

Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Partnering for impact

Community Works is a multicultural and collaborative organisation with a presence in Australia, Europe, and Latin America. We support communities and organisations turn evidence-based social development ideas into practical and impactful action.

Our flexible approach means we tailor our support to the unique needs of our partners—whether it is co-designing, implementing projects, measuring impact, or strengthening leadership and capability.

This capability statement details the services we offer for Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Our team

Our multidisciplinary team brings backgrounds in psychology, public health, applied ethics, public participation, human rights, environment and climate adaptation, and cross-cultural facilitation, and has led and supported research and MEL in diverse settings around the world. We can conduct and communicate research in English, Spanish, Urdu, and Korean.

Together, we combine academic rigour with practical experience to deliver research that is inclusive, accessible, and impactful for all.

Our approach

Our research, monitoring, evaluation and learning is grounded in six principles:

Purpose-driven

With a clear focus and open communication about how findings will be used



Participatory

Centring community voices and lived experience throughout the process



Community-led

Enabling local people to shape, lead, and carry out data collection and analysis



Place-based and culturally informed

Rooted in community context, history, and socio-political dynamics, with an emphasis on cross-cultural understanding and thoughtful engagement



Accessible

Using plain language and inclusive methods that make participation easy and meaningful



Strengths-based

Recognising and building on existing assets, not just identifying gaps



These principles are at the heart of our work, guided by our commitment to supporting organisations and their communities in putting their ideas into action through inclusive, evidence-based approaches that drive continuous learning and improvement.



Our services

Research for policy development

We have been a key contributor to research collaborations that have been influential in developing evidence-based social and economic policy in Australia and internationally. In each case, our expertise formed key aspects of research design, concept development, winning of competitive grant funding and implementation of the resulting programs.

Examples:

- Leadership of major research projects focused on improving policy and practice for the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC), especially relating to policy and practice in access to services for remote area Aboriginal communities.
- Contributions to research design and implementation for projects of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre that focussed on access to mental health services for young people.
- Leadership of research projects on enterprise and employment in partnership with remote Aboriginal communities for the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP).
- Research that produced multiple outputs on alternatives to coercion in mental health care for the World Psychiatric Association, including a position paper with policy directives.

Needs assessments and community perspectives on social issues

Our cross-cultural skillset and visual communication ensure that local voices are heard and meaningfully inform decision-making. Community Works uses participatory, context responsive methods to gather community insights on issues such as infrastructure, environment, health, employment, and social services.

Examples:

- Support to a team of Aboriginal Community Researchers as part of the pilot phase of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in the Northern Territory and South Australia (Ninti One)
- Interviews and surveys with rough sleepers in Ceduna (Ninti One)
- Support of national consultations on First Nations Engagement in the Transition to Net Zero (Ninti One)



Measuring Local Change (MLC)



A community development program, Stronger Communities for Children (SCfC) aims to generate deep and durable systemic changes that will empower local people to give children the best possible start in life.

MLC is an approach to community-led Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) we designed in collaboration with Ninti One to measure the impacts of the SCfC Program, operational in 10 communities in the Northern Territory.

We supported people in participating communities with context-specific training to measure local changes resulting from the program. It encompassed community-led data collection and analysis, where local decision-making determined what a successful SCfC program looked like in their community.

This approach empowers local community researchers and leaders to use findings to inform program decisions, ensuring that evaluations reflect local priorities and meet community and funder requirements.



Implementation of participatory MEL

Community Works specialises in the implementation of participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), enabling evidence-based insights to improve project outcomes. We work closely with communities and stakeholders throughout the process – from designing evaluations and defining methods to conducting research and delivering high-quality analysis and visually rich reporting.

Examples:

- Developing, implementing and evaluating health promotion resources for high school students in the Northern Territory for the Cancer Council
- Mid-term Review of a DfID program in the Western Region of Nepal
- Amnesty Norway Education, Empowerment and Justice Programme mid-term evaluation (in partnership with Pamodzi Consulting)
- Evaluation of the National Trachoma Prevention Program managed by the Indigenous Eye Health Unit of Melbourne University (Ninti One)
- Survey of the clients of the Eritrean Community in Australia (ECA)

Training in community-led research

We equip professionals and communities with the skills to design and implement inclusive, locally grounded processes. We provide tailored support in participatory research methods, data collection, survey design, interviewing, and analysis—ensuring community voices are central to decision-making. Our approach strengthens internal and local capacity, fosters continuous learning, and promotes ownership of data to inform responsive, community-led solutions.

Examples:

- Participatory MEL training with Asian Aid
- Training on community-based research principles with the Australian Awards Fellowship
- Training in community-led research for the Stronger Communities for Children Program





Strategic Review



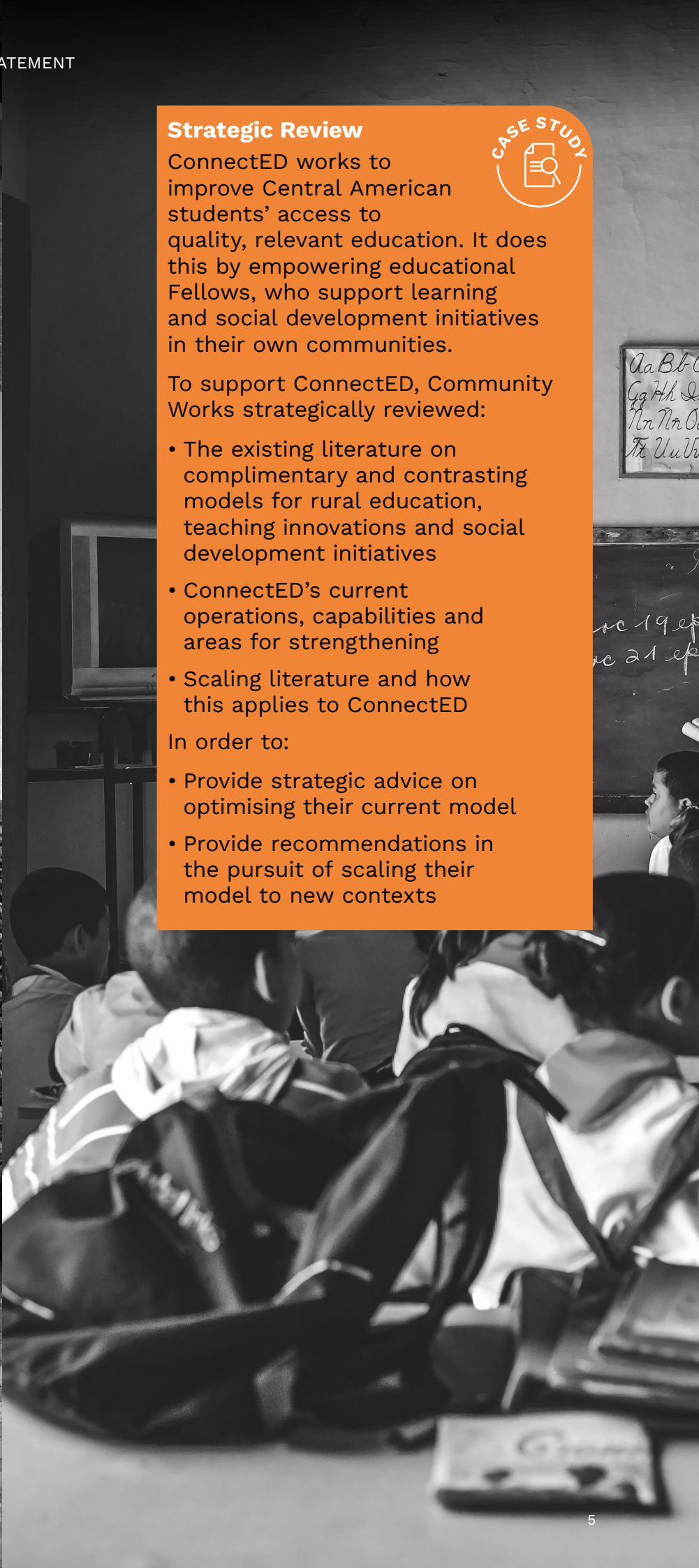
ConnectED works to improve Central American students' access to quality, relevant education. It does this by empowering educational Fellows, who support learning and social development initiatives in their own communities.

To support ConnectED, Community Works strategically reviewed:

- The existing literature on complimentary and contrasting models for rural education, teaching innovations and social development initiatives
- ConnectED's current operations, capabilities and areas for strengthening
- Scaling literature and how this applies to ConnectED

In order to:

- Provide strategic advice on optimising their current model
- Provide recommendations in the pursuit of scaling their model to new contexts



We support organisations to scale their impact through research that informs replication, social licensing, franchising, or partnerships. We have assisted clients with site selection using tailored criteria and have developed tools such as comparative frameworks and implementation toolkits. We work with organisations to formalise and communicate their scaling methods to new partners and locations effectively.

- Creating toolkits for the Rangoonwala Community Centre program in Mumbai, StrongMinds in Uganda, and Amnesty International
- Design and implementation support for the scaling of major programs including the USAID Yaajeende Agriculture and Nutrition Development Program for Food Security in Senegal and for Population Services International in Central America
- Comparative case studies to inform the scaling of place-based strategies for strengthening early childhood systems for the Hilton Foundation

We support organisations to reflect on and strengthen their practice through research. By reviewing existing work, examining comparable approaches, and documenting methods, we work with clients to formalise their models and improve practice. This process builds confidence and clarity while consolidating your organisation's model of practice to enhance delivery, support scaling, and improve impact.

- Review of evidence and literature for Uniting Griefwork, and of Psychosocial Support in Disasters and Emergencies for the World Psychiatric Association
- Design of a model of practice for family mediation for Relationships Australia NT

We specialise in making research findings clear, accessible, and impactful. By using diverse visual communication techniques – including infographics, diagrams, storytelling, and data visualisation – we translate complex analyses into formats that are easy to understand and act upon. This ensures that key insights reach a broad audience, including community members, practitioners, and decision-makers.

- Data visualisation for Tackling Indigenous Smoking
- Translation of research findings into Stronger Communities for Children Storybook

We'd love to hear about your work and explore ways we might support or collaborate with you.

QUESTION 2 - WHAT DID YOU TAKE FROM IT?

- ME FEEL GOOD. EASY. FE
- LEARNING CHORDS
- RECORDING ON MY PHONE
- I THINK A LOT ABOUT MUSIC
- MUSIC IN MY HEAD
- SHARED STYLE USING GOSPEL WITH OTHER MUSIC
- CHANGE SONGS WITH HELP FROM OLDER FELLAS
- I LIKE THE LYRICS
- FEELS COMFORTABLE & GOOD WITH HIMSELF
- THAT GONNA MAKE ME STRONG

QUESTION 3 - WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?

- IT MAKES ME DIFFERENT SO I FEEL LOVE. IT MAKES ME FEEL HAPPY
- I SING FROM INSIDE MY BODY
- KEPT ME AWAY FROM DOING BAD THINGS
- IT IS BETTER NOW WITH YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED
- CHANGED THE WAY OF THINKING ABOUT BAD THINGS HE WENT THROUGH & MADE HIM HAPPY ONCE AGAIN
- DON'T DRINK & DON'T DO THINGS THAT
- OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
- EVERYONE THINKS OF
- REAL FOOD, NOW SEEN
- PEOPLE
- AY
- LE NOW

