

RO-INNLEACHD AIRSON CÀNAIN ALBA

FREAGAIRT BHO CHOMUNN NA GÀIDHLIG AIR A' PHÀIPEAR
CHONALTRAIDH

1. Am bheil thu ag aontachadh leis na h-adhbharan a tha air an toirt seachad airson adhartachadh agus ionnsachadh cànan air duilleagan 4 agus 5, agus gur iad na prìomh adhbharan a bu chòir taic a chuir ri ro-innleachdan cànan an-dràsta ann an Alba. Mur eil, carson?

Tha sinn ag aontachadh leis na h-adhbharan a tha air duilleagan 4 agus 5 agus gu h-àraidh na briathran mu ghealltanais an Riaghaltais ann a bhith a dìon agus a' brosnachadh na Gàidhlig agus an cànan Albais le iad bhi a' faighinn mothachadh mar phàirt chudromach de chultair agus de dhearbhadh-aithne na dùthcha. Tha teagamh againn, ge-tà, mun dòigh anns a bheil an ro-innleachd gu bhith ga chuir an gnìomh oir thathas ga mholadh mar "stiùireadh do luchd-poileasaidh" an àite a bhith na stèidh làidir daingeann a comharrachadh maoineachadh, targaidean agus toradh dha na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail, na buidhnean poblach iomchaidh, agus Roinnean den Riaghaltas. Tha sin de bheachd gu bheil uireasbhaidhean a thaobh modhan-obrachaidh agus dòigh libhrigidh air na tha air a dhealbhadh anns a' Phàipear Chonaltraidh gus ro-innleachd cànan èifeachdach bhrìgheil a chuir air bhonn airson Cànan Alba.

2. Am bheil thu ag aontachadh gu bheil na ro-innleachdan cànan mar a tha iad air am mìneachadh air duilleagan 6-12 agus an àitean eile mar phrìomh roinnean airson inbhe cànan àrdachadh ann an Alba? Mur eil, carson?

Bu chòir a h-uile Ro-innleachd Riaghaltais a bhith a' cuir cuideam air a' cheangal eadar cho cudromach 's a tha e cànan ionnsachadh agus cothroman eaconamaiceach a mheudachadh agus bu chòir seo a bhiodh dearbhte anns a h-uile Ro-innleachd 's Poileasaidhean Roinneil, chan ann a-mhàin anns na cuspairean a tha a' bualadh air Foghlam, Ionnsachadh Cànan, Cultar agus ceistean Gàidhlig. Bu chòir an Clàr Teagaisg airson Sàr-mhàitheas a bhith a' gabhail a-staigh gealltanais gum bi cothrom foghlam Gàidhlig fhaighinn aig gach ìre (3-18) ann an Alba agus mothachadh ann don chànan Albais agus cothrom cànan Eòrpach eile ionnsachadh.

3. Am bheil thu ag aontachadh gum bu chòir na prìomh phrionnsabalan air an liosta air duilleagan 14 agus 15 cruth a chuir air obair cànanain ann an Alba? Mur eil, carson?

Ged a tha sinn ag aontachadh leis na prìomh phrionnsabalan gu lèir air duilleagan 14 agus 15 mar dhòigh cruth a thoirt air obair cànanain ann an Alba, tha dragh oirnn gum biodh e air fhaicinn mar innleachd “mean air mhean” agus chan eil mòran dòchas gum biodh buaidh sam bith aige air libhrigeadh ionnsachadh cànanain oir tha feum air daingneachadh gu sònraichte gus goireasan riatanach a shònrachadh a bhiodh a’ cur taic ri buidhnean leithid na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail a bhiodh ga chuir an sàs. Tha an ro-innleachd seo a’ cumail gu mòr ri bhith “a’ brosnachadh bhuidhnean” an àite a bhith toirt cumhachd dhaibh gus iarrtasan nam pàrant ‘s nan sgoilear a choileanadh. Mar eisimpleir, tha e againn airson a’ dhearbhadh mar a thachair do phàrantan ann an iomadach sgìre de dh’ Alba far an robh iad a’ sireadh foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ach nach d’ fhuair seirbheis oir cha b’ urrainn na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail na goireasan riatanach a thabhann le cionn maoineachadh. Tha sinn a’ toirt fainear an abairt air duilleag 15 ag ràdh “brosnachaidh an Riaghaltas na h-ùghdarrasan gus foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a mheudachadh agus gus inbhe na Gàidhlig àrdachadh ann am beatha làitheil a’ phobaill...” Feumar an abairt seo a chuir an co-ionad ris mar a tha a’ tachairt do phàrantan ann an iomadach àite far, a dh’ ainheòin brosnachadh bhon Riaghaltas gus foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a mheudachadh, chan eil e idir comasach dad a thabhann ach seirbheis a chaidh a mheas mar “lom” le Comataidh Eòlaichean air a’ Chùmhnant bho Chomhairle na h-Eòrpa. Thuilleadh air seo, tha na beachdan seo a tha an Ro-innleachd a’ cuir air adhart eadar-dhealaichte bho na dleastanasan riatanas reachdail a tha air buidhnean poblach ann an Alba a bhith ag ullachadh Planaichean Cànanain Gàidhlig, an dèidh cuiridh fhaighinn bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig a rèir cumhachdan Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005.

4. Am bheil beachd sam bith eile a bu mhath leat a thogail mu choinneimh àrdachadh inbhe cànanain ann an Alba?

Bu chòir Gàidhlig a bhith air a thabhann mar phàirt de churraicealam an fhoghlaim anns a h-uile bun-sgoil ann an Alba agus an uairsin anns na h-àrd-sgoiltean agus do dh’ foghlam aig àrd-ìre. Tha sinn a moladh seo a dhèanamh le a bhith ag ullachadh “Cùmhnant Cànanain” do gach pàiste ann an Alba far am bheil gealltanais ga thoirt do gach neach gu faigh iad cothrom cànan a roghnaicheas iad ionnsachadh a bharrachd air an cainnt màthaireil. Feumaidh seo a bhith air a ghabhail a-staigh mar phàirt de ghealltanais dhaingeann an Riaghaltais gus goireasan ‘s maoineachadh aig ìre riatanach a thoirt do na h-ùghdarrasan gus dèanamh cinnteach gun gabh barrachd sgoilearan, oileanaich agus inbhich an cothrom cànanain Alba ionnsachadh.

*Tha coltas gum bheil beagan teagamh anns a' Phàipeir Chonaltraidh eadar na molaidhean ri Gàidhlig agus na molaidhean air Albais. Ged a tha an dà chànain air am meas mar "chànain airidh air dìon", tha an stiùireadh mu choinneimh Albais nas laige na tha mu choinneimh Gàidhlig. Feumaidh taic a chur ris an ro-innleachd le **fiosrachadh làidir soilleir stèidhichte air rannsachadh mionaideach de thuigse dhaoine, am beachdan agus am feumalachdan airson Gàidhlig mar chuideachadh le co-dhùnaidhean agus le bhith dealbh phoileasaidhean cànain.** Dh' fheumadh taic a chuir ris an fhiosrachadh seo le bhith a' cur ceist mu chànain anns a h-uile sgrùdadh sòisealta bho seo a-mach agus ceistean mionaideach mu chànain gan togail anns gach **Chunntas Sluaigh.***

5. Ma tha thu a' freagairt as leth buidheann, ciamar a tha thu a' smaoinichadh a b' urrainn dhut cuir ri soirbheachaidh na ro-innleachd?

*Mar a' phrìomh bhuidheann leasachaidh Gàidhlig bhiodh Comunn na Gàidhlig toilichte dleastanas com-pàirt a ghabhail ann a bhith **ag adhartachadh agus a' brosnachadh Ro-Innleachd làidir soilleir a bha air a mhaoinichadh gu ìre iomchaidh, le amas a bhith a' dìon agus ag àrdachadh inbhe Gàidhlig ann an Alba mar phàirt de ro-innleachd èifeachdachd bhon Riaghaltas a bhith a' stiùireadh (an comas ri treòrachadh) leasachadh cànain ann an Alba.***

*Cuideachd, bhitheamaid deònach com-pàirt a ghabhail ann a bhith a' measadh adhartas a tha ga dhèanamh le bhith a' cuir an gnìomh **Cùmhnant nam Mion Chànain Eòrpach** airson leasachaidhean na Gàidhlig.*

A STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND'S LANGUAGES

RESPONSE FROM COMUNN NA GÀIDHLIG TO THE CONSULTATION PAPER

1. Do you agree with the reasons given for promoting and learning languages on pages 4 and 5, and that these are the main reasons for supporting current language initiatives in Scotland. If not, why not?

The reasons given on pages 4 and 5 are agreed particularly the statements on the Executive's commitment to protecting and promoting the Gaelic and Scots languages which are recognised as an important part of the nation's cultural heritage and identity.

*We do, however, question the approach which is adopted by the strategy since it is provided as a "guide to policy makers" as opposed to being a robust and firm blueprint which should outline the resources allocation and accompanying output and targets set by the respective local authorities and relevant public bodies, including Departments of the Executive. **In our view the approach as outlined in the Consultation Paper lacks the coherence and mechanisms needed to produce a meaningful and effective strategy for Scotland's languages.***

2. Do you agree that the language initiatives described on pages 6-12 and elsewhere are the key areas for language promotion in Scotland? If not, why not?

*The link and emphasis on the importance of language learning and increasing economic opportunity should be stressed in all Executive Strategies and Policies. Appropriate statements of commitment should appear in all Departmental Strategies and Policies and not just ones covering Education, Language Learning, Culture and Gaelic issues. **The Curriculum for Excellence should contain a commitment to provide access to Gaelic learning at all levels (3-18) in education in Scotland as well as an awareness of the Scots language, and the opportunity to learn other European languages.***

3. Do you agree that the key principles listed on pages 14 and 15 should shape language activity in Scotland? If not, why not?

*While we are in full agreement with the key principles on pages 14 and 15 as a means of shaping language activity in Scotland, we are concerned that what could be regarded as a "softly softly" approach is unlikely to make much of an impact on language learning delivery because as it stands the strategy lacks firm, specific and adequate commitment to allocate the necessary resources to assist the implementing agencies such as local authorities. The approach taken is very much one of "encouraging agencies" rather than **empowering** them to fulfil the expectations of parents and pupils. As an example, we can cite the experience of parents seeking Gaelic Medium Education in a number of areas in Scotland but who are denied this necessary service because of the inability of local authorities to provide the required resources. We note that the statement on page 15 states that the "Executive will encourage authorities to extend Gaelic medium education and to increase the profile of Gaelic in public life....." This statement has to be placed in the context of the reality facing parents in a number of areas where, in spite of encouragement by the Executive to extend Gaelic medium education, it is still not possible to provide anything other than what has been described by the Council of Europe's Committee of Expert on the Charter as "patchy". Furthermore, the overall cautious approach promoted by the*

strategy is in sharp contrast to the statutory requirement on public bodies in Scotland to prepare Gaelic Language Plans, on being issued notice by Bòrd na Gàidhlig under the terms of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.

4. Are there any other comments you would like to offer on this strategy in relation to the promotion of languages in Scotland?

Gaelic should be provided as part of the education curriculum in all Scottish Primary Schools and thereafter at secondary, further and higher education level by its incorporation in the Curriculum for Excellence, as noted above.. We suggest that this aspiration should be provided by the adoption of a “Language Charter” for each child in Scotland where a commitment is given to each individual to be given the opportunity to learn a language of choice (of which Gaelic would be one) in addition to the mother tongue. This needs to be embodied into a firm commitment by the Executive to provide authorities with the necessary level of resources to ensure a greater uptake by Scottish pupils, students and adults for learning Scotland’s languages.

*There appears to be some uncertainty in the Consultation Document between the approach for Gaelic and the approach for Scots. Although both are described as "languages to be protected", the guidance on Scots would appear to be weaker than the guidance given for Gaelic. The strategy needs to be backed up by **strong and transparent data based on a thorough research of people's perceptions, attitudes and needs for Gaelic to aid decision making and policy planning.** This data should be backed up by a requirement to have a language question on Gaelic in all future social surveys and in the national Census.*

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you think you may be able to contribute to the success of the strategy?

*As the major Gaelic development agency, Comunn na Gàidhlig would welcome the opportunity to take a **proactive role in promoting a strong and clear strategy which was adequately resourced,** with the aim of protecting and promoting the Gaelic language in Scotland as part of a coherent approach by the Executive to direct (as opposed to guiding) the development of languages in Scotland.*

*We would also be willing to participate in an assessment of the progress being made in the implementation of **the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** in relation to Gaelic language developments.*