



Welcoming Languages Workshop

2024



Summary of outcomes

INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the outcomes of the **Welcoming Languages workshop**, held in June 2024 at the University of Glasgow and supported through GKEF funding. The workshop was attended by 10 representatives of Scottish education bodies, who got together to discuss the inclusion of languages spoken by ‘New Scots’ in Scottish education. New Scots are “people living in Scotland who have been forcibly displaced or are making a claim that they have a well-founded fear of persecution”¹.

The workshop built on the [Welcoming Languages \(WLs\) project](#)², which piloted the teaching of Arabic - a language spoken by substantial numbers of New Scots – to staff in primary schools. Findings from the WLs project highlighted the practical and symbolical impact that the teaching of Arabic to staff had on the whole school community, emphasizing improved communication with Arabic speaking children and their families and the value of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

The workshop began with two presentations: Prof. Alison Phipps (University of Glasgow and Chair of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy) presented the Strategy's new approach articulating its six key principles, and Dr. Giovanna Fassetta and Dr. Maria Grazia Imperiale discussed the WLs project's phases and findings.

Following these presentations, participants engaged in discussions using the [Ketso](#) tool, addressing five key prompts:

1. What assets (material and non-material) do we have that can help us include New Scots’ languages?
2. What other possibilities/opportunities are there to expand the inclusion of New Scots’ languages in education?
3. What are the challenges?
4. What are the possible/feasible solutions to these challenges?
5. What are the next steps (and who should be involved)?

¹ See: Scottish Government (2024). New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (page 11) Available from: <https://newscots.scot/>

² Funded by the AHRC (Ref n. Ref. AH/W006030/1) from January 2022 for 12 months, Additional University of Glasgow Knowledge Exchange Fund and ESRC Impact Acceleration Account funding was obtained to expand the project’s reach until July 2024, including the delivery of this workshop.



One of the groups discusses the first prompt using Ketso

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

Responses by the workshop's participants (see Appendix for full list) indicate that there are existing assets, resources and opportunities at different levels (government, local authorities, schools, communities, etc) that could be drawn on to facilitate the expansion of languages in education. The assets identified were primarily existing policies and strategies published by the Scottish government (e.g., [1+2 Language Approach](#); [GIRFEC policy](#); [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#)) which can be leveraged to ensure greater diversity in language teaching/learning in Scottish education. Further official documents and international agreements (e.g., the UNCRC; [UNESCO frameworks](#)) were also highlighted as strategic to advocate for linguistic inclusion as a right of all children and as a step towards social cohesion. Alongside official documents, existing online resources such as [Parentzone](#) were also identified as a crucial existing asset, alongside the knowledge and experience of people such as multilingual school staff, pupils and parents/carers, experts by experience, which can facilitate the inclusion of languages in Scottish education. Education's work in this direction can be further enriched by drawing on the resources present in communities - including their linguistic diversity and the expertise of heritage language schools (i.e., community-based, non-formal language schools that are usually run by volunteers and operate at weekends) as well as by establishing links to volunteers, experts by experience and third sector organisations that work towards welcoming New Scots and anti-racism to ensure a fairer society for all.

The challenges identified were also many, starting with the lack - and shrinking - of funding for schools which are leading to cuts in teachers' numbers; the increasing demands on teachers due to expanding curricular requirements; and the monolingual mindsets that still prevails in educational policy as well as practice, including a lack of attention to languages and multilingualism in the professional standards for teachers.

The participants identified ways in which the challenges could also be redressed. This included: ensuring the sharing of experiences, practices and resources (e.g., [EIS welcome packs](#)); drawing on the multilingual repertoires of staff, pupils, parents and language communities; and engaging with higher and further education to ensure that new teachers have greater awareness of the crucial role that languages, multilingualism and intercultural communication can have to ensure the inclusion of all pupils in education. Crucially, participants stressed the need expressed by school staff to be in a better position to support their pupils, including by learning the language that can aid them in this. In addition, identifying 'points of pressure' in the existing structures (e.g., arguing for full implementation of the [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#); understand the [GIRFEC policy](#) to include language; etc.) could be a first step to move towards the inclusion of New Scots languages in education. This could then lead to targeting decision makers and demanding a more thorough application of existing policies and other official documents; ensuring the sharing of existing resources and examples of good practice; and promoting partnerships and networks between schools and with universities, community schools and third sector organisations. School management, who are committed to promote inclusion, equity and fairness, need to champion the promotion of New Scots' languages in education in consultation with pupils, parents/carers and the wider school communities.

The workshop showed clear interest and commitment by professional organisations towards identifying strategies to ensure the inclusion of New Scots' languages in education. The assets and avenues to champion this do exist and, despite undeniable challenges, ways forward are possible. This interest is grounded in the understanding of the crucial role that languages play in the lives of *everyone*, including New Scot pupils, their families and communities. There is an appreciation of the benefits for all pupils, staff and parents/carers, regardless of their background, of having schools that are welcoming, open and inclusive. As advocated by the [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#), integration is a multidirectional and multilingual process that requires efforts and time from all those involved. Integration can result in improved wellbeing, welcoming educational contexts, richer educational offers, and in greater social cohesion, goals that are worth every ounce of the effort and time required.



Whole group conversation at the end of the workshop

APPENDIX: COLLATED WORKSHOP RESPONSES

In the table below are listed all the responses collected via the Ketso tool.

	Q1 Assets	Q2 Other opportunities	Q3 Challenges	Q4 Solutions	Q5 Next steps
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy frameworks (e.g., 1+2 and Learning in 2+) • International links • New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy • Anti-racism in Education programme • Education Scotland Parent Zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD multilingual educators & social care • (Use of) UNESCO frameworks & microdata levels • Visibility of languages in political figures • Cross Party Group (CPG) / All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on multilingual education • Direction and focus in programme • Workforce planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monolingual mindset in policy • Funding (lackof and cuts) • Political commitments • Teacher cuts • Stress – data not represented • Rise of and mainstreaming of anti-immigration narratives • Lack of investment in EAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the right people to co-operate and push for change • Empathetic politicians with vocal platforms • Real commitment to investing in learning workforce • Commitment in principle to interweaving ‘light’ (language?) in policy • Shorter, streamlined policy linking services – to make sense of policy web • Commitment in principle to interweaving in policy (?) • Learning from good practice in other countries • Workforce planning and education • Curriculum reform • Include UNCRC – love, care, entitlement • Increase in teachers’ numbers and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target decision-makers • Implement New Scots

	Q1 Assets	Q2 Other opportunities	Q3 Challenges	Q4 Solutions	Q5 Next steps
				time • Appropriate funding	
SQA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilingual Assessments • SQA to sort out translation tools for Alternative Assessment Arrangements • More meaningful qualifications in more diverse languages • Qualifications for Teachers & Pupils who teach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow curriculum not reflecting diverse communities • Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment in own language • Moving away from 'deficit model in EAL/EGSC • Working with parents and community languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make space for multiple languages and language families
Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi partner hubs • Strategy groups • Quality improvement officers • EAL services • 3rd sector partners • 1+2 Policy entitlement • Equalities teams • Language Ambassadors Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEEMiS - how languages are recorded • LA funding for heritage language schools to encourage all learners • Better Administration Services • GIRFEC • Curriculum reform work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Priorities" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of learner/teacher and assessment in L1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money poured into improving standards in language community schools • Children and families should be involved • Internet supports • Gather data to support change • Identify and engage with specialist allies
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and parents • Trained teachers • Professional development /learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language awareness training • More diverse workforce • Strong inclusive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive issues about which language to choose • Fear of failing/lack of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with headteachers – don't let them delegate it • Native speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower language schools in community • Pool of resources available to all

	Q1 Assets	Q2 Other opportunities	Q3 Challenges	Q4 Solutions	Q5 Next steps
	<p>opportunities for teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary learning • Language communities • Young Interpreters programmes • Existing welcome offers (e.g., EIS Welcome Pack) • Existing resources • Enthusiastic staff • Lived knowledge and staff's languages 	<p>leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers who have multiple languages • Flexible models 	<p>confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of teaching • 'Unconscious bias' • Time, resources and recognition for teachers/schools engaging with multilingualism • Lack of awareness of available resources (Commits) • Competing priorities/full curriculum (esp. primary) • Curriculum structure • Workload • Not enough school staff (college assistants) • Current Glasgow cuts and increasing class sizes 	<p>school staff (not just teachers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled linguists in school – parents, staff, children • Time for teachers to engage in professional learning • Awareness of opportunities + leadership buy-in • Diversity of workforce • Professional Learning opportunities 	<p>schools (e.g. Database of resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in (promote) activities • Sharing good practice • Creating supportive networks
Early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement about learning languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More welcoming environment for volunteers • Arts, drama activities with language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play and understanding of the benefits • Tapping into community assets (e.g., partnerships between schools and local organisations) 		
Community (e.g., parents/ca)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and parents • Trained teachers • Professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language cafes • Use language of parents to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing during the asylum process • Co-ordinating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need wider community engagement for multilingual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having children teach their languages to decision-

	Q1 Assets	Q2 Other opportunities	Q3 Challenges	Q4 Solutions	Q5 Next steps
	<p>development /learning opportunities for teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary learning • Language communities • Young Interpreters programmes • Existing welcome offers (e.g., EIS Welcome Pack) • Existing resources • Enthusiastic staff • Lived knowledge and staff's languages 	<p>teach staff</p>	<p>community links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to time for partnership working 	<p>approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting multilingual approach outwith education (e.g., in the lives of adult New Scots) 	<p>makers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergeneration and use of Elders • Parental voice • Children's voice on how to enhance MS (?) languages
Universities and other institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International students • Research and researchers • Resources • TESOL project (U. of Strathclyde) • International partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITE supporting EAL uses + more language input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create databases of resources
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital tools • Volunteer sector • Activists/people with lived experience raising awareness of importance of multilingualism in New Scots' lives 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up different tutoring solutions • Change PISA • UNCRC incorporation (includes rights to language and culture) • Include language in GTCS standards for full registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership links – map existing resources and find avenues to connect



University
of Glasgow



Authors: Giovanna Fassetta and Maria Grazia Imperiale
Workshop supported through GKEF funding (University of Glasgow)
2024
For further information contact:
giovanna.fassetta@glasgow.ac.uk