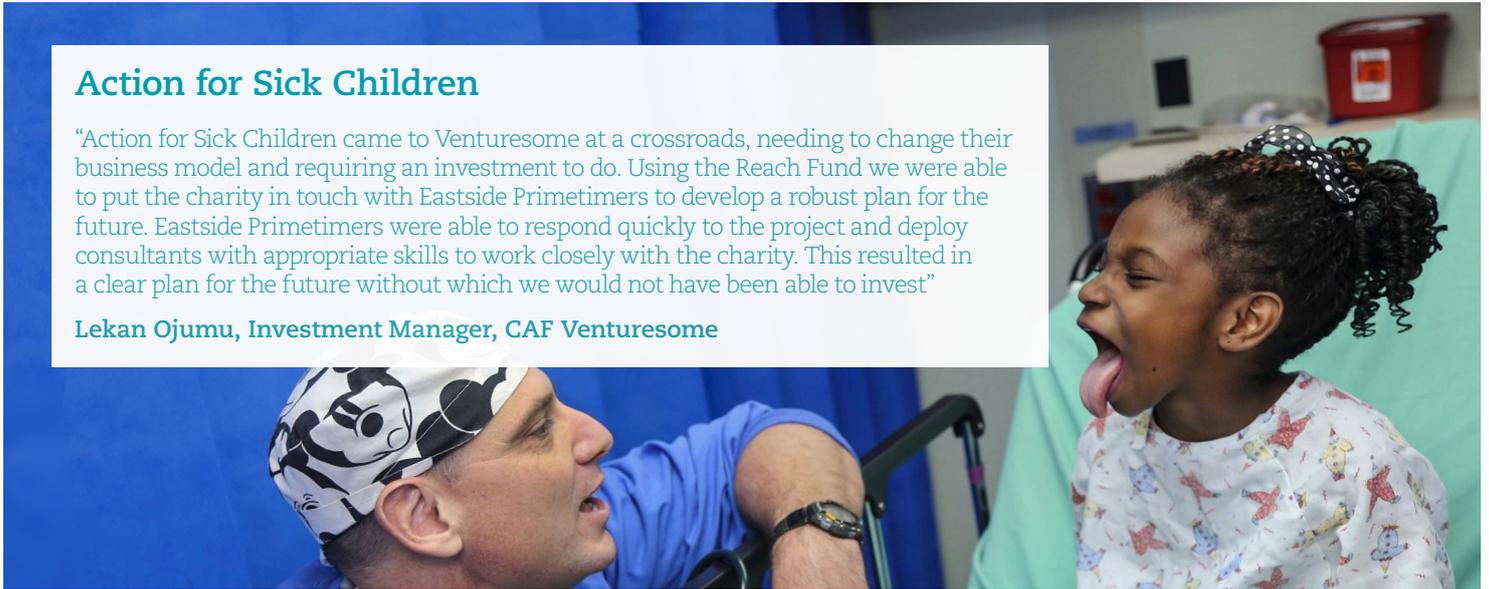


Social Investment

Action for Sick Children

“Action for Sick Children came to Venturesome at a crossroads, needing to change their business model and requiring an investment to do. Using the Reach Fund we were able to put the charity in touch with Eastside Primetimers to develop a robust plan for the future. Eastside Primetimers were able to respond quickly to the project and deploy consultants with appropriate skills to work closely with the charity. This resulted in a clear plan for the future without which we would not have been able to invest”

Lekan Ojumu, Investment Manager, CAF Venturesome



Action for Sick Children is a Manchester-based charity has had a strong heritage in campaigning for better hospital environments and now focuses on a service (Dental Playbox) to teach about the importance of good oral hygiene for children. Poor dental health in young people is a key issue nationally and locally in Greater Manchester, with 36% of children aged five suffering tooth decay (51% in Salford).

① Outcomes

A £70k loan at 6.5% over 5 years from social investor, CAF Venturesome, to implement the turnaround and enable Dental Box to grow from circa 500 settings to over 1,000 by 2021.

② Project Need

Action for Sick Children's previously healthy reserves have reduced over time as they were using these to subsidise activities and develop Dental Playbox. The organisation was operating at a deficit and found itself with serious cashflow challenges, with its existing reserves tied up in an office building. The Board had recognised the need to establish a turnaround plan and had approached CAF Venturesome to provide working capital.

Like many small charities, the organisation recognised the need for change but had limited resources and were forced to undertake a transformation programme on a shoestring. They were understandably tired from facing multiple challenges from expanding their high potential Dental Playbox service, while also needing to keep the lights on. The organisation didn't have a great grasp on its central costs and wanted to test the appetite in the market for its new service offer.

③ Solution

We produced a series of financial tools in order to:

- Identify the underlying costings for each activity and function and their ability to operate at full cost recovery or generate a surplus
- Develop a cost reduction programme
- Assess the amount of funding needed for working capital
- Present 3 year forecasts for investment

An action-oriented business plan was produced to demonstrate a path to sustainability and give reassurances to investors.

A market study assessed potential customers from nurseries, primary schools and local authorities in Greater Manchester, and gave recommendations about how to increase repeat business, improve the efficiency of existing contracts and find new customers.

Operational milestones were set for fundraising and sales to strengthen performance measurement.

“It felt to me as though the organisation really benefitted from having an external perspective. Our intervention enabled them to establish targets around new indicators (repeat business in existing schools, increasing number of sessions in existing schools, rationalising facilitator travel time, etc.) which should help them to generate more income with less marketing and business development resource”

Lisa Lucas, Consultant, Eastside Primetimers