

20 Month Strategy for the Irish Language

Part Three – How to Strengthen Irish Immediately

Cumann Carad na Gaeilge / The Philo-Celtic Society
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It's the economy, stupid.
James Carville, 1992

It's the lack of jobs done through Irish, friend.
The Philo-Celtic Society, 2013

I. THE CONTEXT

In the two previous sections, we saw the following:

A. Economics are extremely important for the strength of the Irish Language and its community.

The people of Ireland themselves abandoned Irish. They chose to speak English primarily for economic reasons. The same process is still happening. (1)

B. The Irish Language and the Gaeltachtaí are out of time. Twenty years are not left to put the Irish Language and the Gaeltachtaí on the road to their recovery.

In the “Gaeltacht Bill 2012 - Explanatory and Financial Memorandum”, the Irish government reported that the Gaeltacht Act of 2012 is based on recommendations found in the Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht (2007) in which it was demonstrated that “a significant language shift from Irish to English has happened in the Gaeltacht” (2) and:

The unambiguous conclusion of the survey on young people is that, without a major change to language-use patterns, Irish is unlikely to remain the predominant community and family language in those areas with the most widespread and inclusive Irish-speaking networks (i.e. Category A Gaeltacht districts) for more than another fifteen to twenty years. By the time the young people surveyed for this study become parents, the networks of active speakers will not be widespread enough to reproduce another generation of Irish speakers unless a supportive sociolinguistic environment can be established in the interim. (3)

In a study in 2005, the Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (the educational council for Gaeltacht and Irish-medium schools established in 2002 under the Education Act of 1998) that Gaeltacht schools were in crisis and, without additional support, only a few of them would be teaching through Irish in 20 years. Parents felt that the educational system cancelled their efforts to bestow Irish as a living language on their children. The study also reported that a significant number of Gaeltacht schools had already switched to teaching through English, and that other schools were also on the brink of doing that. (4)

C. The Irish Language revival is a large popular movement for human and civil rights.

The results show overwhelming support for preservation of Irish: 52.5% want Irish preserved in the Gaeltacht and revived for use in arts and culture outside the Gaeltacht, while another 40.9% want Irish revived and used for public purposes throughout the State. (5)

In other words, more than 93% in the Republic are in favor of complete revival of Irish in the Gaeltachtaí and in the areas of art and culture throughout the state. Less than 7% are against the revival of Irish. Therefore, the Irish Language movement is not some tiny radical fringe. If “lobby” can be applied to citizens who are raising their voices for the sake of their own rights and for the sake of the rights of Irish-speaking people, understand that this “lobby” stands with the support of the overwhelming majority of the people.

D. There is great demand for education through the medium of Irish.

In 2001, before the Department of Education succeeded in “voluntarily” liquidating the Linguistic Institute of Ireland (ITÉ) by withdrawing their funding, (6) (7) the ITÉ did independent, comprehensive research which demonstrated that many parents in the Republic would like to place their children in Gaelscoileanna (schools which teach through the medium of Irish). Translated from English: “In research by the ITÉ 30% of parents showed that they would choose Gaelscoil education if it were available to them at primary level and 25% that they would choose Gaelscoil education if it were available to them at post primary level in their area.” (8)

There is every indication that demand for schools teaching through the medium of

Irish has continued to increase since 2001, but in the school year 2012-2013, only 5.9% of primary school students in the 26 counties outside the Gaeltacht were in Irish-medium schools, and 2.2% of post-primary school students in the 26 counties outside the Gaeltacht were learning through the medium of Irish. (9)

E. to strengthen Irish as an economic language ...

The number of people who speak Irish daily must increase, they must be linked together as a community and as a market, and services and products in Irish must be demanded in order to create jobs which are done through Irish. How? This isn't rocket science. You know, and the whole world knows, how to teach languages effectively, how to link people together throughout the world, and how to demand services and products. Many of these things are easy to do without any additional cost.

II. AREAS FOR ACTION

These areas follow the areas mentioned in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language.

1. Education and Economics

This deals in part with the section called "Education" in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language.

A. the importance of education as an economic aid

If a person can't use a tool, including a communication tool like language, certainly that tool is useless to that person. For many people, Chinese is without worth, use, or advantage for the single reason that they don't speak it. But Chinese is very useful for 1.3 billion other people. People have to be able to speak Irish before they can use it as an economic tool. And, of course, education is necessary as a means by which to increase the number of Irish-speakers and to strengthen Irish as an economic language.

B. signs of hostility and indifference

In December 2011, Ruairí Quinn, the Minister for Education and Skills, threatened to close 90% of schools in the Gaeltachtaí. (10)(11)(12)(13)(14) Under pressure, Mr. Quinn stepped back from this threat in 2012 but it is apparent from his actions and words in 2013 that he has not abandoned this policy and that these schools are still under threat. (15)(16)(17)(18)

Why can the Education Minister destroy Gaeltacht communities, or threaten to destroy Gaeltacht communities, without a word to or from the Gaeltacht ministers?

In November 2012, it came to light that Gaelscoil Bharra in Cabrach, Dublin, was teaching in a bar because, according to the Department of Education and Skills, it "had fallen between the cracks". The Department apologized "because the request from the school for a building had been lost for five years." (19)

In April 2013, the Department of Education and Skills recommended the

establishment of 22 new primary schools, only one of them an Irish-medium school. (20) Why weren't at least 30% or 7 of these Irish-medium schools?

If the Department of Education and Skills wants to convince people inside and outside the Gaeltachtaí that it's time to abandon Irish as a language of community, household, and economics, there's no better way to do it.

C. collapse of instruction

It's apparent that the Department of Education does not know how to teach Irish, more than 90 years after the foundation of the State. Look at this quote from the "20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language":

The Harris report (July 2007) indicated that in English-medium and Gaeltacht primary schools, there was a fall of 36.1% and 40.5% respectively in the numbers of pupils achieving mastery in the development of listening, vocabulary and comprehension skills between 1985 and 2002. While a little over half of pupils mastered fluency of oral description and communication in 1985 in English-medium schools, less than one third mastered them in 2002. The study also found a marked decline in teachers' confidence, with almost 25% of teachers in English-medium schools rating their own standards of spoken Irish as weak ... (21)

D. compulsory Irish?

In January 2011, the candidate Enda Kenny announced that he and his party would like to put an end to compulsory Irish, an action which would kill off a large part of the Irish Language economic sector in the Gaeltachtaí, especially the summer colleges.

It's up to the people of Ireland whether they should go forward with compulsory Irish in the schools. But here, overseas, it's difficult to imagine that it would be required to teach an official language in school in any other country. If only the minority are required to learn two languages in order to take part in the state, isn't that discrimination?

E. denial of human, civil, legal, and Constitutional rights

Getting an education for your child in the language of your choice is a fundamental inalienable right. The Department of Education does not have any right to interfere with this, no matter what their excuse.

F. denying your rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Ireland

In 2010, Deputy Caoimhín Ó Caoláin asked the Tánaiste and Minister of Education and Skills, i.e., Mary Coughlan at that time: (translated from Irish) “Why wasn’t recognition give to Gaelscoil Ráth Tó in September 2010 when schools already in the district are not able to comply with the Constitutional wish of the parents as primary educators of their children, to provide Irish-medium education to their children ...?” (22)

Mr. Ó Caoláin was talking about Article 42 in the Constitution of Ireland: (23)

(1) The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children.

(2) Parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes or in private schools or in schools recognised or established by the State.

(3.1) The State shall not oblige parents in violation of their conscience and lawful preference to send their children to schools established by the State, or to any particular type of school designated by the State.

(4) The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents ...

In other words, Mr. Ó Caoláin is right, parents have the right to demand and get Irish-medium schools under the Constitution.

G. denying your rights guaranteed by the Education Act of 1998

According to the first lines of the Education Act of 1998, the Department of Education and Skills must provide education which is accountable to parents, which respects the diversity of languages, and which is conducted in a spirit of partnership with parents. (24) (25)

In other words, if parents want education through Irish for their children, the Department of Education and Skills has to provide it.

Perhaps this is difficult to believe when we look at the actions (lack of action) of the Education Department up to now. Here are the exact words:

An act to make provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every person in the state ...; to ensure that the education system is accountable to students, their parents and the state for the education provided, respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership between schools, patrons, students, parents, teachers and other school staff, the community served by the school and the state ... (26)

Also, under Article 9 of the Act:

(9).—A recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources ...

[Despite this article of the Act, and despite parents saying that Irish-medium education is appropriate for the abilities and needs of their children, the Department of Education usually refuses to listen.]

(c) to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices,

[Is it appropriate guidance and assistance in their educational and career choices

when the Department of Education and Skills refuses to provide Irish-medium education to students who are interested in working at RnG, TG4, in certain schools and universities and in specific departments of the government in which Irish is needed?]

(d) to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students ... in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school ...

[Can't moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students be advanced, having regard for the characteristic spirit of a school, through Irish?]

(f) promote the development of the Irish language and traditions, Irish literature, the arts and other cultural matters ...

[This paragraph does not say that schools and the Department of Education have to use the worst methods which don't work, or that they can't use the best methods which work best.]

(h) in the case of schools located in a Gaeltacht area, contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary community language ...

[Given that Minister Quinn threatened 90% of the schools in the Gaeltachtaí with closing, is it possible that the primary officers of the Department of Education, including the minister, have not read this Act? No.]

H. Does the Department of Education understand the law?

The Department of Education and Skills understands its obligations under the Constitution and the Law. Here's part of what was said by the Coimisiún um Chóiríocht Scoile, part of the Department, in 2011:

The Irish language Article 8 of Bunreacht na hÉireann states that: "The Irish language as the national language is the first official language". The promotion of the Irish language has been an important aim of successive Irish Governments and its place in our education system has been consistently protected. This should continue to be the case. The importance of Irish has been re-affirmed in the recently published 20 year strategy for the Irish

language, “Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030”... It is also of note that the number of people who speak Irish has increased by in excess of 85,000 in the inter-censal period between 2002 and 2006. A continued strong interest from parent groups in setting up Irish language primary schools backs this up and makes it clear that any system for setting up new primary schools must be sensitive to the special place of the Irish language in our culture. Therefore Irish language schools should be accommodated in the new system whether by means of campus developments with other schools or where appropriate on their own sites ... It is important to note the importance of the Irish language, not just in Irish- medium schools, but also in English-medium schools and that it is a function of all schools to promote the Irish language. This is set out in the Education Act, 1998 (section 9). (27)(28)

I. Is the Department of Education breaking the law on purpose?

The Department of Education gives every indication that it is simply making up its own rules in order to break the law. For example, here is what the Department said about Irish-medium primary schools in “The 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language” in 2010:

There are increasing demands for diversity of provision of school type, including Irish-medium education, distributed throughout the country in areas of both static and growing population. These growing demands have required a revision of the procedures for the recognition of new primary schools. Pending the outcome of the review, the Department of Education and Skills has had to adopt an interim strategy whereby it is only allowing new primary schools to be established to cater for demographic growth in order to deliver on the overall priority that every child has a school place available to them. The review, which is well advanced, is being undertaken by the Commission on School Accommodation ... (29)(30)

For those who would expect improvement on this policy from the Coimisiún um Chóiríocht Scoile, part of the Department of Education, here is what they said the following year (i.e., in 2011) in their report:

In areas of significant demographic growth it has been possible to

meet much of the demand for increased choice of provision through the establishment and construction of new schools. (31)(32)

and

- *In the first instance, the arrangements now in place within the Department of Education and Skills for the identification of the need for the establishment of new schools are noted. (33)(34)*

And that's it. There was not another word about education through the medium of Irish. In other words, there was not any change in this policy. Without "significant demographic growth" and "demographic growth and that only", Irish-speaking people will not get a school, even if they live in a healthy, stable community which has been waiting for an Irish-medium school for more than 90 years.

Is there any mention in the Constitution or in the Education Act of 1998 or in any other law which cancels human, civil, legal, and Constitutional rights in communities which don't have "significant demographic growth"?

The statement of the Department in the 20 Year Strategy continues as follows about Gaelcholáistí (Irish-medium secondary schools):

At post-primary level, new arrangements for the recognition of second-level schools were established in July 2010. These provide for a new framework involving the setting out of clear criteria against which new second-level school applications are to be assessed. These criteria envisage that new schools will only be established where there is demographic demand and that new schools will typically be in a size range of 800 to 1000 pupils. The criteria also set out that a lower threshold of 400 will apply for Gaelcholáistí having regard to the alternative of establishing an aonad within a school. (35)(36)

Is there any mention in the Constitution or in the Education Act of 1998 or in any other law which cancels human, civil, legal, and Constitutional rights in communities which don't have 400 students to establish a Gaelcholáiste?

J. recommendations in the area of education

* Every time the Department of Education (or any other Public Company) denies your rights as a parent or as a student or as a citizen which you have under the Constitution of Ireland, the Education Act of 1998, the Official Languages Act of 2003, or any other law, that's a breach of the law. Report that breach to the Office of the Language Commissioner at

An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe.

Fón: (091) 504006 | Facs: (091) 504036

eolas@coimisineir.ie

http://www.coimisineir.ie/index.php?page=sonrai_tagmhala&tid=3

They are both friendly and professional, they want to help, and you will get an answer from them immediately.

* Demand additional legislation that every student will get Irish-medium education if that's what his/her parents want, just as any student immediately gets education through English if that's what his/her parents want.

* Because the Department of Education and Skills is still threatening to close 90% of the Irish-medium schools in the Gaeltachtaí; causing worry, fear, and decline in Irish-Language communities; and it is a policy of the Department not to develop or support Irish-medium schooling actively (or almost at all); and the Department is not able to teach Irish well or effectively; and the Department is composing rules to deny the rights of the people of Ireland; evaluate whether it is necessary to remove the teaching of Irish, Irish-medium schooling, and schools in the Gaeltachtaí in full from the Department of Education and Skills.

* Evaluate whether it is necessary to create a new department or unit which would be responsible for Irish, the teaching of Irish, the people of Irish, the development of the Gaeltachtaí, and the spread of Irish throughout the country, not just in the Gaeltachtaí, and not anything else that does not relate to Irish.

* Meanwhile, demand additional legislation that the Department of Education and

Skills cannot do or announce anything about schools in the Gaeltachtaí without permission from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

* Because it is likely that it will be necessary to place an Irish-medium school and an English-medium school together in a single building in certain communities, it is right to make certain of the Gaelscoil's independence according to comprehensive guidelines like those which Gaelscoileanna Teo. publishes. See <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/assets/Gaelscoileanna-Teo.-Policy-on-Irish-medium-Units.pdf>

* Because there are not enough fluent teachers in the English-medium schools, demand legislation that additional fluent teachers will be employed, especially native speakers. That will protect the high standard of Irish and lower unemployment and emigration of the Irish-speaking people.

* Because statistics about the demand for Irish-medium schooling have not been published for more than 10 years, demand legislation that the Central Statistics Office will collect and publish these statistics and statistics about attendance in Irish-medium primary schools and Irish-medium secondary schools so that progress and changes can be evaluated in this area.

2. Irish-speakers in the Gaeltachtaí, in the Galltacht, in the Virtual Gaeltacht, and Economics

This deals in part with the section called "An Ghaeltacht" in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language.

A. Based solely on defense, the original Gaeltacht strategy was doomed to failure from the beginning.

It was never just or fair to put responsibility for the national language on a small minority in some of the poorest districts of the country.

“The best defense is a good offense.” It’s apparent that the “Gaeltacht Strategy”, begun in 1926, has not done the job. That strategy was and is based solely on defense. Therefore, from the beginning, that strategy yielded advantage, speakers, and ground to English. No language can stay as it is, without weakening, while its adversary or competitor is banging on the gates and pushing in every day every night year after year.

It is necessary to make a choice. Grow or die. There’s no other choice.

B. The majority of Irish-speaking people are in the Galltacht, not in the Gaeltachtaí. It’s high time to link them together.

To grow, Irish-speakers in the Galltacht in Ireland and around the world must link together with the official Gaeltachtaí. It’s apparent that the authors of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language understand this, but this growth must be put into effect immediately, now, today, like almost every other recommendation in the Strategy.

Everyone knows that Irish-speakers have been moving in large numbers from the Gaeltacht to cities and large towns in Ireland and overseas to get jobs for more than 160 years. As the number of Irish-speakers in the Gaeltachtaí have been decreasing, the number of Irish-speakers outside the Gaeltachtaí have been increasing.

In 2002 in the Republic, there were only 62,000 Irish-speakers still living in the official Gaeltachtaí and approximately 340,000 fluent speakers in the Republic outside the Gaeltachtaí and many of them claiming daily usage of Irish. (37) In

addition, there are other Irish-speakers living around the world, between 18,000 and 25,000 in the U.S.A. alone. (2000 Census: 25,661. 2005 Census: 18,815) In 2006, 1.6 million (41%) of the people of the Republic of Ireland said that they are able to speak Irish at some level. (Census 2006) In 2002, approximately 339,000 or 8% in the Republic said that they were fluent. (38) And, “184,898 people have some ability in Irish in the six counties of the north, according to preliminary results of the 2011 Census ...” (39) In 2002 in the six counties of the north, 75,125 (4.5%) of 1,685,267 claimed that they were more or less fully fluent in Irish. (40)

In other words, there are approximately 415,000 people fluent in Irish on the island of Ireland without counting Irish-speakers overseas.

C. recommendations related to Irish-speakers in the Gaeltachtaí, in the Galltacht, in the virtual Gaeltacht, and economics

Can they be linked together? Certainly. This can be done in virtual Gaeltachtaí (as is now happening on the internet and in social media), face to face in urban Gaeltachtaí (as already developed in Belfast by the will of the people themselves), through more effective usage of public media (e.g., TG4) as will be seen in paragraph 5 below, and more.

For example, if a city anywhere in the world wants to do more business with another city, we see campaigns, meetings, and twinings. What about twinings of communities in the Gaeltachtaí and suburban and urban communities in the Galltacht who would like to advance Irish, business through Irish, and cooperation through Irish?

And there’s no need to wait for the government to do this. For example, without any funding and working solely with volunteers, the Philo-Celtic Society links more than 1400 Irish Language students around the world on the internet. (41) Type the word ‘Gaeilge’ into any browser and see how many hits you’ll get. (How about 42,000,000?) Also look at these:

www.beo.ie/

www.feasta.ie/

www.foinse.ie/

www.gaelport.com/

www.nuacht24.com

<http://antuaisisceoir.com/>

www.angaelmagazine.com
and their like.

There were only about 400,000 Jews in Palestine in 1947, and not every one of them spoke Hebrew. Today, there are more than 415,000 in Ireland alone who are basically fluent in Irish. Is that enough to again make an economic language out of Irish? Certainly the Irish can build on that good foundation.

But don't wait for the government. Do it yourself and do it yourselves.

3. “Family Transmission of the Language – Early Intervention” (i.e., the subtitle in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language)

A. encouragement from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

We received the package which the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht sends to parents to encourage the speaking of Irish in the home. It is nice enough. In their cover letter, they write:

If you choose Irish as the language of your family, you are giving to your child a valuable advantage which could help him/her:

1. *learn how to read and count*
2. *learn other languages*
3. *develop communication skills*
4. *get a job in the future*
5. *make new friends*
6. *take part in a new generation of Irish-speakers*
7. *strengthen identity*

Certainly it’s right to give support to Irish in the family. That thought follows the best and most recent linguistic theories. But if we re-build economic advantages related to speaking Irish, most parents will put emphasis on Irish without any encouragement from the government, exactly as most parents put emphasis on speaking English without any encouragement from the government from the 19th century on.

People switch to another language if they’re able to make a good living through it for themselves and for their children. If people are not able to make a good living through Irish, the decline of the Irish Language will continue until it is dead.

B. recommendation related to family transmission of the language

The best way to advance the language in families is to re-establish the language as a strong economic language.

4. The Government, the Irish Language, and Economics

This deals in part with the section called "Administration, Services and Community" in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language.

A. pulling in opposite directions

Right up front, we have to ask: "Who is in charge?"

In February 2011, Donnchadh Mac Fhionnlaoich, T.D. and Minister of State with responsibility for the Gaeltacht and the Islands, admitted that nobody consulted him in creating government policy about the Irish Language and he did not have any knowledge of what research was used to create his party's policy. (42)

This is ridiculous.

In December 2011, Ruairí Quinn, the Minister for Education and Skills, threatened to close 90% of schools in the Gaeltachtaí. (43)(44)(45)(46) (47) Under pressure, Mr. Quinn stepped back from this threat in 2012 but it is apparent from his actions and words in 2013 that he has not abandoned this policy and these schools are still under threat. (48)(49)(50)(51)

This is ridiculous.

In March 2013, this came to light:

"A complaint was made to the Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga that a man had been unjustly arrested, because he asked a Garda to deal with him through Irish when he was stopped in relation to a traffic offence. The man was taken in handcuffs to a Garda station where he was detained until a Garda was available who could speak with him in Irish. The complainant said that the experience left him 'shamed and insulted and I was told several times that I did not have a right to conduct business through Irish, that I should desist and that I would not have been arrested if I hadn't spoken in Irish.' " (52)

This is ridiculous.

Looking at examples like Norwegian in the 19th century, Hebrew in the 20th century, and Basque, Catalanian, Welsh, and other languages at the beginning of

the 21st century, we can see that it is possible to revive a language successfully with careful management. But it is apparent that that kind of management is not to be found at this time in Ireland.

B. Official Languages Act of 2003

The Official Languages Act of 2003 begins like this:

An act to promote the use of the Irish language for official purposes in the state; to provide for the use of both official languages of the state in parliamentary proceedings, in acts of the Oireachtas, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of public bodies; to set out the duties of such bodies with respect to the official languages of the state; and for those purposes, to provide for the establishment of Oifig Choimisinéir na dTeangacha Oifigiúla and to define its functions; to provide for the publication by the commissioner of certain information relevant to the purposes of this act; and to provide for related matters. [14th July, 2003] (53)(54)

The Houses of the Oireachtas, the Courts, and the Public Bodies (including all departments of the government) must communicate with you in Irish if you use Irish to communicate with them. (55)(56) You can find the list of Public Bodies here:

<http://acts.oireachtas.ie/ga.act.2003.0032.8.html#sched1> .

C. not pulling at all

Look at these statements from the Annual Report of the Language Commissioner:

FOREWORD

2012 was not a vintage year for the promotion of the Irish language in the public sector and for every one step forward there appeared to have been two steps backwards.

Statistics from the most recent Census published during 2012 gave a reasonably positive picture of the use of Irish in the country. The figures revealed an increase of 7% from the last Census in the number of people in the country who said they had Irish and an increase of

7% in the number of people who said they used the language on a daily basis, outside the education system, as well as an increase of 3% in the number of people in the Gaeltacht who said they used the language on a daily basis outside the education system.

These statistics indicated a positive trend and are good news. The statistics would be even better if the State delivered on its promise in providing support for the language. A large proportion of the general public are in favour of the preservation and promotion of the language as is evident in research and surveys undertaken over the years. However, to my mind, there is a considerable gap between the wishes of the public in relation to the language and the efforts of the State on the issue.

Language schemes

While the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht confirmed an additional nine language schemes under the Official Languages Act during 2012, there was an even more significant increase in the number of language schemes that “expired” without renewal. In addition, there was a further increase in the average length of time language schemes remained without being renewed.

The language scheme system is at the very heart of the legislation and any development in the number and quality of services in the Irish language provided by public bodies is dependent on this mechanism.

Overall, of the 104 language schemes that were confirmed from the outset by public bodies, a combined total of 79 had "expired" by the end of 2012; this means that 3 out of every 4 or 75% of all schemes had expired. In the case of 11 of these language schemes, they had expired for a period of at least four years and a further 13 had expired for more than three years. Details of the public bodies whose schemes have expired and those whose schemes have been renewed are available in this Report.

In addition, there were 39 other public bodies whose first draft scheme had been requested by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht but for whom no scheme had been agreed or confirmed by the end of 2012. In the case of ten of these, more than six years had elapsed since they were first asked to prepare a draft scheme.

Although I have issued regular warnings on this matter over a number of years, I am concerned, now more than ever, that there is no secure or stable basis to the system for confirming language schemes. (57)

Look at the numbers again:

104 language schemes confirmed from the outset

+39 not agreed or confirmed yet

143 public bodies

79 expired

+39 not agreed or confirmed yet

118 (83%) without a scheme in effect out of 143 public bodies

Therefore, despite the Official Languages Act of 2003 we can see:

- The largest part of the government refuses to maintain or even create plans for the provision of services in Irish, even though that is required under the Act.
- Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that most of the government refuses to make services available in Irish, even in the Gaeltachtaí, even though such services are required under the Act throughout the country.

Despite this Act, what can we say except that a large part of the government, perhaps most of the government, is still active in killing the Irish Language and in refusing human rights inside and outside the Gaeltachtaí.

Why are large fines or other punishments exacted from public companies and officials which or who fail to fulfill their obligations under the law, except laws which relate to the Irish language and Irish Language communities?

D. recommendations related to the government, the Irish Language, and economics

1) services

Demand services in Irish (and therefore jobs which are done through Irish) from every Public Body (including the Department of Education, every other department of the government, and the public media). You have the right as a citizen.

2) for those who break the law

Evaluate whether new legislation should be demanded which would impose fines on public bodies and officials which or who do not full their obligations under the Constitution of Ireland, the Official Languages Act 2003, the Education Act of 1998, and any other laws which relate to the Irish Language and Irish Language communities.

5. Public Media and Economics

This deals in part with the section called "Media and Technology" in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language.

A. RnG and TG4 are doing wonderful work.

TG4 and Raidió na Gaeltachta are doing excellent work every day and they are developing programs and new digital media to increase their viewing and listening audience. We have only a couple of other recommendations.

B. recommendations related to public media and economics

1. local advertisements

TG4 and Raidió na Gaeltachta are similar to local stations, narrow-broadcasting to specific viewing and listening audiences. They commission wonderful programs in Irish, but they don't act like local stations in the area of advertising, one of the most important methods used to link people and communities together on an economic basis.

For example, here overseas, we would expect to see on TG4 local advertisements in Irish made by companies in the Gaeltachtaí or in the Galltacht on behalf of local companies selling products and services in Irish. Instead, we see international advertisements made overseas (and not by Irish-speakers) selling products like Febreze in English.

2. programs

We would expect to see a schedule made completely in Irish by small companies working in Irish based in the Gaeltachtaí or the Galltacht. Instead, we see on TG4 programs like Bonanza, Little House on the Prairie, Pimp My Ride, and their like. Certainly TG4 can buy licenses for these programs without great cost because Ireland is a small country. But it is also certain that TG4, with the same money, can commission additional programs in Irish from local producers who would be working through Irish.

Lost opportunities. If the native advertising and film industries are weak in Ireland, if there are not many working in Irish from day to day in the production of advertising and films, this is one of the reasons.

6. Dictionaries

A. new dictionaries

As mentioned in the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, excellent work is being done in this area. It is always important to have good up-to-date dictionaries full of modern terminology, especially for business and for learners who do not live in the Gaeltachtaí.

B. recommendation related to dictionaries

But it is important to remember that the danger exists that our dictionaries could soon be relics like “Zeisberger’s Indian Dictionary” for Onandaga and Delaware (i.e., Lenni Lenape). It is necessary to change strategies and methods immediately in order to strengthen our language and our communities.

7. Legislation and Status

As we saw in Part One, if people can get good jobs working in a certain language, that language has high unofficial status (i.e., high respect). More jobs which are done through Irish must be created in every sector - including education, government, and the private sector. Official status is an important avenue to create those jobs. Therefore, official status is an important avenue by which to raise the unofficial status of the language.

Recommendations

1) services

Demand services in Irish (and therefore jobs which are done through Irish) from every Public Body (including the Department of Education, every other department of the government, and the public media). You have the right as a citizen.

2) for those who break the law

Evaluate whether new legislation should be demanded which would impose fines on public bodies and officials which or who do not full their obligations under the Constitution of Ireland, the Official Languages Act 2003, the Education Act of 1998, and any other laws which relate to the Irish Language and Irish Language communities.

8. Economics of the Irish Language in the Private Sector

- a. a lack of understanding?

The government calls this section “Economic Life” in the 20 Year Strategy. Does this demonstrate that the government does not understand that every section of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language has an economic effect on Irish speakers and Irish-speaking communities inside and outside the Gaeltachtaí?

- b. recommendation related to economics of the Irish Language in the private sector

Don't wait for the government. The government does not own your language. And three years after “The 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language”, it is being said that hardly anything has been done by the government except budget cuts. (58)(59)

Do you have a business? Are you in charge of a shop, a department in a store, or an office? Are people who work with you fluent in Irish? In the U.S., we often see advertisements in various languages. It's very common (or perhaps the rule these days) that we hear “For service in [language X] press 2.” On line (i.e., on the internet), we can often choose Spanish or some other language. Methods like this draw customers who will be loyal in the future and methods like this increase the loyalty of customers that a business has already. Encourage other companies to make services and products available in Irish, and buy from them regularly when they do. Do you make a product? Put “Déanta in Éirinn” on it, with directions in Irish side by side with French, Spanish, English, etc. Do you send a newsletter to your customers? Find out which of them would like to get it in Irish. If people have the opportunity to speak Irish naturally and comfortably, they will. Link with them on abairlet.com, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, email, and face to face.

No doubt you can come up with better ideas and put them into effect. Do it now.

III. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TO BE DONE IMMEDIATELY

1. recommendations in the area of education

a. Every time the Department of Education (or any other Public Company) denies your rights as a parent or as a student or as a citizen which you have under the Constitution of Ireland, the Education Act of 1998, the Official Languages Act of 2003, or any other law, that's a breach of the law. Report that breach to the Office of the Language Commissioner at

An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe.

Fón: (091) 504006 | Facs: (091) 504036

eolas@coimisineir.ie

http://www.coimisineir.ie/index.php?page=sonrai_tagmhala&tid=3

b. Demand additional legislation that every student will get Irish-medium education if that's what his/her parents want, just as any student immediately gets education through English if that's what his/her parents want.

c. Because the Department of Education and Skills threatened to close 90% of the Irish-medium schools in the Gaeltachtaí; causing worry, fear, and decline in Irish-Language communities; and it is a policy of the Department not to develop or support Irish-medium schooling actively (or almost at all); and the Department is not able to teach Irish well or effectively; and the Department is composing rules to deny the rights of the people of Ireland; evaluate whether it is necessary to remove the teaching of Irish, Irish-medium schooling, and schools in the Gaeltachtaí in full from the Department of Education and Skills.

d. Evaluate whether it is necessary to create a new department or unit which would be responsible for Irish, the teaching of Irish, the people of Irish, the development of the Gaeltachtaí, and the spread of Irish throughout the country, not just in the Gaeltachtaí, and not anything else that does not relate to Irish.

e. Meanwhile, demand additional legislation that the Department of Education and Skills cannot do or announce anything about schools in the Gaeltachtaí without permission from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

f. Because it is likely that it will be necessary to place an Irish-medium school and an English-medium school together in a single building in certain communities, it is right to make certain of the Gaelscoil's independence according to comprehensive guidelines like those which Gaelscoileanna Teo. publishes.

See <http://www.gaelscoileanna.ie/assets/Gaelscoileanna-Teo.-Policy-on-Irish-medium-Units.pdf>

g. Because there are not enough fluent teachers in the English-medium schools, demand legislation that additional fluent teachers will be employed, especially native speakers. That will protect the high standard of Irish and lower unemployment and emigration of the Irish-speaking people.

h. Because statistics about the demand for Irish-medium schooling have not been published for more than 10 years, demand legislation that the Central Statistics Office will collect and publish these statistics and statistics about attendance in Irish-medium primary schools and Irish-medium secondary schools so that progress and changes can be evaluated in this area.

2. recommendations related to Irish-speakers in the Gaeltachtaí, in the Galltacht, in the virtual Gaeltacht, and economics

Can they be linked together? Certainly. This can be done in virtual Gaeltachtaí (as is now happening on the internet and in social media), face to face in urban Gaeltachtaí (as already developed in Belfast by the will of the people themselves), through more effective usage of public media (e.g., TG4) as will be seen in paragraph 5 below, and more.

For example, if a city anywhere in the world wants to do more business with another city, we see campaigns, meetings, and twinnings. What about twinnings of communities in the Gaeltachtaí and suburban and urban communities in the Galltacht who would like to advance Irish, business through Irish, and cooperation through Irish?

And there's no need to wait for the government to do this. For example, without any funding and working solely with volunteers, the Philo-Celtic Society links more than 1400 Irish Language students around the world on the internet. (41) Type the word 'Gaeilge' into any browser and see how many hits you'll get. (How about 42,000,000?) Also look at these:

www.beo.ie/
www.feasta.ie/
www.foinse.ie/
www.gaelport.com/
www.nuacht24.com
<http://antuaisceoir.com/>
www.angaelmagazine.com
 and similar sites.

There were only about 400,000 Jews in Palestine in 1947, and not every one of them spoke Hebrew. Today, there are more than 415,000 in Ireland alone who are basically fluent in Irish. Is that enough to again make an economic language out of Irish? Certainly the Irish can build on that good foundation.

But don't wait for the government. Do it yourself and do it yourselves.

3. recommendation related to family transmission of the language

The best way to advance the language in families is to re-establish the language as a strong economic language.

4. recommendations related to the government, the Irish Language, and economics

1) services

Demand services in Irish (and therefore jobs which are done through Irish) from every Public Body (including the Department of Education, every other department of the government, and the public media). You have the right as a citizen.

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