



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership-Working

*with the Community and Voluntary Sector at a
Local and National Level*

Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership working

An agreed foundation for engagement between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector

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 below 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

The concept of Social Justice 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.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development 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.

Social Inclusion

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 stakeholder and communities to support sustainable approaches to policy and programme development and implementation.