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Citiwise: Helping Irish Youth Excel

Citywise is an educational program in Dublin helping young people from difficult city backgrounds to aim high in life. It is inspired by the message of Saint Josemaria.

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Citywise Education (www.citywise.ie) is an after-school and out-of-school support programme for 400 boys and girls growing up in the West Tallaght area of Dublin, Ireland. It began in 1991 as a response to the educational

under-achievement of young people living in difficult city backgrounds.

From the beginning, academic work has been its focal point, helping young people to learn how to work hard, acquire good study habits and develop academic ambition.

Recognising the threat that drugs, gangs and crime present to a young person's future, Citywise Education emphasises the importance of character development, personal virtues and the need for each young person to serve society.

Recently Citywise Education developed the Fast Track Academy to help young people set their sights on third-level education (universities, institutes of technology, and teachers colleges). Very few of the boys and girls living in the area would normally plan to continue their education beyond the age of 18, but

the Fast Track Academy is trying to change that.

Volunteers – students, teachers, and people working locally – provide school-goers with special classes, which make going on to study at third level a real and attractive possibility.

They get extra classes, support in their study, as well as mentoring in their transition to further education.

The Fast Track Academy ensures that participants know all about the different options open to them at third level.

To date, the Academy has had a great success rate: 85% of those taking part have gone on to study at third level, some 250 young people so far.

The short video at the top includes interviews with some who are now studying at university.

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