

Project Kitchen Garden Nganambala Northern Territory - 3-11 August, 2012

An extraordinary experience which not only touched the 8 (Richard Goss, Stephen Bond, Kerry Kornhauser, Rick Kornhauser, Kate Strain, Kay Phillips, David Grodski, Helen Grodski) of our lives but the whole Nganambala community, by installing a "kitchen garden" at the school.

Our challenge...

Currently the diets of many Aboriginal people in remote communities are very poor and the children are malnourished, with little stamina and concentration ability. We had a request from the principal of Nganambala School to fill their bellies with fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables.

The project...

Rotary Club of Albert Park, Rotary Club of Brighton, Rotary Club of Brighton North and Rotary Club of Darwin all put their heads together and created the pilot Project Kitchen Garden. Over a 10 day period we travelled 5 hours out of Darwin, into the Northern Territory's outback, where there are no made roads or signage, no mobile connection, just kilometers of bumpy corrugated roads. We installed the 11,000L water tank, fertilized the soil, designed and established a garden bed together with the students, the teachers and the community.

There were many challenges in the establishing of the garden but more importantly in making every effort that the project will be sustainable which meant ensuring the community was on board and felt ownership of this project.

The budget...

The Rotary Club of Albert Park approved the Budget of \$7,000.00, but with other Club's donations, and support from corporate companies the Club's expense is \$2,193.37.

Why is a kitchen garden so important?

Many of us believed that the Indigenous population is receiving ample funds from government agencies and welfare but from what we experienced, at the few communities we visited, this is not the case. Many are addicted to Coca Cola, the children are hungry, living conditions poor, the schools are inappropriately resourced (state of the art white boards and computers but no playground equipment), reading books are in poor condition and learning materials are lacking. But most importantly, students need to be able to concentrate so they can reach their potential - nourishing food is so vital.

We met with Geoff Perry CEO of Top End Schools (15 schools) and he discussed the challenges and the projects that the schools are in desperate need of support, so if the Club would like to be involved another such project we do have the contacts. Matt Gale, Principal Nganambala School, from Solomon Islands, has requested we do a similar project next year with him at the Solomon Islands.

Thanks to...

- Rotary Club of Brighton who assisted with \$1,000.00 plus another \$600.00 personal donations
- Rotary Club of Brighton North who assisted with \$500.00
- Rotary Club of Darwin who supplied all the tools
- Red Dust who supplied one car
- GWELO Developments who supplied the trailer for the 11,000L water tank
- Principal Nganambala School who accommodation for the 8 of us