EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

18th Meeting, 2001 (Session 1)

Monday 11 June 2001

The Committee will meet at 1.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Buildings, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

1. **Gaelic Broadcasting Inquiry**: The Committee will take evidence from—

   - Mr Donald M. Mackay (Chairman of Gaelic Sub Committee, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)
   - Mr Roddy Murray (Vice Convener of Gaelic Sub Committee, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)
   - Mr John Angus Mackay (Director, Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Ms Rosemary Ward (Vice Chairman, Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Mr Iain Macaskill (Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Mr John Alick Macpherson (Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Mr Donnie Macdonald (Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Mr Neil Graham (Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig)
   - Mr Malcolm Maclean (Director, Pròiseact Nan Ealain)
   - Mrs Agnes Rennie (Vice Chairperson, Pròiseact Nan Ealain)
   - Dr Finlay MacLeod
   - Ms Catherine Anne MacNeil (Lèirsinn)
   - Dr R.N. Stradling (Lèirsinn)
2. **National Stadium Inquiry**: The Committee will discuss arrangements for publication of the report.

The following papers are attached to this meeting—

- Written submission from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
  ED/01/18/1
- Written submission from Comataidh Craolaídh Gàidhlig  
  ED/01/18/2
- Written submission from Pròiseact Nan Ealain  
  ED/01/18/3
- Written submission from Dr Finlay MacLeod  
  ED/01/18/4
- Written submission from Lèirsinn  
  ED/01/18/5

---

Martin Verity  
Clerk to the Committee  
Room 2.7 Committee Chambers  
Ext. 85204  
Email: martin.verity@scottish.parliament.uk
Mr Peter Reid  
Assistant to the Education, Culture  
and Sport Committee of the Scottish Parliament  
Room 2.7  
Committee Chambers  
George IV Bridge  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP  

Telephone: 01851 – 703773  
Facsimile: 01851 – 706122  

ALEX A MACDONALD  
CONVENER  
10 May, 2001  

Dear Peter,  

INQUIRY INTO GAELIC BROADCASTING  

I am pleased to submit the response from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for the Inquiry into Gaelic Broadcasting relating to "the progress to date of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee."  

I understand that your Committee is planning to hold an evidence session in early June in Stornoway. I can confirm that the Gaelic Development Sub-Committee of the Comhairle would be very willing to meet with your Committee on the above date to provide additional oral evidence.  

I look forward to hearing from you.  

Yours sincerely  

Alex A MacDonald  
Convener
The Scottish Parliament Education, Culture and Sport Committee
Inquiry into Gaelic Broadcasting relating to
The Gaelic Broadcasting Committee

Submission by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – May 2001

An Inquiry into Gaelic Broadcasting with the following remit:

"To examine the progress to date of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee with
particular reference to:

1) the economic, social and cultural impact derived from its activities and
   spending;

2) the effect on the audience and community;

3) the impact on the development of Gaelic, on the Gaelic Arts and on
   Education; and

4) the legislative, financial and operational framework within which the fund
   operates, especially in the light of the "Milne Committee Report".

Background

The Gaelic Television Fund and Comataidh Telebhisein Gaidhlig were established
by the Broadcasting Act of 1990. Funds made available by the Government were to
be paid to the I.T.C. for the credit of the fund to be known as The Gaelic Television
Fund. The fund was to be managed by the body known as the Gaelic Television
Committee (C.T.G.). In December 1989 the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Rt.
Hon Malcolm Rifkind announced that £8 million would be made available to produce
up to 200 hours of Gaelic Television in addition to the 100 hours then currently being
transmitted in Scotland.

Under the Broadcasting Act of 1996, the Gaelic Television Fund was re-designated
as the Gaelic Broadcast Fund and the Gaelic Television Committee became the
Gaelic Broadcasting Committee (C.C.G./Comataidh Graolaithe Gaidhlig). These
changes took effect from 1 April 1997.
In addition to these changes, the 1996 Act stipulated that a minimum of half an hour a day of Gaelic digital programming would have to be delivered during peak viewing time throughout Scotland from Autumn 1999. The multiplex A licence holder, SDN, owned by S4C, NTL and United News and Media was awarded this contract and daily broadcasts on this terrestrial multiplex channel have been broadcast from Studio Alba, Seafirth Road, Stornoway, since this date. The delivery of digital, Gaelic television programmes from Studio Alba has resulted in the creation of five posts [The C.C.G. spearheaded the bid to attract S.D.N. to the Stornoway facility].

(1) **The economic, social and cultural impact derived from the activities and spending of the C.C.G.**

The C.C.G. has had a significant effect on the Gaelic community in Scotland in a variety of ways. First and foremost the C.C.G. has been responsible for widening the range and improving the quality of Gaelic television programmes in general. The enhanced provision of quality Gaelic broadcasting, the central aim of the C.C.G., has undoubtedly had a major impact on Gaelic development in general and heightened the profile of the language in the national context in a way that had hitherto not been possible. For example, the Gaelic soap “Machair”, for all its faults, generated significant economic activity on the Western Isles where filming took place and also brought a “bias” of the Gaelic language into many Scottish households where Gaelic was never on the agenda.

In terms of employment in 1993/94 over 500 people received full or part-time employment on Committee funded projects, creating 280 full-time equivalent jobs [according to independent research conducted by Sproull & Ashcroft for Glasgow Caledonia University]. However, by 2001 with the reduction in the Gaelic television fund, the number of FTE’s is estimated to have fallen to around 240.

(2) **Effect of C.C.G. on Audience and Community**

The expanded range and enhanced quality of Gaelic broadcasts directly linked to the positive activities of the C.C.G. within Gaelic broadcasting has led to an increase in audiences watching Gaelic TV programmes. Independent research has shown that up to two million (40%) of the Scotland population watch Gaelic programmes. However, scheduling of programmes has an enormous impact on viewing figures as was evident with the demise of the former Grampian Gaelic flagship news programme Telefios which slid below the broadcasting waves once it was anchored by S.M.G. in a scheduling slot unavailable to a high proportion of its target audience.
C.C.G. has also had a significant influence on the developing Gaelic broadcasting community by establishing new television broadcasting, production and training facilities in the Gaelic heartland. This has created new, highly skilled employment opportunities for Gaels with career aspirations in the field of broadcasting. Successful training projects have also been initiated by C.C.G., in conjunction with other Gaelic organisations, such as Prieceart nan Ealan, in production, writing, as well as business and technical skills.

(3) The Impact of C.C.G. on Development of Gaelic, Gaelic Arts and Education

The C.C.G., in pursuit of its key target of availability of high quality Gaelic television programmes has been partly responsible for a sea-change in attitudes to Gaelic. Independent research shows that Gaelic television development is the single most significant aspect in positively influencing parents’ choice of Gaelic Medium Education for their children. With such a diverse range of viewing options freely available in modern Britain, it has become apparent that quality is the main factor in motivating viewers and that language loyalty is not enough to retain viewers. It is obvious, therefore, that Gaelic television and education are inextricably linked and that the C.C.G. has provided a good bridge for those sectors to interact positively and freely.

The Gaelic Arts world and the C.C.G. have worked in a co-operative mode during the last few years to the benefit of the Gaelic community as a whole. A variety of broadcasting training sources have been assembled and delivered with financial assistance and encourage provided by C.C.G. The strong working relationship between the C.C.G and the Gaelic Arts Community has brought the work of contemporary artists to a wide audience through the medium of television to the mutual benefit of all involved in Gaelic Arts promotion.

(4) The Legislative, Financial and Operational Framework within which the C.C.G. operates, especially in the light of the Milne Committee Report

The C.C.G. has had to trim its broadcasting aspirations during the last few years due to the total revenue lost in that time as the Gaelic Broadcasting Fund was not undertaken. The Gaelic Television Fund was originally set at £8 million per annum, increasing to £9.5 million in 1992/93. However, by 2000/01 the gap £3.3 million amounting to loss of revenue of £15.1 million since 1992/93. This represents a loss of 377 programme hours. Despite this gloomy scenario, there is one ray of hope in the independent production sector. The anticipated uptake of 25% by independent producers has now risen to 47% of production funding in 2000/2001. This is a significant increase and is testament to the resilience and creative energy and drive of the independent sector.
CONCLUSION

CnES recognises the valuable work done by C.C.G. in the past and will work co-operatively with the organisation or the new Gaelic Broadcasting Authority; or equivalent, to secure their primary objectives:

(a) Establish a dedicated daily television service; on the Western Isles, on a single digital channel accessible to all viewers in Scotland, with capacity for programme reception within the UK and worldwide distribution where demand exists.

(b) Increase employment and career opportunities in Gaelic broadcasting in the Gaelic heartland of the Western Isles; broaden the production base; maximise economic spin-off and the potential of Gaelic broadcasting to underpin general Gaelic development and Gaelic education in particular.

(c) Develop and extend the powers of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee or a new Gaelic Broadcasting Authority to facilitate and control the scheduling of Gaelic programmes for transmission on digital television and other appropriate delivery platforms.

(d) Enhance funding for Gaelic broadcasting (index linked) to enable it to sustain its impact on the context of multimedia development, maintaining its position as a key provider of Gaelic information; education and entertainment.

(e) Exploit new technological systems and facilities in order to maximise use of resources and access to live and recorded material resulting in the enhancement of decentralisation concepts leading to more buoyant, sustainable rural communities.

(f) Enhance Gaelic radio broadcasting to cover the whole of Scotland.
16 May 2001

Peter Reid
Assistant to the Committee
Room 2.7
Committee Chambers
George IV Bridge
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Reid

Comaidh Craolaith Gaidhilg (Gaelic Broadcasting Committee)
- Submission to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee

Please find enclosed the Comaidh Craolaith Gaidhilg response to the invitation to provide evidence to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. As noted in the submission, it is intended to be read alongside our earlier briefing material provided to Mr Michael Russell, MSP.

In the course of preparing this submission we have both reviewed our own records and consulted with some of the organisations with which we have had dealings since 1991 to gain a balanced perspective. In so doing, in the light of the significance placed on development of an independent production sector, we commissioned an overview from Rev J.M. MacArthur who was involved in the strategy group which argued for the development of Gaelic broadcasting and who subsequently chaired an independent production company which ceased trading since the creation of the Gaelic Broadcasting Fund. This is enclosed with our submission.

For your convenience, I enclose ten copies of these documents in English. Should you wish any more we will be pleased to supply them.

We look forward to meeting with the Committee, and will contact you shortly to discuss detailed arrangements.

Le gach deagh dhurachd

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

JOHN ANGUS MACKAY
DIRECTOR

COMATAIDH CRAOLAIDH GAIDHILG
GAEIC BROADCASTING COMMITTEE

4 Acaraid
Clòthig Siòr Chrunbail
Stàinnaibh
Ellen Leòdraidh HS1 2DF

CREIDEAS NAR COSNAICHLEAN
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

4 Harbour View
Cromwell Street Quay
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis HS1 2DF
CCG Submission
to the
Scottish Parliament Committee
for
Education, Culture and Sport

May 2001
Index

1 Introduction
2 Legislative, Financial and Operational Framework
3 Economic Impact
4 Social and Cultural Impact
5 Education
6 Audience
7 Conclusion

 Appendices

A(I) Primary Objectives
A(II) Goals
A(III) Policy, Guiding Principles & Functions
A(IV) Strategic Considerations
B CCG Primary Interfaces
C Allocation of Employment/Allocation of Expenditure 2000/01
D Breakdown of PnE Income/Breakdown of TOSG Income 1999/00
F Allocation of Programme Grants to Independent Sector /Number of Independent Companies in Receipt of Programme Grants
G Cultural/Community Organisations – Grants Issued
Cultural/Community Organisations in Receipt of Grant
Cultural/Community Organisations – Average Grant Issued
1 Introduction

This submission is intended as supplementary to the baseline information provided to Mr Michael Russell, MSP, already circulated to the Committee. Its format and content are also predicated on the understanding that supplementary oral evidence will be presented to the Committee. It follows the terms of the remit set out by the Committee, and attempts to present information in short statements which can be amplified in discussion. Appendix A provides extracts from the Committee's Statement of Policy which is presented annually to the Independent Television Commission for approval. These extracts provide a guide to the Committee's Primary Objectives; Financial Strategy; Goals; Policy, Guiding Principles and Functions; and current Strategic Considerations.

At this critical stage in the development of digital broadcasting in the UK, and technological convergence between it and telecommunications, the future of Gaelic broadcasting is of greater concern to the Gaelic community than the past. Digital media development presents a unique opportunity to rectify past errors of omission and commission, and to allow the Gaelic community to have an equitable position in a socially and culturally inclusive Scotland. For these reasons this submission starts with identification in outline of the key legislative, financial and operational issues which require to be addressed to strengthen Gaelic broadcasting and remove the constraints placed on the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee in its deployment of the Fund within the current legislative framework.

The Gaelic Broadcasting Committee believes it has discharged the responsibilities set out in legislation inasmuch as it had the powers to do so, while going far beyond that in terms of the impact that its policies and strategies have had on the audience and the Gaelic community which it sought to serve.

The Committee also believes that it has discharged its obligations in terms of its accountability to the public in general and the Gaelic community in particular. It has done this through methodical audience research, public meetings, seminars, surveys, and discussions with particular stakeholders such as teenagers and educators. It has also established and maintained close links with Gaelic language development, educational and cultural organisations as well as with the broadcasting industry, the Independent Television Commission and the Scottish Executive. These interfaces are summarised in Appendix B.
In the light of its experience over the past ten years, the Committee believes that:

➢ The Gaelic community needs a dedicated, digital Gaelic broadcaster representing its interests – an organisation with commissioning powers; broadcast licences for digital satellite and digital terrestrial transmission; stable inflation-proofed Government funding adequate to maintain its core schedule; the capacity to seek sponsorship, advertising and other commercial revenue; partnerships with other participating broadcasters.

➢ While this organisation is being established and consolidated, existing commitments by Scottish broadcasters to analogue provision for Gaelic should be maintained.

➢ Development should be phased building on existing infrastructure and facilitating coherent and sustainable expansion of the independent production sector with the aim of sourcing the majority of programming from that source.
Legislative, Financial and Operational Framework

In the context of the current enquiry, the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee is aware that it may at times be easier to clarify its remit and impact by defining what it is not and does not do, as much as by describing what it is and does. This is especially true where the remit and powers of the Committee fall short of the expectations of the audience, the needs of the community and the ambitions of producers and broadcasters.

- CCG is a funder of television and sound programmes, ancillary products, training, research and development.
- CCG is not a broadcaster: it does not have direct access to dedicated air-time; nor does it hold broadcast licences.
- CCG does not have commissioning nor scheduling powers.
- Broadcasters with priorities other than Gaelic are the gatekeepers in Gaelic broadcasting.
- CCG funding provides programmes for analogue broadcasting under the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990, and for digital broadcasting under the Broadcasting Act 1996. The latter provision was intended as the foundation for a Gaelic digital channel service.
- The legislative provision for CCG funding is non-specific, discretionary and prescribed annually, making strategic planning complicated and cumbersome. This contrasts with legislative provision for the Welsh language service which specifies index-linked Government funding and hours of programmes to be provided to the service by the BBC, and permits S4C to undertake commercial activities.
- Government funding for Gaelic broadcasting is, therefore, subject to the vagaries of political fortunes and direct ministerial intervention, a situation which is unacceptable in other sectors of broadcasting in the UK.
- Gaelic broadcasting funding is also dependent on an annual basis on budgetary allocations within broadcasting organisations in Scotland which are themselves subject to commercial pressures and the will of London-based network schedulers.
The tiers of accountability under which CCG functions under current legislation are complex and administratively burdensome: its members are appointed by the ITC which monitors CCG administrative arrangements and vets its budgets and policy statements; its funding comes from the Scottish Parliament, but it operates under Westminster legislation; its Annual Report and Accounts are vetted by the ITC before being presented to the Westminster Parliament.

CCG has sought to alleviate the onus on independent producers by acting on their behalf as an advocate in the commissioning process. The benefits, however, are outweighed by the tensions inherent in the competitive production environment in the independent sector, and between it and producer/broadcaster; and the fact that CCG is caught in the web of rights and scheduling problems over which it has no jurisdiction or control.

Differing policies and practices amongst commissioning broadcasters towards copyright, programme rights and distribution issues impose additional administrative burdens that create delays in the programme commissioning/contracting process.
3 Economic Impact

From the outset, the Committee sought to maximise the economic impact of the Fund. In particular it sought to bring the economic benefit to the Gaelic-speaking community, through a programming policy that laid emphasis on community involvement, development of the independent sector and leveraging in additional funding. The following points summarise key benefits from the deployment of the Fund:

- Funded employment is currently approximately 238fte: This is distributed as follows: Western Isles 33%; Highlands 11%; Rest of Scotland 53%; Other 3%. This does not correspond with the current demographics of the Gaelic community, but it represents a marked improvement on the position before the establishment of the Fund when the balance of employment outside the Highlands and Islands was much greater. (Appendix C)

- The current allocation of expenditure is: Western Isles 27%; Highlands 12%; Rest of Scotland 54%, Other 7%. This is representative of the trend since 1992/93. Spend does not necessarily correlate with employment in current circumstances, as a greater proportion of the spend in Central Scotland goes towards facilities than in the Highlands and Islands, pointing to the need for broadcasting and related facilities based in the Gaelic community. (Appendix C)

- The Fund has been successfully deployed so as to lever additional funding into co-production, capital investment in physical infrastructure in studios in Skye and Stornoway, and joint projects with other Gaelic organisations.

- Co-productions funded by the Committee have levered in significant additional value of programming in relation to the contribution from the Fund, creating high value programming at below average cost per hour. The Committee’s programme spend of £70.3m has been enhanced by 23% to £86.7m through co-operation with broadcasters in other countries. Thus, through applying the strategies set out in Appendix A, the Committee has levered in programme value at a level of 370% more than it has spent in total on administration as well as enhancing the value of programmes enjoyed by the audience by 23%.

- Through the deployment of revenue funding to attract capital investment into infrastructure the Fund has attracted investment of £0.489m to the training Studio at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye; £1.1m to the Grampian Television Studio in Stornoway, which is now leased to the Committee; £1.3m to Studio Alba in Stornoway. The latter investment saved the Committee approximately £1.5m in location and other costs on Machair over a three year period, retaining production in Lewis, whilst creating an important piece of infrastructure.
In addition to the direct benefits to the Gaelic programme service in terms of production of drama, light entertainment and children's programmes, the existence of the latter studio facilitated the creation of the half-hour daily digital service TeleG provided by S4C Digital Networks (SDN). The Committee provides programmes for repeat showings to this service, creating four jobs in Stromoway funded by SDN – a further example of using public funding to attract commercial support for Gaelic. This became possible only through the Committee's efforts to secure a place for Gaelic in digital television in the lead-in to the Broadcasting Act 1996.

Similarly, partnerships with a range of Gaelic organisations in the fields of training, education and the arts in particular have given the Committee significant added value in relation to its investment, whilst benefiting these partner organisations, in some cases to the point of ensuring their survival at particular points in their existence. Examples of organisations with which the Committee has worked to mutual economic and cultural benefit are Canan and Lèirisín at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye, The Gaelic Arts Agency (PNE) and the Gaelic Theatre Company (TOSG). The synergies in these situations will be apparent from evidence given elsewhere, but the significance of CCG project support to the latter organisations is illustrated in Appendix D. The benefits to the Gaelic community which these organisations serve are important; the benefits to CCG in securing objectives in a cost effective manner are also significant.

In meeting its training obligations the Committee has also sought to maximise the value of its investment to trainees and to the Fund by seeking partnerships which would lever funding from sources to which the Committee would not normally have access. This has also enabled the Committee to deliver objectives with a minimal level of core staff, whilst supporting other organisations. This is illustrated in Appendix E, where it is apparent that significant levels of European Social Fund support is secured as a result of the Committee’s core funding to the Gaelic Television Training Trust (UTTG). The broadcasters also provide significant support in kind as part of the Trust and in providing training placements. In all, in joint training projects there have been 1,096 beneficiaries in training across the range of creative and technical skills.

To ensure a diverse programme supply and spread the economic benefit of its investment, the Committee has given support to the independent production sector structurally, financially and practically. The Committee provided funding to the sector to create its own representative organisations, the Gaelic Producers Association CRTG, which subsequently became CRANN with a wider associate membership than the companies originally involved in CRTG. The Committee established a policy of aiming to deploy at least 25% of its funding to this sector. Appendix F illustrates the allocation of programme grants to this sector and the numbers of companies in receipt of funding each year.
In addition to investing in joint projects with professional organisations, the Committee has supported initiatives by community organisations in order to pump-prime developments which would encourage participation in Gaelic cultural activities, with a view to stimulating further links with the broadcasting industry. Appendix G demonstrates the relatively small scale of this investment, but its value to the Gaelic community is significant.
4 Social and Cultural Impact

The Committee has always been mindful of the aspirations and needs of the Gaelic community in deploying the Fund in accordance with its legislative remit. In particular, the Committee recognised that broadcasting could be a powerful tool in generating community confidence, underpinning cultural pride and replenishing the creative well-spring from which the industry has to draw in order to maintain a relevant, quality programme service. The following points illustrate the impact of the Committee’s strategies:

- Considerable impact on confidence of Gaels due to television expansion was recorded in independent research by Sproull and Chalmers (1998).
- Positive impact on families and family viewing has been noted by Leirsinn research.
- Award winning funded Gaelic programmes have increased confidence of programme makers and heightened cultural awareness and loyalty.
- New positive social interaction has been facilitated between young Gaels, in a Gaelic-speaking television environment, through direct involvement in programmes such as Splatoid shot in Studio Alba in Stornoway. Most Gaelic-Medium schools in Scotland have been involved.
- CCG policy of supporting Gaelic writers, actors, musicians has been beneficial to them, to Gaelic culture and to the audience in terms of enhanced range and depth of programmes.
- Independent assessment has shown that approximately 90% of traditional music programmes on television in Scotland in the period in question were CCG funded.
- Through co-funding, co-production and interaction with overseas broadcasting agencies CCG has established an international profile for Gaelic broadcasting and for the independent production sector.
- CCG policy for location programming has introduced communities throughout the Highlands and Islands to participation in Gaelic Television.
- CCG funding of Gaelic radio programmes has enabled Radio nan Gaidheal to expand the scope and scale of its output.
- CCG has led an initiative to make Gaelic programming available from community radio stations.
- CCG is developing an interactive web-site for young Gaelic speakers.
- CCG publicity materials have provided the most regular and sustained print media profile for Gaelic.
➢ CCG supported the development of the Gaelic newspaper An Gaidheal Ur.

➢ CCG has supported Feisean nan Gaidheal, The Highland Festival and Gaelic events in The Edinburgh International Festival.

➢ CCG has supported the National and Regional Mods of An Comunn Gaidhealach.

➢ CCG Committee members and staff participate as Directors or Board Members on a wide range of Gaelic language and culture organisations, as well as organisations that promote the social and economic well-being of the Highlands and Islands.

➢ CCG-funded training workshops in association with the Gaelic Arts Agency have introduced hundreds of participants to the professional disciplines associated with the industry. This was a radical groundbreaking approach.

➢ CCG has been holistic in its approach to the artistic community, supporting live performance as a minority partner in order to maintain employment and skills development in this sector.

➢ CCG has played a major role in establishing and maintaining infrastructure support for organisations like the Gaelic Arts Agency; the professional Gaelic Theatre Company TOSG; the Gaelic publisher, Cànna; the amateur drama group, the Edinburgh Players; music and drama events by groups in Glasgow; and for new initiatives such as Oran Ur and the Gaelic Debate for schools.

➢ CCG has supported numerous community arts organisations to stage events.

➢ CCG has been a leader in the publication of Gaelic CD-Roms, CDs, and other ancilliary products.
5 Education

The Committee’s strategy has been to supplement, by on-screen provision and back-up material, the resources available in pre-school, primary and secondary education, in particular Gaelic-Medium, and for adult learners.

➢ The Committee has spent almost £4m of its production budget on education, creating 78 hours of programming. This includes four series of the Gaelic language learning programme Speaking Our Language, and a range of schools programmes such as Caraidean, Tug and Baile Mhuilinn. Baile Mhuilinn was used by 96% of Gaelic Medium Units.

➢ The adult learners programme Speaking Our Language ran to 72 half hour programmes; it has been estimated that the number of Gaelic learners in classes in Scotland increased from 3,000 to 12,000 as a result; it was the springboard for the creation of the Gaelic publishing company Canan which sold 60,000 units of back-up materials; Speaking Our Language is used extensively in schools; it has been sold internationally.

➢ Since being given responsibility for radio programmes the Committee has also funded educational radio programming including An Leabhar-lann, a series aimed at 10 – 12 year olds which was broadcast on Radio 3 and distributed to schools on cassette, and Litir do Luchd-ìonnsachaidh, a cross-media project combining radio broadcast with the press (WHFP in Scotland and An Lao in Ireland) and the internet (BBC website).

➢ The Committee has formulated its education strategy by linking programme funding to the priorities established by educationalists for curriculum development in Gaelic Medium Education.

➢ In a survey carried out in 1998, nine out of ten respondents indicated that they watched and listened to Gaelic programmes as part of their Gaelic language learning process.

➢ As well as funding the television and radio projects mentioned above, the Committee has spent a further £0.5m on ancillary support materials. This includes back-up books, videos and cassettes for the Speaking Our Language programmes and a range of back-up materials and teacher’s notes for the schools programmes.

➢ In 1998 the first ever CD-Rom for Gaelic learners was launched. The CD-Rom was a first in this field for the Committee and was a funding collaboration in partnership with The Scottish Office and the European Union. The CD-Rom, which was based on the first series of Speaking Our Language, was distributed free to secondary schools throughout Scotland as well as being available to buy.
The Committee has established a close working relationship with Storlann Naiseanta na Gaidhlig and has recently been given access to the Storlann National Audit of Gaelic Education Resource Needs. This extensive audit has enabled the Committee to consider the diverse needs of the Gaelic pre-school, primary and secondary sectors and identify future education broadcasting priorities.

Other projects undertaken by the Committee that have an important educational dimension include the Higher Still initiative, the home visiting project in the Western Isles and the Gaelic debate for secondary schools which is broadcast on Radio nan Gaidheal.
6 Audience

Audience Research

In addition to systematic audience research through a 300-member Gaelic-speaking Panel, access to the Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board data, System 3 Surveys and special research projects, CCG also holds public meetings and discussions with particular sectors such as teenagers.

➢ Gaelic programmes continue to hold their audience provided they are scheduled prudently and consistently. Viewing choices are largely determined by the scheduling of programmes rather than by genre and content. Since the scheduling of Gaelic programmes on ITV was moved to Sundays in 1998, viewing figures for peak-time Gaelic programmes on ITV have dropped by more than 30%.

➢ Recently, however, there has been a promising increase in audiences. For instance, peak-period programmes on ITV have had more than 200,000 viewers and some BBC 2 Gaelic programmes have attracted unusually high audiences of more than 100,000 for programmes emanating from the Committee’s strategy for co-funding quality programmes with S4C and international funders.

➢ The Gaelic community is well below the national average in uptake of digital television because of the uncertainty surrounding cost implications, and whether there will be provision of a digital Gaelic channel accessible to all current analogue viewers.

➢ Pan-Scotland polls show widespread agreement that Gaelic broadcasting is needed to support Gaelic education, language learning, and the survival and development of the language.

➢ While viewers are very appreciative of Gaelic programming and consider that standards have improved, their expectations are increasing and they are more critical than in the past if they perceive a decline in production values.

➢ Family viewing occurs to a greater extent with Gaelic programming than with mainstream productions.
Conclusion

In summary, the Committee has received £80.248m of Government funding and has provided from that programmes to a value of £86.7m, whilst funding its statutory obligations, deploying the Fund to maximise investment from other sources to build up the physical infrastructure of the industry in the Highlands and Islands and the cultural infrastructure from which broadcasting draws its creative life-force. This leverage in programme funding is additional to the benefits achieved through investment in training and development projects.
Appendix A(I)

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

➢ To build on past achievements and current foundations to meet the requirement of the Gaelic community for a cohesive, attractive, informative, entertaining and educational Gaelic television service available at appropriate viewing times

➢ To promote Gaelic broadcasting as a distinct but integral element in the development of Gaelic language and culture

➢ To ensure that Gaelic broadcasting is not only relevant to the community it serves but is also rooted in the culture and values of that community

➢ To recruit, train, nurture and retain well-qualified staff who are dedicated to the organisation’s continuous quality improvement processes, open communication, high-performance principles and care for the customer

➢ To contain programme costs without compromising quality and quantity of output

➢ To anticipate proactively the changes in broadcasting that will come as a result of new technology, a multi-channel environment, and regulatory evolution

➢ To manage the transition from analogue to digital and to the new structural arrangements for Gaelic broadcasting

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

➢ The Committee is mindful of its public accountability in the administration of the Fund. Accordingly, the priority is given to ensuring value for money through budget analysis, cost monitoring, cash-flow control and post-production audits of all programme grants

➢ The Committee maintains a high standard of financial control and administrative efficiency. The appointed auditors have ratified the Committee’s system of financial reporting and control

➢ The financial parameters within which the Committee operate are:

  • Not less than 90% of the available funding will be applied towards the development and production of radio and television programmes and training. The Committee seeks to allocate no less than 25% of its development and programme production funds to Independent Producers

  • The Committee’s operating costs will be kept to a minimum of 6.5% of available resources
Appendix A(II)

GOALS

➢ To consolidate successful programme strands and to develop new programme genres and formats maintaining quality whilst diversifying output

➢ To strengthen and diversify the independent production sector

➢ To help secure the establishment of a dedicated channel for Gaelic television and to manage effectively the transition from the current provision to a better integrated Gaelic broadcasting system

➢ To ensure that the opportunities provided by digital technology in television, Internet and related communication fields are exploited to strengthen Gaelic broadcasting and the Gaelic community, including the Diaspora

➢ To secure an appropriate government funding base for a core dedicated Gaelic service to be enhanced through mechanisms such as co-funding, co-production and sponsorship partnerships

➢ To develop Gaelic radio within the framework of a unified service which meets the Gaelic community’s aspirations

➢ To develop Gaelic educational broadcasting to strengthen Gaelic education at all levels of provision

➢ To broaden the base of skilled Gaelic writers, performers, presenters, technical and production personnel, and to upgrade existing skills as appropriate to programme needs

➢ To refine research methods in order to maintain contact with target audiences to ensure that programme content and scheduling are relevant to needs

➢ To add value to output through provision of complementary ancillary products (videos, CD-Roms, audio tapes, publications, web pages)

➢ To maintain effective administrative systems including adherence to Investors in People standards.

➢ To assist Scottish broadcasters to provide a sustained Gaelic service as a vital constituent of their public service commitment

➢ To optimise usage of existing facilities and services to maintain programme hours and transmission slots

➢ To support and complement other initiatives in Gaelic language development
POLICY, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND FUNCTIONS

Policy

The primary policy objective of the Committee is to ensure that a wide range of high quality Gaelic television programmes is available to Gaelic programme viewers throughout Scotland at appropriate viewing times and to extend the range and improve the quality of sound programmes in Gaelic that are broadcast for reception in Scotland.

In pursuing this objective, the Committee is mindful of its statutory remit, the aspirations and needs of the Gaelic community, the impact of the development of digital technology on Gaelic broadcasting and the potential for reaching Gaelic audiences outwith Scotland.

Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin the Committee's policy and funding strategies:

- **Quality** - The Committee seeks to ensure that funded Gaelic programming is recognised for its quality. This entails the establishment of sound relationships and effective working practices with Broadcasters and Producers. High standards of attainment are set for all funded activities.

- **Additionality** - In addition to striving for quality of output the Committee seeks to ensure value for money by funding projects which attract financial support from other funders. The Committee welcomes appropriate proposals for co-funding of programmes and training initiatives.

- **Development** - The Committee favours projects which foster and develop the talent of the Gaelic-speaking community in Scotland in order to strengthen the Gaelic broadcasting industry. This entails working closely with the industry and with Gaelic language and arts development organisations to create an appropriate infrastructure for the development of talent.

- **Investment** - The Committee gives due regard to the extent to which projects supported will have a beneficial effect in the medium to longer term on the quality of service provided to Gaelic viewers in Scotland.
Functions

In fulfilling its remit under the 1990 and 1996 Broadcasting Acts, and in achieving its objectives, the Committee operates in a number of inter-related fields:

➤ Programmes - The Committee grant-aids the production and development of Gaelic programmes

➤ Training - The Committee makes provision for the training of persons employed or to be employed in the making of funded Gaelic programmes

➤ Development - The Committee provides funding for programme and project development with a view to developing, sustaining and enhancing the broadcasting service available to viewers

➤ Related Activities - In order to maximise the potential linguistic and cultural benefits to the Gaelic community of its investment in programmes, the Committee funds other developments related to the making of Gaelic programmes. This includes, for example, provision of back-up materials for Gaelic language learning programmes and books, CD-Roms, Internet material, CDs and videos to supplement children’s and education programmes

➤ Research - The Committee finances research into audience attitudes, programme reach, and the types of Gaelic programmes members of the Gaelic-speaking community would like to be broadcast

➤ Promotion - The Committee complements the programme promotion activities of the Broadcasters and Producers to ensure that the Gaelic audience has knowledge of, and access to, funded Gaelic programmes
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

➢ In formulating its programme strategy, the Committee takes account of audience research information, Broadcasters’ views of future scheduling trends and the framework for its programme funding operations set out in legislation.

➢ The Committee’s strategy also takes into account the resources available within the production sector; the interface between this sector and the Gaelic community; and the part that broadcasting has to play in sustaining and enriching the language and culture of that community in order that it may fully participate in the creation of the service that it receives.

➢ In order to secure value for money, the Committee requires Producers to be creative and prudent in their approach to providing quality Gaelic programming. For example, Producers are encouraged to seek programme funding from sources other than the Fund and to make creative use of new technology to reduce programme costs.

➢ The Committee will collaborate with Broadcasters and service providers in developing strategies for Gaelic programmes on digital channels and in pursuing the dissemination of Gaelic programmes via the Internet.

➢ The Committee will be proactive in the implementation of the recommendations of the Scottish Office Task Force examining the future of Gaelic Broadcasting if and when the Government decides to put these recommendations into effect.

➢ Competitive and network pressures and multi-channel developments are likely to have a major effect on the availability of appropriate programme slots on the mainstream analogue channels. Programme strategy will take this into consideration.

➢ The Committee will not fund programmes for first-time transmission in post-midnight slots.

➢ The Committee will continue to seek appropriate transmission slots and will resist any attempts by the Broadcasters to move CCG-funded programmes out of peak viewing times.
Appendix E

**2000 (£)**
- Comataidh Craolaidh Gaithlig: £100,000
- European Social Fund: £155,479
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise: £40,400
- Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise: £20,000
- Total: £315,879

**1999 (£)**
- Comataidh Craolaidh Gaithlig: £100,000
- European Social Fund: £156,879
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise: £44,700
- Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise: £15,542
- Total: £373,111

**1998 (£)**
- Comataidh Craolaidh Gaithlig: £100,000
- European Social Fund: £160,987
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise: £56,400
- Skye & Lochalsh Enterprise: £4,595
- Total: £321,982
Appendix F

Comataidh Craolaith Gaidhlig
Allocation of Programme Grants to Independent Sector

Financial Year
Average = 30%

Comataidh Craolaith Gaidhlig
Number of Independent Companies in Receipt of Programme Grants
(Average number per Year = 13)

Financial Year
Review of CTG/CCG since 1991

J M MacArthur
May 2001
Review of CTG/CCG since 1991

One of my lasting memories of my Divinity studies in Edinburgh University is of a fellow student religiously putting an ear piece in to listen to 'da cheathramh agus fonn' - a mid-day cleverly crafted ten minute radio treat for the linguistically starved Gaelic Radio audience. Much has changed since the early sixties.

The political impetus made possible by the creation of Comhairle nan Eilean along with the changing attitudes of the Highlands and Islands Development Board brought a new dynamic into the way Gaelic was thought of. For too long Gaelic had been thought of and treated as a subject rather than as a medium. This was as true in the field of Broadcasting as it was in Education. Gaelic programmes were seen as competing for scarce money against Sport, or Drama or Religion rather than against English programmes. The early success of Radio nan Eilean in allowing people to hear and take part in programmes in their own language dealing with everyday affairs gave a great boost to those who saw the key role that Broadcasting had to play in the survival of the language in a quickly changing world. A more confident, if smaller Gaelic world re-assessed its priorities and got involved with the wielders of power. The rest is history. The Broadcasting Acts of 1990 and 1996 are key milestones and have to be seen as important foundations for a sustainable future rather than the end of the road. The Milne report and the current enquiry by the Parliament's Education, Culture and Sport Committee are both important in allowing an ongoing political debate as to the right way forward. It was the thrust of sustained, good, soundly based political argument that has brought us to where we are now.

The 1990 Act and the setting up of the C.T.G. was a major breakthrough.
1. It committed the U.K. Government to make it financially possible for Gaelic Television to treble its output.
2. It committed the Broadcasters to paying for an output of 100 hours of Gaelic programmes paid for by themselves in addition to the extra 200 hours paid for by the Fund.
3. It implicitly accepted that Gaelic was a means of communication and could no longer be treated merely as a subject.
'Hard Times' seemed to give way to 'Great Expectations'.
These expectations included:

a. Every area of life could now be open to the Gaelic viewer. News, Current affairs, Politics, Entertainment, Religion, Children's programmes could all at some stage be included in the viewing menu.
Looking back on the last ten years this has happened.

b. The quality of programming should be at least as good as its English counterpart. The costing of the 200 hours at £40k. per hour was the basis of the original grant of £8 million - the £40k being seen as the average cost per hour of other regional programmes.
The judging of success in this area is bound to be subjective. CTG and CCG funded programmes have a good track record in winning awards at the Celtic Film Festival and the more investigative programmes, such as Eorpa, have rightly been seen as worthy of high acclaim for content as well as presentation.

c. Gaelic Television should open up a new industry to hundreds of young Gaelic speakers. This would include people at every level from teleprompters and engineers through to Producers.
It seems to me that this has not happened to anything like the extent hoped for. The initial need was for training in the area of programme making and that priority was real. I would think that the time is right to re-visit this expectation and find ways of broadening the training necessary for other skills within the industry. Enterprise Companies should not be allowed to shelve responsibility in this area. One would also hope that a University of the Highlands would be seen as a key player.

d. It was widely expected that the days of expecting Gaelic viewers to stay up half the night to watch their programmes were a thing of the past.
Alas! Well done to the BBC for winning such kudos as is available under this head.

e. There was hope that the increased Gaelic output would lead to an increased desire for more people to learn the language.
How successful 'Speaking our Language' was is for researchers to judge. I would hope that a more sustained and innovative approach could be considered as part of the normal menu of programming.

The initial setting up of the CTG had its own difficulties.

a. The failure to include Radio from the start was fortunately put right in the 1996 Act.
b. The absence of commissioning and scheduling powers has greatly limited the work of the Committee. This has been particularly obvious in dealing with the Independent sector. The absence of a larger and more vibrant Independent Gaelic sector is one of the main disappointments of the present system. Small industries will naturally struggle to survive but it becomes well nigh impossible without some guarantee of long term funding and help at each stage with the development of business schemes. The ultimate results from the political struggle leading to 1990 will be judged yet by the economic plus to the Gaeil as much as the number of hours broadcast.
c. The failure to turn promises made by the Broadcasters into guarantees has greatly limited the negotiating power of the Committee - and of itself makes the need for change on the Milne model or something else imperative.
Finally I am aware that the Committee and others involved in the renewed debate have to deal with two Parliaments and not one. There is therefore a renewed need to get the public on side. The money originally ring fenced for Television should not be allowed to diminish in real value. Every support should be given to the Committee as they assess the Milne report and make recommendations on it. That support will demand an ongoing dialogue with the Gaelic community.

*************************************************************************

The above comments and observations are based on several factors.

1. Prior to the 1990 Act I was involved through CNaG with most of the discussions and meetings that were being held in Scotland and London. I became aware of the paramount importance of finding out where other people were in their thinking and planning - and why they were there. This led to constructive dialogue rather than clever debate. We are a generation further down the line and I am convinced that the new generation deserve the same respect if we are to see the improvements we believe are necessary actually happening.

2. My involvement in Education has long since convinced me of the important role that Radio and Television have to play in that area. This is even more important in Gaelic Education where resources of all kinds have to be maximised from play group to University.

3. I was for a number of years the Chair of Abu-tele, an independent Television company and saw at first hand the difficulties in starting and maintaining a new business venture of that kind. I also saw the potential. My comments on Enterprise companies are coloured by my own feeling of being let down when a more pro-active role by the Enterprise companies could have ensured our survival. I do not think that our situation was unique.

4. My European involvement through EBLUL has convinced me that a vibrant Gaelic Television service has much to offer similar linguistic communities. The process has to be two-way and in time should add to existing resources.

5. As a Church of Scotland minister in Gaelic speaking parishes in the North as well as in the Central belt I have greatly valued the role of Radio for many years and of Television more recently. With the large decline in the availability of Gaelic speaking ministers and priests Broadcasting will play a greater role in catering for the needs of many isolated Gaelic speakers who still value a Gaelic service.

J M MacArthur
May 2001
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE
FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT
INQUIRY INTO GAELIC BROADCASTING
Submission from
THE GAELIC ARTS AGENCY May 2001

1. Introduction

The Gaelic Arts Agency/Pròiseact Nan Ealan (PNE) welcomes the invitation to submit evidence to the Committee’s Inquiry into Gaelic broadcasting. Our submission addresses the remit of the Committee as set out in your letter of 30th March. It includes a summary of key interactions between the Gaelic arts and Gaelic broadcasting and highlights key arts and cultural issues regarding the role of the Comataidh Craoladh Gaidhlig (CCG).

We formally request the opportunity to present oral evidence to the committee.

2. Background

The Gaelic Arts Agency is the national development agency for the Gaelic arts. It was established in 1987 by the Scottish Arts Council with the remit to “explore new approaches to the development and promotion of Gaelic arts and culture in all media including film and television.” [Appendix 1]

PNE is based in the Western Isles but works throughout Scotland and internationally. We work to a rolling, 3-year, project development programme which sets clear annual targets for the research, design, development and delivery of new Gaelic arts initiatives. We employ a full-time staff of seven, work with hundreds of artists on a commission basis and collaborate extensively with other arts and Gaelic organisations including the CCG. [Appendix 2]

In the late 1980’s we worked closely with Comunn na Gaidhlig on the campaign which led to the creation of the CCG. The reasoning behind PNE involvement was:

- The arrival of English language TV exposure in the 1970s had become a major factor in the decline of Gaelic language usage.
- The minimal Gaelic presence on TV reinforced the wider ‘invisibility’ of Gaelic in Scottish public life and the very low levels of public awareness.
- TV is the greatest sponsor of the arts in the world today. Before the title credits have finished rolling on any TV programme a composer, musicians and a graphic designer will have been paid a professional fee. The minimal Gaelic presence on TV meant minimal promotional or financial benefits for Gaelic artists and profoundly disadvantaged the Gaelic cultural economy.
3. The economic, social and cultural impact derived from CCG activities and spending and the effect on the audience and community

The injection of £9m per annum into the Gaelic cultural economy has had a measurable economic impact that the CCG has doubtless tracked and measured. The CCG role as a funding partner has significantly supplemented the Scottish Arts Council funding of Gaelic arts projects and been a critical success factor in Gaelic arts development. More general perceptions of the impact and effect derived from CCG activities and spending will inevitably vary according to the personal experience of the respondent.

Some of the more problematic, ‘knock-on’, social and cultural impacts have, however, been measured in a 1998 report by Professor Alan Sproull of Glasgow Caledonian University. “The Demand for Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Products and Services: Patterns and Impacts” is based on a postal survey completed by 2028 individuals in the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh or over 6% of the population.

The report compared responses with the detailed fieldwork for research published in 1994 into the economics of Gaelic development. The 1994 research had concluded “that the image of the language both within and beyond ‘heartland’ areas was being positively changed, especially by Gaelic television and Gaelic music”. The 1998 comparison confirmed that “the extent to which these early perceptions have been maintained and deepened is clearly evident from the survey evidence” and noted “the positive impact of Gaelic arts output (especially live events and television) on the attitudes of the relatively young”. [Appendix 4. Section 6.3 (1)(2)]

The breakthrough made by Gaelic television in the 1990 Broadcasting Act was a dramatic and defining moment for the Gaelic community. There is no single event of comparable cultural impact in modern Gaelic history. Without that scale of cultural intervention it is highly likely that the loss of cultural confidence, so evident by the 1980s, would have continued to accelerate and the Gaelic decline would by now be terminal. Argument over whether education or the arts could have been more productive language development channels is teasing but irrelevant as no equivalent arts or education bill was remotely likely to allocate that scale of funding to Gaelic at that time.

Over the past ten years Gaelic television has, for the first time in centuries, enabled real investment in Gaelic cultural production, significantly raised the public profile of Gaelic and reshaped the self-image of the Gael. These are major, if incomplete, achievements.

The expansion of Gaelic broadcasting has also coincided with, and made an important contribution to, a renewed cultural confidence in Scotland. The CCG have been the key funding force behind up to 90% of the Scottish traditional music programming broadcast on Scottish TV over the past 10 years. In becoming ‘visible’ as a normal and natural aspect of public life, Gaelic has contributed to a more holistic sense of Scottishness. This process of normalisation continues to impact on both Gaelic audiences and the wider Scottish public and has important implications for our sense of ourselves as Scots and how we are perceived internationally.
4. **Summary of key Gaelic arts and broadcasting interactions 1991-2001**

Over the past ten years PNE and CCG have regularly worked together to progressively build up Gaelic arts and media support-systems and create an embryonic cultural infrastructure. Our arts and broadcasting collaborations include:

- The Gaelic Arts & Media Training Programme offers pioneering short courses for writers, actors, directors and musicians which have developed new talents and led on to new ideas such as the *Ran Dan* TV comedy series. [Appendix 3]

- Gaelic Youth Theatre graduates now work in all sectors of the Gaelic media. The long-running soap-opera *Machair* was only made possible because the Gaelic Youth Theatre had already identified a pool of young acting talent.

- The film-animation-in-schools project *Dealbhan Beò* led to forty short films on BBC TV and is perhaps the largest body of children’s film in the world.

- PNE initiated and co-developed the BAFTA award-winning, arts and music programme, *Tacsi*, in collaboration with producers Eolas and the CCG.

- The Barcelona Celtic Music Festival, described by the British Council as ‘probably the most successful event we have ever run in Spain’ achieved its profile largely because the PNE/CCG collaboration drew in Catalan TV.

- PNE and CCG, in partnership with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig have worked closely to create and develop the Columba Initiative which is renewing the links between Gaelic Scotland and Ireland.

- The award-winning *Ceolas* summer school was supported from the outset by the CCG and this has led to various Ceolas-based radio and TV productions.

- The TV documentary of the successful Gaelic/Scots Doric touring theatre production, *Craobh nan Ubhal/The Aipple Tree*, set on a North Sea oilrig, was a vital step in the creation of the CCG supported theatre company *Tosg*.

- One-off documentaries have greatly enhanced the audience for arts initiatives such as the Ch.4 film *Uamh an Oir* on Gaelic song, *Gach Strì a Rinn Iad* celebrating Will Maclean’s award-winning memorial cairns to the Clearances and the forthcoming Scottish/Irish Leabhar Mòr/Great Book of Gaelic.
The PNE Database of Gaelic artists has enabled us to provide a casting service for *Machair* and other TV dramas.

5. The impact on the development of Gaelic arts and education

These collaborations illustrate the range of arts and cultural impacts that have directly derived from CCG activities and spending and PNE/CCG interaction. The 1998 Sproull report (quoted above) also commented upon the high levels of interaction and interdependence across Gaelic broadcasting, the arts and education. This interdependent perspective is central to our view of Gaelic broadcasting.

The broad-brush impact of the CCG on the Gaelic arts has been extremely positive in terms of arts education, professional training, employment opportunity, cultural promotion and creative self-confidence. A new ladder-of-opportunity is emerging for young Gaelic artists that has been largely funded by the CCG and forged in collaboration with PNE.

We have attempted to develop a new model of arts and broadcasting collaboration that has achieved a high degree of synergy, added value and social profit. CCG recognition of the cultural development role of broadcasting has enabled them to make a significant contribution to the cultural, as well as the economic, development process. Adopting a holistic approach and making modest ‘cultural’ as well as ‘television’ investments has not only generated a social dividend but paid off handsomely in terms of talent development, new ideas, new programmes, enhanced performance, quality of production and audience satisfaction.

This approach has, however, been criticised by some media professionals who favour ‘pure TV’, or ‘TV in a bubble’ and feel that all CCG funding should go into TV production alone. This question goes to the heart of any debate about Gaelic broadcasting. The high-pressure, urban-centred, ratings-focused, anglo-centric, hothouse world of broadcasting, and the professional self-interest of the broadcasters, will resist the idea that broadcasting is about anything other than broadcasting for broadcasting’s sake.

We would argue that, out of self-interest, Gaelic broadcasting has to be about language and cultural development. Sustaining the audience for Gaelic broadcasting depends upon sustaining the number of Gaelic speakers. This is unlikely to be achieved without a dynamic and holistic approach that actively and strategically utilises broadcasting in support of language and cultural development. If the biggest player in the Gaelic cultural economy has no locus in, or sense of ownership of, that process then the outlook is bleak.
6. The legislative financial and operational framework within which the CCG operates especially in the light of the Milne Committee Report

The preceding sections of this paper have focused on the numerous positive impacts of the CCG on the Gaelic language community. These successes, however, have been more despite the legislation than because of it.

The legislative, financial and operational framework within which the CCG operates is profoundly flawed. Although the 1990 Broadcasting Act was a major breakthrough at the time it was more the consequence of urgent necessity and inspired opportunism than holistic consideration of the most effective and efficient design for a lasting Gaelic broadcasting service. The faultlines were visible from the outset and have become clearer and more pronounced over the past ten years.

Recurrent problems have revolved around the absence of CCG programme commissioning powers, the absence of CCG influence over programme scheduling, the limited growth of the independent production sector, the central-belt focus of Scottish broadcasting, the avarice of the broadcasters and their dominant role in the process. These problems have been compounded by standstill funding and the rapid pace of technological change. The time is right for comprehensive renewal.

The Milne Committee Report offers an exciting and achievable way forward and the Gaelic Arts Agency supports its conclusions. The key comments that we would make to the Parliamentary Committee are:

- The Gaelic community needs a dedicated digital Gaelic broadcaster with commissioning powers.
- It should be based in the Gaelic heartlands of the Western Isles.
- It should be adequately funded and index linked
- This new Gaelic media service should be independent of other broadcasters
- Its management body should feature representation from the community and other sectors such as arts and education to ensure a shared strategic vision.
- As with the Welsh channel S4C it should maximise collaboration, interaction and synergy on language and cultural projects, events and ancillary products.
- It should position itself as the Scottish cultural channel and feature arts and other programming relevant to other Scottish cultural and linguistic interests.
- It should be seen as a key element in Scotland’s cultural infrastructure and a means of promoting Scotland’s cultures to ourselves and the wider world.
Malcolm Maclean
Director. May 2001

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT

INQUIRY INTO GAELIC BROADCASTING

Submission from THE GAELIC ARTS AGENCY
May 2001
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. PNE BOOKLET 1988-1998

APPENDIX 2. PNE AWARDS LIST

APPENDIX 3. GAELIC ARTS & MEDIA TRAINING PROSPECTUS. Proiseact Nan Ealan 1999

APPENDIX 4. THE DEMAND FOR GAELIC ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: PATTERNS AND IMPACTS Glasgow Caledonian University 1998
Submission to the Scottish Parliament’s Education, Culture and Sport Committee’s Inquiry into Gaelic Broadcasting.

Dr Finlay MacLeod, Glen House, Shawbost, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9BD.

Introduction

The following observations are made on a personal level and are not submitted as the views of any group, company or organisation.

No modern culture and its associated language can function adequately without the normal fabric of communications and media, so that such a culture is in touch with itself and with the wider world. Gaelic Scotland requires no more and no less.

A Gaelic television service is a necessary element in Gaelic society. It reaches the lives of individuals of all ages and circumstances in a way that no other service does. It has become the matrix that holds together other more specific endeavours such as schooling, church, work and even family life. Small group and face to face encounters used to provide this basis: now it is provided by television -- and newsprint, disc and radio to lesser degrees. A culture without a regular, taken for granted, television service has very serious learning difficulties.

Scotland itself requires such a regular Scottish television service, and this will become clearer as the nation’s defining of itself continues to be strengthened and clarified. And so with Gaelic Scotland: a circle within a circle. The steps necessary to arrive at this position may seem circuitous, and that is certainly the case with the future development of Gaelic broadcasting.

Gaelic television is in an anomalous situation. Since broadcasting is a retained power, Gaelic television falls within the responsibility of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport at Westminster. But it is funded by an odd, diminishing fund in Edinburgh; a fund that is administered by the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee that cannot commission, schedule or broadcast programmes. BBC Scotland and the Scottish Media Group feed off this fund to provide, for themselves, Gaelic staff and programming, while contributing a minimal amount of their own budgets towards Gaelic
broadcasting. Even if one tried, one couldn’t readily build a more contorted and unsatisfactory provision.

Gaelic broadcasting can never develop in a natural way until it is set on a normalised, simplified foundation. This normalisation has to take place at UK level (where broadcasting legislation currently resides) in terms of scale and shape, so that if and when its political tutelage is devolved to Scotland at a later date, Gaelic broadcasting will return as part of a properly formulated broadcasting provision.

**Gaelic Broadcasting Committee**

Given its most difficult remit, and its seriously decreasing level of funding in real terms, this Committee has performed with competence and sustained application. Given that it was set up as a new organisation, it has achieved a great deal in its relatively short period of operation. It now functions as a fully professional body with all the necessary financial, operational, research and training functions in place. It has built up links with a wide range of Gaelic bodies; educational, arts and economical. Some of its decisions have surprised observers but none of these were taken in a cavalier or thoughtless manner. Any controversial issue is likely to be correlated with its financial or operational structure, previously referred to.

Gaelic television, even in its current rudimentary phase, has built up an awareness and an expectation in the Gaelic community. Young and old have benefited and enjoyed some strands of programming. Many have been enabled to take part in programmes, and a significant number of young people have been attracted to the industry. Although the whole venture has a long way to go, and is in need of a significant raising of its provision, it can be said that Gaelic television, under the guidance and support of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee, has ‘made its mark’ within the Gaelic community and beyond. That it has increased the awareness of Gaelic language and culture, and heightened their status within the Scottish arena, goes without saying.

**The Way Forward**

In considering how the CCG has performed -- within the range of restrictions and anomalies touched-on here -- the main task is to audit its present skills, resources, achievements and vision and harness these so as
to inform and facilitate the significant developments that are necessary if an adequately funded digital Gaelic television service is to be put in place. If the Scottish Executive were to add its informed political will to the task that has to achieved -- paradoxically -- via Westminster, this could be of considerable significance in realising the full inclusion of Gaeldom in the Scottish discourse.

May 2001
Inquiry into Progress to Date of the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee: Response from Leirsinn Research Centre

**Setting the Context**

In 1993 an audience response panel was set up by Leirsinn Research Centre for Comataidh Craolaidh Gaidhlig (CCG) to monitor viewing patterns and response to Gaelic programming. The panel is designed to be representative of the Gaelic speaking population of Scotland as defined by the 1991 Census, in terms of age, gender and geographical location. At any one time the panel consists of around 300 individuals. This represents approximately 1 in 200 Gaelic speakers.

Each week viewing diaries are distributed by post to each panel member. Each diary lists every Gaelic programme to be shown in that week. Panel members are asked to rate the programmes which they have watched. This provides CCG with both viewing figures and Appreciation Index (AI) scores which allow for a comprehensive evaluation of programme performance. On occasion, diaries may contain a focus section which looks for more detailed response to a particular programme or topic.

Leirsinn has also undertaken a number of one-off projects for CCG. These encompass a broad range of topics, including the role of Gaelic broadcasting in Gaelic medium education, Gaelic programmes as a resource for Language Learning, the attitudes of children and young people and the impact of the Gaelic Broadcasting fund on Small to Medium Enterprises.

Key findings from research relating to Gaelic broadcasting are summarised in the categories below.

**Children and Young People**

- Both children and young people confirm that they view Gaelic programmes on a regular basis.
- Programme accessibility is a critical factor in ensuring that children’s and youth programming fulfils its audience potential.
- The *overarching* factor in motivating viewing is quality. Language loyalty is not sufficient to secure a youth audience for Gaelic programmes.
- Young Gaelic-speakers see no reason why Gaelic programmes should fall short of their mainstream counterparts.
- Children and young people want, in Gaelic, what is available in English. However, they want to see the concepts adapted rather than the content translated.
- Young Gaelic-speakers want to be able to identify Gaelic roots within programmes. These contextual elements must be up-to-date, credible and representative of their experiences of Gaelic language and culture.
Education

- A very high proportion of Gaelic Medium Primary teachers use Gaelic television programmes as a classroom resource.

- Teachers held very positive attitudes about the use of Gaelic television programmes as a teaching medium and as a teaching resource, particularly for classroom work and the 5-14 curriculum.

- Gaelic television programmes were considered to be good for differentiated teaching activities.

- Gaelic television programmes were felt to be a more effective medium than radio in that they engaged and held the attention of children.

- Children’s Gaelic television programmes attract parental approval.

- Parents actively encourage their children to watch Gaelic programmes, e.g. by reminding children (or the family as a whole) to change to BBC2 for the Thursday evening strand.

- The viewing of Gaelic programmes is frequently seen to be a family activity.

- Both parents and children would like to see more Gaelic television programmes for children.

- Gaelic television and radio programmes were used extensively by teachers to extend pupils’ vocabulary.

- Parents look to Gaelic programmes for language support in the home.

Source:


MacNeil, Dr M.M., (1996), Use of Gaelic Television Programmes in Gaelic Medium Classrooms, Leirsinn Research Centre for Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig

Stradling, Dr. R.N. and MacNeil, Dr M.M., (1996), Gaelic Medium Education: The Critical Skills, Leirsinn Research Centre for the Inter-Authority Standing Group for Gaelic

**Language Learning**

- Gaelic programmes are a frequently used resource by learners of the language.
- Gaelic programmes provide learners with an easily accessed and authentic Gaelic speech community which would not otherwise be available.
- Gaelic television helps to motivate learners by maintaining their interest in the language.
- Subtitles are appreciated by learners in that they provided a written and oral pathway to language comprehension.
- Gaelic programmes are most effective in aiding pronunciation, extending vocabulary range and exposing the viewer to idiomatic Gaelic.

**Source:**

**Scheduling and Strands**

- Scheduling is a key factor in determining whether a programme realises its viewing potential. When Gaelic television programmes were moved from Tuesday evening to Sunday evenings, average viewing figures fell by around a third, to 32 per cent.
- Predictability of slot is important to Gaelic-speaking viewers. Where scheduling is erratic or inconsistent, viewing levels vary widely, sometimes rising, but generally falling.
- Accessibility is also an issue in securing viewers. Viewing figures for evening Telefios bulletins on GTV halved when the programme was moved from 1800 to 1855, and finally to 1700. Also, most children’s Gaelic programmes are shown at a time when children are unlikely to be home from school.
- Blocks of programmes or “programme strands” are highly effective in retaining viewers. In some instances, audience inheritance levels (follow-on audiences) of 80% or more are achieved.
- Viewing tends to be sustained at a higher level when programmes are broadcast in strands as opposed to dispersed across schedules.

**Source:**
*Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig Audience Response Project* (ongoing)
**Single Channel for Gaelic**

- The majority of Gaelic-speaking television viewers (74%) support the concept of a Gaelic channel.

- Almost nine out of ten respondents (88%) believed that a dedicated Gaelic channel would be an incentive for purchasing the necessary digital equipment.

- A majority anticipated that a Gaelic digital channel would provide a wider range of more appropriately scheduled programmes.

- Over two-thirds (69%) felt that a Gaelic digital channel would have a positive impact on the future of the language.

- In a recent survey (March 1999), 73% of respondents felt that a Gaelic digital channel would be likely to enhance the credibility of Gaelic.

**Source:**


**Radio**

- The Gaelic-speaking audience of BBC Radio nan Gaidheal increased through 1998, and has been maintained over 1999 and 2000.

- Gaelic-speakers who receive BBC Craolaidh nan Gaidheil’s radio output listen to Radio nan Gaidheal more than any other national radio station.

- The Gaelic-speaking audience perceive BBC Radio nan Gaidheal to equal BBC Radio Scotland, in terms of programme quality.

- The listening audience is comfortable with Radio nan Gaidheal’s programme schedule. Week-day breakfast-time broadcasts achieve particularly high audience levels.
• The core audience of Radio nan Gaidheal contains as many listeners from the East Coast and Central Belt (34%), as from the Western Isles (33%).

• Gaelic speakers value BBC Craolaidh nan Gaidheal’s radio output and its access to the Gaelic language used in a topical and modern context. Output is presented in a cultural framework that Gaelic-speaking listeners can relate to.

• A demand for more Radio nan Gaidheal programming aimed at young people, and for learners of Gaelic, was evident.

Source:
MacDonald, B.K., (1998), *Gaelic Radio Listeners: Audience Levels and Listener Profile*, Leirsinn Research Centre for Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig

MacDonald, B.K., (1998), *Gaelic Radio Listeners: Media Access and Attitudes of Listeners*, Leirsinn Research Centre for Comataidh Craolaidh Gàidhlig

**Funding for Gaelic Broadcasting: an enterprise and development function**

• There is an economic dimension associated with funding associated with the revitalisation of Gaelic.

• The sustainability of the language community depends to some degree on the availability of Gaelic-related jobs.

• Language revitalisation depends to some degree on the extension of the use of a language into as wide a range of domains as possible, particularly those like broadcasting, education, multi-media and software development, which are associated with modernity and with aspects of contemporary everyday life.

• Linguistic and cultural revitalisation also depend to some degree on the dynamic linkages between the different sectors of what has been called "the Gaelic economy".

• Broadcasting can boost not only the demand for Gaelic actors, musicians, writers, producers and technicians, it also boosts the demand for live performance as well.

• An expansion in Gaelic-medium education not only provides new audiences for broadcasting, it provides the next generation of performers, producers, presenters and technicians. But a language and culture can also create new markets, new products and new businesses: support services for the mass media, printing and publishing, cultural tourism, telematics and so on.

• Because many of the skills developed within these fields are transferable, linguistic and cultural re-vitalisation has the potential for helping to transform a regional economy. However, this does mean that there needs to be greater integration between linguistic and cultural development and planning on the one hand, and local regional economic planning and development on the other.

• Dr Alan Sproull of Glasgow Caledonian University looked at the economic impact of the Gaelic language sector. His report, published in 1993, concluded that the Gaelic language was sustaining a thousand jobs and that the total economic output generated by funding through the Gaelic Broadcasting fund had had the effect of more than doubling the size of "the Gaelic economy" in
Scotland. Sproull produced these figures through an analysis of financial information obtained from 55 organisations involved in Gaelic-related activity.

• A team of researchers at Leirsinn carried out a similar study although the emphasis was primarily on the impact of investment within the Gaelic media. Here the research focused specifically on the impact of this investment on the regional economy of the Highlands and Islands rather than the Scottish economy as a whole.

• Both Sproull and Leirsinn collected empirical data in order to construct economic multipliers to assess the added value of public and private investment in the Gaelic media.

• The Leirsinn data on the impact of broadcasting funding since 1992 indicated that the number of media jobs had more than doubled as a result of this type of language support. The economic output multiplier also reflected the Sproull findings, again indicating that this had doubled the amount of funding moving through the economies of the small communities.

• This compared favourably with other local enterprise sectors.

Source:


I hope this provides you with some insight as to the impact of Gaelic Broadcasting on the key areas outlined in your letter. Should you require further information then please do not hesitate to get in touch. I would also be willing to provide oral evidence in Stornoway or elsewhere.

With regards

Catherine A. MacNeil
Research Officer
Leirsinn Research Centre