

Fiosrachadh Pearsanta / Contact Information

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Ceistean | Questions

1. Tha cumadh a' Phlana a' gabhail a-steach amas, cuspairean, prìomh raointean agus gealltanasan. A bheil beachd agaibh air cumadh a' Phlana agus air an àrd-amas againn? The structure for the Plan consists of an aim, priority areas and commitments. Do you have any comments on how we have structured the Plan and the overall aim we have selected?

Tha Gàidhlig agam, tha mi ga h-ionnsachadh agus tha miann agam air ionnsachadh agus air obrachadh ann an Albainn tro meadhann a chionn 's gu bheil i ann an-sineach ach chan eil mi misneachail gu leòr airson beachdachaidh air na cuspairean seo sa chànan fhèin.

Support for factual statements is provided in endnotes and a list of references.

Tha cumadh a' Phlana a' gabhail a-steach amas, cuspairean, prìomh raointean agus gealltanasan. A bheil beachd agaibh air cumadh a' Phlana agus air an àrd-amas againn?

Above all else, the Bòrd should promote intergenerational transmission as the key to securing the future of Gaelic. This method of language acquisition is most likely to result in fully bilingual Gaelic speakers. (i) Resources must be available and promoted and volunteers should be trained to help parents implement strategies for raising bilingual children.

In terms of measuring progress, it is good that the Bòrd is moving beyond the focus on increasing speaker numbers. However, novel strategies must be identified to increase frequency of usage and improve the fluency of Gaelic speakers. (ii)

(i) Research has concluded that "whilst only a very small group of primary GME students she surveyed throughout Scotland could realistically be classed as fluent Gaelic speakers, in respect of their mastery of Gaelic grammar (and limited production of errors) all of these came from backgrounds in which the language is used at home [Landgraf (2013: 324)]." (Dunmore 2015)

(ii) Over half of GME graduates in Dunmore 2015 reported low usage of the language, and "researchers in [(Landgraf 2013; Nance 2013; MacLeod et al. 2014)] observed frequent and unmarked use of non-native-like features in GME students' syntax, morphology and phonology, both through ethnographic observations in the classroom and individual interviews" (Dunmore 2015; emphasis mine).

2. Tha sinn dhen beachd gu bheil e riatanach gum bi deagh iomhaigh aig a' Ghàidhlig agus gum bi na raointean shuas a' cur gu mòr ri sin. A bheil beachdan agaibh fhèin air na raointean a thagh sinn no càil eile co-cheangailte ris a' chuspair seo? We believe that the promotion of a positive image for Gaelic is essential and we think that the areas above are the key areas that can make a contribution to this. Do you have any comments on the areas we have selected or alternative suggestions?

Communication:

I cannot provide better advice than that advocated by a parent in Shawbost: "... Provide real support to young parents. Gaelic parenting is a lonely task. How to do this in a modern world - I have no idea."

The authors of the study wrote, "Models for successful inter-generational transmission are available. The TWF project in Wales (www.twfcymru.com) sends trained home visitors to support and advise young families on raising children bilingually. Even when only one parent or grandparent speaks Gaelic, it is still possible to raise children bilingually using the One-Parent-One-Language method... There is a wealth of advice available, based on international research, to parents who wish to raise their children bilingually." (Bell 2014) However, these resources are not being promoted and the importance of speaking Gaelic at home is not underscored to those who need it most. The Bòrd alone has the resources to systematically support parents who wish to raise bilingual children and this should be its first priority. Research has shown a pattern of improving attitudes and decreasing usage in many parts of Scotland over the last few decades (for instance, see Müller 2006: 134-6). Since improved attitudes do not go hand in hand with increased usage, focus on a communications strategy focused on the former may not be effective to "increase the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used." Instead, the Bòrd should prioritize outreach to Gaelic speakers, promoting the language in community, social, and family settings, and countering the perception that GME alone is sufficient.

3. Tha sinn dhen bheachd gu bheil foghlam agus ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig aig cridhe a' Phlana seo. Tha sinn air liosta a dhèanamh de na prìomh raointean airson leasachadh san àm ri teachd. A bheil beachdan agaibh air seo, agus air na prìomh raointean a thagh sinn airson ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig? We believe education and Gaelic learning are central to this Plan. We have also listed the priority areas that we believe should be a focus for ongoing activity. Do you have any comments on this emphasis and on the priority areas selected for learning Gaelic?

In its communication to parents regarding Gaelic-medium education, the Bòrd has emphasized that students without Gaelic-speaking backgrounds thrive in GME. This fact needs to be balanced with an awareness that the typical outcome for GME students without Gaelic at home is not fully bilingual adults who use Gaelic regularly. The Bòrd should develop strategies and conduct research on how to effectively engage GME graduates to leverage Gaelic competency for continued language use, and encourage the use of Gaelic as a social and family language. Language mentorship programs should be established to increase interaction between native speakers and GME students. This would help avoid the linguistic gaps between traditional and new speakers which have hindered some revival efforts, especially Irish and Breton, and increase the amount of Gaelic spoken outside of school.

4. Tha sinn dhen bheachd gu bheil na raointean a chaidh a thaghadh cudromach airson cleachdadh na Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh. A bheil beachdan agaibh air mar a dh'fhaodamaid piseach a thoirt air ìre cleachdaidh na Gàidhlig? We believe the areas selected are important for promoting the increased use of Gaelic. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to make in relation to promoting the increased use of Gaelic?

In terms of supporting Gaelic learning, resources and materials are skewed towards beginners. The project to write a modern reference grammar should help alleviate the shortage of materials for self-study at an advanced level. Very few Gaelic learners ever become fluent and those who do are highly motivated and highly educated (MacLeod 2014). A pressing question for Soillse is what resources and programs will be most effective for helping those who do not have as many advantages to become fluent.

When learners'/new speakers' Gaelic is not acceptable to traditional speakers it causes fissures in the community. A thaobh sineach chaidh na molaidhean agam a chur chun Bhòrd ann an 2014: "Thathas ag iarraidh stiùireadh is treòrachadh an dà chuid gus Beurlachas a sheachnadh agus gus an seòrsa Gàidhlig a thathas a' meas nàdarra agus iomchaidh a chleachdadh. Airson seo a choileanadh bhiodh e feumail leabhar-iùil a bhith ann air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig a bheireadh seachad stiùireadh air cleachdaidhean nach eil a' còrdadh ri luchd-labhairt traidiseanta agus ciamar a rachadh an seachnadh." (Bell 2014)

The Bòrd should not spend money on organisations that hold a majority of events in English or that use English for internal communication. Funding can be used to leverage organizations to switch over their operations.

5. Ann an ceistean 2, 3 is 4, chaidh iarraidh oirbh ur beachdan a thoirt air na prìomh raointean a chaidh a chomharrachadh. Anns a' cheist seo, bu mhath leinn ur beachdan fhaighinn air na prìomh ghealltanasan a chomharraich sin agus air gealltanasan a bharrachd a bu chòir a bhith ann gus an dèanar adhartas ann a bhith a' leasachadh na th' ann de dhaoine a tha a' labhairt, cleachdadh is ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba agus ann a bhith a' leudachadh nan suidheachaidhean anns am bi i air a cur gu feum? In questions 2, 3 and 4, you were asked about your views on the priority areas identified. In this question, we would like to hear any views or suggestions you may have on the key commitments we have identified and views on any key commitments you think should be included in order to make progress with the aim of increasing the number of people speaking, using and learning Gaelic in Scotland and the number of situations in which it is used?

The Bòrd does not control BBC Alba or MG Alba; however, the role of these organizations in producing Gaelic language content is too important to neglect here. It is crucial to reduce the amount of English used in Gaelic broadcasting. English subtitles send the message that Gaelic content cannot succeed without being accessible to English monolingual audiences. Default Gaelic subtitles would benefit both learners and fluent Gaelic speakers who did not learn to read Gaelic. Gaelic voiceovers over English content would retain the Gaelic character of the channel. Radio nan Gàidheal would also benefit from a policy of translating all English content. BBC Alba content should be sold internationally, to improve availability of Gaelic material and raise money for new content.

The Bòrd should continue to support Gaelic publishing and spearhead aims to modernize the industry. Increasing the number of e-books would make Gaelic books cheaper, more convenient, and more appealing to young adult audiences as well as prevent books from going out of print.

6. Tha na ceistean co-chomhairleachaidh a nochd na bu tràithe air a bhith rudeigin mionaideach. Ma tha sibh airson puingeann eile a thogail, agus mura robh cothrom agaibh sin a dhèanamh thuige seo, nach sgrìobh sibh iad gu h-ìosal. The earlier consultation questions have been fairly specific. If there are any other points you would like to make and feel you have not had the opportunity to do so, please write them below.

I believe that unwarranted optimism (iii) is hindering revitalization efforts. In Dunmore's interviews, GME graduates seemed to believe that the language has stabilized and will continue to be spoken even though they and their peers rarely use it. It also seemed that the perception that GME alone is enough discourages parents from making a point of speaking Gaelic to their children.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig's first priority should be the revival of intergenerational transmission. Tapadh leibh.

(iii) The absolute number of Gaelic speakers is still declining. The apparent insignificance of the decline is misleading as younger speakers are almost without exception English-dominant and many are not fully bilingual. The pervasive and increasing influence of English on Gaelic is a well-known characteristic of endangered languages (leaving aside the pros and cons of language change itself). Even in the areas where most adults are fluent, only a small minority of children are brought up with Gaelic as their first language. In Shawbost, less than 20% of parents spoke mostly or only Gaelic with their children (Bell 2014). In South Uist in the 2001 census, fewer than 30% of children were able to speak Gaelic before they went to school. (Duwe 2006)

References

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