



Welcome

Welcome to *Ka Mana: Hawaii's Interfaith Energy & Climate Connection*, a project of [Hawaii Interfaith Power & Light](#) (HIPL). *Ka Mana* connects our interfaith, decision-making, and advocacy communities in Hawaii's historic transition to 100% renewable energy and a carbon-neutral economy. Inspired by shared values, effective action, a sense of urgency for fossil-fuel-free Hawaii futures ASAP, and a vision of social, economic, and environmental equity for all, together we can do this! Welcome to this Historic Moment.

Stories of Faith in Action

For our next few issues, we will share stories of how people and communities of faith are helping make the visions of a more just, equitable, and sustainable future in action, grounded in their own faith traditions. You can view these stories on our new blog, [Leaps of Faith: Stories to Share](#). This month, our story comes from Matiullah Joyia, imam of a local congregation of the Ahmaddiya Muslim faith.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands, like Hawaii, has traditionally relied upon oil as its primary source of electricity, and, like Hawaii, the cost is high. Unlike Hawaii, wages and income in the Marshall Islands are well below the global average. The minimum wage is \$2.50 per hour, and the median annual income is less than \$5000. The electrical grid can be unreliable, even on the main islands of Majuro and Ebeye, not to mention the smaller and more isolated neighbor islands. The government created an electricity roadmap (published in 2018) with ambitious goals similar to Hawaii, but by starting later, they have a lot of catching-up to do.

Humanity First is a non-profit international aid organization. Their mission is to serve disaster struck and socially disadvantaged individuals and families in the poorer communities of the world. It was started in the 1990s by the 4th caliph of the Ahmaddiya Muslim Community, but it grew into a large international,

non-religious organization registered in 58 countries. Its programs span a range of needs, including disaster relief, community care, orphan care, water, health, building schools and vocational training centers, and the gift of sight. In 2019, it served more than 500,000 people in 91 countries.

The Ahmaddiya Muslim Community still participates actively in the organization, of course, which is how HIPL was blessed to meet Imam Joyia, who now serves as one of our clergy advisors. Imam Joyia served with Humanity First in the Marshall Islands on a project to bring renewable electricity to families there. Humanity First registered in the Marshalls in 2014 and worked with the people to assess their highest priority needs. Medical care and reliable and affordable electricity were the two priority needs they decided to serve. Many medical specialists spent time in the islands, providing all types of care for the people.

To address electricity needs, Humanity First purchased 10-20 photovoltaic electricity generating systems (PV) with battery storage and installed those on homes on the island of Majuro. That went well, so they obtained 100 more units, each with a capacity of 1 kW. While these systems were greatly appreciated and helpful, Humanity First decided to reduce the capacity of the units so they could purchase more to serve more households to meet critical

needs. This allowed them to purchase and install another 250 units with a capacity of 100 W. The local mosque also installed a PV system on its roof to meet its own electricity needs and serve as a model for others.

How did they pay for this? Humanity First used international aid intended originally for the national government. Humanity First was able to utilize these funds more effectively, given their history of providing disaster relief and aid to countries around the world. The local mosque offered its campus and offices free of charge to serve for the infrastructure needed to run the program. The local imam also helped out. The average cost per household is only \$300 to install these systems. The local government is asked to cover half of the cost to ensure they are invested in and committed to the program.

The success of this ongoing work has led the mayors of other islands to reach out and ask Humanity First to start up similar programs in their communities. If the national government is committed to its goals of 100% renewable energy and carbon neutrality, hopefully they will invest in this effort and partner with Humanity First to replicate and adapt their model throughout the islands.

Serving the needs of the poor and underserved is common for many religious faiths, rooted in their core values of compassion and a desire for the well-being of all of humanity and Creation itself. For the Muslim faith, charity is one of the 5 pillars of Islam. One of the sayings of the

Prophet, familiar to Christians, is that on the Day of Judgment, we will be asked how we served God by serving those in need. And for Muslims, this charity and service is a way we can be forgiven for our own sins.

Imam Joyia would like this story to inspire us to work collectively as interfaith communities to address the entwined humanitarian, environmental, and spiritual crises we face. Human-caused climate change embodies all these crises, but we can accomplish a lot by working together. Faith has a lot of power to move people in the right direction; indeed, the climate catastrophe shows us that our existential, as well as our spiritual, salvation requires us to move in this direction. Combining our faith and our efforts can have an exponential impact on stopping and reversing the effects of climate change. Like a germinating seedling, it starts off small, but with some time and care, it grows larger and faster until it can become a towering tree, spreading its shade-producing branches and soil-enriching roots far and wide. And then it can produce seeds of its own to distribute far and wide.

As we approach Earth Day 2021, celebrated by Interfaith Power and Light as [Faith Climate Action Week](#), Imam Joyia invites us to reflect on and share how our faiths are responsible for caring for the environment and all of Creation and what we can do as interfaith communities to put values into action.

Contact *Ka Mana*

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