

Martu Leadership Program

AUSTRALIA

Project Brief FY 2016



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PROGRAM

You can help give Martu men and women the chance to build confidence, knowledge and resilience, and become strong community leaders.

In remote Aboriginal communities, governance and leadership require integrity and resilience. Although these can be developed within Martu social and cultural frameworks, modern governance and leadership also require sufficient knowledge, confidence and strategic capacity to deal effectively with the mainstream world. The Martu Leadership Program aims to support Martu men and women to develop these competencies and become strong community leaders. By supporting this project, you will help men and women in the East Pilbara to build realistic pathways to a healthy and prosperous future.

\$16,000 could enable one senior Aboriginal mentor to support Martu Leadership Program participants for two months.

Background

The Martu are the traditional custodians of a vast area of the Great Sandy, Little Sandy and Gibson Deserts in the Western Desert of the Pilbara. Their country stretches from the Percival Lakes in the north, to south of Lake Disappointment, and far to the east of the Canning Stock Route, stretching close to the border between Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

They were among the last of Australia's Indigenous people to make contact with the European world, many leaving completely traditional desert lives to move into stations and missions in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Martu identify as one people with enormous social and cultural strength. Their identity and rights to their country were acknowledged in 2002, when their native title over much of their country was formally recognised. The Martu are now concentrated in Port Hedland, Newman and several desert communities in Western Australia.

Despite their cultural strength, a prolonged history of discrimination and disadvantage means that Martu communities face a range of social problems including education, health and financial challenges, which can compromise the capacity of young people to forge a clear and positive role for themselves in the modern context.



Building confidence, knowledge and resilience in young Martu people is therefore critical to developing their capacity to engage with the outside world and become role models and future leaders.

Program overview

World Vision Australia has partnered with Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ), an Aboriginal non-government organisation based in the Pilbara, to develop a leadership program for Martu. Since 2005, KJ has been working with the Martu people on land and cultural programs with the following objectives:

- To preserve Martu culture.
- To build a viable, sustainable economy in Martu communities.
- To build realistic pathways for young Martu to a healthy and prosperous future.

Front cover: This program supports Martu men and women to become confident community leaders.

Through its increasing engagement with the Martu, KJ has witnessed a keen interest among young people in developing the requisite knowledge that will enable them to address limited access to education and employment opportunities, as well as essential health services, and take effective control of their lives.

World Vision, KJ and the Martu people are working towards improving social outcomes through the Martu Leadership Program, an action-oriented program that is tailored to the realities of current Martu life and experience. The program will begin as a three-year pilot project, with a further two years intended for broader implementation. This will include an independent evaluation of the value of the program and the development of a long-term sustainability strategy.

Program length: October 2013 – September 2018



*Martu Leadership Program participants.
Photo: World Vision*

Program goal

To ensure positive and sustainable social outcomes for the Martu through a leadership program that builds governance and leadership competencies in Martu people at the interface of the mainstream and Martu worlds.

Key outcomes

Martu men and women have been collaborating with KJ to identify program outcomes that they consider critical to developing skills for good leadership:

- **Knowledge:** to identify and acquire the critical and practical knowledge required by Martu to effectively engage with the mainstream world (legal, financial, governmental and corporate knowledge).
- **Strategy:** to effectively manage mainstream-related issues and understand when and how to access appropriate support and assistance.
- **Networks:** to get to know a range of professional people who can assist Martu to deal with issues and make the most of opportunities.
- **Communication:** to develop capacities to speak, read and write in English as much as is practicable.
- **Confidence:** to feel self-assured and capable of taking responsibility for issues and opportunities.

Program activities

The Martu Leadership Program uses diverse and practical methods, including:

- Outdoor education experiences including trips outside the Pilbara to gain broader experience.
- Exchange arrangements with other organisations.
- Opportunities to shadow the management staff of KJ and other organisations for a specified period. Recognised leadership and mentoring roles with younger Martu.
- Access to personal mentors and other support arrangements.
- Practical exercises to apply knowledge including:
 - participation in meetings and debriefs
 - public presentations
 - attendance at and participation in conferences
 - representation in regional forums
 - external leadership programs
- Complemented by some group work, these activities will support the development of:

- communication skills including English fluency, public speaking and literacy
- numeracy and digital literacy
- understanding of “higher English” (a Martu term for technical or complex English)
- Understanding of major elements of the mainstream, including:
 - government (engagement)
 - economy (opportunities and challenges)
 - finance (financial oversight of a company)
 - companies (good governance)
 - law (Australian legal system and sections that have substantial application to Martu)
- Capacity to take effective action.
- Capacity to become role models and strong community leaders.



*Program participants engaged in course work.
Photo: World Vision*

Recent achievements

- The number of core program participants increased from 15 to 24.
- Two participants travelled to Canberra for a lobbying trip in March 2015, where they met over 10 politicians and senior advisors from the three major political parties. The participants learned how government operates and how and who to engage with on various issues.
- In May 2015, participants travelled to Melbourne to learn about “for-profit” companies and presented to BHP, Newcrest Mining, Jetstar and the Western Bulldogs AFL

team. One participant said, “(We are) learning about companies, how they run ... We are a strong team. It won’t take long to get even stronger.” Participants learned about skills needed to run a company, what makes companies succeed or fail, and good governance – all of which have great relevance to how their own Aboriginal corporations should be run. Participants also took part in the “Long Walk” to the Dreamtime AFL game at the MCG as part of Reconciliation Week.

- Participants attended the Native Title Conference in Port Douglas in June 2015, attended by around 740 traditional owners from around the country. The group presented about the leadership program to an audience of 60 people, overcoming their fears of presenting to large groups of people. One participant commented, “We were shaking from head to foot but we didn’t hold back. We made everyone understand. I think they will invite us more.”
- At the annual reflection workshop held in Melbourne, participants were involved in shaping the future of the program in order to achieve positive outcomes for themselves and their communities. Participants have begun to teach others what they are learning during these trips. One participant said, “We have a plan. We are on a journey – we’re going somewhere.”

Beneficiaries

The Martu Leadership Program will provide governance and leadership benefits to Martu men, women and communities in the East Pilbara region.

Program sustainability

The program is designed to build leadership skills and support the personal and professional development of Martu men and women. It does not intend to “reinvent the wheel” or displace existing community-based organisations, but rather to identify suitable models and existing key organisations for partnership.

Partnering with existing service providers and strengthening community-based leadership will help create a sense of community ownership that encourages the sustainability of the program into the future.

A Martu member finds his voice

Before he joined the Martu Leadership Program, Slim was hesitant to become involved in meetings, politics or community positions of responsibility. Through the program, Slim attended a workshop on company law, where he learned about corporate governance, which is integral to the wellbeing of Martu communities.

A year later Slim said, "That workshop stayed in my head for a year. Then I went to a meeting of a native title claim group. We've had the same directors for five years but nobody is happy with them. I stood up and said, 'If we're not happy with them, we can change them'.

As a result of Slim's input there was a resolution to hold an election for new directors and a new Board was elected. The Board is seen to have greater integrity and concern for the inclusion and interests of all who have rights under the claim.

Slim's involvement in the Martu Leadership Program provided the knowledge that empowered him to act, to change a situation where he felt powerless, and to demand accountability so that he, and his community, can take greater control of their lives.

Program evaluation and reporting

Transparency is at the core of our programs and their delivery. Only then can we strategically assess the level of change achieved in the communities in which we work.

All of World Vision's projects are assessed at regular intervals against implementation plans, budgets and progress towards their objectives. Evaluations help us identify what works and why,

and are therefore a critical part of our programming approach.

Our partners will receive an annual project report outlining progress against key outcomes and activities undertaken.

Funding

We invite you to partner with World Vision Australia as we seek to fund \$854,000* in FY16 from donors to support this project.

* Estimated as at time of printing and subject to change.



Program work out on country. Photo: World Vision

Join us

Join World Vision Australia and its partners to build and strengthen leadership opportunities, ensuring positive and sustainable social outcomes for the Martu.

Contact us

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