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Oíche mhór eolais faoin oideachas Gaeltachta in Iorras:

Tús maith & dearfach leis an bplé i measc an phobail

Ba mhaith le Gaeilge Iorrais buíochas ó chroí a ghlacadh leis an slua mór a d'fhreastail ar an gcruinniú eolais a d'éagraigh siad Dé Luain 27 Feabhra 2017 in Áras Inis Gluaire, Béal an Mhuirthead faoi thodhchaí na Gaeltachta agus na scoileanna Gaeltachta in Iorras.

Tháinig os cionn 130 duine, foireann scoileanna, tuismitheoirí, an pobal idir óg agus aosta agus ó chuile cheard den limistéar ina measc, chuig an gcruinniú tábhachtach seo a mhair beagnach 2 uair a chloig. Labhair 4 cainteoirí i dtosach agus lean an seisiún plé oscailte sa dara leath den ócáid.

Rinne an Dr Laoise Ní Dhúda, comhairleoir pleanála teanga, cur i láthair gearr chun an t-ábhar a chur i gcomhthéacs. Tá rogha anois ag scoileanna, i gcomhar le pobal na scoileanna fanacht nó imeacht ón nGaeltacht. As seo amach, beidh stádas Gaeltachta ag brath ar chúrsaí teanga agus ar fhorbairt na Gaeilge agus ní ar thíreolaíocht amháin. Labhair Peigí Uí Chonghaile, oifigeach forbartha don Ghaeltacht le Gaeloideachas, faoin bPolasaí úr don Oideachas Gaeltachta (2017-2022) maille le buntáistí an tumoideachais. Tugann taighde náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta le fios gurb é seo an córas is éifeachtaí chun dátheangachas a chothú (breis eolais ar fáil ag www.gaelscoileanna.ie). Sna sála ar an bpolasaí úr seo, beidh ar scoileanna iarratas a dhéanamh chun aitheantas a fháil mar scoil Ghaeltachta. Beidh critéir áirithe le comhlíonadh ag scoileanna chun aitheantas a bhaint amach. Ina measc (i) clár lán-thumtha dhá bhliain a chur i bhfeidhm trí Ghaeilge sa tsraith naíonán (ii) gach ábhar a mhúineadh trí Ghaeilge (seachas an Béarla). Tá liosta iomlán na gcritéar leagtha amach sa pholasaí. Cuirfear tacaíochtaí ar fáil do scoileanna a dteastaíonn

uathu aitheantas Gaeltachta a choinneáil agus/nó gluaiseacht go dtí cur chuige lán-thumtha trí Ghaeilge.

Thug beirt phríomhoidí (Bríd Ní Sheighin ó bhunscoil Cheathrú Thaidhg agus Máire Uí Mhurchú ó bhunscoil na Fairche) léargas ar a dtaithí féin ag plé leis an tumoideachas i scoileanna Gaeltachta. Labhair siad faoi na dúshláin agus na deiseanna a bhaineann leis sin. Thug siad le fios go soiléir gur féidir agus gur fiú cur chuige mar seo a chur i bhfeidhm, cé go dtógann sé roinnt ama agus cé go dteastaíonn go leor foighne, tacaíochta agus muiníne, ó fhoireann na scoile, ó scoláirí agus ó thuismitheoirí araon. Moladh meas agus grá a chothú don Ghaeilge gan aon bhrú, pionós nó breithinúnas.

Níl aon amhras, mar sin, ach gur próiseas fadtéarmach dúshlánach é seo, beidh obair leanúnach mar chuid de ach beidh buntáistí móra ann do scoileanna, do scoláirí agus don cheantar dá bharr. Is faoi phobal na scoileanna atá sé cinneadh a dhéanamh ina leith seo. Níl an fhreagracht ar aon duine amháin nó ar aon ghrúpa amháin. Mar sin féin, is fiú an cinneadh a dhéanamh maidir le stádas Gaeltachta leis an eolas cuí.

Tá tús iontach agus dearfach curtha leis an bplé maidir le cúrsaí oideachais Gaeltachta sa cheantar seo anois. Ba iad aidhmeanna na hoíche (i) eolas a scaipeadh (ii) plé a thosú (iii) ábhar machnaimh agus misnigh a chur ar fáil faoin ábhar seo. Tá súil ag Gaeilge Iorrais go leanfaidh rannpháirtíocht, plé agus tacaíocht an phobail mar chuid lánach den phróiseas. Is féidir linn an t-uafás a bhaint amach má sheasann muid le chéile, nó chun casadh a bhaint as mana Obama, 'is féidir linn, go mór mór más mian linn.'

Tá Gaeilge Iorrais ag ropadh ar aghaidh leis an obair i measc an phobail agus iad i mbun suirbhéireachta, comhairliúcháin agus feachtais eolais sa cheantar faoi láthair. Déan cairdeas linn ar Facebook, lean muid ar Twitter, seol ríomhphost chugainn ag gaeilgeinorras@gmail.com nó cuir glaoch orainn ag 085 250 3321 chun breis eolais a fháil.

Críoch

Very successful public information meeting on Irish-language education in Erris

Following a very successful public information meeting, Gaeilge Iorrais would like to thank the huge numbers who turned out on 27th February in Áras Inis Gluaire, Béal an Mhuirthead to discuss the future of the north Mayo Gaeltacht and Irish-language education in particular. Over 130 people were present including school teachers and management, parents, a broad spectrum of the community, young and old, representing the entire north Mayo Gaeltacht. The meeting lasted over two hours and was addressed by four speakers which was followed by an open discussion.

Dr Laoise Ní Dhúda, language planning consultant, gave some background information outlining the aims of the meeting which were to inform the public of the changes that are taking place in relation to Irish language education, and to start a discussion on what the future holds. Schools, in conjunction with the communities they serve, have a choice to make if they wish to remain in the Gaeltacht. Going forward, Gaeltacht status will depend on the use and development of Irish language, and not on geographical considerations alone.

Peigí Uí Chonghaile, development officer with Ghaeltacht le Gaeloideachas, discussed the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education (2017-2022)* as well as the advantages of immersion education. National and international research indicates that this is the most effective method of promoting bi-lingualism (further information at www.gael scoileanna.ie). Hot on the heels of this new policy, schools will now have to make an application to be recognised as a Gaeltacht school. A full list of the criteria which has to be met is listed in the policy including (i) a two-year Irish language immersion programme for infant cycle and (ii) all subjects taught through Irish (except English). Various supports will be provided to schools who wish to retain their Gaeltacht status and/or to progress to full Irish language education.

Two national school principals (Bríd Ní Sheighin from Ceathrú Thaidhg and Máire Uí Mhurchú from an Fhairche) gave an insight into their experiences, including the challenges and opportunities of providing Irish-language education in Gaeltacht schools. They

strongly recommended the language immersion model, while at the same time acknowledging that it takes time and patience as well as the support of the school team, students and parents to make it work. They recommended fostering a love and respect for the language instead of applying pressure or judgement of penalties.

There is little doubt, therefore, that language-planning is a longterm and challenging process. It requires ongoing commitment but offers rewards and advantages for schools, students and the general community. The school community will ultimately decide what direction it will follow. No one individual or group can make this decision alone but it is important that they are armed with the relevant information.

The information meeting was a very positive step forward in starting the discussion on this important issue. Gaeilge Iorrais hopes that the participation, discussion and support of the community will continue as a central part of the process. Much can be achieved if we stand together, or to quote Barack Obama, 'yes we can, if we set our minds to it.'

Gaeilge Iorrais is currently consulting with the community by way of a community survey as well as distributing information. Join us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, send us an email at gaeilgeiniorras@gmail.com or contact us on 085 250 3321 for further information.

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