

# **Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta To Know the Status of Our Language**

## **A CHAMORRO LANGUAGE SURVEY PROJECT For the San Diego County Chamorros**

### **FINAL REPORT**

**By  
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**Kanai Chamorro Hinalom Edukacion Unidat**

**A Federally Funded Project by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA)**

**Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta  
To Know the Status of Our Language**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Manamkos (the elderly) and other seniors from the Chamorro community were heard what they have been voicing over the recent years, "We have been losing our native language and culture over the generations, and we need help to save it". Chamorro Hands In Education Links Unity, Inc. (CHE"LU, Inc.) was formed as a 501 (c) (3) Nonprofit Organization to assist the Chamorro community in reaching their cultural goals, improve their wellness in health and their overall well-being.

Culturally, we found through community discussions their long-range goal was to revitalize, maintain, and protect the dying Chamorro language and culture. To strategically accomplish this goal a disciplined method should be followed for success.

The community had agreed the first step was "To know the status of our language-- Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta" through a one-year survey project. In knowing who, what gender and ages, and the community's overall attitude of the language would determine the best action plan to accomplish the community's long-range goal.

The primary goal of the Chamorro survey project, Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta was to conduct a confidential assessment to determine the current status of the Chamorro language within the San Diego County Chamorro community. San Diego County is home to the largest Chamorro population from the Mariana Islands at 7,646 according to the 2000 U.S. Census. According to the local fiesta village leaders, the population is closer to 15,000.

The researchers were tasked with conducting and analyzing the results of the assessment, which would include features of usage such as number and age of speakers, level of fluency, intergenerational use, and rate of loss or gain. Subjects included elders, adults, parents and their children ranging from the ages of 10 to 17 years of age. The findings of this study will assist the community in refining and prioritizing its long-range plans relating to the revitalization, preservation, maintenance and protection of the Chamorro language.

Thus, the scope of work to be performed by the assessment was:

- To determine the use of Chamorro language demographically and chart information
- To determine the use of Chamorro language in different settings and chart information
- To determine attitudes among potential speakers concerning care about Chamorro language and chart information
- To determine hindrances to learning the Chamorro language

Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta was a one-year project which began on September 30, 2008 and ended on September 29, 2009.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with deepest gratitude the following funders and contributors demonstrated their interest in assisting our Chamorro community in reaching their goals. Without their contributions this project would have not materialized within the time frame it needed to be. Gof Dankulu Na Si Yu'os Ma'ase! --A Very Special Thank you!

**A special acknowledgment and gratitude** to The Administration for Native Americans, (ANA), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) , and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for their dedication to fund and assist the San Diego County Chamorro community.

**The Department of Chamorro Affairs (DCA), Board of Trustees, Government of Guam** for their technical assistance to ensure the success of our project. Our collaborated efforts result from sharing the common goals in promoting the preservation of our Chamorro language, culture, and heritage.

**Dr. Marilyn C. Salas and the Center of Excellence for Chamorro Language and Culture (CLC), University of Guam** for directly providing unwavering technical assistance throughout the project period. Dr. Salas' guidance during her visit to our community ensured our readiness for the language assessment project.

**The Sons & Daughters of Guam Club (2007-2008) Board of Directors** for their vision and collaboration with CHE'LU, Inc. by committing a project site area as an in-kind contribution to conduct the language assessment for our Chamorro community.

**Waller Consulting** for their generous contribution of three (3) Dell Work Center Laptops during the project period.

**The San Diego County Chamorro Community** for not only voicing their concerns to CHE'LU, Inc. about our dying language and culture, also for participating in the Chamorro Language Survey.

And last but not least...

**CHE'LU, Inc.'s Board of Directors and our Assessment Volunteers:**

**CHE'LU's BOD:** Co-Chairperson Greg Diaz, CFO JoJo Borja, Secretary Janice Waller Bouffiou, and Members: Thelma Z. Hechanova, Lucy S.N. Isaacson, Ray L.G. Sablan, Luann Guzman, and Dr. Michael Lujan Bevacqua. **Assessment Volunteers:** Florentina C. Boatman, Pacing R. Cruz, Manuel Reyes, Juan Salas, Youths: Jesi Lujan Bennett, Christina Santos and Diana Santos Jordan.

## THE CHAMORRO PEOPLE

### **The Chamorro People**

Chamorros are the indigenous people to the Mariana Islands. This archipelago chain of islands consist of four main islands; Guam (Guåhån), Saipan, Rota (Luta) and Tinian. The islands are part of the Western Pacific Ocean and are approximately a six hour flight west of Hawaii.

The original inhabitants of the Marianas are believed to have been of Indo-Malaya descent originating from Southeast Asia as early as 2,000 B.C. and having linguistic and cultural similarities to Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The Chamorro people of today have a substantial Spanish influence including words in their native language due to Spain's colonial rule between the 16th and 19th Centuries.

Both words "Chamorro" and "Mariana" were derived from the Spanish. Chamorro means the "thick part of the leg or calf". The primitive Chamorros were tall, brawny and had strong legs. It is believed the first Spanish explorers named them Chamorros due to their strong thick legs. The Mariana Islands was named after Queen Maria-Anna, an Austrian and wife of King Philip IV of Spain. Portuguese Explorer Ferdinand Magellan who eventually sailed for Spain was instructed by Queen Maria-Anna to return to the chain of islands and rename them Mariana, Spanish for Maria-Anna.

After the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded the islands to the United States. Other colonization rule included Japan and Germany. After World War II, the United States reacquired control and due to political reasons and by choice; the Mariana Islands were divided. Currently, Guam is a U.S. Territory and the remaining three main islands are now known as The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI.)

The people of the Mariana Islands have suffered in one way or another from colonial rule. The consequences from centuries of colonization, and in most cases earlier mistreatment of our people on their own land, have undoubtedly a negative impact on the Chamorros. They subconsciously mistrust people in general particularly outside of their community. This learned "cultural barrier" has been subliminally passed through centuries of generations and even today this barrier still exists and it is suggested this may be the cause of why our people do not fully cooperate with the census or maintain preventive health care. The positive result of colonization has taught Chamorros to be survivors and a thriving close-knit community.

In the early 1950's after a political upheaval in the Marianas, the United States eventually conceded and awarded the Chamorro people U.S. Citizenship. Due to some of the Chamorro private land being dispossessed earlier by the U.S. military, and for most others new opportunities arose; our people began migrating to the states with a large influx settling in the San Diego County region.

## **Colonization and the Beginning of Native Language Loss**

The Mariana Islands especially Guam was a centrally strategic island for early century trading to other close-by Pacific Islands and with Asia. During the Latte Stone era (primitive era), the Chamorros had their innate native language which consisted of Malayo-Polynesian, a language of the Austronesian languages.

Beginning in the 16th Century, Spain was the first ruling country to colonize the Mariana Islands, lasting close to three centuries. Today, there is a prevalent Spanish influence in the Chamorro language and culture. After the Spanish, the United States was the second ruling country to colonize. The U.S. Military became the governing body of the islands. In addition to Guam being a strategic location for the military, their intent was to also westernize the Chamorro people. This goal was the actual beginning of generational loss of our Chamorro language as known today. The Japanese Imperial Forces invaded Guam on December 8, 1941. The Japanese was the third ruling colonized country and their goal was to settle on the Islands. They too expected the Chamorros to learn their language and culture. However, the islands were vital to the United States and they battled the Japanese forces in July of 1944 and reacquired control of the islands once again. The U.S. has been there since with their original intent to westernize the Chamorros.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s Chamorro students were not allowed to speak their language or learn any Chamorro history within the school system. They were mandated to speak English and learn United States history. This order by the U.S. had tragic results to the Chamorro language and culture over generations. Today, English is still the main language used on the islands. Ironically, in 1997, it is now mandated and part of the school's curriculum to teach the Chamorro language.

The Chamorro community is now in collaboration with CHE'LU, Inc. to assist them with their goal in revitalizing, preserving, protecting, and maintaining our Chamorro language and culture.

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the last U.S. Census-2000, San Diego County is home to 7,646 Chamorros. Although it is believed by traditional San Diego village leaders, the population is closer to double of the documented population.

There are (3) three main sectors where the majority of the Chamorros reside within the county's general population. The heaviest population is known as the South Bay area (approximately 3,500 Chamorros), the 2nd most populated is known as the North County & Coastal area (approximately 2,000) and the 3rd most populated is known as the East County area (approximately 1,500). The remaining of the Chamorro population is scattered throughout the county. These three most populated areas are estimates and are common knowledge within the Chamorro community. The last Census (2000) does not indicate, segregate or verify the population in these main areas.

**Table 1: Chamorro demographical statistics (2000 U.S. Census Bureau)**

POPULATION INFORMATION		NUMBER (n)	%
AGE	under 16	2,141	28%
	16 thru 65	5,199	68%
	Over 65	306	04%
EMPLOYMENT			
	Not employed	4,129	54%
	Labor Force	3,517	46%
POVERTY			
	Below poverty	688	09%

Although San Diego County is home to the largest Chamorro community off-island, it is a non-enclave region.

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## **THE CHAMORRO COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

### **The Assessment Committee**

An existing survey instrument used on Guam was redeveloped by a project staff which also consisted of volunteers of seniors, mid-age adults, youths and CHE'LU, Inc. board members who were all guided by Dr. Marilyn Salas from the University of Guam.

### **Data Collection**

Due to a non-enclave region in San Diego County the methods selected to collect data were; walk-in participants at the project site, outgoing and incoming phone calls, Chamorro functions, and through our website. These methods were found to be the most effective and efficient in maximizing participants and to reach the project objectives.

978 total samples were collected. 675 of the total were from paper surveys, and the remaining 303 were from internet users. The total samples collected were from 342 males and 632 female participants.

The final survey instrument developed was to collect data from adults including those with children between the ages of 10-17 years of age. Permission forms were completed by the parents for their children to participate. The assessment committee felt the minimal age of 10 years of age would be capable of responding to all questions with the least amount of survey assistance.

The various ages selected provided intergenerational usage through part of the Linguistic Data categories.

### **Data Analyses**

The descriptive research approach taken was the use of a survey instrument to gather data from Chamorro adults and children between the ages of 10-17 years of age. Each paper survey was numbered as an analytical identifier and internet surveys included its own analysis through our survey provider. Our project staff entered data collected and eventually systematically combined both sources for a final result through a created formulated spreadsheet.

### **The Survey Instrument:**

The final survey instrument was developed to capture Social Data and Linguistic Data by categories.

Part A: Social Data: Gender, Age Group, Ethnic Group and Household Ages.

Part B: Linguistic Data: Language Ability - Responses to ability to understand, speak, read and write Chamorro.

Part C: Linguistic Data: Language Use - Responses to the use of Chamorro, English or both languages in three (3) different categories: a. with different members of your family, b. social interactional purposes, and c. within the Chamorro community.

Part D: Linguistic Data: Literacy Events – Responses to how often you participated in household literacy activities.

Part E. Linguistic Data: Language Attitudes – Responses to attitude about the Chamorro language.

Two Questions: Response to 2 questions – 1. List in order of importance three reasons why the Chamorro language is important. 2. What are your ideas in bringing back the use of the Chamorro language in the community and at home?

There were a total of 15 questions whereas questions 3, 4, 14 and 15 were fill-in responses, all others were checkable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Social Data:** The first four questions were of demographics: Gender, Age Group, Ethnic Group, and Household ages.

**Table 2:**  
**Questions 1: Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Male</b>	342	35.0
<b>Female</b>	636	65.0

**(n) = Number of participants and samples collected**

### **Discussion**

Almost twice as many females participated than males. According to the census, there are 32 more females than males. Possible reasons for the female majority; inaccurate census count due to the choice of non-participation, more males chose not to participate, or culturally--females are the foundation and leaders of the family unit.

**Table 3:**  
**Question 2: Age Group**

<b>Age</b>	<b>(n)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>10 - 18 Years</b>	98	10.0
<b>19 – 29</b>	133	13.6
<b>30 – 39</b>	181	18.5
<b>40 – 49</b>	191	19.5
<b>50 – 59</b>	256	26.2
<b>60 and Over</b>	119	12.2

**Question 3: Ethnic Group: Chamorro or Chamorro/**

**Top Four Averages in order from the 978 Responses:**

1. Chamorro

2. Chamorro/Caucasian
3. Chamorro/Hispanic
4. Chamorro/Asian (Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, etc)

**Discussion**

685 or 70% of the respondents were 100% of Chamorro lineage. 150 or 15% were of Chamorro Caucasian (European Americans), 65 or 7% were of Chamorro Hispanic, 50 or 5% were of Chamorro Asian, and the remaining 28 respondents or 3% were of other Chamorro mixtures not listed as the top four (4).

Although 70% responded as 100% Chamorro—Chamorro history and maternal or paternal last names could possibly lend credibility that a large percentage of this rate may reflect lineage from countries that colonized the Mariana Islands. Culturally speaking, even if this statement were valid, there is good reason why 70% responded as full Chamorro.

**Question 4: How many people are in your household?**

(A household is people who live in your home and share the activities of caring for the family over a sustained period of time e.g. 6 months or more.)

**Number of Adults** (18 years or older)    **Number of Children** (17 years or younger)

**Top Averages from the 978 Responses:** Adults = 2.8    Children = 1.5

**Discussion**

Generally speaking older Chamorros were known to have somewhat from medium to large immediate family members, i.e. two parents and eight (8) children.

Question four (4) as the majority of the questionnaire reflects individual current status. In other words, older respondents may have possibly once had a large family in their home whereas their children are now adults and have their own household.

**The following Table measures the Linguistic Data - Language Ability to understand, speak, read and write by percentile rate.**

**Table 4: Part B: Linguistic Data - Language Ability Questions 5-8**

<b>Combined Age Groups</b>	<b>Language Ability</b>	<b>Understand %</b>	<b>Speak %</b>	<b>Read %</b>	<b>Write %</b>
10 years to the early 50 years of age	No ability	24.2	24.7	31.5	36.0
	A Little	26.2	26.7	26.0	24.1
Up to 50-mid years of age	Some	18.2	15.1	12.6	8.9
	Good	10.0	11.8	10.4	12.8
Late 50 years of age and over	Very Good	21.4	21.7	19.5	18.2

## Discussion

### Understanding and Speaking

In both understanding and speaking there was an increasing trend with ability. In other words, the highest percentile rates occurred from “No ability” to “A Little” categories. The majority of the age group in those categories ranged from 10 years to approximately the early 50 years of age.

The “Some” to “Good” categories were drawn from up to approximately the 50-mid years of age.

The “Very Good” categories were from approximately the late 50 years of age and over participants. Very Good can be construed as 100 % fluency rate.

### Reading and Writing

In both reading and writing the trend decreases in the ability as expected for colonized reasons that will be summarized in the Executive Summary section.

The categories “Very Good” to “A Little” rate decreases in both Reading and Writing, however, the Writing category has the higher decrease rate, as the “No Ability” rate increases.

The following tables: 5, 6 & 7 are of survey questions 9, 10, & 11 respectively. They measure the use of the languages used within family members, daily family social interaction, and social interaction within the Chamorro community.

**Table 5: Part C: Linguistic Data – Language Uses**

<b>Within the Family</b>	<b>Chamorro</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Both</b>
Grandparents to grandparents	293 (30.0%)	226 (23.1%)	459 (46.9%)
Grandparents to parents	221 (22.6%)	479 (49.0%)	278 (28.4%)
Grandparents to grandchildren	65 (6.6%)	743 (76.0%)	170 (17.4%)
Parents to grandparents	226 (23.1%)	468 (47.9%)	268 (27.4%)
Parents to children	26 (2.7%)	854 (87.3%)	98 (10.0%)
Other adults to children	17 (1.7%)	925 (94.6%)	36 (3.7%)
Children to parents	22 (2.2%)	939 (96.0%)	17 (1.7%)
Children to other adults	17 (1.7%)	895 (91.5%)	66 (6.7%)
Children to children	13 (1.3%)	921 (94.2%)	44 (4.5%)

**Table 6: Daily Family Social Interaction**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Chamorro</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Both</b>
To ask, give, or get directions	46 (4.7%)	854 (87.3%)	78 (8.0%)
Interact socially, i.e. sharing a joke	52 (5.3%)	833 (85.2%)	93 (9.5%)

To express or explain a situation	47 (4.8%)	858 (87.7%)	73 (7.5%)
Praise, encourage, or show happiness	59 (6.0%)	801 (81.9%)	118 (12.1%)
Express displeasure, disappointments, etc.	32 (3.3%)	807 (82.5%)	139 (14.2%)
Seek solutions to problems, or ask for help	21 (2.1%)	846 (86.5%)	111 (11.3%)
To discuss or explain school work	15 (1.5%)	879 (89.9%)	84 (8.6%)

**Table 7: Within the Chamorro Community**

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Chamorro</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Both</b>
Chamorro Social Events, i.e. Fiestas	240 (24.5%)	407 (41.6%)	331 (33.8%)
Funerals and Nightly Rosaries	226 (23.1%)	406 (41.5%)	346 (35.4%)
Sharing Conversations with friends	226 (23.1%)	416 (42.5%)	336 (34.4%)
Conversation with the elderly (manamko')	256 (26.2%)	382 (39.1%)	340 (34.8%)

### **Discussion**

Part C: Tables 5, 6 & 7 are results that measures language usage with individual family members, a social family setting and within the Chamorro community, respectively.

As expected, the overall language used is English. In table four (4)—if both grandparents are of full Chamorro lineage, they have a higher percentage rate in speaking Chamorro to one another than English. However, these same grandparents have a higher percentage rate in mixing both Chamorro and English when speaking with one another than just Chamorro only.

Generationally the younger the age, English is the main language spoken at home and at social settings within the Chamorro community.

Table 8 reflects survey question 12 and measures the use of the Chamorro language and participation in literacy activities.

**Table 8: Part D: Linguistic Data – Literacy Events**

How often does your family participate in the following activities using the Chamorro Language?

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Most Often</b>	<b>Quite Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>
Listening & Telling Stories	112 (11.5%)	118 (12.1%)	246 (25.2%)	113 (11.6%)	389 (39.8%)
Family Meetings	47 (4.8%)	64 (6.5%)	156 (16.0%)	198 (20.2%)	513 (52.5%)
Singing	140 (14.3%)	189 (19.3%)	225 (23.0%)	178 (18.2%)	246 (25.2%)
Discussion & reading a range of media	11 (1.1%)	33 (3.4%)	109 (11.1%)	143 (14.6%)	682 (69.7%)

materials					
Discussion about school work	36 (3.7%)	53 (5.4%)	78 (8.0%)	243 (24.8%)	568 (58.1%)
Discussion with children over their writing	36 (3.7%)	61 (6.2%)	63 (6.4%)	150 (15.3%)	668 (68.3%)
Writing for any purpose	22 (2.2%)	32 (3.3%)	98 (10.0%)	180 (18.4%)	646 (66.1%)
Watching stories and plays	118 (12.1%)	78 (8.0%)	146 (14.9%)	246 (25.2%)	390 (39.9%)
Performing out a story	16 (1.6%)	38 (3.9%)	128 (13.1%)	153 (15.6%)	643 (65.7%)
Music, CDs, Concerts, etc.	126 (12.9%)	136 (13.9%)	187 (19.1%)	251 (25.7%)	278 (28.4%)

### Discussion

The two categories “Listening & telling stories” and “Singing” have higher rates of “sometimes” using the Chamorro language as these cultural activities have been handed-down over generations. However, it is highly probable “listening & telling stories” use both the Chamorro and English language during participation whereas “singing” could reflect certain songs sung only in the Chamorro language.

All other categories have higher rates of “Never” as participation using the Chamorro language, and surmises the language used is English.

Table 9 reflects questions 13 & 14 and measures the attitude among potential and actual speakers within the Chamorro community.

### Table 9: Part E: Linguistic Data – Language Attitudes

For the following statements check the option that indicates your level of agreement or disagreement.

Purpose	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Chamorro is a beautiful language	829 (84.8%)	120 (12.3%)	24 (2.5%)	4 (0.4%)	1 (0.1%)
I am proud of the Chamorro language	870 (89.0%)	80 (8.2%)	26 (2.7%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)
There are only ideas that cannot be expressed in English, only Chamorro	225 (23.0%)	128 (13.1%)	180 (18.4%)	215 (22.0%)	230 (23.5%)
The Chamorro language is only suitable for social,	258 (26.4%)	112 (11.5%)	146 (14.9%)	256 (26.2%)	206 (21.1%)

cultural, and religious activities					
The Chamorro language can be used to develop higher level thinking skills	256 (26.2%)	145 (14.8%)	138 (14.1%)	318 (32.5%)	121 (12.4%)
Chamorro language needs to be updated to deal with current times	228 (23.3%)	255 (26.1%)	143 (14.6%)	80 (8.2%)	272 (27.8%)
I want to learn the Chamorro language	683 (69.8%)	180 (18.4%)	58 (5.9%)	13 (1.3%)	44 (4.5%)
I already know the Chamorro language	256 (26.2%)	156 (16.0%)	86 (8.8%)	215 (22.0%)	265 (27.1%)
I would like to take Chamorro language classes	835 (85.4%)	0 (0.0%)	64 (6.5%)	23 (2.4%)	56 (5.7%)
Do you feel it is important to preserve the Chamorro language?	794 (81.2%)	170 (17.4%)	11 (1.1%)	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)
Should Chamorro lessons be offered to the San Diego County Chamorros?	725 (74.1%)	180 (18.4%)	70 (7.2%)	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)
Should our elderly teach the Chamorro language and culture?	729 (74.5%)	123 (12.6%)	118 (12.1%)	6 (0.6%)	2 (0.2%)
Should there be more CD's, Music, and books in Chamorro for my age group?	677 (69.2%)	198 (20.2%)	68 (7.0%)	24 (2.5%)	11 (1.1%)
Do you believe the Chamorro language is dying?	748 (76.5%)	139 (14.2%)	64 (6.5%)	20 (2.0%)	7 (0.7%)

#### Discussion

Overall there is an extremely positive attitude about Chamorros by Chamorros in this study.

Chamorros are not only proud of their ancestral lineage, they are extremely proud they have their own native language. Chamorros “Strongly Agree” their native language is dying and needs revitalization through language classes, and taught by our elders.

Questions 15 & 16 are open-ended and responsive. All 978 responses could not be listed on this report; however, the Top three (3) reasons are listed.

**Question 15: List in order of importance three (3) reasons why the Chamorro language is important:**

The Top 3 Responses are: 1. Preserve our Culture. 2. Teach our Children for future generations, and 3.Cultural Identity.

It is duly noted the one most favorite response was: Respect to our Ancestors.

**Question 16: What are your ideas for bringing back the use of the Chamorro language in the community and in the home?**

The Top 3 Responses are: 1. Chamorro language classes for both children and adults. 2. Website Instruction, and 3.Social language activities.

**Discussion**

Both open-ended questions 15 & 16 further display the community’s feedback and their overall positive attitude and ideas in revitalizing the Chamorro language.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Organizational Background**

Chamorro Hands In Education Links Unity, Inc. (CHE'LU, Inc.) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit founded in 2005 under our former name, the San Diego Chamorro Cultural Center. CHE'LU, Inc. is dedicated to educating the Chamorro people and the public at large in the preservation of our language, heritage and culture; advocating to improving the population's health, wellness and well-being; and creating, building and strengthening self-sustainability within the Chamorro community.

In 2007, our team was provided the opportunity to build our organizational capacity to effectively and efficiently serve our Chamorro community. The intense organizational training was funded by The California Endowment as part of their "Culturally Competent Health Systems" initiative to advance the knowledge, attitudes, skills and experience of health providers and health systems to effectively serve our Chamorro community and the public at large.

The acronym CHE'LU is a common word in the native Chamorro language and signifies "brother or sister." Our new organization name emphasizes the words "Education and Unity." With all "Chamorro Hands" involved, it will continue to "Link" their brothers and sisters in unity from and throughout the Mariana Islands to empower and sustain the Chamorro community.

### **Project Results**

The analytical results from the assessment conducted was for the San Diego County Chamorros to learn and know the status of our language - Tungo' i Estao i Fino'-ta. The study verifies what our community elders (manamkos') have been voicing that "our native language and culture is dying".

The loss of our language and culture has been a generational descent that began centuries ago through the colonization from various countries. Just before and after World War II, the United States had mandated Chamorro students to learn and speak only the English language in the school.

This mandating no doubt was the beginning of our generational descent in losing our language and culture as it stands today. Beginning in 1987, it is now mandated on the islands the school's curriculum must include teaching the Chamorro language and the promotion of cultural activities.

Here in San Diego County the project's result verifies that our youths and certain adult age groups do not understand, speak, read or write Chamorro. Between the ages of 40-59 years of age, they understand and speak a little more and can carry on simple conversations. Approximately at 60 years of age and over age group understands and speaks up to 100% fluently, however, their reading and writing ability displays trends of decreasing. The older age group was born and raised on the Mariana Islands and spoke their native language at home and social settings. They were not taught reading

and writing of the Chamorro language in school. They depended and learned whatever reading materials were available to them after school.

### **Recommended Solutions**

1. Continue formal discussions and feedback with the Chamorro community's long-range goals in revitalizing, preserving, protecting, and maintaining the Chamorro language.
2. Develop a team that includes community elders, adults, youths, Chamorro language educators, and CHE'LU, Inc. to develop a comprehensive strategic plan in implementing the community's goals.

## **REFERENCES**

### **The Chamorro People**

<http://ns.gov.gu/people.html>

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