



Northern Marianas
Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2021

Beyond the Reef 🚤 *Gi Hiyong i Manati* 🚤 *Mwiniḷḷōl Woosch*

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



The Council's partnership with the CNMI Public School System's Chamorro and Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies (CCLHS) Program expands the Council's network of language experts and cultural practitioners and is driving the development of new educational products and training activities in support of the Council's efforts to promote and preserve the Chamorro and Carolinian languages and cultures. The Council created the Rope of Tradition stipend program and the Cultural Icons of the CNMI poster series to expose public school students to indigenous cultural practitioners. To sustain the efficacy of the CCLHS, the Council conducted a series of focus group meetings with teachers to discuss their needs, interests, and challenges in the classroom. The data collected at these meetings will be used in the years ahead to develop supplemental learning materials and training activities to support CCLHS teachers, students, and parents.

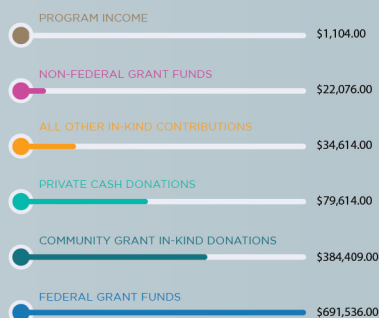
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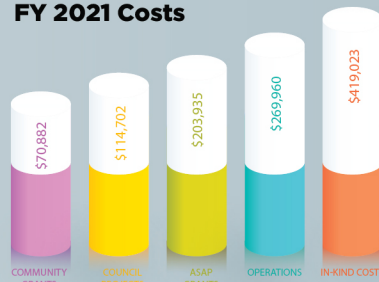
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FY 2021 Revenue



FY 2021 Costs



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2021

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This past year was a significant milestone for our community as we celebrated our 30th anniversary and charted a new five-year strategic plan to promote the humanities through research, publications, dialogue, and programs on a broad variety of topics. These efforts are all designed to examine the texture of our community and how we interact as human beings across time and space, and between languages and cultures. The humanities demand more of our understanding, imagination, and hope for charting our future. As a biracial child, I still remember the struggle I had with my identity and sense of belonging in our community. By reading books and taking the time to critically examine race and ethnicity, I found different perspectives that gave me the courage to embrace all of who I am. Through the humanities, we learn how to think critically, reason, and ask questions. These skills help us understand complex problems, communicate more thoughtfully and intentionally, and adapt to our rapidly changing society. This is what the humanities is all about - bringing people together to examine our identities, to dispassionately understand our differences and, hopefully, to better appreciate the ways in which we are similar. I hope that the work of our Council assures you that you are not alone and that the humanities belongs to us all.

Thank you, si Yu'us ma'ási', and ghilisow for your commitment and support for the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

Tracy M. Guerrero
Tracy M. Guerrero
Chair



ACTIVITIES & OUTCOMES

FY2021 Progress Toward
Achieving our Strategic Goals

G1 Preserve and promote the indigenous languages and cultures of the NMI.

- ▶ Distributed digital and print infographics as part of the **Cultural Icons of the CNMI** program. Featured cultural practitioners including Donald Mendiola, Refaluwasch Warriors, Francis Sablan, Lino Olopoi, Chamorro dance groups, and the Seafaring Traditions Program. Print posters were distributed to Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies instructors for use in the classroom with students.
- ▶ Obtained a National Park Service Battlefield Preservation Planning Grant in the amount of \$91,816 to **expand and interpret the Tinian National Historic Landmark** (Tinian NHL). This project is planned for completion in 2023. It will include a website with interpretive content translated and displayed in the Chamorro and Carolinian languages, as well as interpretive signs throughout the Tinian NHL.
- ▶ Hosted **Chat and Chesa** events on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to assess challenges facing teachers in the Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies (CCLHS) program. The Council also launched the Rope of Tradition Stipend Program in October to bring cultural practitioners into the CCLHS classrooms to deliver presentations and demonstrations.
- ▶ Seventeen students competed in the **17th Annual Valentine N. Sengebau Poetry Competition** representing Hopwood MS, Francisco M. Sablan MS, Dandan MS, Mount Carmel School, Northern Marianas International School, Dr. Rita Hocog-Inos Jr./Sr. HS, Tinian Jr./Sr. HS, and Marianas High School. Junior Division winners were: 1st place Aubrey Tabenas (FMS); 2nd place Daniel Cruz (DMS); 3rd place Hayden Igisomar (HMS). Senior Division winners were: 1st place Jill Mallari (MCS); 2nd place Jermain Yalung and Kaitling Balgoa (Tinian Jr./Sr. HS); 3rd place Erika Pascual (MHS).
- ▶ Promoted culturally-relevant musical practices online via social media [Refaluwasch and Chamorro Children's Songs of Saipan; Rota Students singing 'Isla Luta' in Chamorro; Tâdong Marianas: Storytelling Across the Marianas] and during the **30th Anniversary Celebration**.
- ▶ Recognized Master Navigator Antonio U. Pailug with a **Governor's Humanities Award** for Preservation of Traditional Cultural Practices.
- ▶ Contributed *Hâyi man Chamorro?* interpretive statements to the Biba CHAMORU: Culture and Identity Exhibit featured in the National Museum of Anthropology in Madrid, Spain.
- ▶ **5th Marianas History Conference:** facilitated panel discussions on the Chamorro language lead by members of the Commission on CHAMORU Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People; and produced and featured a short film, **Revitalization of Traditional Sailing and Maritime Culture in the CNMI**.
- ▶ Featured 13 episodes of Chamorro and/or Carolinian cultural heritage and/or language on **Your Humanities Half-Hour** radio show.

G2 Develop and improve educational programs in literacy and language.

- ▶ Developed and implemented an evaluation plan for **Motherread/Fatheread CNMI**.

G3 Increase publications and scholarship in the humanities.

- ▶ 6 NMI resident experts/scholars presented on their projects and areas of expertise at the **5th Marianas History Conference**.
- ▶ Published **Minagâhet – Ellet: Reporting the Truth** in the NMI webinars to disseminate results of a survey on news media use and perceptions, news media literacy, civic engagement, and community values in the Northern Mariana Islands.

G4 Promote the diversity of experiences and perspectives with the NMI.

- ▶ Featured life stories of 8 non-indigenous NMI residents under the theme, Making Marianas Home through the Your Humanities Half-Hour radio shows.
- ▶ Featured 12 **Marianas Stories** episodes via Facebook Live to capture the invention of rocball, the Niño tradition, saving stray animals, living through Tinian history, working as a seamstress for royalty, picking up trash, making Saipan home during the pandemic, farming, overcoming domestic violence, following intuition, and the Erhu musician.
- ▶ Exhibited 8 PRIDE Month Essay Contest winning essays at the NMI Museum of History and Culture during **PRIDE Month 2021**.
- ▶ Co-facilitated the **Veteran's Speaker Series** with the University of Guam's Society of Human Resource Management Student Chapter featuring a panel presentation by current CNMI and Guam residents who served in the U.S. military.
- ▶ Hosted a webinar featuring NMI journalists Thomas Mangloña II and Maria Dizon entitled, *Public Health and the media in a Pandemic*.
- ▶ Co-sponsored the Rota Gilita Festival.
- ▶ Developing a film documentary series of the 2021 Gineptin Ha'anen Taga Festival on Tinian.

G5 Provide capacity-building activities for individuals to acquire the skills and tools to create their own humanities content and programs.

- ▶ Awarded 9 community grants in support of humanities projects that (1) document and preserve Chamorro riddles, (2) promote the traditional Carolinian custom of beading Lighatutu necklaces, (3) document the ancient latte sites and medicinal plants on Alamagan, (4) support NMI youth leadership and Chamorro language and culture immersion programs, (5) document the folklore of Rota, (6) document the experiences of victims of domestic violence, (7) support writing workshops and local authors, (8) introduce students to the study of law and raise community awareness of topical legal issues and, (9) support planning activities for the developing multimedia that explores cultural practices in motherhood through music and the arts.
- ▶ Awarded 6 grants under the American Sâta – Ammalaw Program (ASAP) to help CNMI nonprofit organizations prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus. Humanities projects funded by these grants are expected to (1) produce a digital interpretive and educational resource featuring the Garapan Heritage Trail, (2) create a website and virtual tour of the NMI Museum of History and Culture, (3) launch a summit to connect, inform and support collaboration between individuals and groups who work toward the advancement of the Chamorro and Carolinian languages, (4) broadcast a radio talk show featuring 12 interviews and on-air discussions with Chamorro cultural and language experts on Magic 100.3 FM, (5) document and teach students "Pafiu", a song that describes the star compass and its significance to traditional wayfinding among Pacific Islanders.

PROGRAMS



Cultural Icons of the CNMI – published interviews with CNMI cultural practitioners featuring their experiences and insights into their own cultural practices.

Expanding and Interpreting the Tinian National Historic Landmark (NHL) – a project to amend the boundaries of the current Tinian NHL and develop interpretive signage, web content, and curriculum in multiple languages about the history of the Battle of Tinian during WWII and other important historical sites.

Chat and Chesa

Chat and Chesa – A facilitated conversation on important humanities topics or ideas modeled after “Think and Drink” social gatherings. Chat and Chesa events in 2021 engaged CNMI Public School System’s Chamorro Carolinian Language and Heritage Studies teachers in a discussion regarding their needs, interests, and challenges as language instructors.

Valentine N. Sengebau Poetry Competition – An annual event commemorating the legacy of poet Valentine N. Sengebau. Junior division poets (7th-8th grade students) memorize and recite poems from Microchild. Senior division poets (9th-12th grade students) write and recite original poems that center on themes of culture, identity, or change in the Marianas.



30th Anniversary Celebration – a celebratory event to commemorate the Council’s 30th anniversary and immerse guests in cultural food, performances, orations, music, and a silent auction. The event featured Da Kine and Sugar King Band, a poetry recital, a Carolinian Ngurr chant, and a Kântan Chamorrita. The Most Reverend Bishop Ryan Jimenez and the Honorable Governor Ralph Torres delivered special remarks and recognized the recipients of the 2021 Governor’s Humanities Awards.

2021 Governor’s Humanities Awards – an annual program conducted in conjunction with the Office of the Governor to recognize outstanding contributions to the humanities by individuals and organizations. 2021 awardees: Antonio U. Pailug for Preservation of Traditional Cultural Practices; Dr. Sylvia C. Frain for Research and Publications in the Humanities; Walt F.J. Goodridge for Research and Publications in the Humanities; Preservation of CNMI History; and Outstanding Humanities Teacher; Catherine R. Perry for Preservation of CNMI History; and Denton-Joe O. Pangelinan for Preservation of CNMI History

5th Marianas History Conference – a gathering of scholars and researchers from all over the world to present and discuss the history, cultural heritage, language, political status, demographic change, and experiences of the people of the Mariana Islands. This year’s conference was held virtually in February 2021 with the theme, “Navigating 500 Years of Cross Cultural Contact”. The event featured 644 conference participants from 15 countries, 66 presentations within 22 panels, and keynote presentations by Anthony “Malia” Ramirez and Dr. Theresa Arriola. An e-publication containing conference papers, videos, and audiovisual exhibits can be viewed at www.guampedia.com.



Your Humanities Half-Hour – a weekly, 30-minute radio show that airs every Sunday at 11:30am on Power 99.7 FM featuring interviews with CNMI residents and humanities scholars on a variety of humanities topics. This past year, the show featured 63 guests and recordings are routinely archived on the Council’s YouTube channel for public access.

Minagâhet – Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the NMI – Funded by the Federation of State Humanities Councils by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, project activities completed include the creation of a report, infographic, and a series of webinars to publish and distribute results of a community survey that assesses key indicators of CNMI resident engagement in local news, news media literacy, and local civic and political processes.



Marianas Stories – a Facebook Live interview featuring “extraordinary stories from ordinary people.” These episodes are among the most engaging of the Council’s online programs. The interview with Siñora Deborah Fleming about the history of Tinian had the highest organic engagement reaching 27K+ people, garnering 1K+ likes and reactions, 119 comments, 119 shares, and 4.5K+ link clicks!



PRIDE Month 2021 – The Council participated in a variety of activities to commemorate PRIDE month in the CNMI and support education and dialogue surrounding the LGBTQ+ experience in the CNMI and beyond. These activities included exhibiting the Council’s PRIDE Talks 2020 Writing Contest winners at the NMI Museum and publishing these works in the Marianas Variety. The Council also hosted a free screening of “Sam’s Story” and “State of Pride” at American Memorial Park.



Motherread/Fatherread CNMI – A family literacy program that features courses for adults and story exploring sessions with children. In FY2021, 80 adults completed the 8-hour literacy course and 352 children participated in a story exploring session.

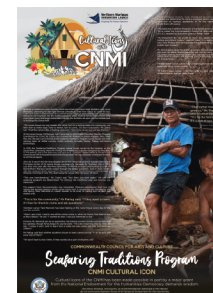
Veterans Speaker Series – The Council collaborated with the University of Guam’s Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) Chapter students to showcase the experiences and transitions of veterans after military service within Micronesia in areas of education, work, leadership and life. Featured panelists: David Okada (Retired Lt. Colonel; US Army), Vince Borja (Retired Staff Sergeant; US Army), Elisabeth Viola Alepuyo (Former Specialist; US Army), Franklin Babauta (Retired Lt. Colonel; US Army), Frederick Dela Cruz (Retired Sergeant First Class; US Army), Dr. Richard Colfax (HM3; US Navy).

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

Community Grant Program – A matching grant program offered to community organizations, ad hoc groups, and individuals to support a wide range of humanities projects consistent with the goals and objectives of the Council. In FY2021, the Council awarded a total of \$70,933 to support 9 humanities projects in the CNMI.

1. Adibina Adibina (\$5,000): for the collection and publishing of Chamorro riddles.
2. Perpetuating Refaluwasch (Carolinian) Beading Custom (\$17,792): for the preservation and exhibition of lighatutur beading tradition and skills.
3. Exploring Latte in the Marianas: Alamagan (\$8,775): for a documentary film showcasing the geography of Alamagan Island its important cultural artifacts and traditional medicinal plants.
4. Inafa’maolek Manhoben Marianas (\$19,142): for a summer retreat providing youth leaders with the opportunity to create a collective vision for the future that celebrates and honors Chamorro cultural heritage and ancestral lineage.
5. Legends of Rota Animations (\$6,900): for a collection of four animations of Chamorro legends (stories) as told by elders on Rota.
6. Domestic Violence and CNMI Culture (\$1,824): for 12-episode podcasts about domestic violence in the CNMI anchored to recorded interviews with domestic violence survivors, experts, and advocates.
7. Marianas Writers Movement – Growing a Writers’ Community (\$5,000): to grow a supportive writers community through an essay contest for high school students; a workshop for prospective novelists during National Novel Writing Month and; a website for writers to share their work.
8. Law in the Community Lecture Series & Pre-Law Program (\$5,000): for four public lectures to promote awareness of pressing legal issues and a pre-law program for participants to examine two foundational legal topics, prepare for the LSAT, tour the District Court and Guma Hustisia, and participate in moot court experience.
9. Nurturing Nāna yan Neni (\$1,500): a planning grant to support a larger project that develops multimedia, music and visual arts to explore cultural values shared through motherhood.

COUNCIL PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: CULTURAL ICONS OF THE CNMI



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