

I. RELEVANT BACKGROUND ON AIME

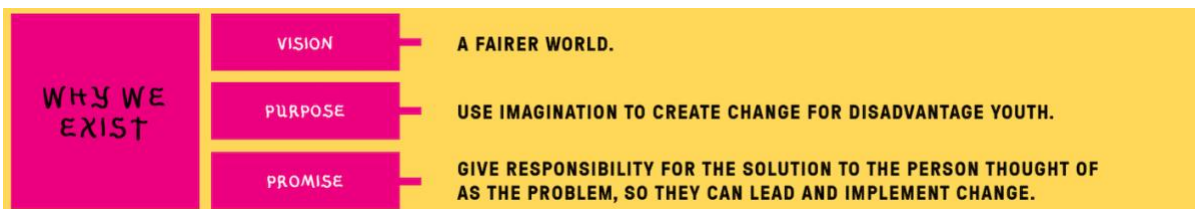
THE AIME STORY

Our story: <https://vimeo.com/352816110/c36d2ef875>

From the oldest continuous culture, Indigenous Australia, with 60,000+ years of imagination at its heart, AIME was founded in 2005. In Australia, over 14 years, we've solved a previously intractable challenge: Indigenous inequality in education. We designed a solution that is scalable, cost effective, easily transferable across borders and focused on unlocking the magic of learning. A structured mentoring model underpinned by imagination. Because kids who everyone calls the problem, we know are the solution.

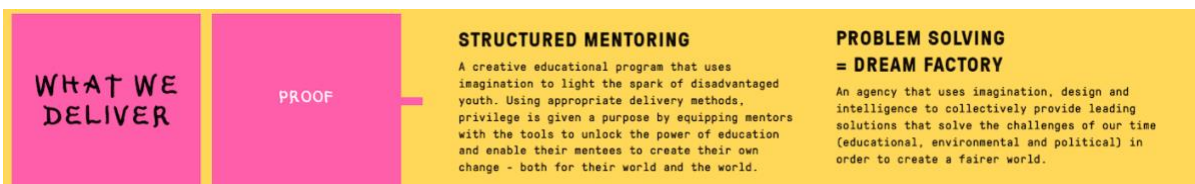
This revolutionary fire of change that started in Sydney is now lighting up 5 countries across 3 continents. Since inception, 25,000+ 'so-called-disadvantaged' kids have marched through the program to end educational inequality, ably supported by 10,000+ university students as volunteer mentors (the largest such movement in Australia's history). Having proven our ability to shift the imbalance of power locally, we are currently taking on the challenge of global inequality, in education and beyond.

Welcome to AIME: <https://vimeo.com/314670113/4c65eb3a7d>



OUR IMPACT STORY

An overview of how the AIME model works: <https://vimeo.com/220543875>



As aforementioned, over 14 years of our existence, not only have we seen 25,000+ so-called marginalized kids be empowered to march onto equality, but also 10,000+ university students, who have crossed racial/cultural divides in the formative years

of their careers, creating the largest such volunteer movement in Australia's history. We've also seen this movement spread wings and inspire 92+ countries worldwide and eventually travel across the oceans to reach 4 countries in Africa and America.

We have 6+ years of independent research into the work we do, with the summary being: "AIME achieves the Holy Grail of education interventions - effectiveness, cost-efficiency and unlimited scalability" (1).

❖ EFFECTIVENESS

➤ For Mentees:

- In terms of educational equality (2), kids engaged in the program are transitioning through their high school experience landing in post-school successful pathways (university, further training or employment) at parity or better than the rest of the population.
- In terms of rebalancing wealth/ power (3), an AIME mentee who transitions to university is expected to earn up to \$332,000 more over their lifetime compared to an Indigenous student that does not complete high school (KPMG, 2013).
- Furthermore, kids at AIME develop a strong sense of identity, self-esteem, cultural-confidence, resilience and aspirations (4)
- More holistic measures on imagination currently being built, in partnership with Accenture and other research partners.

➤ For Mentors:

- AIME enhances their university experience, connection with different cultures, leadership, communication, sense of community and builds a long-term spirit of volunteerism (5).

➤ For wider community:

- AIME benefits families, educators and the wider community (6);
- Deeper measurements currently being built.

❖ COST-EFFICIENCY:

- KPMG's independent evaluation in 2018 (7) found that for every dollar invested into AIME, \$8.9 of direct benefits are generated to society.
 - This same ratio was \$7 worth of benefits per \$ invested as at 2013.

❖ SCALABILITY:

- Over 14 years, AIME has grown from 1 country to 5 countries; from 25 mentees to 25,000+ aggregate; from 25 mentors to 10,000+ aggregate; and from 1 school to 350+ schools annually (8).
- A case study on AIME's scaling journey was recently published by Harvard Business Review (9).
- A feature film on AIME's rapid expansion globally is currently under-production.

We've also seen systemic shifts occur in the broader narrative around kids – for example, in Australia, we've witnessed the birth of the [Imagination Declaration](#) led by the kids, as well as [bi-partisan support from the Australian government](#) towards AIME's work; and globally, we've had an array of influential partners and [ambassadors](#) join hands with AIME to fight for a fairer world.

A CULTURE OF DEEP LISTENING & CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Change at AIME: <https://vimeo.com/342190724/8874344bc5>

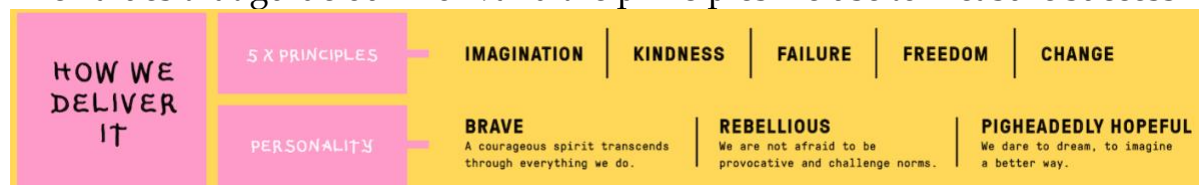
AIME is a constantly evolving, growing, dynamic organisation; and tracking of impact (like breathing oxygen) is an ongoing activity. We call this out explicitly during staff/ volunteer induction ([extract](#) from AIME Songbook), as well as in external engagements with our partners ([extract](#) from AIME Partnering Deck).

For us, data is literally 'kids' lives' and 'every moment is a chance for change'. So we've built a complex interconnected ecosystem, that our lean 'systems' team is constantly refining, which includes:

- a) Slack, our internal communications channel aka the 'campfire', where all our staff worldwide as well as mentors & interns download their reflections on a daily basis – both wins and learnings;
- b) Databases, consisting of typeform surveys, video-streams and airtable bases that capture all program participants information and changes over time;
- c) Songbook, that consolidates a), b) above into regular global impact reports for our key leadership team internally; and as external communication/ stories for our media channels (Note: we left social media for good recently as it was toxic to the kids we worked with).

We've built a culture where reflection and growth are genuinely valued and actively practiced. Immediate, exhaustive reflections (including both 'wins/ successes' and 'learnings/ failures' along with photos and videos) post every mentoring session are shared publicly by the lead mentor on Slack and all our global teams constantly learn from each other. These highlight outstanding moments of application and innovative design, as well as of crisis; all of which feed into future program design/ delivery.

The values that guide our work and the principles we use to measure success include:



II. FORMAL SUBMISSION TO IES

KEY LEARNINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Build a culture of mentoring: which would automatically trickle down into a culture of constant learning and sharing, thus creating ideal conditions for a culture of evaluation. Note that this is also helpful in long-term capacity building work.
 - At AIME, not only do we have internal peer-to-peer mentoring across our global teams, but we also share our toolkit with other organisations to assist in building mentoring into their DNA
- Grow more Indigenous leadership: which should naturally translate into strong, self-governing Indigenous entities shouldering responsibility and accountability to its people.
 - For example, at AIME, we have the Co-CEO program designed to allow 1 young Indigenous person annually aged 18-25 shadow our CEO (Jack Manning Bancroft) on a global stage, who then become strong, young leaders in their own rights – e.g. Ben Abbatangelo (AIME’s Deputy CEO) and Bianca Hunt (SBS’ Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships Coordinator).
- Value failures as growth opportunities: which would let people/teams be transparent both about their successes, and their failures; as well as, create adaptive, resilient and innovative Indigenous organisations.
 - At AIME, 1/3rd of the total time we spend with mentees (kids) is allocated towards ‘Failure Time’, where we invite all community members (e.g. youth workers, police officers, corporate partners, etc.) to work with kids in trying to learn a new skill and failing at it over and over again, till they naturally become adept at it. This same culture is replicated internally.
- Consider IMAGINATION as a key evaluation principle: as it can let us move from followers to leaders, and from students to teachers. In our 14+ years of work with ‘so-called-disadvantaged youth’, we’ve found that once their imagination is set free, they are the ones who lead change towards a better, more inclusive world (school / university and beyond).
 - In AIME’s case, the kids we worked with at Garma defied norms to launch the [Imagination Declaration](#), calling upon Australian leaders to build an Imagination Agenda for the nation (and the World). Note that we’re currently working closely with the various Government departments to bring this to life.
- Stories are invaluable evaluation tools: especially within Indigenous cultures. Even if data and quantitative information is important in communicating with a certain group of audience, the appeal of stories is universal, and there are

many transformational aspects that simply can't be captured in numbers or reports, and hence necessitate stories.

- The many videos included in the background on AIME section above should evidence enough the value we place on stories

RESPONSE TO OTHER SPECIFIC THEMES OF THE ISSUES PAPER:

- Another great way to develop a strong evaluation culture is to reframe impact tracking as an opportunity for constant reflection and growth. Instead of it being an additional burden (which data collection and analyses often tend to become), building an internal culture which sees data as the oxygen or life-blood for any program – both to reflect / refine internally and to communicate success / failure externally.
- For Indigenous programs, in our view, participatory evaluation is a best-practice approach largely because of the historic narrative of excluding Indigenous people from census / policy post-colonisation.
- In terms of methods, mixed-models of evaluations that can validate both stories (qualitative) and numbers (quantitative) are best-suited, though of course context plays a big part.
- Despite Randomised Control Trials being painted as the gold-standard in evaluation, RCTs are oft unsuited for rapidly-evolving programs addressing socially-complex problems – i.e. Indigenous programs.
 - Developmental evaluations are often better suited for such programs. One classic example is the [2014 evaluation](#) of Khan Academy by Stanford, which started off as an impact study, but over time, morphed into an implementation study.
- Indigenous and Western ways can often be reconciled and successfully combined in mixed-mode approaches that include 'story' as an evaluation tool, as the resonance of stories is universal.
- As aforementioned, the most pragmatic way to enable Indigenous organisations to lead evaluations and build capacity is to grow strong Indigenous youth leadership.
 - Furthermore, increasing the most innovative Indigenous organisations' participation in policy building and nation building efforts will go a long way in achieving those outcomes for all.
- We are happy to note the many global evaluation approaches called out in the paper, and the Productivity Commission's intent to learn from evaluation work overseas. On the flipside, we recommend compiling best-practices from Australia to share with other world leaders because surely some Australian practices are unique and far ahead of the curve. At AIME, we are proud of the fact that an Indigenous Australian solution is tackling a global problem.