

Speak to the future, 19 March Forum

Notes from discussions

These will be fed into the development of our strategy and action programme for 2012/13 and beyond.

1. While we would like to get the message out to all of the unconverted, we need to prioritise the most important audiences. Which are the most important audiences to address and who are the key people in them that we need to influence?

- Businesses and business leaders can offer support. They could show why they won a contract ... in connection with languages. We need both SMEs and big businesses: the STEM lobby got multinational sponsors on board to make their case. Google spoke out on the need for programming skills, which made parents and students sit up and listen.
- Attend specialised events, for example connected with law or mechanical engineering. Place articles in professional journals.
- Headteachers are a key audience, especially as increasing numbers of schools become academies (need also to target academy chains). Work with ASCL on this for example through conferences and articles.
- Parents – promoting the benefit of languages for their children’s career, improved employability – using for example mumsnet.com. Those 25+ are a key audience: new parents and/or thinking about their own career path.
- Careers advisers, accessed through careers networks and websites like CRAC and Prospects, can be influential.
- Ofsted: numeracy and literacy are key in determining a primary school’s ‘outstanding’ status – could language learning be a key part of this assessment? Need more evidence that bi-/plurilingualism is good for all aspects of learning, especially in the context of literacy at primary.
- Government, politicians, unions: reach these through personal connections, events and meetings, for example party conference and fringe events.
- Public services including TDA and DfE – e.g. connect with recruitment campaigns for language teachers.
- Possible ambassadors/allies: Lord Digby-Jones, Lord Sugar, medical community, Mary Portas. Numerous figures in the media industry, for example newsreaders and foreign correspondents.
- Governing bodies, through the National Governors Association. (Contribution from Language World, 31 March 2012).

2. While we would like to use as many media of communication as possible, we need to focus on the most effective media to get our message across. Which specific channels should we target, and how can we best gain access to them?

- Social networking and media – Twitter (useful tool for activism and prodding influencers), Facebook, LinkedIn – are a valuable free resource, but need people and planning to be successful.
- Need media pack: a collection of intelligence, evidence and quotes that we can easily make available to a press enquirer. Also ready-made arguments to respond to sceptics.
- Linkage: we need more links between our website and those of our supporters to raise further awareness of the cause.
- Letters to editor: suggested that these are very often successful when 20+ signatures are included. Could employability be a theme here? Or economic value of languages? Would need business and other names outside languages.
- Use video clips shared through social media – with messages from businesses and high profile supporters.
- Generating publicity: what is our PR plan? Need for specialist PR support.
- Use supportive students to convey our messages and share their enthusiasm for languages with their peers.
- Business breakfast briefings can engage business leaders, vice-chancellors, school and college leaders, education editors and others besides.

3. While the campaign has secured some resources to operate, we need to raise significant additional funding to amplify our activities. What funding sources should we approach and how can we best stimulate them to contribute?

(Names who offered leads are given, where known, which we will follow up)

- In Wales, CILT Cymru through their language champions programme had approached Cassidian. *(Ceri James, CILT Cymru)*
- Chambers of Commerce (and other business networks) highlighted as valuable contacts for access to businesses, regional and national. Could we get sponsorship for our membership?
- Funds may be difficult to raise even through our business breakfast unless with find the right angle: this could be social cohesion, for example? Supporting immigrant languages as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy? Or social mobility?
- HSBC are known to have supported for example British Council in China. *(Nikki Perry, NALA)*
- Vodafone 'World of Difference' scheme sends high calibre graduates into charities as 6 month interns *(Emma Cleave, English Pen)*
- Smith's News – have graduate training scheme – say their recruitment is enhanced by language skills *(Nikki Perry, NALA)*

- Go to business events and network. Should we target big businesses rather than small/medium?
- British Telecom – Head of HR, need for linguists
- Rolls Royce – a worldwide business (part of BMW)
- Bentley – have sponsored the German Embassy and Goethe Institut (part of VW group)
- Tata Steel – Indian-owned, want to employ linguists, having to go abroad.
- Dyson
- Procter & Gamble
- Academy chains – look at their sponsors
- Approach embassies for some of the 'other' languages on the increase e.g. Polish, Arabic, Mandarin.

Some points in relation to our messages coming out of the discussions:

- Sell the benefits of the year abroad, promote Erasmus for All (starting in 2014). Also the benefit of work experience abroad.
- Promote career opportunities in European institutions.
- Our argument needs to be very clear, and easy to digest, our messages need to be sharp: give the facts, tell them e.g. where new language teachers will come from, show cognitive benefits, highlight the economic case.
- Employability and economy: £7bn 'tax on trade' according to Education and Employers' Taskforce report.
- Ensure demand is shown not just for high level skills – this message can be off-putting to young people.