

**AN GHAEILGE FAOI**

**BHLÁTH NÓ**

**FAOI BHAGAIRT?**

**THE IRISH LANGUAGE STRUGGLE TODAY**

# RÉAMHRÁ

Aithníonn Pobal Seachas Brabús an tábhacht le cainteoirí Gaeilge a chosaint agus a chothú, ag am a n-imeallaítear daoine a labhraíonn teangacha mionlaigh ar fud na cruinne, idir iad siúd a bhfuil an Ghaeilge acu ó dhúchas agus iad siúd ar mian leo an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim chun a gcuid fhéin a dhéanamh di in athuir.

Tugann Pobal Seachas Brabús tacaíocht do ghluaiseacht na Gaeilge agus é de cheart ag daoine a chónaíonn in Éirinn - Thuaidh agus Theas - a saoil a chaitheamh trí Ghaeilge.

Thriail an Bhreatain an Ghaeilge a dhíothú mar chuid den smacht cóilíneach, agus is í an chríochdheighilt a bhí mar thoradh air sin.

Dealaióinn an chríochdheighilt sin cainteoirí Gaeilge óna chéile sa lá inniu. Cruthaíonn na dlínsí eagsúla dúshlán in aontú na bpobal Gaeilge - tá saincheisteanna éagsúla le réiteach ag pobail na nGaeltachtaí/Galltachtaí agus ag na pobail uirbeacha/tuaithe.

Is dúshlán é daoine a thabhairt le chéile chun gluaiseacht aontaithe Ghaeilge a chruthú.

**Le caoga bliain anuas,** tá rannpháirtíocht corrraitheach in athbheochan na Gaeilge ag tarlú - Thuaidh agus Theas. Tá líon na ndaoine a bhfuil fonn orthu an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim agus a labhairt ag dul i méid – daoine óga ach go háirithe. Ag an am céanna, tá naimhdeas seicteach i leith na Gaeilge le sonrú ar thaobh amháin den teorainn agus ciorraithe tubaisteacha ar an taobh eile.

Is in ainneoin neamhchúram, faillí agus leithcheal an stáit atá an borradh faoin nGaeilge i sochaí na hÉireann tagtha, mar a tháinig athruithe maithe eile sna blianta beaga seo. Labhraíonn lucht an rialtais as dhá thaobh a mbéal i leith na Gaeilge. Is ar leas na gcreach-chistí agus ar leas an chaipitleachais is mó a dhírítear a n-aird siúd sa lá inniu.

Is náireach an chaoi a gcaitear le pobail na nGaeltachtaí. Tá líon na gcainteoirí ó dhúchas ag laghdú de shíor, mar thoradh díreach ar thréigean leanúnach na rialtas Éireannach ar feadh blianta fada. Ní thréigean amháin ach creachadh - na farraige a cheadú do thráiléirí móra na hEorpa, na farraigí timpeall ar an gcósta a bhánú – tubaiste don timpeallacht agus d'iascairí áitiúla - truailliú na bhfeirmeacha iasc a fheidhmíonn gan rialachán. D'fhéadfadh na daoine a bheith chreachta tuilleadh trí dlíthe a reachtáil a chuirfeadh iallach orthu ceadúnais a cheannach ar na cearta feamainne agus coimíne a bhí acu go traidisiúnta, nó na cearta sin a dhíol le comhlachtaí móra idirnáisiúnta a scriosfadh an timpeallacht tuilleadh, ar mhaithe le brabús na gcomhlachtaí móra.

Is náireach an méid a íoctar le mná tí na nGaeltachtaí sa samhradh ar son daltaí a choinneáil €14.50 (samhradh 2025) an dalta in aghaidh na hoíche – agus cuimhnigh go bhfuil cothabháil i gceist leis sin - 3 bhéile sa lá.

Má tá borradh faoi ghluaiseacht na Gaeilge sa chuid eile den tír, is de bharr díograis na gcosmhuintir atá sé sin ag tarlú. Ó thuaidh, thug gluaiseacht ón bhun aníos a dúshlán don sáinn sheicteach inar cuireadh teanga na Gaeilge tar éis na críochdeighilte, ag an stát Aontachtach. Tá biogóideacht i leith na teanga ann i gcónaí áfach agus cothaíonn an bhiogóideacht sin fearg agus fuath ó am go chéile i measc ball an DUP.

D'aithin feachtas Chatherine Connolly an tábhacht agus an dúil agus an grá atá ag daoine sa nGaeilge agus chinntigh sí go raibh páirt lárnach ag an nGaeilge ina feachtas. Is go muiníneach agus go seasmhach a labhraíodh an Ghaeilge le linn an fheachtais, rud a thug dúshlán polaitiúil do bhunaíocht na heite deas sa rialtas reatha atá tar éis clis ar chainteoirí Gaeilge agus ar phobail na nGaeltachtaí araon.

Ó thuaidh, tá An Dream Dearg ag feachtasaíocht ar son cearta teanga agus tá dul chun cinn suntasach déanta acu ó 2016 i leith. Ba threise iad agus iad i ngleic le status-quo Stormont.

Is léir go bhfuil fás agus dul chun cinn polaitiúil na teanga Gaeilge cothaithe ag gluaiseachtaí pobal ar na sráideanna. D'fhéadfaí comparáid a dhéanamh idir iadsan agus Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta. Is iad cosmhuintir na tíre a bhrúfaidh gnóthachain na Gaeilge sa todhchaí.

Is é an caipitleachas an dúshlán is bunúsaí agus is mó a thugtar do chainteoirí Gaeilge, Thuaidh agus Theas. Glacann Pobal Seachas Brabús leis an ráiteas a rinne James Connolly os cionn céad bliain ó shin: “Is é príomhnamhaid na hAthbheochana Cheiltigh ná fórsa brúiteach an chaipitleachais.”

Scriostar teangacha ar fud an domhain, laghdaítear a líon de réir mar a scaipeann an caipitleachas – le lámh láidir go minic. Tá ar a laghad 40% de na 7,000 míle teanga a labhartar i mbaol a dtostanna, de réir UNESCO. Beidh deireadh le 3,000 teanga le linn an 21ú haois, de réir meastacháin níos ísle. Ar an meán, imíonn teanga ar ceal gach coicís, maraon le hoidhreacht chultúrtha agus intleachtúil pobail a labhartha.

Ní tacaíocht teangeolaíoch amháin a theastaíonn ó theanga mhionlaigh, ach tacaíocht pholaitiúil, shóisialta agus eacnamaíoch. Bíonn acmhainní, infheistíocht agus seirbhísí cuimsitheacha ag teastáil ó dhaoine ar mian leo a saol a chaitheamh trína rogha teanga. Ar ndóigh, is deacair don chuid is mó de na daoine a saol a chaitheamh i dteanga ar bith – Gaeilge ná Béarla – ceal gustal, i láthair na huaire.

Is iad na daoine agus an plainéad a íocann as an tosaíocht a thugtar do bhrabús na luchtanna caipitleacha atá lárnach sa gcóras reatha, maraon le hionadaithe an rialtais. Mar sin, ní féidir inmharthanacht na Gaeilge a scaradh ón ngéarchéim

tubaisteach tithíochta, ón gcostas maireachtála, ón mbánú atá déanta ar sheirbhisí poiblí srl.

Tá Pobal Seachas Brabús tiomanta do chosaint agus d'athbheochan na Gaeilge mar chuid dá thionscadal - Éire fíor éiceashóisialach, Thuaidh agus Theas - a chothú - agus gluaiseacht á reachtáil acu chuige sin.

Dírítear aird ar chuid de phríomh-mholtaí Pobal Seachas Brabús i leith na Gaeltachta agus na Gaeilge sa bpolasaí seo. Is cuid d'ár bhfís uailmhianach í, go mbeidh an Ghaeilge beo bríomhar i dtír éiceashóisialach – Éire – saor ó na bacanna brúidiúla a cuireadh uirthi in aimsir chóilíneachais na Breataine sa gcéad dul síos agus ó bhacanna tromchúiseacha an chaipitleachais ina dhiaidh sin.

## **Eacnamaíocht na Teanga: Críoch a chur leis an bhFaillí Nualibrálach**

Dírítear aird ar chuid de phríomh-mholtaí Pobal Seachas Brabús i leith na Gaeltachta agus na Gaeilge sa bpolasaí seo. Is cuid d'ár bhfís uailmhianach í, go mbeidh an Ghaeilge beo briomhar i dtír éiceashóisialach – Éire – saor ó na bacanna brúidiúla a cuireadh uirthi in aimsir chóilíneachas na Breataine sa gcéad dul síos agus ó bhacanna tromchúiseacha an chaipitleachais ina dhiaidh sin.

Molann Pobal Seachas Brabús:

- Deireadh a chur le heaspa maoinithe Gaeilge agus le gortmhaoiniú phobal na nGaeltachtaí
- Deireadh a chur le cistiú-aon-uaire agus cistithe ilbhliantiúla a ráthú do dhreamanna Gaeilge
- Imeacht ón tsamhail 'réasúnaithe' do mhaoiniú
- an múnla a cuireadh i bhfeidhm i ndiaidh na tuairteála agus béim a chur ar scéimeanna cistithe éagsúla.

Ba chóir, i ndeireadh na dála, leas a bhaint as acmhainní ollmhóra oileán na hÉireann - an dá dhlínse - chun athrú mór a chur ar an gcaoi a dtacaítear leis an teanga agus leis an nGaeltacht. Is é sin an chonstaic is mó is gá a shárú. Is é sin an fáth go gceanglaíonn Pobal Seachas Brabús cúis na Gaeilge agus folláine na nGaeltachtaí leis an streachailt shóisialach in Éirinn agus ar fud an domhain.

## Gaeloideachas do Chách

Níor freastalaíodh i gceart ar éileamh an phobail i leith an Ghaeloideachais i dTuaisceart na hÉireann fós, ná ó dheas i bPoblacht na Éireann. Is léir go bhfuil an rialtas in aghaidh infheistíocht cheart a dhéanamh sna seirbhísí poiblí – an t-oideachas san áireamh.

Cé go riaráíonn An Foras Patrúnachta na Gaelscoileanna sa phoblacht, bíonn an rialtas ag braith – go ciúin - ar na heaglais chun oideachas a chur ar fáil.

Ar an taobh thuaidh den teorainn, tá earnáil na Gaelscolaíochta ag fás. Feidhmíonn sí ar an ngannchuid áfach, ar dhá chúis: seicteachas an DUP atá glan in aghaidh an chultúir Ghaelaigh, agus tiomantas domhain na bpáirtithe nualibrálacha uile, fiú na páirtithe siúd a thugann le fios go dtacaíonn siad leis an nGaeilge.

Tá oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge srianta sa dá dhlínse agus ní leor an tacaíocht a thugann institiúidí di. Is cuid de neamhchúram sna hinstitiúidí an faillí a dhéantar ar foghraíocht nó fuaimeanna na Gaeilge a mhúineadh go coinsiasach. Is ceist pholasaí na n-institiúidí oideachais í sin – sa bunleibhéal, dara leibhéal agus tríú leibhéal.

## **Mar fhreagra, seo iad cuid de na príomhbhearta a theastaíonn:**

- Polasaí ‘Soláthar ar Éileamh’ sa gcás go bhfuil tuismitheoirí ag iarraidh oideachas trí Ghaeilge dá gclanna: bheadh sé de dhualgas ar an stát foirgneamh scoile a chur ar fáil. Chuirfeadh sé sin deireadh le blianta fada feachtasaíochta ar mhaithe le háiseanna bunúsacha.
- Infheistíocht a dhéanamh sna Naíonraí, le cinntiú go mbeadh Gaeilge ag an leanbh, i mblianta tosaithe aoiliúna
- Rochtain chinnte ar na tacaíochtaí cuí Riachtanais Speisialta do dhaltaí náischoile agus Gaelscoile.
- Infheistíocht in oiliúint na múinteoirí lena chinntiú go bhfuil dóthain múinteoirí le Gaeilge ann; Cúrsaí tiontaithe Gaeilge a chur ar fáil a chuirfeadh ar chumas múinteoirí reatha múineadh trí mheán na Gaeilge, mar aon le ham pearsanta staidéir a thabhairt dóibh.
- Scoláireachtaí a chur ar fáil do dhaoine fásta agus do leanaí, i bpobail dhíothaigh atá ar bheagán deiseanna.
- Maoiniú a chur ar fáil le go mbeadh daltaí teastais shóisearaigh agus daltaí GSCE in ann freastal ar choláistí samhraidh Gaeltachta, saor in aisce.

- Córas oideachais tuata stáit a bhunú ina múintear an Ghaeilge mar theanga bhríomhar, bheoga agus í inrochtana do pháistí as gach cúlra.
- Straitéis chuimsitheach don oideachas Gaeilge ón naíscoil go dtí an tríú leibhéal, sa dá dhlínse.
- Athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar Chóras Díolúine na hArdteiste, go speisialta na bacanna struchtúrtha a chiallaíonn go bhfuil líon mór daltaí ag diúltiú d'fhoghlaim na Gaeilge mar ábhar Ardteistiméireachta.
- Idirghabháil a dhéanamh chun aisiompú ar an meath rochtaine ar ábhar na Gaeilge i scoileanna Béarla i dTuaisceart na hÉireann.
- Roinnt mhaith cúrsaí tríú leibhéal a chur ar fáil agus comhchéimeanna trí Ghaeilge, maraon le hinfheistíocht i scéimeanna Gaeilge do na mic léinn.
- Leathnú ollmhór (maoiniú san áireamh) ar ghníomhaíochtaí sóisialta iarscoile, maraon le gníomhaíochtaí taobh amuigh den scoil a reáchtáiltear trí Ghaeilge, clubanna óige, clubanna spóirt, srl san áireamh.
- Múineadh fóneolaíocht nó fuaimeanna na Gaeilge le bheith de chuid riachtanach den staidéar dóibh siúd a bhíonn ina mic léinn Gaeilge.

## Inbhuanaitheacht na Gaeltachta sa nGaeltacht

Tá pobail na nGaeltachtaí ag streachtailt leo agus iad ag iarraidh leanúint ar aghaidh mar Ghaeltachtaí beo. Is áiteanna iad a bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar theanga shóisialta, eacnamaíoch agus pholaitiúil iontu. Is ar éigean a bhfuil clár oibre eacnamaíoch iontu. Má tá clár oibre iontu ar chor ar bith, is é an ceann céanna lochtach atá i bhfeidhm sna pobail tuaithe. Sa mullach air sin, bíonn dúshlán bhreise ann a eascraíonn as a bheith ag iarraidh teanga mhionlaigh a labhairt agus mórtheanga an chaipitleachais i lár réime. Chruthaigh agus láidrígh Stát na hÉireann na coinníolacha maireachtála seo.

Ní féidir meath na nGaeltachtaí a dhealú ó athruithe struchtúrtha sa status-quo eacnamaíoch; is gá na pobail thuaithe a neartú le go mbeidh siad inmharthana go heacnamaíoch sa bhfadtéarma. Teastaíonn straitéisí áirithe sochtheangeolaíoch a bhfuil mar aidhm acu na Gaeltachtaí a chaomhnú agus a fhorbairt mar Ghaeltachtaí beo.

Seo cuid de mholtaí Pobal Seachas Brabús: - Iompar poiblí iontaofa a ritheann go minic agus banda leathan iontaofa chun nasc a dhéanamh idir an baile agus an chuid eile den tír.

- Infheistiú a dhéanamh i dtionslaíoch inmharthana le cinntiú go bhfuil an Ghaeltacht slán go heacnamaíoch; is gá go mbeadh sí ina háit maireachtála agus ina háit oibre, nach ceantar turasóireachta amháin í.
- Clár stáit tógáil tithíochta a chur i bhfeidhm sa nGaeltacht le go mbeidh cainteoirí dúchais in ann fanacht sa bpobal go fadtéarmach.
- An phríomháit a thabhairt do chainteoirí dúchais ar liostaí tithíochta agus dóibh siúd atá ag iarraidh maireachtáil agus obair sa nGaeltacht; cosc a chur le hathchóiriú tithe ina dtithe saoire nó 'Airbnb'.
- Laghdú agus reo cíosanna láithreach agus deireadh a chur le dísealbhú gan milleán sna Gaeltachtaí.
- Infheistiú sonrathite i scoileanna lánghaelacha sna Gaeltachtaí lena chinntiú go bhfuil a ndóthain áiseanna agus múinteoirí cáilithe acu; an fhéidearthacht ag múinteoirí aistriú go dtí scoil Ghaeltachta, má bhíonn follúntais ann.
- Deonuithe eatramhacha mar thacaíocht do theallaigh a thógann a gclainne le Gaeilge sna Gaeltachtaí, le cúnamh a thabhairt dóibh seasamh in aghaidh na brúnna meatha agus bánaithe agus pleannanna struchtúrtha á gcur i bhfeidhm ag an am céanna.

- Pleanáil teanga fadtéarmach ráthaithe sna Gaeltachtaí, lena chinntiú go bhfuil an t-am cuí agus an spás ag gníomhaithe teanga le taighde a dhéanamh agus le straitéisí sainithe a fhorbairt, maraon leis na hacmhainní atá riachtanach lena gcur i bhfeidhm.
- Leasú a dhéanamh ar Údarás na Gaeltachta chun é a dhéanamh níos trédhearcaí ó thaobh an daonlathais de; cúlú a dhéanamh ar an gclaonadh chuig cur chuige nualibrálach atá tagtha air le tamall anuas, trí údarás níos daingne a thabhairt don phobal.
- Deonú réalaíoch a thabhairt do theallaigh a bhíonn ag iarraidh lóistín a thabhairt do mhic léinn Gaeilge sa samhradh.
- Deonú a thabhairt d'úinéirí tithe a bhíonn ag iarraidh athchóiriú a dhéanamh ar an teach, le háit a réiteach do mhic léinn a mbíonn riachtanais speisialta.

## An Óige, Na Meáin, An Pobal

Ní comhtharlúint é go mb'éigean do Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta troid ar son bunú Raidió na Gaeltachta agus gur thosaigh bunaitheoirí Bhóthar Seoighe i mBéal Feirste ag forbairt comharchumainn d'oibrithe agus ionaid phobail do na daoine, idir óg agus shean. Is comhartha é beocht na hóige de shláinte theanga mhionlaigh, maraon le cáilíocht agus éagsúlacht ábhar na meán. Is iad na suíomhanna pobail, áiteanna nach baile príobhóideach ná seomra ranga iad, a bhláthaíonn an teanga. Seo cuid de mholtaí Pobal Seachas Brabús:

- Ba chóir tosaíocht a thabhairt do sheirbhísí an óige (i ndiaidh am scoile agus taobh amuigh den scoil) chun ócáidí sóisialta a thabhairt do dhaoine óga le go mbeidh siad in ann fás trí Ghaeilge, rud a thabharfadh líofacht agus inchreidtheacht do chainteoirí an chéad ghlúin eile.
- Maoiniú sa mbreis a bhronnadh ar TG4 le go mbeidh an stáisiún in ann éagsúlacht agus cáilíocht na gcláracha a chuireann sé amach a mhéadú, i dtreo is nach mbeidh air braith ar chláracha an Bhéarla chun ioncam ó fhógraíocht a fháil.
- Breis maoinithe do Raidió na Gaeltachta mar chuid de straitéis chraolta Pobal Seachas Brabús.

- Infheistiú a dhéanamh sna hacmhainní craolta atá ann cheana fhéin agus infheistiú a dhéanamh in acmhainní nua; ardáin a chur ar fáil do dhaoine óga, ó aois an tachráin go fir óga agus mná óga - Tógáil ar an méid atá déanta ag Cúla 4.
- fás tuilleadh sa teascóg sin a éascú, trí mhaoiniú ar chláracha do pháistí a mhéadú.
- Slándáil agus méadú ar mhaoiniú d'eagraíochtaí pobail na Gaeilge, le go mbeidh siad in ann pleananna fadtéarmacha a fhorbairt agus nach gcaithfidh siad dul in iomaíocht le grúpaí pobail eile a dteastaíonn maoiniú uathu.
- is córas maoinithe lochtach a chránn an earnáil phobail i gcoitinne, faoi láthair.
- Cinntiú nach bhfuil cosc ar chraoladh chláracha RTÉ /TG4 ó Thuaidh, le go mbeidh rochtan orthu i dTuaisceart na hÉireann. Tá sé thar a bheith tábhachtach go mbeidh ábhair leanaí de chuid TG4 ar fáil dóibhsean.
- Méadú bliain i ndiaidh bliana ar chláracha leanaí/ daoine óga ar RTÉ a chraoltar trí Ghaeilge go hiomlán le fotheidil chuí.
- Cinntiú gur féidir fotheidil Gaeilge a roghnú do chláracha Gaeilge a thaispeántar ar TG4 agus ar RTÉ.

## Ceartha do Chainteoirí Gaeilge

- Ceartha rochtain ar oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge (ag gach leibhéal) ina cheart bunreachtúil do gach páiste Thuaidh agus Theas; plean réalaíoch le cur i bhfeidhm chun freastal ar an éileamh.
- Láidriú ar Acht na Gaeilge i dTuaisceart na hÉireann chun é a ailíniú i bhfad níos dlúithe le hiarratais bhunaidh na bhfeachtas.
- Rochtain ar sheirbhísí poiblí agus ar sheirbhísí an rialtais trí Ghaeilge
  - ba chóir go mbeadh 20% de na hoibritheoirí san earnáil phoiblí líofa sa Ghaeilge.
- Maidir leis na ranganna Gaeilge fóirdheonaithe atá á dtairiscint do gach státseirbhíseach/fostaí poiblí faoi láthair, ba chóir go mbeidh athleanúint ar bhonn rialta lena chinntiú go bhfuil oibrithe muiníneach as a gcuid caighdeán agus féidearthacht a gcuid oibre a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge.
- Comhlachtaí príobháideacha a sholáthraíonn seirbhísí don phobal, thar ceann chomhlachtaí poiblí, chun cloí leis an rochtain trí Ghaeilge, mar a luadh thuas.

- Rólanna cumhachtaí rialála Choimisinéirí Teanga na Gaeilge, le láidriú Thuaidh agus Theas.

- Straitéis chuimsitheach trédhearcach le cur i bhfeidhm sa Tuaisceart, chun freastal ar chomharthaí dháttheangacha: ar fhoirgnimh phoiblí agus ar áiseanna fóilíochta, agus ar chomharthaí bóthair. An Ghaeilge le dul ar chomharthaí bóthair nuair atá suim de 15% de réir caighdeán idirnáisiúnta aitheanta.

- Tús a chur le maoiniú Straitéis na Teanga Gaeilge i dTuaisceart na hÉireann, rud atá ag teastáil le fada; acmhainní le cur ar fáil dó.

## **Frithchiníochas**

Is le gach éinne atá ina gcónaí in Éirinn an Ghaeilge, beag beann ar a gcúlra ná ar an tír inar rugadh iad. Diúltaímid d'iarrachtaí an Aontachtais ceist sheicteach a dhéanamh den teanga; ní dhealaíonn an Ghaeilge dreamanna éagsúla óna chéile ach amháin iad siúd a mbíonn tionscadail pholaitiúla acu agus aidhm acusan an Ghaeilge a fhágáil ar lár.

Ar an gcaoi chéanna, tá iarrachtaí déanta ag lucht atá i bhfad amach ar an eite dheis – agus tacaíocht eite dheas na Stát Aontaithe taobh thiar dóibh – an deis a thapú sealbhú a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe den ghluaiseacht teanga. Níl suim acu sa nGaeilge ná sna daoine a labhraíonn í. Diúltaímid dá mian gléas troda a dhéanamh den Ghaeilge agus íomhá bhréagach a chothú maidir le na gnáthdhaoine.

Seo thíos cuid de mholtaí Pobal Seachas Brabús:

- Ilghnéitheacht i ngluaiseacht teanga na Gaeilge a spreagadh.
- Tacaíocht teanga a thabhairt d'imircigh, deacrachtaí tuisceana/foghlama a laghdú sa gcóras oideachais agus sa bpobal le seans a thabhairt dóibh dul i ngleic leis an teanga.
- Traenáil agus acmhainní a chur ar fáil dóibh siúd a oibríonn leis an nGaeilge sna scoileanna, sna grúaí pobail, do na soláthraithe seirbhísí srl le freastal ar éagsúlacht chúlraí na ndaoine ar mian leo go mbeidh siad mar chuid d'ár sochaí Gaelach.
- Maoiniú sa mbreis i gcás iarrathóirí tearmainn/teifigh atá ag iarraidh cosanta sa tír agus atá lonnaithe sna Gaeltachtaí, le cúnamh a thabhairt dóibh an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim.

## Introduction

**At a time when people who speak minority languages all over the world are being marginalised, People Before Profit recognise the importance of nurturing and protecting Irish speakers and those who seek to recover Irish for themselves and make it their own once again.**

People Before Profit supports the Irish Language movement – all who reside in Ireland, North and South, have the right to live a life fully through Irish.

The British sought to annihilate the Irish language as part of its colonial control of Ireland, ultimately leading to partition.

Today that partition divides Irish speakers. The separate jurisdictions create challenges in uniting Irish speaking communities - different issues exist in Gaeltacht/non-Gaeltacht and urban/rural communities. It is a challenge to unite the people in building a unified Irish language movement.

**In the last 50 years** there has been a very real, and exciting, revival of engagement with the language. North and South, more and more people are learning and speaking it – especially young people. At the same time, the language faces sectarian hostility on one side of the border and a lack of proper funding on a death-by-a-thousand-cuts approach on the other.

Like every other progressive change in Irish society of recent years, this fledgling language revival has come about in spite of decades of state neglect and discrimination.

In the South, an Irish establishment is content to pay lip service to the language. Their attention is directed to the interests of vulture funds and US capitalism today.

The treatment of Gaeltacht communities is shameful. The density of native language speakers continues to decrease – the direct result of complete abandonment by successive Irish governments over many decades.

Not only have they been abandoned but plundered -the seas around the coast have been decimated by the factory ships of Europe - an environmental disaster for local fisherman – not to mention the pollution caused by unregulated fish farms. The people may be further plundered if laws are enacted which would require them to buy licenses for those seaweed rights, rights which they have traditionally held since the founding of the state, not to mention efforts to sell off commonage rights to large

international companies, who would destroy the environment further, in order to profit by that. The seasonal amount paid to mná tí for a student of Irish in was €14.50 (summer 2025) a night per student

– and the provision of 3 meals a day included.

If the Irish language movement is flourishing in the rest of the country, it is due to grassroots enthusiasm. In the North, recent grassroots movements have challenged the sectarian straitjacket Irish was placed in by the Unionist state. But bigotry towards the language remains and is periodically piqued by culture wars.

The Catherine Connolly campaign captured the growing enthusiasm in the language by making it a central part. Crucially, the consistent and confident use of Irish was fused with a political challenge to the right-wing Irish establishment that has failed Irish speakers and Gaeltacht communities alike.

Similarly in the North, An Dream Dearth campaigns for language rights that have made huge gains since 2016 have been at their strongest when they have taken on the Stormont status-quo.

The growth and political progress of the Irish language in the last decade has been fuelled by community movements on the streets. Indeed, this is no different from the past, for example with Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta. And it will continue to be the real driver of any revival in the future.

There is one overarching, fundamental challenge that lies before all speakers today, North and South: capitalism. People Before Profit takes seriously James Connolly's argument from a century ago that "the chief enemy of a Celtic Revival is the crushing force of capitalism."

As capitalism has spread across the world, often at the barrel of a gun, linguistic diversity has been decimated. According to UNESCO, of the 7,000 languages estimated to still be spoken in the world today, at least 40% are endangered. Lower estimates say 3,000 languages will go extinct in the 21st century. On average, a language disappears every two weeks, taking away the cultural and intellectual heritage of communities.

Support for a minoritised language is not just a linguistic process, but a political, social and economic one too. A life through Irish requires resources and real material investment that enable the services and amenities people require to live a decent life in their chosen language. Of course, the majority of people can't currently afford a decent life in any language, whether in English or Irish.

The same prioritisation of profit by the wider system, and government representatives, at the expense of people and planet, also comes at the expense of minority languages. The viability of the Irish language can't be separated,

therefore, from the housing catastrophe, the cost of living crisis, the crises in our public services, and so on.

As part of our fundamental project of building a movement for a truly ecosocialist Ireland, one that challenges the establishment North and South, People Before Profit is committed to a specific focus on the protection and revival of the Irish language.

This policy document highlights some of People Before Profit's key proposals when it comes to the Irish language and the Gaeltacht. It is part of our ambitious vision for an ecosocialist Ireland in which Irish is a living language, free from the shackles first placed on it by British colonialism and later taken up by 'the crushing force of capitalism.'

## **The Economics of Language: Ending Neoliberal Neglect**

The protection of the Gaeltacht and the revival of the Irish language as a living language cannot be achieved without a huge scaling up in the investment devoted to both.

People Before Profit's policy includes

- Reversal of the historic underfunding of the language and Gaeltacht communities
- An end to one-off funding pots and a guarantee of multi-year funding for Irish language groups.
- A move away from the 'rationalisation' model for funding imposed after the crash, with an emphasis on diversifying funding streams.

the state's vast resources, in both jurisdictions, should be put to use to deliver a sea-change in how the language and the Gaeltacht are supported. That is the bottleneck that needs to be overcome above all others. That is why People Before Profit tie the struggle for the Irish language and the Gaeltacht to a socialist struggle in Ireland, and across the world.

## **Education through Irish for All**

North and South, the demand for Irish medium education is terminally undermet.

In the South, the government is opposed to the idea of real investment in public services, like education.

While An Foras Patrúnachta is the governing body for Gaelscoileanna, the government is quietly beholden to the Church's grip on schools.

North of the border, the Irish medium education sector is growing yet is being starved of the resources it needs. The reason for this is both the DUP's sectarian opposition to Irish, but also the deep-seated commitment to the neoliberal model which is shared by all the mainstream parties, including those who purport to support the language.

Irish medium education is restrictive in both jurisdictions, and overall institutional support is insufficient. Part of the institutional neglect is that the sounds of Irish phonology are not taught conscientiously.

## **This is a policy issue for all educational institutes - primary, secondary and third levels.**

In response, some key measures needed are:

- A policy of “Supply on Demand”: where parents want their children educated through Irish, the state must provide a school, ending years of campaigning for basic facilities.
- Investment in Naíonraí to ensure the language is established in the earliest years of development.
- Guaranteed access to SEN supports for naíscóil and Gaelscoil pupils.
- Investment in teacher training to ensure sufficient Irish medium teachers exist, and provision of Irish language conversion courses to enable existing teachers to teach through Irish, as well as giving them personal study time.
- Scholarships for adults and children in deprived communities to learn the language.
- Funding to make Gaeltacht summer college places available and accessible to every junior certificate and GCSE student free of charge.
- Establish a secular, state-run education system where Irish is taught as a vibrant, living language accessible to children of all backgrounds.

- A comprehensive strategy for Irish language education from pre-primary to third level, both North and South.
- Specifically, reviewing the Leaving Cert Exemption System to remove the structural barriers compelling so many people to want to drop Irish as a leaving cert subject.
- Intervention to reverse the decline in access to Irish as a subject in English medium schools in the North.
- The rollout of many more third level courses and joint-degrees through Irish, alongside investment in Irish language student schemes.
- A massive expansion (including funding) of social after-school and outside-school activities run through Irish, including youth clubs, sports clubs, etc.
- The teaching of phonology to be an essential part of study for those students learning Irish.

## **Sustainability of and in the Gaeltacht**

Gaeltacht communities are struggling to continue as living Gaeltachts, areas in which the dominant social, economic, and political language is Irish. The dominant economic agenda drives the crisis of rural communities, combining with the specific challenges of maintaining minority linguistic communities against the dominant language of capitalism - and the results are there for all to see. The Irish state has created these toxic conditions and intensified them.

Reversing the decline of Gaeltacht communities cannot be separated from structural changes in the economic status quo, including making rural communities economically viable to live in in the long term. But as part of wider change, there needs to be specific sociolinguistic measures that aim to preserve and grow the Gaeltacht as a living Gaeltacht. People Before Profit calls for:

- High-quality public transport and broadband for the rural Gaeltacht Irish-speaking communities to connect home with the rest of the country.
- Investment in sustainable industry to ensure the Gaeltacht is economically viable. It is more than a tourist destination; it must be a viable place to work and live.
- A program of state-led social housing construction within the Gaeltacht to allow speakers to remain in their communities long-term.

- Prioritisation of Irish speakers on housing lists in Gaeltacht areas and those who wish to live and work in the area, preventing the conversion of permanent homes into short-term holiday rentals and ‘Airbnbs.’
- Immediate rent reductions and freezes, and the abolition of ‘no fault’ evictions in Gaeltacht regions.
- Specific investment in Irish medium schools in the Gaeltacht, to ensure resources and sufficient teacher levels, including supports for teachers to move and work in Gaeltacht areas if vacancies exist.
- Interim grant supports for families raising their children through Irish in Gaeltacht areas to help counteract the pressures that are leading to decline and depopulation, while the more structural plans are being rolled out.
- Proper, guaranteed, long-term for language planning in Gaeltacht areas, to ensure that activists and experts have the time and space necessary to research and develop strategies, curated to their areas, combined with the resources to put them in place.
- A reform of Údarás na Gaeltachta, making it much more democratically accountable and to reverse its slide into a neoliberal approach by solidifying a community mandate.

- Realistic grant support for families able to accommodate Gaelcholáiste summer school students.
- Grant support for homeowners who wish to refurbish their homes to support Gaelcholáiste summer school students with additional needs.

## **Youth, Media, Community**

It is no coincidence that Gluaiseacht Chearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta had to fight for the establishment of Raidió na Gaeltachta, and that the founders of Bóthar Seoighe in Belfast set about developing workers co-ops and community centres for young and old people. Vibrancy at youth level is a key indicator of the health of a minoritised language, as is the quality and diversity of media offerings. Community settings are where a language breaks out beyond the confines of both the private home and the class room.

People Before Profit policy includes:

- Irish medium youth services (both after-school and outside-school services) should be prioritised and heavily invested in, giving young people an avenue to socialise and develop through Irish, lending the language social fluency and credibility among the next generation of speakers.
- Increased funding for TG4 so that it can increase the variety and quality of its production and so that it doesn't have to rely on English-language programming to bring in ad revenue.

- Increased funding for Raidió na Gaeltachta, as part of the People Before Profit public broadcasting strategy.
- Investment in both existing and new Irish language media resources and platforms for young people, from toddler through to young adults.
- Building upon the success of Cúla 4, by increasing funding for children's Irish language programming on TG4 to enable further growth in that sector.
- Increased security of funding for Irish language community organisations, with a view to allowing them to develop long term plans and be free of the inter-group competition for funding that can plague the community sector in general.
- Ensure that Irish-language media content on RTÉ / TG4 are not 'geo-blocked', so that people can fully access them in the north. This is especially important for children's content on TG4.
- An expanding year-on-year increase of children's/young adult content on RTÉ that is fully as Gaeilge, with appropriate subtitles - Ensure Irish-language subtitles are an option for all Irish-language content shown on TG4 and RTÉ.

## Rights for Irish speakers

- Access to Irish-medium education (at all levels) to be a constitutional right for every child North and South, with a realistic plan in place to meet demand.
- A strengthening of the Irish Language Act in the North to align it much more closely with the original demands of the campaign.
- Access to public and government services through Irish - beginning by ensuring 20% of all public sector recruits are proficient in Irish.
- Regarding the subsidised Irish classes currently being offered to all civil and public servants, with regular follow-ups to enable workers to continue to feel confident in their ability to do their work in Irish.
- Private sector bodies providing services to the public, on behalf of public bodies, to comply with the access through Irish, as above.
- A strengthening of the regulatory powers of Irish language commissioner roles, North and South.
- A comprehensive visibility strategy to be rolled out in the North, to cater for bilingual signage on public buildings and amenities, and for Irish street signage wherever the recognised international standard of 15% interest is met.
- Introduction and resourcing of the long-overdue Irish language strategy in the North.

## Anti-Racism

Irish belongs to all those who reside in Ireland, no matter their background or where they were born. We reject the attempts by unionism to sectarianise the language; the Irish language is only divisive to those political projects that seek to exclude it.

Similarly, the far right in Ireland, backed by funds from the US far right, have tried to opportunistically co-opt certain aspects of the language movement. They don't care about Irish nor about those who speak it. We reject their desire to weaponise it in their drive to create a false division between ordinary people.

Some suggestions from People Before Profit:

- Active encouragement of diversity in the Irish language movement.
- Support for migrants to remove barriers to help them engage with the language in the education system and in the community.
- Training and resources provided to the Irish language sector to encourage and enable schools, community groups, services etc to cater to the diversity of backgrounds of those who wish to be part of the Irish language community.
- Additional specific funding in cases of asylum seeker/refugee accommodation in Gaeltacht areas to assist those seeking protection here in learning Irish.

