



Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland



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Charity Partner:



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Who are Suas?

Suas is a children's literacy charity. We have a simple but powerful belief – for children in disadvantaged communities, literacy changes everything. Over the past 5 years, we've helped over 3,300 children from disadvantaged communities to improve their literacy skills and we've trained over 4,500 volunteer mentors to support them.

The unique Suas model is designed to deliver measurable, one-to-one, evidence-based interventions to prevent school failure and reduce dropout. In partnership with designated disadvantaged (DEIS) schools, we support 8 – 14-year-olds most at risk of failing in the Irish education system.

Ireland Young Lions Competition Brief

"If we do not give these young people positive experiences at school, improve their literacy and numeracy, it is so difficult for them not to get drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour. If you can't read or write in this world today, what chance do you have? You don't have any belief in yourself that you can achieve anything."

- Teacher in an inner city DEIS primary school

What is the challenge?

The current National Deprivation Index, commissioned by the independent agency Pobal, paints a picture of entrenched inequality in Irish society, with disadvantage stubbornly remaining in some areas and worsening in others. This latest evidence adds to a body of existing information that tells us clearly that children in certain geographical areas are pre-destined to grow up in poverty and have very limited chances in life.

But there is a proven, powerful and focused weapon to tackle child poverty and broken futures. Improving literacy and numeracy. This is not a well-meaning, hopeful claim. It's a proven, tested and robust solution. In fact, I passionately believe, that if there was only one thing a person, a system or a country could do to absolutely transform the prospects for children living in areas of greatest disadvantage, it would be to measurably improve their literacy and numeracy. Literacy and numeracy are powerful regenerators of people and communities.

The tragedy is, we have a national literacy crisis on our hands. While literacy and numeracy has improved incrementally over the last few years for children in Ireland, measures for the poorest and most disadvantaged children haven't changed to any significant degree. That means, in relative terms, poor children are falling further behind. An entire population of poor children is being told they have no right to a proper childhood, less chance to participate in society and will face daunting barriers to forging a bright future.

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It also affects children with special needs and children from immigrant families. The gap is frightening. The negative implications for these children, their communities – and for Ireland – is catastrophic. Because of the appalling impacts of illiteracy and innumeracy, our poorest children are being sentenced to a life of early school-leaving, social problems, poor health, dangerous choices, unemployment, involvement with the criminal justice system and pre-mature death.

However, the good news is, unlike so many of the other massive and intransigent social problems Ireland faces, this challenge is solvable. Suas has developed smart, proven – and dare we say – simple – solutions that improve literacy and numeracy. Our model has already demonstrated wonderful outcomes in the most testing of environments. It is also easily scalable and that's good because the demand is great and urgent. Childhood doesn't wait.

There are bright eight-year-olds in primary school right now who won't survive second level education because of poor reading, writing and numeracy skills. We can change that. To do so, we need visionary partners who care about children and the public good to ensure that happens quickly, efficiently and effectively.

What is the organisational objective?

There are 233 Urban DEIS Band 1 schools in Ireland – the most disadvantaged. Not all of those need help but most do. We are determined to reach 3,984 children in these most disadvantaged schools – in the next three years. This will be achieved through a carefully designed programme of active partnerships with the schools. It means recruiting and training an additional 3,000 volunteer mentors and implementing three phases of two-month long, term-based interventions with children over the school year.

We've already confirmed with 45 schools to deliver 94 projects nationally in the current school term, 24 numeracy projects. In order to do this work, we need to raise:

€240k in year one in order to help 1,128 children.

€300k in year two to help 1,320 children.

€350k in year three to help 1,500 children.

In order to raise this money, we need to make the general public and corporations aware of the transformative power of literacy for children in disadvantaged schools in Ireland.

What is the human story behind this challenge?

The consequences of failing to equip our children with literacy skills are stark. Teenagers with poor literacy are much more likely to experience anxiety and depression and to use drugs. Poor literacy skills restrict a range of life-choices, particularly employment. Early school leaving is highly correlated with poor labour market outcomes and ill health. Therefore, improving child literacy is of the utmost importance and must be tackled with evidenced-based solutions that deliver measurable impacts. This is the reason Suas exists. And this is why we need visionary and civic-minded partners to ensure thousands of disadvantaged children aren't forgotten.

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THE CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Communications objective:

The creative challenge is to inspire civic-minded Ireland to be part of solving a very real problem: a problem that is entirely fixable, but only with their help (time / money).

What problem are we trying to solve:

While Ireland boasts one of the best literacy rates in the world, disadvantaged children are being left behind. This is a problem that is entirely fixable!

In short, we know our interventions work. Of the 758 children we've helped during the last school year, the average reading age of children across our paired reading projects increased by almost 5 months over the 2 month duration of the project.

That means our literacy programme created a 250% improvement in the rate of progress for the children we supported. The average maths age of children mentored by TY students increased by 4 months over the 1 month pilot. That's a 400% improvement in the normal rate of progress in the children we supported.

What's more, 60% of children we supported read more often. 63% of children felt happier to read out loud. 82% of children agreed they were better at reading. 68% said they enjoy solving maths problems. 80% felt they are better at maths. 85% said they are happier to take part in maths class. On top of all that, 100% of mentors said the programme has deepened their commitment to serve others.

Who is the target audience?

Civic-minded Ireland*, with a heart and a purse and an urge or desire to help make a difference *where making a difference is actually possible*, and who can be found in:

- Corporations in Ireland (both as a source of volunteers and funding) with a substantial presence in one or all urban centres in Ireland.
- Philanthropic organisations (as a source of funding)
- Third Level Institutions (as a source of volunteers aged 18-25)
- Members of the wider public aged 35-65 in ABC1 category (as a source of funding)
- Members of the public aged 65+ (as a source of volunteers and, potentially funding)
- Next generation of Suas volunteers (under 18).

*We are open to ideas that target specific/niche groups rather than an overarching mindset.

Insight/truth:

- Target insight: Ireland is very caring and giving country; historically, we have outperformed other markets in the giving of our time and money to worthy causes. This has tailed off slightly in the wake of recession and in the emergence of distrust and cynicism.
- Brand insight: For children in disadvantaged areas, literacy changes everything.



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Key message:

With your help we *can* transform the lives of 3,984 of our children.

Proof:

We have the program that works - all we need is an additional 3000 volunteer mentors and €890k to help 3,984 children in the most disadvantaged schools over the next three years.

What is the desired response?

On seeing the campaign, we want people to step up and take an active role in supporting the children we work with. We want them to be aware of the transformative power of literacy for children in disadvantaged communities and to put this awareness into action and get out there and actively support us in achieving our vision.

KPIs:

- €240k in year one in order to help 1,128 children.
- €300k in year two to help 1,320 children.
- €350k in year three to help 1,500 children.
- 3,000 volunteers recruited (ideally in groups, i.e. large corporates, third level institutions, etc.)

Resources

Website:

www.suas.ie

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/SuasEdDev/>

Case for Support Document:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/6xc11au6h2lel3b/Suas_Layout_CaseforSupport_Client.pdf?dl=0