

Creating the Next Ireland

Why are the politicians not consulting Ireland's bright young things in order to generate new ideas for the challenges of the decades ahead? ***The Sunday Business Post's*** Think Tank gives a fresh perspective on Ireland's issues

On 22nd October 2006, *The Sunday Business Post* asked Paula Downey to be part of a virtual Think Tank to help create an agenda for change in Ireland. Here's what she said:

Wanted: vision and courage

Four things are needed. All connected. First, we have to change the way we think - to respect the systemic and interdependent reality of life. Bank balances grow, and vital species disappear. GNP rises, and so does depression. Hungry kids in one country earn a pittance to subsidise lifestyles in other places, where kids are obese. Toxins lurk in human breastmilk and the livers of polar bears far from industry. Travel is damaging the atmosphere, yet weekend retail therapy in New York is promoted, and the illusion of sanity is maintained.

The second thing we need is intelligent, joined-up policies based on a deep understanding that humanity is poised on an ecological and social knife-edge, and that every one of us shares responsibility for pulling back from the brink. In our complex, interconnected world riddled with the unintended consequences of what we do, it's insane to design transport and energy policies that shape lives, separately from economic policy that shapes work, or education policy that shapes human perception and understanding.

Thirdly, we need a transformative vision for our country. A brand new cultural 'story' that reflects our deepest human values beyond money. Not a patchwork of puny goals but an audacious vision to redirect our path, and galvanise the generation that will decide the future of Life on earth.

Finally, operating from this deeper sense of who we are, why we're here and what life is for, we desperately need courageous leadership to inspire businesses, institutions and people in every walk of life to dedicate their intelligence, resources and energies to creating a culture that works, not just for the few, but for everyone. Work is more than how we make a living - it's how we shape the world. Literally. **Paula Downey**

The Virtual Think Tank

Oisín Coughlan

Director of Friends of the Earth

Tania Banotti

CEO Theatre Forum Ireland

Diarmuid Ferriter

Historian, broadcaster and author of *The Transformation of Ireland*

Paula Downey

Partner at culture change consultancy
Downey Youell Associates

Benedicta Attoh

Writer and Development Awareness
Officer of the NCCRI

Abie Philbin Bowman

Comedian and commentator

Ed Guiney

Film producer

Ursula Kilkelly

Law Lecturer at UCC and advocate for
children's rights

Naoise Nunn

Promotor of the political cabaret
Leviathan

Aisling Judge

BT Young Scientist of the Year 2006

Alan O'Brien

Chartered Engineer and transport
designer

Brian O'Brien

Partner of the ecological architecture
firm Solearth

Cian O'Flaherty

Blogger and moderator of
www.irishelection.com

Colm Hamrogue

President of the Union of Students in
Ireland

About the author

Paula Downey is a partner at **downey youell associates**.

She has a Distinction in *Communication Studies* and a Masters with Distinction in *Responsibility and Business Practice* from the University of Bath and has studied *Systems Thinking* at the Open University. Alongside her organisational development work she writes and speaks on the challenges and opportunities of system change.

She is a co-author of *Exploring the Communication Dynamic: 301 Building Blocks to Enrich your Working Relationships*. She helped create *Q5 - New Leadership at Work* to prompt a movement for personal and organisational change, in which each of us begins to see our working and professional life as an opportunity to address the critical issues of our generation.

Discover more at www.dya.ie

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