



CAGES FOUNDATION

CASE STUDY

Bringing heart and rigour to philanthropic strategy



“SVA has been instrumental in helping the CAGES Foundation to understand the field that we are working within and ensure that we are rigorous in selecting organisations and programs for funding.”

Gemma Salteri, CAGES Foundation

SVA Consulting initially helped the Salteri family develop a philanthropic strategy for the CAGES Foundation, and then went on to support its implementation, refine and document the strategy and provide ongoing support. This engagement extended from the end of 2008 through to 2011.

Starting from scratch

Paul Salteri set up the CAGES Foundation (CAGES) – a Private Ancillary Fund (PAF) – in late 2008 as a vehicle for his adult children, Gemma, Anthony and Carla to practice philanthropy.

In reflecting on which organisations to give to, the Salteris recognised that they each had different interests as well as projects or organisations they knew of.

In an early meeting, SVA Consulting encouraged Paul and Gemma to reflect on what difference they wanted to see in the world rather than who they should give money to.

Gemma had travelled around Australia some years earlier and was profoundly impacted by the predicament of Australia’s Indigenous children, particularly those in regional and remote Australia. As a child of privilege, she felt a strong ethical pull to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to have the same opportunities.

Following further reflection and discussion, CAGES decided to explore how it could play a role in enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in regional and remote Australia (with a preference for NSW) to build the skills to live fulfilling and productive lives.

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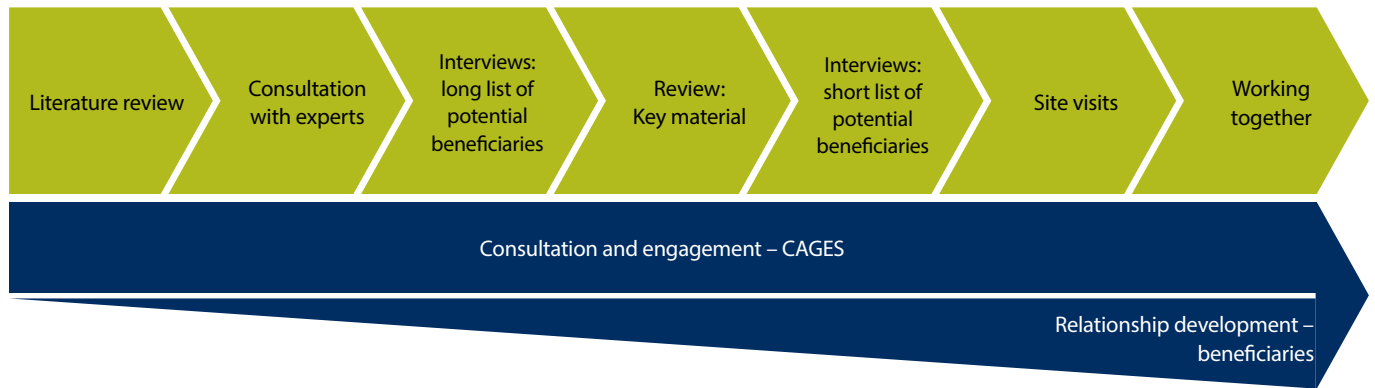
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SVA used its networks and experience to generate a strategy



The challenging realities

The Salteris were under no illusion about how challenging it would be to contribute to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Strategy meetings considered the complexity of the issues, the importance of cultural sensitivity, as well as the family's physical distance from rural communities and its lack of expertise in the area.

To support CAGES, SVA Consulting began building a knowledge base for the family about the social issues: what wasn't working in the area, where the evidence pointed in terms of solutions, what would be required to have a positive impact, and which organisations were considered by Indigenous leaders to be 'on the right track'.

SVA Consulting drew on its extensive networks to test the findings of this initial desk research, and to generate a list of potential organisations and appropriate screening criteria. CAGES learnt that there was unequivocal support from these networks for them to work in this area, and indeed frustration about the apparent reticence of private philanthropists to invest here. There was also unanimous agreement amongst those SVA Consulting talked to that CAGES would have the most impact if it supported programs which made a difference during the first five years of Indigenous children's lives, particularly in the areas of health, social development and early learning skills.

Listening, learning and giving

Between early 2009 and mid 2010, CAGES drew on the expertise of academics, non-profit board members and chief executives, program managers and fellow philanthropists to shortlist potential beneficiaries. It then selected three organisations to support in year one, and two organisations to support the following year.

Responding to the relatively low level of organisational development in the smaller organisations, CAGES provided funding to develop organisational skills and strategy. In the case of one beneficiary, Music Outback Foundation, this funding enabled the CEO to move out of the trenches of fundraising and program management and for the first time develop a five year strategic plan, charting the organisation on a path toward growth.

Building a Foundation to be proud of

By its fifth year of operation, CAGES had grown a network of relationships and developed a sense of the kinds of organisations it prefers to support. It continues to refine and evolve its purpose and has an executive officer to manage the day-to-day grants administration and build relationships.

The three Salteri children are guiding the Foundation to thoughtfully and collaboratively contribute to an area of enormous potential and immense cultural importance in Australian society.



"SVA Consulting exposed us to a new way of thinking and helped us form a strong basis to move our foundation forward. SVA was also able to identify growth opportunities for us and help us to become independently sustainable."

Gemma Salteri, CAGES Foundation

Image (above) from Indi Kindi – The Nagala Project – Indi Kindi, a recipient of support from CAGES Foundation.

Image (front page) – The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation, a recipient of support from CAGES Foundation.

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