

A participatory approach to developing an indigenous resource package that has resulted in a collection of resources that conceptualise quality early childhood practices in remote indigenous settings in the Northern Territory.

The participatory approach taken to develop the National Quality Standards Indigenous Resource Package (NQSIRP) provided indigenous educators in the Northern Territory with an opportunity to present their candid and collective experiences, which provided the foundation work for developing what is now known as the NQSIRP. The process of utilizing 'cultural' history of knowledge transfer, information sharing and debate provided the starting point for formulating what the National Quality Standards for Education and Care may look like in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

Using familiar ways of working and learning together achieved, over a period of time, unique perspectives on ways of constructing meaning for the National Quality Standards for Education and Care. The process was engaging for all and provided rich ideas on what the NQSIRP needed to incorporate into the 'tools' for unlocking the intent of the National Quality Standards for Education and Care. This process orientated groups across the NT to become creative, to explore ideas and empowered different groups to start mixing and matching some of the activities that were being developed.

Adopting new ways of thinking about the NQS within the context of where people are living and working initiated the 'construction phase' of developing activities that focused on the quality areas. This was used as the foundation for interpreting and contextualizing quality early childhood practice. The activities that are in the resource package today were refined overtime. Flexibility has been embedded into the resources as a result of the alternative ways different groups of Indigenous educators identified with the intent of the activity, but exercised alternative choices of how they worked though the activity, distinguishing between the varies concepts.

Discovering what worked and what missed the mark was organic in that it relied on trial and error. There were times that the entire day was a disaster, nothing happened or the ideas or the activity did not inspire anyone. Frustrating as it was, sometimes you just had to start the next day exploring how the process would engage new ways of thinking to permit creative ideas to develop and achieve results that met the local needs.

Any questions on the participatory approach taken, consider emailing session32p@gmail.com