges

In the midst of statewide media consolidation and drastic public education cuts, PBS Hawaii President Leslie Wilcox believed that her organization could help address the state’s news and youth development challenges. PBS had several assets to contribute, including broadcast expertise, a statewide audience, a strong commitment to education and connections to schools. Wilcox hoped to establish a statewide student news network, with middle and high school students producing a weekly television and online broadcast. The effort was inspired by the achievements of a local student news network, Searider Productions, housed at Waianae High School on the remote western edge of Oahu. Searider Productions had produced award-winning news content and developed a successful for-profit venture providing digital media services to the community.

Wilcox believed that PBS Hawaii could be a key partner in spreading a similar youth-voice model throughout the state to:

- Foster communication, storytelling and workforce skills among Hawaii’s students.
- Build the capacity of teachers to foster ongoing media-based learning in their classrooms.
- Cover stories in places and communities often ignored by mainstream media to support a greater sense of connection across the state.

Getting Prepared and Launching

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting provided PBS Hawaii with a \$200,000 start-up grant to establish HIKI NO. Additional funding for HIKI NO soon followed from the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation and the Hawaii Community Foundation (HCF). With its investment, HCF aimed to diversify the information available about Hawaii’s many geographic and cultural communities and to build youth communication skills.

Central to the project’s early momentum was its ability to attract a number of partners, including support from the Department of Education, local rotary clubs and major corporate sponsors, as well as in-kind technical support from Waianae’s Searider Productions and its for-profit arm Makaha Studios, tw telecom, Commercial Data Systems and a local law firm.

Hawaii Community Foundation

Established: 1916

Location: Honolulu, Hawaii

Asset size: \$521 million

Staff: 59

Mission: The Hawaii Community Foundation helps people make a difference by inspiring the spirit of giving and by investing in people and solutions to benefit every island community.

In HIKI NO's first year, PBS Hawaii recruited many public, private, and charter school partners. PBS then conducted teacher training workshops throughout the state to build teachers' digital literacy. A Teacher Steering Committee was established with teachers across four islands, and several anchor schools with established digital media programs were recruited to provide informal mentorship to others.

Teachers were provided with curriculum for digital media courses in their schools, which included lesson plans on journalistic ethics, guidelines on production processes, student story "pitch sheets," tips for quality audio and video shots, and editing. PBS Hawaii made available basic media equipment on four islands for schools with limited or no in-house media technology. PBS established a virtual newsroom for students across islands to pitch ideas, submit draft scripts, upload broadcast quality video and develop newscasts.² One school would serve as a "home base" for each episode, and draft stories would be sent to PBS Hawaii's Honolulu headquarters for feedback to ensure productions met PBS's quality standards.

After a year of preparation, HIKI NO's first season premiered on Feb. 28, 2011. Fifty-four public, private and charter schools from diverse communities on four

islands created 12 original, 30-minute news programs, premiering on Mondays and repeating various times during the week. The first episode explored Facebook rules, laptops in schools, night football, a basketball coach, robots, farming and friendship.³ Popular topics in the first season included environmental issues, traditional Hawaiian foods, sports, youth facing adversity, finding identity and other topics important to youth.

HIKI NO Partnerships

Partner	Type
Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation	Foundation
Atherton Family Foundation	Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Foundation
Cooke Foundation, Ltd.	Foundation
Hawaii Community Foundation	Foundation
Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation	Foundation
Corporation for Public Broadcasting	Nonprofit
tw telecom	Corporate
Commercial Data Systems (in-kind)	Corporate
KTA Super Stores	Corporate
Makaha Studios	Corporate
George Mason Fund	Individual
Stupski Family Fund	Individual

² Ibid

³ Temple, J., "Looking for Inspiration? Check Out HIKI NO," Honolulu Civil Beat, February 24 2011. <http://www.civilbeat.com/posts/2011/02/23/9241-looking-for-inspiration-check-out-hiki-no/>

Project Progress

Now entering its fourth season, HIKI NO has expanded to include more than 500 students from 80 partner schools across all of Hawaii's seven main islands.

A quarter of the state's public schools now participate in the program, along with various private schools. In recognition of the interest generated, PBS moved the program to a prominent time slot on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

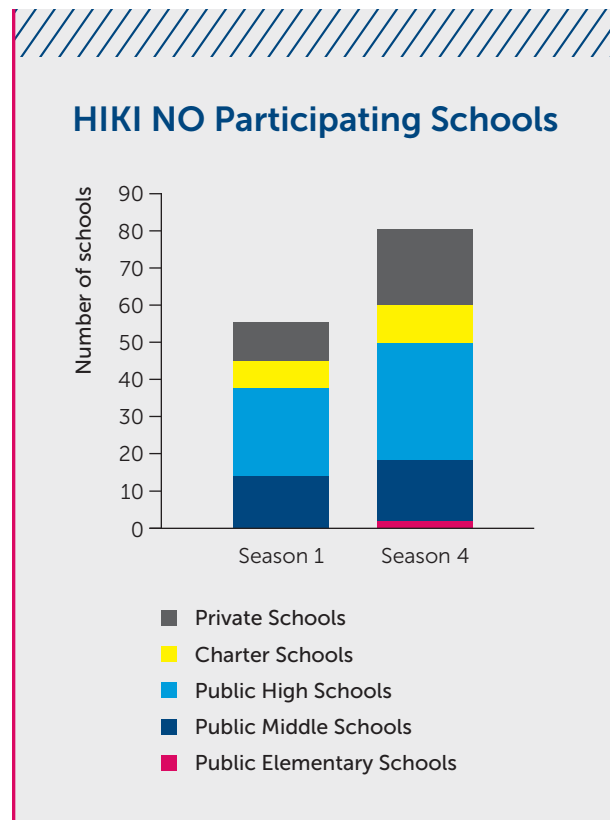
Nielson ratings show that 3,700 households (including 6,100 adults aged 18 and over) in the Honolulu media market regularly watch HIKI NO. This approaches 1 percent of designated market households, in line with other popular prime-time PBS programming such as the NewsHour.⁴ HIKI NO website traffic has been modest, constituting 10 percent of PBS Hawaii online page views.

Supporting teacher digital literacy: HIKI NO staff report that the "single most important" outcome of the work has been to "build the capacity of Hawaii's media teachers and students to tell compelling and authentic digital stories about their communities." At the start of the program, 80 percent of the teachers recruited did not have expertise in digital media or broadcasting. PBS invested heavily in teacher training to instill technology and communication skills. The train-the-teacher model has been central to the work, as PBS Hawaii President Leslie Wilcox explains: "Kids graduate and teachers will be the ones to keep this going. So we're putting a large percent of our budget into training and to acquiring digital assets so we can equip more teachers with the right skills."

Building youth skills and fostering self-confidence: All HIKI NO teachers report that their students have improved communication and collaboration skills as a result of the program. Eighty-four percent of the 54 teachers surveyed by PBS in May 2011 agreed that their students have learned to tell a compelling story about an issue important to them.⁴ Susan Yim, HIKI NO managing editor noted, "In the process of doing broadcast journalism, students learn to be informed citizens. They're encouraged to be curious, ask questions, think critically and be creative."⁵

⁴ HIKI NO report to the Knight Foundation, September 2012.

⁵ Klinefelter, "Tying the State"



For some students, the lessons of HIKI NO apply beyond broadcast journalism. As student Nikki Davis observed, "I learned how to talk to people in the business world, how to sound business-like. I also learned how to get turned down – we'd have to regroup and collaborate to pitch a new idea. It's very different from high school – where they still kind of baby you." The feedback and high quality expected by PBS Hawaii's team (sometimes through several rounds of edits) has stretched students' skills. "HIKI NO has given our students more confidence in what they're capable of doing," said middle school teacher Kevin Matsunaga. "I tell my students that their goal should be to have stories on HIKI NO. The students that are able to do this are so proud, and push themselves to do even more. Their confidence is really boosted."

Stories produced for HIKI NO by the Ni'ihau School of Kekaha have become a particular source of pride. Students at this K-12 charter school on the remote

western side of Kauai have produced five HIKI NO stories and anchored two entire episodes in their near-extinct Ni‘ihau dialect. As teacher Haunani Seward describes:

“Knowing how to speak the Ni‘ihau language is not something most of our students would initially feel proud of because it is stigmatized. We lead the state in incarcerations and poverty. But the media program allows kids to showcase what they can do. The language becomes an asset, and kids see that speaking it is a good thing.”

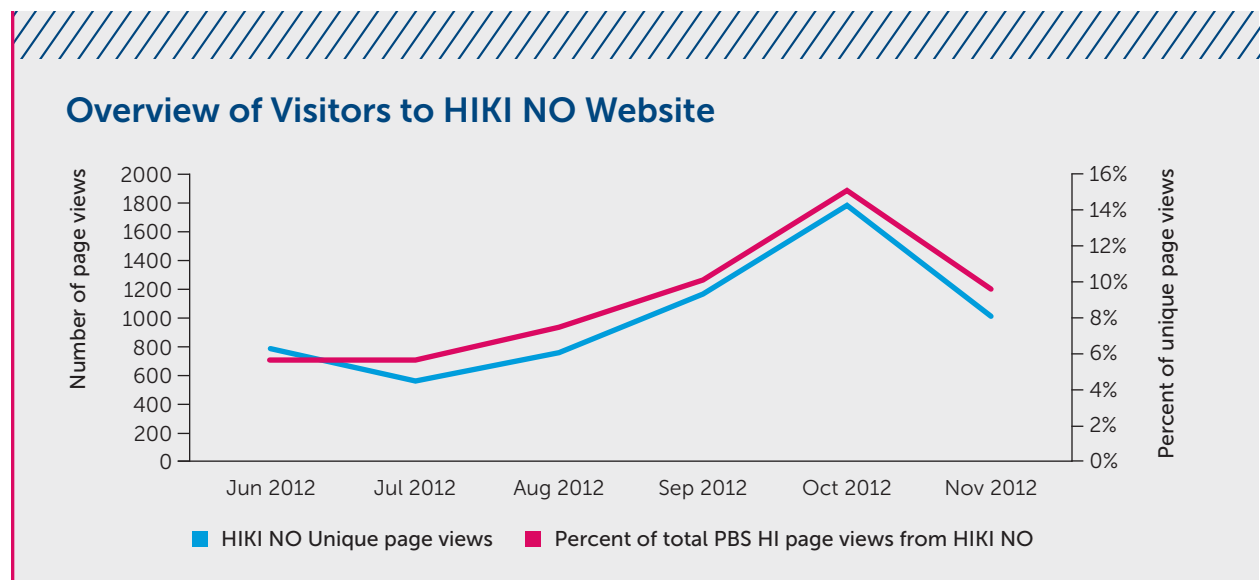
Enabling youth to share their unique viewpoints:

Over three seasons, students have generated original stories on topics ranging from the ancient practices of rock salt production in Kauai and a new plastic bag ban on Maui to the environmental and human threats of “shark safaris” in Oahu. “HIKI NO stories aren’t breaking news, but they’re a little deeper – stories taking us into students’ towns or islands and stories that they think are important,” said PBS Hawaii grant writer Lynn Haff. And in some cases, HIKI NO students provided the only press coverage of a topic, reflecting their unique interests and viewpoints.

Youths have also succeeded in securing interviews and drawing out perspectives where professional

journalists may have failed. A story about a boy who became a father at Moanalua High School showed the challenges of balancing parenthood with school and friends, an honest portrayal told in a unique youth voice. “They have stories about teen pregnancy on MTV,” said student Nikki Davis. “But it’s different when the story is told by someone you can identify with, who is actually from Hawaii.”

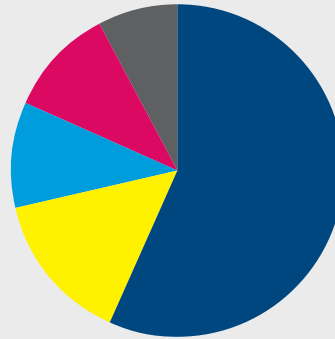
Engaging a youth audience: HIKI NO has successfully engaged youth in the production of the program, but been less successful in building a regular youth audience for its content. While PBS has not conducted a formal audience study, several teachers and students suggested that the television program has attracted the same audience as other popular PBS shows: older adults. Younger viewers may tune in more infrequently, when a show they produced is being aired, or when the program features their school or community. As Candy Suiso of Searider Productions notes “Students don’t run home to watch the news”. In response to viewership trends, Searider Productions moved completely online. “Our main audience is students, and they rarely watch TV. They watch everything online and on their different devices, and they want to be able to tune in at any time,” noted Suiso. Likewise, as of December 2012 HIKI NO’s social media presence is small, and represents an area that could be further exploited to engage a broader youth audience.⁶



⁶ Approximately 550 users “like” the program on Facebook, and just over 400 followers on Twitter.

HIKI NO Budget (2013)

■ Personnel	– \$212,044
■ TV and Web	– \$54,108
■ Training	– \$38,500
■ Marketing	– \$40,000
■ Other direct costs	– \$28,150



Tackling operational sustainability: HIKI NO has reached a critical mass of Hawaii schools. The challenge now will be to sustain the high-touch, high-quality guidance to participating teachers. To do this, HIKI NO will require long-term funding from key partners and will need to further promote a “train the trainer” model. HIKI NO has begun initial conversations with Hawaii’s Department of Education to absorb some of the training costs and hopes to integrate the

program into the state’s language arts curriculum. At the same time, PBS Hawaii is pursuing internal funding sources to continue supporting teacher training. HIKI NO founders have also begun talks with the PBS NewsHour and Texas PBS to replicate the program in Texas, and are developing a youth media tool kit for other cities and states to draw on when launching their own programs.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Build peer support networks for teachers.

PBS Hawaii’s intensive mentorship of teachers and sponsorship of teacher-training conferences created a strong environment for supporting youth learning and enabling HIKI NO to grow. Peer mentorship from a core group of experienced “champion” teachers has also helped struggling schools to stay involved with HIKI NO.

Lesson 2: Use news content from youth to complement mainstream media sources.

In addition to covering the types of stories featured on other news outlets, youths covered specialized stories adults may not have pursued, and with a different voice. This diversified the information available about the community.

Lesson 3: Go beyond television to reach and engage youth.

While adults follow the show, generating youth-to-youth dialogue and building a steady youth audience have been challenging for HIKI NO. Generating more searchable online content and more effectively using social media tools may help address these challenges, as young people may not regularly tune in to early evening TV programming.

Lesson 4: Partner with a top-tier media organization to drive student motivation and engagement.

PBS Hawaii’s broad audience and high expectations raised the stakes for students participating in HIKI NO and created a sense of prestige and pride around the program. With a less respected or exacting partner, students likely would not have felt the same pressure to perform, or the same sense of accomplishment when their stories ultimately aired across the state.

About

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

More at knightfoundation.org.

The Knight Community Information Challenge engages community and place-based foundations in meeting local information needs, helping them increase their impact on issues they care about.

More at informationneeds.org.

FSG

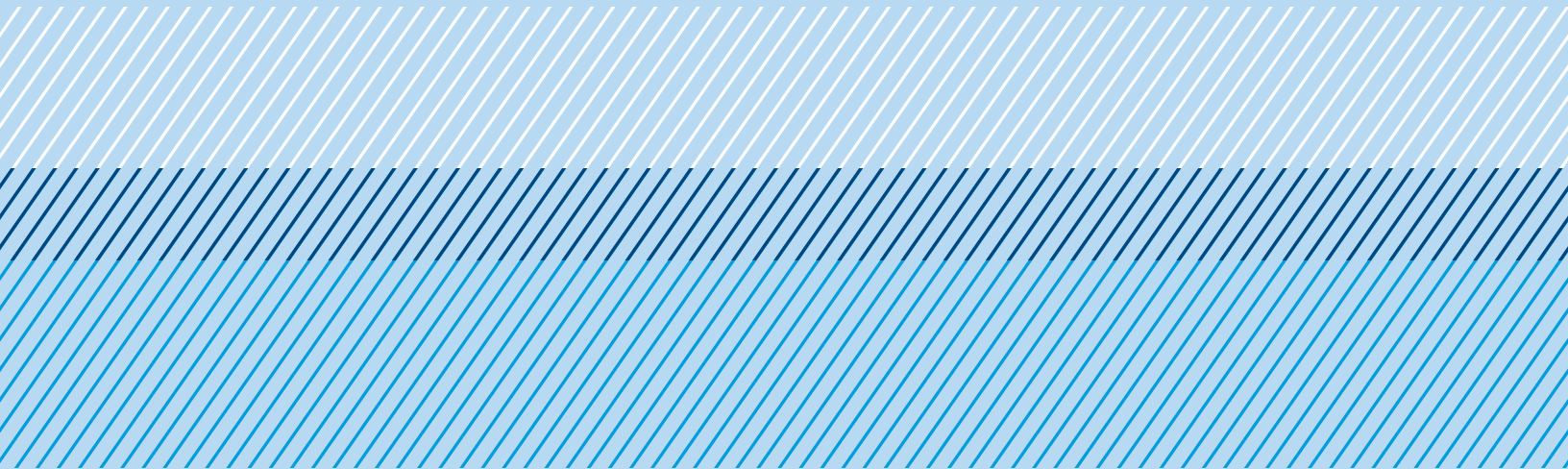
FSG is a nonprofit consulting firm specializing in strategy, evaluation and research, founded in 2000 as Foundation Strategy Group. Today, FSG works across sectors in every region of the globe – partnering with foundations, corporations, nonprofits and governments to develop more effective solutions to the world’s most challenging issues. FSG brings together leaders that are hungry to exchange information, elevate learning and to create collective impact in discovering better ways to solve the world’s most difficult social problems. In the field of learning and evaluation, FSG has significant client and thought leadership experience. FSG’s approach focuses on the use of evaluation as a management tool to improve decision making and increase social impact. We use traditional as well as innovative data-collection approaches to determine the various effects and impacts an organization’s efforts have produced over time – always with the purpose of informing and improving strategy and program implementation.

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