

**JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION!**

**A collection of simple ideas for planning social action in your community**



## WHAT IS THIS?

This handbook contains a collection of prompts, ideas and frameworks to help you think about opportunities for social action in your community.

It aims to help you explore and discuss the things you love about the place you live, as well as identify and take action on the things that need to change.

There's no right or wrong way to use this - dive in and let us know what you think.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

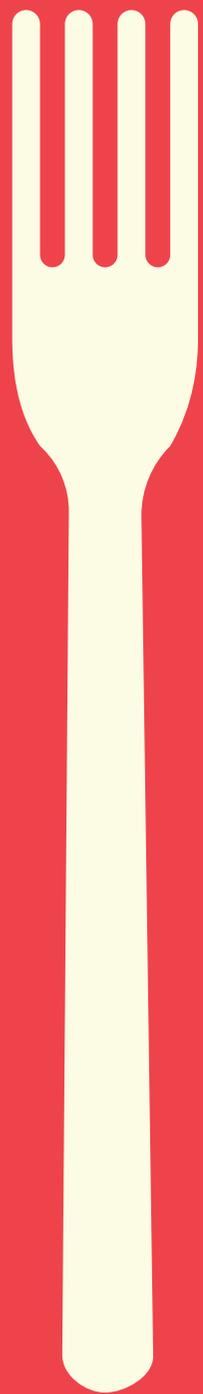
Everyone is welcome to use and share, but it has been created working with people at a grassroots level - to help generate conversations and new ideas that address issues that matter in people's day-to-day lives.

## ABOUT AMPLIFY NI

Amplify NI is supporting a growing movement of people who care about creating fairer places to live. We bring people and organisations together to:

- Listen to personal experiences of inequality and build understanding of how it can be overcome
- Amplify positive narratives of the better future people want to see
- Create and grow the innovative projects, ideas and campaigns that are needed to make change happen.

Amplify NI is powered by The Young Foundation and funded by the Big Lottery Fund.



## IMAGINING WHAT'S POSSIBLE...

'Appreciative inquiry' is an approach used in many community development processes to build on people's hope and capacity in order to bring about positive change\*. Appreciative inquiry is based on the simple idea that people's thoughts & actions are shaped by the questions they are asked. When people are only asked about problems, the possibilities that they can imagine for change are often limited. However, when they are also encouraged to talk about the things they value, enjoy or are proud of, we can open up new possibilities for the future that are rooted in the good things that already exist.

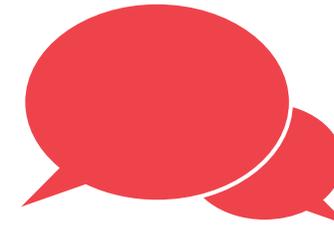
The diagram to the right outlines the 3 basic stages of an appreciative inquiry process, with some examples of questions that can be used to start conversations at each stage.

The prompts on the following pages provide ideas about how to open up conversations about the strengths and positive qualities that people experience in a place.

## THREE STAGES OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

- What is your favourite thing about...?
  - Can you tell me about a place where...?
  - Can you tell me about a time when...?
- 
- What would you like to see here in (X) years time...?
  - What are your hopes for yourself/your family/your community?
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- Can you think of an example where (X) is working really well?
  - Can you tell me a success story about...?

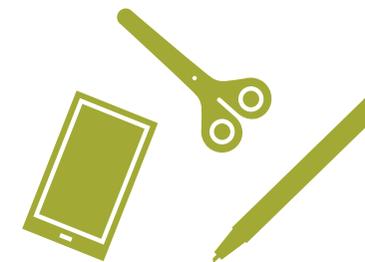
### UNDERSTAND



### IMAGINE



### CREATE



\* For more information about using appreciative inquiry in community development see:  
[www.imaginechicago.org/inquiry.html](http://www.imaginechicago.org/inquiry.html)

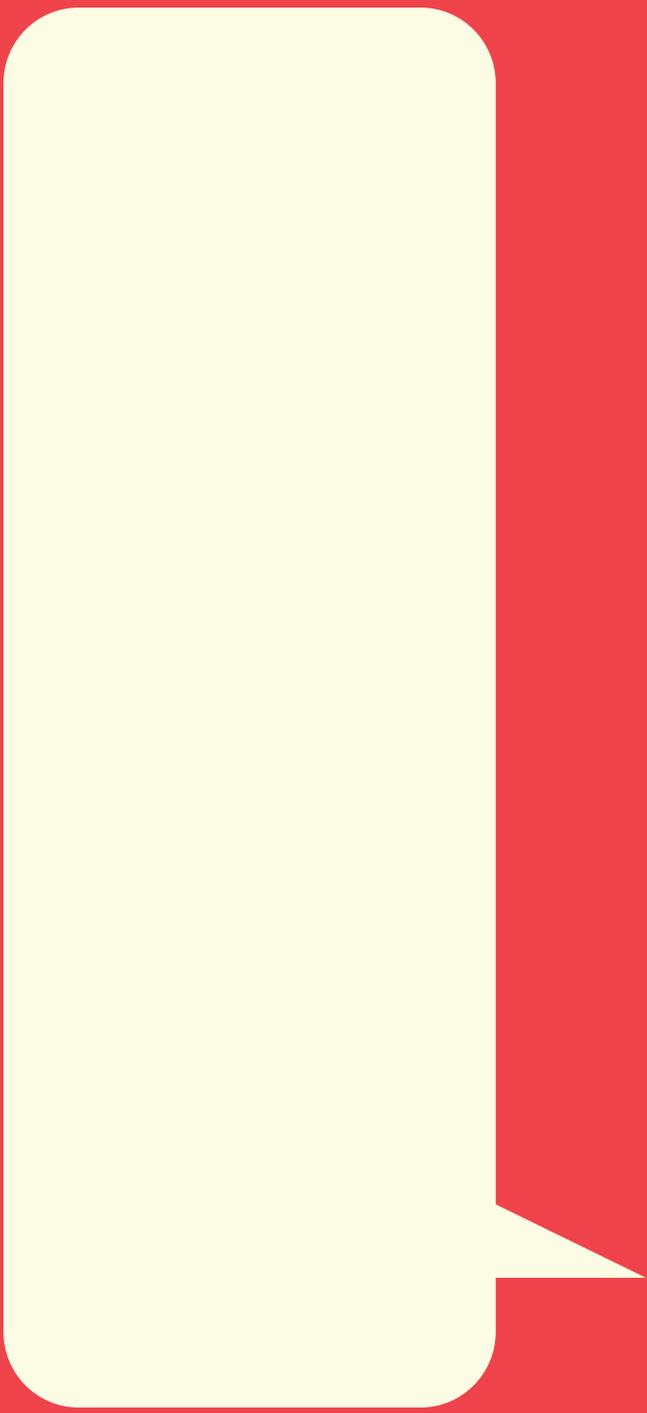
## WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE ?

Northern Ireland is a beautiful place and we have the passion, ingenuity and creativity needed to tackle the challenges we face.

Why not ask others what makes them smile about the place where they live, or what makes them proud to live there? This is an easy way to learn new things about what people value in that place, and the local assets that bring people together.

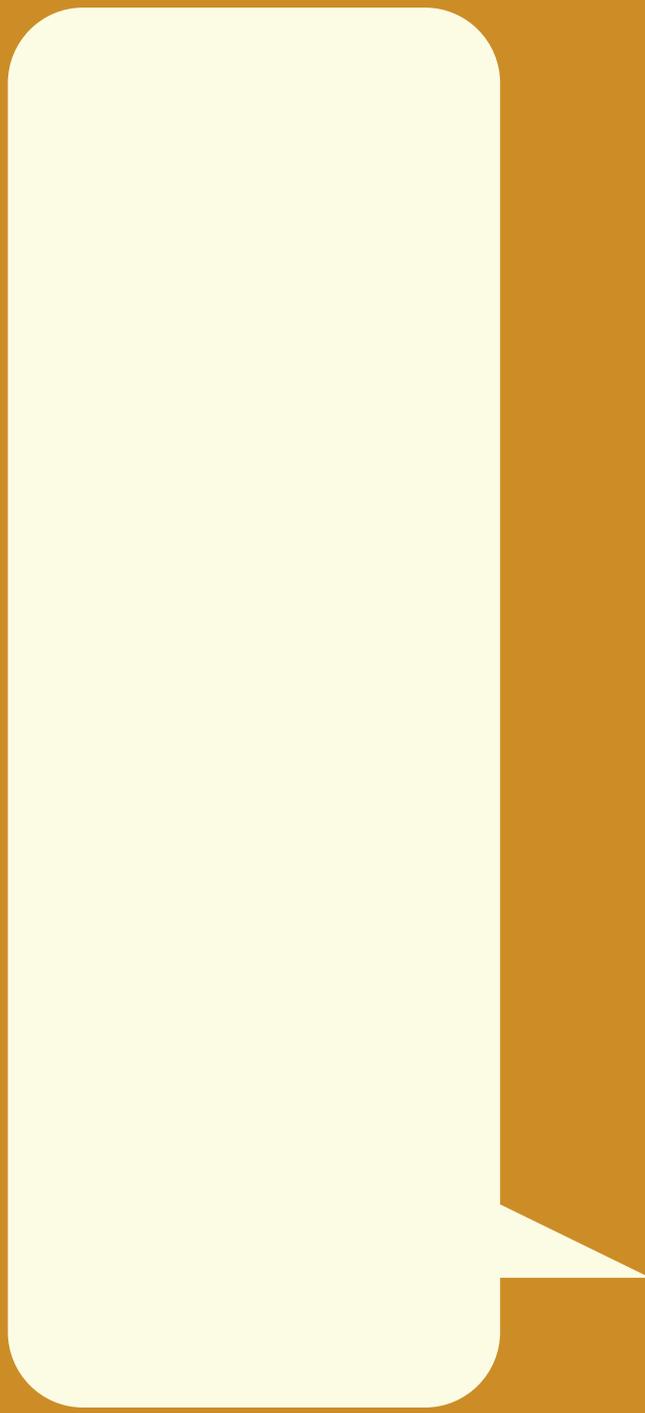


**WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD**



**TO LIVE HERE?**

**WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE**



**ABOUT LIVING HERE?**

## IF YOUR TOWN / CITY WAS A PERSON, WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD THEY BE?

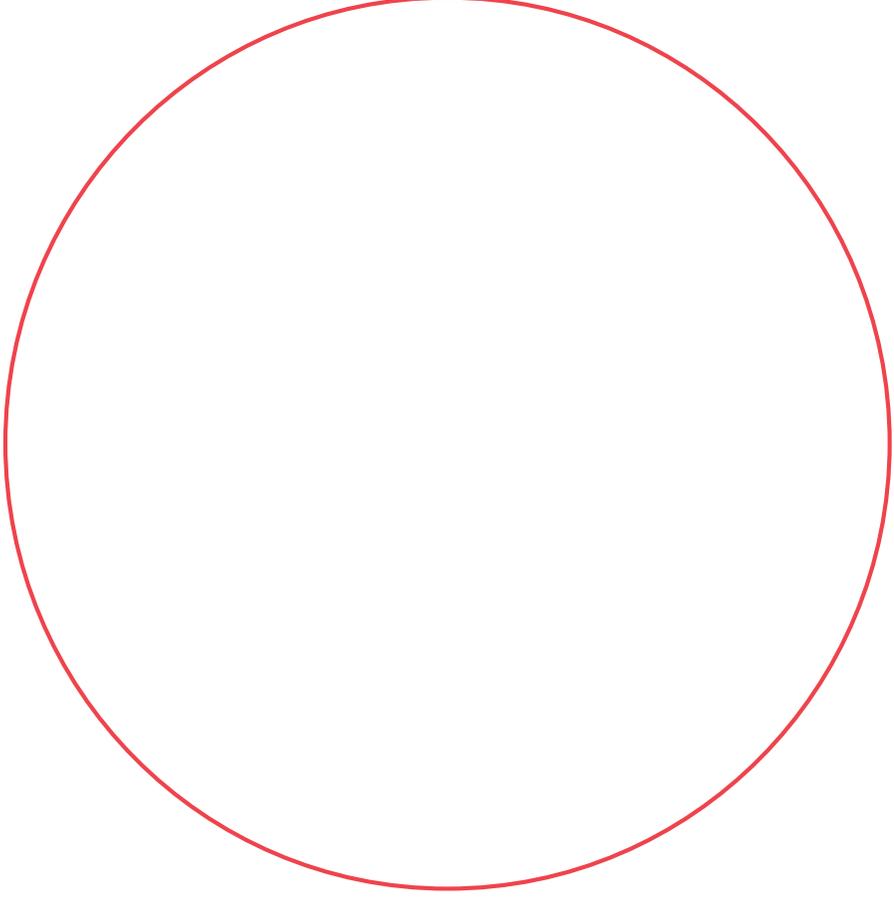
Personification can bring to life the unique qualities and characteristics that we see in the place where we live.

Try asking someone to draw a portrait of their home town, and ask questions such as the examples below:

- What is Enniskillen's personality like?
- What kind of values do they hold?
- Who is Derry/Londonderry friends with?
- What kind of hobbies do they have?
- What kind of things is Belfast worried about?
- What are their hopes for the future?



# IF YOUR TOWN / CITY WAS A PERSON...



Draw what they would look like!

Who would they be friends with?

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What are they good at?  
What do they enjoy?

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What are their hopes and dreams?

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**WHICH 5 WORDS WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO DESCRIBE THE PLACE YOU LIVE?**

Asking people this is a good way to get a quick snapshot of their feelings about a place. You can integrate it into other engagement activities and keep a collection of all the responses to build up a growing picture of how a community sees itself. To make one similar to below see [wordclouds.com](http://wordclouds.com)

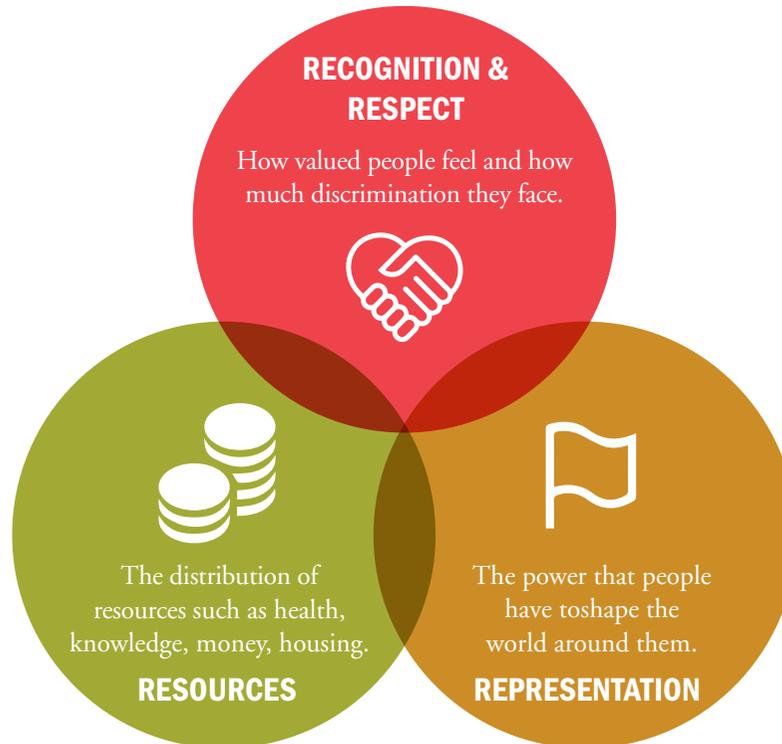


## HOW COULD NORTHERN IRELAND BECOME A FAIRER PLACE?

In Northern Ireland we are united by our warmth, wry humour and generosity of spirit. We are creative, industrious people who are dedicated and strong. But we also face stark inequalities, with deprivation and discrimination oppressing the lives of many. We need to understand the nature of these inequalities and the disparities of power that exist across the region, so that we can take action to challenge their causes.

This framework can be used to consider the inequalities that are faced by people who belong to differing communities and identities. You could use it in discussion groups to explore people's personal experiences and perceptions of inequality, and as a basis for thinking about social action.

## INEQUALITIES OF WHAT?



## EXAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

### RECOGNITION AND RESPECT

- Think about different aspects of your life, like your family, your workplace, your neighbourhood.
- Can you think of things that make you feel valued and heard, or undervalued and ignored, in these different aspects?
- What are the things that are being done, or need to be done, to challenge discrimination in our community?

### REPRESENTATION

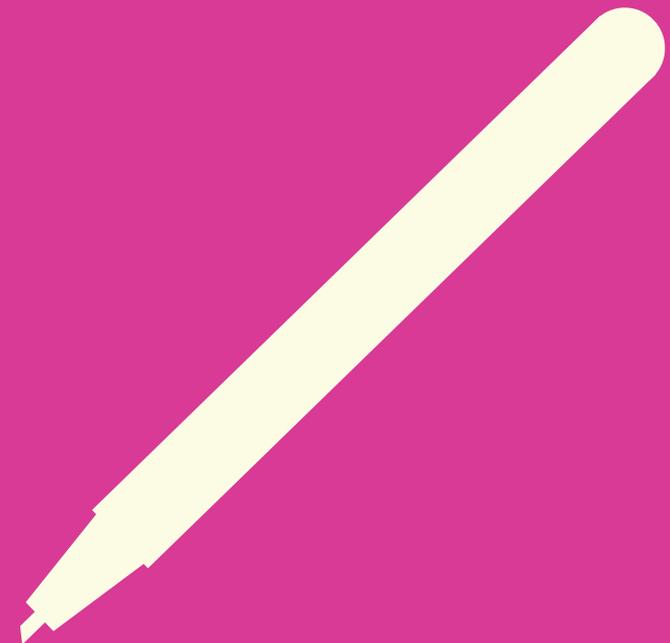
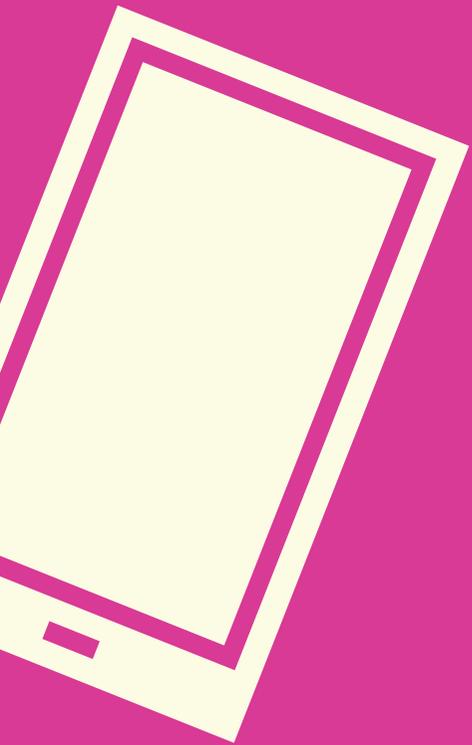
- What are the things that you feel able to shape, influence or change in your community, and how/why do you feel able to shape them?
- What are the things that you feel unable to shape or change, and why?
- Do you feel represented in the place where you live? (i.e. politically, socially, or in the way the place looks and feels)

### RESOURCES

- What are the resources that our community holds?
- What are the resources that are lacking in our community?
- Is there a fair distribution of resources amongst different people in our community? Can you give examples of this?



# TAKING ACTION



## WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

Find out what makes people feel strong. Whether it's a person, a song, a place or a memory - we all have things that make us feel energised & inspired.



## HOW CAN CHANGE HAPPEN?

Social change happens in lots of different ways but always involves engaging with power. This might be the power to speak out and be heard, the power to take particular action or choices yourself, or the power to challenge and lobby against the actions of others. This simple framework is an introduction to thinking about different types of power and how they can be harnessed for the purpose of social action.

### PERSONAL

Building personal understanding and awareness of your own strengths, capabilities and agency, and having the power to use them.

*E.g. Building personal skills and capabilities, expressing personal opinions and experiences*

### COLLECTIVE

Promoting and building the collective of groups of people: through dialogue, co-operation and collaboration (can also be described as 'relational')

*E.g. Promoting awareness through public campaigns, organising new networks, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing*

### STRUCTURAL

Engaging with the structures and institutions that uphold existing power dynamics; influencing or challenging the way people operate

*E.g. Lobbying, negotiation, protest*

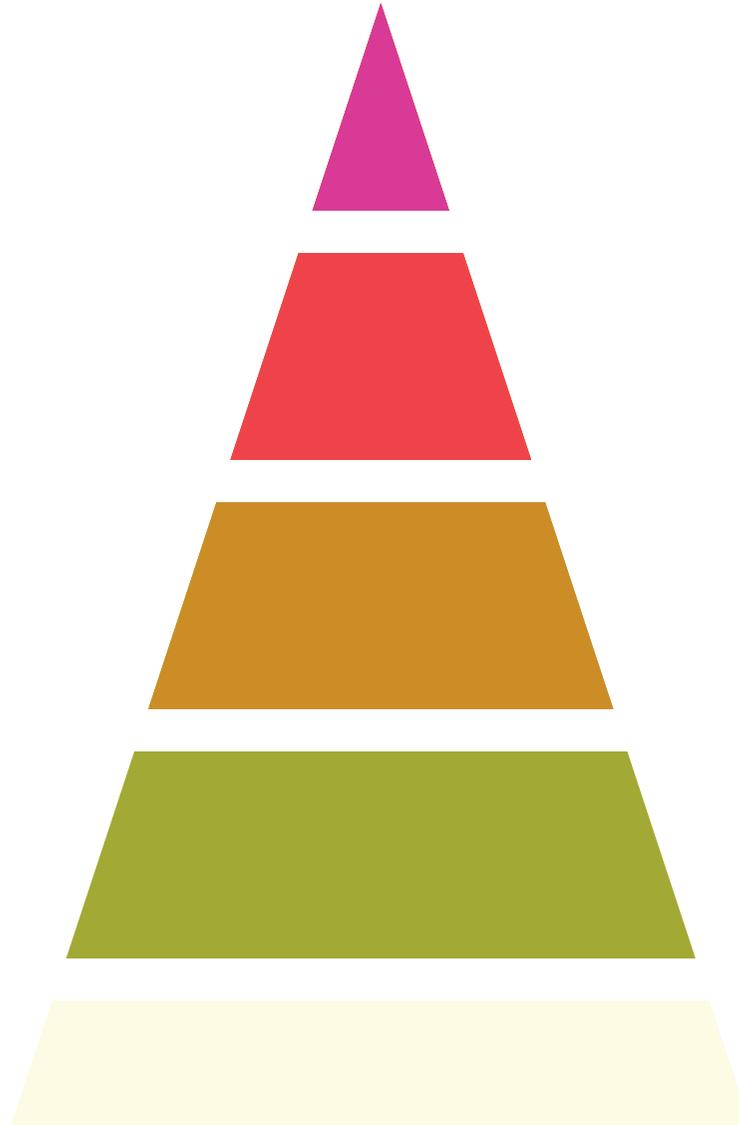
### QUESTION

If you're interested in a particular issue or cause, consider what kind of action is already being taken and at which levels this activity is focussed. Where are there opportunities or gaps?

## WAYS OF GETTING INVOLVED

The participation pyramid is a framework for thinking about the different ways that people might get involved with something. It includes 4 categories, which range from low-level engagement to higher levels of active participation.

The purpose of this framework is not to suggest that the highest levels of participation are always the best types of involvement - instead, we think it is important to consider the whole spectrum of opportunities for people to get involved and to acknowledge the value and benefits of participation at every level.



### LEAD

Becoming empowered to engage others, taking ownership of a process. E.g. Peer-led services, social leadership & campaigning

### COLLABORATE

'We' instead of 'you'. Becoming personally invested in the process and sometimes shaping outcomes. E.g. Volunteering, steering groups

### CONTRIBUTE

Contributing opinions/resources when given the opportunity, without assuming responsibility. E.g. Some focus groups, responding to a survey

### OBSERVE

Receiving and consuming information, but without necessarily responding or reciprocating. E.g. Receiving a newsletter, following on social media

### UNAWARE

### QUESTIONS

- If you're thinking about getting involved with something, which level of participation are you looking for?
- If you're developing a project or idea, have you considered all the different ways that others could get involved?

## DEVELOPING AN IDEA

The social business model canvas is a template that you can use to plan and refine different aspects of your project or idea. This includes articulating the change you want to make, identifying who you could work with, planning how you will be financially sustainable and considering the wider social, political and economic factors that might affect what you do and how you do it.

### PARTNERS



Who helps you to deliver your activities?

### DELIVERY



What activities do you do?

What resources do you own?

### SOCIAL VALUE PROPOSITION



The heart of the project:  
What is the difference that you are making?

What social impact measures do you use?

### CUSTOMER SEGMENTS



How do you work with people who buy your product/service?

Who are the people that benefit?

### MACRO ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

What are the economic social and technological changes taking place that affect your market now and in the future?

### SALES & MARKETING

What is your sales and marketing plan?

How do you reach your customers and beneficiaries?

### COMPETITORS



Who else plays in your space?

Why are you different?

### COST OF DELIVERY

### SURPLUS

Where do you intend to reinvest this?

### REVENUE

**WHAT NEXT?**



## GET IN TOUCH

Amplify NI helps people take action together to create fairer communities where everyone can thrive. We have a small team working across Northern Ireland who support and facilitate Amplify NI activities such as storytelling events, community-based research and helping people to turn their ideas into action. Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more:

[amplifyni@youngfoundation.org](mailto:amplifyni@youngfoundation.org)



## OVER TO YOU

Try to think about 3 things that you could do next to take action on an issue that matters to you. Write them down and have a think about when and how you want to take them forward. Remember that getting involved with something doesn't have to mean a big commitment straight away! Each step you take will be a process of learning and help you to grow, reflect and act on issues that affect equality and fairness in your community.

