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Summarising: Schwab (2002), *An Exploration of Educational Aspirations among Homeland Communities in the Maningrida Region: Issues and Options for the Future*
Responsibility for the preparation of this research summary rests with the authors of the MCEETYA report *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures: CAEPR Policy Research 1990–2007* and not the original author(s) of the summarised material.

Title of Research:
An Exploration of Educational Aspirations among Homeland Communities in the Maningrida Region: Issues and Options for the Future.

Research Publication:
A report commissioned by the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation 2002

Name of Researcher(s):
R.G. Schwab

Time period:
2002

Geographic location:
Maningrida and the surrounding region (NT)

Methodology:
This study was a short-term consultation involving interviews with homeland community leaders and stakeholders, Homeland Centre teachers, visiting teachers and Maningrida Community Education Centre (CEC) administrators. Interviews were also held with the senior staff of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, which is responsible for the economic development of the surrounding homelands of Maningrida. Leaders and stakeholders from all 14 homeland centres were interviewed and the researcher visited nine of the 14 homeland centres. Additional interviews were held with the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training (NTDEET) and less formal interviews with other interested parties.

Aims:
The purpose of this consultative study was to assess the educational aspirations of homeland communities and develop options for the delivery of educational services to homeland centres in the Maningrida region. [This is in the context of homeland education being administratively part of the Maningrida Community Education Centre and therefore administratively linked to the Maningrida Years K-12 school, which provides education to school-age children in the Maningrida township.]

Selected findings and insights:
Homeland or ‘outstation’ communities strongly believed that schooling should be provided in the homelands rather than in the Maningrida Years K-12 ‘hub’ school. Language was a major impediment, with no teachers in the Maningrida ‘hub’ school being able to assist many of the students from the homelands in their own language.

The homeland communities placed a high value on the acquisition of English language skills, both written and spoken. English language and education in general was seen as vital to gaining a job. In this regard, communities wanted an increase in the amount of time visiting non-Indigenous teachers could spend in the homeland centre. This was in recognition of the difficulties faced by the (Indigenous) Homeland Centre teachers who often have limited education and low levels of literacy and numeracy.
The value of visiting non-Indigenous teachers was often not appreciated by non-Indigenous people, including teachers based in the Maningrida 'hub' school, especially the visiting teachers’ greater focus upon mentoring and the complex pedagogical challenges they faced when teaching to homeland students. Other issues identified during the consultations included: housing for teaching, adequacy and maintenance of existing school buildings, a lack of furniture and fittings, transport, homeland teacher entitlements and working conditions, a lack of professional development and budgeting.

Community leaders and homeland centre teachers emphasised the importance of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge underpinning homeland education. There was however differences in opinion as to how best this could be achieved.

The equitable resourcing of homeland centres was identified as a key issue, with significant differences perceived by communities between homeland schools and schools in Darwin and Maningrida as well as significant differences in resources between homeland centres. These differences related to buildings and teaching resources.

The paper canvasses several options for the more effective and equitable delivery of education to homeland communities. Central to these was a need for homeland community involvement in educational governance and decision-making. For example, several options canvassed the idea of educational partnerships, either formally expressed as a service agreement or less formally as a memorandum of understanding.

The paper concludes that administratively homeland schooling should be directly responsible to NTDEET, rather than being associated with the Maningrida 'hub' school as part of the broader Maningrida Community Education Centre.

Educational implications:

The paper emphasises the important value outstation communities place on the acquisition of English language skills and the role of education in helping gain a job. At the same time the paper identifies the dual purposes of education for outstation communities and the integration of Aboriginal knowledge and technologies into school curricula.

The paper also explores options for the development of educational partnership arrangements for outstation schooling as well as significant school resourcing issues such as maintenance of facilities.

Relevance:

Domain 2: School and Community Educational Partnerships

Cross-cultural understanding of purposes and value of education

Domain 4: Quality Teaching

Significance of curriculum

Cultural understanding

Related papers:
