Languages for the Future

NORTHERN IRELAND LANGUAGES STRATEGY

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Abbreviations

BSL/ISL	British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CILT	The National Centre for Languages
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations, and Assessment
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCAL	Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESOL	English as a Second Language
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INSET	In Service Training
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
KS1	Key Stage 1 etc
LLAS	Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NILS	Northern Ireland Languages Strategy
NVQ	National Voluntary Qualification
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SSC	Sector Skills Council
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UCML	University Council of Modern Languages

Introduction

The Importance of Languages

There has been concern for some time in the United Kingdom at the decline in the level of language learning in our schools, colleges and universities. This concern has been shared by many in Northern Ireland.

Somewhat paradoxically, this has been set against a growing public awareness of the importance of languages in terms of economic growth, social cohesion, and personal development. In an age increasingly characterised by globalisation and the large-scale movement of peoples, the pitfalls of monolingualism are becoming more apparent, as is the realisation that, despite its position as an unofficial *lingua franca*, not everyone in the world speaks, or chooses to speak, English.

The simple fact remains that if we wish to be truly international in our aspirations, if we wish to retain the sort of flexibility that will enable us to interact meaningfully and profitably with a world where the power balance between languages and language-blocs is constantly changing, we need to think long and hard about the sort of languages we teach, who we teach them to, and how we teach them.

These concerns have been echoed by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and other business organisations over the last fifteen years and have led to a number of significant policy initiatives in Great Britain. Many of them are referred to in this document. Two recent and particularly influential expressions of anxiety over what it calls 'the severity of the languages deficit in the United Kingdom' have come from the British Academy, which is tasked with developing research in the Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK. In *Language Matters*, launched in June 2009, it concludes that the decline in language learning is having a harmful impact on the ability of UK-born and UK-educated researchers to compete with their counterparts from overseas. It is working against efforts to ensure that the UK is a world-class hub of research, and in turn is damaging to the UK's economy and affecting the UK's ability to address many of the most urgent global challenges[1]. In *Language Matters More and More*, launched in London in February 2011 in the presence of the Minister for Universities and Skills, David Willetts MP, the Academy concludes that 'the study of languages is fundamental to the well-being, security and competitiveness of the UK'[2]. The recent proposal of an English baccalaureat, with a language as one of the core subjects, shows that government is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of languages in these challenging economic times[3].

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[1] *http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/language-matters.cfm*
[2] *http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/bulletin/Language_matters11.pdf*
[3] See Michael Kelly. 2011. 'Is the tide turning for our subject areas?' *Liaison Magazine,* 6, p.4.

These concerns apply to an even greater extent to Northern Ireland, given our position on the edge of Europe and the need to develop our economy and to enhance our international trading at a time of severe recession, and are echoed in the Republic of Ireland, where the National Committee for Modern Languages, Literary and Cultural Studies of the Royal Irish Academy has just published its National Languages Strategy[4].

This document argues that language learning is internationally recognised as being increasingly important commercially, culturally, politically and intellectually. The evidence of a greater emphasis on language learning is evident all around the world, from countries as diverse as China and Australia, which are developing coherent and far-reaching languages strategies, to UNESCO's emphasis on intangible heritage and the global reach of the Internet. Any education system that is responsive to the future wellbeing of the society that it serves must be able and willing to put forward a vision that supports the development of the language skills that will allow us to take our place in a future increasingly characterised by multilingual exchange and international co-operation.

History

It is against this background that the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, part of the Higher Education Academy, in conjunction with the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), has been involved in the promotion of language learning in Universities and Colleges. Its Director, Professor Michael Kelly, was a key member of the *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* (1998-2000) and involved in the drafting of the policy for England *Languages for all: Languages for Life* (2002).

Recognising that the situation of languages in Northern Ireland needed to be addressed, but that our informing context is somewhat different from that in England, the Northern Ireland committee of the UCML set out to promote the development of a languages strategy for Northern Ireland. A local branch of the Subject Centre was set up in 2005, with one of its chief aims being the development of such a strategy. This became the focus of the Centre's inaugural event in Northern Ireland in October 2005, at which the key speakers were Professor Kelly and Dr Lid King, Director of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching Research, the National Centre for Languages (CILT).

The objective of developing a strategy was one that was shared by the Department of Education (DE). Shortly after the launch, the Subject Centre entered into fruitful discussions with the Department, with the result that, in June 2006, the Centre was commissioned to undertake this task on behalf of, and in consultation with, the Department. The commissioning of the Strategy was formally announced at a reception at Stormont on 12th December 2006 by the then Minister Maria Eagle.

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[4] See Royal Irish Academy National Committee for Modern Language, Literary and Cultural Studies. 2011. National Languages Strategy. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy. See also the earlier preparatory document: Ó Dochartaigh, P and M Broderick. 2006. *Language Policy and Language Planning in Ireland,* A report from the Royal Irish Academy Committee for Modern Language, Literary and Cultural Studies, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

The terms of reference were:

- To produce a Languages Strategy that reflects a broad assessment of needs and provides a realistic action plan to promote the uptake of language learning at all levels.

- To take account of current thinking and strategy developments in England, Wales and Scotland, while at the same time recognising our own distinct context.

To consider language learning at all levels and across a broad spectrum of activity: this would therefore include languages at primary school, secondary school, Further Education, Higher Education and Continuing Education. It would consider Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), including those traditionally taught and the lesser-taught foreign languages, indigenous languages such as Irish, English as a second language as it is taught here, the languages of new immigrants to the province, and sign languages.

It was understood that the Centre would undertake consultation with stakeholders and key interest groups with a view to ensuring that the Strategy commanded widespread support, and would allow the public to comment on the scope and ambitions of the Strategy as they developed.

The stakeholders were identified as the business community, including small, medium and large companies, all sectors of education, language organisations and interest groups, the Council for Ethnic Minorities, the various ministries of government which have some responsibility for areas of work covered by the survey, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations, and Assessment (CCEA) and the Inspectorate. It was also recognised that contact with those in the Republic who are involved in the development of the languages strategy there would be important. This would include the Royal Irish Academy, other language agencies and the Ministry of Education.

Scope

The Strategy focuses on the importance of language learning and on the need to improve the uptake of languages in schools and colleges and in the wider community, but also recognises that languages are important for wider economic, social and community reasons, as well as on purely educational grounds.

The Strategy is comprehensive in that it examines all aspects of languages in the province (modern foreign languages, indigenous languages, migrant languages, English as an additional language and sign languages) and how provision can best be made to develop our language skills.

It is clear that the main driver for the changes proposed by the Strategy will be the Department of Education, but it is important to note that these recommendations contained in the Strategy will have significant implications for sectors that are the primary responsibility of other ministries, notably the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).

The Development of the Strategy

The Co-Directors of the Strategy, Professor John Gillespie (University of Ulster) and Professor David Johnston (Queen's University, Belfast), along with Professor Ailbhe Ó Corráin (Ulster) and Pam McIntyre (Queen's) formed the core team under the auspices of the Subject Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies (Northern Ireland). Two research assistants, Rosalyn Davidson (Queen's) and Sarah McMonagle (Ulster), were appointed, and the services of a language consultant, Arthur Bell (Languages Network Northern Ireland), an expert on languages for business, were retained. Dr Ana Kerr, who was seconded from the Belfast Education and Library Board, also assisted with the Strategy for the 2007-2008 academic year.

An Advisory group was set up which included a wide range of stakeholders. A series of Strategy-related events, held throughout Northern Ireland, was organised in which stakeholders from all areas of society were invited to participate. A further consultant, Peter Lavery, was employed to facilitate these consultations. In addition, many individual consultations were undertaken with a range of stakeholders, and submissions requested and received from many interested parties. There was also significant engagement with a number of key experts in the field of languages policy and planning, and contact was maintained with language organisations throughout the whole process. Details of these consultations can be found in the Appendix.

The Strategy website functioned as a key point of contact for all those concerned with the Strategy and has received, to date, more than 19,000 hits. In order to facilitate consultation, Strategy Questionnaires were devised: one for the general public, one for secondary school children and one for primary school children. 374 general, 455 secondary, and 573 primary questionnaires were completed and have provided much valuable quantitative and qualitative material that has been used extensively in the development of the Strategy.

The Strategy has, furthermore, been informed by research in the areas of language policy and planning carried out over an extended period of time at the University of Ulster and at Queen's University, Belfast.

The Value of Language Learning

The Strategy is underpinned by a deep-rooted sense of the value and life-enhancing nature of language learning. There are clear benefits to the learner in terms of generic and transferable skills, not least among them the enhancement of mother-tongue literacy and the promotion of communication skills. It is now widely recognised that learning another language generally enhances the cognitive development of students.

The broader picture is no less compelling. The value of languages for business and economic growth has long been established. Those with good language skills - the right language complemented by an appropriate area of expertise and a good level of intercultural awareness - are well placed in the job market. And there is evidence that this market will continue to expand. It is forecast that the turnover of the languages sector within Europe is set to grow by 10% annually until at least 2015[5].

Languages, of course, also develop our awareness of different cultures and can promote the values and aspirations of global citizenship within our local context.

It is this understanding of the value of languages that has underpinned the development of the Strategy and is reflected in each of its three major sections (see p 10 ff below for a more detailed presentation of the case for learning languages).

Key Objectives

The overall objectives of the Strategy are:

- To promote languages as a key skill for life

- To promote languages in education

- To broaden the range of appropriate language qualifications

- To encourage greater global awareness

- To improve language skills, particularly among children and young people

- To encourage communication and mutual understanding between members of different cultural backgrounds

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[5]   Quoted in an EC Press Release (Brussels, 12 October 2010). For further elaboration of this position see the recent report from the Thematic Working Group Languages for Jobs, European Strategic Framework for Education and Training. 2011, *Languages for Jobs,* 40pp.

The Structure of the Document

The document is divided into three sections, reflecting different aspects of languages. These are: **Languages for Life** - considering languages as a key skill in the context of their delivery within the education sector; **Languages for Prosperity** - outlining recommendations for languages within the business sector; and **Languages for Understanding** - exploring how communication and mutual understanding between members of different cultural backgrounds may be encouraged. Each section is colour coded and structured by the outlining of Strategic Objectives, Strategic Targets and Recommended Actions.

The Main Recommendations

Detailed recommendations are presented in the body of the document and in the table on pp.64 ff. The main recommendations are listed below with the corresponding section number and colour:

Languages for Life

1.2   That language learning be incorporated into the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) group of subjects (hence the suggested acronym: STEM-L), and specifically, that languages be regarded as contributing to the cross-curricular skill of communication up to Key Stage 3 (KS3) and to the development of literacy.

2.1   That pupils have the opportunity to study at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue from the earliest possible age and that all secondary pupils have the opportunity to study throughout their school career at least one language other than English.

2.2   That the teaching and learning of languages in pre-primary/nursery provision be encouraged.

2.3   That the Primary Languages Programme be consolidated and extended, that the teaching of languages at primary level be strongly encouraged in all schools at KS1, and KS2, through the broadening and deepening of language provision, and that languages be integrated into the Revised Primary Curriculum.

2.4   That full use be made of the School Collaborative Programme to deliver languages within the Entitlement Framework both as general and applied subjects, and that a Routes into Languages consortium be established in Northern Ireland.

2.6   That FE and HE institutions be encouraged to offer extended training in language competence to all students, in particular in relation to communication skills and vocational development, and that they address their languages strategies in their own corporate planning processes.

3.1   That the curriculum at both primary and secondary levels be widened to include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - the teaching of other subjects and topics through a language. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an appropriate pilot scheme, and to the encouragement of Specialist Language Schools, in particular, to implement such an approach.

3.3   That non-traditional languages within schools and colleges be further promoted.

4.2   That greater consideration be given to the creative use of technological resources and activities;

■   and that measures be put in place to provide Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers to integrate these new and subsequent resources and activities into their teaching;

■ that infrastructure be provided in schools to enable these media to be used, including the consideration of the use of learning spaces.

5.1 That consideration be given to the introduction of a range of non-traditional qualifications at all levels to reflect differing degrees of specialism, different skills and combinations of skills and differing levels of competence so that pupils may acquire vocational qualifications that assess their practical language skills.

Languages for Prosperity

7.2 That the private and voluntary sectors be supported in carrying out audits of their language and intercultural needs.

7.3 That language programmes for occupational purposes be included in the training provision within these sectors.

7.4 That employers be encouraged to provide language training opportunities, to recognise that languages are a skill priority, and be given incentives to reward language competence.

8.1 That government and local government take the lead by carrying out audits of language and intercultural competence in all relevant departments and agencies, and that steps be taken to meet these needs through explicit inclusion in the recruitment process.

Languages for Understanding

9.1 That existing Northern Ireland language policies and legislation should be subject to ongoing review in order to ensure that they maintain fitness for purpose in an increasingly pluricultural society and remain consistent with national and international legislation.

9.3 That the recommendations of the Business Case Report on Sign Languages should be fully implemented to meet the statutory requirements and duties enshrined in UK disability and equality legislation.

11.2 That the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the government of the United Kingdom, are fully applied and that, as an officially recognised indigenous language on an equal footing with Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, Irish should be afforded the full status and privileges that such standing entails.

11.3 That an awareness of, and respect for, Ulster-Scots traditions be encouraged, and steps taken to examine ways of employing Ulster-Scots linguistic and cultural icons.

Strategic Category 1: Languages for Life

It is our conviction that language learning is a lifelong process as well as an activity that is valuable throughout life. It is clear that a comprehensive languages strategy can be most effectively delivered through the education system.

Strategic Objective A

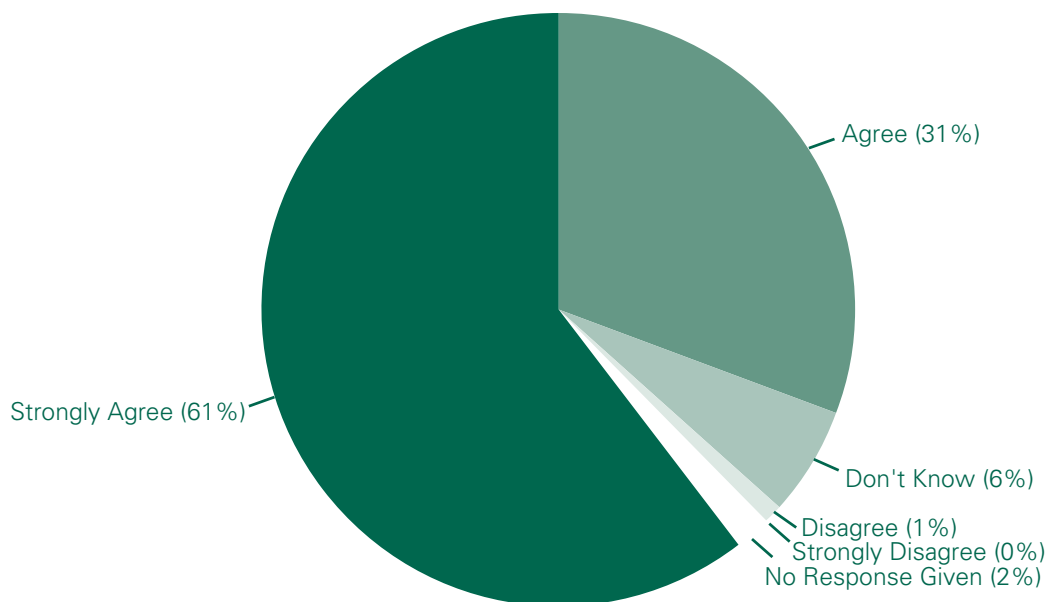To Promote Languages as a Key Skill for Life

1. Strategic Target

To bring about a change in attitudes to languages and intercultural skills so that they are perceived as relevant and attainable.

1.1 The Case for Languages in Northern Ireland

One of the key findings of the consultations that informed the Languages Strategy has been the strong support for the learning and teaching of languages[6]:

*1. **The development of a comprehensive Languages Strategy in Northern Ireland is important.***

- Agree (31%)
- Strongly Agree (61%)
- Don't Know (6%)
- Disagree (1%)
- Strongly Disagree (0%)
- No Response Given (2%)

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[6]   *http://www.nils.org.uk*

However, many in our community believe that languages are not valuable because, among other things, 'everyone speaks English'. We regard it as vital that the case for languages be made. This opinion is widely shared:

> Whether it be through initiatives in the fields of education, cyberspace or the literate environment; be it through projects to safeguard endangered languages or to promote languages as a tool for social integration; or to explore the relationship between languages and the economy, languages and indigenous knowledge or languages and creation, it is important that the idea that "languages matter!" be promoted everywhere[7].

> The fact that multilingualism has been made an EU policy area in its own right is a clear indication of a heightened awareness on the part of the Commission of the increasing importance of the multilingual challenge for the European project. As a result of enlargement, the Single Market and increased mobility within the EU, the revival of the regions, the advent of the knowledge society, migration into the EU, and globalization, this multilingual challenge has reached a completely new dimension - in terms of size, complexity, and policy relevance[8].

> Our traditional exclusive reliance on English is leaving the UK vulnerable, locked in a culture of dependence, reliant on the linguistic competence and the goodwill of others. It is in the national interest to equip the UK to be proactive and competitive in world markets and enable our young people to compete on an equal footing with their peers from Europe and Asia[9].

> The widespread but erroneous perception that 'English is enough' militates against the kind of plurilingual ambitions and achievements common in non-anglophone EU member states. The most recent strategy and action plan issued by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation argues that 'the main challenge for Ireland…is to become a truly multilingual society, where the ability to learn and use two or more languages is taken for granted and fostered at every stage of the education system and through lifelong education[10].

> The need for students to acquire a second language is more evident today than in past times. Research indicates that competency in a second language provides students with a battery of skills, increases their

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[7] Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, on the celebration of 2008, UN International Year of Languages.

[8] European Commission. 2007. *Final Report of the High Level Group on Multilingualism,*. See also 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment' *http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/com/2008_0566_en.pdf*

[9] The Nuffield Foundation. 2000. *The Nuffield Languages Inquiry. Languages: the next generation.* London: The Nuffield Foundation.

[10] Royal Irish Academy National Committee for Modern Language, Literary and Cultural Studies. 2011. National Languages Strategy. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

career prospects and broadens their cultural understanding. In essence, proficiency in a second language helps prepare students for life and success in the twenty-first century[11].

The project team has been convinced, on the basis of its process of research and consultation, of the significant and strategic benefits of language learning for all. It is these perceived benefits that encourage us to make our recommendations. This is not the place to elaborate detailed arguments, nor to deploy the accompanying evidence, but the following points have guided our thinking:

The Value of Language Skills across the Curriculum

Language Awareness

Language learning develops the awareness of how language works. This awareness enhances the capacity of learners in their mother tongue and particularly enhances general literacy. In addition, language learning promotes the development of communication skills: both oral skills in general and presentation skills in particular. Furthermore it facilitates the cognitive development of both young and old, including their capacity to manage information, solve problems, make decisions, and think creatively, all key elements of the Revised Curriculum for Northern Ireland.

Local and Global Citizenship

'Learning for Life and Work' at KS3 includes a strong emphasis on local and global citizenship. Due to the increasingly global dimension of our lives, young people are encouraged to explore issues of human rights and social responsibility, diversity and inclusion, equality and social justice, and democracy and active participation[12]. Languages increase our contact with others throughout the world and with those around us. Languages are, therefore, the most natural vehicle with which to promote both local and global citizenship.

The Economic Benefits of Languages

Despite the prevailing view that everyone speaks English, it is clear that those with language skills possess enhanced employability since they can function in different cultures with different clients. On the European job market employers are looking for employees with at least bilingual skills[13]. In today's European and global business context, with its emphasis on flexibility and exchange, such people are inherently mobile.

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[11] Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. 2007. *Developing Little Linguists: Final Evaluation of the Foundation Stage Primary Languages Pilot.* Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

[12] Learning for Life and Work for Key Stage 3, *http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/learning_for_life_and_work/training/LLW-Guidance.pdf*, pp.20-26.

[13] See for example the article by Liz Lightfoot, 'Learn languages or lose out on a job', *The Observer*, 21st September 2008 (*http://observer.guardian.co.uk*).

Respect for other peoples and cultures enables those with language skills to work effectively in other countries. Their knowledge of languages is vital for the kind of relationship building and networking required in the business and administrative fields. Developing language skills also contributes to economic development through international trade contacts. Furthermore, speakers of foreign languages possess language learning skills that enable competence in further languages to be acquired when they are needed (see **Strategic Category 2: Language for Prosperity**).

The Social Benefits of Languages

Languages, by encouraging pupils to look beyond the parameters of their own culture, foster the idea of working with others. They help develop globally aware individuals who are capable of valuing the linguistic and cultural competences of others and they enhance their cultural development. By introducing young people to alternative ways of self-expression and communication, and to different cultures, they broaden outlooks, and help learners develop an appreciation for the customs and cultures of people from other communities, thereby enhancing cross-cultural communication. They also enhance social mobility by stimulating and sustaining the individual's capacity to integrate with other cultures.

It is this final point that underpins our conviction that the intercultural skills that are a by-product of effective language learning will enable people to appreciate the value of cultural diversity in Northern Ireland and beyond, and in the process will foster the key notion of co-operation across whatever divides the differences of culture and of language seem to suggest (see **Strategic Category 3: Languages for Understanding**).

Personal Enrichment

Finally, the development of language skills contributes substantially to the personal enrichment of all, not least of those who have completed their formal education. Contact with other cultures and the direct experience of forms of expression and of thought other than our own proves enriching cognitively, intellectually and creatively.

Recommended Action 1.1

That a promotional campaign to demonstrate the advantages of language competence in personal, professional and cultural life be designed and implemented[14].

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[14] We would draw attention to 'Speak to the Future: The Campaign for Languages in England and Wales', where a five-year campaign is proposed, from 2011 to 2015, to improve the UK's understanding of the value of languages in all areas of life; to achieve a step change in language learning at all levels and to improve the nation's capacity in language skills and professional services: see *www.speaktothefuture.org*

1.2   Languages and the Skills Agenda

One of the most positive current developments in education is the Skills Agenda, which champions the delivery of key skills across the curriculum, with the emphasis on employability. Within that general framework, given their crucial role in education, business and society, we argue that languages should be considered central to that agenda. As we have seen above, languages enhance the delivery of the cross-curricular skills of communication, literacy, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) competence, problem-solving and the development of the capacity to work with others.

It has been recognised nationally, and specifically within the Programme for Government, that subjects that enable the development of scarce and strategic skills should be recognised and catered for in order to increase, amongst other things, productivity, employment, tourism, tolerance and inclusion in Northern Ireland[15]. Currently the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics have been so recognised:

… ensure our people have the right skills to deliver economic prosperity now and in the future and increase skills and career choices in STEM subjects[16].

It is our view that languages develop both scarce and strategic skills. CILT advises the following:

Employers are always looking for people with language skills. If you speak one or more language, even if not fluently, then research shows that your brain is already more flexible and better at many important tasks than that of someone who only speaks one language[17].

It follows from this, therefore, that languages should be included within the STEM category in view of the crucial contribution that languages may make to collective well-being.

Recommended Action 1.2

That language learning be incorporated into the STEM group of subjects (hence creating the suggested acronym STEM-L), and specifically, that languages be regarded as contributing to the cross-curricular skill of communication up to Key Stage 3 (KS3) and to the development of literacy.

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[15] See the Programme for Government Document which sets out the Executive's strategic priorities and key plans for 2008-2011, *http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/programme-for-government-and-budget-v1.htm*

[16] Programme for Government PSA 2: Skills for Prosperity, *http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/programme-for-government-and-budget-v1.htm*, p.24.

[17] Languages Work, *http://www.languageswork.org.uk*

1.3   Languages Forum

From our series of consultations around Northern Ireland, one of the top five recommended actions from the public is the establishment of a central resource for good practice. There are many organisations, agencies and associations that are involved in, or tasked with, the encouragement of languages. We believe that it would be useful if an umbrella group were formed to overcome this fragmentation in order to give a clear voice to languages, to be involved in the provision of information, advice, research and development and to facilitate dialogue between users and providers.

> ### *Recommended Action 1.3*
>
> **That there be support and encouragement for the creation of a Languages Forum to draw together the various language organisations, agencies and associations that will provide information and advice, showcase best practice through training programmes, encourage research and development into language-based issues, facilitate dialogue between users and providers and advise on the implementation of the Strategy.**

Strategic Objective B

To Promote Languages in Education

From our consideration of the education sector, we have identified the need for

- a greater uptake of language learning

- the diversification of the range of languages currently on offer in formal education and

- an improvement in the effectiveness of language teaching addressing, *inter alia*, the perceived gender and arts bias in language learning

2.   Strategic Target

A Greater Uptake of Language Learning

2.1   Extending Language Competence

In 2002 the European Council in Barcelona called for 'further action…to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age'[18]. As the European Union strives to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, strong provision for foreign language teaching remains a high priority in the field of education.

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[18]   Barcelona European Council (March 2002), emphasis added.

Language learning supports attention, perception, memory, concentration, concept formation, critical thinking, problem solving, and the ability to work in teams. Moreover, these benefits for the individual are of major importance for the wellbeing of society at all levels...As regards language learning in formal educational settings, it is important that education systems in Member States should ensure the teaching/learning of two languages in addition to the primary language of instruction from primary to the end of secondary education...[19]

In order to avail of the advantages of language learning, 85% of respondents to the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy (NILS) online questionnaire believe that starting at a young age is the best way[20].

9. **What are the best ways to encourage language learning? (Please number these in order of priority 1 = high; 5 = low)**

Start at a young age
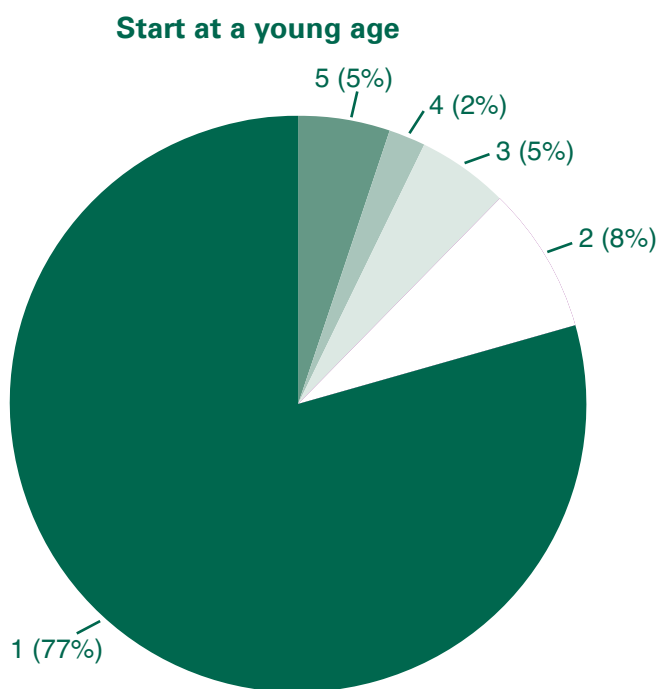
Furthermore, it is imperative that the decline in language uptake at post-primary level be reversed:

In secondary education or training, young people complete the acquisition of the essential core of skills that will serve them throughout a lifetime of language learning[21].

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[19] European Commission. 2007. *High Level Group on Multilingualism Final Report.*
[20] http://www.nils.org.uk
[21] European Commission. 2006. Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006.

Continued learning in secondary education will ensure that our young people emerge from education on an equal footing with their European counterparts, particularly after KS3. The take-up of languages post-14 needs to be increased. Statistics relating to the period from 1994-2007 have seen a decline in modern language entries from 2220 to 1626, that is, from 7.22% of all A-Level subject entries, to 5.28%. Within these figures, Irish has maintained its enrolment (moving from 0.94% to 0.91%) and Spanish has risen from 0.94% to 1.54%. However, since 2007, entries for CCEA A level French have increased from 495 to 610 (+23%), for German from 86 to 116 (+35%), for Irish from 279 to 352 (+26%) and for Spanish from 311 to 375 (+21%)[22].

Some of these rises can be attributed to schools returning to CCEA from English Boards, but it does suggest that the decline has levelled out. However the figures remain low compared to other subjects.

At GCSE, over the same period from 1994-2007, the percentage of entries has fallen but remained comparable, moving from 10.10% in 1994 to 9.14% in 2007. However that picture has now begun to change since languages are no longer compulsory for KS4. For those taking CCEA examinations at GCSE, the numbers for French have declined from 3205 in 2007 to 2612 in 2010 (-18.5%), for German have increased from 253 to 312 (+23%), for Irish have decreased from 2665 to 2052 (-23%), while Spanish has held steady 1428 to 1438. The danger is that this trend will continue through to A level[23].

Languages have been generally devalued in our predominantly monolingual society, and this is a major obstacle in uptake amongst secondary school students. Languages have to compete with a large number of subjects on the curriculum, making it a hard task for teachers of languages to promote their subjects. It is important to develop access, choice and progression in language learning throughout the educational system.

I feel we are at a disadvantage in Northern Ireland as so many of us can only communicate via English. Children in other European countries can communicate effectively in at least 2 languages, English being one of them. We should be able to do likewise[24].

As a teacher in the post primary sector, I am concerned at the declining interest in Modern Foreign Languages amongst pupils. I feel it is essential in the modern global economy to encourage young people to become proficient in a foreign language[25].

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[22] These statistics can be accessed on the CCEA microsite: *http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/microsites_other/statistics/sections_09_10/section_four.asp* GCE Advanced Summary Statistics: Summer 2006-2010.

[23] These statistics can be accessed on the CCEA microsite: *http://www.rewardinglearning.org.uk/microsites_other/statistics/sections_09_10/section_four.asp* GCSE Full Course Summary Statistics: Summer 2006-2010. The recent report by the Inspectorate 'A Short Report on the Provision of Modern Languages in a Sample of Non-selective Schools', Education and Training Inspectorate, July 2011, 9pp., illustrates the worrying retreat there has been from Modern Languages in the secondary sector in recent years.

[24] Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*

[25] Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*

We need to ensure that our children and young people are given the opportunity to learn and enjoy the process of learning additional languages. More than ever before people are travelling to and working in other countries. All the research is telling us that learning an additional language facilitates a greater facility for learning and that the earlier this begins the greater the benefits. We need a Languages Strategy to ensure that learning a second language is strongly encouraged and facilitated and not left to chance[26]!

Widening access to language learning across the school age range and across the community, thus catering for the development of language skills and competences for a variety of learners from beginners to specialist, would be of significant benefit to all. This is a major challenge, but requires a commitment to build the necessary capacity to deliver the objective.

Recommended Action 2.1

That pupils be given the opportunity to study at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue from the earliest possible age and that all secondary pupils be given the opportunity to study, throughout their school career, at least one language other than English.

2.2   Pre-Primary Languages

Almost half of the respondents to the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy questionnaire agree that language learning should begin, where possible, before primary education[27].

When asked the question, When should language learning begin? one respondent replied: "Ideally from birth. That is stating the obvious! But certainly from pre-school"[28].

The need to address the languages deficit in Northern Ireland is urgent, so the level of support for pre-primary language learning is unsurprising. The personal, social and cognitive advantages of early language learning are documented by local reports from the Irish-medium sector which currently has 44 Irish-medium pre-schools in Northern Ireland[29].

Irish-medium pre-school children develop listening, understanding and basic speaking competence within one year in the Irish-medium sector, as is frequently referenced in ETI reports on Irish-medium pre-school settings[30].

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[26] Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[27] *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[28] Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[29] See *Review of Irish-medium Education Report*
      http://www.deni.gov.uk/review_of_irish-medium_education_report__english_pdf_.pdf
[30] Submission from Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta to the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy.

That pre-school is an ideal environment for second and additional language learning is further supported by international research:

"… infants' brains are strong, finely-tuned computers programmed to mimic everything they see and hear. Babies are learning all the time. As they're listening and watching, they're absorbing and remembering"[31].

Children become fluent in their mother tongue(s) before they enter the mainstream classroom. The ability to absorb language at an early stage is well recognised. Pre-school is therefore an ideal setting for language development. Through basic greetings, play and song, children can be exposed to and develop positive attitudes towards other languages. Some children's TV programmes offer snippets of other languages. Dora the Explorer is a good example of this:

The backpack-clad and bilingual Dora (she speaks English and Spanish) has been hailed as a symbol of curiosity and empowerment for pre-school children[32].

The Wee Care Day Nurseries' Windsor Avenue North Nursery in Belfast has recently launched Northern Ireland's First English-French Bilingual Pre-School Class as part of Wee Care's commitment to ensuring the best possible care and education for the children in their care.

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[31] François Thibaut, founder of the Language Workshop for Children:
http://www.thibauttechnique.com

[32] *Financial Times* (21 August 2008),
http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c190ae5c-6fae-11dd-986f-0000779fd18c,dwp_uuid=e8477cc4-c820-11db-b0dc-000b5df10621.html

The bilingual programme provides children with no experience of speaking a second language a great foundation in French as well as providing children who already have experience of the language an opportunity to continue to develop their skills.

The European Commission, in its *Action Plan for Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*, maintains that it is at this foundational stage that key attitudes to other languages and cultures are shaped[33].

This is particularly crucial as Northern Ireland is now home to many languages and cultures from around the world. Language delivery at pre-primary can enrich children from all backgrounds, local and international. 87% of respondents to the NILS questionnaire agree that it is important to know more about the languages and cultures of immigrant communities in Northern Ireland[34]. Diversity is enriching for everybody and engagement should not be delayed. 90% agree that it is important for migrants to maintain their language of origin[35]. This has positive effects on the child's linguistic and educational development, confers recognition of the importance of their language in the community, and retains ties with the child's family and homeland. Mother-tongue maintenance for migrant children should therefore be considered before entry to primary school. By adopting this approach, the new languages of Northern Ireland can be shared by all. Northern Ireland can learn from the experiences of other countries, such as Canada:

… in the city of Toronto in Canada, 58% of kindergarten students come from homes where standard English is not the usual language of communication … Any credible educator will agree that schools should build on the experience and knowledge that children bring to the classroom, and instruction should also promote children's abilities and talents. Whether we do it intentionally or inadvertently, when we destroy children's language and rupture their relationship with parents and grandparents, we are contradicting the very essence of education[36].

Recommended Action 2.2

That the teaching and learning of languages in pre-primary/nursery provision be encouraged.

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[33] European Commission. 2006 *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006,* p.7.

[34] *http://www.nils.org.uk*

[35] *http://www.nils.org.uk*

[36] Jim Cummins, 'Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?' (University of Toronto), *http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/mother.htm*

2.3 Primary Languages

The UK and Ireland lag behind the rest of Europe in the provision of primary languages[37]. More than 90% of primary schools are now offering languages in some form at KS2. The *Nuffield Languages Inquiry* reported in 2000 that: 'an early start makes sense in both educational and social terms'[38] and the European Commission underlines 'the advantages of the early learning of languages'[39]. The *Dearing Report* (2007) further recommended the inclusion of modern languages in the primary curriculum[40]. The Labour government was intending to make Primary Languages statutory, but was unable to do so before its 2010 election defeat. The current government is considering, as part of a broader curriculum review, whether to make primary languages compulsory in England to begin redressing the linguistic deficit. As recently as 1st October, in an interview for *The Guardian*, Michael Gove, the Minister of Education, proposed the teaching of languages to all five year olds[41].

The Revised Curriculum in Northern Ireland encourages inter-disciplinary learning and seeks to build the capacity to operate in a globalised world. However, language learning is not currently required within the Revised Primary Curriculum. Despite their non-statutory status, many primary schools in Northern Ireland have been delivering modern languages. In its evaluation of the Primary Languages Pilot launched in 2005, CCEA reports:

> *The findings of the Primary Languages Pilot are overwhelmingly positive. The pilot was rated highly by all participants and was viewed as an effective method of introducing pupils to a second language in a fun and enjoyable way. Results also indicate that the pilot has successfully developed pupils' listening and speaking skills in the target language. Moreover, teachers and parents felt the pilot has encouraged children's enthusiasm for languages at an early age whilst fostering positive attitudes towards other cultures[42].*

Overwhelming support for the introduction of Modern Languages in the primary curriculum was received during the consultation process of the Languages Strategy, with 85% of respondents to the online questionnaire agreeing that an early start is the best way to encourage language learning[43].

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[37] Eurydice Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe (European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture 2005).

[38] The Nuffield Foundation. 2000. *Languages: The Next Generation. The Final Report and Recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry,* p.40.

[39] European Commission. 2006. *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006,* p.14. This is backed up by recent research, including that of Carrie Cable, Pos Mitchell et al. See *http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u015843/index.shtml*

[40] DfES. 2007. *Languages Review,* pp.8-10.

[41] 'Michael Gove proposes teaching foreign languages from age five', *The Guardian,* 1st October 2011.

[42] CCEA. 2007. *Developing Little Linguists: Final Evaluation of the Foundation Stage Primary Languages Pilot,* p.3.

[43] *http://www.nils.org.uk*

"I'm doing French and I love it. Ça va très bien[44]!"

"My son learnt French in P3 and loved the lessons. He has some basic conversational French"[45]

"We have introduced the teaching of French and Spanish in KS1 and it has been highly successful[46]."

Further support for primary languages has come from DE with the introduction of the previous Minister, Catriona Ruane's Primary Languages Programme in September 2008, which has been highly successful[47]. This Programme, currently aimed at KS1, teaches Spanish or Irish to pupils through skilled tutors who work alongside classroom assistants and teachers, and has attracted interest from more than 420 schools[48]. From September 2009 Polish was offered, due to the increase in children from Poland[49], a welcome addition to this portfolio. This Primary Languages Initiative is very welcome and, in order to meet current parental demand and following European recommendations, this programme should be further rolled out to children in KS2 to provide continuity, should reach every primary school pupil in Northern Ireland, and should include other languages, particularly French and German, reflecting existing expertise in these languages and meeting the demand for diversification. We recommend that primary languages should be strongly encouraged as a central part of the normal curriculum.

Both Teacher Capacity Building and Peripatetic models have been used for the delivery of primary languages in the pilot scheme. While the peripatetic tutor is a valuable extra resource in schools and can complement the work of teachers who have undergone initial and ongoing classroom training, we recommend that, in extending the initiative, the Department should aim to build teacher capacity for languages *within* all schools in the province.

The introduction of languages would feed, with considerable flexibility, into three of the six areas of learning outlined in the Revised Primary Curriculum, namely Language and Literacy, Personal Development and The World Around Us[50]. It is particularly important to stress that research into language learning shows that the learning of another language is extremely beneficial for literacy in the child's mother tongue.

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44 Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*, Primary School Questionnaire.
45 Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*
46 Response from NILS online questionnaire: *http://www.nils.org.uk*
47 See the ETI evaluation of the programme: *http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-primary/surveys-evaluations-primary-2009/an-evaluation-of-the-primary-modern-languages-programme.htm*
48 *http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-de-110808-sport-and-language* By way of comparison, 84% of Primary Schools in England are now teaching languages before it becomes a requirement in 2011. Anne-Marie Graham, CiLT, in *The Linguist,* 47/6 December/January 2009, p.13.
49 See the Ministerial Statement of 16th July 2009: 'End of term report on sport and language programmes'.
50 *The Revised Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum,* Key Stages 1 and 2, p.2.

Languages would also contribute to the development of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, Citizenship, Cultural Understanding and Employability[51]. Further key aspects of the curriculum skills and capabilities that are central to this curriculum - Communication, Managing information, Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making, Being Creative, and Working with Others, can also be delivered effectively through the teaching and learning of languages. Languages are also ideal for the encouragement of the development of ICT skills within the learning process (see 4.2 below).

Recommended Action 2.3

That the Primary Modern Languages Programme be consolidated and extended, that the teaching of languages at primary level be strongly encouraged in all schools at KS1 and KS2, through the broadening and deepening of language provision, and that languages be integrated into the Revised Primary Curriculum.

2.4   Languages at Post-Primary Level

We believe that languages should remain a requirement within KS3, and that their provision should be reviewed as the effects of the Primary Languages initiative begin to be felt in the years ahead. In particular languages should be seen as delivering the key skills, particularly those of communication, already articulated in relation to primary schools above. They should also be seen as developing the key skill of literacy at this level.

Learning partnerships throughout Northern Ireland offer clear opportunities for the strengthening of language teaching and learning. We commend the School Collaborative Programme as an excellent vehicle for delivering languages within the Entitlement Framework.

The application of such partnerships in the delivery of the 14-19 policy should seek to ensure that languages remain a key skill and a key opportunity across all types of secondary school. We believe, therefore, that careers teachers and senior management in our secondary schools should seek to promote the development of language skills. We therefore urge in this connection, that languages be taught or delivered both as general and applied subjects, and that additional, lesser-taught languages (see 3.3 below) could provide the distinctive profile of a school in delivering the 27 subjects required under the new curricular arrangements.

In addition to partnerships between secondary schools, we recommend that strong consideration be given to extending the Routes into Languages initiative, pioneered in England, by diversifying types of language study available into applied vocational areas.

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[51] *The Revised Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum,* Key Stages 1 and 2, p.3.

The Routes into Languages programme aims to increase the take-up of language courses in higher education by encouraging more young people to continue studying languages at school and college and then at university, especially those from social groups currently under-represented in language study. A key feature is to provide the secondary, FE and HE education sectors with the resources to work together to promote language study[52].

A number of regional consortia have been established in England to link schools with universities and colleges to encourage people to study languages. A similar consortium in Northern Ireland would undoubtedly stimulate increased uptake in language learning.

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Recommended Action 2.4

That full use be made of the School Collaborative Programme to deliver languages within the Entitlement Framework both as general and applied subjects and that a Routes into Languages consortium be established in Northern Ireland.

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2.5 Specialist Language Schools

The introduction of the Specialist Language Schools programme was a very positive development for secondary education in the region.

The objectives of the Specialist Language Schools programme are closely linked to the key aims of the E2S programme and will contribute significantly to improving choice for pupils and parents and raising standards for all young people … Of equal importance are the links that specialism builds with other schools in the area, further disseminating good practice and increasing collaboration. Links with local businesses and the community are also fostered, bringing a range of benefits and giving pupils new access to expertise and learning experiences[53].

The work of the three Specialist Language Schools, Shimna High School, Grosvenor Grammar School and Belfast High School, has led to encouraging developments. Collaboration with their partner schools and their primary feeder schools provides a positive template for the growth and encouragement of languages skills within the province.

Partnership is central to the ethos of Specialist Language Schools. We will be working with our local and feeder primary schools in order to open up further opportunities for children to learn languages from the early years of primary school and build up their enjoyment of the international dimension.

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[52] Routes Into Languages, *http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/*
[53] Specialist Schools Programme, *http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/80-curriculum-and-assessment*

We also have new partnerships in place with Specialist Language Schools in the Performing Arts and in ICT. These new links will bring tremendous benefits to our students[54].

In the light of the fact that all the existing Specialist Language Schools ended their designation in August 2011 and that the current programme is being reviewed, we welcome the indication of the previous Minister that a more inclusive model would concentrate on raising standards, tackling barriers to learning, sharing in learning and taking account of the voice of pupils[55]. It would be strategically productive if there were more languages Specialist Language Schools participating in area learning communities in Northern Ireland and if these schools were to offer a range of languages, including lesser taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese and Italian. Such a model would be more broadly based and more inclusive than the current system, and would stress the need for co-operation between schools of all kinds in any given area.

It is understood that this proposal is subject to the application of the generic quality criteria of the scheme. It would also be beneficial for Specialist Language Schools, in their new form, to consider involvement in the Routes into Languages Initiative, described above.

If languages, as we propose (see 1.2, above), are classified with the current STEM subjects, the extra resources that would result could, for instance, be deployed to extend specialist language provision. This should apply to capital equipment related to the development of language teaching.

Furthermore the learning communities of these schools offer a valuable opportunity for the management, strategic development and dissemination of language teaching and learning at primary and post-primary level in schools that are seeking to expand their language provision. It would be valuable if Specialist Language Schools were to pioneer the use of CLIL at secondary level (see 3.1 below). The emphasis on the 14-19 provision in these schools would enable them to strengthen languages where enrolment in those subjects has been declining in recent years.

Recommended Action 2.5

Specialist Language Schools have contributed to enhancing the quality of the languages curriculum. It is recommended that the achievements of this initiative be sustained through the promotion of further co-operative partnerships and alliances, with particular attention being paid to their geographical spread and to the range of languages offered.

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[54] Shimna Integrated College Specialist School,
http://www.shimnacollege.org.uk
[55] See the Ministerial Statement of 22nd April 2009 'Specialist Schools funding announced".

2.6 Languages in Further and Higher Education

2.61 Further Education

Provision of languages in the FE sector in Northern Ireland (with the exception of Belfast Metropolitan College and the South-Eastern Regional College) is not as strong as it could be.

We believe the opportunity exists to address the language deficit and develop the teaching of languages as it is applied to key vocational areas, such as hotel and tourism and business and management, by broadening the range of students taking languages at different levels, rather than seeking to produce specialist linguists. In particular the development of the 14-19 policy provides an opportunity in particular to address the low level of language learning in this sector, and the introduction of a scheme such as the Diploma system, including languages, which was planned for England in 2011, has the potential to play a key role in this regard[56].

2.62 Higher Education

In both the University of Ulster and Queen's University the respective Schools of Languages prepare graduates for specialist degrees in languages (French, German, Irish and Spanish with Chinese at Ulster and French, Irish and Spanish - also with Portuguese - at Queen's) and degrees in languages with other disciplines, including vocational subjects. Both universities continue to be involved in developing innovative approaches to language teaching[57]. We recommend that the two universities should seek to strengthen their enrolment on languages degrees, particularly those with an applied languages focus, and regard languages as priority subjects.

Opportunities exist for undergraduates who are not taking languages as part of their main degree subject(s), but there is room for expansion of this provision. We share the vision of the European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All Undergraduates (ENLU), established under the European Commission's Action Plan *Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity*. Its vision is that all graduates in Europe should:

- be able to communicate in at least two languages other than their mother tongue

- know how to learn new languages effectively

- have the confidence to learn a new language when the need or opportunity arises

- have first-hand experience in working and learning in other countries and in collaborating with other countries, and

- be familiar with other cultures and intercultural skills[58].

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[56] See *www.diploma-in-languages.co.uk* See also 'Tests of inspiration', Dominic Luddy. 2009. *The Linguist,* 48, 2, pp.10-11.

[57] See, for example, the work of the Centre for Excellence in Multimedia Language Learning at the University of Ulster *www.cemll.ulster.ac.uk*

[58] ENLU European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All Undergraduates, *http://web.fu-berlin.de/enlu/index.htm*

In other words languages should be part of 'graduateness'. Their recognition as a key skill, as proposed above (STEM-L), would have important implications for the provision of languages at university level, including the University Colleges, Stranmillis and St Mary's. Their position as a key skill under threat in England was recognised in the Browne Review[59].

University-wide language programmes, particularly those using the benefits of ICT, would enable undergraduates who have not entered University with competence in another language to leave it having undertaken some linguistic study. It would also increase the numbers of graduates with language competence, in particular in relation to a range of vocational areas, especially in the sciences. These programmes would be taken in addition to students' mainline undergraduate modules. They would also provide the opportunity for the introduction and development of lesser-taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Hindi and Russian.

The recent establishment of the Confucius Institute for Northern Ireland by the Chinese Ministry of Education at the University of Ulster (in partnership with Jhejiang University of Media and Communications) will lead to a major development of the teaching of Chinese Language and Culture at all levels, including classes in the wider community, with a particular emphasis on languages for business purposes (see also 3.3 below)[60].

The provision and delivery of language teaching at our universities, at both specialist and general level, should be seen as a key part of the development of each institution's international strategies.

Recommended Action 2.6

That FE and HE institutions be encouraged to offer extended training in language competence to all students, in particular in relation to communication skills and vocational development and that they address their languages strategies through their own corporate planning processes.

Recommended Action 2.61

That the universities should seek to strengthen their enrolment on languages degrees, particularly those with an applied languages focus.

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[59] Lord Browne. 2010. *The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance: Securing a sustainable future for higher education in England (The Browne Review)*, p.47 *http://hereview.independent.gov.uk/hereview/report*

[60] For further information on Confucius Institutes in general see the Confucius Institutes Online website: *http://college.chinese.cn/en/*

> **Recommended Action 2.62**
>
> **That the universities should undertake to support their international aspirations through appropriate language provision.**

2.7   The Lifelong Learning of Languages

Our consultation has revealed a widespread desire for the development of access to lifelong language learning beyond secondary education. We believe that this need can be met through taking advantage of the opportunities and facilities provided within the community by the Extended Schools initiative, as well as through Further and Higher Education. Opportunities should be made available to enable older learners to have access to learning a range of languages, including English as an additional language, migrant languages and languages for special purposes. These opportunities should also be facilitated by employers in the workplace.

> **Recommended Action 2.7**
>
> **That lifelong language learning programmes be encouraged and facilitated especially at community and workplace level, using the benefits of the Extended Schools Initiative.**

3.   Strategic Target

Diversification in the Range of Languages currently on Offer in Formal Education.

3.1   Learning through Language

The concept of *Content and Language Integrated Learning*[61] (CLIL) is growing in popularity. Instead of using English as the language of instruction, subjects are taught through the medium of another language. In September 2006, Wix Primary School in London admitted pupils to its new bilingual stream. Pupils who join this stream follow the national curriculum but study all subjects through both English and French. This initiative responds to parental demand for foundation language learning, as well as enabling pupils to become bilingual early in life.

> *Throughout bilingual education, it is not only a matter of teaching a language; it is equally important to conduct educational activities in that language and to continuously support it by every-day activities, so that the students are learning the language in a natural and direct way, similar to how they learned their mother tongue. This kind of a process has to be put in place over time ...*[62]

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[61] See CLIL Compendium, *http://www.clilcompendium.com*, which receives support from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission.

[62] Wix primary school/École de Wix, *http://www.wix.wandsworth.sch.uk/b/B_home.asp?lang=E.*

Wix Primary School's bilingual stream is an example of *dual immersion* education, ie where two languages are used to follow the curriculum. Such schools can also be found in the USA, using Spanish and English[63].

Irish-medium education in Northern Ireland is an example of *full immersion* CLIL. Through this system pupils follow the curriculum and achieve the added skill of bilingualism. Moreover, languages are seen as useful and functional, as they are the necessary and natural vehicles for learning.

> *Gaelscoileanna are producing confident, capable, productive, dynamic and bi-lingual students every year and this is a wonderful contribution to our society*[64].

Existing English-medium schools can be encouraged to develop lesser models of immersion than those used by Wix or the IM sector. Partial immersion allows certain aspects of the curriculum to be taught through another language. This can begin by teaching subjects that are not necessarily assessed, eg Physical Education, but will still accrue the advantages of foreign language instruction. Where there is a direct overlap between foreign languages and subject content, CLIL can be introduced, eg in European Studies and European history.

In Norway, schools have experimented using English, German and French as the language of instruction in several subjects:

> *In primary and lower secondary school one has also seen that pupils benefited from the increased variation provided by CLIL*[65].

The adoption of CLIL methodologies in language teaching will also enhance the position of language teaching in schools, both at primary and post-primary levels, because CLIL methods provide schools with the potential to teach languages without sacrificing space in an already crowded timetable. At post-primary level, pupils could be facilitated to study several languages without having to make choices between languages or between languages and other important subjects, particularly in Specialist Language Schools.

> *Although it may take a while for pupils to acclimatise to the challenges of CLIL, once they are familiar with the new way of working, demonstrably increased motivation and focus make it possible (and likely) that they will progress at faster-than-usual rates in the content subject … CLIL aims to improve performance in both the content subject and the foreign language. Research indicates there should be no detrimental effects for the CLIL pupils (and often progress is demonstrably better)*[66].

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[63] For instance, Escuela Amigos/Amigos School in Cambridge, MA, *http://www.cpsd.us/AMI/*

[64] Ministerial Foreword, *Review of Irish-Medium Education Report,* http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/10-types_of_school-nischools_pg/schools_-_types_of_school-_irish-medium_schools_pg/16_schools-types_of_schools-reviewofime_pg.htm

[65] Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. 2007. *'Languages Open Doors. A Strategy for Promoting Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education, and Training 2005-2009',* p.25.

[66] *http://www.cilt.org.uk/14to19/intensive/clil.htm*

Such developments pose challenges of implementation. Experience in Scotland with immersion has shown that the quality of teaching in immersion situations must be of a high order[67].

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Recommended Action 3.1

That the curriculum at both primary and secondary levels be widened to include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - the teaching of other subjects and topics through a language. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an appropriate pilot scheme, and to the encouragement of Specialist Language Schools, in particular, to implement such an approach.

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3.2   Sign Language Provision

In March 2004 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). Distinct languages in their own right, sign languages have developed as the natural indigenous languages of Deaf communities.

It is estimated that there are some 219,000 deaf and hard of hearing people living in Northern Ireland. 17,000 of these people are severely or profoundly deaf[68]. BSL is the first language of some 3,500 members of the Deaf population of Northern Ireland while approximately 1,500 use ISL[69]. CILT estimates that BSL is the first or preferred language of 50,000-70,000 people throughout the UK[70]. Furthermore, sign languages are not just used by members of Deaf communities, but also by their families and friends, teachers, and those who provide interpreting services.

Sign language should not be seen as a disability, but have its own place in a spectrum of linguistic diversity[71].

Support for members of the Deaf community and their families can be provided by local groups (eg St Joseph's Centre for the Deaf), at the regional level (eg NDCS Northern Ireland), at the national level (eg British Deaf Association/Irish Deaf Society), and through European networks (eg European Union of the Deaf) and international lobbies (eg World Federation of the Deaf).

The BDA wants to see a society where Sign Language users have the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and quality of life as everyone else[72].

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[67] Consultation with Richard Johnstone, 4th December 2007.
[68] *http://www.rnid.org.uk*
[69] *http://www.rnid.org.uk*
[70] *http://www.cilt.org.uk*
[71] Respondent to NILS online questionnaire, *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[72] British Deaf Association, *http://bda.org.uk/British_Deaf_Association-i-34.html*

In order to have the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and quality of life as everyone else, education through the medium of Sign must be provided to users of Sign Language(s):

No hearing community would tolerate their children being educated solely by those who cannot communicate with or understand their children. Yet Deaf children with normal cognitive ability are expected to function in just this environment[73].

Children who use Sign as their first language often do not have access to education through their linguistic medium. It is a matter of urgency that this is addressed. This further requires that adequate training and professionalisation of teachers for the Deaf be provided. The acceptance of Sign as an appropriate language for use in education signifies its value in the wider world.

As distinct languages in their own right, Sign Languages can be introduced to hearing children at primary and secondary school as they strive to achieve 'mother tongue +2'[74]. Early learning can create the pool required for training bilingual interpreters[75] and tutors of Sign Language(s):

Quite apart from the rights and social requirements of people with impaired hearing, learning sign language offers all the benefits of any new language, and can be accessed through a very different learning experience which will suit some learners better than a word based process[76].

Sign Languages should be taught at primary level by peripatetic qualified tutors. Children have no difficulty picking it up and although not all will remain fluent it should create a pool of people who can help create a much more integrated situation for Deaf people. It is also a huge intellectual leap for people to realise that a language can be visual[77].

Learning opportunities for Sign Languages must also be made available outside mainstream education. The National Deaf Children's Society[78] developed the Family Sign Language Curriculum, a communication training programme for parents of deaf children who wish to use Sign Language to communicate with their children. It has been demonstrated that the Pilot Programme meets the needs of parents and children and it can now be made available more widely with adequate support.

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[73] Cited by Helga Stevens, "Equal rights for Deaf people: From being a stranger in one's own country to full citizenship through sign language", Lecture delivered at ICED 2005 (Maastricht 17-20 July 2005).
[74] The Centre for Deaf Studies at Trinity College, Dublin is developing a European Language Portfolio for users and learners of Sign Languages.
[75] An additional £1.3 million for training of Sign Language interpreters was announced by the then Minister for Employment and Training, Reg Empey, in June 2008.
[76] Respondent to NILS online questionnaire, *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[77] Respondent to NILS online questionnaire, *http://www.nils.org.uk*
[78] *http://www.ndcs.org.uk*

> ### Recommended Action 3.2
>
> **That learning opportunities for sign languages be provided.**

3.3 The Learning of Non-Traditional Languages

The Northern Ireland Languages Strategy acknowledges Northern Ireland's place in Europe and the wider world. It recognises that we are now home to a multitude of languages and cultures due to inward migration. This Strategy, as well as recent policy developments in English as an Additional (or Second) Language, recommends that the appropriate skills be in place to ensure equality in our increasingly diverse society. Furthermore, we seek to exploit the rich cultural resources now at our disposal. The interrelation between language, intercultural skills and international co-operation (see below **Strategic Category 2: Languages for Prosperity**) are at the forefront of language learning and provision. Language competence plays a major role in the creation of global citizens.

> *The first Indian communities settled in Northern Ireland in the 1920s and 1930s ... Second and third generations have been born here, but the linguistic heritage they represent is barely reflected in the formal state examinations statistics[79].*

The Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) records 4200 Chinese speakers in Northern Ireland. Other significant minority ethnic languages are Arabic (1000-1500), and Portuguese (1000+), amongst others[80]. Both Arabic and Portuguese had one GCSE entry, respectively, in the academic year 2004/05. Neither language had an A Level entry in the same year[81].

In 1998 the Council of Europe called for linguistic diversification in modern language provision in its member states:

> *Languages which are spoken by hundreds of millions of people in the world, such as Russian, Portuguese, Arabic and Chinese have only a tiny place in school curricula. Moreover, the standard of teaching in these languages is not always satisfactory[82].*

Linguistic diversification has the potential to foster Northern Ireland's cultural diversity. The expansion of the European Union in 2004 brought migrant workers from Central East Europe to Northern Ireland, with Polish migrants accounting for some 60% of

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[79] Eugene McKendry. 2002. 'Community Languages in Northern Ireland', *Community Languages, Bulletin* 11.
[80] *http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/frequently_asked_questions.htm#q1*
[81] DE Statistics and Research Branch.
[82] Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1383 (1998) Linguistic Diversification, *http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta98/EREC1383.htm*

these newcomers in 2007[83]. The school census from 2007 shows that around 3,500 primary school pupils and 1,700 secondary school pupils have a language other than English as their 'first' language[84]. Some schools are already responding to this diversity by requesting Comenius assistants from the A8 countries.

89% of respondents to the NILS online questionnaire agree that it is important for migrants to maintain their mother tongue[85]. This has positive effects on the child's linguistic and educational development, confirms the importance of their language in the community, and retains ties with the child's family and homeland. Such language provision can also bring understanding of social, cultural and economic realities of the country where the language is spoken to every pupil. The economic potential for every child in Northern Ireland to gain access to other languages cannot be underestimated in a globalised economy, in particular with reference to the emerging economies of China and India.

There is a growing demand for major world languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese and Russian … Education systems and institutions need to diversify their offerings[86].

Recommended Action 3.3

That non-traditional languages within schools and colleges be further promoted.

3.4   The Teaching of English as an Additional Language

With the increase in the number of migrant workers settling in Northern Ireland from non-English speaking countries, it is important that proper provision for children and adults to learn English be maintained and developed. Whilst the vast majority of respondents agreed that it was important for migrant workers to maintain their mother tongue, 92% agree that they should learn the language of their host country[87].

Recommended Action 3.4

That the teaching of English as an additional language in our schools be offered in a consistent manner, through class teachers, in line with funding, to complement the provision of English as a Second Language (ESOL) in the network of FE colleges.

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[83] 'Migration Estimates Northern Ireland (2007)', Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (July 2008).
[84] NISRA (July 2008).
[85] http://www.nils.org.uk
[86] European Commission. 2007. *Final Report of the High Level Group on Multilingualism.*
[87] http://www.nils.org.uk

4.   Strategic Target

An Improvement in the Effectiveness of Language Teaching, *inter alia* addressing Perceived Gender and Arts Bias in Language Learning.

4.1   Language Training for Teachers

In order to deliver the recommendations of the Language Strategy, it is vital that resources be put into the development of teacher training, at initial teacher training stage, as in-service training, and as part of the Continuous Professional Development provision.

Whereas there is a good supply of teachers in the secondary sector, particularly with the main languages taught (French, Irish and Spanish), there is a limited number of German teachers. There is also considerable under-provision in the pre-primary and primary sectors. Training resources need to be provided in particular for this sector to enable language learning to progress. This training should have two elements: training in the target language capability of the teacher, and training in pedagogy of primary learners. This has already been recognised by the CCEA report on *Developing Little Linguists:*

> *… to ensure the sustainability of primary languages, it is crucial that the class teacher develops linguistically*[88]*.*

One way of achieving this enhanced provision of training for language teachers would be to involve Higher Education institutions in such training, and for instance, to make BEd courses in languages available and to increase the numbers of language places on CertEd courses.

Recommended Action 4.1

That specialist training in the form of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), In Service Training (INSET) etc be provided for language teachers and current teachers converting to languages for in- and out-of-class teaching, and for classroom assistants from pre-primary upwards to build teacher capacity.

■   **In relation to 2.3 above, that MFL and languages pedagogy be part of every Primary School teacher's initial training in order both to introduce teachers to language teaching methods, and to refresh the hidden capacity of many teachers in this regard.**

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[88] CCEA. 2007. *Developing Little Linguists: Final Evaluation of the Foundation Stage Primary Languages Pilot,* p.36.

4.2   ICT and Language Teaching

Using the flexibility of the Revised Curriculum and its attendant assessment methods, we strongly commend an increasingly targeted use of ICT in language teaching and learning. Rapid technological development, the reduction in costs through miniaturisation and the increase in performance capabilities bring digital tools increasingly within the reach of all levels of education.

The range of emerging technologies, and the digital tools they provide is vast: interactive whiteboards, multimedia laboratories, virtual learning environments, podcasts in the target language, edublogs, e-mail, wikis, mobile learning and many more. The storage and rapid retrieval of all kinds of data through the global forum that is provided by the Internet, including data from multilingual sources, and the exploitation of sophisticated communication tools, facilitate all aspects of language learning[89]. Their effective deployment offers many opportunities to enhance the teaching of languages. The use of multimedia ICT tools is, we believe, imperative in language education in the modern digital age, but only when deployed within skilful teaching strategies[90]. In other words their use should be teaching-led rather than technology-led.

The use of ICT has the capacity to bring both excitement and motivation to pupils and to provide flexibility in the classroom. It can be used for whole class teaching, for group discussion and for pair work using a computer suite. ICT can also facilitate language learning both in special education and for the gifted and talented pupils of languages (see the section on language learning and special educational needs). It can also be used for cross-curricular purposes, such as digital filmmaking. Alongside this, consideration needs to be given to the configuration of learning spaces to take advantage of these possibilities. In addition, ICT also enables a diversification in language learning methods by enabling, for instance, autonomous learning, and collaborative learning.

Teaching methods need to be developed to make full use of the possibilities made actual by digital technology, and the digital gap in competence between teachers and their pupils in the use of such digital technology needs to be bridged through the delivery of appropriate training[91]. In addition there needs to be an investment in the appropriate infrastructure and equipment to deliver the full benefits of ICT to all learners of languages.

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[89] For instance, Euromail (initially funded under Grundtvig) is based on the idea that "learners of foreign languages use the computer to communicate with other language learners. This happens through a series of structured letter exchanges, which are mailed via an e-mail programme attached to the website" *http://www.juromail.com*

[90] The DEL-funded CETL, the Centre for Multimedia Language Learning at the University of Ulster has already undertaken ground-breaking work in this area.

[91] See, for example, the ICT teaching website *http://www.ict4lt.org/*

We look forward to the outcome of the forthcoming ICT Review to be undertaken by DE and would urge that it should consider in particular the application of ICT to the teaching and learning of Modern Languages. The experience of the Inspectorate is that the use of these technologies provides a significant enhancement of language teaching and leads to underperformance where they are not employed.

Recommended Action 4.2

That greater consideration be given to the creative use of digital technological resources and activities;

- **that measures be put in place to provide Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and CPD for teachers to integrate these new and subsequent resources and activities into their teaching;**

- **that infrastructure be provided in schools to enable these media to be used, including the consideration of the use of learning spaces.**

4.3   Language and the Development of Key Skills

Throughout this Strategy we have indicated the importance of languages in delivering key skills. The Department for Employment and Learning in its Success through Skills Progress Report, May 2007, outlines progress on the development and implementation of the Skills strategy for Northern Ireland. Little or no mention is made of languages in this regard, yet language skills are essential for the development of our knowledge economy and in our capacity to trade internationally. We therefore think it important that language teachers make the acquisition of key skills more explicit in their teaching, and that they should be assisted in that task by the relevant government departments.

Recommended Action 4.3

That language teaching should make more explicit the acquisition of key skills, and in particular of metalinguistic and intercultural skills. Lines of progression should be established from primary to tertiary level for all such skills.

4.4   Translation and Interpreting

The Strategy notes that there is a growing need for highly-qualified translators and interpreters to work in Northern Ireland and beyond. It is no less clear that a Master's level degree is rapidly establishing itself as the gold-standard qualification for professional practitioners in both areas. This increasing professionalisation of the translation and interpreting sectors is to be welcomed, and our local universities have a key role to play in its promotion.

In keeping with the emphasis on the development of key skills, and the role of specialist language skills, it is important that those institutions offering programmes in interpreting and translation ensure that their programmes meet the highest professional standards and are internationally recognised (for example through the European Masters in Translation accreditation system.

It is important that provision for the training of Sign interpreters is of comparable standard to that of all other languages.

Recommended Action 4.4

That all institutions that offer programmes in translation and interpreting ensure that their provision is consonant with agreed professional standards.

Strategic Objective C
To Broaden the Range of Appropriate Qualifications

Strategic Target 5 (i)

A Greater Uptake of a Wider Range of Qualifications in Formal Education, including Special Educational Needs

5.1   Language Qualifications

A range of qualifications should be introduced to recognise different levels of skill and specialisation as far as language learning is concerned. It is unrealistic to expect all children to be language specialists, but it is reasonable, because of their educational benefits, to expect all children to undertake language learning, including those in special education, since it is such a valuable and scarce skill and broadens and deepens their range of skills, as indicated in 1.2 above.

Taking account of the Common European Framework, a system of credits should be set up to complement the existing qualifications framework in order to recognise and reward pupils' achievements in languages, whatever level they attain. In addition, to take account of the vocational value of language learning, an applied route should be provided within the existing GCSE and A Level framework. Consideration should also be given as to how measures such as the proposed Diploma qualification for this age group in England and Wales could fulfil some of these needs (see 2.5 above). As far as the existing examinations are concerned, it is suggested that students taking languages to A Level and beyond should have curriculum content that is both stimulating and challenging.

Recommended Action 5.1

That consideration be given to the introduction of a range of non-traditional qualifications at all levels to reflect differing degrees of specialism, different skills and combinations of skills and differing levels of competence so that pupils may acquire vocational qualifications that assess their practical language skills.

Strategic Target 5 (ii)

A Greater Uptake in Non-Formal Education

5.2   The European Language Portfolio and the Languages Ladder

Between 1998 and 2000 the European Language Portfolio was piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. It was developed as a tool to support plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and has been piloted right across the continent[92]. As a concept it includes:

- a language passport that summarises the owner's linguistic and cultural identity;

- a language biography in which the owner captures his or her experience of learning and using second/foreign languages and encountering other cultures;

- a dossier that contains evidence of the owner's language and intercultural proficiency[93].

This 'can-do' approach is further embraced by the development of the Languages Ladder in England:

We will introduce a new voluntary recognition scheme to complement existing national qualifications and the Common European Framework. This will give people credit for their language skills and form a ladder of recognition from beginner level to a standard which sits alongside GCSE, A Levels and NVQs[94].

Made up of six stages, the Languages Ladder records achievement in language skills at all levels. Furthermore, it lends flexibility to the recognition of achievement. At one level, it works informally through self-assessment, but the ladder can also be graded by a teacher, leading to a Grade Award. This approach can meet the needs of a wide range of learners, both young and old, and can raise the profile of languages both in- and outside the school setting[95].

We regard these developments as promising, but stress that they need to be integrated fully into the delivery of language teaching and learning and into languages assessment methods, especially in relation to the applied use of languages. Their attraction lies in the fact that they can be used for the diversification of learning pathways.

Recommended Action 5.2

That the European Languages Portfolio and the Languages Ladder be introduced to record achievement as an alternative to public examinations at school, community and workplace levels.

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[92] See David Little (ed.), 'The European Language Portfolio in use: nine examples', *http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/ELP%20in%20use%2031%20January%2003.pdf*

[93] Ibid.

[94] 'Languages for All: Languages for Life, A Strategy for England'.

[95] See *http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/languagesladder/, http://www.cilt.org.uk/qualifications/recog.htm*

5.3 The Enjoyment of Language Learning

In 2005-06 the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) undertook research amongst pupils at KS3 to uncover their views - good and bad - about language learning. In the light of the findings of this survey[96], QCA offers a number of recommendations to increase enjoyment and success outcomes so pupils will be encouraged to continue with languages at KS4. We endorse their emphasis on the interactive and participatory use of lesson time; the use of good-quality resources, including ICT, and foreign language assistants; the implementation of the KS3 framework with a view to bringing about faster progress over KS3 (including more work on culture and people); and a curriculum content for students taking languages to A Level and beyond that is both stimulating and challenging, with less time spent on testing and preparation for tests. It is also important to lessen the perceived difficulty of the subject by considering the relative balance of the four skills.

Recommended Action 5.3

That the QCA recommendations for making language teaching enjoyable at all levels be adopted and monitored.

Strategic Objective D

To encourage Greater Global Awareness and Aspirations towards Internationalisation

6. Strategic Target

An Increase in the Number of International Partnerships between Schools, Community Groups, Towns and Cities

6.1 Language and the Development of International Partnerships

It is important that the teaching of languages should be one of the main means of integrating a pluricultural approach into the education system. The importance of and rationale for this is outlined in the section on **Strategic Category 3: Languages for Understanding**.

One means of achieving this is through the development of international links as part of the ethos of schools. We commend the work of the British Council in Northern Ireland[97], which oversees the provision of language assistants for our schools and enables our own students to teach abroad, and the work that it and the European Commission do in sponsoring and encouraging school and community links with other countries.

We recommend that these links and partnerships should be further encouraged, developed and facilitated in our schools.

Recommended Action 6.1

That guidance be given to those schools and groups wishing to establish international twinning arrangements or partnerships.

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[96] QCA. 2006. 'Pupils' views on language learning',
[97] *http://www.britishcouncil.org/northernireland.htm*

Strategic Category 2: Languages for Prosperity

Strategic Objective E

To Improve Language and Intercultural Skills throughout the Population

Introduction

Language and intercultural skills play a key role in trade, tourism, international co-operation and employment, adding value to all international activities by offering multiple and flexible pathways to opportunity:

These are pathways for:

Knowledge - Up-to-date and broadly-sourced technical and commercial information is essential for trade, research and development, and international co-operation. Total reliance on English risks delay in business processes, as well as the distortion or invisibility of areas from which the key information and skills necessary to a knowledge-based economy are derived.

Contacts - The choice of customers and colleagues for co-operation and collaboration should not be dictated by simple language choice. Adding a range of other world languages to English allows that choice to be based on the essential needs of the activity rather than being defined by a lack of linguistic competence.

Communication - In a competitive world we need to ensure that our message gets through and, crucially, that we can hear what others are saying. English alone cannot achieve this.

Employability - Current challenges in the employment market place are clear. To be successful in securing rewarding work and to be able to benefit from the increasing opportunities offered by our international connections, young people need to develop a range of hard and soft skills. Learning a new carefully-chosen language is within everyone's grasp. And with language learning come many of the skills that employers demand - critical thinking, time management, constructing arguments, and intercultural and communication skills.

'If you're among the 88% that believe that learning a new language could add a new lease of life to your job-hunting then […] you are on the right track, especially when the rest of the nation at large seems to have a very poor track record with learning other languages, something which has got us a reputation overseas[98].'

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[98] See also *http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/press-office* the following report: 'A survey of over 8,000 businesses released today (21 April 2012) by the British Chambers of Commerce, shows that exporting activity continues to increase. However, the findings also suggest that providing firms with more training in foreign languages, and increasing their exposure to international companies would encourage more business owners to export.
Knowledge of other languages is an important skill for exporters. 61% of non-exporters that are likely to consider trading internationally consider a lack of language skills as a barrier to doing so. Re-establishing foreign languages as core subjects within the UK national curriculum and in workplace training would mean that the next generation of business owners are 'born global' with language skills. The BCC is calling for the National Curriculum to be revised so that studying a foreign language is compulsory until AS level.'

The Context

It is generally recognised that a society in possession of a high degree of language proficiency across a range of languages is well placed to perform effectively on the international stage in terms of commerce and trade. Of almost 400 respondents to the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy online questionnaire, nearly 90% agreed or strongly agreed that languages are crucial to our economic well-being. A host of recent reports and strategy documents - European, national and local - has stressed the role of language skills in increasing our prosperity. The EU languages strategy, presented by the European Commission in September 2008, is characteristic of such reports. Given that 2008 was the designated Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the strategy naturally emphasises the ways in which language competence and effective language teaching can remove barriers to fruitful interaction between cultures, but the thrust of the strategy is principally concerned with the immediate and long-term ways in which language skills promote and sustain economic growth and prosperity[99].

Moreover, to ignore the opportunities that come in the wake of enhanced language skills across the board does not imply simply standing still. 2008 also saw the publication of the costs of a languages deficit. The EC Business Forum for Multilingualism in its *Companies Work Better with Languages* report concludes simply that our businesses risk losing competitiveness as other countries start out-performing us in terms of language skills.

> *Languages are not only needed to boost sales and marketing. Upstream supply chains cross borders to the same extent as international services and finished goods for export. Labour markets are just as global. Integration of multilingual and multicultural workers is crucial*[100].

The local context for this is self-evident. Globalisation, the development of the European Union, low-cost air travel and demographic change are all exerting profound effects on Northern Ireland. Manufacturing in key sectors such as engineering, textiles and clothing has moved offshore through subcontracting and investment in lower-cost economies. The European Union is now the world's largest economic bloc and provides increasing opportunity for trade and investment. The dramatic rise in direct air connections to Northern Ireland benefits trade, tourism and employment. Local government, non-governmental organisations, education and research, culture, entertainment and sport all operate in an increasingly international environment. An ageing population will create employment needs that will continue to attract migrant workers.

The Challenge

Speaking English is a distinct advantage. It is the first language in many countries and serves as a *lingua franca* in many others. However, our population is largely monolingual and languages are frequently given a low priority despite the clear

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[99] See *http://www.euractiv.com/en/culture/commission-looks-language-skills-boost-eu-prosperity/article-175337*

[100] See *http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/pdf/davignon_en.pdf*

additional advantages that they confer. The challenge, in this context, is to re-position languages as an advantageous and attainable professional and life skill.

The Vision

Languages for Prosperity is informed by the vision of a plurilingual society in which the progress and achievements of individuals and organisations are no longer restrained by dependence upon the language skills of others. Broad-based language competence is a feature of a number of highly successful economies in Europe. Northern Ireland is already rich in language awareness. There is an opportunity to build upon that in order to assert broad-based language competence as a currency of our economic and business life.

Policy

The ultimate aim of the Executive's Economic Strategy[101] is to improve the competitiveness of the NI economy to increase employment and wealth opportunities for all by building a larger and more export-driven private sector.

The key priorities are aimed at rebalancing the NI economy by taking action that will:

- Stimulate innovation, R&D and Creativity;

- Improve the skills and employability of the entire workforce;

- Enable NI companies to compete effectively in the global economy;

- Encourage business growth; and

- Develop a modern and sustainable economic infrastructure.

The Executive will also take action to rebuild the local labour in the aftermath of the recession by:

- Promoting accessible employment opportunities; and

- Providing training and re-skilling to those who have been impacted by the downturn.

Currently in development is a new draft 'Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020' (TSNI), which is being led by DETI. Within the battery of skills that the strategy identifies as key to the achievement of its vision are language skills, and a number of priorities for action in this area have been agreed and are included in the TSNI Action Plan. DETI clearly recognises that the promotion of language learning in Northern Ireland will have a positive impact on the local tourism industry.

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[101] *www.northernireland.gov.uk/economic-strategy*

Similarly, Invest Northern Ireland's core strategy for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) is tied to objectives and targets relating to export-led economic growth as set out in the Programme for Government and NI Economic Strategy[102]. Northern Ireland is increasingly positioning itself as a strategic nearshore location, primarily for European and US companies that wish to access a high-quality workforce at a competitive cost. However, attracting geographically-mobile inward-investment projects has proved increasingly competitive in recent years, particularly against Eastern European countries where competency in English and other European languages tends to be very high, as well as readily available in combination with other key skills sets. In the last year, Invest NI has experienced an upsurge in the number of companies enquiring about multilingual skills in Northern Ireland - both in terms of third-level enrolment and graduates, as well as the number of foreign nationals resident in the region. If we are to continue to capitalise on our success in already attracting multilingual projects to the region[103], we need to ensure that we offer language capacity in sufficient depth and range. It is worth spelling out what this means:

- *language competence* that is fit for purpose, tailored to occupational needs

- *a range of languages* that allows us to communicate effectively with the established as well as the emerging economies of the world

- *language capability* seen as a cross skill, embedded within another area of expertise (for example, IT with languages, finance plus languages, law with languages)

The Review of Public Administration[104] has pointed to the need to rebalance the economy in terms of our reducing our dependence on the public sector - in other words, to foster a reduced public sector balanced by private sector growth. Language skills are central to the achievement of this rebalancing, an important fuel that will allow the private sector to achieve its international potential.

The NI Government European strategy[105] points to the continuing impact of EU membership on our lives in political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Northern Ireland is already engaged with European partners in a wide range of initiatives across many fields of activity. The intention of the European Strategy in this regard may be summarised thus:

To enable Northern Ireland to participate in Europe in a positive, outward and forward-looking manner, and to become a preferred region of choice for partnership where our partners will wish to live, work, study and invest.

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[102] In this context, The NI Economic Strategy has identified the following sectors as offering the most significant potential for growth: Telecommunications & ICT; Life & Health Sciences; Agrifood; Advanced Materials; Advanced Engineering; Business and Financial Services; Creative Industries; Tourism; the Social Economy and Rural Economy.
[103] For example, Caterpillar, Norfolkline, gem, TeleTech, HCL.
[104] 'Better Government for Northern Ireland' March 2008, NIO.
[105] 'Taking our Place in Europe', 2006-10, OFMDFM.

In pursuit of this vision Northern Ireland will:

- Promote its interests within the European Union

- Raise its positive profile throughout Europe

- Raise awareness and encourage participation in European matters: the evidence of the overwhelming importance of the European context for Northern Ireland is unequivocally clear.

- Assert the importance of Language Competence: recognised by Government and ambitious companies alike, the case for asserting language competence as the key to unlocking positive and fruitful relationships is no less incontrovertible.

Research and Consultation

The research we have undertaken shows the importance of languages for the development of the prosperity of the region in a number of areas that are key to our expansion in Europe and beyond. These are:

Trade

Both economic theory and many countries' experience show that economies that trade tend to grow faster. Openness to trade - both exports and imports - strengthens the drivers of productivity[106].

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[106] HM Treasury Trade and the Global Economy, May 2004.

There is substantial evidence that improved language and intercultural skills can make major contributions towards the attainment of government goals and objectives through improved international knowledge, contacts, co-operation and communication.

Specific opportunities that present themselves to the Northern Ireland economy include:

- Economic co-operation with companies in China, India and Central/Eastern Europe, in areas such as manufacturing joint ventures, product or component sourcing

- Marketing and investment opportunities in the emerging markets of Asia and Brazil

- Research and development programmes in Europe Recruiting workers from Central/Eastern Europe.

Languages will help companies and organisations to develop their responsiveness to these opportunities in a number of ways:

- Vital commercial, scientific and technical information can be acquired without the likely delays and possible distortions of second-hand reporting.

- Language skills widen the range of potential contacts and avoid the skewed choices imposed by monolingualism.

- Co-operation depends on shared goals, compatible organisations and personal relationships that can only be improved through language and intercultural skills.

- Communication with and within a multilingual world requires the skilful and informed use of translation, interpretation and localisation.

While speaking English clearly confers an advantage[107], research has shown that monolingualism distorts British economic performance. 'By limiting market development, this language skills deficit has a negative effect on productivity'[108]. Research has shown that the UK balance of trade is positive in English-speaking markets and negative where English is not spoken, that there is a close correlation between the English-speaking proportion of a population and their per capita spend on UK goods and services, and that avoidance of language barriers steers UK exporters into mature and increasingly saturated markets and away from opportunities in developing markets[109]. Language competence, in short, ensures business breadth and economic flexibility.

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[107] However 90% of all pupils in secondary education in the EU are now learning English, so it is not in itself enough. Eurydice 2005. Key data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe.

[108] 'Costing Babel: the Contribution of Language Skills to SME Exporting and Productivity', James Foreman-Peck, Cardiff University, October 2007.

[109] 'Talking World Class. The Impact of Language Skills on the UK Economy'. CiLT, the National Centre for Languages.

This is also reflected in Northern Ireland with its strong dependence on English-speaking markets in Britain, Ireland and North America, and a relatively low proportion in European Union countries. Despite three decades of EU membership and specific trade development programmes, sales to non-English-speaking markets account for only 16% of the total[110]. Previous surveys have shown that large and/ or foreign-owned companies dominate exporting, with Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) playing a limited role; yet SMEs are the key to replenishment and growth of the economy, particularly in Northern Ireland.

Audits of similar regions in England[111] and the ELISE Project[112] have shown that SMEs face language and cultural barriers to successful exporting. The ELAN Project[113] revealed that British companies in general do not plan or invest in order to overcome these barriers.

Northern Ireland has considerable potential to deliver education and training exports. A report[114] in 2007 showed that education was worth more to British exports than banking. SMEs must be encouraged through an effective promotional campaign to recognise the benefits of allowing staff to be trained appropriately.

Tourism

Northern Ireland is becoming a highly desirable global destination, with recognition, accolades and commendation in international travel publications. Consequently, air access has increased in recent years. Northern Ireland currently has 38 European routes serving 20 destinations compared with 7 routes serving 7 destinations in 2004. There were 32 GB routes serving 16 destinations in 2004; this has increased to 38 routes serving 24 destinations, and the three main airports (Belfast International, George Best Belfast City Airport and City of Derry Airport) showed an 11.5% growth in passenger figures in the five-year period from 2004[115]. The upshot of all this is that, according to statistics released by the NI Tourist Board, overnight visitors from Europe increased by almost 60% between 2004 and 2009, with visitors from North America and Australia/New Zealand also growing by approximately 20% in the same period. Tourism is becoming fully internationalised, and our languages capacity will underpin and sustain such development[116].

Within the context of increased access and expanding numbers of visitors, there is still considerable scope to improve the number of non-English speaking tourists who come to Northern Ireland. Between 2004 and 2009 only 11% of our total footfall came from continental Europe (although this remains a markedly rising trend). It seems likely that this share will continue to grow with the new routes and the appeal of our provision to the 'greying' populations in Europe. In the context of global growth, the opportunities

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110 *NI Manufacturing Sales & Export Survey* 2004-05.
111 CILTCILTCILT, the National Centre for Languages, Regional Audits.
112 ELISE project, EU Leonardo da Vinci programme.
113 ELAN Survey of European SMEs CiLT 2007.
114 UK Education & Training Exports. British Council, September 2007.
115 Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). UK Airport Statistics Annual Data (2004 and 2009).
116 2009 Tourism Facts, NITB.

are even clearer. The World Tourism Organisation predicts growth from 693 million arrivals in 2001 to 1.5 billion by 2020; Europe will continue to lead the world in the short and medium term[117].

Over 40,000 jobs are sustained by tourism activity in Northern Ireland, representing 5.6% of the workforce. There is unparalleled potential here to generate growth and create employment. Every £1m generated through tourism supports an additional 25.5 jobs, and as a labour-intensive industry it brings employment to all regions, new facilities to our towns and cities, and creates opportunities in rural areas. As we go about rebuilding a balanced economy, it is only by strengthening our growing industries, such as tourism, that we can create new jobs and business opportunities.

However, written evidence from People 1st to the NI Select Committee revealed that, while there are approximately 43,000 employees in hospitality, tourism, leisure and travel in Northern Ireland, 11% are international workers[118]. The industry has skill shortages, poor retention and a substantial proportion of unqualified workers. Employee turnover in hotels and restaurants is the highest of all sectors and the sector also has the highest proportion of employers reporting vacancies[119].

Growth in the sector, coupled with adverse demographics and its low appeal mean that the reliance on international workers will increase. This adds a further dimension to the international communications challenge within the sector, in other words communication within the workforce as well as communication with customers. Language and cultural skills are very important for this key industrial sector now and will be even more important in the future. The NI Tour Guides Association, for example, has already recognised and responded to tour operator demand by organising language training for tour guides.

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[117] World Tourism Organisation, Vision 2020.
[118] UK Parliament Select Committee on NI Affairs written evidence from People 1st.
[119] *Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005* (DEL and NISRA).

International Co-operation

Northern Ireland is the smallest region in the UK, with limited natural resources, and is dependent on other countries for markets for its products, on migrant labour in the healthcare, food processing and hospitality industries, on offshore manufacturing for its textiles and clothing companies and benefiting from partnerships and networks in areas as diverse as academic research, the arts, and local government. Northern Ireland is a small part of the EU, the world's largest economic bloc with a population of over 500 million people, and the prospect of further enlargement. Unlike other economic blocs, the EU is multilingual, with 23 official languages.

This is our context and our challenge. In Northern Ireland we need to gather new ideas and gain access to accurate and timely technical and commercial information. We also need to build successful and enduring international partnerships and to communicate with the wider world.

Northern Ireland is represented in the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels provides a valuable resource for Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is a member the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime regions and should join the Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power. In addition the Ulster Farmers' Union, the Law Society of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland CBI and the Presbyterian Church maintain a presence in Brussels through national organisations or consortia[120].

Northern Ireland's role could be reinforced and extended by participation in the EU Territorial Co-operation Objective 2007-2013 in which multilateral projects will be generated in:

- the Atlantic Area, transnational zone linking Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, SW France to Spain, Portugal and their island territories

- North-West Europe encompassing the UK, Ireland, northern France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, SW Germany and part of Switzerland

- the Northern Periphery zone of northern Finland, Sweden, Norway, the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland and NW Russia[121].

Belfast, in its role of regional capital and the largest centre of population and economic activity, has developed a very proactive approach to European activities. A European Unit was established in 2003 and was tasked with:

- Promoting the Greater Belfast Metropolitan region as a dynamic, vibrant European destination

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[120] 'Taking Our Place in Europe. Northern Ireland's European Strategy 2006-2011', OFMDFM.
[121] 'Taking Our Place in Europe', OFMDFM.

- Participating in projects and networks of European cities to exchange best practice and showcase Belfast City Council

- Raising awareness of European affairs within the metropolitan region

- Maximising European funding opportunities

- Contributing to EU policy formulation.

The work of the Unit has promoted active participation in a wide range of projects and networks with regions and cities throughout Europe. In addition the Unit promotes partnerships with other cities in USA and with Nicosia, Amsterdam and Hefei, Belfast's sister city in China[122].

Northern Ireland has played and continues to play a significant role in development projects. In 1992 NI-CO was created to develop partnership opportunities to market the skills and expertise of the NI public service and to build a stronger presence for Northern Ireland in Europe and worldwide. In recent years NI-CO has secured nearly 50 projects in 14 countries, covering issues as varied as governance, equality, justice and security, financial management, agriculture & rural development, food, environment, consumer affairs and economic development.

Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Baltic Republics, Slovakia, Slovenia and Malta have all benefited from local skills and expertise through Twinning Projects in new EU Member States. NI-CO has also completed projects in Future Member and Economically Associated States, ranging from Bulgaria (now part of the EU) to Turkey and Serbia and Montenegro. Projects outside Europe include legal development work in Indonesia, agricultural trade in Jordan, healthcare in Egypt, and government procurement in the Lebanon[123].

Belfast City Council and NI-CO are prime examples of Northern Ireland's connections with the wider world and show the contributions that we can make. Other councils and organisations are also involved.

In 2005 Northern Ireland hosted the EEFA U19 Football Finals and the Northern European Gymnastics Championships; April 2007 saw the arrival of teams from 24 countries for the U19 Rugby World Cup, in July the Milk Cup brings young footballers annually from all over the world, and Belfast is now on the international circuit for conferences on a wide variety of subjects ranging from sciences, medicine and creative arts to policing and emergency planning. In 2013 Belfast will be the host city for the World Police and Fire Games.

This summary makes it clear that international connections are vital to Northern Ireland. Our society and economy benefit from the knowledge, stimulus and opportunity that these links and networks provide. In this context of international co-operation, language and intercultural skills are essential if the full potential of these developments, initiatives and activities is to be realised.

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[122] Belfast City Council European Unit.
[123] Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. *Northern Ireland Economic Bulletin,* 2006.

Employment

A major research project[124] at the start of this century found that young people from the UK were at a disadvantage in the recruitment market as a result of not having useable language skills. It recommended that languages should be designated a key skill. Eight years later a survey of British companies[125] stressed the value of language skills in various contexts -'breaking the ice to building bridges'.

In Northern Ireland such skills are required within the workforce in a variety of situations: in local companies whose owners or parent company do not speak English as their first language. Montupet and Michelin, for example, are in this category and they have staff in engineering, logistics, and IT who dropped languages after GCSE and then found they had to speak French to carry out their work (these companies are now excellent advocates of languages to school audiences) where specific experience and training cannot be obtained in Northern Ireland.

For example, it is impossible for textile and apparel designers to experience work in a manufacturing environment in Northern Ireland. Skillfast UK - the Sector Skills Council for this industry - created a programme for Design Graduates in Italy - setting up training attachments to Italian manufacturers to provide this experience. This was supported by the EU Leonardo Programme, Invest NI and Belfast City Council but has regrettably been a victim of national priorities within Skillfast UK during international events in Northern Ireland, such as Olympics 2012 training camps, the World Transplant Games, and the World Police and Fire Games, which will bring 25,000 competitors plus officials, supporters and spectators in 2013.

The importance of language and cultural skills was identified and stressed in a recent report[126] in ethnically and linguistically diverse workforces. This is an issue that concerns employers throughout the UK and Ireland, and was the subject of a Business in the Community Northern Ireland conference in 2007 where production has moved offshore and technologists, engineers, production and quality control managers are now working with colleagues in foreign language environments.

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), in particular, have a crucial role to play in this regard, in terms of their responsibility for identifying the training needs of their workforce. The opportunities and, by extension, the failure costs implicit in the indicative situations identified above underline the importance of the SSCs identifying languages and language competence as core workplace skills. A promotional campaign is required to demonstrate fully the benefits of language and cultural training in this context.

International Communication Skills

People who speak more than one language tend to have excellent intercultural skills that are the result both of predisposition and varied experience. However, for monolinguists, or those whose language experience is limited to the classroom, these

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[124] Nuffield Language Inquiry 1998-2000.
[125] CBI Education and Skills survey 2008.
[126] Skills for Business Network Research and Report for London 2012.

skills need to be acquired. Moreover, in the classroom stereotypical ideas of how the 'typical' French, Spanish or German person might behave all too frequently supplant a more genuine level of cultural engagement. This not uncommon tendency towards essentialising otherness lies at the heart of an attitude of hostility towards, and demonisation of, people from other cultures.

Non-linguists may also experience difficulties in working with translators and interpreters and in communicating with second language speakers of English.

Three different skills-sets are required for international communication at home or overseas. These are detailed in *Passport to Export*[127]:

Linguistic Skills

These comprise both passive and active skills at various levels ranging from meeting, greeting and survival through to the sort of fluency that is required to operate efficiently and effectively in a variety of professional contexts.

Interlingual Skills

Operating in English in an international context requires:

- an understanding of how to use interpreters, of the various types of interpreting, and of how to prepare oneself and brief one's interpreter for the task

- an understanding of translation and of the different forms that translation may take - gist, machine, technical, legal, back etc. Central to this is an understanding of how to commission good translations

- the use of international English. The problems created by slang, dialect, idiom, humour, clichés, similes, metaphors and speed of delivery (too slow or too fast). Anglicisation of names for ease of pronunciation or memory may also affect communication and relationships

- listening to accented English where confusion can be caused by different stress patterns, pronunciation, grammar or false friends.

Intercultural Skills

A set of generic skills that can be developed concomitantly with or independently of language learning that are essential for:

- working with colleagues from other countries or colleagues employing new people who have just arrived from elsewhere

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[127] Basic International Communications Invest NI (in conjunction with Language Network) 2005. See *http://in-languages.com/documents/InternationalCommunicationsBusiness.pdf*

- managing a team from different countries or cultures

- delivering a product or service to people from different countries or cultures.

Promoting and Informing

The Nuffield Languages Inquiry produced a languages strategy for England and, in a project designed to change attitudes to languages across the UK, provided the Regional Languages Network organised by CILT, with Department for Education and Skills (DfES) funding. This established 12 local networks across the UK to promote the importance of language skills to local government and business organisations, to publicise languages and to provide help and advice to organisations and individuals. Although DfES funding has now ceased, the networks are still in existence and as well as carrying out their remit have contributed to other local programmes and produced the How To … series of guides on practical aspects of languages, podcasts with language and cultural advice on many countries, work with the court and prison service. The language networks remain an important resource for practical language development in Northern Ireland.

In spite of such developments in Great Britain, government intervention is required to address a market failure that has resulted in deficiencies in language skills that place British and Irish people at or near the bottom of league tables of language proficiency. This has a demonstrably negative effect on international economic activity and on economic productivity, and similar effects on other forms of international co-operation can be assumed.

Strategic Recommendations

Finally, this section sets out a number of recommendations that, if implemented, will contribute towards the achievement of our key targets in relation to Languages for Prosperity. In general these are:

- **the need to change attitudes to language and cultural skills so that these skills are perceived to be important and attainable**

- **the need to improve language and cultural skills throughout the population.**

While government should necessarily play a central role in the implementation of these proposed actions, this Strategy recognises that our overall aim will only be achieved if individuals and organisations recognise their responsibilities in facing up to the challenges outlined within it.

7.   Strategic Target

The Promotion of Language Competence as a Key Skill of Trade and Business

Recommended Action 7.1

That Language Champions be identified, within the context of 1.3 above, to spearhead the proposed promotional campaign (campaigning within the particular context of the interaction of education, business and society).

Language Champions should be appointed on a voluntary basis. They should be of sufficient standing to sustain a campaign directed both at businesses, and at school pupils, parents and teachers.

Recommended Action 7.2

That the private and voluntary sectors be supported in carrying out audits of their language and intercultural needs.

Recommended Action 7.3

That language programmes for occupational purposes be included in the training provision within these sectors.

This Strategy recognises that there remains work to be done in this regard in order to identify the training gaps that exist between different occupational purposes. Clearly, some sectors (tourism, for example) are now addressing training needs, although even here this remains largely piecemeal. The Strategy has also identified the need for further work to be carried out in order to identify the level of training needed to upskill people in appropriate sectors to business fluency, and to assess whether this is viable through existing training provision.

Recommended Action 7.4

That employers be encouraged to provide language training opportunities, to recognise that languages are a skill priority and be given incentives to reward language competence.

Language training opportunities for pupils and employees not only open up the possibility of new contacts, but are also a key tool for ensuring the degree of ongoing availability necessary to support and sustain our international aspirations.

8.   Strategic Target

The Promotion of Language Competence and Language Awareness as Key
Professional Skills

Such skills are essential qualities in the knowledge-economy workplace. The activities
of Invest NI, in particular, have shown an increased interest from companies who value
foreign-language competency coupled with another skill[128].

Recommended Action 8.1

**That government and local government take the lead by carrying out audits
of language and intercultural competence in all relevant departments and
agencies, and that steps be taken to meet these needs through explicit
inclusion in the recruitment process.**

Recommended Action 8.2

**That CILT's National Occupational Standards in Intercultural Working be
fully disseminated to, and displayed by, all relevant bodies, organisations
and workplaces.**

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[128] Recent examples notified by Invest NI include Law with another European language, Law with
Chinese, IT with (usually) another European language, customer support and sales staff with another
European language (including Nordic languages), recruitment professionals with another European
language.

Strategic Category 3:
Languages for Understanding

Introduction

This section of the strategy sets out the overarching aim, strategic objectives and key recommendations relating to Languages for Understanding, in particular with regard to cultural diversity and social cohesion in Northern Ireland. It has been informed by a process of consultation and research and is underpinned by the statutory rights and duties detailed in local, national and international legislation[129].

Although the ideals of cohesion through diversity, including linguistic diversity, are central to the vision of the European Union and the United Nations, cultural intolerance has been a feature of society in Northern Ireland and is a significant obstacle to social and economic progress.

In attempting to establish a society based on dialogue, understanding and mutual respect, we must address issues relating to language, a key component of culture and cultural identity[130]. How we treat our indigenous languages, our attitudes to ethnic minority languages and our openness or otherwise to foreign languages are real issues which present genuine challenges for all of us.

Vision

Central to our *Languages for Understanding* strategy is the following vision:

The development of a society where cultural and linguistic diversity are celebrated and enjoyed; an open, stable and sustainable society in which all our languages, indigenous and newly arrived, are afforded equal dignity; a society in which pluriculturalism and plurilingualism can unlock latent creativity and engender personal and social enrichment.

This overarching vision will act as a cardinal reference point for the *Languages for Understanding* framework, and for the promotion and delivery of our strategic recommendations.

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[129] For a survey of matters relating to European language policy, see Nic Craith, Máiréad. 2006. *Europe and the Politics of Language: Citizens, Migrants and Outsiders,* Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[130] For a model by which the notion of identity may be codified and related to linguistic structure, see Ó Corráin, Ailbhe. 2009. 'Identity as a Cognitive Code: the Northern Irish Paradigm' in *Cultural Identities and National Borders,* eds. Mats Andrén et. al., Centre for European Research, Gothenburg, pp.35-48.

Guiding Principles

The strategic framework is underpinned by a set of basic principles that have informed this section of the strategy and have guided its implementation.

- Linguistic and cultural diversity are rich social and economic assets which every individual has the right to participate in and enjoy.

- Language policy must operate within and build upon existing legislation, safeguarding the principles of equality of opportunity and fundamental human rights[131].

- All forms of linguistic intolerance and cultural discrimination are abhorrent and unacceptable in a democratic society.

- The protection and promotion of cultural diversity presupposes a recognition of the equal dignity of all languages, including indigenous minority languages, sign languages and the languages of migrant communities.

- Since culture is a mainspring of human progress, economic and cultural aspects of societal development, far from being distinct, are interdependent and complementary[132].

The Challenges

The linguistic challenges we face as a society relate to indigenous minority languages, immigrant languages and learned foreign languages.

Northern Ireland is no longer a bipolar society - it is enriched because it is becoming more culturally diverse. As our society becomes more peaceful and prosperous - and as our demand for skilled labour exceeds what can be supplied locally - we are seeing greater ethnic diversity than ever before. There are substantial economic and social benefits to be derived from this increased diversity[133].

Cultural diversity is a reality in contemporary Northern Ireland. A society which has often been portrayed as narrow and limited in ethnic variety is now displaying greater heterogeneity than ever before. After decades of emigration, the average annual rate of population increase more than doubled between mid-2004 and mid-2008 due to

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[131] For an overview of language rights in the European context, see Nic Craith, Máiréad. 2010. 'Linguistic heritage and language rights in Europe: theoretical considerations and practical implications', in Langfield, Michele et.al. (eds.). *Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights,* London and New York: Routledge, pp.45-62.

[132] Compare the principle of the complementarity of economic and cultural aspects of development. UNESCO. 2005. *Convention on the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,* p.4 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919e.pdf

[133] *A Shared Future. Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland,* p.15 www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/good-relations-report.pdf

large flows of people into Northern Ireland, particularly from the eight Central and Eastern European countries who joined the EU in May 2004[134]. In 2008, some 15,300 people registered for a Health Card (a good indicator of immigration) compared to 7200 in 2003[135]. Much of this immigration has come from outside the UK and the Republic of Ireland and the number of languages spoken in Northern Ireland has increased accordingly.

The challenge we face is to take advantage of this new diversity in order to reap the benefits it can bring. In the modern world, a monolingual society is, quite simply, not sustainable. We must invest in our cultural capital in order to augment our social and economic capital.

We are all too well aware of the problems that cultural intolerance can give rise to. Between 2002 and 2005 Hate Crimes increased by almost 100% each year. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10 although the number of crimes with a racist motivation fell by 7.7%, the number of crimes with a sectarian motivation increased by 24.3%[136]. The social and economic costs of cultural prejudice and of failing to make the most of the manifold benefits of cultural diversity are clearly documented. There is not only a social but also an economic imperative to effectively manage and promote our cultural and linguistic diversity[137]. Only then will we be in a position to tap into the intellectual framework and cognitive insights of other cultures and other languages. In so doing we can unlock creativity, promote innovation and support entrepreneurship[138].

[134] Population and Migration Estimates Northern Ireland (2010) - Statistical Report, *http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp17.htm*

[135] Table 1.31: NI Health Card Registrations from Non-UK Nationals by Country of Last Residence (January 2005-December 2008), *www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/Net_Mig0607.xls*

[136] The Police Service of Northern Ireland, *http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_domestic_and_hate_motivation_statistics/ updates_domestic_and_hate_motivation_statistics_archive.htm* (Statistical Reports No.3 Hate Incidents and Crimes, from 2004/05 to present day).

[137] For an overview of the issues facing minority languages in Britain, Ireland and the Nordic countries, see Ó Corráin Ailbhe and Séamus Mac Mathúna (eds.), 1998. *Minority Languages in Scandinavia, Britain and Ireland.* Studia Celtica Upsaliensia Vol. 3, Uppsala. See also Muller, Janet. 2010. *Language and Conflict in Northern Ireland: a Silent War,* Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.

[138] For an indication of how international immigration can benefit cities economically, socially and culturally, see the Open Cities website *http://opencities.britishcouncil.org*. See also a Council of Europe document on the value of Minority Languages for Regional Development: *https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=RES%282010%29301&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679*

Key Points and Priority Areas Arising from Consultation

Language is the key to understanding a people and its culture.

To know only one language allows you only a narrow view of the world. In this shrinking world and especially in the EU it is necessary to view the world through as many perspectives as possible[139].

Knowing our own indigenous language, the indigenous language of the region in which we reside - Irish - enhances our own sense of identity, sense of self value and our sense of place in a globalised environment. It also protects us from trends towards assimilation into dominant cultures. In allowing us to maintain our distinctiveness, while providing us with the confidence to embrace other cultures and languages, the ability to use Irish enhances our economic distinctiveness and our international appeal[140].

Responses to our questionnaire indicate strong support for the promotion of linguistic diversity:

- Nearly three quarters of the respondents agree that Northern Ireland is a multicultural society and hear another language on a regular basis.

- Almost 9 out of every 10 feel that it is important to know about the languages and cultures of immigrant communities in Northern Ireland.

- Almost all (98%) of respondents feel that it is an advantage to know another language.

- 87% believe that knowing more than one language promotes intercultural understanding.

Our consultations have also identified a range of issues that require action if our aims and objectives are to be achieved:

- Members of ethnic communities have referred to a misunderstanding of their linguistic requirements and emphasised that their views are not sufficiently clearly represented[141].

- While the large majority of respondents to our questionnaire agree that Sign languages are part of our linguistic diversity, it has been highlighted that there is a serious shortage of trainers and interpreters to meet the needs of the community, accompanied by a lack of opportunity for progression to higher education in these subjects.

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[139] Response to NILS Questionnaire
[140] Submission to NILS from *Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta*.
[141] See McDermott P. 2011. *Migrant Languages in the Public Space: A Case Study from Northern Ireland.* Münster: LIT Verlag.

■ Submissions to the strategy from Irish language organisations have identified a number of priority areas for action if the language is to be sustained.

Strategic Recommendations

This section sets out a number of recommendations that, if implemented, will contribute towards the achievement of our key targets. While government should play a central role in the implementation of these proposed actions, we recognise that our overall aim will only be achieved if individuals and organisations recognise their responsibilities in facing up to the challenges we have outlined.

Strategic Objective F

To increase our understanding of the Contribution that Enhanced Language Provision and Intercultural Awareness can make to the Establishment and Maintenance of a Society of Equality, Inclusiveness and Understanding

9.   Strategic Target

A greater awareness of the Values of Pluriculturalism and Multilingualism

Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and the planet ... it is urgent **to take action to promote multilingualism**, *in other words to encourage the development of coherent regional and national language policies which give the opportunity for an appropriate and harmonious use of languages in a given community and country*[142].

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard, in carrying out their functions, to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups[143]. Matters relating to language are fundamental to understanding, equality of opportunity and social harmony, and should therefore be kept under constant review[144].

Recommended Action 9.1

That existing Northern Ireland language policies and legislation should be subject to ongoing review in order to ensure that they maintain fitness for purpose in an increasingly pluricultural society and remain consistent with national and international legislation.

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[142] *UNESCO A Pillar of Cultural Diversity, www.unesco.org/en/languages-and-multilingualism/*
[143] Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga_19980047_en_7#pt7-pb2-l1g75
[144] On the question of official status for languages, see Nic Craith, Máiréad. 2003. *Culture and Identity Politics in Northern Ireland,* Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire and New York, pp.83 ff.

> ### *Recommended Action 9.2*
>
> **That steps be taken to ensure that all languages, spoken and signed, are valued within society, and that mother tongue maintenance is supported.**

British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL)

In March 2004, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced recognition of BSL and ISL as languages in their own right. He also announced that the NI Departments would work together, in partnership with representatives of the deaf community, to develop ideas for improving access to public services by users of sign languages.

Although Northern Ireland currently has around 5000 users of sign language[145,] we have only eight sign language tutors qualified to NVQ level 3 and two qualified to level 4. To be in line with other European countries, there is a need for at least 40.

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[145] Hands-on Partnership, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, *http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/languages/sign_language.htm*

Recommended Action 9.3

That the recommendations of the Business Case Report on Sign Languages should be fully implemented to meet the statutory requirements and duties enshrined in UK disability and equality legislation.

Strategic Objective G

To Encourage Communication and Mutual Understanding between Members of Different Cultural Backgrounds, including Indigenous Communities and Others.

10.   Strategic Target

The Development of Greater Respect for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and Enhanced Understanding of the Needs of Minority Language Communities

Just as the European communities should ensure respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, so too should they respect the diversity of languages spoken … Each language shelters a subtly distinct view of the world and is fundamental to the personal, social and spiritual identity of its speakers: without a language they would be less than they are[146].

All sections of society must take responsibility for initiating communication, developing dialogue and enhancing intercultural understanding. Public bodies and service providers have an increasingly important role as we move towards a society where cultural and linguistic diversity are celebrated and enjoyed.

Learning another language opens up access to other value systems and ways of interpreting the world, encouraging inter-cultural understanding and helping reduce xenophobia (UNESCO, Education in a multilingual world[147].

The promotion of languages as a means of opening up to the greater world is not solely the remit of the educational sector. As Northern Ireland moves to becoming a truly open society, a promotional campaign for languages, language awareness and intercultural skills should prompt employers into more active consideration of the benefits of languages, and not least of the multi-ethnic configuration of their workforce.

Recommended Action 10.1

That the centrality of intercultural understanding to public policy, practice and the delivery of public services be enshrined in a code of practice, to be drawn up in consultation with stakeholders (see 8.2 above).

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[146] Commission of the European Communities. *Commission Staff Working Paper. Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity - Consultation,* Commission of the European Communities *http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/promoting-consultation_en.pdf, pp.14-15*

[147] Education Position Paper 2003. *http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129728e.pdf*

> ### *Recommended Action 10.2*
>
> **That all possible steps be taken to ensure that users of languages are involved in the policy-making processes that affect those languages.**

> ### *Recommended Action 10.3*
>
> **That consideration be given to exploring the creation of mutually beneficial cultural/economic projects with the home communities of migrant workers living in Northern Ireland to promote openness in a global context.**

Strategic Objective H

To Sustain, Maintain and Promote our Linguistic and Cultural Identities and Uniqueness

All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish Language, Ulster Scots and the languages of the various ethnic communities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland[148].

the British Government will in particular in relation to the Irish language, where appropriate and where people so desire it: take resolute action to promote the language[149].

Government has made a clear commitment to protect and promote Irish and Ulster-Scots, and DCAL has promised to develop a Strategy for Regional or Minority Languages. It is important that each language be promoted as part of the shared cultural and economic wealth of Northern Ireland. It should furthermore be recognised that Irish and Ulster-Scots have differing needs and requirements and, where this is the case, it is fitting that these needs and requirements should be addressed independently and appropriately.

11.   Strategic Target

The Promotion and Development of our Indigenous Languages

The Irish Language

Having been a key vehicle of thought over the centuries and forming the bedrock of the place names and personal names which are in daily use, Irish is a core formative element in our cultural identity. As such, it belongs to all the people of Northern Ireland and should be accessible to everyone to learn, cherish and enjoy.

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[148] *Point 3, Economic, Social and Cultural Issues. Rights Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity* The *Agreement, http://www.nio.gov.uk/agreement.pdf*, p.24

[149] *Point 4, Economic, Social and Cultural Issues. Rights Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity* The *Agreement, http://www.nio.gov.uk/agreement.pdf*, p.24. For an analysis of the current position of Irish in Northern Ireland, see McMonagle, Sarah. 2010. *The Irish Language in Post-Agreement Northern Ireland, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Ulster.*

Point 4, Economic, Social and Cultural Issues. Rights Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity The *Agreement, http://www.nio.gov.uk/agreement.pdf*, p.24

The potential economic gains related to the promotion of Irish may be illustrated by the success of the Irish Language Broadcast Fund, established under the terms of the 1998 Agreement. Whereas before the introduction of ILBF only 5 people were employed within the freelance Irish language sector, since its establishment, a total of 539 individuals have been employed in some capacity by the fund[152].

Recommended Action 11.1

That the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the UK government[153], are fully applied and that, as an officially recognised indigenous language on an equal footing with Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, Irish should be afforded the full status and privileges that such standing entails.

Ulster-Scots

The position of Ulster Scots as an integral element within the heritage of Northern Ireland has been demonstrated in recent years by the publications of the Ulster Scots Agency, the Institute of Ulster Scots Studies and the Ulster Scots Academy[154]. The economic importance, moreover, of employing Ulster Scots icons in promoting Northern Ireland to the Northern Irish diaspora throughout the globe is becoming increasingly apparent[155].

Recommended Action 11.2

That an awareness of and respect for Ulster-Scots traditions be encouraged, and steps taken to examine ways of employing Ulster-Scots linguistic and cultural icons.

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[150] Interim Evaluation of the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) - Final Report, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL), *http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/ilbf_final_interim_report-2.pdf*, Table 1.2 Key Findings, p.5. See also McDermott, P. 'Broadcasting for Minorities: The Case of the Celtic Languages' in Máiréad Nic Craith (ed.). 2007. *Language, Power and Identity Politics. Basingstoke: Palgrave*, pp.101-122.

[151] *http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm*. See also Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to the UK on the application of the ECRML (3rd monitoring cycle): *http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/Report/default_en.asp#United. For shortcomings in the ratification of the Charter with respect to Irish see the submissions by Pobal to the Committee of Experts on the Charter. http://www.pobal.org/uploads/documents/charter/Chairt.pdf*

[152] See the websites of the Ulster Scots Agency, *http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com*, the Institute of Ulster Scots at University of Ulster, *http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/ulsterscots/index.html*, for more information on their work and publications. See also *Devolution and Identity*, John Wilson and Karyn Stapleton. 2006. Ashgate: London.

[153] For further information see Northern Ireland Tourist Board (2006).

Table of Recommendations

A range of recommendations is outlined. Some, we suggest, could be acted on immediately, others will require discussion and action in the medium or long term. Those recommendations that we propose should be dealt with promptly are indicated in the timescale column.

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
1 Languages for Life	A To Promote Languages as a Key Skill for Life	1 A Change in Attitudes to Languages and Intercultural Skills so that they are Perceived as Relevant and Attainable	1.1 That a promotional campaign to demonstrate the advantages of language competence in personal, professional and cultural terms be designed and implemented.	2012
			1.2 That language-learning be incorporated into the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) group of subjects (hence the suggested acronym: STEM-L), and specifically, that languages be regarded as contributing to the cross-curricular skill of communication up to KS3 and to the development of literacy.	2012
			1.3 That there be support and encouragement for the creation of a Languages Forum to draw together the various language organisations, agencies and associations that will provide information and advice, showcase best practice through training programmes, encourage research and development into language-based issues, facilitate dialogue between users and providers and advise on the implementation of the Strategy.	2012

Table of Recommendations

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
1 Languages for Life *(cont'd)*	B To Promote Languages in Education	2 A Greater Uptake of Language Learning	2.1 That pupils have the opportunity to study at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue from the earliest possible age and that all secondary pupils have the opportunity to study throughout their school career at least one language other than English. 2.2 That the teaching and learning of languages in pre-primary/ nursery provision be encouraged. 2.3 That the Primary Modern Languages Programme be consolidated and extended, that the teaching of languages at primary level be strongly encouraged in all schools at KS1, and KS2, through the broadening and deepening of language provision, and that languages be integrated into the Revised Primary Curriculum. 2.4 That full use be made of the School Collaborative Programme to deliver languages within the Entitlement Framework both as general and applied subjects and that consideration be given to the establishment of a Routes into Languages consortium in Northern Ireland. 2.5 Specialist language schools have made a profound contribution to enhancing the quality of the languages curriculum. It is recommended that the achievements of this initiative be sustained through the promotion of further cooperative partnerships and alliances, with particular attention being paid to their geographical spread and to the range of languages offered.	2012>

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
1 Languages for Life *(cont'd)*			2.6 That FE and HE institutions be encouraged to offer extended training in language competence to all students, in particular in relation to communication skills and vocational development and that they address their languages strategies through their own corporate planning processes.	
			2.61 That the universities should seek to strengthen their enrolment on languages degrees, particularly those with an applied languages focus.	
			2.62 That the universities should undertake to support their international aspirations through appropriate language provision.	
			2.7 That lifelong language learning programmes be encouraged and facilitated especially at community and workplace level, using the benefits of the Extended Schools initiative.	
		3 Diversification in the Range of Languages currently on Offer in Formal Education	3.1 That the curriculum at both primary and secondary levels be widened to include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - the teaching of other subjects and topics through a language. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an appropriate pilot scheme, and to the encouragement of Specialist Language Schools, in particular, to implement such an approach.	2012>
			3.2 That learning opportunities for sign languages be provided.	
			3.3 That non-traditional languages within schools and colleges be further promoted.	
			3.4 That the teaching of English as an additional language in our schools be offered in a consistent manner, through class teachers, to complement the provision of English as a Second Language (ESOL) in the network of FE colleges.	

Table of Recommendations

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
1 Languages for Life *(cont'd)*		4 An Improvement in the Effectiveness of Language Teaching, *inter alia* Addressing Perceived Gender and Arts Bias in Language Learning	4.1 That specialist training in the form of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), In Service Training (INSET) etc be provided for language teachers and current teachers converting to languages for in- and out-of-class teaching, and for classroom assistants from pre-primary upwards to build teacher capacity.	2012 >
			In relation to 2.3 above, that MFL and languages pedagogy be part of every Primary School teacher's initial training in order both to introduce teachers to language teaching methods, and to refresh the hidden capacity of many teachers in this regard.	
			4.2 That greater consideration be given to the creative use of technological resources and activities;	2012 >
			■ that measures be put in place to provide Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and CPD for teachers to integrate these new and subsequent resources and activities into their teaching;	
			■ that infrastructure be provided in schools to enable these media to be used, including the consideration of the use of learning spaces.	
			4.3 That language teaching should make more explicit the acquisition of key skills, and in particular of metalinguistic and intercultural skills. Lines of progression should be established from primary to tertiary level for all such skills.	
			4.4 That all institutions that offer programmes in translation and interpreting ensure that their provision is consonant with agreed professional standards.	2012

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
1 **Languages for Life** *(cont'd)*	C To Broaden the Range of Appropriate Qualifications	5 (i)A Greater Uptake of a Wider Range of Qualifications in Formal Education, including Special Educational Needs 5 (ii) A Greater Uptake in Non-Formal Education	5.1 That consideration be given to the introduction of a range of non-traditional qualifications at all levels to reflect differing degrees of specialism, different skills and combinations of skills and differing levels of competence so that pupils may acquire vocational qualifications that assess their practical language skills. 5.2 That the European Languages Portfolio and the Languages Ladder be introduced to record achievement as an alternative to public examinations at school, community and workplace levels. 5.3 That the QCA recommendations for making language teaching enjoyable at all levels be adopted and monitored.	
	D To Encourage Greater Global Awareness and Aspirations towards Internationalisation	6 An Increase in the Number of International Partnerships between Schools, Community Groups, Towns/Cities	6.1 That guidance be given to those schools and groups wishing to establish international twinning arrangements or partnerships.	

Table of Recommendations

Table of Recommendations

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
2 Languages for Prosperity	E To Improve Language and Intercultural Skills throughout the Population	7 The Promotion of Language Competence as a Key Skill of Trade and Business	7.1 That Language Champions be identified, within the context of 1.3 above, to spearhead the proposed promotional campaign (campaigning within the particular context of the interaction of education, business and society). In this overall context the incorporation of language learning into the STEM group of subjects (STEM-L) is of crucial importance (see 1.2 above). 7.2 That the private and voluntary sectors be supported in carrying out audits of their language and intercultural needs. 7.3 That language programmes for occupational purposes be included in the training provision within these sectors. 7.4 That employers be encouraged to provide language training opportunities, to recognise that languages are a skill priority and be given incentives to reward language competence.	2012
		8 To Promote Language Competence and Language Awareness as a Key Professional Skill	8.1 That government and local government take the lead by carrying out audits of language and intercultural competence in all relevant departments and agencies, and that steps be taken to meet these needs through explicit inclusion in the recruitment process. 8.2 That CILT's National Occupational Standards in Intercultural Working be fully disseminated to, and displayed by, all relevant bodies, organisations and workplaces.	2012 >

Table of Recommendations

Strategic Category	Strategic Objective	Strategic Target	Recommended Action	Timescale
3 Languages for Understanding	F To increase our Understanding of the Contribution that Enhanced Language Provision and Intercultural Awareness may make to the Establishment and Maintenance of a Society of Equality, Inclusiveness and Understanding	9 A greater Awareness of the Values of Pluriculturalism and Multilingualism	9.1 That existing Northern Ireland language policies and legislation should be subject to ongoing review in order to ensure that they maintain fitness for purpose in an increasingly pluricultural society and remain consistent with national and international legislation.	
			9.2 That steps be taken to ensure that all languages, spoken and signed, are valued within society, and that mother tongue maintenance is supported.	
			9.3 That the recommendations of the Business Case Report on Sign languages should be fully implemented to meet the statutory requirements and duties enshrined in UK disability and equality legislation.	2012
	G To Encourage Communication and Mutual Understanding between Members of Different Cultural Backgrounds, including Indigenous Communities and Others	10 The Development of Greater Respect for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity and Enhanced Understanding of the Needs of Minority Language Communities	10.1 That the centrality of intercultural understanding to public policy, practice and the delivery of public services be enshrined in a code of practice, to be drawn up in consultation with stakeholders (see 8.2 above).	
			10.2 That all possible steps be taken to ensure that users of languages are involved in the policy-making processes that affect those languages.	
			10.3 That consideration be given to exploring the creation of mutually beneficial cultural/economic projects with the home communities of migrant workers living in Northern Ireland to promote openness in a global context.	
	H To Sustain, Maintain and Promote our Linguistic and Cultural Identities and Uniqueness	11 The Promotion and Development of our Indigenous Languages	11.1 That the provisions of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ratified by the government of the United Kingdom, are fully applied and that, as an officially recognised indigenous language on an equal footing with Scottish Gaelic and Welsh, Irish should be afforded the full status and privileges that such standing entails.	2012
			11.2 That an awareness of, and respect for, Ulster-Scots traditions be encouraged, and steps taken to examine ways of employing Ulster-Scots linguistic and cultural icons.	2012

Appendix

1.   Strategy Team

Professor John Gillespie (University of Ulster - Co-Director)

Professor David Johnston (Queen's University, Belfast - Co-Director)

Professor Ailbhe Ó Corráin (University of Ulster)

Pam McIntyre (Queen's University, Belfast)

Rosalyn Davidson (Research Assistant, Queen's University, Belfast)

Dr Sarah McMonagle (Research Assistant, University of Ulster)

Arthur Bell (Language Network Northern Ireland)

Dr Ana Kerr (Belfast Education and Library Board - BELB) (2007-2008)

Dr Chris Shorley (Queen's University, Belfast), who was part of the Strategy Team, died in July 2007

2.   Advisory Committee

Joint Chairs: Professor David Johnston (Queen's University, Belfast) and Professor John Gillespie (Ulster)

Walker Ewart (Education and Training Inspectorate - ETI)

Larry Fitzsimmons (Belfast Metropolitan College)

Desmond Johnston (formerly ETI)

Kevin Lambe (Shimna Integrated College)

Laura Leonard (Belfast City Council European Office)

Kim McCourt (DCAL)

Roger McCune (CCEA)

Eugene McKendry (NICILT)

Aodán Mac Póilin (Iontaobhas Ultach)

Seán Ó Coinn (Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta)

Tomás Ó Ruairc (Foras na Gaeilge)

Jenny Scharf (CCEA)

Jane Sidor (ETI)

Deirdre Stewart (CBI)

Sean Ward (ETI)

Alan Wilson (Ballyclare High School)

Patrick Yu (NICEM)

Plus the other Strategy Team members

3.   Consultation Activities

Given the comprehensive nature of the languages strategy, it was regarded as vital that widespread public consultation with input from all communities should take place. This was achieved by organising a range of public meetings (held in the evenings), conducting face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders, and providing opportunities for written submissions.

In addition, the Strategy, in its draft form, was put out for consultation to all the Departments of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The consultation events were facilitated by Peter Lavery and Therese Hogg. The consultations were semi-structured, with delegates, in self-selecting groups, being asked to record their views across a series of themes using prepared worksheets. The themes were:

- Health and Well-Being

- Education

- Employment and the Economy

- Civic Issues

- Indigenous Languages

- Racism

- Culture, Arts and Sport

Regional Public Consultations

The Linen Green Centre, Dungannon, County Tyrone, 19th February 2008

The Clinton Centre, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, 27th February 2008

Queen's University, Belfast, 5th March 2008

University of Ulster, Magee campus, 6th March 2008

Ballymoney Town Hall, Ballymoney, Co Antrim, 1st May 2008

The questions addressed by the groups at the public meetings were:

What are the main problems associated with language barriers?

What languages are affected?

How are people affected?

Who is affected?

What local solutions are required to overcome these barriers?

Who should be involved?

Participating Organisations

African and Caribbean Association of Foyle

Aisling Ghéar Theatre Company

Armagh Immigrant Support and Welcome Group

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Ballyclare High School

Bangladeshi Community Centre

Bardic Theatre

Belfast City Council

Belfast Education and Library Board

Birches Community Association

British Council

British Sign Language

Coláiste Bhríde

Comhairle Dhún Geanainn, Thír Eoghain

Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG)

Cookstown LSP

CCEA

Craigavon Intercultural Programme

Derry City Council

Drumcree Community Trust

Dungannon Surestart

EMBRACE

Fermanagh District Council

Fermanagh District Council Tourist Information Service

Foras Na Gaeilge

Foyle Language School

Foyle Multicultural Programme

Hands on TV

INCORE

Integrated College, Dungannon

Invest NI

Lá Nua

Language Network Northern Ireland (LNNI)

Larne Grammar School

Lithuanian Association of Northern Ireland

National Deaf Children's Society

Newsletter

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

North West Academy

North West Academy of English

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Pobal

Pomeroy Development Project

Queen Elizabeth II Primary School

Queen's University

Royal National Institute for the Deaf

Rural Community Network

Solidarity Equality Education Diversity Support (SEEDS)

South Eastern Education and Library Board

South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

South West College (Enniskillen Campus)

St Joseph's Boys' School

St Mark's High School

St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School

The Cultural Exchange

The Welcome Project

Theas (The Portadown Lithuanian Community)

Ulster Scots Language Society

University of Ulster

Western Education and Library Board

Woman's World (Craigavon intercultural Programme)

Women of the World

Round Table Workshop

The intention of this workshop was to bring together interested parties from the service delivery side and those interested in accessing services in order to consider the themes listed above. It was held at Malone House, Barnett's Demesne, Belfast on 18th March 2008 from 1.30 pm-4.30 pm.

Participating Organisations

Belfast City Council

Belfast City Council European Unit

Belfast Education and Library Board

Cinemagic

Craigavon Intercultural Programme

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Department of Education

Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety

EMBRACE

Grosvenor Grammar School

InvestNI

Linenhall Library

Nerve Centre

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (Interpreting)

Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Office of the First and Deputy First Minister

St Mary's CBS

St Patrick's College

Shimna Integrated College

South Eastern Education and Library Board

University of Ulster

South Eastern Regional College

Sport NI

Queen's University, Belfast

Ulster Council of the GAA

Ulster Scots Agency

The Northern Ireland Languages Strategy Website

Members of the public were encouraged to complete an online questionnaire in relation to the development of the strategy at *http://www.nils.org.uk/* The questionnaire was available in 15 different languages.

In addition there were questionnaires for primary and secondary school pupils to complete. These three questionnaires provided a wealth of evidence of views on languages.

The questions can be viewed on the website, which remains live.

Expert Consultations

The strategy team invited key language policy makers for detailed consultation sessions. These included:

Professor Richard Johnstone (University of Stirling and ex-Director of Scottish CILT),

Professor Jo Lo Bianco (Chair of Language and Literacy Education, University of Melbourne)

Dr Anne Davidson Lund (Director of Policy, Research and Information, CILT)

Other Consultees

Department of Education

Walker Ewart

Joe Ó Labhraí (now with Foras na Gaeilge)

Jayne Sidor

Sean Ward

Animate

Daniel Holder, Project Manager

Belfast City Council

Laura Leonard, European Unit

Sarah Jane Smith, European Unit

British Council

Karen Moses

Elaine Nesbitt, Project Delivery Officer: Intercultural Dialogue

Jonathan Stewart

Wendy Waring

Castleknock Community College, Dublin

Mary Ryan

Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research

Ruth Bailey

Claire Dugard

Anne Marie Graham, Skills and Qualifications Adviser

Helen Groothues

Sarah Joy

Kit Thorne

CCEA Languages Provision Group

Centre for Deaf Studies, TCD

Lorraine Leeson

Coleraine Multicultural Forum

Comhairle na Gaelscolaiochta

Seán Ó Coinn

Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People

Cilla Mullan

Courts Service NI

Colette Simmons, Statistics and Research Section

Criminal Justice System

Ms Joan Colin, Legal Training Consultant

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Margaret O'Keeffe, Cultural and Language Diversity Policy Branch

Phillip Spotswood, Research and Statistics Branch

Colette Quinn, Languages Branch

Deborah Walker, Thematic Group on Minority Ethnic Languages

Phillips Wilson, Languages Branch

Department of Employment and Learning

Tom Gardiner, Research and Evaluation Branch

Department of Social Development

Melissa Steed, Statistics and Consultancy Branch

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Seamus Camplisson, Evaluation, Equality & Human Rights Branch

Heather Robinson, Evaluation, Equality & Human Rights Branch

Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council

Daniel Holder, Racial Equality Policy & Research Officer

Equality Commission for NI

Donald Bell, Assistant Research Officer

Linzi Straghan

Fleming Fulton School

Nicola McFadden

Forbairt Feirste

Jake Mac Siacais

Colma McKee

Foras na Gaeilge

Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh

Tomás Ó Ruairc

Gaelscoil Mhichíl Cíosóig

Dónal Ó hAiniféin

GEMS (NI) Minority Ethnic Employability Support Project (MEESP)

Maeve McKeag, MEESP Co-ordinator

Shane Smith, Business Development Manager Adventurene

Harbour Commissioners

Sarah Billingsley

Honorary Consuls

Leo D'Agostino, Honorary Consul for Cyprus

Milan Mladek, Consulate of the Czech Republic

Donald Price, Honorary Consul for Denmark

John Ewings, Honorary Consul for Greece

Frank Hewitt, Honorary Consul for Germany

William Harper Sinnerton, Consulate of Lithuania

Tom Kelly, Honorary Consul for Malta

Carson McMullan, Honorary Consul for the Netherlands

Aleksander Dietkow, Consul General of the Republic of Poland

Cecilia Whiteside, Honorary Consul for Portugal

Christopher G Stange, Consulate of St Vincent and the Grenadines

Tom Sullivan, Honorary Consul for the Slovak Republic

Gerry McClure, Honorary Consul for Spain

David Clarke, Swedish Honorary Consul

Ian Parsley

Marian Patterson

Modern Language Association of Northern Ireland

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

Anca Adams, Languages for Life Co-ordinator

Newry & Mourne District Council

Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer

Gerry McGivern, Irish Language Unit

North East Education and Library Board

Bill Brodie

NICiLT

Eugene McKendry

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

Patrick Yu, Executive Director

Gabrielle Doherty, Capacity Building Manager

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Tony Steed, Manager Equality Unit

Fiona Maconachie, Equality Unit

Northern Ireland Screen

Julieanne Crothers-Gibson, Director of Policy Development

Aine Walsh, Irish Language Broadcast Fund

Richard Williams, Chief Executive

NI Prison Service

Maureen Erne, Prison Law & Policy Branch

OFMDFM

Ken Fraser, Racial Equality Unit

Pascal McKenna

Participation Network

Peter Quinn Consultancy Services

Barry McGurgan

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Paul McIlwaine, Equality & Diversity Branch

Mark Peters, Community Safety Branch

Probation Board of Northern Ireland

Mary Coffey, Equality Manager

Regional Language Network, North West England

Cristina Sousa, Manager

Regional Language Network Yorkshire & the Humber

Sandra Potesta, Director

Royal National Institute for the Deaf Northern Ireland

Julie Meredith

Southern Education and Library Board Inclusion & Diversity Service

Mary Yarr, Regional Adviser

STEP

Bernadette McAliskey, Programme Co-ordinator

ULTACH Trust

Aodán Mac Póilin

Gordon McCoy

University of Ulster

Fionntán de Brún

Karen Duffner (Centre for Excellence in Multimedia Language Learning)

Languages Strategy Public Events

27th November 2007 Public Seminar: 'Public Involvement in Language Planning: Understanding the Role of the Citizen, the Academic and other Interest Groups', Professor Jo Lo Bianco, Queen's University, Belfast.

4th December 2007 Public Seminar: 'Language in the Global Age: Opportunities and Threats', Professor Richard Johnstone, Belfast campus, University of Ulster

20th February 2008 Public Lecture on 'Making the Case for Languages', Dr Anne Davidson Lund, Director of Policy, Research and Information for CILT, the National Centre for Languages, Queen's University, Belfast

Joint/Related Events

3rd February 2007 Conference 'Making the Case for Languages', Adrian Ash (CILT), Kevin Lambe (Shimna Integrated College), Professor John Gillespie, a joint event organised by the Modern Languages Association of Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland CILT, Rathmore Grammar School, Belfast

11th May 2007 'The Northern Ireland Languages Strategy', Presentation by Professor John Gillespie and Professor David Johnston at the Annual Conference of the UK Association of University Professors and Heads of French, Queen's University, Belfast

9th May 2008 Symposium: 'Languages Strategy for Ireland', hosted by the Royal Irish Academy Committee for Modern Languages, Literary and Cultural Studies in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Strategy Team, Hilton Hotel, Belfast, Professor Michael Kelly (LLAS, University of Southampton)

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Appendix

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Wright, S. 2004. *Language Policy and Language Planning. From Nationalism to Globalisation.* Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 311 pp.

Online Documents

Unless otherwise indicated by a website address, all these documents area accessible on the Northern Ireland Languages Strategy Website: *http://www.nils.org.uk/*

Business Language Champions Report: *BLC Report.doc*

Lord Browne. 2010. The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance: Securing a sustainable future for higher education in England (The Browne Review): *http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/hereview.independent.gov.uk/hereview//report/*

Commission of the European Communities, Commission Staff Working Paper. Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity - Consultation, Commission of the European Communities: *http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/promoting-consultation_en.pdf*

Developing Little Linguists: Primary Languages Report: *Developing Little Linguists - Aug 07.pdf*

DfES Languages Strategy: *DfESLanguagesStrategy.pdf*

Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise: *elan_en.pdf*

Enterprise Interim Evaluation of the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) - Final Report, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL): *http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/ilbf_final_interim_report-2.pdf*

European Commission Final report of the High Level Group on Multilingualism: *multireport_en.pdf.*

Routes into Languages: Languages and Enterprise: *languages_and_enterprise.pdf*

Review of Irish-Medium Education Report *http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/10-types_of_school-nischools_pg/ schools_-_types_of_school-_irish-medium_schools_pg/16_schools-types_of_ schools-reviewofime_pg.htm*

The National Languages Strategy in Higher Education: Hilary Footit: *RR625.pdf*

UNESCO Report: Education in a Multilingual World: *multilingual.pdf*

Language-Related Resources on the Web

Alliance Française: *http://www.alliancefr.org/*

Association for Language Learning: *http://www.all-languages.org.uk/*

British Academy: *http://www.britac.ac.uk*

British Deaf Association *http://bda.org.uk/British_Deaf_Association-i-34.html*

Centre for Excellence in Multimedia Language Learning: *http://cemll.ulster.ac.uk/*

Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT):
http://www.cilt.org.uk/home.aspx

Chartered Institute of Linguists: *http://www.iol.org.uk/*

Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta: *http://www.comhairle.org/*

Council of Europe Language Policy Division:
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Linguistic/Default_en.asp

European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning:
http://www.eurocall-languages.org/ (the Headquarters of EUROCALL are based at
the University of Ulster)

ENLU European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All
Undergraduates: *http://web.fu-berlin.de/enlu/index.htm*

European Centre for Modern Languages: *http://www.ecml.at/*

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: *http://www.coe.int/minlang*

European Policy on Language Learning and Teaching
Eurobarometer:
http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/promoting-consultation_en.pdf

European Union of the Deaf: *http://www.eud.eu/*

Eurydice: The Information Network on Education in Europe: *www.eurydice.org/*

Foras na Gaelige: *http://www.gaeilge.ie/*

Foreign Languages for Export (FLEX): *http://www.flexlanguageservices.com/* -

Goethe-Institut: *www.goethe.de*

Information and Communications Technology for Language Teachers:
www.ict4lt.org/ and *http://ictforlanguageteachers.blogspot.co.uk/*

Institute of Translation and Interpreting: *http://www.iti.org.uk/indexMain.html* -

instituto Cervantes: *http://www.cervantes.es/default.htm*

Modern Language Association of Northern Ireland: *http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/mlani/*

Northern Ireland Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (NICILT):
http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEducation/NICILT/

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities: *http://www.nicem.org.uk/*

Pobal: The umbrella organisation for the Irish language community:
http://www.pobal.org

QAA Benchmark Statements for Modern Languages:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/languages.asp

School of Languages and Cultures (University of Ulster):
http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/lc/

School of Modern Languages (Queen's University, Belfast):
http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofModernLanguages/

Standing Conference of Heads of Modern Languages in Universities:
http://www.ucml.ac.uk/

Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies: *www.llas.ac.uk/*

The European Language Council:
www.celelc.org/

Údarás na Gaeltachta: *http://www.udaras.ie/*

Ulster-Scots Agency: *http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/*

University Council of Modern Languages: *http://www.ucml.ac.uk/*

Appendix

Languages for the Future

NORTHERN IRELAND LANGUAGES STRATEGY