



**TRTP**  
TIPPERARY RURAL  
TRAVELLER PROJECT

**Family Learning  
Programme:  
Business Case & Strategy**

---

# Contents

---

## Business Case

Chapter 1 - The Story So Far.....	P1
Chapter 2 - The Vision for Ireland.....	P1
Chapter 3 - The Children.....	P1
Chapter 4 - The Numbers / Impact.....	P1
Chapter 5 - The Landscape.....	P1
Chapter 6 - The Big Idea.....	P1
Chapter 7 - Models & Timeline.....	P1
Chapter 8 - Benefits.....	P1
Strategy.....	P1





# Chapter 1

---

## The Story So Far

The Family Learning Programme has changed the lives of a number of families in the Tipperary area. We have done this by removing the barriers that exist for Traveller children in the Irish school system.

Four peer tutors, women from the Traveller community, lead the sessions where children and their families are provided with supports for reading, writing, listening, and pride in their Traveller culture.

The programme is housed in a busy programme of activities run by the Tipperary Rural Traveller Project. Because we are a Traveller led group, these activities tap into the needs of the community we serve. Mental health, community health, mens' needs, and youth programmes have all been on offer throughout the years we've been in operation.

And once again; a fundamental pride in the Traveller culture, which will allow our community to combat the many years of discrimination and stigma that we have faced, and to thrive despite it.

Let's hear how the children tell our Story...

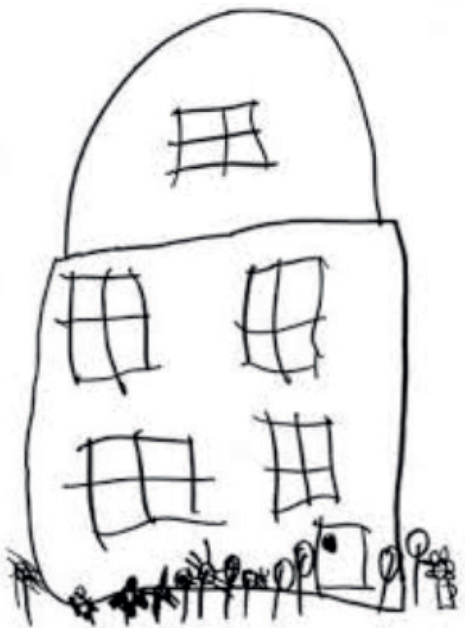
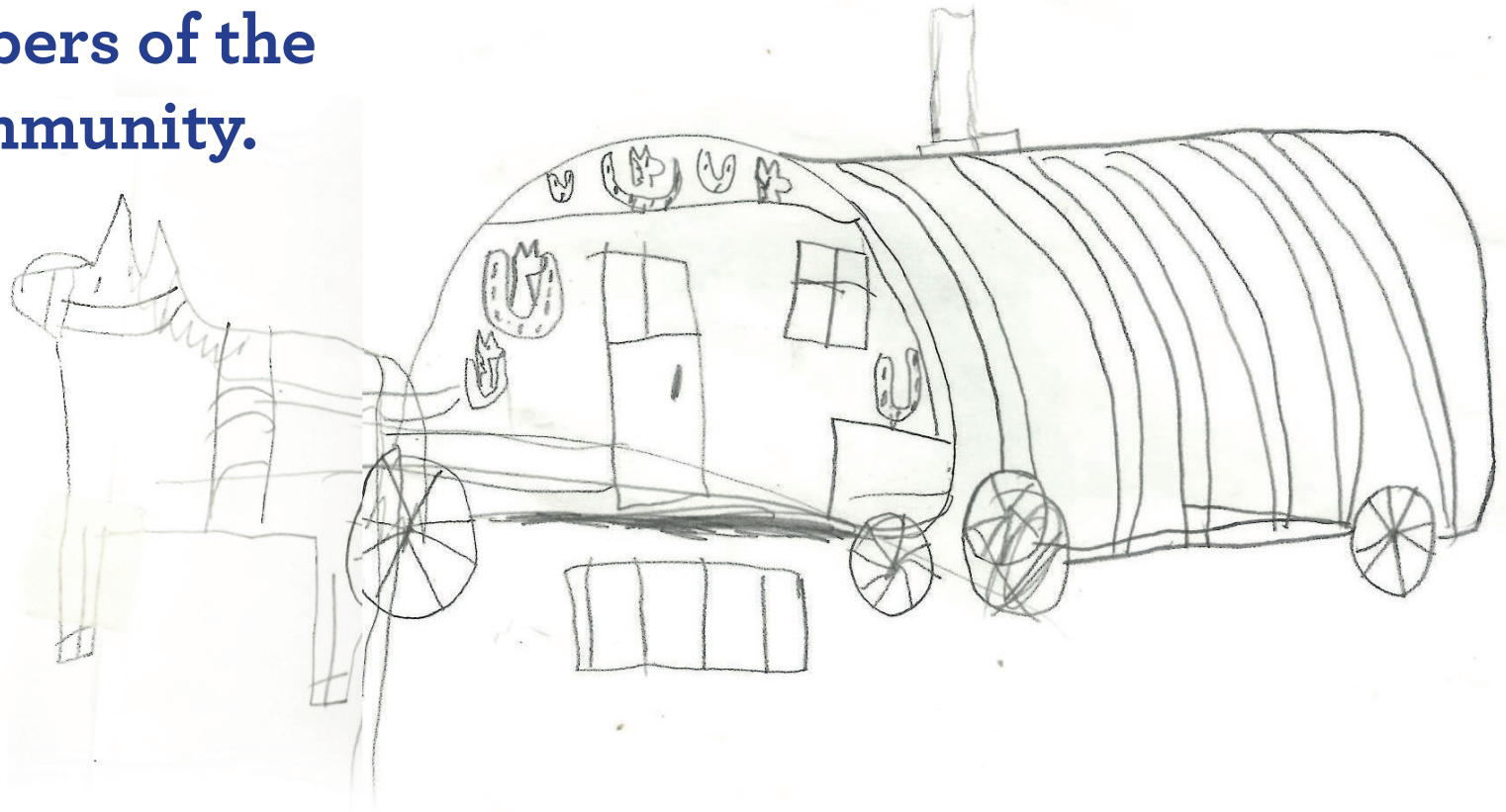




**We are the Kids of the  
Family Learning Programme**

**We live in Cashel with our  
families and friends**

**We are members of the  
Travelling Community.**

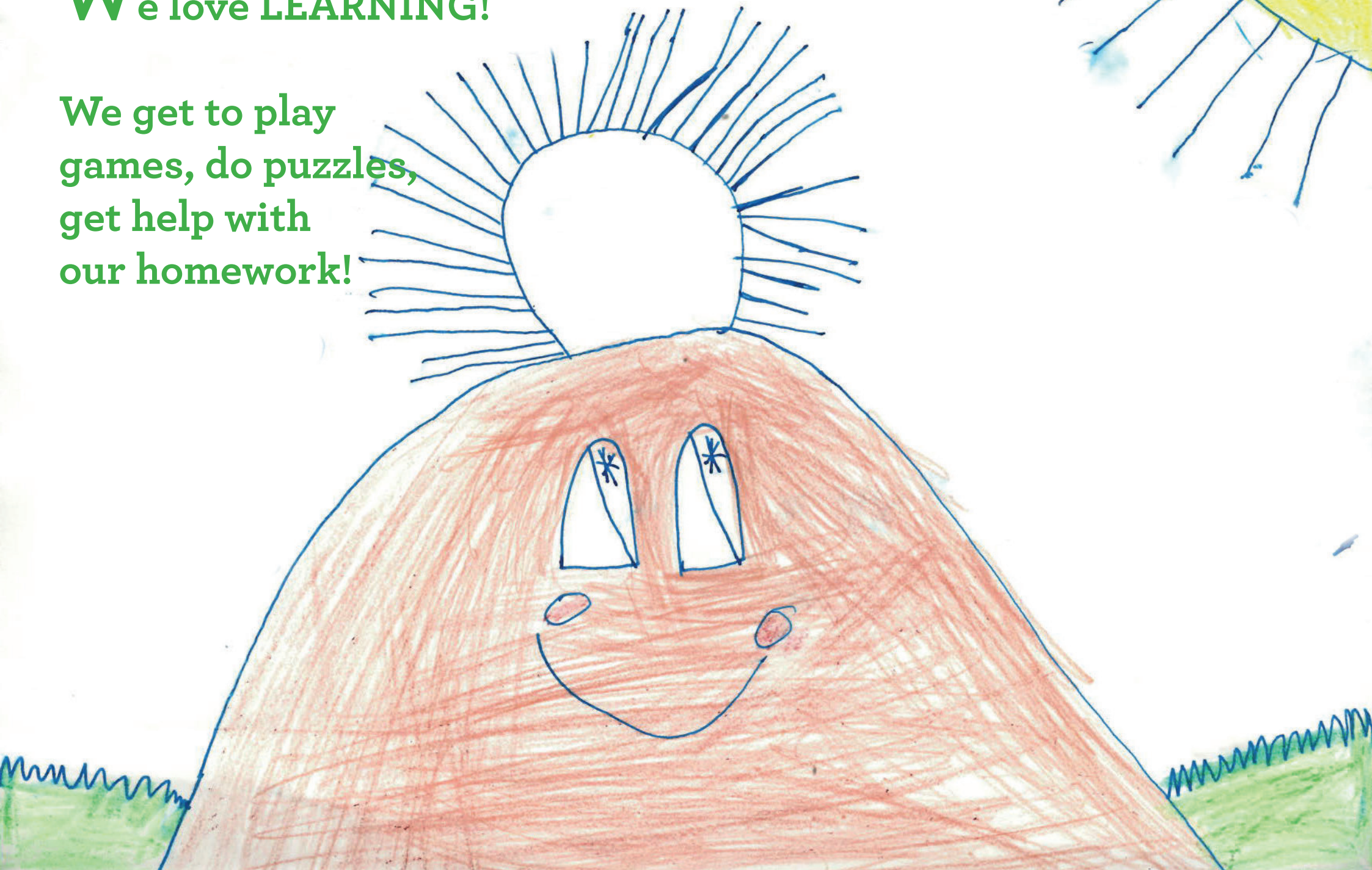


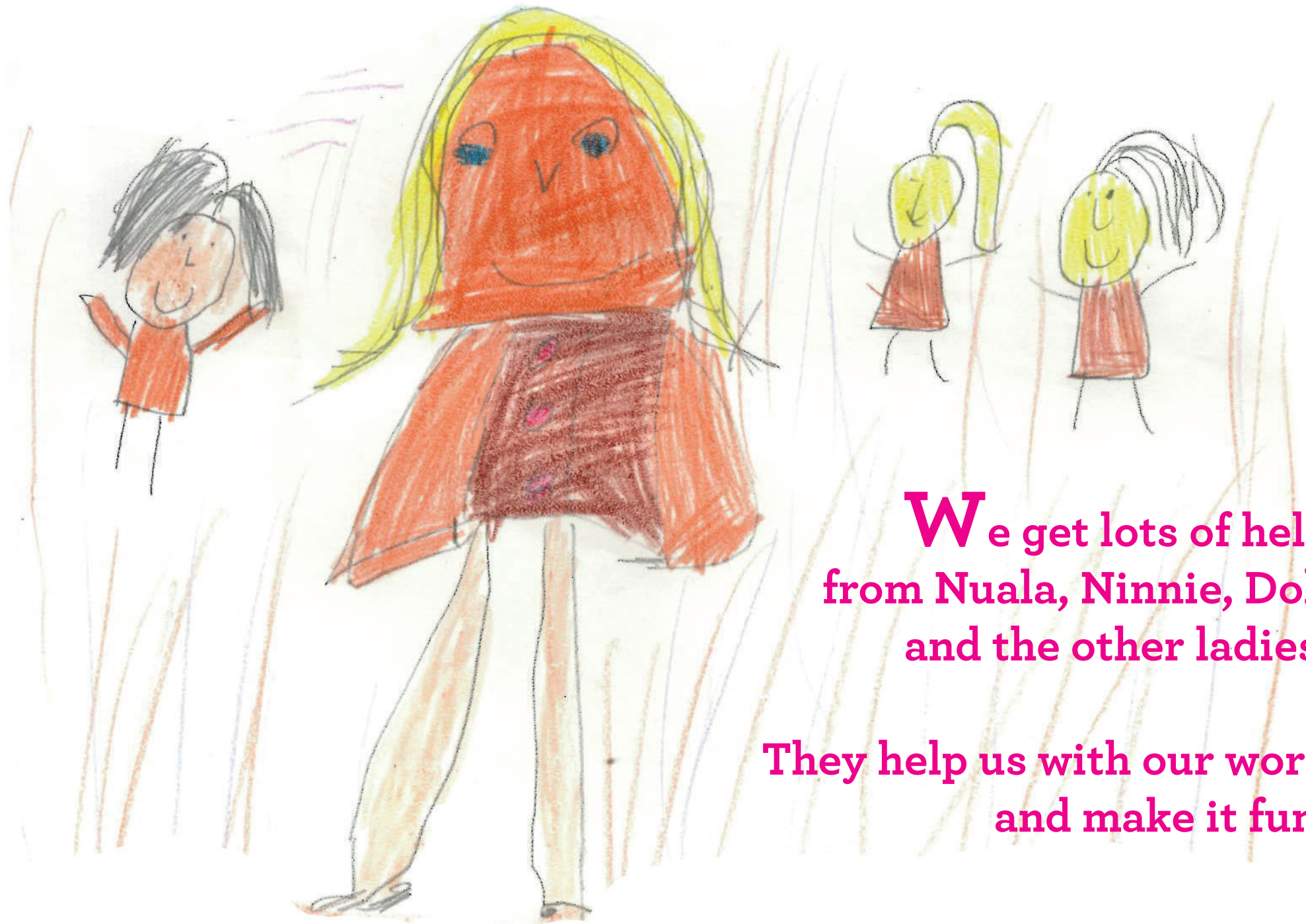
**We go to school with Settled kids,  
and have lots of friends there,  
but we like to go to the Family Learning  
Programme to help learn more**



**W**e love LEARNING!

We get to play  
games, do puzzles,  
get help with  
our homework!



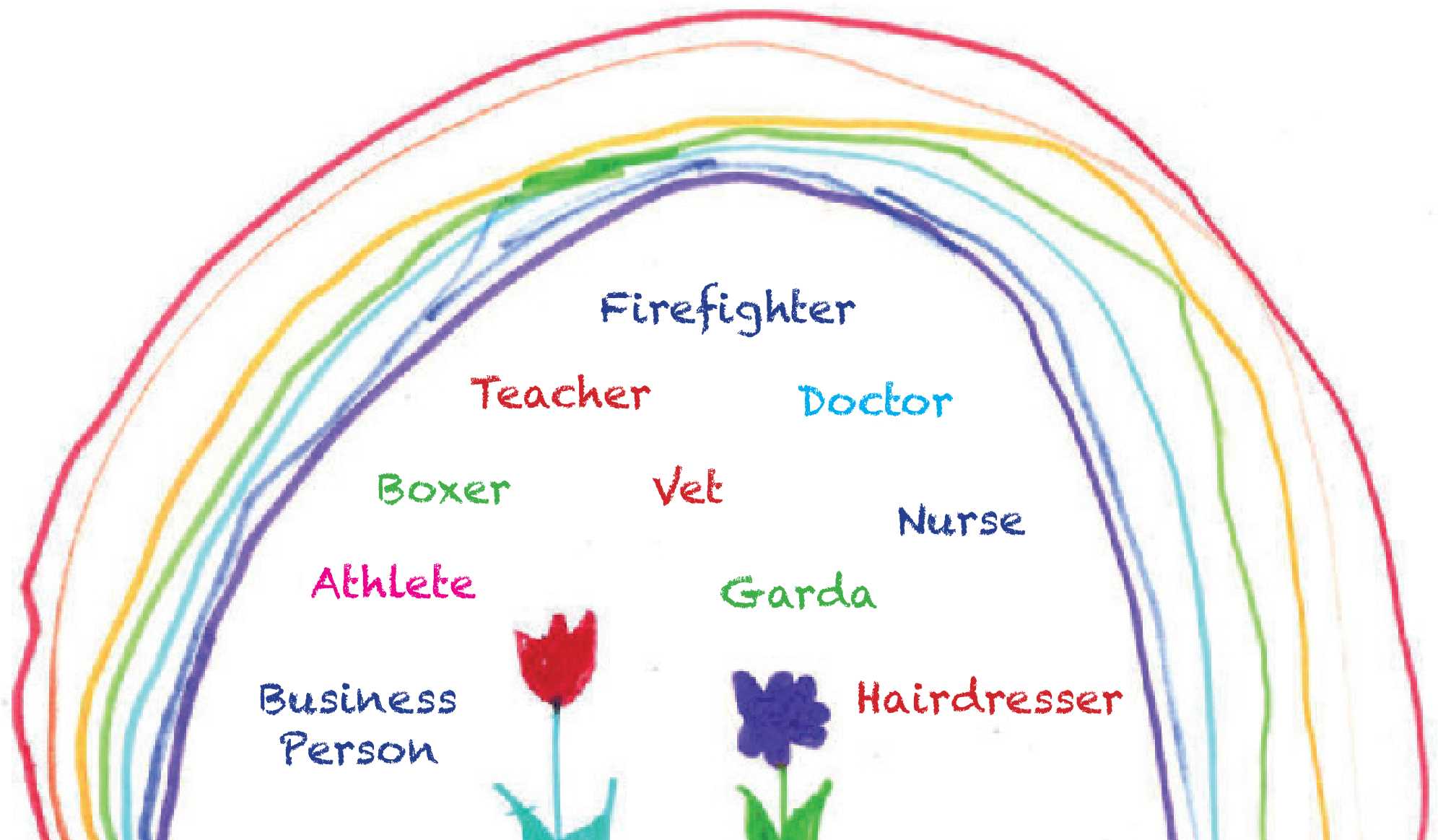


**We** get lots of help  
from Nuala, Ninnie, Doll  
and the other ladies.

**They** help us with our work  
and make it fun!



**T**hey help us think about  
our future and what we can  
be when we grow up.





**We love learning with our  
friends and are EXCITED  
for our FUTURE!**



My  
Best  
friends



# Chapter 2

## The Vision for Ireland

The Family Learning Programme is special. It has the potential to transform our community throughout Ireland by giving our children the start that they need in life. It can lift us out of poverty and equip us with the tools we need to access vital services. Ultimately, it can build an Ireland where Travellers are respected and valued. Staying in school, and succeeding within the education system keeps those crucial doors open to our young people to pursue whatever path they want to in life.

The value of education is learned at a young age. If a child has a positive education experience, it starts a pattern which will deliver positive results throughout their life. If it is negative, they will turn away from education, and from the tools that it could otherwise give them to find their way in this complex world.

Our strategy to achieve this is as follows:

1. We will support Traveller families in learning together, so that children will stay in school longer.
2. We will support Traveller children reach to self-determination so that they can better influence the education system to match their needs.
3. We will build self esteem and confidence in young Travellers so that they will become leaders.
4. We will cherish and celebrate Traveller culture, contributing to a complete history of Ireland and social cohesion in today's Ireland.

A full version of this strategy is included at the end of this document, with further details of each objective and a set of indicators by which we will measure success.





# Chapter 3

---

## The Children

The inspiration for the Family Learning Programme came from a project called Whiddin To The Gauras, where a group of Traveller researchers spoke to Limerick Traveller children to understand how they felt about school and education. Here are some quotes relating to how they felt about school and education:

“Do you like school?

No! It’s too long.

What’s too long about it.

You have to stay in school for twenty five hours! ”

“If you woke up in the morning and said ‘I’d like school to be like that’ what would it be like?

(Long pause) Good.

In what way would you like it to be good?

I’d like to have more friends.”

“Is she a good teacher?

She just gives me easy things ‘cause she thinks I’m small.

She thinks you’re small so she gives you easy sums?

Yeah.

And did you tell her that you’re not small?

I just does the easy sums.

And would you tell her that you can do the harder ones?

No ‘cause ‘cause ammm, she’d just say, ‘no you can’t, get the done. NOW!’

And she gives you the easy stuff?

Yeah and I don’t even tell her, I just says ammm, and then she says,

‘Ok, back to your class now’.”



Families currently attending the Family Learning Programme were recently asked about their experience with the service - could it be better, what do you get out of it, and so on.

Here are some responses:

They learn how to  
spell and read more

They learn how to  
My child learns a lot from that  
class and she learns to read and  
every day she comes home she  
knows something new

All Travellers should  
have the opportunity  
to take part

They learn and get  
their homework done

Tell others how good  
the programme is

Family Learning should  
be for Traveller families  
across the country

The kids get more time  
and quiet to do  
their homework



# Chapter 4

---

## The Numbers & Impact

Our programme has grown from a class of seven students back in February 2013 up to forty three students availing of our programme now in 2019. The strong uptake by families in Cashel to our programme speaks volumes about the value the families place in the programme. Currently we have fifteen families that engage in our programme. Over the course of this year's programme, which has been funded and made possible due to our SIFI grant, we shall have rolled out 200 hours of classes to Traveller children of Primary school age in Cashel.

We have a girl that is a 5th year student supporting us in our classes who herself attended Family Learning classes back in 2013, she provides wonderful peer to peer encouragement and support. She intends completing her Leaving Certificate and is a terrific role model for the young students attending our classes. It is wonderful for us to witness first hand the beginnings of a full circle forming in our programme, with early participants happy to “give back”. A number of our older students aspire to become Family Learning tutors / teachers and we fully encourage this with the hope that this programme will grow with them into their futures, leading to a time when its completely run by Travellers for Travellers.

# Chapter 5

---

## The Landscape

The history of Traveller education in Ireland is not a positive one. We have been let down by a system that is for most people a very positive feature of Irish society. We have learned, through our work in the Family Learning programme, that many older Travellers have a strong negative sentiment towards colouring books. This comes from many years of Traveller children being given colouring books instead of effectively engaged in the classroom. Today, colouring books have been replaced by tablet computers, and we are also beginning to understand the extent of reduced timetables forced upon Traveller children and their families. We've even heard reports of schools excluding children from standardised tests, resulting in years of neglect and failure.

We see policy commitments to potentially address this problem, and subsequent outcomes, emerging from the Departments of Education & Skills, Children & Youth Affairs, and Justice & Equality. They all have objectives which match with the potential impact of what a national Family Learning Programme can deliver. The report of the Better Outcomes Brighter Futures cross-departmental group articulates a government commitment to:

**“Strengthen social inclusion measures and re-invigorate efforts to improve educational outcomes among, and integration of Travellers, Roma and migrant children and young people, and all those with special needs...”**

The Traveller Culture and History in Education Bill 2018 is currently making its way through the houses of the Oireachtas. If it is passed, it will ensure that Traveller culture and history is taught throughout schools in Ireland. In an effort to address discrimination and prejudice, Independent Senator Collette Kelleher introduced the bill in July 2018. It follows similar legislation in Canada, New Zealand and Australia.







# Chapter 6

---

## The Big Idea

To bring this programme to national scale, we have designed what we consider to be an ambitious but practical model which can bring the value of Family Learning Programme to the lives of all Traveller children in Ireland.

### **Peer Tutoring**

The peer-led model is an essential part of what we do. To extend this programme to a national reach, we will recruit, from across the Traveller community, a team of tutors who can support the children in their local communities.

### **Accreditation**

To acknowledge the contribution of this team, and to provide a consistent quality to the programme across the country, we will use a Level 5 QQI accredited programme to train our peer-led tutors. This two year programme, with a heavy practical emphasis and a realistic level of commitment, will allow tutors to start in the programme immediately and to upskill as they go, gaining a qualification after two years.

### **Existing Structures**

Our vision is that existing structures, communities and networks will be strategically used to bring the programme to life. Our peer tutors will be recruited from the Traveller community. The community already exists so this is a new way to bring people together to work in a collaborative way for a positive future for our community. The critical tutor supports will be provided through the local Traveller projects across Ireland, with a central component.

The accredited training will be provided by the Education & Training Boards (ETBs) across the country. Where population numbers are not high enough to meet requirements for an accredited programme, we propose that the Dept of Education provides a subsidy to assist the relevant ETB.

## **Volunteers**

It's important to remember that the fuel of this programme will be an army of volunteers who see the children in their community being failed by the education system and who have decided to take concrete action to fix that. Consequently, the support that we provide through this programme represent very high value for money.


## **Scale**

The total population of Traveller children currently in primary school education is approximately 8,207. We recommend a ratio of 2 tutors and 1 teacher to 15 children ideally, with this team working say two days a week. Therefore we will recruit, train and support a total of 547 peer tutors to support the programme nationally across approximately 30 locations.

A team of 2 full time staff is required to design and run the programme. These staff will ideally be located in local Traveller groups, as either existing staff taking on new responsibilities, or new recruits to a team.

A budget of between €300,000 and €350,000 will ensure that the programme can grow from its existing local level to a national scale over the course of approximately 24 months, depending on which model we choose to pursue. The sample budget on the next page outlines the proposed allocation of costs





Item	Details	Cost	
		Year 1	Year 2
Salary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 x average industrial wage of €39k</li> <li>• Plus employer costs at approximately 10%</li> <li>• And additional buffer to allow for distribution across part time staff</li> </ul>	€90,000	€90,000
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme travel at approx. 20000km @ 30c mileage</li> <li>• Family support transport hire @ €500 average per location</li> </ul>	€19000	€19000
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue costs for location where no free option exists</li> </ul>	€20000	€20000
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT equipment for programme management (year 1 only)</li> <li>• Educational materials @ €1000 per location</li> </ul>	€50000	€30000
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising to schools and communities</li> </ul>	€8000	€4000
<b>Total</b>		<b>€187,000</b>	<b>€163,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>€350,000</b>	

We then expect the ongoing operational costs of the programme to stabilise at approximately €70,000 a year, allowing for a part time coordinator to monitor and support a nationwide network of groups. This figure will become clearer during the two year development phase.



# Chapter 7

---

## Models & Timeline

There are a number of ways we could approach the national rollout of the Family Learning Programme. Our preference is for a regional creep model but we can adapt based on the level of support we secure and how our funder chooses to work.

### **Regional Creep**

This model involves a gradual push out from our existing core in Tipperary, towards Limerick and other nearby counties and then reaching out across the country in three of four phases across two to three years. This allows us to build on the existing community network in a structured and deliberate way, and to slowly build our capacity.


### **Flick the Switch**

This model involves an intensive nine to twelve month preparation and recruitment period, after which we go live in all 26 counties at once. It could be problematic as we don't have the opportunity to work out problems as we build.

On the other hand, we get to more children quicker and it may match certain funding models which have shorter time limits.

### **Localisation**

In the technology sector, the process of launching products in new markets is based on a localisation principle that says that we should meet our biggest challenges head on. This model would choose the most complex areas and launch these in phase one, with the expectation that future phases of growth will be seamless. For example, we would choose an urban and rural area, with high and low population levels, weak and strong infrastructure (ETB, Traveller projects). The distributed nature of the first phase is likely to incur higher expenses but could lead to a shorter project launch period.



# Chapter 8

---

## Benefits

The social and economic benefits of a national family learning programme for Travellers are exponential. A nationwide family learning programme will:

### **1. Create better outcomes for Travellers**

A just society means that no matter where a child is born, or into which home or community, that they face the same potential outcomes as other children. This is simply not the case for Traveller children. We receive less education, we have fewer employment opportunities, we experience more poverty and we have worse health outcomes.

### **2. Act as a preventive measure for mental health difficulties faced by our community**

Suicide rates in the Traveller community are much higher than the rest of the population. If Traveller children are supported in their primary education, they will be more likely to stay in school, find employment or further opportunities and enjoy good mental health.

### **3. Provide a strong foundation to overcome challenges throughout our lives**

Through the demolition of internalised oppression, we will start our children off on a strong footing in life. Being proud of our identity is critical to our ability to survive and thrive in society. This support will help Traveller children to remain proud of their community and heritage and deal with the inevitable challenges in life with more certainty.

### **4. Contribute to a more inclusive and cohesive society**

By increasing participation and engagement in education from a currently marginalised and underrepresented group, we will strengthen the overall education system in Ireland. We will bring the voice of the Traveller community into the classroom and we will reduce the stigma and discrimination that is so prevalent today.

### **5. Reduced costs for support and integration services later in life**

Our current need for state interventions due to deteriorated outcomes will be less if we can better survive and thrive in an equal society. Health and education support costs will lessen if we have better outcomes and greater opportunity for independence.

