



COMMUNITY PLATFORM
CHALLENGING POVERTY & INEQUALITY

Community Platform

Values for a Just Recovery

The COVID-19 Crisis is resulting in a tragic loss of life and is very damaging to families and communities, particularly for those who are most vulnerable in our society. This public health crisis has also led to an economic crisis with a large loss of jobs and incomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed existing inequalities in our society. The impact of these inequalities has fallen heavily on the most marginalised.

How we recover from this crisis, and the values that inform this recovery are essential to the type of society we will have into the future. The solidarity demonstrated by the wider public and some of the measures taken during the crisis already show that there is a strong commitment to social values and therefore great potential to coming out of this crisis better than before it. The response by Government clearly shows the importance of the role of the state to provide for all those who live in Ireland and the need to increase investment to provide effective and sustainable public services and infrastructure for all.

The Community Platform is calling on the Government and elected representatives to build on the momentum for positive change and put to the front the values of COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATION, and DECENCY in working with wider society to plan our recovery.

Community

The Community Platform defines the value of community as:

people looking out for each other and having a sense of belonging; communities that are welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing; and building communities that are socially, economically, culturally, and environmentally sustainable.

Our collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic shows that Irish people are deeply committed to caring for each other and concerned for the well-being of all. It is important for our recovery from this crisis that this commitment is reflected back to people. The value of community should motivate government and national representatives to resource, create, and empower communities where: people are connected to each other and have a sense of place and belonging; difference is valued and incorporated in an inclusive manner; and resilience is fostered alongside a capacity to respond to challenges of environmental sustainability, justice, and social inclusion.

We expect government and national representatives to:

- provide multi-annual resources to independent community organisations that promote social inclusion;
- devise and implement a national policy strategy for achieving connected, inclusive and resilient communities; and
- promote and support the transitions urgently required at community level to meet the challenges of climate change, inequality, and uneven development.

Participation

The Community Platform defines the value of participation as:

people speaking up and having a say, with their views being heard and valued; different voices and the perspectives of different groups in society having an influence to advance equality, social justice and sustainability; and active engagement in decision-making, rebalancing of power in this process, and investing resources to support this engagement.

The value of participation should motivate government and national representatives to engage those who are currently marginalised and excluded from such decision-making in the co-creation and co-monitoring of key policies, policy strategies, programmes, and public services.

Decency

The Community Platform defines the value of decency as:

valuing people's shared humanity and human dignity, and having mutual respect; compassion and mutual support; everyone having a quality of life, with their needs met and a capacity to choose the life they wish to lead; and decent work, accommodation and services for everyone.

During this crisis essential workers have met our essential needs. They are in the low paid and undervalued sectors and decent work must be a core value into the future. The value of decency should motivate government and national representatives to ensure every person has access to adequate income, standard of living, accommodation, health and wellbeing, education, and public services, such that they are afforded dignity, have real choices, and enjoy a capability to flourish.

We expect government and national representatives to:

- develop diverse models for co-creation and create spaces for their effective implementation, involving those who are currently marginalised and excluded from such decision-making;
- create and enable robust, meaningful, and equal policy partnerships between the public sector and civil society organisations that bring forward the needs and interests of those who are marginalised and excluded; and
- protect and enable an independent, critical, and informed civil society voice on public policy and the current context.

We expect government and national representatives to:

- avoid the mistakes of the past and not to return to austerity;
- co-create with civil society a shared vision for economic equality based on the value of decency and a strategy for its achievement;
- invest in public services and sustain a tax base for such investment to adequately meet needs and reach high standards; and
- establish and fulfil the right to a home.

Community Platform

The Community Platform is an alliance of 30 national networks and organisations in the community and voluntary sector working to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality.

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