Arts engagement programs with Warlpiri communities sharing traditions and stories

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Enid

I like to acknowledge Kaurna people the traditional owners past present and future generations of this land.

Southern Ngalia Dance Camp

- Ngajurna Nangala
- Yurntumu Wardingki

I am Nangala from Yuendumu.

I am a Board Member of the Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC- Mt Theo Program), I am a Remote Aboriginal Family Community Worker, with the NT Office of Family & Children and I am Cultural Custodian of the Southern Ngalia Project

In the middle of the Tanami desert is the Language group called Warlpiri. To the north there is a community call Lajamanu they used to call themselves Warnayaka Warlpiri and to the east around Tenant Creek, Ali-Curung and Willowra they called themselves Warlmanpa.

Yuendumu is on the southern end of the Tanami desert and called them selves Ngalia. That is why we picked the name southern Ngalia for our cultural dance program. This involves all Warlpiri women from all Warlpiri communities. This is because we all have the same cultural laws, songs, dreaming’s and kinship system.

The name Southern Ngalia is a name for the ladies from Yuendumu and Nyirripi because they are from the southern end of the Tanami desert.

SNDC happens twice a year it makes us feel strong and proud because we have elders as our teachers and mentors who are keen to go on these camps. They want to pass on our culture to the next generation.

The girls and young women identify which groups to go to when they see an elder. This connects them to the kinship system, which relates to the dreaming and song. For the girls and young women to experience this learning strengthens their knowledge of Warlpiri culture, heritage and identity.

These dance camps help girls, young women and all Warlpiri women to help understand the concepts of Warlpiri culture. So we can maintain our language and the knowledge in our Warlpiri culture.

At the camps there are dances and story telling with song, as well as day trips to country to know where their traditional homeland is. When we get ready for dances we use resources that are modern and traditional. Yapa (Indigenous) and Karydia (non-Indigenous) work and learn together with a mutual understanding of the importance of sharing and caring for one another.

Within my role as cultural advisor and mentor between InCite and WYDAC (also known as the Mt Theo Program) I ensure the senior Warlpiri women have the opportunity to advise the organisations the best way to deliver the dance program.

At each dance camp at the end of the program Incite, WYDAC and the elders have an evaluation meeting. This helps to assist’s us to continue to improve the delivery of our program. We pick out a traditional homeland where we want to have our next dance camp.
The young girls are kept occupied by our Jaru young women whilst the meeting is taking place. Jaru Pirrjirdi stands for strong voices in Warlpiri, our Jaru are young mentors who are travelling through the WYDAC youth program.

Recordings/videos that are taken at the camp are translated and transcribed by me. From Warlpiri language to English for other audiences to read and understand what we do and the importance of why Warlpiri culture must be recorded to stay strong.

Red Sand Culture is good. It’s good that children and young people are getting involved in a lot of activities to make them strong and confident to participate. Yuwayi (yes)

Ngurrju! (Good)

Ngula-juku (That’s all)

**Jenine**

**Red Sand Culture Project**

I would also like to acknowledge Kaurna people the traditional owners past present and future generations of this land.

I am the Executive Director of InCite Youth Arts and oversee the project management of the Southern Ngalia and the Red Sand Culture Projects. InCite is a not for profit community arts organisation based in Alice Springs. We partner with the Mt Theo program to deliver Southern Ngalia and Red Sand Culture. The Mt Theo Program is nationally recognised for prevention, aftercare and support for petrol sniffers and is repeatedly cited as “the success story” in petrol sniffing intervention.

Strong trust relationships exist between Warlpiri communities, InCite and Mt Theo as a result of the long term investment and use of skilled community artists. ‘Red Sand Culture’ like ‘Southern Ngalia’ supports young people to re-engage with culture and family. There are also education, numeracy, literacy, and other health and wellbeing outcomes of these initiatives, all integral to the personal and professional development of young Warlpiri individuals.

Starting in 2006, six young people from the Mt Theo Program attended a music and dance workshop with InCite in Alice Springs. ‘Red Sand Culture’ piloted with 2 weeks of music workshops in Yuendumu in 2007. Delivery has since steadily developed, seeing 96 weeks of hip hop music and dance skills workshops, comprising 880 workshops with attendances of over 8600.

Activities expanding to include Willowra, Nyirrpi and Lajamanu. The repeat visits by artists/mentors has proven vital to establish trust relationships and has been a key to the increased participation and quality of the work engaged with and produced by the young people as well as to maximise the health and wellbeing outcomes for young individuals and the broader Warlpiri communities.

‘Red Sand Culture’ is now ready to take new steps in achieving sustainable outcomes for Warlpiri youth including tailor made professional development and mentoring for identified individuals and young leaders, as well as, creating songs that link strongly with Warlpiri culture and sharing the talents of young Warlpiri musicians.

**Video presentation**

InCite Youth Arts ‘Red Sand Culture’ & ‘Southern Ngalia’ projects 2011: (13.32 mins)  
[http://youtu.be/eD8K8NF2xSc](http://youtu.be/eD8K8NF2xSc)

April 2011 Southern Ngalia Dance Camp: (selection section: 50 secs–5.54-6.44 mins)  
[http://youtu.be/l4nXZ7n_1-k](http://youtu.be/l4nXZ7n_1-k)