



Photo of
Louise Manas

Louise Manas

Manager - *Arkai Kaziw*
Children's Activity Centre
Kubin Community, Moa Island - QLD

Kubin has a population of around 175. It is one of 14 Torres Strait Island communities with a children's centre

'Early-childhood education is a stepping stone'

Louise's motto...

What is the aim?

Our children's activities centres are the first point of contact for children and families. Our childcare service has been going for three years with 10-15 kids across two age groups, but because we are not licensed we do not receive childcare funding. We only get Out of School Hours Care funding two days a week for up to 25 kids.



What was the initial drive/need?

The need in the community is for working parents, so the council auspices our centre, pays my wage and provides our multi-purpose building and community hall for our OSHC programs.

What is your role?

As an educator, I can interpret and code switch. When the children look puzzled I can model language back to them in English, so they adapt well to school, because the language is not alien.

Strengths

What are the organisations strengths?

The department said that if we all do bridging courses we could become licensed. So I am now doing a six month TAFE bridging program for a Diploma of Children's Services and some of the CDEP ladies are now training through Cairns TAFE and doing their practice assessment at Thursday Island Childcare (Thursday Island has their own TAFE teacher.)

Why does it work so well?

I like the hub model best, rather than being constrained to just childcare. We use the Sport and Rec officer here, the arts coordinator and the social justice committee. I would like a school councillor here too, as an early intervention part of the hub, because it's less threatening for families to talk here.

How is it different or unique from other organisations?

We prepare them for their greater journey and for school in a non-threatening way – all the little steps.

What are some of the outcomes and achievements?

Two years ago the Commission for Children came here and trained our staff about The Act and the Blue Card. The Queensland IPSU came here recently too, which was really good, and there was a recent TAFE visit for remote area childcare studies.

Last year Education Queensland brought in half-day four year-old pre-prep. Next year it will be an all-day program.

Barriers

Have there been any barriers along the way?

Human resource support and training – all those problems that come with remoteness.

Is there anything that could be done to make the organisation better?

We have CDEP staff four days a week full-time plus my position. We all have a Blue Card. The community now want our service to go to the next step to reinforce stages of child development, not just provide child minding. So we are thinking about getting licensed, but we need a good committee. It is all about capacity building. This has been a passion of mine for a long time, but it's a really big responsibility.