



EON Foundation Inc.

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MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT

2017





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FOREWORD

A decade ago, there was an appalling 17-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In 2017, that gap in life expectancy has reduced, but still regrettably remains at more than ten years. A huge gap still also exists in infant mortality rates, child malnutrition and chronic disease. Nutrition is the most important factor in the chronic disease epidemic facing Indigenous communities. Without good nutrition infants cannot thrive, children cannot succeed at school and employment opportunities are diminished.

Over half of school aged children in remote Indigenous communities do not usually have fruit and vegetables in the home. The supply, quality and variety of fruit and vegetables in remote communities is frequently very limited, and unaffordable prices often result in diets high in more affordable processed and high-sugar foods.

I am very pleased to have been invited to write the foreword for this report, which shows that an EON Edible Garden now provides the only sustainable source of fruit and vegetables in many remote Indigenous communities involved in the EON Thriving Communities Program. The report demonstrates that EON Edible Gardens have contributed to an increased awareness of the link between nutrition and health.

I am equally pleased by three other significant aspects of this report. First, the report confirms the success of the EON delivery approach of working at a grassroots level in partnership with Indigenous communities. This approach can be contrasted to the provision of services to, or for, Indigenous people which are essentially disempowering and not productive of long-term change.

Secondly, the outcomes of the EON Thriving Communities Program extend beyond the overarching goal of improved health, and include increased attendance and engagement of children at school, and training and employment opportunities in the field of horticulture.



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Finally, I commend EON for the clear future vision for the Thriving Communities Program shown in this report, which includes higher production levels for the EON Edible Gardens and increasing community involvement well beyond the school gate.

The Hon. Wayne Martin AC
Chief Justice of Western Australia

November 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

EON is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2005 in response to the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research Longitudinal Study into Aboriginal Child Health¹. This study confirmed the significant rates of preventable chronic disease suffered by Aboriginal children in remote communities. 19% of the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health is directly attributable to poor nutrition, including low intake of fruit and vegetables². Key causes of poor nutrition in remote communities are lack of affordability and access to fresh fruit and vegetables and a poor understanding of the link between nutrition and better health³.

EON's Thriving Communities Program has been designed to address these problems. It is an intensive, grassroots gardening, cooking and nutrition program based around developing large, edible gardens in remote schools and communities and providing the training and capacity building for the locals to maintain them.

The EON Thriving Communities Program reduces preventable chronic disease caused or compounded by poor nutrition and its social consequences by:

- ✚ Working with communities to build capacity. EON partners with communities for three to five years to make a lasting contribution to community health. We only go to communities that invite us in and work alongside us to achieve sustainability. The Program is intensive, with an EON Project Manager being in community every fortnight to work alongside locals and deliver gardening, nutrition and cooking lessons to the children and adults.

¹ Zubrick, S. R., Lawrence, D. M., Silburn, S. R., Blair, E., Milroy, H., Wilkes, T., Eades, S., D'Antoine, H., Read, A. W., Ishiguchi, P., & Doyle, S. (2004). *The Health of Aboriginal Children and Young People [Volumes 1-4]*. Perth: Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

² Vos, T., Barker, B., Stanley, L., & Lopez, A.D. (2007). *The Burden of Disease and Injury in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*. Brisbane: School of Population Health, The University of Queensland.

³ Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2017). *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Status, 2016*. Perth, WA: Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet.



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- ✚ Establishing local edible gardens to improve food security and access to healthy food for school children and community members.
- ✚ Delivering nutrition education, training and skills, that is, the motivation and means to improve nutrition on a sustainable basis and create healthy communities.
- ✚ Engaging at risk children in learning, using edible gardens and nutritious cooking classes as an extension to the classroom.
- ✚ Improving social, physical and emotional wellbeing through engagement of the whole community in community gardens.
- ✚ Delivering early intervention to effect generational change, ensuring children and their families have the opportunity, motivation and means for improved nutrition.

EON has partnered with 24 remote Aboriginal communities over the last 12 years. The Program has evolved and grown over this time based on community feedback and a focus on achieving meaningful long-term results for communities.

As an outcomes-driven organisation, EON monitors evidence of its success through independent evaluation, a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Program and continuous community engagement, as well as monitoring of communities that have finished the Program.



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Key Findings for 2017 Monitoring and Evaluation Program

EON has an ongoing, comprehensive framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. The information derived from the initiative provides evidence of the achievements of the EON Thriving Communities Program as well as highlighting opportunities for the continued improvement of the Program's design.

The most recent round of EON Monitoring and Evaluation, surveying 321 remote Aboriginal community students and 40 key stakeholders was completed in July 2017. The survey was conducted in ten remote Western Australian communities that have participated in the EON Thriving Communities program for between six months and three years.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Report is a significant document in terms of the number of participants surveyed and the positive outcomes found.

The results show meaningful impact for children and adults in terms of health and education. For example;

- ✚ 96% of teachers have seen positive changes in student attitudes and behaviours as a result of the EON Program, plus positive impacts on student health and school attendance.
- ✚ 91% identify EON as their primary source of learning about health and nutrition
- ✚ 91% enjoy growing fruit and vegetables in the EON garden
- ✚ 80% of students who don't grow produce at home would like to have their own garden
- ✚ 75% of students score 85% or higher when asked to identify food and drink options as being healthy or unhealthy
- ✚ 96% understand basic kitchen hygiene practices



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- ✚ 88% can identify the link between nutritious food and physical health
- ✚ 71% know a recipe for a healthy meal that uses fruit and vegetables
- ✚ 67% sometimes cook healthy food at home
- ✚ 91% like learning how to cook healthy meals
- ✚ 91% believe it is important to eat fruit and vegetables
- ✚ 54% talk to their family about how to be healthy, using the lessons learned from EON
- ✚ 92% would like to eat more fruit and vegetables
- ✚ 52% of students talk to their families about the EON garden
- ✚ 89% - The average score for students when tested on their gardening knowledge
- ✚ 91% - The average score for students when tested on their nutrition knowledge

On average, 59% do not usually have fruit and vegetables at home to eat. 90% of students at schools in their first year of the program do not, falling to 47% of students at schools in their second year of the program or above (a drop of 52%).

On average, 40% of students grow produce at home. 18% of students at schools in their first year of the program do, increasing to 54% of students at schools in their second year of the program or above (a 300% increase)

On average, 36% take the produce home from the gardens. Only 11% of students at schools in their first year of the program do, increasing to 52% of students at schools in their second year of the program or above (a 473% increase)



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The Monitoring and Evaluation also confirms the importance of key aspects of EON's delivery model, namely:

- ✚ Invitation only
- ✚ Long term commitment
- ✚ Practical, grassroots
- ✚ Collaborative
- ✚ Flexible





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BACKGROUND

About EON

The EON Thriving Communities Program has been delivered to thousands of residents in 24 remote communities across Western Australia and has four integrated components.

EON Edible Gardens

The establishment of large vegetable, fruit and bush tucker gardens in the community school, and later the community. Children learn how to grow and have access to the fresh produce. An EON Project Manager visits fortnightly during the school term to provide hands-on gardening, cooking and nutrition classes to school and pre-school children, their parents and other members of the community.

EON Healthy Eating

Use of the garden produce to deliver nutrition and cooking education and eating nutritious food – as part of the school timetable – as well as providing workshops for adults.

EON Healthy Homes

Delivery of the knowledge and tools to maintain healthier home environments, reinforce healthy lifestyle lessons from school and reduce communicable diseases.

EON Training and Education

Formal horticultural training through local education and training institutes as well as informal training to children and adults to sustain the gardens and provide employment pathways.



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Where EON Operates



I tell my Mum – instead of going to the shop you can go to the garden. It’s fun and cheaper.”

Student, 14 years, Yakanarra



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EON's Evidence-Based Philosophy

Since its foundation in 2005, EON Foundation's philosophy has been to build sustainability through designing and implementing a flexible, long-term, tailored and intensive partnership with communities that is built on trust and respect. Intrinsic to this is constant review, measurement and adaptation of the program responding to the preferred style of interaction and learning in community, changes in community leadership and dynamics, and focus on what the community feel is most important to improving their health.

EON's goal is to improve health in remote communities through preventing the diseases caused by poor nutrition. To this end, EON has never taken a "medical intervention" approach but an intensive preventative, education, hands-on learning, early-intervention and life-long lifestyle approach to generate generational improvement in remote community health through improved nutrition.

EON's approach to community development has been evolutionary and has developed in response to changing local circumstances and the capacity of communities to accommodate change. The speed at which the Program is delivered is consciously dependent on the readiness of the community to progress rather than subject to a rigid timescale. The emphasis is on building local capacity flexibly.

Monitoring and Evaluation Journey

Since inception, EON's Project Managers, responsible for the day-to-day partnership and delivery of the EON Thriving Communities Program, have reported weekly on the work undertaken, food grown, meals cooked, eaten, lessons learnt etc. However, after the first few years, it was apparent that a more meaningful assessment of the Program was required.



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Independent Evaluation

In 2012, EON commissioned KPMG to undertake an extensive and independent evaluation of its EON Thriving Communities Program. Specifically, KPMG evaluated the Program's appropriateness, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. To do this, it undertook extensive literature and data review, stakeholder consultations and field evaluations of six remote communities involved in EON's program.

In all cases, KPMG confirmed that EON and its program were achieving its goals and objectives despite the fact that "a complex and shifting policy and funding environment over which residents have limited control disorients communities and leads to apathy, disengagement and a mistrust of outside agents. Only through a persistent and dependable engagement with individuals in communities over several years has EON been able to make progress in this context and develop trusting relationships."

The independent KPMG Report: *Evaluation of the Thriving Communities Program in Six Kimberley Communities (2013)* found that EON is 'operationally efficient and effective' and takes 'a genuine community development approach that values long term engagement over rapid delivery, local capacity-building over passive hand-outs and practical cooperation over top-down intervention'

KPMG concluded that the EON Thriving Communities Program 'is contributing to increased awareness of the link between fresh food, nutrition and good health amongst community members'. There is strong evidence that 'there has been a demonstrable improvement in the horticultural and healthy eating knowledge and skills of children and that adults who have participated in workshops have had positive learning outcomes'.

It's good to grow food in the garden, so you
don't have to buy them at the shop."

Student, 8 years, Yiyili



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Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

Following the Independent Evaluation by KPMG, EON instituted its own formal Monitoring and Evaluation framework and surveys commencing in 2013-2014. At the start of the Program, baseline information is obtained for all communities through surveys, interviews and student questionnaires which is then used as a comparison for interval data collected during the five years.

The principal aims of EON's Monitoring and Evaluation program are:

- ✚ To monitor whether EON is achieving Key Performance Indicators during and at the completion of the Program; and
- ✚ To inform the development of the Program and ensure that it continues to deliver intended impacts over time.

The Key Performance Indicators of the EON Thriving Communities Program are:

- ✚ Improved health outcomes and general well-being
- ✚ Improved dietary and hygiene attitudes and practices
- ✚ Improved education and training engagement, leading to attainment
- ✚ Improved access to a sustainable, local, healthy food supply
- ✚ Improved community capacity – towards program sustainability

While improving health outcomes and general well-being is considered the overarching KPI of the EON Thriving Communities Program, effecting meaningful change can take considerable time, particularly in communities such as those in which EON operates, where health problems are acute, unhealthy lifestyles are embedded and access to affordable fresh food is limited. EON takes a long-term approach, recognising that such entrenched problems will not be solved without a holistic, community-focused, intensive approach. It is not possible for EON to assess changes in disease and infection rates but it can assess



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changes in dietary and hygiene behaviours and attitudes, community engagement, healthy food production, capacity building and training and employment opportunities which are all key steps to building stronger, healthier communities.

The following report therefore explores the effectiveness of the EON Thriving Communities Program in addressing nutrition-related health outcomes, through the perspective of the communities involved.





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MONITORING AND EVALUATION 2017

Methodology

In addition to assessing continuous feedback from community engagement, the 2017 Monitoring and Evaluation initiative involved three key elements:

- ✚ Student surveys – to assess the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of participants;
- ✚ Stakeholder interviews – to collect qualitative data from the teachers, Principals, Community Assistants and Health Service Partners connected to the Program; and
- ✚ Weekly Reports on Program activities by Project Managers in the field.

This Report focuses primarily on the Student and Stakeholder data to assess whether EON is meeting the outcomes referred to above and to consider any Program improvements that can be made to strengthen outcomes.

Participants

Location	Primary Survey	Secondary Survey	Stakeholder Interview	Student Survey completed	Length of time with EON
Yakanarra	✓	✓	✓	Term 1	1 year
Yiyili	✓	✓	✓	Term 1	<1 year
Jarlmadangah Burru	✓	✓	✓	Term 1	<1 year
Warmun	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	3 years
Doon Doon	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	3 years
Yandeyarra	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	2 years
Warralong	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	2 years
South Hedland	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	2 years
Marble Bar	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	<1 year
Nullagine	✓	✓	✓	Term 2	<1 year



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Student Surveys

321 primary and high school students from 10 of EON's communities in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia were assessed through interactive surveys. The surveys were conducted one-on-one, and incorporated a series of hands-on activities with discussions about the garden and EON's key nutrition messages. The intimate structure of the assessment, in combination with the strong relationships established between EON Project Managers and each community, provided a unique opportunity for EON to collect detailed quantitative and qualitative data on the development of the students.

Survey Design

The surveys were designed with respect for the unique cultural contexts of each community, and were therefore adapted to suit the language, abilities, and teaching-styles of each location. This was particularly important, given the challenges associated with data collection in remote Aboriginal populations including barriers of translation, cultural dynamics and literacy and numeracy levels. Involving Aboriginal Education Officers and other local community members as facilitators was an integral part of EON's strategy for ensuring both the integrity and appropriateness of the data collection process. The sense of trust engendered by the students' relationships with the Project Managers, as well as the use of culturally appropriate cartoons, also contributed to the capacity of the survey to reduce emotions of shame, and increase the honesty of responses.

Survey Analysis

Students were categorised according to the length of time that they had been exposed to the EON Program, in order for comparisons to be made between those with 0-6 months and those with 2 years or more experience. Comparisons were also made between those communities that had participated in the EON Program for less than one year, and those that had been partners for two years or more.



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Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 key Program stakeholders, either in-person or online. The stakeholders were principals, teachers, teacher assistants, community assistants and agencies that work in communities. The feedback collected offered qualitative evidence of the successes achieved by the Program, its positive impact on the community overall, and whether it was believed to be appropriate, effective and sustainable over time. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

Weekly Reports

Weekly field reporting by EON Project Managers provides qualitative and quantitative evidence for ongoing Program evaluation. They include key Program statistical evidence e.g. numbers of workshops, student and community participations, meals provided, employees and trainees. The reports also encourage feedback as to the successes, challenges and recommendations for change associated with the Program.

“We always have fun! We enjoy learning about
gardening.”

Student, 11 years, Doon Doon



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Student Survey Results

Edible Garden % of total % difference

Knowledge

Able to identify the three elements that plants need to grow	73	9	●
Able to identify animals that are helpful to the garden	84	19	●
Able to identify animals that are helpful to the garden	67	16	●
Able to identify common tools used in the garden	96	14	●
Can currently identify when produce is ready to be picked	96	9	●

Attitudes

Enjoy growing produce in the garden	92	10	●
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Behaviours

Grow fruit and vegetables at home	45	31	●
Or would like to, if they don't already	75		●
Take produce from the garden to their families	42	41	●
Talk to their family about the garden	57	32	●

Healthy Eating

Knowledge

Able to identify food & drink options as being healthy or unhealthy	72	40	●
Understand basic kitchen hygiene practices	96	11	●
Understand the link between nutritious food & physical health	87	13	●
Can recall a healthy recipe that uses fruit & vegetables	66		

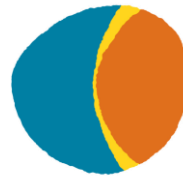
Attitudes

Enjoy learning how to cook healthy meals	88	8	●
Believe it's important to eat lots of fruit and vegetables	91	13	●
Would like to eat more fruit and vegetables	93		

Behaviours

Cook healthy meals at home	67	8	●
Talk to their family about how to be healthy	59	18	●
Do not usually have fruit and vegetables at home to eat	52	-29	●

- % increase between students that have participated in the EON Program for 0-6 months, compared to 2+ years
- % increase between communities what have participated in the EON Program for <1 year, compared to 2+ years



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What the students tell us about our Program

1. Knowledge

- ✚ “Cooking fruit and veggies makes us strong and brainy!” – Student, 7 years, Warmun
- ✚ “When you eat fruit and vegetables they stop you from getting sick. I know I’ll feel healthy and strong and have lots of energy.” – Student, 8 years, South Hedland
- ✚ “We watch the seedlings grow and when they show leaves. Then you get to eat the food when it’s ready.” – Student, 11 years, Doon Doon
- ✚ “Vegetables give you muscles!” – Student, 5 years, Yiyili
- ✚ “When you don’t eat fruit and vegetables you feel weak and get sores.” – Student, 10 years, Warralong
- ✚ “The fruit is healthy because it has Vitamin C in it, and that’s really good for you.” – Student, 8 years, Marble Bar
- ✚ “Veggies make you grow! They help you live longer and be healthy.” – Student, 11 years, Doon Doon

2. Attitudes

- ✚ “There’s fresh air in the garden. I like being there because it makes me feel calm.” – Student, 9 years, South Hedland
- ✚ “I like digging holes and doing all the garden jobs.” – Student, 8 years, Marble Bar
- ✚ “I get really excited when we go into the garden. I like learning about new plants and watching them grow.” – Student, 10 years, South Hedland
- ✚ “I want to be a Teacher. I know that eating fruit and vegetables will help me get there.” – Student, 12 years, Warmun
- ✚ “We have flowers in the garden. They look pretty and colourful and they make me feel happy.” – Student, 10 years, South Hedland



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3. Behaviours

- ✚ “I tell Nanna to use the green stuff from the garden in our salads.” – Student, 9 years, Nullagine
- ✚ “I grow my own plants. I eat carrots and mangoes and corn!” – Student, 10 years, Warmun
- ✚ “I always talk about the garden in a nice way. I talk about planting food stuff – like veggies.” – Student, 8 years, Doon Doon
- ✚ “It makes Nanna feel better when I give her healthy soup & water.” – Student, 9 years, Nullagine
- ✚ “When I take food from the garden it makes me happy.” – Student, 10 years, Warmun

Teacher Survey Results

- ✓ 96% have seen positive changes in the attitudes and behaviours of students, as a result of the EON Program.
- ✓ 65% have seen improvements in the health of their students, since the school partnered with EON.
- ✓ 57% believe that the EON Program has had a positive impact on student attendance at their school.
- ✓ 83% have used the EON Program as a basis for lessons in other learning areas.
- ✓ 91% say their school picks the produce from the garden when the EON Project Manager is not there.
- ✓ 83% are concerned by the health of the children in their school, and the impact this has on attendance.
- ✓ 87% believe that their community has limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables.
- ✓ 96% say that excessive consumption of unhealthy food is an issue in their community.



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Stakeholder Interview Results

1. Improved Health Outcomes

The majority of teachers surveyed felt that the EON Program had contributed to improvements in the health and well-being of participating students. In many instances, EON was perceived as an integral component of interconnected campaigns by the school, community, and other health service providers – culminating in the overall positive impacts observed. Given that the current evaluation represents Baseline to early Interval data, the results present an encouraging picture of the capacity of the Program to further impact over time.

“As both a Teacher and Community Member, I’ve seen major improvements in the health of our students.” – Teacher, Warralong

2. Improved Dietary Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours

Improvements in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of participants were viewed as a significant achievement of the EON Program to date. An abundance of anecdotal evidence highlighted the changes observed in the students; as the key messages and skills derived from the Program were applied to their everyday lives. This feedback supports the findings of the student surveys – illustrating the tangible effects of the Program over the short- to medium-term.

“Students now have a good understanding of the differences between good and bad food. They are much more accepting of vegetables and healthy food and are now showing a preference for vegetables and healthy food. Students are showing an interest in growing vegetables, and have developed very good cooking skills – Becoming much more independent in the kitchen. They have a very good understanding of safety in the kitchen (There has not been a single accident or injury since EON started).” – Teacher, Nullagine

“The kids talk about growing and eating fruit and vegetables. They have a lot more respect for plants and gardens, and the work that goes into sustaining them.” – Teacher, Warralong



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"Since working with EON, there's been a bit of a shift in the eating habits of the students. Around ¼ to ½ are eating better, and making healthier choices in what they are bringing to school. There are less lollies or chips in their lunches and more eating fruit – The kids love eating fruit!" – Principal, South Hedland

"Students display a greater awareness of healthy eating choices as a result of the EON Program. When questioned, they can identify the food groups and tell you which should be eaten regularly. They know sugar, salt and fat should be avoided, and can identify if their snack is a 'sometimes' food or not." – Teacher, South Hedland

3. Improved Educational Engagement

Two of the major benefits of the EON Program, as viewed by the stakeholders involved, were its ability to re-engage students who traditionally struggled with conventional learning, and to act as an ongoing incentive for student attendance at school. Children appeared to thrive in the outdoor classroom setting of the EON Edible Garden and EON Healthy Eating Program, and the high level of engagement translated into increased rates of attendance on the days that EON was in school.

"Some students who find engaging in the classroom difficult, enjoy the hands-on experiences that EON offers and therefore engage in school more readily through EON." – Teacher, South Hedland

"For these kids and their learning – the benefit is that it's not just from a book, but it's a walk out into the garden, a chance to talk about it, and it sinks in so much more." – Principal, Yakanarra

"There's definitely a positive impact on attendance. The kids really enjoy the hands-on way they are learning." – Teacher, Warralong



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“The students are keen to attend school on a regular basis, knowing that they will be using the items from the garden or helping maintain their gardens. It gives them something more to look forward to.” – Teacher, Nullagine

4. Improved Accessibility to Fresh Food

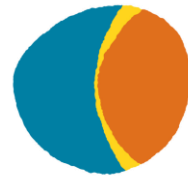
Communities raised concerns about the limited accessibility of fresh, local food. Outside of the EON garden, many communities did not have a sustainable source of fresh fruit and vegetables; either at an affordable price, at the desired quality, or easily accessible by available transport. The EON gardens represent a viable, long-term option for subsidizing issues of supply.

“There’s limited fresh fruit and vegetables available at local stores and they are a higher price. Most families drive two hours to food shop in Hedland.” – Teacher, Marble Bar

“In our community, access to fresh fruit and vegetables is limited due to geographical isolation. In addition, the fresh fruit and vegetables available in the local shop are quite expensive. These factors mean that fresh fruit and vegetables are not a large part of people’s diets.” – Teacher, Nullagine

“There is a high cost of food in our community and it’s not always fresh at the store.” – Teacher, Yakanarra

“Our community has a very limited supply of fresh food due to issues with access and transport from our nearest shopping centre, 150km’s away.” – Teacher, Yandeyarra



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5. Curriculum Alignment

The EON Program was considered a valuable tool for enhancing the educational experience of students in non-EON classes. The garden was regularly used as a practical example of climate, life-cycles, plants and insects in Science, as well as measurement in Maths. Elements of the EON Healthy Eating classes were used to effectively engage students in English, Maths, Health, and Art - through reading recipes, designing posters, reflective writing, and health-focused projects. Teachers welcomed additional input from EON in the future, to strengthen their ability to draw on the Program for formal assessment.

"We use the garden for Science and the study of life-cycles. Ingredient lists are great for procedural texts in literacy." – Teacher, Warmun

"Quantities and soil quality are used in Science, Home Economics, HASS (Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences) – Seasons and climatic changes in locality, Math – Measurement and data, money, water usage, water salinity and how it affects plant growth." – Teacher, Yiyili

"We use the EON Program for Literacy (reading recipes) and Maths (measurements when cooking)." – Teacher, South Hedland

"I find generally that the lessons that EON provide can be drawn on in an incidental manner when a relevant topic arises during any lesson." – Teacher, South Hedland

6. Partnership Strengths

EON has established strong relationships with the health service providers operating in all of its active communities. A number of collaborative initiatives were highlighted for their ability to bolster the impacts of both partnering organisations – ensuring the most efficient use of resources and time, reinforcing key messages with the students involved, and effectively utilising the



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strengths of both parties. These connections represent a unique point of difference for EON, and contribute to the sustainability of the Program over time.

“The EON Foundation has shown a high level of understanding of local communities that helps us at Foodbank WA further develop and modify our programs to meet the needs of the community. Furthermore, the outstanding communication and support from the EON Foundation staff has enabled a positive and beneficial partnership that has not only benefitted our organisations but ultimately the local communities.” – Foodbank, Pilbara

“Yaandina and the EON Foundation work in close partnership with the Yirramagardu Community Program in Roebourne. The partnership that has been built is extremely successful and rewarding for not only ourselves but the residents of Roebourne.” – Yaandina Family Centre, Roebourne





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PROGRAM IMPACT

When the student and stakeholder data is considered as a whole, along with data collected weekly by the EON Program Managers, the following conclusions can be drawn in relation to the aims of the Monitoring and Evaluation program:

Aim 1: To determine whether EON is achieving the intended impacts/KPIs of the Thriving Communities Program

Improved health outcomes and general well-being

There is recognition in schools of the positive impact EON has on health and attendance. At this stage it is not possible to prove health impacts through statistical means. Changes to diabetes rates and other chronic diseases can only be measured over a long period but research shows that improving access to healthy food and education about nutrition are important steps to preventing poor health. Overall, the findings were widely supportive of EON's ability to initiate long-term behavioural change and improve access to healthy food.

Improved dietary and hygiene attitudes and practices

Survey results show there is evidence of:

- ✚ a significant increase in student familiarity with key gardening and nutrition concepts, and
- ✚ progressive improvements in positive attitudes towards dietary and hygiene behaviours.



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Improved education and training engagement, leading to attainment

EON has provided training and employment opportunities including 3 community members graduating from TAFE in Certificate II Horticulture and 7 EON community employees receiving ongoing training and employment. For the children, teachers reported students are more engaged in learning when in the EON garden and that school attendance improves on EON Program days.

Improved access to a sustainable, local, healthy food supply

All communities reported improved access to fresh food.

Improved community capacity - towards program sustainability

The surveys show a strong desire among students to apply EON's teachings to their everyday life, and students and stakeholders have greater awareness of the importance of good nutrition. The EON Project Managers train local community assistants and work alongside them every fortnight, resulting in formal and informal qualifications and paid employment opportunities.

When we're in the garden it's the best day of my life!"

Student, 8 Years, Warmun



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Aim 2: To inform the development of the EON Thriving Communities Program, and ensure that it continues to deliver these intended impacts over time

Key elements of success

Despite operating in some of the most disadvantaged regions of Western Australia and navigating difficulties and day-to-day challenges outside EON's control, EON is able to demonstrate a genuine impact on the lives of the community members involved in the EON Thriving Communities Program. Key elements of the reasons for this success referred to by stakeholders are:

- ✚ Strong relationships established between EON Project Managers and their relevant communities, reflected in the unanimous gratitude expressed by the stakeholders involved.
- ✚ EON's unique, flexible and hands-on delivery. Each of the schools surveyed emphasised the value of the EON Thriving Communities Program in contributing to the delivery of essential health messages, and offering an opportunity for students to experience a non-traditional approach to educational engagement that they would not otherwise have known.
- ✚ Strong partnerships with local schools and agencies. EON ensures the EON Thriving Communities Program complements other aspects of the teaching and learning program, allowing for greater impact and preventing duplication of resources.

Such feedback reflects the value of EON entering communities by invitation only, the regularity of Project Manager visits, the long-term nature of the Program, the importance of tailoring the Program to the unique needs of each community and being flexible.



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STRENGTHENING FUTURE OUTCOMES

The Monitoring and Evaluation results show opportunities to deepen the impact of the EON Thriving Communities Program through:

- ✚ More teacher support materials that align with EON's Program and the school curriculum. EON has mapped its Program against the Western Australian curriculum and provides some support materials to teachers to ensure the Program messages are woven into the teaching and learning program. Feedback from schools is that more such materials would be valuable.
- ✚ Setting higher targets for the amount of produce grown from each garden. The size of the EON Edible Gardens in each school and community varies. This is because of the different sites and the different stages of garden development. It is important EON continue to aim for gardens of at least 450m² and to focus on high-yield, basic vegetable crops that contribute a greater proportion of the community's fresh fruit and vegetable supply. It is also vital that the schools have processes in place to effectively distribute the fresh produce from the gardens. The most effective means at present are through structured morning tea and healthy lunch programs. There is an opportunity for EON to work more closely with schools on produce distribution.
- ✚ Continue to focus on community engagement 'beyond the school gate'. EON works in schools where there is rarely a formal parent support group and it can take time to build trust among community members. Most of the communities surveyed are in the first 6 -24 months of the EON Thriving Communities Program so it is not surprising high levels of parental involvement are not yet in evidence. EON has strategies in place to engage with community, eg. through the initial sustainability plan, offering workshops to community members, providing paid community assistant roles, working alongside any women's groups and playgroups whenever possible, engaging in school sport and cultural events that draw in parents. It is important to keep focussed on such strategies to broaden Program impact.



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CONCLUSION

Gathering evidence of the impact of the EON Thriving Communities program and continuous improvement is “business-as-usual” for EON. Guided by a commercial board and an advisory panel representing a range of professions, informed by the executive staff and project managers who are in the field on a daily basis, EON is well placed to build and maintain robust relationships with the communities who invite EON to partner with them. Central to the strength of the partnership is EON’s ability to listen, observe and respond to the changing needs of the communities’ families.

EON’s unique strengths remain:

- ✚ Invitation-only approach
- ✚ Long-term commitment (3-5 years and longer if required)
- ✚ Fortnightly visits to each community
- ✚ Mutual trust and respect
- ✚ Doing what it says it will do when it says it will do it.
- ✚ School, community and EON all accountable for program delivery.

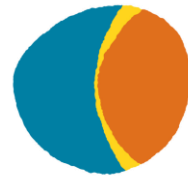




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Appendix A

EON THRIVING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



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AIM OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The principal aims of EON's Monitoring and Evaluating Framework are twofold:

1. To monitor and evaluate the EON Thriving Communities Program impacts – changes in **knowledge**, **attitudes** and **behaviours** of participants over time; and
2. To monitor and evaluate Program design and development – whether it is **appropriate**, **effective** and **sustainable** over time.

The aims are closely aligned to EON's Vision and Mission statements:

Vision: To make a lasting contribution in remote Aboriginal Communities to the reduction of preventable disease caused by poor nutrition.

Mission: To grow, in partnership with remote Indigenous communities, edible gardens and practical healthy eating programs that sow the seeds of changing attitudes to nutrition for generations to come.

The ultimate goal of the Monitoring & Evaluation program is to determine whether EON is achieving the intended impacts of the EON Thriving Communities Program, and whether the Program is consistently fit for the purpose of delivering these intended impacts over time.

The information derived from these initiatives will provide detailed evidence of EON's ongoing achievements, as well as highlight opportunities for improvement of the Program.



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M&E FRAMEWORK DESIGN

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation ensures that the EON Thriving Communities Program is designed and developed to offer the best possible opportunity of delivering the intended impacts; from conception, through to completion.

EON's five principal Program Impact Objectives include:

- ✚ Improved health outcomes and general well-being
- ✚ Improved dietary and hygiene attitudes and practices
- ✚ Improved education and training engagement, leading to attainment
- ✚ Improved access to a sustainable, local, healthy food supply
- ✚ Improved community capacity – towards program sustainability

Improving health outcomes and general well-being (Objective 1) is considered to be the overarching objective, as reflected in EON's vision statement. Affecting meaningful change can take considerable time however; particularly in communities such as those in which EON operates, where health problems are acute, unhealthy lifestyles endemic and cultural barriers abound. Doing so requires a long-term approach and a Program that is holistically appropriate, effective and sustainable. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has therefore been developed with these three key factors in mind.

Each of the other Impact Objectives are addressed directly through a combination of knowledge, attitude and behaviour assessments, and practical evaluations of community activity (as outlined in the Framework Guide below).



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FRAMEWORK GUIDE

1. APPROPRIATENESS

Is the Program relevant, adaptable and does it address identified local needs and priorities?

Due Diligence

Design and development of the Program is informed by early phase research including initial community consultation and project due diligence. Project due diligence may include literature and data review, desk-top research, consultation with wider project stakeholders and community visits to undertake primary research.

Community Engagement Sessions

Community consultation is used to inform EON's Sustainability Agreements with its community and school partners, as well as the design of the Program for local needs. The sessions are intended to emphasise EON's desire to work in partnership with the community – towards the goals that they feel are most meaningful and appropriate to their unique needs. Key decision-makers are engaged to discuss the specific improvements they would like to see in their community, and determine which indicators of health they feel are most relevant. Recurring sessions throughout the lifespan of the Program are used to evaluate whether progress towards these co-operative goals has been achieved.



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Community Snapshots

Snapshot assessments of the community environment allow for a broader understanding of the potential barriers to health promotion that may be present at each location. EON Project Managers undertake an audit of general community facilities, interactions with health service providers (historic and current), accessibility limitations of stores, and proactive school actions. The snapshots provide supporting evidence for the rationale behind entering each community, as well as offer practical markers for behavioural change over the course of the Program.

Community Statistics

Demographic statistical summaries are collated using a variety of respected Government resources – providing an overview of community well-being through recognised health risk factors. Program rationale and design is further supported by a systematic review of current research into nutrition education in the Indigenous Australian population.

2. EFFECTIVENESS

Are the activities of the Thriving Communities Program consistent with the Program objectives?

Weekly Reports

Weekly field reporting by EON's Project Managers provides qualitative and quantitative evidence used for ongoing Program evaluation. It includes key Program statistical evidence e.g. numbers of workshops, student and community participations, meals provided, employees and trainees. The reports also include feedback as to Program successes, challenges and recommendations for change.



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3. IMPACT

Are the Program Impact Objectives being met?

Baseline Surveys

Baseline surveys are intended for application in the early phase of the Program. They are conducted as a one-on-one activity with school children, and are designed to be accessible to those with literacy, numeracy or general learning and language difficulties. The survey assesses knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; principally in relation to gardening, diet and the links between nutrition and health. The results form baseline evidence from which change can be monitored and evaluated over time.

Interval Surveys

The interval surveys are an annual evaluation of the knowledge, attitude and behaviour development in student participants. Results from this round of assessment are compared to that of the baseline surveys for each community – offering insight into the medium-term impact effects of the Program.

Principal & Teacher Interviews

In complement to the student surveys; interviews with the Principals and teachers at each school provide qualitative information around the level of engagement of the children with the program, as well as whether observable change has occurred in their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. The semi-structured style of the interviews allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences of educators involved in the Program. The reflections provide supporting evidence for the quantitative data collected by the surveys.



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4. SUSTAINABILITY

Is the Program self-sustainable in the community?

Pre-Exit & Post-Exit Interviews

Conducted with key Program stakeholders; pre-exit interviews allow for an assessment of the capability of each community to sustain Program initiatives following the majority withdrawal of Project Manager support. Community strengths are highlighted, and a clear plan established to address potential challenges that may arise during the exit process. Following the completion of the EON Project, post-exit interviews evaluate the overall success of the Program withdrawal.

Post-Exit Surveys

Similar to the interval surveys, post-exit surveys are used to assess the long-term impact of the EON Thriving Communities Program on student knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. Results are considered against the previous performance of the school, as well as the level of support provided following the official date of exit.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

A phased approach is taken in monitoring and evaluation through the term of a project, as illustrated on the following page.



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Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Model

Pre-Entry



Project Due Diligence
Community Engagement

Baseline



Project Year 1

Student Baseline Surveys
Principal & Teacher Interviews
Community Snapshots
Weekly Field Reports
Community Engagement

Outcome:

Baseline Report

Interval

Project Years 2 or 2-4

Student Interval Surveys
Principal & Teacher Interviews
Community Snapshots
Weekly Field Reports
Community Engagement

Outcome:

Interval Report

Exit & Evaluation



Project Years 3 or 5

Student Exiting Surveys
Principal & Teacher Interviews
Community Snapshots
Weekly Field Reports
Stakeholder Pre-Exit Interviews

Outcome:

Community Case Studies
Final Evaluation Report

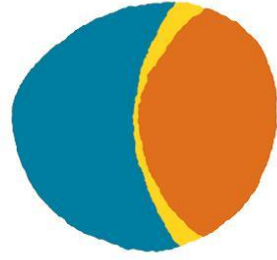
Post-Exit

Project Years 4+ or 6+

Student Post-Exit Surveys
Stakeholder Post-Exit Interviews
Community Snapshots

Outcome:

Post-Exit Sustainability Report



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