

PUBLIC HEALTH RESONANCE

*Culturally & Regionally Relevant
Physical Activity Across the Globe*

WEBINAR PROGRAM

Thursday, May 8th, 2025

Agenda

Introductions & Welcome

Panel on Childhood

Panel on Adults

Panel on Kūpuna (Elders)

Weaving Together & Future Ideas

Mahalo & Closing



PUBLIC HEALTH RESONANCE

Culturally & Regionally Relevant Physical Activity Across the Globe



The goal of the Public Health Resonance Project is to amplify the unique attributes and deep connections across regionally and culturally relevant physical activities for public health promotion.

This project is supported by the Chin Sik & Hyun Sook Chung Endowed Chair in Public Health Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.



Culturally & Regionally Relevant Physical Activity Across the Globe

Introductions & Welcome



We are so grateful to have you join us at our first collaborative Public Health Resonance Webinar: Culturally and Regionally Relevant Physical Activity Across the Lifespan & Across the Globe. We are thankful for the expertise and time of the speakers, the attendees, and the hosts to make this event possible! This event is designed to connect, inspire, and grow relationships, understanding, and impact for public health promotion. We look forward also to your feedback on what else you would like to see/share in future webinars and how this project can be most useful to you! Mahalo for joining us to make these connections possible!

Camino de Santiago

Tetine Sentell



Hawai'i

Tetine Sentell is an internationally recognized health equity scholar and health services researcher. She's a Professor of Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and the Chin Sik & Hyun Sook Chung Endowed Chair in Public Health Studies and the Principal Investigator of the Hawai'i Public Health Workforce Catalyst Lab. Dr. Sentell brings 25+ years experience understanding and addressing health inequities. She wants to better understand and address these problems at the individual, family, and community-level with a strengths-based perspective. Dr. Sentell has published over 125 papers and led projects from the National Institutes of Health, the Hawai'i Department of Health, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality among other funders. Dr. Sentell served as Senior Scientist with the Queen's Health System, as Interim Dean for the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health, and as a Fulbright Specialist at the University of Medicine Institute of Public Health in Tirana, Albania in 2017. Dr. Sentell loves to hike, swim, and enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. She walked the Camino de Santiago in 2023 (and the dog this morning).

Mele Look has worked as a health researcher, community advocate, and health administrator for over 45 years. She was the first Director of Community Engagement at the Department of Native Hawaiian Health, University of Hawai'i's John A. Burns School of Medicine and presently serves as a Senior Advisor on select initiatives. At the Department, Ms. Look founded and facilitates the Ulu Network, a cardiometabolic health community coalition which has grown to 41 community-based organizations with over 80 sites that serve Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Peoples across Hawai'i and the Continental U.S. She received her Master's in Business Administration from University of California, Berkeley. Her research includes pioneering studies in the area of Native Hawaiian mortality and recently has been focusing on initiatives that merge cultural practices and health objectives. She is a cultural practitioner in the Native Hawaiian dance of hula and has completed the 'uniki 'ai lolo graduation as an 'olapa (accomplished dancer) with Hālau Mōhala 'Ilima a renown cultural and creative arts academy.

Mele Look



Hawai'i

Panel on Childhood

Dora Carolo



Portugal

Dora Carolo, MEd, was born and raised in a small coastal village of Lourinhã, Portugal. Naturally, the beach and the sea were her childhood playground, which powerfully shaped her life. She has been bodyboarding and longboarding for 24 years and has always loved open-water swimming. As a child, she only needed to be at sea, with or without a board. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sports Science and a master's in Physical Education (PE) Teaching in Lower and Upper Secondary Schools. Professionally, she has been involved in professional lifeguarding, emergency medical first response as a member of the Portuguese Red Cross, and professional training in water rescue and long-term development in sports. She still works in water safety and education/coaching, trying to unite three great passions: human movement, aquatic environments, and education. On an academic level, Dora integrated three international projects as Assistant Researcher, the European Physical Education Observatory - EuPEO, Physical Literacy for Life, and, more recently, the GoPE! - Global Observatory of Physical Education. Between 2017 and 2025, she trained PE teachers, sports coaches, and dance teacher candidates as an Assistant Lecturer at the Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon. As a PhD candidate (FCT Scholarship 2021.06516.BD), her ongoing research looks at how our aquatic physical literacy development can contribute to drowning prevention and help us be active for life by enhancing Blue Physical Activity behaviors.

Mika Thompson is a Health Data Analyst with the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup in Honolulu, HI (USA). Joining public health in 2018, Mika has had the opportunity to work on a wide range of research topics, most of which related to chronic disease epidemiology, as well as substance use prevention. He is passionate about data analysis and uncovering actionable insights to improve the health and wellbeing of the community that raised him. His education includes a BSc in Psychology, MSc in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology, and a graduate certificate in Measurement and Statistics, all of which from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where he is now a PhD candidate in Epidemiology. He also enjoys research centered on physical activity, especially as it relates to the people of Hawai'i. Despite recently learning the toll fatherhood can have on maintaining a physically active lifestyle, he does get to enjoy chasing his two toddlers around various beaches and parks and taking his dog on long quiet walks alone.

Ricardo Santos Oliveira



Brazil

Ricardo Santos Oliveira - I graduated with a master's in physical education from the Universidade Estadual de Londrina – Brazil; and earned a PhD in Sport and Health Sciences from the University of Exeter – United Kingdom, where he worked at the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre (CHERC). Following my PhD, I Completed a postdoctoral fellowship in epidemiology at the Universidade Federal de Pelotas – Brazil. Currently, I am a Senior Lecturer at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – Brazil, where I am the Leader of the Movement and Vascular Health Research Group (MoVa). My research aims to uncover how human movement – including physical (in)activity and exercise – impacts arterial health and function, with a focus on children and adolescents. Currently I am an Honorary Researcher at the University of Exeter – UK. One of the best things out there is being active. I really enjoy being active through basketball, running, and occasionally swimming.

Mika Thompson



Hawai'i

Panel on Childhood

Momi Tolentino



Hawai'i

Momi Tolentino is the Project Director and Native Hawaiian ambassador for Next Gen Hawai'i, a social media initiative sharing health information in relevant, timely, and trendy ways that reach youth and young adults. The initiative focuses on providing information for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities in ways that are culturally-mindful and appropriate. Momi also works at Papa Ola Lōkahi where she is a Communications and Community Relations Specialist in Native Hawaiian Health. Ms Tolentino was born in Kailua-Kona, raised in O'ahu and Hawai'i Island, and currently resides on the island of O'ahu in the ahupua'a of Ka'a'awa. She is a graduate of the class of 2016 Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, and the class of 2020 from Dartmouth College, where she graduated with a BA in Sociology modified with Anthropology.

Aubrey Yanger Mariano (Familian Decha' yan Liberato) is a mixed-race CHamoru woman, born and raised on the island of Guåhan. Since 2017, she has been nourished by the kuaiwi of O'ahu, Hawai'i, most recently the 'āina of Makiki. Aubrey received her BA in Psychology and American (Empire) Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and will soon be graduating with her Master of Public Health specializing in Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Health. Her research interests have included Indigenous and Pacific psychology, alternative justice processes, and CHamoru conceptions of health and wellbeing from a cultural lens. Aubrey served her MPH Practicum under the Pilina Center for Wellbeing, where she contributed to a scoping review of Indigenous wellbeing models, frameworks, and theories from across Turtle Island and Oceania. Alongside her studies, Aubrey provides Administrative Support to Mauli Ola Mālamalama, the Workforce Development hale at Papa Ola Lōkahi. She has also served as a Graduate Research Assistant in the areas of Wāhine and Historical Trauma and youth suicide prevention. Aubrey's long-term goal is to serve her CHamoru community by developing culturally grounded community health interventions, centering (re)connection with land, water, and CHamoru identity. Her favorite forms of physical activity include gardening and tåno'/'āina workdays.

Aubrey Yanger Mariano



Hawai'i

Catherine Pirkle



Hawai'i

Catherine Pirkle - Trained in both life-course and environmental epidemiology, I have worked for two decades in the field of women's health. I have extensively researched pivotal reproductive health milestones across the life-course—age at first birth, lifetime childbirths, age and type of menopause—and their associations with the disablement process, especially mobility disability. My research in women's health has involved numerous multi-country collaborations across the globe and in particular in low-income and rural communities. In the field of environmental epidemiology, I am particularly passionate about examining how marine environments affect human health, both positively and negatively. I specialize in the study of marine contaminants in fish and seafood as related to food security and nutrition. I am particularly interested in examining how overfishing, pollution, and climate change impact the health of coastal and island peoples. My work in this field has spanned from the Canadian Arctic to Oceania. In June 2023, I became the Scientific Director of the Red Hill Registry which is tracking the long-term health effects associated with the 2021 jet fuel spill at Red Hill in Hawai'i. The jet fuel is estimated to have contaminated the drinking water of over 90,000 people. I love outdoor activities including hiking, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving. I also regularly practice Pilates and take spin classes. However, nothing is more enjoyable than taking a walk on the beach with my daughter.



Panel on Adults

Simone Schmid



Hawai‘i

Simone M. Schmid, Post-doctoral Researcher, received her PhD in public health from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2021, and joined the team in 2022. She has professional public health experience in the areas of health policy, research, evaluation, development cooperation, and management. This experience was gained within the United Nations, State Department of Health, non-profit sector and academia in Hawai‘i, England, Denmark, Germany, Singapore, and Australia. Her goal is to connect academia and health practitioners to design applicable, research-based, innovative solutions and policies addressing health behaviour, especially to improve health equity by supporting population groups who are marginalized to reach their full potential. Simone is particularly interested in community-based solutions, and culturally and regionally relevant physical activity for people with disabilities.



Rachel Dacks is an Assistant Professor of Biocultural Stewardship in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She grew up in Miami, FL and first came to Hawai‘i as a protected species fisheries observer, working on longline tuna boats. While her early academic background and work experience focused on marine ecology and fisheries, her experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in a small Indigenous village in Fiji made her acutely aware of the need to incorporate sociocultural factors into conservation planning. Her research focuses on using qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand complex human dimensions of natural resource management across the Pacific Islands region. She is specifically interested in how monitoring and evaluation of conservation and resource management interventions can be guided by biocultural approaches, in order to reflect the wellbeing of the entire system. Some of her current research is focused on understanding the reciprocal relationships between people and place through exploring the motivations and benefits experienced by environmental volunteers. Rachel spends many weekends participating in community workdays, in which she is able to engage in meaningful physical activity in very special places around the island of O‘ahu.

Rachel Dacks



Hawai‘i

David Anning



Australia/California

Dave Anning is a Senior Consulting Economist with Integral Consulting Inc, with expertise in the management of coastal and marine environments. He has more than 15 years of experience in consulting, and additional experience across academia, government research support, and as a board member of a coastal non-government organization. His work addresses topics such as climate vulnerability and adaptation, coastal resilience, offshore wind and marine renewable energy, natural resource damage assessment, and environmental and social impact assessment. Dave’s education includes a Bachelor of Science majoring in Marine Biology and Anatomy, a Master of Environmental Management with a major in Environmental Tourism, a Graduate Diploma of Economics, and a Ph.D. in Geography, focused on the economics of coastal management. Dave is originally from Australia, and enjoys surfing, fishing, kayaking, cycling and snowboarding.



Panel on Adults

Save the Waves



Global

Save The Waves Coalition (STW) is an international nonprofit that works in coalition with diverse organizations dedicated to protecting surf ecosystems. Their vision is a world where surf ecosystems are valued and protected, and where surfing provides a vehicle for long-term coastal conservation. Their mission is to protect surf ecosystems across the globe and have a goal of protecting 1,000 surf ecosystems by 2030. STW tackles their mission by 1) creating protected areas through their flagship World Surfing Reserve program and Surf Protected Area Networks. 2) managing projects around the world and encourage coastal stewardship through their Save The Waves App, and 3) mounting international campaigns to defend surf ecosystems under threat and inspire the public to take action.

Māhealani Taitague-Laforga, a Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, is a Native Hawaiian graduate student pursuing a Master’s degree in Public Health, specializing in Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Health at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Born and raised on her ‘āina kūpuna (ancestral land), she feels a deep sense of kuleana (responsibility) toward the ‘āina (environment), kaiāulu (community), and processes that have contributed to her sense of mauli ola (health and well-being). This kuleana fuels her passion for research, particularly in exploring the intersections between Indigenous peoples, the environment, and health, with a specific focus on water. Academically, Māhealani is a former scholar of the Summer Health Academy and is currently a graduate assistant with the Ke A‘o Mau Program. This program aims to enhance the understanding of healing and health among faculty, students, and alumni through interdisciplinary, culturally anchored education informed by Native Hawaiian values, practices, and principles. She also completed her practicum hours with Project Mokiha, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Research Leaders project currently in its seventh cohort. This project promotes a culture of health by addressing structural racism and building community capacity to protect water resources while increasing access to water through public trust lands, specifically in Maui and Moloka‘i. This effort involves invigorating a coalition of water protectors within communities across the pae ‘āina (Hawaiian Archipelago). Māhealani enjoys everything related to the ‘āina. Whether surfing, working in the lo‘i (taro patches), or going on long walks, she loves being outdoors. She is an ‘ōlapa, a student of hula, where she has the unique opportunity to connect with wai (water) and ‘āina through the mo‘olelo (stories), ‘oli (chants), and mele (songs) of her kūpuna (ancestors).

Māhealani Taitague-Laforga



Hawai‘i

Lola Irvin



Hawai‘i

Lola Irvin is the Administrator of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division (CDPHPD), in the Hawaii State Department of Health (HDOH). She has been with the HDOH since 2005, and with her diverse and talented team works on policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to advance the quality years of life for all people in Hawaii. Collectively, with community partners, the CDPHPD envisions healthy choices being the easy choice wherever people live, learn, work, and play. Work that brings forward quality of life, social justice, compassion, relationship building and understanding is invigorating. Refueling and refreshing means daily brisk walks, and on weekends digging and pruning about the garden.



Panel on Kūpuna

Alban Ylli



Albania

Alban Ylli is a public health doctor, working for Tirana University of Medicine and Institute of Public Health (IPH) of Albania. I have studied medicine and public health in Tirana, Rome, Geneva and Oxford. I have been deputy director and director of IPH and now teach non-communicable disease control (NCD), health policies/planning and geriatrics at Faculty of Medicine in Tirana. I also run a department of NCD control at IPH. I am involved in several national and international organizations, networks, coalitions with focus on public health. My hobbies include history, urban development and old books. I used to play amateurish basketball with my friends in XXth century, but not anymore in the new millennium. Now, I enjoy walking, jogging and hiking, when I can. I also can enjoy some swimming but only in summer. I try to keep myself fit by doing other exercises, like 30 seconds x 10 times mixed vigorous jumps etc., but not in summer months when it is too hot. Although I am not a good dancer, I enjoy dancing in private parties or public festivals. I may also enjoy gardening but this is a rare opportunity.

Saionara Câmara has been a professor of Physical Therapy at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, since 2015. She mentors master's and doctoral students in the Physical Therapy and Collective Health graduate programs. Her expertise lies in the epidemiology of aging, as well as life-course epidemiology and women's health. Over the years, she has collaborated with researchers from various countries and institutions on international research projects. Her research focuses on the effects of early-life exposures and socio-economic and cultural factors on physical function, disability, and chronic conditions in aging populations across diverse contexts, with a particular emphasis on low-income communities in Northeast Brazil. A lifelong advocate for exercise, Dr. Câmara practiced rhythmic gymnastics during her childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, earning approximately 30 medals in various regional championships. Currently, she maintains an active lifestyle through weight training, contemporary dance, and occasional running.

Saionara Câmara



Brazil

Ke‘alohi Antonio



Hawai‘i

Ke‘alohi Worthington Antonio is a public health researcher, and advocate committed to advancing Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) wellness through culturally grounded approaches. With a background in neuroscience and epidemiology, she integrates Indigenous methodologies and community-based strategies to address systemic health disparities. Ke‘alohi works on initiatives in kupuna wellness, language revitalization, traditional agriculture, mental health, and maternal and paternal health equity across the Pacific. Her work bridges academic research, clinical trials, and community organizing. Deeply rooted in her culture and community, Ke‘alohi is passionate about transforming systems to reflect the values, strengths, and voices of Pacific peoples.

Landon Opunui holds key roles at Nā Pu‘uwai Native Hawaiian Health Care System, serving as Executive Director, Medical Director, and Naturopathic Physician, where he blends traditional Hawaiian health views with modern medical practice. His team has pioneered the development of a Native Hawaiian Integrative Health Center, which offers culturally responsive healthcare services and education to the rural communities of Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i. Dr. Opunui is passionately dedicated to blending traditional and modern healthcare approaches to enhance access and improve outcomes through his roles in clinical practice, executive leadership, non-profit service, and community advocacy. Dr. Opunui is an advocate for health, wellbeing and cultural empowerment in his personal life as well. His wife and two sons live in a humble yurt they built in the forest of Mahinui. An avid and competitive outrigger paddler, Dr. Opunui finds solace in the ocean, balancing his professional and personal responsibilities with his passion for the sea.

Landon Opunui



Hawai‘i

Next Steps and Conversations

Lauren Kelsey



Alaska

Lauren Kelsey, MPH is a Public Health Specialist with the State of Alaska Physical Activity & Nutrition Unit, working to ensure every Alaska child has the opportunity to grow up at a healthy weight, free from preventable weight-related diseases. She provides training and technical assistance to schools, tribal organizations, and other partners to implement strong wellness policies, food and beverage policies and other systems changes to support making the healthy choice the easy choice for Alaskans. She is the Project Director for the Alaska Healthy Schools Project, a 5-year Cooperative Agreement (July 2023-2028) awarded by the CDC School-based Interventions to Promote Equity and Improve Health, Academic Achievement, and Well-being of Students (DP23-0002). Lauren has worked for the State of Alaska for the past 19 years and graduated from Tulane University with her Masters of Public Health. One of Lauren's favorite activities is exploring Alaskan rivers on whitewater rafting adventures with her family.

Nicole Ellison - Howzit! I'm originally from Wai'anae, Hawai'i. I lived there until I was 8 years old, then my family moved to Las Vegas. Vegas just wasn't for me—so as soon as I could, I packed up a U-Haul and watched the city shrink in my side mirror as I drove away. I landed in San Diego and stayed there until 2013, when I was accepted into the first Indigenous master's program in Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Before all that, I worked in the service industry—everything from Blockbuster Video to Dave & Buster's to five different coffee chains. I loved the fast-paced energy of that world, but the higher I climbed, the more I realized that fulfillment was still missing. That's when I started thinking back to my undergrad days in Anthropology. I've always loved learning about people and cultures, but what really struck me was how unwell Indigenous communities are, including my own. Starting my MPH journey opened my eyes to how colonization and diaspora have deeply affected our health and wellness. Our disconnection from Indigenous foods, land, and practices has changed us—mentally, physically, and spiritually. I became passionate about understanding how to restore that connection. I want to find others on this path, learn from their stories—both the wins and the challenges—and help reclaim our collective wellness. Today, I'm a PhD student in the Indigenous Health program at the University of North Dakota, and I'm loving every moment of it. I'm especially passionate about culturally appropriate community outreach and engagement. My hope is to continue collecting the tools I need to weave together my interests and use them to serve and uplift our Native Hawaiian community.

Nicole Ellison



Hawai'i

Leah Grout



Vermont/California

Leah Grout is a Research Data Analyst and Associate Research Professor with the Clinical and Health Services Research Department at Southern California University of Health Sciences (SCU). She holds a PhD in public health from Otago University in New Zealand and an MPH with a concentration in global health from Tufts University. Dr. Grout has 7+ of research experience across a broad array of public health topics, ranging from environmental health to epidemiology and the primary prevention of chronic diseases. She also has extensive public policy experience. Dr. Grout currently lives in Vermont, where she enjoys trail running, paddle sports, and skiing. As an athlete, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of her research passions is physical activity across the lifespan.

Sudit Ranade



Yukon

Sudit Ranade is the Chief Medical Officer of Health for Yukon Territory. He is certified in Family Medicine as well as Public Health and Preventive Medicine. He has a PhD in Family Medicine, having conducted research into models of practice for public health and medicine. Dr. Ranade knows he should be more active and is working on it.

Esme Yokooji



Hawai'i

Esme Yokooji is a graduate assistant with the Public Health Resonance Project and current student in the Masters of Public Health program at University of Hawai'i 'at Mānoa. Esme's specialization is in Native Hawaiian and Indigenous health, and she is currently studying indigenous food systems and culturally relevant interventions for health. Esme splits her time between her work with the Public Health Resonance Project and an internship at Papahana Kuaola where she helps to steward the aina of Waipao, He'eia through the cultivation of Hawaiian varieties of kalo. Esme's favorite physical activities are climbing, fishing, and all things related to growing food. You are most likely to find her in your nearest fruiting tree or lo'i kalo.

Mahalo!!!



We are deeply grateful to so many who have made this event, this project, and this work possible! Mahalo nui loa to the amazing Social Work Continuing Education and Professional Development team for hosting this webinar, including Cliff Bersamira, Maisha Amare-Herrera, Jina Uyeda, and Julia Rivera Reyes. Mahalo to Esme Yokooji for all her work for the team and to Rebekah Rodericks for all her endless support and the help of so many from our collaborative teams. Mahalo to Carrie Soo Hoo for the beautiful materials for this webinar, to Sunnu Rebecca Choi for the stunning original artwork, and to Jennifer van Alstyne for the lovely project website. Mahalo to the many who have inspired, taught, and supported this project including our brilliant and hard working collaborators, our wonderful steering committee, and the communities we serve and learn from.

In this work, we are humbled and deeply grateful for the wisdom, knowledge, and care that has come before us, the love, effort, and time that keeps these practices and activities living today, and the scholarship and dissemination efforts that makes synthesizing this work across so many locations and disciplines possible. We acknowledge the 'āina (land) on which we have gathered to do this work across the world and the many Indigenous communities that have nurtured these lands and their cultural practices across generations even in the face of colonialism and oppression.

We are grateful for opportunities to gather in person and virtually. Mahalo!

