

Tjitji-Tjutatjara Kunpu Kulintjaku (Listening Up Strong For Little Kids) Innovative Evaluation in Remote Indigenous Communities

*Catherine Vockins - Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Christine Armstrong - Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi*

Abstract

Participatory or empowerment evaluation is an innovative and responsive approach to evaluating and understanding complex community projects. The Anangu (Aboriginal) Children's Project in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in the far north west of South Australia is one such project. The project aims to establish culturally safe and inclusive early childhood environments built on Anangu concepts of quality child care. The project design, values and recognises traditional cultural knowledge as critical to developing a strong cultural identity in Anangu children, and this is now being recognised in the literature as a key indicator of positive health and well-being outcomes for Indigenous children (Priest, 2005). Traditional Anangu women from central Australia set the direction for the project and the process of evaluation involves the women interpreting and giving meaning to their work.

The project design uses a partnership approach based on the internationally recognised work in central Australia known as Warrki Jarrinjaku Jintangkamanu Purananjaku (Warrki Jarrinjaku) Warlpiri for 'working together everyone and listening'. This approach supports the growing call for Indigenous participation in evaluation and research (e.g. Kowal, Anderson & Bailie, 2005). This presentation will explore the process of participatory evaluation and partnership by which Anangu together with non-government and government stakeholders share responsibility for achieving project outcomes and building the evidence base for working together. A logic model (or theory of practice) will be used to examine project implementation and the outcomes achieved so far.

Background: Participation in the Policy Context

Social program evaluation in the Australian context is the process of reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of any project, program or group of programs. Appropriateness is concerned with exploring the relevance of a project. Key questions include: How do the objectives fit within a context of government priorities and community need? Are the project activities a logical way to achieve the project objectives? The growing call for Indigenous participation in evaluation and research is directly related to exploring the appropriateness of service delivery and interventions.

Participatory approaches are now being recognised in the context of Indigenous policy development. Australian and State governments are calling for strategies that support

Indigenous Australians to have a real voice, as individuals, and in their families and their communities (Vanstone, 2005). Governments are examining the successes and failures of initiatives in remote Indigenous communities and it has been widely acknowledged that the reality of life for Indigenous people is not as good as it can be and that if “we continue to do what we’ve always done we will continue to get the same results” (Vanstone, 2005 p.1).

The Australian Government is calling for shared responsibility - a desire to work in partnership with Indigenous communities to achieve better outcomes. This represents a fundamental shift toward sustainable human development otherwise known as the New Human Agenda. “... *the New Human Agenda is the recognition that people - individual men and women - are not passive "beneficiaries" but are the creators and authors of their own future*” (Holmes, 1995 cited The Hunger Project website: <http://www.thp.org/reports/nha.htm>). Building the capacity of Indigenous people to participate and negotiate as partners is central to this agenda.

In the area of early childhood the Australian Government has demonstrated a commitment to working in partnership with Indigenous communities. Warrki Jarrinjaku Jintangkamanu Purananjaku – Walpiri for “working together everyone and listening”, also known as the Aboriginal Child Rearing Strategy (Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS) was developed in response to the recognition that existing models of early childhood services are not usually appropriate for Anangu (Aboriginal) families living traditionally orientated lifestyles in remote central Australia. “*We looked at the ...child care. It was set up with white fella rules – white fella licensing. The centre was not thinking about the cultural way to run child care...*” (Irene Nangala, a Senior traditional Anangu woman from Kintore community in the Northern Territory and chairperson of the Aboriginal organisation Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi (Waltja), 2005, pers.comm.). The Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS recognised that cultural knowledge about child rearing is central to the development of early childhood services for Anangu families and their children.

The Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS undertook a literature review of Aboriginal child rearing practices and associated research. Senior women involved in the project recorded their child rearing and parenting practices using an innovative research technique known as ‘family mapping’ - the drawings and designs seen in the Western Desert paintings (Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi, 2001). The management structure for the project included a steering committee comprised only of Aboriginal women from remote communities. The government role in the project was one of support and facilitation. The focus of the project was on relationships and establishing genuine partnerships between community and government (Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002).

Culturally Appropriate Children’s Services

The Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS has been influential in drawing attention to the importance of nurturing an Indigenous child’s cultural identity and this is supported in the international and Australian literature. The right of a child to nurture and preserve their cultural identity is formally recognised as a human right under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention, established in 1989 addresses the rights of children everywhere ‘...*the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection*

from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life” (<http://www.unicef.org.crc>). Australia became a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990.

The Australian Government recently commissioned a literature review and background paper to identify the child care needs, practices and preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children (Priest, 2005 website <http://www.facsia.gov.au>). “The literature search revealed that the key factor that differentiates an Indigenous child’s quality child care needs from that of a non-Indigenous child is the necessity to actively acknowledge and nurture the development of their cultural identity” (Priest, 2005, p xiv). Early childhood services fail to be appropriate for Indigenous children, when Indigenous communication styles and meaning systems are not genuinely reflected in those environments.

The experience of disadvantage in early childhood can establish risks for children in later life but these can be offset by protective factors that support children to become strong and resilient. Cultural identity and cultural pride are important protective factors (Commonwealth Task Force on Child Development, Health and Wellbeing, 2003).

The Anangu Children’s Services Project

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), the Anangu Children’s Services Project will develop children’s services in the remote South Australian Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. **See Attachment A** for a profile of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. The project has two key components:

1. *Service development:* The Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS partnership underpins the service development design and implementation (Priest, Nungarrayi, King and Nangala, 2003; Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002; Waltja, 2001). Key elements of this approach include a focus on:
 - creating the space for correct relationships to occur between Anangu, government and non-government representatives working on the project;
 - Anangu leadership. For example, Senior Anangu women who are cultural leaders in traditional Anangu childrearing principles and practices act as mentors for Anangu who are developing culturally strong services for the first time;
 - building a network of Anangu working for children’s services across central Australia to strengthen peer support, Anangu leadership and learning opportunities;
 - providing appropriate training and support to establish and operate children’s services.
2. *Capital projects:* To upgrade existing buildings or build new infrastructure for children’s services.

Building on the work of the Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS the Anangu Children’s Project key objectives are concerned with establishing culturally strong services inclusive of

Anangu concepts of quality child care. The Project auspice is the Aboriginal organisation Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi (Waltja). Waltja Tjutangku Palyapayi is Luritja for “doing good work for families”. Waltja has been engaged as the project auspice because of their experience in establishing early childhood services in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and more importantly because of their capacity for working in partnership with Anangu and with key government and non-government agencies Waltja was the project auspice for the Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS and many of the Waltja committee members were involved in the project - actively participating in the research process using their traditional knowledge of child rearing practices.

The Waltja committee members are predominantly traditional women from remote communities. The operation and management of Waltja is built on the principle of participation and it is a partnership between committee members and Waltja staff. Waltja’s participatory management approach has facilitated close working relationships with remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and these relationships are critical to Waltja’s ability to provide services and facilitate projects. A ‘good auspice’ organisation is one that has sound connections with the community (Scougall, 2005, p.96).

Participatory Action Research

The Anangu Children’s Services Project is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) project. Participatory action research engages people in examining their own knowledge. Health research identifies an epistemological rationale for Indigenous participation. This rationale is founded on the idea that “...knowledge possessed by Indigenous people (their beliefs, perceptions and attitudes) is the best quality knowledge...and Indigenous participation is the best way to access the knowledge” (Kowal *et al*, 2005, p.469). The research in the Anangu Children’s Project is concerned with the design and establishment of children’s services in the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. Anangu women will be the authors of the research informed by Anangu cultural knowledge, values and beliefs. The research undertaken as part of the Anangu Children’s Project won’t be, nor should it be, value neutral research. As the Project auspice, Waltja facilitates and contributes to the research process and importantly this role is shared between Waltja committee members and staff. As with the Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS initiative, Waltja will be supported in this research by select government and non-government staff who have demonstrated, over time, a correct and respectful relationship with Anangu and Waltja. “*The key aim is to build the knowledge up together*” (Priest, 2006 pers. comm.).

The logic model

A logic model for the Anangu Children’s Project **see Attachment B**, describes the relationship between the project activities, outputs and intended outcomes. The activities represent a set of Service Development strategies (each able to occur concurrently) to build Anangu capacity for participation in the design, establishment and operation of the children’s services. As relationships develop throughout the life of the project, the role of Anangu women in the project – in the cycle of acting, reflecting and planning will grow. Anangu participation processes will evolve from

informant to interpreter and researcher (Dick, 1997). The intended project outcomes are represented in the following table:

<p>7.Culturally Strong Children’s Services Early childhood environments are established. They reflect Anangu communication styles and meaning systems. The services are controlled and operated by Anangu women in the community.</p>
<p>6.Service Design Services are designed using Anangu human capital (cultural knowledge and skills).</p>
<p>5.Skills Transfer Anangu knowledge and skills to operate child care services are strengthened through Anangu leadership; an active network of Anangu who are working for children’s services; and by child care support e.g. operating playgroups.</p>
<p>4.Decision Making Anangu women are making decisions about the project, setting the direction according to Anangu values and aspirations for their children.</p>
<p>3.Strengthening Culture Anangu participate in Anangu early childhood networks. Waltja committee members provide leadership and support. Anangu culturally-acquired knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and aspirations for Anangu children are recognised and valued (human capital).</p>
<p>2.Quality Relationships Building quality relationships between Anangu, government and non-government, where Anangu women are able to “talk up” for child care in their communities. Anangu, and government and non-government capacity for participation will grow as relationships are built and strengthened.</p>
<p>1.Participation Building knowledge of the Project and engaging Anangu participants.</p>

Table 1: Outcomes Hierarchy

The key project activities undertaken so far relate to the Service Development stream of the project and include:

- *Network Meetings;*
- *Anangu Leadership and Service Design;*
- *Child care support including mobile playgroup activities support and training;*
- *Creating the space for correct relationships*

Network Meetings are primarily concerned with facilitating Anangu early childhood peer support. The Network Meetings bring Anangu women together for the purpose of talking about community child care and working together to describe what children’s services should look like. “Participatory action research methods create forums in which people can join one another as co-participants...”(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p.563).

Anangu Leadership and Service Design are activities that occur within the context of Network Meetings. The Waltja committee members have been specifically engaged to

participate in the network meetings to provide leadership and support to the Anangu women. Senior Anangu women from Waltja are cultural leaders in traditional Anangu childrearing principles and practices and they act as mentors for Anangu who are just beginning to develop services. The Waltja committee have experience in developing innovative child care services and they are supporting Anangu women to see what can be possible. Consistent with action learning principles, Waltja women and Anangu women from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands come together to learn from each other's experiences. *Service Design* activities explore Anangu quality child care practices, exploring how families care for and teach their children and what this should look like in a child care environment. Service design is the subject of the action research process. Anangu quality child care practices are discussed, stories, knowledge and ideas are shared and recorded.

Child care support includes mobile playgroup activities and training designed to support the operation of child care. This includes working alongside Anangu women in their communities, and at Network meetings to provide playgroup sessions. These sessions are used to talk about things like activity ideas, good food for children, and resources and equipment. The mobile playgroup provides a direct service for children on their communities and supports Anangu women to think about ideas and practices that they may want to incorporate into their service designs and facilitates a transfer of skills where required.

Creating the Space for Correct Relationships

The purpose of a participatory approach is to ensure that the most appropriate children's services are established as a result of community input. Participation is the "capacity (confidence, motivation, willingness, knowledge and skills) to work, interact and effectively engage with others" (Scougall, 2005 p.67).

Quality relationships enable participation. "...developing and building a personal relationship is important for respect and trust to be established between people and this applies in any context. (Terrini & McCallum, 2003 cited in Priest, 2005, p 50). "Without trust there can be no participation, no co-operation, no collaboration, no partnership. The initiation of a project necessarily requires an environment in which people feel sufficiently safe to come together around shared interests and concerns. It presupposes some foundation of trust" (Scougall, 2005, p.70).

Many of the Waltja committee members have cultural and family ties to women living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands and their responsibility for these relationships was an important reason for undertaking the Children's Project.



Figure 2:

Anangu 'borders' as explained by Irene Nangala, Waltja Chairperson, at a planning meeting for the Project in Coober Pedy, August 2005. The orange lines reflect the fluid nature of Anangu relationships overlapping the SA, NT and WA borders. The lines reflect the connectedness of Anangu in central Australia regardless of where they live.

“Waltja is committed to making meeting spaces comfortable for all participants, to support building relationships and getting strong together” (Sharijn King, Manager of Waltja, 2006, pers.comm.).

In February 2006, the Anangu Children’s Services Project brought women together for the Project’s first early childhood network meeting at Coober Pedy. Coober Pedy was selected as the first meeting place because it was a neutral place. *“Everyone should feel comfortable and able to attend and participate. The right way [for Waltja] is to have the meeting in a neutral place and be invited by the Anangu Pitjantjatjara mob to come onto their land”* (Sharijn King, 2005, pers.comm.). When the Anangu women come together to meet and camp they choose camp sites (where they will sleep) that reflect their relationships to country and family, and this determines who they will camp next to. When women arrive for meetings these considerations are respected, allowing time for the women to establish camps and be comfortable in the meeting space.

The Project makes use of shared Anangu languages that all participants can speak and understand. Waltja committee members named the first meeting Tjitji-Tjutatjara Kunpu Kulintjaku, understood in Pitjantjatjara, Pintupi and Luritja as “Listening up strong for little kids”. Hearing and listening are highly valued attributes in Aboriginal culture (Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002). Participating in environments where Anangu women can effectively communicate supports relationship development and builds their capacity to be involved. Anangu women can feel confident in sharing ideas and being understood and listened to. Pitjantjatjara, Pintupi and Luritja are the main languages spoken at the early childhood network meetings.

The research process will take time. Anangu people need time to think and talk with their communities. The Anangu women will *“need time to come together to get strong with each other”*(Sharijn King, 2005, pers.comm.). *“The Indigenous way looks at time and how it works with space, talking together (dialogue) and safety”* (Coleman-Sleep cited in Priest, 2005, p.30), the space to let people feel powerful, the time to talk together without feeling rushed and feeling safe to make decisions when ready. Anangu women travel long distances to meet with each other. The early childhood network meetings are held over a period of days and are structured to allow the women time to be together, getting comfortable with one another and talking without being rushed.

Time presents an interesting challenge to staff from government agencies. Government officers have to adopt new attitudes to time and make the commitment to become involved in the process of relationship building. On consulting and negotiating with Indigenous communities Beetson says *“...sit, sit, sit, listen, sit, listen, listen some more, observe, listen, listen some more, meet and listen”*(Beetson, 2002, p.90).

The Anangu women are cared for when they come together for meetings. Caring for the women is an important factor in reducing some of the barriers to participation. Many women travel long distances to be involved and leave family and community obligations behind. When the women come together they have the supplies to be self-

sufficient in camp and these supplies are adequate enough to be shared with family when the women return home. For example some women may want to say thank you to family for caring for their children while they have been away.

Creating the space for relationships involves “caring for the women in the right country and right place, with no shame for the women or their families, looking after family and being held together with all the women at the meeting”(Sharijn King, 2006, pers.comm.).

“Working Both Ways”

The Service Development stream of the Anangu Children’s Project as described above is critical as it represents a “both ways” approach to all aspects of the service delivery and design of the children’s services being developed.

“We need to work together as one, and to follow - supporting one another. This is important... Kardiya (‘white fella’) and Yapa (Aboriginal) working together and supporting each other. (Nungarrayi Brown, 2002 cited in Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002).

Another example of a both ways approach in a participatory action research project is the Yirrkala Ganma Education Project. Yolgnu participants came together to explore what was and wasn’t working for Yolgnu children at the Yirrkala Aboriginal School in North East Arnhem Land. The participants were concerned that the school was not appropriate (Yolgnu communication styles and meaning systems were not genuinely reflected). “Through their shared journey of participatory action research, the school and the community discovered how to limit the culturally corrosive effects of the white man’s way of schooling, and they learned to respect both Yolgnu ways and the white man’s way’s. At first, the teachers called the new form of schooling “both ways education.” Later drawing on a sacred story from their own tradition, they called it ‘Ganma education’”(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p.583).

Anangu Research

In the role of researcher the Anangu women have so far been concerned with “listening up” for children. Understanding what happens for children now and how they can be supported in communities – exploring the current situation. Anangu women have begun to share their aspirations for their children and talked about specific community needs.

Anangu women inform their own research because they have the information (or an attitude or opinion) about the situation being researched” (Dick, 1997. p. 3). Options for how to move forward in the Project have begun to emerge (new plans) and the Anangu women have expressed preferences for how they would like to participate in the Project activities and future meetings. The Project’s planning processes are constructive and happen during discussion among the Anangu women.

Waltja enables Anangu participation in the Children’s Project and a range of participation methods have been used to support ‘listening up’ including:

Community Mapping - working in community and family groups the Anangu women

have mapped where children spend their time in their communities. Stories about the maps were shared to learn about each other's places.

Working in Small Groups -working in smaller groups according to country and family can be more comfortable for some people. This strategy often gives people who are shy for speaking in the big group a chance to participate. In small groups the women have shared their ideas and experiences about Anangu games and activities for children; activities that can be done at home and at child care; what makes a good child care worker; and child care building designs.

Talk as One Mob – small groups are usually followed by sharing discussion and ideas with the bigger group. Everyone has a chance to hear all the ideas that have been generated. “Everyone hears the same story: talk as one mob” (Walsh & Mitchell, 2002, p. 44). Talking together as a large group will also happen without using small groups first, but this style of discussion is not usually used until the women have been together for a few days and feeling comfortable with each other. Nungarrayi Brown a senior Walpiri woman from Yuendumu and Waltja committee member spoke to the Anangu women as one mob about the principles that underpin the ‘growing up’ of children in Aboriginal culture, The Dreaming, the Law; Family; Land and Country; and Kanyini the holding of everything together (Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS Project Team, 2002).

Sand Drawing or “Family Mapping” - Family Mapping is an innovative research technique that was explored in Warrki Jarrinjaku ACRS (Priest, 2005). Not wanting to rely on recording their stories in English, Anangu and Yapa (Aboriginal) women from remote central Australia experimented with using their own written language (family mapping) to describe their child rearing practices – the drawings and designs seen in the Western Desert paintings, and in sand drawings. In the Anangu Children's Project child care building designs have been developed using the techniques of sand drawing (family mapping) with props such as stones and leaves, toy fences, furniture, people and animals. A short video depicting the design of a new child care centre in the Laramba community in the Northern Territory was also used to support ideas for the sand drawings. Learning about what's happening in other people's places.

Doing the Work - Waltja staff work along side the Anangu women in their communities to provide playgroups and child care operational support, doing the work together “both ways”.

Painting - workshop activities are often mirrored in painting workshops. Women use traditional Anangu designs to paint stories about the ideas and experiences that have been discussed at meetings. Together, Nungarrayi Brown and Marlette Ross from Yuendumu painted the four principles underpinning the ‘growing up’ of children. The Anangu early childhood network meeting was the first time Nungarrayi Brown had described the four principles in painting using Anangu and Yapa designs.

Measuring Performance

Measuring the performance of the Anangu Children's Services Project is concerned with the capacity of a participatory research process to deliver on the key Project

objectives. Exploring the Project's strategies for Anangu participation in the establishment of culturally strong services and exploring the relationship between the Project activities and intended outcomes.

Key questions include:

1. To what extent do Anangu women feel satisfied with their participation in the research process?
2. To what extent do Anangu women feel satisfied that correct relationships are being respected and established?
3. Are Anangu concepts of quality child care included into the design of children's services?
4. Have culturally strong services been established in Anangu Pitjantjatjara communities?

As at the beginning of September 2006, the project will have been working with the Anangu women from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands for a little over six months. The first early childhood network meeting at Coober Pedy in February 2006 marked the start of the Project activities.

Correct Relationships as defined by Anangu need to be established between Anangu, and the key government and non-government project staff. Relationships and Anangu participation are central to both the research process and measuring the performance of the Anangu Children's Project. Performance information is embedded in conversation and dialogue with the Anangu women. The quality of the relationships that have been built between the project partners will affect access to that information. *"If people are outside of relationships it will be difficult to get feedback. People [Anangu] will always try to give you what you want when they don't know you"* (Sharijn King, 2006, pers.comm.). Quality relationships are the *"only way to get to the truth"* (Christine Armstrong, Waltja Child Care Team, 2006, pers.comm.).

The process of making sense of performance information will occur in collaboration with the Anangu women, Waltja committee members and Waltja staff. This is a critically important process "Since local people are closer to the context, they are better able to document the unfolding of the initiative and it's meaning and impact" (Fawcett et al, 2003, p.33).

Qualitative Data

Data collection strategies include eliciting stories from Anangu women about their experiences of the Project; "family mapping" as described earlier in this paper and exploring the stories of the Project as they are expressed in painting and artwork; and observations made by Anangu women, Waltja committee members, Waltja staff, government officers and other project stakeholders. Photographs will be used as a tool to reflect with Anangu women about what has happened in the project so far. Eliciting stories in this way supports a process of documenting Anangu meanings and perceptions. Photos can also be used as a visual journal that documents the Project as it unfolds - another mechanism for recording Anangu research about the design of children's services. Importantly photos become part of a multi-methods approach to collecting performance information and this can support the trustworthiness of other

qualitative and quantitative data.

Eliciting stories is an approach consistent with Anangu communication styles. “Traditional communication is based on a complex oral culture, sophisticated sign and body language...”(Walsh & Mitchell, 2003, p 39). Waltja uses an approach designed to elicit how Anangu women will talk about their involvement in the Project. For example, the type of questions that Waltja staff will ask will be, ‘*What will you tell your community about what happened at the meeting?*’ This approach avoids direct and specific questioning and can generate a greater depth of information than that of a satisfaction survey or semi-structured interview. Walsh & Mitchell (2002) refer to the problem of eliciting the expedient ‘yes’ answer from Anangu that acts as a barrier to achieving deeper understanding. “*The types of questions asked of Aboriginal people are particularly relevant in a culture which tends to discourage direct questioning in favour of standing back, learning by observation and sharing a personal experience or opinion*” (Walsh & Mitchell, 2002, p.40).

Quantitative Data

A range of statistics will be collected to explore questions such as how many and how often? Project statistics will be combined with qualitative information and other contextual data to generate findings. For example Anangu face significant barriers to participation and these can include things like distance and remoteness, poor health, sorry business, personal issues relating to poverty and behavioural issues and low levels of trust in government. With these barriers in mind, the participation rate at the early childhood network meetings can assist in building a picture about Anangu perceptions of the Project’s worth. It is often stated that “Anangu vote with their feet”. Experience from years of service development predicts that the Anangu women won’t participate if the activities of the project are not considered to be worthwhile. The total number of kilometres travelled to be involved in the meetings also suggests a commitment to the Project. Quantitative data collected to date (including participation rates) are included at Table 2.

Number of Early Childhood Network Meetings	3
Number of Participating Communities	11
Number of Women who have attended the Meetings	32
Number of Kilometres Travelled to attend the Meetings	8,199 km
Number of Community Visits	33
Number of Playgroups and Child Care Operational Support Activities	13
Number of Children attending Playgroup and Support Activities	29
Number of Caregivers Participating in Playgroup and Support Activities	20
Number of Child and Caregiver contacts at Playgroup and Support Activities	148

Table 2: Project Statistics at August 2006

Conclusion

The criterion for success in a Participatory Action Research project is whether participants have a “strong and authentic sense of development...” (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005, p.563). The outcomes from the Anangu Children’s Services Project will be realised in the services that are eventually established. Like the Yirrkala Ganma Education Project’s education environment, the research outcomes will be

reflected in the social practice of operating children's services designed and developed by Anangu women. These will be services that genuinely reflect Anangu communication styles, meaning systems and Anangu concepts of child care.

Building quality relationships with Anangu is the key enabling factor for working in a participatory process. Anangu participation in the research process is the only effective way to ensure that the services are appropriate for Anangu children. And Anangu participation in the generation of performance information is the most effective way of assessing the meaning and impact of the research project.

Attachment A

The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands

The Anangu Children's Services Project is being delivered in the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in South Australia. A profile of the Lands brings the reality of life for Indigenous people into sharp focus and gives emphasis to the importance of a policy shift toward sustainable human development.

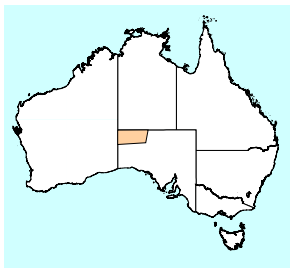


Figure 1

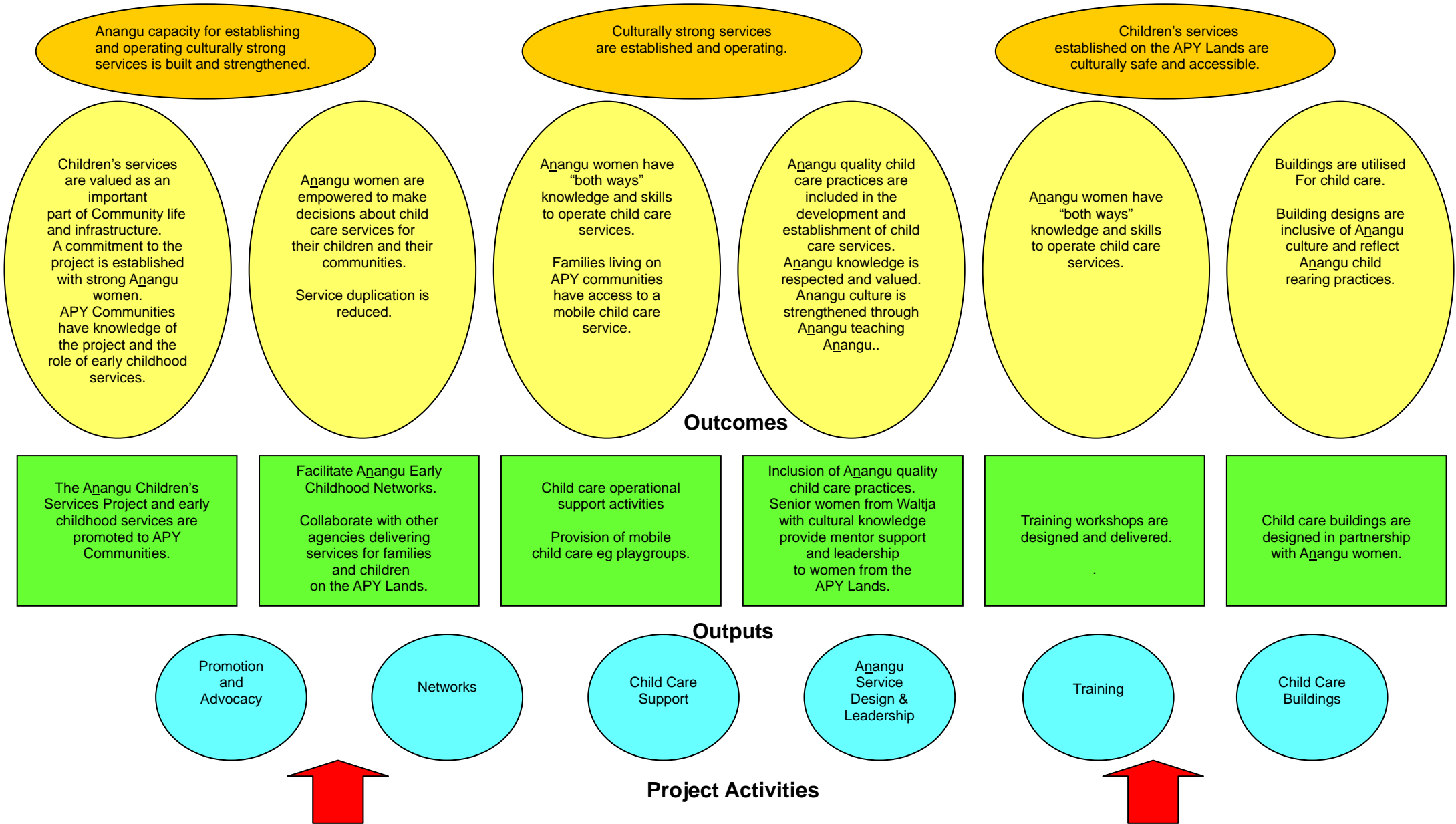
The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands is an area of approximately 103,000 square kilometres in the far north west of South Australia. The Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands are part of the Ngaanyatjara, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Lands covering approximately 350,000 square kilometres of South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara Anangu are the traditional owners of the NPY Lands and these communities share strong language and cultural ties.

The social and environmental conditions in remote Aboriginal communities are well documented. Anangu living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands are impacted by poverty, unemployment, inadequate nutrition, substance abuse and violence. Housing conditions are poor, characterised by sub-standard environmental health conditions, for example the absence of minimum standards such as functioning taps, showers, toilets and laundry facilities. Many people are also subject to overcrowding. These conditions in turn contribute to and exacerbate health problems within communities. The incidence of child abuse in Aboriginal communities in central Australia has recently been the subject of significant media attention and the relationship between poverty and other forms of stress, and child abuse and neglect has also been well

documented (Layton, 2003, p 3.5).

Approximately 2,500 Anangu reside in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands across eighteen communities including homelands. Data from the Nganampa Health Council (<http://www.nganampahhealth.com.au>) indicates that the population is comparatively young with 34% aged under 15 and only some 9% over 55 years of age. A current estimate of the number of children under the age of five is 225. Fieldwork staff working with the Anangu Children's Services Project calculated this figure using information from community women, clinics and community councils. The national trend is an increasing Indigenous birth rate and the number of young Indigenous women having children is also increasing. According to ABS data, in 2004, women under 30 years of age accounted for almost three-quarters of the total Indigenous fertility rate. In 2001 ABS census data indicated a total Indigenous population of 410,000. The predicted population by 2009 is over 500,000 with a quarter of this population living in remote communities. These trends suggest that the total number of children living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands will continue to grow. The current level of targeted early childhood service provision extends to one children's service operating in the Pukatja (Ernabella) Community in the central eastern Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands.

Project Logic



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