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## GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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<b>Project Title:</b>	The Protehi I Lengguähèn Chamorro Project
<b>Award Amount:</b>	\$148,106
<b>Type of Grant:</b>	Language
<b>Project Period:</b>	Sept. 2007 – Dec. 2008
<b>Grantee Type:</b>	Native Nonprofit

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### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 6 Native American consultants hired
- 10 elders involved
- 22 youth involved
- \$38,108 in resources leveraged
- 4 individuals trained
- 14 partnerships formed
- 16 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

### BACKGROUND

In 1946, 98% of Guam's population was Chamorro. Currently, 37% of Guam's 177,000 inhabitants are Chamorro. Though English and Chamorro are both official languages of the island, Chamorro is rarely written or spoken in the public sphere, and less than one-fifth of Guam's people speak the language at home.

To determine the extent the Chamorro people wished to preserve their language and ensure its continuing vitality, Guam Community College (GCC), a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic vocational-technical institution founded in 1977, conducted an

assessment survey in 2007. In the survey, 96% of the 566 Chamorro respondents indicated "it is important to preserve the Chamorro language" and 86% wanted to "learn to speak the Chamorro language."

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to promote the use and preservation of the Chamorro language through the creation of various Chamorro media products, such as CDs, DVDs, music and books. This project focused on the first stage of product development by planning for the overall design of the media products and by creating scripts in the Chamorro language for the DVDs and CDs.

The project's first objective was to establish the project office, hire project staff and scriptwriters, and recruit 10 elders and 22 native youth to provide input on the design of the materials. The office, called the Protehi I Lengguähèn Chamorro Office, was set up within the first quarter. Project staff hired four scriptwriters and a linguist/narrator and conducted interviews with 22 youth and 10 elders to record their experiences within the traditional Chamorro culture.

The project’s second objective was to write four Chamorro scripts under four topics about Chamorro culture and language, thus creating a total of sixteen scripts. The four topics were Guam’s History and Word Origins, Legends, Environment, and Plants and Foods for Medicine and Cooking. Some examples of the scripts include: I Proa (I Sakman) - About Chamorro Canoes and Seafaring Vessels; the Chamorro Creation Story; The Ocean, Land, Heavens, and Moon - How it is Embraced and Lived through the Ancient Chamorro Experience; and Tools Used for Preparing Medicines. To complete the scripts, project staff conducted research at the Guam Public Library, collaborated with the language committee, and obtained dated materials relating to the period prior to Chamorro contact with Spain from libraries and bookstores throughout the United States. Staff members completed drafts of all sixteen scripts and submitted them to the Department of Chamorro Affairs for final review.

Due to the delays in initiating activities, the project received a 3-month extension to finish the scriptwriting, editing, and final review processes.

**OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

The native youth who participated in the project discovered more about their history, culture and language and were provided an opportunity to learn about the process of developing language learning materials. Community elders were able to improve their understanding of the Chamorro language. In addition, writing the scripts allowed the elders to share their knowledge of the language and ensure this knowledge was documented for future generations.

Project staff shared that an ancillary benefit of the project was that it provided the community with more information on how

the Chamorro language evolved after the Spanish colonization of Guam.

At the end of the project period, the Protehi I Lengguähèn Chamorro Office staff was researching funding sources to pursue the production of the media products developed under this project.

“The scripts are one step forward in the continued effort to preserve the Chamorro language of the Chamorro people.”

Fermina A. Sablan,  
Project Director