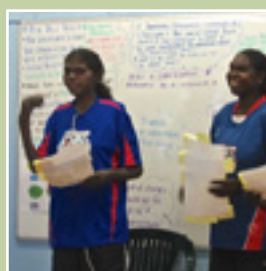


Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project

2013 - 2015
Final Report and Evaluation



Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development

The Northern Territory Government engaged the Northern Institute of Charles Darwin University to provide research and support in governance and leadership for members of the Indigenous communities of Milingimbi, Gapuwiyak, Ntaria Ramingining and Wurrumiyanga.

The project was made possible by funding from the Australian Government through its former Indigenous Capability and Development program.

The goals of this program were to improve understanding of the contemporary functioning and interactions of Aboriginal and Western governance traditions, and grow capacities and understandings in governance and leadership in remote communities.

The Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project uses distinctive approaches to engaging participants collectively and individually in designing and undertaking activities appropriate to the governance and leadership needs of their communities.



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Introduction

The Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance Group within the Northern Institute of Charles Darwin University, has long experience working collaboratively with Indigenous knowledge authorities in the NT on collaborative research and service delivery projects.

In 2014, the Northern Territory Government engaged the group to provide governance and leadership support to the remote NT communities of Milngimbi, Gapuwiyak, Ramingining, Wurrumiyanga and Ntaria.

The Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project uses a distinctive 'Ground Up' approach that engages project participants in designing learning activities appropriate to their governance and leadership needs. The Northern Institute engaged Trevor van Weeren and Juli Cathcart of Merri Creek Productions to work with NI Researchers Dr Anthea Nicholls and Dr Michaela Spencer, in Gapuwiyak, Milngimbi and Ramingining. For the work at Wurrumiyanga on the Tiwi Islands, we also engaged Mike Harrison from the Northern Institute, and Indigenous facilitators Tanyah and Joanne Nasir, who implemented their own 'Rise-Up methods' and NI senior research fellow Mike Harrison. Matthew Campbell from the Tangetyere Council Research Hub was engaged to work with Ntaria.

The project had two stages. Stage 1 focused on building relationships with key stakeholders and developing place based plans for governance and leadership activities. In Stage 2, the support and up-skilling activities negotiated in Stage 1 continued to be implemented.

In this Final Report we present summaries of some key activities, issues and outputs from each community, plus evaluations from project participants, facilitators, and government. More details, stories and resources can be found on the project website www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld

For more information on the GroundUp method, visit www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup

For more information on Merri Creek Productions, visit www.merricreek.com

For more information on RiseUp, visit www.tanyahnasir.com.au/riseup.html

Terms

ALPA	Arnhem Land Progress Association
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
CAB	Community Advisory Board
CDP	Community Development Program
CDU	Charles Darwin University
EARC	East Arnhem Regional Council
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GEC	Government Engagement Officer
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
IGLDP	Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project
IEO	Indigenous Engagement Officer
LA	Local Authority
LCAP	Local Community Awareness Program
LGANT	Local Government Association of the NT
LRG	Local Reference Group
MCP	Merri Creek Productions
MEP	Miwatj Employment and Participation Pty Ltd
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NI	Northern Institute
NLC	Northern Land Council
NTG	Northern Territory Government
ORIC	Office of the Registration of Indigenous Corporations
RJCP	Remote Jobs and Communities Program
VON	Visiting Officer Notification (accommodation)
VOQ	Visiting Officers Quarters
YBE	Yirrkala Business Enterprises

Key Outcomes

- In each site, our IGDLP activities were able to engage an existing vibrant local Indigenous leadership and governance culture. As researchers and facilitators we were actively guided by community members, many took it upon themselves to show us how to support and develop skills and governance in their community.
- While we started out working with individuals, we found ourselves in each community working with groups – both existing and emergent groups – and working to enhance and understand governance and leadership in the specific contexts of these groups.
- The work which we were invited to support often focussed around the growing imperative to develop local organisations which were constituted by local authority, and accountable to the local people. No such formal organisations exist in any of the communities. These organisations were imagined to be potentially the first port of call for government and nongovernment organisations wishing to engage the community.
- There was also a strong sense that while government constituted bodies like Local Authorities etc. have in the past dealt more or less successfully with community infrastructure, they had no way of dealing with social difficulties which seem to be increasing in the communities. Only a local organisation, constituted and accountable locally, engaging traditional leadership and governance, with support from outside agencies would be in a position to undertake this work which is often undermined by external agencies.
- To this end, much of our work entailed exploring the governance rules and structures in formally recognised organisations, bringing together and facilitating discussion and design, developing ICT and English literacy and numeracy associated with this work, and supporting people negotiating with government officers around emerging issues.
- The project unfolded in quite different ways in different communities – due to some extent to our different histories of engagement with those communities, and the different community histories and contemporary life. Our GroundUp and RiseUp methods allowed us to take these differences seriously and to work carefully on problems of the moment as we were invited to participate in community life.
- Each community expressed a desire for continuing government support for local research based work in enriching and extending existing local leadership and governance capacity, rather than predesigned and pre-packaged services delivery as training. In each place this work was seen as different, and always much more than delivery of training in capacity to manage western systems. To this end, we perceive a need for the reinstatement of what used to be called the community adult educator – whose role is to work in education on the ground, in the context of the problems of everyday life, rather than competency-based training.
- There is a clear sense that good governance and leadership in some communities (e.g. the Yolŋu communities) should involve ongoing collaboration between Indigenous and nonIndigenous workers and styles of engagement, while in other communities (e.g. Wurrumiyanga and possibly Ntaria) there is a clearer sense that local people should eventually take over all functions of community governance.
- In each community (except possibly Ntaria) there was a clear sense that governance and leadership were distinct activities, and that traditional conceptualisations were different from those currently at work in government programs (see for example the discussion by Milingimbi elder Lily Roy on page 26).
- The relative valuing of the ‘community’ or ‘settlement’ as a political entity, compared with valuing of clan or land affiliation networks as relevant in governance and leadership, was different in each community. These different ‘imagined communities’ imply different styles of governance and leadership, and potentially quite different structures and practices of local institutions and indigenous organisations. This includes the forms of engagement with government.

Gapuwiyak Report

Gapuwiyak Sketches

Making Yolŋu governance visible: Reviving Yolŋu governance practices

Early conversations with elders/leaders about Yolŋu governance and leadership involved much discussion around clan groups and their places; how they relate to each other, and to the land through *gurrutu* (kinship). Yolŋu leaders often raised lack of recognition and respect for Yolŋu law and *gurrutu* as creating major leadership and governance issues for them. Yolŋu law and *gurrutu* are omnipresent, made visible through governance practices, but remain largely invisible to outsiders. Gawura Wanambi, IGLDP Yolŋu consultant and elder, began working with us to research and map Yolŋu governance and leadership in Gapuwiyak, initially to find a way to make Yolŋu governance more 'visible' to Balanda/government. He commenced by identifying the resident clan groups and kinship categories, how the clans related to each other, to Gapuwiyak and other places in Arnhemland, as well as the local clan authorities and ceremonial leaders. We made a spreadsheet with this information and a map of the area. Then G chose a subset of the categories for the 'map-poster' and the relevant data were used to populate these. The map-poster was designed to show people information about land ownership and authority, naming places, people and kin links. As work progressed G also saw the map-poster as a tool whereby Yolŋu could generate conversations around networks of care and responsibility, and teach the new generations about *gurrutu* and the history of the land. In the subsequent version, all the data was taken off the of this map-poster with only the categories remaining so that different clan leaders could freely add their own information. It was clear that the people-place authorities needed to speak for themselves rather than be spoken for. What started out as a strong claim for others, became something more flexible, emergent, and negotiated for 'ourselves' (more details on website).

Maybe you are the right person at the right time about this

Yolŋu leaders told us stories of how Yolŋu law, governance and leadership is 'run over' by balanda law. They were bemused and frustrated about the lack of recognition of Yolŋu governance and leadership practices and their inability to influence the policy, processes and programs that affect their lives. They saw the Local Authority (LA) as advisory only, dhulŋunju (owned by/belonging to someone else) and legislated under NT law so it is guparaki (on a leash). *'Things have gone backward for Yolŋu [since the super shires and intervention]... We are getting older and on medicine... We need to get younger people involved'...* We sat and listened and talked together over several visits. We got to know each other. Several times people said to us *'you have the right heart for Yolŋu'... the right mind... the right gakal (skills/style) to work with Yolŋu'*. It occurred to us that we were focusing on the 'what' – what we could do through the IGLDP, actions and outcomes. Whereas the Yolŋu leaders were focusing on the 'who'. They were observing 'us', whether they could work with us and if we were worthy of their trust. One day one leader said to Trevor... *'maybe you are the right person at the right time about this...'*

Looking back to find the future

The Project galvanised some Yolŋu leaders in Gapuwiyak to remember their history of working together. They had once had a corporation, and had been talking of 'waking it up' or maybe starting a new one. A meeting of elders was called. They decided to make a new corporation and formed a Steering Committee (SC). *'There's a storm coming... We need to clean up our own backyard and stand up and be ready'*. And so through the IGLDP we embarked on a 12 month journey with the SC, other elders/leaders and later, directors working together on governance and leadership through developing an Aboriginal corporation. The IGLDP Yolŋu consultant (G) felt it was very important for work on the new corporation to begin in the right way. For the first SC workshop he drew on research we had been doing together about Gapuwiyak and put together a PowerPoint of historical photos that prompted participants to share memories and tell stories about the Yolŋu leaders, how they laboured hard and in partnership with balanda missionaries to make Gapuwiyak for their grandchildren (us). Then G shared the

draft Yolŋu leadership and governance map-poster. The SC was inspired to ground the corporation in the vision of the founding Yolŋu leaders, the strengths of Yolŋu culture and proud shared history of Gapuwiyak.

Doing governance and leadership through developing an Aboriginal corporation – the ‘open workshop’

In our next visit, the SC set themselves the task of finishing the rule book and other documentation and submitting this to ORIC for registration. They suggested a core team (G/T/J) keep drafting the rule book in an ‘open workshop’ in the police multi-purpose room (court house) over the following week. SC members and other interested people would freely join whenever possible so they could participate as well as manage their work and other commitments. Two formal evening SC meetings with barbeque’s were programmed to share progress, get feedback and make decisions.

We began the open workshop by looking back – revisiting the previous workshop using photos to remind ourselves. And we displayed the ideas the SC had brainstormed for the vision, preamble, objectives and principles that we had recorded on butchers paper. We started by writing the objectives. We physically cut up and grouped the brainstormed ideas, then drafted an objective for each group, adding these to the wall. We continued in this way, crafting the Rule Book on butchers paper, and displaying our ‘group-negotiated texts’ as wall stories to keep our work open and public, and to provide traces of our learning journey. We negotiated agendas, programs, plans and ways of working that honoured Yolŋu protocols and processes. We respectfully worked both-ways with Yolŋu and balanda knowledges, by going slowly and carefully, using *Yolŋu Matha* (Yolŋu Languages) and English, unpacking the *dhudi dhäwu* (underneath stories) of both Yolŋu and western governance processes, and paying attention to difference.

The right people need to be involved. Several times various Yolŋu authorities were consulted before we could go on together. Careful negotiation with the retelling of histories of people and places was required. Some of these important histories became the preamble to the constitution. Ironically, when the Rule Book was sent to ORIC for review, ORIC came back to us saying that such a detailed preamble was unnecessary. Yet what the facilitators understood through their participation is that this was in fact crucial. The preamble was a tribute to the founding leaders and families of Gapuwiyak and the agreed foundation for the corporation. It was designed, through dialogue with the right people, to be inclusive of all clans and families living in Gapuwiyak today. The same particular care was taken to find the right name for the corporation with permission obtained from an elder/leader who was the son of Goŋ-Däl.

When we finished drafting and editing our ‘group-negotiated texts’, we typed them up to make the final Rule Book, projecting the computer screen so we could all keep contributing. Over the week, 16 people participated – coming in lunch breaks, after work, for half and whole days – to help finalise the objectives, vision, principles, preamble and name; write the rules for voting, members and directors; and produce the Rule Book. All SC members in Gapuwiyak attended the evening meetings.

At the end the workshop the walls were covered in butchers paper, words and pictures – carefully displayed to show our journey. Twenty-three people attended the General Meeting. Sitting in the room, felt like we were sitting inside the Rule Book – a constitution that we had woven around ourselves with words and butchers paper. Some elders we worked with likened it to Yolŋu ways of conducting high level business and ceremony. *‘It’s bit like a ___ ceremony – this work we are doing. We are working it out together... talking hard... negotiating... making sure we understand everything properly, getting it right – with the right people. Polishing it... and then presenting it to the community for their approval’.* Twenty elders/leaders became members at the General Meeting and through a Yolŋu decision-making processes, unanimously endorsed the rule book and chose the first five directors. A month later Goŋ-Däl Aboriginal Corporation was registered. This work is documented in, ‘The Story of the Goŋ-Däl Aboriginal Corporation’ for others to see and to inspire the coming generations.



Newly elected Goŋ-Däl directors finalise the registration process.

These sketches and the full stories are available on the website www.cdu.edu.au/groundup/igld/gapuwiyak

Gapuwiyak Key Outcomes

- A locally owned Goṇ-Ḍäl Aboriginal Corporation with Section 19 lease, emerging partnerships and joint ventures with the Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA), Miwatj Employment and Participation (MEP), East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC), Yirrkala Business Enterprises (YBE) and funding bodies, and the NT government Business Planning Grant and commencement of business planning (more details on website).
- Increased facility, ability and capacity of Yolṇu in Gapuwiyak to practice leadership and governance, influence decision-making, form partnerships directly and work jointly with government and other organisations to employ and train local Yolṇu residents, develop and deliver services and social enterprise in Gapuwiyak. *'We are getting many requests from many agencies and departments [that] 'Yolṇu have to stand up'. That is exactly what Goṇ-Ḍäl is about'.* (Goṇ-Ḍäl Director)
- Increased facility for government agencies and nongovernment organisations (NGOs) to form partnerships, joint ventures in service delivery, engage strategically and accountably, and work together with Yolṇu leaders and community members through the locally owned Goṇ-Ḍäl Aboriginal Corporation
- Workshops, mentoring, coaching and resources that supported Yolṇu and balanda (nonYolṇu/ westerner) participants to unpack and negotiate Yolṇu and western concepts of governance and leadership in the specific and meaningful context of developing an Aboriginal Corporation in Gapuwiyak
- The Government Engagement Coordinator championed our work and became a learner and participant in the Project because she saw and valued the results of GroundUp method and work
- Professional learning of a local Yolṇu leader as a consultant, co-researcher and co-facilitator who developed networks, relationships and understanding required to undertake research and engagement e.g. designing and facilitating workshops, assisting liaison, participating in conference calls, and writing applications, reports, formal letters etc. This included a successful submission for a 'Computers for Communities' laptop, learning how to use it, setting up and using email, using the Internet, making agendas and minutes, writing letters, developing spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations, file management etc.
- Paying attention to developing project resources which would make sense to both Yolṇu and Balanda audiences turned out to be a significant exercise in 'both-ways' governance and leadership at the community level
- Ongoing development of a database and poster maps of Yolṇu governance and leadership in Gapuwiyak and Homelands



Indigenous HIP HOP projects at Gapuwiyak

Gapuwiyak Significant Issues

- Many Yolŋu leaders are working continuously ‘behind-the balanda governance scenes’ – doing governance, interfacing with government and making sure things are running as smoothly as possible in their towns. However, they feel this work is poorly understood and not properly recognised, understood or valued by government
- Yolŋu leaders and elders in Gapuwiyak feel Yolŋu are living under other people’s rules and expressed a strong desire to ‘get out from underneath government and to stand on their own feet’
- In Gapuwiyak, Yolŋu leaders work in good faith with balanda constituted governance arrangements such as Local Authorities (LAs), Mala Leaders Group, Community Action Boards (CABs), Local Reference Groups (LRGs), Housing Reference Groups (HRGs), etc. Their passion and desire however, is to be self-determining and to find ways for Yolŋu law and leadership to be properly recognised and have real decision-making power in all areas of governance in their communities.
- There is a big need for ongoing support to develop, grow and mentor Goŋ-Däl Directors and potential staff: capacity ≠ ability. Increasing the facility for governance and leadership through the establishment of Goŋ-Däl, immediately led to many new opportunities that are rushing towards Goŋ-Däl. Although the Goŋ-Däl Directors have the capacity (desire, will, authority, credibility, networks, experience and skills) to develop and run a corporation, they do not (yet) have this ability. There is a role for a facilitator/educator here, as well as a nonIndigenous manager. *‘We want to show the government that we are serious about this, we want to stand up and be independent but we are not ready for that’.* (Goŋ-Däl Director).
- When we discussed Local Authorities people said they are *dhulŋunju* – owned by/belong to someone else, have jurisdiction under local government and are *gupa raki* (neck rope, government leash, strings attached), are mainly advisory, and are constituted with no processes or agreements that recognise Yolŋu law and systems of leadership, governance and decision-making
- For government it is critical to work with key Yolŋu people with authority in the Yolŋu world, good networks, connections and communication skills, and integrity and credibility. The Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO) and a Regional Councilor both remark how it can be very hard to manage ‘two-hats’ and balance their responsibilities in both the Yolŋu and balanda worlds. This is especially the case if they are seen as working for their employer first and their community second. People in these roles should be employed by local Aboriginal Corporations to work with government so they are working firstly for Yolŋu and their communities.
- Meetings are rarely enough to communicate important issues or to make decisions unless all the appropriate leaders are present. We found an important aspect of our work was to provide transport for people to attend meetings if they do not have this and to engage in a combination of visits to different leaders in their camps, meetings and even workshops until the situation is properly understood and resolved.
- Throughout the Project there were significant problems, changes, and absences of nonIndigenous managers in key agencies which directly impacted on our ability to build relationships and work with their governance groups including the School Council, Mala Leaders and Local Authority and the Art Centre Board
- Most towns have some form of ‘stakeholder meetings’, which are important for coordination of operations at a community level but create a level of quasi governance around implementation of policy, service delivery and operational issues, especially when these don’t include Yolŋu leaders and managers
- The Australian Government Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) is creating bigger bureaucratic demands and requiring Indigenous groups to incorporate before they will fund, partner, or do business of any significance with them. On the other hand, there is little or no support for these new and emerging Aboriginal corporations to become operational.

Gapuwiyak Summary of Activities

The research and facilitation of the IGLDP in Gapuwiyak was conducted by the GroundUp team – a collaboration of Northern Institute (CDU) with two facilitators from Merri Creek Productions (MCP) who visited the community and a local Yolŋu consultant from Gapuwiyak.

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren (MCP) and Juli Cathcart (MCP)

Local Yolŋu Consultant: Gawura Wanambi

• Visits to Gapuwiyak	13
• Days facilitators did IGLDP field work in Gapuwiyak	155
• Meetings with Yolŋu leaders (30 mins – 3 hours, 1 or more people)	71+
• Yolŋu adults, leaders and elders engaged with through IGLDP	50+
• Phone calls with Yolŋu leaders	172+
• Meetings with stakeholder managers and organisations	53+
• Balanda managers of stakeholder organisations engaged with`	43+
• Phone calls to stakeholders (NLC, ORIC, MEP, ALPA, NTG etc.)	74+
• Workshops	5
• Workshop days	17
• Community meetings attended (1 IGLDP mtg, 1 MEP mtg, Goŋ-Ḍäl AGM)	3
• Field trips for Yolŋu leaders	1
• Personal governance matters	8+

Gapuwiyak Future Directions

1. Establishing and growing Goŋ-Ḍäl Aboriginal Corporation and developing strategic partnerships

- Goŋ-Ḍäl directors have commenced writing a business plan for their first business – venture, Gapuwiyak Lodge accommodation with grant funding from the NT Department of Business with plans to commence operation early in 2016
- For ALPA to have the Gapuwiyak RJCP/CDP caseload in partnership with Goŋ-Ḍäl so they can partner them as a ‘big brother’
- Continued mentoring and coaching in 2015 and 2016 to continue learning how to grow and administer their newly registered Aboriginal corporation e.g. ORIC compliance and reporting, partnerships and joint ventures, contracts and liability, grant applications and management
- Funding to employ a part-time Balanda manager/facilitator/educator/mentor and a Yolŋu manager/mentor/ facilitator/educator
- Partnerships and joint ventures with the government and NGOs in program and service delivery, and with agencies, offices and organisations that can support and champion them

2. Visibility and recognition of Yolŋu Law, Governance and Leadership

- Continued research and work with leaders and potential users to complete the database, documentation and mapping of Yolŋu leadership and governance practices in Gapuwiyak and Homelands and to turn this into useful resources for local people and outsiders.

Gapuwiyak Community Evaluations

'When I first met you and heard the story about the project I remember a question from you about what I thought about Yolŋu Leadership and Governance, I thought, good, this is something that hasn't been here before. Things like this have been missed out. I thought that you were right people to work with on this. I am a middle aged leader, I see governance practices fading starting to fade away. When I heard that this was coming from CDU, the Northern Institute, I thought this was the right time.'

'The project is gunga'yunamirr (helpful) dharanjanamirr (recognisable - relevant) mayali'mirr (meaningful) and liya-dhukarrmirr (providing insights for the future), and we have more to learn.'

'It's been a real thrill to open my head and eyes onto the skill of understanding the business (of Governance and Leadership). This is something that has been left out for many years, nobody has come to offer how to do this. How do you start a Corporation from nothing? We started to grow this Corporation, I really appreciate it, the work you have done.'

'GroundUp, grass roots is a manymak dhukarr, a good road. Especially when you work with cultural people. You had all the local people here with one mind pushing, to make it happen. As soon as we were involved we could take all other hats off and now its here.'

'Now we have it all under one umbrella, there are now other opportunities.'

'Get this story from us and send it to your steering committee like Peter Gamlin, they can see and find more support for us.'

'GDAC (the new local corporation) is about our image, our voice. If you look at it in the long range, GDAC want to work directly with Government, not to fight them but more like, here we are, the Gapuwiyak Community is ready, we want to work with you. In the long run GDAC will be the Local Authority. So we have one body, one image, one sound that represents the Yolŋu of Gapuwiyak.'

'Road map? I want to see GDAC work with the Government. The more we work together, the more we are breaking the barriers, this will produce more understanding about the western world of business and how it runs. I don't want to see GDAC fall down, we need to work side by side, it's the only way we can recognize each other, it's the only way we can feel that real gurrutu (kinship), if we are a distance apart, a long way, the government won't get that chance of hearing.'

'We want to show the Government that we are serious about this. We need to work closely. We do want to stand up and be independent but we are not ready for that yet, no.'

'GDAC is symbolising the leadership of those ancestors. It's like the lirrwi, the ashes that are left after a fire, we can feel it there we just need to get some more wood to start the fire again.'

'If we put this foundation it's going to be easy for the next generation to come. The fathers of the current elders came here and worked very hard, now their children are playing the role model and are now also working hard.'

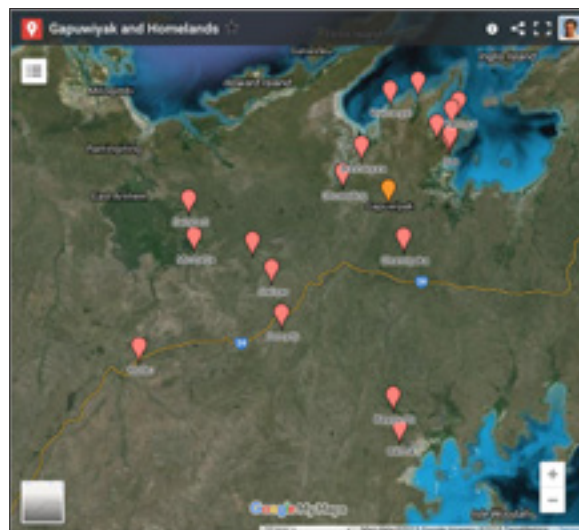
'It's been good to look at both sides of the story Yolŋu and Balanda. Its good for us to get an understanding of these two systems, to find a path to get the understanding of both sides so they are dharanjanamirr (recognising each other). But my first thinking was that our system is not working properly, we haven't been practising it because of many reasons. We need to find a solution to find a way for the two systems to be close. I need to clean up my own backyard, clean up the Yolŋu system because it's not working properly.'

Gapuwiyak Resources

Mapping Governance

We made a variety of resources that were used to help in conversations about the arrangements and configurations of governance and leadership in Gapuwiyak. Most resources were made together with Yolŋu leaders or came out of our collective work.

Information collection forms and spreadsheets



Gapuwiyak and Homelands Google map



A version of the final map resource.



The Story of the Goŋ-Dāl Aboriginal Corporation ... a summary

This is a summary of the story about how we worked together to create the Goŋ-Dāl Aboriginal Corporation.

Yolŋu Leaders: Gawura Wanambi, Yangipuy Wanambi, Davis Muwara, Wathe Wunungmura, Mickey Wunungmura, Peter Murkitja Guyula, Burumbir Wunungmura, Dhukaniny Wunungmura, Margie Lewis, Harry Wunungmura, Wangarkka Ganambarr

Facilitators: Juli Cathcart and Trevor van Weeren

Supported by the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project 2014



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Government



Step 4: Making the Rule Book

We started the workshop by reviewing our progress and the steps to for establishing a corporation. We decided we were up to Step 4: Making the Rule Book for the Corporation.



As well as developing the Rule Book, we wanted to look back to the very beginning of Gapuwyiak and share some of the stories about how and why Gapuwyiak was established.

We looked at videos that told the story of what people thought was important for their organisations, and at some of the lessons they had learned. This helped us to start thinking about establishing the Rule Book for a Gapuwyiak Corporation.

For the rest of the day we worked through the foundation and purposes for the Corporation.

We brainstormed Objectives, a Vision, a Preamble and Principles, for the new Corporation's Rule Book.

As we came across key words like transparency and accountability, we wrote their meanings onto a wall glossary.



4

Baman'puy Dhāwu Gapuwyiakpuy

Gawura made a PowerPoint story about the history of Gapuwyiak based on a story written by Geoff Davey and we spent a long time talking about the how special the beginnings of Gapuwyiak were, and the vision and hard work of the founding people.

We had also been working with Gawura on ways of making Yolŋu Governance more visible. We shared this with the group on the second day.

At the end of the workshop we discussed our next steps.



Making a Corporation for Gapuwyiak

Step 1 Tilling and clearing the ground – Rewal'yun. Some people talking about a corporation.

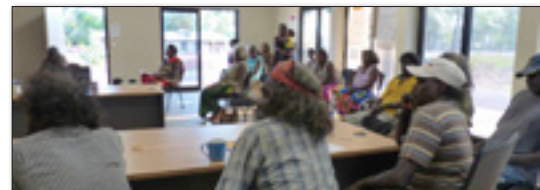
Step 2 Planting the Seed – Meeting and making a decision to start a new corporation.

Step 3 Finding the farmers who will look after and grow the seed. – Forming the Steering Committee

Step 4 Growing and shaping the seed into a young plant – making the Rule book: Vision, Preamble, Principles, Objectives, Name, Members, Directors, Structure...



5



By the end of this very successful workshop we had carefully worked through all the steps required to prepare and complete the Rule Book. The newly appointed Directors held an informal meeting the day after the General Meeting to collate all the documents into the final submission for registration that was then forwarded to ORIC

They also completed an Expression of Interest section 19 application to send to the NLC and reflected on the workshop.

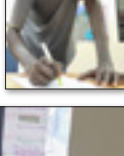
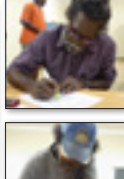
Almost a month later the directors received confirmation from ORIC that the application for registration for the Goŋ-Dāl Aboriginal Corporation was successful.

8

Pages from the Story of the development of the Goŋ-Dāl Aboriginal Corporation booklet



Members and Directors signing documents for the Gorj-Däl Aboriginal Corporation



9

Workshop 3: 30 September - 4 October 2014

On 25 September Juli and Trevor traveled to Gapuwyak to spend a week working with Gorj Däl Directors to take the next steps for the Corporation. Because people are busy, and some were heading to ceremony, we decided to have a workshop session on Friday night (26 September 2014) to brainstorm ideas and plan for the following week.

Making a list of things to do

We started by developing a list of things we want to look at and things we wanted to achieve in the next week.

- Election of two directors and appointment of an advisor to Board
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) application
- Appointment of Office Bearers
- Discuss Corporation Members
- Apply for an Australian Business Number
- Look at Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status and registration as a charity
- Start a Bank Account
- Make a Plan for the week
- Share the ALPA story
- Develop a Strategy plan & Business plan
- Follow up on the Expression of Interest (EOI) for Lot 172 with Northern Land Council (NLC)

- Keep an eye on Aboriginal Benefits Account grant opportunity
- Decide on a Logo
- Develop a one page Prospectus to share the story of Gorj Däl
- Keep an eye on Philanthropic opportunities

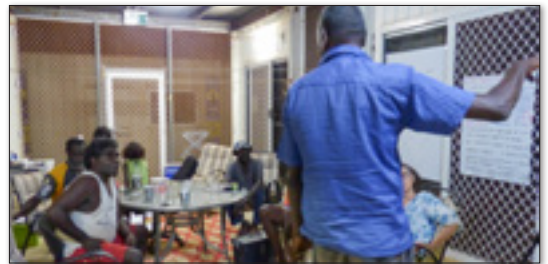
Brainstorm

We decided on a priority for the Agenda list. Everyone agreed we should start with sharing the ALPA story. Juli, Trevor and Yangipuy talked about what they had found out from ALPA during a tele conference and Micky (ALPA Board member) shared what he knew.

Juli started drawing a brainstorm with Gorj Däl in the middle and opportunities around the outside. The drawing helped us see how Gorj Däl, ALPA and other possible partners could work together. As people thought of other ideas,

Juli added these to the brainstorm. After working for an hour we had a good picture of some of the possibilities for Gorj Däl.

We made another priority list of jobs to tackle in the next week.



10

The Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) application

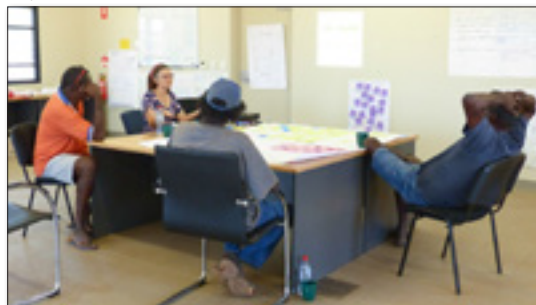
The IAS application was the main focus for this workshop. The Australian Government has made some big changes to Indigenous affairs and we have only this visit to prepare an application. Juli introduced the IAS and explained how it worked and wrote down the 5 main Program Areas under which projects would be funded.



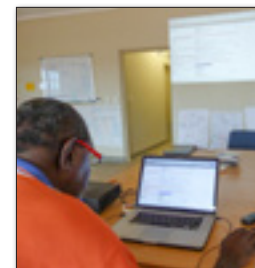
It was very hard work trying to understand the specialised language of Government.

Juli developed a planning template to make the process simpler to understand.

We did some brainstorming for three programs then mapped our results onto the template using sticky notes.

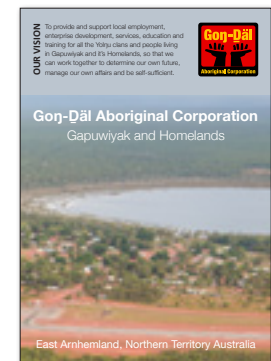


12



We chose to go with two of the programs and Juli took the completed templates and typed them into the application form.

In the meantime we applied for an Australian Business Number and opened a Business account for the Corporation at the local branch of the Territory Credit Union. We also finalised the logo and created a prospectus for the corporation.



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Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation
Gapuwiyak and Homelands
East Arnhemland, Northern Territory Australia

Gapuwiyak is located on the shore of Lake Evella in east Arnhemland, about 500 km east of Darwin. Around 1000 people and 19 different clan groups live in Gapuwiyak. Yolngu law, leadership and governance systems and languages are still strong and active.

We have a proud heritage of great leaders and a history of working together but over the past 20 years our power to make decisions for our own people and communities has been seriously eroded. Unemployment of local Yolngu people is high. Many jobs are taken by non-Indigenous people and Fly-In, Fly-Out service providers and contractors, and there are few properly supported pathways into employment.

We have established the Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation (GDAC) to address these issues. We want GDAC to open the minds of Governments, Corporations and NGOs so that we can find ways to work together, both ways, for the long term.

We need reliable, community-based, ground-up support and mentoring from organisations and people we know and trust. People who have the networks, experiences, knowledge and skills in intercultural communication, as well as in corporate governance and social and economic enterprise development who know us and can work from their hearts with Yolngu people.

Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation seeks a future based on strong partnerships between Yolngu and outsiders that value, respect and strengthen Yolngu culture while enabling outsiders to participate fully in the cultural, social and economic life of Arnhemland, the NT and Australia.

Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation
Lot 171 Waglick Street
GAPUWIYAK NT 0580
gongdalcory@gmail.com

The corporation aims to provide and support, and to implement and carry out programs to bring about, improvements and enhancements to the health, education, welfare, employment, housing, economic independence, social cohesion, self-sufficiency and overall personal and community development of the disadvantaged and underprivileged Yolngu clans and peoples living in Gapuwiyak and its Homelands whilst recognising, respecting, preserving and incorporating the history and culture of those peoples and Yolngu law to achieve this Vision.

The Objectives are to:

- To foster, encourage, establish, develop, implement, assist and support initiatives, programs and activities to provide and improve the health, wellbeing and welfare of Yolngu Peoples in need;
- To foster, encourage, establish, develop, implement, assist and support initiatives, programs and activities to improve education, employment, work, vocations, business opportunities, and development of Yolngu Peoples in need;
- To foster, encourage, establish, develop, implement, assist and support commercially and culturally sustainable enterprises for Yolngu Peoples in need, and to promote community development, cohesion and wellbeing;
- To maintain and develop cultural, economic and social capacity through providing and supporting quality programs and services to Yolngu Peoples in need, including pathways from school to employment, education, training, careers, occupations and businesses;
- To establish and maintain suitable and permissible relationships and partnerships solely to assist in achieving the above

body for accountable carrying out location.

Pages from the Gon-Dal Capability Statement (prospectus)



Gon-Dal Aboriginal Corporation
Lot 171 Waglick Street
GAPUWIYAK NT 0580

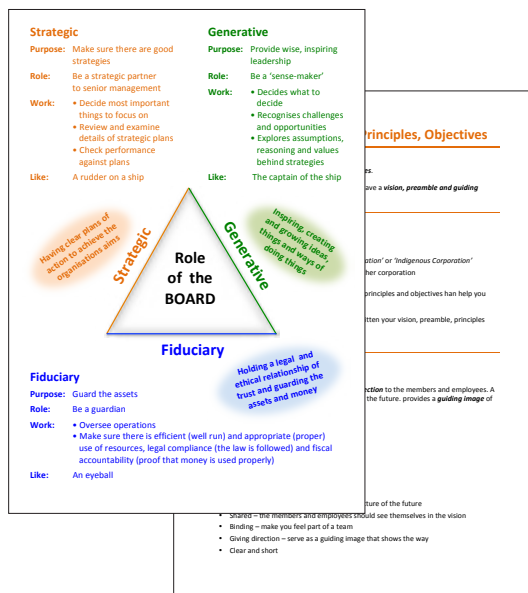
Report on site visits to Ramingining and Milingimbi RUCP

During a workshop to develop an Indigenous Advancement Strategy application in early October the Directors of Gon-Dal discussed options relating to becoming involved with RUCP delivery in Gapuwiyak. We contacted Milingimbi Employment and Participation (MEP) the current providers and also spoke with Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) who are delivering the program at Ramingining and Milingimbi. The directors were very supportive of the idea of seeing if it was possible to partner with ALPA to deliver RUCP at Gapuwiyak. Soon after the workshop, senior ALPA management approached Gon-Dal with an offer to fly them to Ramingining and Milingimbi to inspect their operation there and talk strategies.

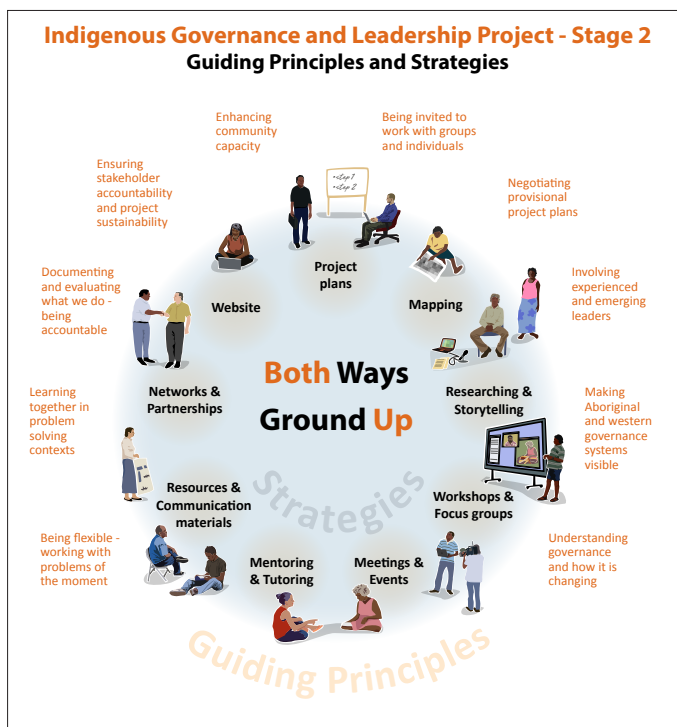
On the Wednesday the 21st October after some transport logistics were sorted out Gwuna, Yagguay, Maklay and Wuthaninyi travelled with Alistair King, Chris Hayward, Henry Marper and Liam Flanagan to both locations.

In Ramingining the group looked at the various projects. Mr King explained how ALPA was working in Ramingining through RUCP and Ombulu Regional Services.

Report on the field trip of Gon-Dal Directors to ALPA operations in Ramingining and Milingimbi



Resources developed by facilitators for use in workshops or with governance groups. These kinds of resources were also used as a basis for a group activities rather than given out to participants.



Resource we used to help explain GroundUp Method

These resources are available on the website www.cdu.edu.au/groundup/igld/gapuwiyak

Milingimbi Report

Milingimbi Sketches

Establishing Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation

After quite a few meetings with individuals and groups of women, they decided that we would work together developing skills in governance and leadership through exploring the idea of developing a women's Corporation at Milingimbi. As a process the creation of this new organisation had its ups and downs, but by the end of the project the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation was registered and had submitted two applications for project funding.

In developing the objectives of the corporation the steering group focused on connecting women of all ages, mothers and children, child-rearing and looking after family. The women were clear that in the first instance this corporation would be a women's project, rather than a clan-based one. Leadership and governance practices of women are significantly different to those of men, where the women have a different focus, and roles. The particular vision that the women had for this corporation is contained in the concept '*gurrkurr manapanmirr*' (used as the basis for their Building Safer Communities for Women funding application) – which translated, means coming together through the links of connectedness, mending the threads that connect clans and people.



Women's steering group meeting

In Milingimbi, there are already a number of women's groups and programs which have been constituted by various organisations. Noticing this, and having been involved in many, the Nyälka directors were clear that they wanted more involvement over what happens at Milingimbi, and that they wanted to create a grassroots Yolŋu organization that provides continuity and community-based/responsive programs and service delivery.

The Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation is envisaged as being a critical component of the Milingimbi governance and leadership landscape because it is a legal body and is owned and created by the women and has greater legitimacy in both worlds and has inclusive membership independent of departments. The word *nyälka* can be translated as 'traditional dilly bag'. It symbolises the creative and productive work of women, a basket which can collect and hold together many different things, as well as other specifically women's meanings.

Wäŋa way'yun

Towards the end of the Project in Milingimbi, the IGLDP Yolŋu consultant (with whom we have worked for many years) one day decided that a number of issues such as the role of police, the situation of homelands, Yolŋu participation in environment, health and education, had coalesced to the point of demanding community-wide attention. The way that he dealt with this was to call a community meeting. The term that he used to describe the beginning of the process was *wäŋa way'yun*, literally the land crying out calling the people to attention. This land-calling was enabled by a community loud-speaker. It



Traditional owner, Lily Roy addresses the community meeting

seemed that the many small items of daily concern had developed such critical mass that the place as much as its people was demanding attention.

The result was a great deal of community discussion and a large community meeting which was recorded by an IGLDP facilitator. This was used to develop a petition to government that was signed by many residents. The petition, which raised a good many issues of concern, seemed to cause some flurry in Darwin including a quick response from Police and successful community engagement visit, a promised visit from the Chief Minister and a letter from the Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs. In his response, the Federal Minister addressed each issue separately with a referral to this or that department or individual to deal with the concern, which had the effect of fragmenting, dispersing and ultimately diluting, the collective concern of the people.

The invoking of *wāṇa way'yun* as the legitimate way to address myriad, serious, unresolved community issues and concerns by a Yolŋu leader was not something that we saw as part of our IGLDP work, but it clearly was an effect of it. We were specifically asked to support the making of the petition (translating what people had said into English and putting it into a letter) and helping people learn about petitions and how these are utilised as a democratic governance technology. It also helped consolidate directions for further IGLDP work.

Yolŋu Nations Assembly

On three occasions, IGLDP facilitators worked with an emergent regional Yolŋu governance group, the Yolŋu Nations Assembly (YNA). The three main IGLDP Yolŋu consultants were in the YNA Executive and they asked us to be involved as part of our IGLDP work. We attended two executive meetings in Ramingining and one in Milingimbi. The YNA executive includes representatives from across the Yolŋu lands. The YNA have traditional designs and a structure that represents at least eight clan networks. As an Yolŋu body, its design is emerging through what can be viewed as traditional ceremonial protocols.

The three meetings IGLDP facilitators were involved in had various agendas. All the meetings had speeches by various Yolŋu leaders that covered the many issues facing Yolŋu, such as no



The Yolŋu Nations Assembly Constitution workshop at Milingimbi

jobs, wrong marriage, training for trainings sake, no recognition for Yolŋu law, etc. These speeches stimulated broader discussion that often turned into a specific action. For example during the meeting at Ramingining in 2013, 99 year leases were a pressing topic. The group discussed this at length and decided to petition the government about.

Our role was support and capacity building before and after the meetings, including helping develop business agendas, scope financial matters, and reporting, for example to the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church. We also ran a workshop helping the executive understand and finalise bits of the Rule Book as they developed their constitution.

YNA now has an ORIC approved constitution that sets out the objectives, the first being an insistence that secret-sacred law is recognized by the State, a demand for a treaty, and a desire for compatibility with Australian law. YNA has also developed protocols for its operation as a governance body representing the interests of Yolŋu law and society as they engage with the outside groups. Their meetings have attracted more Yolŋu and more interest each time. Many Yolŋu have asked us what the YNA means or what it is about. It is a long road that needs to be travelled for Yolŋu to all be one mind regarding the YNA. We came to see the YNA as a group of senior Yolŋu working with a few trusted Balanda, to find a way to do something about a governance impasse, in an institution developed by Yolŋu for Yolŋu according to Yolŋu protocols.

Milingimbi Key Outcomes

- The development, establishment and incorporation of Nyäḷka Women's Aboriginal Corporation and Directors and Members with a clear vision, increased networks, knowledge and skills for developing an Aboriginal Corporation
- Increased facility, capability and capacity of Yolŋu women in Milingimbi to connect and practice leadership and governance, influence decision-making, form partnerships directly and work jointly with government and other organisations to employ and train local Yolŋu, develop and deliver services and social enterprises
- Increased facility for government agencies and NGO's to form partnerships, joint ventures in service delivery, engage strategically and accountably, and work together with Yolŋu leaders and community members through the locally owned Nyäḷka Women's Aboriginal Corporation
- Workshops, mentoring, coaching and resources that supported Yolŋu and balanda participants to unpack and negotiate Yolŋu and Western concepts of governance and leadership in the specific and meaningful context of developing an Aboriginal Corporation in Milingimbi
- Paying Yolŋu authorities as consultants to the Project demonstrated that we and the Project valued, recognised and respected their authority, knowledge and time, and enabled us to build the relationships required for us to keep working well together
- Increased capacity of Yolŋu consultants – methods, networks, relationships and intercultural expertise required to undertake and facilitate research and engagement
- Helped catalyse discussions around governance and leadership in the community, offering opportunities for Yolŋu leaders to encourage each other and share current issues and concerns to relevant audiences through written texts and other means. For example, a community *wäŋa-way'yun* (country-callout) public meeting developed a petition documenting issues, concerns and solutions about governance and leadership and sent it to Australian and Territory Government representatives.
- Ongoing development of texts around Yolŋu Governance and Leadership practices, including senior traditional landowner working to clarify Yolŋu concepts of governance and leadership (see p 26).



Gattjirrk festival dancing

Milingimbi Significant Issues

- Many Yolŋu leaders are working continuously ‘behind-the balanda governance scenes’ – doing governance, interfacing with government and making sure things are running as smoothly as possible in their towns. However, they feel this work is poorly understood and not properly recognised, understood or valued by government.
- Many of the Yolŋu men we spoke to said the Project sounded interesting. They could talk to us at a general level but that said they could not work with us on governance and leadership in Milingimbi because they were just living there and it wasn’t their place.
- The undermining of women’s traditional practices and leadership through non-negotiated interventions (health, education, employment etc.) is seen as directly related to increases in wrongful marriage, teenage pregnancy, young mothers, grandparents taking on parenting roles, poor child-rearing practices and domestic violence
- Local corporation (Nyälka) wants to have leadership and influence over programs, projects and service-delivery to do with women and children in Milingimbi. *‘We want to make this corporation because we want something from the grass-roots that is Yolŋu, not coming down on us from above’* (Nyälka Director)
- That women organise themselves through networks which spread out to cover the community. The community is the effect of these networks. It means that governments and other outsiders need to engage with the networks first, rather than the communities.
- Nyälka would like to be recognised by government as a key Yolŋu organisation in the community which should be approached and deferred to when making policy or decisions regarding women and children, or when entering the community to work on issues relevant to these groups. The Nyälka women are willing and able to be engaged as mentors, liaison, brokers and facilitators to visitors from outside. the community.
- There is a big need for ongoing support to develop, grow and mentor Nyälka Directors and potential staff. Increasing the facility for leadership and governance through the establishment of Nyälka, immediately led to many new opportunities. Although the Nyälka Directors have the capacity (desire, will, authority, credibility, networks, experience and skills) to develop and run a corporation, they do not (yet) have the ability to do this alone. *‘We have learnt about governance but as we go along we need to learn more’.* (Nyälka Director)
- Many other issues arising in Milingimbi at this time (e.g. Yolŋu do not see NTG mandated Local Authorities as the legitimate ‘local authorities’ and some are offended that local government has co-opted this term) were clearly articulated in the petition authored by Mark Guyula and authorised by a group of Milingimbi leaders (more details on website).
- Yolŋu at Milingimbi indicated they are not confident that they will be heard, and needed to think carefully about making their governance practices more visible. They relate a long history of outsiders ignoring Yolŋu representations and requests.

Milingimbi Summary of Activities

The research and facilitation of the IGLDP in Milingimbi was conducted by the GroundUp team – a collaboration of two facilitators from Merri Creek Productions (MCP), with one facilitator from the Northern Institute (CDU) who visited the community and a local Yolŋu consultant from Milingimbi.

Facilitators: Trevor van Weeren (MCP), Juli Cathcart (MCP) and Michaela Spencer (NI)

Local Yolŋu Consultant: Nākarrma Mark Guyula

• Visits to Milingimbi	12
• Days facilitators did IGLDP field work in Milingimbi	140
• Meetings with Yolŋu leaders (15 mins – 3 days long, many around 1 hour)	92+
• Yolŋu adults, leaders and elders engaged with through IGLDP	52+
• Phone calls with Yolŋu leaders	30+
• Meetings with balanda managers/stakeholder organisations	54+
• Balanda managers of stakeholder organisations engaged with`	28
• Phone calls to stakeholders (NLC, ORIC, MEP, ALPA, NTG etc.)	7+
• Community meetings attended (2 Yolŋu community meetings, 1 FaHCSIA)	3
• CAB/LA meetings attended	3
• Workshops facilitated (between 3 – 4 hours long)	6
• Community meetings attended (all run by Yolŋu around governance matters)	3
• Field trips for Yolŋu leaders	1
• Personal governance matters	2
• NE Arnhem Yolŋu leaders attending 4-day Yolŋu Nations Assembly Meeting	15+

Milingimbi Future Directions

1. Establishing and growing Nyäŋka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation and developing strategic partnerships

Nyäŋka is an emergent local Aboriginal corporation that is seeking to build relationships, partnerships and joint ventures with government and NGOs in program and service delivery who can support and champion their work. Nyäŋka has submitted two funding applications for projects (1) Gurrkurrkurr Manapanmirr ('coming together through our connections') Australian Government Building Safer Communities for Women Grant (\$150,000) and (2) Westpac Cyclone Relief Grant (\$10,000).

- The women requested continued mentoring and support from (GroundUp) facilitators in 2015 and 2016 so they can learn how to do the work of establishing, growing and administering their newly registered Aboriginal corporation (ORIC compliance and reporting, partnerships and joint ventures (contracts and liability), grant applications and management etc.)

2. Visibility and recognition of Yolŋu Law, Governance and Leadership

- Continued work on the documentation and mapping of Yolŋu leadership and governance practices and carefully think about their use and distribution.
- Exploring the difference in leadership and governance practices of men and women
- Petition follow-up – promised visit from the Chief Minister Adam Giles, response to police engagement

Milingimbi Community Evaluation

Towards the end of the project we sat with a number of the women we had been working with to grow and develop Nyälka. We asked them what they felt about the project, and working on governance and leadership in this way. These are some of their comments:

‘What I’m thinking is the project is working its way through a path but it needs more smoothing and polishing, the road is still rough at the moment, like a carving that is just a rough shape and needs more details and smoothing.’

‘We need you to tell your Steering Committee to look for more help so we can practice this work we have started. We need more women to come and work together and share their ideas. You need to ask them for more money to come back and finish the road, even though that road is still rough, is there any way we can get a director (manager) in, while the road is still rough. Our basket is empty, we need someone here while you are not here.’

‘If the Steering Committee wants to be part of it, they need to come to Milingimbi and hear the story.’

‘We have learnt about Governance, but as we go along we need to learn more.’

‘Sometimes Yolŋu people are being pushed down, they think that we don’t have governance and leadership here, but it’s there, it exists. There is a balanda blanket covering us. As an example, there was no chronic disease program here before, when I worked in the clinic, I grew that chronic disease program and after 8 years the balanda took over, and that’s not fair, we can’t let that happen again. This Corporation will be operated by Yolŋu from the grass roots level and will have Njapaki as the mentors and helpers.’

‘The way that we work with you? Its Gunḡa’yunamirr (helpful). The way you are working with Yolŋu, you come with boŋ-bakmaram (humility), it’s a process we talk about for when we are visiting people with respect, you have been showing this and Makmakthurr (respect), to make the person feel proud and not afraid. Maybe that’s what you are showing us, we need to share that with the community, you are passing on that rom to us. You are not putting pressure on everyone, that’s what Balanda and Yolŋu are supposed to be doing, sharing ideas, working together. ‘

‘This new Women’s Corporation Project... I’ve been working with the women’s group for many years trying to raise it up. A Women’s group started right back in the Mission days. We could show people about this history, how we started off around the campfire... We need to film the elder women... Who has the drive to tell the story to the younger people about that history?’

‘This is the right time’

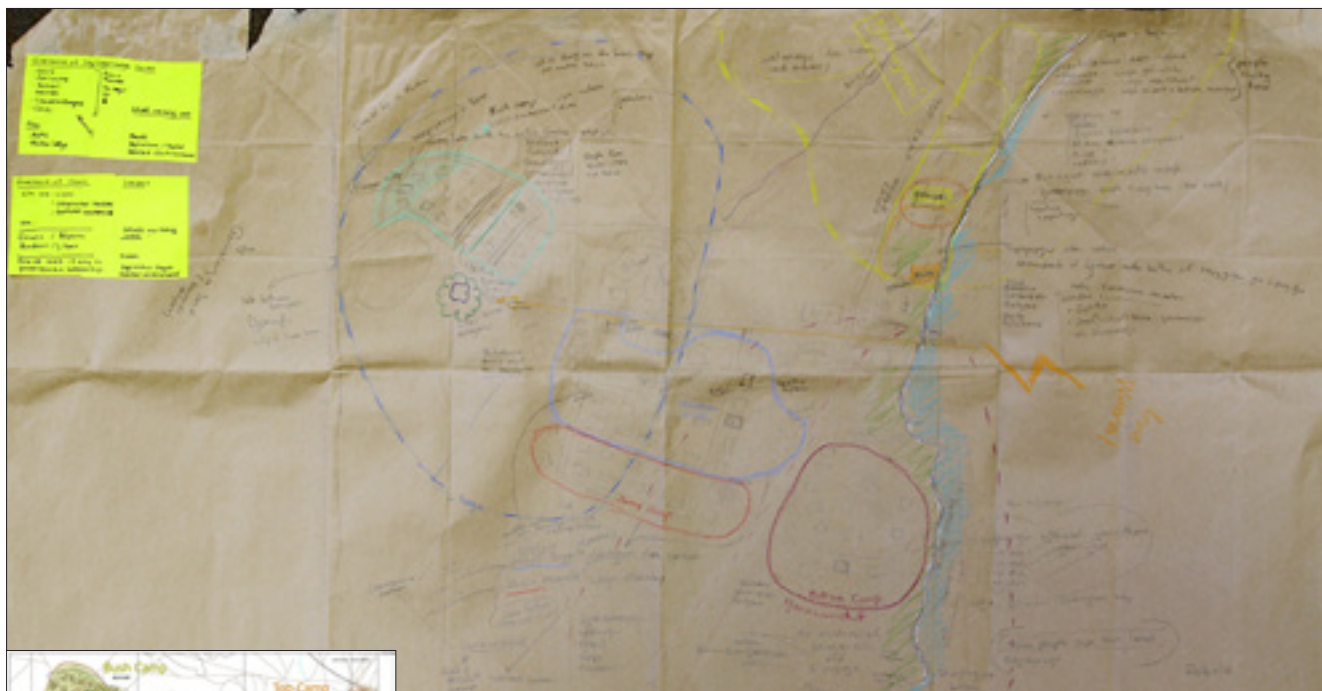
‘Will you keep walking with us?’

‘We all came together as one mind’

Milingimbi Resources

Mapping Governance

We made a variety of resources that mapped different aspects of the governance and leadership arrangements at work in Milingimbi. These resources are part of the ongoing conversation about governance and leadership. They are generative in that they provoke new ways of thinking and talking and support dialogue.



Left and below: Nākarrma Guyula working on Yolŋu governance mapping and developing resources. Bottom: Using resources in Milingimbi



Milingimbi Yolŋu Governance and Leadership maps and posters

Nyälka Milingimbi Women's



The story of the development of the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation.

A report on a project of the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development project 2013-15

Yolngu Leaders: Gwen Warmbirri, Rebecca Nunydyulu, Jessie, Linda Wanan, Janelle Guyir'kuyir, Ganngulpa, Judy Lirrinyin, Farrah Gumbula

Facilitators: Juli Cathcart, Trevor van Weeren and Michaela Spencer



Meeting Wednesday 18th June 2015

Location: Dhundhum, Batchelor Annex

Present: Helen, Gwen Warmbirri, Rebecca Nunydyulu, Janelle, Ruth, Joanne Baker, Sandy Hyde, Trevor Van Weeren, Michaela Spencer

At this meeting we revisited the journey of the Women's Corporation. We recognised that the project supporting Trevor and Michaela's visits to Milingimbi would soon be finished, and that now was a good time to work out the next steps for the corporation.

Timeline:

- The first meeting for this group took place in May 2014. At this meeting the initial idea of starting Women's corporation was discussed. Over a number of subsequent meetings, the objectives for the group were decided on and a visit to Alice Springs to see another Aboriginal Corporation was organised.
- In October 2014 a big meeting was held in the GEC building. This meeting was attended by many interested women, and here we decided on the name and logo for the Corporation, as well as finalised the objectives and began planning a promotion.
- At the next meeting in November 2014 we continued to think about the work of creating a corporation, and Trevor drew the picture of a river which we had to cross and the long road which we would travel as we built this organisation. When looking at this picture, we considered questions about how we would stay safe on this journey, and what we needed to do if we were going to cross the river together.

Where are we now?

Many of the women in this meeting are also involved in a number of other programs which connect with women and children in the community. We created a list of these organisations:

- Nyälka
- RJCP Women's group
- Yuta Miyalk (Group at the school run by Anits/Janelle/Chloe)
- Strong Women/Strong Babies Program
- Nutrition Program (Shire/Health Centre/ Anglicare)
- Playgroup (Anglicare)
- FAST
- FAST
- Family Support Program
- Art Centre
- Church
- Rec Hall



The story of the development of the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation

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Pages from 'The story of the development of the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Aboriginal Corporation'.

Petition

20 May 2015

To: Chief Minister
Adam Giles
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

To: Bees Price
Minister for Local Government and Community Services
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

To: Senator Nigel Scullion
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Prime Minister and Cabinet
PO Box 6300
Canberra ACT 2600

And an open letter to anyone who is interested in our story

Nyälka Womens Corporation

We have been working from the grass roots, on a Yolngu Womens Corporation for Milingimbi. We have been thinking and working on Governance and Leadership, and following the steps to make an Aboriginal Corporation. We have a vision that with the right partnership we could grow a Yolngu Corporation that would...

Support and improve the physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being and harmony of Yolngu women and their families in Milingimbi.

Keep the authority, culture, knowledge and skills of Yolngu women alive and strong.
Create opportunities that encourage women and girls of all ages to connect and reconnect.

Provide support and guidance for babies, girls and women through all stages of their development and life.

Develop, provide and promote services, resources and events that improve the health, safety and general well-being of women and their families in Milingimbi.

Nurture and grow women's enterprises and businesses in Milingimbi.

What do you think about the idea of a Nyälka Womens Corporation?

Do you have any other ideas about what this Corporation could do?

Are you interested to help or be on the Steering Committee?

Talk to Warmbirri or Nunydyulu

Milingimbi Makarr Garma Petition

Women's survey



Promotional video for the Women's Corporation

Steps to Registering an Aboriginal Corporation

To register a new Aboriginal Corporation you need to take the following steps...

STEP 1. A group of people decide to form a new organisation.

STEP 2. They form a **Steering Committee**

STEP 3. The **steering committee** meets and works together to...

- Fill out an **Application to Register a Corporation Form**
- Draft the **rule book**:
 - Name
 - Vision
 - Preamble
 - Values or Guiding Principles
 - Objectives
 - Members
 - Meetings
 - Decision-making processes
 - Directors
 - Finances
 - Record keeping
 - Reporting
 - Disputes
 - Notices
 - Winding up
 - Changing the Rule Book

STEP 4. When the **Draft Rule Book** is finished the steering committee (and other interested people) hold a General Meeting to prepare documents for the registration of the Corporation

- Take accurate **Meeting minutes** to record the meeting
- Make an **Attendance List** of everyone at the meeting
- Sign a **Resolution** to endorse the draft the rule book
- People sign up to be a Members of the Corporation, then the members choose the first Directors
- The new Directors must sign **Consent To Be Directors Forms**
- All members and the directors fill out the **Application to Register a Corporation Form**

STEP 5. The steering committee sends / emails 6 things to ORIC...

- The **Application to Register a Corporation Form**
- The **Rule Book**
- The **signed Resolution** (Attachment A&B)
- The **Meeting minutes** of the meeting
- The **Attendance List** of everyone at the meeting
- The signed **Consent To Be Directors Forms**

STEP 6. **WAIT up to 28 days for ORIC to process and register the new corporation.**

Send to ORIC...

Request to Register a Corporation Form, Rule Book, Meeting Minutes, Signed Resolution, Consent to be a Director Form, Attendance List

Steps to register an Aboriginal Corporation poster

These resources can be viewed on the website: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/milingimbi

Lily Roy on Governance and Leadership at Milingimbi

Lily Roy, the traditional owner of Milingimbi was interviewed by Trevor and Michaela.

Throughout the video, Lily pauses to retell the story in Burarra, a non-Yolŋu language, just to make sure everyone can understand. Here is a short summary of Lily's key points:

1. Lily's authority as custodian

Ma. Ŋarra, yuwalk ŋarra yäku Lily Gurambura . Surname, every time they call me Lily Roy. And ŋarra clan group Gamal-Walamaŋu. Yo, when I look after, I'm really from Yilan, also I look after Milingimbi. Milingimbi and Yilan, they're relate to each other. Nhakun wäwa'manydji, maŋda maŋda.

Okay, my real name is Lily Gurambura, that's my surname, but they always call me Lily Roy. My clan group is Gamal Walamaŋu. I'm really from Yilan, also I look after Milingimbi. Milingimbi and Yilan are related to each other. Those places are brothers, two of them.

2. Leadership at Milingimbi

Nhawi, it's not a one leader, or ŋalapaŋ. Like, ŋarra ga my nhawi, family, I look after them. Also my djamarrkuli', I look after them. Also kids comes to, also I look after Gorryindi ga Gamaŋaŋga. ... Yo. Nhakun, they call me mum, those three clan groups. Yow. Yow.

Well there's not just one leader, or elder.

Like I look after my own children (Mälarra group). But my kids are also the Gorryindi and the Gamaŋaŋga clans.... They call me mum, all those three clan groups.

Like, I can't say I'm looking after everybody. Yaka. Ŋarra waŋan ŋarra djägamirri rraku djamarrkuli, three yän clan group rraku djamarrkuli, Mälarra, Gamaŋaŋga, Gorryindi.

So I can't say I'm looking after everybody. No, as I said, I look after my own children, the Mälarra, Gamaŋaŋga, and Gorryindi.

Yow nhakun nhä nhe waŋan Galikali government nhawi Indigenous leadership ŋani? Bäyŋu. Wäŋa-waŋaŋu yaka dhu dharrray bukmak. Ŋunhi nhanŋu gäna dharrraymirr ga nhina. Ga rraku gäna dharrraymirr. Ga dharrraymirr ŋarra walalaŋ.

So Galikali, you asked me about Indigenous leadership? No. The land owners can not look after all the people. They have their own separate caretakers. And I have my own carers.

Against the rom bitjan ga waŋa.

If I were to look after the others, it would be against the law.

Nhawinŋu in bungulŋur. Yow bungulŋur, ga marngithirr ŋayi dhu ŋiya ŋalapaŋwal.

Leadership comes through ceremonies. Yes when they each learn from their own clan elders.

3. Leadership is shared with the 'grandchild clan' – this is always the case in Yolŋu law.

It's nhawi. Djägamirr rom, nhakun makarraŋaŋur, makarraŋaŋur rom dhu miyalk bakmaram rom, ga nhakun dŋirramu rom dhu bakmaram, rom mala, märi side (yaka muka grandmother) märi side will come trouble you know, yow ga nhawi, nhä ŋunhi, Yolŋu.

That's the law of caring. Like in the makarrata (peacemaking) ceremony, if a woman were to break the law, or a man, then the grandmother's side will come to deal with it. Not just the grandmother, but her whole clan.

Ŋarra dhuwal wäŋa-waŋaŋu. Yow bili ŋarra yän waŋany yän, linyu, Rose Lanybalanyba, Ga ŋarra wäŋa-waŋaŋu ga also gutharra'mirriŋu linyalaŋ, wayirri, märi for Nurruwulu, David, Milaypuma, moma ŋarra ga Jennifer they are still dharrraymirr, napurrŋ gutharra.

I am the land owner. Just me, and also Rose Lanybalanyba. So I am the land owner, but also we have gutharra (grandchildren). David, Milaypuma and (who else?) Jennifer, they are our gutharra clan. They are caretakers, that grandchild clan group.

Ŋarraku dhuwal wäŋa. I get roylaty money from here, yaka muka royalty, I get leasing money. Yow. Ga wäŋa rraku dhuwal two dhuwal ga Yilan, ga Munuŋurra.

So this is my land. I get leasing money from here. So my land is here. Two: Here, and Yilan and Munuŋurra.

Government, every year even intervention came, 2007, ga 8, Ŋarra ga David, yow. Yow, wäŋa-waŋaŋu ga wayirri-waŋaŋu.

The government always, even when the intervention came, in 2007-8, it was David Marpiyawuy and me. Yes so there are the land owners, and those who call them grandmother.

If I was to pass away, the new generation nkakun djamarrkuli, walal dhu nhakun take over, yow.

And if I were to die, the new generation of my children would take over.

4. Governance has to do with the land, and its resources, and working together to keep the land and our bodies healthy.

Yo. Past, ŋunhi, when they, there was one mind, wangany liya, wangany doṭurrk, nhinan walal gan.

Because the early days, nhawi they were looking after fishtrap, ga nhawi gapu, water hole for ŋatha, warraga, ga nhawi rākay ga widjiwidji ga bāltji, djitama, gälun, yukuwa, napur li lakaram gälun, ga bāwan ga nhawi dhuwal wurrdjara, Ŋunhi ŋäthil gan nhinan liya-wangany, wanganyŋur walal gan nhinan, wanganyŋur walal gan ŋorran liya-wangany.

Ga bili nhawi, bāyŋu mari, ŋunhi gan mari ŋorran yän nhawipuy miyalk, ga yaka wāŋa. Wāŋapuy wāthurr walal gan, ga wiripuny, nhawi mulmu special for nhawi goanna, yow mulmu ŋunhi number one,

‘Way, manymak nhuma dhu marrtji räli, limurr dhu dhungur’yun, bāpi, bapi dhuwal dārrpa, number one dhuwal ŋatha, mundukul dhuwal number one ŋatha, yow weṭi, mundukul ga nhawi nyiknyik number one ŋatha, warrakan warrpam’,

Ŋarra ga waŋa bili ŋarra survive ŋarra, nhawinur ŋatha bushŋur,

5. At the end of the interview, Lily again talks in Burarra, and sends Trevor and Michaela back to talk to Mark who is helping with the IGLDP project, to confirm with him what she has said.

Manymak, baḍak. Yow, Dhuwal nhe dhu gāma, wuŋuḷi dhuwal double check nhe dhu Markwal, bili ŋunhi Mark wiripu nhuma djāmamirr.

Yow ga Gamarran, ŋarra dhuwal mathakurr waŋan bili ŋarra dhuwal Burarra Yan-nhaŋu ga nhawi nhuŋu dhuwal bittja yalala nhe dhu nhāma mak nhāma nhe dhu mak manymak mak yätjkurr.

Ma thankyou, Gudjuk ga Galidjan.

In the past, there was one mind, one heart, they were living.

Because in those early days they were looking after the fish traps, and the fresh water for food and preparing cycad bread, and lily roots, different sorts of yams. Back then they were together, sitting together, sleeping together.

And no trouble, only trouble over women, not over land. The land and its people were calling. There’s a very special number one grass for goannas.

‘Hey it would be good for you to come over here, we will set fire to the grass together, wallaby, snakes, king browns, number one food, snakes, rats, all sorts of meat.

I can say that because I grew up surviving on bush tucker.

Okay, just wait. I want you to take this video and double check it with Mark, because you are working together.

Okay, so Gamarran (Mark) I talked like that because I am a Burarra-Yan-nhaŋu (language speaker), and you can look at this video later and decide whether what you see is good or bad.

Okay, thanks Gudjuk ga Galidjan



The full video with subtitles is on the website at www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/milingimbi

Ntaria Report

Sketches

Ntaria (Hermannsburg) community has a long history of developing community governance, starting in the 1960's. These moves to develop and institute community level governance seem founded on the belief that if the various clans can work together they can most effectively generate change in the community that is valued by all residents. This does not mean that there is not conflict between clans, but that there is general acknowledgment that the best way to deal with 'outsiders' is to present a united front. However an ongoing frustration is that working through these structures, such as constituted boards of governance or reference groups, does not necessarily produce the changes that people want, undermining the rationale for engaging in them in the longer term. There are certainly times in which these structures have assisted people to make change which has led to the strengthening of them, the prime example being Wurla Nyinta during the development and implementation of the LIP, however equally their strength is depleted when people invest time and effort and do not see change resulting.

Local Reference Groups (LRGs) were developed as a mechanism for engagement with Indigenous communities to develop the Local Implementation Plans as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery. In Ntaria, due to the work that many individuals and groups had done over a long period of time, the Local Reference Group was named Wurla Nyinta, to reflect the commitment of people from the five Land Trust owner groups to working together for the good of their community. The Wurla Nyinta group continues to meet to provide oversight and advice to service providers working in the community.

In order to try to investigate this issue further I conducted a series of meeting with a range of people to discuss this, to see what kinds of (sub) issues lay inside it. During these discussions a number of points emerged:

- There are a number of community level structures in place that take up peoples time
- Community level structures without resources are impotent
- There is a strong belief that each individual is self determining, so people are loathe to directly try to make others change even though they disapprove of their behaviour
- Some people believe that Traditional Owners are the main decision makers for the community, while others think that better decisions are made when people work together
- The LA is for making small decisions about community infrastructure; it is not seen as a forum for addressing social issues. Yet as individuals they are concerned about social issues and the flow-on effects social problems have for the community



Sports precinct development— an outcome of the Ntaria LIP

Throughout these discussions there was a desire to ensure that Aboriginal interests play a decisive role in the ongoing development of Ntaria (in social and economic terms). There remains a belief that some kind of 'encompassing' community level structure is one of the best ways to do this, with the accompanying knowledge that resources are critical. From the preliminary discussions, and the interest within Wurla Nyinta about ongoing discussions around community level governance and community led change, it is clear

that people feel alienated from decision making processes. This then feeds into the problems that people experience (lack of jobs, people drinking and fighting, kids teasing each other). I.e. there is a sense that it is the lack of organisations at the local level who are seen to be accountable and responsive in Aboriginal terms, that results in action being mostly undertaken by organisations that are seen to be accountable elsewhere (e.g. the school, the clinic). There is the danger that as outside agencies take on the role of trying to effect change in the community that the collective capacity of Ntaria residents to identify and take action on those things they care about is reduced.

I was talking one day with a senior clan leader in general terms about 'governance and leadership' when he mentioned that he felt that the Wurla Nyinta had lost some momentum in the last little while. I probed him further on what he thought was happening and he responded by saying that a lot of work had gone into setting Wurla Nyinta up [the local name for the Local Reference Group set up as part of the NTER] and that while they were developing and implementing the LIP (which had a strong focus on infrastructure) there was a real sense that they were making changes for the community, which in turn were valued by the community. He had the sense that there was real cooperation between the government and the community and that there were resources to put toward making changes in the community.

While being worried that the Wurla Nyinta was in danger of losing its relevance- his bigger concern was that having addressed a range of infrastructural needs in the community there was still a range of social issues that needed to be addressed if Ntaria was going to keep moving forward. At the same time he felt that other community bodies were not able to do this work either, mostly because he felt that they were ultimately accountable to others outside the community. So in short he felt that Ntaria still had range of problems to address, but no obvious way of tackling them.

It seemed in this that two things were coming together, a community level body into which people had invested time and effort (and which had come to assume some level of legitimacy as a community level body) which people sensed was losing momentum, and the continuing desire of people to keep driving change in their community, but now with more focus on the social space than the physical space.

Many discussions have highlighted for me that people are concerned and interested about their home and their future, and how this implicates 'the community'. In this they can see that having a community level body is definitely useful, in that it allows them to do things with a sense of legitimacy- that it is something that can institute change that is not perceived to be generated by outsiders, and which does not impinge on the individual freedom that people so value. However people do not know how to do this. Their first step is to get those people they think of as leaders (and other interested people, including younger people) together to discuss what it is they are worried about and want, and from this to discuss options for how they might organise themselves to make change in the community.



Local Authority meeting

Ntaria Key Outcomes

- Identifying and agreeing upon ways in which Community level governance is valued in Ntaria, and plays a key role in facilitating change and development in the community
- Working with existing and emerging leaders to articulate that local processes to drive a development agenda are critical. A range of people said processes such as that undertaken in the development and carrying out of the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) offer a way to respectfully negotiate mutually agreed outcomes
- Identifying /reiterating that the community has made an investment in developing the Wurla Nyinta group, and that this group therefore should be supported to maintain its role and place as a body that brings senior and emerging leaders people together to make decisions over issues that affect the community
- Identifying social issues as a huge concern to people, and that solving these problems from the inside out is the key to facilitating the long term change that people want in the community
- Beginning to articulate some steps towards strengthening Wurla Nyinta or developing a similar body



Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre

Ntaria Significant Issues

- Local Authorities seen as a forum for dealing with community issues at the very practical level. Some of the members of the LA do not think of it as a high level body that can make decisions on behalf of the community, though with some negotiation could take on some roles that are currently being undertaken by other community level boards. This would be done through a process of negotiation. People still see Wurla Nyinta as having a governance and leadership role, though its position and influence have changed since the LIP has been 'completed'.
- Traditional ownership over the township area of Ntaria is still contested. There are differing opinions about the best ways to make decisions, and considerable care needs to be taken in working with people to ensure that existing points of tension are well managed as people find ways to work together
- The fact that people can identify social issues as a core concern, and as something that inhibits action and change in the community does not mean that they have the mechanisms to change them. People identify that they need support if they are going to be able to do anything to generate the kinds of ground up change that they want to see.



Finke River Mission Store and Hermannsburg Potters

Ntaria Summary of Activities

• Number of days spent in the community	42
• Number of meetings/ discussions facilitated	55
• Number of public meeting attended	
– Local authority	3
– Wurla Nyinta	3
– Other	6
– Number of feedback sessions held	4

Ntaria Future Directions

The main thing to emerge at Ntaria, particularly over the last 6 months, is that people identify social issues as inhibiting development in the community. This concern ranges across people of all ages and across agencies. It includes concern about bullying/ teasing, how children are cared for, domestic and family violence, alcohol use and abuse, partying, loud noise, dangerous driving. People are very interested in finding ways to do something about these issues, however there is no consensus as to how to go about it, nor is there agreement as to what lies at the heart of the problems. For example, some people think that there are not enough jobs and that people are idle because of a lack of opportunity, and so think that Tjuwanpa (the local CDP agency) should do more to support people and help them get jobs. Others feel that there are work opportunities and are of the opinion that people are not taking them up due to the fact that they are not motivated.

As we talked about these disparate but related issues there was a sense that some way of bringing them together so that solutions might be negotiated was required. People thought that Wurla Nyinta was one body that might be able to take on this role, however it was also noted that Wurla Nyinta's capacity to undertake this coordination work has been compromised since the demise of the LIP. As such one proposal that has been put forth for consideration is for the Wurla Nyinta to work in partnership with an organisation that can seek funding to initiate a LIP style process to identify critical community issues and to develop actions plans to put them into place.

Such a process may also work into another possibility raised during the project, that of forming an incorporated body that would then be able apply for funding to undertake projects in the community. Again Wurla Nyinta was identified as a potential body to take on this role, however people were aware that such a move should be undertaken cautiously, noting that if it were to become an incorporated entity that much work would be required to negotiate the governance arrangements so that it could deliver community benefit outcomes.

To date the following have been discussed in terms of next steps:

- Representative of Tangentyere attend a Wurla Nyinta meeting to provide final feedback ;
- Discuss and gauge support amongst all Wurla Nyinta members for their interest in developing a LIP style document around current issues. If there is interest (and preliminary discussions indicate that there is) then;
- Hold subsequent meetings to determine an action plan for the development of a LIP style document and to formalise partnership arrangements with an appropriate body.

Ntaria Community Evaluation

The positive

- *'This project has been good because it has given us a chance to do something to help to make Wurla Nyinta a bit strong again.'*
- *'This project has helped me to see that we really need to find ways to get our voices heard properly. There are a lot of Aboriginal people sitting on boards in this community but they feel powerless. This project helps me to see that we need to do more than just sit on boards, we need to understand how to operate so that we can really get into the driving seat.'*
- *'We don't care how long things take, as long as we are all working together.'*

The negative:

- *'We (the Wurla Nyinta) were really happy with how things were going when we had the LIP, it helped us to decide what needed to be done and we could see action taking place. Now we don't have the same purpose, we're all just scrabbling about wondering what is going to happen next.'*
- *'It seems to me that this project is a bit like lots of the others we see here: a lot of talk but not a lot of action. That is the really hard part for us, taking action around some of these things that worry us, but we don't really know how to do it and that is what we need more help with.'*
- *'Community members are confused, or they just have no idea about what is going on.'*

The disconcerting

- *'We have a lot of problems here that we want to solve; things that are holding us back as a community. But you know I can't just say to someone "you need to do this." I can see the problem but it doesn't mean I can do anything about it.'*
- *'Traditional owners are the ones who should really be making all the decisions for this community'*
- *'My question is- how do we make these people [nonAboriginal] people working for local organisations agencies accountable when we don't even understand who they are really answering to? There is lots of talk about working with Aboriginal people but to us it feels like we always come second.'*

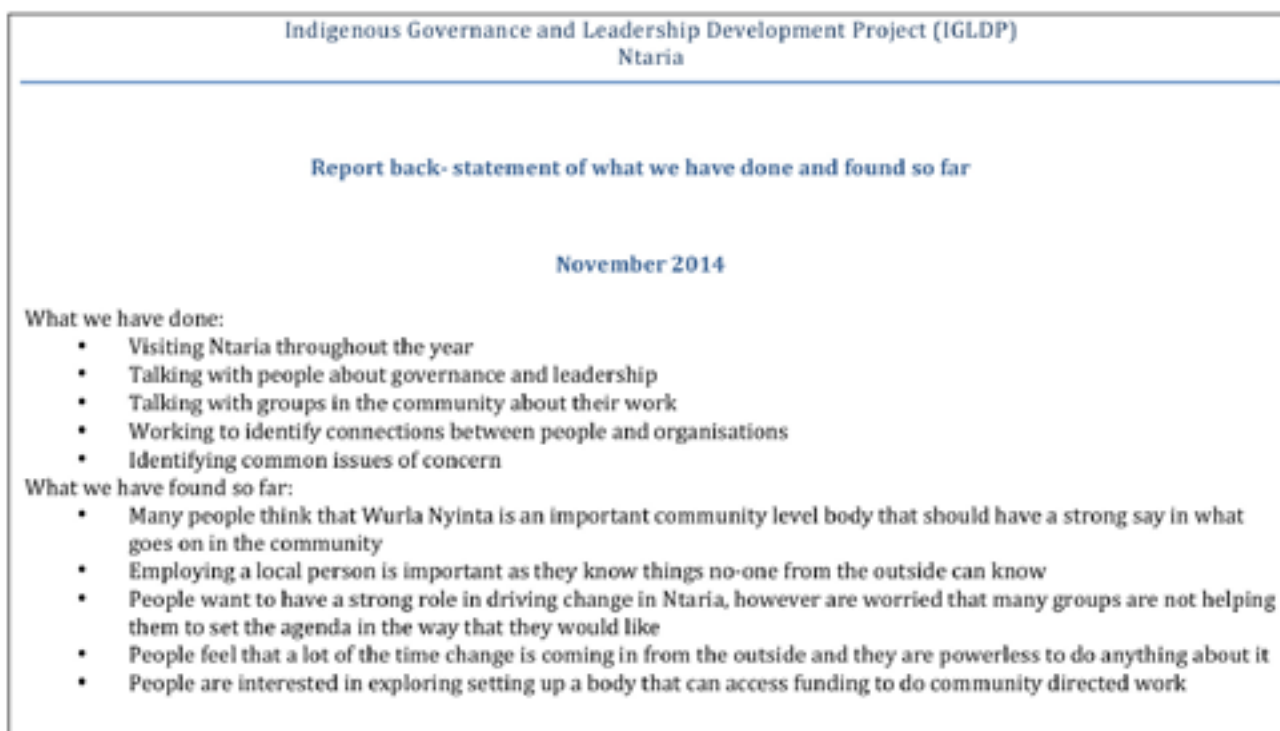


Amanda Kantawarra- IGLDP Research Assistant

Ntaria Resources

The main resources produced in Ntaria were simple posters that articulated what was agreed on as emerging from the project. They were the product of discussions in which issues were raised and then checked against others perspectives, resulting in statements that summed up the general understanding of those involved.

Here is an example of one of our posters.



As indicated elsewhere, the project in Ntaria has not yet reached a strong action stage, partly due to the difficulties presented by the broad and inter-connected nature of the issues people are concerned about, and partly because of difficulties in generating agreement as to who (on both an individual and group/ collective level) is responsible for doing something about those broad collective issues.

One of the difficulties experienced in thinking about what resources we might produce was the fluid nature of how people see their own governance. They do not see it as a relatively stable and fixed system that can be easily made visible. Indeed one of the challenges in this project was the fact that each issue is seen to bring together a unique array of individuals and groups, all of whom stand in quite particular vantage points in relation to any given issue. There are clearly some people who are regarded as important players in a diverse range of issues in Ntaria (particular Traditional Owners mainly), yet it is not possible to say that they occupy the centre of governance arrangements as they will themselves negotiate a particular role for themselves in each particular instance in which they have a role to play.

This reluctance to encode local governance (because of its negotiated nature) in a fixed form proves to be difficult for those who are not operating within the community (I was an example when the project started) . For those people who are spending a lot of time on the ground it is clear who needs to be talked to, and it is through these processes that governance of any particular issue emerges (as I learnt over time). At the outset we perhaps imagined that there might be ways to make governance more visible, however as the project progressed the less sense this made.

Another theme that emerged was the governance arose as an issue around those things in which there was contestation, for example how to do something about children playing around late at night, or why funding changes were taking place within the local Health organisation. The differing opinions of who is responsible,

how they become responsible and what their role is in resolving issues reveals governance to be contested and emergent. Late in the project the LIP emerged as a story of relative success as it was seen as a “thing” around which people could organise. Critically this was the case whether you were Aboriginal or not, government employee or local resident, bureaucrat or Traditional Owner. It set out who would do what, who was responsible and a mechanism for reporting back on progress. It seems to me that in some sense this is an example of a resource that understands governance in Aboriginal communities to be something that happens in an intercultural space, and as such needs to be developed together so that everyone can have a shared understanding of how to move forward together. Its success however depends on how it is brought into being, how it unfolds and how committed to it people are.

Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project (IGLDP)

Ntaria

Report back- statement of what we have done and found so far

November 2014

What we have done:

- Visiting Ntaria throughout the year
- Talking with people about governance and leadership
- Talking with groups in the community about their work
- Working to identify connections between people and organisations
- Identifying common issues of concern

What we have found so far:

- Many people think that Wurla Nyinta is an important community level body that should have a strong say in what goes on in the community
- Employing a local person is important as they know things no-one from the outside can know
- People want to have a strong role in driving change in Ntaria, however are worried that many groups are not helping them to set the agenda in the way that they would like
- People feel that a lot of the time change is coming in from the outside and they are powerless to do anything about it
- People are interested in exploring setting up a body that can access funding to do community directed work

Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project (IGLDP)

Ntaria

Report back- statement of what we have done and found so far

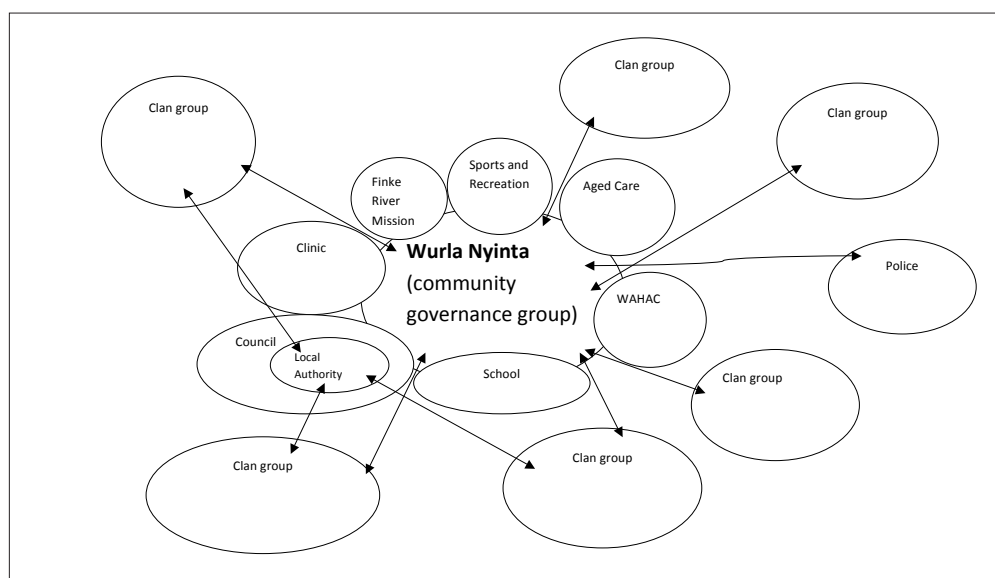
June 2015

What we have done:

- Visiting Ntaria throughout the year
- Talking with people and groups about governance and leadership
- Attending meetings
- Identifying common issues of concern
- Talking about what people want to see in the future
- Working together to develop plans

What we have found so far:

- There is a long history of efforts to have community level governance in Ntaria
- Many people think it is important that the Traditional Owners have a strong role in decision making for Ntaria
- Some things have damaged community level governance in Ntaria, the Shires being the main one
- Social issues such as people not working, problems from alcohol, kids teasing each other and family violence are concerns for many people
- Ntaria people are the ones best placed to work out the best ways to fix things- outside agencies need to help with this because people cannot do it alone
- People are still thinking about the best way to drive a community development agenda, people want to see change happen!



Ramingining Report

Sketches

Governance House

For most of the Project, an IGLDP facilitator, Anthea, lived in Ramingining. Council accommodation was an old donga with a large veranda enclosed in flywire that was located in the 'business hub' of Ramingining adjacent to the VOQ and Store and opposite the Council Office and Art Centre. Through the continuous IGLDP work done by Anthea, Yolju leaders and community members, the donga emerged as a safe, welcoming CDU-IGLDP workspace that operated for the first 11 months of the project as a 'governance drop-in centre' and adult education facility, that was nicknamed 'Governance House'.



A meeting of elders in the enclosed verandah of 'Governance House'

People came for support, advice, assistance, coaching and mentoring from us as well as to give us support, advice and mentoring about issues and community matters. Many letters were written to the Courts, NGOs and government agencies sorting out identification issues and raising concerns. We always worked 'both-

ways' together to carefully unpack the context and story behind particular government problems, changes or initiatives so we could understand what people were talking about, what words meant, where the issue of the moment had come from, how it was connected to government policy or law, and the implications, consequences and so on. And we worked through Yolju governance issues together so we could understand what was going on and why certain decisions were made, clans and people involved and actions taken. We ran regular small 'workshops' responding to particular issues as they arose.

Local Yolju leaders and residents regularly used this space to do both personal governance (e.g. dealing with legal and court matters, banking, organising ID, fines, dealing with scams, IT issues) and community

governance, which often came out of CAB/LA and LRG meetings (e.g. 99-year leases, school attendance/truancy, installation of meter boxes). Yolju and Balanda visitors doing governance work in Ramingining also used this space to meet and work.

Being in the heart of town people could drop in on their way to and from the shop, during their lunch hour or before and after work.

Towards the end of the Project some leaders were dropping in daily for a cuppa and to talk together and with us about things in the



A meeting of the Yolju Nations Assembly outside 'Governance House'

community that they felt related to issues of governance and leadership or were puzzling them. The creation of a space for elders to sit and talk among themselves and to meet visitors is often brought up by Yolŋu as a key for enhancing traditional leadership.

Maybe above all, Governance house was a safe, comfortable space where senior Yolŋu could withdraw and talk with each other about governance issues (as much as to work with Balanda).

More questions than answers: ebbs and flows of the Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation

Through conducting a feasibility study for a local Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation (RAC) in 2013, we had already been involved in discussion about developing a local corporation with a number of elders and leaders whose vision was to make:

A strong, healthy, well-governed and well-managed, accountable registered Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation that will provide and support: Homeland

Centre services, local employment, education, training and enterprise development in Homeland Centres and Ramingining.



The Q&A session during the elders forum

These plans were suddenly derailed when ALPA (who run the store and had recently become the RJCP Provider), in consultation with TOs but not the wider community, announced it was starting a business, 'Dinybulu Regional Services' that would occupy the assets and take up opportunities the SC had identified for its corporation. Yolŋu leaders wanted to keep working on developing their own local corporation through IGLDP. They formed a RAC Steering Committee and we conducted several workshops around registering a corporation and developing the Rule Book. At the same time we kept talking with various ALPA managers who also participated in the Nänthun'ga Buku-bakmarama (Q&A) Elders Forum. During this time there was a lot of ceremony in Ramingining. By returning to community regularly at times that suited Yolŋu leaders and fitted around ceremony, we were able to allow various formulations to unfold according to the rhythms and protocols of discussion and agreement making that fitted into community life, particularly ceremonial life.

Meanwhile with the gaps and needs in Ramingining and Homelands being met through Dinybulu and the RJCP, the need and feasibility for a local corporation slowly diminished. The relationship of a new Ramingining

Aboriginal Corporation and Dinybulu Regional Services Pty Ltd was never fully clear and big issues like how the RAC board would gain the experience and skills to take over DRS were not resolvable.

Maybe Senior Yolŋu took advantage of the ebb and flow of ceremonial life to allow progress on the RAC to be made slowly and carefully towards full agreement of all those who needed to be involved in discussion around a corporation. Sometimes it looked like a plan had completely faltered, but then it would become clear that it was just incubating. And maybe it still is?



Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation Steering group workshop

Ramingining Key Outcomes

- ‘Governance House’ – a welcoming, dedicated, centrally located, supportive, culturally safe place that Yolŋu leaders, community members and groups regularly used to do specific personal and community governance work and came to for support, advice, assistance, coaching and mentoring. Yolŋu and balanda visitors doing governance work also used this space to meet and work out of, and IGLDP facilitators used it for running regular small responsive ‘workshops’. ‘Governance House’ is now closed.
- The 3-day *Njanthun’ ga Buku-bakmarama* Elders Forum that included a full day community-wide Q&A with a panel of key Yolŋu leaders and balanda managers
- School Council Governance workshops on the role, function and power of the School Council
- IGLDP research and resources were used to inform the Ramingining Local Community Awareness Program (LCAP)
- Paying Yolŋu authorities as consultants to the Project demonstrated that we and the Project valued, recognised and respected their authority, knowledge and time, and enabled us to build the relationships required for us to keep working well together
- Professional learning of a local Yolŋu Leader as a key consultant, co-researcher and co-facilitator through GroundUp method, developing networks, relationships and intercultural understanding required to undertake research and engagement e.g. designing and facilitating workshops, helping facilitators liaise with community members, working with government managers, developing PowerPoints and presentations, participating in conference calls, preparing reports, letters, petitions etc.
- The GEC became a champion, learner and participant in the Project because he worked with us and valued the results of our GroundUp method and work
- Ongoing development of spreadsheets, map and texts about Yolŋu governance and leadership in Ramingining and Homelands



Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation Steering group workshop

Ramingining Significant Issues

- Many Yolŋu leaders are working continuously ‘behind-the Balanda governance scenes’ – doing governance, interfacing with government and making sure things are running as smoothly as possible in their towns. However, they feel this work is poorly understood and not properly recognised, understood or valued by government.
- A rapidly changing and confusing governance and leadership landscape in Ramingining as a result of the dissolution of the Ramingining Homelands Resource Centre Aboriginal Corporation, ALPA taking on the RJCP/CDP Provider contract and ALPA’s establishment of the business Dinybulu Regional Services.
- The Yolŋu Nations Assembly is an effort by Yolŋu leaders across Arnhemland to address incoming governance and leadership issues collectively and through traditional authority.
- There is need for community-owned spaces in Yolŋu communities, like ‘governance house’, that are staffed with experienced researchers/facilitators/educators where Yolŋu leaders, elders and community members can meet freely and be mentored and supported to properly learn about, understand and deal with continuous incoming governance and leadership issues that require their engagement (see Future Directions below).
- Yolŋu perceive good governance and leadership in Ramingining as working closely in partnership with skilled and respectful Balanda to continually negotiate the dhukarr (pathway) for good governance and leadership together. We experienced this in our IGLDP work and observed it in the work of East Arnhem Mediation as they mediated and brokered arrangements between balanda law and Yolŋu customary law.
- Enrichment of Yolŋu governance and leadership practices and Balanda respect for these through working in partnership is seen by Yolŋu as the key to good governance and leadership in Ramingining. Rather than government managers imagining/hoping that the Yolŋu they are working with will someday takeover their jobs, people like CSMs and GECs should be looking for ways for themselves to work more effectively in the intercultural space, and resourced to learn how to do this.
- Creating a ‘culturally safe environment’ is fundamental to good engagement between Yolŋu and Balanda at all levels and in all situations, especially meetings. In order for appropriate dialogue to take place and for everyone to be able to understand what is being discussed, to participate well and make good decisions, Yolŋu must not be culturally compromised. Even though Balanda participants may not understand what is going on, they need to be sensitive to and enable the appropriate time and space for Yolŋu participants (in particular Board and Council members) to manage their leadership and governance responsibilities and cultural protocols properly. Not doing this makes Yolŋu culturally unsafe and creates problems, anxiety and anger for communities.
- Stakeholder meetings of balanda managers create a level of quasi balanda governance in communities. Finding ways to involve Yolŋu leaders in ‘community stakeholder’ meetings, and valuing and recognising their authority and time appropriately (e.g. through payment) is critical to good community governance.
- Yolŋu leaders and residents express extreme frustration in the way in which they feel Australian and NT law and policy is ‘Djambi-djambi’ – (jumps all over the place, inconsistent). They often complain that it keeps changing and rolling over them, and has a huge impact on them. It makes it impossible for most Yolŋu leaders and residents to keep informed and up-to-date about things that affect them and their towns/communities, and therefore to be good leaders and support good governance.
- A Yolŋu governance body would have the ability to call meetings according to their own agendas, and to call Balanda workers to these meetings. Under present circumstances, this is impossible.

Ramingining Summary of Activities

The research and facilitation of the IGLDP in Ramingining was conducted by the GroundUp team – a collaboration of two facilitators from Merri Creek Productions, with one facilitator from the Northern Institute (CDU) and a local Yolŋu consultant from Ramingining. The NI facilitator lived in Ramingining and the two MCP facilitators visited the community.

Facilitators: Anthea Nicholls (NI), Trevor van Weeren (MCP) and Juli Cathcart (MCP)

Local Yolŋu Consultant: Dhulumburrk Gaykamaŋu

• Visits to Ramingining	13
• Days facilitators did IGLDP fieldwork in Ramingining	158
• Meetings with Yolŋu leaders	62+
• Yolŋu adults, leaders and elders engaged with through IGLDP	45+
• Phone calls with Yolŋu leaders	30+
• Meetings with balanda managers/stakeholder organisations	29
• Balanda managers of stakeholder organisations engaged with	10
• Community meetings attended (2 Yolŋu community meetings, 1 FaHCSIA)	3
• CAB/LA meetings attended	3
• LRG meetings attended (and participated in)	3
• Workshops facilitated (between 3 – 4 hours long)	4
• Njŋ'ŋun ga Buku-bukumarama: Questions and Answers (Elders Forum) - Yolŋu	45+
- Balanda	8
• Community meetings attended	2
• Personal governance matters	14+
• NE Arnhem Yolŋu leaders attending 3-day Yolŋu Nations Assembly Meeting 1	15+
• NE Arnhem Yolŋu leaders attending 2-day Yolŋu Nations Assembly Meeting 2	25+

Ramingining Future Directions

1. Visibility and recognition of Yolŋu Law, Governance and Leadership

- Continued research and work with leaders and potential users to complete the database, documentation and mapping of Yolŋu leadership and governance networks and practices in Ramingining and Homelands and to turn this into useful resources.

2. An Indigenous (Yolŋu) Research, Engagement and Adult Learning Centre/Hub that is:

- centrally located in the business area of town
- staffed with experienced Balanda and Yolŋu adult educators
- provides formal and just-in-time, education, mentoring, coaching, workshops, higher education, training, support and resources
- supports and builds Indigenous research and researchers
- supports Yolŋu leaders and residents to engage productively and in partnership with government, NGOs and private enterprise
- supports Yolŋu corporations and enterprises to establish, grow, develop and manage partnerships and joint ventures etc.

Ramingining Community Evaluation

'We have been working on educating Government and employees and other stakeholders in the community e.g. Clinic, Police, School, ALPA. Who can tell them what is right and wrong? We need to find the common ground for all of us to help Yolŋu understand the law and order, to create jobs in the community and teach them skills etc. This Governance and Leadership Project has been doing that, and that's why we are asking for more time.'

'Our message is getting there (to government), we think, but we are not sure if that message is being displayed. There is nothing coming back from Government. Are we doing it manymak - good, are they tabling it, or are they putting it under the table? Bala ga bilin, rali bāyŋu – it goes there and that's all, nothing comes back. What is the Government's response to all their meetings with us?'

(Talking to Trevor) 'Your work through us has gone to the department, is it manymak? Government is dhunja – lacking understanding that we have a common law. Your IGLDP job is to tell the Government.'

'Every department are doing and talking what the Government are telling them, what about Yolŋu? Your job (IGLDP) is not finished.'

'Yolŋu Governance and Leadership comes from the land, from bark painting, ceremony and the sacred dilly bag. (With hands locked) All Stakeholders in the community need to be working with Yolŋu leaders and the Yolŋu Nations Assembly. We need our own makarr garma agreed located ceremonial structure, here but Yolŋu haven't got a taste for it yet. Every stakeholder (organization) has its own council and rule book. The meetings are on when they want one, it should be the other way around.'

'The field workers should come back. We need field officers in place and Yolŋu recognized as researchers.'

'The job has not been finished. It needs funds for another year or a year and a half.'

'Outside Balanda, not from here are writing laws in their offices, who is it for? They keep putting fire in our minds. All we want is our message to be received and be put on display and then practice it.'

'We should have one bungawa (leader), one person, or a small team should be responsible for all the meetings and coordination.'



Ramingining

Ramingining Resources

Mapping Governance and Leadership

We made a variety of resources that were used to help in the development of various configurations of governance and leadership in Ramingining.



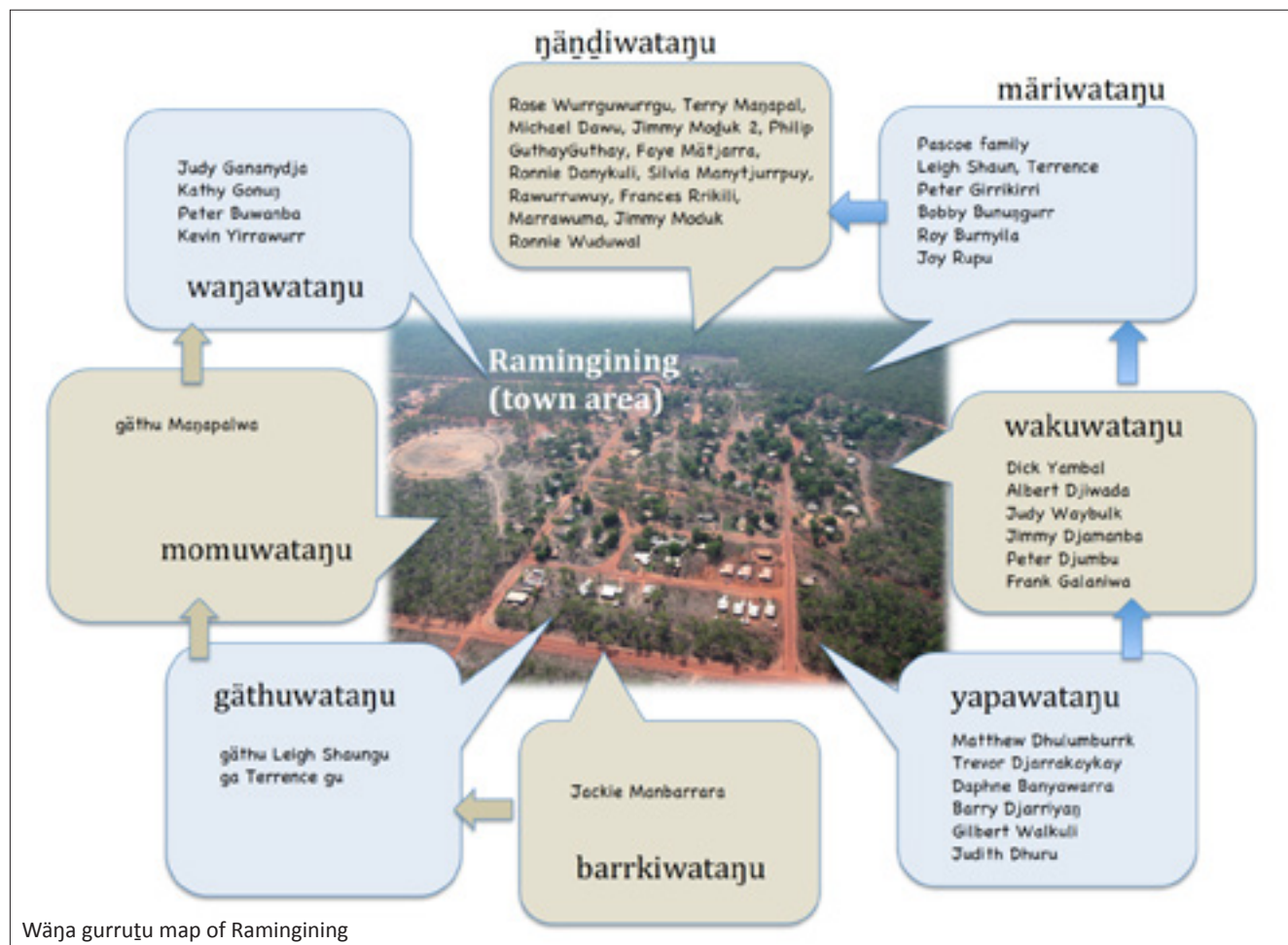
Ramingining and Homelands satellite map

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Tables of Governance and Leadership information



Don't leave us out

In one visit two facilitators (T and J) and Yolŋu consultant (M) were talking about governance in Ramingining and all the different 'balanda' stakeholder groups or 'bodies' and their affiliations with government and nongovernment organisations. As we talked J began drawing a picture on butchers paper. Looking at the drawing, M talked about 'communication' being a real problem. Not enough involvement of Yolŋu community members in the running of the community through different agencies. Balanda not communicating properly with Yolŋu and vice versa. With issues like school attendance, health and safety etc. most community members don't understand how agencies have responsibility and how this connects with the community. They don't know enough about the Australian, NT and local government laws, policies and programs and how these are implemented. M pointed out that, 'There is a current and Yolŋu are caught in the government current which is pulling Yolŋu to their way of learning and doing things. Yolŋu have things. I need to think what I have and what I can do. Yolŋu have land, sea, bush, culture. What I have I can use to make something useful in the modern world'. Later J re-drew the picture on the computer and shared it. This new picture provoked different conversations. 'Where are Yolŋu leaders in this picture? How do Yolŋu leaders fit into this stakeholder governance picture? There's no Yolŋu body in the picture'. M remembered the days of the 'Village Council' in the 1960's. 'Maybe we should look at the Village Council again?' We talked about the Village Council as a Yolŋu stakeholder group under Yolŋu governance and leadership and operate according to Yolŋu rom (law/protocols/processes). 'All we would expect is the outside world's respect'.

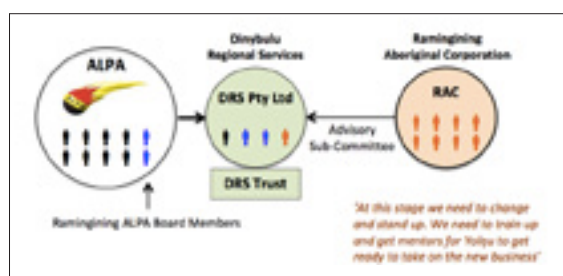
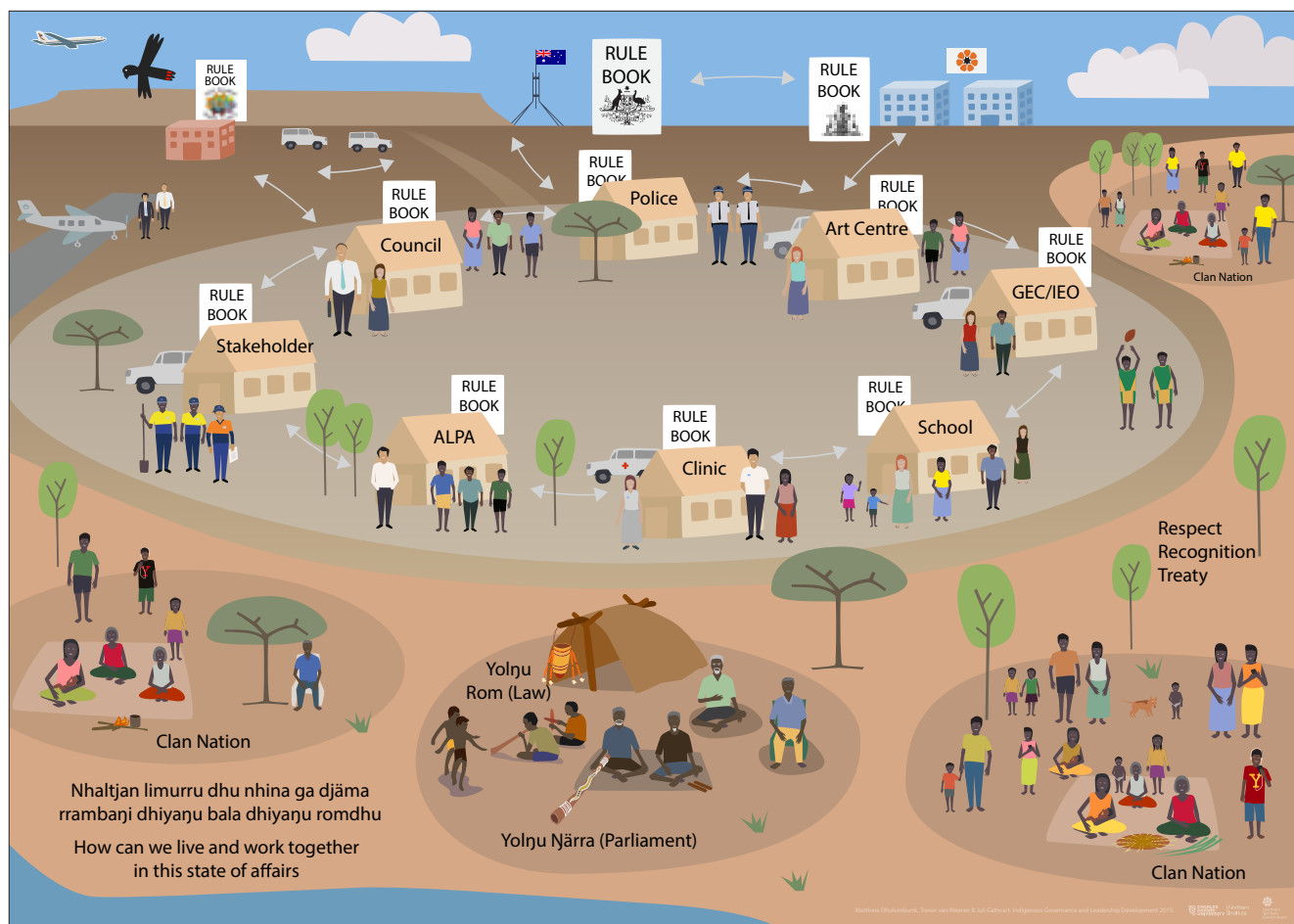
Posters-for-talking...

In the next IGLDP visit several weeks later, M and other leaders were talking about the Milingimbi petition (more details on website) and about doing something similar at Ramingining. They were also talking about drafting an MOU for all Ramingining stakeholders including Yolŋu about how to work together. M and T made a rough drawing together while thinking through the MOU idea. T showed M another poster he'd made of a generic community governance scenario and had trialled at Milingimbi a few weeks before. They used the elements from this poster with the MOU drawing to make a 'poster-for-talking' showing the current state of affairs with 'balanda' stakeholders governed by their Rule Books or Constitutions and their connections to the Australian and NT governments. After showing drafts to other elders we looked at some concepts of Yolŋu governance and balanda governance, and noted some differences. We made some edits to show the Yolŋu clan nations governed by their Sacred Dilly Bag and how these are not recognised by the dominating balanda stakeholder governance landscape. A draft of the poster was sent to the IGLDP Steering Committee who noted Local Government was missing. The final poster has been used in all three IGLDP towns and with Yolŋu Nations Assembly to stimulate conversations

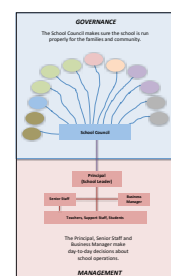


about governance. Yolŋu consultants and other leaders have copies of the printed poster (<https://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/ramingining/>).

Drawing together as we are talking prompts conversation, helps us to explain our ideas and reveals important cultural and other differences in the way we understand things. It supports us to work collaboratively, to generate collective understanding and most importantly, to do our 'difference' respectfully and well. The pictures are also traces of our journey together through a landscape of shared understanding we have performed and created together. When we do this work particularly well, the pictures often start to resonate and do their own work. The pictures themselves provoke, stimulate and generate dialogue. They become 'actors' in the dialogue. These pictures we develop slowly and carefully through using them with other people over time, watching how they work until we feel we have a version that is ready for printing.



We developed various visual texts to help us talk about, learn about and understand complex western governance concepts and arrangements.



School Council Workshop

Ramingining - 19 & 20 May 2014



Activity 1 - Wall Glossary

The Wall Glossary is an important part of all GroundUp workshops. All new and special words used during the workshop are put on the glossary so that we can be clear about their meaning.

The first word we looked at was **representative**, because we needed this word for Activity 2. It means someone who stands for or speaks for someone else.

Activity 2 - Who are we and what are our roles?

Each participant wrote the answer to four questions on different coloured paper. The questions were:

- What is your name?
- What kind of representative are you?
- Who do you represent?
- What is your position on the S.C.

Then they introduced themselves, and pasted their answers into a table. This activity made it clear that all the Yolngu members of the school council are Community Representatives, so they represent the community.

The two staff representatives represent the staff. Sue, as the principal, represents the Department of Education and the School Community.

Page 1

Program - Day 1

Welcome & Introduction

Activity 1 - Wall Glossary
New and special words

Activity 2 - Who are we and what are our roles?

Activity 3 - What are the FUNCTIONS and POWERS of a School Council? (Part 1)

Activity 4 - Review and Wrap-Up

Participants Day 1

Albert Waninyamar - Chairperson
Darren Wanybarra - Vice Chairperson
Veronica Gaykamaru - Secretary
Shirley Nulumburr - Treasurer
Arlene Wanybarra - Ordinary Member
Richard Durruurra - Ordinary Member
Barry Djarriyan - Ordinary Member
Sophia Yinakarrajan - Ordinary Member
Doreen Bilpil - Ordinary Member
Melissa - Ordinary Member
Sue McAvoy - School Principal



Ramingining Q&A



Njān'thun ga
Buku-bakmarama

Questions & Answers

In May we held our first Q&A in Ramingining. It was a part of the 3-day Elder's Forum.

This is the story of the Q&A on the second day.

The Elders' Forum

The Elders' Forum was held at the Old Police Station in Ramingining. It happened over 3 days.

Day 1 - Monday 12 May

The first day was just for Yolngu Elders and young people who will become Elders one day.

They talked about their dreams and visions, and about questions and worries, getting ready for Day 2. There were 25 people taking part.

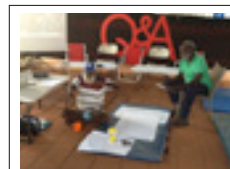
Day 2 - Tuesday 13 May

On the second day, Balanda were invited to be part of a Question and Answer program, like Q&A on television. It was a great success with 45 people coming to take part.

We had 3 panels. We invited the Rev Dr Djinyini Gondarra to be the chairperson. He flew from Darwin especially to do this, but because the plane was a bit late, Joseph Smith chaired the first panel and then Djinyini took over for the second panel.

Day 3 - Wednesday 14 May

On the last day we talked about the questions which had been asked and thought about the future. 15 people came. Juli and Trevor from the GroundUp team at Charles Darwin University joined us too.



Matthew Dhulumburrk and Tommy Gānda preparing questions at the start of the day.



Tony, Waninyamar, Joseph & Danykuli on our first panel.

Page 1

Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation - Steering Committee Workshop 5th November 2014

Workshop - Wednesday 5th November, 2014

We held the workshop at the Court House. The purpose of the workshop was for the Steering Committee to take the next steps in the journey of making a Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation for Ramingining.

Present: Dhulumburrk, Djwada, Yambal (2), Rumburumba, Djarriyan, Biltji.

Contacted but unavailable: Galiniwa, Norman

Facilitator: Trevor van Weeren (NI, CDU)

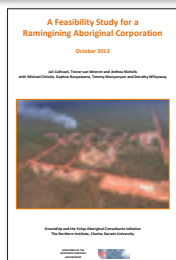
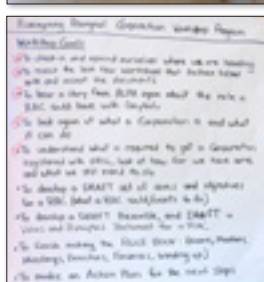
Workshop start: 10am

Workshop Goals

- To check-in and remind ourselves where we are heading
- To revisit the last few workshops that Anthea helped with and accept the documents
- To hear a story from ALPA again about the role a RAC could have with Dinybulu
- To look again at what a corporation is and what it can do
- To understand what is required to get a corporation registered with ORIC, look at how far we have come and what we still need to do
- To develop a DRAFT set of aims and objectives for a RAC (What a RAC could/wants to do)
- To develop a DRAFT preamble and DRAFT a Values and Principles statement for a RAC
- To finish making the RULE BOOK (Name, Members, Meetings, Directors, Finances, Winding-up)
- To make an action plan for the next steps

Goal 1: Looking back: Check-in and remind ourselves where we are heading. Keeping the story straight.

Trevor told the story about where we had come from, starting back in mid 2013 when ALPA was taking over the running of the old Ramingining Homelands Resource Centre. We looked at how we had made a feasibility study for a Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation.



1

Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation - Steering Committee Workshop 20th November 2014

Workshop - Wednesday 20th November, 2014

We held the workshop at the Court House. The purpose of the workshop was for the Steering Committee to take the next steps in the journey of making a Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation for Ramingining.

Present: Dhulumburrk Yambal (2), Galiniwa, Biltji, Norman, Tony O'leary.

Contacted but unavailable: Rumburumba, Djarriyan, Djwada

Facilitator: Trevor van Weeren (NI, CDU)

Workshop start: 10am

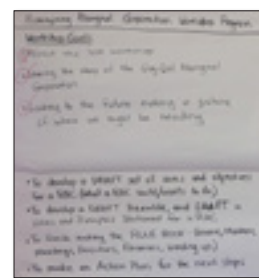
Workshop Goals

- Revisit the last workshop 5th November
- Sharing the story of the Gon-Dal Corporation
- Looking to the future; making a picture of where we might be heading
- To develop a DRAFT set of aims and objectives for a RAC (What a RAC could do or wants to do)
- To develop a DRAFT preamble and DRAFT a Values and Principles statement for a RAC
- To finish making the RULE BOOK (Name, Members, Meetings, Directors, Finances, Winding-up)
- To make an Action Plan for the next steps

In this workshop we achieved Goals 1 and 2. We partly achieved Goal 3 and will continue working on this in 2015.

Goal 1: Revisit the last Workshop. Check-in and remind ourselves what we have done. Keeping the story straight.

Dhulumburrk introduced the Workshop. He also introduced Peter Gamlin from the Northern Territory Government, Department of Community



1

Workshop documentation

These resources can be viewed on the website: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/raminging

Wurrumiyanga Report

Sketches

Community Workshops at Wurrumiyanga

From the beginning of this project the Tiwi people at Wurrumiyanga raised the need for Tiwi Way/ Tiwi governance to be acknowledged and for the Ponki Mediation process and Skin Groups Meetings to be reinvigorated and re-established. When we talked to them about the project, they highlighted these concerns as their focus, which they continually reinforced as we worked together.



Rise Up workshop in Wurrumiyanga

During the community workshops we were guided by Tiwi people's expectations and priorities when developing ways of articulating issues and growing capacities for governance and leadership in the community. We worked in a holistic manner ensuring that the participants were provided with the opportunity to share their knowledge and understandings, raise any community concerns or issues they wished to share as well as develop governance and leadership capacities.

Some of the learning shared and topics discussed included:

- Identifying businesses at Wurrumiyanga (private and Tiwi)
- Identifying service providers (government and NGO)
- Identifying the boards, LA and Tiwi Island Shire Council
- Sharing the history of Tiwi Island Shire council
- Discussion about issues Tiwi people experience and how to work with them to resolve them
- Tiwi aspirations and hopes for community in the future

Prior to being able to speak about governance and leadership in ways which did not isolate people through producing or reinforcing feelings of inadequacy, we needed to engage with where people were at; beginning a learning and development journey which had the potential to open up new and safe possibilities for Tiwi people.

It was important to prepare people for the learning and the discussion that was to follow. We invested time



Presentations to the group, Rise Up workshop

in encouraging and building the Tiwi people's confidence and capacity to actively participate in a meaningful and positive way. The shared learning was very cooperative and collaborative in a caring, safe, fun, open and non-authoritarian learning environment which ensured real engagement and learning. By being guided by Tiwi people, as well as working through empowerment and confidence building people began to see themselves as confident and capable human beings who are knowledgeable in their traditional governance system and who understand that there is a need for the Tiwi governance and western governance to work in partnership (more details on website).

Skin Group meetings becoming a new Tiwi organisation

Towards the end of the project we were asked to facilitate a workshop which focussed on leadership, governance, Tiwi Ways and Skin Group Meetings. By request of key Tiwi people that we had been working with, attendance at this workshop was by invitation only.

There was very specific work that this group wanted to achieve at the meeting. We were to develop a working group to help reconstitute the Tiwi Skin Groups meetings, and an action plan for how the group could work with services providers to address current issues arising in the community.

During our discussions, the old Tiwi word *Ngarukuruwanajirri* was remembered by one of the female elders in the room. This word means ‘four Tiwi skin groups coming together, helping together’. People were delighted with the re-emergence of this word which was not in common usage, and which some of the younger members of the group hadn’t heard. There was recognition that this was a deep concept which was crucial to the work we were doing now.



Skin Groups workshop in Wurrumiyanga

Re-establishing the Skin Group – or *Ngarukuruwanajirri* - meetings would allow people to speak from their proper cultural context when addressing issues about governance, leadership and mediation when working on community social issues. Recognising the Skin Groups as an organisation able to be engaged by other authorities and organisations, would also begin to update established but increasingly inadequate practices of seeking clan representation on councils and boards. While this approach to relating Western and Tiwi governance practices has supported clan representation within enterprise development, so far it has not enabled adequate Tiwi engagement with social issues in the community.

There was a feeling that convening the *Ngarukuruwanajirri* meetings provides a new way for the Skin Groups to



Elder, Bernard Tipiloura addresses Skin Groups workshop

participate within the variety of governance practices taking place in Wurrumiyanga, and also provides an opportunity for the teaching and modelling of Tiwi Way to Tiwi and non-Tiwi. As an organisation, the *Ngarukuruwanajirri* 's core function would be to articulate Tiwi Way and the Skin Group relationships, while nurturing and developing positive working partnerships between Tiwi people and traditions, and Western governance structures and service providers (more details on website).

Wurrumiyanga Key Outcomes

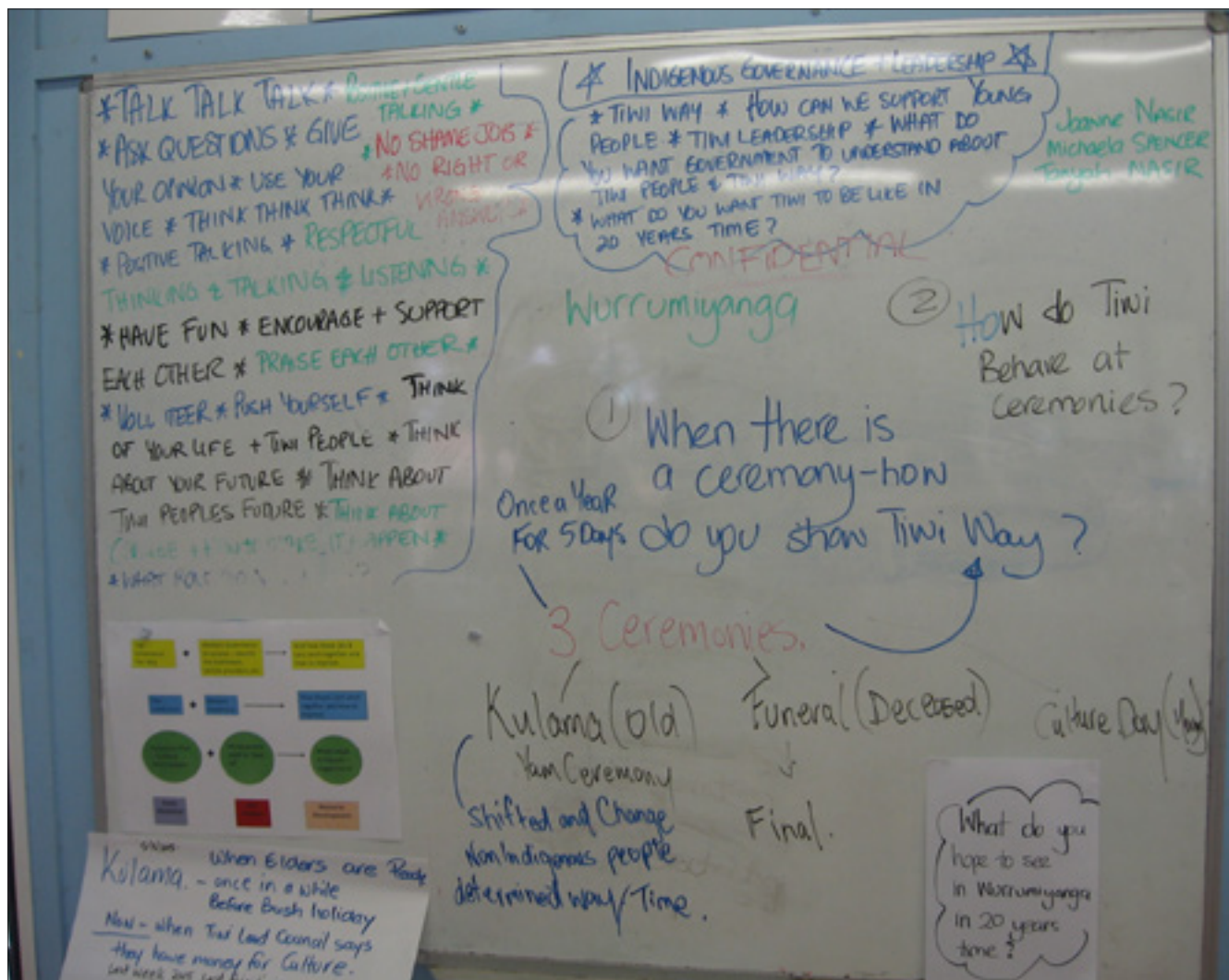
- Working with elders, Wangatunga Strong Women and emerging leaders to articulate 'Tiwi Way' as a critical pre-cursor to any successful engagement with government agencies and service deliverers in Wurrumiyanga
- Strengthening of the 'Skin Group Meetings' as a key forum for the engagement of social issues in the community
- Creation of an 'action plan' outlining how Skin Group Meetings and other agencies and organisations may work together to address social issues in the community (more details on website).
- Collaborative design of a Rise Up facilitation process which may be used by Tiwi people to support the development of new organisations and governance practices in Wurrumiyanga
- Ongoing engagement with broad sections of the community – supporting Tiwi people not currently engaging with public forums and decision making to confidently step into new leadership roles
- Creation of a 'road map' for the future development of the Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board (TITEB) – including new board policies and procedures, and continued support and mentoring for board directors (more details on website).
- Development of strategies to address ongoing issues around communication between the TITEB board and the broader community



The end of the Skin Groups workshop

Wurrumiyanga Significant Issues

- Tiwi people do not recognise 'Tiwi Way' as adequately understood or engaged with by external organisations operating in the community. They stress that 'Tiwi Way' is not something that can be captured in a document, but which must be practiced and taught by appropriate Tiwi authorities working in collaboration with others. In particular through the engagement of Tiwi authorities to induct newcomers into the practice of 'Tiwi Way', and through linking Skin Groups to the Local Authority, Regional Council and other service providers.
- There is a growing recognition that while Tiwi clan group representation on council and company boards has facilitated economic and enterprise development in the Tiwi Islands, this approach has not provided adequate means for working together to deal with social issues in the community.
- Ongoing support is needed to develop Tiwi people's understandings around Township leasing; in particular the 99 year lease and how businesses begin in Wurrumiyanga.
- Tiwi people at Wurrumiyanga continue to emphasise the importance of having Tiwi people employed in the new jobs becoming available on Bathurst and Melville Islands. However, there is still not a clear commitment by government, private enterprise and service providers to achieving these employment aims, and developing the long-term strategies required to achieve them.



Work on Tiwi Way and Western governance practices

Wurrumiyanga Summary of Activities

IGLDP project work was undertaken by two different teams of facilitators working in Wurrumiyanga:

Tanyah and Joanne Nasir (Tanyah Nasir Consulting Services), assisted by Michaela Spencer (Northern Institute), coupled governance and leadership development with the Rise Up facilitation approach.

Mike Harrison (Northern Institute), also assisted by Michaela Spencer, worked with the TITEB Board of Directors offering mentoring and support around the development of new board policies and practices.

Tanyah Nasir Consulting Services:

• Number of workshops held	9
• Total workshop attendance	134
• Number of engagements with community members	50
• Meetings with stakeholder organisations	27

TITEB workshops facilitated by Mike Harrison:

• Workshops held with TITEB Board	2
• Total workshop attendance	11
• Meetings held with TITEB management	4

Wurrumiyanga Future Directions

By the end of the project, the leaders and elders we had been working with were very clear and insistent that they wanted the work that they had begun to continue, and that they wanted to propose a set of recommendations to government and others outside the community. We workshoped these recommendations and the full list can be viewed on the website.

Also emerging out of the project were several key areas which may benefit from further work and investment.

1. Through the Rise Up workshops, therapeutic and developmental work was begun with a significant number of people within the Wurrumiyanga community. Participants at the workshops reported clear improvements in their sense of wellbeing and self-worth, and expressed a desire for more work of this kind. Observers of this process were also impressed, and suggested that the Rise Up program should be an obligatory precursor to any RJCP or other employment training activities.
2. Through the project the initial work of constituting Ngarukuruwanajirri or Skin Group Meetings as a new Tiwi organisation was begun. A working group, schedule of events and action plan was drawn up. There is significant momentum behind the move to formalise the Skin Group Meetings, and a desire that further work be funded and supported by government.
3. Once constituted the Ngarukuruwanajirri should be an organisation that others approach first when they enter the community, and from there they can be given guidance about who to talk to and how to access cultural awareness training. The Ngarukuruwanajirri may then also partner with service providers around how to manage and deal with issues in the community, and link with the Local Authority to ensure there is a two-way flow of information and service provision occurring through the Skin Groups.
4. Following on from several workshops with TITEB, the Board of Directors requested that the acting CEO continues to work with Northern Institute Researchers to deliver further governance mentoring, and further workshops to develop necessary board policies and other key documents which will assist their sustainable and responsible operations as a Tiwi company. They also requested that the acting CEO continues to work with Northern Institute Researchers to identify and apply for funding to sustain this collaboration.

Wurrumiyanga Community Evaluation

On the Rise Up Workshops:

'I have been waiting for something like this. It is important for us to be able to talk together about these things'
– Tiwi Man, Ponki Mediator

'Thank you for bringing the happiness and laughter' – Deanna, workshop participant

'The work has been over time slowly, slowly. Then today it has really helped us, because it was respecting us as we have good idea for Tiwi Way. It focuses on our strength as Tiwi and how we can change the violence at Wurrumiyanga and doing something very effective where everyone is listening and showing respect. This happens when we work with skin groups and Tiwi Way'
– Tiwi Man, Skin Group leader

'Please keep the ball rolling. This way of doing so far is working so keep same structure and keep the same team to train us. It helps us to develop and think about our code of conduct to be impartial like the workshops and build Tiwi capacity and confidentiality. This has helped us to really understand leadership and governance and look at Tiwi Way. The Code is the foundation – it will support Skin Group Meeting to manage the risk when we write up our own code' – Tiwi Man, Skin Group leader

'I am not sure how it all works because I did not attend; however, I did get invited to experience a couple of Tiwi songs with the group after they had finished an intensive session. This was phenomenal as the women had literally transformed into confident, radiant, happy, uplifted souls. I guess that by that time of day. All the work was complete and it was a special time of expression and sharing. If I can put it into words it would be... 'That which we seek we already have within ourselves. It's simply there awaiting an awakening, a self-realisation, an epiphany'.. I just hope there will be more opportunities to bring this course back to Tiwi for others to experience, plus to act as a reminder that living by our core values, culture and beliefs, enhances our lives. The outstanding outcome is that the governance course was so different to other structured service provider, stakeholder, government, or even educational processes' – Deb Cooper, Regional Coordinator RJCP Women's Centre (more details on website).



Tanyah Nasir (facilitator) and workshop participants

On the TITEB workshops:

'Identifying these issues has provided us with a platform to improve the work our board, what their roles and responsibilities are, how to better manage their relationship with the CEO and how to give directions set visions and understand their financial and social responsibility toward the organisation.' – Daniel Lesperance, Acting CEO TITEB]

'The CDU researchers have been useful in terms of developing the understanding of the board roles and identifying and assisting to resolve some short comings.' – Daniel Lesperance, Acting CEO TITEB

Wurrumiyanga Resources

Videos

Footage from the Rise Up workshops, as well as participant interviews and 'shout outs' were recorded throughout the project. This footage has been edited into four short videos on Tiwi Way, Skin Groups, Governance and Leadership in Wurrumiyanga, and the Rise up process.



Story of IGLDP in Wurrumiyanga

We developed a brief account of the Rise Up workshops at Wurrumiyanga, showing the approach of Tanyah Nasir consulting services, and their engagement with Tiwi people.

IGLDP in Wurrumiyanga

Introduction

Work in Wurrumiyanga has been carried out differently across the two stages of this project. The first stage took the form of a consultation process where members of the local community sat down to discuss their concerns, interests and understandings of Western and Tiwi governance in Wurrumiyanga. The second stage is taking place as a series of workshops which couple community development and empowerment with an emphasis on the strengthening of governance and leadership capacities within the community.



Tanyah Nasir - Rise Up facilitator

I was invited to be the IGLDP worker on the ground at Wurrumiyanga due to my long experience working with Indigenous individuals and organisations in the past. I have worked with Indigenous people and Tiwi people across the Northern Territory over the past 30 years with an education, employment and training context. Recently I have worked with Tiwi people whilst delivering the TNCs Rise Up Program, Be Your Best, Own your Future, in Darwin and at Wurrumiyanga.

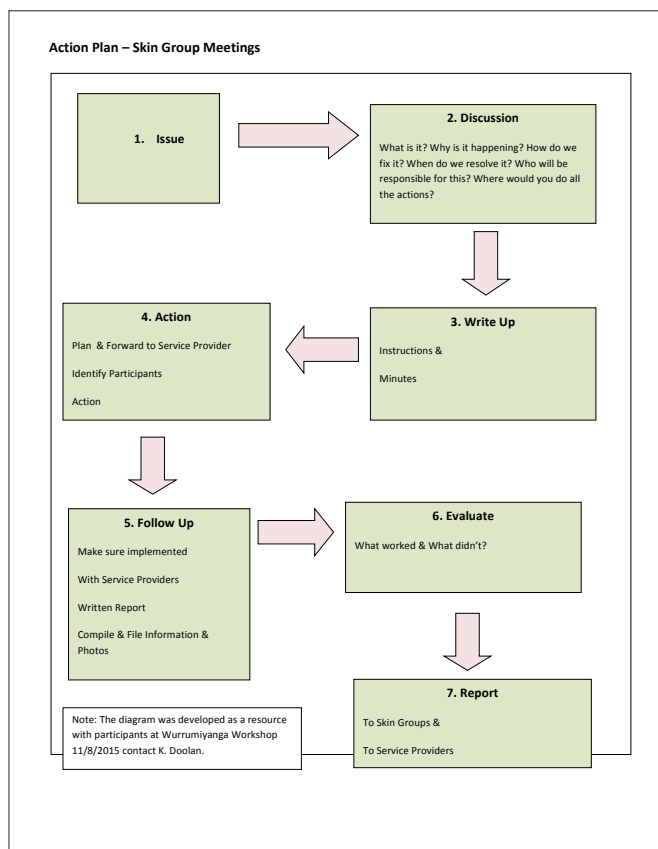
Even though I have family and cultural connections to some families at Tiwi, I undertake this project as an outsider however, I understand that my relationships will impact and influence how people respond to me.

I have been intentionally very broad in whom I talk to, as well as what I talk to them about, as this provides people with the opportunity to engage, connect, participate and feel valued and listened to. They are able to share their thoughts without judgment or repercussions. Beginning this project I took a "Tell Us the Story from your perspective ... as a worker and as a community member" approach to opening up discussion and allowing people to discuss what they would like regarding governance and leadership.

Stage 1

Stage 1 of this project initially involved meeting with people (Tiwi and non-Tiwi) that I already had an existing personal and professional relationship with, seeking their advice, guidance and support on how to proceed, who I needed to talk to and how to move the project forward in an inclusive and respectful manner.

Local Tiwi people were happy to meet in their spare time to share their knowledge to help me understand the governance and leadership at work at Wurrumiyanga. At initial discussions the employment of local Tiwi people was highlighted as a way of developing and strengthening



Further development of the TITEB Board's policies and processes

Following on from several workshops with TITEB, the Board expressed a strong desire to continue with further workshops on Governance that produce Board policies and other key documents that they will use in developing their Governance approach. They also requested that the acting CEO works with Northern Institute Researchers to identify funding for this work, apply for it, and implement the Governance development program.

Policies and resources to be developed in the course of this policy development program include:

- An overall framework that brings together TITEB programs and the high level outcomes and indicators that demonstrate progress in achieving outcomes.
- A TITEB shareholders agreement
- TITEB policy on delegations for the board, and a clear process to present information to the Board with recommendations for action.
- TITEB policy on Tiwi Workforce development addressing the Role of the Board in developing and sustaining key relationships with Tiwi Elders, and other Tiwi Boards around issues like activity development and participation, activity testing and dealing with potential family and other conflict, ways of building Tiwi Workforces
- TITEB policy on Tiwi Employment and Tiwi Staff development
- TITEB policy on Cultural awareness and development of Cultural Competence of Non Tiwi Staff
- TITEB Policy on cultural competency of service delivery
- The Board were interested in the 'Tricker Model' (1994), and would like to workshop it in the context of the governance responsibilities for TITEB in the Tiwi Community
- Revision of processes of financial reporting, formats to allow the Board to better understand the financial position of TITEB, and the option of establishing a Finance Subcommittee of the Board

Funding is being sought from the NTG Department of Business to further this work.

'Action Plans'

We facilitated the creation of two 'action plans' to support ongoing work by the Skin Groups Meetings, and the TITEB board. The action plan for the Skin Group meetings was developed to facilitate their own working process and accountability when partnering with service providers.

The action plan for the TITEB board emerged out of governance workshops facilitated by Mike Harrison, and detail agreed next steps for the organisation as they review and improve their governance practices.

Skin Groups Project

We were able to take a project on the Tiwi Skin Groups (Rossingh et al., 2014) back to Wurrumiyanga and show it to many of the people who had been involved in its creation over the last 10 years. As a 'found object' this resource assisted our workshops developing a new Tiwi Skin Groups organisation; and may also be beneficial for others in the future.



These resources can be viewed on the website www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/wurrumiyanga



Evaluation of IGLDP Processes

Introduction

Building up governance and leadership capacities in remote Aboriginal communities entails taking seriously contemporary Aboriginal understandings and practices, as well as those of government and of the university. Our evaluation work involved each of these groups.

We started the project work in each community by asking questions about what governance and leadership might mean in local terms. We sought to take seriously the differentials generated in traditional language discourses and cultural authority, since these are still central to community life.

In the same way, in this report, we began with stories of the ground work, highlighting particularities. We invited key community members with whom we had worked, to reflect upon our work, what it meant and what it had produced. Then the facilitators from each community reflected upon their own practice and its outcomes. Next, we invited members of the Steering Committee to evaluate the whole process, from the governments' points of view. Finally university researchers offered insights from the academic point of view.

We were interested in evaluating the project not only in its own terms for each of the five communities, but equally in the context of changing relations between governments, business, civil society, Aboriginal communities and academic research in the changing policy climate of the Northern Territory. This latter context is no less local and specific than the context of each community. It is in the richness and strength of the differing connections between all these locales, that the health of NT institutional life lies.

Gapuwiyak Facilitation Team Evaluation

What made our work easier?

- Employing and working with Gawura Wanambi (elder/leader) as a local advisor, mentor, co-researcher, interpreter.
- Working through local Yolŋu authorities, being guided in this by Gawura and following his leadership.
- The considerable experience of Goŋ-Däl Steering Group and Directors, and their unflagging enthusiasm and commitment to working through complex governance and leadership issues and building networks through developing their own Aboriginal Corporation both during and between visits.
- Our ongoing work with Gawura and Goŋ-Däl Directors meant we developed relationships, routines and expectations, and built on previous learning.
- Spending time on weekends with various Goŋ-Däl Directors getting to know and learning about their families, Yolŋu law, gurruṯu, stories and places. Driving rather than flying meant that this was possible and not a burden. Having a car we were independent, could get around easily, help transport people and things.
- Staying in the VOQ, VONs and Police accommodation and using the Police Court House and the Australian Government complex for workshops and meetings.
- Positive responses of ALPA, MEP, DEAL, EARC and NTG regional staff to Goŋ-Däl's incorporation and the opportunities that immediately arose.
- Francine Chinn (GEC) and Watha Wunurŋmurra (IEO) (whom we knew from previous work) proactively supported the IGLDP, and helped keep us abreast of community and government issues and changes, invited us to meetings etc.

What made things more difficult?

- Managing complex issues of Yolŋu ownership and authority around use of a particular Yolŋu name with significant meaning and usage history... "everyone wants that name Ŋ....." in relation to decisions around the corporation.
- Trying to work meaningfully with the confusing, obfuscatory and unaccountable IAS process and Indigenous affairs environment of the Australian Government experienced through supporting the Goŋ-Däl Directors to write and submit an IAS application and a petition to Minister Scullion.

What was most effective?

- Gawura Wanambi conducted careful research with many Yolŋu leaders to develop a 'database' and map of Yolŋu governance and leadership in Gapuwiyak and worked closely with facilitators to design ways of presenting this.
- Building knowledge about and skills in governance and leadership through workshopping, mentoring and coaching in the real context and experience of developing and running the Goŋ-Däl Aboriginal Corporation.
- Working with Yolŋu leaders and elders to record information about clans, leaders and their relationships to each other and places in Gapuwiyak and Homelands and developing a spreadsheet and maps.
- The 'Open Workshop' for the Goŋ-Däl Steering Group and community members to the processes for registering the Goŋ-Däl Aboriginal Corporation. (See Sketches, page 8)

- Keeping in regular contact with Goṇ-Ḍäl Directors, Gawura (EARC Vice Chair), Watha (IEO) and Yangipuy (CLO) between visits, checking if visit dates a couple of weeks in advance and touching base just before the visit to make sure timing was good and people were able and ready to work with us was critically important.
- Working with Gawura at the beginning of each visit to review things and find out what was happening in Gapuwiyak, make a rough plan then meeting with the Goṇ-Ḍäl SC/Directors to present and hone this plan together, build a program and time frame and make an agreement about what we wanted to do and/or achieve and how we would do this.
- Working with Yolṇu leaders through governance and leadership problems of the moment, e.g. developing an Aboriginal corporation, getting a Section 19 lease, negotiating potential partnerships with ALPA and MEP, helping people prepare for Court hearings, reporting scams.
- Holding the Goṇ-Ḍäl AGM in the community meeting place on the Council lawns, enabled everyone to easily attend and the Goṇ-Ḍäl Directors to present themselves and Goṇ-Ḍäl publicly through performing the AGM. It also created the opportunity for some issues around the development of the corporation to come out into the open and be resolved.
- The Goṇ-Ḍäl Directors carefully discussing, planning and preparing for meetings with each other and the IGLDP facilitators meant we could workshop things they didn't understand and develop strategies and clarity around issues and processes, so they went into meetings feeling confident and prepared.
- Continually reflecting on and evaluating our work with Gawura and the Goṇ-Ḍäl Directors. Recording meetings and listening to and talking about the recording together later was particularly useful and provided a good record.
- When meeting with the MEP (Yolṇu) Board Members, all Yolṇu Directors met first and discussed things together in appropriate Yolṇu ways BEFORE Balanda were involved in the meeting.



Heading off to Gapuwiyak

Milingimbi Facilitation Team Evaluation

What made our work easier?

- Employing and working with Nākarrma Guyula (elder/leader) as a local advisor, mentor, co-researcher, interpreter.
- Working with elder and leader, Gwen Warmbirrirr and for a short time Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO) Farah Gumbala, helped us connect with Milingimbi women.
- Building knowledge about and skills in governance and leadership through workshopping, mentoring and coaching in the real-life context and experience of developing and running the Nyälka Women's Aboriginal Corporation.
- Staying in the Visiting Officers Quarters (VOQ) and with the Healthy for Life Coordinator and using her house as well as the Australian Government complex for some workshops and meetings.
- The support and encouragement of the Healthy for Life Coordinator in connecting women wanting to strengthen Yolŋu women's leadership and governance (who later formed the Nyälka Milingimbi Women's Group) with Indigenous Governance and Leadership Project (IGLDP).
- Having female facilitators was very important for working with women.

What made things more difficult?

- It was not possible to work directly with the Milingimbi Community Advisory (CAB)/Local Authority (LA) without the support of the Council Services Manager (CSM). The CSM was happy to meet, talk with us, for us to attend CAB/LA meetings and present about the IGLDP and wished us well but did not create opportunities for us to do any governance and leadership work with CAB/LA members despite our offers.
- Yolŋu leaders who were also members of the CAB and LA discussed many governance and leadership issues and concerns with us including concerns about the CAB/LA but did not ask us to work with them through the CAB or LA.
- Attempts to work with the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), School, Art Centre and Milingimbi & Outstations Progress Resource Association (MOPRA)/Rangers didn't get past initial scoping stages. They seemed to have their own Professional Development and training processes and programs in place (e.g. East Arnhem Regional Council (EARC) employed Matrix On Board to do governance training with Regional Councillors, NT Council of Government School Organisations (COGSO) was working with the School Council, the RJCP could only accommodate accredited training) and it was too difficult to fit us in with these and their busy schedules, which were often planned months in advance.
- There was no Government Engagement Coordinator (GEC) living in Milingimbi and the IEO position was vacant for most of the Project.
- Competing demands on the time of



Meeting with elders at Top Camp

many of the women who involved themselves with us impacted on their ability to be on time and attend meetings and workshops.

What was most effective?

- The only traction the IGLDP got in Milingimbi was working directly with Yolŋu leaders. Working with Yolŋu leaders outside of 'balanda-style' institutions, and showing we were comfortable with that, was crucial.
- Working with Yolŋu leaders through governance and leadership problems of the moment e.g. supporting leaders to make a petition about leadership and governance issues to NT and Australian governments.
- Working with an 'informal' group of Yolŋu women who were part of a long history of 'women's groups' dating back to the missionaries. The women were looking for ways to ensure continuity, develop and run their own programs and be the first port of call for government agencies and NGOs wanting to work with women and children so they work through Yolŋu law and governance to provide appropriate, coordinated, community-based services and programs in Milingimbi.



Women's group meeting to finalise the Rule Book

- Building knowledge about and skills in governance and leadership through workshopping, mentoring and coaching in the real context and experience of developing and running the Nyäḷka Women's Aboriginal Corporation.
- Keeping in contact with Gwen Warmbirrirr and some of the other women between visits, checking visit dates a couple of weeks in advance and touching base just before the visit to make sure timing was good and people were able and ready to work with us was critically important.
- Negotiating, flexibility, accommodating employment and child-care responsibilities and providing food helped the women to manage competing demands and participate in IGLDP meetings and workshops.
- The differential work of IGLDP stages 1 and 2 was important in Milingimbi. It gave us the freedom to widely research and find people who wanted to work with us to develop and improve their leadership and governance capacity, and find ways for western and Yolŋu governance to work better together in Milingimbi and the Stage 2 Plan gave us possibilities to target an emerging group and support Yolŋu women to develop an Aboriginal corporation as a strategy of the IGLDP.

Ntaria Facilitation Team Evaluation

What made our work easier?

- The main thing that made the project easier to do, particularly given my lack of history in the community was having Amanda Kantawara as a local employee of the project. Amanda knew people, knew their relationships and knew how to find them and negotiate to bring them into the process. Key here was our ability to work together well and comfortably.
- The fact that people in this community have a history of thinking and talking openly and seriously about community level governance, meant that the project processes took place in contexts where the subject matter was already a known and talked about 'thing'. The fact that it followed on from the moves toward formalising community governance through the Wurla Nyinta also helped in this particular context where they were happy to think about governance at the level of the community.
- Being connected to the Northern Institute is very important for the Tangetyere Council Research Hub, and our team of researchers in Ntaria in a project like this. It allows us to learn from others, and to pass that along. Setting up a connection between the two places institutionally, both the community and the NI see our work contributing to a wider context. Without the link to the NI the project would not have gone as far.

What made it more difficult?

- The fact that I was a newcomer with no previous history in the community undoubtedly made things harder. The project just landed in the community--we just turned up uninvited. It meant that it took quite a while for the project to get going, notwithstanding the importance of our first move being to negotiate acceptance of the project, and agreement for us to start with Wurla Nyinta's blessing. People were still wary of getting involved in the project as it had not emanated from anything they had initiated, and we were asked many questions about what it was about and what it was meant to do.

What was disconcerting?

- The essentially unbounded and stretchable nature of 'governance', and of 'leadership' as analytic concepts kept tripping us up. Understanding how local leadership and governance always implicates more actors, and recognising that we need to think about some kind of process for involving them, could be usefully explored.
- In terms of our project I think privileging working with Aboriginal people and showing we were willing to follow more or less wherever they went, was in the first instance, the right way to conceptualise the project. But perhaps as the project unfolded we should have done more work in looking at the sticky, messy spaces at the interfaces. However to do this might need different (new) processes to bring others in and more time. It is disconcerting to recognise this at the end of the project.

What could be done differently next time?

- In terms of what change I would make I would seek to structure it using a more formalised iterative process rather than the two stage process we used. The reason for this is that in Ntaria there were not distinct stages, rather a (what turned out to be) structured unfolding, in this case around the concept of community level governance. Recognising that in other places other issues and imperatives emerged, it is nonetheless fair to say that in each there was no great distinction between planning and action- the two things occurred together and were emphasised differently at different times in the projects



Nicholas Williams and Reggie Lankin- Sports and Recreation officers



Ramingining Facilitation Team Evaluation

- Employing and working with Dhulumburrk Gaykamanju (elder/leader) as a local advisor, mentor, co-researcher, and interpreter.
- One IGLDP facilitator (Anthea Nicholls) had a long history of living and working in Ramingining and very strong connections to many Yolŋu leaders and community members and to the School, and lived in Ramingining for most of the Project.
- Having one of us living in Ramingining for much of the Project meant we could fit the work more easily with Yolŋu life and community events. But note that this was only possible because Anthea's accommodation costs were covered by her participation in several other CDU projects
- When Anthea retired we often drove rather than flew to the community. This meant we were independent, could get around easily, provide a help with transporting people and things. It helped us to build our relationships with people. We learned about governance and leadership informally by going out onto country with Yolŋu family and colleagues after work and on weekends.
- Building knowledge about and skills in governance and leadership through workshopping in the real world experience of developing a Ramingining Aboriginal Corporation.
- We had strong existing relationships with the Yolŋu and some balanda teachers through our work in a previous Professional Development program for Yolŋu teachers, and Anthea's past work as a Ramingining teacher and running Yolŋu matha classes.
- Open, innovative leadership of the new school principal who saw the outcomes of our PD with Yolŋu teachers and asked us to work directly on governance issues with the School Council.
- Tony O'Leary (GEC), and Norman Daymirinju (IEO) (whom we knew from previous work) proactively supported the IGLDP, and helped keep us abreast of community and government issues and changes and invited us to participate in and support Local Reference Group meetings, and work with them to improve these.



Project facilitator Anthea, in discussions with Djiwuda

What made things more difficult?

- It was very hard to work with the East Arnhem Regional Council in Ramingining. A very short 'training' session for the Community Advisory Board at the end of a couple of meetings was all we managed.
- The Art Centre Manager and ASRAC Rangers were happy to talk with us and identified governance issues but did not want to vary their existing governance training arrangements.

What was most effective?

- Working closely with Dhulumburrk.
- ‘Governance House’ – a welcoming, dedicated, centrally located, supportive, culturally safe place that Yolŋu leaders, community members and groups regularly used to do specific personal and community governance work and came to for support, advice, assistance, coaching and mentoring.
- Mapping balanda governance arrangements with Dhulumburrk and developing a poster that helped people talk about governance in Ramingining, Milingimbi and Gapuwiyak.
- Working with Yolŋu leaders through governance and leadership problems of the moment, e.g. responding to the 99 Year Leases, working Yolŋu and Balanda law together in relation to parole responsibilities, understanding the new ALPA business, Dinybulu Regional Services and its impact on the feasibility of the local Ramingining Corporation they were working to develop.
- Living in Ramingining meant Anthea was able to support Yolŋu community members with many individual governance and leadership issues and concerns in an on-going way.
- Working in a very hands-on, practical way with Yolŋu to unpack, understand and address governance issues and concerns as and when they arose caused by government policy or processes.

What was disconcerting?

- Working in our very hands-on, practical way with Yolŋu meant that a disconcerting disjunction occurred when Anthea left the community. It took some time for new footings to emerge in which Trevor could comfortably work. This should not be seen as a disadvantage of the ground-up way of working but it does need to be recognised as a factor. In fact Trevor went on to participate in what was a most significant event in governance and leadership development in Ramingining and the wider Yolŋu polity. IGLDP processes pursued both by Anthea and Trevor, albeit taking different forms, contributed to the success of this event.



Project facilitator Juli, in discussions with David Rumbrumba

Wurrumiyanga Facilitation Team Evaluation

What made the project easier in our community?

- The Team leader is an Aboriginal person who has family connections in the community
- Working with Bonaventure Timaepatua as the cultural consultant in the community. He was invaluable in liaising with community leaders and workshop participants.
- Committing to offering payment to those involved in the project
- Having the commitment and support of Kevin Doolan (Local Authority)
- Openness of the Tiwi people – they shared their knowledge with energy and enthusiasm
- Having the freedom to be guided by Tiwi people in the way we organised our work, and the directions taken by the project.
- That Northern Institute privileged Indigenous facilitators and Aboriginal ways of doing in the implementation of this project
- Having the freedom and flexibility for the project to unfold organically as it was driven by the community
- The TITEB project was made easier for a number of reasons. The Lead researcher has had a relationship with the CEO for many years, and relationships also exist with many of the key Tiwi stakeholders. This meant that there was a good level of trust and the project was quickly able to focus on the key issues. The Lead researcher has also recently completed a relatively large project for TITEB, that engaged Board members, a large cross section of Tiwi and Non Tiwi staff, and the majority of stakeholders that TITEB work with, including the Tiwi Land Council. This brought to the project a “fresh set of eyes” on the whole TITEB operation, including its relationship with Tiwi community.

What made things more difficult?

- We were continually translating the language of the project (even the basic terms ‘governance and leadership’) into language that was not threatening or alienating to the people we were working with. This translation work was crucial to any outcomes which we may have achieved, however, is frequently undervalued in project outlines and reporting
- Focussing on ‘governance and leadership’ tended to obscure some of the therapeutic development work that was needed to get people to the stage where they could begin to work on these issues.
- When working with the TITEB board, the main issue was the relatively short time frame and the availability of Board members to meet and progress issues.

What worked most effectively?

- Organising ourselves so that we respond very quickly to any work from the island, that now was a good time, or not, to come. We both arranged trips and cancelled trips at very short notice to fit in around funerals and other sorry business
- Integrating Rise Up exercises focussed around confidence building and empowerment with governance work and activities
- Being guided by elders in the community
- Beginning very broadly by speaking to a wide range of people and organisations about how they would

like to work with us, and how they would like to work with the opportunity presented by this project

- Being able to generate our particular outcomes and methods of interaction as we went along. Without this flexibility we would not have been able to remain responsive to the people in the community who we were working with, and to find ways of developing and moving the project along which were not an imposition within community life and therefore counterproductive to what we were trying to achieve.
- Having the support and expertise of Michaela Spencer from the NI. Michaela was very much the connector and conduit for the Indigenous facilitators and the NI for all matters regarding the project. This process worked very well.



Rise up workshop in Wurrumiyanga



Women participating in the Skin Groups workshop

NT Government Participants Evaluation

Peter Gamlin, NTG project manager and Steering Committee member

What was good

- The opportunity to employ a different approach and negotiate from the beginning how the project would be delivered and how participants wanted to be involved.
- Responding to priorities of the participants. Being able to offer support and work in a way that has not been available to some groups for some time, e.g. the progressing of the governance ambitions at Gapuwiyak through Gorŋ-Däl.
- The brokering of the relationship between the researchers and the Steering Committee. Having someone like Michael as the CDU project contact, someone who understood the perspectives of the different stakeholders and was able to communicate effectively to an audience of public servants was extremely helpful.
- Drawing attention to the emergence of particular governance ‘problems’ and explaining/pointing to some of the new governance entities that are arising.
- Generating some resources to counter some common misconceptions about governance and leadership in remote communities.
- The insights that were gained into our own approaches to governance, specifically the awareness of limits to governance knowledge and practices within large mainstream NT organisations (like NTG, CDU and LGANT). Saw this in the ad hoc changes to the Steering Committee membership, the way in which we viewed agreements (and agreement making), the limited understanding of the audit process, etc.

What was hard

- Project was implemented at a time of significant change to governance arrangements and governance groups under the influence of governments e.g. the withdrawal from the LRGs, the introduction of Local Authorities, the shifting of focus of both governments.
- The quality of our project management tools i.e. not having a really coherent project funding agreement with milestones or performance indicators that were consistent with the agreed project objectives
- Difficulty in sticking with the activities agreed to in the project funding agreement.
- Responding to change and managing the tension between flexibility and accountability. When it was identified through Stage 1 planning/implementation that some of the original deliverables, objectives and outcomes anticipated were not going to be achieved, or other unanticipated opportunities had arisen, it would have been good to negotiate an acceptable change to the agreement (documented in a variation).



Steering group meeting at CDU

- The shift in priorities of governments and the decline in interest in the IGLDP project over the time taken to go from the original Aust Gov RSD Governance and Leadership Development Strategy funding MoU to project implementation.
- The inability to provide the information that project participants wanted on the changes to government policy e.g. the silent demise of the Working Futures Policy
- Difficulty in promoting the project within the NTG. Frequently dismissed as small, not producing tangible outputs, etc. and not championed. Entrenched scepticism towards “academics”.
- Hard to get access to some of the governance groups – some reluctance of organisations to accept assistance if not being delivered/organised/controlled? by them.
- Getting a shared understanding of the obligations of different parties, for example, the obligations of Government to demonstrate efficiency and results when using public money.

What was disconcerting

- The struggle to stay on track. The loss of focus on producing resources and making of both systems of government visible to the other. Didn't seem to get to explaining how activities at their interface might be made to work more effectively. Project originally intended to provide assistance to people directly participating in the project and others (both in government and communities) who need to understand each other. As yet, there is not much in the way of resources that makes both western and Aboriginal systems of government visible to a wider group.
- The reluctance of Regional Councils to get involved with the project. Perhaps we as a steering committee should have done more to get to the bottom of what the problems were and facilitate some access.

What could have been done differently/ other thoughts that might inform future projects.

- The project's relevance to the intended beneficiaries. It almost seemed as if it was pushed on to the community (by governments). By the time the project was implemented, the original motivation to support Governance and Leadership activity had diminished within project funding organisations. Should we be saving our energy and resources for projects that are requested by community members or organisations, have a very clear/specific purpose, and which is agreed to/committed to by governments?
- The importance of understanding government as an audience (something I am learning about continuously) and the difficulty in getting information to decision-makers in a form that they will engage in – i.e. Summarised, specific, very brief and preferably identifying some observable change.
- Stronger links between some of the issues identified and recommended practical actions to overcome them. E.g. lack of experience, knowledge, understanding and skills about Yolŋu culture, governance and leadership amongst some balanda staff – what can we do about it?
- More clarification of project governance and management arrangements. Steering Committee ToRs? Where there is an expectation of some facilitation by the project funding organisation/s it should be formalised in the agreements.
- Perhaps sustainability should be thought about earlier in the life of a project so there is time to explore different options for continuing or transitioning to other kinds of assistance.

CDU Researcher Evaluation

What was good

- Being supported by government funding to take on a project which involved a balance of research and facilitation. IGLDP processes were designed for simultaneous services delivery (promoting capacities and skills in governance and leadership in five Indigenous communities) and research. Research sought both to discern the current situation of governance and leadership practices in five Indigenous communities, and to identify the tensions and hence needs that capacity building in governance and leadership practices might attend to.
- Ongoing negotiations with community members, facilitators and Indigenous consultants, academic theorists and researchers, and government officers, as new understandings of local governance and leadership, and new and unexpected collaborations towards capacity building emerged.
- The flexibility made possible through two key exigencies,
 - the support of particular people in government who felt some urgency for an alternative to top-down delivery of training in leadership and governance, and
 - the eagerness with which community members engaged with the local facilitators once it was clear that the project was addressing emergent local agendas, rather than bringing in (yet another) government agenda from outside...
- Working in team of 2-3 facilitators in each community lessened feelings of isolation enabling mutual support and mentoring. Being able to 'bounce ideas around' on the spot was invaluable.
- Being able to arrange or cancel visits at short notice and 'turn up' at the right times in communities, and being able to do that routinely and regularly
- Previously established relationships with community elders in all the communities (except Ntaria)
- Working with Indigenous researchers and organisations (including Tangetyere Council Research Hub and Rise-up)
- Coming together at the NI twice a year for in-depth discussion as a research-facilitation group to consider the unfolding project in each community; looking carefully at samenesses and differences; taking differences particularly seriously.
- Undertaking the project in the Northern Institute in the wider context of research into governance, changing roles of governments, Indigenous organisations, and the Developing the North agenda.



Team meeting at the Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University (CDU)

What was hard

- The actual work of balancing facilitation and research in the Indigenous communities and in NI settings requires collective reflective practices. Both research and facilitation require that we become simultaneously partial insiders and partial outsiders. The partialities are different when one is in an NI setting or a community setting. And research and facilitation practices also differ. IGLDP processes are a tricky balancing act.
- Some of the best and most productive project work in communities was undertaken in intense sessions working with individuals or groups, working on problems of the moment, but with very little identifiable 'outcomes' – ie products which can 'tick boxes'.
- Related to the above, we were under some pressure to produce 'resources' which may be useful for similar work in other contexts. As it turned out most of the resources were very local and specific, addressing the problem of the moment, so not readily generalizable. These were sometimes improved mainly to provide evidence to the funding bodies of 'value for money' for the investment in the project. The resources at best work as exemplifications.



Team meeting at the Northern Institute, CDU

What was disconcerting

- We started the project believing that much of our work would entail connecting up various people and organisations in communities with various people and bodies in government. This really didn't happen, partly because what we imagined to be existing or incipient connections with government were almost non-existent, and because people on the ground were generally insistent upon beginning with an articulation of their own governance practices, and working from there towards connections with outside institutions and their structures and governance.
- We imagined the work would be more informal and ad hoc, but as it turned out, people in each community were interested in engaging the facilitators to help with the development or strengthening of their own organisations.
- This sometimes involved some soul-searching about the tensions between what we had been funded to do by governments, and what we had been asked to undertake by the people we worked with.

What could have been done differently/ other thoughts that might inform future projects.

- Working relationships with nonindigenous people at the community level could have been much improved if there were better coordination and communication between the departments represented by the steering committee and those on-the-ground workers. Some effort was made towards this end at the beginning of the project. Occasional visits by the Steering Committee to communities may have helped.



Team meeting at the Northern Institute, CDU

Conclusion

The Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance group at the Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University, was approached by the NT Government, and invited to undertake the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project in 2013. This invitation represented significant good faith and trust on the part of government, and the recognition of a history of successful ground-up research and facilitation in Yolŋu communities funded by government and other bodies (see www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup).

We were interested to work in communities where we were known and experienced. Our engagements in each community were different and changed over time. The researchers and facilitators met and communicated regularly with each other and with government. With changing government policies and practices, with the changing constitution of the Steering Committee, and with the growing local ambition at each site for the development and recognition of Indigenous organisations, our work changed over the two years. The central concern for building up governance and leadership capacity in local communities on local terms remained constant. Different individuals, groups and institutions engaged us in different ways, and different groups and initiatives emerged as the project unfolded.

Our research-facilitation methods entail strategically identifying and working with people of good will wherever we find them, and taking their institutional practices and values seriously. There were always people interested and concerned to work with us. From the outset we worked from our tentative knowledge and our respect for governance and leadership within the Aboriginal polity, within the university, and within different branches of government. We worked hard to build those relationships together.

We found ourselves in the unique and privileged position of being funded to address the agendas of the people we worked with, on their own terms, and often in their own languages. This included people in government, in the university, and in non-government organisations. In fact it is working together, attending to the richness and strength of institutional and organisational connections in each site and at all levels, that accounts for our success, and points to what we must all do to ensure healthy and resilient governance and leadership in the NT.

Much work remains to be done



Appendix

Gapuwiyak Community engagement tables: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/gapuwiyak

Milingimbi Community engagement tables: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/milingimbi

Ntaria Community engagement tables: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/ntaria

Ramingining Community engagement tables: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/ramingining

Wurrumiyanga Community engagement tables: www.cdu.edu.au/centres/groundup/igld/wurrumiyanga

