

14 *Children, knowledge, Country: child and youth-based approaches to revitalising musical traditions in the Kimberley*

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Abstract

Children and young people are often positioned as future beneficiaries of efforts to revitalise language, song, and culture. While accounts of dance-song traditions in Australia often include evidence of the participation of children, or are explicitly directed at children, rarely, if ever, has the position and role of children in these initiatives been examined. This paper turns attention to the activities, attitudes and roles of children and young people in the practice and revitalisation of the Junba dance-song tradition in the northern Kimberley.

Keywords: revitalisation, singing, song, Junba, Kimberley, digital cultural heritage, repatriation, children and young people

Introduction

The public dance-song genre known as Junba is practised by Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal peoples in Mowanjum and associated Communities¹ located along the Gibb River Road (Kimberley, Western Australia). Strategies to sustain and revitalise Junba traditions have been the focus of previous research that investigates how collaborative and community-led repatriation supports intergenerational knowledge transmission (Treloyn and Charles 2015). This chapter builds on previous work that outlines how children and young people are beneficiaries (Treloyn and Martin 2014) and key participants in Junba initiatives (Treloyn, Charles and Nulgit 2013, Treloyn and Charles 2015) in order to foreground and understand the key role they play in sustaining Junba.

¹ The word 'community' is capitalised ('Community') when referring to a particular settlement that is called a Community by residents and is declared a Community by the Western Australian Government, under the *Aboriginal Communities Act 1979*. The word 'community' is not capitalised when referring to a group of people defined by common language, cultural practice, or other association.

The data for this chapter is based on research from a current project titled ‘Children, knowledge, Country: music-based strategies for teaching and learning in remote Aboriginal communities of Western Australia’, conducted in partnership with the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC).² The authors of this chapter include two academic researchers (Emberly and Treloyn) and a community investigator who is also a leader in the revitalisation of Junba (Charles). The pictures, photos, words and data from child and youth participants are included here with permission from each participant and their guardians.

Among activists and academics there is an emergent movement to encourage children to ‘become active partners and participants in research conducted about them and among them’, rather than just to observe or record their views (Montgomery and Kellett 2009:47). This movement challenges researchers to consider children’s participation in the research process: how do we shift away from representations of children based on unexamined notions of childhood towards informed, child-directed and child-initiated research participation, while at the same time balancing issues of consent, access, and dissemination (e.g., Alderson and Morrow 2011; Greig, Taylor and McKay 2013)? The ‘Children, knowledge, Country’ project has attempted to take up this challenge, and our research meshes with a number of local and regional research priorities in relation to the revitalisation of language and Junba.

The important role of children and young people in revitalisation activities is recognised by the KLRC, which was established in 1984 to advocate for Aboriginal languages and language speakers of the Kimberley and to ensure that languages and associated knowledge systems are passed onto children (Hudson and McConvell 1985, Kimberley Land Council and Waringarri Resource Centre 1991, KLRC 2010). The KLRC understood that local song and dance traditions such as Junba play an important role in the transmission of knowledge about language, land and culture to children in their home communities and in ‘on Country’ contexts, but that these rich and diverse educational experiences were not necessarily reflected in classroom learning. This motivated them to collaborate on the ‘Children, knowledge, Country’ project. (By ‘Country’, we mean the places that are intertwined with the identities and knowledge systems of the participants). Moreover, there has been local concern about the health of the Junba tradition, so these disconnections in the educational worlds of children risk reinforcing both poor outcomes not just for children but for the state of Junba as well.

This paper seeks to understand the perspectives of children and young people in relation to the factors that guide revitalisation of Junba. Specifically, our interest is in the role of children and young people in prompting and stimulating intergenerational knowledge transmission and in communicating their knowledge of Junba through workshops and performances, for each other and for diverse audiences. It also aims to expand on the interest in understanding Aboriginal children’s roles in the production and use of cultural media (Kral 2011; Kral and Schwab 2012); in cultural practices on Country (Palmer et al 2006; Eickelkamp 2011); and in the practice and revitalisation of ceremony and dance-song (Campbell 2012; Corn and Patrick 2014).

Children, young people and intergenerational knowledge transmission on Country and through performance

Maintenance of Junba is a primary concern for Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal communities. It is a holistic practice that plays an important role in maintaining the wellbeing of all living things: people, Country, and spirits in Country (Treloyn and Martin 2014). In 2002, elder singer and expert composer Scotty Nyalgodi Martin⁺ (see Redmond 2000, Treloyn 2003) explained that practising

² Australian Research Council Linkage Project 120020721. Investigators: Patsy Bedford, Siobhan Casson, Rona Googninda Charles, Jane Davidson, Andrea Emberly, Robert Faulkner, Kathryn Marsh, Sally Treloyn.

Junba is essential for sustaining life, because Junba (which Martin refers to below as ‘culture’) and the spirits that created life are inseparable:

[I]f we don’t have any any sort of totem [the painted boards and string crosses carried by dancers] or culture [Junba dance-songs], you know, well . . . we haven’t got a Galaru [Rainbow Serpent] . . . we haven’t got Wanjina [localised ancestral spirits] . . . You’ve got to have that [Junba] because you belong to Wanjina. See those song and dance? Everything, that Wanjina gave us. And our body is . . . the power of it. See we got to have that otherwise we will be lost, without the culture (Scotty Nyalgodi Martin speaking to Treloyn, 20 February 2002, Derby).

Junba is a public dance-song genre that has many of the hallmarks of Central Australian song style, including short text strings that are repeated cyclically, performed isorhythmically and set to a cyclical melody. These are accompanied by clapsticks and clapping, and by dance that is performed by adults and children. There are two broad sub-genres: Jadmi, which is only danced by men and boys, and Jerregorl³, which is danced by all. The decline in the health of the Junba tradition can be, broadly, attributed to the complex historical and contemporary circumstances that limit opportunities to practise. By contrast, when reflecting on childhoods in the 1970s and earlier, elders refer to experiencing, year after year, an extended period of two to three months during which they walked with their elders and families attending Law ceremonies. This happened in the wet season ‘holiday time’, when mustering on the cattle stations was halted. Elders have described the rich diversity of Junba repertoires that were performed during these periods. Charles describes her experience as a child in the 1960s and 70s at Old Mowanjum mission:⁴

If it was a concert night, singing and Junba, you could take your blanket and go with your parents to listen, or to night worship, if they were having that. They would have singing every night (Charles 2008:116).

When the old people were singing at night, our parents took us with them. We weren’t allowed to stay in the house. We went to the morning prayer place at Old Mowanjum, laying down under the stars and watching and listening until they fell asleep. This was in the 1970s.

We used to spend all Christmas holidays – two to three months – travelling for Law business, because my dad was a singer. Daisy Jurrwala (dad’s sister, my aunty), and Amy Wurrngany Peters, were also there.

At New Mowanjum the singing ground was near where the office is today, this is where I saw Biyende⁵ [a dance-song about two *agula* spirits (one male, referred to as ‘Mr Agula’, and one female, referred to as ‘Mrs Agula’) and a *yila* (‘baby’) composed by Martin] and Wanalirri [a dance-song about the Wanjina spirit named Wanalirri composed by Watty Ngerdu] and Ninbi [a dance-song about Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal peoples coming together as *ninbi* (‘three tribes’) composed by Watty Ngerdu], danced by old Laurie Utemorrah and Watty Ngerdu. Mum used to sing in the group with them, Ngerdu and Utemorrah. William Banjak was a dancer. Laurie

³ Generally, the term ‘Jerregorl’ is used to refer to Ngarinyin Junba repertoires and ‘Galinda’ to refer to Worrorra Junba repertoires of this sub-genre. Most commonly, however, all repertoires are referred to as just ‘Junba’.

⁴ Mowanjum was founded in 1956 as a new home for Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal peoples. The site of the community was moved in 1980, to accommodate the federal government’s extensions to the airport near the old site (Jebb 2008:138-9). The first site is referred to as Old Mowanjum and the second as New Mowanjum.

⁵ Song names are capitalised.

Gowanalli was the Biyende dancer, Mrs Agula. He used to walk cross legged. We used to laugh all the time (Charles speaking to Treloyn, 12 June 2016, Mowanjum).

These two to three month periods, with family, Law and culture as the focus, repeated year after year throughout a child's life, provided an opportunity for immersion in both ceremonial (Wolungarri) and public (Junba) dance and song. The childhood experience of going to sleep to sounds of family singing is one frequently described by elders. In recent years, by contrast, perhaps due to the modern conditions that limit mobility and new forms of entertainment, this opportunity for immersion has been interrupted.

The annual Mowanjum Festival first took place in 1997. It has continued to the present as the focal performance event of the year, attracting hundreds of performers and visitors to the Mowanjum Community. It provides Ngarinyin, Worrorra, Wunambal, and visiting groups with a feature event to motivate their practice of Junba and Wangga (the two primary public dance-song genres in the region). The one-night festival and its lead-up, however, often bring some concern that there are not more opportunities to practise Junba. There is a particular need for more opportunities to practise on Country – that is, in the homelands to which Mowanjum's diverse communities are indigenous.

When Junba practitioners are asked how Junba can be sustained, they express a desire and need for additional face-to-face teaching and learning opportunities. While opportunity to practise is recognised as an important requirement for music vitality across the world (Grant 2014), in the case of Junba, the preferred location for teaching and learning Junba is on Country.

'Teaching on Country' has similarly emerged as a priority for the KLRC. There was an internal review in 2005 that sought to understand how Aboriginal people view their heritage, languages and knowledge practices in relation to the education that is provided by remote Community schools. In response, and as a result of ongoing consultation with communities, the KLRC developed curriculum programming centred on recognising and supporting Aboriginal teaching and learning methods in and out of school contexts, including 'Teaching on Country' (Bedford and Casson 2010). Thus, the notion of 'Junba camps on Country' became key to the collaborative planning for the 'Children, knowledge, Country' project.

Using the research projects as support, in 2011 elders Rona Charles, Matthew Martin and Pansy Nulgit ran the first Ngarinyin Junba camp, as part of an ARC Linkage Project (LP0990650) and assisted by the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, structured around a range of activities aimed at providing opportunities for children, young people and adults to practise Junba. These included dance, song and associated activities, such as: locating and harvesting *ornmal* 'white ochre' for body paint, or paperbark for *ngadarri* 'headcaps' to be worn by dancers; clearing and planning the *bororru* 'dance ground'; 'brightening' totems by repainting their designs; storytelling; and the study of dance practice using video recordings (Treloyn, Charles and Nulgit 2013). With the support of the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, children and young people led the documentation of the event using iPads and handheld recorders. Charles led a second camp in 2015.

Conversations about the importance of sustaining Junba and holding Junba camps on Country have identified children as beneficiaries and as motivators of adults' practice. Describing the benefits for children that come from their participation in Junba teaching and learning events, Scotty Martin's son, Matthew Dembal Martin, focuses on children's emotional and physical wellbeing:

We just do it for the children, showing them . . . Like last week I was down in Perth. We had that NAIDOC [National Aboriginal and Indigenous Day of Observance Committee] week, but some students from Mowanjum they are schooling there, high school. They're all dancers. So they called me up, so I came down for that NAIDOC week. I had one week there going from school to school singing, dancing, make them dance, showing their teachers. They were very happy. They have the Country and for themselves they feel strong. They are not weak. The spirit, the singing, the dancing – that makes them healthy. It's always with them (Matthew Martin, 24 July 2012, Melbourne).

Junba camp participants of multiple generations express the benefits for children that stem from the location of the campsite, particularly its distance from town. For the 2011 camp, elders decided that the location should be on Ngarinyin land, some 300 kilometres away from the nearest town of Derby where many of the participants were based. The chosen site, known as Anbada (Old Mount Barnett Station), is close to the Community of Kupungarri and situated in the heart of Wilinggin (Ngarinyin Country). The distractions and troubles associated with town life were seen to be lessened in a remote location.⁶

The social, physical and aural environment of 'on Country' locations also supports immersive learning. 'On Country' camps provide opportunities for Junba listening and contemplation. For elder singer and camp leader Matthew Martin, the week-long camps provide an opportunity to remove children from the day to day distractions associated with mobile phone network coverage, television, radio and town-based activities. This allows space in their minds to concentrate and learn:

When we get them out bush they will learn quicker. They have got nothing to do in the bush. They'll start talking about the old things that we are trying to teach now. They'll be talking about it. ... We learn [teach] them so they can get that thing in their mind (Martin speaking to Treloyn, 15 March 2011, Mowanjum).

Children have the opportunity to go to sleep listening to elders singing, as did their grandparents (and some of their parents) when they were children. These 'on Country' activities provide a context not just for intergenerational teaching and learning, but also for intergenerational bonding (Palmer et al. 2006). Significantly, it provides an opportunity for young people and older children to learn, but also to lead the learning of those younger than themselves.

At the centre of the perceived efficacy of Junba camps for children's learning is the local cultural significance of 'Country'. Country – and the ancestors and spirits residing within it – is core to Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal peoples' cultural identities and wellbeing. Despite waves of displacement and colonisation, connection to Country has driven major social and political movements in the region throughout the twentieth century and up to today. Learning on Country is considered to be not only an effective space for teaching and learning, free of distractions, but also the right way to learn, in the company of the spirits that inhabit place. Junba Camps begin with a welcome to Country, where a traditional owner 'sings out' to the spirits in Country in language, announcing the participants' presence. Through appropriate welcomes to Country, by learning and dancing on Country with spirits, the bones of children and their social and emotional wellbeing are supported (Treloyn and Martin 2014). In response to a question put to him by an audience member at the 2013 Symposium on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Music and Wellbeing, John Divilli, a participant in Junba Camps then aged 16 years, reflected on the longer-term effects of Junba camp for wellbeing. He pointed out that 'it takes away all the young kids to bush, takes them away from drugs and alcohol and all that stuff. So it helps us, it's good' (John Divilli, 28 November 2013, Melbourne).

While it is clear that elders position children and young people as beneficiaries of Junba, and young people such as Divilli articulate their own views on the subject, the younger generations also play an active role in enabling these benefits to be realised. On a practical level, while elders tend to be the singers, Junba performance requires the participation, motivation and action of children and young people in the dances. Counter to an understanding of intergenerational knowledge transmission that regards it as solely or primarily a process of elders teaching younger people, it is clear that, in Mowanjum and related Communities, young people in fact create opportunities for this transmission. For example, in the lead-up to the 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Mowanjum

⁶ This approach has also been adopted by the Yiriman Project. This is a program designed to improve the lives of youth by supporting elders to take young people on trips to Country (Palmer et al. 2006).

Festivals, young people have been active in research, using archival photographs, video and audio recordings, and the song knowledge of their elders, to prepare for, practise and then perform dances that have fallen from the contemporary canon. By undertaking this revitalisation work, young people are instrumental in motivating elders to recall and perform the songs that accompany their dances. This work is a source of pride for family members, who praise their young people for such efforts. Speaking to an audience of several hundred at the 2012 Mowanjum Festival, following a performance of Scotty Martin's dance-song *Biyende*, after a hiatus of some 16 years, by teenagers Johnny Divilli and Larry Wungundin Smith, Rona Charles exclaimed over the microphone:

What a performance . . . That particular *Jadmi* wasn't danced for a very long time. Good on you boys! That was really good boys, well done! (Rona Charles, 11 July 2013, Mowanjum).

Matthew Martin also explains how he has developed his methods of teaching children and young people in response to their interest in audio and video recording technologies and media:

We have to get that thing straight. Get it down in computers and, like in CDs, many *Junba* [songs and repertoires], dancing and singing. That's the special thing for our kids then—our next generation coming up. They got to pick all that [up] like the old people did. They pass it on to generation after generation. Well that's what I'm trying to get now, trying to teach these kids properly you know? Proper way of dancing, proper way of singing, to learn to sing. So if I am not around, well they got a CD there to look at. A picture to see. They can listen to CD, DVD, look at the pictures. That spirit will bring their mind back, and the kids will carry on from there. When they get older, older, older, they'll, sort of, get everything in their mind. Just in case something happens to us. . . . They can have their *Junba* but they can [also] have another song, [from] other old people, that [have] all passed away now. They [the old people are] not singing here with us but we have got to keep carrying on how, teaching our children, let them listen. We can show them our dancing, how they dance from old, old songs. . . . DVDs that's the main thing. They can watch the pictures, see the show (Martin speaking with Treloyn, 15 March 2011, Mowanjum).

Importantly, it is recognised by elders that children and young people play a role in sustaining and revitalising not only *Junba*, but also – due to the interconnectedness of *Junba* dance, people, spirits and environment – the health of their communities and Country (Treloyn and Martin 2014).

The contribution that children make more broadly to their communities is evidenced also by their approach to the workshops designed by the research team. These have the purpose of understanding better the children's experience of teaching and learning *Junba*. This will be the focus of the second section of this paper.

What children and young people say and show about the importance of *Junba*

Here we highlight the perspectives, ideas, and concerns of children and young people, as articulated through discussion, drawings, song writing, oral presentation and performance. Insofar as they play an important role in stimulating and leading intergenerational knowledge transmission, finding ways to understand their ideas about why and how they integrate song and dance into their communities and youth cultures is significant for revitalisation methodologies.

Integrating children and young people into research processes demands diverse, attentive and creative methodologies that do not dictate outcomes but rather find meaningful pathways for children

to collaborate on outcomes that they deem beneficial and important in their lives. As Punch (2002: 325) notes:

A common concern for qualitative research with adults or children is not to impose the researcher's own views and to enable the research subjects to express their perceptions freely. The difference for research with children is that it is difficult for an adult researcher ever to totally understand the world from a child's point of view . . . Children are not used to expressing their views freely or being taken seriously by adults because of their position in adult-dominated society. The challenge is how best to enable children to express their views to an adult researcher.

Traditional research methods of participant observation and interviews do not necessarily provide a space for children to articulate their perspectives on how the Junba traditions can be sustained and what they mean to youth cultures of today. However, methods that position children and young people as collaborative participants rather than subjects help to integrate their perspectives into research processes and findings (Alderson and Morrow 2011; Greig, Taylor and MacKay 2013 Mitchell 2011). In the 'Children, knowledge, Country' project, we have embraced this approach by incorporating various projects led by children and youth. These include documentation of Junba by children and youth, youth-led activities in Junba Camps on Country, and revitalisation practices developed by youth.

As a means of furthering the aims of this project, members of the research team gathered for a week-long workshop at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, preceding the 2015 conference of the Musicological Society of Australia (MSA). At this workshop, the culture teachers and community researchers (Rona Charles, Sherika Nulgit and Heather Wungundin) worked towards articulating a Junba-congruent curriculum with Sally Treloyn and Kathryn Marsh. At the same time, six young people between the ages of seven and 15, from the Communities of Mowanjum, Kupungarri and Yumurlun (Pandanus Park), shared their ideas about why Junba is important in their lives and communities. They worked with Emberly to frame their ideas for sustaining Junba and for supporting intergenerational knowledge transmission in their communities and beyond. The methods that emerged as important methods to children for expressing their ideas were: collaborative brainstorming, drawing, song writing, and presenting to an audience and performing. This provided insights into how they view their participation in these traditions as meaningful, and gave us a better understanding of the motivations behind their roles in Junba revitalisation. The youth team was not given explicit methods to follow, but their brainstorming sessions led them to choose song-writing, drawing, and performance as the means for explaining their connection to Junba most effectively.

Scholars argue that drawing and visual methodologies can reveal 'experiences and perspectives while at the same time democratically involving children as 'producers of knowledge'' (Eldén 2012: 69). Thus visual methodologies shift the focus away from research *on* children and young people to research *with* children and youth (Thomson 2008). During the Sydney Junba workshop, the children and young people produced knowledge about the interconnectedness of Junba, Country, and wellbeing, and their role in supporting family and Country through Junba. This knowledge was produced by the children themselves, through a collage of words and concepts that addressed the issue of what it is about Junba that is important to them.

In the word list and collage, the participants named several of the Communities in which they and their families live (Mowanjum, Pandanus Park/Yumurlun), and Mount Barnett/Kupungarri). They also named one of the language groups with which they identify (Ngarinyin), as well as that of the land on which the workshop was held ('Gadigal'). (They had learnt this name from the Welcome to Country that opened the MSA conference.) They also used this activity to develop and share their knowledge of the Junba dance-songs that they perform. The word *lura* (upper right) refers to the dance-song Lura Ganinji, in which two *agula* spirits scratch themselves and peer at the audience. Underneath *lura*, *ninbi* refers to the dance-song Ninbi that represents all three Mowanjum groups (the Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal) coming together. *Mejerrin* (bottom right) and *winjagin*

(middle left) refer to two dance-songs that depict ancestral stories for important places in Ngarinyin Country. Linking these references to Country, people and Junba – and adding significantly to our understanding of the importance of Junba and its revitalisation for children’s lives – are words that attribute affective values, both personal and cultural, to place and people (‘home’, ‘respect’, ‘responsibility’, ‘nice’, ‘cool’, ‘beautiful’).



Figure 14.1: The importance of Junba (word collage created by youth participants, 28–30 September 2015)

Building on these themes and assemblages, each participant used drawings to illustrate what the ideas meant to them. Laurenzia Divilli used illustration and key words to show how important it is to stay healthy on the land and to remember the land from which you come.



Figure 14.2: Drawings by Laurenzia Divilli illustrating Junba dancing ground and healthy Country, September 28–30, 2015



Figure 14.3: Drawing by Clintisha Bangmorra, September 29, 2015

Clintisha Bangmorra spoke about her enjoyment of witnessing old people playing the clapsticks and teaching Junba to younger generations. Clintisha's drawing (see Figure 14.3) transforms the action and aural effect of the rhythmic striking into an active image, showing paired clapsticks with repeated, multi-coloured parallel lines (top right). Clintisha's drawing also illustrates a comprehensive range of Junba dance-song sub-genres, including two subgenres of Junba. Jadmi is indicated by the conical paperbark headcap (top left) and Jerregorl by the totem (bottom left). The genre Wangga is signalled by the didgeridu (bottom right).

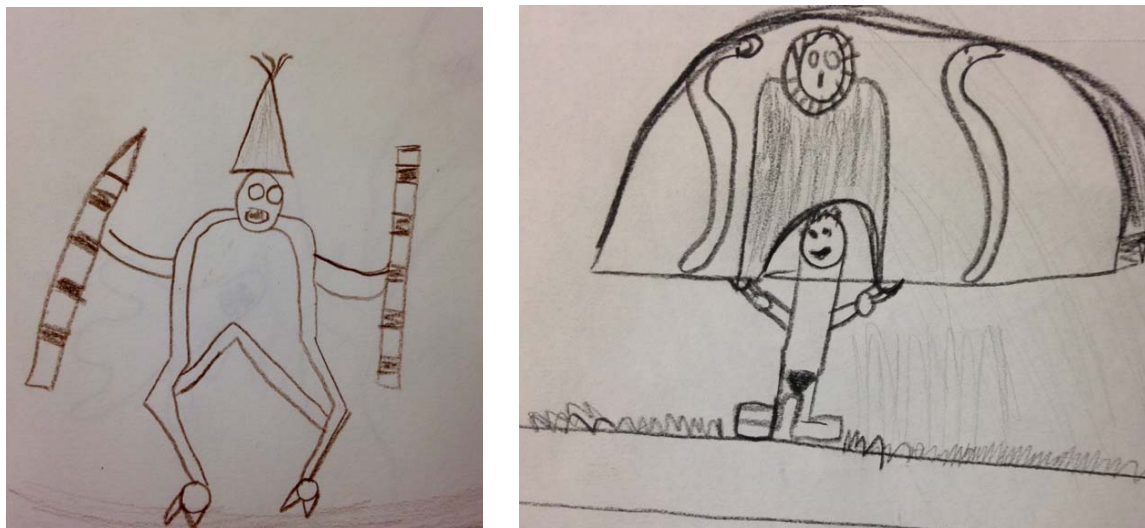


Figure 14.4: Drawings of Junba dancing by Selwyn Wungundin, September 29, 2015

Other drawings illustrate dancing and dances. In the drawing on the left in Figure 14.4, Selwyn Wungundin portrays the *Lura Ganinji* dance that he himself enjoys to perform. He represents the dancer's body with skeletal jagged lines, pointed toes, blank eyes and teeth, to show that the dancer

does not dance as a living person but, rather, embodies and enacts one of the *agula* spirits that the song lyrics describe (two *agula* spirits looking for their tribe). In his second drawing, the depiction of a dancer performing a *jerregorl* style *junba* shows the happiness of the dancer as he carries over Country the heavy dance board painted with Wunggurr and Wanjina creative spirits.

In addition to these activities (brainstorming, talking about and drawing Junba, preparing for and practising it), the children and young people also wrote a song in collaboration with the other community participants at the workshop. In this exercise, they connected new lyrics with a traditional melody and song texts (namely, Wanalirri and the warm up song Goobardwardangoo).

Goobardwardangoo (Song by Laurenzia Divilli, Lakeisha and Selwyn Wungundin, Clintisha, Sherayna and Tilenia Bangmora, and Eamarldon Rivers)

This is our land, this is our home
Bush country is where we belong
Junba is the dance for our song

Wanalirri wa yamowul yamowul
yamowul gambani
*Wanalirri wa*⁷

This is our culture, this is our identity
We are the Ngarinyin People
From Wilinggin Land
This is how we stand
Junba keeps us strong and proud
So *ngalanybabidi*⁸ out loud!

Goobardwardangoo
Barlja goomandangi
*Woorre gowadnerri*⁹

Wanalirri wa yamowul yamowul
yamowul gambani
Wanalirri wa

Following the workshop sessions, the children and young people participated in a panel session at the MSA conference, where they presented their word collage, drawings, and song. After their presentation, they performed Junba for the conference audience, with dance boards they had made during the week. Demonstrating the embodiment of *agula* spirits by dancers in Lura Ganinji (as illustrated in Figure 14.4), the boys approached and lunged towards audience members, soliciting engagement and participation in their performance. The group ended their bracket of Junba performances with Ninbi, which refers to three Mowanjam groups (Worrorra, Wunambal and Ngarinyin) coming together. Finally, they danced Wangga with conference participants.

⁷ Gloss: Wanalirri is coming, boggy ground. Explanation provided by elder Matthew Dembal Martin: this is the story of Wanalirri finding the boys and bringing the rain. The ground became soft and boggy, like jelly and quicksand, drowning all the people.

⁸ Singing group.

⁹ Gloss (Matthew Dembal Martin): they [all the Wandjinas] were talking, making it big [for Wanalirri]; 'let him come here, and see this for himself', they were saying.



Figure 14.5: Laurenzia Divilli leading the song writing session, September 29, 2015

Conclusion

This paper suggests that children are not only beneficiaries of revitalisation processes, but can also lead them by their participation. Elders describe the physical and emotional benefits for children's wellbeing that emerge from their participation in preparing for and conducting dance. Additionally, however, the forms of intergenerational knowledge transmission that emerge in Junba camps and performances exhibit a fundamental reciprocity and interdependence between the actions of learners (children and young people), on the one hand, and teachers (elders) on the other. Children and young people, rather than being the recipients of a unidirectional flow of knowledge from elder to child, motivate elders to sing and teach. They also become teachers to those younger than themselves. Moreover, they lead innovation of the modes by which Junba is taught and learnt, prompting elders to embrace new technologies, and researching dance and song with archival materials. In these ways, children play an active role in the revitalisation of Junba. In addition, by reinforcing connections with family and Country through their performance activities, children and young people contribute to their wider communities and Country by supporting and nurturing the fundamental link between Junba performance, spirits, people and place.

Adopting child-centred methodologies for research focused on child-led production of knowledge, we have drawn attention to the ways in which children and young people articulate their knowledge of Junba as a practice that is an integral part of their identities and communities of childhood. We also see how children affirm their role in communicating the interconnectedness of Junba with people and place. They are advocates for keeping traditions of knowledge strong. They understand that this entails self-reflection as well as presentation and performance to diverse audiences, in both their own communities and elsewhere. They are active in processes of innovation, planning and performance of dance-song activities. The continuation and revitalisation of songs is not just *for* them, but is, in fact, dependent on them. Accordingly, research focused not just on

observations of their behaviour and presumption of the benefits, but rather on their views and opinions about revitalisation activities, will enhance our understanding of how endangered dance song practices, such as Junba, are maintained and revitalised.

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