

Case study

Atherton Children's Art Club



Details

What:

The Atherton Children's Art Club came about in 2014 as a result of a short residency by New Zealand arts worker, Shona Hammond-Boys. Shona adopted the model developed by the New Zealand Children's Art House Foundation with the principles of self-responsibility, loving art and having fun. The concept was piloted initially in Atherton and Herberton, although people from all over Far North Queensland attended and were inspired by her workshops.

From its humble beginnings in June 2014 as a two-hour after school activity, the Atherton Children's Art Club has become a fixture in the community, supported by local art teachers and a network of dedicated parent volunteers and committee members. As well as learning to work in different artistic media, the children have also learned how to present their artworks and to comment positively on other children's work.

The project surpassed all expectations and the Atherton Children's Art Club with its dedicated support team and some additional project funding from the Regional Arts Development Fund has continued to grow to the point where it is now financially independent.

When:

January - December 2014

Where:

Atherton



Section of final artwork ready for Café Atherton exhibition (Image by Colin Trigwell)

Arts Queensland and Tablelands Regional Council contributions:

\$9,705 – Regional Arts Development Fund

The Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Tablelands Regional Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.

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Links:

<http://www.trc.qld.gov.au/lifestyle-leisure/regional-arts-development-fund/>

Outcomes

- The children involved in the Atherton Children's Art Club have not only developed their creative skills, they have also increased their self-confidence through expressing themselves through their art and sharing their experiences with other like-minded children.
- The Art Club has provided new employment opportunities for local artists, as well as supporting their growth professionally as teaching artists.
- The teachers, volunteer parents and committee members have created a safe, informal learning environment which fulfils an unmet need for creative opportunities for children in Atherton.
- The children have gained community recognition for their creative contribution and the positive impact the Art Club has had on their town, including their participation in the Graffiti Stop program across four Tableland towns.
- A key measure of the success of the Art Club is that it has a waiting list and is now financially independent.



Working on the mockup of the final design for the Café Atherton exhibition (Image by Colin Trigwell)

Participant feedback

I enjoy the diverse range of art techniques....It's inspiring me to attempt new art forms and get my own style...It makes me feel good when I create things. Art Club participant

I am relieved that finally a kids' art club is up and running and that so many competent volunteers are behind it. The children seemed so pleased with themselves at the exhibition opening and they seemed proud, as I am, to be part of the club. Committee member

The appetite of the students for knowledge of art processes and techniques was inspiring and gives me great hope for the future. Everyone knows creativity leads to resourceful, innovative solutions, which is what the world needs and why the arts are so vital in education. Teaching artist

Learnings and reflections

On reflecting on the progress of the Art Club since its beginnings in 2014, the committee recognised the importance of seed funding from programs such as the Regional Arts Development Fund.

This grant gave us the opportunity to set up a pilot art club and trial community engagement. It allowed us to purchase materials and the services of professional art teachers/practitioners, test costings and evaluate children's participation, enjoyment and learning.

The funding also allowed the Club to develop more quickly than expected. *The club is still in its early stages, but due to the commitment of a number of people, it has come a long way in a short time. I am impressed with administration practices and systems put in place to ensure things are running smoothly from the top down. Teaching artist*