

Through the lens of a Yolŋu Aboriginal approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

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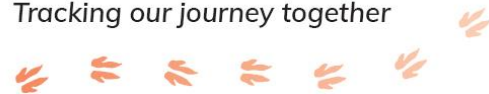


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*Footprints for the future
Tracking our journey together*





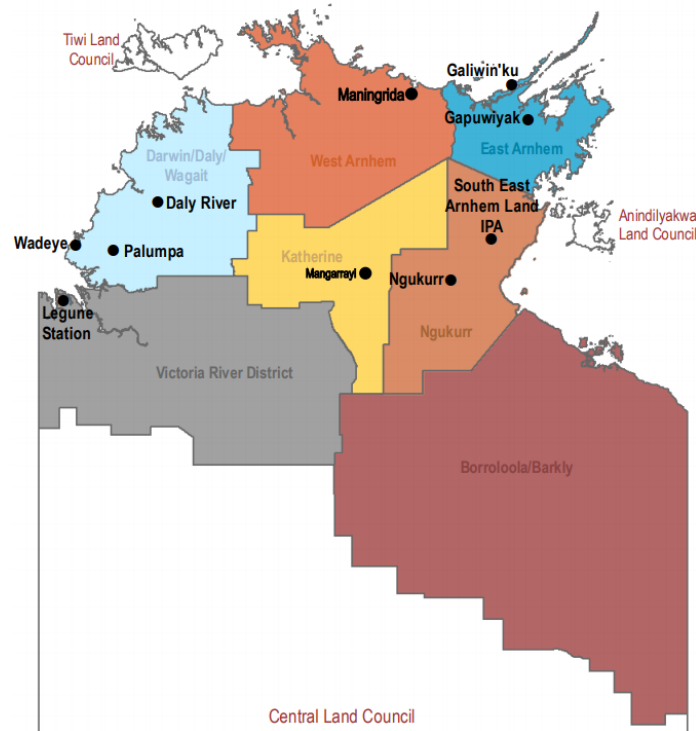
NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

Community Planning and Development Program

Building stronger communities and better lives

Build governance and planning capacity so Aboriginal groups can control their own interests and build healthy and resilient communities for future generations.

Work alongside Aboriginal groups to support them in using income from land use agreements to undertake projects that create lasting community benefit.





NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

Community Planning and Development Monitoring and Evaluation System Project

Purpose

- Provide accountability to Aboriginal people
- Program learning and improvement
- Measure value and impact

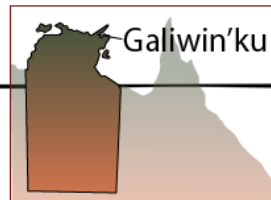
Method

A three year research project trialing three approaches:

1. Enhanced community development process
2. **Participatory monitoring**
3. Checking-up to keep on track



Nyomba Gandaṇu



- My clan is Golpa. I was born in Galiwin'ku.
- I am Traditional Owner for the eastern side of Galiwin'ku, a place called Galawarra
- I work as senior Yolŋu community engagement officer at 'Connecting Beginnings'
- I am also doing a Diploma of Indigenous Research
- I'm talking about Monitoring and Evaluation, Yolŋu way. Working on this NLC Community Planning and Development project.



Nyomba Gandaṇu, Golpa Clan Elder and Galawarra Traditional Owner

Yolŋu Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitoring step-by-step – life of the child
- Evaluation – when they're dancing in the group



Yolŋu lens, and Balanda lens

Balanda (non-Yolŋu) M&E

- Comes with a big machine that drives everyone into one.
- It assesses by its own categories

For Yolŋu

- You did and dig, and knowledge comes up – spirit, water
- Hidden stone is underneath, we are Yolŋu, you can't move or change us



Story of Sniffing

My grandson had been sniffing...

- That child was called vulnerable by police, services
- But we took him out to homelands, eating bush foods, going hunting
- He was there for 3 months
- We saw many changes...
- We know always he is strong in ceremony, family, language



Giving the message of gurrutu

- Even though we are different tribes, we are all connected
- North-East Arnhem people
- We are strong on our own identity – not just Indigenous, or Aboriginal, but Yolŋu!
- This is where the balanda lens can't see



Raypirri Camps

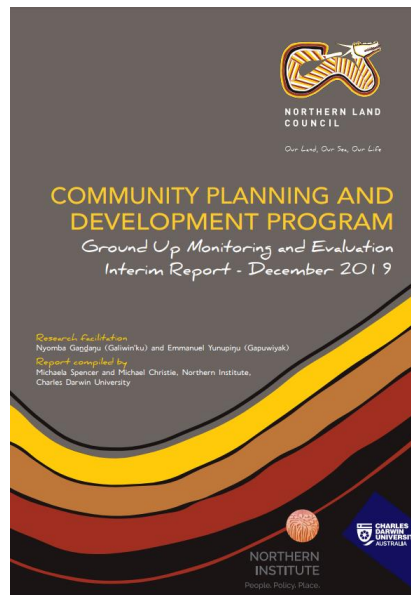
- Learning through M&E about how NLC can work with TOs, running these camps for Yolŋu children
- Not just focusing on the child as vulnerable, but on raising up the life and spirit of Yolŋu children. On particular people's country, away from the township.



Growing healthy community under Yolŋu authority

Ground Up M&E

- Working with two separate M&E practices
- Towards improved community development practices and an increasingly healthy community
- Enacted through partnerships guided by Yolŋu authority



Joanne Durrurrnga reflecting on raypirri camps for young people



Fig. 4 Nyomba Gaggeyu with Joanne Durrurrnga and family

My feedback is that everything is going well. Programs are helping community, making everyone busy. Supporting Indigenous people in programs.

There is a lot of violence happening at this time and we have to reduce. Start at the family. Looking at the whole community, you can see there is certain families where raypirri is coming, in other family there is no raypirri. They are trying hard but going in different, different directions. Not coming together to a strong surface.

My suggestion is to have a BBQ so TO can run raypirri in their own area. Our families do different discipline. Can't bring everyone together, is really hard. Have to go family to family. Then when that is working really well can go into clan level. But first start raypirri with family.

Jonathon Roy reflecting on Murrunga raypirri camps

What I am doing in my small country, my homeland, is small but getting big. Those children get healthier, the country gets healthier and I feel healthier too.

In Galiwin'ku, they are making a mess. I'm trying to give them business into their country, outstation. Do business out, not into town. So can treat things properly, and learn properly. Every outstation is a branch of Ekele Island. Each tribe will be getting business. I'm showing the way for what they will do.

I'm tribe Majarra. The clay we stopped using it. They were not using it - clay, rock, ochre. We are lifting up the rightful dreaming. Reminding the kids of the real Majarra dreaming, leave it where it is. On the island teaching how to hunt and cut it and eat it. The kids come back very healthy.



Fig. 5 Jonathon Roy (middle) and family

Speaking to mainstream M&E

- In recent years, Aboriginal people have increasingly called for a greater focus on monitoring and evaluation to improve the quality of programs and increase Aboriginal people's control over their own development.
- We see the work of arriving at M&E concepts suitable for certain people and places at certain times, as a decolonial practice

Key learnings:

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders operate from fundamentally different worldviews, they don't necessarily value the same outcomes.
- Views on the purpose of M&E, the type of information that constitutes quality evidence and the best methods to generate it will differ.
- You can't simply 'mix' evaluation processes that work well for Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders.

Glossary...

<i>Balanda</i>	<i>European/non-Yolŋu person</i>
<i>Manymak</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Gurruṯu</i>	<i>Kinship</i>
<i>Gapu</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>Gunda</i>	<i>Stone</i>
<i>Yothu</i>	<i>Child/ young person</i>
<i>Gakal</i>	<i>Skill/ ancestral style</i>

For more information...

- Ground Up: <http://groundup.cdu.edu.au/>
- Northern Land Council: <https://www.nlc.org.au/>
- Indigenous Researchers Initiative: <https://iri.cdu.edu.au/>



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