



MCF Annual Report 2016

Montessori Children's Foundation

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General Achievements

MCF's goal is to make Montessori programmes available to children in Australia, who, for a multitude of reasons, would not otherwise be able to access them.

We currently focus on indigenous and remote communities where the need for quality education and support is intensified by vast distances from the centres of Australian government decision-making, service-delivery and economic activity, and by histories of invasion, appropriation, and neglect. Despite this, in these communities we find a strong desire for a better future, and a deep awareness that the future lies with its children.

In 2016, MCF was proud to continue to work in partnerships that provide Montessori programmes across the Torres Strait, a programme in the Aboriginal communities of Aurukun and Lockhart River and a renewed interest from the Mapoon

Aboriginal Shire Council to introduce Montessori in their newly constructed childcare facility.

We do continue to be constrained with limitations especially with record low interest rates impacting our ability to fund projects. These challenges are not ours alone, and are faced across the charitable sector. We remain very grateful to the bequest of Bob Masterman, which ensures that the work can be sustained in perpetuity by virtue of the interest of a large endowment. We are also very grateful to the Montessori community for its ongoing support, and to all the individual Montessorians, trainers, consultants and community members, who strive to ensure the best start of life and enriched educational opportunities for children.

MCF's core area of business is early childhood and this is underpinned by the following key principles:

Partnership

Partnering with key organisations in communities drives ownership and commitment, and connects us to the work of other organisations committed to children's wellbeing.

Sustainability

Remote community programmes are only sustainable if the skills to manage, develop, and deliver them are located within the community. Providing Montessori training, especially in 0-3, and 3-6, and building a foundation of local knowledge and expertise, is one of MCF's two key areas of investment.

Quality

Quality practice needs time and support, and is usually developed in a workplace where experienced professionals provide support and assistance to those at the beginning of their careers. Such a body of Montessori experience and expertise is not available in remote communities, making mentoring our second key area of investment.

Flexibility

The complex circumstances of remote communities mean that the taken-for-granted ways of establishing and managing Montessori services and programmes, and providing training and mentoring, are not possible. Flexibility is essential in the design and delivery of training and mentoring, hand-in-hand with maintaining quality and fidelity of practice.

During the year, MCF farewelled Kay Boulden as our Community and Government Liaison. Kay decided to retire from full-time work although she is still offering her invaluable experience and knowledge to MCF pro bono. MCF is enormously grateful to Kay for the strong foundations, key learnings and relationships that she has built over many years that will enable us to continue this important work.

MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION



Current Projects

Aurukun

MCF supports the Koolkan Childcare Centre Educator Support Project with an agreement being reached with Aurukun Community Services in June for their commitment to fund a number of mentor visits at the centre, in the 2016/17 financial year. We are grateful to the Montessori trainers and consultants who visit Aurukun and work side by side with the centre staff and families to support the development of babies, infants and young children.

The school holiday programmes at Aurukun have been a constant since the inception of MCF's work in Cape York. The recent unrest and disruption at the school continues to affect the programme during the holiday periods but we will continue to work with the Shire Council to offer this in the future.



Koolkan Early Childhood Centre, Aurukun

Mapoon Community and Family Engagement Project

A visit by MCF representatives to the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council to meet with community leaders and present information on Montessori in late 2016 has led to the Council working with MCF to commit funds to engage with the local community to introduce Montessori principles and practices.



Koolkan Early Childhood Centre, Aurukun

It is hoped that during 2017 a series of workshops will take place that will be open to all members of the community who are interested in improving parenting skills. Through these workshops, community members can find out more about how Montessori education can enhance the lives of local children and families. An initial visit by Mapoon Shire Council members to observe Montessori programmes in the Torres Strait, has been planned for February 2017.

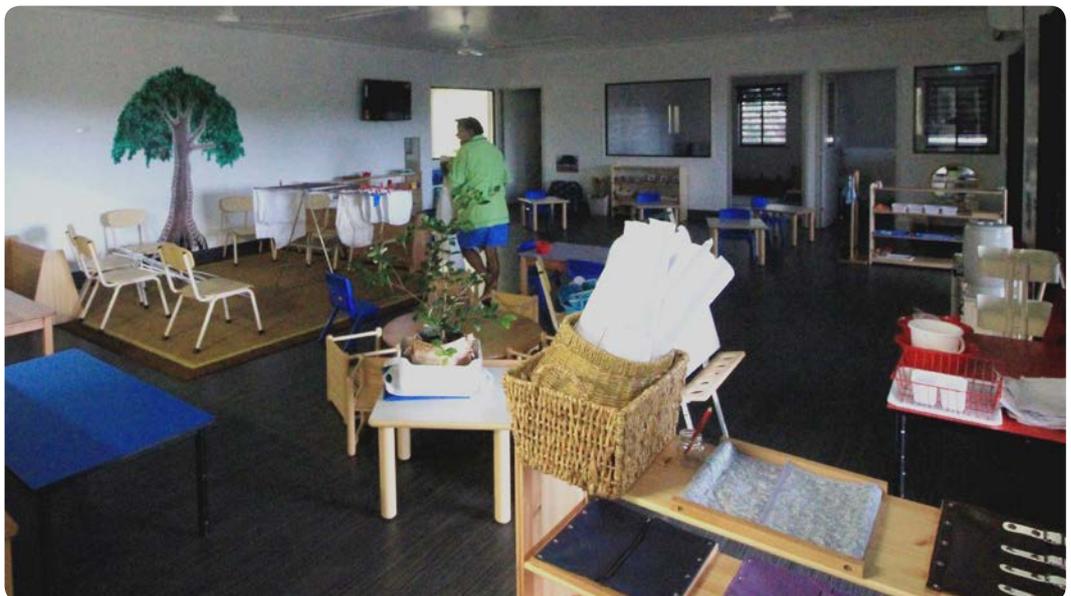
Lockhart River

In 2014, MCF developed a partnership with the Puuya Foundation in the Cape York community of Lockhart River. At this time, MCF was working with the Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council who planned to build and operate a new early childhood centre in the community. The official opening of the Kuunchi Kakana Centre was held on 23 June 2016 and now operates a Montessori babies programme amongst other activities.

During 2016, MCF was successful in obtaining a \$10,000 grant from the Renner Family Foundation to assist with providing ongoing mentoring support for the 15 members of the Lockhart River community who completed the Montessori Assistants Course. The programme plans to maximise the impact of the initial training, and the impact and growth of Montessori early childhood programmes in Lockhart River during 2016/17.

In the long run, we anticipate that the body of Lockhart River Montessori trained early childhood professionals will grow to the point where peer mentoring is available. We are endeavouring to ensure that there is a programme in place to support the existing staff in the future.

In the meantime, pro bono services have been obtained to continue with a research framework that measures the impact of this work through parent interviews and other means. In the past this research has revealed overwhelmingly positive and transformational outcomes.



Kuunchi Kakana Centre early years room ready for the daily activities



The Official Opening, Kuunchi Kakana Centre, Lockhart River

MCF is excited and proud to announce that a new Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 has been developed for Montessori education in the Torres Strait.

Torres Strait

MCF is excited and proud to announce that a new Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 has been developed for Montessori education in the Torres Strait. The partners to the Strategic Plan are Tagai State College, TSIREC, YUMI Education Inc. and MCF. These partners share a belief in education as preparation for a happy, healthy and fulfilling life for each human being, as an individual, as a member of a family and a community, and as a citizen of the Torres Strait nation.

Further, the partners believe that families and communities should take a lead role in making education choices for their children, facilitated by the opportunity to access a Montessori education and also the knowledge and skills to make an informed choice.

Fundamental to the realisation of this vision is the development of a sustainable model of service delivery for Montessori education. Through such a model, Montessori education programmes in the Torres Strait will:

- Be of the highest pedagogical quality
- Build on the capacity of Torres Strait Islanders to deliver Montessori education
- Inform and engage families and the local community.

Together with a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the continuation of the partnership agreement to operate a range of Montessori early years education programmes, community engagement events and professional development activities throughout Torres Strait communities, MCF believes this significantly strengthens our relationship with the Torres Strait community.

There are currently eight Strait Start programmes operating in the Torres Strait on the following Islands: Boigu, Damley, Murray, Thursday Island, Masig, Badu, Kubin and Poruma. Five Strait Start coordinators and two employees from Torres Strait childcare centres graduated from the 0-3 Diploma course run recently in Brisbane.

Ongoing support will be provided to the graduates in their workplace, as has been the case in the past. Our submission to the Fouress Foundation towards supporting the graduates was successful and this will contribute to mentoring. The two 3-6 classes on Thursday Island continue to provide beautiful Montessori early childhood programmes, although providing support for Montessori training and staff continues to be a challenge.

Strait Start You Tube Channel

Tagai State College and YUMI Education Inc. were thrilled to announce the launch of the Strait Start YouTube channel during 2016. This channel features informative videos on parenting and early childhood development, specifically for families in the Torres Strait.

The YouTube Channel is another extension on the successful Strait Start initiative – an early years programme for families of young children, unique to the Torres Strait. The content uses the Montessori approach and familiar images to build families' confidence,

skills and capacity to create the best conditions for their children's development.

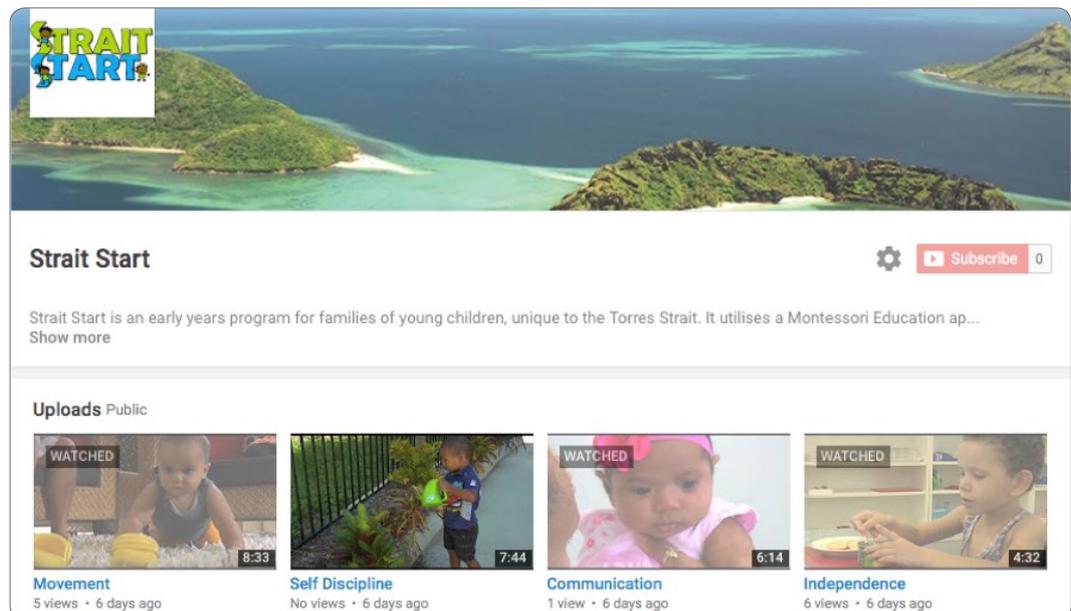
To view the channel, go to:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCet0e7_GtNfB9U26KxjC0rg.

Future Developments

MCF continues to seek opportunities as part of its mission to make the benefits of Montessori education more widely available. In 2016, an alternative trading name, the Montessori Community Foundation, was registered for MCF to expand its fundraising activities.

On 14 December 2016, the ACNC officially launched the Registered Charity Tick to the public as part of a campaign to help enhance public trust and confidence in registered charities. The tick aims to reassure the public that registered charities are transparent and accountable by highlighting their presence on the ACNC Charity Register. MCF's publications will be updated with the tick during 2017.

In mid 2017, MCF will be partnering with





Dottie Hobson, Chair of the Puuya Foundation with Kay Boulden and Christine Harrison



Dr Jim Waterson, Director-General, Department of Education and Training, with Tanya Koko, Manager, Kuunchi Kakana Centre and Dame Quentin Bryce, Patron, Puuya Foundation

YUMI Education and Trinity Beach State School to host the inaugural Remote Montessori Refresher in Cairns. The event will bring together staff from remote indigenous communities across Australia for a unique professional development experience. Conducted by leading Montessori trainers and practitioners, the Remote Montessori Refresher will provide opportunities for Montessori educators to share common experiences, explore best practice and network with other professionals.

MCF is also embarking on a strategic planning process for future development. This process involves consultation with key partners and each MCF project and community. Montessori board members, trainers, consultants and stakeholders will also have input. The process will clarify MCF's strengths and investigate the challenges and opportunities facing MCF going forward. It is anticipated that the strategic exercise will culminate in a final Strategic Plan later in 2017.

Montessori Children's Foundation

MCF is a trustee for a number of trusts that serve to alleviate disadvantage and support human development through the Montessori approach. MCF is a registered charity and has Deductible Gift Recipient status.

Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust (MICT)

MICT was established as a deductible gift recipient trust fund to facilitate fundraising and to provide support for Montessori Indigenous projects throughout Australia.

Masterman Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust (MMICT)

MCF's work across Cape York and the Torres Strait is underpinned by the generous bequest from the estate of Leslie Charles 'Bob' Masterman. The Masterman Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust was established in 2006 in order to fulfill Bob Masterman's legacy and realise his conviction that Montessori education was a way forward to improve life opportunities for Indigenous Australians. As Trustee of MMICT, MCF focuses on developing strategic partnerships with individuals, community groups, private businesses and government agencies to ensure the success and sustainability of projects in communities from Cairns through to the Torres Strait.

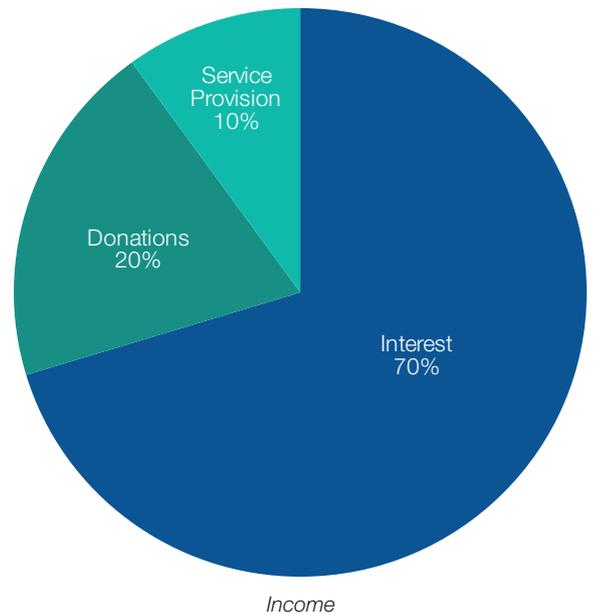


MCF 2015/2016 Profit and Loss Statement

Montessori Children's Foundation Scholarship Fund (MCFSF)

The purpose of the MCFSF is to further the education of children and adults by providing Montessori scholarships as set out in the trust deed. MCF is at present working to establish a capital fund producing income to support scholarships in a stable and predictable manner.

The following information presents income and expenditure highlights from the 2015/2016 financial year. Totals were summarised from the consolidated financial statements from: Montessori Children's Foundation Limited, the Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust, the Montessori Children's Foundation Scholarship Fund and the Masterman Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust.

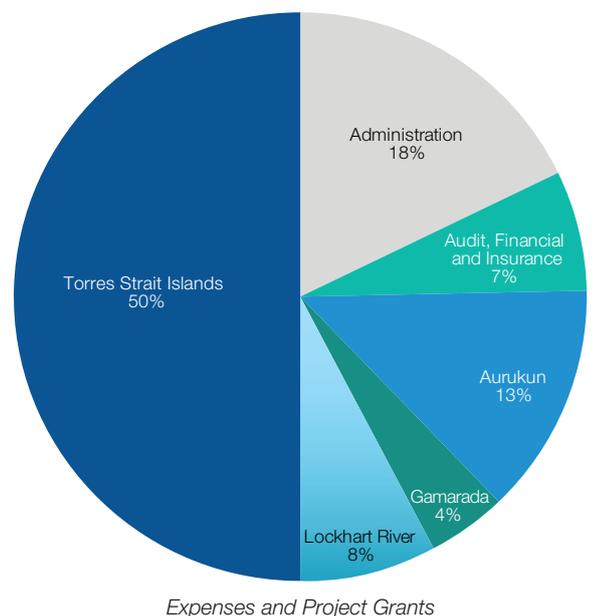


Income

Interest	125,176
Donations	35,054
Service Provision	17,802
Total	178,032

Expenses and Project Grants

Administration	31,544
Audit, Financial and Insurance	12,101
Aurukun	23,267
Gamarada	7,915
Lockhardt River	14,501
Torres Strait	87,604
Total	176,932



We must develop the spiritual life of man and then organise humanity for peace. The positive aspect of peace lies in the restructuring of human society on a scientific basis. Social peace and harmony can have only one foundation: man himself.

Maria Montessori

