

The Economic Impact of Gaelic Arts and Culture

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
GAELIC ARTS AND CULTURE

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Abstract

The shift in most industrialised countries from manufacturing to services raises the possibility of cultural industries acting in part as a replacement for declining manufacturing employment. Resulting from this has been a growing interest in the role of arts and culture in economic regeneration, and in the question of language, as a motor for economic change, where language is seen as a key driver of culture.

The social characteristics of the Western Isles and Inner Hebrides of Scotland are intimately bound up with Gaelic language, arts and culture. Previous studies have partially identified the result on employment and communities of all 'Gaelic related economic activities', but none have specifically investigated the impact of *Gaelic Artistic and Cultural Activities* (GLAC) within this area.

Following familiarisation with the organisations involved and a review of the appropriate theoretical literature, a large scale postal survey of over 8,000 consumers of Gaelic artistic and Cultural products within the identified area was undertaken together with a survey of the supply side of Gaelic-related artistic and cultural products.

The research succeeded in identifying *inter alia* the existing level of consumption of Gaelic related artistic and cultural goods within the 'Gaelic economy' and the trends behind this consumption. In addition it allowed an assessment of the economic impact of the sector on jobs and employment, the extent and scope of the individuals and organisations supplying Gaelic related artistic and cultural products, the impact of their activities and the extent to which existing demand was being fulfilled.

Finally the research has provided evidence regarding the possible existence of dynamic interrelationships between cultural and linguistic difference and a range of intermediate variables which could effect the economic health and development of the community.

The contribution to knowledge which this work represents can be used by policy practitioners in this area to help understand and overcome existing problems, refine economic and cultural development policy instruments and potentially have a positive impact on the Gaelic economy in terms of jobs created and economic opportunities provided.

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