
MICRONESIAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



Project Title:	Na Metgot I Familia (Make the Family Strong)
Award Amount:	\$137,486
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies – Family Preservation
Project Period:	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 3 Native American consultants hired
- 7 elders involved
- 3 youth involved
- \$6,267 in resources leveraged
- 4 individuals trained
- 11 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Micronesian Business Association (MBA) is a 501(c)(3) faith-based organization incorporated in 1997. The organization's purpose is to provide charitable, educational, and recreational programs for the benefit of communities in Guam. During the last decade, the MBA has served communities through employment and training programs, youth programs, and entrepreneurial counseling. The MBA has sponsored youth sports clinics, hosted music and performing arts events for youth, and built a children's playground in the village of Tamuning.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In February 2009, MBA project planners interviewed a small number of randomly-selected community members to determine if people on the island would be receptive to a healthy marriage community education project. Upon receiving positive feedback, the group developed a project incorporating Chamorro values of "inafa'maolek" (interdependence) and "ayuda familia" (help the family), stressing the importance of healthy marriages in creating stronger island communities.

The project's first objective was to research community needs relating to marriage and family preservation, and to determine how to reach out to the community to meet these needs. The project team began by designing a comprehensive, 60-question survey allowing community members to compare ideal qualities of a relationship with the qualities present in their own marriages. The project team felt that analyzing the gap between desired and real qualities would shed light on what was working and not working in contemporary Chamorro marriages. After creating the survey, project staff, with volunteer help, interviewed 300

community members of all ages, mostly at community events and night markets. Next, staff conducted one-on-one interviews with 23 couples to gain more insight on how to strengthen and sustain marriages. With this data, they assembled a detailed report, which was used to shape the curriculum and activities later integrated into the project. In addition to surveying the community and summarizing findings, the team formed an outreach strategy. With this strategy, the team identified and partnered with 11 community organizations, each capable of providing unique services and resources for future project implementation.

The project’s second objective was to develop curricula and strategies for future implementation. To develop curricula, project staff first reviewed existing healthy marriage curricula, including PAIRS, WAIT Training, and Smart Marriages, for their ease of use, ability to engage learners, and community appropriateness. The project team selected the nine-hour PAIRS Essentials curriculum as the project’s main curriculum because it was considered less intimidating and more engaging than other curricula. Staff opted not to modify the text of the curriculum, instead choosing to make cultural adjustments in how the text was delivered. After selecting this curriculum, the project director took a PAIRS trainer certification course, received certification, and trained two project staff members and a community volunteer. Later in the project period, the project director received training in the Pick a Partner and Prepare/Enrich curricula. To add local flavor and make the curricula more culturally-appropriate, project staff worked with a multimedia technician, the Guam Department of Youth Affairs, and the Guam Archdiocese to create DVD interview vignettes and supplemental materials.

To supplement the PAIRS curriculum, the project team also published a six-hour

curriculum which they called “Love and Respect,” with a teachers' manual, workbook, and PowerPoint presentation. This curriculum provided many exercises designed to foster better communication among couples. In the last half of the project’s cycle, project staff piloted the PAIRS curriculum and supplemental materials, training 39 participants in three sessions and asking them to evaluate the usefulness of the curriculum. Through these evaluations and feedback from 14 additional focus group participants, the project team developed a final curriculum, which included nine hours of PAIRS Essentials training, six hours of Love and Respect training, and supplemental training utilizing Prepare/Enrich materials.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The community survey and ensuing report produced by the MBA project team shed significant light on what is happening in modern Chamorro marriages and on what can be done to address the challenges Chamorro couples face. The curriculum developed by the MBA team, deemed highly effective by pilot test participants, adeptly focuses on strengthening marriages and families. If implemented throughout Guam, the curriculum could provide many Chamorro couples with valuable tools to improve their relationships, helping them become better spouses and parents. According to the project director, the project has sparked a growing dialogue within the community, “Local leaders and community members are starting to understand community problems in new ways, and discovering that many problems stem from issues occurring within families.” The MBA already has received referrals from two local government social service agencies, and the MBA team is committed to working with project partners and community members to continue offering this healthy relationships curriculum.

PA’A TAOTAO TANO’



Project Title:	Chamorro Language Assessment Survey (CLAS) Project
Award Amount:	\$97,399
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 5 jobs created
- 150 youth involved
- \$34,500 in resources leveraged
- 6 individuals trained
- 22 partnerships formed
- 1 language survey developed
- 6,542 language surveys completed

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2001, Pa’a Taotao Tano’ is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the cultural traditions of the indigenous people of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Guam is the largest of 15 islands that make up the Mariana Islands chain, and has a population of 154,805, according to the 2000 Census. The Chamorro, the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands, are the largest ethnic group in Guam, with 65,243 people, or 42 percent of the population. Prior to this project, there were no known statistics on the number of Chamorro people who spoke and practiced the Chamorro language on a daily basis.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to assess the status of the Chamorro language in Guam and to assist the Chamorro community in developing and implementing a strategic plan to preserve and perpetuate the language.

The project’s first objective, to be completed within three months, was to develop a language assessment survey. To do this, Pa’a Taotao Tano staff worked with a professor from the University of Guam’s School of Business and Public Administration to assemble a 10-question survey. Questions were designed to provide insight on the extent to which people of different age groups, genders, and geographic locales could understand, speak, read, and write the language. Other questions were developed to shed light on language use patterns and on community attitudes about the language, attempting to uncover where people used the Chamorro language, how frequently they interacted with fluent speakers, and how important they felt language knowledge was in retaining their Chamorro social identity.

Objective two was to conduct the Chamorro Language Assessment Survey (CLAS),

collecting completed surveys from at least 10 percent (6,524 people) of the Chamorro population of Guam. To accomplish this, the project director and coordinator hired and trained five project assistants and conducted a media campaign through radio and newspapers ads. Then, over a six-month period, the coordinator and project assistants surveyed people in all 19 Guam villages, carefully ensuring that 10 percent of each village’s population was surveyed. Project assistants and the project coordinator conducted door-to-door surveys in the villages and surveyed the community at island festivals, cultural events, flea markets, concerts, and night markets. The team set up booths at the Chamorro Lunar Festival, Gef Pago’s Dinana Minagof, the Marianas Home Grown Concert, Talofof’s Banana Festival, the Dededo Flea Market, and many other events. During the survey period, the assessment team collected 6,542 surveys, exceeding the project goal by 18. As surveys were completed, the project director kept an ongoing tally of results, continuously updating the database. Utilizing partnerships with Guam’s 19 village mayors and with island event and festival coordinators, the project team was able to learn the whereabouts of various events and activities in advance and gain an understanding of where people commonly congregate, allowing a more efficient and effective survey collection process.

The third objective was to analyze survey data and produce a report on the status of the Chamorro language in Guam for distribution to key stakeholders. To accomplish this, project staff, with expert assistance from a Chamorro information technology professional, aggregated the data and developed project charts and graphs. With guidance from the University of Guam professor who helped design the survey, the project team analyzed the data and prepared the report. The report was shared with all 19

village mayors, the island’s academic and teaching community, and other groups interested in preserving and perpetuating the language. The team presented the report at Barrigada Community Center in September of 2010, and the event received significant coverage from all of Guam’s newspapers and from one of the island’s TV stations.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

During six months of gathering survey data, Pa’a Taotao Tano’s CLAS project team had the opportunity to meet with one-tenth of Guam’s indigenous population, an enormous number of people, and discuss the status of the Chamorro language. These efforts helped fuel an island-wide dialogue on the cultural and social significance of the Chamorro language. According to the survey team, community members expressed strong pride and happiness that a Chamorro language survey was being done, hoping that such efforts would contribute to saving the language.

The Pa’a Taotao Tano’ project team completed the first known survey on the status of the Chamorro language in Guam, providing the community with a greater understanding of how, where, and the extent to which the language is currently used. While only 43 percent of respondents were able to write the language “very well” or “well enough to communicate,” 75 percent and 68 percent respectively were able to understand or speak Chamorro at or above these levels. Ninety-five percent of survey respondents felt that “an important part of being Chamorro is knowing the language,” while only one percent disagreed. The project team shared these and other findings with government officials, the academic community, and the community-at-large, providing information they hope will assist the island’s political, academic, and cultural leaders in developing strategies to preserve and perpetuate the Chamorro language.