



NINTI ONE REMOTE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

INTERPLAY FRAMEWORK BRINGING TOGETHER STORIES AND NUMBERS

INTERPLAY WELLBEING FRAMEWORK FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN REMOTE AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM MAKERS

- Wellbeing is holistic and influenced by many interrelating factors
- The Interplay Wellbeing Framework can provide statistical, objective measures of:
 - » Wellbeing and how it changes over time, and in relation to programs and interventions
 - » Culture, empowerment and community as well as more standard wellbeing domains of education, work and health
 - » Interrelationships between contributing factors
 - » Key pathways and areas for investment for policy and program makers to optimize wellbeing cost-effectively

Wellbeing has been difficult to understand, measure and strengthen in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Aboriginal knowledge is passed down through stories, and governments mainly speak the language of numbers, so we developed a coordinated approach to merge Aboriginal knowledge and western science – by bringing together stories and numbers.

Over four years, we applied a 'shared space' model whereby community, government and researchers collaborated to design and implement a holistic Interplay Wellbeing Framework and survey tool for remote communities.

It integrates domains that community identified as being important, being culture, empowerment and community with those prioritized by government, including education, employment and health. These six domains are integrated a holistic model of wellbeing. Statistical validation of the framework and survey tool was based on survey data collected from 900 young Aboriginal adults from four different remote communities nationally.

Applications

The framework provides a statistical tool to objectively measure and strengthen wellbeing. It uses data visualization software and video to represent community values of culture and empowerment and identify statistically proven pathways to improve wellbeing. It can:

- quantitatively monitor and analyse the impact of policy, programs and strategies on overall community wellbeing
- support place-based initiatives by identifying the most effective policy and program investments for a particular community
- statistically compare and monitor community wellbeing over time
- understand how culture, empowerment, community, education, employment and health interrelate and contribute to overall wellbeing
- identify practical pathways to improve outcomes across education, employment and health through strengthening culture and building empowerment.



Development and validation of the Interplay Wellbeing Framework

Statistical validation of the Interplay Wellbeing Framework and survey tool was based on quantitative data from a cohort of 842 Aboriginal people aged 15–34 years, recruited from four different Aboriginal communities in remote Australia (over 900 surveys collected initially). Participants completed individual surveys designed and administered by Aboriginal community researchers based on the Interplay Wellbeing Framework. Structural equation modeling showed good fit statistics confirming the holistic nature of the model. The strongest direct impacts on wellbeing were ‘social and emotional wellbeing’, ‘English literacy and numeracy’, ‘Aboriginal literacy’, ‘substances’ (lack thereof), ‘work’ and ‘community’. Correlation analyses suggested cultural factors have indirect impacts on wellbeing, such as through Aboriginal literacy. All cultural variables correlated highly with each other, and with empowerment and community. Empowerment also correlated highly with all education and work variables. ‘Substances’ (lack thereof) was linked with positive outcomes across culture, education and work. These analyses confirm that culture, empowerment and community play key roles in the interplay with education, employment and health, as part of a holistic and quantifiable system of wellbeing. Further, it validates the holistic concept of wellbeing confirming that everything is interrelated and needs to be considered at the ‘whole of system’ level in policy approaches.

Further information

Statistical validation of the Interplay Wellbeing Framework is reported here:

Cairney S, Abbott T, Quinn S, Wilson B, Wakerman J. Interplay Wellbeing Framework: ‘bringing together stories and numbers’ to measure Aboriginal cultural values in remote Australia. *Submitted*.

The project’s shared space model is described here:

Abbott T and Cairney S. 2014. Collaboration and capacity development through the employment of Aboriginal community-based researchers [Special issue: Red dirt research in remote Australia]. *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*. 17, 4. pp. 164–67.

A full description of the Interplay Project Methodology is outlined here:

Cairney S, Abbott T and Yamaguchi J. 2015. *Study protocol: the Interplay Wellbeing Framework and methodology to assess wellbeing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote Australia*. CRC-REP Working Paper CW024. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.

Development work to define wellbeing is here:

Cairney S and Abbott T. 2014. Aboriginal wellbeing in a ‘Red Dirt Economy’ [Special issue: Red dirt research in remote Australia]. *Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*. 17, 4. pp. 5–22.

A literature review to inform the project is here:

Nguyen O and Cairney S. 2013. *Interplay between education, employment, health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas: working towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing framework*. CRC-REP Working Paper CW013. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.

Further publications describing the validation process are in preparation.

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Interplay Between Health, Wellbeing, Education and Employment