

St. Ann's Gaelic College  
January 31 – February 2, 2009

# Ceilidh House Meeting for Gàidhlig aig Baile



**Report prepared by  
Alan Sloan and  
The Office of Gaelic Affairs**

**With support from  
community team:  
Shay MacMullin  
Mary Jane Lamond  
Tim Aggett**

**May 25, 2009**



## **CÉILIDH HOUSE MEETING – GÀIDHLIG AIG BAILE REPORT**

### **Creating our own Nova Scotia Community-based Gaelic Immersion Programs**

#### **Background**

1. Since January 2005 community-based learning classes and workshops have been held in communities in Nova Scotia, from Bay St. Lawrence to Halifax. In May 2008 the Office of Gaelic Affairs released a report on community-based education activity to date, including student survey results and feedback from community focus groups and tutor interviews (*Am Blas Againn Fhìn*). With its emphasis on fun, social engagement and speaking Gaelic, instructors and students were enthusiastic and hopeful about the future of community-based immersion in Nova Scotia. While they reported greater facility in speaking Gaelic in a variety of settings, participants also acknowledged the methodology could be improved with further planning and co-ordination of resources.

On January 31 and February 1, twenty-seven members of the Gaelic community came together to discuss ways to advance *Gàidhlig aig Baile*, Nova Scotia's own community-based language learning system.

#### **Objectives**

1. To identify guiding principles for *Gàidhlig aig Baile*.
2. To envision what is possible in creating our own Nova Scotia community-based Gaelic immersion system.
3. To identify areas of focus for the advancement of *Gàidhlig aig Baile* i.e. developing teaching methods, materials and teachers.
4. To identify skills, resources and partnerships available for the advancement of *Gàidhlig aig Baile*.
5. To identify a working group(s) to carry forth action areas identified. Develop terms of reference for the working groups. What resources and support do working groups need to do their work?

#### **Céilidh House Format**

We began the first day by telling stories in pairs about our effective experiences with community-based learning, and then sharing our stories in small groups. Common themes were “harvested” from dozens of conversations. Recurring themes included the importance of social and informal settings, encouragement, passion and a positive attitude.

We then reviewed a background document prepared for the meeting. It highlighted community-based Gaelic learning activities in the last five years in Nova Scotia, information on second language learning/teaching and on language revitalization in endangered language communities. A list of principles was gleaned from the research (page 6). This information, combined with themes from our personal experience of community-based learning, provided the basis for café conversations on guiding principles to adhere to when creating our own Nova Scotia community-based learning materials and methods (page 7)

With flip chart paper and markers in hand, we envisioned what is possible in creating our own Nova Scotia-based Gaelic immersion system. Images and words were captured and included visions of multi-generational opportunities to learn and speak Gaelic; Gaelic as the language of the home, school, community, work, media, entertainment and romance. In our visions communities are connected, not just within Nova Scotia but to other areas of the world, particularly Scotland. Learning opportunities and materials are ample and diverse.

Visioning was followed by an Open Space Technology session. Participants who felt passionate about a subject offered to host a conversation group. Once all the topics were announced, each participant decided which discussion group to join or visit. Discussion groups included Gaelic media, Gaelic materials, Domains of speech, Tutor training and support, and Total immersion in the home.

The first day concluded with participants offering what they learned today and what they wanted to accomplish tomorrow. (Page 14-15).

In the evening we enjoyed the music of fiddlers Brian MacDonald and Joe Peter MacLean and then gathered around the milling table for four hours of Gaelic singing. “We should begin the weekend with a céilidh, to remind us why we are here,” one participant suggested.

On day two we began with a brief check in. Facilitator Alan Sloan talked about the effectiveness of an asset-based approach to development, where you build from the solid ground of your strengths, rather than the swampy ground of your fears and feelings of inadequacy. He said that when we say “someone should” rather than “I will,” we give our power away.

We had café conversations in the morning to determine what projects and project groups were interested in forming. There were at least three areas of focus: developing materials, teaching methods and teachers. Seven conversation groups reported during the harvest (page 16-10), further refining areas of tutor development and training and creating innovative materials. New ideas emerged as well, like the need to include children and youth in all that we do, the need to better advertise the learning opportunities that are out there and the need to make better use of the Gaelic College.

Using Open Space Technology again, we gathered in working groups to begin developing project ideas, which would carry forward action items. Six working groups formed: Nova Scotia-based learning materials; Achieving fluency in a non-threatening environment; Ramp up Tutor training; Gaelic youth film, and *Buidheann obrach àrdachadh na Gàidhlig* (Working group to advance Gaelic).

The day concluded with participants sharing their thoughts on the weekend session, both in a closing circle and in written evaluations. Many expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come together and the desire for more opportunities like this in the future.

We feel the day was inspiring and well worth the effort. Real actions came out of meaningful dialogue in an atmosphere that was relaxed, friendly, focused and energizing. This document is a transcript of the results of the various sessions we participated in. Many good ideas, suggestions, concerns and insights were generated.

The planning committee wishes to thank everyone who participated and is looking forward to continuing this important work, through the newly formed project groups, and in the upcoming workshops.

Shay MacMullin  
Tim Aggett  
Mary Jane Lamond  
Lewis MacKinnon  
Frances MacEachen  
Alan Sloan (facilitator)

## Day One: 31 January 2009

**Purpose of the day:** The advancement of community-based Gaelic immersion, *Gàidhlig aig Baile* in Nova Scotia.

### ❖ SESSION 1 – WORLD CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS

In order to lay the foundation for the workshop, the group began with a World Café conversation to identify the guiding principles for community-based Gaelic immersion. People paired up at tables of four. Each person was asked: “***Tell a story about an effective experience you have had with community-based learning, learning Gaelic or another language or subject.***” After five minutes, the other partner shared a story.

Then each partner briefly shared the other’s story with the people at the table, and summarized in one or two words the essence of that story. A table “host” was asked to record these comments.

Participants switched tables, leaving the table host to welcome the three new people to the table and to briefly summarize the stories shared, plus the one or two words that captured the essence of that story. Then, the groups at the tables were asked: “***What were the factors that made these programs described in the stories successful? Identify elements, themes and patterns.***”

Following is the “**harvest**” or results from those stories and conversations:

#### Conversation #1

1. Social aspect – common to all
  - tea
  - natural transmission
  - enculturation
  - social construct/informal
2. Transmission as most important factor – need dialogues between more fluent speakers, but problem of access to them.
3. Interaction
  - Lack of pressure/feeling comfortable  
While at the same time
  - Need to push yourself to take part, interact, and use what you have.  
Expectation. Hard work.
4. Relationships – Build up long lasting links, somewhere to use it in the future: Passion.
5. Context – not always inside! Outdoors!

6. Challenge of having time/resources to be able to take part in above restricted learning for some.

7. Investment – people's time and energy: both teacher and learner. Sacrifice.

### Conversation #2

- Find the positive
- Find commonality
- Build consensus
- Immersion = speaking
- Encouragement works
- Subliminal learning
- Passion!
- Socialization (*srùbag*)
- Persistence → BREAKTHROUGH!!



### **Conversation #3**

- Encouragement
- Community
- Engagement
- Learning-by-doing
- Responsibility
- Varied experiences
- Overcoming fear
- Positive thinking
- Mentorship [Sharing, Sharers]
- Courage
- Socially-Constructed learning

### **Conversation #4**

- Maximize the access to knowledge resources by using every method possible: community gathering, email, internet, audio/visual materials, etc.
- Urgency and engagement of the learner
- Passionate attachment to an outcome
- Involvement of mentors

### **Conversation #5**

- EMOTION PASSION
- Positivity
- *Brosnachadh* (encouragement)
- *Ti agus bonnach* (tea and food)
- Language and Culture Interconnection
- EMOTION PASSION

### **Conversation #6**

- Social
- Connected – personal need to be connected
- Inclusive
- Structure
- Self-discipline
- Commitment of resources
- Immersion

## ❖ **SESSION 2: REVIEW OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENT AND CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS**

The group reviewed the background document on community-based Gaelic immersion from the Office of Gaelic Affairs (OGA). A list of suggested principles distilled from that document were presented:

- Stress free
- Teach the language through the language
- Teaching grammar is implicit rather than explicit
- In the beginning communication is more important than accuracy
- Lots of positive feedback
- Repetition without repetitiveness
- (Nova Scotia) Cultural Content
- Flexible Tool Kit
- Honest evaluation of program effectiveness
- Sustainability
- Clear goals
- Patience
- Importance of expertise
  - personal
  - professional
- Emerging –be open to what is emergent
- Define functionality

Following the review, the participants held café conversations to identify guiding principles for Gàidhlig aig Baile. The question: *Based on the stories shared and the summary document, what are the guiding principles we need to adhere to in creating our own Nova Scotia community-based learning materials and methods?*

**Harvest:** Each table group presented a number of proposed principles on sticky notes and placed them on the front wall, clustering them where the principle seemed related or similar to others. Here is a list of the “sticky notes.”

### **Guiding Principles**

- professional
- sustainability
  - \$
  - tutors
  - sacrifice required
  - motivation
- Support tutors
- mutual evaluation
  - students of course &
  - course of students
    - is also another way of evaluating the course

- (optional?) assessment tools
- experiential – students are actively engaged in an activity while learning language
- inclusivity
  - all ages
  - intergenerational (mentioned 2 x)
  - speakers and learners
- playful, humour
- create a stress free environment that allows participants to overcome inhibitions
- flexible toolkit
  - adequate training
  - adequate materials
- methodology is mimicking the way we learn our first language – experiential
- need demonstration – making mistakes is okay!!
- flexible
- full-time immersion option
- defined progression
  - measurement
  - recognition
- accessibility
  - cost/fees associated with learning Gaelic
- nurturing and acknowledgement of leadership
- honest evaluation – learn from your mistakes (mentioned 2 x)
- understand student motivation
- repetition 20/20
- recognize different learning styles – grammar
- encouragement
- comfortable location/facilities with ample materials
  - kitchen
  - bedroom
  - dining room, etc
  - fully equipped
- appropriate class size
- stress free (mentioned 2 x)
- flexibility
  - time
  - methods
- team approach
- measurable outcomes
- identify learning outcomes – curriculum
- goal setting
  - learners
  - tutors
  - Council, FIOS, etc
  - "community"
  - OGA

- criteria for success
- social context
  - integrate language and culture
- student preparation
- teacher preparation
- tutor training
- support tutors
  - initial orientation
  - continuing support
  - flexible curriculum
  - mentorship
  - professional development (re-certification)
- guidelines and support for tutors
- teach the language through the language
- NS cultural content
  - stories
  - food
  - songs
  - idioms
  - bards
  - etc
- put in place regular mechanism for evaluation
- learning occurs through + social + cultural context
  - "tì agus bonnach"
- authentic contextual transmission
- teach the language through the language
  - using a variety of methods – and with some use of the primary language where necessary
- multi-context
- use of target language
- immersion
- Informal /Natural setting
- further clarify/organize guiding principles for Gàidhlig aig Baile
- utilize principles of community development
- explore/utilize local resources
- creation of community
  - use language outside of class within cultural context
  - music, history, kinship systems, attitudes – work ethic, belief system
  - language of the home – language outside of home
- open to ideas
- be aware of what is emerging in language teaching training
- value of language maintenance
- maintain and grow Nova Scotia language and culture

*During an open space session on day two, Mary Jane Lamond, Frances MacEachen and Mary Fedorchuk distilled the many suggestions into a vision statement and guiding principles.*

## **DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Vision – Language transmission in communities

1. Learning opportunities are intergenerational
2. Gaelic is the language of the learning experience
3. Learning environments are:
  - a. in multiple settings, e.g. indoors, outdoors, homes
  - b. supportive
  - c. encouraging
  - d. reflective of rural and urban settings
4. Learning is experiential and contextual, relevant to NS Gaelic Culture
5. Tutors are adequately supported
6. Learning opportunities are accessible. A lack of funds will not preclude participation
7. Learners are responsible for their own learning and supporting other learners
8. Tutors are responsible for ongoing assessment and evaluation
9. Co-ordination of Gàidhlig aig Baile programs rests with \_\_\_\_\_?
10. Measurable outcomes (TBD – i.e. EU framework for language proficiency )

Additional notes:

Gaelic learning/transmission is based on our current research and community experience – best practices and shared among tutors and program deliverers.

Two other principles for consideration:

1. ongoing support for community organizations that implement community-based Gaelic programs
2. celebrate success

VISION: Gaelic language transmission in and through community.

## **❖ SESSION 3: ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE**

Following the identification of guiding principles, the participants held café conversations *to envision what is possible in creating our own Nova Scotia community-based Gaelic immersion system.* The questions included:

- What is your vision of a future where Gaelic language immersion programs are flourishing in Nova Scotia?

- How and where would Gaelic be taught?
- Who would teach Gaelic? How would teachers be trained?
- Who would be learning Gaelic?
- What materials would be used?

**Harvest:** Following are the results of those visioning groups:

**Vision 1 – Open Door!**

Nova Scotia Gaelic    →→→→→→→→    Scotland Gaelic  
 ←←←←←←←←

- Exchange
- People
- Resources
- Websites
- Facebook Gaelic
- Families exchanges
- Student exchanges
- Support for immigration of Scots to Nova Scotia
- Sponsorship of community programs (after school programs. Scotland -> Nova Scotia)



## **Vision 2 – Live in Learning**

There is a drawing of a house with trees and people outside.

Outline of a map of Nova Scotia. *Taigh Céilidh* (Céilidh House) in every area of Nova Scotia.

Taigh Chéilidh for everyone ages 3, 16, 31, 46, 92

Mom and Dad in exercise room working out

Kids taking karate lessons in Gaelic

Chance to watch Gaelic films

Cooking space in Gaelic

Parents with children in Gaelic

Outdoor activities in Gaelic.

## **Vision 3**

Drawing is set up in sections:

HRM (Truro)

Eastern Mainland

Cape Breton

These areas connect to other sections: provinces of New Brunswick, PEI, NFLD, and to Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man.

Sections are like cells of an organism all linked. Within the centres of HRM, Eastern Mainland and Cape Breton there are smaller cells that are interconnected: home, the coffee shop, schools, universities etc.

## **Continuous learning**

- through immersion P-12.
- through the medium of Gàidhlig with Gàidhlig aig Baile.
- multi-layered.
- mentoring
- native Speaker.

## **Vision 4**

- Linking communities together with technology
- Community Radio/TV
- New Media with Global Access
- New literature and poetry
- North American Version of *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* (training teachers/materials)
- Acceptance of different dialects. No one is more correct than the other.
- Value Gaelic as an asset.
- Employment in Business and government.
- Link language to music and other efforts

- Link all aspects of Gaelic culture together
- Pride
- Total Immersion (weeks at a time) in the home.
- Sustainable number of speakers is expanding.

### **Vision 5**

#### **Reach for the stars**

A growing tree symbolic of strong roots in rich soil, branching out, blossoming.

The tree is nurtured by sustainable planning, sunshine (fun, optimism) rain

Children playing under/on tree.

### **Vision 6**

#### **How and where?**

- Locations – > stores, churches, community centre
- Immersion
- Community
- Preschool
- People's homes
- Topic specific locations

#### **Teacher Training for Gàidhlig aig Baile**

- Recognize that some people have an innate ability to teach
- In community homes
- Residential courses
- Distance learning?
- Informal training
- One size does not fit all.

#### **Who is learning?**

- All ages
- Parent and child
- Anyone who wants to

#### **Materials**

- Structure where needed
- Print materials
- Speakers
- Games
- Visual aids
- Props

### Who teaches?

- People who want to
- Native speakers
- Fluent learners
- Learners, as long as they are ahead of students.

### **Vision 7 – A’ Choimhearsnachd Ghaidhlig**

- *Sgoil-Treanaidh aig gach ìre steidhichte air slatan-tomhais* (Training school with each level measured)
- *Eaglais – seirbhisean Gàidhlig* (Church – Gaelic services)
- *Sgoil na Cloinne – troimh mheadhon na Gàidhlig* (School for children – through the medium of Gaelic)
- *Bidh duine sam bith ag ionnsachadh.* (Anyone who wants to is learning)
- *Teachd an Tìr* (Sustainable livelihoods)
- *Neach ciùird (leasachadh luchd-prófaiseanta)* (Professional Development)
- *Coimhearsnachd Shoisealta* (Social, interactive community)
- *Cothrom air Céilidh* (Opportunities for Gaelic speakers to gather)
- *Cothrom air eaglais* (Opportunities for church)
- *Cothrom air spòrs* (Opportunities for entertainment – in Gaelic)
- *Cothrom air suighridheachd* (Opportunities for romance – in Gaelic)
- *Cothom air seirbhisean (poblach)* (Opportunities for public services – in Gaelic)

### ❖ **SESSION 4: OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY**

This session began with an introduction to Open Space Technology. Following is a brief description:

- Hosts of conversations came to the front of the room and wrote down a topic they wished to discuss on large sticky notes, placing them on the front wall.
- Once all the topics were identified, the hosts went to different corners of the room. Participants joined whatever group or groups had topics of interest to them.
- Participants were free to either remain within a group or to move to another group at any time that they felt they were not contributing or learning or if they simply wished to find out what other groups were discussing (called the “law of two feet”).
- It was also fine not to join any group, remaining within the room, having a cup of tea and reflecting alone or chatting with others who didn’t wish to participate in a specific group.

The objective of the session was: *To identify areas of focus for the advancement of community-based Gaelic immersion – i.e. methodology, materials, and instructors. Based upon the envisioning and brainstorming session, identify key topics and join conversations that most interest you about how to make the goals of this workshop a reality.*

**Harvest:** Following are the results from those conversations:

**Topic 1: Gaelic Media: Host, Dwayne MacEachern**

- iLand (Dwayne's T.V. station project)
- Gaelic needs better visibility in popular media
- TV/Internet have become important learning tools in society
  - Are there reruns of shows in Scotland that we could air here?
  - Can we access old video/radio programs
- Would be nice to have news in Gaelic (even 10 minutes a day)
- Need programs by youth, for youth.
  - Dalbrae for example has Gaelic class and film class
- Where's the dollars going to come from?
  - Ventures have to generate revenue to sustain themselves.
- We must create a new (media) industry
  - Follow examples: Nigeria's film industry, etc.

**Topic 2: Gaelic Materials: Host, Lewis MacKinnon**

*What kinds of Gaelic learning materials can be created to assist on-going Gaelic learning in the province?*

Gaelic learning materials (in part) need to be developed based on recorded materials reflecting the historical uses of the language in Nova Scotia

- Domains – Short Nova Scotia stories in Gaelic (multi-media)
  - Acted out idiomatic expressions
  - Subtitled/Beurla – Gàidhlig
  - Orthography
  - Skits
  - Sayings
- Ulpán Materials?
  - Bord na Gàidhlig writing up these courses. Israeli and Welsh development. (Investigate) Use as a model?
- Get tutors over (from Scotland) /fully developed materials for the tutor
- Speaking Our Language – Produce a Nova Scotia version but don't use Beurla (English)
- Registry of introductory language needs to be developed
  - Student on-line/audio/video session food preparation/home activities
  - Series DVDs
  - Karoke word pad program. Type a word and computer says it.
  - Soap Opera

- Ireland Grammar Games (speak/write, record yourself).
  - Cable TV? / CRTC guidelines
- Radio stations – Sirius Radio
  - Booklets/e-books/pronunciation/graphic novels/cartoons
  - Caintt mo Mhathar
- WIKI – participative
  - Mac-Talla – now digitized.
  - Transcriptions of Gaelstream
  - University Course assignment
  - Team project integrated learning
  - Roy Wentworth lexicon for New Ross.
  - Message board
- *Am Bràighe* -- digitized.
- CB Magazine—digitized
- Lessons from *Am Bràighe* (files already digitized)
- Hire Ken -- (use of his anecdotes and) his lessons
- Structure— use Ronald Blacks Book as a guide (use local idioms)
  - Prototype – Forerunner of Gaelstream.
- *C'est la Vie* radio program model.
- Tutor training
- Methodology
- Immersion
- Gaelic House Immersion – People living in Gaelic
- Gaelic Media: Visibility, programming, presentation. Designing Language courses
- Gaelic learning materials based on recorded materials that reflect traditions, idiomatic speech. Incorporate this into language learning.

Lexicon – Don't let Gaelic be translated English

### **Topic 3: Domains of Speech: Host, Jim Watson**

*(There weren't any notes were taken during the session. Jim was asked to write something after the weekend for inclusion in the report.)*

Community-based immersion in Nova Scotia should have a high degree of sensitivity to the Gaels' language of everyday life. Expressions of the Gaelic experience are grounded in contexts that may not include certain formal registers used in institutional settings such as the school system and bureaucracy, or the domains of science and technology. Care must be taken that Gaelic learning remains grounded, first of all, on those generationally established perspectives that make its expressions unique from within: the language that expresses a full range of human emotions, social values and artistic creativity. If the learner is learning language associated with a different cultural experience, through the medium of Gaelic, it is a form of translation.

## **Topic 4: Tutor Training and Support: Host, Caroline Cameron**

### **Training in methodology:**

- There should be a series of seminars in experiential language instruction, bringing in important thinkers/ practitioners in the field, such as Leanne Hinton.
- This workshop can be cost shared with and attended by Acadian and Mi'kmaq (even Greek community in Glace Bay is large) communities.
- There needs to be a greater recruitment for potential tutors – native speakers, people with capacity.
- Regarding guiding principles: “Sail your best course”, i.e., start from where we are.

### **Curriculum**

- There is a need for simple situation-based lesson plans to help in planning sessions. Can tutors write up notes and trade around?

### **Immersion language training for tutors**

- Residential experience would probably be useful, one week length. Utilize native speakers.
- Team-teaching would allow the language development skills of novice tutors; native speakers can provide mentorship/coaching.
- Dialects require further documentation work
- Many ways to engage native speakers: Can assist native speakers with tasks, use Gaelic only. Can use immersion methodology in any situation – it is important that the learner should understand methodology and use this to direct interaction. This way mentor gains familiarity/training with technique.

**Topic 5: Total Immersion in the Home: Host, Margie Beaton**

**Homes with Gaelic speakers open up on a weekly, bi-weekly basis to interested students of Gaelic.**

- Full immersion for a week (to start off)
- Do everything the family does.
- Visit local Gaels
- Invite Gaelic to the house
- Activities with the family e.g. hiking, shopping, gardening, walking in the woods, identifying trees, etc.
- Daily reading
- Songs/stories etc. etc.



## ❖ CLOSING SESSION, DAY ONE

### **What we learned today:**

- Learned about history of language/teaching
- Reading materials in advance were useful
- Reminded of the importance of idiomatic speech
- Realization that we are tapping some people (Gaelic speakers) heavily
- Starting with a story works, makes it real
- Used community development principles
- Questions not addressed today, will discuss
- Film – creating jobs in media and film
- Home as a hotel for learning.
- How much people are exploring this as a community
- Linking Community work with language learning

### **What do we want to accomplish tomorrow?**

- What can be available beyond weekly class – subsidized, longer programs
- Creating social spaces
- Simple audio/visual project that encapsulates conversation
- Youth strategy – Better communication of what is available
- Leadership -> Future
- Value of language maintenance
- Accessibility – learners may find it difficult because of cost (bursaries, scholarships, organized spaces)
- Set up tutor workshops
- Barebones curriculum
- Language prestige is fundamental for developing morale
- Method for communicating and collaborating within the community, e.g. a message board
- Set further meetings

### **Day Two – February 1**

***Purpose of the day:*** To complete the process we began yesterday, resulting in projects and project groups that will be able to accomplish what we want.

### **What else do we want to accomplish today?**

- Work on “guiding principles” – clustering, organizing, clarifying
- Gaelic College is a resource not fully used
- Developing very flexible learning materials

## ❖ SESSION 1: WORLD CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS

*Based on the work of the groups in the Envisioning and Open Space sessions yesterday, what projects and project groups are interested in forming?*

There are at least three areas to explore:

1. Developing materials
2. Developing teaching methods
3. Developing instructors

**Harvest:** Following are the results of those conversations:

### Conversation #1

#### **BEYOND WEEKLY CLASSES**

- Subsidize programs – professional and highly organized
- Utilize existing infrastructure
- Create a centre for Gaelic

#### **GAELIC MATERIALS**

- Gaelic House: furnished, live-in activity-based learning – viable (has to pay for itself) – have exchanges with similar type of community resources in Scotland
- Create a video series
  - Theme-based and modern/upbeat
  - Through medium of Gaelic
  - Local, Nova Scotia idiomatic Gaelic
- Activities:
  - Art class
  - Sports
  - Kid's focus – slopping around with foods and crafts – make learning really easy, convenient – parents will do anything for kids – create interest amongst kids and get the parents – attract through creative projects
  - Household activities

### Conversation #2

- 1. Campaign to send information** (Gaelic Blitz) to all public schools about where you can learn Gaelic. Spearheaded by Gaelic Council and OGA
- 2. Advanced Tutor Retreat:** Get funding to pay 4 – 6 tutors to take on roles as tutors. They come to Gaelic College for 4 – 6 weeks, live in immersion and have native Gaelic speakers live in here.
- 3. Chief Tutor/New Tutor:** Identify more advanced students in classes and get them to conduct first level tutoring for newcomers
- 4.** Immediate need for guidelines around community-based learning
- 5.** Develop a subscription-based media service in Gaelic TV/radio

### **Conversation #3: Developing Materials**

#### **Existing materials**

1. Digital
  - *Cainnt mo Mhathar*
  - *Sruth nan Gaidheal*
  - Rinzler Collection
  - MacEdward-Leitch
  - Creighton Collection
2. Printed
  - Shaw stuff
  - *Am Bràighe*
3. Courses/Curriculum
  - Public school stuff
  - Textbooks

#### **Tutor Requests – Best-practice sharing**

#### **Next Steps**

##### **A.**

- Selection of stuff from e.g. *Sruth nan Gaidheal* (based on Seumas’s mentoring scheme) – Can be used instead of having extra native speakers
- Development of support materials to go with above
- A wee bit of linguistic commentary
- Idioms
- Grammatical nuances/dialect
- Development of class tasks linked to numbers 1 and 2 above
- Some sort of logical progression – a manual for tutor, beginning/middle/advanced (Listening to material -> Talk about points -> Class activity)
- Make stuff more accessible, e.g. on CDs, to put on in car

##### **B. Use of DVDs made during making of *Cainnt mo Mhàthar***

- Make available to be bought/rented?
- Time-coded etc.
- Importance of visual cues

##### **C. Song**

- Information on background of song/singers
- This for teaching use – like Sep Seinn(?)
- Good for all sorts of contexts – schools

##### **D. Development of Script/guidelines for “*Gàidhlig aig Baile*”?**

- List of possible scenarios

- Along with list/manual of vocabulary to go with scenarios, e.g.
  - Topic 1 – Making a Bed
  - Topic 2 – Making Tea
  - Topic 3 – Babies
- List of props needed
- Factor in use of Nova Scotia idiom where possible
- Make sure tutors know they should be comfortable to use own words, not to be intimidated
- Manual for both students/tutors

**E. Possibility of thinking about standardization of body language for intro levels of “Gàidhlig aig Baile”**

- Is this a good idea?

**F. Use of Scottish speakers**

- “*drochaidean fiosrachaidh*” (information bridges)
- Exchanges to bring people over
- Bring speakers over for a month to be there to speak Gàidhlig

**Ceist na Seachdain**

***Co ni seo uile?! (Who does all this?!)***

*(Co chuireas clag air a'chat?) (Who is going to put the bell on the cat?)*

- Working Group
- Collaboration between Fios/An Clachan/etc.
- Need financial support to hire people to work on these

**Conversation #4**

- A. Visual Aids – charts/posters (our own) – categories/themes PowerPoint or DVD to train tutors – teaching methods (reference/refresh books) Above are part of TIP Course Kit for tutors, props, e.g. suitcase of clothing, mock lessons (like TPR video)
- B. TIP DVD Series: Basic – not “fancy”
- C. iLand TV -> *Sràid Gàidhlig* (“Sesame Street” idea) – TIP learning tool
- D. Radio – programming – if we had 15 minute segments, could be aired now on 101.5 fm
  - Ray Mac – CJFX
  - CIGO – Bob MacEachern
  - “Island Echoes” – CBC
  - Beaton Institute
  - Gaelstream
  - Highland Village
  - St. FX – Ken Nilson; special collections
  - Jeff May’s – Cheticamp
  - BBC – Alba “Radio nan Gaidhel”
  - YouTube

E. Book Collections

- ST. FX Collections
- Sydney Library (MacConnell)
- Eastern Counties Regional Library
- Aig

F. Digitalization:

- MacTalla
- Shunpiking
- St. FX Digital Collection
- CBU Scottish Collection

G. Writing Courses

H. Gaelic Web Portal



## **Conversation #5**

### **A. Developing Instructors**

- Residential program for language
- Weekly tasks with native speakers (need native speaker registry)
- Formal methodology training – local instructors and others

Timing? Survey – 1<sup>st</sup> week of July

### **B. Teaching Methods – after 200 hours**

- Perks Shining Waters
- Transport native speakers
- Gaelic walk

## **Conversation #6**

### **Issue: Tutors**

- Need to increase the number of fluent Gaelic speakers who are also expert/competent tutors
- Suggest targeting retired teachers
- Suggest covering costs such as accommodation, travel and childcare
- Suggest communities identify people to become tutors
- Suggest looking for corporate funding
- Suggest advertising for fluent Gaelic speakers who may be interested in employment opportunities as tutors (we don't know everyone who is out there)
- Suggest 4 month program for tutor training

## **Conversation #7**

- Family events and children and seniors
- Investigate Seniors funding
- Gaelic walks in HRM
- Integrate resources we already have in regard to websites, distributing info.
- “displaced” speakers – bring them back
- Student orientation meeting
- GAB tutor “box” materials – stories, felt board, recordings, etc.
- Guiding principles
- Learner's spirit in NS – stay connected better – focus on positive, don't be so critical of ourselves and each other
- Build habit to use Gaelic first
- Peer group for kids
- Mixed levels
- Organic – materials and lessons more important than levels
- Passion, fun, free social spaces
- Better use of Gaelic College

- Community – all levels – Céilidh – Còmhradh (camaraderie)

## ❖ SESSION 2: OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

*To identify working groups to carry forth action areas identified. Develop terms of reference for the working groups. What resources and support do working groups need to do their work?*

**Questions for groups** (from the *Working Group Report* form):

- Name of project or working group
- Describe the project or working group
- What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life? What time frames?
- What skills are available?
- What resources are available?
- What partnerships can be formed?
- Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?
- Who will be the principle organizers?
- Who else do you need to invite?
- What do you need in the short-term? In the long-term?
- How will the group know when they have been successful?
- How will the group communicate with each other?
- When and where (or how) will your group meet next?

**Harvest:** Following are the results from those groups:

### Working Group 1

**Name of project or working group:** Nova Scotia-based learning materials

**Describe the project or working group:** Developing and identifying resources to create learning materials

**Host:** Lewis MacKinnon

### **Who participated?**

Margie Beaton, Lewis MacKinnon, Shay MacMullin, Susan Cameron

**What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

**What time frames?**

- Call for interest – Create a Gaelic resource group to assist with terminology, idiom and content.
- Call for additional materials.

**What skills are available?**

**What resources are available?**

**What partnerships can be formed?**

St.F.X. library, universities, Gaelic Council, Public Archives, Department of Education, OGA

**Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**

Margie, Lewis, Shay, Susan and others

**Who will be the principle organizers?**

**Who else do you need to invite?**

**What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

What does our end product look like?

Video series/thematic/continuing/transcripts/subtitles/exercises: through Gaelic. Learning modules/sustainable.

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

**When and where will the group meet next?**

### **Working Group 2**

**Name of project or working group:** Achieving fluency in a non-threatening environment.

**Describe the project or working group:** Opportunity to practice the language in a wide range of everyday situation (with a fluent speaker on hand)

**Host:** Beth MacNeil

**Who participated?**

Laura, Beth, Dwayne

**What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

**What time frames?**

Trial weekends over a few months.

Using TIP with a small group “A day in the life” theme. (Two people creating a film “a day in the life of . . .” to make available resource to learners of everyday vocabulary.

**What skills are available?**

Access to fluent speakers in a learning setting.

**What resources are available?**

Funding and locations (local, fluent speakers)

**What partnerships can be formed?**

Gaelic speakers/learners wanting to reach fluency

**Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**

Needs the same type of planning as this weekend.

**Who will be the principle organizers?**

Gaelic Council

Office of Gaelic Affairs

**Who else do you need to invite?**

Students of Gaelic and the advanced tutors to facilitate

**What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

When everybody who wants to speak Gaelic can.

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

**When and where will the group meet next?**

**Working Group 3**

**Name of project or working group:** Ramp up tutor training

**Describe the project or working group:**

1. Bring in specialists to conduct training sessions in language teaching
2. Bring tutors together to share our expertise and best practices.

**Host:** Hector MacNeil

**Who participated?**

Bernie Cameron, Simon Innes, Bill MacLeod, Shay MacMullin and Betty Lord

**What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

1. (Identify) who/cost/availability/venue. Seek funding (provincial/federal [employment programs]) for specialist seminars

2. Establish Gaelic tutors' working group. Organize seminar (facilitated) to share best practices (communicate objectives, be prepared to share success/challenges, lots of lead time, email success/challenges, craft agenda, identify costs, seek funding.)

#### **What time frames?**

1. November 2009
2. April 3, 4, 5, 2009

#### **What skills are available?**

Expertise of tutors  
Organizational skills  
Asher/Hinton expertise

#### **What resources are available?**

Tutors' resources – materials/intangible  
Gaelic College facility – meeting and lodging  
Funding resources, that we can pursue Office support.

#### **What partnerships can be formed?**

Gaelic Affairs, Gaelic Council, Gaelic College, *Sabhal Mór Ostaig (foghlam beatha)*, CLI, other ethnic communities, community-based organizations affecting Gaelic language opportunities, Department of Education.



**Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**

Hector, Betty, Bernard.

**Who will be the principle organizers?**

Hector MacNeil, Betty Lord, Bernard Cameron, Shay MacMullin.

**Who else do you need to invite?**

Tutors, potential tutors, language specialists.

**What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

Financing, office support, venue, correspondence, tutor buy-in, OGA buy-in.

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

Exchange of ideas effective specialists have been brought in.

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

Email

**When and where will the group meet next?**

Via email – on-going.

**Working Group 4**

**Name of project or working group:** Gaelic youth film

**Describe the project or working group:** Have a film making workshop with mentors and equipment to prepare a 3-5 minute film that gets entered into an on-line provincial competition.

**Host:** Nona MacDermid (Gaelic College was written on sheet)

**Who participated?**

Brian MacDonald, Nona MacDermid, Dwayne MacEachern, Beth Ann MacEachern, Catriona Parsons.

**What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

**What time frames?**

Write proposal with budgets, plan for people/equipment

Need to joint venture: Gaelic Council, OGA, Department of Education, School Boards, Principals, CBC, NFB, Gaelic College, Parent management with Nona and films.

Get funding → CBC/NFB/OGA/GAP/Entrance fee

Recruit → Fluent speakers/story film making mentors.

GAP February 15, notice end of March/Film project April/ Films ready May 1

**What skills are available?**

Nona – film making/producing

Catriona – language mentoring/theatre

Beth Ann and Brian – Access to schools and classes and students

AFCOOP/CBFA – provide film mentors. (Sheldon Currie)

**What resources are available?**

HR – teachers/mentors/

Facilities – schools and Gaelic College

Equipment at schools that have film

Internet – publicity/voting through CBC

**What partnerships can be formed?**

Gaelic College, CBC, NFB,CBFA, AFCOOP, viewfinders, Gaelic Council, School Boards, Schools, Principals.

**Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**

Nona, Brian, Catriona, Beth, Dwayne, OGA resource, Gaelic Council.

**Who will be the principle organizers?**

Nona, Beth, Catriona, and Brian.

Write up GAP application – Catriona

**Who else do you need to invite?**

Mary Fedorchuk, Sam MacPhee, Bill MacLeod, Michael Fox.

**What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

Funding

Parent meeting with project team

Long term – CBC/NFB, Public relations

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

When we have at least three new youth produced Gaelic films.

The films are available on-line

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

Have Skype, teleconference meeting the week of Feb. 2-9.

Skype/email.

In person meetings at schools to present

**When and where will the group meet next?**

- On-line next week to review GAP application.
- In person at schools or school board ASAP.

- Feb. 23-24 -- Producers meeting in Halifax with CBC.

### Working Group 5

**Name of project or working group:** *Buidhean obrach ardachadh na Gàidhlig*

**Describe the project or working group:** Interested in developing a media strategy.

**Host:** Jim Watson

#### **Who participated?**

Ken Nilsen, A.J. MacDougall, John MacNeil, Joe Peter MacLean, Dwayne MacEachern

**What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

**What time frames?**

**What skills are available?**

Editing, institutional and organizational capacity.

**What resources are available?**

See above.

**What partnerships can be formed?**

Village, Comhairle na Gàidhlig, FIOS

**Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**



Jim Watson

**Who will be the principle organizers?**

Jim, Ken, Dwayne.

**Who else do you need to invite?**

Key organizational people.

**What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

Talk to people about the need.

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

By what appears about Gaelic publicly.

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

Phone, email.

**When and where will the group meet next?**

When the need arises.

### **Working Group 6**

**Name of project or working group:** Communication and co-ordination strategy for the Gaelic community.

**Describe the project or working group:** Draft a strategy for collecting and disseminating Gaelic language events and initiatives

**Host:** Tim Aggett and Caroline Cameron

#### **Who participated?**

Caroline Cameron, Tim Aggett, John MacNeil

#### **What are the steps necessary to make your project come to life?**

##### **What time frames?**

1. Map out relationships among the members of the Gaelic community
2. Refine the map at a meeting of involved and interested people
3. Communicate strategy developed using the co-ordination mapping work.

#### **What skills are available?**

Community planning/development experience  
Organizational planning and experience

#### **What resources are available?**

The Gaelic community  
Gaelic Council website and administration officer  
Office of Gaelic Affairs.

#### **What partnerships can be formed?**

OGA  
Gaelic Council  
Various potential cultural organization

#### **Who is willing to work on making this project a reality?**

Tim, Caroline

#### **Who will be the principle organizers?**

Tim, Caroline, Gaelic Council.

#### **Who else do you need to invite?**

OGA  
Gaelic Council (community development committee, communication committee).

#### **What do you need in the short term? In the long term?**

Time, money, people, community buy-in.

**How will the group know when they have been successful?**

When there is good representation of the community at the meetings.  
When the Gaelic community is well informed of events and initiatives.

**How will (members of) the group communicate with each other?**

Face to face, phone, email, skype (if available).

**When and where will the group meet next?**

Next Céilidh House Meeting or as soon as can be arranged.

❖ CLOSING, DAY 2

The day and workshop closed with a circle. Many people expressed thanks for the two days together and the desire to continue working together on projects and in future workshops. Some comments:

- One participant said she felt honored to be invited
- One participant felt Céilidh House Meetings that bring the community together should be held quarterly. There is a need to meet face-to-face. Suggested that a yearly schedule be developed, similar to the Filmmakers Co-operative.
- Office of Gaelic Affairs said Céilidh House Meetings are important as they inform the office's planning.
- One participant stressed that the collaborative process the Office of Gaelic Affairs is using is encouraging.
- The importance of creating opportunities for children to join their parents in Gaelic activities was stressed. Discussion on Gaelic College learning weekend that targets families.

## **Workshop Evaluations**

The participants were asked to fill out workshop evaluations. Following are the compilations of those forms:

### **What did you appreciate about this workshop?**

1. Good to see people thinking ahead but also trying to identify concrete next steps.
2. Style and positive aspect
3. Lots of information exchanged, good venue, very well organized
4. We talked about so many other possibilities regarding Gaelic beyond TIP. Very exciting!!
5. Open, non-stressful, highly informative of passion in the community
6. Well-organized, sense of purpose, comradeship
7. Gathering of diverse groups, good discussions.
8. Touching base with Gaels, looking to the future.
9. Good exchange of ideas and open discussion
10. The passion and enthusiasm expressed by the group
11. The chance to meet others in the Gaelic Community and exchange ideas.
12. The congenial company – the consensus achieved – the passion evident – the good ideas – the willingness to work.
13. The style, everyone has an input
14. Chance to hear so much Gaelic and participate in the Gaelic world for a bit. Enjoyed the method of beginning with a story. Chance to interact with many people.
15. I loved the techniques like World Café and Open Space as they are inclusive and non-threatening. I liked that we are working on plans for growth.
16. Materials sent before the workshop. Well facilitated, good team approach ran on time.
17. Chance to discuss plan for the future for Gaelic.
18. Full participation of all present – ability to go with the flow.
19. I appreciated a general sense of solidarity on the issue of Gaelic renewal taking place within the parameters of its traditional community – directionally independent of institutions with little to offer beyond token recognition at best. Also, the format was well delivered.

### **What suggestions do you have for changes to this workshop?**

1. Sometimes felt Harvest sessions could have been shorter
2. Perhaps more time i.e. another day, 2 ½ days
3. Invite children to participate and entertain. They could be doing Gaelic related activities and join the larger group when possible/practical.
4. More time
5. Begin earlier. Friday afternoon/evening

6. Workshops can have an incremental framework. Next one is based on the outcomes of this one.
7. It was well-paced, productive
8. Well done
9. Simplify facilitation
10. More movement in the OST sessions
11. By all means, bring in the children
12. Have “Céilidh session” on Friday night
13. One section with the vision and then the specific set of questions seemed to be confusing, but good stuff came out anyway.
14. Opening the workshop with a social gathering would make it easier to share ideas/concerns later.
15. The one half hour “Blue Skye” spontaneous session. Dream ++ (plus)
16. May have been better to have impartial folks facilitating.
17. In some cases, issues around which day two groups formed to initiate a strategy and plan of action might benefit from similar workshops focused solely on their given topic – such as learning material development.

### **What did you learn?**

1. That there is more going on linked to Gaelic in Nova Scotia than I thought.
2. More informed about skill sets of those in attendance – useful for knowing who to approach for help on various projects.
3. Many people are on the same page to where they want to see the Gaelic be in the future.
4. A whole lot of Gaelic opportunities to communicate socially. I made numerous connections and even got involved in two important projects that will be completed from start to finish.
5. That there is a greater level of consensus among the participants than I expected.
6. LOTS! We’re making good progress. I am not at all frustrated. I feel we are taking the necessary time to get things right.
7. Lots of simple ways to tackle problems
8. We have come a long way but we have a long way to go. There is much enthusiasm and passion for the language.
9. So many problems, so few resources
10. The strength that comes through collaboration/The camaraderie that can be developed through open sharing.
11. Clarified what I would like to see happen with Gaelic. Came up with new ideas as to how to make it happen
12. It is not so much that I learned something new as became confirmed in the faith that what we are about can be accomplished.
13. That there are more people than I thought passionate about Gaelic. Some new Gaelic words, phrases.

14. I learned about the skills/experiences/ passions of those around us.
15. That we are not utilizing all our resources to achieve the best possible resource. We are being a bit territorial and we need better communication/coordination.
16. How to reach consensus. Action orientation.
17. That there is growing interest in Gaelic.
18. How powerful our community is.
19. A change in community discourse from external reference points to an internal view seems to indicate that a level of self-confidence is emerging in Nova Scotia's Gaelic renewal community.

### **Who else should be part of the process?**

1. Perhaps some young people. We could gather their opinions to what we are trying to accomplish. Is our efforts imparted to them that the language advance.
2. I believe we have the optimum fit of government, education, public, Gaelic community organizations to make this initiative take flight.
3. As Nona mentioned there's more people out there – Meat Cove etc. Mi'kmaq language advocates, French/Acadian language advocates.
4. Diverse groups
5. Youth reps?
6. At this point, no one; later, other interest and interested people.
7. Key community development contacts, RDAs, Continuing ed., tourism and recreation organization contacts
8. Everyone who is currently teaching Gaelic or who has done in the past.
9. Murdina MacRae, Gaelic teacher in Kentville; Morag Burke, Big Pond; Emily MacKinnon, Meaghan O' Handley, Joanne MacIntyre – Currently doing B.ED to become Gaelic teachers.
10. A children's Gaelic weekend/workshop (+ spouse)
11. Many other people who will be identified over the next few years, through some of the initiatives which were born or at least conceived here.
12. Board members of the Gaelic College, Sam MacPhee, CBC – we need Gaelic media.
13. Minister of Gaelic Affairs.
14. Youth
15. The invitees who were not able to attend.
16. On a project basis, vetted professionals and advocates with a strong interest in seeing Gaelic in Nova Scotia reach a satisfactory measure of renewal could be called on to provide critical services and advice.

### **What other questions should we be asking?**

1. Perhaps we as a community should look outside of government for support
2. Are we missing anyone or anything that could potentially improve the status of Gaelic in Nova Scotia? How can communication be improved?
3. How much time/effort can we really commit to these things? (Maybe this would help to create a sense of responsibility)
4. How does the process link up with other established projects/organizations?
5. Who has the time to do this work?
6. End objective. We could spend the weekend on how to involve youth.
7. Continuing to ask if what we are doing is working.
8. How do we create awareness within the larger community?
9. Can we achieve concrete timelines for current projects?
10. How can we get a Gaelic media fund in Canada? How can we get the funds to teach tutors? Why isn't the Gaelic College a huge part of this effort?
11. What is government's long range financial commitment? How do we fit within the federal multi-cultural agenda?
12. How to keep this process moving ahead.
13. ? My head is full.
14. The relationships of formal education and social transmission to a living framework for language and cultural maintenance requires more exploration for understanding.

### **What is the most important action to come out of this weekend?**

1. Follow-up on events
2. Follow-up and completion of main working group projects.
3. Hope that whatever "outcome" that finally comes about can be acted upon in a short period of time.
4. We need to see evidence of action as a result of all these great objectives which were created.
5. Guiding principles; co-ordination/communication strategy; tutor workshop; tutor/student learning materials.
6. Communications efforts
7. Coordinated effort
8. Communication – to create support
9. Pick priority issues and move on with them.
10. Identification of key initiatives – prioritize. Create a result within a realistic time-bound period.
11. For me, further tutor training (towards fluency). Generally more effective collaboration/networking/mutual support across the province.
12. That each group implements the project they begun.

13. That we put forward some concrete actions toward our main goal, Gaelic renewal.
14. Follow-up, continued contact, *brosnachadh* (encouragement)
15. We need to document the human and other resources we have and then coordinate efforts (e.g. database of Gaelic speakers who are willing to share. Maximize use of Gaelic council website etc.
16. Increased commitment to working together.
17. Follow up
18. Tutor training in language and methodology; materials from NS; methodology; tutor toolkits.
19. Creating a cogent social support system for all levels of initiative may be the cornerstone for successes in mustering – or overcoming – impinging domains for long-term development.

### **Participants**

A.J. MacDougall, Bernard Cameron, Brian MacDonald, Beth MacNeil, Beth Ann MacEachen, Bill MacLeod, Caroline Cameron, Catriona Parsons, Dwayne MacEachern, Elizabeth Lord, Frances MacEachen, Hector MacNeil, Jessica MacLennan, Jim Watson, Joe Peter MacLean, John MacNeil, Ken Nilsen, Laura Stirling, Lewis MacKinnon, Margie Beaton, Mary Fedorchuk, Mary Jane Lamond, Nona MacDermid, Shay MacMullin, Simon Innes, Susan Cameron, Tim Aggett.



# APPENDIX A

## Cover Letter with Revised Guiding Principles

March 3, 2008

A (Bhana) Chàirdean Chòire:

I am sending a draft report from the Céilidh House Meeting -- Gàidhlig aig Baile, held at the Gaelic College January 31-February 1.

You will note this is a transcript of the information collected at the meeting. It also includes a review of the rationale and objectives for this Céilidh House Meeting and a summary of the weekend. If you see any errors or omissions, please send them to me and I'll include them in a final draft of the report.

We encourage your feedback on the report and any suggestions that you may have for future development of *Gàidhlig aig Baile*. We would especially like your comments on the proposed vision and guiding principles. The guiding principles for *Gàidhlig aig Baile* will guide us in the planning and delivery of community-based learning opportunities. The guiding principles should reflect Gaelic Nova Scotia, our experience and best practices with community-based learning and that of other endangered language communities. They will guide the Gaelic community's work in implementing our vision for *Gàidhlig aig Baile* in Nova Scotia.

On day two of the Céilidh House Meeting, one of the working groups developed a vision statement and summary of the guiding principles, based on information collected from our café conversations. (See pages 6-10 of the report). After the weekend, the working group continued to refine the vision and guiding principles. They are:

**Vision:** *Growing Gaelic language and culture in and through communities.*

### Guiding Principles

1. Gaelic is the language of the learning experience.
2. Learning environments are:
  - *In multiple settings*
  - *Supportive*
  - *Encouraging*
  - *Reflective of urban and rural settings*
3. The learning experiences are:
  - *Relevant to Nova Scotia Gaelic culture*
  - *Intergenerational*
  - *Experiential*
  - *Contextual*
  - *Supportive of different learning styles*

- *Based on current research and community experience.*
  - *Offering opportunities for repetition without repetitiveness*
4. Tutors are:
    - *Adequately supported*
    - *Responsible for ongoing assessment and evaluation*
    - *Sharing best practices with other tutors and program deliverers*
    - *Exploring and utilizing local resources.*
  5. Learners are:
    - *Responsible for their own learning.*
  6. Tutors and learners together are:
    - *Engaged in assessing measurable outcomes.*
  7. Learning opportunities are accessible; a lack of funds shall not preclude participation

What are your thoughts on these principles? How can they be improved? Is there a need for further discussion on the vision and guiding principles?

In addition to these principles, the working group identified two needs:

- To identify how Gàidhlig aig Baile programs will be co-ordinated.
- To identify who is responsible for ongoing support for community organizations which implement Gàidhlig aig Baile programs and celebrate success.

Your thoughts on these two items would also be appreciated.

The Office of Gaelic Affairs would like to thank the planning team of Tim Aggett, Shay MacMullin and Mary Jane Lamond and our facilitator Alan Sloan for their work, good humour and commitment to the process.

Thank you for traveling to the Gaelic College from your homes across Nova Scotia. We appreciate your great ideas, hard work, songs, stories, music and enthusiasm for the future of Gaelic in Nova Scotia.

Le deagh-dhùrachd,

Frances MacEachen  
Community Development Officer  
maceacff@gov.ns.ca

## APPENDIX B

### Responses to Draft Report from Participants

**March 6, 2009**

**Jim Watson, Nova Scotia Highland Village**

Responding to a request for feedback on proceedings from *Gàidhlig aig Baile* development discussions at the Gaelic College, I offer a few impressions.

Firstly, in my view, the two days were efficient and productive. Group dynamics were focused on community, where - if Gaelic language and culture is to have a future in Nova Scotia, initiatives must necessarily be nurtured and matured. Prevailing comments from participants throughout talks and exercises indicated that Gaelic renewal in Nova Scotia is seen as an internal issue best met by development of local resources and collaborative strategies. Sessions were well conducted, no doubt due to thoughtful preparation and planning beforehand. (The organizers and facilitators are to be commended.) Those present brought a good cross-section of Gaelic renewal experience to their tables. (On this point, group commitment to tasks at hand was an impressive resource in itself.) And to be sure, conversations, singing and music during down time after supper Saturday night was not the least aspect of this working weekend; an organic instance of Gaelic language as a distinct medium for social exchange in the Province.

Follow-up is important, and so we have been asked to comment on the record of our work and, in particular, on the vision and guiding principles for building the *Gàidhlig aig Baile* methodology. For my part, starting with the vision, it is brief and directly to the point. *Gàidhlig aig Baile* is a vehicle for language transmission, but more than just classes and learning materials. Its philosophy embraces a social framework of planning, co-operation and innovation. To this end, I believe, the vision statement's simplicity encapsulates the goals which we all wish to see realized. If word tinkering is appropriate here, a suggestion might be that the vision statement read something like this: Growing language and culture in, by and with communities. It also seems essential to me that the vision statement should be stated in Gaelic first - as should be the guiding principles.

For the sake of mission clarity, I have a few suggestions on guiding principles for consideration. They are as follows:

1. The principles could be placed in the context of an overarching tenet such as: *Gàidhlig aig Baile* is a community-based philosophy that strives for Gaelic renewal in Nova Scotia by way of a living language - or some such statement;
2. The word learning is used a lot in the text for guiding principles. I think that overuse of this word lends itself to a persona that the *Gàidhlig aig Baile* methodology is not so much socially engaged as it is an educational medium.

Perhaps *Gàidhlig aig Baile* principles could be clearer on intentions toward renewal outcomes in communities and cultural transmission;

3. The guiding principles could include more focus on cultural content, and its transmission, as central to Gaelic social expression in Nova Scotia. “Nova Scotia Gaelic culture” is mentioned under principle 3 in the first bullet only. As well, under principle 4, it might also be stated that tutors need to be adequately informed, and able to deliver, relevant cultural content.
4. Principles 5 and 6 seem to indicate satisfactory outcomes in a learner and tutor matrix. Broadening domains for assessment might include qualifying *Gàidhlig aig Baile* processes in terms of community capacity building.
5. Response to two statements of need on page three of the cover letter is as follows:
  1. To identify how *Gàidhlig aig Baile* programs will be co-ordinated;

Partial answer to need 1 might entail training liaison officers who work for a service organization such as FIOS in co-operation with the community-based funding arm of the Office of Gaelic Affairs.

2. To identify who is responsible for ongoing support for community organizations which implement *Gàidhlig aig Baile* programs and celebrate success?

The Office of Gaelic Affairs is the obvious source for provision of core funding to community-based *Gàidhlig aig Baile* initiatives. Allocations available through the office should be prioritized to carry out this role, perhaps through reorganization of the present GAP remit.

Finally, supporting research documentation, such as *Am Blas Againn Fhìn*, the Dunbar report for FIOS and proceedings from other meetings on TIP development, could be combined with results from the Gaelic College Céilidh House Meeting to create a foundation document that informs *Gàidhlig aig Baile* direction at community and bureaucratic levels, in particular with a view towards policy making.

Having said that, I believe the issue of validating cultural representations in the Province waits for the same treatment as community-based immersion. Not as simple as two sides of the same coin, I strongly recommend that Gaelic Nova Scotia’s cultural expressions be prioritized over a similar Ceilidh House working session for discussions on re-integrating cultural expression to community social domains. In so far as mobilization is concerned, Gaelic Nova Scotia’s glass is now half-full. In the course of renewing Gaelic language, fundamental questions remain, what are we going to say and who do we represent?

For those who wish to consider other models for organizing around these issues, the following Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages URL may give prove of interest:

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Publications/language.html>

---

**March 12, 2009**

**Catriona Parsons**

First of all, my strong impression of the two days together was of the passionate commitment of the participants and, to a large degree, of consensus among us. Though I sometimes found the proceedings confusing on the first day, and the draft report itself manifests how much material to digest came out of the meeting, I realize that a birthing process is a messy one!

Secondly, I was interested to read in Seumas Watson's response his comment on "Gàidhlig aig Baile" as a "community-based philosophy" (my underlining). It echoes my own sense of the meeting that the "Gàidhlig aig Baile" concept has become much more than a Gaelic name for TIP. This was quite evident from the breadth and scope of ideas that emerged from the process, while at the same time all were unanimous on the community as central. It's a foundational theoretical principle that language is kept alive in families and families live in linguistic communities : everyone is (at least instinctually) aware of this. A sentence of this sort might be the first philosophical principle of "Gàidhlig aig Baile".

Thirdly, I'd like to comment briefly on some aspects of how Gaelic Education might begin to be seen within the "Gàidhlig aig Baile" 'philosophy' (I guess this isn't strictly a response to the actual 2-day meeting, but speaks more to what might have developed if we'd had a 3<sup>rd</sup> day focussed on the wider parameters of Education, which include TIP , originally seen as immersion language instruction for adults, currently known by us as Gàidhlig aig Baile).

We need a comprehensive language plan, including :

- 1) Children (from babies on up) and Parents at home
- 2) Pre-school (2-5?) (Cròileagain)
- 3) Elementary School (Public--- and Private?)
- 4) Junior High School (Public--- and Private?)
- 5) High School (Public--- and Private? Including the International Baccalaureate)
- 6) Community Centre (taking in many activities, incl. Adult Gaelic Immersion classes)
- 7) University
- 8) School of Education ( Gaelic Methods for Elementary, JHS and HS)
- 9) Central Resource Library (compare French model)

I confess I've been uneasy from the beginning about the TIP model that requires NOT seeing the language at the same time as spoken Gaelic words/phrases are introduced to the adult class. (I'm not talking about grammar here!) Children under 2 get exposed to

the spoken language at home first; then parents read to them from books, child on knee looking at the pictures and words.

This whole thing got beautifully crystallized for me last week when I went back to visit the French school in Pomquet, Antigonish County. The youngest (3s and 4s) were in **Pré-*sgoilaire*** (Pre-school); French was the language of instruction (with some English at the beginning of the year since most of the children were in fact not from Francophone families; or even if they were, English is often what's used at home, according to Mme. Vignon, the teacher). **ALL** over the walls were colourful pictures with the words spelled out. There were colourful books for them to use. They could **SEE** the words while they **HEARD** their pronunciation for the first time and thereafter.

The next stage is **La Classe Maternelle** (5-year-olds.) I watched the teacher teach the children new words from a story-board, putting names to the characters (The story was "Sam, le Serpent")—and adding their own ideas from the vocabulary they already knew. At that point, all was conducted in French. The children were thoroughly engaged. They were **SEEING** and **HEARING** and **SPEAKING** all at the same time!

I have heard on occasion adult **beginners** of Gaelic express frustration because, as some have expressed it, "I don't know what I'm saying!" Many are **VISUAL** learners more than **AUDIAL** or **KINAESTHETIC** learners; all these methods should be integrated. Gaelic adults in **TIP** classes who have already experienced learning Gaelic in other ways have much less problem because **THEY KNOW WHAT THE WORDS LOOK LIKE** already, and the order in which they come in a sentence. The speech only method works best with the older native speakers who are renewing their facility in using the language but have never learned to read it. I'm sure however there must be some who would like to become literate.

I could continue at great length but this is already too long! **SO**, two final small points :

- 1) Using learners as teachers should be carefully monitored : example I have of direct translation from English is "a'dèanamh suas a'leabaidh" instead of the idiom "a'càradh na leapa". This kind of thing simply reinforces the need for the very initiative we're embarked on. Perhaps the thorough preparation of suitable materials will largely take care of this difficulty.
- 2) If/When we bring teachers from Scotland, they should be given an orientation before starting teaching.

Sin e an dràsda! Ach dìreach gu robh a'choinneamh le chéile gu math feumail's taing dhan fheadhainn a chuir a h-uile sion air dòigh.

CNP

---

**March 15, 2009**  
**Caroline Cameron**

Hello all,

I reviewed the notes and felt that they were great. I went over all the comments for the guiding principles, and found they all fell into one of the following list of principles, perhaps it is too detailed, but I felt that it was better to be explicit. There is naturally lots

of overlap with the principles as presented in the draft report. If any of this is useful, help yourself!

The Gàidhlig aig Baile program should be:

- Professionally delivered
- Sustainable: planning for ongoing support of all aspects / tutors / participants
- Set measurable outcomes, goals for all aspects / tutors / participants
- Set in place evaluation mechanisms for all aspects / tutors / participants
- Flexible in technique, well informed, open to development
- Utilizes local resources and culture
- Develops language community outside of class
- Promotes the value of language maintenance
- Utilizes principles of community development

The classes should be:

- Immersion
- Repetitive
- Experiential
- Inclusive of, accessible by all ages
- Comfortable, relaxed, natural and varied learning environments
- Based in, and therefore reinforcing NS Gaelic social and cultural context

\*\*\*

Of the principles presented in the draft report, I am uncertain about actually assigning responsibilities listed in 7 and 8 to specific people. (1. I don't think that it was discussed at all by the group – but maybe I missed it 2. Regarding 8, ... well I tried about five ways to express the problem here, but there are a number of reasons why tutors should not be responsible for evaluation. My comments have nothing to do with current tutors, but for the sake of 'running a tight ship', I feel it would be best not to assign responsibility to tutors, but simply state that ongoing assessment and evaluation must be carried out – until there are more details hammered out.)

Also, I don't believe that principle 9 has to do with guiding principles, although, of course it is a critical question, and could be addressed separately in the document.

\*\*\*\*

I appreciate Jim's comments – and especially the suggestion that we take a Ceilidh House approach to the cultural side of things – perhaps not too soon, because it seems to me that we have a lot to digest right now in terms of trying to operationalize the information from the Gàidhlig aig Baile session.

\*\*\*\*

I also especially like Catriona's thoughts on understanding Gaidhlig aig Baile in the context of the full range of education opportunities in our world. This in no way depreciates the offering of Gàidhlig aig Baile. The programme is only yet developing, and we have used TIP extensively for fluency development for beginners and have found it effective. A less-understood aspect of TIP, as Finlay presents it, is that literacy is approached after the initial period of 200 hours (it is only initially text-free). Of course, Gàidhlig aig Baile is yet to be defined and it would probably be foolish to configure it without carefully thinking about how it is complemented by resources and programmes already existing.

---

**March 18, 2009**

**John MacNeil**

Day 1

**Session 2:**

**Honest evaluation of program effectiveness:** Like I've said before I think the Gaelic immersion method is the way to go but has it been evaluated in any depth? It should be able to stand on its own merit. Can the cost justify what is accomplished? Anything that is funded mainly from TAXPAYERS should have an unbiased evaluation.

**Under Guiding Principles:** Sustainability in the long term will not be possible if just the Gaelic community remains opportunist that its language and culture is important. The non Gaelic community must be convinced that all minority cultures are assets to be nurtured.

**Drafting Guiding Principles: #9** Co-ordination of *Gaidhlig aig Baile* programs rest with -----? That is something that must be answered sooner than later.

**Session 3:**

**Vision 1 --- open door**

Websites: For most websites the initial idea seems good at the start. The problem is to update and keep information current. That's where most websites fail. However I see an advantage for other Gaelic organizations to link to a site such as the Gaelic Council. What I'm saying if something is going on in the Gaelic community the Council website is where the information should be. If it isn't then someone has dropped the ball.

Student exchanges: Very important and benefits are for the long term because of the friendships that are established. The same for family exchanges.

**Session 4:**

**Topic 1 - - - - Gaelic Media - - -** It's important at this stage that we look to see what is available at present in Scotland that we can utilize to have Gaelic more visible to a larger audience. We should try to benefit from what has been already tried and had some

success. Our resources of people and dollars are much more limited and we must always keep that in mind.

**Topic 2 - - - - Get tutors over from Scotland - - -** That perhaps is what may happen but please understand that has to be "sold" to the Gaelic community over in Nova Scotia. I can only say that at a community meeting a few years ago in Christmas Island that idea, from a list of different proposals, was dead last. And that sentiment may not be unique to Christmas Island.

**Topic 3 - - - - Domains of speech - - - -** This "Domains of speech" is what has weakened over time. It's what has happen with an minority language. I don't think it can be stopped. For learners of the Gaelic language to have an understanding of their history and culture is one important way to slow the process. Don't be an "orphan" to our culture. We fail as a Gaelic community when we don't promote the history of the Celts let us say when we put on language workshops.

**Topic 5 - - - - Total immersion in the home - - - -** Of all the topics discussed if I had to pick one that I myself am most interested it would be " total immersion in the home". It's something I think is doable. It would have community support and be cost effective. There is a problem with sustainability but that perhaps could be managed.

## **Day 2**

General comments as per conversation:

**#1 In order to advance beyond weekly classes. - - - -** Just the logistics because of distance or number of learners it's something that probably is better for the learners to task as a group in their own communities. The Gaelic weekend idea seems to work. Could more be organized? Perhaps a co-op type venture, let's say a day care, teaming with an existing day care but use the Gaelic as the medium of play. The Gaelic house as I said before is something to really consider. It would be nice to move beyond the idea of "someone's" home and having a stand alone "Gaelic House". Ownership means fixed expenses and what have you. If there was some way to tie tourists or exchange students to the "Gaelic experience" the stand alone Gaelic house might be feasible. Would the Highland Village or Gaelic College consider to partner on looking at the concept?

**#2 Suggest looking for corporate funding. - - - -** This is an avenue that wouldn't hurt for us to try. A business can be sympathetic that we want financial help. We need convincing answers to receive the actual cash. Something that we may forget as a potential source of funds is the Gaelic community. Look at it this way. Most of us, if not all involved in trying to advance the Gaelic believe there is a renewal of grass roots support for the effort. If that is true should not financial support perhaps be there also? If not? Why the effort?

The following can be taken as comments in general to the Ceilidh House Meeting.

The two (2) days were well organized and went very well. We covered a lot of topics and information. I think most in this "Gaelic adventure" will admit what was discussed is not new. That`s not important. To act on the information is what is important. To build consensus from a group of twenty seven (27) members of the Gaelic community may be possible however we must always be cautious that the Gaelic community is in agreement. Perhaps at a future meeting we could agree that there should be an organized plan established that sets down areas for which each particular Gaelic organizations should be responsible. We have the Gaelic community, Comhairle na Gaidhlig, FIOS, other Gaelic organizations and the Office of Gaelic Affairs. I think we could be more efficient.

I know it would have been difficult with the time available but we missed an opportunity not to arrange a list of priorities. It would be a benefit to have had a consensus of what the group thought were items to really work on now and doable and what could be left to the future.

In closing I would like to mention I hope that the working groups will keep everyone informed of their progress or problems that they encounter.

With respect,  
John