



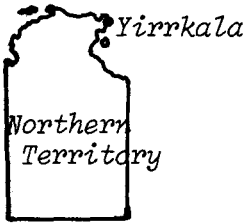
The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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OUR CULTURE PROGRAM

Bakamana and Djuwandayngu,
Aboriginal Teachers,
Yirrkala N.T.

This year in the post primary section of Yirrkala school my sister, Djuwandayngu and I have been teaching the students ways of understanding the two cultures; that is, the Balanda and the Yolngu ways. Our aim was to make the children aware of their culture and to give them a little bit of knowledge about the Balanda people who work closely with the Yolngu people.

We started out by teaching about the kinships system; from there we built on all the important things in the Yolngu ways. This took in marriage system, relationships, clans and the most important one, *land*. Land, we felt, was the most important issue because it concerns Yolngu people throughout Australia. The children already know about the fight for land and about the people who are concerned with it. We told the children which land they belong to and why it is very important to their fathers and grandfathers and to them. We told them what sacred things made our land. Then after this we invited older men from the camps to tell them more stories about Yirrkala and our other lands. We talked about our land at the present. Why are we going back to our own countries and making outstations of our own? Where do we get the money for all the things we need like iron to build houses, pipes for water, windmills, pumps and so on?

Not only did we teach about all the things that are mentioned above, but we also taught the children how to write in our own language, Gumatj, by using different activities to do with important Gumatj words.

During the year we invited a variety of speakers from the community and Nhulunbuy to come and talk to the students. We've asked the Northern Land Council Chairman, Galarrwuy Yunupingu, (we got a lot of ideas from him); Barry Lamshed from D.A.A.; Wally Wulanybuma, member for the N.T.A.C.C.; Sam from Community Development, and Wandjuk Marika, Chairman of the Arts Council.

My personal feeling is that what we are trying to do is to make the older children realize that we are people who are rich in culture and that the Balanda way is second choice. We are looking

to the children as leaders in the future and to have that potential you have to have a knowledge of both cultures. It's up to the students to reason and to evaluate what we have been teaching them. We have not been teaching from a set program. I envisage that all the schools in the Territory will start a program like this for our emerging youth.

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BOOKLETS FOR ABORIGINAL SCHOOL STAFF

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has made funds available for the production of several booklets based on articles which have appeared in past issues of *The Aboriginal Child at School*. Each booklet will contain articles on a specific topic, for example, teacher aides, community involvement, language programs.

The booklets will be provided free of charge to all Aboriginal school staff in Australia.

Copies of the first booklet will be mailed in February, 1979.

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