

8/11/06

A Charaid,

Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig

As a parent of Gaelic Medium Educated children, learner, volunteer and worker within the Gaelic sector, I have been involved in and participated within many of the various services the Gaelic world has to offer. Please find below my comments on the National Plan for Gaelic

Whilst it does state (Page 9) that bodies other than those mentioned as primary players would also be able to put in for projects relating to the various action areas, I am concerned that if you are not seen or deemed as one of the primary players, that the others who are so deemed primary players, would be encouraged to take up the project or advised to put in for a similar project as say a preferred bidder.

- Action Area Vitality –community – CNSA should appear as a primary player as they are already working with the community/families who play a key role in their organisation. They are often the first point of contact that people have with Gaelic and those people then go on to feed the other Gaelic sectors and have been doing this since I first came into contact with Gaelic which is good number of years ago.
- Action Area Status – Awareness – is also one of their key areas. An example of this is their involvement with the Skill City event they attend run by Careers Scotland each year for secondary school children which highlights possible career choices for young people.

It was encouraging to note that it was acknowledged that the process of ‘societal reform’ regarding Gaelic takes much longer than expected in comparison to other areas of planning.

- An acknowledgment that GM households may also mean where only 1 parent speaks Gaelic as there are a large amount of families in this position who make a major impact and given the right support can increase the numbers of both children and adults speakers within the community
- Lifelong Learning – many families are supported by the pre-school sector, for example, encouraging parents to attend courses, offering courses and helping them attend pre-school groups along with their children. I feel that CNSA should therefore be included a primary player in this sector.
- Continual Professional Development – this is a very important area but is very difficult to do within the sector. An acknowledgement of how important and difficult it is to allow time from work to let both CPD for fluent speakers, to acquire new skills so they can enter areas that require specific skills, as well as time built in for people with the correct skills to acquire the Gaelic language. Career development is very limited due to a number of reasons for example, project working; how can you or the organisation you work for develop your career path if after a couple of years you have to reapply and if successful start another project. Due to lack of proper resources over a number of years in the support sector of pre-school, those who do work in it are working way above their contracted hours and therefore do not have the time to undertake CPD. This is an important area as we could start to lose experienced workers if they cannot see their prospects improving within the Gaelic sector. (Is there a way to help to achieve this more effectively?).
- Action Areas (p 44) – entitlement and Language Access Key Task – “to engage with young couples and families in the encouragement of & support for 0-3 Gaelic provision” once more CNSA are not mentioned as they are the Gaelic pre-school council, should they not be mentioned as providers and facilitators of this sector.

Grants – every funder now looks for ‘new initiatives, innovative schemes’ surely we should also fund what we know works or we are in danger of continually reinventing the wheel but put together slightly differently.

Support, Prestige, and CPD – the continued use of project funding make these elements difficult to achieve. How can planning take place if organisations that deal with pre-school for example, have to continually come

up with projects which will help service the groups properly and help support the families and the communities that build up around them? Each year the pre-school sector are dealing with new parents and new communities both fluent and learners (these are not projects but a continuing developing service that grows each year but has less manpower servicing them) yet no guarantee can be given that they will be offered the same or what should be a better developed service than the previous year as everything is project based. To be able to offer the proper support which will also have an effect on the prestige and would also allow workers to attend CPD as well as offer career paths, we need to move way from project funding to a certain extent and fund properly the pre-school sector which collects, gathers, nurtures and feeds many of the other Gaelic sectors. I have continually heard how important the pre-school sector is over a number of years but when it comes to funding for staff to support groups and communities it is very difficult to find. There is also a need to understand that Gaelic groups do cost more so they can input the language and to have a funding stream that allows all Gaelic pre-school groups to access money for revenue costs on top off what is available to the English sector. This would have a major boost on morale and motivation, would allow more focus and time to encourage families to make an informed choice to go forward and become involved within the many sectors of the Gaelic world.

Le dùrachd

Ceitidh Hutton