
FOND DU LAC BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA



Project Title:	Anishinaabemowin Language Immersion Canoe Building (Wiigwaasi-Jiimaan) Project
Award Amount:	\$179,143
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 5 Native American consultants hired
- 145 elders involved
- 650 youth involved
- \$40,175 in resources leveraged
- 9 partnerships formed
- 16 adults increased their ability to speak a native language
- 36 youth increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa has approximately 4,000 members, with a 100,000-acre reservation in northeastern Minnesota. About 1,500 tribal members live on the reservation, and around 2,400 live within a 25-mile radius. Due to various historical factors that profoundly altered the seasonal, nomadic lifestyle of the Chippewa, many tribal members lost touch with their native Ojibwe (also called Anishinaabe) culture and language. A language assessment survey conducted in 2001 found only four fluent Ojibwe speakers

remaining on the Fond du Lac Reservation. Tribal members expressed strong interest in increasing the number of speakers; in response the tribe has created a formalized plan for language revitalization, including language tables, curriculum, and a repository at the Fond du Lac Cultural Center and Museum. The next step was to create a hands-on project where the language could be used in an immersion setting while performing traditional skills.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project was to plan and conduct three canoe-building sessions held entirely in the Ojibwe language and share the experience of the project with the greater Fond du Lac community. Each summer, the project director hosted an intensive three-week camp on the grounds of the tribal museum. The project had a total of 12 stipend participants, with four additional full-time volunteers. Six stipend participants repeated all three years, and the others completed one or two sessions. An average of 420 visitors per year, from young Head Start classes to elders at the nearby community center, came to the project site to watch the canoe-building and learn

Ojibwe. An expert language instructor stayed on site and provided stipend participants with one hour of organized Ojibwe instruction per day. Canoe-builders and visitors engaged with the language through audio CDs that played Ojibwe words during the sessions, and vocabulary that was visually posted in the canoe-building house. The project produced three canoes, which Project Director Jeff Savage displayed at the tribal casino and various tribal gatherings.

In order to share the project with as many community members as possible, Mr. Savage also created a full-color book describing the canoe-building process with pictures and Ojibwe words, including an audio CD with project vocabulary. He distributed the books and CDs to area schools, tribal colleges, community centers, and libraries, in addition to the project participants and visitors. The book also was the basis for a slideshow presentation, which Mr. Savage shared at community gatherings.

To measure language proficiency, the project director and language instructor developed evaluations, which all stipend participants completed at the beginning and end of the camp. Five respondents stated that they advanced from having no knowledge to a beginner level, two became advanced beginners, three said they moved from beginner to intermediate, and two moved beyond intermediate, one of which reached advanced. Based on his own observations, as well as assessments by the language instructor, the project director reported that the real gains were people becoming more comfortable using Ojibwe, since initially most participants were very reluctant to try speaking the language. Project staff noticed growing levels of effort and comfort over the course of the project; in the second and third years, the focus shifted to the language as people became familiar with the canoe-building process.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

This project made significant contributions to increased fluency, knowledge, and comfort using the Ojibwe language in the Fond du Lac community, while also giving cultural arts skills to tribal members so they can be future teachers and mentors. Using the idea that Anishinaabe traditions and values are woven into the language, Mr. Savage successfully engaged community members through canoe-building in order to preserve both language and cultural skills.

While teaching project participants how to find materials for the birch-bark canoes, the project director also worked extensively with the tribal natural resources department to teach staff how to look for cultural resources, instilling an alternative perception of natural resource management. He incorporated cultural and traditional lessons into all project activities in an effort to give a cultural context to the language.

Additionally, educational entities such as the Fond du Lac Tribal College now include the book and CD as part of their curricula, so the wider native community is benefiting from these cultural resources as well.

“Intergenerational teaching and participation provides the foundation for our culture, and was a cornerstone of our project.”

Jeff Savage, Project and Museum Director

LEECH LAKE BAND OF OJIBWE



Project Title:	Niigaane Ojibwemowin Immersion Project
Award Amount:	\$416,730
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 5 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 5 Native American consultants hired
- 10 elders involved
- 40 youth involved
- \$600,139 in resources leveraged
- 21 individuals trained
- 13 partnerships formed
- 7 people achieved fluency in a native language

BACKGROUND

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe has 10,205 enrolled members, with over 4,000 members living on the Leech Lake Reservation in north-central Minnesota. The tribe's traditional language is Ojibwemowin, or Ojibwe. A language assessment survey in 2000 found that there were 96 fluent speakers on the reservation, but this number has quickly diminished as elders pass on. Survey results also identified a strong desire among community members to preserve the language and teach Ojibwemowin to youth.

The Niigaane Ojibwemowin Immersion School was established in 2003 as part of the community's efforts to revitalize the Ojibwe language and culture, with the goal of

improving students' language skills and academic performance. Niigaane operates as a program within the tribally-chartered Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School and at the beginning of this project served 18 students in kindergarten through third grade. Continual assessments conducted by Niigaane staff throughout the school's existence have identified two critical issues: lack of effective teaching methods for delivering academic content in Ojibwe, and lack of training opportunities for those wishing to teach in an immersion setting and achieve fluency in the Ojibwe language.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to enhance the immersion education of Niigaane students by providing opportunities for teachers to produce curriculum, develop teaching methods, and improve their own Ojibwemowin proficiency. The first objective was to create relevant academic and cultural content for kindergarten through sixth grade, and identify effective teaching methods to deliver the content in Ojibwe. A curriculum team of Niigaane teachers and staff worked with consultants to develop materials for math, reading, and science. Recognizing that language must evolve to keep pace with new concepts and technologies, project staff also organized an

elders roundtable that met quarterly to create new Ojibwe vocabulary to meet needs identified by the teachers. Because the teachers are all second language learners, fluent elders helped keep content grounded in Ojibwe culture by bringing a deeper understanding of traditional knowledge. Additionally, the school's director worked with elders, teachers, and a curriculum writer to develop an Ojibwe phrasebook. Staff continue to expand the phrasebook, and it has become an easily accessible reference tool for the teachers. Using materials produced as part of this project, the curriculum team also developed a database of lesson plans that is reviewed and updated on a weekly basis. Teachers now have a comprehensive catalogue of lessons which include cultural teachings that correspond to state standards and are already in the Ojibwe language.

The second objective was for Niigaane teachers to reach an advanced level of Ojibwemowin proficiency through the development of a master/apprentice program. School staff worked with elders and content specialists to create a training plan for teachers, with individual goals and training strategies. Niigaane's director worked with elders to administer oral proficiency interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year to measure progress and inform training plans. She paired each teacher with a fluent elder to form master/apprentice teams that met as frequently as possible during the school year, with longer work sessions in the summer. As a result, one teacher reached advanced-high on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages proficiency scale, and one progressed two levels to reach intermediate-low.

School staff also monitored students' language and academic achievements annually. Teachers used subjective

evaluations to assess language proficiency, but they are in the process of developing a standardized assessment method for Niigaane. Academically, staff utilize their own curriculum-based measurements to evaluate students in addition to Minnesota state tests.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

With the support of three very dedicated teachers and a regular group of fluent elders, Niigaane taught 19 students in kindergarten through sixth grade its first year, 27 its second, and 34 its third, reaching 40 youth throughout the project. Teachers reported that the master/apprentice program has been very beneficial, and that this project has provided new training opportunities for those who wish to teach in an immersion setting and learn Ojibwe. Simply having people who are willing to speak Ojibwemowin with those who want to learn contributes to the community's sense of native identity, and helps develop the language skills of teachers and students.

As teachers and school staff gained proficiency and comfort with the Ojibwe language, they observed many positive results for the students as well. The teachers, elders, and administrators reported increased language proficiency in every child at the school, with three youth achieving fluency at their grade level. Niigaane students also consistently met or exceeded the scores of their English-speaking peers on state academic tests. Elders and teachers reported seeing greater respect, tolerance, patience, and confidence in the students, who are more connected to their native identity as a result of their experiences at Niigaane.

"We are starting to see the possibilities of reclaiming and rebuilding the Ojibwe identity."

Naabekwea Liberty, Niigaane Teacher

MIGIZI COMMUNICATIONS, INC.



Project Title:	American Indian Cultural and Economic Corridor Development Project
Award Amount:	\$876,997
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 4 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 4 Native American consultants hired
- 400 elders involved
- 423 youth involved
- \$171,429 in resources leveraged
- 280 individuals trained
- 19 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Migizi Communications, Inc. is a native nonprofit located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to the 2000 census, 8,378 Native Americans reside in Minneapolis, with the greatest concentration in the Phillips neighborhood. This is where one of the only geographically identifiable urban Indian communities in the nation has existed since thousands of native people, mainly Ojibwe and Dakota/Lakota, began coming in from surrounding areas in the 1950s. The main thoroughfare of Phillips is Franklin Avenue, which was the original home of the American Indian Movement, and now boasts many Indian-owned businesses.

Migizi (“bald eagle” in Ojibwe) started training radio journalists in 1977, as a way to present news from a Native American perspective. There are now two pillars of Migizi: educational support programming with Minneapolis public schools, and New Media Pathways. Over the course of its history, Migizi trained journalists, produced the country’s first Indian news magazine to be distributed nation-wide, and given a voice to at-risk Indian youth through media and communications training.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Over the past three years, community leaders throughout Minneapolis, including Migizi staff and partners, have worked together to “transform the American Indian community for the 21st century, while preserving and strengthening indigenous values and assets.” As part of that effort, the purpose of this project was to enhance the capacity of the urban Indian community in Minneapolis to seize local entrepreneurial opportunities.

The first objective was to engage at least 400 people in a community-driven process to develop a master plan for a physical and virtual cultural and economic corridor. To

accomplish this, project staff held nearly 60 events, including listening sessions and design charettes, involving 1,238 members of the Native American community over a two-year period. As a result of this process, the “American Indian Community Blueprint” was unveiled in the spring of 2010, and 750 individuals have officially endorsed the plan. The blueprint defines a vision for the future of the Indian community in Minneapolis, and identifies strategies for establishing housing, educational, business, social, and cultural services. Over 1,200 copies of the plan have been distributed, and it is available to the general community online through Migizi’s main project partner, the Native American Community Development Institute. Numerous Indian-owned businesses have been established on Franklin Avenue since the corridor opened in May 2010, including the All My Relations Gallery, Mille Lacs Bank, and Northland Visions gift shop.

The second objective was for 150 Indian youth to complete 400 hours of technology, media, and entrepreneurial training in preparation for implementation of the master plan. By the end of the third year, over 290 middle and high school youth had completed media training through community media teams, summer media institutes, and technology, media and entrepreneurship courses in four Minneapolis public schools. Performance assessments showed that all students advanced their knowledge and skills in multi-media production and entrepreneurship, with most showing significant improvement. The total hours of production exceeded 13,000, resulting in about 25 media projects, such as public service announcements, documentaries, and a teen suicide prevention initiative. These projects produced by the youth generated \$101,157 in income, and were contracted by various local and civic entities.

The third objective was to identify and explore, as a result of the master planning process, a minimum of three cooperative enterprise development opportunities for Indian youth and adults. During the summer of the third year, 21 students produced four enterprise ideas, which were further developed into businesses plans with the help of mentors. Students then presented their plans to a panel of local business owners and community members.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The master plan and the opening of the economic and cultural corridor have provided a road map and a sense of hope, creating a collective vision that did not previously exist. The community is reclaiming the physical geography of the neighborhood, and is creating a better future for individuals and families. With more economic and cultural opportunities in the Phillips neighborhood, native youth can see a future in the area, and families have a stronger reason to stay there. Project staff reported that the inclusiveness of the community planning and development process has empowered people, giving them a voice they usually do not have in the larger Minneapolis community.

The project not only promoted grassroots community development, but also gave youth a sense of achievement and responsibility through media and entrepreneurial training. Students gained software and media skills that can be directly applied to jobs and higher education, and learned how to form successful business plans. Through this project, youth developed their ability to express themselves with media technology and storytelling, while also improving their own self image and reconnecting with their native identity.

RED LAKE BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS



Project Title:	Red Lake Path of Life Project
Award Amount:	\$1,005,874
Type of Grant:	SEDS - Strengthening Families
Project Period:	Sept. 2006 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 2 Native American consultants hired
- \$9,600 in resources leveraged
- 37 individuals trained
- 12 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians has a total population of 7,618 members, with a reservation located in northwestern Minnesota. The reservation covers 1,259 square miles and is very rural, made up of forests, wetlands, and two large freshwater lakes. It is unique among reservations in Minnesota for being entirely owned by the tribe, and is made up of four main communities: Little Rock, Red Lake, Redby, and Ponemah.

The people of the Red Lake Band are Ojibwe, also known as Anishinaabe. The community has been able to maintain much of its native language, religion, and customs. However, a lack of housing, high crime rates, high unemployment, and a legacy of historical grief are among issues faced by the tribe. These problems also represent

barriers to healthy marriage, and are reasons why Red Lake has a pressing need to build a matrix of strong families and communities through healthy relationships and marriage.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The first objective was for 14 role model couples at Red Lake to provide mentoring and education about healthy relationship and marriage skills to at least 12 at-risk couples, who would increase their knowledge in these areas by 25 percent. Project staff estimated they had 20 to 25 mentor couples who worked with at least 12 at-risk couples over the five-year project. Couples and individuals acted as mentors, and together contributed 9,694 hours of service. Mentors and instructors volunteered much of their time, but also collected weekly stipends to help them commit more time to the project. Mentors received certification in marital education training provided by project staff, and offered guidance to other couples primarily through group activities, with some individual sessions. Participants completed pre- and post-evaluations at each activity, and project staff recorded a 47 percent increase in knowledge of healthy relationship skills in the fifth project year.

The second objective was for at least 18 married couples to strengthen their relationships and increase their marriage skills by 50 percent through participation in marital education workshops and family or couples activities. Overall, the project provided 657 hours of training to participants through marital workshops, relationship courses, and traditional and modern dance. During the first three years of the project, a certified instructor administered Gottman Institute healthy marriage and relationships training. In the last two years, Project Coordinator Frances Miller conducted workshops using a healthy relationship manual developed under the fourth objective of this project. Ms. Miller reported that 15 couples strengthened their relationships by 92 percent in the fifth year, and believes this is representative of the whole project period.

The third objective was for 20 individuals, who may be part of a married or engaged couple, to increase their knowledge of and skills in communication, conflict resolution and commitment by 25 percent through participation in a marital education course, couple mentoring sessions, and annual retreats. Project staff measured that 20 individuals increased their knowledge by 92 percent in year five, and the project coordinator distributed certificates in healthy marriage and healthy relationship training to an estimated 15 people total.

The fourth objective was to hold a focus group consisting of couples and individuals to test the Red Lake marriage education course, based on the manual developed by project staff, and to incorporate the results into the course. A focus group made up of 10 people met and provided feedback on two draft manuals, one that reflected more modern views of marriage, and one based heavily on traditional Ojibwe teachings. This process resulted in a final manual titled “Path of Life/Wiijiwaagaan: Introduction to

Healthy Relationships and Native Wellness,” based on input from project staff, mentors, and community members.

Unfortunately, the original project co-coordinator and partner of Ms. Miller, Richard Graves, passed away during year three. The mourning period resulted in some additional challenges, and although an assistant joined the project, many records from the first three years were inaccessible. As a result, project staff had to estimate final numbers, and were unable to provide formal analysis of the pre- and post-evaluations.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Despite the challenges, Ms. Miller is confident the project achieved its intended goals. The workshops and activities made participants, as well as mentors, realize that their behaviors and values were being passed on to their children, helping many to positively change their ways. After participating in this program, two couples married, some individuals found full-time jobs, and others started their own efforts to improve community wellness. In addition to increased knowledge of healthy relationship and marriage skills, staff also witnessed increased self-esteem in project participants.

Furthermore, all participants, staff, mentors, and volunteers learned more about Ojibwe values and how they apply to relationships. For example, during the traditional and modern dance classes, instructors talked about how dancing relates to healthy relationship skills as well as culture. The activities and workshops also provided a routine and a chance to socialize for many community members, and stipends allowed volunteers and participants to attend even if they were in difficult financial situations. This project has strengthened the Red Lake community for years to come by teaching people about cultural values such as respect, communication, and family.