

HITZARGIAK – Languages illuminating each other

Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin

GENERAL INFORMATION

DATE: 2016-02-22

1	Name	An Gaeláras
2	Language	Irish
3	Working area (education, communication, teaching, leisure, administration...)	Education, Culture, Arts, Finance
4	Email and phone number for contact	E-mail: gearoid@culturlann-doire.ie Tel: 00447870277020
5	Social networks (Webpage, Facebook, Twitter...)	Web: www.culturlann-doire.ie Facebook: facebook.com/culturlann?_rdr=p Twitter: twitter.com/culturlanndoire

DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

1	Description of the practices	<p>An Gaeláras is Derry's primary Irish language, arts and cultural organisation. Established in 1984, the organisation is now one of the most dynamic, innovative and award-winning Irish language organisations anywhere in the country, delivering a range of cultural initiatives.</p> <p>The centre has attracted widespread interest and support from the local and wider community, and has become the major driving force in the development of Irish language and indigenous arts services on the island. Alongside a year-round programme of arts activity and performances, the organization has delivered several large-scale festivals over the past five years, and continues to produce a challenging and diverse programme to cater for all ages and communities.</p> <p>An Gaeláras</p> <p>An Gaeláras was established in 1984 as Craobh Cholm Cille, a branch of Conradh na Gaeilge in the Bogside area of Derry. It is a company limited by guarantee and also has charitable status.</p> <p>When Craobh Cholm Cille first started out in Dove House in the heart of the Bogside, the ambition was to provide Irish language classes for adult learners and for the young people of the area. However the demand for Irish classes was so great that it quickly outgrew its first premises.</p> <p>To cater for learners from all over the city, and to be as inclusive as possible, it was decided to acquire city centre premises.</p> <p>In 1988, An Conradh moved from Dove House to 35 Great James' Street, Derry. In 1994 the group purchased a four-storey building at 34 Great James' Street, which became known as An Gaeláras (the Home of Irish).</p>
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Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin

In 2001, An Gaeláras purchased McDaid's bakery at 37 Great James Street, and secured planning permission for a new purpose built Irish Language, Arts and Cultural Enterprise Centre on the site at a cost of £4.6m. Construction of the O'Donnell & Tuomey designed building started in January 2008 and it was officially opened on 4th September 2009. In July 2008, the building represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale and has won many awards since its completion, coming second in the prestigious Stirling Prize competition, the first building from the North of Ireland to be nominated.

The building was financed by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Foras na Gaeilge, Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, ILEX, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, International Fund for Ireland, European Union Peace & Reconciliation Programme, Department for Social Development, Ulster Community Investment Fund and the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund.

The facilities in the new Cultúrlann include a theatre and performance space, a cafe, teaching and training classrooms, business incubation suites and office space.

Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin also provided space for established related businesses and groups such as Dearnán (Irish language TV production company), Ciste Infhestíochta Ghaeilge, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and Cumann na bPíobairí, which are still in operation today and which have created a vibrant Irish cultural and arts based economy in the North West of Ireland. This continuing transformation of An Gaeláras' Cultural Quarter to an Irish cultural and arts centre of excellence has placed a significant responsibility on the board of management and staff of An Gaeláras Ltd to match this pace of transformation in its delivery of community arts and education services.

Our Work

The new building is a space for learning, creativity, exploration and enterprise and a beacon for the Irish speakers throughout the island of Ireland. The group currently draws the majority of its 126,000 annual users from the North West area, however there are an increasing number of users from outside this natural catchment and An Gaeláras views these markets as those with the most growth potential.

The overall project entails the management of 22 schemes, 36 staff and volunteers and the running of 4 buildings. The staff complement has grown from 2 full-time staff in 1998 to 20 full-time staff, 6 part-time staff and up to ten volunteers or placements at any given time.

The CEO and staff were central to the organising and delivery of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in August 2013 and to the Pan-Celtic Festival in April 2014 and the profile, status and stakeholder relationships that they have developed as a result of this are significant and will contribute to the future development plans of the organisation.

An Gaeláras Ltd has grown at a significant pace since it was first established and since the completion of their new premises, Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin. The delivery of festivals, arts and education programmes has expanded beyond the confines of the current space and we have recently acquired the adjacent Church and Manse buildings to provide extra capacity.

Achievements from 2009 to 2014 include:



- Increased Irish language learners and classes
- Increased traditional music learners and classes
- Expansion of Club Óige Setanta
- Procurement and delivery of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013
- Hosting of Pan-Celtic Festival 2014/2015
- Purchase of 33 & 35 Great James Street
- Acquired planning permission for hotel at 34 Great James Street
- Initiation of intense process of cross-community engagement
- Using cultural heritage as a vehicle for collaboration rather than an area of contention.

What is Coláiste an Phobail?

Coláiste an Phobail is a programme of language classes and activities aimed at encouraging the use of Irish in the community. Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin offers a variety of classes to suit the needs of absolute beginners right through to those of a fluent speaker of the language. Most of the programme is delivered in our centre, but we also work in the community, in local schools and organise residential weekends in the Donegal Gaeltacht to enhance the learning experience of our students.

We offer a number of accredited courses in partnership with **North West Regional College** and **NUI Galway**, alongside our own language course, Céimeanna Comhrá, taught at three ability levels and tailored to the needs of the casual learner.

The centre is a welcoming environment for anyone wishing to learn Irish or practice their language skills. Our in-house café offers a bilingual service, and we sell a range of Irish books, cards and giftware. Our team are on hand at any time to offer assistance, whether this means helping out with unfamiliar words or phrases, or allowing learners the opportunity to practice their conversational skills on them.

Classes and activities run throughout the year, and regular social events such as table quizzes and conversation circles are organised at which our community of learners and language enthusiasts can enjoy a vibrant urban Gaeltacht experience.

For a complete list of all courses currently on offer, please visit the Language Courses section.

Conversational Irish Courses

Céimeanna Comhrá, our language course, has been specially devised by one of our tutors, Toirealach Ó Gráda to suit those interested in learning Irish for conversational use. It is taught on a weekly basis and learners build upon their pool of everyday words and phrases unit by unit through three stages: beginner, intermediate and advanced.

Accredited Irish Courses

A number of accredited courses are taught in the centre, offering the opportunity to acquire OCN Levels 1-3, GCSE, AS & A2 Level and diploma qualifications.

Community Courses

A selection of other subjects are on offer at Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin, including Creative Writing, Folklore, Irish History and Patchwork Quilting.

Tús le Teanga is Cultúr

This weekend scheme is aimed at children aged 5 – 11, offering an introduction to the language. As well as starting their journey in learning Irish, the children will learn music, dance, song, art and storytelling.

Léargas

This innovative Irish language scheme has been running in 13 English medium primary schools in the Derry City/ North West area since 2011. The highly successful scheme is funded by the Department of Education and offers primary school children in Key Stage 2 their first exposure to Irish in weekly sessions incorporated into the curriculum. Our tutors deliver the programme through imaginative and interactive activities.

Léann Do Dhéagóirí

This course offers past pupils of Irish medium primary education an opportunity to take their GCSE Irish exam through weekly preparatory classes.

An Chéad Chéim Eile

This course is designed to improve language skills amongst past pupils of Irish medium primary schools who do not get an opportunity to practice their Irish in post-primary education.

Intensive Language Courses

We organise weekend intensive languages courses several times each September, February and June. These full day sessions are a great way to boost language skills, and are also an excellent introduction for prospective learners. These courses are often delivered by lecturers from Ulster University or native speakers from the Donegal Gaeltacht.

The Fáinne Scheme

There are several opportunities throughout year in which we give learners an opportunity to test their spoken Irish and earn themselves one of the widely recognised gold, silver and 'cúpla focal' badges. These run in conjunction with the intensive courses and Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Events & Activities

There are numerous events and activities planned alongside our weekly classes to provide an opportunity for learners to make use of their spoken Irish in a comfortable environment alongside classmates. These include weekend trips to the Gaeltacht, conversation circles and table quizzes.

2 Precedents (reasons, needs...)

Reasons or needs: To create spaces for Irish speakers and for Irish Culture.

3	Objectives	Promotion of Irish Language and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the numbers of Irish-speakers, in Derry and in the North-West by providing for the teaching of Irish, through classes and courses, to all of the people of Derry in a way that is accessible, tailored and effective. • To develop a vibrant traditional arts sector within Derry City and the North-West through the provision of the highest standard of courses, workshops, festivals and events. • To create a generation of young Irish language activists through the development of Club Óige Setanta and the provision of a wide range of youth activities through the medium of Irish. • To create a bi-lingual environment in Derry and the North-West through the development of an urban Gaeltacht Quarter. • To promote awareness of cultural identity between the Irish-speaking community and those within the Protestant community through the provision of cultural awareness classes and events within the Protestant community.
4	Main and close working areas	Derry city and North-West Ireland.
5	Collaborating entities and their working areas	Government Departments, culture groups, educational institutions, local authorities
6	Implementation period	5 years

FILE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BEST PRACTICES

8	Expansion (number of influenced people, internal and external expansion...)	
9	Investment (economic, time, people...)	The acquisition, development and creation of a Cultural quarter with 5 arts buildings. We spent £4.6 million in 2009, £500,000 in 2012, £518,000 in 2014 and £400,000 in 2015 on capital build projects
10	Results	
11	Documentation, reference material	
12	Presentation video	http://culturlann-doire.ie/videos/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubT_38xeL_s
13	Other relevant information	