



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector



Prepared by the Department of Rural and Community Development supported by the  
Cross Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development  
[gov.ie](http://gov.ie)



## Foreword

Throughout Ireland, community and voluntary organisations work every day to improve lives and build a better society for all. Working in partnership with the state, community and voluntary organisations reach into every area, striving to ensure that no-one is left behind.

The last two years have reminded us what is possible when the community and voluntary sector and the state collaborate strongly together. COVID-19 challenged us all to change and adapt. We learned new ways of doing things, new ways of reaching out, and we also gained a new appreciation for each other and the communities to which we belong.

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities, the strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024 outlines a vision to “create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members”. Collaboration and partnership working were key components in the development of the strategy and continued collaboration will be critical to the successful delivery of the strategy’s actions.

One of the commitments of the strategy is the adoption of an agreed set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector.

These values and principles, developed by the sector and agreed by Government, will provide the foundation for all consultation, collaboration and partnership working between the community and voluntary sector, and central and local government.

The agreement and adoption of these values and principles marks an important milestone in the continued strengthening of the relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector. It is essential that we continue to work more effectively together. Without this collaboration and partnership between the sector and the state, we would not be able to reach all of the people that we need to. These values and principles will help foster a culture of mutual respect and understanding as we work together to face challenges.

We look forward to championing these values and principles, working with our public sector colleagues to realise their intent, and to continue to strengthen collaboration. We are committed in the months and years ahead to continued open and transparent engagement with the sector in the pursuit of the most positive outcomes for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Humphreys".

**Heather Humphreys**

*Minister for Rural and Community Development*



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe O'Brien".

**Joe O'Brien**

*Minister of State with responsibility for  
Community Development and Charities*

# Introduction

*Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024* outlines a vision to “create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members”. Collaboration and partnership working were a key component in the development of the strategy and continued collaboration will be critical to the successful delivery of the strategy’s actions.

The relationship between the State and the community and voluntary sector is extensive and the sector is responsible for the delivery of a diverse range of services for the state. A significant part of this relationship centres on the need to collaborate and work in partnership when developing and implementing policy frameworks. The importance of effective consultation has been identified at international and national level and Ireland has made commitments to supporting effective collaboration through its membership of the Open Government Partnership and its establishment of Public Participation Networks (PPNs), among other initiatives.

One of the commitments in the five-year strategy is the adoption of an agreed set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working at national and local level. The values and principles will provide the foundation for all consultation, collaboration and partnership working between communities, organisations in the community and voluntary sector and Government Departments, Local and Regional Government and agencies of the State.

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an agreed set of values and principles that will underpin the relationships necessary at all levels to provide effective support to communities in particular the most disadvantaged and marginalised.

## Aim

The aim of this document is to provide Government Departments, Local and Regional Government, agencies of the State and organisations in the community and voluntary sector with an agreed set of the values and principles to be utilised as the foundation for all collaborative and partnership efforts with communities and organisations of the community and voluntary sector. While not intended as an exhaustive list, full and active consideration of these guiding values and principles will support effective partnerships between the community and voluntary sector and government at local, regional and national levels.

## Commitment

All Government Departments, Local and Regional Government and Agencies of the State (Public Bodies) will commit to the utilisation of the values and principles detailed here to inform all collaboration and partnership working in the context of consultation, policy and programme design, development, implementation and monitoring at a national, regional and local level.

# Values

Community and voluntary sector organisations, and the work that they do, is framed by a set of values that underpin the approach to the communities and individuals that they support. These important values serve to ensure that the diversity of all communities is fully supported and considered when determining the appropriate supports for those communities and their individual members.

It is important for collaboration and partnership working at a local, regional or national level that all relevant organisations and public bodies consider the values listed below and ensure that these values inform the design, implementation and monitoring of policy and programmes. This will ensure that all members of the community are considered as part of that partnership process and are facilitated to engage with the processes in an effective way. This in turn will support more effective policy and programme design and implementation that allows all members of the community to engage with policy and programme processes that will/may have an impact on them and their communities.





## Social Justice

A commitment to the concept of social justice, which believes that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities and can be seen as a commitment to comprehensive engagement to ensure the promotion of cultural, environmental, economic and socially sustainable policies and practices.



## Empowering Communities

A commitment to empowering communities, increasing their knowledge, skills, consciousness and confidence to become critical, creative and active participants. Supporting people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential.



## Sustainable Development

A commitment to sustainable development, which is seen as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Sustainable development is a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and in the future. To realise this requires creating a sustainable and resource-efficient economy founded on a fair and just society, which respects the ecological limits and carrying capacity of the natural environment.



## Active Participation

A commitment to active participation of all stakeholders, including citizens and non-citizens. Participation is rooted in the belief that communities have the right to identify their own needs and interests and outcomes required to meet them. Building active participation involves a recognition that policies and programmes targeted at communities and groups will not and cannot be effective without the meaningful participation of those communities in their design, implementation and monitoring.



## Human Rights, Equality and Anti-Discrimination

A commitment to human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, involving promoting human rights and equality in society and committing to addressing the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by many groups. Responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty are relevant to all public bodies in the context of this particular value.



## Social Inclusion

A commitment to prioritising the needs of communities experiencing social or economic exclusion, including rural isolation, and recognising that promoting social and economic inclusion requires us to recognise and seek to address the root causes of exclusion as well as developing strategies and mechanisms to promote and ensure inclusion.

# Principles

The strategy design process was informed and underpinned by a set of principles outlined below and the implementation of its objectives and actions seeks to give effect to these principles. In this context these principles should also underpin and inform the design, development, implementation and monitoring of national, regional and local policies and programmes that will/may have an impact on communities.

.....

## Principle 1: **Respect**

Commit to respect for the diversity of knowledge, skills, views and lived experience being brought to a process by all stakeholders. In addition, bodies will make every effort to maximise the potential this diversity brings while managing any conflict or disagreements which may arise in a positive and inclusive way.

.....

## Principle 2: **Subsidiarity**

Recognise and facilitate the ability of communities, whether communities of interest or geographic communities, to influence and, where possible, take decisions and actions, promoting power sharing and the exercise of power as close to communities as possible.

.....

## Principle 3: **Harmonisation**

Ensure consistency with existing strategies and implement agreed objectives and actions relevant to local and community development. Support and facilitate approaches promoting harmonisation and common standards of good practice in local development and community development programme, policies and processes throughout the country.

.....

## Principle 4: **Value for Money**

Promote and facilitate value for money approaches underpinned by a collaborative, partnership and whole-of-government ethos that prioritises societal value and community need.

.....

## Principle 5: **Implementation**

Make every effort to leverage the structures already in place locally and nationally seeking to maximise the potential of these structures.

.....

## Principle 6: **Collaboration**

Work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and communities to support sustainable approaches to policy and programme development and implementation.

# Acknowledgements

## Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development

<b>Bairbre Nic Aongusa (Chair)</b>	Department of Rural and Community Development
<b>Rachel Doyle</b>	Community Work Ireland
<b>Ann Irwin</b>	Community Work Ireland
<b>Ivan Cooper</b>	Community and Voluntary Pillar
<b>Ronnie Fay (RIP)</b>	Community and Voluntary Pillar
<b>Joe Saunders</b>	Irish Local Development Network
<b>Peter Brennan</b>	Irish Local Development Network
<b>Adrienne Rodgers</b>	Local Government
<b>Frank Holt</b>	Community and Voluntary Stakeholder
<b>Brigid Geoghegan</b>	Community and Voluntary Stakeholder
<b>Deirdre Hardiman</b>	National University of Ireland, Galway
<b>Helen Casey</b>	National University of Ireland, Galway
<b>Ruth Barrett</b>	Department of Health
<b>Tony Kieran</b>	Department of Social Protection
<b>Hannah Gilmartin</b>	Department of Energy, Climate and Communications
<b>John Cole</b>	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth





**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland