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The Mining Minds Education Partnership is a program funded by BHP Billiton in partnership with education consultants Semann and Slattery, local education leaders and community members. It partners with communities in Roxby Downs, Woomera, Andamooka and Marree in remote South Australia. It aims to build an authentic collaboration to promote the development of the towns as the community of choice for education.

It was crucial to the project's success that it built on existing community strengths and was driven by the community. Having a whole of community approach required the engagement of various stakeholders in the early stages of this project. As a local resident and educator for 12 years it was my role to identify the stakeholders and bring them together. I found it was the relationships and strengths-based approach that I had built over time that allowed us to develop trust. We met formally and informally, often over a cup of tea in the local café, with community members, schools, educators, children, students and families. We collated and analysed relevant local and international data, considered past initiatives and recommendations and liaised with BHP Billiton and a forum of local education leaders.

The information collected from these consultations was shared with the wider community via a number of avenues including posters with key ideas, sharing data at forums and dissemination through the projects newsletter. Three key ideas emerged in relation to families:

- It is critical to the success of children that teachers, parents and the community hold and convey high and positive expectations for children's learning.
- Partnerships with parents that raise the awareness of their crucial role in their children's education and provide them with the skills to do so would make a significant difference in outcomes for children.
- There is a recognised strength in our community and building on this strength by working in partnership with families, educators and children will improve outcomes for children and the community. Involvement in learning was seen as a whole of community role.

So, in partnership with parents, we set up a local learning community that built on local strengths and ideas. A group of local mothers is undertaking further study in education. Several educators have been supported to be involved in practitioner inquiry projects where they have developed successful partnerships with parents, particularly in the areas of transitions and sharing curriculum. Local parents who run businesses have contributed to curriculum delivery at a high school level by jointly teaching economics units.

As the project moves into its third year, we are seeing the establishment of a community hub, a child-friendly venue in a shop in the main street. Recently, BHP Billiton announced \$4 million partnership with the state government to place an integrated children's centre in Roxby Downs that has a dedicated parent engagement program. So, like local parents and educators, we have high expectations for the future of family engagement in our community.