

MEETING:	LANGUAGE COMMITTEE
DATE:	1 May 2019
TITLE:	Hunaniaith - Gwynedd's language initiative An update on their work
AUTHOR:	Gwenllian Mair Williams
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	This report is submitted in order to provide a background to Committee members about the existing work and priorities of the initiative.

1. Background

- 1.1 Hunaniaith has been established as a language initiative within the Council's Language Unit since 2009.
- 1.2 According to its Language Strategy 2010-2013, the original intention of the initiative was to:
- Set a strategic direction to linguistic planning in Gwynedd
 - Co-ordinate and add value to the work of partners in order to take advantage of all opportunities to promote the Welsh language
 - Develop, drive and commence new innovative projects to promote the Welsh language
 - As well as undertaking and implementing a number of projects directly, or on a joint basis with departments, organisations or other partnerships.
- 1.3 These intentions continue to be relevant although the work of the initiative has now evolved and changed considerably, from operating strategically only to be offering more direct intervention and activities in communities.
- 1.4 Hunaniaith is funded by the Government through a **Welsh Language Use Promotion Grant**. This grant funds the work of all language initiatives across Wales.
- 1.5 Therefore, the priorities and work of the initiative has to correspond with the general objectives of the Government in the field, and follow the action areas of the Government's language strategy, **Cymraeg 2050**. <https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/cymraeg-2050-strategaeth-y-gymraeg-v1-1.pdf>. The Government is asking initiatives to operate mainly under Theme 2, and on the priority to increase social use of the Welsh language in the community, although many initiatives also operate across other fields.

- 1.6 In 2016, the language initiatives were offered grant assurance for a three year period, and a Corporate Plan had to be drawn up as part of the grant conditions. This was a governing document, which included the aims and objectives of the initiative for the three year period, an analysis of strengths and weaknesses and information on finance and staffing.
- 1.7 Drawing up that plan gave us an opportunity for the first time to examine the long-term objectives in the strategy and to plan the work of the initiative beyond a year at a time, ensuring meaningful continuation to work in the target areas.
- 1.8 The areas selected to be targeted during the three-year period were ***Dolgellau, Tywyn, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Bangor***. The intention was to use these urban centres to promote activities.
- 1.9 The two priorities set for the work of Hunaniaith was to empower and arm individuals and community groups, and to offer more opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language and see its value in their lives.
- 1.10 March 2019 marks the end of this three-year period, and we have now received confirmation that the grant will continue for another two years. As a result, we were required to update the Corporate Plan for the next period.
- 1.11 We are now initiating a new work programme, that will extend to 2021, and are examining new action areas.
- 1.12 Working to increase opportunities specifically for young people will be a priority, along with mapping work that will add to our evidence base, and enable us to identify new areas to work within them in future.
- 1.13 This report takes a retrospective look at the past year, on the successes of the work of the initiative and the lessons learnt, and presents examples of work by officers in order to improve Members' understanding of the type of interventions that are planned across the various fields.

2. Overview of 2018-19 work

2.1 Good practice over the year

Collaboration:

2018-19 was a good year in terms of developing partnerships further with some key partners, and the time invested to co-plan and collaborate paid dividends. We have always endeavoured to maintain a good working relationship with other organisations that work in the field, but this year, focus was placed on developing the relationship with two specific partners, namely Cymraeg for Kids and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai. By developing a joint project with Cymraeg for Kids, the link with the Council's Early Years service was also strengthened.

Collaboration across the Language Initiatives as a whole has also developed, with Welsh Language Initiatives (the umbrella organisation that supports the work of the initiatives

across Wales) leading on many national projects and also plans for future collaboration between language initiatives in north Wales.

Arm and develop new opportunities:

We have ensured that the team is given freedom within their work programmes to experiment with new methods or ideas. We place great importance on arming others rather than direct provision all the time, and on trying to find partners that will ensure sustainability in the communities.

By commissioning freelance workers to hold activities in new areas for example, we can show them commercial opportunities. Sŵn a Sbri was commissioned during 2017-18 to hold sessions in the Dwyfor area and the provider now holds regular sessions there independently from Hunaniaith. Therefore, the intention is to act as a trigger.

This year, there was successful collaboration with three golf clubs in Dwyfor in order to extend the provision of Welsh entertainment for new audiences and locations. Consequently, opportunities to socialise through the medium of Welsh have increased in areas such as Porthmadog, Morfa Bychan and Abersoch, and businesses have realised that there is a financial benefit to them from providing Welsh entertainment and have gone ahead to arrange subsequent evenings themselves.

2.2 The successes of specific projects:

Early Years Seminar:

This is the second year Hunaniaith has held a seminar for workers in the field with all sessions fully booked. The original target audience was independent and freelance workers in the field, such as people who hold entertainment sessions for parents and young children, but it was interesting to see that many *Cylchoedd Meithrin* workers and independent child minders were also registering for the sessions.

Cymraeg for Kids was a partner for the original activities in 2018-19, but representation from the early years unit from the Children and Supporting Families service was also added to the sessions during 2018-19. Very constructive and positive feedback was received, and we hope that these sessions can continue in future.

24 individuals and 14 locations were represented in both sessions during 2018.

The Gwyn ap Nudd Activity:

This was a good example of two things - collaborating with another provider to add value, and also how to tailor an activity in order to have the best influence.

We had identified that many of our activities under the field of families became too passive - children came along to watch a show - instead of participating in interactive activities that included the whole family. The aim of the work in this field was influencing the use of language amongst the family and, therefore, there was a need for careful thought about the type of activities that were held in order to ensure that they achieved the aim. This activity

was interactive, therefore, included the adults and children, and introduced them to new aspects on the history and mythology/ancient Welsh tradition.

Working in partnership with Galeri was a means of attracting a broader audience, due to their reputation and their marketing power, and it was seen that this also raised the profile of Hunaniaith.

22 children and 18 adults attended two sessions.

Bangor Outdoors Project:

This project has been implemented over a three-year period, which aims to work intensively with a small cohort of young people to see whether language patterns and practices can be influenced through regular intervention. The project is lead, under commission, by the Urdd's Outdoor Activity Service and it includes six outdoor activities for 15 young people in a year. It introduces them to new activities and to local history and geography as well as raising awareness about employment opportunities in a growth area locally. The impact of this intervention will be fully evaluated at the end of the project.

The Development of Popdy Language Centre:

The Development Officer in Bangor has been crucial in developing use of the centre as a resource and activity location. Regular sessions are now held in Popdy, with many family sessions being held during school holidays and the centre used weekly by Aelwyd yr Urdd and Cymraeg for Kids.

2.3 Lessons learnt and areas of improvement:

i) Collaborating with community groups

We depend on the good will of people to work in the communities, and a tendency to over-depend on the resource of employed staff to hold activities can be a barrier.

For example, during the year it seemed that the ***MAD (Dolgellau Entertainment Organisation)*** project, that had been established by the Development Officer in Dolgellau nearly four years ago, did not work anymore. As individuals changed from one school year to the other, commitment seemed to be attenuating and the same investment and enthusiasm was not seen. This shows how inconsistent community work can be as we depend on contact with the right people at the right time.

This year, a target to work with groups that had traditionally held activities in English was set, with the intention of trying to influence to change language practices and increase opportunities for children. This has been challenging and we will need to consider how to support and encourage such groups in future. Barriers arise as a result of a lack of commitment and interest among volunteers (who are mainly non-Welsh speakers) to change. A number of providers also prefer to use English, even though they can speak Welsh, either because that this has been the custom for

some years and that they are eager to ensure that "everyone understands", or that they specifically provide for communities that are considered as non-Welsh speaking communities.

There is a need to be cautious when establishing action groups in new communities that we include people who are eager and enthusiastic to collaborate in the long term, and to take responsibility for elements of the promotion work in their communities.

ii) ***Working more intensively with a small cohort***

There is a tendency to hold individual activities rather than arrange a series of activities with the same group of individuals. For example, the road-shows for young children that were arranged during the year have been very successful in terms of attracting large numbers, but we do not establish a relationship with the individuals to see whether or not the events contribute towards a change in their language use.

There is a need to think how we can work with the same cohort or group of people over a period of time in order to have the best influence.

iii) ***Evidence base***

We have been working in areas that were identified and targeted based on the results of the 2011 census. In an attempt to think of new areas to begin working within them, it seemed that there was not much evidence base except for the census data that leads us naturally to new locations. Bearing in mind also that we are now closer to the next census than the previous one, there is a risk that the picture is now different to what is in the census.

Therefore, we need to look at opportunities to gather evidence and undertake research that will be a basis for us to operate in specific methods or areas. For example, we have used local family activities recently to gather information about the movement and travelling practices of parents when attending activities with pre-school children.

iv) ***Focusing efforts and making the best use of resources***

In an attempt to work across the different priority areas, even in one small geographical area, there is a risk that we are trying to be everything for everyone, and ultimately we are spreading ourselves too thin without having the best possible impact.

During the next year, we will focus efforts in areas such as Tywyn on working with one group of people (children and young people in this case), to see whether this would lead to a more measurable change.

v) ***Adapting priorities***

When monitoring the progress of targets consistently, we can soon identify when a target or project will not work as intended, and decide whether or not to abandon the project and make an application for the Government to change target, or to adapt the way of working. However, care must be taken when proposing to abolish a target and we should propose a new equivalent target that attempts to meet the same need or aim.

vi) *Relationship with the Education Department and the work of the Secondary Sector Language Strategy*

There are clear opportunities for Hunaniaith to contribute towards the work of the secondary strategy in order to add value and ensure that schools appropriately address the need to promote informal/social opportunities to use the Welsh language.