CITYWISE EDUCATION

Citywise Education is an innovative youth and education organisation based in the heart of West-Tallaght. Through its unique blend of STEAM, Afterschool, Leadership & Academic programmes it supports young people from the ages of 8 – 21 to thrive in their community and grow in confidence to reach their goals. Our vision is to "Improve communities through youth education" and we have been doing this for over 25 years. Citywise programmes can be considered in three core strands:

Afterschool & Leadership: These programmes offer attractive activities for young people which work to develop interests, increase confidence and instil a love of learning, while engaging individuals and their families (for children from 8 years of age and older). They focus on extracurricular games and sports, whilst emphasising the importance of character and personal development. The activities in these clubs can vary from homework clubs, cooking, music, art, and sport.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, digital Art, Maths): These programmes ensure young people learn new skills and develop relevant competencies, opening the possibility of future careers in these subject areas.

Fast Track Academy: FTA offers education and personal support to young people from underserved communities from primary school age. Many of these young people then engage with Fast Track Academy as they move into senior secondary school and then on to third-level education. This support includes mentorship, access to career workshops, as well as additional classes, and study support. This support sees 95% of our final year FTA students progressing to further and higher education, in an area where only 7% of the population hold a degree.

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Our Fast Track Academy, has been externally validated by the UNESCO Centre for Children and Young People at the University of Galway (2022) as part of the first social return on investment study in Ireland. It highlighted the life-long soft skills inculcated by our programmes, which included collaboration, communication, and resilience. This report shows that our work has a social return on investment of €12.60 social value for every €1 spent.

"One of the biggest things I've gained from Citywise is confidence. The leadership opportunities taught me to believe in myself, to speak up, and to take on challenges. That confidence played a huge role in helping me work towards and eventually get into my dream course."

- Former Citywise Leader & Current Volunteer

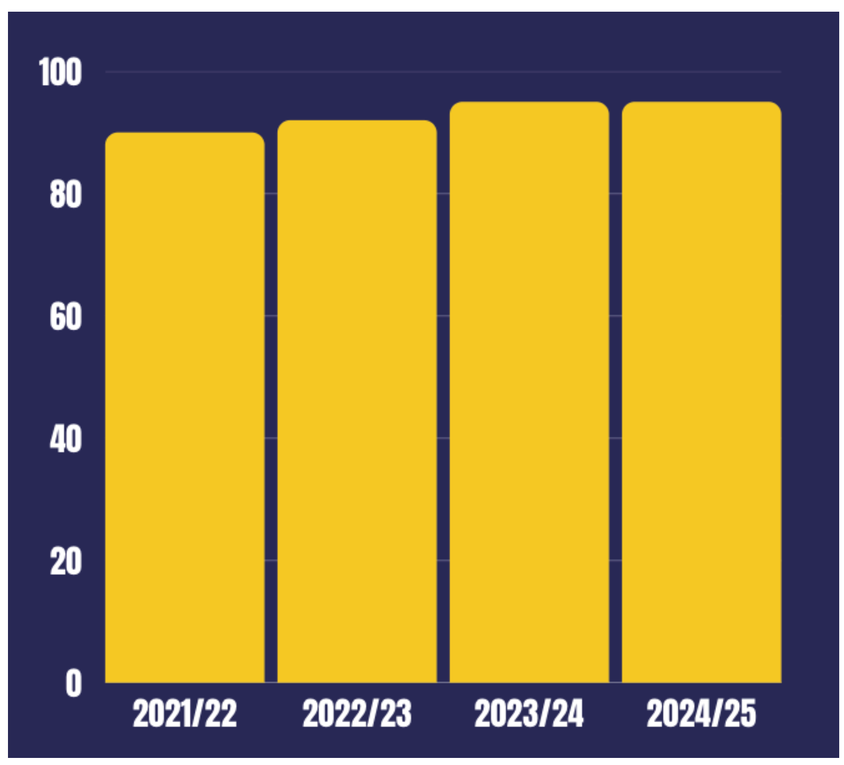
The Need:

The locality in which our organisation operates is considered to be one of the most marginalised areas in Ireland. The area of west Tallaght is identified as highly disadvantaged or underserved with less than 7% of the local population holding a college degree (Pobal, 2022). The Pobal deprivation index (2022) denotes the immediate areas we serve of Jobstown & Killinarden as "extremely disadvantaged" the lowest possible rank on the deprivation scale. The immediate locality Citywise Education serves is considered the most disadvantaged under the DDLETB (2018) remit.

In Jobstown and local cluster areas in West Tallaght, college progression rates are currently as low as 12%, in comparison to 29% in the wider Dublin-24 area (Higher Education Authority statistics). Further, there is a severe dearth of career support for young people in underserved communities. High intergenerational unemployment, as well as lack of information, confidence and resources and poor prior awareness of course content is leading to high student drop-out rates at third-level and to poorly-made career choices. This is particularly evidenced among students from underserved backgrounds (Irish Times, 2025).

"Citywise has boosted me academically, and I couldn't be more thankful. They provide a quiet room to study in, numerous classes, constant support, and a safe place to ask questions. Citywise had a massive positive impact on my Junior Cert results, and I hope this trend continues for my Leaving Cert".

-Current FTA Student



Graph 1. Progression rate to Further & Higher Education by Citywise FTA Students