🌺 Hawaiʻi: Closing the Circle with Susannah Johnson

🎙️ Segment Summary

In this final segment, Hawaiʻi "closes the circle" of 24h for Change in Education. Gabriel introduces **Susannah Johnson**, highlighting Hawaii as a place of ancestral cultures, powerful nature, and deep educational wisdom. Susannah then offers a narrative, reflective synthesis of the whole 24 hours from a Hawaiian/indigenous, strengths-based lens.

🧭 Education Re-Framed: Purpose, Gifts, and Values

- **Education as Human Development:** Schools should be in the "business of human development": cultivating kind, purposeful, responsible humans rather than chasing test scores or content coverage.

- **Gifts, Strengths and Aloha:** Through the story of **Auntie Pua** and a student who finally names his gift as spearfishing, Susanna stresses that every learner has gifts that may not fit traditional school categories.

- **Hawaiian Concepts:** Concepts such as **aloha**, **ha** (breath/well-being), and **pilina** (relationships) frame education as honoring each person's gifts and community strengths.

- **Mission as Keel, Not Anchor:** A school's mission should be a **keel** (balancing and guiding forward movement) rather than an **anchor** that keeps them tied to outdated models. Leaders must re-examine their mission to ensure it supports bold, humane innovation.

🌍 Global Competencies for the Future

Susannah connects the themes heard across all segments (well-being, honoring place and culture, technology used humanely, strong family involvement, etc.) with global competence frameworks:

Global Competencies Over Grades

- Investigating the world.

- Appreciating multiple perspectives.

- Communicating across cultures.

- Taking action for collective well-being and sustainability.

Four Core Global Capacities

From her research, she highlights four essential, future-relevant capacities:

- **Critical thinking** (before, during and after using AI).

- **Compassion** (the biggest current deficit, in her view).

- **Curiosity** (protecting it instead of "schooling it out").

- **Adaptability** (being able to keep learning as the world changes).

🤖 Innovation, AI, and Systems Change

- **AI as an Amplifier of Human Purpose:** AI is cited as a powerful enabler when anchored in ethics and humanity, and even shows Gabriel's AI-in-schools books as practical, ethical guides for educators using AI in K-12.

  - She stresses that AI doesn't replace us, but people who know how to use it may replace those who don't.

- **Hawaii as a Living Ecosystem of Change:** She describes:

  - A **single statewide system** of public schools plus strong charter and independent-school networks that intentionally collaborate.

  - Key convenings include the **Schools of the Future Conference** and **Hawaiʻi Society for Technology in Education (HSTE)**.

  - There are deep **community partnerships** with local businesses and organizations, including land- and ocean-based projects such as restoring ancient fishponds, to address food security and climate challenges.

- **Solutionary, Place-Based Projects:** Drawing on work with the **Institute for Humane Education's** "solutionary" framework, she shares examples of student projects in Hawaii that tackle real issues (school climate, community needs, SDGs) through research, empathy, systems thinking, and action.

- **Youth Philanthropy and Re-defining Wealth:** The **Hawaiʻi Center for Youth Philanthropy** invites young people to define what "value, worth and wealth" mean in

their own communities and to direct funding towards locally defined needs—grounded in Hawaiian values and seven-generation thinking.

🙏 Closing Message

- **Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable:** This is a decade of disruption, but disruption can yield great art, ideas, and systems.

- Educators must learn to live with rapid change, embrace "I don't know," and shift from gatekeepers of knowledge to **guardians of critical thinking and hope**.

- **Practical Invitation:** When things feel stuck—faculty tensions, hard days, frustrated students—go outside, look at the land/sky/ocean, breathe, reconnect with each other, and imagine better possibilities... then act.

- She thanks all educators involved and Gabriel for holding the global space, framing this "ending" as really just the beginning.

🔗 Key Entities and URLs

- **Hawai'i Center for Youth Philanthropy (HCYP)** – Youth-led philanthropic initiative in Hawaii focusing on community-defined needs and values. YSH complete site

- **Schools of the Future Conference (Hawai'i)** – Annual innovation conference co-organized by Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools and partners, bringing together thousands of educators. ppshi.org

- **Hawai'i Society for Technology in Education (HSTE)** – Statewide ISTE affiliate supporting effective ed-tech use in Hawaii. ppshi.org

- **What School Could Be** – Global network and media platform highlighting innovative schools and future-focused learning. 24hforchange.education

- **Getting Smart** – Education media and consulting organization whose podcast episode on future-ready skills is referenced. hais.us

Key Concepts / Frameworks

- Human development as the core purpose of schooling

- Individualized and personalized learning (learner-owned journeys)

- Global competencies & global skills (critical thinking, compassion, curiosity, adaptability)

- Aloha, ha (breath/well-being), pilina (relationships)

- Solutionary projects, SDGs-aligned education, humane education

- Youth philanthropy & community-defined wealth

- AI as ethical amplifier of human creativity and purpose

- Mission as keel (guiding) vs. anchor (holding back)

- Getting comfortable with being uncomfortable; decade of disruption