
RED CLOUD INDIAN SCHOOL, INC.



Project Title:	Mahpiya Luta Lakol Waimspe Wicakiyapi - Teaching Lakota to Red Cloud Students
Award Amount:	\$302,229
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 8 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 20 elders involved
- 300 youth involved
- \$291,208 in resources leveraged
- 51 individuals trained
- 25 partnerships formed
- 7 language teachers trained
- 300 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 25 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

Red Cloud Indian School (RCIS), founded in 1888 on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, serves students in grades K-12. Though RCIS is not affiliated with the tribal government or tribal schools, 99 percent of students are Lakota youth from Pine Ridge. Due to the distressed economic conditions, RCIS does not charge tuition, and there is a long waiting list for enrollment. RCIS faculty have been teaching the Lakota language for over 40 years, with classes required for all K-eight students and one

level of high school students. Over the years, however, these courses have not succeeded in creating fluent speakers.

In 2006, there were roughly 6,000 fluent Lakota speakers. The average age of these speakers was 65. In 2008, to stem the loss of the language and encourage fluency and use among youth, RCIS educators began working with Indiana University's American Indian Studies Research Institute (AISRI) to develop a K-12 curriculum. In academic year 2008-09, they developed a basic template for the curriculum, outlining learning concepts, sequences, and activities, and created pilot materials for grades five-six and high school level one.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to expand RCIS's Lakota language revitalization efforts through further curriculum development and language teacher training. The first objective was to develop, test, and revise curricular materials for grades K-two, seven-eight, and high school levels two-three, and to test and revise curricula made previously for grades five-six and high school level one. RCIS staff and AISRI partners, including linguists and curriculum development consultants,

began by reviewing the curriculum template created for the pilot materials, ensuring it was logically, thoroughly, and interestingly arranged to present Lakota language structure and functions to K-12 youth and to facilitate the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

Using this template and carefully considering how to sequence the K-12 curriculum, the project team reviewed and revised previously-created materials and developed new textbooks, teachers' manuals, teaching aids, assessment tools, and multi-media materials over the next 18 months. All units included grammar points and practice activities, incorporated grade-level appropriate content areas on history and culture, and featured artwork from local artists. Multi-media materials included themed flash cards; an online dictionary; an animated reading lesson series based on the story of an Oglala Lakota brother and sister; and interactive online vocabulary activities. The team also developed a Lakota language keyboard for both PC and Mac. This gave students and staff a common writing system, consistent with the one selected for the texts, for learning and teaching Lakota. By project's end, the team finished the curricula for kindergarten, grades five-eight, and high school levels one-two, and 90 percent of the high school level three curriculum. The curricula for grades one-two were 30-40 percent complete. Over 300 students from grades five-eight and high school levels one-two used the new curriculum during the project, and the team made changes based on student and teacher feedback.

The second objective was to provide training to RCIS Lakota language teachers in current language teaching techniques, preparing them to effectively utilize the new curricula. To do this, AISRI staff provided ongoing short teaching demonstrations, one-on-one consultation, in-class interaction, and small group training to seven RCIS teachers on

using active language techniques, the new curricula, assessment strategies, and other topics. AISRI maintained an on-site coordinator in Pine Ridge for the duration of the project, ensuring that training met the needs of the RCIS staff, and that teacher feedback was incorporated into the new curriculum. In August of each year, teachers took part in an intensive three-day training workshop, and six teachers travelled to the AISRI program office in Indiana for training in March of each year.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

RCIS Lakota language teachers have expressed strong satisfaction with the new curriculum; it gives them a structure, activities, and assessment tools, and eases the daily worry of creating lessons and searching for resources. The curriculum's thoroughness, accessibility, affirmation of Lakota culture, and use of modern teaching techniques and multimedia tools encourage students to be more interested in learning, add credibility to the classes, and enhance the position of teachers.

According to Robert Braveheart, the RCIS superintendent, "Students have higher quality Lakota language curricula than ever before, are becoming less shy about learning and using the language, and are using it in a wide range of settings. Our language team had the most improved and highest language scores at the Lakota Nation Invitational. We have a basketball coach who uses Lakota on the court with the kids. Teachers—not just language teachers—are requiring kids to use Lakota to get hall passes. Parents and grandparents report that their kids are asking more questions about the language. The project has given them hope that the whole reservation community will benefit, and that our language and culture will be preserved."

RCIS received a new ANA grant to finish the K-12 curriculum, and is on target to complete these efforts by September 2013.

RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES



Project Title:	Lakota Healthy Marriages
Award Amount:	\$906,946
Type of Grant:	SEDS - Strengthening Families
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2011
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 6 full-time equivalent jobs created
- 400 elders involved
- 450 youth involved
- \$55,152 in resources leveraged
- 62 individuals trained
- 19 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Rural America Initiatives (RAI) is a nonprofit organization based in Rapid City. Formed in 1986, RAI provides a wide range of social services to the 19,000 Native Americans living in Rapid City and the surrounding area. RAI's Ateyapi Mentoring Program has provided area American Indian youth and adolescents, ages 10 to 14, with cultural and physical activities, character building opportunities, and academic tutoring since 1994. The program's mentors work in public schools, with teachers, providing assistance in classrooms and on playgrounds, and implement Ateyapi afterschool programs for Native American boys and girls. Program activities have included singing, dancing, arts and crafts, language, sports, field trips, and educational workshops, and are designed to enhance the

self-esteem, health, wellness, and social identity of youth participants.

The Ateyapi Mentoring Program has many well-established partnerships with Rapid City public schools, including Knollwood Elementary, General Beadle School, and Horace Mann School. These three schools have 58, 53, and 48 percent American Indian enrollment respectively. The youth served by this project were mainly fourth and fifth graders, ages 10 to 12, from these schools.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to develop a sustainable healthy relationships component for the RAI's Ateyapi Mentoring Program, to provide the Rapid City Native American community with healthy relationships education. Incorporating Lakota/Dakota values, the new healthy relationships component would integrate educational sessions with mentor role modeling to facilitate greater understanding and practice of the attitudes, values, and behaviors found in healthy marriages and stable families.

The first objective, in year one, was to increase the healthy relationship skills of 16 Ateyapi program mentors and enhance their

capacity to train others. To accomplish this, five Ateyapi mentors, 11 mentor trainees, and four others recruited from RAI programs received three days of intensive training in the Native Wellness Institute's (NWI) "Leading the Next Generations" healthy relationships curriculum. Training topics included native wellness; historical trauma, healing, and wellness; healthy gender roles; communication; and healthy conflict resolution. Upon completion of the training, the trainees received training of trainers certificates, and were authorized to train others in the NWI curriculum. These individuals also were given training in other healthy relationships curricula to broaden their perspectives on healthy relationships and wellness. After completing the training, mentors recruited 120 youth for the project, involving them in making the curriculum more age-appropriate and adapting it to Lakota culture. Staff then tested the materials and received feedback from 30 youth serving on curriculum review teams.

The second objective, in year two, was to increase the understanding of 120 youth on the benefits of healthy relationships and improve their relationship-building skills by 10 percent as measured in pre- and post-assessments. To accomplish this, program mentors, with occasional assistance from mentor trainees, trained 139 Knollwood, General Beadle, and Horace Mann fourth and fifth grade students in the 12-week Lakota-adapted NWI curriculum. Project staff collected assessment data on the youth and provided it to an independent evaluator, who tracked the learning and progress of the students. Mentors kept parents informed and involved through powwows, parent nights and socials, honoring marriage celebrations, cultural presentations, holiday events, and after-school activities.

The third objective, in year three, was to train 120 more youth and 50 young adults in the Lakota-adapted healthy relationships

curriculum, and to institutionalize it as a regular component of the Ateyapi program. To accomplish this, the RAI team recruited and trained youth from the three schools and adults from RAI's Birth to Five Early Head Start and Head Start programs. In year three, 123 elementary students finished the curriculum. Furthermore, 42 adults completed the adapted NWI curriculum and were certified as trainers of the curriculum.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

In three years, 62 adults, including 40 parents, were trained in the Lakota-adapted NWI curriculum. Most of those trained work in RAI programs, and have begun teaching the curriculum to families, youth, and other community organizations, ensuring that the Rapid City American Indian community will continue to benefit from healthy relationships education.

Of the 450 youth participating in the project, 382 were able to complete the 12-week curriculum. Results from post-tests indicate that youth improved by 19.8, 35.2, and 33.4 percent (year to year) in their ability to recognize the signs of unhealthy relationships. Project Coordinator Whitney Rencountre stated, "The project has helped kids learn core values and traditional methods to reflect upon their identity, gain acceptance, navigate life's issues, and have healthy relationships." Truman Grooms, a parent of a project youth, concurred: "I've seen real change in the way my son communicates; he is much more expressive than before. The Ateyapi program turns kids in the right direction and enhances their self-esteem. It gives them the tools to know Lakota culture and values, helps them develop skills at resolving conflict, and even gives them a chance to do their homework. Being associated with the program has been a real positive experience for our family."