



# Whole of Community **Engagement** Initiative

## Tracking Pathways Together: Evaluating the Impact of Community Engagement *Rom-manapanmi ga Dhinthun Djalkiri*

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# What is the Whole of Community Engagement Initiative

- \* Learning and understanding about education related issues; Ground-up in 6 remote Indigenous communities
- \* Improving education pathways
- \* Engaging with the whole community; Collaborative & PAR
- \* Learning and acknowledging context within the community
- \* Building an understanding about education in the community; All ages
- \* Support and negotiate plans for activities and ways to address emergent issues
- \* Identify enablers/barriers - school, community, CDU, Batchelor Institute, CDP etc.
- \* Sharing stories and ideas
- \* Spirit of partnership

*Commonwealth funded – HEPPP : 6 Communities –  
Yirrkala, Galiwinku, Yuendumu,  
Tennant Creek, Gunbalanya & Maningrida*



**Why was the community interested in the project?**

## **Yirrkalā Community Vision**

*Improving education pathways*

*Community education and training opportunities*

*More degree qualified Yolŋu teachers*

*Higher qualifications for Yolŋu*

*Mentoring and leadership opportunities*

*Supporting & Inspiring young people*

*Research and evaluation development*

*Building Relationships*

*Partnership with education providers*

**Stepping closer to the concept of a Bush  
University**



# How was the Community Vision determined?

- Engaging with Community Leaders
- **Finding the right people to talk with through referrals**
- Building trust to access the deeper stories and issues
- **Quietly Observing**
- Attending community meetings and events
- **Travelling to homelands with community representatives**
- Listening to community stories
- **Really listening!**
- Building an understanding of the issues from Yolŋu perspective
- **In partnership**



# ***Really listening – allowing Yolŋu perspective to flow***

**Letting go of institutional mindset**

**Being objective but always learning**

**Being guided by Yolŋu**

**Honouring the Yolŋu Voice**

**Collaboratively**

**Respectfully**



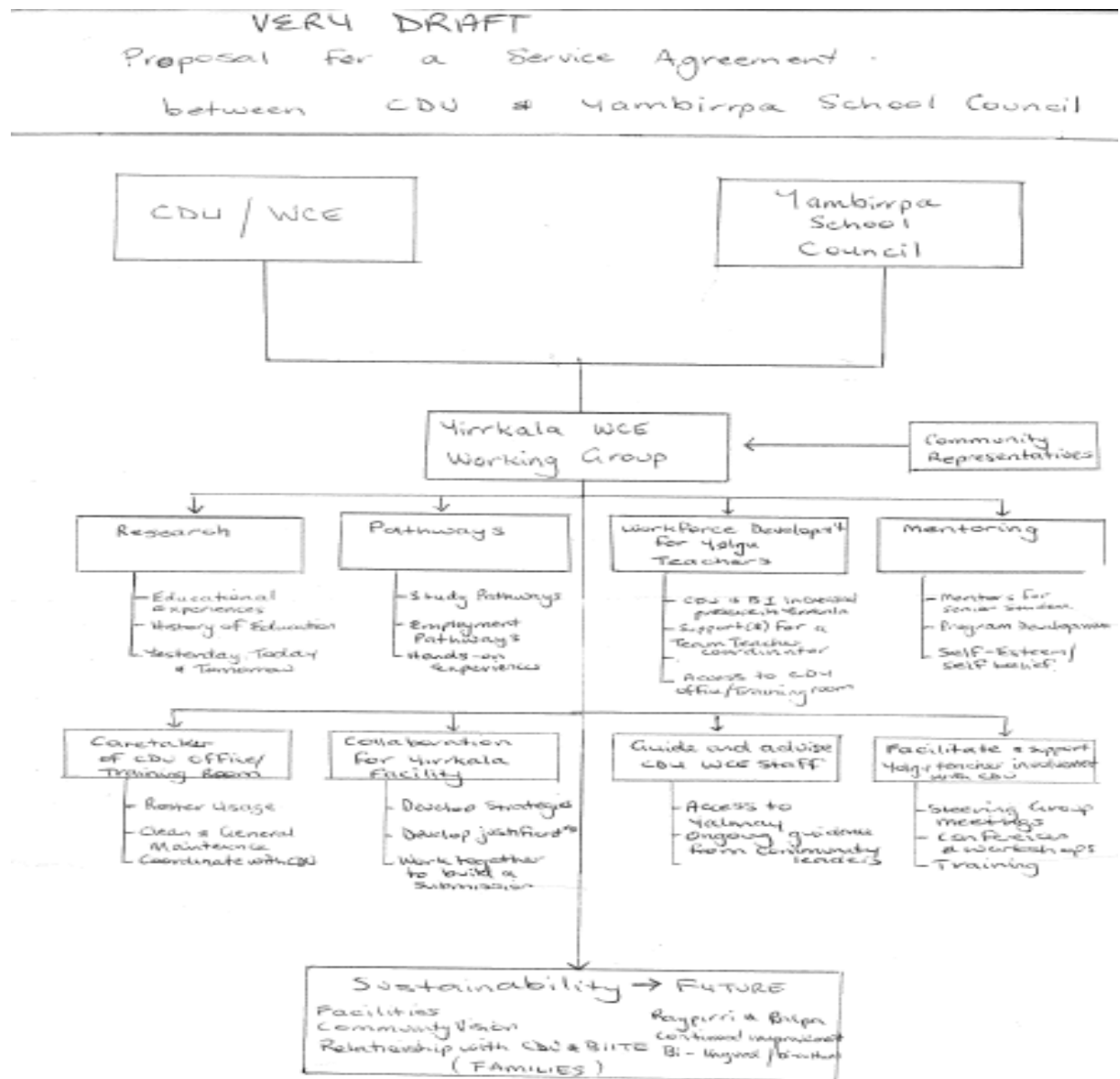


# Humble Beginnings

- Talking to the key people
- Getting people involved
- Hearing from teachers in the school
- Hearing from people in the community
- Bringing forward a different perspective
- Acknowledging each others contribution



# The collection of visions: Early draft concept







Confidential

## Contract for Goods or Services - External Suppliers

Office of Research and Innovation

Between

CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY  
Ellengreen Drive  
Darwin NT 0808  
ABN 54 693 513 649

And

Yamirpa Schools Council  
Cl- Yirrkala School, Rarrkine Road, Yirrkala  
ABN 33131263614

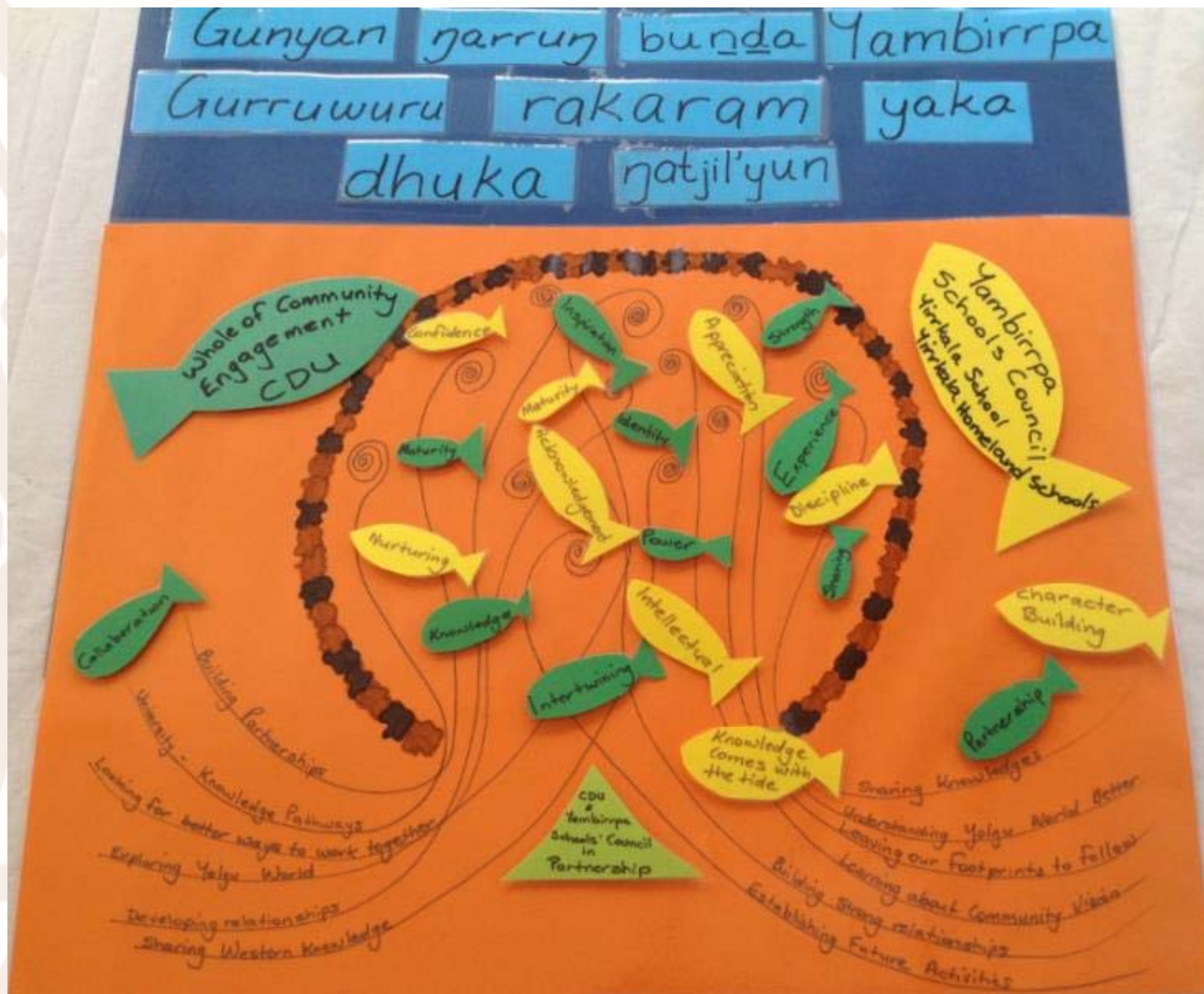
CHANGE  
YOUR  
WORLD



# Service Agreement

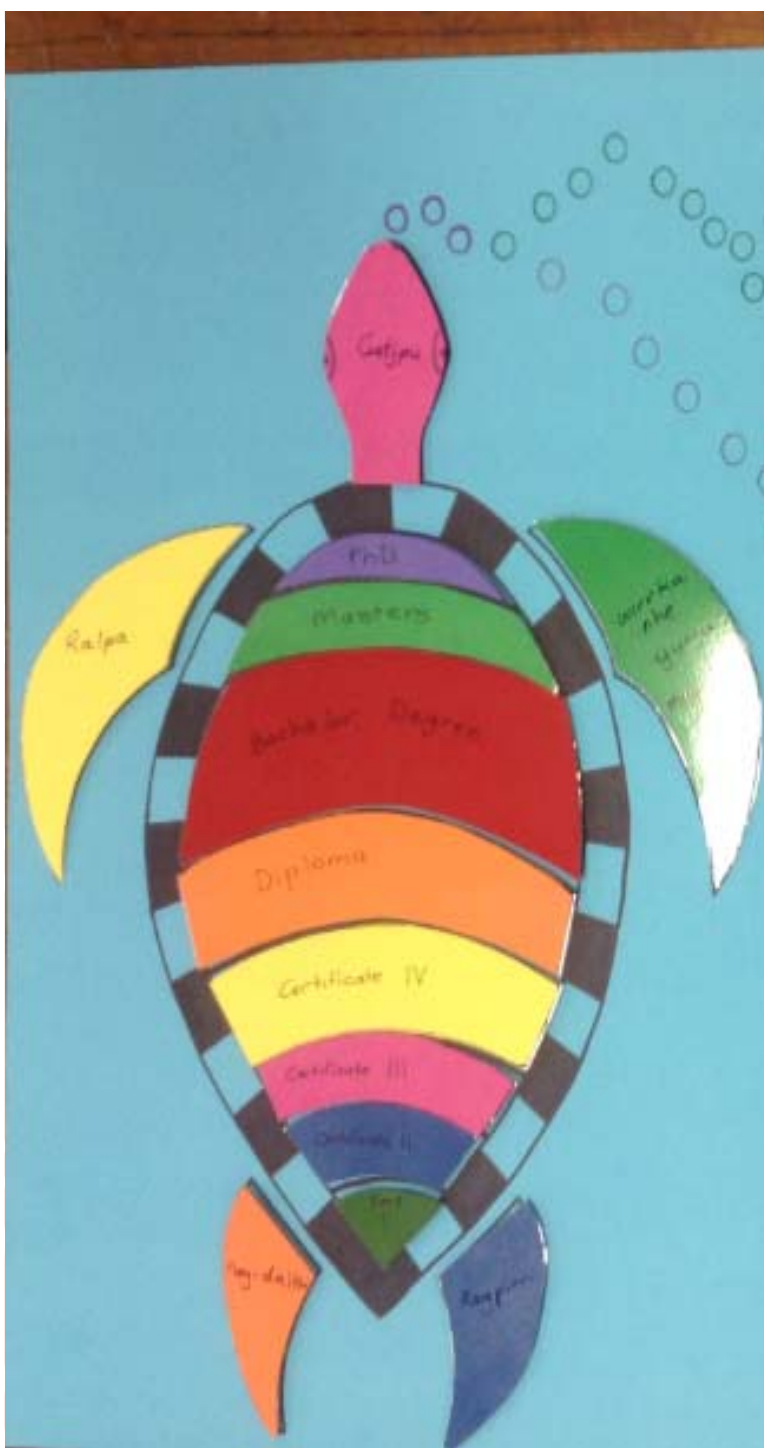












- (VET Diploma)
- Automotive
  - Conservation and Land Management
  - Practical Skills
  - Health
  - Food & Nutrition
- Science
- Engineering
  - Environmental Science
  - Smart Science
  - Planning and Building
  - Clinical Medicine / Pathology
  - Nutrition

- (VET Diploma)
- Visual Arts
  - Creative Writing
  - Music
  - Performing Arts
  - Design
- (Bachelor Degree)

- (VET Diploma)
- Education
  - early childhood
  - Middle
  - Secondary

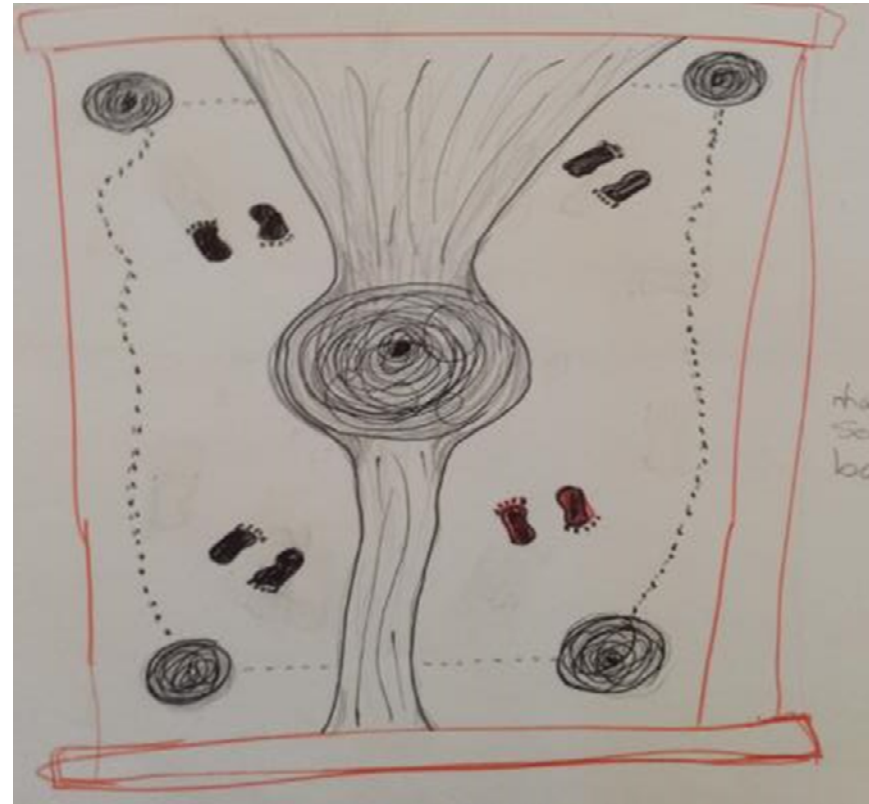
- (Bachelor Degree)
- Primary
  - Health & Physical Education
  - Humanities and Social Sciences
  - Information Technology
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Visual Arts
  - Early Childhood

- (VET Diploma)
- Business
  - Accounting
  - IT and
  - Economics
  - Legal Studies
  - Finance
- (Bachelor Degree)

# An informal monitoring and evaluation approach evolved out of the community engagement process

This has:

- \* guided a rethinking and refining process
- \* Assisted us in finding out more about what impacts a Yolngu person's educational journey
- \* Assisted us to understand the systems that operate in the education and broader environment.



# Building a Partnership



**Recognition and  
celebration of  
achievements  
together**



# Did we effectively engage? Did we get the community vision right?

- Gauging how outcomes are performing against community derived expectations
- What does the community think and how do we know they are being honest and open?







# Assessing the Impact of service activities

- Engaging regularly with Community Leaders
- Talking with families
- Observations of mentoring in the school
- Observing impact of role models telling their education journey stories
- Reactions arising from learning about different education pathway options
- Acknowledging one another's contribution











# Establishing what your place is in this community – Self Reflection

Being guided by  
community leaders

Sitting back and  
listening and absorbing

Learning and  
respecting the deeper  
connections of Yolŋu  
culture

Belonging



Has it been a successful engagement approach?  
What is now different?  
What are the sustainable outcomes?



**An evaluation style that ebbs and flows with the landscape, naturally arising to reflect the community way – that is respectful, acknowledging and inclusive of culture and the knowers of culture.**



**Being around the community, getting to know many people**

**Talking with lots of people and following up with them**



# Bala ga lili

Riding the challenges

Going with the flow

Are we taking credit for achievements that were already happening?

Constant checking back to the vision

Understanding and embedding Cultural foundations

Really trying to understand the community vision



## What have we achieved towards the Community Vision?









# Outsiders and Insiders working hand in hand

- \* Setting the community vision
- \* Checking against the vision
- \* Seeking more and more stories
- \* Hearing from different people
- \* Making sure - Questioning if we really understand
- \* Nurturing outsiders to grow and develop – exposing them to more and more culture as they mature
- \* Make the heart as one people
- \* Not 2 hearts black and white but one heart, one universe



Are we getting the deeper story?  
The rich story?

Are we understanding and conveying  
the real story?

Is it two-way?



# Yolŋu community Yolŋu Voice Yolŋu Ways

**Collectively evaluating  
– insiders and  
outsiders harnessing  
the central themes,  
refining on the fly and  
reflecting together**



**Sharing  
Understanding  
Accepting  
Walking together**





**It is about adding value**  
**Following the vision**  
**Making the vision a reality**







# Whole of Community **Engagement** Initiative



Australian Centre for  
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES  
& EDUCATION



**Batchelor  
Institute**



Northern Territory  
Government

