

Ngarikirrimi Papurajuwi Kakirijuwi
Healing our Children Project
Tiwi Islands

“Pinyama Pupuni Pikaringini”

Good story vision that we see

Evaluation Report



Artwork by Cosi Tipiloura

23 January 2017

for Relationships Australia (NT)

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Acronyms

TITEB	Tiwi Islands Training & Employment Board
RJCP	Remote Jobs and Communities Program
HOC	Healing our Children (Project)
RANT	Relationships Australia Northern Territory
DCF	(NT) Department of Children and Families
SWSCSB	Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture Program
PMC	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
NAAFLS	North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service

Executive summary

The Tiwi Islands 'Healing Our Children' (HOC) Project also known as Ngarikirrimi Papurajuwi Kakirijuwi (NPK) began as a 12-month pilot run in Wurrumiyanga, Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi by Relationships Australia in 2016. The Project team trains community volunteers and conducts support groups for mothers referred to the Project by Tiwi service providers or community members. This evaluation will help Relationships Australia plan for the future of the Project on the Tiwi Islands and inform the expansion of the Project to other communities in the NT.

Key findings

How well does the Project strengthen Tiwi culture and work in a Tiwi way?

The HOC Project was developed as a result of long term collaboration by strong Tiwi women and the Relationships Australia's Children's Counsellor. The Project is conducted locally by Group Facilitators who are strong, dedicated and experienced Tiwi women. It arose out of the need identified by Tiwi women to help families understand the effects of violence on children. Tiwi people are highly supportive the HOC Project because it provides important messages to strengthen mums, family and children in a culturally sensitive way.

How is the Project increasing volunteers' and participants' knowledge and skills?

HOC training increased participants' knowledge about the impact of violence on child development. Support group participants learnt to recognise the signs of trauma in children and know what to do to act more protectively. They recognised they need to do things differently for themselves in their relationships to deal with the problem of violence and minimise children's exposure to it.

How well are the volunteers and participants able to use the new knowledge and skills?

Volunteers and participants shared the stories and information with their families; particularly their children and grandchildren. They used the strategies they learnt during the training and bush camps to take protective action to protect themselves and their children during times of trauma or crisis.

How is the Project making a difference to families and children of participants?

Participants provided examples of increased support for children under their care and provision of safe spaces for children in their families. They also reported an increase in safe cultural and family strengthening activities such as going out bush to escape fighting and jealousy.

How well has the Project built community support to reduce trauma in children?

The HOC Project has been successful in building support among the Tiwi community for the Project. The Group facilitators and volunteers are strong dedicated and experienced people who are well respected in their communities and the HOC Coordinator has worked with a long history of providing therapeutic training and support to the communities.

Project information was widely shared with community members and services. Community services expressed a strong level of interest in the Project and provided feedback that there was a need for the Project and interest in referring families to the support groups.

Key challenges

Difficulties engaging some key services and small number of referrals

Despite expressing interest, few services sent staff to training or referred participants to the support groups. The majority of referrals came from the Group Facilitators' and volunteers' own community networks.

Low retention at volunteer and mentor training and at support groups

In Wurrumiyanga, three out of 14 participants completed the volunteer training. In Pirlangimpi 13 women expressed interest in attending but only four attended and completed the training. In Milikapiti eight women attended and five completed the training.

The Project found it difficult to attract caregivers with children aged 0-3 to the support groups. Despite changing the mode of delivery to bush camps, small numbers attended and not all completed the program.

Limited resources for sustaining the Project

The dedicated support by the Project Coordinator ended in October 2016. The Group Facilitators are employed for a maximum of 10 hours a week. There is no further funding for bush camps which was the most effective mode of delivery trialed during the pilot.

The Group Facilitators don't have an office space to work from or a dedicated venue for project training and support groups in all communities. There are currently no arrangements in place for local Tiwi based organisations to support the Group Facilitators and help maintain project activities.

Key recommendations

Increasing engagement and referrals

Membership of the Tiwi Islands Early Childhood Network and attendance at its meetings would strengthen the HOC Project's relationship with health service providers and ensure that HOC activities are included in the calendar of events.

It is recommended that the Project team provide regular briefings to staff meetings of agencies such as DCF that have a high turnover of staff.

Increasing enrolment and retention at training and group support sessions

The model for volunteer training and support groups should be reviewed and consideration given to more flexible ways deliver the program to increase the attendance of service providers and community volunteers. These could include the adding HOC education sessions to Tiwi services' training or events calendars, RJCP training activities, online training sessions or webinars for health and community services.

Consideration should also be given to reconfiguring the support group program so that it can be run in alternative ways. Consider packaging it in components that could be run as short sessions with a wider range of groups. These could be delivered as part of the FaFT, Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture (SWSBSC) or maternal health programs

Sustaining the Project

The HOC Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone. It requires ongoing coordination, and training, mentoring and support from either Relationships Australia, a local service provider or both. The Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone. It is recommended that Relationships Australia continue its efforts to establish an agreement with one or more Tiwi based organisations to undertake some or all of the following:

- provide office space and logistical support for the Group Facilitators
- deliver the HOC awareness, education sessions or support groups
- provide a training venue
- provide management and coordination support for the Project

About this report

This report presents the evaluation findings for the Tiwi Islands 'Healing Our Children' (HOC) Project. In the Tiwi Islands, this project is known as Ngarikirrimi Papurajuwi Kakirijuwi (NPK) roughly translated as 'making good our children'. The Project is a 12-month pilot run by Relationships Australia in Wurrumiyanga, Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi .

The HOC Project team will use this evaluation to help them plan for the future of the Project in the Tiwi islands. The lessons learned from the Tiwi HOC pilot will help the Project expand to other communities in the Palmerston, Darwin Rural, North East Arnhemland and Katherine regions.

How we planned and conducted the evaluation

The evaluation was planned and conducted by a volunteer review team of Tiwi people from Wurrumiyanga working with a consultant evaluator and the HOC Project team. Review team members included Elaine Tiparui, Kevin Doolan, Mavis Kerinauia, Phyllis Daniels, Jacinta Tipungwuti, Michaela Tipungwuti, Cosi Tipiloura, Patricia Munkara and Nea Harrison.

The evaluation plan 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' (Good story vision that we see) was developed with HOC staff and Tiwi community members over two days in September 2015. The planning sessions included an introduction to the Project and an introduction to planning and conducting an evaluation.

The HOC Project theory of change and program logic is represented by the 'Pinyama' or the wild bush apple tree. The 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' evaluation plan shows how the Tiwi people see the vision of their community through the HOC Project. Cosi Tipiloura, a member of the review team and an emerging young artist created an artwork to represent the 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' evaluation plan. The artwork is shown on the cover. The artwork was launched on 11 August 2016 at the Women's Centre in Wurrumiyanga during the data collection process.

The evaluation used a range of data collection methods to ensure we collected strong and reliable information about the Project. The HOC Project team collected monitoring and evaluation data throughout 2015 and 2016. The review team met in August 2016 to collate and assess the available data and collected additional data between August and October 2016.

- See attachment 2 for a list of the people who participated in the evaluation
- See attachment 3 for an overview of the data collection methods.
- See attachment 4 for a summary of the 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' evaluation plan.

What we wanted the evaluation to tell us

- How well does the Project strengthen Tiwi culture and work in a Tiwi way?
- How is the Project increasing volunteers' and participants' knowledge and skills?
- How well are the volunteers and participants able to use the new knowledge and skills?
- How is the Project making a difference to families and children of participants?
- How well has the Project built community support to reduce trauma in children?
- What can we learn from this Project to help other projects?

The story of the Tiwi Islands Healing Our Children Project

Who runs the project?

The Healing our Children (HOC) project is funded by Relationships Australia Northern Territory (RANT). Project staff include:

- Three Group Facilitators who are Tiwi people employed to run the HOC support group in their community
- A Project Coordinator based in Darwin to support the Project.
- A manager based in Darwin to oversee the Project
- Peer Mentors – Tiwi women volunteers who support the project. The Group Facilitators and the Coordinator provide training for and support the Peer Mentors.

What does the Project want to achieve?

The HOC Project sets out to prevent young children being exposed to traumatic experiences such as domestic and family violence. The vision is to educate mothers and grandmothers about the harmful long term effects of trauma to increase their motivation for more protective behaviours towards their children where violence does occur.

Project also aims to build the capacity of the community to respond to issues of domestic and family violence.

Where it started – ‘It takes a forest to raise a tree’

‘Healing Our Children’ was born out of the collaborative work of the Children’s Counsellor, Aboriginal Support Workers and community members. *‘It Take a Forest to Raise a Tree: Healing Our Children from the Storms in their Lives’* was developed in consultation with women in Milikapiti, Pirlangimpi, Wurrumiyanga, Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy between 2010 and 2013. Over 40 women were involved in its development.

Why is the Project needed?

Neuroscience (brain science) research shows that exposure to domestic and family violence is a source of toxic stress. This kind of trauma is harmful to the developing brain, especially in young children whose brains have done most of it’s development by the time they turn 3 years old. For example, toxic stress in babies causes low birth weight and failure to thrive presenting a higher risk of children being removed from their families. In older children, the effects of toxic stress present as learning and memories problems at school, behaviour issues and being unable to control emotions. In adolescence, we see mental health problems, unsafe sex, drug and alcohol use.

The best way to prevent the harmful effects of toxic stress on the growing brain is early intervention (education and support) with caregivers of young children in the first 1000 days of life.

Who does the HOC Project want to help?

The HOC Project aims to reach out to mums, carers and grandmothers (referred to as caregivers throughout this report) going through hard times with their children and grandchildren, in particular the mums of little babies under three and pregnant women.

How is the Project run?

The Project began in July 2015 with 12 months funding for a Darwin based Coordinator to work two days per week and for three Tiwi Group Facilitators based in Wurrumiyanga, Pirlangimpi and Milikapiti to work up to 10 hours per week.

The Project Coordinator trained Tiwi women as Group Facilitators and a number of peer mentors who worked with the Project coordinator to develop and then run the program for small groups of participants (caregivers) in the three Tiwi communities using the 'It Takes a Forest' resource kit as a tool for dialogue.

The Group Facilitators, supported by the Project Coordinator, held information sessions for Tiwi community service providers and interested community members. These provided an overview of the training and group sessions, referral process and strategies for working together to support families.

The ongoing work of Group Facilitators in their communities includes:

- maintaining contact with and sharing the Project story with Tiwi Services
- receiving referrals to the support groups from Tiwi Services
- running the support group sessions for women with children under three years
- providing follow up support for women who attend the groups
- making referrals to other groups for services if needed.

Peer mentors are community volunteers who are trained in the model. They support the Group Facilitators and may also provide support to support group participants.

The Project aimed to train at least eight women in each community as peer mentors, with a cross section of skin-groups represented. Participants who completed the group training had the option of becoming mentors as well.

Project volunteer training and support groups

Training for volunteers and mentors was held in Wurrumiyanga, Pirlangimpi and Milikapiti. Twelve Tiwi women were awarded certificates of attendance for completing the whole four-day program (five in Milikapiti, four in Pirlangimpi and three in Wurrumiyanga). Thirty women attended at least some of the HOC training.

What happens during the training and support groups?

The HOC Project uses storytelling and art to talk about: ¹

- growing strong and healthy children
- the types of trauma that harm children

¹ Story telling and art are called narrative and art therapy in Project documents.

- the impact of harm on children’s brain development in the critical period
- the effects of harm and the actions which help children heal at four developmental stages (pre-birth, baby/toddler; primary-school age; adolescence)
- family and community responsibilities for protecting children.

The HOC Project team sought to find a suitable space (such as the childcare or safe house) in each community where the HOC group could meet and have access to child care. This would provide an ongoing supportive and nurturing environment for HOC group members and their children.

What we found out as part of the evaluation

How well does the Project strengthen Tiwi culture and work in a Tiwi way?

The Project was developed by Tiwi people in partnership with Relationships Australia

The HOC Project was developed as a result of long term collaboration by strong Tiwi women and the Relationships Australia’s Children’s Counsellor to support and strengthen Tiwi Families. The Project arose out of the need identified by Tiwi women to help families understand the effects of violence on children. They felt it was important to provide information to women in a way that involved story telling and dialogue and would not shame families. The HOC Project draws on Elders and families to support their young mothers and children. The HOC Project supports Tiwi families to work together. A Project leader said:

Today we can teach our children and make them understand to believe in themselves, especially to believe in themselves to make a better life; because there will always be spirit and hope and strength in mind.

The Project meets a need and provides important messages in a culturally sensitive way

The Tiwi people involved in the HOC Project have engaged and are highly supportive of it because “it provides important messages to strengthen mums, family and culture”. Comments included:

I saw that our children are in need, especially children that have been abused or witnessed abuse. There is a culture of people not realising the affect adult’s actions have on children. I have been a part of this community my whole life and wanted to see a change.

I saw something needs to be done for the kids. The kids are abused. People seem to expose kids to everything. When they get into fights they don’t think about listening and watching eyes of children or think of the effect that their actions are having on kids.

It is important that people understand how their behaviour affect children’s growing brains and emotions.

When we first started the program and showed the video people were ashamed but they want to solve the problem.

Training participants reported that they enjoyed the training and found it relevant to their needs:

I'm interested doing this training, just to learn bit more.

It's good first time learning about this workshop, pupuni (good) workshop.

I liked how Lucy spoke out clear and didn't give us the answer straight away. She let us speak first. I loved doing the drawing and colouring (activities).

It has bought out some of the things that I have been going through. And now I am relaxed and relieved there is no hurt, shame and blame within me or others.

I found it very very interesting. Lucy is a good teacher. I feel we should be doing more of this educating people on the child's brain and what trauma does to their development. If people know more about it, they might be more willing to change their ways for the good of their children and their future. I enjoyed it immensely.

The HOC Project incorporates Tiwi culture into the learning

The training and support groups incorporate important Tiwi cultural concepts such as storytelling and include talking tools such as the 'Tree of Life' and the 'Circle of Life Mat' developed as part of 'It Takes a Forest to Raise a Tree: Healing Our Children from the Storms in their Lives'. Elaine Tiparui and Patricia Munkara, two of the Project developers, explained the key concepts underpinning the project as:

Big trees represent my ancestors, like my great grandfather showing my parents culture, dance, singing, respect for the land and respect for each other. The big tree is happy to see his kids, the next generation, growing up strong and healthy around him. Elders' responsibility is to teach the generations after them where the country is, where they're from, where their kinship family is and it's the parents' role to look after the kids, see them growing up.

[The seed of life story] is about brain development and the effects of trauma on the brain. The brain is like the seed of a tree – it has to be nurtured and cared for when the baby starts growing in mum's tummy.

(Presentation to the 5th National SNAICC Conference, in Cairns June 2013).

Community leaders see the tree as a symbol of strong culture and people who attended the training "really liked the tree as a way to explain the story".

Support group participants, volunteers and facilitators reported that the bush camps are an important way to strengthen Tiwi culture and work in a Tiwi way. During the bush camps, the HOC learning activities were woven into a range of cultural and family strengthening activities that included stories around the camp fire, a smoking ceremony, dancing, singing, collecting bush foods and medicine and acknowledging ancestors. Women reported the following:

We were teaching culture like dancing, singing and saying a little bit of prayer on the camps.

We did a healing there with all the kids.

The smoking ceremony was healing for our children. It was a nice camp sitting around the fire.

It made us feel good, that smoking ceremony. The children were happy with the adults. We helped each other with the program and the kids. The kids are our future. We can teach them culture out here.

[We were] helping the children on camp and walking on the beach.

Before we entered that country we called out to the ancestors to look after our people and visitors.

We went to find bush medicine leaves and down the beach to find body paints.

Women collected pandanus.

[We were] taking kids to the mangroves and finding bush foods.

We were] talking with the kids about being safe out bush.

Women attending the bush camps reported that the best things included:

Bringing out our feelings and getting to know everyone else's and getting together. It was good getting to know Relationships Australia.

Hearing different stories from the other ladies about their own lives and experiences.

Getting together with family and friends.

Gathering together at the campfire, singing and watching the kids dancing.

Staying strong and looking after our children.

It is good to see mothers willing to help themselves.

The Project employs dedicated and experienced Group facilitators from each community

The Group Facilitators are strong dedicated and experienced Tiwi people who are well respected in their communities and recognised as cultural leaders and role models by Tiwi people. In addition, the Group Facilitators bring a wide experience and confidence to work with and provide advice to non Tiwi Service providers. The ability of the Group Facilitators to work independently was critical to the success of the operation of Project.

Tiwi culture was integral to the design and conduct of the evaluation

The strong Tiwi people and service providers who were part of the review team developed an evaluation plan for the Project called 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' (Good story vision of what we see) that ensured that the evaluation was planned and conducted in a way that strengthened Tiwi culture.

The ability of the Tiwi Review team members to design a comprehensive and robust evaluation plan within a Tiwi cultural framework shows a detailed understanding of the aims and objectives for the HOC Project as well a detailed knowledge of what a successful project should be achieving for Tiwi people.



The Pinyama tree likes to grow near the beach in swampy conditions. The fruit flesh is eaten when ripe red but the seed is not eaten. In the tunga bag, there are some pinyama fruit that children can collect to take home. The fruit represents the change we want to make for our people (Cosi Tipiloura, Review team member and creator of the 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' artwork).

How is the Project increasing volunteers' and participants' knowledge and skills?

Volunteers and mentors reported that the training increased their knowledge about the impact of violence on child development. Their comments included:

I've learnt a lot from this workshop that I or anyone can understand what may be good to help each other with problems.

It has brought out some of the things that I have been going through, and now I am relaxed and relieved there is no hurt, shame and blame within me or others.

Mothers need to be calm and help or talk to a child in a calm way.

Some participants at the the Wurrumiyanga and Pirlangimpi bush camps provided feedback that they had learnt to recognise the signs of trauma in children and know what to do to act more protectively. Others recognised they need to do things differently for themselves in their relationships to deal with the problem of violence and minimise children's chance of exposure to it. Their specific learnings included:

It (trauma) affects kids. We need to keep them safe. They feel sad and afraid. I've learnt how the brain develops in different aged kids. It was good to see and hear one of the women taking about her experience of violence.

The pictures [in the 'It Takes a Forest' toolkit], I could relate to in my life.

They feel scared. It's unsafe for them to see what's going on. I can show love and care for them. I was helping all the kids (on this camp).

We gotta keep the babies safe when they turn three so they will grow up good.

I'm gonna take my grandkids hunting. If my grandkids weren't safe, I would take them to other family.

I learnt about myself (about that tree and the hole in there). I learnt about healing our children, making sure they are alright and taking to them.

I learnt about going on the straight road, when there is family violence in the family. When pregnant mums smoke or drink that damages babies mind. When they grow up they will find it really hard. They will remember their mum and dad used to drink. They will have behaviour problems growing up.

I think I growl too much. I think they get it from me. I need to talk properly.

It made me think deep down inside and have an opportunity to learn things I hadn't learnt about before.

How well are the volunteers and participants able to use the new knowledge and skills?

The volunteers and mentors who attended the training found it very useful and have shared the stories and information with their families; particularly their children and grandchildren. Volunteers and mentors reported:

Since I did the program I have found more patience with children and my house is a safe place. Children come here all all the time and want to come here. I treat children differently. I always loved children, but now the children who are naughty – it has made me understand why they are like that. I feel for them. I can see the good and look for the good bits. I am more patient especially with the kids who are naughty behaviour – those who bully others and throw rocks at others. I talk to them more gently and am patient with them because I can see where they are coming from.

Even though I don't know how to help. I can't tell parents what to do. All I can do is to show is care and treat them the respect and let them know that they are likeable. I keep on looking for the goodness in them. I hope that they learn how to treat people well from the way I treat them.

I will try better ways to get along with others, sharing feelings and talking to them. I have strengthened friendships with others. (This was provided woman, who broke down and shared for the first time the isolation she has been experiencing from her partner)

During the bush camps mothers and grandmothers spent quality time with their children playing and collecting stones and bush tucker, working together on the art activities and drawing how they would like to see their community and their families. The Wurrumiyanga bush camp report described how “moments of secure attachment [were] observed as children checked with their caregivers during the sessions”. One of the participants asked for permission to take the banner made by the group of their ideal community, which was called ‘Ngawa Nginingali Purinjirrunguwi’ (We are Like Trees) to share at the next women’s group at CatholicCare.

Participants provided stories at the bush camp about actions they are taking to protect young children. One participant shared that she always feels safe at her sister-in-law's house. This is also the place that takes her children to if they have been fighting in the community.

Participants told the following stories of protective action:

If my kids are missing I go look for them and bring them home.

I will stay away from family when there's trouble.

My oldest daughter she has an unborn baby, she's pregnant. If she has argument with her partner, I tell her to 'stay home, you're safe with me'. Her partner, he comes the next day, because he drinks too. I keep my daughter here. The next day she can go back to him and sort that problem out.

- See attachment 1 for more stories collected from participants and volunteers by the HOC Project team during the bush camps and through follow up interviews.

How is the Project making a difference to families and children of participants?

The stories told by volunteers about how they provide safe spaces for children in their families show evidence of increased support for children under their care. Examples reported include:

I'm taking on responsibility for my grandkids and keeping them safe. (a grandparent, who cares for children under the protection of DCF)

There was a time when I saw all these things, not in a proper way, bad things came in and we had to go bush. When my kids were fighting, jealousy, I took them out with the car to go weekend, we go bush. I showed them the seed of that yam and the hole where that possum went. I wanted to teach them how to find the eggs on the beach, picking up the paranga, muscles and euli. Now I see them doing what I did. And their parents as well. They go around and gather for their food. When I see them, they can do their own things now. I see something good in them.

The small numbers of young mums attending the support groups, and the timing of the evaluation soon after the bush camps means that there is little evidence that the project has made significant difference to families and children at this stage.

The HOC team collected quantitative data from participants at the end of the bush camps and reported that none of the women indicated they would react in a violent way if threatened, while children were in their presence. All of the women indicated their preferred responses were telling the person to leave, leaving with their children immediately, ringing Night Patrol or Police for assistance, providing comfort and responding to the emotional needs of their grand/children, removing themselves and their children to stay with family or the Safe House or seeking respite by going bush or another community.

Only one woman indicated she would still react in a violent way if threatened, while grandchildren were in her presence. She stated that she and her husband were drinkers and she recognised this had an impact on her behaviour. One mother indicated that she knew she had a problem with stress and that it impacted on her children. The HOC team reported that through sharing her story in this support environment, she was comfortable enough to accept a referral to Relationships Australia's counselling program.

How well has the Project built community support to reduce trauma in children?

The HOC Project has been successful in building support among the Tiwi community for the Project. The Group facilitators and volunteers are strong dedicated and experienced people who are well respected in their communities and the HOC Coordinator has a long history of providing therapeutic training and support to the communities.

Project information was shared with community members, Tiwi and visiting services through meetings, information sessions and video nights. The Project team met with local schools, clinic, child care centre, Families as First Teachers (FaFT), the safe houses, Police, Youth Justice Program, Red Cross, CatholicCare NT, Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), Tiwi Islands Training & Employment Board (TITEB), North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (NAAFVLS), Department of Children and Families and the Government Engagement Coordinator.

All service providers were invited to participate in the learning workshops. The HOC Project team received feedback that there was a need for the HOC Project and interest in referring families as participants in the training and support groups. The slide night at the Pirlangimpi Child Care Centre was attended by most of the Tiwi service providers including the Health Centre, School and Child Care.

The RJCP planned to send its workers to train as mentors. DCF Coordinators are aware of the Project and the DCF case worker reported that HOC is one of projects that workers need to know about.

Challenges faced by the Project in Tiwi Islands

This section outlines the challenges the HOC Project encountered during the 12-month pilot period. Following each group of challenges is a table outlining some strategies for overcoming the challenges. These strategies were suggested by the people we talked to as part of the evaluation.

Engagement and referrals

Difficulties engaging some key services

Although there was a strong level of interest during the consultation phase and a high turnout at the information sessions in all three communities, few services ultimately sent staff to training.

This lack of engagement was attributed to competing priorities and high turnover of staff, which results in loss of knowledge about available services and programs such as the HOC. Despite multiple attempts by the HOC Coordinator and Group Facilitator to engage the Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture team, the Darwin Based Coordinator did not know about the Project. The Wurrumiyanga Health Centre manager at was new at the time of the evaluation and did not know about the Project. DCF has is a high turnover of staff with many workers lasting only 6 months in the job.

Small number of referrals received from Tiwi service providers

Despite the information sessions, detailed information sheets and referral forms provided to Tiwi Services only a small number of referrals were received from them. The majority of referrals came from the Group Facilitators and volunteers own community networks.

DCF and CatholicCare referred people to the HOC support groups. However, it was reported that the timing of the HOC support groups limited attendance by some potential participants. DCF referred three clients to the HOC program. DCF sought to refer a 14-year-old girl who required counselling. However, she didn't fit into the Project guidelines.

The HOC Project team felt that the lack of referrals from the health centres may be due to a lack of time for staff to talk with patients and the sensitive nature of the referral and the need to obtain consent. Some Aboriginal health staff indicated to the team that they do not like to ask questions about domestic or family violence). Safe house staff were reluctant to refer clients to the Project. They reported that they don't refer clients to any services.

The review team was only able to follow up with one health service despite repeated visits, emails and phone calls by the Tiwi review team members and the external evaluator.

Strategies for overcoming the engagement and referral challenges

Challenges	Strategies to overcome the challenges
Difficulties engaging some key services	<p>Membership of the Tiwi Islands Early Childhood Network and attendance at meetings would strengthen the HOC Project's relationship with health service providers and ensure that HOC activities are included in the calendar of events.</p> <p>DCF would like HOC to provide its case workers with regular information about the project. A website providing information about the Project, training and activities, the referral forms and regular updates would be useful for service providers. DCF said that a regular three monthly visit to the DCF office to provide updates to the remote team would be helpful.</p>
Small number of referrals received from Tiwi service providers	<p>Membership of the Tiwi Islands Early Childhood Network would provide the HOC Project with increased exposure and increased opportunities to have referrals to the project incorporated into the routine planning of community and health services.</p> <p>DCF suggested that placement of a calendar of events and referral forms on the website will make it easier for DCF and Health Department staff to refer to the Project.</p>

Participation in HOC Project activities

Low retention at volunteer and mentor training

Despite strong interest being expressed by a number of Tiwi service providers, very few sent staff along to the training workshops. Training Tiwi women as volunteer peer mentors is an important part of the HOC Project model. TITEB and RJCP at Wurrumiyanga expressed interest in sending at least 6 registered RJCP women participants to the training to become community volunteers, but in the end sent none. Of the 14 women who began the training in Wurrumiyanga only two volunteers and one RANT Aboriginal support worker completed it. In Pirlangimpi 13 women expressed interest in attending but only four attended and completed the training. In Milikapiti eight women attended and five completed the training.

Low attendance by target group families at the support groups and camps

The Project found it difficult to attract caregivers with children aged 0-3. In Wurrumiyanga, the HOC team conducted assessments on nine women who expressed interest in attending, three of whom were referred from DCF. Two of the women referred by DCF were due to have babies and were in Darwin at the time of the support groups were held. A number of service providers said that they could not insist their clients attend the HOC Project sessions because they were voluntary.

Five women attended the first Wurrumiyanga support group session, two women attended the second session and one woman attended the third session. The design of the HOC program requires participants to attend all sessions so that they receive the same information and trust can be built within the group. When attendance dropped, the HOC Project team decided to cancel the group and reconsider the delivery model. The team felt that better group attendance may be achieved by holding the program out bush on a camp over three days. Unfortunately, attendance at the Wurrumiyanga and Pirlangimpi bush camps were low. Milikapiti camp was cancelled when it looked like the numbers would be small.

Several young mothers left before the end of the bush camp. Volunteers and Project staff reported that telling their story was difficult for them and may have been the reason some they left before the end of the camp. Other reasons offered were competing priorities such as funerals and family responsibilities. Volunteers offered the following comments:

Some of the things we talk about is the sort of things that mothers and fathers do... that when a woman is pregnant their behaviour will affect whether they get a good child. [Maybe she was] not ready to confront up to what was happening, was too frightened and took off.

It is a confronting topic but if the mums are if willing to make changes it can be incredibly useful. They have to be ready. We can't push things on them.

In one community a number of funerals impacted on attendance. [The funerals] makes it to much, because people's moods weren't good they weren't in the space to listen to the content.

Young mums are embarrassed that they have problems at home.

Strategies for overcoming the participation challenges

Challenges	Strategies to overcome the challenges
Low retention at volunteer and mentor training	More flexible ways to deliver training would enable greater numbers of service providers and community volunteers to attend training. These may include the incorporation of training into in-service or professional development calendars, RJCP training activities, online training sessions or webinars for health and community services.
Low attendance by target group families at the support groups and camps	<p>TITEB, Jinani Childcare and CatholicCare stated they would be happy to work with Relationships Australia to incorporate HOC sessions into their training and support activities and to have the support sessions run from their training and childcare centres in each of the communities.</p> <p>The HOC program could be broken up into components as run as short sessions. An introductory session could be developed that could provide an overview of the key messages about brain development and the importance of keeping children away from violence. This could be delivered as part of the FaFT program.</p> <p>RJCP suggested that running workshops at the TITEB training centres would provide HOC with ‘a captive audience’. It would enable the HOC to tap into existing RJCP clients who would attend as a requirement of their RJCP enrolment.</p> <p>Short sessions could be delivered at other activities in the community such as baby shows or health days. The “It takes a forest to grow a tree” video be shown at the Health Centre in the reception.</p>

Sustaining the Project

Short timeframe for establishing the Project across the Tiwi Islands

The twelve-month timeframe for establishing the Project in three communities on the Tiwi Islands was ambitious. The Darwin based Co-ordinator was employed two days a week and her dedicated support to the Tiwi Islands ended in October 2016. The Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone.

Project funding was limited. The funding enabled the employment of three Group Facilitators for up to 10 hours a week and for volunteer and mentor training to be run once in each community during the twelve-month pilot period. Although bush camps was the most effective delivery method trailed during the pilot, they are expensive to run so were only able to be run once in each community.

The Group Facilitators have been with the Project for different amounts of time. Patricia, the Wurrumiyanga Group Facilitator has been with the Project from the beginning, Carol began as the the Pirlangimpi Group Facilitator in March and Jacinta as the Milikapiti Group Facilitator in July 2016. The Facilitators should have access to ongoing mentoring and support.

No office space for HOC Group Facilitators to work from

The Group Facilitators do not have a dedicated office space to work from or resources such as photo copiers and printers to help with planning, preparation and promotion of Project activities. The Project does not have a dedicated venue for project training and support groups in all communities. There is no arrangement in place to date with local Tiwi based organisation to support the Group Facilitators and help maintain project activities.

Strategies for overcoming the sustainability challenges

Challenges	Strategies to overcome the challenges
Short timeframe for establishing the Project across the Tiwi Islands	The Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone. It is recommended that Relationships Australia continue to provide dedicated management and coordination support for the Project from Darwin and funds to continue training and support groups or form a partnership with a Tiwi based organisation to manage the Project.
No office space for HOC Group Facilitators to work from	It is recommended that Relationships Australia establish an agreement with a Tiwi based organisation to manage the Project and provide ongoing support, education sessions, mentoring and support for the Group Facilitators. Jinani Child Care Centre Coordinator has suggested that the Group Facilitators can continue to be supported by FaFT or the childcare team. Jinani, RJCP and CatholicCare in Wurrumiyanga have all offered to provide a venue for training and support group activities. These can be linked in with existing women's, men's and playgroup activities.

Learnings and recommendations

The HOC Project is a valuable and extremely worthwhile project that is well regarded by Tiwi Islander women and men. There is agreement among key stakeholders that there is a need for education and support for behaviour change to reduce the trauma suffered by community's children and families. The Project operates in complex environment and unsurprisingly, has not been able to achieve all of its intended aims and objectives in the time allocated to the Pilot. The Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone. It requires ongoing coordination, and training, mentoring and support from either Relationships Australia, a local service provider or both.

What worked well

The HOC Project meets a clear need in the Tiwi Islands communities. It provides important messages to strengthen mums, family and culture in a culturally sensitive way. It was developed as a result of long term collaboration by strong Tiwi women and the Relationships Australia's Children's Counsellor and is held in high esteem because of that. The Project is conducted locally by Group Facilitators who are strong, dedicated and experienced Tiwi women.

The training for the volunteers and the support group bush camps were well regarded for their content, and for the incorporation of Tiwi healing, Tiwi values and focus on strengthening Tiwi culture. The majority of referrals to the HOC activities came from the Group Facilitators and volunteers own community networks.

Project participants reported that the training increased their knowledge about the impact of violence on child development. Some of the volunteers and participants provided examples of how they used the strategies they learnt during the training and bush camps to take protective action to protect themselves and their children during times of trauma or crisis.

Project information was widely shared with community members and Tiwi and visiting community services. Community services expressed a strong level of interest in the HOC Project and provided feedback that there was a need for the project and interest in referring families as participants in the training and support groups.

Key challenges

Despite strong level of interest in the HOC Project, and agreement among key stakeholders that there is a need for increased knowledge about the effects of trauma on child development and support for behaviour change, the project was not been able to effectively establish as workable model and achieve its aims and objectives in the time allocated to the Pilot.

Few Tiwi Community services sent staff to training or referred participants to the support groups. Many of the staff the services did send came for one day only.

With limited buy in from the health and community services, the Project found it difficult to attract caregivers with children aged 0-3 to the support groups. Despite changing the mode of delivery to bush camps small numbers attended and not all completed the program.

The dedicated support by the Project Coordinator ended in October 2016. The Group Facilitators are employed for a maximum of 10 hours a week and have limited funding to run

future training and support groups. There is no further funding for bush camps which were the most effective mode of delivery trailed during the pilot.

The Group Facilitators don't have an office space to work from and the Project doesn't have a dedicated venue for project training and support groups in all communities. There are no arrangements in place to date with local Tiwi based organisations to support the Group Facilitators and help maintain project activities.

Recommendations for strengthening and sustaining the Project

Increasing engagement and referrals

Membership of the Tiwi Islands Early Childhood Network and attendance at its meetings would strengthen the HOC Project's relationship with health and community service providers and ensure that HOC activities are included in the calendar of events.

It is recommended that the Project team provide regular briefings to staff meetings of referring agencies such as DCF that have a high turnover of staff.

Increasing enrolment and retention at training and group support sessions

Consideration should also be given to reconfiguring the Support Group program so that it can be run in alternative ways. Consider packaging it in components that could be run as short sessions with a wider range of groups. An introductory session could be developed that could provide an overview of the key messages about brain development and the importance of keeping children away from violence. This could be delivered as part of the FaFT program or as part of the Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture (SWSBSC) or maternal health programs

Sustaining the Project

The Project is not yet sufficiently established to stand alone. It requires ongoing coordination, and training, mentoring and support from either Relationships Australia, a local service provider or both. It is recommended that Relationships Australia continue its efforts to establish an agreement with one or more Tiwi based organisations to undertake some or all of the following:

- provide office space and logistical support for the Group Facilitators
- deliver the HOC awareness, training and support groups
- provide a training venue
- provide management and coordination support for the Project

Attachment 1: Insights shared through interviews with HOC participants

The following insights were shared by HOC participants and were collected by the HOC project team during the HOC camps and thought follow up interviews with volunteers and participants.

The HOC team “acknowledge that the Aboriginal women involved in the Healing Our Children program already come to us bearing skills, abilities, values and knowledge on how to raise strong and healthy children and protect them from harm. These things have always been there, often passed down to us from generations before. But sometimes they have been lost or forgotten or compromised by distractions or social problems in the community like drinking, drugging and violence”.

The strengths, skills and knowledge that we draw on to keep our children strong

X attended the Wurrumiyanga Bush Camp with her daughter, S (4 years old). X shared various ways she keeps strong when there is conflict in the family. This includes:

“staying away from trouble” and “if my kids are missing I go look for them and bring them home”

Going hunting because it *“helps them stay away from trouble, instead of fighting with other kids”*. This is something X learnt from her mum and dad when she was S’s age.

X says that her mum and dad taught her to be independent. Independence has taught X to *“look after myself and my kids”, “take kids out hunting and show them the way”*. X had to quit drinking and smoking in order to be independent.

In one instance X shared that her son had been fighting with his friends. *“P comes home and tells me. I say wait til morning and we’ll talk to the family. When they are drunk and night and he comes home, I say go to sleep and wait til morning. I tell him we need to wait til his uncle is sober, otherwise it will make the problem big.... We have to go the next day and tell the parents. The parents tell us what’s going on. Then we explain to P. Stop fighting, that is your cousin and no fighting. They are your family members.”* Instead of blaming or pointing the finger at each other, *“we listen to each other, one person talks then the other person talks. We make all the kids come together and apologise”*. X recognises that the kids are listening to the adults watching them talk and this is how they learn to listen too.

E is a grandmother who is always stepping in to keep children safe in her family and in the community. She attended Wurrumiyanga bush camp. E has an ability to be able to connect with children and their parents; she draws on strong cultural knowledge to teach children ways of developing relationships and connection with each other and the land. E says her greatest strength is *“teaching kids the proper way and taking them out bush”*.

“We have to first look after ourselves” because “If I’m strong, I can do things and make sure that everything is right for our kids. [We need to] make sure that we are always ready or on alert. I see things happening in myself. [I am] watching out for signs of trouble.”

“There’s always a sign when kids are not right. We can see it because we can feel it. Sometimes they are shy, don’t want to talk. But we don’t rush them. We just say ‘how are you today, did anything happen at home, or maybe good things happen to you?’ But they say ‘No, I’m not right’. Then we know that there is trouble at home.”

"I make them sit down and tell them 'this is not good; this is jirrti (bad)'. Maybe later on we say 'Don't go and make fight now, that's bad thing. You go round and round in a circle. Make sure you don't get involved.'"

"Sometimes I sing at home for them, put their favourite music on or they watch favourite cartoon. Sit down with them and maybe storytelling. [Remind them] about good things out bush. I always say that to my grand kids 'there's always a way to get away from that problem'.

E encourages children to talk about their feelings: *"They say 'I don't like dad sometimes; I don't like mum sometimes'. I tell them they have a right to do that (talk about their feelings). Sometimes the parents get angry. They don't know what's happening there [with their children]. If the child doesn't go back and talk to the parents, sometimes I go back and talk to them."*

V is a grandmother who has lost a granddaughter to suicide. She attended the HOC bush camp at Pirlangimpi. V's faith in God is a strength that keeps both her and her grandchildren strong. V says that the bible has messages she tries to teach the children about violence, and good and bad.

"Sometimes I go to church. Try to encourage grandchildren to go to church. I teach the grandchildren prayer and to keep strong."

"I show them how to stay safe, show them how to read the bible...[I read them] stories about early times when they used to fight. God punished them like Noah and the ark. They were doing bad things then God destroyed them; the ten commandments, to give promise to the Lord. They need to learn about it...Kids can learn about good and bad."

F and S are grandmothers who attended Pirlangimpi camp. These women have become involved in community meetings to try to get a Safe House in the community. They say

"We just send night patrol to look for the kids. Sometimes they're wandering around the street at night, something might happen. We're scared they might get raped".

"We don't like seeing things happening in the house, violence, that's not safe for the kids. So we call the cops or night patrol. Keep the kids away so they're not seeing those things happening".

"We need to keep them safe, otherwise they may grow older, they may be doing the same thing, they might hurt their girlfriend or boyfriend. They may see their family doing this and that's how they pick that up. They're not going to school."

The importance of family relationships

X talked about how important is to have close family nearby for support. X says *"my sister helps me get my kids to school"* and *"Sometimes I help her too. I tell them to get up in the morning, and get to school"*.

E indicated that while family can sometimes be the source of conflict, family can also be the healers. *"The other day there was the really biggest fight ever. My two tribes fighting. And this young boy was really angry. And I went around to that little boy and I said 'Stop'. I went around to my family and I said 'Stop.' Suddenly they stopped. Magic I did. I said 'thank you Lord'. That young boy I followed him. That lady was following him and I said 'no, he is quiet now, don't make it all worse'. Other strong women came in and we stopped them. [With those strong ladies] we said 'we don't want your crap'. That morning I came down and saw him, that little boy there*

sitting there on his own. I said 'now you right?' And he said 'yeah, I'm right now'. He thanked me because I tell him 'that is not his family, I am family to him'. And I bought him drink and pie."

S says

"we get the children together and talk. Sit down with them. [Talk about] fighting or stealing. Tell them to stop. Talk about the culture, teach them how to dance, how to sing. It's important for me to [teach] my grandchildren and other family members. Try to encourage them and encourage our grandkids, to help them, take them out camping, then we can have a good talk to them. Tell them story about long time ago. Positive stories for them to learn. In the old stories, we teach them how to respect the older ones. We never used to have grog or people playing cards. We used to go out camping, bush, ceremony, kulama ceremony."

The special places we use to keep our children safe

X shared that she always feels safe at her sister-in-laws house. This is also the place that X brings her children back to, if they have been fighting in the community.

As well as the bush, E says the most important places for her are home, around the church area and the shop. These are the places where "we sit a lot with family, with other mums and dad's...where other women come together to talk about what's happening. Sometimes they try to throw words at us, start fight, but we don't get involved with that at. I go back home with the kids".

When violence happens E says "we try to get [the kids] away from that. But kids still run around and want to look at that. I tell them to get away from there. I say 'I'm not a stickybeak lady. I sit down at home. You see that card game, I'm not there. This is what I tell the kids 'when I'm home, I'm home. That's why they come and stay with me. I just give them advice. That home is a safer place for me."

"Kids might see things, what parents do at home and they run away. [The parents] starting arguing or smoking or whatever and [the kids] say 'we going to Omo's house and stay there'. They stay all night. Their parents know where they are at night. I know there is something wrong in the house."

Church is a special place to E because "we believe that spirit come to us, maybe our ancestors, the spirit of the people gone. We ask them for prayer, we ask them to help us. Sometimes the kids are there. But at home, I say a prayer or the rosary. The kids look at me and say 'what you doing nana?' I say 'that my night prayer, hold this picture here and you pray to him.'"

V says that she is more likely to go out bush if there is unrest in the community or violence occurring in the community. "My husband, when there was fighting, he used to get up and go and stay [out bush] for the weekend..... We go out and get bush tucker. Good tucker, exercise, out bush."

F says "to the grandmother's house. That's a place kids know they can go. They can stay with other family. We can go down to the beach, sit down with them and talk or somewhere else like the barge landing."

The actions we are taking to protect young children

X knows how important it is to protect the developing brain of babies. When asked about any actions she has taken to protect young children she said "My oldest daughter she has an unborn

baby, she's pregnant. If she has argument with her partner, I tell her to 'stay home, you're safe with me'. Her partner, he comes the next day, because he drinks too. I keep my daughter here. The next day she can go back to him and sort that problem out."

E says "There was a time when I saw all these things, not in a proper way, bad things came in and we had to go bush. When my kids were fighting, jealousy, I took them out with the car to go weekend, we go bush. I showed them the seed of that yam and the hole where that possum went. I wanted to teach them how to find the eggs on the beach, picking up the paranga, muscles and euli. Now I see them doing what I did. And their parents as well. They go around and gather for their food. When I see them, they can do their own things now. I see something good in them."

"It's really sad sometimes when we see mum and baby drop down. And we say 'we need to go out and help that mother'. Sometimes family say 'no that's not our business'. They are afraid. But we go and tell the other ladies [strong women]. If we sit closer to that person, they hide themselves away and we know. One time, I did that when I saw a young lady. She lost her money. She came around and sat with me 'Ah. What's wrong? No money. So what are you going to do now?' I knew something had happened. She had to get up and go and take that baby to family. I didn't say 'go round to your family and tell them what's happening – no. Just get the baby and walk. I encouraged her to get away from that area now. [Her partner] might throw things around the house or maybe get violence. I do that, help them young people."

E uses a 'tough love' approach when it comes to supporting her daughter when she gets caught up in conflict and this is affecting her grandson (2). "When A [my daughter] is focusing on talking to him [ex-partner], J [my grandson] runs and sits with me. He knows [about his mum and dad fighting]. J just comes in under my bed. I always know 'What's wrong now?' Hey say 'Mum, mum mum.' He [has been] listening. I say 'are you frightened?' He says 'kuwa kuwa' (yes). I say 'dad or mum?' He says 'mum always swear, swear'. So when A is finished, I make her sit down and [my husband] and I talk to her. I say 'You don't focus all the time when he [partner] ring you. We say 'Stop, close that phone, look at this young kid here.' But that young boy is good now. He's running around everywhere. Now she is putting herself in a good way. I say you can't look at the negative. You've got to focus on the positive things for you. Changes. This young boy is more important. He is a learner. He will look after you when you are bigger. We have to look after him."

V recalls a time when her granddaughter saw a fight and came to her for help. "Her two grandmothers had a fight and she was there in front. She came home and told me 'You know what? My nana, she knock em down that other nana. I told her "you shouldn't see that fight. Any fight or argument, you're not to be there", I said to her." Reflecting on what she would do next time this happened V says "I want her to keep away. I tell her "you can go fishing or swimming" Sometimes she learn how to make damper...she can make cake."

"We go and sit on the beach. We take them to the mangroves. Sometimes I take them behind the airstrip and camp there. So they can swim....I encourage them to be strong and healthy."

S lives with her daughter and baby granddaughter. She encourages her daughter to get out of the house if there is conflict. "If you have baby in your arm and the husband is fighting, what if he chucks something? That baby might get hurt. I take them out, walk down the road there."

The skills children are learning from us

Grandmothers are noticing that their grandchildren have learned ways of taking action to keep themselves safe.

V says that she has noticed her grandchildren *"keep away from danger. They are going to the beach by themselves.....Sometimes my grandchildren, they sleep with my Uncles. And next day they can go back. My granddaughter, she comes to stay with me and then goes back to her parents next day. We just sit down with them and give them feed. They sit down then they go play or ride a bike."*

F talked about how older children are trying to protect younger ones, something that they probably learned from watching their grandmother. *"[Older kids are] protecting brothers and sisters, look after them, take care of them, walk with them, make them feel pupuni {good}....so they won't get hurt, keeping them away from argument and fighting."*

"In Wurrumiyanga, when they see their parents fight, they ring the cops and ban their own parents. They're really clever and smart. They don't want their parents to fight."

E says *"There was a time when I saw all these things, not in a proper way, bad things came in and we had to go bush. When my kids were fighting, jealousy, I took them out with the car to go weekend, we go bush. I showed them the seed of that yam and the hole where that possum went. I wanted to teach them how to find the eggs on the beach, picking up the paranga, muscles and euli. Now I see them doing what I did. And their parents as well. They go around and gather for their food. When I see them, they can do their own things now. I see something good in them."*

In one instance X shared that her son had been fighting with his friends. *"P comes home and tells me. I say wait til morning and we'll talk to the family. When they are drunk and night and he comes home, I say go to sleep and wait til morning. I tell him we need to wait til his uncle is sober, otherwise it will make the problem big.... We have to go the next day and tell the parents. The parents tell us what's going on. Then we explain to P. Stop fighting, that is your cousin and no fighting. They are your family members." Instead of blaming or pointing the finger at each other, "we listen to each other, one person talks then the other person talks. We make all the kids come together and apologise". X recognises that the kids are listening to the adults watching them talk and this is how they learn to listen too.*

The hopes we have for our children

X shared how she hopes her kids grow up to be like her, reaching out to other family to help them. X says that if this hope comes true *"we'll be happy, because I showed them to love each other, and make friends with each other"*. X says this hope can be traced back to when she was 10 years old because she grew up watching her mum and dad reaching out to a lot of families that were struggling with alcohol.

E has strong hopes for a better life for her grandchildren which includes travelling to new places, learn about different cultures and share their culture with others. This is something she experienced growing up. This is all about having a *"better understanding of themselves first. So maybe they can go on with their lives, to grow up to be a young man or young woman. This is why teaching is so important to E. "I make sure they see a lot of things in me. I want them to be*

themselves. I need to teach them a better way. And look forward. My hope has always been there. I trust in myself. I believe in myself. If I don't do what I want to do, it will just pull me back. And I will go back to the way I was." This is something she tries to instil in her grandchildren. "There will always be choices. If you like a better way of doing it yourself or not bothering. I gotta be the positive one. 'Be good, believe in yourself'. I say that to [the kids] because I see a lot of things that are not good. I believe what my mum said 'Carry that on with your children. Carry on and then teach, help other family. Support them".

E has become a strong advocate for the HOC program. *"Putting that [HOC] program together. Today we can teach our children and make them understand to believe in themselves, especially to believe in themselves to make a better life. Because there will always be spirit and hope and strength in mind."*

V has a vision for her grandchildren *"for their future, to keep them safe, to learn about education, go to school everyday and be strong."*

A strong culture woman, S would *"like to share my hopes with my grandchildren, my youngest little grandson. Teach him how to dance and speak Tiwi language. And respect for old people. They might become culture people. And they would be strong."*

The strong hopes mothers and grandmothers have for grand/children appear to give them strength to keep going. In the words of F *"Keep kids safe. Because kids are our future."*

Attachment 2: People who provided information for the evaluation

Project participants	Participants provided stories at the workshops and camps that were used during the evaluation. We have not listed their names here to protect their privacy
HOC Project staff	Lucy Van Sambeek, Relationships Australia
	Patricia Munkara, Wurrumiyanga
	Carol Puruntatameri, Pirlangimpi
HOC Volunteers	Elaine Tiparui, Wurrumiyanga
	Virginia Galarla, Pirlangimpi
Project participants	Participants provided stories at the workshops and camps that were used during the evaluation. We have not listed their names here to protect their privacy
Service providers	Philippa Castle, CatholicCare Wurrumiyanga
	Therese Burke, CatholicCare, Pirlangimpi
	Ebony Williams, Jinani Child Care
	Claudia Kantilla, Department of Children and Families
	Geoff Parkinson, Department of Children and Families
	Stuart Nicholson, RJCP Melville Island
	Debra Cooper, Relationships Australia, Wurrumiyanga
	Dolores Costa, Pirlangimpi Health Service

Review team members

Cosi Tipiloura	Community member
Elaine Tiparui	Community member, Wurrumiyanga
Jacinta Tipungwuti	Community member, Wurrumiyanga
Kevin Doolan	Tiwi Islands Manager, Australian Red Cross
Mavis Kerinaua	Indigenous Engagement Coordinator Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Michela Tipungwuti	Community member, Wurrumiyanga
Phyllis Daniels	Community member, Wurrumiyanga
Nea Harrison	External evaluator

Attachment 3: How we collected, reviewed and analysed the data

Data collection

The evaluation used a range of data collection methods to ensure strong and reliable information. The HOC Project team collected monitoring and evaluation data throughout 2015 and 2016 and the review team members collected additional data between August and October 2016. Data collection methods included:

Document review and discussions with HOC team members

Review of Program documentation and reports provided data on Project planning, inputs, outputs and outcomes. The Project coordinator collated project data into reports to the review team. These were presented and discussed during the two-day data sharing and analysis workshop. Documents reviewed included:

- Training and bush camp reports
- Reports to the review team
- Conference presentations
- Reports on the HOC Facebook page

Participant stories

HOC team members documented stories from the participants during and after the training and group support sessions and camps. These stories were able to be told because of the trusting relationships built up during the project period.

- See Attachment 1 for examples of these stories.

Pre and post tests

HOC team members collected a range of information from participants to identify changes in learning through pre and post test activities at the training, group support and bush camp activities. They reported these in reports to the review team.

Semi Structured interviews

Semi structured interviews were conducted with participants in the volunteer training and support groups; and with Service Providers and stakeholders from Wurrumiyanga and Pirlangimpi who had involvement with the HOC Project. The review team members sought to interview all stakeholders who could provide useful information to the evaluation. Interviews were conducted in person or by phone.

Despite numerous attempts, members of the evaluation team were not able to interview some key Health service providers to gain their feedback about barriers to their engagement the Project.

Community workshop

A number of community members attended the data sharing and analysis workshop held over two days in August 2016. The community members provided valuable information about the program, stories of program influence and change and provided suggestions for the future. The discussions and feedback were recorded and documented.

Data review and analysis

Data sharing and Analysis workshop

Project staff shared the data they collected with members of the Review team and interested community members during a two-day workshop at the Wurrumiyanga Women's Centre in August 2016. During the workshop members of community services and community sat together to discuss the project, tell stories about what is working well, challenges and discuss strategies for overcoming the challenges as well as ideas for strengthening the project.

Feedback and reporting

The consultant evaluator drafted the evaluation findings provided by members of the review team and the HOC Project team into a draft report that was provided to the HOC project coordinator for the Tiwi Islands Group Facilitators and Relationships Australia staff members to review in November 2016.

The report was reviewed and the recommendations considered by the Relationships Australia Healing Our children team at their planning meeting in December 2016. Feedback from the meeting was incorporated into this report.

This report was presented back to the members of the Tiwi Islands HOC team at a meeting held in Wurrumiyanga on 23 January and was used to plan project activities for 2017.

A newsletter of the summary findings and future plans for the Project will be produced for members of the Tiwi community by the Relationships Australia HOC Project Coordinator.

Attachment 4: The Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini evaluation plan

The HOC Project theory of change

The Tiwi model of HOC's program theory and logic is represented by the 'Pinyama' or the wild bush apple tree. 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' (Good story vision of what we see) was developed with HOC staff and Tiwi community members over two days in September 2015. It is just a starting point. Like any tree, this vision may change over time as the project grows and develops.

The 'Pinyama Pupini Pikaringini' shows how the Tiwi people see the vision of their community through the Healing Our Children project.

The Pinyama (bush apple) tree likes to grow near the beach in swampy conditions. Over the years it has adapted to grow in good, sandy soils. A strong and healthy Pinyama tree grows next to the Relationships Australia office in Wurrumiyanga.

The seed - about the Project

This project is starting out like a seed. The seed represents starting new life and new babies. It is about looking forward to a strong future with our strong families in strong culture.

The Healing our Children Project is a 12-month pilot run by Relationships Australia the Tiwi Island communities of Wurrumiyanga, Milikapiti and Pirlangimpi.

If the Project works, it can be put in new places. New seeds can be planted. The lessons learned from the Tiwi HOC Project will help the Project expand to other communities in the Palmerston, Darwin rural, North East Arnhemland and Katherine regions in the 2nd and 3rd years.

Where we started – 'it takes a forest to raise a tree'

'Healing Our Children' was born out of the collaborative work of the Children's Counsellor, Aboriginal support workers and the community. 'It Take a Forest to Raise a Tree: Healing Our Children from the Storms in their Lives' was developed in consultation with women in Milikapiti, Pirlangimpi, Wurrumiyanga, Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy between 2010 and 2013. Over 40 women were involved in its development.

Growing with Purpose – the target Group

We want to reach out to mums, carers and grandmothers going through hard times with their children and grandchildren. It is especially important to reach out to the mums of little babies under three and pregnant women.

Our sense of direction - the program theory

Every seed needs to be planted in the right place, facing the right way. This is like having a sense of direction.

We believe that change is everything, we can all make changes and we can make a difference. Having these beliefs, gives us a sense of direction.

Starting to grow with food and nourishment – Tiwi values that underpin the Project

Just like the seed, our program cannot start growing without food and nourishment. This comes from the earth.

Food and nourishment represents the Tiwi values that underpin the work. With good strong values, this program will grow strong and healthy.

These are the values being drawn up into the seed from the earth:

- Tiwi knowledge and strong culture
- Good family values
- A sense of responsibility
- Respect. Building positive relationships and respecting each other because everyone is related.
- Good feelings from the community and feeling good about ourselves. We give out **good feelings** and get it back.
- Strong will power to help others (passion or motivation)
- Faith
- Trust
- Knowing that your team works together and will support you
- Belief in self
- Positive role-modelling
- Having hope
- Love

Government funding helps us to fertilise the seed. We also have an evaluator who is helping us plan the life of the project, keep it alive and make sure its growing how we want it to grow.

Caring for Pinyama – having the right people involved

The HOC Project needs the right people caring for it. It needs the right people working with women and children, like grandparents, Elders, mentors, strong women, program staff and volunteers. They will come from the four Tiwi skin groups.

The right people have to come to the program and the right people have to attend.

Culture is the trunk

Culture is in the middle of this project. It is also all around, everywhere. Like the trunk of a tree, culture holds the project up strong and straight and proud. Our culture includes many practices and traditions which have been around for thousands of years. These are some of the ways we think about our culture.

- culture is about family, working together and supporting each other for our children's wellbeing
- Having a strong spirit
- Culture is in our Tiwi stories, in our hearts, in the bush
- Paying respects to our people, calling out to them when we go onto the land, even if we are from another place.

- Singing and dancing
- Language
- Art, painting, carving and weaving
- Bush medicine
- Campfires at night
- Healing and smoking ceremonies
- Ceremonies for celebrating new life and new growth like Kulama
- Pukamani ceremonies for those people who have passed away
- Spiritual practices like when we see ancestor spirits; they show the way and give guidance when we are lost
- Respect for ourselves and others

Our culture reminds us that the answers to our problems come from within the community. If our tree is not growing strong, we look to our culture for the answers. We turn to the voices of our ancestors, who are listening, looking up from the trunk, making sure that everything is growing.

The challenge of storms

We know that trees can be knocked down by violent storms. A lot of the storms that hurt our families come from outside influences; things like drugs and alcohol which are not part of our culture. The answers to these problems come from within our community and our strong culture. We, the Tiwi people can help ourselves to heal and recover from these storms, just like a tree that regenerates over time.

The leaves are our supporters – key stakeholders

The leaves represent the people in this project. They might be standing back admiring the tree or working really hard to grow the tree. They are stakeholders, community members, organisations and other service providers. They are:

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| • Program staff | • Mums |
| • Families | • Grandparents |
| • Elders | • Strong women |
| • Community | • Parents or guardians |
| • Red Cross | • Youth Diversion program |
| • Early Childhood Services e.g. Jinani and FaFT | • Health Centre and Aboriginal Health Practitioners |
| • Schools | • Safe Houses |
| • Police | • Shire Council |
| • Local member of Government | • RJCP |
| • NT Department of Children and Families | • Federal Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| • Catholic Church | • CatholicCare NT |

- Night Patrol
- Sport and Recreation
- Milimika group
- Centrelink

Bearing fruit – Project impact

The fruit represents the change we want to bring about for our people and our community. Here are the fruits we wish to produce:

- A good community; sharing and caring, looking out for each other
- Whole families have a healthy lifestyle
- Happy families in a good environment
- Families are safe
- Everyone feels safe and protected
- Everyone feels love and respect
- Strong family networks
- Happy homes with no violence
- Men feel good, connected and strong in their culture
- Children have good behaviour, feel good about themselves
- Mums are looking after the family and caring for children
- Kids are playful, healthy, feeling good and have good behaviour
- Kids are attending and progressing well at school

Reaching out with strong branches – Project outcomes and activities

Big branches - Project outcomes

Pinyama is divided into two big strong branches of the tree. The branches represent the aims of the project.

The first big branch aims to build the capacity of the community to respond to and prevent trauma. It is about us helping our own families who may be experiencing some violent storms in their lives.

The second big branch aims to prevent trauma in children by reducing their exposure to violence and abuse. We need to do this by strengthening the connection between mothers, fathers and children.

Smaller branches - Project activities

The smaller branches set out the activities: what it is we are going to do in the project to achieve these aims.

Community capacity building

This starts with bringing the right people together and connecting people up to come together and learn. The learning will focus on domestic violence and how it impacts on our families and as well as sharing stories about traditional Aboriginal ways of healing for our children. It will be a two way learning process. Together, we will increase our knowledge about trauma and how best to support women.

Here are some of the activities we will be doing:

- Developing and delivering the 'two ways' learning program
- Including traditional healing practices in the program content
- Encouraging and support motivated people to come and learn; finding the right people
- Employing people to be facilitators of the program, support volunteers and work within the community
- Ensuring the four skin groups are represented amongst the volunteers
- Building relationships with service providers
- Having meetings with groups, community and services informing people about our work
- Ensuring our Elders know about the program
- Working with other services to refer people to and from the HOC women's group program
- Linking people in with strong family and skin groups when they have problems
- Giving our love and support to the children
- Establishing a Tiwi Review Team for this '12-month trial' to gather, look at, assess and review feedback, then make suggestions for improvement

Preventing trauma in babies and children

We will establish a women's support group program to reach out to mums, grandmothers and carers who are living with storms to help them protect their children. Staff will be role models for the women participating who will become the teachers themselves for the next generation. Some of the activities in this branch of the tree include:

- helping workers and volunteers attend the training program and feel confident delivering the program as a facilitator or mentor
- Setting up the women's groups
- Establishing the group at the child care centre so they can look after the kids while the mums participate
- Running groups once a term in each community for 6-8 women at a time
- Being flexible so the group can run different ways. It might be 4 half-day sessions or another model
- Issuing a personal invitation and holding activities to make mums feel welcome - child care, food, bush trips, cultural songs, dancing and music, smoking/healing ceremony, painting, bush medicine, basket weaving

A healthy tree – quality criteria - Tunga

We will know if we are doing a good job in this program, if the tree is healthy and bearing good quality fruit.

Good quality community building

This is what good quality fruit looks like on the community building branch of our tree:

- The right people are involved in the program
- A strong team of volunteers want to be involved

- The project co-ordinator and cultural adviser develop the training together; training and support groups incorporate Tiwi knowledge; the training was good quality and delivered in a two-way approach
- Workers and volunteers show interest, turn up to the learning program and keep coming; they develop new skills; they feel confident to [implement-use](#) the new knowledge learned; facilitators know how to run the support groups
- Volunteers feel comfortable and get support from others through mentoring
- The work team shows commitment, turning up regularly to work and meetings; there is good communication amongst the work team
- Skills have been taken up and are being communicated
- Funds [are](#) used to support activities and is well managed
- Reports are written on time
- Word has been spread; lots of people in the community are talking about the project; services are talking about our program between them; the family care team system is working on the same page
- Men's groups know about the program
- Team building meetings are often; there is regular debriefing
- Meetings are in the right places
- The program has flexibility
- We get good feedback about the team from members of the community
- The Review Team meets regularly to see if everything is happening how we planned

Good quality trauma prevention activities

On the other branch of our tree, dedicated to preventing trauma in children, this is what the fruit will look like when the project is working well.

- Women show up to the support groups, feel comfortable speaking up and stay for the whole group
- Women are feeling brave enough to talk, open up, share and listen in the group
- Women who come are actually asking for help; mums return asking for more help when needed
- Women participants are feeling better and coping better with parenting the children
- Women are dealing with their own feelings better and feeling supported
- Mums are enjoying the group
- We hear stories about how the women are taking action to protect their children
- Kids are protected when community fights break out
- More traditional healing practices are used when we are helping our families recover from storms
- Improvements in children's behaviour is observed by people around them
- Women are telling other mum's about how helpful the group was
- Workers notice or hear changes in the behaviour of mums in conflict situations e.g. choosing not to get involved with conflict

Evaluation questions - What we wanted the evaluation to tell us

1. How well does the Project strengthen Tiwi culture and work in a Tiwi way?
2. How is the Project increasing volunteers' and participants' knowledge and skills?
3. How well are the volunteers and participants able to use the new knowledge and skills?
4. How is the Project making a difference to families and children of participants?
5. How well has the Project been in building community support to reduce trauma in children
6. What can we learn from this Project to help other Projects?

Testing the fruit - evaluation methods – How we found out

Here are some of the ways we can test the fruit, to see if it is good quality and good for Tiwi people.

- Feedback and observations about participants from workers
- Co-ordinator observing workers and volunteers demonstrate their skills
- Observing body language and sign language of women participants. This is a cultural thing. We can tell by their eyes whether they feel *pupini*, confident and comfortable or shy.
- Interviewing mums about their experience of the program by someone they trust
- Collecting women's stories about their experience and putting it together in a collective document
- Group discussions
- Team workshops
- Collecting feedback about the team from the community
- Collecting feedback at the end of learning workshops and team meetings