

PARTNERSHIP BROKERS

SCHOOL+BUSINESS+COMMUNITY

MILLNER PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Purpose:

To support and empower students, their families and their communities

Partnership Members:

Millner Primary School	Save the Children
Danila Dilba Health Service	The Smith Family
NT Health Children's Development Team	AFL NT
Corrugated Iron Youth Arts	

Context and Goals

The Millner Primary School Partnership was formed around providing support for indigenous students at the school. In particular, the focus was on a group of students who resided in the town camps in the area. Most of these students come from Minmarama – a town camp that has incredibly high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

The **ERICUS** (Educating Remote Indigenous Children in an Urban Setting) program has been established to channel support for these students. The partnership aims to increase attendance, increase literacy and numeracy, improve health, increase parent and family engagement and increase participation in extra-curricular activities. Reintegration into mainstream schooling is the ultimate aim, once students' issues have been addressed. It is essential for this to occur prior to them transitioning to Middle Years schools where there is little support or personal attention.

One of the major barriers to achieving this is the transience of families living in the town camps. They divide their time between the town camp and remote indigenous communities (where they do not attend school at all). The students have very high support needs as do their families.

The Partnership's Approach

In the early stages of this partnership the approach focused on getting students to school; providing a "family group" classroom to allow them to adjust to home and school routines; health assessments, care, referrals and therapeutic programs within a whole-of-school approach; and opportunities for extended learning through co-curricular and extra-curricular activities eg sport and circus skills training. Partners have also enabled students and their families to connect with the broader community through performance, football and Family Fun Days.

As the partnership has developed the depth of involvement has increased dramatically. The "urgency" has lessened although the need is still great (especially

with transient attendance). Partners have focussed on a deepening of program and commitment. The support services are now routinely provided and opportunities for enhancement and extension arise constantly eg ERICUS students who had been doing circus training at school were invited to perform at the opening of The Great Moscow Circus in Darwin and then had opportunities to attend intensive workshops with the circus performers.



Parents and family members have become actively engaged in the education of their children to the extent that a small number of these are being offered training and employment opportunities within the school.

Benefits

- Most students have shown dramatic improvements in attendance
- Literacy levels of students have increased
- Most students have had full health screening and referrals have been made for specialist services.
- Students have increased confidence and self-belief and are actively involved in the life of the mainstream school
- Parents' knowledge about how they can support their children to continue and do well at school has increased
- Employment and training opportunities for family members have arisen
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Next Steps

This partnership continues to develop and strengthen as partners become more engaged and see more opportunities for involvement. Integration of the ERICUS group into mainstream schooling is continuing and the partnership will continue to explore support for these students as they transition to Middle Schools.

Support from the Partnership Broker

The Partnership Broker continues to facilitate regular meetings to review the Action Plan, discuss approaches and support the ongoing development of this partnership with an aim to it becoming self-sustaining next year.

TOP TIP

Involving all partners in planning and decision making is critical to maintaining an effective partnership.