



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Páipéar Seasaimh AMLÉ ar Oideachas na Gaeilge 2021

USI Position Paper on Irish in the Education System 2021

Réamhrá // Introduction

Is eagraíocht dhátheangach í Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ) a bhfuil 374,000 ball againn ar fud an oileáin. Tá polasaithe teanga ag an Aontas a chintíonn go mbeidh an Ghaeilge in úsáid ann agus go mbeidh sí feiceálach in aon fheachtas nó fhoilseacháin a scaiptear in ainm na heagraíochta.

Tá Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge lán aimseartha tofa san Aontas a thugann tacaíocht don Aontas ina iomlána chun an teanga a chur chun cinn. Tá sé mar sprioc ag AMLÉ an Ghaeilge a neartú, ní hamháin ag an tríú leibhéal ach ar fud an oileáin.

Tuigean AMLÉ tábhacht na Gaeilge inár stair agus inár dtodhchaí, agus creideann gur chór go mbeadh ról lárnach ag an teanga sa phobal ag leibhéal áitiúil agus náisiúnta. Déanann AMLÉ neart oibre ar réimsí éagsúla a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge ó thaobh oideachais agus cur chun cinn na teanga de.

Tagann an páipéar seasaimh seo mar thoradh ar an bhfeachtasaíocht agus an stocaireacht atá déanta ar son na mac léinn le córas níos cothroime agus níos fearr a bhaint amach ar mhúineadh na Gaeilge ón réamhscoil go dtí an tríú leibhéal. Tá AMLÉ ag obair go tréan ar fheachtais náisiúnta ar na hábhair seo le blianta beaga anuas, ar nós stocaireacht a dhéanamh chun an deontas Gaeltachta a thabhairt ar ais, agus an feachtas #Gaeilge4All a lorgaíonn polasaí cuimsitheach ar an nGaeilge sa chóras oideachais.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) is a bilingual organisation with 374,000 members across the island of Ireland. The Union has language policies that ensure that Irish has a central role in the organisation and that it is used in all USI campaigns or publications.

USI has a full-time elected role for the Vice-President for Irish that helps the Union in its entirety to promote the Irish language. It is the aim of USI to promote and protect the language, not only at third level but across the island.

USI understands the importance of Irish in our past and in our future, and we believe that the language should have an important role in our society at both a local and national level. USI carries out work in various sectors relating to Irish, both education-related and the promotion of the language and language rights in the wider public.

This position paper comes as a result of many years campaigning and lobbying on behalf of students for an improved system of teaching Irish from pre-school to third level. USI has been at the forefront of many national campaigns on these issues in recent years, such as lobbying for the reinstatement of the Gaeltacht Grant, and the #Gaeilge4All campaign which seeks a total reform of how Irish is taught in our education system.

Scríofa agus curtha le chéile ag:

Clíodhna Ní Dhufaigh, Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Le hionchur agus cabhair ó:

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An Ghaeilge sa Chóras Oideachais ó Dheas // Irish in the Education System in the South

Polasaí Cuimsitheach don Oideachas Gaeilge // Comprehensive Policy for Irish in the Education System

Aithnítear nach raibh polasaí cuimsitheach don oideachas Gaeilge riamh i bhfeidhm ó bhunaíodh an Stát. Mar thoradh ar fheachtas #Gaeilge4All in 2019 shínigh 12,000 duine achainí ag iarraidh ar an Aire Oideachas agus Scileanna tús a chur le próiséis chun athchóiriú a dhéanamh ar an nGaeilge sa chóras oideachais.

Tá an iliomad fadhbanna leis an mbealach a múintear an Ghaeilge i naíonraí, scoileanna agus institiúidí tríú leibhéal a fheidhmíonn trí Bhéarla don chuid is mó. Tá géarghá le cur chuige nua, go bhféadfaí níos mó daoine teanga dúchais an oileáin seo a bheith acu.

Seasaimh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go mbeadh polasaí cuimsitheach don oideachas Gaeilge ón réamhscoil go dtí an tríú leibhéal go mbeadh deis ag gach duine sa tír an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim i gceart. Ba cheart go mbeadh an polasaí seo bunaithe ar an CEFR, an caighdeán Eorpach do mhúineadh na teangacha agus go mbeadh dréimire soiléir leagtha amach sna curaclaim go bhféadfaí daoine a bheith ag súil le caighdeán áirithe a bhaint amach ag pointe ama ar leith ina saol scoile nó ollscoile.

It is recognised that there has never been a comprehensive policy for Irish in the education system since the foundation of the state. As a result of the #Gaeilge4All campaign in 2019, 12,000 signatures were gathered calling on the Minister for Education and Skills to begin the process of reforming how Irish is taught in the education system.

It is well established that there are many issues with the current model of teaching Irish in pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and in third level institutions who operate primarily through English. There is an urgent need for a new approach, so that more people can learn and appreciate the native language of the island.

USI position: *A comprehensive policy for the teaching of Irish should be developed and implemented from pre-school to third level so that every person in the country has an equal opportunity to learn Irish in a practical and meaningful way. This policy should be based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), the European standard for the teaching and learning of language, so that a clear pathway is laid out in the curriculums so that students can expect to reach a certain level of language proficiency at specific points throughout their school or university lives.*

Díolúintí // Exemptions

Aithnítear go bhfuil córas i bhfeidhm i mbunscoileanna agus meánscoileanna timpeall na tíre a dhéanann sé níos éasca go pháiste díolúine a fháil ón nGaeilge agus iad ar scoil. Tá dhá dhream áirithe ar a bhfuil an córas seo ag díriú: páistí idirnáisiúnta a bhogann go hÉirinn; agus páistí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu.

Maidir le páistí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu, is tábhachtach go ndéanfar socrúithe dóibh go bhfaighidís an tacaíocht chuí le tabhairt faoin nGaeilge ar scoil agus le páirt a ghlacadh sa saol sóisialta a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge chomh maith. Léiríonn taighde idirnáisiúnta nach bhfuil a leithéid ann agus míchumas foghlama i dtaca le foghlaim an dara teanga nó foghlaim teanga iasachta. Má bhíonn deacrachtaí ag páistí leis an teanga scríofa, beidh na deacrachtaí sin acu i dteanga ar bith a bheag nó a mhór, ag brath ar chastacht na teanga agus a hortagrafaíocht. Mar sin féin, éiríonn le páistí a bhfuil réimse leathan de riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu an dara teanga a fhoghlaim¹.

Do pháistí idirnáisiúnta, a bhogann go hÉirinn ag aois óg, tá sé tábhachtach freisin go dtugtar deis do na daltaí seo páirt a ghlacadh sa saol sóisialta a bhaineann leis an nGaeilge agus go mbeidh said comhtháite i saol na scoile chomh maith. Is minic go mbíonn sé níos éasca do na daltaí seo teanga nua a fhoghlaim toisc an dara teanga a bheith ag roinnt acu cheana féin.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go ndéanfaí socrúithe cuí mar chuid de pholasaí cuimsitheach ar oideachas na Gaeilge chun go mbeadh deiseanna ag gach páiste an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim fiú má bhíonn deacrachtaí foghlama acu nó más páiste idirnáisiúnta iad. San áit nach féidir le dalta tabhairt faoi mheasúnú scríofa, ba cheart go ndéanfar socrú leis an dalta sin tabhairt faoi scrúdú cainte nó scrúdú éisteachta ina áit. San áit go bhfuil dalta tar éis bogadh go hÉirinn ó thír eile, ba cheart go mbeadh siad in ann tabhairt faoin nGaeilge ag leibhéal níos ísle ná a gcuid comrádaithe ranga.

It is recognised that the current system in place in primary and secondary schools across the country makes it much easier for children to get an exemption from studying Irish while in school. There are two specific cohorts of students which this system affects directly: children who have moved to Ireland from other countries, and children with learning difficulties.

For children with learning difficulties, it is important that arrangements are made so that they can get the proper support to study Irish in school and to participate in the social aspects of the Irish language as well. International research shows that there is no such thing as a foreign or second language learning disability. Children who have difficulties with written language will face those difficulties to a greater or lesser degree in all languages, depending on the complexity of the language and its orthography. Nonetheless, children with a range of special educational needs can successfully learn a second language².

For international children who move to Ireland at a young age, it is important to give them the opportunity to take part in the social elements of learning Irish and that they can properly integrate into

¹ <https://gaeloideachas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Dalta%C3%AD-a-bhfuil-Disl%C3%A9icse-orthu-i-Scoil-l%C3%A1n-Ghaeilge-Comhairle-do-Thuimitheoir%C3%AD.pdf>

² <https://gaeloideachas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Students-with-Dyslexia-in-an-Irish-medium-school-Advice-for-Parents.pdf>

school life as well. Often children who move to Ireland from other countries find it easier to learn a new language, sometimes being proficient in several languages already.

USI Position: *Suitable arrangements should be made as part of the comprehensive policy for Irish in the education system so that every child has an equal opportunity to learn Irish, regardless of any learning difficulties they might have or regardless of where they come from. Where a child can't undertake written assessment, they should have the opportunity to do oral or aural assessments instead. Where a child has moved to Ireland, they should have the opportunity to learn Irish at a level appropriate to their current ability.*

Éileamh ar Ghaelscoileanna // Demand for Gaelscoileanna

De réir taighde atá déanta ag Conradh na Gaeilge chuirfeadh 49% de dhaoine ó dheas agus chuirfeadh 23% de dhaoine ó thuadh a bpáistí chuig Gaelscoil dá mbeadh ceann ar fáil sa cheantar áitiúil.

Aithnítear go bhfuil an-chuid deacrachtaí ag tuismitheoirí agus páistí rochtain a fháil ar oideachas lán-Ghaeilge go háirithe ag an dara leibhéal. Tá an feachtas Gaelscoil4All á reáchtáil le cúpla bliain anuas le hiarraidh ar an Stát freastal ar an éileamh atá ann do Ghaelscoileanna timpeall na tíre. Ar na feachtais is mó bhí ceann le Gaelcholáiste a bhunú i nDún Dealgan co. Lú., agus ceann le bunscoil lán-Ghaeilge a bhunú i mBaile Átha Cliath 6/6w. D'fhás líon na bpáistí in Éirinn a bhí ag freastal ar bhunscoil lán-Ghaeilge ó 6.4% sa bhliain 2,000 go 8.1% i 2018/19 agus tá 3.5% de dhaltaí meánscoile sa tír ag freastal ar scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge.

Seasaimh AMLÉ: Ba cheart do Rialtais ó Thuadh agus ó Dheas freastal ar an éileamh atá ar an nGaeloideachas do pháistí trí níos mó Gaelscoileanna agus Gaelcholáistí a bhunú. Credimid go bhfuil sé de cheart ag gach páiste a gcuid oideachais a fháil trí mheán na Gaeilge.

According to research carried out by Conradh na Gaeilge in 2020, 49% of people in the South and 23% of people in the North would send their children to a Gaelscoil if one was available in their local area.

It is recognised that there are a lot of difficulties for parents trying to access Irish-medium education for their children, especially at second level. The Gaeilge4All campaign has been established for several years now, asking the State to meet the current demand for Gaelscoileanna across the country. The most notorious of these campaigns has been for the establishment of a second level Gaelscoil in Dundalk co. Louth, as well as the establishment of a Gaelscoil in Dublin 6/6w. The number of children attending Gaelscoileanna at primary level has increased from 6.4% in 2000 to 8.1% in 2018/19 and 3.5% of all secondary students are attending Irish-medium schools.

USI Position: *The Irish Government, through the Department of Education and Skills should meet the continuous demand for Irish-medium primary and secondary education through the establishment of Gaelscoileanna throughout the country. We believe that it is the right of every child to be educated through the medium of Irish.*

An Ghaeilge in Institiúidí Tríú Leibhéal // Irish in Third Level Institutions

Cúrsaí trí-Ghaeilge ag an Tríú Leibhéal // Courses through Irish at Third Level

Aithnítear go bhfuil líon beag cúrsaí trí Ghaeilge ar fáil i réimsí éagsúla nach mbaineann le foghlaim na teanga féin. Bíonn deacrachtaí ag mic léinn a thagann isteach sa chóras tríú leibhéal ó scoileanna lán-Ghaeilgen ó ó na ceantair Ghaeltachta agus an t-oideachas ar fad faighte acu iomlán trí-Ghaeilge ag leibhéal na bunscoile agus na meánscoile. Bíonn deacrachtaí acu go háirithe agus iad ag déanamh staidéar ar na hábhar ETIM agus scríobh an Bhéarla acadúil. Is beag tacaíochta a bhíonn ar fáil dóibh siúd a bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga acu agus iad ag tabhairt faoin measúnú

Is beag eolais atá ar fáil do lucht na hArdteiste agus iad ag cur isteach ar na cúrsaí tríú leibhéal. De réir grúpa fócais na Mac Léinn Gaeltachta chuirfeadh tuilleadh daoine óga isteach ar na cúrsaí seo dá mbeidís ar an eolas futhú agus iad ag ullmhú le freastal ar chúrsaí tríú leibhéal. Luaigh cuid acu go raibh an costas a bhaineann le bogadh as baile mar cheann de na bacainn ba mha mhó a bhí rompu agus iad ag iarraidh cur isteach ar na cúrsaí seo.

Seasaimh AMLÉ: Ba cheart don Rialtas, tríd an Roinn Turasoireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán, agus an Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais, Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta, tuilleadh infheistíochta a dhéanamh in institiúidí tríú leibhéal ionas gur féidir leo níos mó cúrsaí a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge i réimsí eile agus go mbeadh na cúrsaí seo ar fáil timpeall na tíre le freastal ar dhaoine óga na Gaeltachta agus dóibh siúd a bhfuil cumas mhaith acu sa teanga. Ba cheart go mbeadh an deis ag gach mac léinn a gcuid oideachais tríú leibhéal a dhéanamh iomlán trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Tá gá le níos mó daoine óga a oiliúint trí Ghaeilge chun go mbeidh an Rialtas in ann an sprioc atá leagtha amach i mBille na dTeangacha 2021 agus 20% de dhaoine a earcú sna státseirbhísi a bheith líofa sa Ghaeilge faoi 2030 a bhaint amach. Mar shampla tá sé de cheart ag aon duine a gcuid gnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge sa chúirt, ach is annamh a mbíonn modúil Ghaeilge ar fáil mar chuid de chéim sa dlí.

It is recognised that there are a small number of courses available through Irish in various areas of study not associated with the language itself. Many students from Gaelscoileanna or from Gaeltacht areas, having previously been educated completely through Irish at primary and secondary level, have difficulties when attending third level institutions who operate primarily through English. Students have difficulties when studying STEM subjects or when writing in academic English in particular. It is also often hard to get proper support from teaching staff when undergoing assessment through English.

There is little or no information provided to students in Gaelscoileanna or in schools in the Gaeltacht on third-level courses that are carried out through Irish across the country. According to the USI Gaeltacht Student Focus Group, more young people from Gaeltacht areas would apply to these courses if there was more information available about them, and if they were available in several institutions right across the country. Students also cited the cost of moving away from home as a barrier to accessing these courses.

USI Position: *The Government through the, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, the Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, to provide funding to higher education institutions so that they may create more courses through Irish in other areas. These courses should be available across the country to meet the needs of young people in*

the Gaeltacht and those who are already proficient in Irish in rural areas. Every student in the country should have the right to receive third-level education through Irish.

More young people need to be educated through Irish so that the Government can achieve it's aim of 20% of civil service recruits being fluent in Irish by 2030. For example, it is currently the right of every citizen of Ireland to conduct themselves through Irish in the courts, but very rarely are there modules in Irish available to law students.

Measúnú // Assessment

Is beag coláiste in Éirinn a thugann deis do mhic léinn a gcuid measúnaithe a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge mura bhfuil an cúrsa bunaithe ar fhoghlaim na teanga, litríocht na Gaeilge nó an mhúinteoireacht. Cruthaítear deacrachtaí dóibh siúd a bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga acu agus iad ag tabhairt faoi mheasúnú trí Bhéarla amháin i gcomparáid lena gcuid comrádaithe ranga agus níl aon struchtúr nó polasaithe i bhfeidhm i roinnt institiúidí ardoideachais le tacaíocht a thabhairt dóibh.

I roinnt institiúidí tríú leibhéal sa Bhreatain Bheag, tá an ceart ag gach mac léinn measúnú a dhéanamh sa Bhreatnais, fiú mura bhfuil an cúrsa á sholáthar trí Bhreatnais ach amháin in ábhair a bhfuil cumas i dteanga eile mar chuid riachtanach den chúrsa.³ Sa chás nach bhfuil an Breatnais ag an léachtóir/teagascóir, íocfar as seirbhísí aistriúcháin chun go mbeidh an mac léinn in ann a chuid measúnaithe a dhéanamh sa Bhreatnais.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go mbeadh an rogha ag gach mac léinn sa tír a gcuid measúnaithe a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge. Ba cheart don Rialtas maoiniú a thabhairt d'institiúidí tríú leibhéal chun go mbeidís in ann an rogha seo a chur ar fáil do mhic léinn aon mheasúnú a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge in aon chúrsa nach bhfuil cumas i dteanga eile mar chuid riachtanach de.

Very few colleges in Ireland give students the choice to carry out assessments through Irish, if their course or subject is not on the learning of the language, Irish literature, or teaching. Students whose first language is Irish often struggle when undergoing assessment through English, compared to their classmates and there are no structures or policies in place in many HEIs to help support these students.

In many higher education institutions in Wales, students have the right to carry out their assessments in Welsh, even if the course is not being delivered through Welsh itself, except in courses or subjects where proficiency in another language is requirement. Where the lecturer/tutor doesn't have Welsh, translation services are used so that the student can still be assessed in Welsh.

USI Position: *Every student in the country should have the option of carrying out assessments through Irish. The Government should provide funding to HEIs to enable them to give students the option of carrying out assessment through Irish, even when the course is being delivered through English.*

Ábhair Oide // Student Teachers

Aithnítear go bhfuil sé riachtanach d'ábhair oide cumas áirithe a bhaint amach sa Ghaeilge le clárú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta. I measc na riachtanas seo ná leibhéal B2 nó níos airde a bhaint amach

³ https://www.bangor.ac.uk/canolfanbedwyr/pdf/LS_saesneg_2013.pdf

i dTeastas Eorpach na Gaeilge, chomh maith le tréimhse áirithe a chaitheamh ag obair nó ag déanamh staidéir i gceantar Gaeltachta, nó socrúchán scoile a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge.

Ní hionann na riachtanais seo a bhaint amach agus ardchaighdeán Gaeilge a bheith ag na mic léinn áfach agus aithnítear nach bhfuil go leor ábhar oide iomlán muiníneach as a gcuid Gaeilge, sa scríobh nó sa chaint, agus an cúrsa oiliúna curtha i gcrích acu. Mar gheall ar an réimse leathan ábhar atá le clúdach i gcúrsaí oiliúna do mhúinteoirí bunscoile, ní chaitheann na hábhair oide mórán ama ag labhairt i nGaeilge nó ag déanamh staidéir urithi leis an gcaighdeán atá ag teastáil leis an teanga a mhúineadh a bhaint amach.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go mbeadh níos mó deiseanna ar fáil do na hábhair oide, go háirithe ag leibhéal na bunscoile, an Ghaeilge a úsáid le linn an chúrsa. Ba cheart go mbeadh níos mó ábhar á ndéanamh ag na mic léinn seo trí mheán na Gaeilge le feabhas a chur ar an gcumas agus an mhúinín sa teanga gur féidir leo í a mhúineadh ag caighdeán ard. Chuideodh sé seo go mór fadhbanna le soláthar múinteoirí, go háirithe i nGaelscoileanna timpeall na tíre.

Do na hábhair oide atá ag tabhairt faoin MGO sa dara leibhéal, ba cheart go mbeadh tuilleadh béime curtha ar mhúineadh na Gaeilge agus ranganna cruinnis.

It is recognized that student teachers, at both primary and secondary level are required to achieve a certain level of proficiency in Irish in order to register with the Teaching Council. These language requirements include having achieved level B2 or higher in the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) as well as having been resident or working in a Gaeltacht area for a specific period or completing school placement through Irish.

However, students' abilities to meet these requirements do not always equate to proficiency in the language and it is recognized that many student teachers are not fully confident in their language skills, both in speaking and teaching, on completion of their teacher education. Because of the wide range of subjects covered in primary education courses, student teachers spend very little time speaking or studying Irish to meet the standard required to teach it effectively.

USI position: *Student Teachers, particularly those studying primary teaching, should be given more of an opportunity to use Irish throughout the duration of their course. More subjects should be taught to student teachers through Irish to enhance their speaking ability and instill greater confidence in student teachers when teaching the subject. This would also tackle issues regarding teacher supply, especially in Gaelscoileanna across the country.*

For students in the PME post-primary degree, more emphasis should be placed on the teaching of Irish, as well as grammar classes.

Tréimhsí Foghlama sa Ghaeltacht // Learning Period in the Gaeltacht

Aithnítear go bhfuil an tréimhse foghlama sa Ghaeltacht mar chuid riachtanach de roinnt cúrsaí a bhfuil foghlaim na Gaeilge mar chuid lárnach dóibh. Do na mic léinn atá ag tabhairt faoin mbunmhúinteoireacht, déantar é seo i mblóic choicise, faoi dhó le linn an chúrsa. Tá costas €750 ar an tréimhse foghlama sa Ghaeltacht, agus tá deontas ar fáil ón Roinn Oideachais do mhic léinn in institiúidí maoinithe ag an Stát. Tá na costais a bhaineann le freastal ar an gcúrsa seo, agus an méid ama a

chaileann na mic léinn amach ar obair pháirt-aimseartha mar bhac do go leor mic léinn ar mhaith leo freastal ar na cúrsaí.

Chomh maith leis sin aithnítear go bhfuil mic léinn ag déanamh staidéir ar an nGaeilge mar chuid dá gcúrsa, nach bhfuil sé riachtanach dóibh freastal ar thréimhse foghlama sa Ghaeltacht le go mbeidís tumtha sa teanga. Tá go leor taighde ann go gcuidíonn an tumoideachas go mór le teanga a fhoghlaim. Ní hamháin go bhfuil tábhacht leis an cúrsaí seo le feabhas a chur ar chumas teanga na mac léinn, ach chomh maith leis sin tugtar deis do mhic léinn a bheith tumtha i stair agus cultúr na Gaeltachta.

Seasaimh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go mbeadh ar gach mac léinn atá ag déanamh staidéir ar an nGaeilge mar chuid dá gcéim freastal ar thréimhse foghlama sa Ghaeltacht nó thréimhse chónaithe a le go mbeidís tumtha sa Ghaeilge agus le muinín a thabhairt dóibh. Ba cheart go reáchtálfar na cúrsaí seo le linn na bliana acadúla agus ní cheart go mbeadh air na mic léinn íoc as freastal ar na cúrsaí seo. Ba cheart don Rialtas, tríd an Roinn atá freagrach as an Ardoideachas nó an Roinn atá freagrach as an nGaeilge aus maoiniú rialta a thabhairt leis na mic léinn seo a chur chun na Gaeltachta. Ba cheart socruithe cuí a dhéanamh chomh maith do mhic léinn sna cúrsaí seo arbh as an nGaeltacht dóibh.

It is recognised that many courses where the study of Irish language is a central component, require students to attend courses in Gaeltacht areas to become immersed in the language. For student primary teachers this is carried out in two-week blocks, twice throughout the duration of their course. The cost of the tréimshe foghlama sa Ghaeltacht is currently €750 per two-week course and is subsidized for students in state-funded institutions by the Department of Education in the form of the Gaeltacht Grant. The cost of attending this course, and the duration for which students are required to forfeit part-time work is a barrier for many students who wish to study these courses.

It is also recognized that not all students who study Irish as part of their course are required to spend time in the Gaeltacht in order to immerse themselves in the language. It is well established that immersion in a language, in an area where it is widely spoken is a vital part of learning a language. Not only are these courses important for improving students' language ability but they are also be used as an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the culture and history of Gaeltacht areas.

USI Position: *Any student studying Irish as part of their course should undertake residency in the Gaeltacht to immerse themselves in the language and build confidence. These residencies should take place during regular teaching time in the academic and the costs of which should not be incurred on students. Sustainable funding should be allocated by the government Department with responsibility for Higher Education and/or the government Department with responsibility for the Gaeltacht and the Irish Language. Appropriate arrangements should also be made for students in these courses who are from the Gaeltacht themselves.*

Socrúcháin agus Printíseachtaí // Placements and Apprenticeships

Aithnítear go bhfuil an socrúchán oibre mar chuid lárnach d'an-chuid cúrsaí tríú leibhéal trasna na tíre. Faoi láthair, is beag deis atá ann do mhic léinn tabhairt faoi shocrúchán oibre trí Ghaeilge, seachas má tá siad ag déanamh staidéir ar an múinteoireacht nó ar an nGaeilge í féin.

Dóibh siúd atá ag tabhairt faoi phrintíseachtaí, is beag deis atá ann printíseacht a dhéanamh i nGaeilge lasmuigh de na ceantair Ghaeltachta.

Fágann sé seo mic léinn nó printísigh a bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga acu, nó a bhfuil an t-oidreachas ar fad faighte acu trí mheán na Gaeilge roimhe seo, faoi mhíbhuntáiste i gcomparáid lena comrádaithe ranga agus iad i mbun socrúcháin nó prínteachachta.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Ba cheart go mbeadh an ceart ag gach mac léinn nó printíseach a gcuid socrúchán oibre a dhéanamh trí mheán na Gaeilge. Ba cheart go mbeadh sé de rogha acu siúd a dhéanann socrúchán trí Bhéarla a gcuid measúnuithe a bheith déanta i nGaeilge má iarrtar air.

It is recognised that work placement is an integral part of a wide range of courses in third level across the country. Currently, there is very little opportunity for students to carry out placement through Irish, unless they are studying teaching or the Irish language as itself.

For those undertaking apprenticeships, the option to carry out their apprenticeship is also rarely available outside of Gaeltacht areas.

This leaves students and apprentices whose first language is Irish, or who have done their primary and second-level education through Irish, at a disadvantage from their peers when carrying out placement or their apprenticeship training.

USI Position: *Every student and apprentice should have the right to carry out their work placement through Irish. Student and apprentices who carry out work placement through English should also have the right to be assessed through Irish if requested.*

An Ghaeilge sa Chóras Oideachais ó Thuadh // Irish in the Education System in the North

Tá an t-oideachas lán-Ghaeilge mar chroíleir na gluaiseachta ar chearta teanga ó thuadh. Go stairiúil, tá forbairt déanta ag pobal na Gaeilge ar Gaelscoileanna ina gceantair agus tá sé seo mar chuid lárnach den oideachas lán-Ghaeilge ach tá gá, áfach, le tuilleadh tacaíochta, maoinithe agus pleanáil ón Stát le cinntiú go bhfuil siad ag freastal ar mhianta na hearnála, na teanga agus na mac léinn.

Irish Medium Education (IME) is at the heart of the movement for language rights in the north. Historically, the Irish speaking community has established and developed the Gaelscoileanna in their areas and this is still an integral part of the development of the IME, however, there is a need for greater support, investment and planning from the state to ensure the needs of the sector, the language and the students are met.

Rochtain agus tacaíocht don earnáil // Right to access and supporting key needs of the sector.

Ba cheart go mbeadh sé de cheart ag gach tuiste ó thuadh, an ceart intuigthe go bhfaigheadh a gcuid páistí oideachas lán-Ghaeilge, sa réamhscoil, bunscoil, iarbhunscoil nuair atá éileamh uirthi.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Go gcuirfear Coimisinéar Teanga i bhfeidhm le cinntiú go bhfuil struchtúir shoiléir ann don fhreagracht agus gearán dóibh siúd a mhothaíonn go sáraíodh a gcuid cearta. Chomh maith leis sin, ag teacht le seasamh Chomhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, ba cheart go mbeadh gealltanas agus tacaíocht do chreatlach pleaála agus forbairt shuntasach agus riachtanach ar infrastruchtúir caipitil le tacaíocht a thabhairt don earnáil atá ag fás gan mhoill.

Every parent in the north should have the implicit right for their children to receive and Irish-medium education, through pre-school, primary and post-primary stages where there is a sufficient demand for such.

USI Position: The appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner to ensure that those who feel they have been denied this right have a clear structure for accountability and complaint. Further, in line with the position of Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, to support this rapidly growing sector there must be commitment and support for a robust area planning framework and significant and necessary capital infrastructure development.

Na Curaclaim// Curriculum

Tagann forbairt na bpolasaithe agus curaclaim ón Roinn Oideachas agus eagraíochtaí cuí eile le mianta agus riachtanais a bhaineann le hOideachas lán-Bhéarla, ach tá siad seo an-difriúil ó riachtanais earnáil oideachas lán-Ghaeilge. Ní féidir freastal ar riachtanais earnáil na Gaeilge nó mic leinn dátheangacha leis na polasaithe agus curaclaim céanna atá i bhfeidhm do scoileanna agus mic léinn aonteangacha.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Tá gá le hathchóiriú ar an gcuraclam agus infheistíocht shuntasach i bhforbairt agus soláthar curaclaim a n-aithníonn agus a bhfreastlaíonn ar riachtanas na ndaltaí le Gaeilge, daltaí atá ag foghlaim na Gaeilge i scoileanna lán-Bhéarla, agus daltaí sa Ghaeloideachas. Tá gá le hinfeistíocht a dhéanamh i bhforbairt agus soláthar réimse leathan seirbhísí tacaíochta sa churaclam mar shampla, scrúduithe, uirlisí measúnaithe, agus seirbhísí tacaíochta a fhreastlaíonn ar riachtanais na ndaltaí in oideachas lán-Ghaeilge.

The development of policies and curricula from the Department of Education and other relevant bodies accommodate the needs and interests of an English-Medium Education, but the needs and interests of the Irish-Medium sector are not the same. The Irish-medium sector and the needs of bilingual/Irish-speaking students cannot be accommodated under the same policies and curricula as monolingual schools and students.

***USI Position:** There is a need for curriculum reform and for adequate investment into the development and provision of a curriculum that recognises and deals with the specific needs of Irish-speaking students, students learning Irish in English-medium schools and students in IME. There is also a need for investment in the development and provision of a full range of curricular support service, including examinations, assessments tools and support services that fit the needs of students in IME.*

Foireann Teagaisc agus Acmhainní // Teaching staff and resources.

Cé go bhfuil obair déanta ag An tÁisaonadh le hábhair ardchaighdeánacha a chruthú, agus ag an CCEA chun dul i ngleic le ganntanas acmhainní foghlama Gaeilge, tá go leor fós le déanamh le cinntiú go bhfuil na hacmhainní ag múinteoirí oideachas ar ardchaighdeán a thabhairt dá ndaltaí.

Tá easpa múinteoirí ann chomh maith, agus is minic go mbíonn ar mhúinteoirí san earnáil oideachas lán-Ghaeilge a bheith ag múineadh i ranganna móra. Ní hamháin go bhfuil fianaise ann go dtugann ranganna ar an uasmhéid de 25 dalta an deis is fearr do pháistí forbairt a dhéanamh ar a gcuid scileanna teanga, tá gá le cinntiú go bhfuil go leor múinteoirí á n-oiliúint don Ghaeloideachas, agus go bhfuil siad ag fanacht in Éirinn le bheith ag obair ann nuair a cháilíonn siad.

Chomh maith leis sin, tá tionchar dearfach agus forásach ag aonaid lán-Ghaeilge i scoileanna Béarla ar an oideachas lán-Ghaeilge agus ar fhás agus forbairt na teanga sa tuaisceart. Léiríonn dea-chleachtas idirnáisiúnta, áfach, go ndéantar an feabhas is mó i measc na ndaltaí trí an tumoideachas.

Seasamh AMLÉ Tá géargá le pleanáil fadthéarmach straitéiseach le dul i ngleic le fadhbanna soláthar múinteoir agus leis an nganntanas acmhainní. Teastaíonn infheistíocht ar fhorbairt agus soláthar leabhair oideachais, bogearraí, ábhair chlosamhairc agus idirlín trí Ghaeilge. Ní mór do na húdaráis oifigiúla athbhreithniú agus pleanáil a dhéanamh le straitéis a sholáthar chun líon na múinteoirí a ardú agus le cinntiú go bhfuil obair ar fáil san earnáil.

Tá gá chomh maith le plean a fhorbairt chun oideachas lán-Ghaeilge a sholáthar do mhic léinn breisoideachais agus printísigh.

While there has been work carried out by An tÁisaonad to create high quality materials, and by CCEA to deal with the deficit in resources to teach through Irish, there is still much more that needs to be done to

ensure teachers have the tools they need to give their pupils and students the highest quality education they can.

There is also a short supply of teachers, and often teachers within the IME, teachers teaching Irish or through Irish in English-medium schools are teaching large classes. Not only is there evidence that teaching in classes of maximum of 25 students gives the students more of a chance to develop their linguistic skills, but there is also a need to ensure we have an adequate number of teachers training for IME, and that they are choosing to remain in Ireland to work when they qualify.

Additionally, Irish-medium units within English-medium schools have had a positive and progressive impact on IME and the development and growth of the language across the north. However, international best practice tells us that students gain the most benefits through immersive learning.

USI Position: *There is significant need for strategic and long-term planning to deal with both teacher supply issues and the resource deficit. This requires investment into the development and provision of educational books, software, audio-visuals and web-based materials in Irish. There must also be a formal review and forward-planning by official authorities to deliver a strategy to increase the number of teachers, and to guarantee work within the growing sector.*

There is also a need develop a strategy to provide bilingual or Irish medium teaching in further education and in apprenticeships.

Tacaíocht do Mhic Léinn i gComhthéacs Sóisialta // Supporting students in a social context.

Tá go leor mic léinn in oideachas lán-Ghaeilge, nó atá ag foghlaim Gaeilge in scoileanna Béarla, nach labhraíonn an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga i suíomhanna lasmuigh den scoil (sa bhaile, i gclubanna óige, ag úsáid seirbhísí scoile/poiblí). Tá sé rí-thábhachtach sa tumoideachas gur féidir an Ghaeilge a úsáid lasmuigh de shuíomh na scoile agus mar chuid den ghnáthshaol laethúil.

Seasamh AMLÉ: Ba cheart maoiniú suntasach a thabhairt do sholáthar seirbhísí tacaíochta Gaeilge, seirbhísí seach-churaclaim agus óige trí Ghaeilge do dhaltáí in oideachas lán-Ghaeilge, daltaí le Gaeilge, agus daltaí atá ag foghlaim na Gaeilge i scoileanna Béarla, de réir iarratais phobal na Gaeilge ó thuadh a bhfuil neart oibre déanta acu ar pholasaite sa réimse seo. Chomh maith leis sin, is gá forbairt a dhéanamh ar an tacaíocht atá ar fáil do thuistí/chaomhnóirí a bhfuil a bpáistí á gcuir chuig scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge leis an nGaeilge a úsáid sa bhaile.

Many students in IME, or who are learning Irish in English-medium schools do not speak Irish as their main language in non-curricular settings (in the home, youth clubs, using school/public services). It is an important part of immersive learning to also be able to use Irish outside school and part of everyday life.

USI Position: *In line with the demands of the Irish speaking community in the north who have worked on developing policy in this area, we call for adequate investment into the development and provision of Irish-medium support services, adequate and sustainable extra-curricular and youth services through the Irish-medium for students in IME, Irish speaking students and students learning Irish in EM schools. Also,*

there is a need for the development of formal organisational support for parents/guardians of students in IME to support the use of Irish in the home.