

FIELD REPORT 2020



A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

In 2020, 290 million children globally were not in school due to school closures as a result of COVID-19. It was projected that 24 million would never return.

Thanks to our team members and customers around the globe, we've been able to respond to the pandemic by supporting some of the most vulnerable communities through health, wellbeing and education initiatives.

Our initial response in Uganda, South Africa and Thailand was to reach as many children as possible to ensure they were still able to access basic necessities like food, water and hygiene products, as many children rely on school to receive these items. Supporting healthcare centres and workers was also high on the priority list to ensure they were equipped to cope with COVID-19.

Importantly, we wanted to make sure that children could still continue their education journey through the distribution of learning materials to their homes. Home learning packs played a major part in 2020, with 19,087 packs delivered across the regions we support. In some areas,

classes were delivered over the airwaves, with the Cotton On Foundation team taking over local radio stations. Parents, teachers and community members united to deliver classes under trees in villages across the globe.

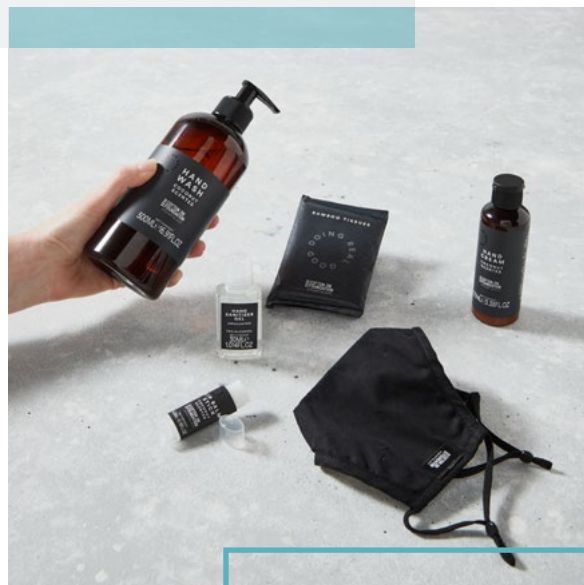
Wellbeing always plays a major role in all of our work, however, in 2020 it became a critical element to our pandemic response. When safe to do so, in-country teams conducted home visits to ensure children had access to basic necessities, were safe and being cared for appropriately.

**This year's Field Report
is a curation of the voices
of our team, teachers and
students across the globe,
through the lens of how
COVID-19 shaped their 2020.**

It explores what challenges were presented, what opportunities and new skills were revealed, and what it meant for supported communities.

2020

US IN NUMBERS



TOTAL FUNDS RAISED IN 2020

\$18,810,189 AUD

FUNDS RAISED FROM PRODUCT SALES

\$16,041,474 AUD

Masks Purchased

1,599,725

Funds Raised from Masks

\$7,526,344 AUD

Water Bottles Purchased

297,708

Funds Raised from Water Bottles

\$1,713,557 AUD

Tote Bags Purchased

5,334,612

Funds Raised from Tote Bags

\$4,897,961 AUD

AN AMAZING

12,050,616

ACTIONS TAKEN

A Cotton On Foundation
product was sold every

2.6 SECONDS

US IN NUMBERS

Currency in AUD



Donations

\$2,429,627 (12.9%)

Team Giving

\$397,078 (2.1%)

Other

\$385,657 (2.1%)

Tissues

\$1,459,965 (7.8%)

Water

\$1,713,557 (9.1%)

Masks

\$7,526,344 (40.0%)

Tote Bags

\$4,897,961 (26.0%)

FUNDS
RAISED

TOTAL \$18,810,189

Local Project Management

\$868,135 (4.6%)

Admin \$1,564,683 (8.3%)

Future Projects

\$7,613,347 (40.5%)

Other*

\$1,173,621 (6.2%)

RSA

\$634,909 (3.4%)

Uganda

\$5,768,690 (30.7%)

FUNDS
DIRECTED

TOTAL \$18,810,189

Thailand

\$831,316 (4.4%)

Australian Indigenous Programs

\$355,488 (1.9%)

Proudly, we are part of the Cotton On Group and this means we are able to keep our administration cost below 10%.

*Includes Australian Bushfire relief and local partnerships including: LifeChanger Foundation, St Vincent de Paul Society, Beyond Blue & Food Bank.



UGANDA

INNOVATION

Throughout a year characterised by curveballs, the Cotton On Foundation team, teachers and students in Uganda have found new and exciting ways to continue ensuring each child enrolled in our supported schools is able to continue to access a quality education. From broadcasted radio lessons for students, to the distribution of seedlings to families to ensure food security, creative decisions have defined a new way of working and learning.

STAYING SAFE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In a year like no other, the Cotton On Foundation team jumped into action and were innovative in the ways programs were delivered, to make sure our supported students and communities were able to keep safe and healthy in the face of a global pandemic.

- Monthly health awareness messages were sent via a mobile public address system, reaching the homes of children from all 20 Cotton On Foundation supported schools.
- New hand washing facilities were installed in schools.
- 795 posters with health messages were distributed to all schools, in both English and local language.

The Student Engagement team started to engage students that are not yet back to school on the topic of wellbeing. Sessions were led by fellow students and guided by a parent and teacher.

In these sessions, children were given resources for building self-esteem, and were encouraged to keep busy with hands-on skills such as making mats or balls. Most exciting to note was the production of our brand new wellbeing booklet, filled with information that makes it easier to engage students in their own wellbeing.

“It has been very exciting engaging students on their wellbeing; children share stories, do hard work and this has kept them busy.” - Teacher, Uganda

As it became clear that school closures were going to continue for more than just a few weeks, our Wellbeing Team also mobilised to reach children in their homes, especially those most vulnerable. The team conducted household assessments that took a pulse on the mental and physical wellbeing of students and their caregivers and responded accordingly. Interventions included public health messaging on a PA system, but also 1:1 discussions with our consulting counsellor if students and their families were struggling.

The Cotton On Foundation Team also moved around households in the community targeting teenagers with safety messages during lockdown. This was done especially to ensure that the girls kept safe amid the many challenges faced at personal and household levels.

“I am so happy to be thought about and my children at this time when I have been hopeless and helpless.”

Parent, Uganda

UGANDA

2020 HIGHLIGHT STORY



[Click to read Ronald's Story](#)



“I am happy to be given a pack of sanitary pads, I didn’t have anything to use and my parents can’t afford them.” Student, Uganda

3,015 children who were identified as needing extra support were provided food and hygiene packs during lockdown. As a result of the lockdowns, parents incomes were affected - the provision of these food and hygiene packs helped remove some added pressures.

Throughout lockdown and school closures, girls were supported with reusable sanitary pads, underwear and information about hygiene and menstrual management. Girls were assured of access to pads and were educated in their use to manage their periods.

EDUCATION

“Receiving home learning packs empowered me to be in charge of my own learning. Delivering home learning packs to our home meant that I could still learn even when schools were closed. Home learning assessment by the teacher gave me confidence of joining another class next year.”

Ronald, Primary Grade 3 Student, Uganda

Home learning pack distribution included household visits, with the purpose of keeping children engaged academically at home. Home learning assessments were geared towards ensuring children do not miss their current classes, but also to prepare them for the future.

“Cotton On Foundation invited us as tertiary education students for a catch-up. I benefitted very much. We were encouraged to keep in touch with Cotton On Foundation staff, focus on studies, and be resilient. I was very energised mentally.”

Joan, Certificate in Hairdressing, Uganda

UGANDA



TEACHER SUPPORT

“The famous SMS blasts sent, especially those on Social Emotional Learning, have given me direction on how to relate with my learners for them to speak their mind.”

Alex, Primary Grade 4 teacher, Uganda

SMS blasts have been an ongoing activity since April 2020. The content of these messages range from recommendations for professional learning, lesson development and social emotional learning.

The SMS blasts are a mechanism of engaging teachers during the COVID-19 lockdown. The social and emotional learning SMSs provided mindfulness activities to teachers as they navigated this difficult lockdown. 280 teachers were receiving these messages on a weekly basis since April 2020.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Energy Efficient Kitchens

Construction of bio-digesters at Bunjakko, Kyaterekera and Ntebbe Za Ddungu Primary Schools commenced - the biogas generated will be used for cooking school meals. Waste will be used as organic fertilizer in the school gardens.

Water is Life

Six new Rhino water tanks were installed at our partner schools in 2020 - two each at Bunjakko, Kyaterekera and Ntebbe Za Ddungu Primary Schools. Each Rhino tank has a capacity of 200,000 litres! That's a huge 1,200,000 litres of water added to our total, bringing total water capacity to our supported communities in Uganda to 5,415,000 litres!

[Click to read about Rhino Tanks](#)



PATHWAYS

“When schools were closed due to the Coronavirus, no physical interaction with the lecturers was allowed. Receiving data support from Cotton On Foundation has helped me to access lectures, do my course work and conduct research in time.”

Jonathan, bachelor degree student, Uganda

51 students completed online learning during the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown. They were supported with data bundles to support their connectivity. 42 students received laptops to support them in accessing e-learning during lockdown, when schools and education institutions were closed.

Cotton On Foundation hosted check in meetings in small group settings for 112 scholarship students (44 university and 68 vocational students) to support their wellbeing. Topics of conversation included self-esteem, awareness and focus; resilience, self-motivation and being accountable; and emotional wellbeing.

UGANDA

UGANDA

IN NUMBERS



3,372

HOUSEHOLD VISITS

during home learning pack distribution, wellbeing surveys & child safeguarding

7,893

HOME LEARNING PACKS

were distributed

40

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

TRAINED ON COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION

5,320

TEXT MESSAGES

sent to 280 teachers

3,161

SANITARY PACKS

distributed to girls



182

STUDENTS

received scholarships for vocational/university studies

1,748

FOOD PACKS

for 3,015 vulnerable students & their families

95

TEACHERS

involved in home learning (distributing materials & carrying out assessments)

UGANDA



RESILIENCE

South Africans everywhere have proven to be resilient despite the brutality of the effects Coronavirus have had on the country and economy. Our supported teachers showed resilience in the way they sprang into action preparing at-home learning packs (that even included playdough for the little Grade Rs!). For many, the challenge may have seemed insurmountable, but armed with a can-do attitude and an ever-burning desire for more, our team and supported communities in South Africa can conquer anything.

“These children are striving to grow in the harshest environment. They are fighting against the toughest tides. They are pushing forward regardless of these challenges. The least we can do for them is provide them with much needed love, care, support and information they need to continue creating conditions whereby they are able to actualize their fullest potential. While doing so, we must never make the mistake of leaving their parents behind, as they are a part and parcel of the child’s development.”

Raylene, Community Social Worker, South Africa

Improving communication with parents was a key focus in 2020 - the Cotton On Foundation team in South Africa established WhatsApp groups, and more recently Facebook and Instagram accounts to share updates with the school communities.

826 Empower Packs were also distributed to girls from Dr JL Dube High School and Ethekwini Primary School. Each pack included six reusable pads, three pairs of undies, a roll on deodorant, a bar of soap, a facecloth, and a copy of My Body #NoShame, a fun and interactive menstrual health education book by Dignity Dreams.



“We have never seen such humility in our lives. The idea of sending these food packs home with kids really made a huge difference at home, and we as parents appreciate it so much. These COVID-19 times have done a lot of damage in a lot of homes in terms of employment and affording life. We were all used to receiving these food packs every Friday. On behalf of all the parents I would like to say thank you for everything you have done for us.”

Parent, South Africa

With students unable to attend school and parents’ income affected by COVID-19, 15,548 food packs were distributed in 2020, to make sure kids and their communities had access to nutritious meals.

SOUTH AFRICA

INFRASTRUCTURE

“Ethekwini Primary School appreciates and admires a conducive environment for teaching and learning brought about by the infrastructure upgrades made by the Cotton On Foundation. The environment makes it easy for educators to integrate various teaching techniques that enhance curriculum delivery, thus having a direct impact on learners academic development. The infrastructure just brings hope, knowing the social status of the community serviced by the school, this brings no doubt to the fact that learners see a possibility of prosperity just by looking at their surroundings. The school has a vision to utilize infrastructure in further enhancing learner development outside

of the classroom.” Themba lethu, Deputy Principal Ethekwini Primary School, South Africa

Ethekwini Primary School celebrated their community opening in February 2020, before COVID-19 closed schools in South Africa. Previously, the school did not have capacity to accommodate a cohort for the final year of Primary School (P7). Now, Ethekwini includes additional classrooms, ensuring all children can complete their primary schooling at Ethekwini Primary School.

[Read more about Ethekwini Primary School](#)

TEACHER SUPPORT

“Cotton On Foundation has helped us by providing teacher support through the Khanyisa Inanda Community Project (KICP). KICP introduced us to alternative measures of discipline and behaviour modification when dealing with learners. We have also been introduced to more modern ways of incorporating technology in our lessons during school time, such as Google Slides, Microsoft Powerpoint and Word, and using emails to make both the learning and teaching experience effective. This has also led to improved communication between staff members and our staff becoming more efficient.”

Mrs Dube, teacher, South Africa

Teacher development and support was able to continue through lockdowns. The main focuses of these continued sessions was SEL (Social Emotional Learning) and ICT development for teachers.

“To witness the entire staff willingly ‘come on board’ and embrace a new way of learning and teaching using technology in such a short space of time is commendable and certainly worthy of praise. KICP looks forward to continuing our journey with the school, embracing opportunities where staff can grow professionally and find much joy in their time spent at school, thereby encouraging further innovation in terms of the offering to the learners in the classrooms.” Judy, Director Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Project, South Africa.

EDUCATION

“I remember when our president told us that we will not go to school until they have found a vaccine for COVID-19. I felt like my dreams had been shattered and I will have to repeat the same class next year, but we were very fortunate when the Cotton On Foundation intervened and decided to give us homework packs. They really helped us directly and indirectly. Homework packs helped us to learn to be independent by learning at home by ourselves and doing research on our own. It felt as though we were being groomed for varsity. The homework packs also helped us to make it to the next grade. I will always be thankful to the Cotton On Foundation for intervening and contributing to me proudly making my way to the next grade.”

Bongekile, High School Grade 9 Student, South Africa

To make sure no one fell behind while unable to physically attend classrooms, home learning packs were provided to students from our supported schools.

SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA IN NUMBERS

5,946

HOME LEARNING PACKS

for Ethekwini Primary School
students were distributed



20,045

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT ITEMS

12,500

BARS OF SOAP

600

LITRES OF HAND SANITISER

were distributed to support health clinics and Cotton On Foundation supported schools

21,653

FOOD PACKS

for Ethekwini Primary School and Dr JL
Dube High School students & community

826

EMPOWER PACKS

GIVEN OUT TO SUPPORT GIRLS

SOUTH AFRICA



GROWTH

Even with COVID-19 looming large over our projects in Thailand, 2020 has been an amazing season of growth. Bwe K'Lar Learning Centre continues to evolve as renovations continue, and our supported students continue to learn and progress under the guidance of dedicated teachers and the Cotton On Foundation team. You only have to look as far as the blooming Bwe K'Lar garden to see the fruit of all the hard work poured into 2020.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Preparation and prevention were key in our approach to ensuring supported students and communities stayed alert, and more importantly, stayed safe.

- Handwashing stations were installed
- The implementation of hand sanitiser and social distancing in schools was a priority - these measures remain in place.
- Posters and pamphlets were distributed to raise awareness about COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread
- Collaboration between schools and the community increased in the evaluation of the school and its grounds
- Equipped sick bays for Migrant learning Centres and essential first aid kit were purchased and set up at school
- Parents were taught the symptoms of COVID-19, and learned about how it spreads to others.
- Teachers and parents gave children regular reminders of how to stay safe and healthy.

“I learn how to keep myself clean and safe due to the health talks we had through our teachers and parents.”

- Naw Paw Eh, G9

INFRASTRUCTURE

“Good school, good building’ becomes our motto, because it supports our school health and sanitation”

Eh Kwee, Head Teacher, Thailand

- The existing toilets were rebuilt.
- The kitchen was renovated to have enough room to dine and to hold school activities
- There is a store room to manage and store food for the students and for the boarders.
- Drainage and water flow systems have been installed to avoid mosquito and preventable diseases.

As part of the Stage 1 renovations of Bwe K'Lar Learning Centre completed in August, the Cotton On Foundation team on the ground in Thailand unveiled a brand new, undercover play and multipurpose space for the learners!

“We appreciate the dedicated work and the regular visits of the teachers for our children’s education.”

Daw Ma Tin, Senior Student Parent, Thailand

THAILAND



EDUCATION

“Parents were wide awake in terms of their roles in education.”

Amy, Education Mentor, Thailand

Parents were asked to support teachers in delivering the home based learning program, and were instrumental in assessing students in terms of their physical and mental growth.

TEACHER SUPPORT

“Good planning and good instruction is our power to transfer the skills and knowledge to students.”

Olivia, Teacher, Thailand

“Teachers get to know the meaning of ‘thinking out of box’ now.”

Amy, Education Mentor, Thailand

Teachers came together to implement home based learning.

PATHWAYS

“I am happy that I could still learn to prepare myself to further my study.”

Kyaw Kyaw Ag, Scholarship Student

In Thailand most Pathways scholarship students remained on campus at their universities through COVID-19, while some moved to online learning. To ensure students were able to keep up with learning we provided a laptop to those that required one. On top of that, Country Manager Yim, checked in with all students weekly from a wellbeing perspective, and supported them with any issues that came up. Yim also shared with them current government health advice to ensure they understood what was going on around them, and how to stay safe.

“Students are getting excited to sit for their GED entrance exam and we are happy to provide the facilities or any support that the students need.”

Maphia, Teacher, Thailand

The GED or General Education Development test is an equivalency exam required for migrant students to enter university. Unfortunately, universities in Thailand do not accept students who have graduated from Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs), so to show they have high school level education they must sit a GED test. In the past this has been done once they have graduated from a MLC and can take up to two years of further study. In 2020 we integrated a GED program into Hsa Thoo Lei Learning Centre, saving students at least two years of further study and getting them into university sooner!



[Click here to get to know Bwe K'Lar](#)

THAILAND

THAILAND IN NUMBERS



31,250 COOKED MEALS



have been distributed to students and teachers from Hsa Thoo Lei Learning Centre -

250 PER SCHOOL DAY SINCE JUNE!

Remote training was completed by

39 TEACHERS

COVERING FIVE TOPICS

5,248



HOME LEARNING PACKS

for students from both Learning Centres

15



handwashing stations
were installed

43 STUDENTS

**RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR
VOCATIONAL STUDIES OR UNIVERSITY**

2,750 PPE ITEMS &

**28 THERMOMETERS WERE
DISTRIBUTED TO SCHOOLS**

**SANITARY PADS
were distributed to**

50 NEW STUDENTS

THAILAND



COMMUNITY

Central to Yolŋu culture is the ‘Yaka Gana’ ethos, meaning ‘Always together, never alone.’ In 2020, Yolŋu have shown strong leadership, resilience and a togetherness in their communities. The Northern Territory borders were shut down to ensure Yolŋu communities’ safety. During this time, the community maintained their programs that support young Yolŋu people in their strong cultural identity and quality education.

C-BATE: COMMUNITY BASED ABORIGINAL TEACHER EDUCATION

“Training Yolŋu people is so important. We need our Yolŋu teachers to make sure that our language and culture does not fade away. Without them, our children will not be able to carry our language and culture into the future. We don’t want our children to become like children down south, they are Yolŋu children. We want them to speak their language strongly, not broken language, mixing English and Yolŋu daruk.”

– Yirrkala School Language Specialist, Dela 1 (Yunupingu) Mununggurr.

Through our partnership with Yirrkala School and Laynhapuy Homelands School, the Community-Based Aboriginal Teacher Education (C-BATE) program, will support Yolŋu people to become qualified teachers without having to leave their communities. Through C-BATE, we will help support up to 16 students to achieve a qualification by the end of 2022, with the opportunity for the program to influence a similar approach across communities in the Northern Territory.

[Read more about C-BATE](#)

DHIMURRU

“We are doing this Yolŋarra Galtha for the students so when they grow up, they know where they come from, where their ancestors come from, and the journey through the songlines and their identity. So as in their life they will grow and make a strong foundation for their generation to come. So they know what to do when they grow up, so they know how to relate to each other, and relate to the world.”

– Rrawun Maymuru, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation Senior Cultural Advisor.

In 2020, some of the themes covered in the Learning on Country Galtha Rom Workshops included ‘Gurrutu’ (or kinship and cultural identity), and the Yambirrpa fish traps (also a metaphor for the importance of people working together). Gurrutu is important to allow people to know how to act and relate to each other. It is part of our foundation.

This year the consistent learning focus centred on who we are, and how we relate to the land/sea, and each other.

“Yolŋu Children grow up with two laws, Dhuwa and Yirritja. This foundational knowledge molds who a person is, where that person comes from, what their vision is, how they think, how they will be able to deal with contemporary life and whether they will be able to sort and analyse the idea they encounter in their lives in a balanced way”

– Yirrkala School Vision Statement

For the last Galtha in 2020 at Rorruwuy, word spread from the first few days and 92 people turned up to share a campfire meal and for the Burŋgul (Cultural dance) on the final night of the five day Galtha. Yolŋu and ŋäpaki (non-Yolŋu) learning, eating and dancing together.

[Find out more about Dhimurru](#)

AUSTRALIA



2020 HIGHLIGHT STORY

Meet Guti

WELLBEING

“It has been really difficult at times but our amazing teachers pushed us along through the whole journey. It was amazing learning and experiencing both ways in our bilingual school. We are feeling so proud of ourselves for being able to complete year 12. We are looking forward to our future.”

Dhawuthawu Mununggurr.

Yirrkala School's Wellbeing workshops help support young Yolŋu students (Year 10, 11 and 12), families and teachers in a holistic education model through wellbeing support, mentoring and pathways workshops.

MULKA PROJECT

“At first the unknown of the global pandemic was scary, we knew how detrimental it would be for all Yolŋu if the virus reached Yirrkala. To protect the community we postponed workshops and cancelled interstate facilitators meanwhile continuing to safely service the Yolŋu community.”

Siena Mayutu Stubbs - Mulka film-maker

- The Cotton On Foundation supports the Mulka Project to run 4 creative workshops every year. Through these workshops, young Yolŋu people develop skills in the creative arts, and importantly can explore and express their cultural identity.
- With COVID-19, restricting travel the Mulka Project had to postpone some of their workshops with Interstate facilitators.
- Working creatively, the travel restrictions gave the Mulka Project and expert Play Specialist, Cat Sewell the opportunity to work virtually for the Nudel Kart Play Workshop, with a series of sessions facilitated via Zoom.
- The Mulka Project was also able to tap into some amazing local talent for their Beat Making Workshop and Yambirra Drone Workshop.

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA

IN NUMBERS



We signed off on our biggest partnership in Australia, committing to

\$1 MILLION

AUD OVER
3 YEARS

to support Community Based Aboriginal Teach Education program

3

GALTHA ROM WORKSHOPS

(Daliwuy Bay, Yambirrpa, Rorruwuy), plus a
ŋalapaŋ (Elders) planning workshop for 2021

3

MULKA WORKSHOPS

took place in 2020: Nudel Kart Play
Workshop, Beat Making Workshop,
Yambirrpa Drone Workshop

8

SENIOR STUDENTS

AT YIRRKALA SCHOOL
GRADUATED YEAR 12

4

OF THESE STUDENTS RECEIVED AN ATAR

(Australian Tertiary Admission Rank)
which should see them go to University

A FIRST IN THEIR COMMUNITY

AUSTRALIA

HOW WE STACKED UP

We recognise that our actions can contribute to ending extreme poverty around the world and therefore aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Goals (UN SDG's) is of the utmost importance.



1 NO POVERTY

357 Household Wellbeing Surveys

54,651 Food packs



2 ZERO HUNGER

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



39,380 Pieces PPE
including masks, gloves, face shields, aprons and glasses

26,733 Health Centre Visits

659 Babies
delivered with a supervising attendant

4,383 Antenatal Care Visits

11,581 Immunisations

3,011 HIV Tests

156 Nutrition Mission
program participants trained

407 Ongoing Scholarships

New Playground at Bwe K'Lar Learning Centre (Thailand)

Construction of the BKN Primary Schools continued despite the challenges of the pandemic. These schools will account for **1,500 Educational Places, 30 New Classrooms, 6 New Large-Scale (rhino) Tanks (200,000L each tank).**

280 Teachers reached with SMS's

19,087 Home Learning Packs

3,372 Household Visits

\$1 Million Over 3 Years
Partnership with Yirrkala School and Laynhapuy Homelands School

4 Mulka Creative Workshops

4 Learning on Country Galtha Rom Workshops

8 Wellbeing Workshops
Year 12 Yirrkala School Graduation

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY

4037 Sanitary Pads distributed

40 Healthcare Workers Trained

826 Empower Packs (RSA)



The Cotton On Foundation acknowledge the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin nation as the Traditional owners of the land on which our Support Centre is based and where this report was produced – Wadawurrung Country. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We honour and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who for thousands have years have cared for and preserved this country's land, waters and culture.