

Public Benefit Statement

The public benefit that flows from the purpose is the educational benefit of additive bilingualism which improves self-esteem, promotes cultural awareness and tolerance, enhances individuals' job and recreational opportunities, leads to formal and informal educational qualifications (Diploma, Degree, OCG, GCE/GCSE and Fáinne exams) and integrates the Irish speaking/learning community into the rich cultural fabric of Northern Ireland and beyond.

The benefits are evidenced through frequent internal and external qualitative assessment, including annual participation in the Conradh na Gaeilge and other competitions; registers of and feedback from participants at lessons, courses and events; photo and press coverage, documentation and recordings; audited annual accounts; engagement with and feedback from our Facebook page and new Instagram account; and detailed reports to any occasional funders (Foras na Gaeilge, An tOireachtas, Glór na nGael, Community Foundation/Ultach Trust).

The possibility of any harm, for example by physical injury incurred by participation in games and activities for children, is outweighed by the benefit and significantly reduced by the policies and procedures in place to address such risks, for example our Child Protection Policy, Volunteering Policy, Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Guidance and our attentive upkeep of the building and its resources.

The charity's beneficiaries are the general public in Northern Ireland, the general public in neighbouring border counties (Louth and Monaghan in the main), the wider community of Newry, and visiting language promotional groups. Specific projects may address the needs of discrete sections of society (e.g. those promoting reconciliation in the north or those parents who are raising their children through the medium of Irish or those recently bereaved).

We run graded and structured Irish language classes at 6 levels. We also:

- mount bilingual educational exhibitions at least once a year
- organise half-day and one-day intensive courses
- publish monolingual Irish and bilingual materials
- deliver and facilitate lectures
- participate in Oíche Chultúir
- encourage readings of new fiction
- provide for occasional book launches
- support third level students with their research
- run a book club
- promote singing and drama and emergent creative writing in and through Irish
- develop and manage a users' library of Irish language texts and recordings
- facilitate the Oriel Traditional Music Archive
- promote Local Studies through providing original and historical resources in Irish and English

The only Private benefit flowing from this purpose is that Volunteers will gain advantage from our programme of ongoing training, in the areas of teaching skills, resource preparation, Child Protection, book, paper ephemera and vinyl conservation, and event management skills for example - skills that are transferable to other settings - albeit this is incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

Through our training programmes, Volunteers will acquire skills and experience that will directly assist the quality of our provision. Our archive and library continues to expand and these resources are widely shared with community-based educational projects. A particular acquisition this year has been a collection of Performing Arts photos pertaining to Newry Musical and Orchestral Society and a large collection of snaps with some negatives acquired from the local press.

Purposes

The purposes of our organisation are: to educate the public in and through the Irish language, and in particular the Irish language as used in its spoken and written modes, by the provision of structured and graded language courses and other formal and informal learning opportunities; to promote and develop the Irish language for the benefit of the public in the area of benefit; to encourage appreciation for, and participation in, bilingual Local Studies activities by people in the area of benefit with a particular focus on the young, unemployed, those new to Irish, returners to education and retired; to encourage and stimulate literacy in the Irish language in the area of benefit by the provision of library and research facilities, bi-literacy training, facilities for book launches, public readings and writing workshops.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are all those who availed of the educational provision and activities provided at the Gaeláras and occasionally online, and those who used our community space. This includes those who availed of a new bespoke Absolute Beginners' class (September 2024) and our new Déanfaidh sé an Gnó! course with online audio support. Others who benefitted received free promotional print and other materials in Irish and English through the post. The local and wider community, non-Irish speaking, benefitted from the educational materials available from the users' library, especially the local history section (some of which now appears in a trilingual feature in a local newspaper on a fortnightly basis), and from free copies of educational literature. Vulnerable adults are catered for with one to one provision as suits their needs. Others who benefitted included the OTMA volunteers who help to catalogue resources and edit online content. Overall, the beneficiaries included those whose personal self-esteem, cultural confidence, awareness and tolerance, and cognitive development have been enhanced through Additive Bilingualism.

Activities

The public benefit of our educational benefit of additive bilingualism was evidenced in a number of ways. We promoted cultural awareness especially through our good relations and wider educational activities which included: an exhibition of Performing Arts photos (on display for six months in Newry Library); an exhibition of new acquisitions; a second bespoke course for assistants in the Náiscoil; support for teaching drama in the Bunscoil; book promotions during Seachtain na Gaeilge; a history tour of Saint Patrick's CoE Graveyard; active engagement with heritage promotion in South Armagh including reminiscence events in Tí Chulainn; hosting traditional music evenings x 3; support for adults studying A Level Irish; ongoing co-operation with Newry Bosco and Shane O'Neill's GAC in provision of learning materials; continuing occasional provision of courses to 6 levels in the Newry Gaeláras; support for our online language course entitled Faigh Fáinne-Caith Fáinne; support for our new two part courses Déanfaidh sin an gnó; an exhibition of Irish

grammar books. We have been working on the new website gaelaras.ie and cataloguing work relating to the archive continues.

We have run Leabhra-Feabhra activities; sponsored prizes for Bunscoil and Náiscoil pupils and supported Sports Day and the Christmas Plays, Ulster Scots Day and History Day; sponsored online competitions; hosted meetings of diverse language and community-based groups; invested in our library stock and storage; and maintained our provision of educational materials for the local press, concentrating increasingly on articles/features that include Ulster Scots.

Achievements

Classes are well attended and the teaching volunteers are reliable. Our Facebook (2650 followers) and Instagram platforms (650 followers) are still growing and the number of posts has increased. Our storage and cataloguing system has seen some small improvements. We are open to the public more hours, provide more one-to-one support; promote local festivals and commemorations; develop our evolving marketing through our Oifigeach Forbartha Gnó. Our booklet *Faigh-Fáinne Caith Fáinne* has been distributed widely and will have had a fifth reprint recently. *Déanfaidh sin an gnó Part 2* has been published and the materials are available free on Newry.ie and gaelaras.ie. A new course *I dTreo Fáinne Óir* has been published with associated online sound files. The rare items in the archive have been augmented. Our outreach has been extended and has seen us involved with Drumalane Community Association, Restorative Justice Newry, Dundalk Gaelic League, Omeath Historical Society, the University of Ulster, Dáil na Mumhan, St. Michael's PS Cillín, Newry Maritime Association, Newry Public Library, the Rowntree Mc Alinden Committee, Newry Foresters and the Newry Museum.

Restrictions on who can benefit

Our planned events are all free at entry – lectures, exhibitions, one-day courses, competitions, guided tours of the Gaeláras, access to our resources and archives. We endeavour to do almost everything bilingually though this is not realistic at times if we are stressing the total immersion approach to second language learning. Any monolingual events are advertised as such as a matter of policy and practice, or a level of fluency is indicated. Activities involving Irish Medium Educational Sector children are always conducted through the medium of Irish only as we seek to provide cross-generational language role-models for the children. Wider bone fide community groups and other cultural groups can use our premises free of charge.

Private benefit

The only Private benefits are that Volunteers, participants and visitors will gain advantage from our programme of ongoing training, for example in the area of book conservation and cataloguing, up-skilling linguistically in preparation for public examinations (A Level/Diploma/Degree/TICO), in researching and producing bilingual promotional literature and developing event management skills, in teaching an adult class, in promoting publications - skills that are transferable to other settings - though this is incidental and necessary to ensure the benefit is provided to our beneficiaries.

Statement of compliance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's

guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's educational purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.