

2024 NMAM Study Guide

Performance Guide

Nothing Micro about Micronesia

By Leilani Chan & Ova Saopeng



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Hawaii People's Fund
Jo-Jikum
MAP Fund
Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC)
Micronesians United Big Island (MUBI)
National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)
Pacific Ethnic Island Arts Museum (PIEAM)
Pacific Voices / Kokua Kalihi Valley
PREL (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning)
UH Hilo Performing Arts Center
Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAM)

Production Credits

Written & Directed by Leilani Chan & Ova Saopeng
With support from Cultural Navigator Innocenta Sound Kikku and members of the Micronesian community.

Songs by
Stephanie "Soultree" Camba

Music by
Derek Cannon
Daniel Bambaata Marley

Projection Design by
Joan Osato

Set & Prop Design by
Eric West

Lighting Design by
Maximilian Urruzmendi

Costume Design by

Iris Kim

Sound Design by

Stephanie Camba

Jonny Chang

Sarah Danvers

Videography & Sound Recording by

Leilani Chan

Jonny Chang

Acting & Movement Coaches

Misa Tupou

Kiki Rivera

Jackie Pualani Johnson

Justina Mattos

Stage Manager

Sarah Danvers

Performed by

Kealaula "Lala" Faifili

Tristan Henry

Kathy Martin

Ova Saopeng

Koa Shope

Study Guide by

Stephanie "Soultree" Camba

Reiki Ho

Show Synopsis

HTY welcomes TeAda Productions back to Tenney Theatre with the world premiere of *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*. Students will enjoy the original songs, movement, and thought-provoking scenarios that take place in this coming-of-age story about three youths who meet at a high school in Hawai'i and are magically transported on an adventure across islands of Micronesia. The characters must navigate between life in Hawai'i and the traditions of their ancestors while facing the rising tides of their uncertain futures.

About TeAda



TeAda is a nomadic theater of color rooted in the stories of immigrants and refugees. The company is committed to healing and honoring the lives of the displaced, exploited and overlooked. TeAda's artistic process starts and ends with conscious listening, community building, and creative courage. Through theater workshops and performances, TeAda offers acts of service that are transformative and impactful. For more about TeAda, go to www.teada.org

Directors

Leilani Chan and Ova Saopeng

About the Co-Creators



Leilani Chan, Founding Artistic Director of TeAda

An award winning performance artist, actor, playwright, director, and cultural worker, Leilani grew up in Wai'alae and Kaimuki, attended Wilson Elementary, Kaimuki Intermediate, Kalani High School. Leilani says, "I grew up going to shows at Honolulu Theatre for Youth and UH Manoa. I would get all the actors to sign my program. I was in the first Summer Program for the Enhancement of Basic Education program at UH Manoa. We studied acting, theater history, set and costume design with UH professors and got to perform on the Kennedy Theater stage. I

LOVED It! I wasn't very confident that a local girl like me could do Shakespeare, but I got cast in the lead female role in *The Comedy of Errors!* And I was hooked. My Hawai'i theater roots have carried me all over the country." Leilani is the Founding Artistic Director of TeAda Productions and is Co-Chair for the 7th National Asian American Theater Festival and Conference to take place at UH Mānoa May 24-28, 2024 hosted by The Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists www.caata.net. She is a graduate of Hampshire College and UCIrvine.



Ova Saopeng, Associate Artistic Director of TeAda

An actor, writer and teaching artist from Los Angeles, Ova was born in Savannakhet, Laos and raised in Honolulu. He grew up in Kalihi Valley ("Kalihi Pride!") and attended Kalihi Elementary, Dole Intermediate, and Farrington High School. Ova says, 'In the 8th grade, I saw T-shirt Theatre performing at Dole Intermediate. My teacher Mrs. Watanabe told me to go to the cafeteria after school. I did not know that it was an audition/recruitment for T-shirt. George Kon and Walt Dulaney opened the doors of self-expression and the theatre. From that day forward...it's been a ride. I remember singing as Sanjar, a hero, for my first production of *The Lady and the Tiger* with T-shirt Theatre and my voice cracking trying to reach a really high note. It was embarrassing and exciting at the same time.'



Note from Co-Creators: Leilani Chan and Ova Saopeng From TeAda Productions

TeAda Methodology is based on a devised theater practice that is inspired by many other theaters of color from across the U.S. including Urban Bush Women, Teatro Campesino, Great Leap, and many others. Our process is to collect stories from the community and put them on stage, which means that we spend a lot of time building trust in the community. Starting with our first play centering Micronesian community and stories, ***Masters of the Currents***, we have been working for over a decade with the Micronesian community in Hawaii.

We were lucky enough to travel to Micronesia as part of the research development of this show. On that trip, we were able to do workshops in multiple island nations including the Marshall Islands, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Guam, and Saipan. We also did workshops with the Micronesian community in the Los Angeles Area in Long Beach and Pasadena. It took us over a year of collecting additional stories to create ***Nothing Micro about Micronesia***. By investing time with the community, we have woven relationships across Micronesian communities in the diaspora. In turn, the community has contributed to our process by sharing their stories, inviting their networks, and being part of the development, production, and uplifting of both ***Masters of the Currents*** and ***Nothing Micro about Micronesia***. As a result of this multi-year commitment, we

are proud to say that the majority of the performing ensemble are Micronesian and Pacific Islander.

The themes that have resonated throughout our journey with the Micronesian community is the importance of upholding your culture and navigating what you want to hold on to, especially for those who leave their home islands. We have learned that the community is forced to compromise between staying or leaving home and navigating between tradition or modernity. Our roots as people who grew up in Hawai'i and represent a long list of ethnicities, has helped our theater practice in working with communities that we may not be a part of. It has helped us to create work that promotes a better understanding of each other's experiences. What's happening with the Micronesian community here in Hawaii and the pressures that this community is feeling is something that connects to what has happened for many generations in Hawai'i and across the U.S.– whether it's dealing with racism, over-policing, climate change, migration, and militarism. These are all the things that are not only affecting the Micronesian community, but if we work with the Micronesian community, we could actually reflect on what's happening across the planet.

Pre-Show Activity

Where in the World is Micronesia?

Micronesia is a subregion of **Oceania**. **Oceania** is defined as a region made up of thousands of islands throughout the Central and South Pacific Ocean. It is divided into 4 subregions: Australia and New Zealand, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. Oceania is home to 43 million people.

Before (or after) the show, familiarize your students with maps of Oceania and Micronesia.



Map courtesy of World Atlas

Oceania

Printable Map of Oceania:

Go to the link below to print maps for your students:

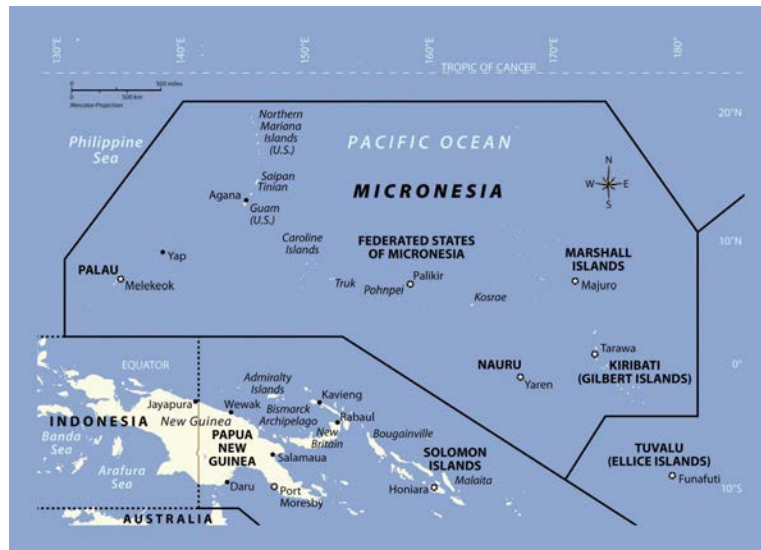
<https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/aulargez.htm>

Interactive Digital Maps: <https://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org>

<https://mrnuusbaum.com/australia-and-oceania-interactive-map>

Micronesia

Micronesia is a collection of more than 600 islands in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. It's one of the world's smallest nations, with a landmass smaller than Luxemburg, but as a region, it spans more than 1,801 miles (2,900 kilometres) and crosses five time zones! It consists of: Federated States of Micronesia: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Kiribati, Nauru, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam.



History and Background Information

Micronesia and Colonization

Micronesia has a long history of colonization.

In 1886, Micronesia was colonized by Spain. Spain sold the islands to Germany in 1899. In 1914, Japan took control of the islands and occupied them until 1944, when American forces took them by force.

The islands became a major battleground during World War II. Between 1942 and 1943, US submarines cut off supplies between the islands and Japan and regular bombing raids began soon after. From 1947 until 1986, Micronesia was part of the Trust Territory and of the Pacific Islands (TTPI), a United Nations trust territory administered by the USA.

Migration due to Nuclear Testing & Climate Change



Photo: National Archive

Micronesia has a profound and vital indigenous history beyond nuclear testing and climate change, though they are at the forefront of both conversations. The United States' nuclear testing between 1946 and 1958 left a legacy of illness, displacement, and trauma that Micronesians are still experiencing today.

As a result of these testings, Runit Island in Enewetak atoll in the Marshall Islands contains radioactive waste and there are concerns regarding a radioactive spill. As a result of the testing, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) was formed as an agreement of free association with the United States and Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of the Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau providing economic aid in exchange for U.S. military control of specified land areas.

In addition to dealing with the nuclear impact of WWII, the continued development of small island economies, and the impacts of climate change, many Micronesians have migrated out of their islands for more opportunities in education, work, and survival as rising tides continue to threaten their homelands and ways of life. While Micronesians are one of the groups of people that have contributed the least to climate change, their lands are among the most affected. The lack of fresh water due to rising sea levels and salt water intrusion into wells affects the crops and natural resources in Micronesia causing food insecurity. Populations in outer islands have migrated to the more metropolitan areas while residents of larger cities and outer islands are also making the difficult decision of leaving their island nations.

Indigenous Resilience & Response to Climate Change



Photo: Weno, Chuuk '23, Leilani Chan

Many community leaders and organizations throughout Micronesia demonstrate and advocate for how their indigenous cultures are rooted in sustainability practices that are essential for our world's future. From sustainable transportation, handicrafts, and fishing practices to relationships with each other, nature, and animals that lead to greater biodiversity and connection - Micronesia is an example of indigenous resilience and response to climate change.



Photo: Majuro, RMI '23, Leilani Chan

Organizations like the Madau Project and Waan Aelōñ in Majel teach indigenous practices like navigation that do not require the use of fossil fuels and non-renewable resources. Both programs support Micronesian youth and adults, respectively in navigating opportunities for education, employment, and thriving in new lands while remembering your heritage and ancestral ocean navigation practices.

Each Micronesian culture has their own unique style of handicrafts and expert weaving practices using plants, shells, and materials sourced locally. Some weavers have resorted to upcycling plastic when plant materials are not available. All of these practices are rooted in oral traditions of storytelling and show the sustainable practices embedded within these indigenous cultures. The preservation of weavings and oral traditions within different family and cultural lines represent an ongoing relationship with ancestors and ancestral stories that were not originally written.



Photo: Parem, Chuuk '23, Leilani Chan

Micronesia has one of the most biologically diverse coral reefs and forests on the planet. Their remote locations allow them to be safe havens for animals that are becoming more rare like the silky sharks in Fana Island, Palau. Micronesians have been stewards of the land and sea. One sustainable fishing practice used in places like the Marshall Islands consists of creating stone or coconut front weirs to catch fish as a community, which builds relationships and support for one another that feeds the entire community.



Photo: Majuro, RMI '23, Leilani Chan

While some Micronesian leaders believe that reducing carbon emissions and evacuating are some of the only choices available, there are others advocating for investments in expanding the land and finding other solutions to keeping these islands and atolls above sea level. As Micronesian community continues to face uncertain currents, it is the foundation and practice of extended families and creating kinship across communities that is keeping cultures and hope alive for the future of these islands and generations to come.

Resources

BOOKS

- *Collision Course at Kwajalein* Marshall Islanders in the Shadow of the Bomb by Giff Johnson
- *Iep Jältok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter* by Kathy Jetřil-Kijiner
- *Micronesia at the Crossroads* by Carl Heine
- *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed* by Donald F McHenry
- *Militarized Currents Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* by Cynthia Enloe
- *Strangers in their own land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands* by Francis X Hezel, SJ

WEBSITES

- Climate Change is our Reality by Selina N. Leem
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ODlcuhf_Y
- Community-based Fisheries in the Marshall Islands by Kalena Kattil deBrum
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eA64J5LWyM>
- Jo-Jikum <https://jojikum.org/>
- Marshall Islands Conservation Society <https://www.atollconservation.org/>
- Pacific Voices <https://www.kkv.net/pac-voices>
- PREL <https://prel.org/>
- Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAM) <https://www.canoemarshallislands.com/>

Post Show Discussion

- What is tradition? Are there customs, values, or practices that you follow from your culture?
- What are some of the Micronesian customs, values, or practices in our play?
- Are some of these customs or values similar to your own? Did any resonate with you?
- What are some of the challenges that our characters faced?
- Have you ever faced challenges like this in your life? What are some things that might help you when facing challenges?
- What could you do for a friend who is facing challenges like the characters in our play? Who could help in your community? What resources or support are available?

Glossary of Translated Terms

Our show features Chuukese, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, and ‘Ōlelo Hawai’i languages. Here are some of the words and phrases that are used in *Nothing Micro about Micronesia*

‘Ōlelo Hawai’i	Definition/Meaning
‘aumakua	Animal spirit
‘awa	‘Awa (or kava) is a traditional drink made from the Piper methysticum plant; presented during social gatherings,

	important ceremonial rituals as well as a medicine
kumu	teacher
uhu	parrotfish

Marshallese	Definition/Meaning
lakwe / Yokwe	Hello
Löktañūr	the brightest star above the Marshall Islands and name of the mother in the origin story of how the sail came to the outrigger
Jemam	Your father

Chuukese	Definition/Meaning
Marau	parrotfish
Oni	taro
Pwon	night
Ran	day
Sato	land
Tirow	Asking permission

Pohnpeian	Definition/Meaning
Mwaramwar	Head garland/necklace
Sakau	kava
Sarawi	Sacred Land
Seht	shirt

Writing Activity

Journal in Character

In this play, our characters experience conflict, because they are from a different culture. Have you ever had a conflict with someone with a different identity or culture from you? How would that make you feel?

Choose one of the characters and put yourself in their shoes.
Imagine what it might feel like to be far away from your home facing difficult decisions.

Write a page in the voice of the character.

Step 1	Choose one of the characters in our play Which character did you relate to most and why? Which character did you feel most different from and what did you learn from them?
Step 2	Imagine one of the moments in the play. Use your imagination to become one of the characters in our play. Imagine how that character was feeling in that moment.
Step 3	Write a page in character. Write a page in that character's journal about that moment. What are you feeling as the character? What are you hoping?
Step 4	Share your journal pages If comfortable, share your journal pages with your class.
Step 5	If time, write another journal page as another character. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes helps to understand different perspectives.

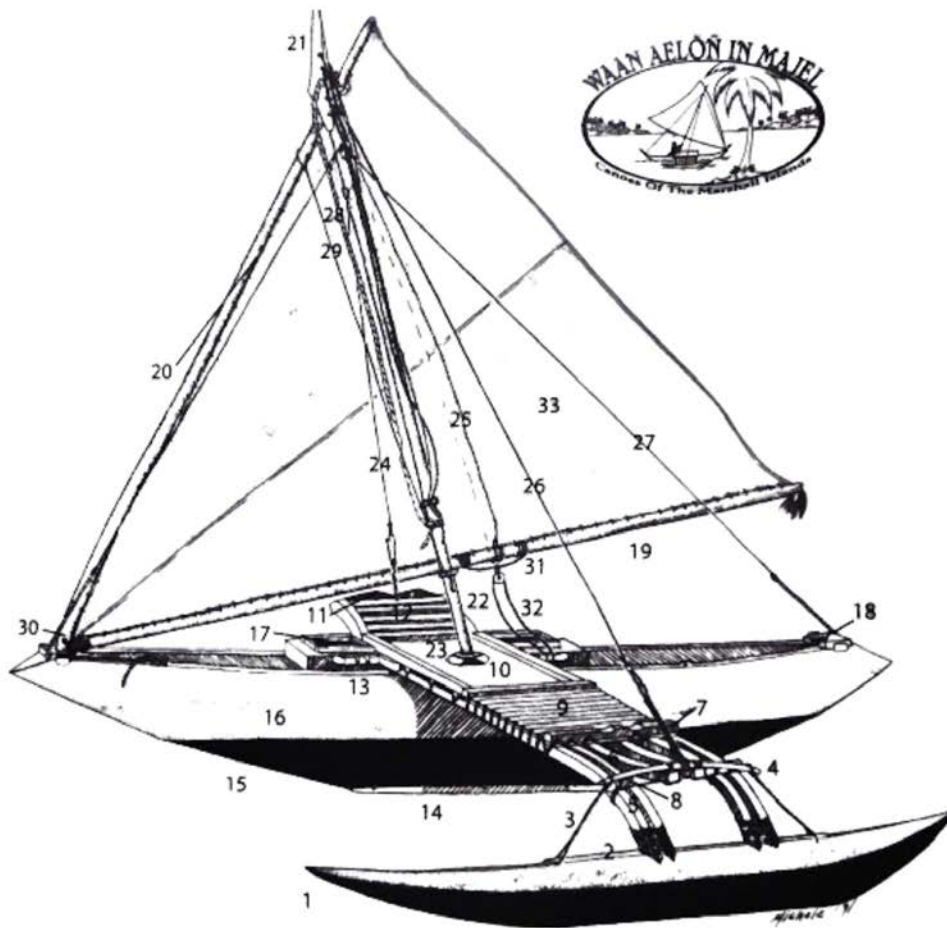
Bonus Writing Activities

1. **Create a story about a conflict** you may have had with a person of a different culture or identity than you. Write with detail from the voices and opinions of each character involved in the story answering: Where could you travel to gain understanding about each other's beliefs, feelings, and perspectives? Who would be a fun, magical guide to take you through these travels? What type of solutions and collaborations could you and this foe turned friend come up with?
2. **Imagine you are going on a journey across the Pacific.** What will you carry in your canoe and why? What would be the hardest thing to leave behind?

Visual Arts Activities

Label the parts of an outrigger canoe

Find and label this Marshallese Outrigger with their names below according to their number:



1. Kubaak - lit outrigger
2. Ae - current
3. Kabaj - bird, reef heron
4. Jojo - flying fish
5. Apet
6. Kie fish - big eye fish
7. Mweiur lon
8. Mweiur lai
9. Kein-eon-ere
10. Ere
11. Kein maeron
12. Ron
13. Kilikili
14. Mal
15. Jouj
16. Mej
17. Haj
18. Dipakaak
19. Rojak kora
20. Rojak maan
21. Lot
22. Kiju
23. Boklop
24. Toron
25. Tiliej
26. Tokubaak

27. Jomur
28. Maan
29. Jallikok/Keplok
30. Kopalpel
31. Lep-lik
32. Toiep
33. Ujele

Our Company



Leilani Chan
Founding Artistic Director

Ova Saopeng
Associate Artistic Director

Taloo Carrillo
Development Director

Jonny Chang
Marketing and Local Programs Manager

Stephanie Camba
Operations and Diaspora Programs Manager

Pre/Post Show Playlist:

Funder Logos:

NEFA:



MAP FUND:



NEA ArtWorks & NEA:



Hawai'i People's Fund:



Collaborators

Nothing Micro about Micronesia's cast members have lineages rooted in Chuuk and Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia and TeAda Productions has one squad member from the Marshall Islands. After nearly 20 years of working with the Micronesian community in the diaspora, this play could not have been possible without the support of organizations, community leaders, and allies within the Micronesian and Oceania community. The following organizations and collaborators have supported our journey in exchanging cultural, creative, and relational arts.

Jo Jikum is based in the Marshall Islands.



Thank you to Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner of Jo-Jikum who connected us with their youth program in Majuro to hold **Nothing Micro about Micronesia** workshops.

Jo-Jikum means “your home” or “your place” in Marshallese. It stands for “Jodrikdrik in Jipañ Ene Eo Ekutok Maroro”, which loosely translates to “Youth helping the land that is green and lush”. They are a Marshallese based nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering Marshallese youth to turn the tides, become change-makers and creators, and contribute to the survival of their lush, thriving islands. Their organization has been instrumental in uplifting Marshallese youth in developing their creative endeavors for social change.

Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition based in Hawaii.

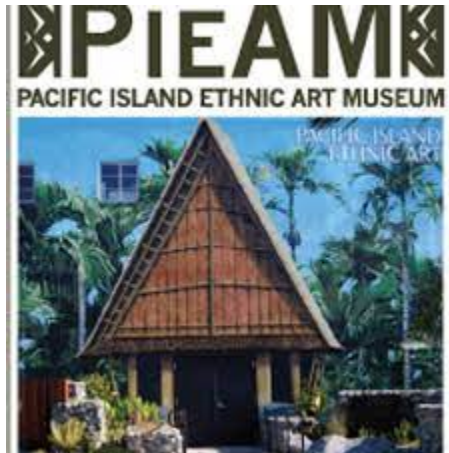


Thank you to Innocenta Sound-Kikku and Philios Uruman for the years of collaboration for **Nothing Micro about Micronesia** as well as **Masters of the Currents**.

The Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC) is a volunteer based organization that advocates for the health and well being of Micronesians to improve their quality of life in seeking justice and equality for the Pacific Community. MHAC was founded in 2008 to mobilize the

community's participation in the Hawaii Health Equity Summit and respond urgently to policies proposing to eliminate health insurance benefits for Micronesians living in Hawaii. MHAC collaborates with other existing Micronesian organizations like We Are Oceania, Micronesian United, Micronesian Community Network, Nation of Micronesia, and Micronesian United Big Island.

Pacific Island Ethnic Arts Museum (PIEAM) based in Long Beach, CA.



Thank you Fran Lujan, Samantha Olvera, and Jason “JP” Pereira for welcoming TeAda to connect with ancestors from across Oceania and holding space for *NMAM* workshops and community building through TeAda Methodology.

PIEAM is a community house and central meeting place. PIEAM’s mission is to amplify the collective wisdom of the Pacific Islands people of Oceania (Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia) through rotating installations and lived experiences. Their purpose is to connect the community to resources and foster intercultural exchanges with appreciation and respect. They recognize the unique kinship that exists between ancestor pieces, people, and their histories and the obligation that comes with this recognition.

PREL (Pacific Resource for Education and Learning) based throughout Oceania.



PREL is an independent, nonprofit organization with staff in Hawai'i, American Sāmoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia: Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap. Through their work, they collaborate with schools and school systems, families, community

organizations, and government agencies to transform education and promote dynamic reciprocal learning communities built on strong social and cultural capital.

Pacific Voices based in Kalihi, O’ahu.



Thank you to Innocenta Sound-Kikku and Pacific Voices for the many years of support and collaboration for the continuation of Micronesian life, stories, culture and arts.

Pacific Voices is open to all Pacific Islanders, especially those living in the Kalihi area. Pacific Voices started as an afterschool program at Kuhio Park Towers because Kōkua Kalihi Valley wanted to create a safe space for children to go to and learn their tradition and cultures. More broadly, the program provides a safe space for children to be nurtured and educated in a culturally-appropriate manner that places tremendous value on their personal history and circumstance. Pacific Voices provides after-school tutoring, cultural education (e.g. chants, dance, stories, etc.), traditional arts and crafts, bilingual/translational education in their origin language, and community navigation.

Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAM) based in the Marshall Islands.



Thank you to Alson Kelen who allowed us to interview him for our research in developing **Nothing Micro about Micronesia** and inspiring us with how he supports indigenous laborers and livelihoods while preserving a living and essential art form.

Wa means canoe in many Micronesian languages including Marshallese. Waan Aelōñ in Majel is a grassroots non-profit organization that trains Marshall Islands youth based on the traditions of the Marshallese canoe. WAM provides vocational and life skills training to youth-at-risk using the medium of traditional outrigger canoes, boat building, carpentry, and woodworking. The program links the new generation with the old, working together to keep this unique aspect of Marshallese culture alive, while simultaneously addressing serious social problems affecting youth in Marshallese society.

DRAW YOUR OWN OUTRIGGER