



2022 Soillse: International Conference

Call for Papers

**Rooting Minority Language Policy
in the Speaker Community**



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

**2022 Soillse: International Conference
Rooting Minority Language Policy in the Speaker Community
Caladh Inn, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Scotland**

29–31 August 2022

Confirmed Speakers:

François Grin (University of Geneva)

Jane MacLeod (Community Activist)

Patrick Morrison (Community Activist)

Agnes Rennie (Galson Estate Trust)

Lowri Cunnington Wynn (Aberystwyth University)

Theme

The aim of this conference is to examine the societal challenges or critical socio-cultural condition faced by many endangered vernacular minority language groups. The conference will focus particularly on policies and initiatives aimed at reframing language policy and planning approaches through the enhancement of community engagement and the empowerment of speaker groups in their own contexts. Placing the existing community of speakers at the heart of language policy initiatives within the context of socio-economic revival will be key for developing credible language policy. The University of the Highlands and Islands is organising this conference in Stornoway, in the Western Isles, to facilitate the participation of community members and activists in our discussions, and to encourage the exchange of a diverse range of viewpoints.

Challenge

We wish to provide an opportunity for participants to address various aspects of the widespread cognitive dissonance or mismatch between being on the receiving end of antagonistic, irrelevant or largely aspirational policies for language diversity, on the one hand, and living with the reality of social fragility or demise experienced by many minority-speaker groups on the other.

Platform

The conference will provide a platform for those seeking to propose language policy and planning initiatives which go beyond the symbolic provisions and limitations of the institutional or status-building focus. We wish to encourage participants from a variety of minority language groups, including researchers, policy makers, practitioners, activists and community members, to share their experiences of the minority language condition and to propose more productive mechanisms for developing socio-economic agency among threatened language minorities.

Sociolinguistic Context

The conference seeks to encourage and to build upon current debates and to shape future policies surrounding issues focussed upon by Soillse's Islands Gaelic Research Project landmark 2020 publication: *The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community: A comprehensive sociolinguistic survey of Scottish Gaelic*. By providing an open platform the conference seeks to offer an opportunity for various representatives of island communities to participate in and to compare their situation with other minority language groups currently undergoing critical degrees of language shift and to examine how current language revitalisation policies interact with other threatened minority language communities.

Topics

Presentations are invited to address the following themes:

- Language policy intervention in the minority language crisis
- Demolinguistic aspects of minority language contraction
- Processes in societal demise of ethnolinguistic groups
- Sociolinguistic aspects of language acquisition in threatened minority groups
- Comparative analysis of minority language communities
- The challenge of policy prioritisation in small language planning
- The discursive bias and minority language communities
- The vitality, resilience and cultural autonomy dimensions of language minorities
- Comprehensiveness and complementary efforts in language policy and planning
- Sociological theory and minority language sustainability
- Out and In-migration factors impacting on indigenous communities and LPP
- Socio-economics of language policy for highly-threatened speaker groups
- Vernacular community agency and empowerment in feasible language policy
- Challenges to minority language diversity and post-modern culture
- Micro and macro diversity in societal language change
- Minority-language civic culture

Contact

Further details for submitting abstracts, accommodation, travel, registration and the conference programme will be available to view in due course. Early expressions of interest are welcomed. For more information, please contact us at: conference2022@soillse.ac.uk.