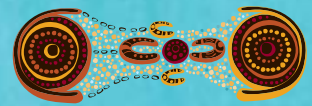


Stronger Communities for Children

KNOWLEDGE SHARING SEMINAR

DARWIN *
SEPTEMBER
25TH AND 26TH 2018



NINTI • STRONGER
ONE • COMMUNITIES
IN CHILDREN



The stakeholders of the Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) program held the September 2018 Knowledge Sharing Seminar up in the tropics of Darwin.

The seminar was opened with a Welcome to Country from traditional owner Donna Jackson, on behalf of Larrakia Nation. She spoke with us about local sites close to the place we were meeting, men's and women's places and, in particular, special coastal sites to avoid at low tide.

Day 1

Day 1 of the seminar provided opportunity for participants to learn about recent research on childhood development from Menzies School of Health Research and Charles Darwin University/Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Indigenous Corporation. The opportunity for a Q&A raised a number of questions on how to put some of this information into practical action in SCfC communities. We describe these questions in the relevant section of the report.

During the second half of the day, participants reflected on the Collective Voice initiatives and collective impact principles of past SCfC seminars. Randall Cook from NT Department of Education's Remote Early Childhood and Integrated Services gave an overview of the NT Together 4 Kids event which SCfC participants were attending on Day 2. The event was asking three key questions: What needs to change? How can we do this together? How can we make it last? This led into the LCB session where everyone got together to develop a collective response to these questions. In a separate group, Facilitating Partners and Prime Minister & Cabinet talked about impact reporting; social enterprise and alternative funding streams.

The afternoon saw two presentations from Ntaria Western Aranda Leaders' Group and Galiwin'ku's Yolngu Wanganhamirr Mitj'. Following the wrap up of Day 1 we were entertained by Larrakia traditional owner Ali Mills, with her mix of local, traditional and contemporary songs. The evening was capped off with a superb SCfC quiz win by Atitjere SCfC Decision Making Group!

Day 2

Day 2 had us heading to the NT Together 4 Kids event in Darwin city. Three Local Community Board members represented SCfC in the leaders' circle at the start of the event and which set the direction of the event's discussions and future planning.

Back at the SCfC Knowledge Sharing Seminar, presentations about key SCfC activities were given by Maningrida, Gunbalanya, and Ngukurr. This was followed by two interactive activities to get us moving in the afternoon. First, participants worked in their community groups to record the core parts of their LCB governance that make it strong. We brought everyone's ideas together to see there was a particular way of doing governance in SCfC. After this, groups brainstormed ideas about what improvements could be made in telling the story of how SCfC is making a difference for children and families in their communities. This concluded the Seminar and provided actions for us to progress in the lead up to the next seminar!



SCfC Tree

To kick off the Seminar participants were asked to reflect on what makes SCfC successful and to represent this visually by growing the SCfC tree:

Green leaves 

What are your activities?

Flowers 

**What are your SCfC outcomes –
What is the result of your
activities?**

Water 

**What is helping make it all grow,
make it strong?**

The end result was a strong, colourful tree collectively representing the dynamic work of SCfC across the 10 communities. The tree reflected core community priorities and the seven key SCfC outcomes of:

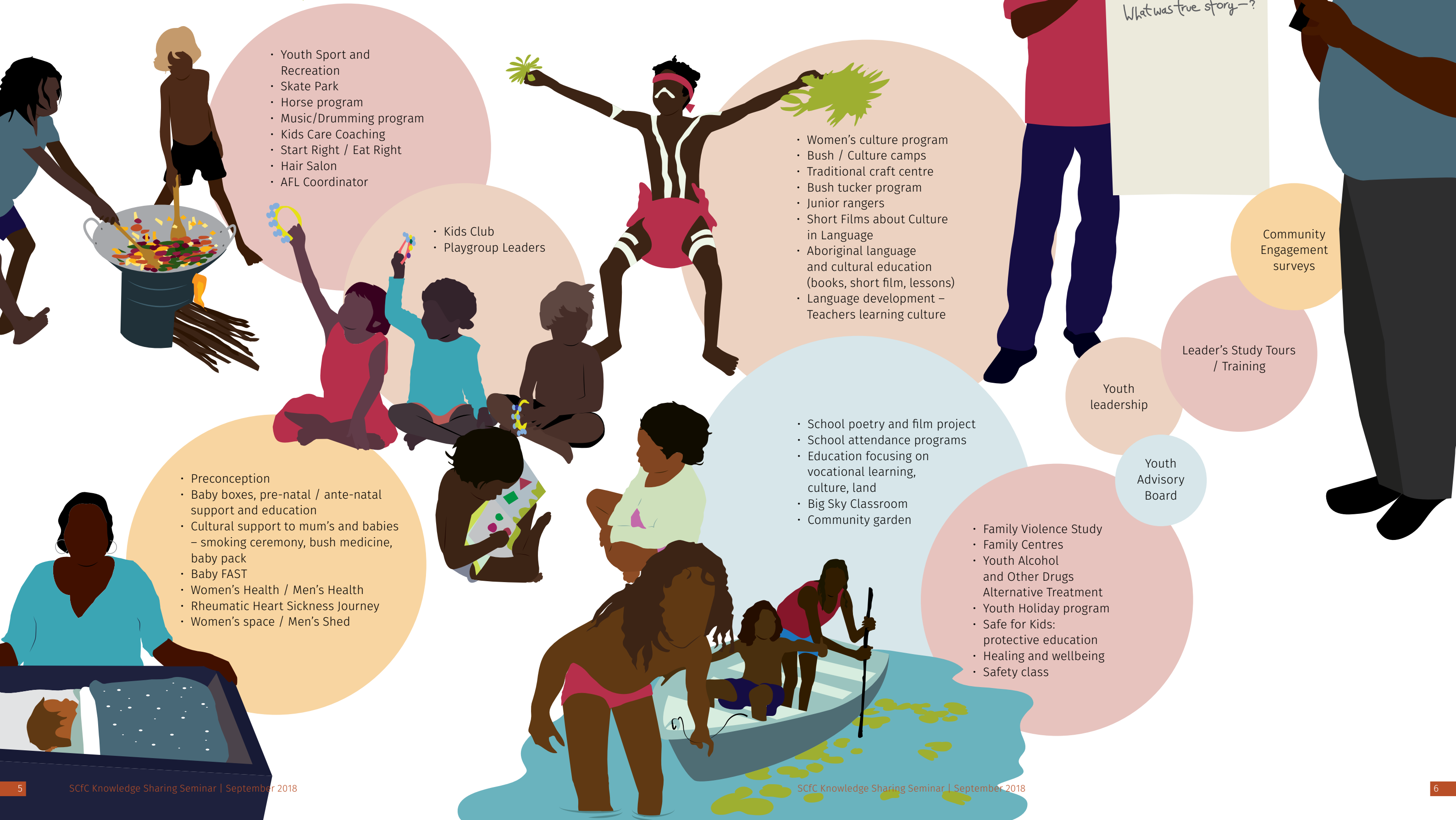
- Safe families and communities
- Support the nurturing of young children
- Provide children, young people and families opportunities for participant in cultural events.
- Support children to be school ready.
- Support young people to attend school and gain an education.
- Build community capacity to lead, plan and prioritise services that children and families need.
- Build the capacity of Indigenous organisations to deliver these services.

The activity set the scene for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and re-connecting together about shared efforts to create a safe and positive environment for families, and to give their children the best start in life to grow up strong, healthy and confident.



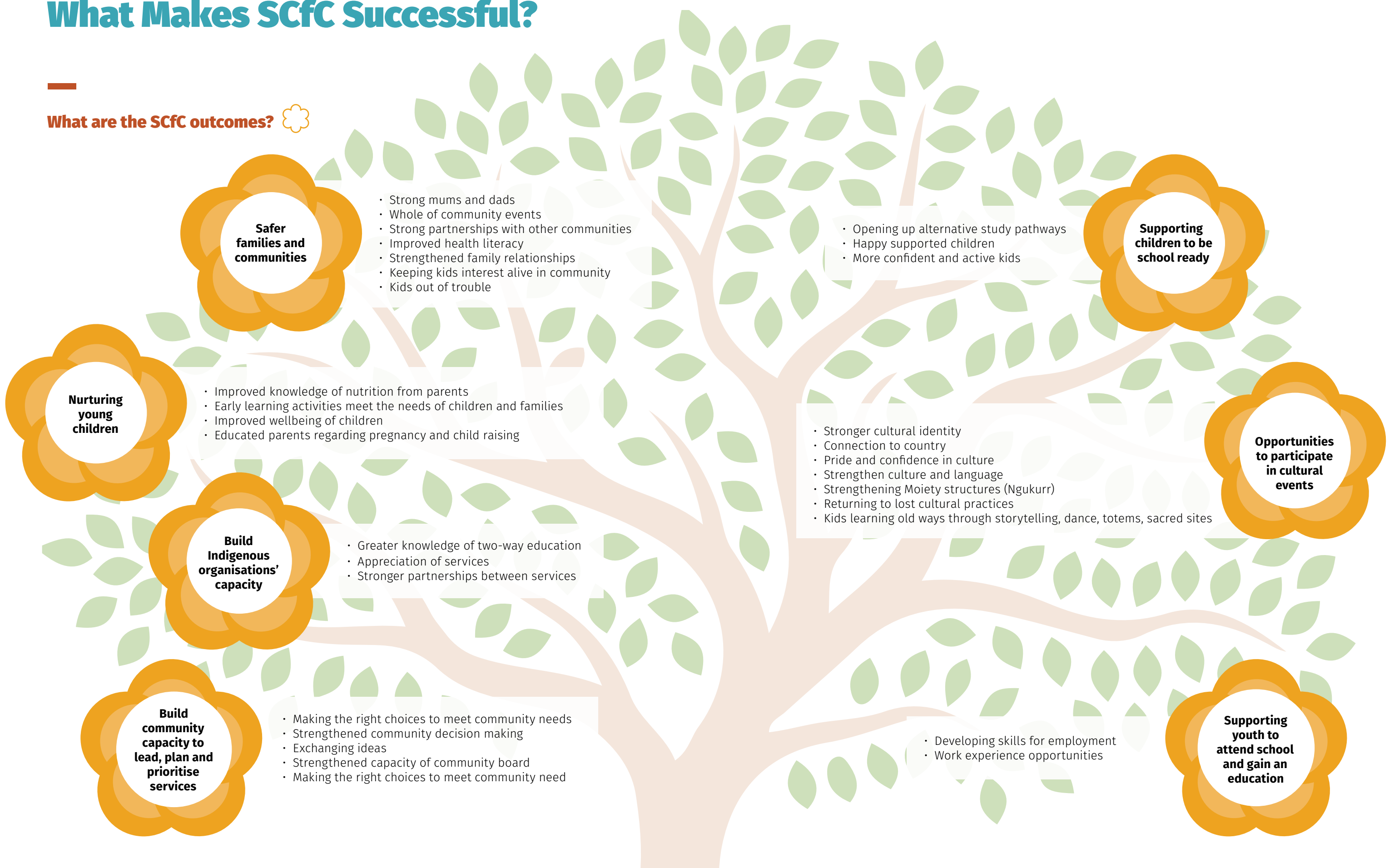
What Makes SCfC Successful?

What are the SCfC activities?



What Makes SCfC Successful?

What are the SCfC outcomes? 



Childhood Development Presentations

There were two key external presentations highlighting SCfC's core focus: nurturing young children to give them the best start in life.

Firstly, Professor Steven Guthridge of Menzies School of Health Research presented on the 'Early Years Story - Why the early years of a child's life are so important'. He explored key ideas around:

- The foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing are laid down very early in a child's life;
- Knowing what shapes early brain development can help policy and communities to act effectively to give children the best start in life; and
- Investing in early child development is the best known strategy for overcoming intergenerational disadvantage and for building community sustainability.

Professor Guthridge shared recent research findings from the NT Data Linkage Study looking at early pathways to school learning. There was much interest in the potential community level measures for monitoring health development of children and how this could help Local Community Boards know what is going on in their community and how they can best support them through SCfC. Suggestions for what practical ways communities could use the information to help build strong pathways in health and wellbeing provided food for thought.

Menzies has had a longstanding partnership with SCfC and it is wonderful to continue to share knowledge, and to start the conversation about ways Local Community Boards and Facilitating Partners can engage with community level data to know 'what is happening now' and how this can help target SCfC activities.

SCfC welcomed Associate Professors Elaine Lāwurrpa Maypilama and Anne Lowell from the Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University; Rosemary Gundjarranbuy from Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Indigenous Corporation (Yalu), and Nyomba Gandangu from Connected Beginnings to present findings from their six-year collaborative research project: Growing up children in two worlds: Cultural strengths in promoting child development in Galiwin'ku, a remote Australian Aboriginal community.

The research came about by senior Yolŋu women concerned that the childhood programs in Galiwin'ku were not recognising Yolŋu priorities and knowledge of early childhood. The research was a collaborative effort between the researchers and Aboriginal people to:

- To share Yolŋu knowledge about growing up children – strengths and challenges
- To find out what is important to Yolŋu in growing up children and how families support this development
- To increase other peoples' understanding of Yolŋu children's development so assessment processes do not confuse 'difference' with 'deficit'.

Participants were captivated by the research videos showing the evidence and insight into Yolŋu cultural strengths in promoting child development. The Yolŋu way that children are taught about their connection to all parts of the natural world, developing a strong identity through Gurrutu (kinship); language, bungul and manikay (dance and song), and how knowledge is celebrated and strengthened through repetition, reinforcement and reward.



Q&A Session

A Question & Answer session with the five presenters provided an opportunity for participants to explore some of the information. Of particular interest was:

- The importance of Aboriginal cultural strengths and priorities in childhood development being recognised and valued as part of the whole approach to Aboriginal children's wellbeing and development;
- The importance of community knowing when school-based assessments like the Australian Early Child Development Census (AEDC) were happening;
- Feeding back these assessment results to community and having discussions about how the community can help;
- The challenge of housing and overcrowding, effecting all aspects of childhood development, it is the biggest influence on kids attending school
- Service delivery systems needing to be accountable to the community, not government; and
- Negotiating with government and service providers to have access to up-to-date community-level data to understand what is happening with their children and working together to help support and nurture them.

Actions for SCfC

FPs and LCBs will review the information presented by Professor Guthridge to see what it means for their community. They will work out any questions they have and coordinate with Ninti One to seek further advice from Professor Guthridge and the Menzies School of Health Research team. This includes support with community level measures, access to service data and the refreshing of the dashboards.



Local Community Board Session

The Local Community Board session is a standing item on the agenda for all SCfC Knowledge Sharing Seminars. It arose from a desire for Board members to get together collectively to discuss issues and identify solutions to improve the delivery and outcomes of SCfC in their communities.

For this Seminar, LCB members met to develop their responses to the three questions being asked by the NT Together 4 Kids event which SCfC participants were attending on Day 2.

What needs to change? How can we do this together? How can we make it last?

Randall Cook, Director of the Remote Early Childhood and Integrated Services and Kate Simpson from Collaboration for Impact gave an overview of the event's origins, purpose and emphasised the importance of Aboriginal community leadership in setting the direction of the 2 day event.





Community Presentations

Ntaria

Healing Kids Our Way Pilot: Child Therapy team, training, coordination

The first KSS community presentation was delivered by Taren Williams and Annie Kennedy on behalf of the Western Aranda Leaders Group. SCfC participants were engaged in the story of how the Ntaria “Kids Club” has evolved into a popular therapeutic program for children in the community who may be experiencing developmental trauma.

The story of the Kids Club began in 2014 when Western Aranda and non-Aboriginal staff who work with children under the age of twelve began comprehensive training which focused on recognising the impact of trauma and its effect on children’s brain growth. SCfC staff and Aboriginal teachers reported that these learnings better facilitated the identification and management of behaviours resulting from developmental trauma.

Community conversations around the Brain Story and child trauma prompted the formation of the Healing Kids Our Way project which employed a professional Child Therapist and local Child and Family worker who worked alongside local Ngangkara (traditional healers) in 2017. The team worked together to develop a therapeutic play program targeting children and youth at risk to the exposure of violence, neglect and abuse. Concepts of trauma were developed in the Western Aranda language through stories and images that have resonance with Western Aranda culture.

The Ntaria Kids Club has helped children to manage behaviours related to developmental trauma and provided playful opportunities for kids to be well in spirit, culture, mind and body. Every day the program is planned with a mix of activities that work with different skills, such as Rock and Water, which teaches kids to play safely and compassionately with others, identify their feelings, and utilise action coping methods.



“This shows one of the Kids Club team engaged in sand play with the children. Sand Play helps children to settle, and the game they are playing teaches turn taking, something that is difficult for children with developmental trauma.”

Annie Kennedy, Ntaria SCfC FP Coordinator

Community Presentations

Galiwin'ku

Yolnu Wananhamir Mitj Dhatam (Water Lily) Dhawu (story)

Representatives from the Galiwin'ku Local Community Board, the Yolnu Wananhamir Mitj (YWM) shared the story of The Dhatam. It is a model of cultural governance which has allowed greater access, agency, and responsibility to control and direct funding to best meet the needs of children, families, and communities.

LCB members demonstrated how each community member has a clan relationship with the traditional Dhatam story through the *gurrutu* kinship system, that allows each member to follow the song lines and stories of the Dhatam from within their own clans. In their presentation, proud LCB members from Galiwin'ku offered real insight into how and why cultural practices and systems of leadership can inspire local people to participate in community valued programs.

The Dhatam image is a visual representation of this governance model:

- **Roots:** the foundations of YWM, and the processes used to ensure strength in working together
- **Stems:** the pathways for children to grow, the key roles and responsibilities of the team, and the rules for governance that continue to guide YWM
- **Leaves:** The Yolnu facilitated activities that have been funded through SCfC since 2014 and the learnings from the experience of partnership between Yalu and Red Cross
- **Water:** the supportive environment of clans, community members and culture
- **Flowers, seeds and new Dhatam (water lily):** the achievements from YWMs efforts that are valued and keep the model growing and supporting for children and families in the community
- **The Billabong:** the natural habitat where the Dhatam grows. The community, its members, culture and connection to country that support the longevity of the Dhatam

The Dhatam model has enabled Yolnu-driven solutions to existing barriers within community programs. In this way, YWM Board members have moved from strength to strength in local decision making for SCfC related activities, to also act as an advisory board for external community wellbeing initiatives (i.e. Connected Beginnings) and as mentors to the Youth Advisory Board.





Day 2

NT Together 4 Kids Event

On Wednesday 26th September, participants of the Knowledge Sharing Seminar were invited to engage in the NT Together 4 Kids event hosted by the NT Department of Education's Remote Early Childhood and Integrated Services Strategic Forum. This event was an acknowledgement that across the Northern Territory, people are testing new ways of working and calling for change.

NT Together 4 Kids brought together leaders from across the Territory who have a role in supporting kids to be happy, healthy, and safe. Following a Welcome to Larrakia Country from Edwin Fejo, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Michael Gunner, spoke to the audience. He emphasised the need to invest in the early years of children's lives, to focus more on prevention rather than cure, and his desire that we work together in finding a way of doing it differently to make change.

Critical to exploring how this is happening in the Territory was hearing the voice of Aboriginal community leaders. Ian Gumbula, Marlene Andrews (Ngukurr) and Nicholas Williams (Ntaria) represented the voice of the SCfC LCB and joined Nyomba Gandangu (Connected Beginnings), Colleen Gwynne (NT Children's Commissioner) and David Pugh (Anglicare CEO) in a leadership circle to which the audience could listen. They discussed:

What needs to change?

How can we do this together?

How can we make it last?

Key messages arising from the discussion included:

The importance of genuine listening to and learning about First Nations culture

The value of long-term funding commitments

The need to recognise, support and invest in their leadership and capabilities

A priority is to let go of siloed approaches

The importance of reporting and data sharing at community level

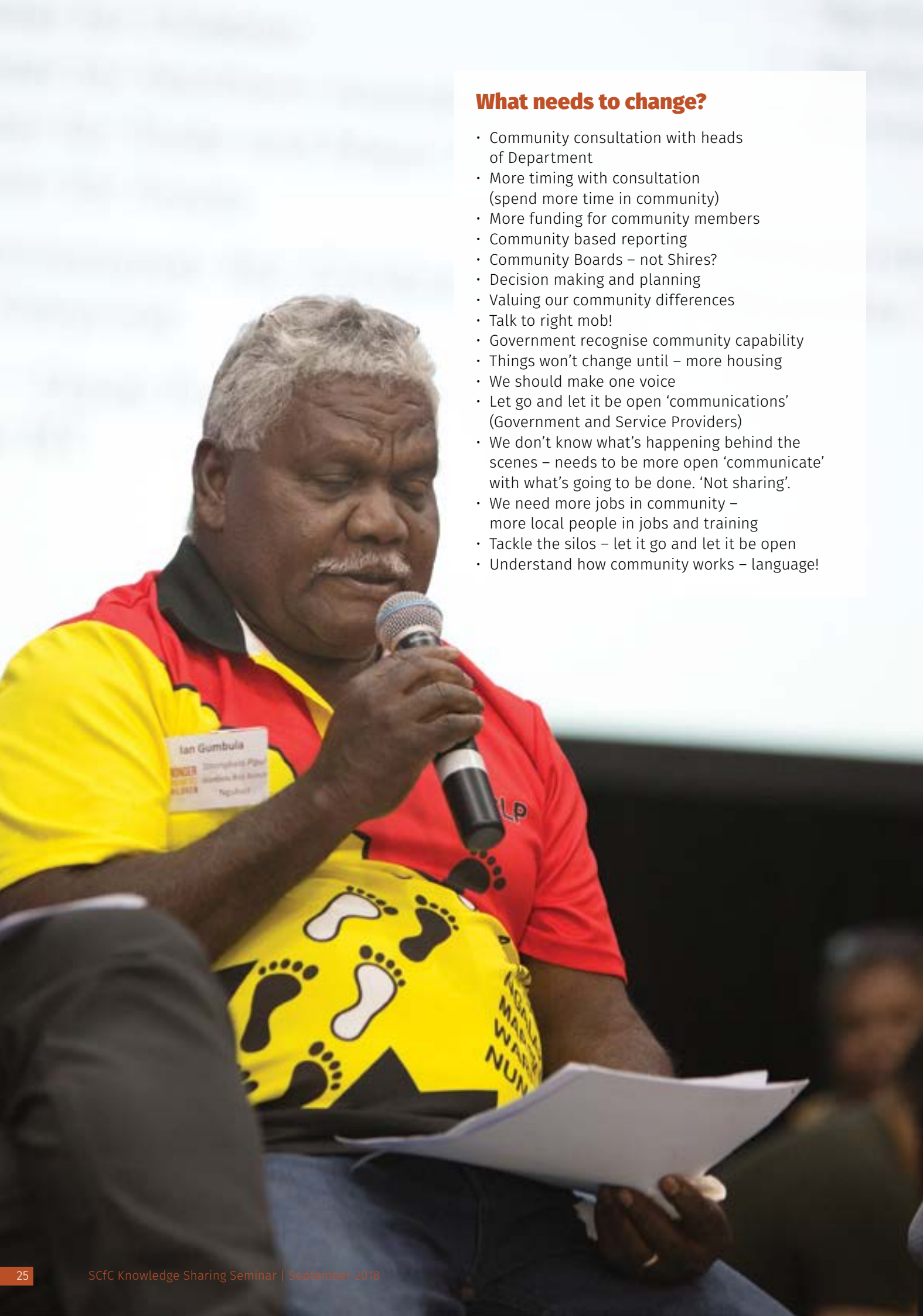
The emergence of the Children and Families Tripartite Forum across federal and territory governments and peak bodies and the potential of this group to align policy and practice to support collaborations across the Territory.

Collective impact as a way forward

Housing overcrowding, employment and sporting facilities were also raised as essential to bringing about necessary change.

This collective voice set the scene and direction for developing shared principles, a shared set of outcomes for the NT and a plan for doing this collaboratively across the NT.



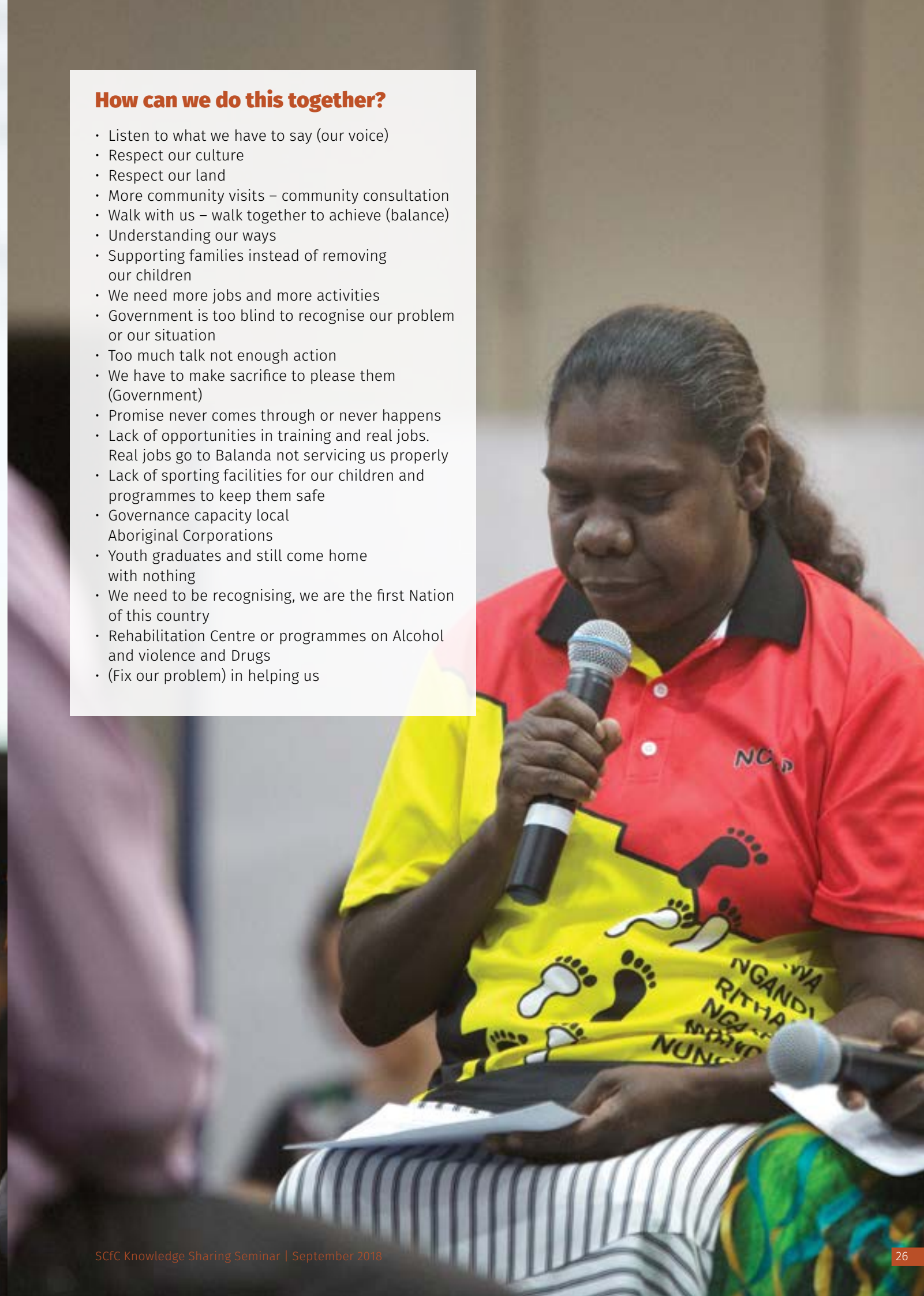


What needs to change?

- Community consultation with heads of Department
- More timing with consultation (spend more time in community)
- More funding for community members
- Community based reporting
- Community Boards – not Shires?
- Decision making and planning
- Valuing our community differences
- Talk to right mob!
- Government recognise community capability
- Things won't change until – more housing
- We should make one voice
- Let go and let it be open 'communications' (Government and Service Providers)
- We don't know what's happening behind the scenes – needs to be more open 'communicate' with what's going to be done. 'Not sharing'.
- We need more jobs in community – more local people in jobs and training
- Tackle the silos – let it go and let it be open
- Understand how community works – language!

How can we do this together?

- Listen to what we have to say (our voice)
- Respect our culture
- Respect our land
- More community visits – community consultation
- Walk with us – walk together to achieve (balance)
- Understanding our ways
- Supporting families instead of removing our children
- We need more jobs and more activities
- Government is too blind to recognise our problem or our situation
- Too much talk not enough action
- We have to make sacrifice to please them (Government)
- Promise never comes through or never happens
- Lack of opportunities in training and real jobs. Real jobs go to Balanda not servicing us properly
- Lack of sporting facilities for our children and programmes to keep them safe
- Governance capacity local Aboriginal Corporations
- Youth graduates and still come home with nothing
- We need to be recognising, we are the first Nation of this country
- Rehabilitation Centre or programmes on Alcohol and violence and Drugs
- (Fix our problem) in helping us





How can we make it last?

- Ongoing funding
- No pilot program
- Strong partnerships with Government (side by side)
- Ongoing training in community and real jobs
- Strong leadership not recognised by Government
- Keep culture alive
- Effective communication ongoing with Government
- Look, listen and learn
- Talk to elders – ‘community leaders’, understand who they are. Slow process, right information
- Team work – all the time with non-indigenous
- Involving Asst Teachers for NAPLAN
- Information sharing between Government Departments – how can community understand that process?
- What are their systems going to change (to shift) to make change in community engagement?

Participants were then introduced to the collaborative change cycle from the lens of leadership, collaboration, community empowerment, and planning and measurement. The group began to explore their individual roles and contributions within the extensive network of support for children in the NT.

As participants moved between large coloured yarning circles that represented elements of the collaborative change cycle, discussions broadened between services staff and community leaders about existing collaborative processes. As we learnt from each other we began to develop a shared language for collective aspirations to work differently and achieve large-scale collective change for children in the NT.

MC and Kayoss, local hip hop creatives from Katherine wrapped up the morning with an oral scribe. It was a fantastic way to capture everyone’s thoughts and ideas!

Actions for SCfC

We will look with interest for the outcomes emerging from the full event.

We will seek opportunities to collaborate with government, service providers and other Aboriginal community leaders to move forward with a way of working differently, working together, to improve the health and wellbeing of children in the NT.



"Nurse, can you fix my sores please?! I don't want to get the heart bug!"

Student



Day2 Community Presentations

Maningrida

Lesley Woolf, Petra van den Berg, and Trephrina Taylor presented on behalf of the SCfC Maningrida Reference Group about some of many current SCfC activities happening in Maningrida.

Highlights included:

Rheumatic Heart Sickness Journey: A six-week program

Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) is a big health problem for children in Maningrida. The Lúrra Language & Culture Team worked with local research specialists to learn and translate the RHD story into 4 local languages (Djinang, Ndjebbana, Kuninjku and Burarra). This helped the Indigenous Language and Culture staff to create resources to support a 5-week RHD learning program at the school, followed by a 1-week RHD assessment.

Children are now taking a more proactive approach when RHD symptoms arise and approach the local clinic to receive the necessary treatment. The school principal envisages carrying out this program each year for the next five years. This will provide opportunity to revise and strengthen the program.

Preconception Health and Education Program

This project is to encourage young women to attend the health clinic, have regular health checks and make good and informed health and life choices. Trephrina plays a key role in connecting with the young women and encouraging them to visit the clinic. The project works in partnership with the Strong Young Women's Program, Youth Services Sexual Health Program and Women's Health GP.

Big Sky Classroom

Maningrida's Big Sky mobile classroom began as a way to connect with families, children and young people who are disengaged from formal school. The Big Sky Classroom is a way of building relationships and encouraging children of all ages to be involved through nature-based learning in familiar spaces around the community. The focus of the classes is on health and nutrition, literacy, art and music.





Gunbalanya

Mental Health Program “The Enemy Within”

Local Community Board: Karrimud Rowk

**Facilitating Partner:
Adjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation**

Presenters from Karrimud Rowk and Adjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation shared the story of how the well-known First Nations rugby league player Joe Williams captivated the minds and hearts of children, youth and families in Gunbalanya. Joe gave 11 suicide prevention and wellbeing education talks to over 450 people in the two days he was in Gunbalanya including students from school, the football team, clinic staff and the community.

Sharing his own compelling story gave community people greater insight into dealing with “the enemy within” by highlighting concepts of self-care, respect, pride in identity, and emotional openness with others. The topic of community wellbeing education brought to light how much influence Aboriginal role models can have on children and youth about deeper issues which are often secreted within the broader community.

“It provided a wonderful platform to open up different forms of relationships with colleagues that may never have eventuated, or we may not have learnt more intimate knowledge of their own struggles with the “Enemy Within”.”

Facilitating Partner

Ngukurr

Respecting our past and present, One mob working together, Leading both ways to create a safe, strong, vibrant and sustainable community for generations

Representatives from Strongbala Pipol Wanbala Bois Komiti were proud to share their creative initiatives for children and families in Ngukurr. The presentation began with an inspiring snapshot of the short film “Lil Bois” which is part of the Ngukurr Story Project. Directed by local producer Grant Thompson and accompanied by local sound productions from the Ngukurr Music Hub, the film is spoken in Ngandi and Kriol languages and has contributed to development of literacy, culture and other skills in a fun way. The film has since been nominated for Best Short Film in the Capricornia Film Festival and has inspired further activities to seed from the growing music and film industry in Ngukurr.

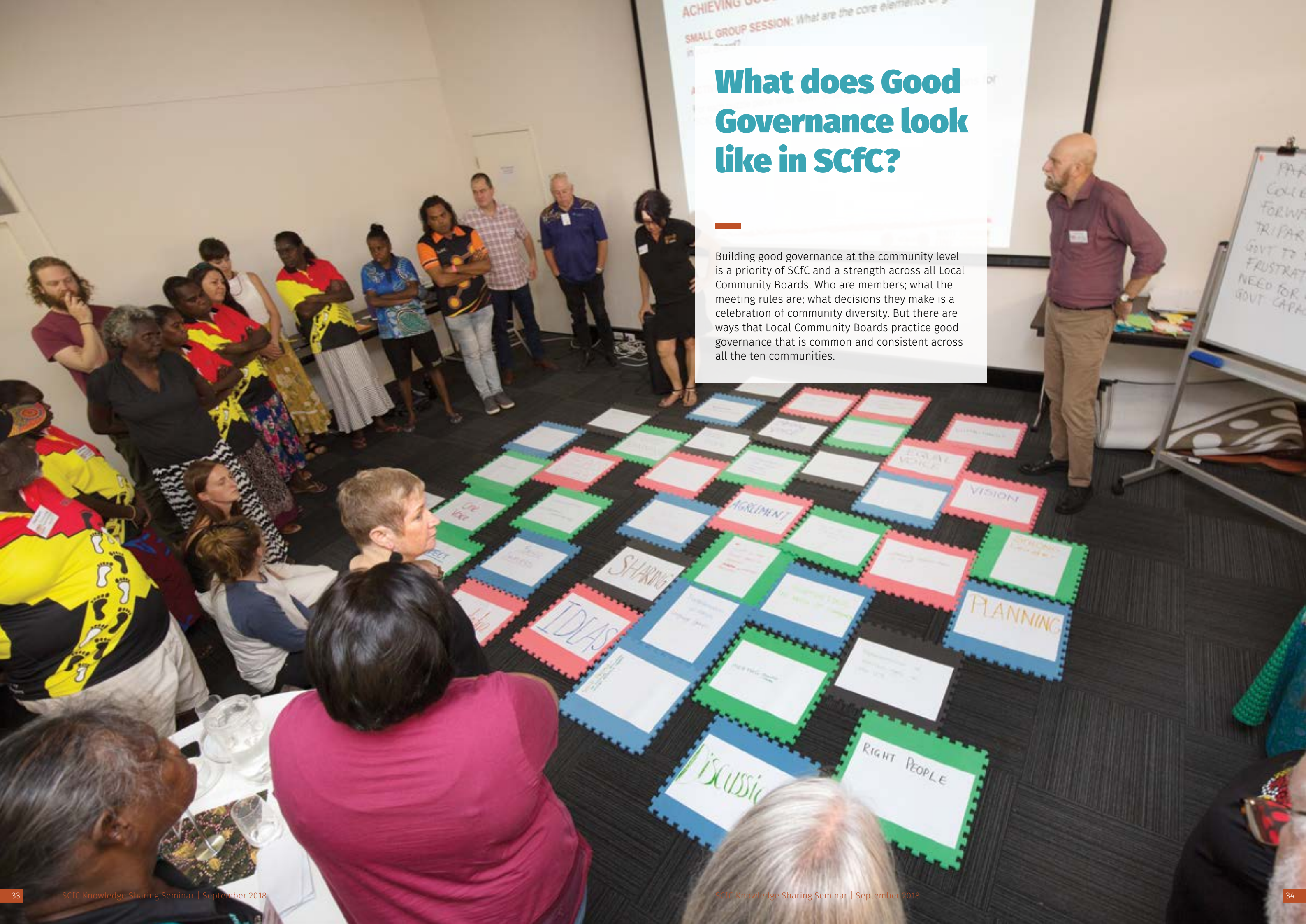
The Board and Facilitating Partner Yugal Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation has focused on strengthening community knowledge of SCfC through the Ngukurr Festival held in June. There has also been significant investment in conducting a Community Voice survey by local researchers to understand what the community’s priorities are to make Ngukurr strong for children and families. This information will inform the development of SCfC community plans. There has also been a collaborative research project with Australian National University about family violence which is surveying families to see how they can be best supported to deal with violence.

Leadership training in Ngukurr has also become an important part of building local capacity of leaders: providing new perspectives on leadership; and developing skills in critical thinking, self-reflection, and building a sense of responsibility.



What does Good Governance look like in SCfC?

Building good governance at the community level is a priority of SCfC and a strength across all Local Community Boards. Who are members; what the meeting rules are; what decisions they make is a celebration of community diversity. But there are ways that Local Community Boards practice good governance that is common and consistent across all the ten communities.



Emerging SCfC Governance Model





Actions for SCfC

Ninti One will use the sharing and learning from the exercise to prepare a short summary of the emerging SCfC Governance Model for participating communities.

This model will help strengthen existing practice. It will provide a foundation for strengthening governance in the future and for supporting new board members to understand how governance works across the SCfC Program.



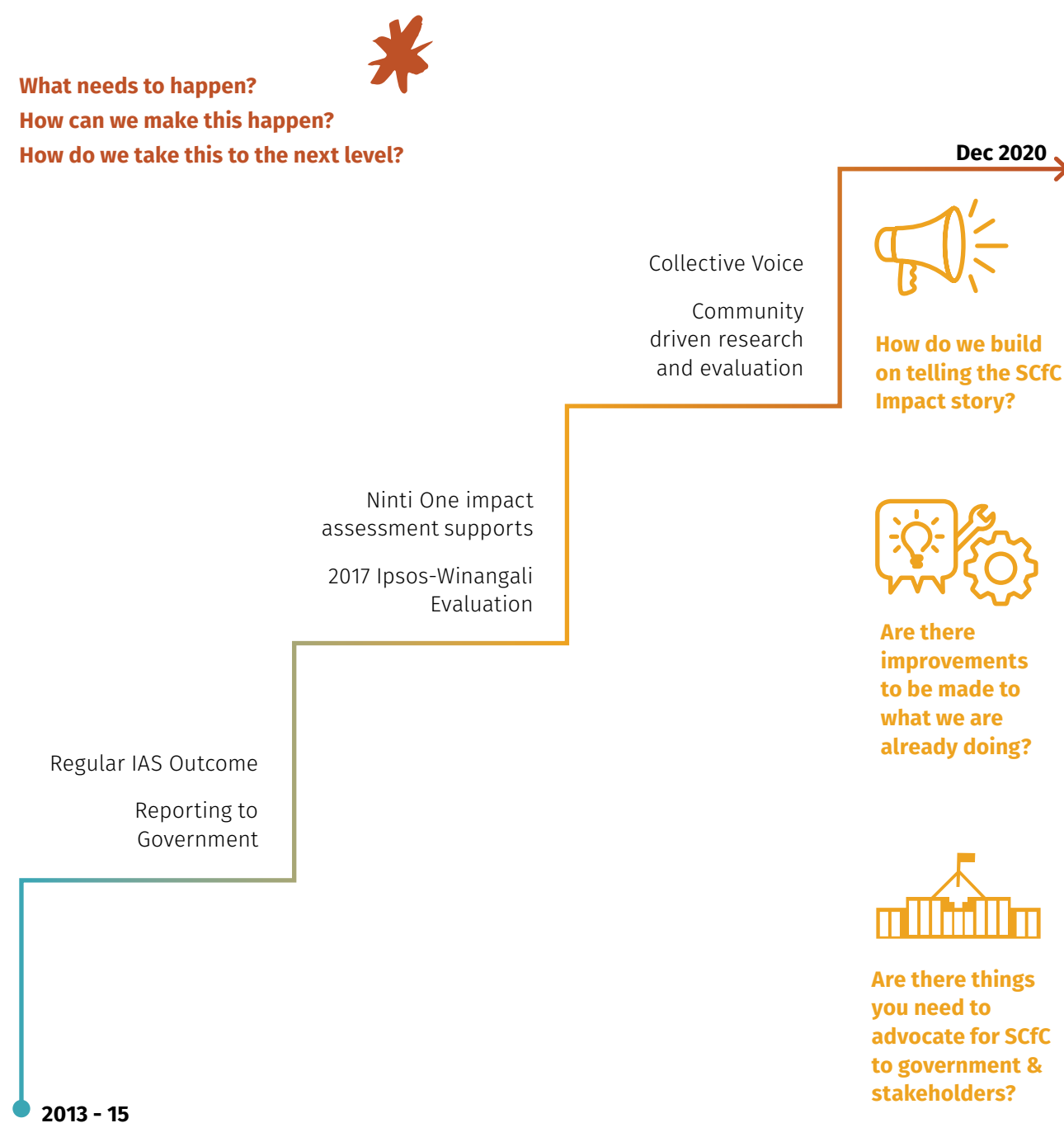
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What needs to happen?

How can we make this happen?

How do we take this to the next level?

Participants were encouraged to come up with ideas for building on this work to strengthen the ways in which SCfC can tell the story of impact so that community, government, service providers, and the general public are aware of the positive and lasting change that is happening.





What things do you need to advocate for SCfC to government and stakeholders?

Community-driven leadership

Effective program delivery relies on local decision making and activity implementation

Greater recognition of cultural ways of doing things – our structures in governance and community planning are valid and work well

SCfC should be the local decision-making board for every government and NGO stakeholder that enters our communities

More advocacy for education, health and wellbeing programs

We can do things for our own communities

Working together for the same outcomes

We should have access to more tools so that everyone can benefit and learn

Working together with strength and pride

Use connections to facilitate collaboration with other stakeholders, programs and government

Shared information and planning with community

Benchmarks for good local decision making

Utilise our strong and equal voice. Listen to our leaders as they work to represent all of us

Be accountable in community

Support from Government

The government should improve reporting tools so that we can report both ways back to our communities

We walk side by side and listen to each other, particularly to our elders in community

SCfC results are quantified in government terms. This approach disregards a lot of value and meaning that exists on the ground in community

Government should listen closely to our community boards

We might need support, but we don't want non-indigenous people to do it for us. We have our way.

Reporting back to government about how their process and administration hinders our performance

Experience the struggle we have and only then you can know how we feel

Housing affects the nature of everything and we don't have enough to support our people

Government – give us certainty for long term funding (at least 5 to 10 years)



What improvements could we make to what we are already doing in SCfC?

Program funding and the future

Long term funding commitment

Finding alternative and additional funding to go towards existing programs and wages

Community celebrations to improve awareness of strength through progress

Telling the story better in reporting to government

Show the need for continuation of SCfC

Re-evaluate our future direction and priorities – terms of reference and vision

Strategic development of projects into social enterprise to free up SCfC funds for new initiatives

Community engagement

We need to come to SCfC more often and get everyone involved, more young people should come along so we can utilise their strengths

Community engagement and collective impact...these are all buzz words but how are these processes really playing out in community?

Junior rangers to educate peers at school – show them alternative community driven and valued career pathways

Target ages 15 to 25 so that they become more aware of the need to participate and use their voice in community

Build on SCfC foundations with better structures that facilitate big community visions for positive change

Target wider audiences

Community events

Communication & reporting

Assess priorities and evaluate what we are doing and continue to improve

Make the time to share the good stories with media and promotion support

We need to get better at telling the story right

Sharing information better in community

Improve communication

Letters to NTG, PM&C and various departments regarding recognition of LCBs as being the chief decision makers

Demonstrated outcomes both quantitative, qualitative, and our way

Relevant reporting requirements that cover "both ways"

Better reporting methods like digital story telling



How do we build on telling the SCfC impact story?

Methods

Traditional media e.g. TV

Presentations

Digital Story Telling / Videos / Short Films

Written material:

- Booklets / books
- Newsletters
- Glossy magazine

Videos/Short Films

Public Events in Alice/Darwin involving SCfC communities – gather media attention

Social Media

Audience

Philanthropic / Alternative Funding or Partner organisations

Traditional media e.g. TV

Minister / Government agencies

NT public

Community

Strategy

Advocacy – stronger group voice, strong messages from each community, Right People, Right Outcomes

An agreed model for advocating for SCfC (Good news stories and Data)

Provide reports as required to meet departmental needs + telling the qualitative impact

Engage a media company to develop stories/information

Data collection across performance reports

Celebrate the stories let everybody know the joy!! Be proud.

The big picture stories for the whole program

Positive stories from the board or community members

Showing what's happening in our community

More training for indigenous staff and volunteers

Telling the story better with audio, video on evidence-based activities

Share good news stories to shift the way government sees us as incapable

Actions for SCfC

Participants agreed for Ninti One to analyse these ideas and draft a strategy for Telling the Story to government and community.

This draft strategy will be shared with SCfC stakeholders to ensure it represents their key messages, draws on existing and future capacity to lead this work collectively and utilises existing and new methods of communicating stories of impact.



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WE WOULD LIKE
TO THANK ALL THE
PARTICIPANTS OF THIS
KNOWLEDGE SHARING
SEMINAR FOR MAKING
THE JOURNEY FROM
YOUR FAMILIES AND
COMMUNITIES TO SHARE
YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH
EACH OTHER, AND TO
CONTINUE TO BUILD THE
STRENGTH OF SCFC IN THE
NORTHERN TERRITORY



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