

0139

Focusing on Indigenous family business: Developing engaged evaluation methodologies with Indigenous NT families

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Indigenous communities working in partnership with government and non-government agencies require evaluation processes that identify the ways and extent to which an intervention develops and is sustained in complex social, political and economic environments. The evaluation process needs to undertake a number of roles that;

- map the limited direct or indirect evidence of the effectiveness of these interventions,
- understand the ways activities and evidence interrelate,
- make recommendations concerning a specific program's objectives, methodologies and processes that may enhance its outcomes and ongoing sustainability,
- create opportunities for skills and knowledge transfer about evaluation processes in between stakeholders.

This paper seeks to explore key concepts in the design and implementation of evaluation processes in Indigenous contexts that reflect the priorities and realities of stakeholders and participants. They are based on an analysis of learnings from a series of evaluation projects focusing on community business and life conducted alongside key Indigenous informants. Of particular importance was developing understandings around the elusive concept of familial initiated businesses or courses of action that are designed to address issues that impact on the community collectively. This family focus rather than weakening, supports the community perspective of caring for country, culture and community.