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Advances in technology along with the gifts of the natural world has given us the opportunity to live in an age of abundance for the whole nation if we are to prioritize the basic needs for our society and our environment.

Shelter

There is great potential in natural building (timber frame, cob, strawbale and hempcrete) which have a much lower carbon footprint and better indoor air quality. Planning regulations are currently restricting the development of this area. As rural towns are struggling I would suggest "trailing" developments in these areas.

Food

Ireland is pretty disgraceful in this area with only 1-3% of land being farmed organically we are destroying our soil and hence our potential to grow food in the future (as well as leading to flooding and other environmental issues). Nationwide encouragement of composting can help replenish our soil and will also reduce waste. We also need to start producing a lot more food within Ireland and stop relying on cheap imports from other countries. Food is the basis to our health and our survival, we should have a much stronger connection with it as a nation and encourage farming not belittle it. If a war or environmental disaster was to happen cutting off all imports to the country, how many would we survive feeding our nation?

Energy

Again, locally renewable forms of Energy is the only way forward, we cannot keep importing energy, burning valuable peat and non-renewable fossil fuels. The fact that fracking is being considered despite the evident destructive effects of it is disgraceful. Ireland has enough renewable sources of energy between wind, sun and tidal to be 100% renewable by 2040.

Health

More education on nutrition & exercise, encouraging preventative methods of healthcare. Reduce the working week to encourage more downtime to avoid burnout and increase availability of job positions. Encourage community interaction through public space and well designed communities to support mental health.

Education

A more holistic form of education is needed in schools. Our minds can be our greatest asset and also our worst enemy yet kids are thought nothing of their inner workings. A basic understanding of psychology and sociology and encouragement to contemplate the self would see happier and more productive citizens in years to come.

We have a lot of work to do, and a lot to gain from doing so, but if we don't act soon we have everything to lose.

yours with integrity,
Adrian O'Connell