

Name: niki robertson

Is the vision of the draft Plan one in which you can share?:

Yes. It looks very promising.

In the light of your response to the above question, are the proposed sectoral projects essential to the meeting of the action area aims for 2012? If not, why not?:

Yes, I think so.

Are the outcomes for the twenty themes and the priorities for tackling them correctly outlined and prioritised? If not, why not?:

Yes - its a huge remit!

In the light of your response to the above question, what projects do you view as being essential to implementing these priorities (some examples are offered in Appendix I):

And are the right organisations identified as being the primary players in implementing these priorities?:

Yes

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, how do you see yourselves contributing to the success of the National Plan?:

Do you have any other comments on the draft National Plan which you would like to submit?:

I'd like to see a small info leaflet that was available to all pre-school families when they begin to make their choices for nursery provision.

I think that highlighting the benefits of bilingual learning is important. I know from experience that many people feel that Gaelic is a 'dead' language. It's virtually impossible to convince these folk otherwise. Its often a view that has been ingrained since childhood and can have associations with all kinds of things including where families are originally from. However, I always win the argument in the end - because being able to speak more than one language is an advantage.

We are pretty awful in the UK when it comes to speaking other languages. In parts of Europe you can speak to people who are pretty fluent in at least one other language - and often competent in four! Gaelic Medium is great because it gives the opportunity to have another language from an early age and that can help with the learning of other languages later on.

I'm from Lancashire and Gaelic didnt really mean much to me when I moved up to the Highlands. My husband wanted our children to go to the local GM unit and I didnt really know much about that. I did a bit of research and decided that bilingualism was a good thing - regardless of which languages were involved. I saw it as an educational advantage for the

kids. From there my own interest in Gaelic grew. We set up a local CNP and eventually I enrolled in an immersion course. As part of the course I did a survey to predict the growth of GM uptake in the area, consulting all the families with pre-school youngsters. Quite a few came back undecided and with some concerns. Angus Brendan MacNeil was Gaelic Development officer in Lochaber at the time and we arranged some home visits. These made a big difference and definately helped parents in a positive way. Angus had done some reading on bilingualism in French Canadian communities and was able to demonstrate the benefits they had identified.

At the end of the day everyone wants the best for their child educationally.

I'm not saying that Gaelic itself isnt important - just that there are other positive ways to encourage its growth to those who may not consider it as a valuable contemporary option.

I'd like to see information about the benefits of bilingualism available for pre-school parents.

I agree for my views to be made public: ON