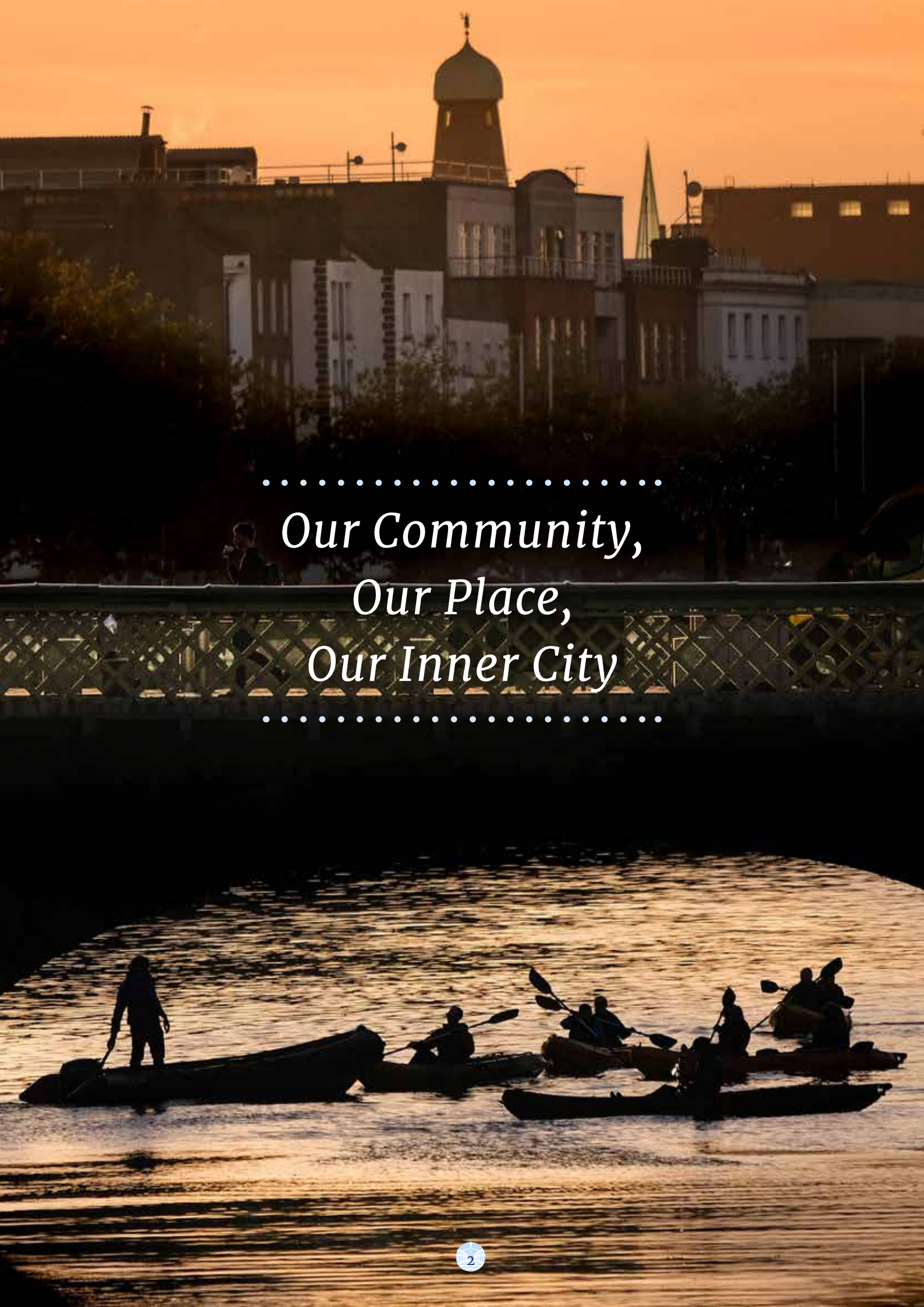




DUBLIN CITY
COMMUNITY CO-OP

Strategic Plan 2023-2027



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*Our Community,
Our Place,
Our Inner City*

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Foreword

Over the course of our previous Strategic Plan the Co-op has come a long way and has become an important and influential organisation supporting and serving disadvantaged communities and groups in the inner city

IN THIS, THE DUBLIN CITY COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE'S (CO-OP'S) SECOND STRATEGIC PLAN, WE SET OUT OUR GOALS AND AMBITIONS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS AND SPELL OUT HOW WE INTEND TO BUILD ON AND CONSOLIDATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

The Co-op was established in 2014 to fill a gap – inner city Dublin was the only region in Ireland that lacked a local development company. Thus, community development organisations across Dublin's inner city came together to form an organisation that would fill this void. The intention was to strengthen cooperation, coordination and collaboration between organisations sharing a common vision and working to combat poverty, inequality and social exclusion in their communities and to attract additional resources for community development activity. The structure adopted was a co-operative as this would allow members both to retain their independent status and identity and to cooperate on issues of common interest.

Over the course of our previous Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, the Co-op has come a long way and has become an important and influential organisation supporting and serving disadvantaged communities and groups in the inner city. Adopting the model of a co-op has proved to be an inspired and successful innovation. It has ensured that the Co-op has become an important support and resource for community development in the inner city. It has both successfully supported the ongoing work of its member organisations and developed new and pioneering initiatives in response to emerging needs. It has also increasingly drawn on the collective knowledge and experience of its members to advocate authoritatively and effectively on issues of poverty and social exclusion in the inner city and to propose concrete proposals to improve policies and programmes in this regard.

A key task of the Co-op has been to foster effective and constructive relations with other organisations working in the inner city, especially the different statutory agencies. One of the key lessons that emerged during the Covid pandemic was the importance of effective partnership and cooperation between all the different bodies, statutory and civil society, working to tackle the challenges of poverty and social exclusion and to build stronger and more sustainable and inclusive communities. To this end we have devoted considerable efforts to fostering a constructive working relationship with a wider range of organisations based on mutual respect and cooperation. In the coming period we will continue to foster a partnership approach and ensure that the voice and expertise of local community organisations is at the heart of all developments affecting their communities.

An important role of the Co-op has been to ensure that there is adequate funding to support the work of its members and the development of community development initiatives in the inner city. In this regard we have been fortunate to receive substantial public funding that has supported a wide range of community development programmes. In particular, the Co-op holds the contract to implement the Government's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in the inner city. This is complemented by an additional combined grant from Dublin City Council and the Department of Rural and Community Development. These resources are used to support the work of our member organisations in delivering a wide range of essential social, economic

and cultural services in disadvantaged communities and supporting the core work of the Co-op. The current SICAP programme comes to end in 2023 and it is vital that this key source of funding for the community development sector is continued into the future. As well as providing essential funding these programmes have enabled us to build very good working relationships with the organisations responsible for them: the Department of Rural and Community Development, Dublin City Council and Pobal. In addition to this important core funding the Co-op has increasingly been able to attract funding for specific initiatives in areas such as migrant inclusion, healthy community initiatives, Roma employment and training, community festivals, social enterprises and integration of Ukrainian and other refugees. This has enabled us to develop constructive relationships with a wider range of funding agencies such as the HSE. Looking to the future we hope to build on this and we will work to attract additional funding for a broader range of initiatives in disadvantaged communities.

Over the course of the last Strategic Plan issues of poverty, inequality and social exclusion in the inner city became ever more evident. They have been exacerbated by a number of factors: the impact of the Covid pandemic particularly on children and vulnerable older persons; the accelerating cost of living crisis; the impact of the increasing number of Ukrainian and Non-Ukrainian refugees living in Dublin's inner city which has added to the challenge of ensuring integration and diversity of a growing ethnic minority population; and the growing impact of climate change and the need to transition to a more sustainable future. All these issues add to the demands on the Co-op and its member organisations. However, responding to them also creates exciting opportunities to develop new initiatives and to develop new and constructive partnerships with all the agencies working to build more inclusive and sustainable communities in Dublin's inner city. Thus, in this Strategic Plan we set out how we plan to do this through: continuing to support the work of our member organisations; further strengthening the Co-op and ensuring that we sustain a culture of equity and transparency in all our work; constantly reviewing all our work to ensure that all our efforts have a real social impact; and continuing to advocate for increased social, economic, cultural, climate and environmental justice for disadvantaged communities in the inner city.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of the Co-op I would like to record our thanks to all the stakeholders, internal and external, who have contributed to the development of the Plan. A special word of thanks is due to zinto3 who assisted us so efficiently and sensitively in developing the plan. As the independent chairperson of the Co-op I would also like to pay tribute to the extraordinary commitment and dedication of our core staff team lead so ably by our CEO, Noel Wardick. They have responded in a remarkable way to each new challenge that has faced the Co-op, especially during the Covid pandemic. They are a key reason why I am confident that the ambitious goals set out in this Strategic Plan can be achieved. Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Board Members who represent each of the Co-op's member organisations. Their commitment to the Co-op and hard work on its behalf has been essential in ensuring the development of the Co-op as an effective and well-governed agency. It is a privilege to work with them.



HUGH FRAZER
Chairperson

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This new Strategic Plan for 2023–2027, developed over a twelve-month period that involved extensive consultation with Co-op members and other stakeholders, builds on the organisation’s successes and learnings to date

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Executive Summary

Since its legal establishment in 2014, Dublin City Community Co-operative (‘the Co-op’) has become a recognised and respected actor in community development and social inclusion. It has proven that it is possible for community development organisations to work together to address some of the most persistent economic and social challenges facing individuals and communities in Inner City Dublin.

In addition to two successful cycles of jointly tendering for and winning the Government’s Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the Co-op has grown to deliver a diverse range of other targeted interventions including: Inner City Community Support Programme (ICCSPP), Strength-in-Diversity (SiD) Project, focusing on migrant inclusion; Healthy Communities and Social Prescribing Project in the north east inner city Dublin; Roma Employment & Training (REaT) Project; and is a consortium member on two Social Enterprise Projects and the Ability Programme for Dublin South City. Moreover, Co-op members have also conducted joint research and policy work highlighting, for example, the needs of deprived children across their respective constituencies and the inequalities exacerbated by COVID-19. Importantly, the Co-op has been able to create an internal working culture true to its values and principles, one that is based on trust, transparency and mutual respect.

This new Strategic Plan for 2023–2027, developed over a twelve-month period that involved extensive consultation with Co-op members and other stakeholders, builds on the organisation’s successes and learnings to date¹. It recognises that the social and economic needs in the communities are as complex and acute as ever. It also recognizes that climate change and the transition to a greener economy has the potential to deepen existing inequalities if that transition is not equitable and just.

This Strategic Plan re-affirms the three key roles of the Co-op.

- **LEADERSHIP:** Under this Strategic Plan, the Co-op will build on its authority, reputation and collective expertise in order to be more vocal about the causes and solutions to inequality, and the impact of poverty and social injustice on communities.

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¹ See Appendix for a detailed outline of the consultation and engagement process undertaken

- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** To a greater extent, the Co-op will set its own Community Development agenda in the course of this Strategic Plan, delivering more joint projects with member and non-member organisations and implement Co-op office-led projects that align with identified community needs, that address root causes, and demonstrate best practice.
- **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Under this Strategic Plan, the Co-op will provide greater value-add to members by delivering efficiencies, protecting existing funding, securing new funding, providing capacity building, supporting greater coordination and by being a collective voice on advocacy, policy and research.

Aligned with these roles, the Co-op has agreed four strategic priorities

1. Advocate For Social, Economic, Cultural, Climate and Environmental Justice
2. Deliver Social Impact
3. Support Our Members and Strengthen the Co-op
4. Sustain a Culture of Equity and Transparency

Our strategic plan is structured to reflect our history and current position; the changing context we operate within; ways in which we engage and communicate with different stakeholders; and how we approach and plan how to best secure our future – both as an entity in our own right, and as a collective of local organisations who mutually share a common purpose, vision and mission. As a framework this plan allows us the necessary flexibility required in a changing political, social and economic environment and takes account of local circumstances that we face both externally and internally. By using this approach in pursuit of our strategic priorities against our roles, we will be better positioned in the future to achieve our mission as set forth in what is our second strategic plan.

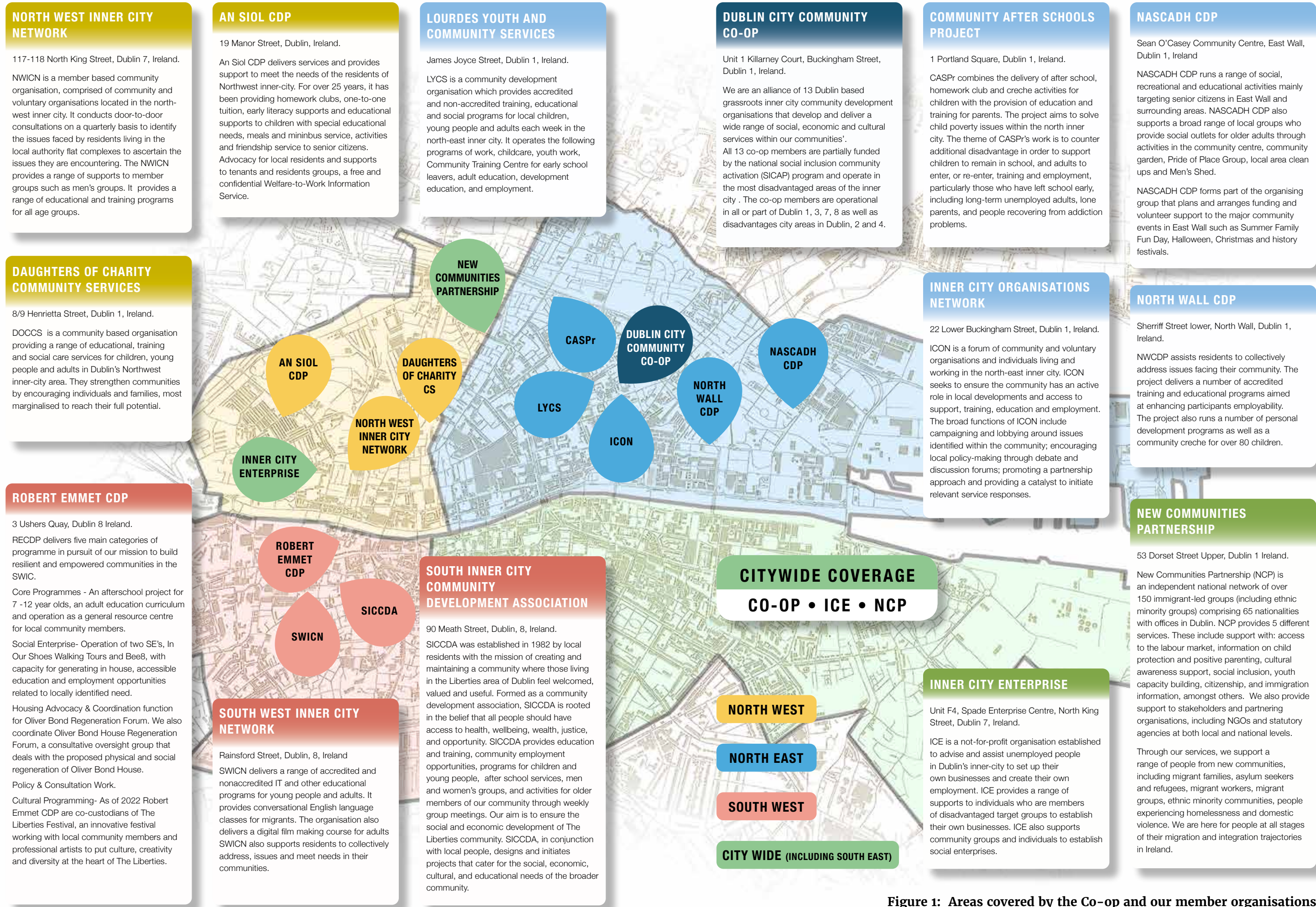


Figure 1: Areas covered by the Co-op and our member organisations

‘The Co-op Today’ and the Social, Economic & Policy Context

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The Co-op’s members are involved in programmes and activities which can broadly be categorised as: community development; life-long learning and education; children, childcare, youth and families; and enterprise and employment

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The Co-op is a non-profit, co-operative alliance of local community development organisations based in Inner City Dublin working to address social exclusion and poverty. Established in 2014 as a co-operative society and registered also as a charity, this alliance was formed in response to an opportunity for 15 local community development organisations to collectively deliver a Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)² contract; alone, each member would have been unable to tender for this opportunity, but together they were able to make a successful bid. Today, the Co-op acts as an umbrella organisation to 13 local community development organisations, following a merger in 2016 of two member organisations and the subsummation of one member organisation’s staff into the Co-op itself, and has expanded its funding and programming beyond SICAP – see below.

The Co-op operates in all or parts of Dublin 1,3,7 & 8 and disadvantaged city areas in Dublin 2 & 4, covering 41 Electoral Divisions, several Gardai, Dublin City Council and Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) divisions, as well as three Health Service Executive Community Healthcare Organisations (HSE CHO).

SERVICE OFFERING

The Co-op’s member organisations deliver a range of programmes aimed at addressing social exclusion and poverty. The Co-op’s members are involved in programmes and activities which can broadly be categorised as: community development; life-long learning and education; children, childcare, youth and families; and enterprise and employment.

As a collective, the Co-op’s principle joint workstream is to tender for and implement the multi-year SICAP. In addition to this, the Co-op and its member organisations advocate on issues of social justice, environmental & economic justice and inequality in the inner city.

The work of the Co-op is supported by the Co-op office, a small staff team that coordinate and administer programme funding and coordinate other activities in support of the Co-op’s mission such as capacity building, thematic based member working groups and governance. The office also coordinates the Co-op’s research, advocacy and communications’ work with and on behalf of its members and represents the Co-op and its members on several local and national stakeholder groups and committees.

In the last few years, the Co-op office has also started to deliver programmes

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2 The Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is the Irish Government’s national social inclusion programme. SICAP provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies and is implemented by independent not-for-profit organisations such as the Co-op across the country.

to address emerging areas of need in the community. These include: Strength-in-Diversity (SiD) Project, focusing on migrant inclusion; Healthy Communities & Social Prescribing Project in the north east inner city; Roma Employment & Training (REaT) Project; and the Co-Op is a consortium member on the Ability Programme for Dublin South City and the Social Enterprise Community of Practice (SECoP) Programme for Dublin City & Fingal. Since 2022 the Co-op has developed a significant refugee response capacity to address the needs of refugees of all nationalities residing in the inner city. In addition, the Co-op has initiated research into the area of Climate Change and a Just Transition as it applies to socio-economic disadvantaged urban contexts with a view to developing project proposals and advocacy positions over the course of this strategic plan.

TARGET GROUPS

The Co-op’s programmes – whether run by our members, jointly, or by the Co-op office – primarily target ‘hard to reach’ communities, families and individuals. While these groups have diverse needs, they are considered difficult to engage due to their socio-economic characteristics and institutional relationships. They are very often unheard and seldom listened to. The Co-op also works with local social enterprises, and individuals starting their own businesses.

In delivering its services and in conducting its research and advocacy work, the Co-op engages with other non-member community development organisations, State agencies and bodies, local, regional and national structures (both statutory and non-statutory), and service providers, such as childcare, sport organisations, local development companies and youth services. The Co-op is an active and engaged member of the Irish Local Development Network, the national representative body for organisations implementing programmes such as SICAP and LEADER.³

SOCIAL CONTEXT

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY. Dublin’s inner city is characterised by a ‘patchwork’ of demographics and outcomes where, for instance, disadvantaged Irish and migrant communities reside alongside some of the wealthiest communities and political institutions in the country. Wealth masks deprivation and poverty in the inner city. For instance, looking at the 41 Electoral Divisions in which the Co-op operates, data seems to indicate that these areas experience less deprivation than average⁴; however, looking more closely within these

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3 The Irish Local Development Network CLG (ILDN) is the representative body for Ireland’s Local Development Companies (LDCs) and the Co-op. These 49 not-for-profit groups are building inclusive, vibrant communities and better life chances for people in every part of Ireland. With 2,100 employees on the ground, supporting 15,000 community groups and 170,000 individuals through €300+ million of programmes, each year, the ILDN membership is the largest Community Development/Anti-Poverty Network in the state.

4 Data.Gov.Ie (2016) Pobal HP – Deprivation Index Scores – 2016 <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/hp-deprivation-index-scores-2016#:~:text=The%202016%20Pobal%20HP%20Deprivation,the%20level%20of%20electoral%20division.>

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Electoral Divisions and examining the Small Areas⁵, almost 25% of them are considered disadvantaged⁶. Moreover, nearly 20% of the areas within the Liberties’ Electoral Division show levels of disadvantage above average⁷. In Dublin’s north east inner city where there is a population of almost 46,000, more than 16,000 people live in disadvantage and poverty, side-by-side with a significant level of wealth and development in the area⁸. At a macro level, research has also shown that people living in urban settings are more likely to face social inclusion barriers than their rural counterparts⁹.

The disproportionate concentration of homeless accommodation sites, drug & alcohol services and Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian refugee accommodation centres in a relatively small and densely populated geographic area which is already socio-economically disadvantaged has led to the creation of a **‘poverty-hub’** in Dublin’s inner city. As a result, the demand for services and supports required for such a vulnerable cohort of society far exceeds capacity on the ground. The necessary untangling of this **‘poverty-hub’** will be difficult and challenging in the years to come.

Addressing poverty is complex and relies on more than just addressing a person’s material wealth.

Poverty is multidimensional, encompassing different areas of an individual’s life: from health, to education, to housing tenure. And these factors are dynamic and work to influence each other. For instance, as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, poor health outcomes can be the result – and cause – of different sources of deprivation, ranging from socio-economic, childhood development, working conditions, and living circumstances. As shown by the Co-op report *‘The Impact of Covid-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities’*, the pandemic has dramatically affected those communities who were already “medically and socio-economically” disadvantaged¹⁰. This was evidenced, for instance, by the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on marginalised communities as well as on Roma and Traveler communities, who could not properly self-isolate and were already affected by chronic diseases at a higher rate than the general population¹¹. The complexities involved in addressing poverty, inequalities and social exclusion require an approach which considers the individual’s circumstances as a whole, as well as that of their family and community.

5 Small Areas are the smallest unit of measurement and census statistical analysis available from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Census small areas are a sub-division of the Electoral Division administrative unit. Census Small Area (CSA) generally cover 65–90 households.

6 Dublin City Community Cooperative (2022) Consultation Children & Youth Strategy – A Statement to Government <https://dublincitycommunitycoop.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Submission-by-Dublin-City-Community-Cooperative-to-Government-Consultation-Children-Youth-Strategy-pdf-submitted-24th-Feb-2022.pdf>

7 SICCCA (2019) ‘Community Profile and Needs Assessment of the Liberties and Surrounding Areas’

8 ICON (2022) ‘The NEIC: What are we talking about?’ <https://www.iconnetwork.ie/about/north-inner-city/#:~:text=Within%20the%2011%20ED's%20there,the%20complexity%20of%20the%20area.>

9 ESRI (2018) ‘New research examines barriers to social inclusion in Ireland’ <https://www.esri.ie/news/new-research-examines-barriers-to-social-inclusion-in-ireland>

10 Dublin City Community Cooperative (2020), ‘The Impact of Covid-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities’, *The Impact of Covid-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities* (dublincitycommunitycoop.ie)

11 Irish Times (2021) ‘Support offered to Roma community during pandemic must continue, says HSE and NGO network’. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/support-offered-to-roma-community-during-pandemic-must-continue-says-hse-and-ngo-network-1.4697119>

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT. A key determinate of life outcomes is childhood education and development, and Ireland’s child poverty and deprivation rates are above the EU average¹². More than 10% of people in Ireland live in poverty, of which 30% are aged under 18¹³. The childhood deprivation rate is also high, with one sixth of children living in deprivation¹⁴. In Dublin specifically, nearly 20% of children under 18 years old live in material deprivation and almost 5% are consistently poor¹⁵. Behind the overall statistics, the impact of poverty and deprivation on children in Dublin’s inner city has been highlighted in the Co-op’s **‘No Child Shall Suffer’** report¹⁶ which provides living narratives of the experiences of children and their families.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND A JUST TRANSITION. Another key issue on the horizon for organisations working to combat inequality and exclusion is climate change. Its implications are far-reaching and likely to fall along the fault-lines of existing inequalities, for instance material wealth, health, housing, and employment. Research has shown a link between higher hospital admissions and exposure to air pollution in disadvantaged areas of Dublin¹⁷. While there is government commitment to adapt to the climate crisis, a ‘just transition’ that actively seeks to benefit and engage already-marginalised individuals and communities needs to be actively built.

UKRAINE AND NON-UKRAINIAN REFUGEES. Finally, during the development of this Strategic Plan, the Irish government waived visa restrictions on Ukrainians fleeing war, resulting in approximately 70,000 refugee arrivals in Ireland as of end of 2022¹⁸, with Dublin’s inner city hosting nearly 2,465¹⁹. Among Local Electoral Areas, Dublin North Inner City has experienced the highest number of arrivals in the country with 1,664 Ukrainians²⁰. ²¹In addition, Ireland has experienced a significant increase in people seeking international protection with 13,319 non-Ukrainian refugees seeking asylum in Ireland during 2022, the highest figures for more than 20 years²². As with Ukrainian refugees many non-Ukrainian refugees are accommodated in the inner city area. These numbers have created severe pressure on services provided by the State, by schools and by community development organisations, while also highlighting a lack of capacity in Early Care and Learning services, English language services and services to School Aged Children in the Inner City.²³

12 The Children’s Rights Alliance (2021) ‘The European Child Guarantee’, https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/information_sheets/files/European%20Child%20Guarantee%20June%202021.pdf

13 Social Justice Ireland (2022) ‘More than 580,000 people are still living in poverty in Ireland, of which 164,000 are children’ <https://www.socialjustice.ie/article/more-580000-people-are-still-living-poverty-ireland-which-164000-are-children>

14 Ibid.

15 Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2020) Income, Poverty and Deprivation among Children: A Statistical Baseline Analysis <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a1580-income-poverty-and-deprivation-among-children-a-statistical-baseline-analysis-july-2020/>

16 The Co-op’s No Child Shall Suffer report – Dublin City Community Co-Op (dublincitycommunitycoop.ie)

17 DCU (2022) ‘Environmental Justice in Ireland: Key dimensions of environmental and climate injustice experienced by vulnerable and marginalised communities’ <https://communitylawandmediation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Environmental-Justice-in-Ireland-230322-1.pdf>

18 Department of Justice figures

19 Arrivals from Ukraine in Ireland Series 8, Central Statistics Office

20 Ibid

21 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/FP/p-aui/arrivalsfromukraineinirelandseries6/>

22 Department of Justice figures

23 Dublin City Community Cooperative (2022) ‘Childcare, Capacity and Ukrainian Refugees – A Statement to Government’ <https://dublincitycommunitycoop.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Co-op-Statement-Childcare-Capacity-and-Ukrainian-Refugees.pdf>

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Ireland is experiencing its highest rates of inflation since 2008, hitting 9% in 2022²⁴. Inflation comes at a time when 30% of the population has already cut back on essentials, heating or food due to the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs of living²⁵. As costs of essentials have increased, a growing number of people are affected by fuel poverty. Single adults with dependent children, older people on fixed retirement and benefits, and disabled people are disproportionately impacted by energy price increases compared to the rest of the population²⁶.

In the last years, housing has also represented a key inter-generational concern in Ireland. In 2022, housing prices in Dublin City increased by 11.7% between May 2021-2022²⁷, making the city the fifth most expensive place for renters in Europe²⁸. Over one third of those in the private housing market live in poverty, with the problem of ‘hidden’ overcrowding becoming increasingly common²⁹. Homelessness is also on the rise, reaching a new peak of 11,542 in January 2023³⁰. Moreover, official statistics sometimes underestimate the real scale of the problem by omitting thousands of individuals and families on the social housing list together with their friends or family³¹.

Among European countries, Ireland is the country with highest inequalities in wages between the bottom 10th percentile and the top 90th percentile³². People living in Dublin inner-city areas were already employed in low paid precarious jobs³³ and COVID-19 worsened their employment conditions, with increase in demand for the Co-op’s services during the pandemic³⁴. The escalating energy and cost of living crisis only serves to exacerbate these challenges.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Government’s Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016 established a competitive tendering process to deliver local development work, open not only to local development companies and non-profits, but also to for-profit companies. The introduction of a competitive tendering process has created uncertainty for local development and community organisations, as many must compete with private corporations entering the sector, and a downward pressure on the costs of delivering effective community development interventions.

24 CSO Consumer Price Index November 2022
25 Society of St Vincent de Paul (2022) ‘An analysis of the financial impact of Covid 19 & rising cost of living’ <https://www.svp.ie/getattachment/9567466b-599f-4e1e-a33d-b03adae7d4fc/Red-C-2022-Report-The-Cost-of-Surviving.aspx>
26 New Economics Foundation (2022) ‘Single parents, pensioners and families with disabled members face up to 56% faster rise in energy bills than the average household’ <https://neweconomics.org/2022/01/single-parents-pensioners-and-families-with-disabled-members-face-up-to-56-faster-rise-in-energy-bills-than-the-average-household>
27 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rppi/residentialpropertypriceindexmay2022/>
28 CSO (2022) ‘Residential Property Price Index January 2022’ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rppi/residentialpropertypriceindexjanuary2022/>
29 Dublin City Community Cooperative (2020), ‘The Impact of Covid-19 on the Most Disadvantaged in Our Communities’
30 Department of Housing figures, January 2023
31 Society of St Vincent De Paul (2021) ‘Combating Housing Exclusion In Ireland’
32 NERI (2021) ‘Wages in Ireland are more unequally distributed than in any other high-income EU country’, <https://www.neriinstitute.net/blog/wages-ireland-are-more-unequally-distributed-any-other-high-income-eu-country>
33 Frazer, H. (2020) ‘Covid-19: Lessons from disadvantaged communities for EU social policy’
34 Dublin City Community Cooperative (2020) ‘2020 & 2021 Audited Accounts’

Among tendering guidelines, SICAP has also included a requirement for organisations to have a minimum financial turnover and specific geographic coverage to take part in a tender. From this uncertain competitive environment, the Dublin City Community Co-operative was born in 2014. The Co-op has continually advocated against the policy of competitive tendering, highlighting the uncertainty it creates and the detrimental impact it has on the community and local development sector.

In late 2021, and again in late 2022, the Government announced an increase in the SICAP budget in line with the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2025 to reduce poverty by 2%³⁵. While the increases were welcome the SICAP budget remains nearly 35% lower than its predecessor budget before the financial crisis.

The next National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2023-2028³⁶ is also due to be published and will align with the 2021 EU Child Guarantee³⁷ to address disadvantage and poverty in childhood.

In June 2022 the Irish Government announced its EU Child Guarantee National Action Plan, a significant milestone as Ireland begins implementation of the EU Child Guarantee.³⁸

The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time, nationally and internationally. We have the opportunity to act now to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, ensure a just transition and secure a resilient future for generations to come. The Programme for Government and the Climate Act 2021³⁹ commit Ireland to halving our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2018 levels and reaching net zero by 2050. Ireland’s pathway to achieving these targets is set out in the Climate Action Plan. Progress Reports on the Climate Action Plans are published each quarter.⁴⁰

35 Not all SICAP implementing organisations received the full 10% increase announced for 2022, some received more than 10% while others received less than 10%. The Co-op received 5%, the minimum increase.
36 The Co-op made a formal submission to the consultation process which can be found at Consultation Children & Youth Strategy – A Statement to Government – Dublin City Community Co-Op (dublincitycommunitycoop.ie)
37 European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European child guarantee, Publications Office, 2021, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/204674>
38 gov.ie – Ireland’s EU Child Guarantee National Action Plan (www.gov.ie)
39 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (irishstatutebook.ie)
40 gov.ie – Climate Action Plan Progress Reports (www.gov.ie)

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The Structure

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The Co-op exists to address needs relating to community development, social inclusion, poverty, and related issues, to ensure the sustainability and wellbeing of local communities

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LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

The Co-op was established and registered as Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative Society Limited with the Registrar of Friendly Societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts (1893-2014) in November 2014 and became a registered charity with the Charities Regulatory Authority, Registered Charity Number (RCN) 20107079, in early 2016.

Our Rules⁴¹ and Objects set out our legal governance framework, but also allow us freedom to supplement with additional guidelines. The Co-op's Rules currently outline our key governance protocols:

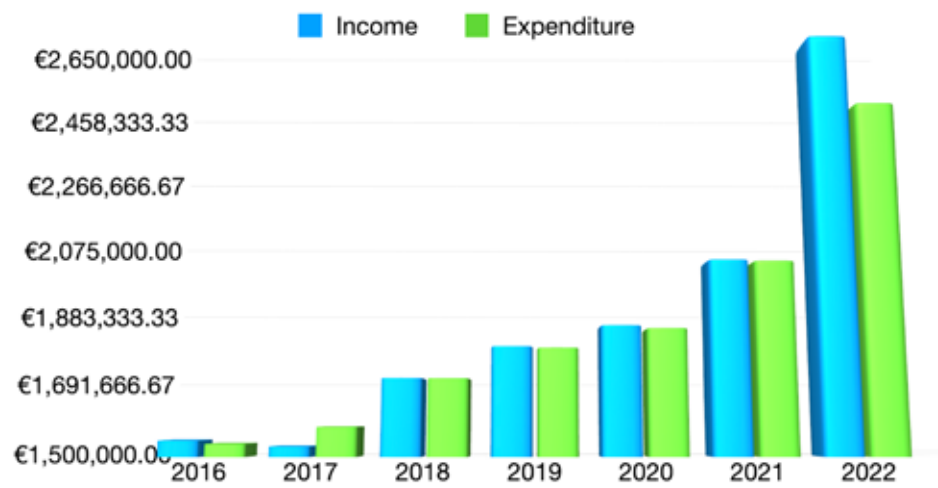
- The Board is made up of one representative from each member organisation who holds decision making powers on their behalf. In the interests of managing potential conflicts of interest between them, none of these representatives receive any financial benefits and/or salaries which are supported by funds which are routed through the Co-op, and we have an independent chair with no links or affiliations to our members. As a charity all Co-op board members serve in a voluntary capacity. To date, having an independent Chair with no prior or existing connection with the Co-op or any of its constituent member organisations has been well received by all and has been a key factor in the Co-op's strong governance performance. The first independent chair of the Co-op served from April 2015 to September 2017 with his successor being in situ since October 2017. The independent chairperson is appointed by the sitting board. The chairperson provides oversight of the Co-op's board which governs the organisation from a fiduciary and strategic perspective.
- Currently, four standing sub-committees of the Board have been established, namely, Governance; Finance & Audit; Advocacy-for-Change; and Performance & Resources, all of which comprise a number of nominated board members.
- Equality of power within this structure regardless of relative size or contribution either financially or through other means – all member organisations have a single vote.
- The Co-op exists to address needs relating to community development, social inclusion, poverty, and related issues, to ensure the sustainability and wellbeing of local communities. This creates future opportunities with regards to engaging with research and advocacy programmes that are wider in scope than just Dublin, which may open additional income generating opportunities and increased opportunities for the Co-op to influence national policies that impact on the ground in Dublin's inner city.

41 In a cooperative legal structure the organisation's governing constitution is referred to as The Rules

OPERATIONS & PERSONNEL

Since its establishment, the Co-op's financial situation has been relatively stable with the organisation experiencing a modest steady rise in income and expenditure. Income and expenditure are closely tracked as 99% of the Co-op's income comes from state funding for programme delivery (SICAP and ICCSP respectively account for 44% and 32% of the Co-op's income). At time of writing, the Co-op had a modest net Reserve of €27,935.⁴²

Co-op Income and Expenditure 2016-2022



The Co-op's staff cohort has grown from one employee in 2015 to 13 at the start of 2023, with the new personnel mainly programme focused.

In addition to Co-op staff, there is also a 'Practitioners Forum'⁴³ which meets several times a year and has its focus on the delivery of activities, programme implementation and quality, coordination of work, developing and maintaining on-going relationships and designing working practices and joint projects where they are felt to be of relevance to the communities of Dublin's inner city. The Practitioner Forum offers the Co-op's management team an additional resource, insight, and guidance to draw upon in ensuring the Co-op remains true to its original vision and stated purposes.

42 2021 Annual Audited Accounts
43 The Practitioners Forum comprises nominated staff from each of the 13 member organisations. Many of the staff who partake in the Forum are the heads of their respective organisation. The Co-op CEO and senior Co-op staff attend the Practitioners Forum

Figure 2 below outlines the overarching structure of the Co-op and its constituent parts:



MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The following organisations comprise the Co-op's membership:

- An Siol Community Development Project
- Community After Schools Project (CASPr)
- Daughters of Charity Community Services
- Inner City Enterprise (ICE)

- Inner City Organisations Network (ICON)
- Lourdes Youth and Community Services (LYCS)
- Nascadh Community Development Project
- North Wall Community Development Project
- North West Inner City Network (NWICN)

- New Communities Partnership (NCP)
- Robert Emmet Community Development Project (expected to merge with SICCD A during 2023)
- South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCD A) (expected to merge with RECDP in 2023)
- South West Inner City Network (SWICN)

The work of each member organisation is highlighted on PAGES 8 & 9

Key findings from the SWOT Analysis

A multi-stakeholder workshop took place in April 2022 and an internal Co-op/Members only workshop followed in May 2022 where in both workshops participants were asked to share their perception of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing the Co-op. The SWOT exercises were undertaken against three key categories of analysis; the main themes are summarised below. This input from stakeholders informed the Aims, Goals and Actions subsequently identified.

PROGRAMMES & SERVICES

Since its establishment, the Co-op has become a recognised and respected actor in the sector by funders, peer organisations and in the community. The Co-op has successfully implemented programmes and services and weathered the storm of COVID-19 demonstrating flexibility in how it responded to the challenges of the pandemic and associated restrictions. Opportunities for development included expanding programmes and services – delivered jointly by Co-op members or by the Co-op office itself (particularly as pilot projects that might later be scaled to the wider Co-op). Climate change and responding to acute needs in the community (for instance, the needs of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian refugees) were identified as priorities. However, the biggest barriers to availing of these opportunities is not a lack of willingness amongst members but rather resource capacity and accessing more flexible forms of funding.

RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, POLICY, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Stakeholders identified that the Co-op's work in – and understanding of – communities was a key strength. While the Co-op office has much valued central capacity for undertaking and coordinating research and policy work, overall this area is under-resourced across the Co-op and more challenging to fundraise for. Given those challenges, stakeholders identified that working in partnership with organisations such as think tanks,⁴⁴ universities and research institutes might be a key opportunity for expanding and strengthening this category of work. It was also suggested that the Co-op could explore options to maximise the reach of the research and policy work it has already undertaken through a more strategic approach to communications.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

The Co-op's culture was identified as a key strength, where decisions are taken transparently and in consultation with members; this must be maintained. The commitment and expertise of staff both in member organisations and in the Co-op office were praised. A key barrier across the entire organisation is capacity, with the needs in the community always outpacing the Co-op's ability to respond,

⁴⁴ As an example, the Co-op has a formal research, monitoring & evaluation MoU with TASC, the national think tank for Action on Social Change, www.tasc.ie



let alone find time for non-frontline work such as research, policy, learning and training. In the Co-op office, the core team that supports the administration and coordination of the Co-op has remained the same size despite a growth in the Co-op's work and complexity. An identified opportunity was to continue to diversify the Co-op's funding model to ensure its sustainability, increase its capacity and improve its ability to deliver community-responsive work.

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

This Strategic Plan encompasses: the Co-op's Vision, Mission, Values, and Principles; a set of Strategic Priorities and Goals; and the strategic actions that will enable the achievement of each Priority.

VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The Co-op's Vision, Mission, Values, and Principles were developed during the development phase of the organisation's inaugural Strategic Plan 2018-2021. As part of the consultations for the Strategic Plan 2023-2027, stakeholders were asked to reflect on whether the Co-op's Vision, Mission, Values and Principles were still relevant and valid, and there was broad agreement that they remain so.

VISION

OUR VISION IS A CITY WHERE THRIVING LOCALLY BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS WORK TOGETHER TO ELIMINATE POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.

MISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO TACKLE POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ALL ITS GUISES. WE WILL DO THIS BY BUILDING AND SUSTAINING AN ORGANISATION WHICH SUPPORTS ITS MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE AND THE DIVERSITY THEY REPRESENT

VALUES

We operate from a community development and social inclusion ethos which forms the basis of our Values and how we conduct our work with all stakeholders. Our four Values are:

PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ETHOS

focusing on:

- Empowerment
- Justice
- Social Inclusion
- Participatory Democracy
- Collaboration

.....
*We operate from
a community
development and social
inclusion ethos which
forms the basis of our
Values and how we
conduct our work with
all stakeholders*
.....

PROTECT AND SUSTAIN GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Built up over decades by local people for local people
- Grassroots approach
- Working with ‘hard to reach/seldom heard/rarely listened to’ groups and individuals
- Strengthening communities
- Creating and sustaining ‘active citizens’⁴⁵ i.e. people being active, engaged and involved in their communities and with the issues that affect their lives

CREATE SOCIAL VALUE

- Social value is about understanding the relative importance of changes that people experience because of what we do, and how important these different changes are to them and using the insights we gain from this understanding to make better decisions. Social value is about quantifying not only the things that have a market value, but also those that are more difficult to place a value on, such as increased confidence, improved health or the benefits of living near to a park. By taking this relative importance into account we can ensure that the decisions we make focus on what is valuable to people, and ultimately increase the overall value of our work. Social value is about being more accountable to those people whose lives are affected; and about making better decisions on how we allocate our financial and non-financial resource.
- In creating societal value we demonstrate transparency through five dimensions: accountability, quality, responsiveness, equity and efficiency (which includes financial). The Co-op’s approach is valuable because it empowers people, improves communities and benefits society.

SOLIDARITY IN SUPPORTING EACH OTHER’S WORK

- Shared history of combating poverty
- United voice of disadvantaged communities
- Combat fragmentation and competition
- Promote integrated solutions to problems
- Share information / resources / ideas

PRINCIPLES

A set of five principles guide the Co-op’s way of working with all our stakeholders:

COLLECTIVE ACTION: Community work is based on working with and supporting groups of people. It enables them to develop knowledge, skills and confidence, so that they can analyse and identify priority needs and issues and address these through collective action.

EMPOWERMENT: Community work is about the empowerment of individuals and communities and addressing the unequal distribution of power.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Community work is based on a belief that every person and every community can and has a right to play an active role in creating conditions for a just and equal society where human rights are promoted and all forms of oppression and discrimination are challenged.

EQUALITY & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION: Community work challenges the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups by institutions and society that leads to discrimination against people based on ability, age, culture, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, racial or ethnic group, nationality, skin colour, sexual orientation and political or religious beliefs.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is about the involvement of groups and individuals who experience social exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination in decision making, planning and action at all levels, from the local to the global. Participation can be viewed as a continuum of activity that can start from information sharing through capacity building and empowerment to active engagement and meaningful participation in democratic processes.

45 Citizens in this context are understood to include all people living in Ireland regardless of their technical legal status

.....

*Community work
challenges the
oppression and
exclusion of individuals
and groups by
institutions and society*

.....

THE CO-OP'S ROLES

Under its previous (and first) Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the Co-op articulated its three key roles and organised previous priorities under these three headings:

- The Co-op as having a **LEADERSHIP** role, reflecting the shared vision and individual circumstances of its members.
- The Co-op as a focal point for **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**, highlighting the impact and value of its members and using this to lobby for further change by policy makers and statutory funding agencies.
- The Co-op as a provider of **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**, better sustaining itself in order to ensure a stronger offer of support in facilitating its members to not only access revenue opportunities, but also to further enhance their own capacity, social value and impact.

During the course of this strategic development process and on hearing feedback from stakeholders within the Co-op and outside of it, it was confirmed that these three key roles remain relevant. Moreover, given the scale of the challenges facing inner city communities and community development organisations, it is time for the Co-op to build on these three roles and become more ambitious and proactive.

- **LEADERSHIP:** Under this Strategic Plan, the Co-op will build on its authority, reputation and collective expertise in order to be more vocal about the causes and solutions to inequality, and the impact of poverty and social injustice on communities.
- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** To a greater extent, the Co-op will set its own Community Development agenda in the course of this Strategic Plan, delivering more joint projects with member and non-member organisations and implement Co-op office-led projects that align with identified community needs, that address root causes, and demonstrate best practice.
- **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Under this Strategic Plan, the Co-op will provide greater value-add to members by delivering efficiencies, securing new funding, providing capacity building, supporting greater coordination and by being a collective voice on research, policy and advocacy.

Strategic Aims, Goals and Actions

This Strategic Plan identifies four Strategic Aims that the Co-op will focus on, aligned to its three key roles.

The following four strategic aims have been developed as a result of multiple stakeholder consultations and engagements during 2022 including SWOT analyses through the lens of our members and listening to the views of external funders, commissioners and peer organisations within the wider sector. In addition, a scanning of the political and economic environment and review of the key strategies and policies that may affect the Co-op have been conducted as part of the strategic planning process.

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

1. ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Our aim is to be a trusted voice on social inclusion and social, economic, cultural, climate and environmental justice issues. Through our collective unity we will strengthen and amplify the voice of our members and Dublin’s inner-city communities. Through harnessing the knowledge and expertise of our member organisations and staff we aim to collectively contribute to, and affect, progressive change. We will constructively challenge public policy and advocate for legislative change as appropriate.

2. DELIVER SOCIAL IMPACT

Our aim is to evidence the outcomes of our work across Dublin’s inner city to all our key stakeholders and report on the social value we and our members create based on agreed frameworks and measurement tools. We will always endeavour to be innovative in our work and seek opportunities to create and maximise the social value of what we do.

3. SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS AND STRENGTHEN THE CO-OP

Our aim is to allocate resources and funding the Co-op receives for onward distribution to members in a fair, transparent and equitable manner.

We will use the resources of the Co-op to increase the capacity, reach and impact of our member organisations both individually and collectively.

4. SUSTAIN A CULTURE OF EQUITY, INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Our aim is to work to the highest standards of fairness and governance while adhering to all legal and statutory funder requirements and obligations. A culture of integrity, equity and transparency will underpin everything we do.

THE CO-OP’S KEY ROLES, STRATEGIC AIMS, GOALS AND STRATEGIC ACTIONS

KEY ROLE	LEADERSHIP	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
STRATEGIC AIM	1. ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE	2. DELIVER SOCIAL IMPACT	3. SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS AND STRENGTHEN THE CO-OP	4. SUSTAIN A CULTURE OF EQUITY, INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY
GOALS	<p>We influence policy and legislation on social, economic, cultural, environmental and climate justice</p> <p>We influence local, regional and national policy and ideology on inequality and community development</p> <p>Our research is picked up by policymakers and media</p> <p>Our policy and research agenda is shaped with and by our members</p> <p>We convene and are active participants in strategic networks</p> <p>We have strong relationships with policymakers, decisionmakers and local politicians</p>	<p>We secure and deliver impact through our programmes including those implemented via our members and those directly implemented by the Co-op</p> <p>Collective action by our members addresses structural inequality, pressing community needs and their root causes</p> <p>We spark innovative pilot projects that address community needs</p> <p>We support an agile and flexible coordinated response to emerging community needs and emergencies</p> <p>Our stakeholders recognise the impact of the Co-op and its members</p> <p>We demonstrate best practice in community development, engagement and empowerment</p>	<p>Our members' capacity is supported</p> <p>We facilitate learning, information-sharing and communities of practice between members</p> <p>We support a coordinated response from members on key issues and crises</p> <p>We deliver efficiencies for members through shared services, systems and spaces</p> <p>We increase and diversify our funding (especially from foundations, philanthropy, EU)</p>	<p>Members are consulted on strategic decisions</p> <p>We demonstrate high standards of governance and financial management</p> <p>Financial and non-financial resources and opportunities are equitably distributed among members</p>
STRATEGIC ACTIONS	<p>COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY, PLANNING AND OUTPUTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop communications and PR strategy and workplan• Provide communications training for staff and members• Develop communications and advocacy calendar of key dates/weeks, 'hooks', spotlighting members' work and impact, and communities lived experience• Develop bitesize communications materials – including based on previous reports• Bring in external communications and PR support to maximise impact of big reports and research papers• Review previous reports to maximise their communications and policy impact <p>POLICY AND RESEARCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish strategic collaborations to support research and policy, e.g. with third level institutions, think tanks, networks• Hold regular briefings with policymakers and politicians on Co-op work and research• Develop guidelines for how the Co-op goes into partnerships / collaborates with other institutions (e.g. proprietary rights over research, acknowledgements, use of findings etc)• Strengthen link between the Co-op and member programmes and research (to gather data, share learnings, identify policy priorities)• Develop policy monitoring and evaluation framework to measure impact• Develop climate & environmental justice strategy (map what members are already doing, develop coherent narrative around the work that is linked to social policy/inclusion, identify strategic partners and research/advocacy opportunities)• Convene multi-stakeholder networks to advance specific causes, ensure coordinated responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure and administer SICAP 3 and ICCSP funding for 2024-2028• Secure and administer Co-op specific funding in the areas of Migrant Inclusion, Roma Employment & Training and Healthy Communities• Seek out funding opportunities for Climate and Environmental Justice focused projects• Improve data collection and impact monitoring, e.g. explore joint CRM system for non-SICAP programmes• Increase collaborations and partnerships across all four quadrants of the Co-op's inner city catchment area• Create spaces for members to suggest and collectively develop new ideas and innovations	<p>CO-OP OFFICE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore options to increase Co-op office space and facilities, (bigger office space to accommodate team, availability of private spaces for sensitive conversations, drop-in clinics and individual client support) e.g. via DCC, CSR partnerships• Scope fundraising opportunities and partnerships including from philanthropists, foundations, EU• Increase Co-op team capacity to provide core support to members (priority: Finance, Admin, Research, Human Resources & Governance Compliance) <p>SUPPORT TO MEMBERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide capacity building training for members: diversity & inclusion, racial justice & tackling racism, communications, climate and environmental justice, governance compliance, narrative & financial reporting, IRIS CRM system• Establish member working groups / fora on key themes (e.g. climate & environment, older persons, childhood education & development)• Provide opportunities for members to network with each other e.g. Co-op AGM, internal practitioners' meetings, Co-op Mental Health & Wellbeing Working Group	

In summary, the Co-op has three Key Roles under which our four Strategic Aims are located, as follows:

LEADERSHIP

- Advocate for social, economic, cultural, climate and environmental justice

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Deliver social impact

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Support our members and strengthen the Co-op
- Sustain a culture of equity, integrity and transparency

Conclusion

The Board of the Co-op is cognizant of the many challenges that the organisation faces, both externally and internally. The lack of adequate office space for Co-op staff and the dearth of funding to address the matter is an ongoing concern. However, if not addressed the growth and development of the Co-op will be constrained. Furthermore, if the Co-op is to support the needs of the increasingly diverse communities now residing in the inner city additional resources will be required to scale our staffing capacity accordingly.

Broad socio-economic statistics and profiling of communities in the inner city can often mask local areas of significant social deprivation and need. Further, they do not convey the lived experiences of the most disadvantaged in Dublin's inner-city communities, which is crucial in being able to develop and pursue our community development approach.

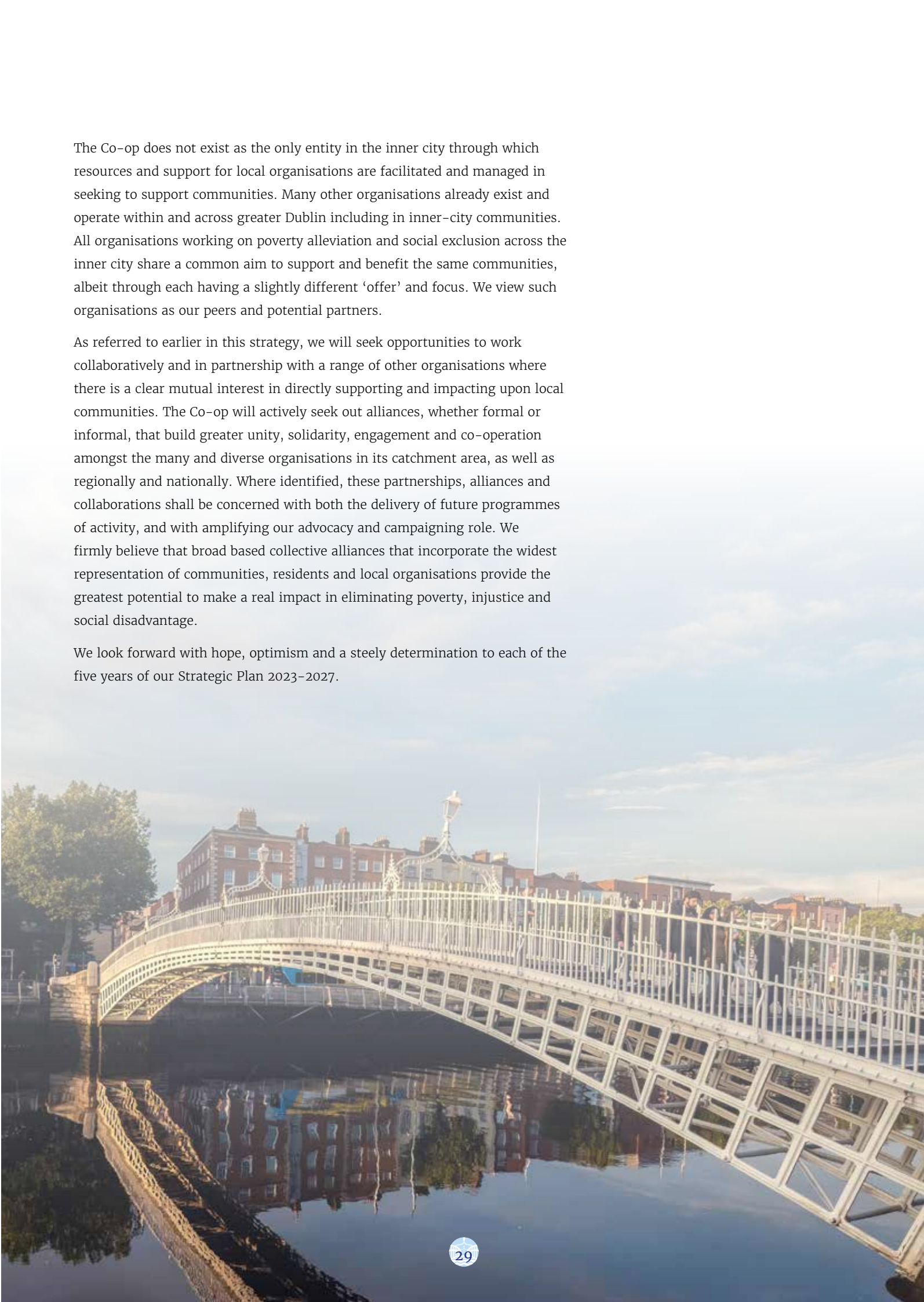
Through our member organisations based and working specifically within these communities, we are acutely aware of the impact of such disadvantage and are resolutely committed to working towards a more inclusive society not just in the inner city but across Dublin and Ireland. Therefore, we intend to remain well placed to capture these needs and issues in informing wider policy. In influencing policy in this way, we will be able to help direct resources into local inner-city communities, achieve greater impact and so better generate support for our member organisations.

The routes through which we support these communities via our member organisations are through the management of the SICAP programme along with other thematic funding streams. In addition, we will serve to act as a dissemination mechanism for small local discretionary grants that various bodies wish to see used for local activities. The Co-op will also continue to position itself as a reliable, credible and effective 'preferred partner' for Dublin City Council as it seeks to implement a wide range of programmes and activities across the inner city.

The Co-op does not exist as the only entity in the inner city through which resources and support for local organisations are facilitated and managed in seeking to support communities. Many other organisations already exist and operate within and across greater Dublin including in inner-city communities. All organisations working on poverty alleviation and social exclusion across the inner city share a common aim to support and benefit the same communities, albeit through each having a slightly different 'offer' and focus. We view such organisations as our peers and potential partners.

As referred to earlier in this strategy, we will seek opportunities to work collaboratively and in partnership with a range of other organisations where there is a clear mutual interest in directly supporting and impacting upon local communities. The Co-op will actively seek out alliances, whether formal or informal, that build greater unity, solidarity, engagement and co-operation amongst the many and diverse organisations in its catchment area, as well as regionally and nationally. Where identified, these partnerships, alliances and collaborations shall be concerned with both the delivery of future programmes of activity, and with amplifying our advocacy and campaigning role. We firmly believe that broad based collective alliances that incorporate the widest representation of communities, residents and local organisations provide the greatest potential to make a real impact in eliminating poverty, injustice and social disadvantage.

We look forward with hope, optimism and a steely determination to each of the five years of our Strategic Plan 2023-2027.



APPENDIX

Strategy development and consultation process

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS AND CONSULTATIONS

A plan for strategic development is crucial to ensure the sustainability, growth and continued success of an organisation. It is an opportunity to learn and reflect on the past, and to look forward to identify and unite behind future ambitions.

Following a specially convened strategic planning Board meeting held in November 2021 that kick-started the development of the Co-op's second strategic plan⁴⁶, the Co-op engaged 2into3 in early 2022 to facilitate the development of a five-year plan through a participative process that strove to honour its mission-driven and community-centred approach. A broad range of internal and external stakeholders were invited to share their views as part of the consultation. The Co-op's Board decided that 2022 would be allocated to the planning, development, design and consultation phases of the process and that the five-year plan would cover the years 2023–2027 inclusive.

The process is visualised in Figure 3 below and involved three key workshops.

- On 7 April 2022, a broad selection of the Co-op's key stakeholders were invited to participate in a virtual workshop. Participants included Board members, members of the Co-op, staff of the Co-op office, peer organisations working in community development, funders, and political representatives. At the session, participants were asked to review the Co-op Vision, Mission, Values and Principles that were collectively agreed in the process of developing the Co-op's inaugural Strategic Plan 2018–2021. Participants also conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of key areas of the Co-op's work and operations – the key findings of which are summarised below.
- On 5 May 2022, the Co-op Board, Co-op staff and the Practitioners Group (staff from the Co-op's 13 member organisations) gathered in a virtual workshop to reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing the Co-op and the communities it serves, and on that basis to start to identify solutions – or Goals – to address them.

⁴⁶ The Co-op's first strategic plan, Building Inclusive and Thriving Inner City Communities, covered the years 2018–2021 inclusive. The board determined that the twelve months of 2022 would be utilised for a comprehensive and detailed strategic planning and consultation process with the final outcome, the Co-op's second strategic plan, covering the years 2023–2027.

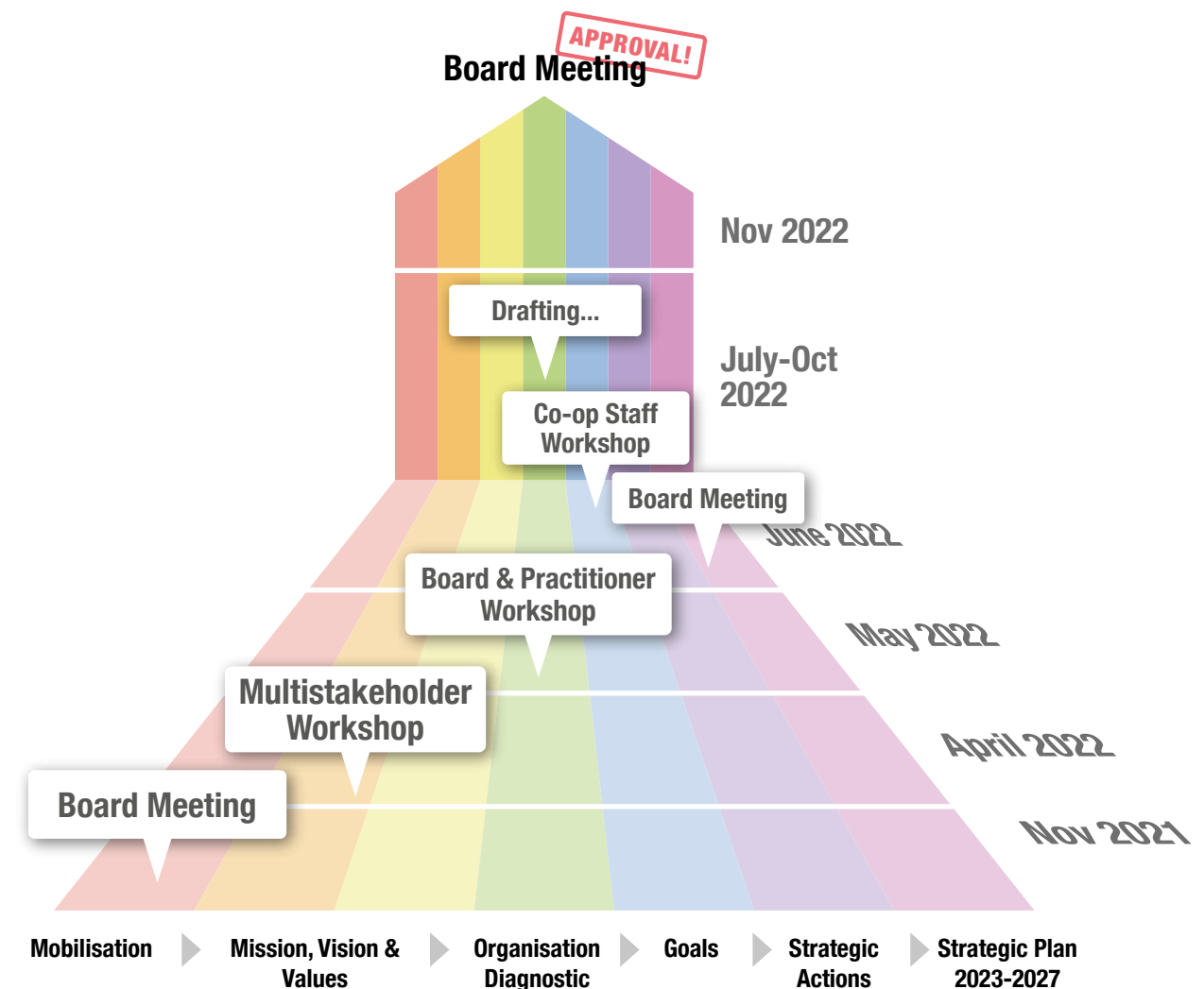
- On 6 June 2022, an in-person workshop with Co-op office staff to review the draft Strategic Aims and Goals emerging from the previous workshop and the subsequent review by the Board, and to identify the strategic actions or investments that would be needed to achieve them.

As part of the strategic planning process, a review of the Co-op's organisational structure, office space and capacity was undertaken. This review was discussed and analysed by the Board as part of the Strategy's development and approval.

An operational Steering Group was established to oversee the strategic planning and consultation process. The steering group met before and after each workshop to advise on process execution and stakeholder engagement, to review workshop outputs, and to produce recommendations for consideration by the Board.

The Board were invited to participate in workshops, were provided with a mid-point update to review a draft set of Aims and Goals in June 2022, and finalised and approved the Strategic Plan at a 'Strategic Planning, Development & Reflection' focused board meeting held on 9th November 2022.

Figure 3: Visualisation of strategic development, consultation and engagement processes undertaken by the Co-op in developing its 2023–2027 Strategic Plan



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