**Building and strengthening capacity of Aboriginal Australians to lead local responses and achieve culturally competent, sustainable community development giving voice to the voiceless**

**Janella Isaac, Joshua Augustine, Rosana Smith, Jessica Bunning**

The Indigenous Community Navigator (ICN) program builds capacity of local Aboriginal people to work together with families, communities and stakeholders to co-design and drive community-led collaboration for empowering families and improving children and young people’s outcomes. It supports strengthening community capacity to identify priorities and build evidence to support pathways and roadmaps for impactful, sustainable development. The emphasis is on developing not only a strong and coordinated community voice, but a multi-generational group of community leaders that can advocate for a better way together.

ICNs have been essential to the development of West Kimberley’s Dampier Peninsula, Woombooriny Amboon Angarriiya Partnership Initiative (WAAPI), leading a shift in decision making by handing over power from government and service providers to community.

Save The Children provides coaching, mentoring and technical expertise to the Navigator team. The program provides an excellent example of investing in a new way of working to build 'trust' between community and stakeholders and ensure 'design' that is 'inclusive,' 'co-produced' and 'embedding culture' to enable service delivery to be more culturally sensitive, competent and effective.

The presenters are locally employed grassroots ICNs in the WAAOI, connected to what is identified as the Nyulnyulan family language group. The family language groups include both mainland and island traditional kinship connections with Nyulnyul, Bardi, Djabirr-djabirr and Nimanburru (mainland groups). The island language groups; Jawi and Oowiini (Mayala) have adopted the Bardi language and are integrated as such being part of the northern Dampier Peninsula mainland communities.

These roles have been largely self-determined by the ICNs from their discussions with community, ensuring community priorities are the focus, brokering government agency and service provider relationships and advising stakeholders on appropriate community channels for engagement.