



## **Make it count with Indigenous Learners Community Two-way teaching approaches Elizabeth Gilligan - Biography**

Elizabeth Gilligan is an Aboriginal Education Worker at Yiyili Aboriginal Community School in the Kimberley. She has been recognised in her field as an educator in various schools in the Kimberley. She was born in the old Fitzroy Crossing Hospital near the big Fitzroy River.

She's a mother of three and a grandmother of six. As a child, she attended GoGo Primary School, near GoGo station, 20km north east of Fitzroy Crossing where she grew up. Her grandkids now go to Yiyili School where she works.

In 1978 Elizabeth went away for boarding school to Derby Senior High School to complete year 8 and was boarding in a hostel with many other students from various backgrounds.

Elizabeth stayed at the boarding school for a year before making the move to Perth the following year in 1979. She completed year 9 at Kewdale Senior High School where she stayed at the girls' hostel. There were many other girls from the Kimberley that attended the same school and stayed at the same hostel where she stayed away from her comfort zone.

In 1980 she then left Kewdale and moved to Mount Lawley where she stayed at a girls' hostel at CooinDAH Hostel and went to Mount Lawley Senior High. When she finished her secondary years of schooling she returned home to the Kimberley.

Her first job was working as an Indigenous teacher aide at GoGo Primary School in 1981 and this is where she first realised that education was very important for Indigenous kids. She worked at Gogo Primary School for 1 year until she had her first born and gave up teaching for a while to focus on raising her child. When her first child was older she decided to move to Kalgoorlie. In 1982 her second child came along so she decided to take an extended break from the classroom.

When her children were older Elizabeth applied for a position at CAPS Coolgardie where her youngest went to the pre-school and her eldest went to CAPS Coolgardie.

A couple of years later she decided to move back home to Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley. She then enrolled her kids at the same school she attended, Gogo Primary School. It was then that her third child came along and again she had to wait for a while to grow him up.

At that time Indigenous people started to move back to their homeland. Elizabeth moved back to her mother country which is Gooniyandi land between Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing.

She lived at Yiyili Community on Gooniyandi land with her kids and her oldest two were attending Yiyili school. When her third child got a bit older he also attended Yiyili pre-school. At that time she applied for a job at the school. During this time, her parents moved from Yiyili to start up another community 50km out of Yiyili along the Great Northern Highway.



In 2002 she relocated to work at Bayulu Community School. A couple of years later her two eldest were ready to leave home for boarding school in CAPS Coolgardie. At this time, Elizabeth began working at Yiyili Community School again where her kids were attending. Her third child was in pre-school when she applied for a position at Yiyili School. Her children are now all adults and Elizabeth is now contributing to the education of her grandchildren by working as an AEW in their classrooms. She is also one of the school board members who govern the decisions of Yiyili School. Elizabeth often represents her community and school by presenting and attending conferences in various places. She is also a member of the Gooniyandi Corporation as a director for the Gooniyandi people.

