



YES, I CAN!

ABORIGINAL ADULT LITERACY CAMPAIGN



Stage 2 Pilot

Final Evaluation Report



First Nations Graphic Design:

Award-winning designer, Brooke Ottley, has family from across Australia: Gunggari from central Queensland, Wuthathi from far north Queensland, Cape York area, and Torres Strait Islander, from Thursday Island. She lives in Darwin.

Photo supplied.

Yes, I Can!

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Stage 2 Pilot

Final Evaluation Report

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SUMMARY

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(as per Contract Requirement)

Name of Recipient: University of New England

Project Title: Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign

Milestones: Final Evaluation Report.

Budget: The project has been completed in accordance with the budget. Final financial reports due 31 August 2014.

Progress on achieving outcomes:

1. Five cohorts from three sites, Wilcannia, Bourke and Enngonia, completed Phase 2: *Yes, I Can!* lessons
2. Graduations of first four cohorts held March 2014; graduation of fifth cohort to occur October 2014.
3. Total *Yes, I Can!* graduates Stage 2 pilots: 65
4. Phase 3: Post-literacy for the first four cohorts completed. Fifth cohort post-literacy phase due for completion September 2014.
5. Initial campaign Phase 1: Socialisation and Mobilisation work, Site 4 (Brewarrina) commenced; now on hold until funding has been secured to run the Campaign there.
6. National organisation established for Campaign upscale, Literacy for Life Foundation Inc.

Major issues or developments: See detailed report, following.

For copies of any published reports, promotional material, media publicity, pamphlets or other documentation relevant to the Project, contact the Literacy for Life Foundation:



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ABBREVIATIONS

AANSW	Aboriginal Affairs NSW	MLALC	Murrawari Local Aboriginal Land Council
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	MPRA	Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly
ACSF	Australian Core Skills Framework	MPREC	Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Cooperation
AHO	Aboriginal Housing Office	NAALCSC	National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Steering Committee
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	NAPLAN	National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy
AIT	Australian Integrated Training	NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
ARC	Australian Research Council	NSW	New South Wales
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	PACE	Parental and Community Engagement Program
BAHS	Bourke Aboriginal Health Service	RJCP	Remote Jobs and Communities Program
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects	RTO	Registered Training Organisation
CDF	Community Development Fund	SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
COAG	Council of Australian Governments	UNE	University of New England
CWG	Campaign Working Group	UPCEJV	Enrique José Varona University of Pedagogical Sciences (Cuba)
CWP	Community Working Party	VET	Vocational Education and Training
DIIRSTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Research, Science and Tertiary Education	WELL	Workplace English Language and Literacy
EOI	Expression of Interest	YIC	<i>Yes, I Can!</i>
IPLAC	Institute of Pedagogy for Latin America and the Caribbean (Cuba)	YSP	<i>Yo, sí puedo</i>
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council		
LFLF	Literacy for Life Foundation		
LLNP	Learning, Literacy and Numeracy Program		

INTRODUCTION

On Friday, 14th March, 2014, over 200 people gathered at Bourke Central Park for the graduation of 48 students from Wilcannia, Enngonia and Bourke from the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign. The young boys of the Muda Muda dancers opened the proceedings with a welcome dance. The Master of Ceremonies, Jack Beetson, a Ngemba man from Brewarrina who is the National Campaign Coordinator and Executive Director of the Literacy for Life Foundation (LFLF) introduced Alastair Ferguson, Chairperson of the Bourke Aboriginal Community Working Party (CWP), to give the Welcome to Country speech. Speaker after speaker then rose to congratulate the graduates and support the Campaign. The diversity was striking, ranging from the local Campaign coordinators, to public servants representing both New South Wales (NSW) and Commonwealth governments, to the manager of the Panthers NRL football team, to the Cuban Ambassador to Australia. Finally, the Cuban Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Pedro Monzón, and the Foundation Chairperson, Donna Ah Chee, presented certificates to each graduate. Several students then came back to the microphone, to read out letters they had written in their final lessons, thanking their teachers, the Campaign team and their Technical Adviser from Cuba. The following letter by a Campaign student summed up the feelings of many students:

Your Yes, I Can! program helped me a lot because before I started these lessons I couldn't understand many things that they taught me at school. It was really hard to understand most of my teachers. But through the Yes, I Can!, it has been easier. We all learned at a slower and easier way. Now I can write sentences, paragraphs and even letters so I can do whatever I want to do in my life because I can read, write and understand better.

Thank you to the Yes, I Can! Programme for turning my life around.

That night, the graduation made national news on NITV, and appeared again the following night on SBS.¹

Since that day, the graduates have continued with their post-literacy activities, while in Bourke some have become trainee literacy class Facilitators, working in the next intake, which began on 22nd April. Meanwhile, preparations are underway to extend the Campaign to Brewarrina and Weilmoringle, two more of the 14 communities in the Murdi Paaki region of western NSW. If all goes to plan, this Campaign will eventually spread to every community in the region, and to other regions around Australia. The aim of the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign, quite simply, is to achieve a substantial reduction in the number of Aboriginal adults who have little or no English language literacy; and by this means, to make a significant contribution to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in Australia.

Ambitious as this may seem, there is no reason to believe it cannot be done, provided there is sufficient political will. The graduation in March 2014 was a further stage in an extensive pilot research project, which began in the second half of 2011. The first stage took place in Wilcannia, and the second stage extended it to two more communities. The aim of these pilots was to discover if (and how) an internationally-recognised model for mounting mass literacy campaigns, developed by Cuban literacy educators and which has now reached over 6 million people around the world, could be adapted for Aboriginal communities in Australia. The pilot study, utilising this model under an agreement with the Cuban Institute of Pedagogy for Latin America and the Caribbean/Enrique José Varona University of Pedagogical Sciences (IPLAC/UPCEJV), was

¹ Below is a link to an SBS article written at the time about the Campaign graduation: <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/caribbean-literacy-program-helps-adults-in-bourke/3ns6oyse5>.

initiated by a group of national Aboriginal health and education leaders and funded by NSW and Commonwealth governments. Since it began, it has been closely monitored and evaluated by the University of New England (UNE), which has also acted as the overall project manager.

The results, summarised in Table 1 below, speak for themselves. By July 2014, 81 people from three of the most educationally and socially disadvantaged communities in Australia had participated successfully as students in the Campaign, and built their basic literacy skills; and 15 people from these communities, including some of the graduates, had been trained to work in the Campaign as organisers and literacy Facilitators. Just as importantly, the Campaign gained the support of a wide cross-section of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community, expressed through practical contributions and participation in Campaign activities. On the basis of this success, the original National Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Steering Committee (NAALCSC) has also, in the course of the pilot, worked with a corporate sponsor, Brookfield Multiplex, to establish a national not-for-profit organisation, the Literacy for Life Foundation Incorporated, to take over responsibility at the conclusion of the pilot for rolling the Campaign out nationally.

Table 1. Summary Statistics, 2012–2014

	Wilcannia	Bourke/ Enngonia	Total
Adult population	279	486	765
Estimated target population (40%)	112	194	306
Surveyed	103	173	276
Expressions of interest (EOIs)	41	122	163
Interested survey participants (%)	40	71	59
Starters	40	78	118

	Wilcannia	Bourke/ Enngonia	Total
Graduates	23	58	81
Completion rate (%)	58	74	69

Notes:

- » In Stage 2, the Campaign ran five intakes and achieved 65 new graduates, seven from Wilcannia, 15 from Enngonia and 43 from Bourke. This was 15 more than the targets set in the Parental and Community Engagement (PACE) program (15) and Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program/Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO)(35) funding contracts;
- » Over 60% of graduates are female;
- » Average *Yes, I Can!* graduates per intake rose by 60%, from 8 in Stage 1 to 13 in Stage 2;
- » Retention rates rose to 74% in the new sites, Bourke and Enngonia.
- » Enngonia, where the Campaign reached virtually every person in the target population, should be considered 100% literate, once Phase 3: Post-literacy is ended.

Despite these achievements, there are still a significant number of Aboriginal adults with low literacy in Wilcannia (estimated 90+) and Bourke (estimated 220+). The Campaign will therefore need to continue in those locations to achieve substantial improvements in health, employment and other social indicators. In the Murdi Paaki region as a whole, which consists of 18 communities, the need remains very high, with an estimated several thousand people with minimal literacy. **To achieve a higher rate of literacy at a regional level within 5 years requires significant scaling up of the Campaign.**

This report is the final evaluation of the pilot stage. It provides a comprehensive account of the way the campaign model was implemented during the second stage of the pilot, which began

as the first stage was completed at the end of 2012. While written to fulfil the requirements of the two main funding bodies, it is also intended for a wider audience, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders who have participated in the Campaign in some way, and interested adult literacy practitioners and researchers.

THE CAMPAIGN MODEL

While never previously attempted in Australia, the mass campaign model for building adult literacy has been a feature of development efforts in many countries over several hundred years, and most recently in countries of the Global South (Arnové & Graff, 2008). As two international experts describe it:

[The] mass campaign approach... seeks to involve all segments of society in order to make all adult men and women in a nation [or region] literate within a particular time frame. Literacy is seen as a means to a comprehensive set of ends – economic, social, structural, cultural and political (Lind & Johnston, 1990, p. 85).



The Enngonia Campaign class.
Photo courtesy Edwina Pickles/SMH

Unlike smaller-scale literacy programs, which have virtually no impact on the overall rate of literacy in a population, literacy campaigns set out to achieve population-level change. The pilot in Australia followed the model originally developed in Cuba and deployed in the national literacy campaign in Timor-Leste (Boughton, 2010), described in more

detail in previous reports. Following a period of preparation, in which the national structure and resourcing is laid down, the Campaign rolls out at a community level in three phases, each of which supports the other two.

- 1** Phase 1, called *Socialisation and Mobilisation*, seeks to engage the whole community in addressing the issue of low literacy, with visits to every household to identify people willing to take part, extensive promotion and publicity, and the signing up of local organisations and agencies as Campaign partners and sponsors.
- 2** Phase 2 comprises a set of *basic literacy lessons*, taught to groups of 15–20 adults per class by specially-trained local Facilitators using the Cuban *Yes, I Can!* (YIC), or “*Yo, sí puedo*” (YSP) in Spanish, audiovisual resources.
- 3** Phase 3, called *Post-literacy*, engages the partner organisations working with the Campaign team to provide opportunities for the new graduates to consolidate their literacy in structured activities and work experience, with the aim of building pathways into further education, employment and socially-useful community work.

All three phases have to begin, in a sense, at the same time, and continue simultaneously, for the Campaign to gain the required momentum. We have likened this to the three spokes of a wheel, each of which must be strong for the wheel to continue rolling.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE AND FUNDING

The political will which drives a mass literacy campaign is expressed through a national structure. Its role is to provide overall national leadership and planning for the campaign, and

secure the essential resources. In some countries, the initiative to establish a national campaign leadership has been taken by government, as was the case in Timor-Leste, which established a National Commission Chaired by the Minister for Education. In others, for example in the state of Kerala in India, or in Argentina, the initial leadership has come from a non-governmental organisation, which then sets out to 'recruit' the different levels of government to its agenda. In Australia, the process has been closer to the latter. Commonwealth and State government agencies have joined private donors to fund the pilot stage of the Campaign, which has been led by the NAALCSC and managed by UNE.

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ADULT LITERACY CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE

The pilot was initiated by the NAALCSC which formed in 2009 with seed funding from the Lowitja Institute. By the start of the second stage of the pilot, the Committee had been reduced through resignations to three members. These were the Chairperson, Ms Donna Ah Chee, a Bundjalung² woman from northern NSW, who is currently the Director of the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress; the Campaign Coordinator, Mr Jack Beeton; and Ms Pat Anderson, Chairperson of the Lowitja Institute. The main business of the NAALCSC following the successful conclusion of the Stage 1 pilot was to help secure funds for the second stage; to continue to provide Aboriginal leadership, advice and oversight as the second stage pilot proceeded; and to work with a major corporate sponsor, Brookfield Multiplex and its law firm Clayton Utz to design and establish a new national organisation to take the Campaign to its next stage. The major outcome from this work was establishment of the Literacy for Life Foundation

Incorporated, a partnership between the national Aboriginal leadership developed through the pilot and a leading international building and development corporation in the private sector, Brookfield Multiplex.

LITERACY FOR LIFE FOUNDATION INCORPORATED

The Foundation was incorporated on 7 May 2013. The Constitution reads, in part:

The objects of the Company are:

- (a) to significantly reduce the rate of illiteracy within the Aboriginal adult population and the gap in the English literacy rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, which has stemmed from the poverty and socio-economic disadvantage of Aboriginal peoples;
- (b) to strengthen a culture of literacy whereby the Aboriginal adult community values learning and the various pathways it affords to individuals and the community as a whole, as a means of alleviating poverty, helplessness, crime and substance abuse; and
- (c) to develop the capacity of local Aboriginal community members to lead, own and coordinate a reduction in the rate of illiteracy within the Aboriginal adult population and to further opportunities for participating community members as a way of conquering poverty,
- (d) to be effected by delivering a **literacy campaign**, implementing an **adult literacy campaign model**.

A literacy campaign involves a co-ordinated and sustained effort to raise the level of literacy of the Aboriginal adult population by mobilising and training local resources, local organisers and local facilitators to support as many Aboriginal adults as possible to learn very basic literacy

² The spellings used in this report for First Nations Peoples and languages are those used by AIATSIS (<https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/search>), unless alternative spellings are quoted from a text or the name of a local community organisation uses a different spelling. Variations of spellings exist for many First Nations Peoples and languages.

within a relatively short time-frame, using a simple, standardised method contextualised to the local circumstances of Aboriginal peoples, followed by a period of post-literacy, community-run consolidation activities.

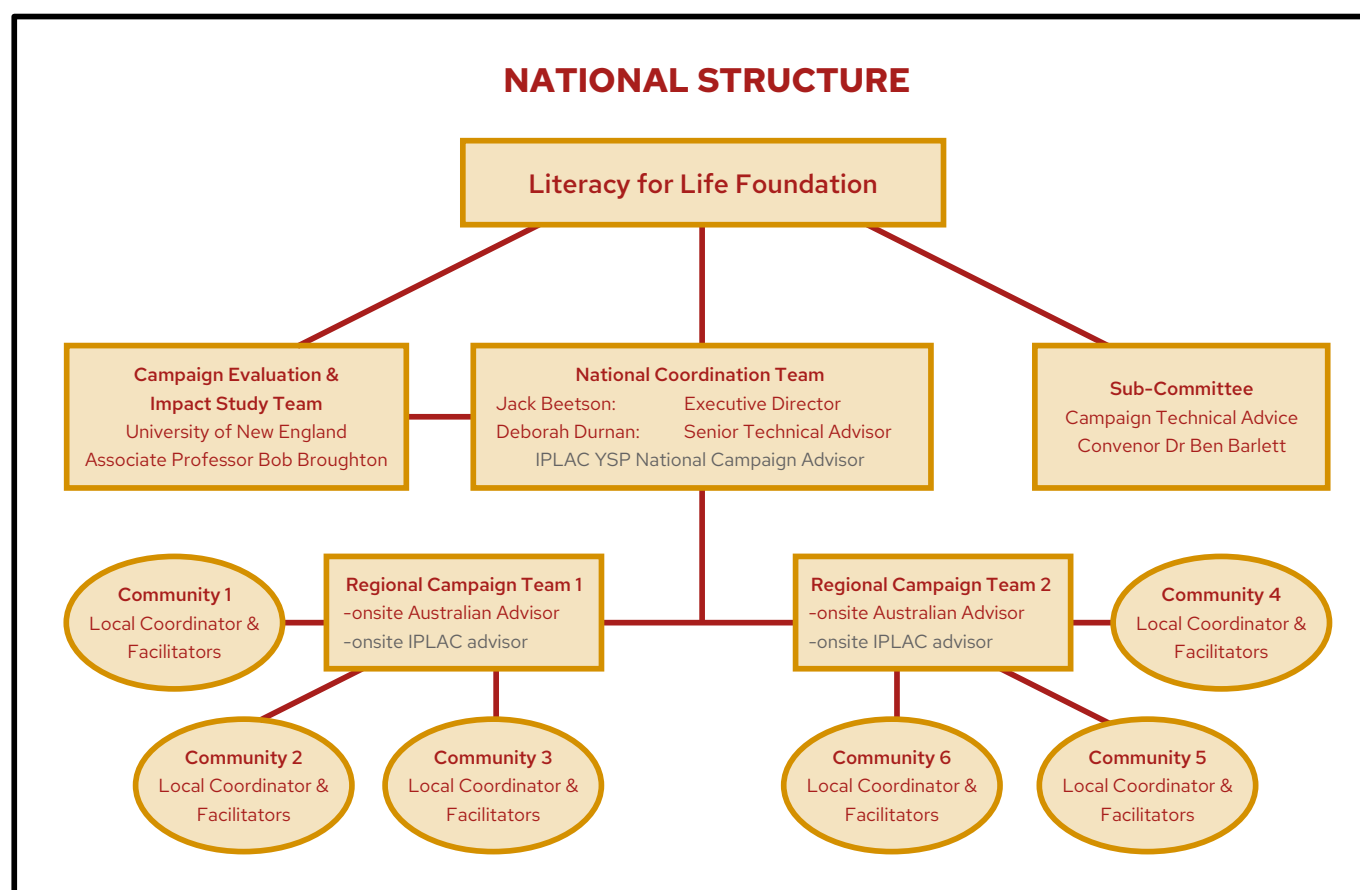
and across the country. NRL players Jamie Soward and Jamal Idris have signed on as ambassadors for the Foundation, and the LFLF logo appears on the backs of the jerseys (LFLF Media Release, 19/07/14).³

The three remaining members of the NAALCSC became Foundation Directors, joined by two Directors appointed by Brookfield Multiplex, its Managing Director John Flecker and its Operations Manager Don Aroney. Donna Ah Chee is the Chairperson of the LFLF Board and Jack Beetson is Executive Director. The Foundation gained tax-exempt and deductible gifts contribution status in late 2013. The LFLF Board resolved to continue to use UNE as the Campaign evaluator, and one of its first decisions was to allocate \$60,000 over 2 years, 2014–2016, as a contribution to an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects grant application to begin a longitudinal study of the Campaign's impact. The LFLF Board appointed a small Technical Sub-committee to advise it, convened by Dr Ben Bartlett, a specialist in Aboriginal public health. It has now begun negotiations with the Campaign's Cuban partners for an exclusive license to use the YIC method in Australia. Diagram 1, on the next page, represents the new national structure which the Foundation proposes for the ongoing roll out of the Campaign.

In the last 3 months, LFLF has begun to receive pledges and donations from private sector organisations. Current sponsors include Boystown, Brookfield Johnson Controls, Clayton Utz, Kinetic Super, Master Builders Association of NSW and Tough Mudder. Additional donations have been received from Accor, GMF Contracting and Rotary Club Sydney CBD. The Foundation has also established a partnership with NRL team Penrith Panthers for the 2014 Rugby League season, helping to raise awareness of low literacy levels in Aboriginal adults in Western Sydney, regional NSW

³ Further details on the Foundation can be found on its website: <http://www.lflf.org.au/>.

Diagram 1. Proposed National Campaign Structure from 2014



PARTNERSHIP WITH CUBA

In February 2013, prior to the project funding being received, three members of the Campaign team, the Campaign Coordinator, Jack Beetson, the Australian Technical Adviser, Deborah Durnan, and the Project Manager and Evaluator, Bob Boughton, travelled to Havana, Cuba at the invitation of the Cuban Ambassador to Australia. This visit was funded by the Lowitja Institute and UNE. In Havana, they reported on the first pilot to the *Pedagogía 2013* Conference, and began negotiations on a new agreement to cover Stage 2 with the Cuban Campaign partners, the Ministry of Education, and IPLAC/UPCEJV. In May 2014, UNE finalised an agreement to appoint a new IPLAC-trained Technical Adviser as a Visiting Academic, along with an Intellectual Property license to use the YIC materials. The Technical Adviser from Cuba arrived in Australia in June. She worked initially in Wilcannia for six weeks, and then moved to Bourke, where she assisted

with the initial and ongoing training of the local YIC Facilitators for Bourke and Enngonia, and in monitoring the students progress through the classes for the first three intakes, two in Bourke and one in Enngonia. She also spent some more time in Wilcannia, assisting the local staff to complete the third intake there. The Technical Adviser returned to Cuba in late March 2014, at the end of her contract with UNE.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN STAFF

For this pilot stage, the WELL/AHO funding provided support for four key staff at the national level. They included the Campaign Coordinator, Jack Beetson, who undertook this work on a part-time consultancy basis under a subcontract between the UNE and his company, Beetson and Associates; the Project Manager and Evaluator, Associate Professor Bob Boughton from UNE, the author of this report; and Ms Deborah Durnan, the Australian Technical Adviser, who

also worked part-time under a subcontract with UNE. The fourth member of the national team was the Technical Adviser from Cuba, José Chala Leblanch, who was appointed as a Visiting Academic at UNE from June 2013 until March 2014, under the arrangement described above. Dr Steven Smith was a part-time Research Associate, assisting with interviews and data analysis. In addition to this core team, UNE employed several other people on a casual and fractional basis to assist with aspects of the research and evaluation, some funded through the WELL/AHO grant, and others from other sources described below. In the last few months of the project, it became necessary to employ a part-time Project Administration Manager to help with the increasingly complex contract management and funding acquittals. For the future roll-out of the Campaign, LFLF has now employed an Executive Manager to provide management and administrative services to the Campaign.

In addition to the people mentioned above, the Lowitja Institute funding provided support for two other experts to participate in the evaluation process. These were Professor Anne Hickling Hudson from Queensland University of Technology, a former President of the World Congress of Comparative Education Societies who worked with Paul Freire in the Grenadian literacy campaign of 1981; and Dr Ben Bartlett, a public health physician with extensive experience in Aboriginal health services and policy areas, and a detailed knowledge of research into the social determinants of Aboriginal health. Professor Hudson has now withdrawn from the Campaign, but Dr Bartlett continues as the Convenor of the LFLF Board's Technical Sub-committee.

FUNDING NEGOTIATIONS

In January 2013, the NAALCSC put a proposal to the Commonwealth Minister responsible at that time for the Skills portfolio, Hon. Sharon Bird, seeking \$865,000 funding from the

Commonwealth to undertake research and development work on the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Stage 2 Pilot with three new sites – two in NSW and one in the Northern Territory – from March 2013 to June 2014. The aims of Stage 2 were:

- a) to customise and refine the YIC model further for Aboriginal communities in Australia, based on findings from the 2011–2012 pilot;
- b) to achieve a further 60–75 Aboriginal adult graduates from the Campaign, across four communities;
- c) to develop a Campaign handbook, including resources and strategies appropriate to a wide range of remote Aboriginal community settings and contexts;
- d) to design and test a workforce development process to enable the Campaign to be up-scaled in 2014–2015 to a regional and/or national level;
- e) to establish the feasibility and identify the requirements to roll the Campaign out across Australia.

The submission specified the total cost of Stage 2 as **\$1,310,000**, including continuation in Site 1 in Wilcannia. It proposed that two thirds of the total funds be provided by the Commonwealth (\$865,000) and one third (\$445,000) by State governments and other sources. Six weeks later, the Minister met with the Campaign's delegation in Canberra. She agreed to look at funding options under two programs in her portfolio, namely WELL and the Language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP). She also undertook to seek additional support from another Minister, Hon. Julie Collins, who had portfolio responsibility for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development.

Following on from this meeting, the UNE submitted two applications to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Research, Science and Tertiary Education (DIIRSTE) on 13 March, one

under WELL Strategic Projects for \$350,000 to undertake the pilot in two new sites in western NSW in partnership with AHO (\$240,000); and one under the LLNP for \$200,000 to undertake the pilot in a new site in Central Australia (in the Northern Territory). The first was successful, and in May 2014 UNE signed a contract from WELL for \$350,000 to implement the Campaign in two new sites in NSW in partnership with NSW AHO, which had agreed to contribute \$290,000. This brought the total funding to \$590,000. However, there was no response from LLNP for several months, and in the end, that funding program was suspended without a decision being taken. This effectively ended the plan to undertake a pilot in a non-English speaking language community as part of the pilot phase.

In April 2013, negotiations began with the NSW office of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for funding under its PACE program to employ local staff through the Land Council to run a third intake in Wilcannia as part of the pilot phase. In May 2013, a PACE grant of \$67,700 was made to Beetson and Associates to cover these costs, allowing work to recommence there in June. Meanwhile, discussions continued with Minister Julie Collins' office and in June we were encouraged to put in a further submission for \$200,000 under the newly-announced Community Development Fund (CDF) of the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP). An offer was made by Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin on 5 August 2013. However, the election intervened, delaying the execution of the contract, which meant that funds were not provided to UNE until December. Consequently, this funding runs until December 31 2014, whereas the WELL/AHO funding had to be fully expended, initially by 30 June, and then, following an extension application, on 31 July. The timeline of the funding negotiations is set out in Table 2.

Table 2. Stage 2 Pilot Funding Negotiations 2013

January-13	Initial submission to DIIRSTE
February-13	Meeting with Minister Bird
March-13	Submissions to WELL, LLNP and AHO
April-13	Submission to PACE for Wilcannia Intake 3
May-13	PACE, WELL and AHO contracts signed
June-13	Submission to CDF
September-13	CDF contract signed
December-13	CDF funding provided

GOVERNMENT FUNDING BREAKDOWN

The total budget from our two major funders was \$590,000; \$350,000 from WELL and \$240,000 from AHO. The AHO funds come through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. The \$590,000 was managed by UNE, and approximately 50% was paid to Aboriginal organisation subcontractors working on-site. Originally due for completion on 30 June 2014, the contracts with these funders were extended to July 31st, to allow work to continue in Bourke and to begin work on extending the Campaign to Brewarrina. Additional funds then came under the PACE and CDF programs, as described above. A proportion of the CDF funds were paid to the new Foundation as a subcontractor from June 2014, to allow it to begin to take over delivery of the Campaign. A further grant to UNE of \$167,000 was received from the Commonwealth Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program, to work with the literacy Campaign staff and participants on researching a local employment development plan, building on the Campaign's post-literacy phase in Wilcannia. Finally, another small grant (\$48,000) was provided to LFLF in May 2014 from the Bourke Alcohol Working Group, via Medicare Local, to assist with local expenses, including local

travel and vehicle hire, and the rent on the house in Bourke which the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service had made available for the visiting Campaign staff. In total, the WELL/AHO funding thus made it possible to leverage an additional \$450,000 in government grants to support aspects of the pilot in the three communities. This was in addition to the in-kind support provided by partners as detailed in “Network of Partners and Supporters” on page 17. The ‘down-side’ was the complex contract management and reporting load this entailed.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: THE REGION AND THE COMMUNITIES

While the mass literacy campaign model is designed to operate at a national scale, every community brings its own history and context to the process, and an understanding of the local context is essential for its success. The two new western NSW communities which agreed to join the Campaign, Bourke and Enngonia, are, like Wilcannia, part of the Murdi Paaki region. This is an area of western NSW which has previously been the subject of a major Council of Australian Governments (COAG) trial, and which has an ‘identity’ based on a long history of its 18 communities working together, initially under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), and more recently via the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (MPRA) (Urbis Keys Young, 2006). The other communities include Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cobar, Collarenebri, Coonamble, Dareton, Goolooga, Gulargambone, Ivanhoe, Lightning Ridge, Menindee, Walgett, and Weilmoringle. The region includes several Local Government Areas, and also overlaps with the western region of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

Aboriginal people in Murdi Paaki come from many different language groupings, and the pattern of settlement today is a product of a long and often violent history of colonisation. Non-Aboriginal people entered the region in the mid 19th century, but already by then, imported diseases which arrived with the invaders had spread inland, reducing numbers by up to 90%. After an initial massive expansion of the pastoral industry forced many of the remaining people off their lands, drought and recession at the end of the 19th century led to another change in settlement patterns. For the next 70 years, the region was progressively divided up into smaller holdings, on which Aboriginal people found intermittent work as shearers, fencers and fruit and cotton chippers (Thompson, 2001). The dispossession of the original Aboriginal owners and occupiers of these lands was facilitated through forced removal to several government stations and missions in the region established in the first half of the last century. This period also saw the emergence and slow growth of an Aboriginal civil rights movement, which demanded full citizenship rights and the return of some of the stolen lands (Goodall, 1996).

Following the successes of the Aboriginal civil rights movement in the 1960s and the 1967 Referendum, the first ‘modern’ Aboriginal political organisations were established in the region in the 1970s. In Bourke, an Aboriginal Advancement Association was formed, followed by a Housing Cooperative (Kamien, 1978). Across the region, there arose other organisations including the Western Aboriginal Legal Service, the Western Women’s Council and several local Aboriginal Medical Services. In 1983, the NSW Land Rights Act formalised the existence of Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), and the number and local Aboriginal organisations continued to grow through the 1980s and 1990s.

In 2007, the MPRA’s Regional Plan described the makeup of the region’s different Aboriginal peoples as follows:



ENNGONIA

Many Aboriginal people today have difficulty tracing their descent to particular language groups because of the disruption brought about by European settlement. However many people in the Murdi Paaki region can trace their ancestry to the Paakantji/Baakandji, Ngiyampaa, Wangaaybuwan, Ngemba, Wayilwan, Murrawari, Wangkumara, Muti Muti, Ularai, Baranbinja, Malyangapa, Gamilaroi, Kuja, Budbadjui and Gunu nations. European influence came relatively late to far western and north western NSW and it has been possible for Aboriginal people of the Murdi Paaki region to conserve and pass on more of their culture and language than many of the Aboriginal peoples of coastal areas. Numbers of Paakantji/Baakandji, Ngiyampaa, Murrawari, Ularai/Yuwaalaray, Gamilaroi and Wangkumara speakers learned their language from Elders, and a resurgence of language is currently taking place. Aboriginal people of the region are reclaiming and revitalising their language and culture. (GHD, 2007, p. 12)

In total, at the 2011 Census, the Murdi Paaki region had an Aboriginal population of 8,378 people, an increase of 3% since the last census, over which period the region's population as a whole was in decline. Aboriginal people now comprise over 17% of the total population, making them a very significant minority. The Aboriginal population is also much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, with an average and a median age of 15 (Aboriginal Affairs NSW [AANSW], 2013). This means that the Aboriginal population's importance in the region's social and economic development is set to grow in coming years. At the same time, there has been a major decline in opportunities for so-called unskilled work, and so the education level of the population will be crucial to any attempts to maintain a viable regional economy. Already in 2013, the Commonwealth's RJCP website identified 251 job seekers in the Far West Region NSW, and 768 in the Upper Darling region, i.e., 1,016 people overall. We can safely anticipate that a significant proportion of this population will have very low English language literacy.

In 2011, only 48% of Aboriginal teenagers aged 15–19 in the Murdi Paaki region were in education, compared with 66% of non-Aboriginal teenagers. There is also a significant and growing gap, as in NSW more generally, in Year 12 completions, with only 14% of the Murdi Paaki region Aboriginal adults having completed 12 years of school, compared with 30% of non-Aboriginal adults. Similar participation gaps exist in TAFE and Higher Education participation and completions, with only 32% of the Murdi Paaki region Aboriginal adults aged 15+ with a post-school qualification, compared with 45% of non-Aboriginal adults (AANSW, 2013).

The first step in any effective development strategy must be to raise the overall literacy level in the adult population, since a more literate culture in the community is an essential foundation for ongoing educational improvement. To get an indication of the size of the problem, Table 3 below uses the same estimates for the region as have been used in previous reports for the national population. This indicates that there are between 1,600 and 3,000 Aboriginal people aged 15 and over in the Murdi Paaki region who have low or very low English literacy. It is safe to assume that this section of the Aboriginal population will be over-represented in the region's unemployment figures, in the people with health problems, in the families which have trouble getting children to go to school, and in the people who are caught up in the criminal justice system.

Table 3. Low Literacy Estimates, Murdi Paaki Aboriginal Adult Population

Total Murdi Paaki Aboriginal population	8,378
Population 15+ (77%)	6,451
Scenario 1: Number of adults with low literacy if the low literacy rate is 25%	1,613
Scenario 2: Number of adults with low literacy if the low literacy rate is 35%	2,258
Scenario 3: Number of adults with low literacy if the low literacy rate is 45%	2,903

For a literacy campaign to overcome this problem in, for example, a five year period, requires between 300 and 600 people to achieve basic literacy per year. This was not the goal of the pilot stage, however. Rather, the aim of Stage 2 was to undertake further testing and development of the campaign model, to discover what would be required to upscale it to a regional level.

THE PILOT COMMUNITIES

Bourke was one of the largest towns which the colonisers established in the region, originally as a river port, as was Wilcannia. In 1938, an abattoir opened on the edge of town which then provided unskilled and semi-skilled work, as did the Department of Main Roads and the Shire Council. In the 1940s, a new wave of Aboriginal occupation began, with the arrival of Wangkumara people who had been forcibly removed from Tibooburra in South West Queensland to Brewarrina Mission Station, from where they had begun a long walk home, but were stopped by flooding. The Bourke Aboriginal reserve was established in 1946 on 46 hectares on the western edge of town.



North Bourke Bridge in Bourke, NSW. Photo: Frans de Wit. Used under Creative Commons BY NC ND 2.0 license. flic.kr/p/7mrX4F

Aboriginal people had lived in Enngonia since the 19th century, but the Aboriginal reserve, where the majority now live, was only gazetted in 1957. As with Bourke, Enngonia people came from a range of other localities, but in the 2005 CWP Plan, it was said that the majority identified with the local land owning language group, the Muruwari people; while some families claimed Kurnu and Budjari descent. Many of the Muruwari people living at Enngonia came from Weilmoringle and nearby localities, and still had ties with families living at Weilmoringle (Burns Aldis, 2005).

In the 1970s, at the same time as Aboriginal organisations were emerging, the rural economy was heading into a long term decline, in part due to drought, but also to the mechanisation and rationalisation which resulted from the growing dominance of agribusiness companies in the rural sector. As economic conditions declined, social problems increased, race relations became more toxic and rates of arrest and incarceration climbed. Worsening relations between sections of the Aboriginal community and police culminated in outbreaks of street violence (called 'riots' by the media at the time) in 1988 and 1998 with multiple arrests (Cowlshaw, 2004). The government focus on indicators of so-called 'community dysfunction' continued in 2010 and 2012, with Bourke and nearby Brewarrina the subject of two separate investigations by the NSW Ombudsman, focussing

on child protection issues. The reputation of Bourke as a dangerous place was further reinforced by media reports in early 2013 stating:

The remote north-western NSW town of Bourke has topped the state in six of the eight major crime categories in the past 12 months, prompting a call for a “full-hearted attack” to fix drug and alcohol problems in the town. (Sydney Morning Herald [SMH], 2 February 2013)

These conditions have not been improved by the failure of many local Aboriginal organisations to overcome problems of internal conflict and mal-administration.



Misty sunrise beside the Mitchell Highway at North Bourke, NSW.
Photo: Michael Cleary.

Table 4, below, shows that in 2011, the adult population of the two new communities (15 and over) not enrolled in school or further education was approximately 500 people (AANSW, 2013). The initial target population for the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign, based on the conservative assumption of 40% having low English literacy, is therefore approximately 240 people.

Table 4. Adult Population not in Education, Bourke and Enngonia 2011

Location	Males (M)	Females (F)	Total (T)
Bourke	202	247	449
Enngonia	22	15	37
Total	222	262	484

Source: 2011 Census Tables

Note however, that according to AANSW (2013), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) ‘undercount’ means that, on average, the Aboriginal population may be about a fifth larger than counted. So our target at the outset was 250–300 people. Obviously, this is more than can be reached in 1 year, with each intake consisting of a maximum of 15–20 people. Doing three to four intakes per year, for 3 to 4 years will be required to reach the entire target population. In this pilot stage, our aim was simply to reach as many as possible within the funding period, and in doing so to learn more about how to implement the campaign model in Aboriginal communities.

IMPLEMENTATION IN STAGE 2 PILOT COMMUNITIES

PHASE 1: MOBILISATION AND SOCIALISATION

Mobilisation and Socialisation of the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign occurs through a range of activities designed to increase awareness of the extent of the problem of low literacy, the value of collective community action to overcome it, and the way that the campaign model works to achieve this. This requires the Campaign team to establish a local Campaign Working Group (CWG) to help drive the Campaign; to recruit and train local Campaign staff; to train local people to conduct a household literacy survey to raise

awareness and seek expressions of interest from potential participants; to publicise and build support for the Campaign across all sectors of the community; and to organise public events including a launch and graduation functions which build community involvement in the Campaign and provide support and recognition for the participants. These activities begin at the start of the Campaign, and continue for the whole time it is operating. As the Campaign gathers momentum, community involvement grows and more and more resources are mobilised to support the Campaign participants and staff. This momentum is accompanied by a shift in perception from low literacy being simply a problem of individuals who have been 'left behind' by the formal education system to a community-wide responsibility.

Phase 1 activities are essential for building and consolidating the local leadership and political will to ensure the Campaign is able to do its work and becomes sustainable over time. In the two new communities, this began with meetings of the National Campaign Team with the Aboriginal CWP in Bourke and the Murrawari Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) in Enngonia in June 2013. Aboriginal staff and participants from the Wilcannia Campaign assisted with these initial negotiations, and their input was crucial in convincing the two new sites to join the Campaign. Because of the close family and cultural relationships among communities along the Darling River, the three communities are now supporting each other and sharing experiences. This has included:

- » Wilcannia staff, students and CWG members participating in the launch of the Campaign in Bourke and Enngonia in September 2013;
- » Wilcannia staff, students and CWG members participating in a major graduation in Bourke in March 2014;
- » a combined 'mini-conference' in March 2014 in Bourke involving participants and staff from all

three communities to evaluate the Campaign to date and plan the next steps.

As a result of this initial work, each community was able to establish a local CWG to help the local and national staff formulate strategies, and to provide advice attuned to the specific needs of their communities.

The success of Phase 1: Mobilisation and Socialisation of the Campaign is demonstrated in a number of ways, including:

- » successful recruitment and training of an effective local Campaign team;
- » level of participation and engagement in local CWG meetings;
- » level of community participation in the launch, and in the graduations;
- » response to the local household literacy survey and the number of people who expressed an interest in taking part;
- » number of organisations who sign up to support the Campaign and provided direct practical assistance;
- » positive coverage of the Campaign in the local media;
- » extent to which staff and participants reported feeling that they were being supported by their community.

THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN TEAMS

In Bourke, a local Campaign Coordinator commenced work in June 2013, and then assisted the national team to recruit two local Facilitators. In Enngonia, because of the small size of the community, the Campaign Coordinator also took on the role of Facilitator, and was joined by another local Facilitator.



Graduation in Bourke.
Photo courtesy Edwina Pickles/SMH.

HOUSEHOLD LITERACY SURVEY

As with the Wilcannia pilot, the first Phase in Bourke and Enngonia included a household literacy survey, conducted under UNE's Research Ethics Committee approval, based on written support from the local CWP. The survey is an essential part of 'socialising' the Campaign, because it involves visits by local staff to each household, to discuss the Campaign, and the literacy needs of the adults in that household. It results in a much greater awareness of the Campaign in the community at a 'grassroots' level, and the EOIs obtained at the end of the visit give an indication of the level of demand, that is, of the self-assessed literacy need. Local survey workers were trained in July 2013 to carry it out; with some follow up training and some further surveys conducted at the end of the first intake. To date, approximately 35 Aboriginal households in Bourke and 23 in Enngonia have been surveyed. The initial surveys covered all the houses in Enngonia except one, but in Bourke we focused mainly on the western part of town, including the Alice Edwards Village. This was because the local staff were more familiar with those neighbourhoods, and felt they would get more initial support. All houses surveyed were matched to their housing provider with AHO assistance. At the 2011 census, there were 298 houses in Bourke with Indigenous residents, so we have reached less than 15% to date (AANSW, 2013). In the final month of the Stage 2 pilot, work

began to survey more of the households in Bourke, to establish the level of ongoing demand for future funding submissions.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN WORKING GROUPS

In Wilcannia, the local CWG established in the Stage 1 pilot continued to meet throughout 2013 and into 2014, and assisted with all phases of the Campaign there. The Bourke Community CWG was established in June 2013, as a sub-committee of the Bourke Aboriginal CWP. The Enngonia Community CWG was formed by representatives of the lead agency there, the Murrawari Local Aboriginal Land Council. These Community CWGs met regularly throughout Stage 2, to review the progress of the Campaign and to advise the Campaign staff on any issues and problems arising.

THE ROLE OF MURDI PAAKI REGIONAL ENTERPRISE CORPORATION

In Stage 2, Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation (MPREC) was our major regional partner, working under subcontract to UNE. This was a new arrangement, since in Wilcannia the Campaign partner was the LALC, where the Campaign Coordinator, Jack Beetson, was the Acting CEO. MPREC had been a partner in Wilcannia, providing the facility where classes ran, but this was a much bigger role. Utilising the WELL/AHO funds, UNE subcontracted MPREC to provide and equip the Campaign office and classroom, as well as the classroom in the Land Council Office in Enngonia; to employ the local staff; and to provide Campaign transport, materials and consumables, at a total cost for the period July 2013- June 2014 of \$200,000. The Foundation's aim was to develop a sustainable long-term relationship with MPREC so they could play a leading role as the Campaign rolled out across the Murdi Paaki Region.

MPREC is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee, established in 2003. It

describes itself as “the peak provider of services to Indigenous communities in western NSW”, and currently employs over 70 people in its six divisions, which include a building company and a registered training organisation, Australian Integrated Training (AIT). As the RJCP provider, they already had a relationship with many of the participants and local staff in Bourke and Enngonia, who were registered job seekers with them. Bourke office staff consider that the majority of their job seekers require literacy and numeracy support, providing another indication of the level of demand.

Table 5. Murdi Paaki Regional Enterprise Corporation Bourke jobseeker Data

MPREC Bourke	Jobseekers by sex		
	M	F	T
Bourke (including Alice Edwards Village)	170	110	280
Enngonia	9	8	17
Overall	179	118	297

Source: MPREC

AIT provides accredited Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses in a range of areas, and therefore is potentially an excellent partner with whom to develop pathways for participants beyond the post-literacy phase. In reality, it has proven more difficult than expected to utilise this connection, as described in the final section of the report.

NETWORK OF PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

A list of new local partner agencies and supporters as at July 31st 2014 appears below. This is in addition to the network built in Stage 1.

Table 6. Network of Partners and Supporters

Organisation	Role in Campaign
Bourke Aboriginal CWP	Bourke Lead agency; and CWG member
MLALC	Engonnia Lead agency; and CWG
Bourke Aboriginal Health Service	Accommodation; facilities for workshops; co facilitation of Health and Wellbeing workshops; CWG member
MPREC CEO and Board of Directors	Employer of local staff, fund manager and provider of facilities;
MPREC RJCP local office Bourke	Referrals for structure activity; CWG member
MPREC RJCP local office Wilcannia	Referrals for structure activity; CWG member
MPREC AIT	Training and assessment services
NSW Land Council Zone manager	Supporter
Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly	Chairperson an active supporter
Bourke Aboriginal Consultative Group	President; CWG member
Medicare Local Bourke	Funding and Phase 3: Post-literacy activity
Bourke Alcohol Working Group	Funding

Organisation	Role in Campaign
Bourke Men's Group	Launch and graduation BBQ
Maranguka	Supporter; Phase 3: Post-literacy workshops
Mission Australia	Referrals
Bourke Community Justice Group	Phase 3: Post-literacy workshop
Bourke Magistrate	Referrals
NSW Department of Corrections, Bourke	Referrals
Bourke and Enngonia Police	Referrals
Enngonia Primary School	Involvement in Phase 3: Post-literacy
Bourke Primary School	Supporter
Bourke High School	Referrals; CWG member
CentreLink Bourke	Bourke CWG member
Community Technology Centre Association	Provided desktops, laptops and internet support and resources;
AANSW, Bourke office	Support and in-kind assistance
Aboriginal Community Housing Providers	Support with literacy-housing links

As a result of MPREC being appointed as the RJCP provider for the whole region, it gained use of a major facility in Bourke, the former Gundabooka CDEP centre, which became the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign headquarters and classroom in Bourke.

The Campaign's success during the pilot stages in building a broad base of support among government and non-government service agencies in the region is consistent with the 'social capital' model for increasing the effectiveness of adult literacy provision that has been proposed by several literacy studies writers in Australia and overseas in recent years. However, the Campaign goes beyond simply enlisting these agencies as supporters; it also encourages the literacy Campaign participants and staff to use the opportunities provided by the Campaign to advocate actively for agencies to become more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the less literate members of their communities.

PHASE 2: YES, I CAN! LESSONS

Intake 3 YIC lessons began in Wilcannia in July 2013, after the new Technical Adviser from Cuba had finished her initial training of a new Facilitator to replace the ones who had left once Stage 1 was completed. The first lessons in the two new communities of Bourke and Enngonia began in September that year. Over the period from May 2013 until July 2014, there were five separate intakes.

Table 7. Start and End Dates for Stage 2 Cohorts, YIC Campaigns

Intake	Start	Finish
Wilcannia 3	01/07/2013	29/08/2013
Bourke 1	16/09/2013	05/12/2013
Enngonia	16/09/2013	03/12/2013
Bourke 2	25/11/2013	06/03/2014
Bourke 3	22/04/2014	24/07/2014

In this section of the report, there is a brief description of the lessons themselves, followed by


a discussion of the outcomes. The section ends with an evaluation of this stage of the pilot and the lessons learned for the proposed upscale.


THE YES, I CAN! LESSONS

The Cuban-made DVD lessons are a defining feature of the YIC model. When participants arrive for their class, they sit in chairs, behind desks, with a large TV screen at the front of the room. The Facilitator introduces the lesson briefly, and then the students watch a 30-minute DVD on a TV screen. On the DVD, they see a class of five “actor-students” learning how to read and write from an “actor-teacher” and an “actor-assistant teacher”. From time to time, topics being talked about in the class will be illustrated with footage of scenes from the region of the actor-students. In Australia in the pilot stage, DVDs from the 2003 Grenada campaign are being used. During the lesson, the Facilitator stops the DVD, so the “real” students can discuss a topic, or complete an activity in their workbooks which they have just seen completed by the actor-students. Following the DVD lesson, participants spend another 30 minutes doing practice activities. Watching the DVD lesson and completing the activities takes a maximum of 1 hour.

The teacher on the DVD uses a “traditional” phonics instruction method, building letter and sound awareness, and the technique of writing, then the ability to hear, read and write letters, words and phrases, progressing by the final lessons to sentences and paragraphs. Each letter is learned in the initial 42 lessons through association with a specific number, using a Guide Table (see the English version in Figure 1).

GUIDE TABLE

	1	a	A
	2	e	E
	3	i	I
	4	o	O
	5	u	U
	6	t	T
	7	l	L
	8	f	F

	9	y	Y
	10	k	K
	11	x	X
	12	v	V
	13	r	R
	14	p	P
	15	c	C
	16	s	S
17	d	D	
18	b	B	

19	n	N
20	h	H
21	m	M
22	w	W
23	g	G
24	q	Q
25	j	J
26	z	Z

Figure 1. The Yes, I Can! Guide Table

The Cubans call this method “alphanumeric”, and it was adopted because of the belief that, even in communities with very little literacy, there is some familiarity with numbers because of money and markets. The numbers correspond to the importance of the letter in constructing words, e.g., in the English version, vowels are 1-5; and the subsequent numbering follows as closely as possible to the frequency of each consonant’s use in the language of instruction.

The lessons are divided into three stages. There are seven basic introductory lessons, 45 reading, writing and revision lessons, and 12 consolidation and extension lessons with assessment activities. Lesson 1 introduces the model, and Lesson 64 is an evaluation activity for the Facilitators. Lessons 2-7 are designed for people with no prior experience of reading and writing, and include exercises to practise holding a pen and forming simple shapes. Because almost all the participants in Australia have had some basic instruction in the past, we have been able to skip over these lessons and go straight from Lesson 1 to Lesson 8.

Each lesson follows a predictable structured sequence, which the Cubans call an “algorithm” and which the students and Facilitators quickly learn. As will be further discussed, the lesson begins with a discussion topic, which introduces a key letter or word. Easily recognisable icons in each lesson cue the students to observe, listen,

speak and write, following the example of the students on screen. From time to time, the lesson is paused to allow students to complete exercises in pre-printed workbooks or writing pads, exercises they have just seen the actor-students do on screen. The lesson ends with another period of practice of the activity learned during that session. As suits people with minimal or no prior literacy and minimal confidence as learners, the initial steps are very small, beginning with motor skills, then vowels and consonants, then diphthongs, reading, generating and writing words using these graphemes. Progress remains slow until Lesson 46, at which point participants begin to write words into sentences and then learn “connector words” to form paragraphs. Along the way, very basic punctuation is also taught. From Lesson 50 onward, comprehension of more complex blocks of text is regularly checked, and students learn to fill out forms with basic personal data. Then, in the last eight lessons, students complete exercises which form the basis of the assessment of their competence at the exit point, in that they learn to produce in their workbooks a simple letter to a friend including description and opinion. An outstanding feature of this structured pedagogy, which emerged from our direct classroom observations, is that local Facilitators fairly quickly learn how to teach the lessons through following the example of the actor-teacher, while, at the same time, students are learning to become literacy learners by the same process, watching and copying the learner behaviour of the actor-students. A ‘community of practice’ is quickly established, and is one of the aspects of the model which students and staff most value.

LITERACY ASSESSMENT

There is no formal assessment in the YIC model, in the sense of a test. Instead, the local staff and the Technical Advisers review student progress by observing the class and the student work that is completed in the pre-printed workbooks and locally-generated worksheets. This is in effect a

continuous assessment process. Detailed weekly records are maintained showing who is “advancing” and who is not, and those who are falling behind or struggling receive additional support.



Regional Development Officer, Lillian Lucas works with Bourke students. Photo courtesy Edwina Pickles/SMH.

That said, we have previously mapped the outcomes of YIC against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). Completion of 64 YIC lessons means students exit with basic reading, writing and learning competence at level 1 minimum or 2 maximum on the ACSF. This enables them to fill out basic forms; write personal letters; write up to two paragraphs on a personal topic; and read with comprehension up to two paragraphs on a familiar topic. Obviously some students can perform at a higher level but this is the minimum standard. Importantly students gain significantly in terms of self-esteem and confidence, ability to follow a daily routine, ability to complete tasks, ability to work as part of a team, ability to manage own time, capacity to identify as a learner, and valuing literacy and learning as a core part of their own life, family life and community life.

SCHEDULE AND CATCH-UP

Each community decides, through a process of discussion among staff, the CWG and the students who enrol, what will be the weekly timetable. In Bourke, each of the three intakes opted for running the classes over 3 days, Monday-Wednesday, in the mornings. In Enngonia, they chose to have longer classes, but only meet on 2 days, Monday

and Tuesday, to fit in with local arrangements for getting to Bourke for shopping. Following on from the pilot in Wilcannia, in Stage 2 we continued with a practice called 'catch-up.' This involves local staff, with support from the Technical Advisers, timetabling three additional 1 hour sessions at different times for students who have missed a regular lesson, to ensure no one falls too far behind.

POSITIVE MESSAGES

This is a critical element in the YIC model. At the beginning of each lesson, the actor-teacher introduces a simple sentence which includes the letter to be learned in that lesson, but which also contains a particular message in relation to attitudes and values, comparable in some respects to the "generative themes" of Paulo Freire's culture circles. After watching the "actor-student" class discuss this topic on the DVD, the local Facilitator stops the DVD player to allow a discussion to occur in the "live" class. We ask our students "what do you think about this message?" or "Is this important here for us?"; or some other simple question to try to stimulate discussion. This assists in contextualising the lesson to the local

circumstances of the students, and it generates new local words, using the letter for that day's lesson. The sentences on the DVD lessons include:

1. Open the gate
2. Let kids be kids
3. People love peace
4. My thoughts are with you
5. Take care of the sea (from overfishing, pollution, etc.)
6. Our future is secure
7. Love your family
8. Put the rubbish away (recycling and disease)
9. Look after the woods/forest (we say 'scrub', or bush)
10. Give me a hand (solidarity)
11. Music is part of our culture
12. I am a friend
13. Elderly are important. They need our love and respect
14. Mind the time
15. Help your family.



Importantly students gain significantly in terms of self-esteem and confidence, ability to follow a daily routine, ability to complete tasks, ability to work as part of a team, ability to manage own time, capacity to identify as a learner, and valuing literacy and learning as a core part of their own life, family life and community life.

PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION DATA

Table 8 below provides the summary data over the five separate intakes of YIC classes during Stage 2.

Table 8. Summary Participation and Retention Data, Stage 2 YIC cohorts

Intake	Wilcannia 3	Bourke 1	Bourke 2	Bourke 3	Enngonia	Total
Expressions of interest (EOIs)	42	40	34	24	24	164
Starters	16	16	22	19	21	94
Withdrawals	9	5	7	2	6	29
Graduates	7	11	15	17	15	65
Retention (%)	44	69	68	89	71	69

The 'expressions of interest' are derived from the survey process, when the local staff ask people who have been identified as needing assistance with literacy to 'sign up' to join the YIC classes. Additional EOIs are gained from people who come into the Campaign offices to ask if they can join, having heard about it from friends and family. However, people are only counted as 'starters' if they attend a minimum of three lessons in the first 4 weeks. In other words, people who attend for only 1 or 2 days and leave are not counted as genuine enrolments. In fact, some of these people subsequently return to join a new intake. To date, we have received 10 new EOIs for a fourth intake in Bourke which is scheduled for October 2014, subject to funding.

WITHDRAWALS

Regular attendance in the first 4 weeks is generally maintained unless there are significant personal and family crises, or if people move or take up employment. As described above, every effort is made through catch-up classes to ensure that everyone who wants to can complete the lessons and graduate. The withdrawals are slowly being reduced as local staff become more experienced, and as the processes for working around local crises become more effective. The main issues which cause people to withdraw are childbirth, grief, moving away, poor health, drug and alcohol problems, family issues, and police, court and probation/parole problems.

PHASE 3: POST-LITERACY

Post-literacy aims to build on Phase 2 achievements through a process of consolidating



Themes or topics which were suggested by participants included computing; local and family history; family and community health and wellbeing; Indigenous rights; tenancy, consumer, legal and welfare rights; core work skills including work experience; kids reading; critical literacy.

and extending adult literacy competence and confidence, and strengthening the culture of literacy within the community. Building on the general knowledge activities and discussions in YIC lessons, Phase 3: Post-literacy supports the graduates to engage in a range of structured activities, including work experience, for six hours per week over a further eight to 12 weeks. These activities encourage participants to continue to use literacy as an everyday social practice.

In many ways Phase 3: Post-literacy is the most critical component of the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign Model. During this phase participants are prepared to walk from the safe and secure Aboriginal space through the next “gate” into the wider mainstream world of learning, employment and social life. We call this building a pathway into further training at the VET level, employment, social enterprise and/or improved participation in family and community development activities. Post-literacy is recognised by the Commonwealth government under the RJCP program as a structured activity for job seekers. A key aspect of the post-literacy phase is that our network of partners and supporters are called on to participate, by providing opportunities and resources for the post-literacy program. In this way, the Campaign provides a solid bedrock upon which the community can slowly build its future with people who have previously been ‘left behind.’

Overall, the Phase 3: Post-literacy should achieve two key outcomes:

- » each student to have participated in a minimum 4 to 6 hours per week of activities over 8 to 12 weeks;
- » a pathway established for each individual student into relevant formal VET training, work experience and/or employment; social enterprise and/or community work.

PARTICIPATION

In Bourke and Enngonia, Phase 3: Post-literacy activities have run for 28 weeks in Stage 2, beginning with 2 weeks at the end of the first intakes in December, and continuing from February until now (August 2014). In total, this has involved 168 hours of activity in both communities. In Bourke, there were three 2-hour sessions per week, while in Enngonia there were two 3-hour sessions. Currently, there are 17 participants in Bourke, and the average daily attendance is 8, rising to a maximum of 14. In Enngonia, there are 20 participants. This is more than the total number of YIC graduates (15) because one of the Facilitators now participates in Phase 3: Post-literacy as a structured activity under RJCP, as does one other already literate person who did not attend the classes, but now wants to participate. Three more participants are graduates from classes held in Bourke who have now moved to Enngonia. The average daily attendance in Enngonia is 9, rising to a maximum of 12.

PHASE 3: POST-LITERACY PROGRAM

In Stage 2, a coordinated Phase 3: Post-literacy strategy was gradually elaborated, in consultation with the CWGs, participants, staff and local partners and supporters. The elements of such a strategy, we have discovered, include:

- » building literacy (learning, reading, writing, speaking, numeracy and IT skills);
- » assisting students to grow as strong, independent citizens confident in their own identity;
- » introducing critical literacy to enable students to navigate the modern world and engage with it as equals;
- » expanding knowledge in important areas across one or more of the eight domains of adult literacy impact (see the section on Impact Analysis which is included later in this report);
- » developing a culture of literacy within the community.

The program of structured activities was negotiated with participants and staff and determined by the availability of instructors, support from relevant agencies, and available resources including funding. Themes or topics which were suggested by participants included computing; local and family history; family and community health and wellbeing; Indigenous rights; tenancy, consumer, legal and welfare rights; core work skills including work experience; kids reading; critical literacy.

A monthly program of learning activities was drafted for each intake. The role of the national team and the local staff was primarily to broker other local or regional agencies or individuals to deliver workshops, information sessions, work experience, mentoring and other hands-on experiences to encourage participants to step up and engage with the mainstream world as strong, proud and confident learners and citizens. The Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign team delivered a limited range of sessions including a non-formal introductory critical literacy program and casual instructors were engaged if required to run some non-formal sessions such as computing, art and cooking. To date, the following activities have been organised:

- » Computing classes
- » Harmony social and emotional well being workshop by MPREC in Enngonia
- » Social determinants of health and acupuncture workshop (led by Dr Ben Bartlett)
- » Health and Nutrition:
 - cooking classes;
 - Bourke Aboriginal Health Service (BAHS) sessions on eye health and glasses; healthy foods and growing own vegetables; sexual health
- » Art classes
- » Speech writing for student graduations;
- » Teamwork workshop

- » Completing written interview questions on the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign for an AHO publication;
- » Reading to kids
 - two sessions including writing a kids book;
- » Workskills workshops covering
 - job ads, resumes, applications, preparing for interviews; rights and responsibilities at work; work experience;
- » Family and local history:
 - workshops with UNE lecturers on using Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and other history resources
- » Culture and hunting:
 - a trip to Enngonia for bush tucker and local history; and a trip to Brewarrina; a trip to Gundabooka
- » National Indigenous issues workshops:
 - Apology, Constitutional reform, Sorry Day, International Indigenous Day and Rights Declaration; racism; National Aboriginal Children's day in Enngonia School;
- » Film appreciation:
 - Films shown: Mandela, 12 Years a Slave, Redfern Now, Person of Interest.
- » LFLF Mini-Conference preparation and participation
- » AHO workshops
 - one workshop, to produce a comic on housing issues
 - three to date run by Birrang covering budgeting, healthy homes; health and nutrition
- » Young Leaders workshop in Enngonia by MPREC
- » Welfare Rights
 - workshop and clinic on social security and Centrelink;
 - workshop on advocacy skills;
- » Community governance:
 - MLALC workshop in Enngonia;

- Maranguka (new local organisation): understanding, writing brochure and talking to community;
- » Work Development Orders workshop with Aboriginal Legal Service
- » Guest speakers invited to speak about local job opportunities:
 - police,
 - National Parks;

As part of Phase 3: Post-literacy, staff also worked with AIT MPREC and other Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to assist participants to engage with the formal post school education system by accessing one or more accredited courses at the appropriate level (e.g., the White Card, OH&S, First Aid, driver's license courses, and the hygiene certificate for catering work experience).

As a result of the pilot, several agencies are working actively with the Campaign to deliver activities in areas of their interest and expertise. For example, BAHS, which has been a strong supporter since the start, clearly understands the connection between adult literacy and improved health outcomes. BAHS staff collaborated with us to deliver a health and well-being program covering nutrition, reproductive health, eye health including the provision of reading glasses. Another example is the Community Technology Centre Association, whose staff installed and maintained computer laboratories with wireless internet access in each location, and provided online support and training. Successful workshops have also been run through our partnership with the AHO, and the Sydney-based Welfare Rights Centre ran workshops for the cost only of their travel.

However, there are still challenges in enlisting the active support of service agencies in each community. Most agencies continue to see the Campaign as a competitor rather than a stepping stone into their programs. This seems to especially

be the case with training providers, including the local TAFE institute and even AIT, the training division of our major partner. More work therefore needs to be done to communicate the purpose and benefit of Phase 3: Post-literacy whereby we serve to link with and not replace other agencies' activities. This experience also points to an underlying problem, in that the 'professional' service provider staff, even those in Aboriginal organisations, appear to be challenged, perhaps threatened, by the degree of local community control the Campaign has established, and the passionate advocacy for the rights of the low literate participants that the Campaign has promoted. This relates to the continuing influence of old-style racism in rural towns, which breeds division and hostility on both sides, and especially in relation to the more marginalised Aboriginal people with whom the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign works, people who have previously been viewed at best as victims but also as 'troublemakers' by formal education institutions (Cowlshaw, 2004).

As the NSW Ombudsman discovered, division and competition among agencies divides the available resources into smaller and smaller units, until no one can achieve any major change within the community as a whole. A strategy to build a solid network of support requires the Campaign Coordinator, on-site Advisors and local Aboriginal leadership to make it a priority beginning in Phase 1. In other countries, for example Timor-Leste, this was achieved through establishing a post-literacy 'Commission' involving representatives of all the government and non-government agencies operating in a locality, to ensure a united effort to build local literacy.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN

The participation and completion levels are an indication that the Campaign is achieving outcomes for those who join; but the real meaning,

the impact that becoming more literate has on the participants themselves, is more clearly demonstrated in their own accounts. One source for discovering this has been the letters which the students compose at the end of the YIC lessons, in which they are encouraged to express in their own words some of the experiences and benefits they gain. Each student has consented to these letters being made public, to assist others to see the value of the Campaign and what they have achieved. The introduction included the words which a graduate read out from his letter at the March graduation. The following extracts from a representative sample of other student's letters provide additional testimony of the Campaign's value.

I'm writing this letter for letting you know about all good things this programme campaign has done. It has brought a lot of families together, and taught them well, as for me, it has made me confident in myself, receive and give respect, and also gave me knowledge, I didn't get in school because I didn't get to complete my schooling. I found it challenging and fun that made me want to get involve more. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for this programme as my people and self-needed it. I have learned a lot and would like to keep on going with it, and help my people more.

— A female student from Enngonia.

When I first started this Yes, I Can Programme, I was very scared because I was the eldest in a class of younger students. But now I am enjoying every moment of it. The Yes, I Can Programme taught me how to respect my fellow students and also taught me how to spell properly and write letters, also how to read books to my grandchildren. I also enjoyed the way teachers have taught us.

— A female student from Bourke



The Bourke campaign class.
Photo courtesy Edwina Pickles/SMH.

I did a lot of practice in the lessons and it taught me to do better in my reading and writing and it stopped me from being shame and learnt me how to spell and write sentences and paragraphs so I've learnt so much in this Yes, I Can program and it is so special because we have got our own mob teaching us. Thank you Yo si puedo. Yes, I Can is mad, thank you.

— A male student from Bourke

I am so glad I joined the Yes, I Can program. I have learned so much in the past 12 weeks. Now I can help my kids with their homework from school. It's just really good we learned so much from this program, so thank you for the effort in helping us and time and driving out to this little community.

— A female student from Enngonia

I felt that I wasn't confident with myself. I'm very proud of myself and two sons, for trying the Yes, I Can program. I'm confident that I can do anything I put my mind too. I hope that everyone enjoys it as much as I did.

— A female student from Enngonia.

I would like to thank you all for giving me a chance to learn in the programme. I did not do much schooling as I was growing up and didn't get a good education but now I feel I can do anything. You helped me to do things I didn't think I could do like help my grandkids with their homework and writing letters but the best thing of all you made me feel good about myself. Also a big thank you to [the two local classroom staff]... for being such good Facilitators and also to [the Technical Advisor from Cuba]... and the rest of the staff. If I can do it anyone can.

— A female student from Bourke

Further evidence from the participants is provided through interviews, some of which were conducted by UNE Research Associate Dr Stephen Smith and some by freelance journalist Chris Ray, who did a feature article for the Sydney Morning Herald Good Weekend. A number of themes emerge from this qualitative data, the analysis of which will continue in coming months. Among the key themes to have been identified so far are:

- » Participants feel safe, supported and relaxed because they are being taught by family and people they know
- » School and other formal education experiences in the past have left them feeling they could not learn, but the Campaign classes have shown them that they can
- » The classes have brought families in the community together in ways they have not previously experienced
- » Many people now feel that they can go on to do more study, and to apply for jobs
- » One of the most important goals that people have is to be able to help their children and grandchildren do better in school
- » There is a great deal of gratitude and respect for Cuba, the Cuban Technical Advisers for their contribution to them and their families, and for the work they are doing to build literacy in other countries
- » Other people in their community and people in other Aboriginal communities should be given the chance to join the Campaign.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

If sufficient organisational and workforce capacity is not built into communities prior to funding being allocated, then government agencies are setting communities up to fail. (NSW Ombudsman, 2012, p. 49)

One of the Stage 2 objectives was to develop strategies to build a sustainable workforce for the Campaign. This was identified in the WELL/AHO funding contract clauses as:

- 1.1 Customising and refining the YIC model further for Aboriginal communities in Australia, with a specific focus on the determinants of successful region-wide deployment and **the development of a sustainable local workforce**; and
- 1.3 Designing and testing **a workforce development process** to develop locally-based Aboriginal literacy organisers and Facilitators, with a view to further up-scaling in 2014–15;

In countries of the Global South, the success of YSP is based on its use of local organisers and facilitators, who can be trained quickly and cheaply to apply the model on a mass scale. The DVDs make it possible to run the classes without qualified literacy teachers present all the time. However, the local Facilitators and organisers are always supported by a team of literacy advisers, usually Cubans or people they have trained, and usually qualified teachers. The advisers provide initial training to the local staff before the campaign proper begins, both in how to lead the lessons, and also how to organise the other phases of the campaign. They then provide ongoing training and support as the campaign rolls out, each adviser 'mission' staying in-country for two to three years. This was the model used in Timor-Leste (Boughton, 2010).

During the Australian pilot, the local workforce in each community has consisted of a Campaign Coordinator and two YIC Facilitators. As in Wilcannia, we discovered in Bourke and Enngonia that it is necessary to have two local Facilitators working in each YIC class. This provides for a 'back-up' when one cannot attend, but more importantly, the two Facilitators support each other, and are able to provide more intense

support to individual students. It is also preferable for cultural reasons to have one man and one woman, though this did not prove possible in Enngonia, where the Campaign Coordinator was also a Facilitator. We also trained the Bourke Coordinator to be a Facilitator, providing a second 'back-up.' After the second intake in Bourke, we recruited two trainee Facilitators to assist with the third intake, as we had also done in Wilcannia.

THE WORKFORCE

A total of 21 people have been employed at different times to deliver the Campaign in the three locations over two stages. This on-site workforce was 75% Aboriginal, and 65% of the Aboriginal staff were female. Of the five non-Aboriginal staff, two were the Technical Advisers from Cuba. The National Team included the Aboriginal Campaign Coordinator, the two Cuban Technical Advisers, and the Australian Technical Adviser. Two female non-Aboriginal staff were employed in the latter stages of the Campaign as on-site Technical Advisers, but neither stayed beyond 3 months. This data is summarised in Table 9, below.

Table 9. Staffing by Aboriginal Status by Sex

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal			Total Personnel		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
National	1	0	1	1	2	3	2	2	4
Bourke/Enngonia	3	5	8	0	2	2	3	7	10
Wilcannia	2	5	7	0	0	0	2	5	7
Overall	6	10	16	1	4	5	7	14	21

In addition to these staff, the evaluation team included the UNE Project Manager, a member of the Technical Committee, and several part-time and casual staff who undertook specific research tasks, e.g., interviews, database work and demographic data analysis. The university also employed a part-time contract Administration

Manager for the final six months of the pilot. Some of this work was separately funded. All the university staff were non-Aboriginal.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The capacity development of the local workforce has been the responsibility of the National Campaign Team, namely the National Campaign Coordinator and the two Technical Advisers. When the CDF grant application was developed, the idea was to use some of these additional funds to recruit and train another Australian Technical Adviser to take over more of the workforce development at a local level, so the National Campaign Coordinator and Technical Advisers could focus on preparing for the upscale. However, the delay in funding meant that the position was not filled until January 2014, and the person chosen left within three months. Her replacement also left after only two months.

The role of National Campaign Coordinator has been crucial, and without his input it is almost certain the Campaign would not have achieved the outcomes it did in terms of developing the local staff. Jack Beetson is a highly-effective and respected Aboriginal leader with direct connections to the region in which we are working, and the staff and students see him as a role model. He is a qualified adult educator and development worker, with several decades experience in Aboriginal-controlled education, and has particular skills working in conflict-sensitive situations, uniting people across family and language groups, and across different organisations. The local staff regularly acknowledge his contribution to their increasing confidence and capacity. In the words of one local Campaign worker:

I speak to Jack ... because you get so many people vilify, you know they make accusations against you, they slander your name – and you don't know who to turn to. Because you're doing something right in

the community – it feels like your own community is dragging you back down. So, I spoke to Jack about that, because I’ve experienced that. And his advice was “stick to the line”. You know “follow your heart; keep the passion” and you know because that man he’s been around the world and he’s put up with this for a long time. You know, I try to learn from the best. (Interview, 18/03/14)

For the Campaign to upscale, it will require other leaders with similar capacity to be trained in the model, so they can assist in the work of mentoring and supporting local staff. This process began in Bourke, with the CWP Chairperson, Alistair Ferguson.⁴ Alistair’s belief in the local staff and his public commitment to the Campaign has contributed substantially to its success, but it takes considerable time and a close involvement to develop sufficient familiarity with the model to guide the local staff. Aboriginal people with both the skills and the local authority to lead a Campaign of this kind are already in very high demand, providing leadership in multiple organisations and programs, and this presents a particular challenge for upscaling, as discussed in the final section of the Report.

The Technical Adviser from Cuba also has an important role in workforce development, training Facilitators in the use of YIC, and providing the background and context to the model and the experiences which people have had in other countries. However, the pilots have demonstrated

that it is essential to have an on-site Australian Technical Adviser working alongside the Cuban Technical Adviser, to help customise the lessons and the training of local staff to the specific Australian context, including ‘mainstream’ education systems and employment systems and how the Campaign has to interface with them. The local Campaign Coordinator also has to learn how to be an effective community organiser, and to network with local agencies and partners, which requires a good understanding of the Australian political and cultural context.

The Technical Adviser from Cuba had been trained by IPLAC in the YSP method, but had not previously worked in a mass campaign. An experienced teacher of English to adults in her own country, she was strongly committed to her country’s international education work, and had worked for 3 years on the Greenlight program in New Zealand. This was a home-based distance education DVD course which IPLAC developed with a Māori College, to prepare students to enter vocational and academic study. She had not previously worked with people with very low literacy, or in isolated and conflicted communities like Wilcannia, Bourke and Enngonia. Surprisingly, she had received very little briefing by the previous Technical Adviser, who had worked on the pilot in Wilcannia. As a result, she experienced considerable ‘culture shock’ in her first few months, and was on a very steep learning curve. For

⁴ Alistair is the great grandson of William Ferguson, one of the founders of the modern Aboriginal rights movement in the 1930s (Gibson, 2014).



A total of 21 people have been employed at different times to deliver the Campaign in the three locations over two stages. This on-site workforce was 75% Aboriginal, and 65% of the Aboriginal staff were female.

example, she struggled to understand the broad dialects of Aboriginal English commonly used by local staff and students in western NSW, and the level of individual and community distress and disorganisation:

At the very beginning, I arrived in Wilcannia. I stayed in a motel, but not in a room. I stayed in the back of the motel and I felt very isolated there... and also there was a great impact of the Aboriginal English. At the beginning I couldn't understand anything.
(Interview, 18/03/14)

The Technical Adviser from Cuba also had no training or experience in the community development work required during Phase 1; nor with how to set up systems for maintaining detailed Campaign records, such as we had seen used in Timor-Leste. Despite these problems, she quickly built good rapport with the local staff, who were very positive about her and very grateful for the assistance she gave them, as were the students when the YIC lessons began. Nevertheless, these issues put additional strain on the resources of the Campaign Coordinator and other Technical Adviser, who had to take more responsibility for building the capacity of the local workforce to undertake the preparation work and the Phase 1 tasks.

In the end, much of the day to day workforce development work was undertaken by the

Australian Technical Adviser, who also assisted the Cuban Technical Adviser to understand and take on some of the other responsibilities of the Technical Adviser role. A qualified teacher and experienced popular educator, the Australian Technical Adviser has worked in Aboriginal community-controlled organisations for three decades, and for the last two with the National Campaign Coordinator. She worked with the National Literacy Campaign Secretariat in Timor-Leste in 2006–2007, where she was trained in the YSP model by the Cuban mission leaders and a variety of advisers. This combination of Aboriginal community and Timor-Leste experience has helped contextualise the IPLAC model to the local community situation.

Over time, this work resulted in a systematic program of local workforce development, which has 10 objectives:

- 1 To build an understanding of the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign model as a whole, and each of the three phases;
- 2 To introduce some basic concepts of popular education and adult learning theory and practice;



Identified areas [of professional development] included: community leadership, community governance, meeting facilitation, assertiveness training, peacebuilding, dealing with conflict, community organising skills, supervision skills, time management, planning, team work, report writing, media skills, computing skills, networking skills and public speaking.

- 3 To explore issues relating to Aboriginal English and Standard English and English language literacy;
- 4 To understand the historical development, program logic and structure of the YSP/YIC method.
- 5 To introduce the ACSF literacy measurement tool and its purpose;
- 6 To learn how to undertake the Campaign socialisation through the household literacy survey;
- 7 To learn how to deliver the YIC DVD lessons independently using a 'model lesson plan structure and content';
- 8 To learn how to gather evidence of student competence as set out in the YIC assessment protocols;
- 9 To undertake the administrative tasks associated with the delivery of the Stage 2.
- 10 To learn the practice of regular critical reflection and evaluation.

These objectives are achieved through a combination of initial 'pre-service' training and ongoing in-service professional development, as follows:

1. Initial 'pre-service' training in the campaign model and in the method of teaching and learning using the YIC lessons on DVD. This ideally takes three weeks. Over the same period, the Phase 1: Mobilisation and Socialisation work is also mapped out, and some training given in what this requires, including how to administer the household literacy survey, and how to record enrolments;
2. Once the Phase 2: YIC lessons begin, a structured training session each day, in which the lessons for the following day are viewed,

and the Technical Advisers help the local staff prepare their lesson plans (Plan Preview Prepare – PPP)

3. Once a week, a reflective practice training session, to evaluate the teaching and learning that has occurred in the lessons taught that week (Action Reflection)
4. At the conclusion of each intake, an intensive staff development workshop, to consolidate and extend the capacity of the local staff as 'popular literacy educators.' These workshops include input from the local Campaign Coordinator, the Technical Advisers and the Evaluator.
5. In March 2014, we held a 'mini-conference' in Bourke, for staff, students and local stakeholders from all three pilot sites. Each location reported on their experiences of the Campaign, and small groups worked on several 'focus questions'. This proved very popular, and an annual gathering like this should be considered when the Campaign upscales.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR COORDINATORS

The local Campaign Coordinators undertake an additional professional development program, both on and off job, to gain the skills and knowledge to fulfil their duties as a Campaign Coordinator. The process begins with a conversation about individual work goals and priority needs in terms of their duty statement, followed by an informal skills audit and literacy assessment to determine individual's strengths and weaknesses. Identified areas included: community leadership, community governance, meeting facilitation, assertiveness training, peacebuilding, dealing with conflict, community organising skills, supervision skills, time management, planning, team work, report writing, media skills, computing skills, networking skills and public speaking. The National Team worked with the Coordinators over the 12 months of Stage 2 to address aspects of each area through on-job

and opportunistic training, mentoring, and off-job workshops and meetings. The Coordinators were provided with opportunities to prepare for and participate in a range of activities such as media interviews, public speaking, and representing the Campaign at agency meetings. The off-job program included:

- » Phase 3: Post-literacy strategy development (1 day workshop)
- » team work (1 day workshop)
- » welfare rights (2 day workshop)
- » advocacy skills (1 day workshop)
- » introduction to community governance (3 day workshop)
- » MPRA governance consultation (3 day workshop)
- » Women's Business and leadership gathering Dubbo (3 day workshop)
- » Cuba Australia Friendship Group, Sydney Campaign event (evening)
- » ACSF and literacy assessments (1 day workshop)

TECHNICAL ADVISER TRAINING

In addition to the local staff training program, a draft orientation program for new Australian Technical Advisers was developed before we recruited the new Technical Adviser in January 2014. This took the form of a 'distance education' reading program, of the kind which is used in an advanced university undergraduate or postgraduate unit. It was trialled with both the people who took on the Technical Adviser role, and has since been used by LFLF to in-service people from the Foundation and Brookfield Multiplex. It can now be used for Technical Adviser pre-service training in the upscale stage, as outlined in the final section of the Report.

SUSTAINABILITY

The high ratio of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal staff in the Campaign team is undoubtedly a factor in its success, including in its acceptability

and positive reception from the wider community. Importantly, it demonstrated the Campaign team's commitment to invest in the community, providing local employment and training. All 14 local Aboriginal staff were registered Job Services Agencies/RJCP job-seekers or on other Centrelink benefits before joining the Campaign. By the end of Stage 2, most had not only earned important income for themselves and their families, they had developed important skills and useful knowledge for future employment and community benefit.

Currently, only five of the 14 local staff are still working on the Campaign, all in Bourke and Enngonia. This is because funding ran out in Wilcannia at the conclusion of the PACE-funded third intake, and the CDEP-funded Local Employment Development Project. Three of the seven Wilcannia staff, all male, have obtained other work. One joined the staff of the local Catholic Primary school as an Aboriginal Education Worker, and the other two are with MPREC, one as an employment adviser, the other as a supervisor of structured activity projects run out of the Men's Shed. Of the three women, one left town, while personal and family crises interrupted the ability of the other two to maintain other work.

This highlights the difficulties of building a stable local workforce to maintain the Campaign and to build on it to undertake other community development activities. There are at least five factors. The first is uncertain and interrupted funding, meaning that even if people stay on for the duration of their casual contracts – which the majority have done – they leave once funding ends. Second, local staff share a lot of the same issues as the participants, including a history of unemployment or underemployment and a lack of work skills, which means even when funding is available, participation can at times be erratic. Third, the chaos of community life, as described in detail in the Stage 1 Report, disrupts everyone's ability to maintain their commitment to the Campaign. Fourth, when people do gain skills, they



Enngonia: Graduate William Cubby got his driver's license and secured employment. His partner Stephanie also graduated and got her driver's license. The couple have two boys and were able to get more involved with the local school.

"I want to give my kids a head start. I want to see them do better than what I done," he says.

"Most of us can read and write a lot better now. We've gone through the classes together and the community is working together better. People are talking to each other more and it's helping them to stay out of trouble better." Photo credit: Hugh Rutherford.

can quickly be 'snapped up' by other employers with a more stable funding base. Fifthly, the above factors make the presence of a more stable and qualified on-site Australian Technical Adviser, if not constantly, at least on a part time basis, essential to keep things moving, and these positions have proved very difficult to fill during the pilot stage.

One further challenge to implementing the YIC model in Australia is that, unlike in many countries of the Global South, the Campaign has to interface with and feed into an existing 'developed world' vocational and adult education system, which has its own well-articulated frameworks for assessment and progression, the ACSF and the Australian Qualifications Framework. For this reason, 'quality control' through the continuous assessment process, and rigorous record keeping in individual student attendance and progress is essential, not least because in the pilot phase the model must demonstrate its credibility with stakeholders from this formal system. This flows through into the need for the local workforce to learn about this wider system and its standards.

Initially, we thought that the partnership with MPREC, as a major Aboriginal-controlled non-governmental organisation, would create a more stable institutional framework for the Campaign, and help us to recruit, support and consolidate our staffing. In fact, MPREC itself faces many of the same problems, and because it took over as the RJCP provider for the whole region at the time Stage 2 began, it was going through major changes itself, taking on new staff and new responsibilities. Moreover, neither its RJCP role, nor its RTO role, prepared MPREC well to deal with the needs of the Campaign to maintain a high level of flexibility and responsiveness to staff and participants. So, while the MPREC Directors and CEO were strong advocates of the Campaign, the organisation lacked the capacity or, indeed, the understanding of the model, to deliver on-site support in the manner required in Bourke and Enngonia.

It will also be advisable, as the Campaign scales up, to provide local staff with their own pathway into an appropriate Australian qualification for community-based popular education and adult literacy work. In May 2014, a consultant to the project assessed five of the Bourke and Enngonia staff who are still involved with the Campaign, as a first step towards assisting them to apply for 'Recognition of Prior Learning' of some elements of competency in appropriate VET training packages. Over time, the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign aims to build a pathway for local staff to attain a Certificate III, and perhaps go on to complete a higher level qualification in Aboriginal community adult education and/or community development.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Since the first pilot began in Wilcannia at the end of 2011, 276 people have been contacted through the household literacy survey, 118 have joined a YIC class and 81 have completed it. In addition, 15 people have been recruited and trained as local staff, others have participated in the local CWGs, and several hundred have taken part in public Campaign activities. While this has been done as a pilot, and is by no means a mass campaign as yet, there is now substantial evidence emerging of the impact such a campaign can have in the communities it reaches.

The international experience of mass literacy campaigns demonstrates that, in order for a campaign to lead to significant social change in a community, it has to become supported by a wider movement which has a program for development and social transformation (Arnové & Graff, 2008). Existing patterns of educational inequality, whereby some adults are literate whereas others are not, are the result of institutionalised practices in the past, and these continue to have an effect in the present. Acquiring literacy is a first step towards changing existing patterns of inequality

in the distribution of power and wealth which inhibit peoples' efforts to take control of their own development. One advantage of the international character of the YIC model is that it connects people to events beyond their own community and their own country, where they can see what has been achieved in other places. This helps to keep alive the idea of the possibility of a different future.

Under the Commonwealth CDEP program, we undertook research which aimed to develop a better understanding of ways to use Phase 3: Post-literacy of the Campaign to engage the people mobilised through the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign (participants, staff and local partners) in a longer-term development strategy.

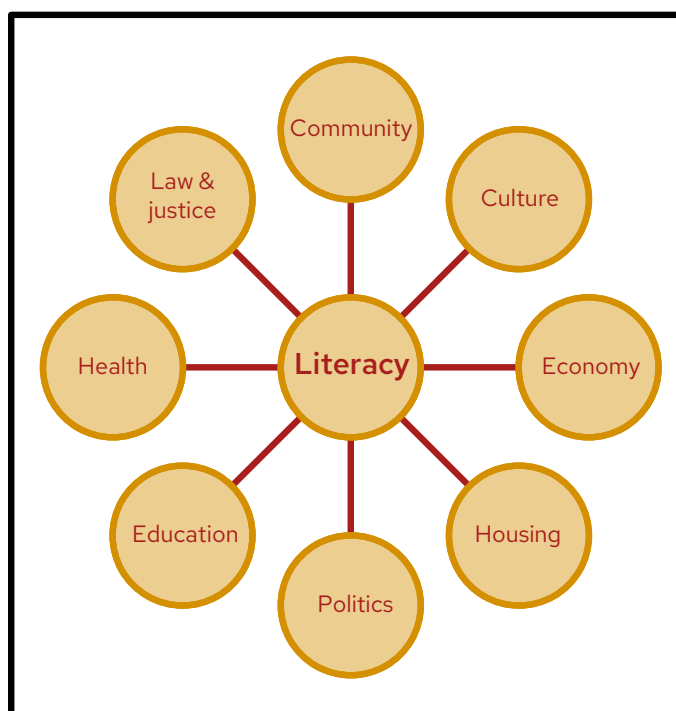
The framework which was developed to guide this work identifies eight different 'domains' of development, through which people's positive engagement in social change needs to be supported:

- 1** The economy, e.g., employment, income, participation in labour market programs;
- 2** The community, e.g., active membership of community organisations, participation in community building events, membership of sporting clubs;
- 3** The formal education system, e.g., school participation, parental involvement in children's education, participation in vocational education;
- 4** The wider political system, e.g., voter registration, utilisation of political system;
- 5** The housing sector, e.g., through better-managed tenancies, involvement in housing association management, housing improvement and building programs;

- 6** Cultural maintenance activities, e.g., native title organisation membership, subsistence economic activities, local language maintenance;
- 7** The health system, e.g., utilisation of health services, actions against substance abuse;
- 8** The law and justice system, e.g., reduced arrest and incarceration, utilisation of legal services.

These domains and indicators were identified from studies of the impact of mass literacy campaigns in other countries (Sandiford et al., 1995; Burchfield et al., 2002; Oxenham, 2009; Maddox, 2007), and from recent Australian writing on indicators of Indigenous health and wellbeing (Prout, 2011). The framework is illustrated in Diagram 2, below.

Diagram 2. Framework for Understanding the Impact of Literacy on Development



The key to this model is that each domain interacts, not only with people's literacy levels, but with each of the other domains. So, for example, while improved literacy can be a pathway to improved engagement with health services, for example in the form of action to deal with

substance abuse in the community, this can have a positive impact, not only on health, but also on incarceration levels and employment. The evidence of impact during Stage 2 is still being analysed, and this work will continue through a longitudinal study once the resources for this have been secured. Below are some interim results from five of the eight domains, namely housing, education, health, law and justice and community.

LITERACY AND HOUSING

As a result of negotiations with the NSW AHO, housing issues were to be integrated into the Campaign. This is specified in clause 1.3 of UNE's funding contract signed jointly with the AHO and WELL, requiring us to:

Work... in partnership with the NSW Aboriginal Housing office to identify the links between improved literacy and increased tenancy and housing management capacity.

The evidence we have collected demonstrates clearly that poor housing and low literacy are inextricably linked, each one interacting with and reinforcing the other. Sub-standard and overcrowded housing affects the ability of children and young people to do homework and study for school; and makes it hard for occupants in a house to keep books and writing materials safe and secure. Power for heating and lighting is often not on, adding another layer of difficulty to maintaining any kind of literate practice. From the other direction, good literacy, numeracy and communication skills are essential for maintaining a secure and comfortable tenancy, including getting landlords to action requests for repairs and maintenance, understanding and responding to written correspondence from landlords and utilities providers, managing household budgets to cover housing costs, and making applications for new public housing.

We asked staff from AHO and the two main housing providers, Mid Lachlan and Murdi Paaki

Housing to identify the specific housing provider for the houses in which participants are living, according to the survey data. Over time, this will enable us to match housing indicator data against Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign participation, to measure any improvements, e.g., in reduction of rent arrears, improved maintenance, increased participation in housing association activities. Furthermore, it assists local Campaign staff to know how to advise participants when they raise issues about their housing in class discussion, as regularly happens, and to encourage them to take part in community meetings with the appropriate provider. Housing tenure and management in Aboriginal communities is quite complex, in that rental housing is owned by several different government and non-government agencies, while property management is in the hands of several other different agencies. So, in class, we also seek to explain how this works, so people know where to go with their issues. This is also part of the training of Facilitators and Coordinators, so that they can become more effective advocates for their students. The relationship with AHO as a partner also made possible several workshops in Phase 3: Post-literacy on aspects of tenancy management and household budgeting. In September there is a month of post-literacy activities planned around the housing theme. Participants also took part in a workshop with a consultant to develop a comic on housing issues, which will be produced in November 2014. In turn, this will become a resource to be used in developing literacy.

A further aspect to the housing connection is the employment opportunities in the housing sector, in a range of occupations including building trades and housing support services. At present, the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign participants do not see themselves as able to apply for jobs in this sector, but over time it will be possible for some people to build pathways through work experience placements and accredited VET courses so they can gain work in this sector. During

Stage 2, the Campaign Coordinator worked with local agencies and Brookfield Multiplex on a joint government-housing industry plan to increase the number of jobs in this sector for local Aboriginal people.

FORMAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

One of the aims of a literacy campaign is to re-engage adults in the community with the formal education system. The main evidence that this is occurring includes:

- » Participants becoming more involved in the education of children in the family and community
- » Participants enrolling in formal courses, including VET courses
- » Education providers taking an interest in the Campaign, and engaging with the participants
- » Participants continuing on their own personal self-directed learning paths

One further indication is when staff commit to an ongoing role as a community educator, and decide to improve their skills and qualifications for this work, as discussed above under Workforce Development.

ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS

One of the most significant effects of the Campaign to date has been seen in Enngonia, where the Campaign staff and students are now actively involved with the local public school in a variety of ways. The desire to help children with their school work has turned out to be one of the strongest motivations people identify for joining the Campaign. This theme emerges constantly in the YIC classes, which encourages discussion of this through positive messages in several of the 64 lessons. In Phase 3: Post-literacy, work began with a discussion of reading to children, which led in Enngonia to the School Principal taking part in a post-literacy workshop where this was

the topic. We also used a resource on this issue from the Early Childhood Association, a DVD where Aboriginal parents talked about reading to their children. As a result of this workshop, the discussion has continued and some participants have begun writing their own simple stories to read to their children and grandchildren. Work has also begun to encourage participants to join the School Council and take part in the meetings they hold at the School. Enngonia is a small school, with only 15 students, plus preschoolers; and its enrollment is 86% Aboriginal. In the year we ran YIC (2013), attendance rose to 91%. In March 2014, the School Principal in Enngonia said in an interview:

More parents are talking to me about school and asking for their kids to be given homework. Our preschoolers are using the library more, too. It's been a great thing for the community: it's given the adults who did miss out on their schooling a chance to catch up and have a way to relate to their children. I went along (to a literacy class) and did a talk on story books. Later I had some parents come along to school and borrow books, which I thought was lovely.

She then wrote the following letter attesting to the positive effect of the Campaign:

I am writing to express my support for the Adult Literacy Program that has been running in Enngonia. I have seen the benefits of this program for my students, as well as the parents. More parents have requested homework for their student, which is being consistently completed. There has also been an improvement of communication between the school and parents. The school is being consistently notified when students are going to be absent, or reasons are given for absences. The biggest improvement seen this year has been in students reading. Generally over a holiday period students slip back in reading levels. This year we have seen students maintaining their reading levels over holiday periods or they have only slipped back one level. These are all huge improvements for our school and the community of Enngonia and I would like to attribute some of these improvements to the Adult Literacy Program.

The experience in Enngonia replicates the good relationship with the Central school that was built in Wilcannia, where the Principal was on the CWG and provided in-kind support in Stage 1; and this has continued into Stage 2. As the School Principal in Wilcannia herself said in an interview:

We have a very positive relationship with the parents and community members that have been involved with the project. There is a pride within the School that we are actually in partnership with this project.

In Bourke, however, the process of building a partnership with the three schools has been slower, but there have been several positive meetings between the Campaign team and the Principal of the High School, and the Senior Aboriginal Education Worker, a local Aboriginal man, is an active member of the CWG.

The new Commonwealth Government Remote School Attendance Strategy program provides an opportunity to expand partnerships like this between the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign and the schools in the communities where it is running. At present, the Remote School Attendance Strategy is confined to three NSW locations, Wilcannia, Bogabilla and Walgett, but other NSW communities are expected to come online in the near future. Opportunities to partner with School communities may also arise through the NSW Government's Connected Communities program.

Using attendance data and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test results published on the My School website, it should be possible over time to provide quantitative data to complement the qualitative data provided through interviews. Table 10 on the next page shows the attendance rates for the government schools in the pilot communities since 2011, the year before the Campaign commenced in Wilcannia.

Table 10. School Attendance in Campaign Locations 2011–2013

	Annual School Attendance rate (%)		
	2011	2012	2013
Enngonia Primary School	87	82	91
Bourke Primary School	90	91	92
Bourke High School	80	76	75
Wilcannia Central School	64	62	64

Source: My School website

The basic hypothesis is that attendance and outcomes from school will improve in future years, as will parental involvement with the schools, as an increasing proportion of adults in a community improve their literacy, re-engage with education and begin to build a more literate culture in the community.

In addition to the direct benefit to the children's school attendance and outcomes, the increased engagement of Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign participants with the school system opens up pathways into employment. In Wilcannia, a literacy Campaign graduate is now working in the School as a library assistant, and several Bourke and Enngonia participants are enrolling in a Child Care Certificate course in TAFE. The Aboriginal Education Officer at Bourke High School has offered work experience there as part of post-literacy, in the hope that other Campaign graduates will apply to be Education Support Workers.

ENGAGEMENT WITH VET AND POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION

In Wilcannia, five graduates from the first two intakes completed units of competency towards a Certificate III in Hospitality. However, none completed the full qualification. Since the start of the first intakes in Bourke and Enngonia, there has been strong interest among participants

in undertaking formal VET courses. As of July 2013, we had identified VET pathways for 26 YIC graduates, as set out below in Table 11.

Table 11. Enrolments and/or expressions on interest in VET courses

Course	M	F	T
Certificate III Children's services		3	3
Certificate in Hairdressing		2	2
Certificate in Shearing	1		1
Certificate II in Construction	1		1
Certificate in Land Management	1	1	2
Certificate in Mechanics	2	1	3
Hygiene certificate	3	4	7
Barista certificate	3	4	7
Overall	11	15	26

Three other graduates, two men and one woman, also asked for help to enroll in the Open Training and Education Network to complete their Year 10-12 education, but as yet we have not been able to assist with this.

EDUCATION PROVIDERS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CAMPAIGN

Our major partner is MPREC which has an RTO in its business structure, AIT. Over time, the RTO staff have begun to engage with the Campaign, e.g., attending the launches. However, the relationship is not as close as it could be, and on several occasions the RTO has run courses without approaching the Campaign staff or students to encourage them to participate. Western TAFE, the public RTO for Bourke and Enngonia, has also engaged in various ways, including taking part in CWG meetings. It has also offered the use of their facilities, but the costs have been prohibitive.

ONGOING SELF-DIRECTED EDUCATION

In Bourke and Enngonia, the partnership with the Community Technology Centre Association has meant that there are now computer labs in each facility, the Gundabooka CDEP Building in Bourke and the Land Council Office in Enngonia. The Association has also set up computers in the Men's Shed in the Land Council grounds in Wilcannia. These facilities now make it possible for Campaign graduates who have completed Phase 3: Post-literacy to continue learning at their own pace, dropping in to undertake activities which build their literacy. The three centres established by the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign have thus begun to operate as informal community-owned and managed learning centres.

LIBRARY VISITS: BUILDING A CULTURE OF LITERACY

The following extract from one of the Bourke Coordinator's regular reports captures the way a visit to the Shire library helps to build a culture in which literacy and especially reading is valued:

Another fantastic day dusted, we went to the Public Library. The librarian gave an introduction. She explained each section of the library and how to find what you needed she was great, after that we followed her back to the counter she helped [five Facilitators and students]... become members, should of seen [one of the student's]... face when she gave him his library card haha he was that happy. Some are already members. There were two students who never had any Identification but that's all sorted, the 10 students that attended today agreed to having the trip to the Library once a fortnight all sorted, they will bring some IDs on the next visit. I told the students to take a look around maybe they'd like to borrow a book on Local History since it's an activity on our program Just to give them an idea, some liked the idea they browsed around for an Hour a few borrowed some books it was fun.

LITERACY AND HEALTH

The relationship between literacy and health is complex and multidimensional. Continued poor health in Aboriginal communities has a major impact on school attendance, not just because children miss school when they are sick, but because family illness and death is also highly disruptive of young people's education. Gray (1991) estimated that 30% of Aboriginal young people aged 15-19 had already lost at least one parent, which he pointed out, was extremely disruptive of their education, and their emotional and economic security:

Right through the teenage years, parental death and preceding parental illness is a constant accompaniment to the process of growing up Aboriginal (Gray 1991, p. 373).

While mortality rates have improved since this study, many adults who now have very low literacy lived through this period. Deaths in the families with whom we work occur every month and there are constant bouts of illness. The Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign has to take account of this high rate of morbidity and mortality, with flexible program arrangements, opportunities for people to catch up if they miss classes, and support for people who are affected by these events.

The relationship also works the other way, in that people with little education and low literacy find it more difficult to maintain good health for themselves and their families, for a variety of reasons. One is poverty, since low literacy and poor education makes it more difficult to obtain and retain work, and even to maintain the poverty line income paid by Centrelink. With less money, people are less able to purchase and prepare good food, and are less able to maintain their houses and pay their rent and utility bills. This creates less healthy environments, lowers resilience, and increases the risk of disease. Low literacy also affects people's capacity to interact effectively with the health system when they are sick, in

terms of understanding and following health professionals directions. Most importantly, low literacy is an aspect of powerlessness, the inability to change the circumstances in which one is in; and this powerlessness, this lack of control, is a major factor in generating the stress which undermines people's immune systems, making them more susceptible to disease (Bell et al., 2007). On the other hand, a major UK study found that learning affected health by increasing people's resilience, through "self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal trust, empathy, feelings of connectedness, supportive relationships and broader outlooks" (Hammond, 2002). These match the benefits which participants and local staff have identified as coming from the Campaign.

Dealing with people in these circumstances every day, the staff are required to help people make use of the opportunities the Campaign provides to understand the reasons why the community's health is poor, and what actions they can take to change things, utilising the knowledge and skills they are acquiring. This begins in the Phase 2: YIC lessons, when some of the positive messages lead to class discussions about health and health risks. From these discussions, it has been possible to develop activities in the post-literacy phase which directly address health issues in ways that also build literacy and general knowledge. The following Phase 3: Post-literacy activities help to do this:

- » Cooking classes, which have recently included the Aboriginal Health Service nutritionist
- » Undertaking the basic hygiene certificate which is required for work in catering industry
- » Visits to the local health service, for eye tests
- » Participation in meetings and discussions of health issues, including with members of the local Drug and Alcohol Working Group
- » Work experience with health providers
- » A basic first aid course

These activities are done with our campaign partners and sponsors, including BAHS, Medicare Local, and AIT.

LITERACY, LAW AND JUSTICE

National, state and regional level statistics demonstrate the very high rates of contact which Indigenous adults experience with the criminal justice system. For example, on 30 June 2013, there were 8,430 prisoners who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This represented over one quarter (27%) of the total prison population. The largest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners (21%) was in the 25 to 29 year age group. NSW had the highest number of Aboriginal prisoners, 2,300 (ABS, 2013). Over 90% of Aboriginal adult prisoners nationally are male. The rate of incarceration is over 15 times higher than it is for non-Indigenous Australians, and the rate is rising annually, having risen by 52% in the last decade (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011, p. 29). Aboriginal men increased from 12% of the NSW inmate population in 1996 to over 20% in 2008, while Aboriginal women increased from 17% to 30% over the same time period (Indig et al 2010). Over 20% of people in prison are not convicted, they are being held while on remand.

Our experience to date tells us the rate of incarceration is even more pronounced among Aboriginal people with low levels of English literacy. This is borne out by earlier studies which have found a 60% rate of functional illiteracy in the general prison population (as cited in Baldrey, 2009), and by other studies demonstrating the inverse correlation between education levels and imprisonment. We can therefore safely assume the rate of low literacy is even higher among Aboriginal prisoners than 60%. This is not to say that low levels of literacy are a cause of incarceration, but it does mean that people with low literacy are highly likely to be imprisoned at some time in their life. Moreover, low literacy is clearly involved as a

contributing factor, as, for example, when people are repeatedly arrested and eventually jailed for unlicensed driving, because they do not believe they can pass the written component of the driver's license test. As the Campaign upscales in coming years, it should therefore be possible to demonstrate that raising people's literacy level makes a significant contribution to reducing the rate of incarceration.

Imprisonment however is only part of the story, as even when people are not being imprisoned, they are caught up in the criminal justice system on a regular basis, as alleged offenders, as victims, as witnesses, and as people on bail or probation. This is an aspect of the life of the people we work with which has to be dealt with. Ultimately, our goal is to reduce people's negative experiences with the justice system, because these are a major cause of the problems they face in their lives. It is a barrier to their continued education, and to their ability to gain and retain employment (Hunter & Daly, 2012). It is also an aspect of reducing the stresses that lead to ill health, and improving the level of peace and order in the community. In the long run, this will have major benefits not only for the individuals, families and communities concerned, but for the wider society, freeing up tax revenues for more socially useful purposes.

We already have evidence from several sources indicating that the Campaign is having a positive impact in this area. On several occasions now, Campaign participants who have been up before the courts have been released back into the community, rather than given a custodial sentence, because magistrates have been convinced that continuing with the Campaign will be of more benefit to them. At the same time, we have lost some students as a result of custodial sentences for offences and breaches of probation and parole conditions. One indication of the success we have achieved has come from the Darling River

Area Commander of the NSW Police, who wrote the following in a letter to the LFLF Board after attending the March 2014 graduation:

Since the commencement of this program in Bourke I have observed tremendous outcomes among some of our most vulnerable community members in Bourke and Enngonia. In particular, many of those graduates who spoke and read so well at Friday's graduation ceremony, have demonstrated recognisable personal growth in confidence and self-worth since becoming involved in this adult literacy program.

Aside from the obvious improved reading and writing skills, many of those involved in the program have demonstrated a transition from involvement in criminal activity toward positive activities such as championing social justice issues on behalf of other less literate community members.

.... Two of your graduates are now supporting local Police by attending and providing input into our regular Police Aboriginal Consultative Committee meetings in Bourke. (Superintendent Greg Moore, Darling River Local Area Commander, NSW Police Force, 26 March 2014)

In the last month of the WELL/AHO contract, Commander Moore began discussions with the Bourke and Enngonia Campaign coordinators about involving them and the literacy Campaign participants in a cross-cultural education program for new police coming to town. Developments like this demonstrate that the Campaign has a huge potential to improve the relationship between the community and the local law and justice system. Over time, this should also result in safer communities, where individuals are less likely to suffer from violence, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect and in which social and emotional wellbeing are prized. **This is because improved literacy, improved school retention rates, increases in meaningful employment, strong parenting abilities and the reduction of crime are all components of a safe community** (Day et al., 2013).

LITERACY AND COMMUNITY

The main issue we have identified in relation to the 'community' domain is that low levels of literacy in the adult population are a major barrier to effective participation as active citizens in the governance of local communities and their organisations. At one level, this is about community members feeling confident to contribute to discussion and decisions around community issues such as housing, service provision, jobs, children's schooling and birthing facilities. At a higher level, it is about actively contributing to the running of one's own organisations as members.

The Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign has begun to change the level of participation in a few small ways. For example, as part of the MLALC renewal process, the students most of whom are members of the MLALC, have spent time in post-literacy learning to read and understand the rules and practice meeting procedures. Meanwhile in Bourke students are participating in an ongoing dialogue with the Maranguka founding leadership about the purpose and membership of this new organisation. Similarly, students participated in a Justice Reinvestment consultation recently with some speaking up about what they perceived to be the underpinning issues to be addressed in Bourke.

It is a fact of life in today's world that literacy is essential to community and organisations' business. Citizens are constantly being asked by government, Land Councils and other agencies to respond to a complex array of policy documents, reports, funding guidelines and compliance correspondence. With so few people in each community with the level of critical literacy required to understand this level of text, an enormous responsibility falls on those few leaders who do have the ability to work with such texts, and there is no clear way to ensure they remain accountable. The number of Aboriginal organisations under administration at any one time is one indicator of this problem.

The Campaign pilot set out to address this problem, through bringing the organisations in as Campaign partners and supporters in Phase 1: Mobilisation and Socialisation, and encouraging them to become directly involved in offering activities in Phase 3: Post-literacy. In Phase 1, by joining the local CWG and signing up as sponsors and supporters, community organisations acknowledge that low literacy levels are a problem for them, something that they commit to addressing. When a health service joins the CWG, it recognises that low literacy is not solely an education issue but also their legitimate business; likewise this applies to other organisations, such as legal services and Land Councils. The Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign needs as many organisations and agencies as possible to engage in this way to succeed. This also improves the chances of people with literacy needs being referred to the Campaign, especially as Aboriginal staff and Directors of these organisations learn about the Campaign and see its purpose and how it can assist their families and communities, and make their work more effective. This is what 'socialisation' means, it is a process whereby more and more people learn about the Campaign and understand what it is seeking to do, and how it relates to their own people and their community's aspirations and needs.

A measure of the success of this pilot stage, therefore, is the number of agencies and organisations involved with the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign, and the depth of their engagement. As one example, in Wilcannia, where the campaign office was located in the offices of the LALC, some literacy Campaign participants signed-up as members of the Land Council, where previously they had not joined. This meant they could vote for the Directors at the Annual General Meeting, and at the October 2013 Annual General Meeting, many of the Campaign participants attended for the first time; and a Campaign graduate was elected to the Board. Similarly,

the Murrawarri LALCs close involvement with the Campaign in Enngonia, being the main local lead agency and providing the classroom space, has helped increase the involvement of literacy Campaign participants in Land Council business, and effectively turned the Land Council building into a community learning centre to which people continue to come each day to use the computers and take part in other activities, several months after the 'official' end of the post-literacy phase of the Campaign.

UPSCALING THE CAMPAIGN

This final section of the Report outlines five elements identified through the evaluation which will need to be in place for upscaling (or 'generalisation', as our Cuban partners call it) to succeed. These are:

- » national, regional and local Aboriginal leadership and coordination;
- » a secure and stable funding base, with strong government support;
- » a long term agreement with the Cuban partners;
- » a coherent workforce development strategy for local staff, Technical Advisers and LFLF personnel;
- » a longitudinal study to demonstrate impact over time and to build a stronger evidence base for refining and improving the model for the Aboriginal Australian context.

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP

The WELL/AHO contract required us to develop an understanding of "the determinants of successful region-wide deployment" and to increase "the commitment of Aboriginal people and their organisations across the region to the development of a literate culture for all."

The evaluation demonstrates that Aboriginal leadership at every level is essential for the Campaign to succeed. To date, national leadership has been provided chiefly by the Campaign Coordinator, Jack Beetson, with support from the NAALCSC originally established through support of the Lowitja Institute. This level of Aboriginal control 'at the top' has been sufficient to win the support of local Aboriginal leaders in the three communities of the pilot, and this in turn has made it possible to recruit and train effective and appropriate Aboriginal staff as local Facilitators and Coordinators, and to get local Aboriginal organisations to support the Campaign, including through the local CWGs. However, there is as yet no 'middle-level' Aboriginal leadership, which means the national leaders have to do the work of building the local support, ensuring that the Cuban and Australian Technical Advisers work in appropriate ways, and the work of mentoring the local Aboriginal staff. As the Campaign upscales, it will become less possible for the national Aboriginal leadership to play this role, especially the Campaign Coordinator, across multiple communities. Already, in Stage 2, the distance to Wilcannia, and the need to work across the region, stretched the limited resources available to maintain this level of Aboriginal direction and control. This is a problem which the LFLF Board will need to consider prior to upscaling. In Timor-Leste, for example, the national Literacy Campaign Commission established 'lower-level' commissions at district and sub-district level. Currently, there are a significant number of Aboriginal organisations with some experience of the model, including the MPRA; MPREC; the NSW Aboriginal Land Council network in the region; several Aboriginal CWP's (whose chairpersons sit on the Regional Assembly); several Aboriginal Medical Services; and some local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. This is perhaps a base on which a more regional model could be developed. This may require an active 'socialisation' program to deepen the

understanding of Aboriginal leaders about the model, to discuss ways it might contribute to the development agendas of their communities and organisations, and to identify the specific involvement from them that a successful Campaign will entail.

The political will to drive a mass literacy campaign does not arise spontaneously, or simply from discussion. The pilot demonstrates that the best way to develop this political will is via an active involvement in the Campaign, through which its impact in communities can be directly experienced. The ideal way to do this is through structural arrangements which incorporate more Aboriginal people in an advisory role in the day-to-day running of the Campaign in their region.

A STABLE FUNDING BASE

During the two pilot stages, the Campaign was dependent on a complex mix of short-term funding from a variety of sources with different reporting requirements, different outcomes and different timelines. Upscaling demands a more stable and streamlined funding model. Without this, the coordination, management and reporting responsibilities become unsustainable. The minimum requirement should be three years guaranteed funding. This will also facilitate workforce recruitment and development.

The establishment of LFLF and the level of Commonwealth and NSW Government funding demonstrate the support that the pilots have generated within government, in the private sector, and from some key national Aboriginal leaders and their organisations. That said, the political will within government to upscale to a full campaign is still not evident. The problem is not so much at the policy level, because the campaign model is consistent with the National Foundation Skills Strategy (2012), which is Australia's current national policy framework for

raising adult literacy and numeracy, signed by the Commonwealth and all State and Territory governments (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). The Campaign also meets the objectives of the national Indigenous policy framework, Closing the Gap.

However, the mass adult literacy campaign model does not fit easily within the guidelines of current funding programs designed to achieve those policy objectives. The WELL Strategic Projects program, which was the source of core funding from the Commonwealth DIIRSTE for both the pilot stages, was terminated following the last Commonwealth Budget. At present, the principal Commonwealth program for raising adult literacy and numeracy levels, is the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program within the Commonwealth Department of Industry. It has a budget of \$152.5 million in 2014–15; and provides for up to 800 hours of Language, Literacy and Numeracy training for registered job seekers through a network of SEE providers. However, the SEE providers are chosen by tender, and are all VET institutions, i.e., TAFEs and private RTOs, which only offer formal accredited Language, Literacy and Numeracy courses, based on an entirely different model. Moreover, a good proportion of Aboriginal adults with low literacy are not eligible to do these courses under SEE funding since they are not registered job seekers. The Report of the Forrest Review, Creating Parity (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014), identified the Australian Workforce Productivity Agency's National Workforce Development Fund as an alternative employer-led model, which could be used to raise Aboriginal adult literacy levels within a coordinated and targeted strategy to close the Aboriginal employment gap. This agency, however, was also de-funded in the 2014 budget. Similarly, there are no state-government funding programs specifically directed to raising literacy levels in the Aboriginal population.

The second aspect of this problem is that the provision of funding is only one aspect of the role of government in a mass literacy campaign. While it may not be feasible in Australia to expect the government to play the kind of national coordination role it did in Timor-Leste, it is nevertheless crucial that all levels of government, Local, State and Commonwealth, are engaged in providing active support to the Campaign. In the pilot stages, we have begun the process of securing support from the government agencies operating in the communities where we are working, but much more is needed. In particular, work needs to be done to convince more agencies, both government and non-government, to prioritise working with the Campaign to increase their engagement with, and support for, adults who have low literacy. In Bourke and Enngonia, NSW Police, the AHO and AANSW are now doing this. In Wilcannia, there was strong support and some coordination provided from the Remote Service Delivery Coordinator's office. But many agencies remain unaware of the extent to which low literacy is a barrier to so many Aboriginal people's effective participation in their programs. *A successful campaign will only be possible when every agency understands that raising the literacy level in the adult population is a priority for them, as much as it is for the people concerned. As the Campaign slogan developed by the Wilcannia Community CWG says, "Literacy is everyone's business."*

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INSTITUTE OF PEDAGOGY FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Foundation is currently negotiating with the Ministry of Education, the Republic of Cuba and IPLAC/UPCEJV for a three year exclusive licence agreement for use of the YSP/YIC adult literacy model. The Foundation is seeking to secure this agreement to allow the "generalisation"

or expansion of the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign across multiple sites or communities from late 2014.

This move to secure a longer term agreement represents a significant investment by the Foundation and should assist both parties to overcome some of the problems encountered with building a sustainable Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign workforce.

To this end, IPLAC will need to send a highly experienced Campaign Advisor on a short term basis to work with the Australian National Campaign team to elaborate a strategy for upscaling and collaborate to develop and deliver an intensive pre-deployment training program for both the Australian and Cuban Technical Advisers. Both the Cuban and the Australian on-site Technical Advisers should work together to coordinate and support up to three communities at any one time for up to a 12 month period in each site with support from the National Campaign team.

The proposed agreement needs to include provision for the IPLAC expert Technical Adviser along with the Australian National Campaign Team to jointly monitor and review the implementation of the Campaign and its use of YIC across the various sites. This would involve two additional visits annually to Australia for up to 8 weeks at any one time.

The Technical Adviser training program would include the Aboriginal Australian context, cultural awareness training, and the implementation of the YIC model across a range of different sites. In particular there should be a focus on Facilitator and Coordinator training and records management and analysis.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The local workforce development required for a region-wide or national roll-out will require a combination of on-site Cuban and Australian Technical Advisers, with a minimum of one team of two for each group of two or three sites (depending on the distance and travel time between sites). This will allow the on-site workforce development strategy for local Aboriginal staff which was developed in the pilot to be integrated into the Campaign (and the funding) in all new communities which join. In addition, pre-service training of the on-site IPLAC and Australian Technical Advisers, and all the relevant Literacy for Life Foundation personnel will need to occur *before Phase 1: Socialisation and Mobilisation begins* in any new communities. A short term professional development strategy for this could be developed utilising this Report and the Stage 1 evaluation. If Cuba is able to provide its Technical Advisers, and if their preparation and orientation can be accomplished more systematically, the main challenge, as we have seen from the pilot, will be recruiting and retaining suitable on-site Australian Technical Advisers. These will need to be people with the qualifications and experience to undertake effective popular education and development work in highly demanding circumstances, under Aboriginal direction. In the longer term, if the Campaign is to be up-scaled nationally, consideration should be given to developing and offering university-accredited units of study, at postgraduate level, in the history, theory and practice of the mass campaign model and its contextualisation to Aboriginal Australia. These could be inserted within existing postgraduate programs in adult education and community development, thereby generating a larger pool of potential Technical Advisers from which to recruit.

LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The community surveys and Campaign participation records have generated the 'baseline' data to begin a longitudinal study of the impact of the Campaign on the people involved and on their communities. As the Campaign scales up, it will be possible to keep adding new communities to this database, which, over time, makes possible a much more rigorous demonstration of the value of the campaign model. As can be seen from this Report, it is already possible to use the quantitative and qualitative data which the two pilots have generated to deepen our understanding of the role which literacy plays in development; and of the barriers which low literacy puts in its way. Analysis of this data along the way has also allowed us to identify issues and problems, and to make improvements to the model, and this should continue with any upscale.

According to a literature review from the National Centre for Vocational Education research (NCVER), "no studies have attempted to directly estimate the benefits of improved literacy and the impact of poor literacy on Aboriginal populations in Australia' (Hartley & Horne, 2006, p. 23). This makes it all the more important that the Aboriginal Adult Literacy Campaign be used to build a more solid evidence base for the need to address this problem. To this end, an application was made for ARC Linkage funds to support such a study, with LFLF as a collaborating organisation with UNE. While the application was rated highly by assessors, it was not funded in this round. The Foundation may therefore wish to seek alternative sources of funding, perhaps working with the Lowitja Institute and its partner universities. As stated in the ARC application:

Evidence from this longitudinal study will build knowledge, in Australia and internationally, about the links between literacy levels and levels of health and wellbeing in Indigenous communities, thus aligning the project with the national Strategic Research Priority 'to build resilient communities and achieve

a state of physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease, or infirmity, for all Australians in whichever part of Australia they live', and specifically to 'identify ways to improve access, utilisation and engagement with health, education and social services in partnership with urban, rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities'. Importantly, the results will guide Aboriginal leaders, governments and private donors as they decide whether to continue to support the mass campaign approach, including whether to upscale the approach to a national level. (Boughton et al., 2013)

One further option which could be considered is to seek private donor support for a doctoral or postdoctoral scholarship for an Aboriginal educator to undertake this work.

CONCLUSION

Submission of this Evaluation report marks the end of the WELL/AHO funding contract with UNE, and the end of a longer research relationship with the WELL Strategic Projects program which began when the Wilcannia pilot was funded towards the end of 2011. As described above, there remains a small amount of funding from the CDF under the RJCP to finalise Phase 3: Post-literacy work in the two pilot sites from Stage 2.

The two pilot projects have demonstrated that a mass literacy campaign, adapting the Cuban Yes, I Can! model to the circumstances of Aboriginal communities, has the potential to make a significant improvement in the levels of literacy within the Aboriginal adult population, and, in this way, to help individuals and communities achieve improvements in a range of other important areas, including their children's education, their health, and their relationships with the law and justice system. The pilots also demonstrate that the key to success is the level of Aboriginal control over

CONCLUSION

the Campaign, from the national level down to the local level, and in the day to day work of the Campaign including the actual literacy lessons.

Perhaps most importantly, the pilots have created within the three communities a group of around 200 people, the participants, the local staff and their families, and the people from the organisations that supported them, who have discovered that it is possible to build a new community solidarity around dealing with the issue of literacy. In doing so, they have joined millions before them from across the Global South who have made a similar discovery over the last six decades.

Literacy is the basis on which all other human rights can be won and defended. No valid reason can anymore be given for a wealthy country like Australia denying that right to its First Peoples.

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