

CHANGE X



Proven Innovations
for your community

Fighting Words in your community

Your complete guide to getting started



Welcome to the ChangeX Fighting Words guide! Here you can learn some more about us and follow the step by step guide to getting Fighting Words workshops started in your community.

We're here to help so please do get in touch!

Seán Love, co-founder of Fighting Words

Fighting Words

Learn some more...

Why Fighting Words?

Ireland has a wealth of creative talent and has produced some of the world's greatest writers. However, creative writing and arts are often not encouraged or valued within the education system. Students' capacity for independent, creative and critical thinking is often not properly nurtured. Fighting Words exists to change this...

Fighting Words provides free tutoring and mentoring in creative writing and related arts.

Since 2009, Fighting Words has worked with 45,000 participants from all parts of the country. Over the first five years, a total of 90 primary schools and 45 secondary schools have taken part in Fighting Words workshops with participants showing increased levels of confidence, empowerment and self-efficacy and many kids report having discovered a love of writing.

Fighting Words

Learn some more...

The History

Fighting Words was established in January 2009 in Dublin's north inner city by author Roddy Doyle and Seán Love, (former Executive Director of Amnesty International Ireland). The inspiration came from author Dave Eggers' 826 Valencia project in San Francisco. There are now nine 826 centres throughout the US, and Fighting Words has itself helped to inspire another eight similar projects throughout Europe, in Paris, Barcelona, Milan, Amsterdam, London, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Vienna.

- DCU recently completed an evaluation of Fighting Words - check it out [here](#)
- Learn more about Valencia 826, where the inspiration for Fighting Words came from, [here](#)
- To see some more videos and films by Fighting Words check out their [Vimeo Channel](#)

Fighting Words

In your community

Who is this for?

In order to spread the Fighting Words model and to give as many kids as possible the opportunity to participate, we want to help local champions run workshops in their local communities. Getting workshops up and running won't be something you do alone, you'll need the support of your community, particularly parents and teachers but any new project needs a leader to get started.

Check out our short list of criteria and if this sounds like you then email niamh@changex.org to arrange an introductory Skype and she'll guide you through the 5 steps.

Does this sound like you?

- You enjoy facilitating and nurturing creativity
- You have a passion for the creative arts
- You have excellent management and administrative skills
- You have the experience and practical skills necessary to launch a new community initiative

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

Step 1: See Fighting Words in action

Visiting the main centre in Dublin will give you a valuable insight into the culture and ethos of Fighting Words. You'll get to see how it works, both from the administrative side and the creative side and meet some of the people involved. Once you see it in action you'll have a much clearer idea of how it could work in your local community. You'll also get to see first-hand the magic of unleashing creative potential!

Fighting Words HQ runs sessions every weekday and at weekends so to arrange a visit at a time that suits, you can email niamh@changex.org

The address of HQ is [Behan Square, Russell Street, Dublin 1.](#)

If you can't make it to Dublin, we would love to meet you via Skype / Google Hangout, get in touch and we'll arrange a meeting!

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

Step 2: Talk to relevant people in your local community

Once you've met us, seen Fighting Words in action and you're ready to get started you should start talking to the people in your local community who can help you make it happen.

This will include:

- Local writers, artists and creative people – they can help you in delivering the workshops and building awareness.
- Local schools, youth groups, parents and teachers – it'll be important to speak to parents and teachers early in the planning process to see if demand is there for Fighting Words workshops.

Briefing these people on what Fighting Words is and why you think it's a great idea will be a good way to get them excited about the idea but also for you to gauge local interest. Their support will be vital!

Showing this [video](#) and sharing the background, impact and some of the great Fighting Words publications will help you to communicate why Fighting Words is a great idea.

Remember that not everyone has to be on board at the beginning but it's best to ensure that demand exists and that there is local interest when getting started as this will make it easier in the long run!

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

Step 3: Complete training

Once you have interest from local teachers / parents or youth-groups, it'll be time to begin the training process.

Key to the success of Fighting Words has been the consistently high quality of its programmes and volunteers. Top quality training is therefore very important!

Fighting Words HQ will provide you with this training particularly focused on delivering the workshops in your local community.

This will be a mix of online and in-person training and will provide you with all the resources, knowledge and tools you need to deliver your first workshop.

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

Step 4: Find a suitable venue

Finding a suitable venue will be really important. You'll need somewhere comfortable and creative with flexible capacity for the group you'd like to cater for. Some places where a Fighting Words workshop could work really well are:

- A local library
- An art gallery / museum
- A community centre / hall
- A local college / art-school

There are no strict rules but finding a place that has a creative, open and relaxed atmosphere will set the right tone for your workshop. It's crucial that you find a venue at little or no cost so that you can provide the workshop to local children for free. When asking for the use of the venue, remember to ask on behalf of the kids who will get the enjoyment and benefit from the Fighting Words workshop.

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

Step 5: Recruit some volunteers

Once you've completed your training and you have a venue you'll need a small team of volunteers to help you deliver the workshops. The number of volunteers will depend on the number of kids in your workshops as well as the frequency of workshops.

Fighting Words HQ will provide you with some guidance on recruiting and training volunteers.

What kind of people volunteer at Fighting Words?

People from all walks of life - including professional writers, aspiring writers, teachers, student teachers, retired teachers, journalists, visual artists, musicians and filmmakers - just to name a few.

What skills do volunteers need?

Anyone who enjoys working in a creative environment and is a good listener is a welcome volunteer.

What kind of commitment is needed?

This will depend on the number and frequency of workshops provided.

Is training provided?

Yes, training will be provided by Fighting Words HQ.

Fighting Words

Your step-by-step guide

FAQ

How often should we run workshops?

This will depend on your availability, commitment and that of your volunteers. It might be once a week or once a month. You don't need to decide just yet. You can try one session to get started and take it from there.

Is there help & support available?

Yes lots! The team at ChangeX and Fighting Words HQ are here to help you as much as possible, don't be afraid to get in touch.

Are there legal issues I should be aware of?

Fighting Words operates a comprehensive child protection policy. You and your volunteers will be brought through this and you'll be asked to sign a Fighting Words Charter - outlining your agreement to this policy.

You might have some more questions so get in touch with Niamh from ChangeX who can answer any more questions you might have

Email: niamh@changex.org

Phone: 01 677 8683