

# Scotland, People and Language Forum

## Report

20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015

ATLANTIC QUAY, GLASGOW

**GATHERED  
TOGETHER**  
Cruinn Còmhla





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “Scotland, People and Language Forum” took place on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015 in Glasgow. The event was co-organised by Gathered Together (BEMIS Scotland), Bilingualism Matters (University of Edinburgh) and Education Scotland (Scottish Government).

The aim of the Forum was to discuss Scotland’s linguistic diversity, current Scottish language policy including the “1+2 Approach” and to share information, experiences and expectations, examples of good practice and opinions on working with linguistically diverse communities, especially in the education sector.

The event was attended by 59 participants, representing a total of 31 institutions and organisations, including Scottish Government, 12 local authorities, NGOs, 3rd sector organisations, universities and colleges. Half of the participants were EAL or ESOL teachers.

During the event the “1+2 Approach” was explored by Lousie Glen (Senior Education Officer at Education Scotland), who outlined the policy itself and Jude McKerrecher (Confucius Institute, Professional Development Officer, SCILT), who provided a practitioner’s perspective. Dr Martha Robertson (University of Edinburgh) presented a Case Study for Language Learning in the Community as implemented through a school and home-based SOFT project.

Two facilitated, small-group discussion sessions took place during the event. The first one, focused on the “1+2 Approach” allowed the participants to discuss the challenges in supporting the policy in the context of their work, their involvement in the policy implementation and the ways in which the policy is likely to affect the people they work with. The second session had a broader theme of linguistic diversity and, apart from gathering information on the number of languages that the participants work with, it encouraged them to share examples of good practice, discuss their concerns and needs.

While all the Forum’s participants, appreciated the opportunities that the “1+2 Approach” could open, they emphasized the importance of fully recognising the community languages, spoken by ethnic minorities (including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) within the policy and ensuring that these languages are valued and are part of the curriculum (not necessarily as an L3 option only, as for thousands of children they are their L1). This was directly linked to the issues of parental involvement, empowerment and confidence-building in children, young people and adults from minority backgrounds.

The interest in extending the portfolio of languages for which National Qualifications are offered was also discussed, as was the promotion of bilingualism, partnerships, training opportunities for teachers, equity in ESOL provision, clear communication, more resources and staff as well as transparency over funding. The participants shared also a number of inspiring examples of good practice in working with children, parents, teachers, communities and other stakeholders.

The information provided by the participants in the evaluation form allows us to conclude that they found the Forum very stimulating and expressed a clear interest in attending similar events in the future, ideally with more involvement from minority language representatives and communities.

## FOREWORD

According to the 2011 Census, 7% of people over 3 years old living in Scotland use a language other than English at home. In some local authority areas the numbers are considerably higher – 13% for both City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City, 15% for Aberdeen City, 20% for Shetland Islands and 47% for Eilean Siar.

Scots and Polish (each 1%) and Gaelic (0.5 %) were, on the whole the most common languages other than English reported as being used at home. British Sign Language (BSL) was used at home by 13,000 people aged 3 and over (0.2 % of the total population aged 3 and over).

The Pupil Census Supplementary Data for 2014 published by the Scottish Government in February 2015, revealed that children in Scottish schools between them speak 139 languages, the top five being Polish (11,582), Urdu (5,400), Scots (4,610), Punjabi (4,105) and Arabic (2,374).

Scotland is a truly multilingual and multicultural country. This variety is often considered to be a challenge but it is also a fantastic resource and part of Scotland's common heritage. When trying to lay down the route to integration for the people of Scotland we should consider both perspectives.

## Scotland, People and Language Forum

9 am - 1 pm on Friday 20 February 2015  
James Watt Room, Atlantic Quay, Glasgow G2 8LU

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 9:00–9:30   | Registration + coffee   |
| 9:30–9:50   | Opening remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Liz McConnell (Gathered Together)</i></li><li>• <i>Madeleine Beveridge (Bilingualism Matters)</i></li><li>• <i>Mandy Watts (Education Scotland / New Scots Refugee Strategy)</i></li></ul>  |
| 9:50–10:30  | <b>Session 1:</b> 1+2 Scottish Government language strategy<br><br>What is the policy and how is it being implemented? An overview of the strategy in theory and in practice; discussion of the implications for education and beyond.<br><br><i>Louise Glen (Senior Education Officer, Education Scotland)</i><br><i>Jude McKerrecher (Confucius Institute, Professional Development Officer, SCILT)</i> |
| 10:30–11:00 | Coffee break and poster session.<br><br>A chance to explore resources and projects in a range of sectors.   |
| 11:00–11:20 | Case study: Community involvement in language learning<br><br>Example activities and issues encountered in the SOFT project (School & Family Together for the Integration of Immigrant Children)<br><br><i>Dr Martha Robinson, SOFT project coordinator in the UK</i>   |
| 11:20–12:20 | <b>Session 2:</b> Working with language diversity in Scotland: challenges and successes<br><br>Small group discussions to identify key themes, challenges and strategies for practitioners and clients.   |
| 12:20–13:00 | Feedback, next steps and closing remarks.   |

## ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

**Gathered Together (GT)** is a pilot project between BEMIS Scotland and SPTC (Scottish Parent Teacher Council) to support parents from Ethnic and Cultural Minorities to become more involved in their children's education and school communities. Funded through the Scottish Government Early Intervention Fund and managed by The Big Fund, this new innovative approach is to encourage parents and carers from ethnic and cultural minorities throughout Scotland to come and be part of Parent Councils enabling wider parental participation in their children's education.

The project is delivered through a series of workshops and events, research involving parents from diverse ethnic groups and preparation of resources, as well as support for Community Champions.

Gathered Together recognises that role that positive attitudes towards diverse languages in the education system and beyond and language policy may play in promoting diversity and equality in Scotland. The "Scotland, People and Language Forum", initiated by GT aims to provide a platform to discuss this issue, to share views, experiences and information and gather opinions from people involved in working with languages.

**BEMIS Scotland** is the national ethnic and cultural minorities led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and the communities that this sector represents.

**Bilingualism Matters** is a Centre at the University of Edinburgh, and is dedicated to communicating evidence-based information about speaking more than one language. The Centre works with families, community groups and second language learners, enabling people to make informed decisions about bilingualism and language learning.

It has developed numerous partnerships and outreach projects working with the public sector, education authorities, health professionals and the private sector in Scotland and beyond. The Centre is involved in projects teaching modern languages in Scottish primary schools, and in international research grants studying multilingualism across Europe. As of 2015 the Bilingualism Matters Centre in Edinburgh leads a network of 15 branches carrying out similar work across Europe and the US.

**Education Scotland** is an agency of the Scottish Government and its role is to improve the quality of Scotland's education system and to provide support and challenge to the field from early years through to adult learning. The CLD Policy and Improvement team, which was directly engaged in organising the "Scotland, People and Language Forum", has policy responsibility for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and works to ensure that those with ESOL learning needs have access to high quality ESOL provision.

In 2013 Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council developed a new strategy: "New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities" to be delivered between 2014 and 2017. Education Scotland lead on the Education strand of the strategy. One of the outcomes for education is to promote linguistic diversity in Scotland to enable the multi-lingual refugee community to contribute to Scottish society. Education Scotland, along with other partners involved in taking forward this strategy, has a key role to play in promoting the linguistic diversity within Scotland's communities.



## INTRODUCTION

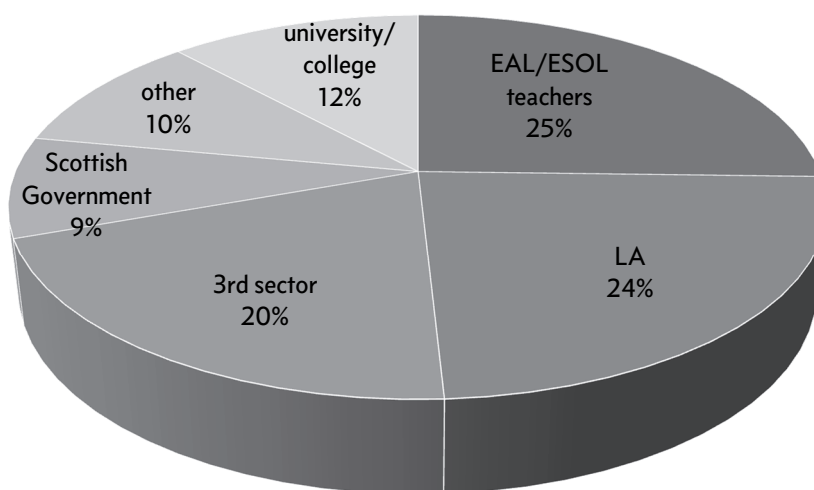
The aim of the event, focused on Scotland's linguistic diversity, was to offer the chance to discuss current language policy including the "1+2 Approach", share information, experiences and expectations, examples of good practice and opinions on working with linguistically diverse communities, especially in the education sector.

Institutions, organisations and individual people working with diverse languages and actively promoting language diversity were invited to attend the forum. The event was announced on <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/> as well as through a variety of other communication channels such as social media, websites, bulletins and newsletters of the organisers.

Between 14 January 2015 and 20 February 2015, over 500 people visited the forum's official webpage. The registration process closed on 9th February as all available places were taken.

## PARTICIPANTS

The "Scotland, People and Language Forum" was attended by **59 participants**, representing a total of **31 institutions and organisations**, the breakdown of whom is given in the chart below.



Half of the participants were EAL or ESOL teachers (including 4 teachers working exclusively as ESOL teachers, and 2 dual working as both EAL and ESOL teachers) and people working for local authorities with linguistically varied groups of clients. This included school teachers, EAL leaders, Education and Support Officers as well as Community Learning & Development Workers. On the whole **12 local authorities** were represented at the event:

1. Aberdeen City Council
2. East Ayrshire Council
3. North Ayrshire Council
4. South Ayrshire Council
5. East Dunbartonshire Council
6. Dumfries and Galloway Council
7. Dundee City Council
8. City of Edinburgh Council
9. Falkirk Council
10. Fife Council
11. Glasgow City Council
12. East Renfrewshire Council

Third sector was represented by a total 12 participants from BEMIS, North Glasgow Integration Network, Radiant and Brighter, Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, Scottish Refugee Council and Conradh Na Gaeilge Glaschú. Researchers and students from the University of Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Glasgow, City of Glasgow College and Dundee and Angus College also joined the discussion as did representatives of Education Scotland (Scottish Government), General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), SCILT (Scotland's National Centre for Languages), Skills Development Scotland, Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and Scottish Council on Deafness.

41 of the participants filled in feedback forms. One part of the form was designed to let us learn more about the nature of contact that the participants have with diverse languages. The table below summarises the findings (multiple selections per person were allowed):

I work with a specific language community	<b>3</b>
I work with a variety of languages	<b>25</b>
I work with school children	<b>21</b>
I work with adults from various language backgrounds	<b>20</b>
My job requires me to speak a language other than English	<b>5</b>
I was brought up with a language other than English at home	<b>8</b>
I use a language other than English at home	<b>10</b>

## PROGRAMME OF THE EVENT – DETAILED OVERVIEW

### Opening Remarks – Presentation of the Event Organisers

- Liz McConnell – Coordinator of the Gathered Together project
- Dr Madeleine Beveridge – Research co-ordinator at Bilingualism Matters Centre, University of Edinburgh
- Mandy Watts – ESOL Development Officer, CLD Policy and Improvement Team, Education Scotland

### Session 1: 1+2 Scottish Government Language Strategy

#### A 1+2 APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING: BACKGROUND TO IMPLEMENTATION

*Presented by Louise Glen, Senior Education Officer at Education Scotland*

The presentation discussed the “1+2 Approach to language learning” which was launched in 2012 and is currently being implemented in the Scottish schools. The idea behind the 1+2 approach is to give every child the opportunity to learn two other languages (L2 and L3) in addition to their mother tongue. The first additional language (L2) is taught from Primary 1 onwards, with the second additional language (L3) taught from P5 at the latest. Local authorities have until 2020 to ensure that they are able to deliver modern languages from P1 onwards.

This is consistent with the Scottish Government’s vision to radically improve the provision of modern languages in schools. The programme is unique in the UK and aims to bring Scotland more into line with other EU member states implementing the European multilingualism policy guided by the objectives set by the Barcelona Council of March 2002. It is also an economically justified approach, as:

*One in every five British exporters knows it is losing overseas business through its inability to overcome language and cultural differences*

(British Chambers of Commerce, November 2003)

Prior to the 1+2 policy, languages in Scottish schools were introduced usually from P6 or P7, with fairly patchy delivery and some children missed out on a progressive language learning experience.

There is no hierarchy of languages in the 1+2 approach – any living language counts. This includes Scots, sign language and community languages. However, the first additional language (L2) must be able to be carried on into secondary school and be available as a NQ thereafter. This means that, British Sign Language, for example, will be available as L2, while Polish can only be taught as L3.

It is expected that for the majority of children, the language they started in P1 as their L2 will be the one they continue through to the end of the broad general education. There is scope, however, for L3 to be continued as the main language in secondary school, when certain criteria are met.

The Scottish Government is committed to the implementation the 1+2 approach and recognises that Scotland will not be as successful as a country and economy as it could be if its society remains essentially mono-lingual. The 1+2 approach allows **all** children to benefit from language learning, including for example, those children with special needs or for whom English is a second language.

Challenges for full policy implementation include:

- gaining an accurate national picture of capacity in language teaching at P1-P7 level;
- building capacity through 'upskilling' primary practitioners and opening additional channels for training;
- ensuring consistent support and training across the 32 local authorities;
- ensuring that the primary experience equips learners with the necessary skills for progression into secondary school.

Current forms of support:

- in 2013-14, £9 million was devolved to Local Authorities to implement the new strategy;
- pilots were run in 10 schools (including 6 pilots in primary schools, 3 in secondary and 1 transition) evaluations of these sit on the Education Scotland website;
- guidance (including video clips) for the teaching of a first modern language in Primary 1 were issued by Education Scotland in December 2013;
- Primary 2-7 Framework was issued in June 2014, containing minimum expectations of what children should be able to do by the end of P7 in L2.

The primary emerging messages from the policy are: positivity of parents, enthusiasm and confidence of children, children's openness to other cultures, the development of literacy skills and skills in language learning, as well as the message that all can benefit from language learning.

## **A 1+2 APPROACH TO LANGUAGE LEARNING: PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE**

*presented by Jude McKerrecher, Confucius Institute, Professional Development Officer, SCILT*

In order to implement the 1+2 Approach the Scottish Government allocated a considerable amount of funding to appoint the Development Officers and to develop resources which are proving very good.

The impact of the new policy goes beyond the immediate classroom setting – it contributes to the development of global citizenship by encouraging the involvement of professionals working in diverse sectors into the delivery of language programmes. Thanks to these initiatives schoolchildren are discovering niches in the (global) market that can only be accessed with an adequate knowledge of language and culture.

The L2 and L3 taught in primaries (i.e., the two modern languages that will be required in all primaries as of 2020) are decided cross cluster between the primary and high school to ensure that there is progression. At the same time the policy emphasises the importance of inclusion through the recognition of community languages and creating innovative opportunities to learn from students from other backgrounds. These community language projects are hugely important for raising linguistic and cultural awareness, but do not typically make up the L2, because of the requirement of progression into secondary.

An example of community languages that I have been involved with is facilitating Mandarin in primary schools. This is achieved through a range of creative approaches, including working with Tianjin teachers, language assistants, volunteers working with teachers or Chinese Language Assistants; in order for someone to be presented for a qualification (and therefore taught as the L2) we would need GTCS registered teachers.

Parents and children are asking about the opportunity to learn other community/home languages. But to make it possible, properly qualified and GTCS registered staff would be needed in these languages as well.

### **Response from Ken Muir, Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland**

*General Teaching Council aims to register teachers who will be able to teach two languages. For the first language taught there is a residency requirement for registration: at the moment it is 6-month spent in a country where the language is spoken, however, GTCS is now looking for possibilities to make it more flexible. The Teaching Council is also looking at other ways to register non-teachers who would be able to contribute to the implementation of the policy in schools.*

### **FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSION ON “1+2 APPROACH”**

The participants of the forum were divided into 9 groups and each group was invited to discuss and answer three questions.

- What are the challenges in your context in supporting “1+2 Approach”?
- How do you see yourself being involved in the “1+2 Approach”?
- How will the “1+2 Approach” affect people you work with?

The following is the summary of the discussion findings.

#### **What are the challenges in your context in supporting “1+2 Approach”?**

The challenges identified by participants from the Scottish Government, GTCS, EIS and SCILT included:

- ensuring that appropriate number of teachers, materials and resources are available (which also impacts on continuing a given language (e.g. Gaelic);
- ensuring that support is available for particular languages (e.g. Mandarin);
- ensuring that enough time is built into initial teacher education.

Many EAL and ESOL teachers shared the concerns about availability of qualified, experienced staff (emphasising that teachers are most often trained in German and French only) and, along with other participants, identified also a range of other practical problems. The majority of the problems discussed concerned the distinction between L1 and L2 and the provision for languages traditionally labelled as “community” or “home languages”. The following challenges have been identified in this area:

- the “1+2 Approach” does not seem to embrace the fact that for thousands of children in Scotland their L1 is a language other than English (also, no clear definition of “community language” and “mother tongue” is provided in the Approach) and does not provide pathways for supporting these languages other than as L3 (the L3 route does not support the development of language skills if the language is in fact a child’s L1);
- the need for recognition of community languages as subjects with national qualification (Polish was one of the examples occurring most frequently, see previous point) – at the moment the available choices are restricted to a limited number of languages and the potential of community languages is overlooked;
- resistance of parents from minority backgrounds to introduce another language and so there is a challenge in convincing them that their children can benefit from the policy.

During the discussions it was appreciated that the policy has the potential to support people coming to Scotland with no English and would be a blessing for EAL teachers, providing that it offers support for English as well as for the mother tongue of the newcomer.

Other challenges identified by the participants included the need for:

- long-term thinking in the implementation of the policy;
- CPD opportunities for teachers;
- clear guidelines for educators on the levels of language skills required to deliver classes;
- considering support for children with additional support needs (including deaf children);
- ensuring firm grasp of grammar in L1 to enable further development of language skills and learning of languages;
- additional EAL teachers.

### **How do you see yourself being involved in the “1+2 Approach”?**

A number of routes and options for involvement have been identified:

- some participants who are **community language speakers** themselves, declared their willingness to explore the possibility of contributing to the teaching of their heritage language in schools;
- EAL and ESOL specialists emphasised the possibility of engaging both parents and young people who are community language speakers in the delivery of the policy. The promotion of children’s home languages in normal interactions would be a very desirable practice of embedding diversity in the curriculum;
- in the case of **Gaelic**, the policy opens up new opportunities to promote it as L2;
- for **other languages** it creates the potential to promote language exchanges and internationalisation.

Numerous participants representing the teaching profession have also emphasised the opportunity to get involved in the “1+2 Approach” by promoting the idea of language learning in general (including the fact that language skills are transferable skills). In the case of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants this would also involve raising awareness among parents about the available language learning options.

Many EAL/ESOL teachers indicated they see their role as teaching English as L2, however they would appreciate if the policy made the link between the Approach and EAL services clearer (cf. previous point on defining what “mother tongue” is).

The opportunity for establishing cooperation with other specialists, organisations and sectors was seen as yet another way of getting involved. The representative from the Scottish Council on Deafness considered establishing a working group of people with experience to support teaching BSL. Some teachers present at the forum declared willingness to work with organisations promoting parental involvement (such as Gathered Together and Parent Network Scotland). EAL and ESOL teachers discussed the opportunity for working together on implementation and training, including provision of advice to head teachers, quality improvement officers etc.

### **How will the 1+2 policy affect the people you are working with?**

The forum’s participants agreed in their comments that the 1+ 2 policy has the potential to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and, more importantly, highlight the value of diversity among minority and migrant children, young people and parents, as well as among broader society. EAL and ESOL teachers were especially optimistic about the opportunity to use language skills as a tool for integration, particularly if young speakers of other languages (including refugees and asylum seekers) or

parents from community backgrounds are invited to contribute with their languages to the implementation of the policy. This would also boost their confidence levels, increase parental involvement and equip all taking part in new skills. Similarly, teachers who would be willing to run taster sessions could gain new skills.

Many participants expressed their readiness to be involved in professional dialogue to support the development of the initiative. At the same time, however, concerns were raised that the policy will create expectations for bilingual parents that possibly cannot be met. Some were also concerned about the overloading of children for whom English is not L1 and the challenges of working with children with additional support needs who may be struggling with literacy.

## **SOFT: A CASE STUDY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE COMMUNITY**

*presented by Dr Martha Robinson, SOFT project coordinator in the UK*

The aim of the SOFT project (School & Family Together for the Integration of Immigrant Children) is to foster the linguistic and social integration of immigrant children through shared language learning activities that involve children, teachers, and families.

This is a three year project running from December 2012–November 2015, bringing together seven partners across Europe, and funded with the support of the European Commission. UK work on the project is based in Edinburgh and has enjoyed a great deal of support from Edinburgh Council Educational Department, English as an Additional Language service as well as the Heads and key staff at the six schools involved.

In total, 503 children and 25 teachers participated in the project. This included 276 children from minority/migrant backgrounds whose parents came from Poland, Iraq, Syria, South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Slovakia, China, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Brazil and who show various degrees of competence in the English language. Depending on the migrant/home child ratios in the classrooms, the schools involved have been classified as following two strands:

- a) Two homogeneous monolingual groups involving at least either 95% of migrant and 5% home children (high number with very limited English) who engage with language activities in English, or vice versa with 95% of Scottish and 5% of migrant children (English as the main language) who were learning a modern language.
- b) Four heterogeneous groups (roughly 50% mono- and multilingual children) involving children from Scottish and migrant monolingual homes as well as multilingual families who were learning a new modern language together (either Spanish or French).

The original plan of the project assumed that all parents should be involved in activities at different stages throughout the lifespan of the project, however, it soon became apparent that not all schools engaged equally and there were schools with high and schools with low parental involvement. Two types of activities were proposed: **macro-level events** (e.g. informational sessions for parents) and **micro-level events** (e.g. language based activities as part of the general running of the project, such as collaborative learning activities, the creation of classroom displays, etc.). The first type of activities proved to be difficult for teachers to organise and those events which took place were not well attended by parents.

The project is currently being evaluated on the basis of cognitive testing, testing of linguistic competences in English and modern languages learned, as well as questionnaires for teachers and families.

So far the **feedback from teachers** highlights difficulties with engaging parents due to the type of activity

proposed, lack of time during term-time, too many other activities for teachers to attend to, lack of motivation from some teachers and a perceived lack of interest from parents.

On the other hand, **feedback from parents** highlights that most parents found it difficult to take part in the SOFT activities due again to the type of activity, problems with understanding the tasks (including insufficient knowledge of English), a lack of information about the activities, a perceived unfriendly attitude from the teachers or school and the feeling that they are not valued.

Preliminary results of the project show that children involved in language based activities in heterogeneous groups benefitted greatly because both home and migrant children shared the experience of having to speak a different language on an equal footing. The project had a positive impact for the development of empathetic feelings for both home and migrant children. Among parents, positive outcomes were found where parents were involved and felt part of the community. For teachers, a strong correlation between motivation and implementation of the programme has been found.

## **Session 2: Working With Language Diversity in Scotland—Challenges and Successes**

### **FACILITATED GROUP DISCUSSION**

In the second facilitated session, the participants were asked to share their experience of working with diverse languages in Scotland, and opinions and information on multilingual projects.

As in the first group discussion, three questions were asked:

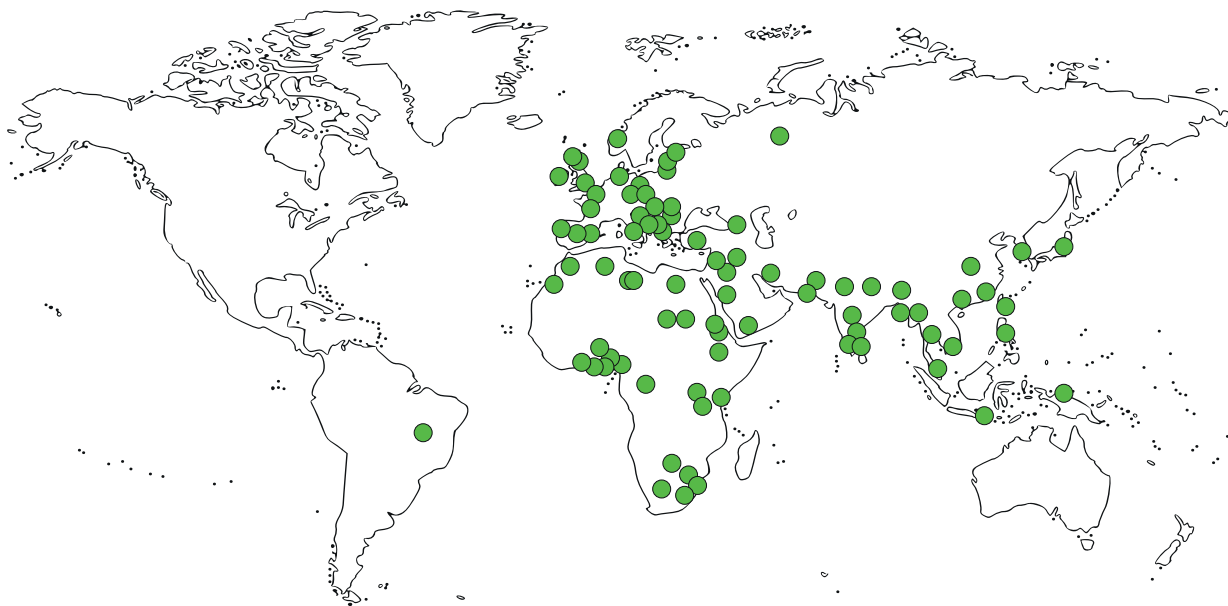
1. What languages do you work with or encounter in your work?
2. What is working well?
3. What could be done better?

#### **What languages do you work with or encounter in your work?**

On the whole, the forum participants named a total of 80 languages that they could recall from their own work experience in Scotland. This includes languages of Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and Pacific Islands (see map below).

*Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, French, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian and Russian* were the languages listed by all groups. The remaining languages were: *Albanian, Afrikaans, Amharic, Asamese, Balinese, Bengali, British Sign Language, International Sign Language, Bulgarian, Burmese, Catalan, Chinese Cantonese, Chinese Hakka, Czech, Douala, Dutch, Estonian, Farsi, Fur, Gaelic, Georgian, German, Greek, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Kinyarwanda, Korean, Kurdish, Khosa, Latvian, Lithuanian, Lingala, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Ndebele, Nepali, Norwegian, Oryia, Pidgin English, Pashto, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Roma, Scots, Serbian-Croatian, Shona, Slovak, Slovene, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Syrian, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Tigré, Tigrinya, Telugu, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Twi (Akan), Tswana, Urdu, Vietnamese, Yoruba and Zulu.*





*Geographic distribution of languages spoken in Scotland, named by the participants (Locations according to the World Atlas of Language Structures. Roma and International Sign Language have not been included. Arabic has been included in the variety of its dialects).*

EAL and ESOL teachers reported some schools where almost all pupils are bilingual. In Glasgow, the most multilingual of all Scottish cities, 147 languages are said to be spoken by schoolchildren. We know about schools in which 40–50 languages are spoken but there are some where, for instance, only Urdu is spoken in addition to English.

### **What is working well?**

The aim of this question was to learn more about the good practice examples and individual projects that are successful. The participants were very enthusiastic to share their thoughts and experiences and the summary below provides an overview of the issues discussed.

In relation to **working with children**, EAL specialists were happy that their contribution is valued by children and parents and felt strongly that consistent, supportive attitude from schools is also crucial. They also emphasised the point that valuing the home languages is an important element of successful teaching practice – children feel confident chatting in home language without feeling the need to translate for adults. Learning in and outside of the classroom, with the involvement of parents has also been highlighted as an attractive practice and one of the participants provided the example of project in Edinburgh, “Time for a story” (parents and staff going to library after school, choosing a book and listening to a story).

ESOL teachers too are confident that their contribution is appreciated as it improves **young people’s** chances to move into higher education. During the discussion they shared a number of good practice examples including: working in tutorials to support English skills; preparing young people for Higher ESOL (which is now accepted by all universities in Scotland) and promoting volunteering opportunities to ESOL learners.

Two other specific projects aimed at groups focusing on improving their language skills in English were also mentioned:

- “Living and Learning in Scotland” (Edinburgh) which provides South Asian women with the opportunity to learn about life in Scotland (including practical advice on using public transport, for instance);
- “See Scotland” - peer learning between local and migrant schoolchildren aimed at studying each other’s cultures and history via language and outdoors.

The role of **parents** in the process of education was also explored during the discussion. The promotion of parental involvement was viewed as especially important – participants representing services, teaching profession and third sector agreed that working in a home-school partnership facilitates better provision, embeds home learning and enables sharing of knowledge and information.

The importance of working with primary school and families to help support the parents so they can help their children with homework, for example, and to have better communication with the school/teachers was also highlighted as a very desirable practice that empowers the parents and allows them to integrate.

At the same time it was stressed that efforts need to continue to raise awareness of EAL services in schools and that health visitors may play an important role in the dissemination of this information.

Some other examples of good practice were also reported:

- “Playground games” (Glasgow) – a project supporting the development of skills in empathy and language at play time – immigrant parents are asked to share with other participants the games they played when they were younger;
- booklet designed for people who recently arrived in Scotland, including description of their experiences, challenges and how they overcame them;
- communications folder translated into other languages;
- inviting interpreters to parent forums, and/or ensuring invites were written in the parents’ home language, to make parents with lower levels of English feel valued and assure them that their voice was important;
- being able to access Bilingualism Matters/British Council FAQs as a guide allowed parents to voice their concerns e.g. racism, which they hadn’t been able to do before.

A separate group of comments concerned **teachers and teaching practice**. It was emphasised, that as in any educational setting, confident and passionate teachers are the key to success. Making teachers aware of support and resources and encouraging head teachers to promote this was also mentioned as one of the crucial factors ensuring success in working with diverse languages in a school environment. An example was given of a teacher with beginners Gaelic who didn’t feel confident teaching Gaelic in a special needs school but was provided with support and resources which he now confidently employs in the classroom. Some practical examples were also provided - e.g. storytelling on topics in different languages to validate cultures and languages and the use of the ESOL effective assessment tool across the sectors both formally and informally.

In relation to **policy-level** practice, the attitude of Scottish Government – moving to a more holistic approach, with person-centred learning and adult learning in the community – was also reported as very effective as is the presence of Global Citizenship in the curriculum.

Finally, the importance of **multi-level cooperation and partnership** emerged as an important element of the effective provision of services. The examples listed by the participants included:

- partnership between South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire to coordinate efforts of EAL services (with a possibility of a cross-Ayrshire approach);

- partnership of ESOL and EAL providers in South Ayrshire to produce an information booklet
- partnership of EAL services with the Inverclyde for Literacies – allowed to broaden horizons of both teams and encouraged new perspectives on how small teams can join up;
- Language exchange in Glasgow facilitated by ESOL teachers - multi-lingual groups are brought together, ESOL students and college/university students learn the language by meeting up and teaching each other's;
- partnerships of EAL services with professional football clubs (Glasgow), EAL pupils and staff are invited to Celtic Park IT suite;
- “Determined to Make Movies”, a Glasgow City Council initiative that gives young people the opportunity to learn about filmmaking, it attracted a lot of interest from young people representing culturally diverse communities;
- partnerships of UK bodies and community organizations.

### **What could be done better?**

By asking this question the organisers hope to gather an insight into what challenges people face in working with (diverse) languages and what the barriers are to more effective working (both internal or external to an individual's own organisation). The participants contributed a number of improvement ideas and recommendations based on their own experience. They have been summarised and categorised under the headings below.

#### *The role of school and teachers*

Most of the comments under this heading came from EAL and ESOL teachers. Their main concern is the **quality of support for EAL/ESOL learners**. Clearly, more EAL and ESOL teachers are needed as current needs exceed the available provision significantly. Part of the solution would be some more support from class teachers, but they often don't see EAL as their responsibility and do not appreciate the role of home language in the education process. It was suggested that class teachers would benefit from additional training on simplifying English for the purpose of working with EAL children and general guidelines on working with such children. Perhaps surprisingly, the experience of multiple participants suggested that schools perceived as having higher attainment appeared to be less supportive of other languages than schools perceived as having lower attainment.

Unfortunately, cases of teachers displaying negative attitudes towards language learning have also been encountered. To tackle these problems a range of **approaches and training** would need to be developed. Clearly, staff training opportunities to raise awareness among teachers of the importance of bilingualism and understanding of how first language can help with studies would be desirable. This could and should also be done through high quality, universal Continuing Professional Development (CPD). A point has also been made that **EAL/ESOL teachers work would be taken more seriously** and would be more effective if it was less dependent on schools management.

**Specific suggestions** have also been made including: more attention paid to the experiences of pupils coming into class; using native speakers' skills in encouraging language use and language learning (both with the parents and for children to use their first language in class); using dictionaries as part of normal classroom routine; enabling inclusive participation of deaf BSL users in ESOL classes and making teachers aware of available resources.

Representatives from the third sector emphasised that more partnership working between schools and community learning initiatives would be desirable. It was also suggested that ESOL and CLD providers working with the parents of migrant children could be working more closely with school too.

### *Communication and information provision*

The issue of improvement of communication and information provision was mentioned in various contexts.

Teachers emphasised the need to ensure that parents have the right information about choices and courses available (including transition choices). The information should be presented in plain English (this concerns information packages prepared by both schools and Councils) and, where required, other languages should be incorporated into communication with parents. In general, schools and families would benefit from better availability of interpreters but ESOL opportunities for parents should be promoted.

EAL teachers would also appreciate more opportunities to meet with parents, while CLD representatives would want to see more transparency and clarity on who is responsible for funding additional support needs.

Finally, participants agreed that forums to foster better communication and initiate community engagement should also be organised.

### *Engagement*

In the view of the forum participants, one of the clear opportunities for improvement lies in opening schools to contributions from outside as greater understanding of other cultures is clearly needed. At the moment, non-teachers (including parents) do not always feel welcomed in schools, though Curriculum for Excellence aims to improve this. Clearly, we also need to work on the attitude towards community projects, as we should involve more of them at schools. At the same time teachers also need to feel empowered to go into communities and engage with these projects directly.

### *Promotion*

The need for more promotion of **bilingualism, home languages and language learning** among children, parents and teachers/schools was a recurrent theme. It was stressed that if schools will value bilingualism, children will value their own heritage. Additionally, one of the participants emphasised that **Higher** ESOL should be better promoted to parents and children. Another participant drew attention to the fact that **resources** are often not promoted effectively – this was the case with libraries which pushed for Gaelic resources and bilingual books not so long ago but, due to lack of awareness, the books were not used and therefore were not re-purchased.

### *Access to resources and services*

Barriers to accessing resources and services were mentioned by a number of contributors. Some of the practitioners postulated more ESOL classes in the community, more joined-up approaches, more staff time during lessons (particularly in secondary schools), better pooling of resources for those working in isolation and more equity across local authorities and age groups, as well as decentralization of provision of support to make sure the needs of people outside big cities are also met.

The options for improvement discussed went beyond the immediate topic of language diversity and included: improving transport in rural areas; creating additional childcare options or child friendly environments (both for adult ESOL learners and parents engaging in school life of their children); better support for progression to work or study; reduction of isolation or risk of isolation and better support to encourage people from language minority backgrounds to leave their houses.

### *Policy Advice and Information*

In general, it was felt that **more emphasis on the language diversity agenda** is needed within the wider policy landscape, as well as **more promotion of multilingualism, clearer qualification framework and wider dissemination of research findings around the benefits of learning another language**.

A discussion was held around the general misconception that EM and bilingual parents should “*speak English at home*”, as had been previously viewed on Education Scotland’s Parentzone Scotland website, while the evidence-based advice given by EAL teachers is for parents to continue speaking in the parent’s own language at home (cf. earlier discussion on “1+2 Approach” and the role of EAL teachers). Feedback from the conference and Education Scotland’s quality assurance process have resulted in the previous content being removed from the Parentzone Scotland website. Education Scotland is continuing to work with parents to develop revised information and advice to parents and carers in this area.

## FEEDBACK, NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS

Following the second facilitated group discussion, all facilitators were asked to share with other groups the most important findings which, gathered together, gave the impression of a very broad range of points of view and, in addition, a wide range of projects were also discussed.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the networking and the opportunity to exchange ideas that this event created and declared interest in attending similar events around the topic of language diversity and language policy in Scotland. They also emphasised that it would be desirable to involve more community representatives in any such future events.

All those attending were invited to send further ideas to the organisers after the event.

## EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

All participants of the forum were invited to fill in feedback forms after the event. 41 forms were returned to the organisers and the results of the analysis of the forms are presented below.

39 participants strongly agreed and 2 agreed that the event stimulated discussion about language policy and language diversity in Scotland. All 41 found the event interesting (with 38 strongly agreeing to this statement) and all would consider coming to a similar event in the future. 35 strongly agreed and 5 agreed that they felt able to contribute to the discussion.

40 participants rated particular components of the event – all as either very good or good:

	VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR
Presentations	29	11	0	0	0
“1+2 Approach ” facilitated group discussion	33	7	0	0	0
“Working with language diversity in Scotland” facilitated group discussion	34	6	0	0	0
Feedback/concluding remarks	21	4	0	0	0

When asked to indicate the best thing about the event 17 participants indicated “sharing practice”, 15 “discussion format” and 11 “presentations” (especially the case study of SOFT) and “networking opportunity”.

We also learned from the feedback that of the issues discussed during the forum **the “1+2” language learning policy, language diversity, promotion of bilingualism, and parental involvement in education were considered most important** as they are relevant for improving work practice and encourage appreciation for language diversity.

An open question **“What have you learnt from this event”** returned answers relating to the following areas:

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Learnt about organisations for the first time	10
Learnt about projects for the first time (of which SOFT is specifically mentioned)	10
Learnt what other authorities are doing	4
Learnt about “1+2 Approach”	14
Learnt importance of parental involvement	2
Learnt importance of valuing language diversity	3
Learnt importance of/ potential for partnership working	4

The participants were also asked to share with the organisers **how will this event impact their work** and they provided a truly encouraging set of answers:

SECTOR	COMMENT
<b>Academia</b>	Learning about the 1+2 policy will support my practice in the community.
<b>Academia</b>	I found people with similar interests - will follow up with them.
<b>CLD/ESOL</b>	At a time of uncertainty within our CLD department, huge cuts to our funding, I hope still to be able to relook at our ESOL provision and provide a better experience for our learners
<b>CLD/ESOL</b>	Renewed enthusiasm to put my head above "everyday" water and keep in touch with developments across Scotland/ networking opportunities.
<b>CLD/ESOL</b>	I hope to begin to have better conversations on what is being planned/ put in place to develop bilingualism/ language learning in schools and see how CLD can contribute to this.
<b>CLD/ESOL</b>	I will take some of the ideas back to partners I work with and hopefully develop ideas I previously had about getting ESOL parents involved in school.
<b>EAL</b>	I will look at expertise and contact other networks for help in planning future projects.
<b>EAL</b>	I will take forward inclusion of parent councils, and partnerships with parent councils, community associations and third sector organisations.
<b>EAL</b>	It really helped stimulate my thinking for my MEd research.
<b>EAL</b>	This keeps me updating and reassuring aspects of my role as an EAL teacher.
<b>EAL</b>	Share with colleagues. Read more on policy.
<b>EAL</b>	More research/ implementing some ideas in school/ parents involvement.
<b>EAL</b>	I will be feeding back to colleagues and looking forward to reading the report.
<b>EAL</b>	More aware - can feel isolated in a small team. Very inspiring!
<b>EAL</b>	Hopefully promotion of ESOL policy will support our work and resources increased to fund more teachers.
<b>EAL</b>	Work in partnership with all the agencies to promote the good work which is happening across Scotland.
<b>Education</b>	I think I will work more on language diversity and promote language diversity to students.
<b>Education</b>	look out for ways to promote multilingualism and using the language skills of ESOL learners to enhance their life skills and integrations
<b>Education</b>	I will be reporting to, and encouraging more community engagement BY the school.
<b>Third sector</b>	Better understand how to approach schools to partner with them and also better understand the opportunities that exist.
<b>Third sector</b>	Able to take resources/ info back to team to feedback to parents.
<b>Third sector</b>	Feedback to team re implications for resource development
<b>Other</b>	It will allow me to support EIS members in their pursuit of additional funding for resources targeted at children/ young people who have English as an additional language.
<b>Other</b>	Help me to raise awareness of 1+2 policy with adult learners who are parents
<b>Other</b>	To work more closely with schools which the children of the learners I teach attend.
<b>Other</b>	Will look at producing resources in additional, relevant languages.
<b>Other</b>	Try to broaden the use of learners' L1 e.g. stories in other languages spoken by the learners.

Finally, the feedback form asked for **ideas for improvement for the next event**. Among the comments related to the format of the event it was most often repeated that first-hand experience of migrant children and parents would be desirable as well as broader involvement of diverse communities. A suggestion was also made that we could invite speakers who have more experience of language diversity programmes (from policy or practice) from other countries.

## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

The “Scotland, People and Language Forum” initiated a very vivid discussion and allowed participants to exchange knowledge, opinions and examples of good practice from their work with a couple of dozens of minority languages.

The Scottish “1+2 Approach” policy, considered unique in the UK, was explored first by Education Scotland and SCILT representatives and then by local education officers, teachers, researchers and representatives of third sector organizations. While the idea behind the policy was praised, the participants representing local authorities (including EAL and ESOL teachers), Education Institute for Scotland, universities, colleges and third sector agreed that it lacks deeper consideration of the linguistic landscape of Scotland: it does not recognise fully the fact that, for thousands of children, their L1 is not English and does not provide support for community/home languages. While the speakers of minority languages are encouraged to get involved in delivering language teaching for their languages as L3, no provision is offered for the development of the L1 of EAL learners. Such an option would be very desirable taking into account that solid foundation in L1 is an important prerequisite for efficient acquisition of English. As one of the contributors said:

*“Spread the message that the best way to learn English is to maintain and support the first language.”*

Lack of National Qualifications in community languages was also highlighted (with Polish, the largest language in Scottish schools after English, referred to most often) as was the fact that the range of L2 languages is rather limited.

It was emphasised that the policy has the potential of becoming a powerful integration tool if the involvement of young people (including refugees and asylum seekers), parents and communities are encouraged and the community/home languages of Scotland are fully recognised and valued.

The second facilitated discussion allowed the participants to elaborate on a number of issues as detailed in this report. Some of the themes that the participants felt really strongly about were: the importance of promotion of bilingualism; home languages; parental involvement; partnerships; training opportunities for teachers; equity in ESOL provision; clear communication and more resources and staff as well as transparency over funding.

A number of examples of good practice involving schools, third sector organizations and parents were provided but at the same time the participants were honest about the existing gaps. When discussing language diversity in Scottish schools one of the EAL teachers said:

*“Many other children in school are bilingual but schools aren’t aware; attention is really paid when English is and additional language (EAL). Also, EAL team do not have knowledge about teachers’ languages.”*



We have also learned that the participants found the event very stimulating and that there is clearly a need to organise similar events in the future, involving more minority language representatives and communities.

*“The event was very interesting. All practitioners and teachers would benefit from attending.”*

*“A great event to get people discussing key issues affecting diversity/ languages within our community with all national bodies/ projects.”*

## FINAL WORD

The “Scotland, Language and People Forum” was attended by participants representing a diverse range of institutions and organisations. It stimulated a vivid discussion, exchange of information, observations and examples of good practice, as reported here. The next step would be to present some clear recommendations. However, in order to obtain the full picture of facts, needs and expectations, and give justice to the complex subject that was the theme of this forum, more research work involving the diverse communities of Scotland would be required.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### Websites of the organisers

Gathered Together: <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/>

Bilingualism Matters: <http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/>

Education Scotland: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/>

### "1+2 Approach" documentation

*Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach*; Scottish Government, 2012

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00393435.pdf>

*A 1+2 approach to modern language* (complete documentation with recommendations and resources on Education Scotland website)

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/curriculumareas/languages/modernlanguages/supportmaterials/1plus2approachtomodernlanguages/introduction.asp>

### Other relevant Scottish Government policies:

*Curriculum for Excellence. Building the Curriculum 3. A framework for learning and teaching*; Scottish Government, 2008 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/226155/0061245.pdf>

*Curriculum for Excellence. Modern Languages. Principles and Practice Paper*; Education Scotland [https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/modern\\_languages\\_principles\\_practice\\_tcm4-539990.pdf](https://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/modern_languages_principles_practice_tcm4-539990.pdf)

*New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities*; Scottish Government, 2013

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/4581/downloads#res439604>

### Statistics

*Scotland's Census 2011*; National Records of Scotland website: <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/>

*Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland 2014*; Scottish Government, 2014

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7590/0>

*The Impact of Foreign Languages on British Business - Part 1: The Qualitative Results*; British Chambers of Commerce, 2003

### Other

*Languages for the Future. Which languages the UK needs most and why*; British Council, 2014

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/languages-for-the-future.pdf>

*Modern Languages Excellence Report*; Scotland's National Centre for Languages; 2011

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/91982/0114747.pdf>

J. McPake (2006): *Provision for Community Languages in Scotland*. Institute of Education: University of Stirling.

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/920/0039475.pdf>



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