
NLC Community Planning and Development

Ground Up Monitoring and Evaluation

Ground Up M&E – User Manual
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Abbreviations

CDU	Charles Darwin University
CP&D	Community Planning and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NLC	Northern Land Council

Core Commitments

- In Aboriginal places everywhere, elders have their own practices of *monitoring* their people-places and assessing *value* in unfolding networks of kin and country.
- Ground Up monitoring and evaluation takes seriously the sovereign authority of elders and works to ‘make evident’ ways in which community development practices may better align with the local and ancestral imperatives of the people-places they govern.
- Other forms of monitoring and evaluation, working with other forms of evidencing (e.g. data collection, activity tracking) can be complementary to Ground Up M&E.
- These imperatives work to bring contemporary and continuing practices of community life into alignment with ancient and respected ways of being and doing.
- Local researchers are essential to Ground Up M&E, and are key intermediaries between elders, Traditional Owners and Northern Land Council staff.
- These researchers may be current leaders, or the leaders of the future. They are well supported in their M&E work, and are given the opportunity for professional development, on their own terms, under the supervision of their elders.
- Local researchers work with an understanding of evidence as something which is performed rather than found or made. Evidence is ‘making evident’.
- As NLC workers modify their projects and practices in response to the insights provided by Ground Up M&E, they are themselves producing and becoming evidence of the success of the collaborations with elders.
- Any CP&D officer (even someone who is quite new to a place or project), can begin to engage Ground Up M&E methods by simply acknowledging the authority and sovereignty of elders relevant to the project at hand, by listening respectfully to their stories, reflecting upon how those stories may provide insights into how CP&D can be improved, and how CP&D achievements can be represented and publicised.
- Effective Ground Up M&E will enhance a culture of engagement, collaboration, reflection and respect for elders’ authority within the CP&D program, and more widely within the NLC.

Background

Between 2019 – 2022, the Ground Up Researchers from CDU were engaged by the NLC to participate in their Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Monitoring and Evaluation Project. This project was designed to test a number of different approaches to Monitoring and Evaluating (M&E) of community development projects in remote Aboriginal communities. The Ground Up component of this project took place in 3 project sites: Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak and on Malak Malak land. Reports on this project work can be found at: <http://groundup.cdu.edu.au/index.php/current-projects/>

Ground Up M&E in these places, has been facilitated by CDU academics working with local researchers under the authority of local elders and Traditional Owners. This work recognises the sovereign authority of Aboriginal people and their knowledge practices, including the insistence by local elders and researchers that there are always already Yolŋu and Malak Malak practices of M&E at work in the context of CP&D work undertaken by Traditional Owners working with the NLC.

Over the course of this project, CDU academics have worked with a Ground Up approach and set of core working commitments (see Appendix 1). This has involved, engaging existing local M&E capacity in generating M&E methods and insights that will enable positive improvement within local CP&D projects and the practices of NLC staff and partner organisations.

Now, the NLC has requested a manual be developed for NLC staff seeking to initiate Ground Up M&E without academic support.

The focus of this manual is to provide guidance for:

- engaging local researchers and/or research teams
- supporting these researchers in their work of 'making evident' elder and Traditional Owner visions and commitments so these can be more easily seen, supported and celebrated by Traditional Owner group and community members, and the NLC

Here we present a series of step-by-step instructions and resources for getting started, and developing methods for collecting, interpreting and reporting M&E data in the form of stories from elders and Traditional Owners connected with CP&D projects in their communities.

These are tools and resources which have emerged out of CDU's collaborative work with local researchers to date, and from conversations with CP&D project officers. In sharing these tools and resources here, we suggest they read as indicative of the kinds of approaches that could be developed elsewhere, rather than a definitive set of rules to be applied or a checklist to be completed.

Ground Up Monitoring & Evaluation: Getting Started

What is collaborative Ground Up M&E?

Ground Up M&E, begins with a conceptualisation of monitoring and evaluation as expressed by elders guiding the conduct of CP&D projects in their places.

We see local practices of M&E as always at work in Aboriginal settings where elders are in constant conversation about the unfolding of their communal lives in place, including those practices or projects introduced or facilitated by outsiders.

These practices are not always visible to external staff and organisations, such as CDU or the NLC. The practice of Ground Up M&E is oriented towards generating methods and processes by which local researchers can work in collaboration with NLC staff in 'making evident' existing local M&E practices and imperatives already at work, and through this supporting better alignment of external organisations to local and ancestral imperatives.

As NLC workers modify their projects and practices in response to the insights provided by Ground Up M&E, they will themselves be producing and becoming evidence of the success of the collaborations with elders, where evidence is the emergence of healthy strong people-places who benefit from a project in ways which conform to ancestral imperatives in new contexts.

Ground Up M&E of community planning and development: Initial assumptions

We work with two assumptions that sit together at the outset. One is that the NLC's Community Planning and Development (CP&D) program seeks to engage with lively networks of sovereign Indigenous governance and authority in the places where they work. The other is that the NLC themselves also have extensive and established networks of organisational practice which somewhat prefigure their engagements and activities in remote Aboriginal communities.

It is at the intersection of these differing and robust sets of knowledge practices that Ground Up M&E works in good faith towards locally specific forms of collaborative engagement between Traditional Owner groups, the NLC and other external organisations.

The Ground Up M&E practices detailed in this manual all refer to the work carried out in earlier stages of this project, which was initiated in each case as part of already active local CP&D projects. These projects are coordinated by Traditional Owner groups who meet regularly with NLC staff at CP&D meetings to plan, maintain and make decisions about the character of local community development projects funded through income from land use agreements.

Our methods arising in the context of this work have responded to these existing arrangements and have sought to create generative outcomes in the form of improved NLC working practices, as well as community development outcomes aligned with the work of elders monitoring and enhancing the effectiveness of their activities in terms of their overall vision of being in place, and finding ways of celebrating this effectiveness with others.

Steps for getting started: Supporting the emergence Ground Up M&E through engaging local researchers in CP&D sites

1. The go-ahead for collaborative M&E needs to be negotiated in the first instance with senior Traditional Owners who are superintending the community development projects (see Appendix 2: Introducing Ground Up M&E in TO group meetings). These senior people know that the NLC has its own processes for M&E but Ground Up M&E works from their authority with the help of paid local researchers they will nominate. These researchers will have the opportunity to become a researcher under the guidance of NLC and elders.
2. It is possible to have more than one local researcher, and it is possible to work with research mentorees. The membership of the local research team can be guided by the Traditional Owner group and may involve casual employment of researchers by the NLC (see position description, pg. 24).
3. The CP&D M&E officer and the local researcher agree upon some opportunities to meet when visits are made to communities, ways of staying in touch at other times and processes for reporting (see Appendix 5 for examples).
4. The local researcher is encouraged to devise their own practices, ways of working with the elders to undertake monitoring and evaluation and to develop their own profile as a researcher. This may be with the guidance of the NLC M&E officer and/or by looking at previous methods for inspiration (see pg. 10)
5. The local researcher may assist the group in: coming up with their overall vision and goals, articulating what they want to measure in relation to particular projects they choose to undertake (i.e., setting specific objectives and indicators) as well as in reflecting on how those projects have performed against the TO-chosen objective and indicators. At the same time, they might evaluate progress through an entirely different evaluation lens that sits outside the specifics of a project (e.g., how it has altered or reinforced certain people-place relationships within community).
6. The M&E officer can also work with CDU on the professional development of local researchers including aspects of writing, computer literacy, video, transcription and translation of some languages (see pg. 9)
7. Initial work would likely focus on listening to the main stories and concerns that Elder Traditional Owners would like to share. This may include ancestral stories of their places and kin and clan connections and their assessments of how community development happens, as well as other processes of gathering ideas, opinions and evidence.
8. These stories can provide the grounding for ongoing M&E work and a reference point regarding existing local practices of M&E and community development visions¹. The local researchers work with the NLC M&E officer to create and interpret evidence and to find ways of making it visible within the continuing life of the TO group and within the NLC more widely.
9. Ongoing M&E activities are likely to centre on means for continually looking back to historical and ancestral imperatives of particular people-places, in guiding and celebrating the emergence of healthy community and futures for young people.

¹ These stories might be expressed in different forms (in written words, in visuals, in spoken word, literal or metaphoric) and it's important that where possible this diversity is accommodated.

Engaging Local Researchers

All Ground Up M&E research is work carried out under the guidance of elders, and in collaboration with local researchers. In some communities there will already be established local research capacity, in other places, there are likely to be skilled and interested people in the community who may be engaged as local researchers and supported in the professionalisation of their research work.

Below we suggest some categories of researchers who could be engaged in particular places. The best configuration of people will depend on the place, and local ecologies of governance and leadership present there². Constituting these teams is part of M&E research development.

Research teams

The configuration of research teams is likely to vary from place to place. We work under elder authority, and then engage teams of researchers and support as appropriate to particular pieces of work. These teams may include people from several of the roles below, it would not necessarily include people from all roles in a place at a given time.

- **Role 1: Local senior authorities over people-places**

Elders and Traditional Owners are always enacting their own forms of M&E in the context of CP&D projects and in relation to their broader responsibilities caring for ancestral people-places. These elders are consulted and paid as advisors on M&E projects, and play a crucial role detailing local M&E concepts and ensuring CP&D projects conform to local needs, practices, histories and aspirations. Engaging them in the work of research supports and makes visible their ancestral authorities, and helps organisations undertake successful projects in remote communities.

In this project to date: Nyomba Ganḍanju was engaged at Galiwin'ku as a senior authority who supported the development of key concepts of Yolŋu M&E and who guided the conduct of on-ground research carried out by the CDU researcher. She made invaluable contributions articulating a local Indigenous understanding of M&E, and articulating this to broader TO, stakeholder, NLC and academic groups. Nyomba also enrolled in the CDU Diploma of Indigenous Research as a complement to her NLCM&E work. Under agreement with the Traditional Owner group, Nyomba was not paid for her services.

- **Role 2: Community researchers**

Community researchers may be engaged as M&E researchers working under the authority of Elder Traditional Owners³. These researchers are likely to be young or emerging leaders and have particular skills both within their own knowledge and governance traditions, and the institutional structures and practices of wider Australia. They may experience research as a welcome opportunity for employment

² In some places, for example, the process of engaging senior leadership may be more difficult than others. Sometimes it will be possible for senior leaders to work together, sometimes it is more appropriate for them to be approached and worked with separately. These are elements of the social and governance ecologies of different places and may need to be navigated in the context of Traditional Owner group meetings or with the assistance of more junior local researchers who will be working under their authority.

³ In this instance, working under Elder authority means the Elders are aware and approve of the working being undertaken by the researchers, however they may not be substantially involved or be remunerated.

and upskilling in their home community with their family as guidance and support. They may also have skills in working with technology in connecting the various knowledge and governance traditions which are at work in their local communities.

In this project to date: Both Emmanuel Yunupingu and Gwendoline White were engaged as local researchers respectively working in Gapuwiyak and on Malak Malak land. They both used the research opportunity as a way to spend time sitting and working with Elder TOs, in developing new and sophisticated methods for supporting the commitments of these elders to become visible to NLC and more actively attended to in local CP&D projects. Emmanuel has been successful in receiving a CDU Indigenous Community-based researcher micro-credential through his M&E activities, and Gwendoline has enrolled in a Diploma of Indigenous Research. Emmanuel and Gwendoline were paid as community researchers for their work.

- **Role 3: Mentorees**

Aboriginal young people are an important part of Aboriginal community life, and a fundamental concern for elders. They have their roles and participate often as onlookers in every part of ceremonial and political life. Young people are rewarded in many ways for serious participation in cultural life, and should be remunerated for their contributions to language, knowledge and culture work. Mentorees can be engaged to work alongside community researchers, beginning to learn what research means and gaining confidence as they become the next emerging generation of knowledge brokers and community authorities.

In this project to date: We did not engage any mentorees in this project. Two of the community-based researchers involved were new to research themselves and were supported to learn the ropes without others also participating. However, engaging mentorees may be a good option in future.

- **Role 4: Local research manager (CP&D M&E Officer)**

Local research managers provide crucial support for community-based researchers involved in M&E activities for a particular site. Their role is to engage local researchers and support them in their initial learning around what M&E research may be for them and in their community. They provide ongoing technical and funding support to the local researchers, as well as some coordination of research activities and interpretation of research materials. They are likely to have involvement in a number of different research sites, and so are also able to coordinate connections between local researchers in the form of conference presentations, or workshops and meet-ups in Darwin.

In this project to date: So far, this role has been played by the CDU research team. They have developed close working relationships with each of the researchers and supported their on-the-job training, the development of their particular skills and research methods under Elder authority and have supported professionalisation through access to credentials and further study. In the future, this role is likely to shrink to the provision of professionalisation support only.

In the future, the local research manager role will be assumed by the NLC with some support from CDU. NLC's CP&D M&E Officer will undertake the majority of the support and coordination tasks of the local research manager with CDU providing professionalisation support (see *opportunities for professionalisation* below). The CP&D M&E Officer will work with CP&D Officers to identify and recruit new community researchers as well as managing the relationships and workload of the current and any future researchers.

- **Category 5: NLC Staff and other stakeholders**

It is beneficial for CP&D officers, broader NLC staff and staff from external organisations to all recognise themselves as important parts of the M&E system and as committed to growing a culture of M&E within CP&D. Networks of NLC and other involved stakeholders (such as university academics or staff from project partner organisations) can provide crucial support for the work of local researchers and M&E activities and are a key intended audience of insights emerging from M&E research. In the past, Traditional Owners have been happy to hear of the way NLC staff have been able to modify their thinking and behaviour as a result of their participation in Ground Up M&E and see this learning as important community development work. Elders expect NLC workers to learn from their involvement with M&E and changed NLC practices are seen as evidence of successful community development.

Research team remuneration

The following table outlines the agreed remuneration for different roles on the research team. Remuneration as listed below may not always be appropriate in situations where people are both researcher and participants in the Program.

Please note: All NLC Casuals must follow the casual sign-up process and be engaged for a minimum of 4 hours. Half day rates have been calculated with this in mind.

Role	CDU remuneration (2019 – 2021)	NLC remuneration (2022 onwards)
Local senior authorities over people-places	\$200/ half day \$400/ day	Casual ASO6(A) \$185/ half day (and \$46.25 every hour worked thereafter)
Community researchers	\$150/ half day \$300/ day	Casual ASO3(D) \$150.28/ half day (and \$37.57 every hour worked thereafter)
Mentorees	\$50/ half day \$100/ day	Casual ASO1(B) \$57.94/ half day (and \$28.97 every hour worked thereafter)

Opportunities for professionalisation

Local researchers are usually interested in opportunities for recognition, professionalisation and upskilling. All researchers working with the Ground Up team are offered the opportunity to develop a research profile on the [Indigenous Researchers Initiative](#) website, and to apply for a CDU Indigenous Researcher Micro-credential assisting upskilling and recognising existing local research skills and capacities. These credentials support team-based intergenerational research work involving senior authorities as well as researchers and mentorees, and there are different levels of credential available for each of the categories of researcher listed above.

- [Senior Indigenous Community-based researcher](#)
- [Indigenous Community-based researcher](#)
- [Indigenous Research Collaborator](#)

Researchers interested in further study can also be supported to transition into the [Diploma of Indigenous Research at CDU](#) and to complete on-ground elements of this course alongside their CP&D M&E activities. It should be noted that the Diploma is not a good fit for everyone and the course coordinator would be in the best position to assess if it is a right fit for an interested community researcher.

CDU Ground Up can provide support for local researchers undertaking M&E work and assist them to complete their credential assessments, or to enrol in the Diploma (for details, see Appendix 8). The CDU research credentials are designed to align with on-the-job training and research activities being undertaken by the researcher as part of their role. If a researcher is interested in receiving a credential, their credential assessments can, with careful planning, be met in the course of their existing research work and as such should be discussed and agreed on beforehand by the researcher, the M&E officer and the CDU contact.

If a researcher wants to obtain a micro-credential, then the local research manager (M&E Officer) should:

- Contact CDU in the first instance so they are aware of the interest
- Work with the researcher to begin gathering information for the credentialization process (see Appendix 8 for more details)
- Understand that a researcher's work with NLC is used as evidence for the credential. Researchers need to show one research output to CDU – it would be useful if this output was directly related to the work they were doing for NLC.
- Note that there is a cost associated with the credentialization, which covers the paperwork and time taken to assess the applicant. This is payable to CDU.
- Discuss with researchers their researcher profile for the Indigenous Research Initiative website and seek a good photo.

Research Ethics

In engaging local researchers there are two sets of research ethics which must be acknowledged and upheld. Practices of ethical research involving informed consent, protection of data and reciprocal research practice which are well articulated in the institutional context of universities, and in organisations such as AIATSIS (see: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research>). These work alongside local forms of ethical research practices which will be best understood by the local researchers and their elders, and which may orient around kinship relations and practices for maintaining First Nations' knowledge and law while working in collaboration with university or NLC staff.

As part of their employment and professionalisation, local researchers can be supported to articulate their own understandings of research ethics, and how they will be working to keep Elders, Traditional Owners and others safe in the context of intercultural research work. They should be acknowledged

having authority over these practices, and able to guide external collaborators around appropriate research practice with Traditional Owners.

Local researchers can also be supported in their use of plain language statements and consent forms (see Appendix 4), which alert Traditional Owners to the way in which their stories will be shared with NLC staff and may be stored in NLC offices or computers.

Community researchers, if engaged, will often be the one to explain the project and consent process to the person participating, especially if this is a requirement for their micro-credentialing. Ensure that the plain language statements and consent form (Appendix 4) is updated for your project. Some things you may wish to include in your consent conversations are: talent release for any photos, co-authorship for any published materials, attribution of quotes.

Ground Up M&E in Practice

Beyond the initial engagement of local researchers under the authority of the Traditional Owner group, the everyday practice of Ground Up M&E is largely focussed on listening to stories from elders and working with these stories to understand key imperatives in the doing of community development work, and how the value of this work is being guided and assessed on the ground.

We have found it can be helpful to see Ground Up M&E research working through 3 interlinked parts (each carried out through a variety of methods):

- **Sitting with elders/ working with stories:** Listening to original and ongoing stories and concerns from elders and key involved people
- **Interpretation:** Seeing CP&D projects as expressions of original and emerging stories and concerns articulated by elders. The value of a project can be read as dependent on the extent to which it re-enacts and remembers elder and ancestral imperatives.
- **Reporting/ generating organisational responses:** Sharing stories of positive achievements and changed practices so these can be seen and celebrated in the right way

Below we provide details of various possible methods that may serve as inspiration for local researchers carrying out this work in their places.

1. Sitting with elders/ working with stories

It's likely that in the very first instance of research and story collecting, elders will articulate the key imperatives and concerns which will remain consistent over the life of the CP&D work. For example, the creation story of Gapuwiyak offered by Clancy Guthitjpuu at the opening of M&E work in Gapuwiyak, see: Interim Report Stage 1, pg. 24 (<http://groundup.cdu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/NLC-report-2019-.pdf>). These stories can be collected and recorded through a variety of means and be continually referred to through continued practices of storytelling and collecting over the life of a CP&D project.

- **Open interview discussions**

Unstructured or semi-structured discussions with elders, Traditional Owners or other relevant community members allow interviewees to share stories and issues which are important to them, and to articulate these in their own terms. The process usually involves sitting with the interviewee at home or in their workplace and inviting them to share their thoughts on what has been going well in relation to current CP&D projects, work with the NLC and other issues of concern (see Appendix for a list of possible questions). Their comments are recorded using a video or audio recorder, or as handwritten notes.



Figure 1. Nyomba Gandanju (right) interviews her sister Jane Garritju (left)

Sometimes elders may seem to be telling stories of uncertain relevance to the project at hand. However, the pertinence of these stories should be assumed, even though their significance requires patient discernment.

Once the discussion is over (and they know what they have shared) interviewees can be asked to sign a consent form authorising their stories to be shared with the NLC. They may also be happy to have their photo taken.

- Video Recording: 'Key concepts'



Figure 2. Nyomba Gandangu speaking about Yolŋu M&E

Short video recordings can offer a way for elders, Traditional Owners and senior researchers to articulate their local Aboriginal understandings of key M&E concepts. These videos may be in their own language, or in English and can ground shared understandings of the character of M&E and of the significance of other key terms such as 'community' and 'development'.

Development within this project: This method was initiated by Nyomba in providing detailed conceptual accounts of Yolŋu M&E for her Diploma studies, and for CP&D M&E. In each stage of the Ground Up M&E project Nyomba introduced a new metaphor further fleshing out her principles of M&E and sharing them with the NLC. She would ask the CDU researcher to record brief videos which were then transcribed and translated. See links below:

[*What is Monitoring and Evaluation Yolŋu way?*](#)

[*What is Community Development Yolŋu way?*](#)

[*Mununukkunhamirr' – a concept of coming together to sort things out the proper way*](#)

She also generated a set of videos on community development and how stakeholder groups may align with Yolŋu, described through the metaphor of weaving a pandanus mat and doing M&E

- [*Yolŋu Monitoring and Evaluation \[PART 1\]*](#)
- [*Yolŋu Monitoring and Evaluation \[PART 2\]*](#)
- [*Yolŋu Monitoring and Evaluation \[PART 3\]*](#)

For further resources see her research profile: <https://iri.cdu.edu.au/nyomba-gandangu/>

- Video recording: 'Stories from elders'

Short video recordings can also be a way for senior authorities to share their stories and reflections of ongoing CP&D work. This may be preferred to written or interview formats, and again can be in the speakers own language or English. These videos would often be facilitated and recorded by a more junior researcher, who in the process of this work also has an opportunity to show themselves and be mentored by their senior elders.

Development within this project: This was a technique developed by Emmanuel Yunupingu when working alone as a researcher in Gapuwiyak.

He initiated this technique when speaking to senior TOs about key elements of their CP&D projects, and then shared these videos with CDU – in an important sense becoming evidence himself of healthy community development.



Figure 3. Clancy Guthitjpu in a video filmed by Emmanuel Yunupingu on his phone

- Video Recording: 'Selfie stories'

At times elders and key people will be happy to speak with local researchers and share their thoughts, experiences and impressions of CP&D activities, but will not want to be videoed themselves. The local researcher can speak with these senior authorities or community members and then produce a 'selfie video'. This involves recording themselves relaying comments from senior people or reflections from meetings or other CP&D events.

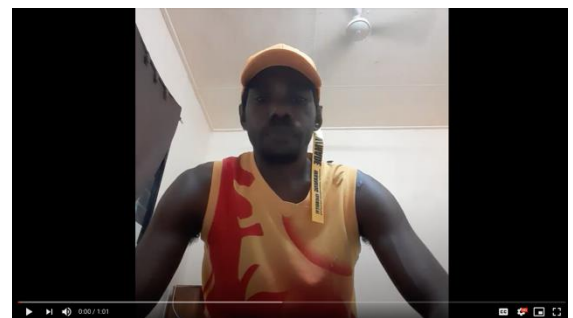


Figure 4. Emmanuel Yunupingu recording a 'selfie story'

Development within this project: This was another technique invented by Emmanuel Yunupingu. He developed this approach as a way to share stories and information with CDU researchers in Darwin while he continued working on the ground in Gapuwiyak.

- Oral report backs

Verbal report backs over the phone offer a convenient way that local researchers can provide feedback to the M&E officer or other NLC staff. Local researchers may call on a needs basis when they have something to share, or may arrange a phone meeting after a significant event (e.g. a meeting with stakeholders). This format allows the local researcher to speak, and the CDU researcher or NLC staff member to write, as a process of collecting and recording M&E stories and feedback.

Development within this project: Both Nyomba and Emmanuel would use this technique when they were interested in staying in touch with the CDU researcher outside of scheduled visits. Emmanuel would often call and provide a lengthy (1hr) report back after an NLC meeting when he could comment on the issues discussed and provided reports backs on individual conversations he had with Traditional Owners. He would also often request that the CDU researcher 'get ready' to catch all his words on her computer or notepad as he spoke.

- Vignettes/ Voices of Senior Elders

Vignettes offer a collaborative method by which stories from elders can be specifically edited and curated by local researchers or NLC/CDU researchers so as to foreground key stories and concerns shared by elders. These are created by drawing on the stories shared in open interview discussions and editing these discussions to create small but detailed 'story nubs'. Adding a heading can help to situate the text, or to foreshadow the significant point being shared. The text can be accompanied by a photo of the speaker.

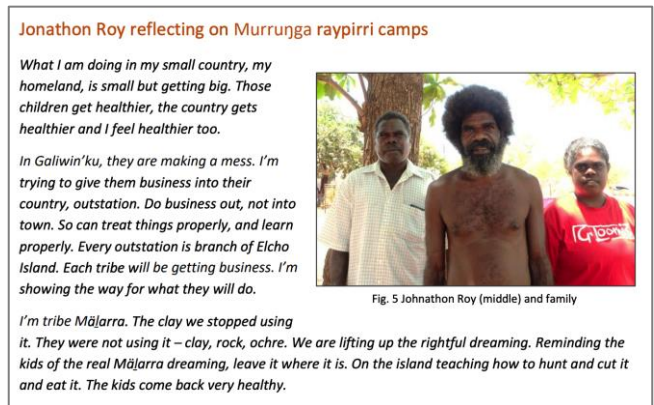


Figure 5. Vignette featuring Johnathon Roy (Stage 1 Report, 2020)

Development within this project: This method was largely developed by CDU researchers who have used similar techniques in other projects. This approach does not stand alone but offers a way for TOs to see their specific contributions being made visible in M&E reports.

- Video Recording: Meeting Commentary

The M&E concerns and commitments of elders is often on show in NLC meetings. Creating and then interpreting videos of these meetings can help to make evident certain practices which are being displayed but might otherwise be missed on the day. This technique involves the local researcher recording NLC meetings with Traditional Owner groups, and then selecting some key moments within the meeting which may be worthy of interpretation. Here the local researcher is carefully discerning which bright or difficult moment can work as evidence. These moments can be re-presented as brief reports, in which the local researcher provides a summary of the event, as well as a commentary as to why that particular moment was significant. The CDU/NLC researcher can then also provide an interpretation of this moment as embedding an M&E insight.

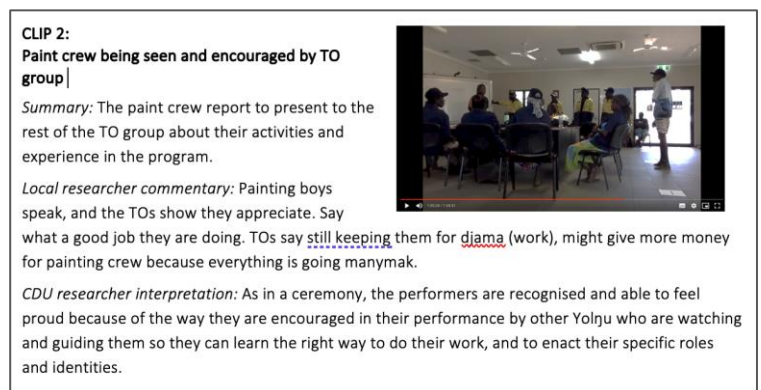


Figure 6. Example of Meeting Commentary (Stage 3 Report, 2022)

Development within this project: This technique was invented collaboratively by Emmanuel Yunupingu and the CDU research team. Emmanuel initiated the recording of the NLC meeting, and then sat with CDU researchers in developing interpretation of these events, and the actions of Elder TOs in the group in supporting the growth and flourishing of CP&D work. It offers a way to see the M&E practices of the elders already at work in meeting situations, so that they may be more actively validated and supported by the NLC.

- Collaborative review of historical documents and archival material

Sometimes it is not possible to sit with elders and hear their stories and concerns. This can be if these senior people are very elderly, or when most have passed away. In some cases, supporting the collective review of past documentation by the Traditional Owner group can be an active M&E practice supporting careful decision making. This may involve a continual review of the groups own newsletters and other publications, as well as review of past NLC archive material that may specify the kin relationships of clan groups, and expressions of past elders about land ownership.

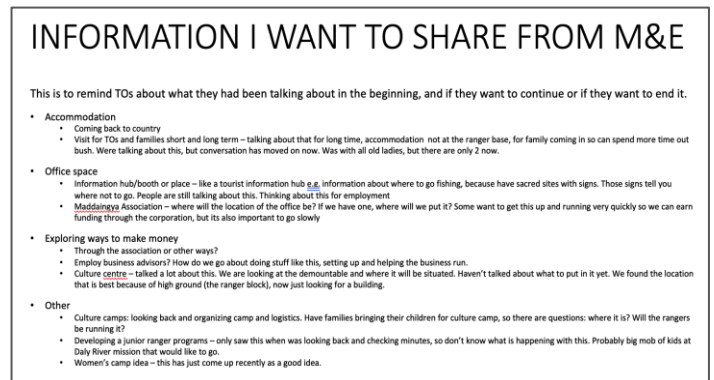


Figure 7. Excerpt from a presentation by Gwendoline White, sharing findings from her document review

Development within this project: This technique was developed by Gwendoline White as a way to support the Malak Malak TO group in their decision making to be guided by the past dictates of elders and by their own initial interests. The focus of this work was to support the process of looking back as means for deciding how to carefully move forward (see Stage 3, Final report, 2022).

- Ethnographic stories

NLC staff working on the CP&D programs may also have their own insights, stories and experiences that can contribute to M&E. These stories can be written up as needs be when a CP&D staff member experiences a particular moment of disconcertment/ surprise/ confusion that warrants further consideration, or if they witness a significant behaviour or event. Such stories are intended to capture the particular situation when the confusion arose and enable this to be shared with local researchers or other NLC staff for collaborative interpretation. They may also be accompanied, or inspired by, a photo of the significant episode. CP&D staff fieldnotes may be an important source of such stories.

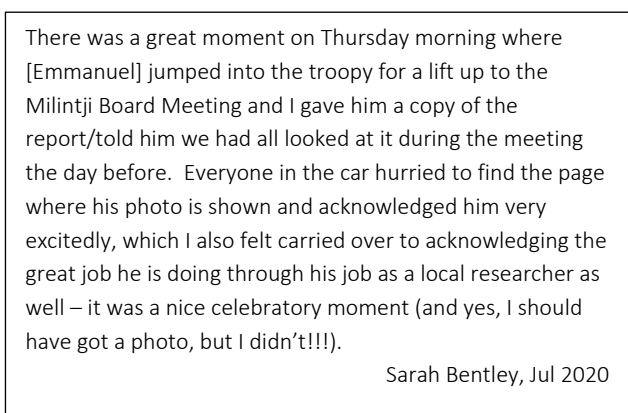


Figure 8. Brief ethnographic story by Sarah Bentley, shared with the CDU research team

Development within this project: This has not yet been strongly explored, but one example was included in the Stage 2 progress report (see above). This was a small story written by Sarah Bentley, expressing a moment when Elders recognised Emmanuel as a researcher working on the project through the authority of kinship links, and praised and encouraged him for his efforts. It offers a description of a live moment of action, as well as some brief commentary on the significance of this moment for the Traditional Owner group as an example of 'bringing up' good governance in the new generation.

2. Interpretation

In the context of CP&D M&E we have found the interpretive phases of our M&E work to fall into two parts. An initial stage where the first stories shared by elders are likely to point to a preferred focus for community development work generating healthy Indigenous people-places according to elder and ancestral authority. Then an ‘ongoing’ stage where stories gathered by local researchers help to evidence ways that CP&D projects are enacting these imperatives and can be celebrated for doing so.

Stage 1: Initial identification of Elder imperatives and concerns	Stage 2: Ongoing reflection on the performance of CP&D projects and practices as instantiations of identified Elder concerns
This responds to initial instincts, ancestral imperatives and stories shared by the Traditional Owner group and local researchers in beginning to articulate their M&E work in connection with local CP&D projects.	This draws on story material gathered by the local researcher and field staff (see possible methods above) to show how initial imperatives are being enacted by CP&D projects, and the work of Traditional Owners and the NLC.
Ongoing reporting: Showing and celebrating the practices and authority of Traditional Owners as they guide their CP&D projects and the work of the NLC and other organisations.	

- **Stage 1: Initial identification of Elder imperatives and concerns / evaluative themes**

At the beginning of Ground Up M&E at a new site, there will typically be a particular focus and style of M&E practice overtly, or implicitly, put forward by a group. This will relate to the concerns of the elders to continue healthy and vigorous community life, and the work of the local researcher in articulating these concerns.

This first set of stories collected by the local researcher will often express main commitments of senior Traditional Owners. While these commitments may be spoken about in different ways and in different angles through the rest of the project, they are likely to remain consistent as locally specific imperatives that can ground the ongoing M&E work in this place. However, it would always be helpful to remain attuned to changes that the Traditional Owners may initiate as projects mature.

These themes – or points of focus – are not hard to identify, as they are often insisted upon in the first instance of M&E work, and remain touchstones for ongoing work over the rest of the project.

For example, in this project: Nyomba has re-articulated and enriched the key concepts which she sees as central to Yolŋu practices of M&E (see page 14 above). These have guided our understanding and practice of M&E in both that site and more broadly.

In the Gapuwiyak M&E, there was an initial instance that the value of both M&E and community development work was in making the true story of Gapuwiyak visible, including through observing the authority of the elders and respecting which clans share which totems and lands (as identified in the story of the creation of Gapuwiyak, Stage 1 report, pg. 25).

In M&E work with Malak Malak, has been a consistent focus on the need to affirm Malak Malak heritage through the collective assembling and documentation of stories, artefacts and practices which reiterate the wisdom and governance practices of past elders, most notably in the creation of a culture centre.

In the early stage of work at a particular place, it may be helpful to explicitly record these guiding imperatives for future reference in the project. This may be through discerning evaluative themes (e.g. within the recording of the Gapuwiyak creation story), or it may be sufficient to simply note the particular focus of work in a particular site and continue supporting the local researcher to continue work in this vein.

When a set of key themes, or ‘evaluative themes’ are identified early in the project, they can help to guide the interpretation of story data produced by the local researchers. However, these themes do not generally provide a way of judging CP&D outcomes as good or bad. Rather they are likely to point to historical or ancestral imperatives that CP&D is seen as needing to remember and re-enact if local projects are to have the effect of producing strong networks of kin and community life under Elder authority.

- Stage 2: Ongoing reflection on the performance of CP&D projects and practices as instantiations of identified Elder concerns

Beyond the beginning stage of Ground Up M&E, the continuing work of the local researcher will help to ‘make evident’ the ways in which CP&D projects may, or may not, be effectively enacting the main imperatives and concerns prioritised by elders at the outset.

The research material generated by the local researcher as they work with elders and Traditional Owners can be read by the NLC as offering ongoing guidance as to what remains the most pressing concerns for elders, and how NLC staff and other partners can better align themselves so as to effectively support the activities of Traditional Owner driven CP&D projects.

The role of the NLC M&E officer at this stage is to continue supporting the local researchers to be active and productive to reflect upon their own practices and the work of the NLC, and to facilitate the circulation of the evidence they produce amongst relevant audiences (see reporting section below).

There will always be an element of collaborative curation involved in this stage of work. It may be beneficial for the NLC M&E officer to work with local researchers, supporting them to create PowerPoint presentations, videos or videos and social media reports that can be shared with NLC CP&D staff and other to better guide their collaborative work with Traditional Owners.

The first stage of curation will be undertaken by the M&E officer in collaboration with local researchers as they pull together stories that have been elicited and recorded by the researcher over an agreed time period (e.g. over the last 6 months). A second stage will be undertaken collaboratively by the CP&D team as they review and make sense of the story material generated in the research, and devise ways of responding to this feedback. It is often easier to “see” insights when looking back at 6 months of data. During this curation stage, CP&D officers will be encouraged to notice what’s ‘inside’ the vignettes/ senior elders voices and identify things that stand out. This should not be a comprehensive activity. The community researcher role in curation is to keep in touch with Elders between visits to make sure things are on track, and feeding back to CP&D officers what Elders think is working and if kinship roles are being enacted. See ‘reporting’ section below for more details.

3. Reporting / generating organisational responses

Within the Ground Up M&E work to date, the importance of ‘visibilising’ or ‘evidencing’ the good and collaborative work of CP&D has continually been reiterated by Traditional Owners as a key function of M&E carried out as community development work.

As Nyomba has emphasised, monitoring is a practice which is always being undertaken by Traditional Owners as they guide projects and the work of the NLC, and evaluation is the moment where this collaborative work finally emerges as enacted in the right way (for example, when *raypirri*’ camps come to be coordinated in the right way and enacted on the right homelands; see Nyomba’s comments in the Stage 3 final report)

Therefore, reporting plays an important role in showing and celebrating CP&D achievements. Below we propose a new form of reporting which is likely to become significant beyond CDU’s involvement in CP&D M&E. We also list several forms of reporting which have played a significant role in the CP&D M&E so far and are likely to remain important in the future.

- CP&D M&E reflection workshops (new)

Currently, NLC staff hold reflection workshops to review their field notes and reflections as part of the M&E process which supports improvement in CP&D program practices. These meetings offer a good opportunity for the M&E officer to table stories, feedback and insights gathered from local researchers as a way of building up a culture of Ground Up M&E within the group. Structuring reflection on the Ground Up M&E research into these sessions would enable the CP&D staff to:

- collectively reflect on the material generated by local researchers
- generate shared interpretations of this material
- propose means for incorporating these learnings into their everyday work and project plans
- report on the effect of incorporating previous feedback into their working practice

On occasion, it may be highly beneficial for local researchers to be invited to these meetings (or to other specially convened events). They could be recognised for their contribution to ongoing CP&D M&E work, and share their understandings and interpretations of the M&E work with CP&D staff. These meet-ups would also offer a valuable opportunity for local researchers to connect as a group and learn from each other’s experiences.

- Local researcher presentations

With the support of NLC staff, the local researchers have been given opportunities to report on their work to the Traditional Owner group at regular NLC meetings. Presenting at these meetings has allowed Traditional Owners to see what has been happening in the M&E guided by local researchers and offered them an opportunity to guide the researchers and congratulate them on their efforts.

For example, in this project: Nyomba has taken the opportunity of using these presentations to help the TO group become more aware of how to work collectively beyond clan groups in generating strong Yolŋu communities through financial investment.

When presenting to the TO group Emmanuel has received endorsement and encouragement from his grandfathers for the work he is doing, and the TOs get to see his developing leadership as an outcome of the CP&D M&E work

Gwendoline has developed a PowerPoint to show to the Malak Malak working group, reminding them of their previous ideas and commitments. She sees this opportunity as a way to strengthen decision making in the group, and to have a positive impact on CP&D

Presentations developed by local researchers can also be useful to share with other stakeholders and organisations, so they can become better aware of the interests and practices of the Traditional Owner group. Similarly, conference presentations allow researchers to showcase their collaborative M&E to academic audiences and promote their own, already strong practices of M&E in these contexts.

- **Newsletters and social media**

Within the project to date, the NLC has had a strong commitment to presenting and celebrating the CP&D work in the Land Rights News and through Facebook posts. This has been appreciated by Traditional Owners and researchers who have valued being recognised in these ways. The presentation of a public face of CP&D work has also helped other groups to be aware of the work carried out elsewhere, as well as who is involved and the directions they have decided to take.

Continuing to promote CP&D processes and successes within and beyond the NLC through these outlets may play an important role in continuing to nurture good will and support for projects within communities and the program more broadly.

- **NLC reports**

To date, annual reports have been the primary mechanism for communicating CP&D M&E activities and insights. Writing these reports has involved curating all the Ground Up M&E work of the previous year and presenting it in an accessible format designed to be accessible to Traditional Owner groups, NLC staff and broader academic or public audiences.

It could be that in the next phase of the project, this reporting format reduces in significance, while researcher presentations, newsletters and social media posts become more predominant. The value of the NLC interim reports created to date, is that they offer a way to synthesise material and identify insights that may be valuable for the NLC (see interpretation section above). However, creation of formally published Ground Up M&E reports could be replaced by internal reports circulated as the subject of discussion and reflection amongst the CP&D project officers.

Below is a suggested table of contents for an internal report based on the structure of previous Ground Up reports:

1. Insights
2. What we did
3. Vignettes/ Voices of Senior Elders
4. Photos
5. Key concepts
6. Who was involved
7. Researcher bio and photo

Generating organisational responses

In all cases, the reporting of CP&D M&E insights and stories is more than a communication activity. It showcases exemplars of good practices and local achievements that can guide future NLC work. Local researcher stories and presentations often embed key learning points about how the NLC can better align their work with local imperatives.

The expectation is that alongside demonstrating good CP&D good practice to others, NLC staff will continue to listen and respond to these stories in the spirit of learning, and with a curiosity around how they can modify their community development work, as well as the organisational habits of the NLC, in response to elder and researcher guidance.

Examples from this project include: Vignettes detailing key issues to be considered in the organisation of raypirri' camps in Galiwin'ku affirmed CP&D officer concerns about current camp organisation and supported changed practices around how the camps would be run so they could better support Yolŋu practices of growing up young people. These camps now being carried out in homelands can be celebrated through newsletters and social media as expressing and reinforcing Yolŋu law.

Newsletters showing the attendance of TOs and elders at the opening of the CP&D playground project in Galiwin'ku affirmed the support that elders and different clan groups have for partnerships that will benefit young Yolŋu

Stories about the character of money, and how Yolŋu appreciate seeing money always circulating and 'at work' have supported NLC staff to keep working with TOs around appropriate investment of funds for employment projects in Gapuwiyak, and to consider particular ways of presenting the money story in TO group meetings.

Evidencing outcomes of Ground Up M&E

Changed practices

An intended immediate outcome of Ground Up M&E is the creation of changed practices within the everyday work of the NLC staff, as well as the wider NLC organisation, as they collaborate with Traditional Owner groups on CP&D projects.

The stories and insights generated by local researchers are specifically designed to 'make evident' ways in which elders and Traditional Owners would like to structure ways of working in relation to their own local and ancestral imperatives, and ways in which they are already seeking to guide proper arrangements of collective life through their chosen initiatives.

In supporting local researchers to share their stories in the context of CP&D meetings, and through video and audio formats and on social media, the CP&D officers will be hearing from elders, Traditional Owners and the researchers themselves about issues at hand and imperatives of good practice in CP&D work.

It is the responsibility of CP&D staff, supported by the NLC M&E officer, to develop responses within their working practice that are motivated by the activities of the local researcher(s). These responses may be within:

- Ways meetings are structured, coordinated and run
- Processes used to communicate around particular topics (e.g. money story)
- Character of partnerships with external organisations
- Planning and structuring of individual projects
- Planning and structuring of the overall CP&D work in a particular place
- Overall program practices and objectives
- Working practices and relationships with other parts of the NLC
- Engagement and employment of the local researcher(s)
- A more nuanced approach to publicity around CP&D projects which links activities to the wider ongoing concerns of the elders for healthy emerging generations on country
- Other areas raised as significant through the local research

As CP&D staff experiment with making changes to their own practice, or supporting changed practices in other areas (e.g. of a partner organisation) they may like to keep a record within their meeting/field notes, and/or bring these to CP&D M&E reflection meetings for discussion.

This tracking goes beyond what the local researcher can do as part of their everyday duties, but can provide an valuable record of ways in which NLC staff have responded to feedback, and the effects of their response.

A possible format for this reporting is as follows:

CP&D Officer Fieldnotes (suggested template):

- Summary of issue raised by local researcher feedback:

- Response initiated:

- Within CP&D project:

- And/or within everyday CP&D practice:

- Effects noted from this change (e.g. as a verbal response from TOs or an observed response within the group or running of projects)

- Feedback to elders/TOs

Evidence of changed practices

As emphasised by the local researchers involved in Ground Up M&E to date, the evidence of successful M&E is the emergence of healthy community as the enactment of sovereign Indigenous people-places aligned with ancestral imperatives.

Community development emerges as an *outcome* of M&E work. In being guided by the stories of elders, Traditional Owners and local researchers, NLC staff and CP&D projects themselves *become evidence* of senior people on country exercising their sovereign authority and responsibilities in upholding their knowledge and governance practices, including through the forging of new contemporary projects and partnerships.

It is the process of becoming woven into these local structures of kin and governance that Ground Up M&E seeks to support and precipitate. The tools and processes presented in this manual can be therefore understood as ways of intensifying and making more visible the means by which elders and Traditional Owners would anyway be exercising this authority, and support a growing sensitivity within the NLC and other organisations to hear and respond to these guiding efforts in the conduct of their ongoing collaborative work.

Summary of activities and responsibilities

M&E Stages	Location	Actions	Resources	Responsibilities
Getting Started	CP&D Traditional Owner group meeting	Introduce and seek Traditional Owner guidance around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - initiating M&E activities within local CP&D - Employment of local researcher(s) 	p.6 – Steps for getting started p. 31 – Ground up origins and academic commitments p.34 – Introducing Ground Up M&E in Traditional Owner group meetings	CP&D officer M&E officer
Engaging local researchers	On-ground (or phone/online) discussion with Traditional Owners and potential researchers in each CP&D community	Negotiate and agree on a researcher or team of researchers Develop a plan around processes of ongoing communication Support them to access professional development	p. 8 – Engaging local researchers p.38 Communication plan and technology use p.9 – Opportunities for professionalisation p.40 – Researcher position description IRI website: iri.cdu.edu.au/	M&E officer Traditional Owner Group CDU researcher
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Methods	On-ground in each CP&D community	Negotiating and initiating processes for sitting with elders and Traditional Owners and hearing their stories of CP&D projects and other issues of concern Record stories (by video/audio or other means) and share with M&E officer	p. 10. Ethical research practice p. 13 – Sitting with elders/ working with stories p.37 – Guiding M&E Questions Reports: Stage 1 , Stage 2 , Stage 3	M&E officer Local researcher(s)
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Interpretation	On-ground in each CP&D community NLC Office	Noting main concerns and imperatives raised in Traditional Owner stories Keeping in focus these concerns when curating stories to be reported/circulated	p. 18 – Interpretation Stage 3 Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nyomba's work with concepts - Gapuwiyak evaluative themes 	M&E officer Local researcher(s)
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Reporting	CP&D M&E meetings CP&D TO group meetings Land Rights News CP&D newsletters Social media Other presentations	Collaborative CP&D team sharing and interpretation Showcasing and promoting M&E stories to relevant audiences Responding to these stories through initiating changed CP&D practices	p.20 – Reporting/ generating organisational responses	Local researcher(s) M&E officer CP&D officers
Evidencing outcomes	CP&D Officer field notes Land Rights News CP&D newsletters	Recording changes to NLC and project practices in response to M&E stories/reports Promoting successful project outcomes	p. 23 – Evidencing outcomes of Ground up M&E p.23 – CP&D officer fieldnotes (suggested template)	CP&D Officer Traditional Owner Group
Iterative continuation of Ground Up M&E activities				

Case Studies: Systems and practices of Ground Up M&E in three sites

Over the 3 years of the Ground Up CP&D M&E project, particular local systems and practices of M&E came to life under the guidance of local researchers working with Traditional Owner groups in Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak and on Malak Malak land (see NLC Ground Up M&E reports: 2020, 2021, 2022).

The practices of these local researchers, working in collaboration with CDU researchers, helped to 'make evident' some of the M&E practices and imperatives already at work in these places, and enabled these to be shared with the NLC, as well as displayed for the TO group and community members more broadly.

Here we re-present these activities as short case-studies following the Ground Up M&E summary template introduced above.

Galiwin'ku



Figure 9. Ground Up M&E research in Galiwin'ku with Nyomba and her family

Ground Up M&E Stages	Location	Actions	Responsibilities
Getting Started	Galiwin'ku	The NLC CP&D Officer supported the CDU researcher to introduce Ground Up M&E and the opportunity for a local research employment at a Traditional Owner group meeting in Galiwin'ku	CP&D officer CDU research team
Engaging local researchers	Galiwin'ku	Several options were initially raised by the Traditional Owner group regarding local researchers. A woman from outside the group (who was good with computers and writing) was suggested, but she wasn't interested in the job.	Traditional Owner Group CDU research team Local researcher

		<p>It was agreed that Nyomba (as a Traditional Owner and senior woman) could be engaged as a researcher if her research role was recognised as a component of her CDU studies for a Diploma of Indigenous Research and would not be remunerated.</p> <p>Nyomba enrolled in a Diploma of Indigenous Research</p>	
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Methods	Darwin/ Galiwin'ku	<p>Nyomba began the first of a series of video recordings describing concepts of Yolŋu M&E</p> <p>Nyomba guided and facilitated open interview discussions with Traditional Owners recorded by the CDU researcher</p>	Local researcher CDU research team
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Interpretation	Galiwin'ku/ Darwin	<p>Nyomba's concepts of M&E informed and grounded all CP&D M&E going forward.</p> <p>Nyomba was supported to keep elaborating on these key M&E concepts as the research continued</p>	Local researcher CDU research team
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Reporting	Online/ in print	<p>Nyomba presented her M&E philosophy at a number of academic forums and in the CP&D Traditional Owner group meetings</p> <p>Stories were generated in the Land Rights News and Facebook</p> <p>Interim reports were developed for the NLC by the CDU research team</p>	Local researcher CP&D officers M&E officer CDU research team
Evidencing outcomes	Galiwin'ku	<p>Insights derived from stories generated in the M&E research have supported changed practices around the coordination of <i>raypirri'</i> camps, for example</p> <p>(other outcomes would be best reported by CP&D officers, and have not been recorded to date)</p>	CP&D officers Local researcher

Gapuwiyak



Figure 10. Ground Up Research in Gapuwiyak with Jason Butjula, Jimmy Marrkula and Emmanuel Yunupingu

Ground Up M&E Stages	Location	Actions	Responsibilities
Getting Started	Gapuwiyak	The NLC CP&D Officer supported the CDU researcher to introduce Ground Up M&E and the opportunity for a local researcher employment at a Traditional Owner group meeting in Gapuwiyak	CP&D officer CDU research team
Engaging local researchers	Gapuwiyak	After the meeting in a discussion between senior Traditional Owners, Emmanuel Yunupingu was proposed as a researcher and agreed to the role Emmanuel developed a research profile on the IRI website and committed to earning an Indigenous community-based researcher credential	Traditional Owner Group CDU researcher Local researcher
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Methods	Gapuwiyak	Emmanuel facilitated discussions with senior Traditional Owners who insisted that the creation story of Gapuwiyak was crucial to all CP&D work and recorded a working version of this story. Emmanuel initiated a number of different video-based research methods and worked with the CDU researcher to share these stories and key issues and concerns amongst the Traditional Owner group.	Local researcher CDU research team
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Interpretation	Gapuwiyak/ Darwin	The Gapuwiyak creation story video was transcribed and translated at CDU, and key themes within this story were checked with Traditional Owners Subsequent video /story recordings generated by Emmanuel were interpreted as expressions of these themes	Local researcher CDU research team

Ground Up M&E in-practice: Reporting	Online/ in print	Emmanuel presented his M&E work at Traditional Owner group meetings Stories were generated in the Land Rights News and Facebook Interim reports were developed for the NLC by the CDU research team	Local researcher CP&D officers M&E officer CDU research team
Evidencing outcomes	Gapuwiyak	Insights derived from stories generated in the M&E research have supported changed practices around communication of the money story and have affirmed the value of a lengthy process of logo design (other outcomes would be best reported by CP&D officers, and have not been recorded to date)	CP&D officers Local researcher

Malak Malak



Figure 11. Ground Up research on Malak Malak land with Betty Sullivan and Gwendoline White

Ground Up M&E Stages	Location	Actions	Responsibilities
Getting Started	Malak Malak Land/ Daly Region	The NLC CP&D Officer supported the CDU researcher to introduce Ground Up M&E and the opportunity for a local research employment at a meeting of the Malak Malak working group, and at a full Traditional Owner group meeting at the Malak Malak ranger base	CP&D officer CDU research team
Engaging local researchers	Malak Malak Land	Gwendoline White was proposed at the initial working group meeting as a preferred researcher.	Traditional Owner Group CDU researcher Local researcher

		She accepted this role later at the Traditional Owner group meeting, and committed to enrolling in a CDU Diploma of Indigenous Research	
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Methods	Darwin/ Malak Malak Land/ Daly Region	Gwendoline facilitated discussions with senior Traditional Owners about their experiences and stories of the CP&D work and liaised with the ranger co-ordinator around ongoing video and audio recording work that would capture the voices and stories of Malak Malak elders. Through her CDU studies she also initiated a document review of past CP&D newsletters and NLC Malak Malak archive materials	Local researcher CDU research team
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Interpretation	Darwin/ Malak Malak Land	Beginning with the initial working group meeting, the focus of the M&E research was directed towards the rejuvenation of Malak Malak cultural life through the work of building a culture centre This focus guided initial open interview discussions, and research methods.	Local researcher CDU research team
Ground Up M&E in-practice: Reporting	Online/ in print	Gwendoline initiated family and Traditional Owner group discussions around Malak Malak succession, and has developed a PowerPoint presentation to be delivered at a future working group meeting Interim reports were developed for the NLC by the CDU research team	Local researcher CP&D officers CDU research team
Evidencing outcomes	Malak Malak Land	Generative work seeking to clarify clan succession rules and harmonious meeting processes has been initiated by Gwendoline and remains a work in progress.	CP&D officers Local researcher

Appendix – NLC Resources

Appendix 1. Ground Up origins and academic commitments

1. Ground Up research has arisen out of a particular academic history, and is supported by a set of theoretical commitments which are present within its everyday practices.
2. Our methods have been developed over many years, starting with ‘both ways’ education in bilingual schools in Arnhem Land in the 1980s, leading into the development of the Yolŋu Studies teaching and research practices at Northern Territory University now CDU, and to contemporary research, consultancy and service delivery.
3. Since the work on ‘both ways’, we have always taken seriously the knowledge and cultural authority of Aboriginal elders. Our work is collaborative, but not democratic. It starts with the sovereignty of Aboriginal people-places.
4. In each setting we are careful to elicit, articulate, strengthen and mobilise local Aboriginal knowledge and governance. Often this entails starting with stories from relevant elders. Taking these stories seriously then often provokes the collaborative (re)negotiation of received concepts. In the NLC case this has included rethinking English concepts of ‘community’, ‘planning’, ‘development’, ‘monitoring’ and ‘evaluation’.
5. There is a close connection between our work and the field of Science Studies where the unpacking of assumed givens (e.g. the separation of people and place) is seen as opening pathways for meaningful intercultural engagement.
6. We also acknowledge a tradition in western pragmatist philosophy which takes the world as unfolding in the context of ‘the problems of the moment’, and its many different participants in collective action. Thus, we see our work as generative – it results in changed action rather than objective statements and does not stand apart from the work it monitors or evaluates.
7. Taking seriously Aboriginal sovereignty entails engaging, recognising and paying relevant elders, engaging local Aboriginal researchers who are approved by the elders, engaging mentorees as part of the ongoing work of keeping local knowledge and governance practices alive, and using local languages and undertaking close reading of the imperatives and perspectives that may be buried inside them.
8. Also, critically important is the knowledge and governance practices of the funding body – whether it be the NLC, the NTG or an NGO. Our work entails collaboratively negotiating ways of going forward together in good faith that takes seriously imperatives from both sides.
9. We have only recently and somewhat reluctantly given this practice the name ‘Ground Up’ – to distinguish it from other institutionalised practise of research, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation. We run the risk of our methods been taking as a sort of ‘brand’ – a methodology or recipe book that can be transferred from one setting to another rather than a set of moral, political, strategic and metaphysical commitments and sensibilities which frame and underpin our work.

Prepared for delivery in an NLC workshop on Ground Up Principles (March 2020)

Appendix 2. Nurturing a culture of M&E in CP&D – visual resource

Ground Up M&E begins with recognising the presence of local practices of monitoring and evaluation that are always already present within the local knowledge practices of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people-places. It works to make these processes evident to organisations such as the NLC so they can be better guided by the M&E activities of the people and groups they are working with.

In this manual, we have largely presented Ground Up M&E as a step-by-step process which is able to be implemented. This is in the hope that such a format will be useful for NLC staff as they seek to support this work. However, this presentation of a step-by-step process can also be somewhat misleading and may not be intuitive for Traditional Owners or local researchers working with the NLC.

As a supplementary resource, the schema below offers another way of visually depicting Ground Up M&E. This may be beneficial for some CP&D staff and may align more closely with processes of learning and M&E development as experienced and understood by Traditional Owners and local researchers.

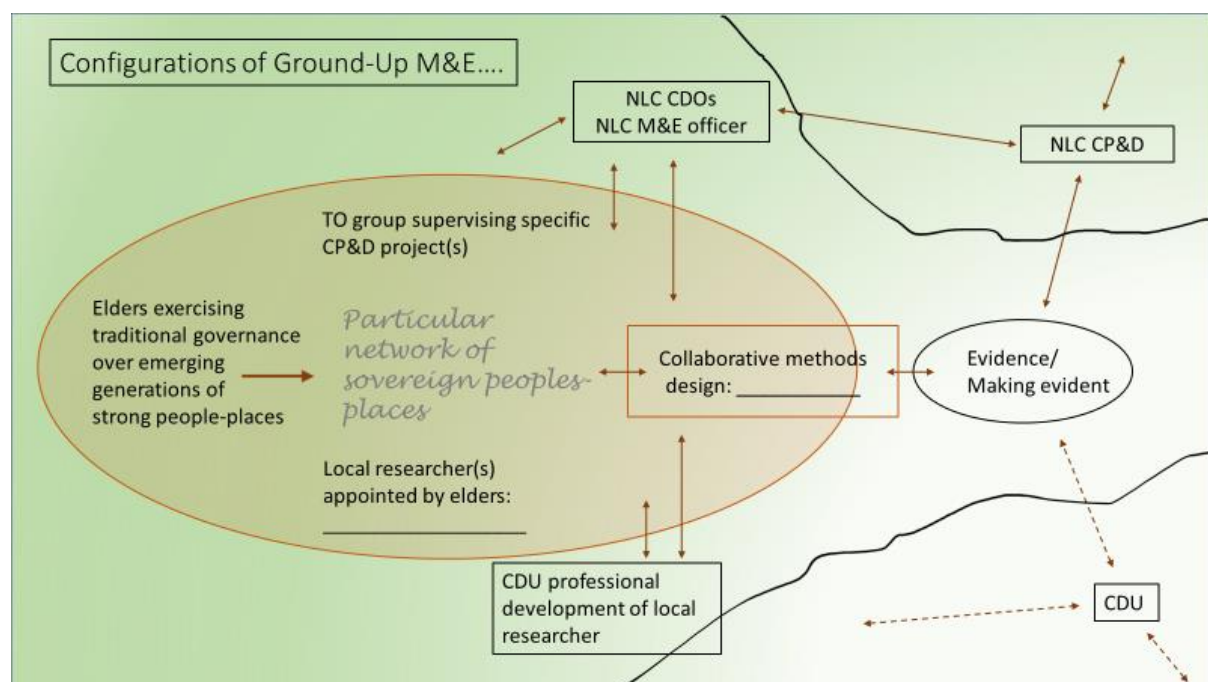


Figure 10. Ground Up M&E schema – available for use as a template showing and recording configurations which are likely to come to life around Ground Up M&E in each place.

Ground Up M&E as engaging particular networks of sovereign people places:

1. The orange circle denotes the existing network of kin and authority which is already present in all places where a CP&D program or project may arise.
2. Within their networks of kin and authority, elders are already at work *exercising traditional governance over emerging generations of strong people-places*. They are watching and guiding the young people so they may grow up knowing who and where they are, and they are also watching and guiding external organisations so they may come to support the flourishing of healthy and vibrant community as an outcome of collaborative work under elder authority.

3. These practices of traditional authority are being engaged and extended by *Traditional Owner groups supervising specific CP&D projects* and by *local researchers* as they collaborate with the NLC on CP&D M&E activities.
4. It is in beginning to work collaboratively with CP&D staff that the Traditional Owners groups involved in CP&D and the local researchers can begin to *collaboratively design methods* for sharing their understandings and practices with the NLC as part of everyday CP&D work. These methods will be different in each place, for different projects and different researchers.
5. The purpose of these methods is to *make evident* local ancestral imperatives and knowledge practices that the NLC may beneficially align with and support in carrying out their work. The working of this M&E system itself is *evidence* of good relationships and community development.

Presented in this way, the work of nurturing good M&E practices is also the work of becoming sensitive to the working arrangements and authorities of sovereign people-places, and it is the collaborative work of the traditional Owner groups and the local researcher(s) which make this easier for NLC staff and other external collaborators. Here, nurturing vibrant practices of M&E involves nurturing vibrant cultures of collaboration under elder authority on the ground and in the NLC.

Appendix 3. Introducing Ground Up M&E in TO group meetings



There are often two key elements of Ground Up M&E that are to be introduced to Traditional Owner groups at the beginning of M&E work: one is that the NLC is interested in checking in with and learning from how elders and Traditional Owners will already be guiding the CP&D practices and the work of the NLC; the other is the opportunity for a local researcher(s) to be employed and assist in guiding this work.

Below are a set of key points that may help guide these initial discussions.

- Aboriginal people on country are the first and final authorities for their land and people.
- They have knowledge, governance and law that is critical to the success of CP&D projects, but this knowledge is often difficult for the NLC and service providers to understand and respond to.
- A key aspect of CP&D is the work put in by non-local organisations to engage and comply with Aboriginal elders' visions and proposed practices.
- The NLC, and other organisations, are interested to keep listening and learning to how the Traditional Owner group will be guiding the project work in their own ways.
- There is an opportunity for a local researcher, or researchers, to be casually employed to work with Traditional Owners and the NLC. There is also an opportunity for the local researcher to gain professional recognition of their work through a CDU Community-based researcher micro-credential or enrolment in the CDU Diploma of Indigenous Research.
- The local researcher has a very important role in making visible to the NLC the ways in which the elders put the projects to work and keep their eye on them and work out what was useful and important and what could be changed or improved.
- The local researcher can listen to the main stories and concerns of the Traditional Owner groups as they work together with the NLC, and they can help to make the visions and understandings of the Traditional Owners clearer.
- This will help the NLC and other organisations to better see how the Traditional Owners are helping to grow healthy new generations so they can support this work and share good stories of what has been happening.

Appendix 4. Plain language statement and consent form

Below are examples of the plain language statement (PLS) and consent forms used by CDU researchers on the CP&D M&E project. It may not be necessary for local researchers working with Elders and Traditional Owners to use forms such as these. However, they can often play a useful role in alerting participants to the organisations involved in the M&E work (e.g. the PLS will typically show the logo of the NLC and any local organisations involved in or auspicing the M&E work), and to the potential for their stories to be shared with other audiences (e.g. included in reports shared within the NLC) or stored over time.



Information for Participants:
**NLC Community Planning and Development
Monitoring and Evaluation Project**

Local Researchers: Nyomba Ganḍaṅu, Emmanuel Yunupingu and Gwendoline White

CDU Researchers: Michaela Spencer and Michael Christie

Project sites: Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak, Daly River

Purpose of the Project: We will be working with Traditional Owners who are part of the NLC Community Planning and Development project. We would like to look back over the work that has been happening on this project and find good ways to tell the story of the community development work TOs and the NLC are doing together.

When we visit your community, we would like to sit with you, and talk to you about:

- Your work with the NLC, and the community development projects you have initiated
- Benefits you hope these projects might bring
- What has been good about this community development work, and what has been difficult
- Good ways to keep looking back over this work, so as to support it to grow and improve

Benefits of the Project:

- Sharing ideas about what has been working well, and how stories from the project can be told
- Developing clear understandings about how Yolŋu and the NLC can work together in good ways
- Finding ways to continually review and improve this work so good outcomes can be achieved for Yolŋu in their communities

What will be expected of you:

We would like to work with you, listen to your stories, and work together. We are interested in talking to you about the work you have been doing with the NLC, and the projects you have been developing

together. We will also seek your advice about local researchers who could work with us on this project. As we develop reports on our research, we will make sure that your ideas are represented, and that you are happy with the way we work together. You can finish up your work with the project at any time.

Person to contact:

If you have any questions, you can contact Michaela Spencer from CDU on 8946 7251, Michael Christie from CDU on 8946 7338 or Hayley Barich from the NLC on 8943 9768.

If, during the course of the project you have any concerns about the project or the researcher, you may contact the Executive Officer of the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee, who is not connected with this project and who can pass on your concerns to appropriate officers within the University. The Executive Officer can be contacted on (08) 8946 6498, toll-free on 1800 466 215, or by e-mail cdu-ethics@cdu.edu.au.

Informed Consent Form

**NLC Community Planning and Development
Monitoring and Evaluation Project**

- 1 I understand what this project is about
- 2 I have had a chance to ask questions about the project, and I am comfortable with the answers that I have been given. I know that I can ask more questions whenever I like.
- 3 I agree to my participation in this study
- 4 I know that I do not have to participate in it if I don't want to. I made up my own mind to participate and nobody is making me do it. I know that I don't have to answer any questions I don't like.
- 5 I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time. If I pull out, none of the information I have given the researchers can be used in the research.
- 6 I agree to photographs being taken of me for this project YES/NO
- 7 I agree to be part of a video recording for this project YES/NO
- 8 I know that I won't get paid for participating in the research project

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form [or someone has read it to me in a language I understand] and I agree with it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: / /

Researcher to complete (of oral consent has been provided):

I have described the nature of the research to the participant and I believe that he/she understood and agreed to it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: / /

Appendix 5. Guiding M&E Questions

Sometimes local researchers may be interested and confident to initiate unstructured conversations with Traditional Owners and elders about CP&D projects in their community. At other times, it can be helpful to work with a set of M&E questions. The local researcher can be encouraged to study and discuss the questions beforehand. They can pick and choose from this list, selecting ones which suit them, and interpreting and altering them in a way that makes sense to them and the situations in which they are working.

M&E guiding questions for use by local researchers:

- What is your role in working with the NLC on community development projects?
- What projects are you focusing on at the moment?
- How did you get to decide on this project(s), who was involved and were you happy with the decision-making process?
- Are the right elders involved in supervising this project?
- Are the right Traditional Owners involved in this project?
- What do you think are the best outcomes from the project, so far?
- If this project is successful, how will it help the next generation?
- Has this project helped you to think of other work that can be done to help grow up the next generation of your people, and keep people and place together?
- Are the right balanda agencies involved in this work? Are there other groups it would be good to involve in this project or other CP&D work? Are there other people we should talk to?
- Are the NLC and Traditional Owners working well together? What is going well? What could be improved?
- Is there anything else you would like to share?

Responses to these questions may be recorded using a phone or video or audio recorder, through taking notes (usually by the non-Indigenous researcher), by the local researcher listening to the responses and then recording a video of themselves detailing Traditional Owner responses, or by other means negotiated between the local researcher, Traditional Owner and NLC M&E officer.

The aim in recording these responses, is not to collect specific answers to the questions. But to become aware of stories, insights and aspirations that assist the Traditional Owner group and NLC staff to reflect on ongoing CP&D work, and understand ways to better align CP&D practices with the ways Traditional Owners would like to grow healthy people-places and new generations of young people.

Appendix 6. Communication plans and technology use

Each researcher will have different preferred processes for staying in touch with the NLC. These processes will be discussed with the M&E officer when the researcher begins work and may change over time. Below are examples of the communication processes adopted by local researchers involved in the project to date.

Nyomba Gandanu

Day-to-day communication:

- Via phone calls on a needs basis, i.e. both Nyomba and Michaela (CDU researcher) would call each other when they had news to share.

Research engagements:

- Most activities took place face-to-face when Michaela visited Galiwin'ku, or Nyomba travelled to Darwin for other reasons. During these face-to-face engagements it was agreed that:
 - o Nyomba would oversee and facilitate Michaela's interviews with Traditional Owners and stakeholders
 - o Nyomba would make time to work with Michaela to produce video resources and work on presentations as necessary to meet project or other deadlines
- At times, Nyomba also provided feedback to Michaela via phone reports following CP&D meetings or other significant events

Sharing material:

- All activities were carried out face-to-face or via note taking from verbal reports, so it wasn't necessary to share digital materials.
-

Emmanuel Yunupingu

Day-to-day communication:

- Via phone calls on a needs basis, i.e. Emmanuel would call when he had news to share, and Michaela would call if she needed to clarify travel dates, or other aspects of the research.

Research engagements:

- Beyond the initial stages of the project, most research was carried out by Emmanuel independently. It was agreed that Emmanuel would:
 - o Oversee and facilitate Michaela's interviews with Traditional Owners and stakeholders when Michaela was in Galiwin'ku
 - o Call Michaela after CP&D Traditional Owner meetings and offer a report
 - o Sit with Elders and Traditional Owners (at home or in their respective workplaces) to hear and record their stories of ongoing CP&D work

Sharing material:

- Face-to-face engagements and phone reports were effective processes that didn't require sharing of digital materials
- Video recordings generated by Emmanuel were shared by exporting the recordings to a shared googledrive folder, or when Emmanuel travelled to Darwin for other reasons.

Gwendoline White

Day-to-day communication:

- Michaela would call Gwendoline and arrange times to meet at CDU for M&E research work

Research engagements:

- Research activities took place as part of Gwendoline's Diploma studies, through Gwendoline's independently conducted research, and through trips to visit senior Malak Malak Traditional Owners. It was agreed that Gwendoline would:
 - o Attend weekly/fortnightly study sessions at CDU (particularly during term time)
 - o Report back on her independent archive research
 - o Oversee and facilitate Michaela's interviews with Traditional Owners and stakeholders during research trips

Sharing material:

- All report backs occurred face-to-face, so it wasn't necessary to share digital materials

Appendix 7. Researcher Position Description

Job Title:	Indigenous community-based researcher (monitoring and evaluation)
Classification:	Casual
Branch:	Community Planning & Development

What is this job about?

Traditional Owners are working together with the NLC on community development projects that will help new generations to grow up strong. The NLC want to make sure that they are working with the Traditional Owner group in the right way. You would be employed as a community researcher collecting feedback from Traditional Owners and helping the NLC to learn from this feedback about how they can best support your community projects.

What will you be doing?

You will be working with elders and the NLC to share feedback about how the community development projects are going. This might be by:

- Working with elders recording stories and ideas about community development, and what is important to them
- Sharing these stories with the NLC in ways that are approved by elders
- Working with the NLC to help them learn from these stories
- Keeping elders and TOs informed about what you are doing and what the NLC would like to do with their stories and pictures.
- Helping the NLC to celebrate the work of the Traditional Owners on social media and in newsletters

Who will be helping you?

- The Traditional Owner group will agree that you are the right person for this job, and support your work
- The NLC M&E officer will help you to get started, make sure you have access to equipment, arrange your pay and be your main point of contact
- If you want to receive a certificate or do further study, a CDU lecturer will help you

Essential Criteria

To be suitable for this job you will:

1. Be approved by relevant elders or Traditional Owners as the right person to work as a community-based researcher in {place}, and in relation to the CP&D project work in {place}
2. Work under their guidance and authority.
3. Have skills in working 'both ways' with your own elders and with non-Indigenous people and organisations
4. Be committed to working with the NLC M&E officer to provide feedback from elders and Traditional Owners about the community development work in {place}

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to fulfil, to the best of my abilities, the above-listed duties and other responsibilities:

Signature of Employee

Print Name

Date

Appendix 8. Professional development and credentialisation resources

NOTE: The resources in this appendix is the intellectual property of CDU. CP&D has permission to use within our team, but are not to be shared beyond the NLC CP&D team.

A set of resources have been developed by CDU to support the awarding of Indigenous researcher micro-credentials. These are included below:

1. **OUTLINE:** An outline that lists each of the key steps in the micro-credential process and assessment criteria
2. **PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE:** A template guiding how to assemble relevant information for the researcher profile and evidence of meeting the assessment criteria
3. **REGISTRATION FORMS:** Registration forms to be sent to CDU for processing and credential awarding

The Indigenous researcher micro-credentials are designed to connect with CDU's [Diploma of Indigenous Research](#). The Senior Indigenous Community-based researcher credential entitles the earner to credit for one unit in the Diploma. Completion of 3 Indigenous Community-based researcher (repeatable) credentials also entitles the earner to credit for one unit in the Diploma.

Outline of steps in the micro-credentialing process

STEP 1: INITIATING THE RESEARCH

1. Community researcher expresses interest in working for a micro-credential
2. Independently, or with support, they: initiate a research project; or work collaboratively with others on a project (e.g. university research team); or identify past activities they have undertaken that are relevant to the credential

STEP 2: FULFILLING THE CRITERIA

3. Independently, or with support, they develop a research portfolio in which they introduce themselves, showcase past work and reflect on how they do their intercultural work ([portfolio template](#))
4. Working to the relevant assessment criteria, the community researcher undertakes the necessary tasks and assembles necessary outputs or evidence of past outputs to be displayed on their profile page and/or included on their credential application form ([criteria template](#))

STEP 3: COMPLETING AND SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION FORM

5. They complete an [registration form](#) which includes brief info, such as: name, email address, and link to portfolio (*Note: In some cases, the potential recipient will have to set up an email account*)
6. They seek endorsement of their application from a Senior Indigenous authority, who sign the application form
7. The application (including signature of the Senior Indigenous authority + portfolio information + completed assessment criteria) is sent to CDU (michaela.spencer@cdu.edu.au) for 'assessment' and authorisation by the Dean of the College of Indigenous Futures, Education and the Arts

STEP FOUR: RECEIVING THE CREDENTIAL

8. The awardee will receive an email asking them to follow a link to accept their badge and set up their profile
9. Awardee can print a certificate of attainment from this site. They are now also authorised to share the 'digital badge' on all social media sites and include it in their online profile.

Credential assessment criteria:

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH COLLABORATOR

Criteria for Assessment:

- Attendance at a research induction meeting and identification of supervising Elder Indigenous authority
- Creation of a research profile detailing who you are, and your previous work (including research experience)
- Successful participation in one or more collaborative research projects undertaken under Elder Authority with local researchers and CDU staff.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCHER

Criteria for Assessment:

- Attendance at a research induction meeting and identification of supervising Elder Indigenous authority
- Creation of a research profile detailing who you are, plus any previous work or research experience
- Successful facilitation of one or more research interviews (or discussions)
- Demonstrated understanding of research ethics and processes for informed consent
- Demonstrated capacity to operate bilingually and/or bi-culturally in research situations
- Production of a research output (e.g., video, audio recording, PowerPoint presentation, written report etc)

SENIOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCHER

Criteria for assessment:

This credential can be awarded on the completion of a research profile or e-portfolio detailing:

- Who you are, your connection to particular people-places, and your previous work or research experience.
- Examples of 4 (or more) completed research projects, including:
 - Brief description of each project
 - Demonstrated understanding of research ethics and processes for informed consent
 - Identification of skills practiced and your contributions to each stage of the projects
 - A research output from each project (e.g., video, audio recording, PowerPoint presentation, written report etc)
 - Any available photos or videos (optional)

Portfolio Template

Each researcher will have a sense of what they want to present and how, and they can feel free to use the portfolio in ways that best suit their needs. Therefore, the template below is intended as a guide, rather than a set of rules to be followed precisely.

For the researcher:

<p>Introduce yourself...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Where you are from • Any other important information about who you are 	<p>Photo</p> <div data-bbox="943 551 1201 741" style="border: 1px solid black; height: 85px; margin: 10px auto; width: 162px;"></div> <p>[Can be attached as an electronic file]</p>
<p>Your story...</p> <p>Talk a bit about your where you have come from and what you have been doing, including details of previous work</p>	
<p>C.V.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about your previous jobs • List of any previous qualifications • Links to work you have done before (e.g. reports, youtube videos) 	<p>Your availability:</p> <p>Do you want to be available as a consultant working in your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What work are you available for? • Where can you offer these services (just your community? Travel?) • Would you like to be contacted directly? By what means? (e.g. phone, email – provide details) • Do you have an ABN?
<p>Your approach to research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is research important to you? • How do you do this work? (e.g. who do you work with, what does it involve?) • What are some of your special skills? 	<p>Research ethics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For you, what does it mean to work ethically in your community? <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you keep yourself and others safe in your research work?

For the researcher support-person:

Please check each box below, and provide details of how each criteria were met

☐ Attendance at a research induction meeting

☐ Demonstrated understanding of research ethics and informed consent

☐ Demonstrated capacity to operate bilingually and/or inter-culturally in research situations

☐ Successful facilitation of one or more research interviews (or equivalent)

CDU Micro-credential registration forms:
Senior Indigenous community-based researcher (level: RPL)

PERSONAL DETAILS
Name:
Email:
Community:
BADGE DETAILS
Date to be issued:
CDU student number (if applicable):
EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Profile URL (or attached): (incl. evidence of completed past projects)
Previous projects successfully completed: 1. 2. 3. 4.
BADGE ACCREDITATION:
Senior Indigenous researcher
Name:
Signature:
CIFAS Dean (or their delegate)
Name:
Signature:

Indigenous community-based researcher (level: beginner)

PERSONAL DETAILS
Name:
Email:
Community:
BADGE DETAILS
Date to be issued:
CDU student number (if applicable):
EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Profile URL (or attached):
Project title:
Award criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at a research induction meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated understanding of research ethics and informed consent <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated capacity to operate bilingually in research situations <input type="checkbox"/> Successful facilitation of one or more research interviews (or equivalent) <input type="checkbox"/> Production of a research output (e.g. video, audio recording, PowerPoint presentation, written report etc).
BADGE ACCREDITATION:
Senior Indigenous Researcher
Name:
Signature:
CIFAS Dean (or their delegate)
Name:
Signature:

Indigenous Research Collaborator (level: participation)

PERSONAL DETAILS
Name:
Email:
Community:
BADGE DETAILS
Date to be issued:
CDU student number (if applicable):
EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Profile URL (or attached):
Project title:
Award criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at research induction (incl. ethics briefing) <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in one or more collaborative research projects (with CDU or other supporting organisation)
BADGE ACCREDITATION:
Senior Indigenous researcher
Name:
Signature:
CIFAS Dean (or their delegate)
Name:
Signature: