

Our SPDG Story: Guam's Collaborative Journey

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Guam SPDG partners and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Special Education Director and Program Manager take a fun 1920s photo during the NASDSE 2022 State Night event.

On September 19, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), Division of Special Education, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG): Project Hita Para Mo'na (HPM) partners shared their story, Guam's Collaborative Journey, during the concurrent session at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) annual conference in St. Petersburg, Florida. The GDOE SPDG partners included the Project HPM key planning team members from GDOE, Autism Community Together (ACT), University of Guam CEDDERS and School of Education, and NASDSE. The GDOE SPDG partners presented on the similarities between Guam's seafaring history of using different types of canoes throughout the years and Guam's SPDG journey today. In CHamoru, Hita Para Mo'na means "moving forward together," which communicates GDOE's approach to developing and implementing effective professional and family learning for improving functional outcomes and educational results for children with disabilities, with a focus on children on the autism spectrum.

Like Guam's seafarers, developing effective professional and family learning opportunities requires a strong foundation for working together towards a common purpose – improved child outcomes. For GDOE's SPDG, this grounding was through the implementation of NASDSE's Leading by Convening (LbC) authentic engagement of various stakeholders critical to crafting the canoe for Guam's journey today. The presentation highlighted the professional and family learning challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and how the LbC re-engaged all stakeholders to chart GDOE's course for addressing the gaps in professional and family learning through partnerships and authentic engagement. Our SPDG story is about moving from training to learning together and moving from just information dissemination to understanding and contributing to our learning.

Our SPDG Story (cont.)



June De Leon, Interim Director, Guam CEDDERS, expresses her appreciation through a BIG hug with Valerie Williams, Director, OSEP, after the GDOE SPDG presentation at NASDSE on September 19. Director Williams attended the GDOE SPDG Guam's Collaborative Journey presentation, which excited Interim Director De Leon. (Pictured L-R): John Eisenberg, Executive Director, NASDSE, GDOE SPDG partner; Laura Taisipic, Program Coordinator/SPDG Family Engagement Liaison, GDOE; Christine Pilgrim, Associate Division Director, OSEP; Ms. Williams; Ms. De Leon, GDOE SPDG partner; Tom Babauta, Assistant Superintendent/SPDG Project Director, GDOE; Luann Purcell, Ph.D., NASDSE Consultant, GDOE SPDG partner; Cathy Cardenas, Ph.D., Interim Chair, Special Education Department, School of Education, University of Guam, GDOE SPDG partner; Evelyn Claros, President, Autism Community Together, GDOE SPDG partner; and Joanne Cashman, Ed.D., NASDSE Consultant, GDOE SPDG partner.



Tom Babauta, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education, GDOE (standing, front left), introduces Guam's Collaborative Journey presentation at NASDSE, while June De Leon (standing, front middle), Interim Director, Guam CEDDERS, and John Eisenberg (standing, front right), Executive Director, NASDSE, looks on with the other GDOE SPDG partners.

GDOE Provides Professional Learning Session



GDOE Division of Special Education held a professional learning session with administrators from elementary, middle and high school. Standing from L-R: Terese Crisostomo, Program Coordinator, GDOE; Cathy Tydingco, Part C Coordinator, GDOE; Portia Topasna, Preschool Coordinator, GDOE; Tom Babauta, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Special Education, GDOE; Michelle Camacho, Speech and Language Supervisor, GDOE; Tricia Taitague, Program Coordinator, GDOE; and Arnell Medler, Program Coordinator, GDOE.

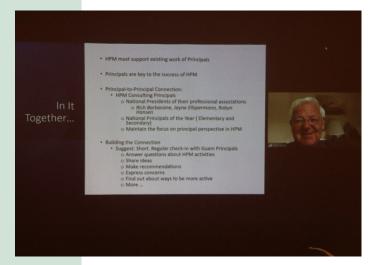
In preparation for the new school year, the Guam Department of Education (GDOE Division of Special Education, in collaboration with Guam CEDDERS, held three professional learning sessions. The first session was held on July 18 at the Westin Resort Guam for school administrators from elementary, middle, and high school. The purpose of this administrator session was to improve the educational outcomes of students with IEPs by building the capacity of school administrators in the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). There were multiple presentations throughout the day starting with Project Hita Para Mo'na and Leading by Convening presented by Joanne Cashman, Ph.D., director of the IDEA Partnership, NASDSE, with virtual support from Robyn Conrad Hansen, Ed.D., Jayne Ellspermann, and Richard Barbacane. This was followed by a presentation by Mary Schillinger, M.S., EDLD, former school administrator, Assistant Superintendent & Deputy Superintendent, and author of The Administrator's Guide to Building and Maintaining a Comprehensive Autism Program and Write-On: A Guide to Compliant Documentation of Special Education Policies and Procedures. She presented on GDOE's new IEP Supplementary Services Request and Paraeducator Support packet and how to use a fading plan to foster independence. Ms. Schillnger also gave the participants an opportunity to review the new packet, and to submit any questions they have

regarding the packet during the working lunch session. The last two presentations of the session were conducted by GDOE personnel, Marie Babauta, Compliance Officer; Jesse Nasis, Esq., Legal Department; and Brian Enriquez, GDOE CRT-TA, regarding the legal questions and implications of IDEA, the IDEA regulations on discipline, and the development of the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).

Two additional professional learning sessions for SPED personnel were held on August 8 and August 9. The August 8 session was for elementary school personnel and was held at the Hilton Guam Resort. The August 9 session was for secondary school personnel and was held at GDOE. The purpose of these sessions was to increase the knowledge and skills of the staff from the Division of Special Education in the implementation of the IDEA to meet the unique needs of eligible children with disabilities with a targeted focus on the use of specific tools and procedures such as the child identification and referral procedures, Review of Existing Data (RED) procedures and tools, and consultation procedures and tools.

Both sessions helped kick off the new school year by building the knowledge and skills of personnel to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities.

GDOE Provides Professional Learning Session (cont.)



Richard Barbacane provided virtual support for Joanne Cashman, Ph.D., during the session.

Mary Schillinger presented via Zoom.



Administrators from elementary, middle and high schools, and Division of Special Education staff participated in the session.

GDOE Scales Up SSIP



The Maria A. Ulloa Elementary School team participated in 'Quick Check' activity.

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) added four more schools to the State Systemic School Improvement Project (SSIP). These schools, referred to as scale-up schools, are D.L. Perez Elementary School, Finegayan Elementary School, Maria A. Ulloa Elementary School, and Malesso Martyrs Memorial School. They now join the initial target schools of Captain H.B. Price Elementary School, M.U. Lujan Elementary School, Juan M. Guerrero Elementary School, and Chief Brodie Memorial Elementary School. Orientation sessions for each school were conducted via the Zoom video-conferencing platform during the month of March. The orientation sessions were facilitated by Guam CEDDERS staff Josephine Cruz, Ed.D., Debra Whitt, and Rachel Duenas, and Guam CEDDERS consultants Nieves Flores, Ed.D., and June Quitugua. These were informative sessions about what the State Systemic School Improvement Project is, what it entails, its history and background and how it aligns with GDOE's strategic priorities.

Other SSIP activities included an aimswebPlus session for all eight SSIP principals held on April 14 at GDOE. This session was facilitated by GDOE Instructional Coaches Debra Shimizu and Franky Indalecio with support from Guam CEDDERS. The session centered on the importance of administering the aimswebPlus assessment with fidelity, and also to increase the knowledge and skills of SSIP principals in using the aimswebPlus Fidelity Checklist to collect observational data on the administration of the assessment. This was the first session where the scale-up schools participated alongside the target schools.

On May 19, a GDOE SSIP work session was held at the Hilton Guam Resort. The purpose of this half-day work session was to re-evaluate and update the SSIP Theory of Action (TOA), Logic Model and the Evaluation Plan. It also provided an overview of SSIP and the SSIP Infrastructure Components. This session was

GDOE Scales Up SSIP (cont.)

attended by school teams composed of the school principal, a teacher representative, and a parent representative from all eight SSIP schools. It was facilitated by Terese Crisostomo from GDOE, Josephine Cruz Ed.D., Debra Whitt, and Rachel Duenas from Guam CEDDERS along with Guam CEDDERS consultants Nieves Flores, Ed.D. and June Quitugua.

Finally, on August 9, a session on reading instructional strategies and continuous improvement was held at the Hilton Guam Resort. Participants included administrators, kindergarten to 3rd grade teachers and resource room teachers from the four new SSIP scale-up schools. The purpose of this session was to increase the percentage of students reading proficiently by 3rd grade by building the capacity of K-3 teachers in the delivery of evidence-based practices for reading instruction and in the continuous improvement process.

The addition of the four SSIP scale-up schools marks a milestone in GDOE's SSIP journey. We are excited to bring more schools aboard as we collaborate to ensure ALL students are reading proficiently by 3rd grade.



Nieves Flores, Ed.D., Guam CEDDERS Consultant, (standing) with the 1st and 2nd Grade teachers from Maria A. Ulloa Elementary School.

GDOE Scales Up SSIP (cont.)



M.U. Lujan Elementary School Principal, Natasha Dela Cruz, (standing) introduces her school team.



A GDOE SSIP work session was held at the Hilton Guam Resort and was attended by school teams comprised of the school principal, a teacher representative, and a parent representative from all eight SSIP schools. Terese Crisostomo, School Program Consultant, GDOE (standing) speaks to the school teams.

GDOE Scales Up SSIP (cont.)



On April 14, an aimswebPlus session was held for all 8 SSIP principals at the Guam Department of Education Central Office, and was facilitated by GDOE Instructional Coaches Debra Shimizu and Franky Indalecio.



On August 9, a session on reading instructional strategies and continuous improvement was held at the Hilton Guam Resort for administrators, Kinder to 3rd grade teachers and resource room teachers from the four new SSIP scale-up schools – D.L. Perez Elementary School, Finegayan Elementary School, Maria A. Ulloa Elementary School, and Malesso Martyrs Memorial School.

GDOE Hosts Math Sessions



Chief Brodie Memorial Elementary School Principal Darlene Castro leads her school in their introductory cheer.

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE), in partnership with Guam CEDDERS, held a professional development session for the 2022-23 school year on Monday, August 8, 2022 facilitated by University of Hawaii Professor, Dr. Barbara Dougherty, and University of Guam (UOG) Dean of School of Education Dr. Alicia Aguon. Dr. Dougherty is an author/co-author of 35 books focused on mathematics instruction, member of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) U.S. Department of Education Practice Guide Development Team, past member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Board of Directors and Board Executive Committee, and member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Task Force – Pandemic Effects of Returning to School. Dean Aguon, a former GDOE math teacher, was a UOG math professor for over 21 years and was a recipient of the 2000 Carnegie Teaching Award as Professor of the Year. The on-site session was held at Westin Resort Guam on August 5, 2022. Participants included administrators, kindergarten through 3rd grade general education teachers, special education teachers, and instructional coaches from the State Systemic Improvement Project (SSIP) schools - Captain H.B. Price Elementary School, M.U. Lujan Elementary School, Juan M. Guerrero Elementary School, and Chief Brodie Elementary School. The purpose of the session was to provide evidence-based strategies and recommendations for teaching mathematics using instructional manipulatives in grades K-3. Facilitators shared information on the standards for mathematical practice as well as effective mathematics teaching practices. Participants were able to engage in activities targeting the use of math manipulatives to ensure there is sufficient concrete learning experiences for students to master math concepts based on research recommendations.

GDOE Hosts Math Sessions (cont.)



June De Leon, Interim Director, Guam CEDDERS, (standing) talks with M.U. Lujan Elementary School teachers Veronica Peredo and Dawn Perez during the table discussions.



Dr. Jackysha Green (standing) talks with student teachers as they learn math instructional strategies.



Price Elementary School Kindergarten teachers practice using Cuisenaire rods to compare units and length.

Project Hita Para Mo'na Holds Full Partnership Meeting



Dr. Joanne Cashman and Sherry Cruz (standing L-R) with Evelyn Claros (not pictured) President, Autism Community Together facilitate the LbC training.

The Guam Department of Education's (GDOE) State Personnel Development Grant or Project Hita Para Mo'na (HPM) held work team sessions with Dr. Joanne Cashman, a consultant from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) from July 16 through July 20. Project HPM is a GDOE grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) designed to build the capacity of professional and family members through an authentic engagement framework called Leading by Convening (LbC). Project HPM has five community partners: GDOE, Autsim Community Together (ACT), Guam CEDDERS, the University of Guam School of Education (SOE) and NASDSE. LbC works to ensure that all voices are heard and valued to improve the outcomes of students.

On July 16, a full partnership meeting was held at the RIGHA Royal Laguna Guam Resort. During the meeting, participants from partner organizations participated in LbC training.

HPM work teams are comprised of representatives from the five partner organizations. Work team sessions were held at the Westin Guam Resort and at the GDOE main office. The purpose of the work team sessions was to communicate the expectations of Core Team members; incorporate LbC principles within the GDOE system of professional learning; increase stakeholder involvement through authentic engagement; and design evaluation measures that support the overall professional and family learning system. The work team sessions focused on the following topics: infographics and dialogue guide development; mapping evidence-based practices for professional and family learning; Implementation Support Practitioners; and student outcome goals. In addition, on July 18, Dr. Cashman also had the opportunity to work with school principals on how LbC supports GDOE's State Strategic Plan. This professional learning session was facilitated by the Division of Special Education.

See Photos on Page 12

Project Hita Para Mo'na (cont.)



Dr. Joanne Cashman (standing) from NASDSE talks to GDOE principals about LbC at a principals session held at Westin Resort Guam.



Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services representatives participate in a work team session at the Westin Resort Guam.

Families Participate in Training Series



Nieves Flores, Ed.D., consultant, Guam CEDDERS, facilitated an activity with the parents that attended professional and family learning session.

The Hawaii Parent Training Information (Hawaii PTI) Center, the Autism Community Together (ACT), the Guam Department of Education (GDOE), the Office of the Governor, and Guam CEDDERS sponsored a series of family learning sessions at the Westin Resort Guam for parents of children receiving special education and related services. There was a total of five sessions facilitated by Nieves Flores, Ed.D., Guam CEDDERS consultant. The purpose of this series was to provide information on the Special Education process to parents of children and youth receiving special education and related services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The first session, held on May 14, provided an overview of both the IEP and Special Education (SPED) process. The second session, held on July 9, focused on the topic of understanding evaluation reports and eligibility documents. Parents learned about the IDEA requirements for conducting evaluations, eligibility and determining educational needs, assessments administered to determine eligibility and educational needs, and parent

rights related to evaluation and eligibility. The third session, which was held on July 23, focused on the topic of understanding a child's IEP. Parents brought a copy of their child's IEP to this session and were given additional information and explanation on the components of the IEP to better understand how to read and interpret the information on the IEP. The fourth session, held on July 30, focused on the topic of Placement/Monitoring Your Child's Progress/Modifications. Parents were given guidance on possible tasks/questions to ask before, during, and after the IEP and/or Placement meetings. The fifth and final session was held on August 27 and was mainly a recap of the first four sessions. More guidance and a summary sheet were provided to the parents regarding procedural safeguards and other parentrelated issues. This series helped prepare parents for the start of the new school year and equipped them with the knowledge to become active participants in their child's IEP meetings.

CNMI Supports Students with Challenging Behaviors

In collaboration with the Guam Department of Education, Division of Special Education (GDOE-SPED), Guam CEDDERS co-facilitated the August 16 full-day professional learning: Supporting Students with Challenging Behaviors on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) with the CNMI Special Education Director and Team. The full-day session included close to 200 Public School System (PSS) administrators, special education teachers, teacher aides, related service providers, health monitors, nurses, bus drivers, and bus conductors. The focus of the session was prioritized through feedback received from previous professional learning activities.

The GDOE-SPED Assistant Superintendent Tom Babauta with his training team, Trisha Taitague, Warren Lampa, and Josielynn San Nicolas, introduced the Safe Crisis Management (SCM) framework and strategies for supporting students with challenging behaviors in various school environments from on the bus to the classroom. Session objectives included:

- Identifying the rationale for SCM
- Understanding the factors which influence an individual's development, growth capacity, and behavior
- Identifying, understanding, and applying the SCM principles, practices, and prevention strategies
- Identifying and understanding common sources, characteristics, and types of behaviors of concern
- Identifying, understanding, and utilizing strategies to deescalate and/or physically intervene

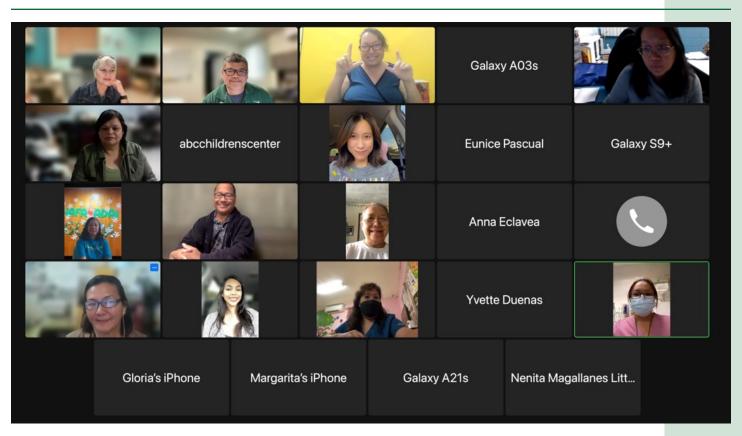
The GDOE-SPED team reviewed the SCM principles and provided examples of their importance. Preventative and de-escalation strategies were emphasized through demonstration of the techniques for implementing the strategies. As a result, each school team reflected on how the SCM strategies can support their team's action steps for improvement this school year. The overall feedback indicated that the full-day session was useful and relevant. The importance of TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) was echoed throughout the day, which was an excellent way to start the school year!



Tom Babauta, Assistant Superintendent, GDOE-SPED, describes how the GDOE created a SCM training team to support schools address students with challenging behaviors.



Guam EHDI Updates Quarterly Activities



Guam Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (Guam EHDI) project continued to provide Outpatient Hearing (OHS) Rescreen Clinics at UOG Dean's Circle, House 19, from June through August to ensure timely delivery of hearing screening services. In July and August, the Guam EHDI project held Learning Community Meetings and invited daycare providers to be part of the Learning Community. The topic of discussion was Cytomegalovirus (CMV), a common virus most frequently found in young children ages 0 through 5. This common virus that infects most adults by age 40 is usually harmless. Those most susceptible to the virus are individuals with compromised immune systems and pregnant women. Pregnant women infected with the virus can pass it to their unborn children. Children born with congenital CMV may develop hearing loss at birth or late-onset hearing loss. For most of the participants who attended the Learning Community Meeting/Training, this was the first time they had heard about CMV. As a result of this meeting/training session, Guam EHDI, in collaboration with the Learning Community attendees, developed a brochure, "Understanding Cytomegalovirus (CMV)." Staff distributed pamphlets to partner agencies, daycare centers, and preschool facilities.

The project participated in the first round of Village Play Time Events from June to August hosted by the Guam Preschool Development Grant Birth - Five (Guam PDG B-5). Families dropped by the EHDI "Baby Jam" station to create musical instruments using common household items and recyclable containers. The children explored and experimented with pots, spoons, pans, and plastic bottles to produce a variety of sounds and patterns. Play activities encourage children to be curious and experiment, which is fundamental to learning.

The project also partnered with Guam PDG B-5 to provide families returning for an Outpatient Hearing Rescreen appointment with a gas coupon to assist families with the rising cost of gas. PDG extended this offer to families of infants needing a Diagnostic Audiological Evaluation (DAE). Parents who viewed a video detailing what to expect and how to prepare for their child's DAE appointment received an additional coupon. An audiologist performs diagnostic audiological evaluations and provides the family with a diagnosis of the child's hearing. Should the child be diagnosed with hearing loss, the audiologist may refer the family to the following support services: Guam Early Intervention System (GEIS), Guam's Positive Parents Together (GPPT), or Guam Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (Guam EHDI). Guam EHDI provides parents with information about hearing loss and will assist the family with a referral to GEIS and GPPT upon the family's request.

GEHDI Participates in Village Play Time



Guam EHDI participated in the Village Play Time (VPT) Events at the Mangilao and Agana Heights Community Centers. VPT engages children and their parents in activities that promote child development through play. Guam EHDI used recyclable products to demonstrate how common objects found around the house such as empty containers and spare kitchen utensils can make inexpensive musical instruments. EHDI staff also demonstrated how to use plastic containers bottles with beans and rice to make sound instruments such as maracas. Tanya Simer, Research Associate, Guam CEDDERS (sitting left) observed parents and children as they played together.

GSAT Demonstrates AT at Conference on Aging



On June 30, the Guam System for Assistive Technology exhibited AT devices during the 46th Annual Governor's Guam Conference on Aging at the Dusit Thani Resort, which was hosted by the Department of Public Health and Social Services. (Pictured above) Chaz Nangauta, CEDDERS Student Office Assistant, talked to visitors about the GSAT program and assistive technology devices displayed.



Leah Abelon, CEDDERS Project Coordinator, talked to visitors about the GSAT program and assistive technology devices displayed.



Jackie Evans, a conference participant, smiled as she tried the Upwalker. The Upwalker is a mobility aid that is designed to provide upright support for users.

GSAT Demonstrates AT at Youth Expo

On August 6, Leah Abelon, Guam CEDDERS Project Coordinator (pictured), demonstrated the OmniReader during the Youth Empowerment Program Expo hosted by the Micronesia Training and Development Institute-Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). The OmniReader features a camera that captures printed text and reads it for individuals with vision impairment. Text can also be magnified and high contrast. Devices that assist with hearing impairment, coordination, and movement were also demonstrated.



iCanConnect Program Provides AT

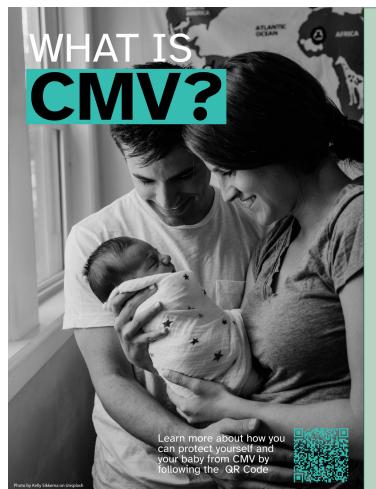


On August 2, Celestia Cepeda received an iPad mini, bone conduction headphones, and an amplification phone through the iCanConnect, National Deaf-Blind Equipment Program (NDBEP), with technical assistance conducted by CEDDERS Project Coordinator Leah Abelon. The iCanConnect program provides equipment to individuals with significant combined vision and hearing loss who meet federal income and disability guidelines.

GSAT Presents AT



On June 29, Guam CEDDERS Project Coordinator Leah Abelon facilitated a presentation and demonstration of assistive technology to students and staff from the Marianas Training and Development Institute – Youth Development Program. Students engaged in feature matching activities. Each category of AT was placed on a table and a group of students took turns identifying the features of the AT device and brainstormed ideas for who would benefit from using the device.





University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, & Service (Guam CEDDERS) Newsletter

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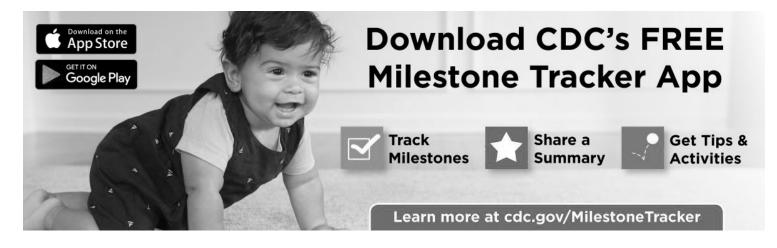
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Alternative formats (e.g. Braille or large print) of *I Tellai* will be made available upon request.

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