

AR STÒRAS GÀIDHLIG

Geàrr-chunntasan raoin: Roinn Turasachd



Ann an roinn na turasachd, tha grunn iomairtean air tachairt thairis air na deich bliadhna a dh'fhalbh, a tha a' feuchainn ri ceangal a dhèanamh eadar dualchas na Gàidhlig agus Gàidhlig ann an Alba san latha an-diugh, le luchd-turais ag iarraidh blas fhaighinn den eadar-dhealachadh a th' air a thabhann tron chànan is chultar.

Tha Cearcaill na Gàidhlig na eisimpleir air leithid de dh'obair – seo iomairt margaidh cho-obrachail a chaidh a' chur air bhonn ann an 2007 gus beairteas cànan is dualchais na Gàidhlig a chur air adhart air feadh eileanan Innse Gall agus taobh siar na Gàidhealtachd. (Bha an iomairt seo na chom-pàrteachas iomabhuidhne eadar Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid; Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd; CalMac; VisitScotland; agus HITRANS – Compàrteachas Còmhdaidh na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean).

Chaidh a' chaid tè de Chearcaill na Gàidhlig a' cur air bhonn san Iuchar 2007, stèidhte air an t-slighe eileanach 'Hopscotch' aig Caledonian Mac a' Bhruithainn a bha a' gabhail a-steach an t-Òban, Barraigh, Èirisgeidh, Uibhist a Deas, Beinn na Faoghla, Uibhist a Tuath, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach agus Malaig.

Às dèidh mar a shoirbhich leis an iomairt seo, le 300 gnothachasan ionadail air feadh na slighe a' gabhail com-pàirt, chaidh pròiseact Cearcaill na Gàidhlig a leudachadh airson bun-stèidh de shìa shlighean a chruthachadh, le taic bho 650 gnothachasan ionadail air an t-slighe.

Bha na gnothachasan sin a' cur taic ris an iomairt dà-chànanach seo tro shanasachd taobh a-staigh an cuid toglaichean agus le bhith a' sgaoileadh litreachas. Bha na gnothachasan seo nam measgachadh de thaigh Leabaidh is Braicist, bùithtean ionadail is goireasan turasachd. Chaidh deich mìle lethbhreac de leabhar beag dà-chànanach a chlo-bhualadh, anns an robh 'tursan pearsanta' a chòrd ri sia sgrìobhadairean cliùteach Albannach, a' gabhail a-steach Aonghas Pàdraig Caimbeul, Màiri NicArtair, Dòmhnall Meek is Ùisdean Cheape. Bha na slighean sin stèidhte air slighean eileanach 'Hopscotch' CalMac. Cuideachd, chaidh ceud gu leth mìle (150,000) leabhraichean a sgaoileadh air feadh na h-Alba agus aig àiteachan sònraichte air feadh na RA mu choinneamh an iomairt seo.

Air fhoillseachadh le Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean.

Airson an aithisg uile agus foillseachaidhean eile, thigear gu www.hie.co.uk/gaelic

Airson tuilleadh fiosrachaidh, thigear gu www.gaelic-rings.com

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Cuideachd, chaidh làrach-lìn ioma-chànanach a chruthachadh a dh'aona ghnothaich, www.gaelic-rings.com, anns an robh 'tursan ann an iomhaighean' le ceòl bho Runrig. Bha an iomairt cuideachd mar mheadhan air sanasachd dà-chànanach fhaighinn ann an naidheachdan iomchaidh mu thurasachd agus ann an CalMac Explore, msaa, cho math ri nochdadh dà-chànanach air rathad-iarainn Taobh Siar na Gàidhealtachd eadar Inbhir Nis is Caol Loch Aillse.

Tha an iomairt seo na dhòigh air aithne a thoirt gu bheil cànan is cultar na Gàidhlig nam pàirt chudromach anns a' mheasgachadh de fheartan a tha a' tàladh luchd-turais gu sgìrean Gàidhealach, agus gun urrainn dhan Ghàidhlig ceangal a thabhan eadar siubhal, àiteachan-còmhnaidh, aoigheachd agus biadh is deoch gus cur ris na dh'fhiosraicheas luchd-turais às an dùthaich seo fhèin agus bho thall-thairis.

Ann an seadh nas fharsainghe, tha VisitScotland gu gnìomhach a' coimhead air dòighean anns am faigh luchd-turais blas den iomadachd a th' air a thabhan le coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig air Ghàidhealtachd. Tha luchd-turais gu tric air an tarraing gu sreap nam beann no eunlaith na sgìre.

Mar sin, tha iad a' beachdachadh air planaichean airson làraich Ghàidhlig a chruthachadh, a' toirt an cothrom do luchd-turais buannachd fhaighinn bho bheairteas nan coimhearsnachdan far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig fhathast làidir. Tha tomhas den seo mar-thà ga dhèanamh ann an coimhearsnachdan leithid Siabost ann an Leòdhas is Tròndairnis san Eilean Sgitheanach – tha an dàrna fear dhiubh seo air a bhith a' cleachdadh eòlas ionadail gu soirbheachail gus a' choimhearsnachd a chomharrachadh mar aon far a faigh luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig air a dhol am bogadh sa chànan cus sgìlean cànan a thoirt air adhart.

Tha am beachd-smauin 'Slighe Innse Gall' a' gabhail a-steach lèirsinn iomlan, gus rothaireach is coiseasachd bho cheann a tuath Eilean Leòdhais gu ceann a deas Bharraigh a bhrosnachadh, anns an aon dòigh ri Slighe Iar na Gàidhealtachd ach le Gàidhlig aig a' chridhe mar phàirt den bhun-structair fhèin.

Bhiodh 'hubs' Gàidhlig eadar-dhealaichte air feadh na slighe – cuid a' dèiligeadh ri dualchas na Gàidhlig, feadhainn eile le eunlaith, agus cuid eile le ceòl Gàidhlig, agus bhiodh iad air am faicinn mar dhòigh air cinnteachd nan coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig a chomharrachadh, gach fear a' cleachdadh feartan den Ghàidhlig mar so-mhaoin. Dh'fhaodadh seo tachairt tro bhith a' tadhail air ionad mineachaidh, tro bhith a' frithealadh cèilidh ionadail, no tro bhith a' tuigsinn a' chruth-tìre tro shoidhnichean dà-chànanach le deagh fhiosrachadh orra, no tro thuras gu aonad eunlaith ann an sgìre far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig ga bruidhinn.

Tha cuid den na leasachaidhean cultarail Gàidhlig seo mar-thà a' tachairt – mar a chithear, mar eisimpleir, anns an athleasachadh den taigh-tasgaidh aig Caisteal Leòdhais ann an Steòrnabhagh agus mar a tha soidhnichean dà-chànanach air an cleachdadh ann.

Tha aithne ga thoirt gum biodh feum air bun-structair a bharrachd, leithid leapannan a bharrachd, nam biodh leudachadh gu bhith ga dhèanamh ann an turasachd co-cheangailte ri Gàidhlig – ach tha greis bho chaidh a' cheist seo a thogail ann an cuid de na sgìrean air a bheillear a-mach.

Chan urrainnear coimhead air turasachd co-cheangailte ri Gàidhlig mar rud fa leth bho thurasachd traidiseanta, ach tha cothrom ann cur ris ann an dòigh nach beag. An-dràsta, tha còmhraidhean a' tachairt anns na h-Eileanan an Iar co-cheangailte ri 'Hebtember' – mìos de thachartasan san t-Sultain le fòcas air ealain is ciùird, air feadh nan eilean fad mìos – ag amas air ealain is ciùird a chur fon bhoillsgeadh, le cothrom ionnsachadh Gàidhlig a thabhan agus cothroman eile a chur an aire dhaoine. Mar-thà, tha na Fèisean agus Feis HebCelt, cho math ri tachartasan Blas, a' cur Gàidhlig aig cridhe na tha a' tachairt a thaobh ceòl beò is co-aimisireil.

Anns an aon dòigh tha ceangal làidir aig slighe an uisge-bheatha ann an Ìle ri tùsachd na Gàidhlig anns na taighean-staile air an t-slighe – agus mar a tha sgrùdaidhean-cùise eile an seo air a shealltainn, gabhaidh seo a chleachdadh gus togail a thoirt dhan cheangal leis a' chànan is chultair tro òstairean a' cur air adhart a' Ghàidhlig mar so-mhaoin.

The Cearcall na Gàidhlig is one such approach - a collaborative marketing initiative launched in 2007 to promote the richness of Gaelic language and culture throughout the Hebridean islands and the West Highland mainland. (This initiative was a multi-agency partnership between Argyll and Bute Council, Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; The Highland Council; CalMac; VisitScotland; and HITTRANS - the Highlands and Islands Transport Initiative).

The first of the Gaelic Rings, or Cearcall na Gàidhlig, was launched in July 2007 based on Caledonian MacBrayne's Islands Hopscotch route taking in Oban, Barra, Eriksay, South Uist, Benbecula, North Uist, Skye and Mull.

Following the success of this initiative with 300 local businesses along the route becoming partners, the Gaelic Rings project was then expanded to form the basis of six journeys with the support of 650 local businesses en route. These businesses supported this bilingual initiative by advertising it within their establishments and distribution of literature.

These businesses ranged from B&Bs to local shops to tourist attractions. Ten thousand copies of a small bilingual book were published consisting of 'favourite' personal journeys' of six highly respected Scottish writers including Angus Peter Campbell, Mairi MacArthur, Donald Meek and Hugh Cheape. These journeys were based on CalMac's Island Hopscotch routes. In addition, one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) leaflets were distributed across Scotland and at key entry points to the UK regarding this.

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In addition a bespoke multilingual website was launched www.gaelic-rings.com which also included 'photographic journeys' with backing music from Hurrig. The initiative also saw bilingual advertising in the relevant tourist press and CalMac Explore etc., together with a bilingual branding presence on the West Highland line between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh.

This initiative is a recognition that Gaelic language and culture plays a significant part in the mixture of factors that attract tourists to Gaelic speaking areas and can also provide a thread that links travel, accommodation, hospitality and food and drink into a richer experience for the domestic and international visitor.

Further afield, VisitScotland are actively investigating how the diversity offered by Gaelic speaking communities in the Gàidhealtachd can be accessed by visitors, often attracted by the opportunity of hillwalking or birdwatching, within landscapes notable for their Gaelic names.

Thus they are considering the construction of Gaelic destination plans allowing tourists to draw from the richness of communities where Gaelic continues to be strong. There is already experience of this within communities such as Shabost in Lewis and Trotternish in Skye - the latter having successfully used local knowledge to position the community as one in which Gaelic learners can be immersed to help their language.

The concept of a 'Hebridean Way' encompasses this holistic vision, developing cycling and walking from the Butt to Barra, in a manner similar to the West Highland Way but with Gaelic at its heart as part of the infrastructure itself.

The concept of different Gaelic 'hubs' along the way - some dealing with Gaelic heritage, others with birdlife, and others with Gaelic music would be seen as a way of marking the authenticity of Gaelic communities, each using aspects of Gaelic as an asset. This could be either through a visit to an interpretive centre, the experience of a local Cèilidh, or the understanding of the landscape through well explained bilingual signage, or a visit to a bird sanctuary within a Gaelic speaking area. Some of this Gaelic cultural add-in has taken place already - as can be seen for instance in the refurbishing of the museum at Lews Castle, Stormway and the use of bilingual signage within that.

There is an acknowledgement that an expansion of Gaelic linked tourism would need some additional infrastructure such as bed spaces - but this has been a long recognised issue in parts of the area concerned.

Gaelic linked tourism cannot be seen in isolation from traditional tourism but can add substantially to it. Current discussions that are taking place in the Outer Hebrides around the concept of 'Hebtober' - a month of events happening in September focusing on arts and crafts, envisaged as pan-island for a whole month - aiming to bring arts and crafts to the fore, clearly have the opportunity to provide Gaelic learning or showcase opportunities. Already the Fèisean and the HebCelt Festival, together with Blas events inject Gaelic into the core of existing live and contemporary music.

Similarly the whisky trail on Islay, has an intimate connection with the Gaelic provenance of the distilleries featured within the trail - and as is shown in other case studies here, this can be used to boost a connection with the language and culture through local hoteliers featuring Gaelic as an asset.



The tourism sector is one where several initiatives have taken place over the last ten years, seeking to link Scotland's Gaelic heritage and Scotland's Gaelic present with visitors wishing to experience the distinctiveness offered by the language and culture.



Sector overview: Gaelic Tourism

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