



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, may I extend my warmest greetings to all those gathered for this inaugural Fergus McCabe Summer School, an event that so fittingly honours the memory of your beloved colleague, the late Fergus McCabe, whose life was devoted to the pursuit of justice, equality and dignity for communities so often left at the margins.

I fondly recall the privilege of speaking at your conference in November 2015 to mark the 20th anniversary of the Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign. It was then, as it is now, an opportunity to reflect on the courage, solidarity and compassion that has shaped your work over three decades.

A main theme of my Presidency has been to build an inclusive Republic, one in which all citizens are treated with equal dignity and respect and are empowered to participate fully in our democracy. If we are to achieve the goal of a true Republic, then we must seek out and embrace those of our fellow citizens who are most vulnerable and suffer the greatest exclusion.

Those affected by addiction are often in that position of exclusion and denial of citizenship. They are often regarded as being outside or even below the community of rights-holders in our society. Their addiction is used as a basis to dehumanise those such as drug users, a dehumanisation that takes the form of stigmatisation and derogatory language and leads to a denial of services, a lack of voice, and even, on occasion, is used as a justification for victimisation.

As a society we are greatly indebted to those innovative founders of Citywide who recognised the importance 30 years ago of promoting community involvement in existing structures to tackle drug abuse, allowing for the development of responses based on the actual needs identified by the communities themselves.

May I take this opportunity, therefore, to commend Citywide for this vital work which is grounded on the ethical mission of standing with some of the most vulnerable members of our society, in solidarity, with compassion and without judgment. Molaim sibh.

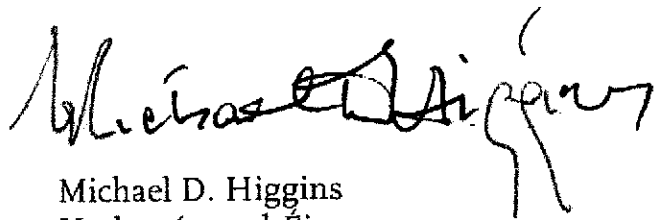
As you mark your 30th anniversary, may I extend my warmest congratulations to all your members, past and present, who have contributed to the important work of the Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign over the past three decades.

May I thank all of you for your work, your advocacy, and above all your persistence in the pursuit of fairness and inclusion.

May I wish you every success as you continue your important contribution to the building of a truly inclusive Republic, one where all our citizens are treated with dignity, allowed a voice and a right to participate in society.

Síochán sioraí le anam lámhach Fergus.

Traoslaím libh is beir gach beannacht d'on todchaí.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Higgins" clearly legible.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland