

IMPROVE EDUCATION  
 PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT  
 ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES  
 ADOPT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC STRATEGIES  
 MEET HUMAN NEEDS & PRESERVE LOCAL CULTURE

FOCUS OUR  
 MAUI ISLANDS  
 NUI OUR FUTURE

Own it!

## BUILDING CONSENSUS



**begins with bringing people together to express their ideas, clarify areas of agreement and disagreement, and develop shared resolutions.**

Consensus building is a decision-making process that is vital to any community planning effort. Assisted by an unbiased facilitator, participants can raise issues, seek to understand each other's views, and then cooperatively, often through compromise, develop an agreed upon resolution. To develop consensus among people about what problems or challenges are facing a community and its resources, the issues must be clearly defined.

***In 2003, the people of Maui Nui engaged in a groundbreaking process to define a vision for their future. Focus Maui Nui brought nearly 1,700 residents into an intensive participatory process, emphasizing the importance of local needs and priorities. Representing all planning districts and the islands' broad range of demographic groups, participants articulated the values they believed should guide Maui County.***

Identifying and describing issues must be based on a systematic collection of information about threats, opportunities, and challenges that currently face a resource or most likely will in the future.

To comprehensively identify issues requires bringing together a diverse group of people including businesses, elected officials, landowners, special interest groups, resource experts, and citizens. The process of defining issues is both an excellent consensus-building activity and an important element of decision-making.

Successful solutions respond to community needs and problems. Building successful community consensus brings together folks with deeply held and differing values, and with contradictory views of political and economic impacts. It can be difficult, and it does take time, but the outcome is worth it as all participants "own" the process, have a stake in the decisions, and are committed to seeing the work finished.

Without accepting the other person's thinking, you cannot further your own interest. You need the other's help to get results.

~ Harri Holkeri  
 Prime Minister of Finland  
 United Nations Chair

**In what public gatherings have you participated?**



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