



**EDUCATING  
THE FUTURE**

Annual Report  
2025



**25**



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# Welcome!

Welcome to Educating The Future's 2024-2025 Annual Report! This Report is an opportunity for us to showcase some of the highlights that have made the year so special! Come take a look at what we've been up to this year, and thank you for being a part of our success!

Firstly, we would like to thank all of our volunteers and supporters in Timor-Leste, Australia, and internationally. Our team is the nucleus of our work and these fantastic volunteers now spread all over the world have been collaborating on improving educational outcomes for Timorese children since 2016!

Educating The Future remains one of the only organisations building public preschools in Timor-Leste. We are a purposeful, future-minded, cross-cutting and sustainable organisation committed to constructing a safe and equitable future for Timorese youth. In the past year, we have seen success in both our domestic and international programs, with our Young Leader Development Program and Preschool Development Programs reaching the

largest number of children in our near 10-year history!

Consistent with everything this organisation continues to achieve, every accomplishment belongs not only to the volunteers and communities, but to all the stakeholders, donors, collaborators and supporters who have trusted this organisation for nine long years. All achievements detailed within this report are yours to celebrate as much as they are ours! Welcome to Educating The Future's 2024-2025 Annual Report, and thank you for building dreams alongside us.

Thank you to everyone who picks up our Report every year, and thank you to everyone who are picking it up for the first time.

Thank you and welcome!

# Benvindu!

Benvindu ba Relatóriu Anuál 2024/25 husi Educating The Future! Ami hakarak hato'o komunikasaun kona-ba aspetu ida-ne'ebe esensial ne'ebe halo tinan 2024/25 nian.

Uluk nanain, amihakarak agradese ba ema hotu-hotu ne'ebe hanesan voluntáriu no sorumutu sira iha Timor-Leste, Austrália no internasionál. Hamutuk ho ema hotu-hotu sira ne'e, ami konstrui moris uluk husi tinan 2016 horekordu edukasaun ba labarik sira! Obrigado ba ema hotu-hotu ne'ebe apoia ami nia relatóriu iha loron-loron, no ba ema hotu-hotu sira ne'ebe halo hodi maifoin relatóriu ida-ne'e!

Educating The Future kontinua hanesan aas ida-ne'ebe konstrui pré-eskolár públiku iha Timor-Leste. Itania organizasaun hela ba maibé ura, futuru, hamutuk no sustentavel ne'ebe komprometeatu konstrui futuru justu no seguru bajuventude Timor-Leste. Iha tinan kotuk ne'e, ami asiste ba programa nasional no internasionál,

ho programa Dezenvolvimentu Lider Juvenil no Dezenvolvimentu Preskolanian, ne'ebe hala'o hodi lori familia barak liu sai mak iha.

Hanesan ho aweida-ne'ebe ami bele oras ne'ebe nia labele realise mosu ho atu bele remata; hanesan atu barak idane'ebe kontinua halo, susesu hotu tuir itania voluntáriu sira no komunidad sira, maibé mos ba hotu-hotu ne'ebe konsernido kona-ba dezenvolvimentu edukasaun Timor-Leste nian.

Itania susesu hotu-hotu ne'e, sei hotu-hotu nian atufesteja tanba ne'ebe halo la'os ami deit, maibé hotu-hotu hanesan! Benvindu ba Relatóriu Anuál 2024/25 husi Educating The Future no obrigadu ba konstrui moris hamutuk hoami.



## Educating the Future's 2025 in Review

As we reflect on the 2024-2025 period and the successes that come with it, and celebrate our tenth year of operating as an organisation, we are, as always, incredibly proud. Our hallmark fundraisers once again packed out rooms, parks and halls, and we could not be happier to share that in the last year, we completed the construction and inaugurated of both our sixth and our seventh preschools, which are now currently operating in regional areas of Timor-Leste.

One of our most exciting progressions to emerge out of the last year's work, is the significant expansion of our team in Timor-Leste. With the officially registered Timorese branch of Educating the Future now operating out of our Timorese office in Dilli, we have welcomed new Timorese staff, who offer our organisation invaluable first-hand knowledge

of Timor-Leste's culture, history and work methodologies. Joined by our ever-growing Australian volunteer-base, Educating the Future could not be prouder to act as a platform from which a new generation of leaders emerge into the sector. The achievements of Educating the Future outlined in the following review testify to our organisation's continued ambition and the incredible commitment of our volunteers to our cause.

### On our model

Educating the Future offers a valuable and neatly refined program, which relies on a cost-effective and high-quality, community-led model. This model is what ensures that Timorese communities are empowered through education, and we have been consistently improving and refining it to ensure the best possible outcomes since our inception ten

years ago. Its value can be understood both directly and by taking a broader view.

The direct value of our program lies in economically empowering communities throughout the course of construction, which culminates with the completion of a public preschool teaching the local curriculum and working to uplift the overall education system. In light of this, children who likely would not have had the opportunity to attend preschool, are afforded the critical opportunity to invest in their early childhood years. This results in a firm foundation for children to begin their schooling, and impacts not only on the child in question, but also on their family.

The macroscopic view can be understood when acknowledging how this individualised value extends to benefit the local community that the child and its family are party to, and the national contributions it has later on for national education standards, and skilled labour for the entire country. When this benefit is weighed according to the adaptability of our program to various regions in Timor-Leste, the scope of value our model offers becomes evident.

Once completed, our schools are handed over to the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education who Educating the Future has proudly held a strong relationship with over our last seven years of work. MEJD and the Timorese government also work to sustain and maintain the schools following their completion. As they function, our schools become community hubs that empower children, their families and the broader community network. Many community leaders, elders, parents and friends, join the School Management Committee (SMC) – a community-led committee of engaged leaders we establish at the start of the school's



construction – who support the school's growth and continuation. We have found almost all of these SMCs have continued long after the completion of our projects, showing a strong sense of local ownership in the maintenance and stewardship of these projects.

Perhaps the most valuable feature of our model is how adaptable it can be to the varied regions of Timor-Leste. Working alongside the Ministry of Education, allows Educating the Future to nationalise its impact and direct support to locally-defined, high-needs areas. Operating from a localised understanding of sustainable development, ensures the longevity of our projects. As an organisation, we've understood our value to be the trust we place in our model and local partnerships, and our firm belief in empowering local development rather than implementing foreign systems. This is reflected in Educating the Future's 90% overall community satisfaction rate, and is the reason for our significant expansion of our Timorese

team over the last year – who are the most qualified at ensuring this is achieved to a high standard.

We have spent 7 years refining this model, and the accomplishments of the 2024-2025 period are the glorious fruits that blossom from this dedication. Our year is best measured by domains that characterise us as an effective, for-purpose educational organisation working to deliver locally-owned and accessible, high-quality preschool education. Our fundraisers, programs, partners and constantly evolving strategy are the broad categories that our year's efforts are dedicated to. 2024-2025 can most acutely be summarised by innovation atop the compounding momentum of recent years. Our fundraisers provide the perfect opportunity for our supporters to meet our volunteers who consistently and tirelessly work behind the scenes at Educating the Future, raising both the critical funds and the awareness that brings our goals into fruition.



Our programs are the destination for the money we raise, and we are so proud to state that we are a value-for-money organisation, delivering a large portion of all collected funds to our programs and local Timorese people. Our Preschool Access Program is the heart and soul of our organisation. It is the vessel through which we enact our plan for sustainable development and is the primary resource our volunteers spend countless hours refining and improving.

### On our involvement with the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

One highlight from Educating the Future's from the 2024-2025 period, is our ongoing membership with the ACFID. Alongside the governance and best practice standards that come with being a party to such a council, this opportunity connects Educating the Future with a powerful network of like-minded organisations, alongside the opportunity to enter into dialogue with them regarding overlapping issues across the sector. ACFID also provides Educating the Future with a multitude of support services, training and resources. Educating The Future is incredibly proud of this membership and looks forward to the advancements that it will bring for the organisation in years to come. With our CEO Adam Hegedus sitting on the ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee for a first term of three years, Educating the Future is able to gain first hand insight into the mechanisms that underpin international development and humanitarian organisations.

### On our 2024-2025 fundraisers

Educating the Future held two major fundraising events in the 2024-2025 period, with our 10-

Year Anniversary Gala hosting 300+ guests and is set to be held on 29th November, 2025 at Waverly College.

### Byron's Walk

On the 10th of February, Byron Bruce James undertook his second mammoth fundraising venture for Educating the Future, walking 1,600 km from Sydney to the most Southern tip of Tasmania. Byron exceeded his fundraising goal, raising \$7,035 and spending over six months walking in gruelling winter conditions. Byron's walk was a demonstration that emulates the plight faced by countless Timorese children to attend school, and mimics the foundational walk of our founders Adam and Alexi back in 2015. Byron's immense efforts saw him feature on channel 7 news, and was one of the biggest fundraisers for the year.

### Touch World Cup

The second major fundraiser was our Touch World Cup tournament. Hosted annually at Easts Rugby Club in Randwick, this year saw an unprecedented turn out and record rates of enrollment from participants, with 27 teams, 300 players and over 175 spectators. The Touch World Cup raised over \$25K in funds, and this staggering contribution goes directly towards our projects and plans to be implemented over the next year.

### Other Notable Achievements

There are a range of other immense achievements from the 2024-2025 period that we are proud to talk to. As aforementioned, our organisation underwent significant expansions in Timor-Leste, and with this, came many new opportunities. In the conclusive months of 2024, our Timorese team, joined by our CEO and Co-Founder Adam, met with Timorese





government officials, the Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste, NGOs such as UNICEF, donors and community beneficiary groups, and companies with partnership potential to check in on, gain insights and improve our organisation's Timorese affairs.

Following the official establishment of our Timor-Leste branch in May of 2025, via registering it with the National Directorate of Notary and Registry in the Ministry of Justice and Timor-Leste and the significant expansion of our work force to operate it – including a new Country Director, a Youth Program Manager, Program + Operations Coordinators, and consultants to inform our After School Program, we worked to improve our protocols and practices across all sectors, informed by Timorese knowledge. In May of 2025, we inaugurated our 6th preschool in Nunutari Ermera, and closely afterwards in July of 2025, we inaugurated our 7th in Manuela Dili, funded by SundaGas company.

This last year demonstrates the leaps our organisation is making not just in terms of capacity, but also in the quality of work we

are able to deliver. This momentum stands as a testament to ten years of experience and passion, and will be both continued and added to in years to come as we continue to strive towards a world where all children, no matter who or where they are, have access to a safe and quality education.

### On our Young Leader Development Program

The other side of work is our Young Leader Development Program which embodies our commitment to our volunteers in both Australia and Timor-Leste. This program focuses on equipping young professionals with the skills they will need to succeed in the for-purpose sector. Educating the Future is the product of successfully implemented and maintained governance and due diligence procedures, effective communication both within and beyond the organisation, effective leadership in a collaborative working environment and many other skills that our young leaders are exposed to routinely. Many young leaders rose to the challenges presented by such occasions and have excelled in their professional development in the 2024-2025 period.

## Our 2024-2025

Lastly, over the course of the last financial year, Educating the Future is proud to have collected nearly \$71,000 AUD in donations. This immense figure directly translates into better educational outcomes for Timorese children and is a testament to all of our volunteers, whose collective hours spent working for our organisation in the last year amount to the value of \$33,595. This last year has also seen an immense expansion of our virtual reach, with our social media platforms – including our Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn – accumulating 23,00 followers and supporters from around the globe. These figures stand as a testament to the invaluable nature of Educating

the Future's work, the incredible dedication of our team and the generosity of our partners, supporters and donors. As this period draws to a close, we extend our thanks to all who have contributed to these figures in any and all capacity. While our fundraising efforts have been limited, we have invested into our grant applications, governance and development outcomes to ensure that our requests for funding are aligned with best practice, evidence and are effective.

We are Educating The Future and we are in the business of empowering Timorese youth through the power of education.

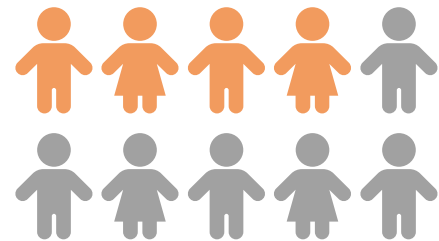


# Status of Early Childhood Education in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste falls below this critically low average, with nearly 4 in 10 children attending preschool.

Education is one of the most important social processes, driving development for individuals and society. Access to education is vital for the alleviation of poverty, achieving gender equality, economic security, improving health and wellbeing, and establishing peace. The strengthening of education systems also allows democracy to flourish and makes way for political stability, where people can get to know their rights and how to exercise them (Centre for Global Development 2025). When a child has access to education, they are empowered to reach for their dreams and have confidence in their future (UNESCO, 2021). Education the Future works to raise awareness that when early childhood education is prioritised, this development is possible.

Globally, far too few children are enrolled and attending preschool education programs. UNICEF reports that a mere 4 in 10 preschool-aged children are enrolled in early childhood education programs. Timor-Leste still falls below this critically low average, with a 26.7% preschool enrolment rate in 2018 (UNICEF, p. 22) with only a small increase to 32% in 2025



(President Ramos-Horta, 2025). The peripheral benefits of early childhood education programs are far-reaching and have the potential to exponentially increase social development capacities. From social competency to emotional development, prioritising early childhood education forms the fundamental foundation upon which a quality education can then be built.

The story in Timor-Leste is convoluted, with radical disparities between urban areas and rural or remote areas, and a lack of official data to track changes (AIR 2022, page 38). UNICEF reports that 37% of youth aged 15-24 are illiterate, and this is compared to just 6% of youth in urban areas. An equal access to quality preschool and high school education for kids living rurally remains one of the largest obstacles. There are still many rural and remote parts of Timor-Leste where preschools do not exist, even though 72% of the population live in rural areas. UNICEF also reports that roughly 70% of grade one students do not meet basic learning outcomes and requirements. Prioritising access to early childhood education is the first step. Data gathered by UNICEF

shows that where early childhood education has been prioritised, children flourish in later stages of education, with enrollment and attendance rates significantly higher than instances where preschool education was limited in accessibility. This is an issue that we are directly addressing at Educating the Future by prioritising building preschools in rural areas of Timor-Leste to bridge the urban-rural gap and keep kids in schools for longer.

In 2011, the Timor-Leste government published its National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2011-2030 which strengthened the integration of preschool education into the national education sector. The NESP made way for Timor-Leste’s Policy Framework for Preschool Education which addresses prominent areas of strategic focus, including expanding the availability of quality preschool education, the development of a national curriculum and standards-based monitoring and evaluation system (AIR 2022, page 28 & 29). This framework, and the NESP, are an important step forward in providing Timorese children with equal access to early childhood education and our work at Educating the Future positively

compliments this progress.

2025 remains a critical time for Timor-Leste, where the future security and prosperity of the nation must continue to be at the forefront of both policy making and developmental strategies. For Educating the Future, and our important stakeholders and collaborators, we believe that this must begin with early childhood education, funding the educational development sector and increasing the amount of preschools in Timor-Leste to increase access to education. Access is the fundamental starting point. By looking at our own research, monitoring and evaluating procedures, we are able to assess our programs to ensure that we stay guided by these goals. Having conducted an analysis of Social Return on Investment reports in 2022, it was revealed that for every dollar invested into early childhood education and preschool, there is up to a \$17 USD social return. This analysis was supported by Nobel Prize Research and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and is evidence that we use to steer our work at Educating the Future.



# CEO's Foreward



*Adam Hegedus*  
**Managing Director**

As we reflect on our journey in 2024/25, I am proud to highlight our continued collaboration with the Ministry of Education, which has now formally spanned eight years.

Together, we are addressing Timor-Leste's critical gap in early childhood education, an issue that remains a top priority on the Prime Minister's agenda, second only to nutrition, which intersects closely with our work. Aligning with the priorities of the nation underpins our goal of localisation and ensuring that our development work is supporting a collaborative agenda of progress. We have been proudly working on our new After School Play

program design with local experts and consultants and excited to pilot an evidence-based and community-aligned program.

Over the past nearly ten years since our first walk, our efforts have culminated in significant milestones, including the completion of our fifth preschool and a successful inauguration ceremony that celebrated this achievement. This year, we have focused on strengthening our team, to ensure that we have the necessary capacity and sustainability to support our growing programs. This includes a stronger presence of Timorese volunteers who will continue to implement education programs with communities.

We continue to use findings from our application to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) as a guiding light to our work to ensure it is compliant and best practice. This comprehensive review evaluated our organisation across five key areas: governance, finance, partnerships, quality, and communications. The insights gained from this review have illuminated areas for uplift within Educating the Future, and I extend our sincere appreciation to the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Technical Advisors who supported this critical assessment. While unsuccessful in our application we aspire to this high level of accreditation in the future and look to act on comprehensive feedback provided with a clear actionable work plan. We have pivoted recently as a response to the feedback learnt to design a new Play After School program, a first of its kind program in Timor-Leste, with the support of local expert consultants, communities, parents, educators and the government.

Engaging more with Australian government departments and funders remains a priority as we look to broaden our impact. As I reflect on my personal journey leading this organisation for nearly ten years since our inaugural walk in November 2015, I am excited about the upcoming fundraising events, particularly celebrating a decade of impact at our Annual Gala Dinner in November 2025.

Our governance and compliance efforts are reinforced by our Board and Finance Committee, who ensure that we uphold the highest standards. I would like to extend my gratitude to our dedicated team members in Timor-Leste and Australia who continue to conduct essential monitoring and evaluation



activities. I would also like to highlight Kim Gago for her work as Acting CEO supporting all areas of the organisation's growth balancing full-time work.

Our ongoing focus on risk management remains vital, as we continuously review changes to government policy, key person risks, long-term financial sustainability, and strategic obstacles. Additionally, we are committed to environmental management, drawing on local community wisdom to understand the impacts of our initial building phase and addressing the ongoing challenges posed by the climate emergency. We will continue to address cross-

cutting issues and monitor organisational, project and compliance risk as we scale and localise.

I am proud to announce that we continue to distribute significant funds directly to communities and the partners, School Management Committees we support and establish, underscoring our commitment to impactful initiatives. I would also like to recognize our new joiners, whose fresh perspectives and energy will be invaluable to our mission. Our work directly confronts early childhood education access, poverty alleviation in a way that is respectful, sustainable and localised. Led by Matthew Dunne and Tyler Von Der Heyden, our Programs Team is now focused more than ever on development outcomes, cross-cutting issues, ensuring child protection is enshrined in the culture of our pre-school programs, while responding to emerging needs of communities and beneficiaries, as partners.

Thank you to everyone involved in making our programs happen on the ground. Namely, our wonderful National Partnerships Manager Camilo Fatima, who continues to work with the Ministry of Education HANDS Pre-School Program, delivering incredible outcomes for children. Alongside him are Country Director Cirilo Soares, Programs and Operations Coordinator Santino Frenky de Araujo and Programs Coordinator Nina Alves Guterres Pereira. Thank you to our advisors in-country who continue to support us, including from the HANDS Pre-School Programme with the Ministry of Education; Stuart Mathews, Marie Quinn, Richard Hellyer, Pedro Barreto Ximenes, Maun Augusto Soares and the entire team making our ongoing partnership with the MoE and HANDS effective and aligned.



This would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our Board members, Jessica Irving (outgoing), Vivian Stephens, John Cucinotta, Jenny Katrivesis and Oscar Osborne, who actively participated in all our activities from Board meetings to involvement in our Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, donations and supporting with their specific areas of expertise across law, program design, evaluation and finance. Our operational improvements continue to evolve, with a strong focus on enhancing our overall program to strengthen development outcomes.

I am personally excited to visit Timor-Leste in 2026 for my 15th visit. This visit symbolises the resilience and strength of our team in continuing our work sustainably. We remain committed to supporting the Ministry of Education's goal of achieving 60% preschool enrollment by 2028, a significant increase from the current rates of 20-30%. We have been invited to participate in strategic planning efforts with the Ministry of Education.

This year, after completing my MBA at Oxford

after a rigorous Master of Public Policy, which has equipped me with a strategic and governance mindset, I have taken on a full time role as General Manager of Teach Us Consent Global. I look forward to bringing insights across both organisations to drive improvements for children and vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, I am proud to serve as a member of the Australian Council for International Development's Code of Conduct Committee, which upholds and reviews the Code regulating 140 Australian international NGOs, of which Educating the Future is a full member. We are also working towards due diligence on our localization plan, aiming to shift our resources and base operations to in-country initiatives. I would like to thank ACFID for their continual support of our organisation and alignment with best practice standards.

Together, we are paving the way for transformational change in the lives of children in Timor-Leste. Thank you to our dedicated team, partners, and supporters for your unwavering commitment to our mission.



# Chairperson's Foreward



*Oscar Osborne*  
**Chairperson**

I am honoured to present the 2025 Annual Report as Chairperson of Educating The Future. This year marks a decade since Co-Founders Adam and Alexi's walk to establish this organisation. Over those ten years, they have built a legacy that I am proud to have been part of, and I look forward to seeing that legacy grow as we continue our work in Timor-Leste.

Our tenth anniversary year has brought both notable achievements and fresh challenges, all underpinned by the unwavering commitment of our people, programs, partners, and supporters. Together, they form the backbone of our work and guide us in pursuing our mission.

Over the past year, we made substantial progress in our operations and projects, each step bringing us closer to empowering remote Timorese communities through preschool education. We began constructing our seventh preschool and establishing a new education system at a preschool in Dili Municipality, and we are thrilled with the progress. The commitment shown by all communities we have worked with has been inspiring, with everyone playing a vital role in moving each project forward.

Our international team's dedication and vision continue to drive our success. In Timor-Leste, our programs are led



by Country Director, Cirilo Soares, National Partnership Manager, Camilo Fatima, and Program & Operations Coordinators, Frenky de Araujo and Nina Kagome, together with our network of volunteers. Their efforts bring our commitment to community-led education to life, with Timorese voices and values at the heart of our approach. As an Australian organisation deeply rooted in the Timorese community, we are proud to foster local empowerment and create a lasting impact.

At Educating The Future, our people are our greatest strength. This year, several team members went above and beyond. I want to recognise Kim Gago, Emma Newman, Jie Rui Lin, Anna Gonzalez, Raphaella Katzen, Alec Lesmond, Alexi Piovano, and Matt Dunne for their exceptional contributions; their hard work and leadership have been pivotal to

our growth. I also want to thank our Board members for their unwavering support, and especially acknowledge Grace Harding, whose invaluable work as Secretary has played a crucial role in our progress. I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Jessica Irving, who retired from the Board this year; her many years of governance, legal, and financial support have left a lasting legacy at Educating The Future.

A significant milestone this year was designing a new national option for early childhood education, working alongside the Ministry of Education and local communities. This work reflects our long-term commitment to systems-level change, not only building schools but helping shape the structures that will sustain early learning for generations to come.

Our commitment to transparency and efficient resource management remains a core principle. We continue to provide value for money and maintain strong oversight of our financial expenditure. Our adherence to regulatory standards reflects our dedication to responsible stewardship, ensuring every contribution is used to drive meaningful change. For this, I would like to thank our Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Chair and Treasurer, John Cucinotta, and our Chief of Finance, Maddie Newman.

The partnerships that support our work are essential to our mission. We are grateful for our ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of

Education and programs like HANDS, which enable us to create enriching play environments that enhance children's learning. We extend special thanks to The Dinner Ladies for their steadfast support over the past nine years, and to every supporter who believes in our mission to expand educational opportunities for young people.

The generosity of our community, both here in Australia and abroad, empowers us to deepen our impact and extend our reach. As we look to the future, we are eager to embrace new opportunities, form meaningful partnerships, and make a positive difference.



# The History of Timor-Leste


In order to holistically comprehend Educating the Future's purpose of facilitating children's access to and quality of education in Timor-Leste, a brief overview of the history of Timor-Leste people is first required.

For 450 years, Timor-Leste was under Portuguese colonial rule. Throughout this period of occupation, Timor-Leste was continuously subjected to frequent and violent territorial conflicts. Portugal, which occupied the East section of the island of Timor, often fought with the Dutch-ruled sector of the Island. Alongside these territorial clashes between the two colonial powers which continued into the 19th Century and through both World Wars, the local Timorese communities, their cultural traditions, practices and livelihoods were paid little regard (Lucas, M., Cabrita, I., & Ferreira, A. 2015). Like many colonies throughout this era, the land of Timor-Leste was seen merely as a means for agricultural pursuits, and the Timorese people a means for labour.

This era of colonial rule was therefore characterised by strict taxes on farming that left many Timorese communities

living in extreme poverty, high levels of forced labour and violence. As Portugal prospered greatly due to the coffee, cotton and sugar produced at the expense of the Timorese people, they actively minimised the cultural and political structures that had historically defined the region (H., David. 2014).

In 1975, Portugal at last began to decolonise its occupied regions throughout the Asian-Pacific, and in November, Timor-Leste gained its long-sought independence. This opportunity for self-determination sparked fears in the United States that their geopolitical interests would be threatened by another young democracy turning to communism. A mere 9 days later, a US-supplied Indonesian invasion of Timor-Leste toppled the nation into another period of foreign occupation. The Indonesian occupation was both oppressive and destructive. Over the next 24 years of Indonesian rule, more than 200,000 Timorese people lost their lives, and the country was subjected to a relentless military rule that saw widespread disease, famine and social unrest. In 1999, under mounting pressure from the



United Nations (UN), the international community and various Timorese nationalist movements, a referendum of independence was put to the people. In a brave act of defiance, 78.5% of Timorese residents voted to transition into a self-governed state.

facilitate humanitarian assistance operations, rebuild infrastructure and reinstate political stability. In 2001, Timor-Leste held its first free elections, and in 2002, they finally declared themselves an independent state (United Nations, 2006).

Furious at the outcome of the referendum and anxious to exert control over the nationalist rebel groups who saw an opportunity to usurp power, the Indonesian army – backed by the Indonesian militia and the United States – launched an attack on the Timorese people, and the country was thrown into civil war (United Nations, 2006). The Indonesian militia moved across the country, killing thousands of Timorese civilians, destroying 95% of the country’s infrastructure and displacing an estimated 500,000 out of 1.3 million Timorese residents, many of whom fled to neighbouring countries to survive (CIA, 2024). In the wake of the massacre, the Government of Indonesia finally accepted international assistance, and adhered to requests to back down and let foreign aid take over management of the region. The UN Security Council established the International Force East Timor [INTERFET] which used a multinational and unified command structure enforced mainly by Australian peacekeeping teams, attempting to restore order,

Since 2002, Timor-Leste has been working to overcome its history of occupation, violence and oppression. The newly instated Timorese Government has outlined access to quality education for all Timorese citizens as a key pillar in their progress towards doing so.

Understanding this history in Timor-Leste is so important in comprehending the unique social and political climate that exists there in the modern day. It is also the driving force behind the work of organisations such as Educating the Future. Alongside their goal of providing quality education to all Timorese citizens, Timor-Leste also strives to increase access to other fundamental resources such as clean water, food and sanitation. However, the devastating impact of centuries of violence, armed conflicts, and their almost complete loss of infrastructure and trained professionals, must be recognised as requiring an immense and consistent amount of support from both internal and external support networks.

# Strategic Plan & Our Contribution to Education in Timor-Leste



## Vision

A world where every child and young person flourishes.

## Purpose

To provide quality, inclusive and safe education and life skills to children and young people to improve personal growth and access to meaningful opportunities.

## Aspiration

To become a medium-sized self-sustaining NGO in Timor-Leste with international funders and partners

supporting our early childhood education and youth empowerment work in Timor-Leste, advocating for improved quality of life. As an Australian NGO, ETF provides a supporting function to utilise its localised power through resourcing, technical expertise, continuous monitoring, platforming, and empowerment.

## Values

- Evidence-based
- Value-for-money
- Locally-led
- Diversity and inclusion
- Sustainable



## Area Focus

All municipalities with work in Aileu, Dili, Ermera, Liquica, Baucau, Covalima, Atauro. Based on the needs of underserved or marginalized communities where access to quality early education, learning platforms and opportunities is limited.

## Beneficiaries

Children aged 3-10, young people aged 16-25, rural communities, women and girls, persons with disabilities, education ecosystem. Programs follow a life cycle approach.

## Intersectional perspectives

Disability inclusion, locally-led, gender equality, environmental stewardship and climate integration, digital inclusion, youth empowerment, child rights.

## Strategic objectives

Grow organisation resources and be sustainable locally-led, Australian supported organisation  
Implement and evidence early childhood and youth readiness programs effectiveness and value-for-money

## Systems of governance and operational efficiency

Empowering marginalized or vulnerable groups, children, youth and women in Timor-Leste. Raising awareness and advocating for positive change in the local community to improve the quality life of children and youth.

## Our Approach

We work closely with the MoE, President of the Municipal Authority, local authority and community.

## Sustainability into exit plan

Strong monitoring and evaluation. We seek to collaborate but not duplicate collaboration efforts and have a partnership-led approach, a locally-led approach, and an evidence-led approach designed by local experts and people.



## Educating the Future's contribution to education in Timor-Leste

As a not-for-profit organisation, Educating The Future uses its funds to build free, public and quality preschools in regional areas of Timor-Leste and support the community to uplift their schooling outcomes. Educating The Future also runs early childhood education programs that focus on direct learning interventions that are measurable and curriculum aligned. In doing so, Educating The Future hopes to provide a positive foundational introduction to schooling that compels Timorese children to complete their primary and secondary studies. All of Educating the Future's preschools are equipped with basic hygiene and WASH (water, sanitation) facilities, as well as free food services for students and employees - nutrition being a key component to learning outcomes and access.

Additionally, we employ members of the community throughout the construction, operation and management processes. In doing so, Educating the Future works under to facilitate the implementation of the The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal #4; 'Quality Education'. Through our model, which is continuously refined and adapted according to location, climate and the needs of the local community, Educating the Future aims to facilitate the development of local networks, systems of knowledge and prosperity.

Educating the Future was established in 2016, after Co-Founders Mr Adam Hegedus (Managing Director) and Mr Alessandro Piovano (Chief of Communications) raised \$19,165 walking 800 km in 3-weeks in late 2015 following their high-school graduation. Together with Cirilo Soares,

the team Co-Founded Educating The Future in-country. Educating the Future is proudly led by young Australian and Timorese volunteers, and is governed by a Board of Directors, a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Fundraising Committee and a Timor-Leste Strategic Advisory Panel.

Educating the Future’s mission is to empower members of impoverished communities to achieve an improved quality of life and to award them the capacity to realise their potential. Educating the Future’s vision is a world in which all children have access to a quality early childhood education, through which they may achieve foundational learning outcomes. The organisation works towards the UNSDG4 for quality-education, focused on early childhood education interventions, namely pre-school construction, capacity building and access campaigns.

Educating the Future raises funds in Australia that are invested in the long-term capacity of School Management Committees in Timor-Leste, which are Educating the Future’s primary implementing partner. Educating the

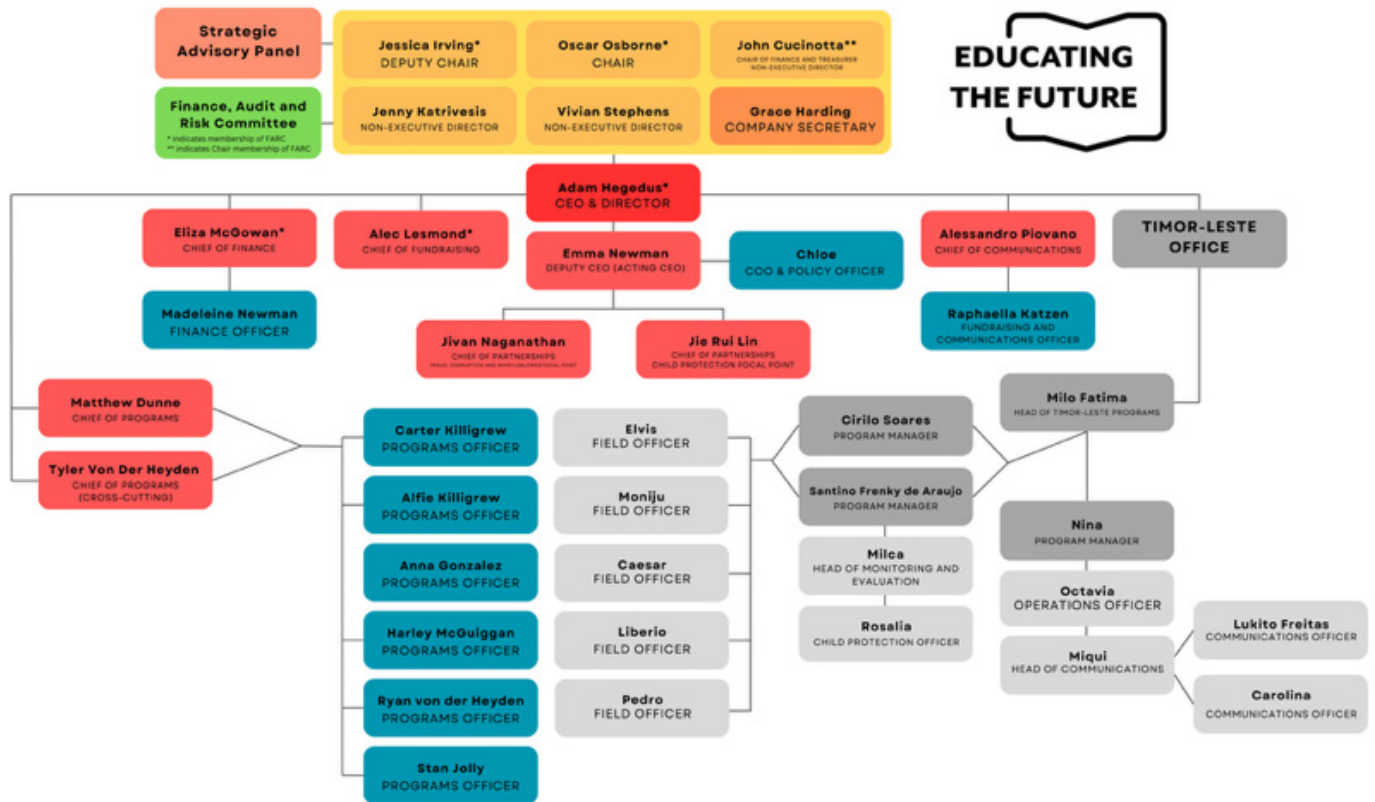
Future also partners with various government ministries and departments in Timor-Leste, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding. Funding is predominantly sourced from Australian public donations, and some corporate donors. In 2018, Educating the Future received funding (\$58,960) from the DFAT Friendship Grant to invest in two community pre-school systems.

Educating the Future’s team is wholly voluntary, and consists of 22 Australian based volunteers and 11 in-county volunteers. Recently the organisation onboarded its first full-time staff after nine years of volunteering. The team is currently managing a portfolio of two projects in one country, with an annual budget of A\$100,000. Educating the Future has a Programs, Finance and Compliance Team, as well as field staff (volunteers) in Timor-Leste. In-country field staff focus on project implementation, with Australian based volunteers focus on planning and Monitoring, and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

Educating the Future is not a member of an international alliance or network.



# Organisation Structure & Our People



**CEO:** Adam Hegedus

**Acting Deputy CEO:** Kim Gago

**Deputy CEO:** Emma Newman

**Country Director:** Cirilo Soares

**Timor-Leste Partnerships Manager:** Milo Fatima

**Program & Operations Coordinator:** Santino Frenky de Araujo

**Program & Operations Coordinator:** Nina Kagome

**Company Secretary:** Grace Harding

**Chief Fundraising Officer:** Alec Lesmond

**Chief Finance Officer:** Maddie Newman

**Chief of Programs:** Matthew Dunne

**Chief of Communications:** Alessandro Piovano

**Chief of Programs (Cross-Cutting):** Tyler Von Der Heyden

**Chief of Partnerships:** Jie Rui Lin

**Chief of Partnerships:** Jivan Naganathan

**Communications & Fundraising Officer:** Raphaella Katzen

**Programs Officer:** Ryan Von Der Heyden

**Programs Officer:** Harley McGuiggan

**Programs Officer:** Alfie Killigrew

**Programs Officer:** Carter Killigrew

**Programs Officer:** Anna Gonzalez

**Policy Officer:** Chloe de Torres

**Field Officer (Timor-Leste):** Nijo da Costa de Carvalho

**Field Officer (Timor-Leste):** Pedro Noursu Pinto Jeronimo

**Field Officer (Timor-Leste):** Caesario Fernandes

**Field Officer (Timor-Leste):** Alcario Erlander Liberio

**Communications (Graphic Design) Officer (Timor-Leste):**

Lukito Freitas

# Country Director Report



*Cirilo Soares*

## Country Director

As Country Director, I am proud to announce the successful work completed by my team in 2024/25 in Timor-Leste. I am particularly proud that we opened our branch in Timor-Leste supported by an amazing team with Milo Fatima, Frenky de Araujo and Nina Kagome to begin. We set up our processes for scale with good partnership and governance systems with our Australian organisation. Announcing the incredible work completed by Educating the Future in Timor-Leste this past year:

- Completed constructed Educating The Future's sixth preschool in Ermera with three classroom and currently 76 children consisted of 40 male and 36 female enrolled.
- Signed the agreement partnership with Sunda gas local company for construction of our seventh preschool in Dili and completed the construction project and inaugurated by the National Director of Education.
- Completed locally registered Educating The Future as local NGO in National Directorate of Registries and Notaries under the Ministry of Justice Timor-Leste.
- Completed recruiting 4 local full-time staff for running the ETF new program.
- Established Educating The Future local office in Dili Timor-Leste and fully operated by local staff.
- Strong cooperation with Ministry of Education and National Directorate of Preschool Education, resulted actively invited in meetings and coordination for early childhood education development program in Timor-Leste include admitted become active member Technical Working Group for decision making, policy development and review early childhood education development plan for 2025-2028.
- Invited to attend two National Conferences of early childhood

education development Timor-Leste.

- Completed design of our new After School Program, an innovative, evidence-based first program for the nation, and introduced it to counterparts at the Ministry of Education including National Directorate of Preschool Education.
- Completed ETF new program introduction and implementation strategy to President Authority of Ermera Municipality and Aileu, and Director of Education Municipal Service Ermera and Aileu as the first municipal for implementing ETF new expansion program include After School Program for Early Childhood Education and Rural Women Outreach Program.
- Completed After School Program consultation workshop in 4 preschools, engaged by 280 people include local authorities, teachers and parents from four Village in Dili and Ermera Municipality.
- Established good connection with International NGO in Timor-Leste that work in relevant program include Alola Foundation, ChildFund, Maluk Timor.

We look forward to the exciting plans in 2026:

- Establish after school program in 20 preschools with 1000 children expecting to be enrolled.
- Recruited 5 local facilitators to facilitate the after-school program in 10 preschools.
- Discuss with Ministry of Education to review the current MoU to include ETF new program expansion of after school program for early childhood education.
- Discuss with Ministry of Education to support learning materials to the after-school program and about sustainable integration of this learning program.
- Complete fundraising activities in Dili and Timor-Leste to support sustainability.
- Liaising with INGO and NGO work on relevant program of Early Childhood Education in Timor-Leste for partnership.
- Open internship program for Timorese graduates and youth.
- Launching the English professional program for youth and students, including digital literacy skills.
- Implementing the rural women program including providing training.
- Launching and supporting small grants for youth entrepreneurship program in Timor-Leste.

# Acting Co-CEO's Report



*Kim Gago*

**Acting Co-CEO**

This year has been one of profound growth, reflection, and deepened community connection for Educating the Future. As we look back on the 2024–2025 period, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, partners, and Timor-Leste communities who walk beside us. Together, we continue to witness the remarkable power of young people — across both nations — to shape a future where every child has the opportunity to learn, play, and thrive.

This has been a pivotal year in our organisation's evolution. With approximately 85% of our funds directed to program delivery, we have strengthened our financial stewardship and ensured that donor contributions create tangible, high-value impact. Despite economic pressures in Australia, our revenue has remained stable, and we

have secured significant new partners, including SundaGas, who enabled the construction of our seventh preschool. Their support reflects the growing confidence of corporate stakeholders in the maturity, governance, and sustainability of our model.

A major milestone this year was the establishment of our Dili office, marking our shift from a youth-led volunteer organisation to a locally anchored, professionally staffed entity. With four full-time team members — a Country Director, Program Manager, ECE Program Manager, and Partnerships Manager — we now have the operational capability, cultural alignment, and on-the-ground presence needed to deliver high-quality, community-led programs with consistency and care.

This strengthened presence has already created clear benefits: more frequent school visits, greater visibility of community needs, improved safeguarding practices, and real-time collaboration with School Management Teams and government partners.

This transformation underscores our commitment to localisation — not as a strategic trend, but as a fundamental belief that the most enduring change is led by the communities themselves. One of our proudest achievements this

year was the launch of our Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program, fully funded by Educating the Future and designed by Timorese subject matter experts. More than 500 young children across our seven partner schools will benefit from this program, which focuses on the developmental foundations of early learning — play, curiosity, literacy, and social exploration. Early results have been deeply encouraging, with parents engaging more actively in school life and communities recognising the value of early childhood development as a shared responsibility. This shift toward local ownership is the most powerful indicator that the program will sustain and grow far beyond our initial investment.

Our communities have also shown extraordinary leadership. In Xanana Nunutali, parents and community members have worked alongside volunteers and local staff to advance our seventh preschool at record pace. Moments like these — where families proudly gather on-site, where teachers collaborate with parents, where younger siblings peek curiously into classrooms — capture the heart of our mission. They remind us that education in Timor-Leste is not just a system to be built, but a community movement to be nurtured.

As we look to the year ahead, our priorities reflect both ambition and grounded responsibility. We will scale our ECE program, deepen community partnerships, invest in the skills and leadership of our Dili-based team, strengthen school management capacity, and pursue diversified financial partnerships to ensure long-term stability. These efforts are essential to expanding our impact while honouring the communities we serve.

To every Australian donor, volunteer, supporter, and reader of this report: your generosity is the reason more children are stepping into safe, joyful learning spaces. Your support strengthens governance, builds local leadership, and opens pathways for early childhood education that simply would not exist otherwise. You are part of a global community that believes in the potential of every child — and that belief is changing lives.

As the needs in Timor-Leste continue to grow, we remain steady, committed, and hopeful. We invite you to continue this journey with us — to stand with our Timorese team, to help us build momentum, and to be part of a future where education is not a privilege, but a promise.

Thank you for your trust, your belief in our mission, and your partnership in creating lasting change.

An extended thanks to our Board of Directors, our Executive Leadership Team, and our Timorese Leadership team for your unwavering commitment to the cause of our organisation and in building continued impact for years to come.

# Our Early Childhood Education & Learning

We are proud to announce that we have educated over 2000 children in Timor-Leste through our seven preschools across five Municipalities. With a new After-School Play Program in design, developed in collaboration with local experts and aligned with the Education Strategic Plan 2026-2030, we aim to contribute to the Ministry of Education's 60% enrolment target for 2030.

Our early childhood education program has been the cornerstone of Educating the Future since its inception. Starting with the construction of a preschool in Railaco Motohare, an enrollment campaign and improving play spaces, materials and accessibility. This program has since been focused on community-built preschools in regional and rural areas of Timor-Leste. It leverages an evidence-based approach and one that recognises the unique strengths of each community we work with, from when we establish and support the School Management Committee to working with the Parent Teacher Authority.

By partnering with the Ministério da Educação, Juventude e Desporto (MEJD), Timorese National Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Educating the Future has been able to assist Timor's national education goals. This is a significant achievement for the organisation and one that reflects its foundational belief in empowering local systems rather than introducing foreign ideas. We are incredibly

proud of this, and have been for over 9 years. Within the preschool access program, Educating the Future works as a facilitator and funder of the construction process, which is led by the community. During the construction process, Educating the Future works to develop the skills within the community, such as their financial reporting and program management skills, allowing for future projects to be undertaken. It improves the sustainability of education management.

As such, Educating the Future's partnership with the MEJD ensures that these preschools become public preschools, which are provided with adequate resources and teachers. Where possible, Educating the Future has also utilised its other partnerships with local NGOs to provide extra learning materials and resources to newly constructed preschools. Our program provides WASH, disability access, electricity, drinking water, gardens, playgrounds and continual youth engagement with the community responding to their needs over time and being the initial link between the government, handing the operation over to the Municipal Director of Education and ensuring its sustained success and maintenance.

ETF have been able to facilitate the construction of 7 preschools and access to over 2000 students:

**Preschool 1: Railaco Motohare - Ermera Municipality**

- Preschool 2: Fahisoi - Aileu Municipality**
- Preschool 3: Fahiten - Liquica Municipality**
- Preschool 4: Saburia – Aileu Municipality**
- Preschool 5: Loi-lubo – Baucau Municipality**
- Preschool 6: Xanana Nunutali - Ermera Municipality**
- Preschool 7: Manleu - Dili Municipality**

We opened our seventh pre-school and first in Dili in mid-2025. The community welcomed representatives of the organisation alongside a network of core stakeholders to mark the completion of the project and the handing over of the keys to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MEJD). Notably, the inauguration was attended by the Secretary of State Domingos Lopes Lemos, DG Apolinario and the DNIE Helio. The project funder, Sunda Gas CE,O was also present for the inauguration.

With the transfer of the keys, the building – constructed by the local community with the financial and strategic support of Educating the Future – becomes a public preschool. This preschool will cater to Loi Lubo in Timor-Leste and its surrounding villages.

The total enrolment in the preschool has increased by 20% since the completion of construction and is projected to increase further. The preschool will teach the local curriculum and offer 53 current students a safe space to learn and play. Our communities are 90% satisfied with our engagement, and we continue to look for ways to listen, improve and uplift our work, including with our complete localisation focus.

Looking forward, Educating the Future hopes to continue the preschool access program in rural areas with another community in 2026. The current MEJD and national education agenda have put preschool education as a core focus due to the rising understanding

of the importance of pre-primary education. Educating the Future will look to aid the Timorese government through our preschool construction program, ensuring more children are able to access quality preschool education and increase engage further educational opportunities. Educating the Future will also look to build upon the community development aspect of the preschool access program by partnering with local NGOs to deliver programs to the preschool communities surrounding child protection, gender equality, disability inclusion, school readiness, adult learning, and social and emotional learning. This will help ensure that the community can develop as a whole beyond the classroom.



# Monitoring, Evaluation, & Learning



In the past years, Educating the Future has made significant strides in uplifting our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems, with support from a DFAT-funded Technical Advisor in 2023 as we prepared for our Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) application. Our established systems effectively track a portfolio of projects, enabling us to gather valuable data on our initiatives.

Our organisation collect quantitative indicators, including the number of children enrolled in our programs and the number of community members employed through our initiatives. We have implemented baseline data collection to monitor the status of children in our target areas, particularly those attending early childhood education, allowing us to conduct longitudinal tracking of educational progress, including the role of enrolment programs raising the importance of pre-

school and basic education and parental engagement.

This year we have 398 children enrolled across our seven pre-schools in Timor-Leste in five Municipalities.

A key area of focus for our organisation is the enhancement of our MEL systems concerning cross-cutting issues, particularly gender and disability. We have uplifted our tools and expanded the capacity of our staff to ensure that these considerations are integrated into our programs. Community satisfaction surveys are conducted after project completion, allowing us to compare results over time and gain insights into the development and educational outcomes achieved.

We actively monitor attendance rates and the quality of post-construction environments, assessing factors such as teacher performance, resource

availability, infrastructure improvements, maintenance, and overall learning outcomes. We also measure outcomes for girls and children with disabilities. This comprehensive approach ensures that we maintain high standards of educational delivery.

In addition to quantitative data, Educating The Future collects qualitative information through community perception surveys, which are conducted with School Management Committees (SMCs), builders, and preschool staff at the beginning and end of each project. The results of these surveys are incorporated into our project evaluation reports, providing a holistic view of project impact.



With the design of our new After School Play Program we have an extensive monitoring and evaluation framework, an evaluation criteria and utilise data collection tools and methods suitable to measuring demonstrated differences in learning outcomes.

We operate with a Theory of Change, MEL Framework, and an Evaluation Plan. Our evaluation approach is guided by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria, ensuring that our evaluation reports are comprehensive and reflective of best practices.

Educating The Future is looking to complete a major evaluation of the new After School Play program across our pre-schools in late 2025 and early 2026. These evaluations provide critical insights into project effectiveness and inform our future programming, and expansion, including a focus on the School Management Committees - from cross-cutting, parenting, disability inclusion, environmental considerations, data management and teacher support.

To monitor partner performance and compliance with established policies, Our organisation conducts the following activities:

### Fortnightly partner site visits

These visits include audits and reviews, documented through field monitoring assessments carried out by in-country volunteers. This ensures effective oversight of construction progress and the partners' ability to efficiently procure and manage materials.

### Field visits and monitoring exercises

Educating The Future leads these initiatives to assess key policy elements such as fraud

prevention, anti-terrorism measures, corruption mitigation, child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH), and environmental sustainability. We call open tools useful for local organisations.

### Preschool inspections

Educating the Future volunteers conduct inspections of preschools, reviewing financial receipts and ensuring compliance with policies during the completion phase. We also work with pre-school inspectors overtime and both Municipal and National Ministry of Education staff.

### SMC communication monitoring

We assess the effectiveness of SMCs' communication and their involvement with the Municipal Education Office and other government officials.

### Board and Committee oversight

The Educating the Future Board reviews

updates and reports regularly, ensuring strategic alignment and effective governance.

### Evaluation terms of reference

Using a strict criteria from the OECD measuring our effectiveness, outcomes and accountability. During monitoring visits, Educating the Future volunteers provide SMC and community members with opportunities to voice concerns, both collectively and individually. Complaint forms are made available in the local language, ensuring that community members can submit anonymous reports, fostering an environment of transparency and accountability.

Through these rigorous MEL processes, we remain committed to improving educational outcomes and ensuring that our initiatives are impactful, sustainable, and aligned with the needs of the communities we serve.

We look forward to publishing results of the pilot evaluation with our full methodology and indicators in 2026.



# ACFID & ACFID Fundraising Charter

Educating The Future is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). We adhere to the principles of the ACFID Code of Conduct for Non-Government Development Organisations, which establishes a minimum standard of governance, management and accountability for member agencies.

We are also committed to the ACFID Fundraising Charter, which ensures ethical and accountable fundraising information

divulsiion and stakeholder communication. We are proud to be a member of ACFID, and are advocates of their crucial work for all actors and beneficiaries in the sector. We annually review our compliance with the Code and the Fundraising Charter, and this is sighted by both the Finance Committee and our Board of Directors stewarded by our Chair, CEO and Chief of Programs.

You can find out more about ACFID on [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au).



# Fundraising & Events Highlights

This year, the fundraising team elected to elevate our existing events and focus on increasing the impact of our hallmark fundraisers while spending our vital resources on expansion into Timor-Leste. We also explored new opportunities with corporate giving programs. Through the Benevity and our crowdfunding platform with Byron Bruce-James walking from Sydney to Tasmania for pre-school education, we were able to connect with supporters in the technology sector, raising awareness and contributions that helped support our ongoing projects.

This year, some of our more characteristic fundraisers were able to take centre-stage and become morphed by experience into incredibly successful events. These included our Touch World Cup event and Byron Bruce-James' Walk from Sydney to the Southernmost point of Tasmania!

## Touch World Cup

Our 2025 Touch World Cup was the most financially-successful fundraiser of the year and delivered another characteristic day of jovial competition in the spirit of increasing access to quality education for all children in Timor-Leste. A record-breaking 27 teams played over 300 games to a crowd of over 175 spectators in a spirited round-robin style touch football competition at Easts Rugby Club in Sydney.

The event raised over \$25,000 for ETF's programs while vitally outlining how these funds would be spent and how everyone involved in the event has actively contributed to ETF's ongoing mission.

The event would not have been possible without the stewardship of our very own Chief Fundraising Officer,



Alec Lesmond, and the generosity of the major event sponsors. A special thank you must be extended to Easts Rugby Club and Pilot Health, and all the sponsors, donors and collaborators that made the event the roaring success it was!

### Byron's Walk from Sydney to Tasmania

On the 10th of February, 2025, Byron Bruce-James set off on his second fundraising walk for Educating The Future; a gruelling 1800-kilometre trek from Sydney to the southernmost point of Tasmania! This venture comes 5 years after Byron walked from Sydney to Byron Bay in 2020.

The Trek had two parts: Sydney to Melbourne and Davenport to the southernmost point of Australia! Byron departed via the Princes Highway and followed the southern coast of New South Wales into Victoria for Melbourne. He then boarded the Spirit of Tasmania and alighted in Davenport, in the middle of winter, where his commitment was pressure-tested by severe weather and a high level of discomfort.

Reflecting on the walk, Byron told us that “all the pain of exhausted limbs trudging in wet socks to howling conditions; hungry; thirsty; cold, it was all worth it knowing that the funds raised would support such an amazing cause. I’ve been able to reflect on my previous walk and the impact that generated, and that’s all the motivation I needed to persevere through this one!

Byron shattered his \$5,000 fundraising target, raising over \$7,300 that will directly support our preschool Development program. Everyone at Educating the Future is incredibly proud of this exceptional showcasing of resilience and perseverance; a testament to Byron’s character, the organisation could not be more grateful for the support this and his previous fundraising trek have generated, and we’re sure everyone in Timor-Leste is just as proud of you!



# Our Partners, Donors, & Supporters

## Partners

Educating the Future would like to especially recognise the support of the following supporters and partners. These notable supporters underpin the success of this organisation and many of the below contributions enabled Educating the Future to thrive in the 2024-2025 period. We would like to recognise and thank these offices for their ongoing contributions to our organisation. Your support drives our ambition and our ambition knows no bounds. For this, we say thank you, obrigado barak!



## Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport Timor-Leste (MEJD)

The MEJD are Educating the Future’s primary collaborator and partner in Timor-Leste. As mentioned, the MEJD collaborates with Educating the Future to identify and mobilise ‘in-need’ communities in Timor-Leste that require infrastructure development before working alongside Educating the Future to realise these projects. Educating the Future is proud to have nurtured the development of this

partnership and truly believes in the long-term, manifold impact early-childhood education can bring. With our mission of being localised, the MEJD provides the time, expertise, insight and logistical mandate to make our work come to life as a collaboration. Having signed and sighted our Memorandum of Understanding with the MEJD since 2019, we continue to look at ways to improve our collaboration.

# Supporters

Educating the Future would like to formally acknowledge the generosity of the following supporters. We classify as supporters any individuals, businesses, organisations or institutions that have volunteered their time, their expertise or their experience on a pro-bono basis. We cannot emphasise how invaluable this support is to the development of Educating the Future as an organisation, as it facilitates our ability. The individuals and groups listed below have contributed to vital organisation functions, events and fundraising ventures - allowing Educating the Future to improve the efficiency of its processes and scale the calibre of events and fundraisers. Many of the supporters listed below have contributed to our events by donating prizes, offering pro-bono services, advice and expertise, and many of the supporters listed have done so on numerous occasions. Thank you!

## Notable Supporters

### Waverley College

Educating the Future would like to thank Waverley College for their ongoing contribution. The contribution of the College is difficult to put into words; we would like to foremost give thanks for the venue donation for our Annual Gala Dinner in 2016, 2017, 2022 and now 2025 November. The College also supported

various small scale fundraisers during the school year and have done an amazing job spreading awareness of our organisation. As our founders were old boys of The College, a number of past and present volunteers have been made aware of Educating The Future through the school's support. Thank you!

### Australian Government Department of Industry, Sciences and Resources

Educating The Future is proud to acknowledge the role of new supporters that have generously donated their time, their resources to our organisation and its cause throughout the period 2024-2025. The Department of Industry, Sciences and Resources is one of these donors, who throughout the past three year period not only offered more than \$5000

in donations, but who also reached out to meet with our team to learn about our program and advise us on ways to align contributions and work with pre-school education. Thank you to the Department for their support and donations, we are excited to see where this relationship will go in future years.

## Notable Givers

Educating The Future would like to recognise the contribution of a number of notable donors and regular givers that have made significant contributions to our organisation in the past financial year. Our regular givers consistently donate to our organisation on a monthly basis, and our notable donors have contributed significantly to our cause throughout the past five year period. Your generosity and kindness has facilitated better educational outcomes for Timorese children. On behalf of the entire team, we would like to thank you for your ongoing support of our organisation and the work that we do. Without your support, we would not be able to continue our work in the same calibre that we currently do. We are incredibly grateful. Thank you!

### The Dinner Ladies; Katherine Westwood and Sophie Gilliatt

We would like to acknowledge Katherine Westwood and Sophie Gilliatt for their numerous contributions to Educating The Future. The Dinner Ladies have supported Educating the Future in a number of capacities, both as donors and collaborators with our Annual Gala Dinner since 2016. Ms. Westwood

and Ms. Gilliatt also donated \$2000 to Adam & Alessandro’s Great Ocean Walk; the largest donation this fundraiser received. We are incredibly thankful to The Dinner Ladies for their ongoing support and look forward to our future collaborations.

## Regular Givers

John Wakim  
Emma Zvarova



# Financial Summary

Total revenue for 2024-25: **\$104,537**

In 2024/25 Educating The Future secured total revenue of \$104,537, of which \$33,595 is non-monetary revenue through our volunteer contributions in-kind. The revenue obtained represents an increase of 229% from the previous financial year.

Donations increased to \$26,110 from \$19,062 in the previous year. The organisation is focusing its resources on grants, strategic uplift and a review of our organisation.

Educating The Future recorded total expenditure of \$113,249, of which, \$33,595 is non-monetary expenditure through our volunteer contributions

in-kind, an increase of 165% from the previous financial year. International programs and support costs accounted for 82% of total cash expenses. This percentage remained the same as 2023/2024.

The organisation continues to maintain low administration and accountability costs of 14% in total expenditure and fundraising costs accounting for 4% of total expenditure. The Board and management will continue to monitor the organisation's financial situation. The organisation has total cash at bank of \$116,807. All expenses shown in AUD.

# Financial Report

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**

**ABN 31 632 970 819**

**Financial Statements**

**For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

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**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

**1. DIRECTORS' REPORT**

The directors present their report on the company for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.

**Directors**

The names of the directors in office at any time during the financial year and up to the date of this report are:

Name	Date Appointed	Date Resigned	Position	Occupation
Adam Hegedus	17 April 2019		Managing Director	Executive
Oscar Osborne	17 April 2019		Director; Incoming Chair	Research Student
Jenny Katrivesis	17 April 2019		Director	Executive
John Cucinotta	17 April 2019		Director; Treasurer	Accountant
Vivian Stephens	17 April 2019		Director	Consultant
Jessica Irving	17 April 2019	20 March 2025	Director; Outgoing	Lawyer
Grace Harding	28 February 2023		Company Secretary	Consultant

**Activities**

The principal activities of Educating The Future Australia Limited during the course of the year were:

- a) To provide relief from poverty, sickness, misfortune, disability and/or helplessness for young children in Timor-Leste and their wider communities by:
  - i. fostering and advancing the cause of disadvantaged children and communities through the provision of educational opportunities.
  - ii. providing the provision of funds to support the construction or upgrade of schooling facilities to enable local leaders to launch and grow community projects designed to relieve poverty.
  - iii. assisting persons who are experiencing financial disadvantage by reasons or age, or any other circumstances by funding programs to enable children and youth to develop their full educational and social potential.
- b) To demonstrate fair distribution of relief, be informed by local people in Timor-Leste and deliver sustained and lasting benefits.
- c) To act as a relief fund.
- d) To become and remain a registered Australian charitable organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient Status as a Public Benevolent Institution.
- e) To solicit donations and gifts for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the Company.
- f) To attract and encourage bequests, legacies and all forms of deferred gifts for the purposes of the Company.
- g) To take such steps by personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise as may from time to time be deemed expedient for the objects of the Company.

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

- h. To carry on the work and assume all assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the unincorporated entity operating under the name Educating The Future (ABN 31 151 129 942) including, if permitted, its ABN.

**DIRECTORS' REPORT (continued)**

**Significant Changes in the State of Affairs**

There were no significant changes in the state of affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 2025.

**Significant events after the Balance Date**

Since the end of the financial year, there are no known events financial or otherwise that would impact materially on the financial statements of the entity at 30 June 2025.

**Results**

The net loss for the year ended 30 June 2025 was (\$8,712).

**Dividends**

No part of the profits or other income or the property of Educating The Future Australia Limited may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividends, bonuses or otherwise to the members under Organisation's constitution.

**Indemnity**

No indemnities have been given or insurance paid during or since the end of the financial year for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the Organisation.

**Legal Proceedings**

No person has applied for leave of court to bring proceedings to which the Organisation is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the Organisation for all or any part of the proceedings.

**Directors' Benefits**

No member of the Company has received or become entitled to receive a benefit as all services were rendered on a voluntary basis.

In accordance with the resolution of the Directors.



Oscar Osborne  
Chair



John Cucinotta  
Treasurer and Director

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

## **DIRECTORS' DECLARATION**

The directors declare that in the directors' opinion:

- a) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- b) The financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

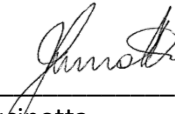
Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013*.

SIGNED AT this 28 September 2025

In accordance with the resolution of the Directors



Oscar Osborne  
Chair



John Cucinotta  
Treasurer and Director

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

**Statement of Financial Position As at 30 June 2025**

<b><u>Equity</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>
Current year earnings		(8,712)	(23,028)
Retained Earnings		125,440	148,547
Total Equity		116,807	125,519
<b><u>Represented by</u></b>			
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>			
Cash at Bank		116,807	125,519
Cash held in Timor-Leste Bank	2	0	0
		116,807	125,519
<b><u>Less Current Liabilities</u></b>			
Creditors & Accruals		-	-
Net Assets		116,807	125,519

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements*

**Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

<b>Revenue</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Donations & Gifts				
-	Monetary		26,110	19,062
-	Non-monetary	3	33,595	26,487
Grants				
Commercial Activities Income			38,895	
Other Income			5,937	
<b>Total revenue</b>			<b>104,537</b>	<b>45,549</b>
<b>Less Expenditure</b>				
International Programs			62,486	30,338
Program Support Costs			2,751	3,860
Community Education		4	3,233	
Fundraising Costs		4	3,434	460
Accountability & Administration			7,750	7,431
Commercial Activities Expenditure			-	-
Non-monetary Expenditure		3	33,595	26,487
Other Expenditure				
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>113,249</b>	<b>68,577</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>			<b>(8,712)</b>	<b>(23,028)</b>
Retained earnings at beginning of the year			125,519	148,547
Balance at the end of the year			116,807	125,519

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
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*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements*

**Statement of Changes in Equity For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

	Retained Earnings	Reserves	Other	Total
Balance as at 01/07/2024	125,519	-	-	125,519
Profit for the Year	(8,712)	-	-	(8,712)
Balance as at 30/06/2025	116,807			116,807

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements*  
**Statement of Cash Flows For the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

<b><u>Operating Activities</u></b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	\$	\$
Receipts from		
Crowdfunding	2,696	3087
Donations	23,413	-
Dinners and Events	38,895	-
Grants	-	-
Small fundraisers	-	1370
Other	-	-
Interest	5,938	-
Payments to suppliers	(79,654)	(39,785)
Net cash flows from operating activities	<u>(8,712)</u>	<u>(20,723)</u>
 <b><u>Investing Activities</u></b>		
Other cash items from investing activities	-	-
Net cash flows from operating activities	-	-
Net increase/decrease in cash and cash equivalents	<u>(8,712)</u>	<u>(20,723)</u>
 Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	 125,519	 146,242
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	<u>116,807</u>	<u>125,519</u>

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements*

**Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2025**

The **company's** objective is to pursue the following charitable purpose(s):

- a) To provide relief from poverty, sickness, misfortune, disability and/or helplessness for young children in Timor-Leste and their wider communities by:
  - i. Fostering and advancing the cause of disadvantaged children and communities through the provision of educational opportunities.
  - ii. Providing the provision of funds to support the construction or upgrade of schooling facilities to enable local leaders to launch and grow community projects designed to relieve poverty.
  - iii. Assisting persons who are experiencing financial disadvantage by reasons or age, or any other circumstances by funding programs to enable children and youth to develop their full educational and social potential.
- b) To demonstrate fair distribution of relief, be informed by local people in Timor-Leste and deliver sustained and lasting benefits.
- c) To act as a relief fund.
- d) To become and remain a registered Australian charitable organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient Status as a Public Benevolent Institution.
- e) To solicit donations and gifts for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the Company.
- f) To attract and encourage bequests, legacies and all forms of deferred gifts for the purposes of the Company.
- g) To take such steps by personal or written appeals, public meetings or otherwise as may from time to time be deemed expedient for the objects of the Company.
- h) To carry on the work and assume all assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the unincorporated entity operating under the name Educating The Future (ABN 31 151 129 942) including, if permitted, its ABN.

**Note 1 - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**a) Basis of Preparation**

The financial report is a financial report that has been prepared and presented in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

The financial report is for the entity Educating The Future Australia Limited as an individual entity. Educating The Future Australia Limited was established on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of April 2019 as a not-for-profit Australian Public Company and operates as a charity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs. It does not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the company in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
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**b. Revenue and Expense Recognition**

The financial statements include the value of all revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities, and equity of the company.

**c. Income tax**

No provision for income tax has been raised as the company is exempt from income tax including capital gains tax under division 50-B of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

**d. Deductible gift recipient**

The Organisation is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) entity. It is covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

**e. Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include deposits held at call with Westpac.

**f. Revenue**

Revenue is recognised upon receipt of funds deposited into the bank account. These include sales of merchandise, donations, and sponsorship. Interest revenue is recognised when received and credited to the bank account.

**g. Goods and services tax**

The company is not registered for GST.

**h. Employee entitlements**

All services provided are voluntary and no wages are paid.

**i. Trade and other payables**

Trade and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the Company during the reporting period which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amount normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

**j. Comparative information**

When required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to confirm changes in presentation for the current financial year.

**k. Authorisation for issue**

The financial statements are authorised for issue by the Committee at the date of signing the Management Certificate.

**l. ACFID Disclosures**

The Financial Reports have been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the ACFID Code of Conduct. For further information on the Code please refer to the ACFID Code of Conduct Guidance Document available at: [www.acfid.asn.au](http://www.acfid.asn.au)

**Note 2 – Cash held in Timor-Leste**

Cash is held by Educating The Future’s Accountants, Christine Carberry Business Solutions in Timor-Leste. Cash is acquitted from CCBS to Timor-Leste Country Director and Partners to fund implementation associated with our preschool education access program.

**Note 3 – RDE Calculation Non-Monetary Revenue and Expenditure**

Recognised Development Expenditure (RDE) is the annual eligible expenditure of a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), using contributions from the Australian community. Eligible expenditure is for the NGO’s own development and humanitarian activities overseas and development education in Australia. Eligible contributions include donations of cash, gifts-in-kind and volunteer services. Up to half of the RDE can be from eligible gifts-in-kind and/or eligible volunteer services.

In the context of Educating The Future, we have recorded, using a timesheet system, volunteer hours attributed to Timorese Programs for the financial year. Each eligible volunteer has been assigned to the DFAT Enterprise Agreement job description based on their contributions to Timor-Leste Programs. The relevant job description is linked to an Annual Rate in which the recorded volunteer hours are multiplied by. The logged hours are multiplied by the rate of pay table specified by the DFAT Enterprise Agreement in the ANCP RDE Explanatory notes on page 10. Educating The Future has awarded the lowest annual rate of each job description relevant to the respective volunteer.

The final ‘salary’ calculation forms the ‘Non-Monetary Revenue and Expenditure’ figures evident in the Statement of Profit and Loss and other Comprehensive Income. Educating The Future has recorded and accounted for this figure in line with ACFID’s Mandatory Guidance on Financial Reporting.

**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
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**Note 4 - Calculation of Community Education and Fundraising costs**

Educating The Future hosts events in the Community for a dual purpose of fundraising and awareness raising of the importance of pre-school education access in Timor-Leste. This is a dual focus at the Annual Touch Football Event. This is displayed through guest speakers and materials distributed. In March 2025, Educating The Future hosted an Annual Touch Football Event and half of the cost of \$6465.80 AUD is associated with Community Education as per our definitions and activities undertaken at this Event.

**Note 5 – Directors’ Remuneration**

No remuneration was received by any director of the company as all services were rendered free of charges. However, any expenses incurred by directors in discharging their duties on matters relating to Educating The Future Australia Limited were met by the company.

**Note 6 – Indemnity**

The trustee and any officer, agent or employee of the trustee in discharging their duties in accordance with the guidelines are:

- a. Not liable for any loss or liability; and
- b. Entitled to be indemnified from the Trust Fund.

**Note 7 – Contingent Liabilities**

The directors are not aware of any contingent liabilities during the year.

**Note 8 – Related Party Transactions**

There are no related party transactions during the year.

**Note 9 - Resolution of the Members at the Annual General Meeting**

At the Annual General Meeting, November 04 2025, the Members of Educating The Future Australia Limited reviewed and approved this Statutory Financial Report

**Note 10 – ACFID Membership**

Educating The Future Australia Limited is a member agency of the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) including being an accredited signatory to the Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct defines standards of governance, management, financial control and reporting with which members should comply with and identifies mechanisms to ensure accountability in use of public monies.

<b>Company Details</b>	<b>Registered Office</b>	<b>Principal Place of Business</b>
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**Educating The Future Australia Limited**  
**ABN 31 632 970 819**

Educating The Future Australia Limited ABN 31 632 970 819	6/195 Malabar Road, South Coogee NSW 2034	6/195 Malabar Road, South Coogee NSW 2034
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# Thank you!

Thank you for reading Educating the Future’s 2024/25 Annual Report, nearing our ten year anniversary!! We are incredibly thankful to have such far-reaching and enduring support both in Australia, Timor-Leste and across the globe. Your enduring faith in Educating the Future fuels our work and allows us to change lives in Timor-Leste. Safe access to quality education programs fertilises the next generation of leaders and early-childhood education remains one of the most worthy investments one can make. With your support, we will be able to continue our vital work in Timor-Leste for years to come.

This report provides us with a moment to proudly reflect on our successes of 2024 and the first half of 2025, including a new program design and expanding into Timor-Leste more formally. They serve as key signifiers of our advancement in programs, fundraising, governance and expansion both in Timor-Leste and Australia, and exemplify how 2024/25 has held record results for our organisation on all fronts. We look forward to celebrating these at our decade of Educating The Future event on 29 November 2025 in Sydney.

What we have achieved as a network of contributors, donors, volunteers, communities and supporters, exceeds the mere impact of an organisation. Educating The Future is so much more than an organisation; it is an attitude to amelioration through education for the sake of posterity.

Just as we do every year, we would like to acknowledge that the successes of this organisation belong not only to the directors,

volunteers, beneficiaries or communities, but to everyone involved with Educating the Future in any capacity. To anyone who has ever purchased a t-shirt, donated their time, expertise or skills, attended an event or donated to a fundraiser, it is your support that fuels our ambition, and our ambition knows no bounds.

So we thank you once again for the year that was 2024/25, and look forward to what the coming year will bring, particularly for our Timorese led organisation.

## Contact

Educating The Future Australia Limited

ABN: 31 632 970 819



[people@educatingthefuture.org](mailto:people@educatingthefuture.org)



[www.educatingthefuture.org](http://www.educatingthefuture.org)



ETF Organisation



Educating The Future

*Educating The Future is committed to reducing its environmental impact and has produced this report with consideration for the environment. We encourage our audience to view the digital version.*

*We pay our respects to the First Nations peoples on whose lands we live and work. We honour their enduring connection to Country, culture, and community, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.*