

## **A Ten-Year Journey to the Heart and Soul of Education**

It started with a mother's dream at the end of a long and stressful day looking after her children. She had a vision of a school that would change the country's educational blueprint and set the new standard for levels of care and well-being in schools.

Susan Wilmot-Josife was so empowered by her vision, and so determined to make others see what she saw, that she gathered a team of like-minded educational experts around her and set out to do what the dream told her – to make that school into a reality.

They called it The Gregory Academy, and it would be the headquarters of the new educational blueprint that was at the centre of her vision. Susan raised £2 million in capital investment and put in bids for properties, only to be outbid in a succession of cruel blows which eventually forced her to abandon the idea.

But from the ashes of disaster came a new purpose. During her work towards the school, Susan and her team amassed mounds of research and global contacts for education, complementary health, inner peace and sustainability. The vision began to move in a new direction.

Susan followed it and INaSENSE was born. Conceived as a social enterprise, not for profit organisation, INaSENSE is about finding solutions to social problems by creating innovation in education.

The educational blueprint was adapted and further research was carried out with MIA – My Identity Audit – a special pilot project that went out to 200 students in six educational establishments. Two state sector schools, two private sector schools and two further education colleges. The results were startling. There were two major themes within the results that came back from the students: anger, and unhappiness. Not used to being consulted about their personal well-being, they experienced frustration and confusion.

Instead of being discouraged, Susan felt that by recruiting the help of more students, parents and teachers all working together, these debilitating layers of low self-esteem in children could be radically improved.

Even though children may be being taught a wide range of ideas in terms of social matters through Personal and Social Education (PSE) classes, there is without a doubt a deficit. This has been proven by the statistics and research that is ongoing at INaSENSE, giving a very strong indication that too many young people post-GCSE have this missing connection that allows them to have the necessary soft skills to complement their academic ones.

Statistics prove that too many children are leaving school unhappy and unfulfilled and the end product is seen in the news every day: youth crime, gang culture, binge drinking, substance abuse and self-harm.

INaSENSE plans to address the issues right at the core of these problems. A new qualification is in development that will give children the opportunity to find out **who** they are and decide **what** they are going to do with that knowledge, in personal, global and community contexts as addressed through the different units. This natural next-phase of the educational blueprint devised by Susan and her colleagues has been 10 years in research and development, and INaSENSE has received an overwhelming response in support of this idea.

The second part of growth at INaSENSE will take place with a newly-seeded online presence at INaSENSE.co.uk. Over time, INaSENSE plans to develop this space into a cutting-edge, bespoke website that offers a global umbrella of resources, information, courses and latest news in the areas of well-being, peace and sustainability.

Three main areas of the website will inform and guide visitors as they follow their own journey in search of themselves: the **Knowledge Hub**, which will grow to become a one-stop network resource, pooling information and resources together for anyone to search; the **Experts' Articles** pages, home to exclusive content and cutting-edge news from INaSENSE's many varied and wonderful contacts, all experts in their fields.

The **H.E.A.R.T. Centre** will address the overarching vision of INaSENSE as a home to courses, webinars, DVDs and training offered by INaSENSE's partners. In time, it will house the qualification currently in development from the MIA pilot.

INaSENSE plans on pursuing further exciting additions to the website, subject to funding, including a **Creativity Café** and **Philosopher's Stone** to provoke thought in questioning minds. These ideas stem from a wish to give visitors of all ages the opportunity to express and share their creative thoughts and feelings, and any questions or thoughts they may have on the world around them. Creative thinking can lead to true innovation, something that INaSENSE, with its ongoing research mission, is always searching for. Currently, for example, developments in neuroscience are being closely followed as they link in to the work of Jane Lloyd, one of INaSENSE's affiliates.

All along the many varied roads of INaSENSE's journey, Susan Wilmot-Josife continues to steer the vision with the help of her team.

"If a young person knows what their dream is," says Susan, "there is no stopping them. And in order to do this, they have to have self-belief and confidence, and know who they are."