

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

Established in St. Ann's in 1938, Colaisde na Gàidhlig (CnaG) is an educational non-profit institution, offering year-round programming in the culture, music, language, crafts, customs, and traditions of the immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland. Currently, students are able to choose to study from over ten traditional arts, including Cape Breton fiddle, piano, guitar, step-dancing, and piping, highland dancing, weaving, and of course Gaelic language. The only institution of its kind in North America, students of all ages and skill levels visit the College every year. With an international reputation for its contribution to the preservation and promotion of Gaelic culture, the Gaelic College offers a unique learning experience.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

We are interested in finding ways to position songs more centrally in community-based Gaelic language learning while supporting community language teachers with professional development opportunities. We are focusing on songs for several reasons: 1) for centuries, they were the Gaels' primary form of literary output; 2) they encode Gaelic history, genealogy, and cultural worldview; 3) their lyrics provide opportunities to engage with various linguistic elements (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, idioms, dialects, pronunciation); 4) they offer a real-world Gaelic expressive form with which students can interact, and songs exist that would be suitable for students at every level of Gaelic to study; and 5) singing together is not only a traditional Gaelic activity, it offers an important means of building community, both in the classroom and outside it.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

CnaG offers Gaelic language and cultural instruction for learners of all ages and through a variety of programs, from year-long mentorship programs for youth to month-long immersion courses for adults, from weekly online courses to week-long summer camps. We also offer instruction in traditional music. In fact, we believe that music and language are fundamentally interconnected so a more central integration of song into our offerings is important to us. This project will provide much needed support for both our full-time staff and our part-time instructors. Moreover, CnaG has taken a leadership role in providing educational and professional development opportunities for community-based Gaelic language teachers, and this project offers us an excellent opportunity to develop, improve, and increase our professional development offerings to the community.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2021.