

## **#SocietyOfSolidarity: Five ideas for the Netherlands after corona**

What the corona crisis teaches us is something we already knew: we stand together. For a moment it is no longer about competition or economic gain. Everything now revolves around cooperation. For our health as individuals, but also for the health of our society.

While the economy is being paused, society is taking action:

We see a massive effort to prepare hospitals, billions of investments to keep businesses and jobs afloat, an overwhelming number of citizens' initiatives to help each other through the crisis mentally as well.

It is this solidarity that we have to hold on to when we think about how we organise our society. Because the corona crisis also shows where our economic system is failing. It mercilessly exposes the vulnerability of our society. The blows once again fall where they strike hardest.

Years of right-wing politics have weakened our public sector and eroded social security. Wanting to pay the lowest price for everything has made us dependent on others, thus even endangering our security. We depend on China for mouth caps, on the US for breathing apparatus, on the pharmaceutical industry for vaccine research. We are more vulnerable than we thought. Corona shows that clearly.

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It's too easy to say we were just unlucky that this pandemic hit us, that we couldn't have done anything about it. That would be the same if we had said after the 1953 flood disaster: 'storm tide and spring tide at the same time is just bad luck. But, well, it can happen, let's get on with it.' We didn't. We went to arm ourselves against the water violence. We came up with the Delta Plan.

The Delta Plan not only rebuilt what had been destroyed, but ensured that such a disaster could never happen again. Now we need a plan like this. For the challenges of our time. A plan to put the health crisis behind us, to stop the economic crisis, and to tackle climate change.

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If we make the right choices now, this could be a turning point. It could be the beginning of a more equitable economic system, where the focus is not on money or the lowest price, but on welfare.

These are our five ideas for the Netherlands after corona:

### **1. Solidarity in paying the bill**

The first question we need to ask is: Who is footing the bill for this crisis?

We have to solve this in a different way than after the 2008 crisis. At that time, company profits were maintained and society paid the bill.

- The money that large companies now receive to avoid bankruptcy and to maintain employment must be a loan. After the crisis, every euro has to be paid back to society.
- The tax system must be reformed. We have to tax large assets more heavily, just like the profits of large companies. Now some companies don't pay tax at all. We will put an end to this tax evasion.

## **2. Solidarity in our climate policy**

While we invest to get our economy back on track, we need to build a green economy. Every press conference these weeks the government makes clear that they are acting on the advice of the experts. It sounds so logical, but this is not yet happening in tackling the climate crisis. Experts have been warning for years: there is no time to wait any longer. Yet there are now noises from right-wing politicians saying that we should just take a step back. But the time for postponement is over. On the contrary, we need to accelerate. We want:

- A climate investment fund to finance plans that reduce CO2 emissions and put us on the road to a new economy. For investments in public transport, hydrogen, sustainable energy, and the construction of affordable housing.
- A hefty CO2 tax for business. In the new economy, clean and fair production is rewarded and the 'polluter pays' rule.

## **3. Solidarity with the public sector**

In these dark days, we appeal to the people and sectors that have been cut back in better times. We now see what the vital professions are. People who now run our country as cleaners or homecare workers do so for a salary that can barely make ends meet. Just applause is not enough. We want:

- To raise the wages of people in home care, nursing, and cleaning.
- The doctors, nurses and carers to have a say in the care and policy in their hospital, nursing home or home care organisation.

## **4. Solidarity in care**

During the corona crisis there is no competition between hospitals, only cooperation. The government took the lead in distributing patients among hospitals and, for example, purchasing respirators. Cooperation between hospitals must also be the starting point outside times of crisis. This also applies to mental healthcare and home care. We want:

- The management of care back into public hands. We don't organise care through market forces but through collaboration.
- To break the power of the pharmaceutical industry and take charge of the development and production of vaccines and medicines within the European Union itself.

## **5. Solidarity in the labour market**

We need to invest in a much stronger social safety net. We see the need for this now more than ever. People who have to make a living from an insecure contract are indispensable for the profits of companies in good times, but are now without work and income from one day to the next. Flexworkers and freelancers pay the price. But a company is more than just a machine to make a profit. It is a community, for better or for worse. We want:

- That every worker in the Netherlands, regardless of the form of contract, receives a good safety net.
- An end to exploitation on the labour market. We put an end to payroll constructions, zero-hour contracts and false self-employment.

These times show us what really matters. Not the profits, but the well-being of people.

It's time we set up our society accordingly.

Right-wing politics will once again want to put the bill of the crisis on the shoulders of citizens who are already struggling. They will again want to postpone tackling climate change.

It is up to us to ensure that the solidarity we see today becomes a blueprint for tomorrow's society. For a world that is fairer, healthier and more sustainable.

It's up to us to make sure that the society of solidarity comes about.

**Join us.**

- Jesse Klaver