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JULY VISIT Kalumburu

2019 // PREPARED BY ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS WA



This July

WE EXPLORED CULTURAL ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITIES

In July 2019, master weavers (and sisters), Margaret and Rhonda Duncan from Urapunga in the Northern Territory, returned to Kalumburu to teach and mentor women. Over five days they shared their bush knowledge and taught pandanas weaving to women, as well shared their stories of challenges facing remote entrepreneurs and how to keep a business strong.

The workshop was supported by Enterprise Partnership WA (EPWA) facilitators Clare Wood and Susannah Wallman. EPWA, formally known as Enterprise Learning Projects (ELP) WA, have been working with the community over the last three years on projects to activate entrepreneurship and to promote wellbeing in Kalumburu. On this trip, Clare and Susannah supported the weaving workshop by providing education on business concepts such as sales, marketing and financial management, as well as how partnerships are critical in supporting micro-enterprise development and health and wellbeing in remote communities.

Dates of Visit: 1- 5 July 2019**Day One: Monday**

The weavers were welcomed by Esther and other women at the Strong Women's Centre. The women caught up and then made a plan for the week.

Esther and her children then took the weavers out to country surrounding Kalumburu so that Margaret and Rhonda could teach them how to identify and collect pandanas, as well as the various roots and flowers to use for the dyeing process.

'I really want to do this..me and my girls, we really want to learn this.'





Day One: Monday continued...

In the afternoon back at the Women's Centre, other women who had participated in previous weaving workshops joined the group as Rhonda and Margaret demonstrated how to strip and prepare the pandanas for dyeing.

There were lots of conversations about the importance of culture and going out on country, and how this was good for well-being. The women spoke about how being engaged in meaningful, culturally-focused activities could support people to stay away from alcohol and drugs in community and be good role models for the younger people.

Margaret and Rhonda spoke about opportunities for developing different weaving products such as earrings, baskets, place-mats and dilly-bags. They also spoke about how tourists are often interested in the weaving process and shared how they had recently facilitated some weaving workshops with tourists at the Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland!



*"I started when I was 12. I used to see my mum all the time weaving. When you are interested in something you want to do, you learn".
(Margaret Duncan)*

Day Two: Tuesday

The second day the women set up under the shade of the Mango trees. Margaret and Rhonda showed the women how to prepare the bush dyes and began to dye the pandanas on the fire.

Over cups of billy tea the women shared stories about the challenges of setting up remote business and balancing obligations to family and community and how to keep going in the face of grief and loss.

In the afternoon the weaving process began!

Spending time together yarning also brought out conversations around language and the desire for the older women to share language with the younger women.



*"I've got to teach you our language too"
(Kalumburu Elder to young participant)*





Day Three: Wednesday

On the third day the women spent time practicing weaving and exploring what kind of products could be made for sale. A few volunteers from the mission visited and sat with the women at the mango trees and learnt about the process.

"When I came down I had all this stress, but then after sitting and doing the weaving I felt real good".



In the afternoon that day, a group of women travelled to McGowans Beach for some relaxation, fishing and to visit the tourist camp to explore opportunities. There was significant interest in the women's weaving and a strong interest from tourists wanting to meet traditional owners and learn about culture in Kalumburu.



Day Four: Thursday

On the fourth day the women had a relaxed weaving day under the mangoe trees again. This gave time for the women to work on their weaving technique, ask Rhonda and Margaret lots of questions and for Clare and Susannah to chat through different aspects around setting up and running a business in a remote community. They talked about how creating partnerships with other people and organisations can be really important, such as helping to get access to spaces and vehicles.

There were conversations about how cultural microenterprise can support health and wellbeing aspirations in the community, such as helping people to stay away from drugs and alcohol and healing.



"That's when the healing happens, when you get out of the house and in to the bush".





Day Five: Friday

Last day in Kalumburu! The women spoke about their hopes and dreams for the future and discussed ideas for tourism and micro-enterprise in Kalumburu and how to keep bush knowledge and culture strong.

There was an idea of returning to camp at McGowans or Honeymoon and host workshops for tourists as a way to encourage tourists to visit Kalumburu.

The women spoke about how good the week of weaving and spending time on country had been, and everyone looked forward to inviting Margaret and Rhonda back again soon.

"It turned my mind around, whatever I had in my mind: silly, mad, angry; but now I started doing this, it takes my mind off things, takes the anger out".

Thanks to Kalumburu community members who welcomed Margaret and Rhonda back to Kalumburu, they love visiting and one day would love to stay longer!

Thanks to Father Simon for the loan of the troopy for the McGowan trip to meet tourists.

Thanks to Matt at McGowans camping ground for clearing such a lovely shady spot for the women to show their artwork and weaving.

Thanks also to the KAC youth program for their support of the workshop and help with transport and logistics.

Many thanks to Esther and Kirsty at the Strong Women's Centre for all their support of the weavers during the workshop, and to Kirsty for her beautiful photo of the workshop week!





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