



## The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Policy-in-Action Initiatives

For the last 25 years, the Stone Soup Leadership Institute has been empowering thousands of multicultural youth to become leaders of their ocean communities—from Hawaii to Rhode Island, from Puerto Rico and Virgin Gorda to Martha's Vineyard, from the Philippines to Sri Lanka. Every day these young people see the drastic impact of climate change on their islands—from depleted fish supplies to rising sea levels, increasing hurricanes, and coastal erosion. During the Institute's Sustainability Summits and year-round youth-community leadership initiatives, these young people develop the skills, training, and experience they need to speak truth to power, and to challenge their leaders to create policies for adapting to climate change realities. They have represented their island communities at state, national, and global events like U.S. Secretary Kerry's Ocean Summit, along with leaders like Dr. Sylvia Earle, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Monaco's Prince Albert.

### Case Study: Hawaii

When he was just 16 years old, **Trevor Tanaka** secured champions in Hawaii's House of Representatives and Senate, made presentations, solicited testimonials from community leaders—and in just six months got his Sustainability Resolution passed in both houses of government. During the following nine years, he's been working on getting it implemented. Through this process, he—and all of our youth leaders—have learned a lot. We call this Policy-In-Action. It started with President Obama's speech at the 2011 APEC Summit in Honolulu, and led to the Institute's Sustainability Forums with youth, business, community, and government leaders and the Hawaii Department of Education. There, Trevor proudly presented a report on strategic recommendations from the Hawaii Governor's Report on Climate Preparedness Resiliency to President Obama. Then secured a grant from Hawaii's Department of Tourism, Business, and Economic Development to create an online system, the Sustainable Hawaii Toolkit. All this was to ensure that all of Hawaii's young people would learn about sustainability in school. Trevor achieved this by standing on the shoulders of youth leaders from Puerto Rico and Martha's Vineyard, who had championed Policy-In-Action projects.

### 2020 Sustainable Vision Reports: Challenging Our Leaders to Create Sustainable Policies

The Institute is working with youth leaders to envision a sustainable future for their communities. Through an intensive four-year visioning and community engagement process, participating youth prepared well-researched, well-documented presentations that challenged their leaders to develop policies that balance protecting their communities' fragile ecosystems, providing for their families, creating opportunities for their children, and building a prosperous future. They also attracted like-minded people to join them in preserving their communities by attracting philanthropists, socially responsible investors, and venture capitalists to help them develop green projects.

**Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative.** In partnership with the **Martha's Vineyard Commission**. Youth Leaders presented at the **Walter Cronkite Awards: 2014**. This Island Plan was developed over 5 year community process - without youth involvement. MVYLI youth leaders worked for one year to research, understand this plan and then worked with the MV Commission's top cartographer to create a Sustainable Vineyard Map as a visible way to share their vision for how to create a sustainable Martha's Vineyard for future generations.

**Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative.** In partnership with the **Puerto Rico Tourism Company: 2008.**

Presented to the mayor of Vieques, who gifted 300 acres to build a green community for landless families.

**British Virgin Islands: Sustainable Economic Development Mission: 2008-2010.** As part of their hands-on research for sustainable island economic models for their 2020 Sustainable Vision Report, youth leaders from Vieques traveled with their mayor and his Economic Development Council to the British Virgin Islands (BVI) on an Economic Development Mission. The BVI prime minister was so impressed with their presentation that he asked the Institute to develop what became the **Virgin Gorda Youth Leadership Initiative:** [www.vgyl.org](http://www.vgyl.org)

**The Philippines.** In partnership with the **Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute: 1987-2003.**

Microcredit/microfinance for indigenous fisherfolk + political reform = Sustainable Economic Development

Soon after the People Power movement in 1986, the Institute's founding director began a 30-year relationship with the Philippines. Marietta Goco is featured in one of the stories in the book, *Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes*. In 2003 Mrs. Goco traveled to New York City to receive the Institute's Eleanor Roosevelt Award at this prestigious event, which was attended by Walter Cronkite, Dr. Muhammad Yunus, and other dignitaries.

That same year, the Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute funded a fact-finding mission on the Institute's nearly 30 years of work with Mrs. Goco's legacy of microcredit/microfinance efforts as a champion for the Social Reform Act, the first legislation of its kind in the country, and subsequently her leading the President's Commission to Fight Poverty, the first such commission in the world.

Thanks to the global press Mrs. Goco received as a result of the Eleanor Roosevelt Award, she experienced a newly-achieved celebrity status, which she used to champion the arduous process of changing the Constitution of the Philippines. One of the significant outcomes of this historic initiative was that previously marginalized indigenous fisherfolk could now be equally represented, and her country could have a more equitable economy.

The resulting microcredit/microfinance programs for indigenous fisherfolk have had a far-reaching effect on this vulnerable island nation, leading to a reduction in the exploitive and destructive practices of detonating the seas to catch precious endangered fish for Chinese "delicacies." The 22-year-old **Mitzi Jonelle Tan**, who stands with and amplifies the voices of indigenous fisherfolk in the Philippines, is featured in the forthcoming book, *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes*.

Stone Soup Leadership Institute  
[www.stonesoupleadership.org](http://www.stonesoupleadership.org)