

**Partnership &  
Collaboration  
with Ocean Equity  
Collective**



## What is the Ocean Equity Collective?

A program of the Next 100 Coalition - The Ocean Equity Collective (OEC) is a Black, Indigenous, People of Color led and focused coalition of organizations and people in the ocean conservation space. Our aim is to foster the next generation of ocean stewardship.

In developing partnerships, we aim to work with organizations aligned with our mission and vision. While our capacity limits how many partnerships we hold, we maintain a commitment to addressing historical violence and marginalization through creating new strategies for engagement, cultivating accountability, and building capacity for transformative justice within ocean conservation today. We emphasize the need to build trust and meaningful relationships with individuals, existing governmental agencies, and organizations, particularly at state and federal levels, that will create pathways for collaboration and systemic change. We aim to develop sustainable methods to address and prevent ongoing inequity for a more resilient future.

### **The Ocean Equity Collective's Founding Members:**

**Creation Justice Ministries | [www.creationjustice.org](http://www.creationjustice.org)**

**'Āina Momona | [www.kaainamomona.org](http://www.kaainamomona.org)**

**KUA | [www.kuahawaii.org](http://www.kuahawaii.org)**

**Brown Girl Surf | [www.browngirlsurf.com/](http://www.browngirlsurf.com/)**

**GreenLatinos | [www.greenlatinos.org/](http://www.greenlatinos.org/)**

**AZUL | [ww.azul.org/en/](http://ww.azul.org/en/)**

# Building Transformational Relationships

Transformational relationships are defined by mutual respect, accountability, commitment and continuous self-transformation. In the context of the ocean conservation movement, it means focusing on repairing historical and continued damage in order to build trust with frontline communities for the long-term.

This is in contrast to transactional relationships which are defined by their short-term, harmful, and often extractive nature. Transactional relationships have historically benefitted mainstream groups while disproportionately harming frontline organizations. This cycle continues to be perpetuated by state and federal institutions - by focusing on transformation, we hope to break this cycle and give power back to the communities doing critical work on the ground.

## **This contrast can be seen in the example below:**

On the island of Moloka'i, scientists often visit Keawanui Fishpond, a traditional food system rich in biodiversity managed by 'Āina Momona, a local Indigenous-led organization. When building the relationship between these groups, there are a range of possibilities - here are two actual scenarios that have taken place:

**Transformational:** Scientists directly approach 'Āina Momona to ask permission to research the land. They discuss how to best conduct research given the cultural significance of the area and are invited to a site visit. Community knowledge is recognized, valued, and uplifted resulting in research that is more thorough, encompassing critical insight and capacity from all parties. Interactions are respectful, credit in resulting research is shared, and the foundation for a long-term relationship that is mutually beneficial is built.

**Transactional:** Scientists bypass 'Āina Momona and go directly to the land, disrupting ongoing projects and disrespecting the community that manages it year-round. There is paternalism in the interactions and community expertise and resources are not considered or uplifted by the scientists, creating little possibility for a continued relationship following the conclusion of research. This interaction is extractive by nature, asymmetrically beneficial, and continues the marginalization of this frontline community.



# Centering Community in Policy Development

The Ocean Equity Collective centers community by always coming back to the communities we represent when evaluating federal policy. Valuing lived experiences in the design of policy, legislation, regulation and research is a cornerstone for our endorsement and support of various campaigns.

## Our Policy Priorities

Our endorsement of the following policies reflect the role they play in advancing equity, environmental justice, and community empowerment.

## Agency Led Initiatives

- America the Beautiful Initiative (30x30)
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)
- Infrastructure Bill Funds Distribution
- Coastal Resilience

## Legislative Priorities

- Reconciliation Plan
- Ocean Based Climate Solutions Act
- Break Free From Plastic Act

## Contact

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