



12 February 2021

## **#DouglassWeek: Organizers' Statement**

### Statement from the #DouglassWeek Team, 12th February 2021:

We note the press coverage of the Lord Mayor of Cork's use of the phrase "all lives matter" in one of yesterday's #DouglassWeek events.

Firstly, we would like to thank and draw attention to the outstanding work of the young artists from the Cork Migrant Centre at Nano Nagle Place that was showcased during the event. It is regrettable that this discussion has distracted from their creativity and from the many inspiring projects and collaborations taking place this week.

We are grateful to the Lord Mayor for his support and partnership as we have developed #DouglassWeek and we recognise that his words were used with the aim of communicating a message of inclusion. However, this phrase has frequently been used to criticise and undermine the Black Lives Matter movement. We share the disappointment expressed by some attendees and panellists. As Dr. Naomi Masheti of the Cork Migrant Centre put it, "the term 'Black Lives Matter' has come to be associated with racial justice across the globe and 'all lives matter' is mainly used as a reaction to 'Black Lives Matter' in such a way that it diminishes or de-legitimizes Black people's experiences of inequalities."

We believe that the conversation was an important one and was carried on in a respectful way by all involved. Panellists responded to the discussion proactively, and several contributors explained very well the importance and context of Black Lives Matter as a slogan and a movement. Paul Oakley Stovall put it well when he said that "All lives will matter, when Black lives truly matter, and when Black lives (and particularly Black women, Black trans and Black LGBTQ lives) are treated with equality under the law."

One of the aims of #DouglassWeek is to facilitate these kinds of difficult and necessary conversations, and we hope that this will contribute to an important dialogue that will be carried well beyond the span of one week.

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#DouglassWeek Team

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