

MAKING THE EARLY YEARS COUNT

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



This report covers the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. There are two sets of audited Financial Statements covering the periods 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 and 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan adopted in August 2021 and the version in te reo are both attached. This Annual Report is structured to report under each of the Goals contained in the Strategic Plan.

TAHI - Inspired Kindergartens delivers 'top-quality' early childhood education which is responsive to communities.

Competition in Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector from private operators continues to a key feature for operations of Inspired Kindergartens. However, we remain committed to a vibrant and high-quality kindergarten education being available for all families. That means an ongoing review of our services to ensure they meet their community's needs and a rapid response to any changes in those needs.

The six-hour day remains the main model of operation for our kindergartens. Since the advent of the COVID pandemic and the move to more flexible working arrangements of many parents this model is proving highly popular.

Our enrolment rate across all our kindergartens for the 2022/3 year was 93% (94.1 as of 30 September 2023). On 30 June 2023 we have combined waiting lists of 532 (553 on 30 September 2023) for the approximately 1100 places we offer.

Our two all-day services - OPEYS in Otumoetai and Maunganui in the 'Mount' - are also well regarded serving that particular niche in the market.

Our Home Based ECE service was re-structured in 2021 to take account of the reduced number of educators we were able to engage. Home Based education remains highly popular particularly with the parents of younger children. And the service is 'full' with both the number of educators and children at their maxima. Further growth is inhibited by the government regulations and our ability to recruit suitable educators.

In late 2022 our Home-based service re-structured to accommodate the changes required by the Ministry of Education and a reduced number of educators. As a result, we closed one of our two services and reduced one Visiting Teacher position. Home Based early education remains highly popular, particularly with the parents of younger children. And the service is 'full' with both the number of educators and children at their maxima. Further growth is inhibited by the government regulations and our ability to recruit suitable educators.

Education Review Office (ERO)

ERO commenced an organisational review in June 2023 including 'sampling' eleven of our kindergartens. The review was only completed in September 2023 with the final report provided in November 2023.

The association was judged as "Effective" with findings about our kindergartens being highly complimentary;

“Teaching practices and conditions that promote positive outcomes for children include:

- nurturing aroha and care, affirming children’s individuality and uniqueness*
- prioritising learning-focused partnerships within the localised curriculum*
- teaching teams that are responsive and know their children well as capable and confident learners*
- establishing and maintaining effective relationships with external agencies and community networks to support the wellbeing of all children*
- utilising te reo and te ao Māori authentically to strengthen bicultural practices*
- incorporating children’s voice and whānau aspirations well through assessment practices that further supports the interests and needs of all learners*
- creating natural environments that encourage children’s exploration and critical thinking*
- learning spaces that are thoughtfully designed and intentionally arranged to maximise children’s curiosity and creativity*
- implementing sustainable practices that encourage children to be kaitiaki of papatūānuku (guardians of the environment).”*

Kindergartens Aotearoa (KA)

Kindergartens Aotearoa comprises a group of 6 kindergarten associations with 370 kindergartens with the objective of developing a national organisation to strengthen kindergartens and provide an opportunity for all children to engage in the kindergarten experience. Little progress has been made on this project and the Board has adopted an alternative approach to meet this objective– a proposed merger with Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens on which there is a separate report.

RUA - Inspired Kindergartens will honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of our nation.

Te reo ma ona tikanga programme supports teachers, kindergartens and our Home-Based Service to implement the Māori world view in their work. Te Whariki – the Early Childhood Curriculum – requires an increased emphasis on bi-culturalism and ensuring children have an increasing understanding of te Ao Māori (the Māori world).

This programme includes;

- Te Pumaomao – a decolonisation workshop held on a marae
- Wananga
 - Te reo
 - Waiata and karakia
 - EnviroSchools collaboration
- Nga Haeranga – visits by staff to important sites in our area
- Local curriculum development
- Iwi and mana whenua engagement
- Support for on-line te reo programmes

In addition to the te reo version of the Strategic Plan (*Mahere Rautaki*) we have developed a te reo version of our Tiriti o Waitangi Policy and an iK Waiata.

Our teachers also engage with their local Kahui Ako (cross sector learning clusters) and the the Professional Learning offered.

TORU - Inspired Kindergartens will sustain its people, places, wairua and resources.

Inspired Kindergartens as a not-for-profit charity operates within constrained funding limits. Small variations in enrolments can have a dramatic effect on the organisation's finances. Some kindergarten rolls are volatile with sudden and unexpected movements of children and families. This is particularly so in areas of high transience. While our enrolments remain strong, even slightly lower income from government sources cannot often be compensated for by reducing our costs. This is particularly so in times of high inflation. However, we remain committed to the principle of affordability by maintaining the donations rather than fees in our six-hour kindergartens. We note however that from Term 4 2023 we are seeking a greater level of donations.

Finances

The Board is committed to spending wisely but mostly on our tamariki and therefore does not maintain substantial cash reserves. Holiday Programmes in all school-day kindergartens reflects both a community need as numbers attending rise and the need to generate additional funding to maintain our commitment to 100% trained teachers and enable to undertake our capital works programme, particularly upgrading our older kindergartens. We are thankful to our bank , the ASB, for the support provided on the limited times we require overdraft facilities.

The 2022 Financial Statements were produced later than usual due to the pandemic. The highlights include;

- Income increased from 14,567,514 to \$15,450,716 mainly due to an 8% increase in government funding.
- A reduction in donations of \$8,621.
- A post-depreciation deficit of \$216,972, 1.4% of income.
- A decrease in the value of our assets by \$140,911 to \$8,417,114 from \$8,558,025 in the 2021 year.

The 2023 Financial Statements are currently with our Auditors, Baker Tilly, and should be available before the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

Matariki

Services undertook a variety of celebratory events to mark Matariki. And our iK annual Matariki event included the presentation of the following Awards:

- The 'Being the Best we can Be' Award - Catherine Geddes, Head Teacher at Avenues Kindergarten.
- For the Good of the Children Award - Claire Davison, Head Teacher at Gwen Rogers and Papamoa Coast Kindergartens.
- The Manaakitanga Award – Debbie Fitzgerald – Administrator at Te Puke NA Arataki Kindergartens.

- The Mana Award - Greerton Village Kindergarten Team
- The Aroha Award - Te Puna Kindergarten Team.
- The Kaitiakitanga Award - Jenny Collier, Jess Purvis-Stanly and Tracie Collier, our Home Based Educators in Whitianga.
- Un-Sung Hero Award - Vicki Newcombe – support staff member, Paengaroa Kindergarten

Professional Learning

Our two-yearly Conference was held in July 2023. It focused on Hauora/Wellness and practical teaching strategies. The total spent directly on professional learning in the year ending 30 June 2023 was \$91K.

Marketing

The core of our strategy to grow awareness of our Kindergartens and Home Based service is to target 70% of our marketing budget into online advertising. As a result, we have seen excellent results through Facebook/Instagram advertising and the use of video campaigns. The increased activity in the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, compared with the previous year, saw a 98.02% increase in reach (estimated number of people viewing our ads) and a 415.28% increase in impressions (number of times our ads were viewed). Looking forward, despite budgetary restrictions, we will continue our strategy of focusing on online advertising with an estimated 63% spend of marketing budget. This marketing strategy contributed to the high levels of enrolment in our services.

Staffing

Inspired Kindergartens continues to attract quality applicants for teacher and administrator positions. We remain the employer of choice for ECE teachers in the area due to the 'best' employment and teaching conditions offered in the sector. We remain committed to being a Living Wage employer.

Our thanks to our sterling bunch of relievers who continue to support our quality programmes.

Learning Support

Our full-time Resource Teacher – Early Intervention oversees this programme. Approximately 20% of enrolled children have an identified learning support need which is recorded on our iK Learning Support Register. In the period under review the programme continued to utilise the Targeted Funding for Disadvantaged Children along with direct Ministry of Education funding of approximately \$140,000 and association funds of \$250,000. This enabled the employment of approximately 3,000 teacher aide hours in kindergartens and early intervention advice and support.

WHA - Inspired Kindergartens promotes environmental sustainability.

Enviro-Schools

We value our Enviroschools partnership which continues to support the focus for kindergartens to deliver Education for Sustainability. Our newest Kindergartens are currently engaging in deeper understanding and practice that reflects an Enviroschool journey. For our Kindergartens that have been on this journey for several years, the Enviroschools resources and professional learning provide opportunities for revisiting teaching and learning practice, and introducing the Enviroschools Kaupapa to our new iK people.

Kindergarten Energy Project

The aim of this project is to make kindergartens self-sufficient in energy by 2025. We aim to install Photo-Voltaic cell technology in kindergartens after staff have maximised energy saving in the kindergartens. The development of this program has been stalled as TECT and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council no longer provide resources in this area. We are now reliant on charitable grants and Association funds. Thankfully, Mercury (the Trustpower purchaser) has continued the initiative that permits us to share excess power across our network. Ten kindergartens have installed this technology which means that 19 kindergartens benefit. Thanks to our partner in this project, Sustainability Options.

Lisa Lightbourne
Board Chair

Peter Monteith
Principal/Tumuaki