
EUCHEE TRIBE OF INDIANS



Project Title: Euchee Language Translation Project
Award Amount: \$350,000
Type of Grant: Language
Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 9/29/2006
Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3 jobs created
- 12 people trained
- 3 partnerships formed
- 335 products developed
- 20 elders involved
- 94 youth involved
- 6 Native American consultants hired
- 877 Native language classes held
- 14 Native Americans increased their ability to speak Euchee
- 3 Native Americans achieved fluency

BACKGROUND

The Euchee (also Yuchi) Indians are a non federally-recognized Tribe whose traditional lands spanned what is now the southeastern United States. A series of forced removals began in 1825 and ended in the 1850s with the majority of Euchee community members currently residing in the Tulsa area of Oklahoma. Tribal records approximate that 2,400 people claim Euchee descent. Due to their non-federal status, many Euchee people have enrolled with neighboring Tribes, including the Muscogee Creek Nation and the Absentee Shawnee Tribe. But the Euchee community continues to

maintain their distinctive cultural and social institutions, including ceremonies, traditions and their unique language.

Unlike other Native languages, Euchee has no known related languages. Called a “language isolate” by linguists, even distantly related languages have not been identified. Currently, only six Native Euchee language speakers remain, each around 80 years of age. Only one fluent male speaker remains – a critical point as males and females have separate and distinct ways of speaking.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the two-year Euchee Language Translation Project was to take advantage of the Euchee elders’ language expertise and reinvigorate community efforts to preserve the Euchee language.

The Project enlisted the six remaining fluent-speaking elders to translate older recordings. These reel-to-reel audio and cassette tapes recordings required intense concentration and multiple listening sessions. It was a labor-intensive, time-consuming process for which the elders were compensated. The Project produced 110 translations of the Euchee language’s two remaining dialects. The newly produced Euchee translations were

catalogued, preserved on long-term storage media and placed in storage.

In another activity, volunteers prepared and narrated traditional Eucjee stories in a monthly community presentation. This motivated each storyteller to master a particular piece of the Eucjee language. Elders provided each volunteer presenter informal feedback.

The Project had a rigorous regimen for fluent Eucjee elders (i.e., master) and translation specialists (i.e., apprentice) in which they translated traditional Eucjee stories, ceremonial presentations and written materials. This master-apprentice approach produced three fluent Eucjee speakers and 12 proficient speakers.

Producing a radio show was more difficult than originally anticipated. It took 16 hours to produce a single 15-minute radio lesson and the Project produced 25 radio lessons. Each lesson provided a chance for fluent speakers to refine their language skills and all interested members to practice Eucjee.

Initially, the Project was turned down by every radio station in the Tulsa area. It was successful in procuring a program slot at KCFO once they discovered the station employed an influential Eucjee community member. The radio program will continue past the Project's timeframe as community members have indicated that it is a useful language revitalization effort and the station's signal is strong enough to reach most Eucjee tribal members.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

This Project reinforced the elder's traditional positions as holders of knowledge and wisdom within the Eucjee community. The elders have embraced the chance to preserve and document the Eucjee language for future generations and relished the opportunity to hone their own language

skills. Josephine Keith referenced the positive impact the Project has had on the elders, sharing, "Even we learned new things, and we heard phrases we hadn't heard in years!" Andrew Skeeter, Chairman of the Eucjee Tribe added, "I have seen a growth in all areas of language use, particularly if you listen to conversations at our ceremonies. Our people are trying to speak and our fluent speakers are helping them." Henry Washburn, the last remaining male fluent speaker, commented on the inextricable bond between culture and language and asserted, "If we are Eucjee, we must speak Eucjee."

Eucjee youth have also enjoyed the benefits of this Project. Project staff conducted community language and cultural presentations which encouraged youth to use their language skills and educated them on the history and background of their people. As a result, youth gave similar presentations in their public school classes, demonstrating a clear sense of identity and pride.

The Project increased social bonds among tribal members at Eucjee ceremonies and services, such as funerals and weddings. Furthermore, the community gatherings and presentations have promoted cultural exchanges by providing a forum for parent-child interactions and intergenerational activities.

"The Eucjee language belongs to our community, and as elders we feel it is stronger now than it has been in years."

Ann Halder

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS IN OKLAHOMA



Project Title: Tribal Charter Activation Project
Award Amount: \$250,000
Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 9/29/2006
Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 2 jobs created
- 83 people trained
- 3 partnerships formed
- 6 businesses created
- 9 elders involved
- 6 youth involved

BACKGROUND

The United Keetoowah Band of Indians in Oklahoma (UKB) is a federally-recognized tribe with headquarters in Tahlequah. Under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, Congress legislatively authorized UKB to organize as a separate tribal entity. In 1950, the United States Department of Interior finalized and approved the Constitution and By-Laws and its members ratified the Constitution and By-Laws.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this two-year Tribal Charter Activation Project was to establish a Corporate Charter Activation Office and governance tools and codes. The Project was intended to enable UKB to implement a progressive program to create for-profit tribal enterprises and to assist their

community members in developing small businesses.

Initially, the Project conducted a survey and identified 12 businesses owned by tribal members, which established a basis for the activation of the Corporate Charter. On behalf of the Project, three consulting companies drafted, revised and finalized tribal codes and trained UKB Tribal Council members on their roles and responsibilities in administering the Corporate Charter.

Three months into the Project, election results shuffled the personnel on the Tribal Council and the Project, requiring the completed seminars to be duplicated. The newly-elected Tribal Council soon realized they had different ideas on how to best execute the Project plan, specifically, the content of the planned business codes and ordinances. Based on this input, the Project replaced the original consulting firm with two groups with whom they had partnered with previously and that had experience in creating and implementing tribal business codes. Consequently, the Project's implementation fell behind schedule. However, the Project and the Tribal Council were satisfied with the work of the replacement consultants, which resulted in a

Economic Development Act suited to meet UKB needs.

The Tribal Council adopted the Economic Development Act to activate their Corporate Charter authority. The Act also included an new Economic Development Board to oversee, approve and tax business incorporations. The Board would also manage the Corporate Charter Office.

The Corporate Charter Office policies and procedures were drafted and would be approved once a permanent Corporate Charter Office Director was hired.

The delayed completion of the first year activities impacted the Project's second year performance. By the Project's completion, a permanent Office Director had yet to be hired. As a result, draft policies and procedures were never formalized.

However, the Project and Economic Development Board successfully partnered to develop three tribally-owned enterprises and assisted two tribal members in three new businesses. This Project has already observed the authorization of three tribal enterprises including Keetoowah Trucking, Inc., Keetoowah Construction, Inc., and Keetoowah Trading Company. UKB members have established three businesses, including Summerfield Construction Company, Shade Web Design and a fundraising tools website.

Overall, the foundational pieces of this Project have been completed. The Corporate Charter has been activated and a Corporate Charter Office and Economic Development Board have been created to administer the Economic Development Plan and oversee tribal businesses. The condensed schedule forced Project staff to abandon evaluation of the Corporate Charter's effectiveness and many policies and procedures have yet to be finalized, but UKB has committed funds to

sustain the current Project staff members and continue their activities.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

Tribal Chief George Wickliffe shared that the enrolled population of UKB was about 6,000 members just five years ago. Currently, the United Keetoowah Band boasts 12,000 enrolled members. Chief Wickliffe explained that the majority of the new members were Keetoowah Indians that had enrolled within the Cherokee Nation to gain access to social services and enjoy the advantages an established governance infrastructure offers. The focused efforts of the Keetoowah leadership to build their own capacity and integrate economic and social development efforts into a comprehensive governance agenda have attracted the Keetoowah population back into their traditional community. Georgia Dick, Project director, shared that this Project has advanced these efforts and stated, "We're not only growing in size, we're growing our capacity to help develop our people's dreams."

Community members also shared their support. Brian Shade, a webpage designer, had formed two web-based ventures under the recently activated Corporate Charter. He explained, "I wanted my business to be a Keetoowah tribal business because I'm proud to be Keetoowah and I believe my tribe will provide me support in my efforts." Stephanie Wickliffe, Acting Corporate Charter Office Director, concluded, "overall, the United Keetoowah Band can now assert itself as a sovereign nation and is beginning to attract community members who would like to start their own business." The business owners also cited the benefits that their taxed profits will have upon all tribal members, as the UKB will invest these funds into social programs for UKB's constituents.

UNITED NATIONAL INDIAN TRIBAL YOUTH, INC.



Project Title: Preparing Native Youth for Life's Journey

Award Amount: \$359,000

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: 9/30/2004 – 7/31/2006

Grantee Type: Native Non-Profit

PROJECT SUMMARY

- 2 jobs created
- \$2,680 in resources leveraged
- 218 people trained
- 1 partnership formed
- 1 product developed
- 20 elders involved
- 1,266 youth involved
- 2 Native American consultants hired

BACKGROUND

United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (UNITY) is non-profit organization based in Oklahoma City. Their mission is to foster the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth, and to help build a strong, unified and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement.

UNITY maintains a network of Youth Councils throughout Native America. There are about 260 Youth Councils in 34 states, serving an estimated 45,000 native youth. Based upon these numbers, UNITY has the broadest geographic reach of any youth organization serving American Indians and Native Alaskans.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

UNITY conducts its programs with the belief that native youth can make a significant and substantial contribution to Native America if provided with appropriate spiritual, mental, physical and social development training. Consistent with this philosophy, this Project planned to provide leadership and life skills training to native youth. The youth would then be expected to conduct community needs assessments within their communities and design community service projects based on their assessments. In addition, the youth would develop personal life goals and plans.

To complete its first objective, the Project developed a 12-unit "*Preparing Native Youth for Life's Journey*" workbook and DVD. Footage was collected by taping a full training session, but budget constraints limited its production to a few short clips that now accompany the handbook on UNITY's website. The handbook is available for download by interested native groups. The Project exceeded its milestones by training 1,266 native youth and 106 adult advisors.

While the Project's goal was to have 600 native youth from at least 40 Youth Councils complete needs assessments within

their respective communities, the Project did not receive any completed assessments. To encourage response, the Project developed an on-line chatroom for Youth Councils to network, share best practices and discuss challenges. While the forum worked effectively, it was hacked by an outside group, rendering it inactive. Since the service Project objective was dependent on the community needs assessment, the Project also failed to meet the service Project goals. The Project received field reports from five Youth Councils.

UNITY staff developed the Project's concept and implementation with no input from local level partners or Youth Councils. During the training sessions, native youth evaluations indicated that the seminars and networking opportunities were highly appreciated, but the youth had not been involved in designing the original Project.

The Project also planned to have at least 240 native youth from a minimum of 24 Youth Councils develop a set of life goals and a plan for achieving them. This objective was originally intended to be undertaken by the native youth in their home communities, but based on the lack of field reports, the Project implemented this strategy at the training conferences. The goal-setting seminars were evaluated highly by the youth.

The Project planned to hire a Project coordinator to organize and maintain the communication channels and serve as the main contact for UNITY's 260 Youth Councils. During Project implementation, this position was filled with a consultant who shared that the Project could have utilized additional staff to develop and maintain a participant database and tracking system to more effectively coordinate the UNITY trainings and Youth Council fieldwork.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

A conference call was held with native youth and adult advisors involved in the Project's implementation. When asked to reflect upon the impacts that the Project has had, many found the trainings provided by UNITY particularly helpful in assisting their tribal communities. Sue St. Onge shared, "UNITY gave us the tools to research, plan and take action steps towards implementing change in our communities." Robert Grenfell, an adult advisor with the Barona Band of Mission Indians Youth Council offered, "The trainings helped our youth mature and seek out responsibility, and they were then able to benefit their tribe through a service project."

The trainings were responsible for numerous personal impacts as well. Colleen St. Onge stated, "When I saw all the lofty goals my friends were setting for themselves, it inspired me to aim high as well. I decided to set a 3.5 average and the National Honor Society as my goals. So far, I have a 3.6 and I will be filling out my Honor Society application in the spring." Ally Krebs, the parent of a Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians youth added, "The UNITY trainings were instrumental in inspiring my son to pursue and receive a college scholarship. They showed him the steps he needed to take to get there."

Finally, the participants mentioned the positive effects of assembling native youth and providing a forum for them to discuss native issues. Robert Grenfell detailed, "Our discussions showed us that our challenges are similar. This discovery bonded the youth and raised their esteem because they realized that they are not alone in their struggles as native youth."