



Artwork by Taking Root participants, Sol Marques and Rosaline Puana

Humanities Guåhan is pleased to nominate *Taking Root: Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability* for the 2019 Helen and Martin Schwartz Prize for Public Humanities Programs.

### **Program Description**

*Taking Root: Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability* is a program for at-risk Guam public middle school students who trace their heritage to Guam, the CNMI, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. This program engaged students in the environments and cultures of Guam and Micronesia through exploratory hikes and field trips; workshops in creative writing, art, and photography; guided intercultural exchanges and projects; Pacific environmental conservation activities and lessons; and workshops and mentoring on youth-led community action. The Taking Root Program was comprised of three parts: an immersive three week summer program on the environments and cultures in Guam and Micronesia, weekly Youth Community Action Plan meetings, and a Youth Sustainability Conference.

### **Overview**

#### **Filling the Gap for Guam’s Youth**

Guam is identifiably the most urbanized island within the Micronesian region, experiencing the recognizable challenges of rapid change that come with globalization and continued colonization, while also existing as “home” to indigenous CHamorus, and a burgeoning Micronesian community inclusive of residents who trace their heritage to the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands, and transnational citizens with ties to the Asia-Pacific region. Such challenges manifest themselves in the youth community, as young people try to make sense of their world and see themselves as modern islanders, who are preoccupied with mobile devices, social media, and American pop culture. These young islanders are somewhat detached from pressing social and environmental issues and instead respond to growing materialistic and consumerist values. Surprisingly, they rarely have the opportunity to engage in activities that encourage learning from each other, celebrating their diversity, sharing their histories, and building positive relationships based on an understanding and appreciation of their unique cultures and the natural environment of their shared home in Guam.

In response to this urgent area of need, in January 2018, Humanities Guåhan launched the planning of ***Taking Root: Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability***, an enormously successful outdoor youth initiative for at-risk Guam public middle school students that integrated capacity building—for youth leadership, critical thinking and problem solving, and community engagement—with an immersive educational program centered on the natural and cultural resources of Micronesia. This intensive and innovative project served students who attend schools in a single-unified district that has been recognized as being among the highest poverty school districts in the nation. In addition to the financial strain and limited resources often experienced within their families, these students face the challenges of a severely and chronically underfunded public school system, with overcrowded classrooms, chronic teacher shortages, very limited or nonexistent enrichment and mentorship opportunities, and educational materials and curricula largely centered on the natural and cultural resources of the U.S. mainland.

The Taking Root initiative was created for middle school students because generally in our community, intensive environmental activities and groups tend to be tailored toward high school students; creating a youth environmental and cultural program to serve this age group was important for increasing awareness and influencing behavior on environmental and cultural sustainability issues for students earlier in their lives and strengthening a sense of empowerment at an age where they are first learning about their independent capabilities. Managing this age group of at-risk youth with limited family support for this type of program required intensive mentorship and logistical support, but the investment of time and resources led to highly successful outcomes.

The overarching **aims** of the youth outdoor education initiative are:

- to reconnect youth to the land and help them to know, understand, and appreciate the natural world and the harmful effects of climate change on it
- to encourage a deeper level of cross-cultural awareness and understanding
- to empower youth to identify the critical roles they play in sustainable development, cultural and environmental preservation, and community building

The Taking Root initiative accomplished these goals through an innovative program that connected at-risk youth and indigenous youth from Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and Micronesia with scientists, environmentalists, humanists, and traditional experts. The project ran from June to October 2018 and was comprised of three parts:

- Cultural and Environmental Immersive Summer Program
- Youth-led Community Action Plans with Mentorship
- Youth Sustainability Conference

During the three-week Cultural and Environmental Immersive Summer Program, a total of thirty middle school students from the Guam public school system participated in several outdoor and classroom activities. Some of these activities included instruction on climate change, community action and compassionate leadership; field trips to a limestone forest and ancient CHamoru latte site; hikes to watersheds and snorkeling at beaches; visits to local farms and clean up and restoration activities. The participants then mapped and identified needs within the community and established goals and an action plan for their own youth-led community project to address local challenges around the global crisis of climate change. Finally, the participants helped develop, produce, promote, and facilitate Guam's first Youth Sustainability Conference. The Conference provided an opportunity for initiative participants to share their experiences and community action plans with their peers, while also allowing for a larger audience to engage with the experts we have partnered with.

**Have you ever ...**

**EXPLORED** the limestone forest & ancient Chamorro village in Litekyan (Ritidian)?

**HEARD** stories about the Sleeping Lady of Kosrae, or Uab of Palau?

**LISTENED** to birdsong on Cocos Island?

**SNORKELED** through schools of fish in sparkling blue water?

**IMAGINED** navigating the waters of Micronesia w/ masters of seafaring from Chuuk and Yap?

**DREAMED** of delivering powerful poetry to world leaders about the threats to your environment & your love for your islands?

**WONDERED** about how our islands came to be & how we can protect them?

**CREATED** your own stories, poetry, photographs or art about your beliefs, your culture, & your connection to the land & sea?

**Join us this summer!**

**TAKING ROOT**  
Environment & Culture  
SUMMER CAMP

**June 4-22, 2018**  
MON - FRI | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

We're inviting thirty of Guam's public middle school students who trace their heritage to Guam, the CNMI, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands to join us for the Taking Root Project!

For more information, please contact:

**TINAOTAO**  
HUMANITIES  
GUAHAN

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Taking Root visiting the Guam National Wildlife Refuge, 2018

## **A Multifaceted Endeavor**

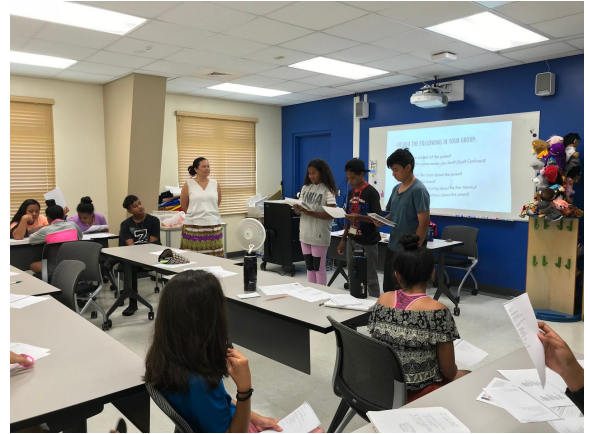
### **Cultural and Environmental Immersive Summer Program**

In order to map the curriculum and activities of this immersive and multifaceted [initiative](#), Humanities Guåhan consulted with a curriculum committee comprised of educators and experts in a variety of fields including marine biology, environmental conservation, middle school curriculum development, local and regional history, as well as traditional knowledge of Guam and wider Micronesia. These committee members included: an associate professor of science at Guam Community College and faculty advisor to the student and community group Guam EcoWarriors; an assistant professor at the University of Guam and the executive director for UOG's Center for Island Sustainability; an associate professor of biology and division chair of natural science at the University of Guam; a celebrated marine biology secondary-school educator and longtime faculty advisor for the student environmental group Marine Mania; an expert on the Palauan community of Guam; an expert on the Satawalese community of Guam; a longtime educator and vice principal at Untalan Middle School; and a professor of Chamorro Studies at the University of Guam.

The process of recruiting students for the program involved meeting with the principals, vice principals, and other school representatives from all eight public middle schools. With their cooperation, information was disseminated about our program, a point of contact was designated at each school, and 5-7 students were recommended from each school to be entered into our final pool of applicants. In the end, our group was comprised of youth from seven of the island's eight middle schools, and nearly all states, territories, and nations in Micronesia were represented in the heritage of our students.

We placed each of our students into six teams, each led by a college level intern recruited for their experience with either cultural or environmental programs and past work with youth. Our middle school students were kept in these teams throughout the camp to foster a strong sense of bonding and teamwork, which we believe was also crucial for retention and the quality of participation of the students. We received several comments from our partners about the team-like nature of our students, which could be difficult to foster in a public program for students from a wide range of

cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds within an at-risk population. Such team bonding among a diverse group is especially difficult in large public schools in Guam, where there is a tendency for students to keep to peer groups that are similar in ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are very proud that our students were able to work together and support each other across difference, which we attribute not only to the teams we created, but also the mix of teams we placed together, the culture of supportiveness and openness created by our staff and interns, our buddy system and shared group activities.



The three-week summer program followed an intense [schedule](#) of both indoor and outdoor activities and involved Humanities Guåhan staff and interns, community leaders, educators, and cultural and scientific experts. The students travelled to the wildlife refuge and ancient CHamoru village at the north end of the island and the barrier reef island just past the southernmost tip of Guam, received an overview of the histories and cultures of the different territories, states, and nations of Micronesia, spoke with seafaring and traditional navigation masters and practitioners, learned about, cooked, and ate traditional food from different parts of Micronesia, participated in activities on climate change, invasive and endangered species, erosion, overfishing and watershed management, monitored echinoderm species on Guam's reef flats, planted native and endangered plants, learned about the biology, ecology, and traditional uses of the mangroves, participated in poetry, photography, music and art workshops, and learned to work together in teams and consider viable ideas for their community action plans. To develop this program, we utilized and built partnerships with organizations and individuals from throughout the island.

Jane Goodall's environmental curriculum- the Roots & Shoots Program, was implemented for the immersive summer camp; it is a youth service program that centers on compassionate leadership and aims to shape leaders who contemplate the way their decisions impact all living things and the environment. Students utilized the [24-page Roots & Shoots Toolkit](#) which outlines the four step formula for identifying and implementing a service campaign. Students referred to this guide throughout the camp and later in the community action planning phase.

### Action Plans



In our community action planning sessions, which began in the summer camp and continued through the summer and fall, we emphasized a youth-led approach. We asked our students to survey all they were seeing and had seen during the 3-week immersion camp—our island's ecosystems and cultures, the threats to those ecosystems and cultural practices, and the innovative approaches toward remedying those problems—and to reflect on those field trips through assignments, ultimately to decide on a project of their own. Through these assignments and activities, we asked students to consider issues they felt most passionately about, what projects were actionable within the time frame that we had, what resources they needed for those projects, and which community partners they would like to approach for additional help.

We provided and reflected on both national and local examples of youth led action to inspire our students, from myriad examples in Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots Program to international youth groups using Map Your World technology to Guam's high school and college student groups, who organized recycling and composting lessons and testified before the Guam Legislature to persuade senators to pass legislation on a regional shark sanctuary. We found that the local examples in particular were most inspiring for the students, especially in that the videos we screened of local student action featured some of the Taking Root interns they were working with. In discussing and reflecting on youth-led projects, our students were simultaneously excited and intimidated by the assignment: public school service-learning in Guam usually formally begins in high school islandwide, and the commonplace style of



service-learning is to follow directions given on specific projects, rather than conceive of and organize a project oneself.

### **Taking Root Teams**

One of our teams, the [Royal Spams](#), was inspired by a Taking Root trip to the Marbo Cave and Cliff Area, which includes a freshwater cave that is part of the Northern Guam Lens Aquifer. On the field trip, our students learned about the aquifer's role in supplying fresh water to the island's residents, and how it is threatened by climate change, pollutants, and saltwater intrusion from potential overpumping. They explored the cave's interior and then hiked to the Marbo Cliffline nearby, where they learned that the Marbo area was once the site of an ancient CHamoru village and remains a place of deep cultural significance. While planning the project, the students researched the hazards and deaths that had occurred in the area, and worked on deeper research into the environmental and cultural significance of the area. They met with the Special Projects Coordinator from the Guam Fire Department for consultation on safety signs, with a professor from Guam Community College on the scientific significance of the area, and they consulted with the Guam Historic Preservation Office on the historical and cultural importance of the area. They organized and carried out a cleanup of the area, designed educational and safety signage, and found translators who could supply Japanese, Korean, and CHamoru translations for tourists and locals.



Another team, The Chillins, decided on [Badlands Restoration](#) as their community action project during the camp, after a Ridge-to-Reef field trip to the badlands of Yona, Pago River, and Pago Bay with the Guam Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry, the Guam Nature Alliance, and the University of Guam's Sea Grant Program. This Taking Root team put together a social media community education campaign and immersion project to demonstrate the need to save both the soil and the reef. They worked closely with the Guam Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry and chose a site along the hiking path to Tarzan Falls—a popular hiking spot. They chose specific areas for restoration, decided to implement particular methods for soil restoration—based on the topography of the land,

the proximity of acacia trees and the likely flow of water—created lists of materials needed to implement an immersion activity, and worked with Forestry to provide supplies and tools to volunteers. They created an Instagram account to engage their peers on erosion and soil restoration, and successfully utilized volunteers to install jute and wattles on their chosen site.

[Team Branches](#) was interested in ocean conservation, and implemented two related community action projects to that effect: site-based recycling and cleaning of Tanguisson Beach and Human Use Monitoring, a relatively new method of gathering data about human activities in Guam coastal areas, which are then compared with impacts to the reefs directly offshore or in the vicinity of those human activities. The students who managed the Tanguisson Beach Cleanup were granted support from their village mayor for trash pickup following cleanups and potential recycling support if needed. These students also volunteered for iRecycle who provided advice on organizing recycling efforts and sorting recycling as necessary for the island's recycling facilities. These students further recruited additional manpower by talking to classmates, who also utilized the beach frequently and were enthusiastic in their efforts. Our Human Use Team carried out observational research at both Tanguisson



Beach and the Paseo de Susana Park, in tandem with site cleanups and with the support of Humanities Guåhan, their peers, and Friends of Reefs Guam. These students were the first middle school students to engage in this new type of research activity, which had previously only been performed by college students.



The [Bellas and Benny Team](#) was concerned with the recent arrival of the coconut rhinoceros beetle, first discovered in Guam in 2007 and known in our region to decimate the coconut tree population when unchecked. They worked with entomologists at the University of Guam's College of Natural and Applied Sciences Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program to collect beetle larvae that would be studied in labs at UOG. While initially researching the coconut beetle problem, they discovered that the methods that had been used in the past few years on Guam to try to control the beetle population proved ineffective, and that their efforts would be best spent in assisting the entomologists as they tried to find new ways to combat the beetle population. This Taking Root Team learned how to identify promising sites for beetle larvae, how to handle and store the larvae, and went on site visits to

find larvae with an entomologist and his partners. Students also researched different cultural practices and the importance of the coconut tree to different cultures in the region, melding environmental and cultural conservation into their community action plan.

The [Pacific Einsteins](#), our youngest team, focused on creative new methods for recycling, namely upcycling--repurposing old and used materials into new, useful products. These students researched data from Guam's International Coastal Cleanups and participated in cleanup and recycling efforts in order to understand and decide on common types of refuse that could be easily repurposed for their project. They focused on plastic bottles and caps, creating prototypes for vases, pencil holders, and key chains, and heard from iRecycle's spokesperson about her upcycling workshops utilizing old tires and pallets. From their research, the Pacific Einsteins conceived of and carried out two upcycling workshops, in which they led participants through the process of creating upcycled keychains with used and cleaned fishing twine, bottle caps, and paint. This team was instrumental in the Straw Upcycling project, together with the Taking Root Team Banana Ninjas, in which 2,000 used straws were collected from Guam's California Pizza Kitchen, cleaned, and then used together with balloons, paper mache, glue guns and spray paint to create upcycled sea urchin centerpieces for the Youth Sustainability Conference.



The final Taking Root Team, the [Banana Ninjas](#), focused on a specific item of trash--single-use plastic straws--and their role in ocean and land pollution, as well as their impacts on human health and wildlife. After conducting research about those impacts, this team hoped to inspire individual consumers and restaurants to reduce their use of plastic straws through an education and outreach campaign. The Banana Ninjas held meetings with representatives from Guam restaurants who already had implemented a straw policy (restaurants distributing straws only when requested by a customer) or who had used products that eliminated the need for plastic straws, and with a local senator, who had written and passed legislation banning plastic bags on Guam. The Banana Ninjas drafted a petition addressed to Guam restaurants requesting the implementation of a straw policy, created an online petition, and printed copies that they used to inform the public about straw policies, requesting signatures from students and teachers in their schools and from passersby in public areas. These [petitions](#) were then used in meetings with Guam restaurant owners and representatives, with their respectful request to the restaurant to implement a straw policy. From their meeting with a representative from California Pizza Kitchen, the Banana Ninjas were essential in gathering 2,000 used, repurposed straws to demonstrate both upcycling and the need for single-use straw reduction in the Straw Upcycling project.



## Youth Sustainability Conference

In order to increase access to the Taking Root Program beyond our initial cohort of 30 public middle school students and six college interns, we presented the [Taking Root Youth Sustainability Conference](#). We solicited students from all eight of Guam's public middle schools. Seven of the eight schools participated and attendance grew to 122 participants from the schools including 113 students and 9 chaperones. Taking Root parents and representatives from our partner organizations, Taking Root Curriculum Committee and Humanities Guåhan Board of Directors also attended the conference.

We wanted to provide visiting student participants with a mix of educational experiences during the conference: listening, reflecting, discussing, exploring, engaging in group work, and brainstorming for the future. Our first priority was to provide our visiting conference student participants with models of youth community action via our Taking Root teams. Each team had twenty minutes to present on their project and carry out an interactive activity related to their project to further engage visiting students. Our Taking Root students and interns used Microsoft PowerPoint & Google Slides to prepare their [presentations](#), created scripts, and rehearsed together with their interns and Humanities Guåhan staff, and before their Taking Root cohort. They created a range of activities, including a recycling game, a drawing/poetry activity imagining an island without coconut trees, a Jeopardy trivia contest about the badlands, and a sign design activity for different public spaces on the island.

For the second half of the conference, we wanted to increase interactive activities and exploration for the visiting students and our Taking Root cohort, so we settled on a combination of Breakout Sessions and a Youth Sustainability Fair. The Fair would help the students explore widely and learn one-on-one about other cultural and environmental organizations on the island beyond Taking Root. We invited a mix of organizations who either had worked with us during Taking Root or who hadn't but emphasized the region's environment, cultures, or a combination of the two in their outreach programming. To facilitate one-on-one interaction, we provided conference participants with an interview activity sheet, the Sustainability Fair Passport, to help them ask questions of organizations at the fair and retain knowledge of future events and activities outside of school.



The poster features a blue background with a pink tree graphic at the top. On the left, there is a logo for 'TINAOTAO HUMANITIES GUAHAN' with a stylized face. The main title 'TAKING ROOT' is in large, bold, pink and blue letters. Below it, a yellow banner reads 'Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability'. The event title 'YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE' is in pink, followed by the date and location: 'Friday, October 26, 2018 | Hyatt Regency Guam'. The 'PROGRAM AGENDA' is listed in a clean, sans-serif font, with time slots and activities. The background of the agenda section transitions from blue to green.

**TAKING ROOT**  
**Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability**

**YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE**  
Friday, October 26, 2018 | Hyatt Regency Guam

**PROGRAM AGENDA**

**8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.**  
*Check-in and Breakfast*

**9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.**  
*Welcome Remarks*  
*Kimberlee Kihleng, Executive Director*

*Introduction of Taking Root*  
*Bernice Santiago, Project Coordinator*

*Palau Pledge*  
*Video Presentation*

**9:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.**  
*Taking Root Community Action Presentations*  
The Chillins  
The Royal Spams  
Team Branches  
Pacific Einsteins  
The Bellas and Benny  
Banana Ninjas

**11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**  
*Lunch*

*Nihi! Video Presentations*  
*Praise Song for Oceania by Craig Santos Perez*  
*Video Presentation*

*Håfa adai Pledge*  
*Guam Visitors Bureau*

**12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.**  
*Interactive Break Out Sessions*  
*Sustainability Fair*

**2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
*Evaluation and Conference Wrap Up*  
*Bernice Santiago*



For the Breakout Sessions, we wanted students to explore community action in a group setting, and brainstorm future actions they would like to take together with their classmates. We invited and confirmed seven community partners who had been instrumental to the Taking Root community action projects, and we split the participants into separate groups, comprised of one Taking Root team, one Community Partner, and visitors from one school. During the Breakout Sessions, visiting students heard from a specific Taking Root team about ideas for potentially expanding their specific project or replicating their project at other sites on the island. They also heard from

their Community Partner about other youth outreach programs or potential needs for youth community action that existed within their organization's purview. From these ideas, visiting students were asked to reflect on what they had heard, decide on what was most interesting to them, and discuss their potential community action in the larger group setting. The visiting students then voted on the most promising activity to emerge from the discussion, and chose specific actions that they could take immediately following the conference.



### **Public Impact**

The Taking Root Program including a summer camp, mentorship by interns, partnerships with organizations, scientists, environmental experts, and traditional experts and youth-led Community Action Plans culminated in a resoundingly successful *Taking Root Youth Sustainability Conference*. We're enormously proud of our middle school students, who were often shy and intimidated at the outset of the conference planning stage in July, and yet presented their projects to a student-filled ballroom of their peers in October with surprising passion, conviction, and grace. They conceived of, organized and carried out projects that were clear, concrete answers to the threats facing our island. Our students' growth over the course of the program, their clear sense of empowerment, and their enthusiasm were inspiring. We're also very proud of our college interns for their part in leading, guiding, and encouraging their teams; they became important sources of support throughout the program, and we were pleased to see their growth and their strengths expressed in their dedication to their teams and the Taking Root Program. In tackling such an ambitious project, we are extremely proud of our accomplishments initiating a successful new model of youth community action on Guam, which we've since learned is a model that our partner organizations want to adopt for their own youth programs.



In addition to providing the tools and mentorship for students to become leaders in environmental advocacy, the program also fostered much needed unity in Guam's diverse student body and the wider island population. Our students came from schools where racial tension and stigma, particularly against the students who trace their heritage to the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands, is prevalent and erupts in violence, in a way that is mirrored in the larger Guam community. Our program fostered a team spirit, compassionate leadership, positive relationships, a positive sense of cultural identity, appreciation of diverse strengths and differences, and respectful and peaceful interaction among our diverse students, and was enormously successful in this. There was a clear sense of team unity and friendship among our

diverse students by the end of our immersion camp, which continued through our community action planning phase and was an important model for teamwork and compassionate leadership at our Youth Sustainability Conference.

### **Addressing Areas of Need**

The local education agency, the Guam Department of Education, serves nearly 30,000 K-12 students who attend all 41 of the island's public schools. The entire school district participates in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program, in which all students receive school meals at no cost to them. This program eliminates the need for CEP schools and families to submit and process household applications to the National School Lunch Program and Breakfast Program, and is only an eligible option for the nation's highest poverty schools. Schools qualify for CEP when more than 40% of enrolled students are "identified" by their participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and



are directly eligible to receive free school meal benefits. In April 2018, the percentage of identified students district-wide, according to Guam DOE, was 55.6%. Among the island's 26 elementary schools, the identified student percentage was 62.6%; among the island's secondary schools (8 middle schools, 6 high schools and an alternative school), the identified student percentage was 48.76%.



These numbers speak to the great financial strain widely experienced among students in Guam public schools, as well as their access to capacity-building and enrichment opportunities outside of their schools, either in the form of after-school programs or summer programs. For families unable to pay for school breakfast and lunch, the costs of additional capacity-building programs such as the summer K-12 programs offered by the University of Guam are out of the question. Even when the programs are free, such as free grade 6-12 programs offered by college preparatory programs at Guam Community College and the University of Guam, or by nonprofit organizations with educational and capacity-building programs, both the cost of meals and basic transportation prove to be major barriers. The Guam Regional Transit Authority is the island's only public transportation system, and is chronically and historically dysfunctional and unreliable. In our meetings with administrators and support staff at the eight public middle schools during the spring of 2018, a ubiquitous and immediate question was one of available transportation. The majority of the families of the at-risk public school students we were seeking to serve relied on the busing provided by Guam DOE, and this bore out in the number of students we needed

to provide transportation for during the immersive summer camp. Humanities Guåhan utilized vans and public school buses through corporate and government sponsorship.

These limited resources and the financial strain within the families of Guam public school students make clear that for the majority of them, capacity-building and enrichment opportunities are limited to the public schools themselves. The public schools, however, are underfunded: amounts approved and provided for by the Government of Guam have, in recent years, been at least \$100 million less than the annual budget request from the Guam Education Board.

The desperate state of Guam's public school system is also apparent in the lack of regularly updated textbooks and education materials. Added to this, is the fact that the textbooks that are purchased are largely centered on the natural and cultural resources of the U.S. mainland. The majority of these materials are purchased from vendors such as Houghton Mifflin, Johns Hopkins University, Follett Library Resources, Achieve3000 and others--materials created in and built for students who live in entirely different natural environments and have access to vastly different cultural resources in the U.S. mainland. As a result, there is a significant education gap that exists for the natural and cultural resources of Micronesia, and for the histories and cultures of the Asia-Pacific region, across curricula.

## **The Future**

### ***Taking Root in Micronesia***

We are enormously proud of the success of this project and we are actively seeking funding for *Taking Root in Micronesia: Growing Youth Empowerment for Island Sustainability*, an annual 10-week intensive summer program, capacity-building workshops and mentorship on professional skills for community projects, education programs on Micronesia's natural and cultural resources, meaningful cross cultural exchange, and youth-led community action plans culminating in an annual Youth Sustainability Conference.





Taking Root participants with Yapese Traditional Master Navigator, Ali Haleiyur, 2018

The Council will identify core *Taking Root in Micronesia* teachers—education specialists who will further develop the program initially launched in 2018 and teach [extended curriculum plans](#) on Community Action, Natural Resources of Micronesia, and the Cultures of Micronesia. We will also draw on our partnerships from Taking Root 2018 and our other community projects, including key members of our Taking Root 2018 Curriculum Committee.

Taking Root 2018 partners who we would like to work with for Taking Root in Micronesia include a number of local and regional experts and organizations, including CHamoru and other Micronesian cultural practitioners such as traditional healers, farmers, fishermen, carvers, seafarers, weavers, storytellers, chanters and performance artists, as well as islander and non-native scientists, educators, and community organizers.

The long-term overarching goal of the Taking Root in Micronesia initiative is to empower island youth to take on active and engaged leadership roles in our island community in the management of our natural and cultural resources. Taking Root in Micronesia's long-term goals include building a broader and more complex understanding of the island's and region's resources, encouraging a deeper level of cross-cultural awareness and peaceful cross-cultural interaction, and fostering professional life skills development that gives students the tools to create and manage innovative and effective programs for the benefit of our island and region. The Taking Root in Micronesia initiative will accomplish these goals through a series of interdisciplinary programs that will connect public middle school students on Guam with natural and cultural resource stakeholders across the island, as well as educators and professionals who will provide hands-on capacity building education and mentorship. Through the real-world application of their skills, our students will be all the more prepared and connected to the important natural and cultural resource issues facing our island.



## **Financial Structure**

**Salaries and Honorarium-** To make this project possible, Humanities Guåhan received critical grant support from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Insular Affairs under the Technical Assistance Program in the amount of \$48,523. Funding partially covered the salary and benefits for the project director to coordinate and administer the 5-month period of the project. Equally important was compensating our interns and over 20 guest speakers and organizations for providing resources and expertise in building and carrying out the activities. We believe it is important to provide honorarium to local and regional experts in working directly with our students and their families.

**Food-** Throughout the three-week immersive summer program, funds were used to provide breakfast and lunch through a local catering company. Humanities Guåhan also used \$1,100 from our general funds to provide snacks for the students during the Community Action meetings held at our office.

**Transportation-** From the outset, we were aware that transportation would be a challenge for many of our participants. We sought sponsorship from Hertz Guam/Triple J Motors and secured three 7-seat vans used for transporting participants from throughout the island to the activities associated with the immersive summer camp. Additionally, Guam Community College (GCC) partially covered the cost of public school buses used during summer camp excursions. Personal vehicles were used for transporting a small group of students during the weekly Community Action meetings.

**Venues-** GCC provided large classrooms and the Humanities Guåhan office (which includes a large meeting room with access to computers and internet and a small library) served as the venue for Community Action meetings. Partial funding was provided by the 2018 Guam Legislative Appropriations to cover the more than \$9,000 cost of the conference including venue rental, lighting, and audio/visual services. Our Taking Root T-shirts were provided by a local company, in addition to Taking Root tote bags and water bottles- essential items for the excursions that took place throughout the summer. We also provided support for the Marbo Cave Restoration Project with assistance from the Adahi I Tano grant offered by the Guam branch of Matson Navigation Company. The project was funded \$500 to help pay for project supplies and partially cover the cost of safety and historical signage posted at Marbo Cave.

**Instructional supplies-** The remaining DOI funds went toward instructional supplies for both indoor and outdoor activities including waterproof cameras and reef walking shoes.



**Taking Root Interns and Participants at the 1st Youth Sustainability Conference, 2018**

## **Additional Information and Links**

Link to Taking Root Website: <http://www.humanitiesguahan.org/programs/taking-root>

Link to Camp, Community Action Plans and Conference Photos:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kmi1dg846a8z4jc/AADvYwkv8mWNs4dg0WuRur8Ka?dl=0>

Link to Schwartz Prize Nomination Packet:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/e06pj491b3tejxh/AAAbIzNb4Y8Zplpr811uAfq7a?dl=0>