

Hello, Below are some thoughts regarding the National Plan.

a.. Educational outreach to Gaelic-friendly parents to teach them Gaelic so they may help pass the language on to their pre-school children to help ready the next generation.

b.. The plan must encompass a long-term vision for Gaelic. Such as the above - - teach parents a little now, so they can teach their children who will then go to Gaelic Medium schools in a dual-language society, and those children who are educated in Gaelic then grow up and give rise to a completely Gaelic generation.

c.. Assertively develop Gaelic Medium educational opportunities, including "hard targets" for the number of Gaelic schools.

d.. Goal of making Gaelic education a right, rather than an option of convenience.

e.. Establish Gaelic regions with a Quebec-style Gaelic rights regime (but more flexible so as to extend into major cities).

f.. The efforts of individuals and independent organizations provides great vitality to the Gaelic movement, but an organization such as Bord na Gaidhlig must serve as a coordinating hub of all these independent efforts.

g.. The part of the National Plan that calls for promoting "interest in Gaelic as a life choice" must include this message to children in the education of children. If the language is to survive, children must come to adulthood convinced of the value of Gaelic, and what's more, be convinced enough that if they marry outwith the Gaelic community, they bring their partners into the community rather than as what currently happens, which is that the young Gaels are pulled out of the community.

h.. A concerted effort to promote interest in staying in the Gaelic communities and building an viable economy there, as opposed to the idea that the only way to "get on" is to go air falbh. In this, the University of the Highlands and Islands is a good model, providing University education that is aimed at economic development within a Gaelic and/or Gaelic-friendly environment.

i.. Promote a business-friendly, low-tax regime in the Gaelic areas; and in other ways, encourage economic vitality.

j.. Develop a culture that is proud of Gaelic and is expansionary.

k.. Develop a massive outreach plan to turn every native Gaelic speaker into a teacher/tutor of Gaelic.

l.. Children finishing school should leave with an experience that initiates them into a Gaelic community as Gaelic adults; this experience in traditional cultures, most often sometime in the mid-teens, helps "set in concrete" the values that the community wants passed on to the succeeding generation.

m.. Along these lines, the Gaelic community needs to become very clear, firm and unambiguous about the value of Gaelic and the value of perpetuating it -- to the themselves, their children, and to people outwith the Gaelic community.

n.. Encourage a pro-natalist mindset in the Gaelic community. Scotland's population is shrinking, augmented largely by immigration. No measures in Gaelic education or media or government policy will do any good if there are no Gaelic children.

In the end, I would say that the current Plan is well thought out and designed. All the parts are there. Some of what I have written above is re-iterative. But what isn't in the Plan -- and what maybe you cannot put in print -- is a certain determination to see the Plan through and to create a Gaelic community. The word that appears repeatedly is "promote," which, I am sorry to say, connotes some sort of weak suggesting ... though I suppose the crucial question is, How is this plan going to be promoted? Writers on the Gaelic scene have commented that a tremendous vitality is emerging from the input of learners and volunteers (Ronald Black of the University of Edinburgh, writing in the poetry anthology *An Tuil*, adds the contribution of women writers). There has to be more than the establishment of programmes; there has to be a stimulation of the Gaelic people and the would-be and the will-be Gaelic people. A friend of mine from Leodhas says you need somebody or some-bodies to go into the Gaelic communities, door-to-door, church-to-church, council-hall to council-hall, and speak to the people

there; make use of Gaelic institutions, practices, and above all person-to-person contacts to spread the word. The Gaelic word.

Le dùrachdan,

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