

Aithris Gàidhlig 2022

Gaelic Report 2022

AUGUST 2022

Credit: Tony Scherr

Urras Taobh Siar Na Hearadh / West Harris Trust
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Le taic airgeid bho Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus Fearann
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Ro-rath

Thàinig a chiad buidhean airson an Urras Taobh Siar na Hearadh a chruachadh ri chèile ann an 2007 leis an amas stad a chuir air daoine an aite fhagail agus a dèanamh cinnteach gum bi an coimhearsnachd beo anns an àm ri teachd. Anns an Fhaoilleach 2010, chaidh Losgaintir, Sheilebost, Horgabost, Na Buirgh agus Sgarasta Mhòr air a cheannach bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba agus chaidh an Urras Taobh Siar na Hearadh a chruachadh.

Anns an t-samhradh 2022, le taic bho Fearann Coimhearsnachd na h-Alba agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig, thòisich greis-gnìomhachais oileanach Gàidhlig aig an Urras, airson deich seachdainean. ‘Se an amas aca a Gàidhlig bhrosnachadh anns a choimhearsnachd agus aig an Urras. Anns an greis-gnìomhachais seo, bha feum ann program a cuir air adhart airson leasan sa Ghàidhlig, a gabhal a-steach Gàidhlig mar phàirt dhan na tachartasan a bha and Urras a cuir air doigh agus a cuir ceilidh air chois a bha a’ comharrachadh a chànan anns an coimhearsnachd. Cuideachd bha e na pàirt dhan obair a cuir Gàidhlig air làrach-linn an Urras agus chaidh seo a dhèanamh le bhi ag eadar-theangachadh na duilleagan aca. Bha an taic-airgeid cuideachd a gabhal a-steach aithisg-rannsaichaidh air ciamar a bhiodh Gàidhlig air a chleachdadh aig an Urras agus anns a’ choimhearsnachd.

Introduction

In 2007, a steering group that would eventually lead to the formation of the West Harris Trust was formed with the aim to halt the trend of depopulation being experienced in the area as well as balancing an ageing population to ensure the community survived into the future. In January 2010, the crofting townships of Losgaintir, Seilebost, Horgabost, Na Buirgh, and Sgarasta Mhòr were bought by the community from the Scottish Government and the West Harris Trust was formed.

In the summer of 2022, the West Harris Trust, with support from Community Land Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig, appointed a Gaelic student placement for a period of ten weeks with the aim of increasing the use of Gaelic in the community and the Trust. Aspects of the placement included facilitating a programme of Gaelic lessons, including the language in a series of events put on by the Trust and organising an end of placement event celebrating the language in the community. Introducing the presence of Gaelic on the Trust’s website was another requirement of the post and this has been introduced through Gaelic translations on the website pages. The funding for the post also included writing this report about the future use of Gaelic within the Trust and wider community.

Airson rannsachadh a dhèanamh, bha dà shuirbhidhean air a' dhealbhadh airson muinntir na Hearadh, fear airson luchd-fileanta agus fear airson daoine a bha ag ionnsachadh no aig nach robh Gàidhlig. Chaidh freagartan air iarraidh air na meadhanan-sòisealta agus anns am pàipear ionadail 'Dè Tha Dol'. Bha dòighean eil ann airson an suirbhidh a lìonadh a-steach, mar eisimpleir thairis air fòn no a cuir fear anns a phost. Bha seachd-deug freagairtean air fhaighinn air ais as an suirbhidh airson luchd-ionnsachaidh/gun Gàidhlig agus dha-dheug air ais airson luchd-fileanta. Bha suirbhidh air a chuir a-mach chun am bòrd-stiùiridh cuideachd le freagairtean bho coignear.

To inform this report, two surveys were created for Harris residents, one for native Gaelic speakers and one for those learning or who don't speak the language. Responses were invited via our social media platforms and in the local events magazine 'Dè Tha Dol'. Whilst the survey was primarily conducted online, alternative formats were available and communicated to the community. In total, seventeen responses were received for learners/non-Gaelic speakers and twelve responses to the native-speaker survey. A survey was also sent round the nine current West Harris Trust directors with responses from five.



Ciamar a tha Gàidhlig a coimhead air feadh Alba?

Tha an slugh nas sinne a tha air lorg anns na h-eileanan a ciallachadh gu bheil Gàidhlig fhathast fìor chudromach anns na coimhearsnachdan. Thug Comhairle nan Eilean Siar a-steach poileasaidh ‘Gaelic First’ ann an 2020 agus tha seo a ciallachadh gu feum Foghlam tro Mheadhan na Gàidhlig a bhith na chiad taghadh airson clann sgoile a tha tòiseachadh sgoil. Tha seo a sealtainn gu bheil an cànan fhathas beò anns a’ choimhearsnachd. Tha fianais ann a tha ag aontachadh leis a seo anns an chunntas-sluaigh, ann an 2011, far a bheil e ag radh gu bheil sgìlean Gàidhlig aig 61.2% de shluaigh na h-eileanan an Iar, a tha nas sinne na trì. Seo an àireamh as motha ann an sgìrean comhairle na h-Alba Tha an ath àireamh as motha ann an sgìre a’ Ghàidhealtachd le 7.4% agus an cuibheas-nàiseanta aig 1.7%.

Ach chan e a mhàin anns na h-eileanan a tha Gàidhlig air a bhruithinn tha Gàidhlig a fàs air feadh Alba o chionn ghoirid. Air tìr-mòr, tha iad a faicainn barrachd iarrtas airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, mar eisimpleir ann a Ghlaschu tha iad ag obair air an ceathramh sgoil Gàidhlig. Chuir iad cuideachd bacadh air an àireamh de clann a’ dol a-steach gu class a h-aon air sgath’s nach eil gu leòr tidsearan ann airson na tha ag iarraidh.

What does Gaelic look like across Scotland?

The ageing population found in the islands means Gaelic is especially prevalent here with the language still regularly spoken in the community and with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar introducing the ‘Gaelic First’ policy in 2020 making Gaelic-Medium Education the default for children starting school, suggesting that the language is still very much thriving in the community. This is further evidenced by the 2011 census which found that 61.2% of the Outer Hebrides population over the age of three had some skills in the language, the highest percentage in any council area in Scotland by some way, with the next being 7.4% in the Highland council area and the national average being 1.7%.

However, Gaelic is not just spoken and used in the islands with the profile of Gaelic increasing all over Scotland in recent years. Mainland Scotland has seen an increase in demand for education delivered through the medium of Gaelic, as is evident in Glasgow where work on the fourth Gaelic school is underway and Primary One places have been capped in the city due to there being insufficient teachers to meet the demand.

Nuair a chaidh an Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005 air chuir seachad, chruaich iad Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson ri dèanamh cinnteach gum bith an cànan tèarainte airson an àm ri teachd mar cànan Albanach, leis an aon urram le Beurla. Tha an Achd ag iarraidh plana Gàidhlig nàiseanta air a dhèanamh gach coig bliadhna, leis am fear as ùra dìreach air co-choimhairle poblach a chrìochnachadh 's an Lunastal 2022. Bidh am plana ag innse amasan airson an an cànan air feadh na h-Alba bho 2021 gu 2026. Tha am plana seo a cuir cuideam air cho cudromach sa tha Gàidhlig air feadh Alba agus gu bheil uidh ann airson an cumail mar pàirt dhan an dualchas Albanach anns an àm ri teachd.

Tha an Achd na Gàidhlig cuideachd ag radh gu feum plana Gàidhlig a bhith aig gach comhairle ann an Alba agus a tha seo a deanamh cinnteach gu bheil a h-uile sgìre ann an Alba a brosnachadh ciamar a' sh'fhaodhas iad taic a chuir ris a chànan, chan e .mhainn anns na h-eileanan.

When the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed, it created Bòrd na Gàidhlig to ensure that Gaelic was protected into the future as a national language of Scotland, awarding it the same respect as English. The Act requires a national Gaelic plan to be created every five years, with the most recent having just finished public consultation in August 2022. This plan will outline the aims for the Gaelic language throughout Scotland from 2021 to 2026. The creation of this plan emphasises the importance of the language across Scotland and that there is a desire to keep it a part of Scotland's heritage well into the future.

The Gaelic Language Act also stipulates that every council in Scotland must have a Gaelic Plan which ensures every area in Scotland is considering how they can best support and encourage Gaelic, not just the islands.



Credit: Martin Lamb

Ciamar a tha Gàidhlig a coimhead ann a taobh siar na Hearadh agus 's an Urras?

Tha Gàidhlig fìor chudromach airson na coimhearsnachdan anns na h-eileanan agus chan eil taobh siar na Hearadh diofraichte. Tha an eachdraidh agus dualchas ionadal a tha cho pròiseal dh'an aite a dol laimh ri laimh ris an cànan. 'Sann tro bhàrdachd agus orain a tha tòrr dha na sgeulachdan air innse, bho stòraidhean èibhinn gu tubaisdean duilich. Tha seo pàirt dhan an adhbhar carson a tha an cànan cho cudromach airson an coimhearsnachd air sgath 's gu bheil e a cumail daoine an duigh ceangailte ris an àm a dh'fhalbh.

Anns an suirbhidh airson luchd-ionnsachaidh/gun Gàidhlig, thuir barrachd air 80% gun do dh'fheuch iad an cànan ionnsachadh. Tha seo a sealltainn gu bheil an fheadhainn a tha a gluasad a-steach a dèanamh ceum airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh, Tha a mhòr chuid dhan luchd-freagraidh ag radh gun do dh'fheuch iad a chànan dh' ionnsachadh airson barrachd fiosrachadh eadhinn mu'n àite' agus bha iad a faireachdainn gum 'bi e feumail airson a' bhi fuireach anns na Hearadh'.

What does Gaelic look like in West Harris and the Trust?

The Gaelic language is crucially important in the island communities of Scotland and West Harris is no exception. The local history and heritage that makes this area so unique, goes hand in hand with the Gaelic language. It is through Gaelic poetry and song that many stories of the history are told depicting the funny anecdotes from small villages through to tragedies that shook all the islands, for example the losses during the World Wars. This is part of the reason why the language is so important for the community because it keeps the present generation connected to the past.

In the survey for non-Gaelic speakers and learners, over 80% said that they had made some attempt at learning Gaelic which shows that those moving to the island are making a conscious effort to learn the language with most respondents saying their reason for learning was that 'it will allow me to understand more about the heritage and culture of the area' and because they 'felt it would be useful living on Harris'.

choimhearsnachdan 's na Hearadh agus cha mhòr nach thuirt a h-uile duine gum bu choir na daoine a tha a gluasad chun an àite ceum a' dhèanamh airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh. Tha seo a sealltain gu bheil na daoine a tha fileanta 's a Ghàidhlig airson a cuir taic chun na daoine a tha ag ionnsachadh agus gu bheil an cànan glè cudromach airson gach duine a tha a' fuireach anns na Hearadh.

Ann an 2017, chruaich an Urras plana Gàidhlig a bha ag innse mu dheidhinn chleachdadh Gàidhlig anns an Urras. Bha trì prìomh amasan ann: a togail iomhaigh agus cultair na Gàidhlig, adhartachadh Gàidhlig anns an Urras agus a' brosnachadh agus a cleachdadh an cànan. Gu mì-fhortanach leis nach eil duine ach an oileanach Gàidhlig air a bhith ag obair anns an Urras chaneil corroman ann Gàidhlig a chleachdadh. chan eil cuid dhan na amasan air thoirt gu buil. Ach tha na h-amasan fhathast ann agus tha an dòchas ann gum bi Gàidhlig mar pàirt dha'n Urras a dol air adhart.

Tha eisimpleiran ann gu bheil an Urras a cleachdh na Gàidhlig d ta air an Urras a chleachdadh Gàidhlig. Far a 'suarrain dhaibh. Chaidh an ionad choimhearsnachd ùr air fhosgladh ann an 2017 leis an t-ainm 'Talla na Mara', ainm a bha air thaghadh le sgoilear ionadail.

Two thirds of native speakers surveyed said they spoke Gaelic everyday which emphasises how the language continues to be used in the communities of Harris including in West Harris, and nearly all native speakers surveyed said that those moving to the area should try to learn some Gaelic. This shows that those fluent in Gaelic support and encourage those learning and that the language is hugely important to all those living within the communities of Harris.

In 2017, the West Harris Trust created a Gaelic policy that outlined the use of Gaelic within the Trust. It outlines three key ambitions: to enhance the status of the Gaelic language and culture, to promote the acquisition of Gaelic, and to encourage increased use of Gaelic. Unfortunately, as there hasn't previously been a member of staff employed at the Trust that has had Gaelic, many of the ambitions laid out in the policy haven't been met. However, the aims remain in place and the hope is that Gaelic will continue to be a factor in the work the Trust does going into the future.

There have however been historical examples of the Trust creating a visual presence of Gaelic. The new community enterprise centre opened in 2017 was named 'Talla na Mara' which is the Gaelic for 'hall of the sea' and was named by a local school pupil.

Tha Gàidhlig air a chleachdadh ann an iomadh diofar rudan ann an Talla na Mara, mar eisimpler tha coinnlean air an t-ainmeachadh as deidh an ainm-àite Gàidhlig ‘Niseaboist’. Tha na ainmean aig na h-àitichean-campachaidh cuideachd sa Ghàidhlig mar ‘Talla na Mara’, ‘Pàirc Niseaboist’ agus ‘Seilebost School’ uile a chleachdadh na litreachadh Gàidhlig. Air timcheall an ionad Talla na Mara, tha soidhnichean-fiosrachail dà-chànanach a bha air maoinichte le Bòrd na Gàidhlig agus Maoin-dualchais a’ Chrannchuir. Tha seo a sealltainn luchd-tadhail gu bheil an cànan fhathast na pàirt mòr dha na coimhearsnachd. Tha seo cudromach cuideachd airson muinntir an àite a tha a faicinn an cànan agus an dualchas aca anns an obair an Urras.

Tha an Urras cuideachd a cuir air tachartasan a tha a cuir taic le Gàidhlig anns an coimhearsnachd agus a tha a bhrosnachadh cultair an àite, mar eisimpleir le ceilidhean tradaiseanta. Tha na tachartasan seo a toirt ri cheile tàlant ionadal agus a bhith na àite far am faod an cànan a bhith air a bhruidhinn agus an dualchas ceòlmhor a thaisbenadh..

Tha prògam leasanan Gàidhlig air a bhith a chuir air doigh, a tha toirt cothrom do dhaoine aig nach robh cothrom mar thadh.. Còmhla ris na leasanan seo bha sreath de cothroman-comhraidh.

Gaelic is in many of the other products that are found within the centre, for example candles and reed diffusers that are sold are named after the Gaelic place name ‘Niseabost’. The names of the campsites ran by the Trust are also all in Gaelic with spots at ‘Talla na Mara’, ‘Pàirc Niseaboist’ and ‘Seilebost school’ using the Gaelic spelling of the place names. Around the Talla na Mara centre, there are also bilingual signs and information boards funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This shows to visitors coming to the campsites and to the centre that Gaelic is still very much used by the community. This visibility is equally important to those from the area so that they see their language and heritage being represented by the Trust.

The Trust also puts on events that support the use of Gaelic in the community and promote the culture of the area, for example by hosting traditional ceilidhs. These events feature local musical talent and provide a space where the language can be spoken, and the musical heritage that is so closely linked to Gaelic, can be shared.

A programme of Gaelic lessons has also been run by the Trust giving those that haven’t had the opportunity previously, a chance to learn the language. In conjunction with these lessons, a series of Gaelic coffee mornings were organised.

‘S e cothrom do luchd-ionnsachaidh a bh’ann, a tighinn còmhla ri luchd-fìleanta agus a’ chleachdadh na bha iad air ionnsachadh ach cuideachd a’ chluinntinn sgeulachdan mu dheidhinn eachdraidh an àite bho muinntir an àite. Bha seo a còrdadh ri luchd-fìleanta cuideachd air sgath ‘s gur e cothrom a bh’ann a tighinn comhla agus ag innse stòraidhean. Bha seo a ciallachadh gum faodadh an luchd-ionnsachaidh gluasad air falbh bhon gràmar agus meorachadh and an cultair agus dualchas beartail a tha a dol comhla ris a’ chànan. Bha na tachartasan seo a còrdadh cho mòr ri daoine gu bheil dòchas ann gun chum iad a dol as deidh dh’an greis-gnìomhachais Gàidhlig a crìochnachadh. Tha seo a sealltainn gu bheil an coimhearsnachd ag iarraidh a taic a thoirt don Ghàidhlig agus tha iarratas ann airson àite fosgailte airson gach ìre de Ghàidhlig.

Tha na tachartasan seo a tha a thoirt a-steach Gàidhlig a faighinn èisteachd mòr mar a than na suirbhidhean ag innse. A-mach as a h-uile duine a bha a gabhal pàirt, thuirt 65.5% gun robh fhios air a bhith aca mu dheidhinn tachartasan a bha an Urras a chuir air doigh, leis a mhòr chuid a thoirt ‘Madainnean-cofaidh’, ‘ceilidhean’ agus ‘leasan’ mar eisimpleirean.

These provided a space where those learning the language could come together with native speakers and practice what they had been learning and as well as hearing about the history of the area from local speakers. This also hugely benefited the native speakers because it was an opportunity for them to come together and share stories and anecdotes. This meant that for those learning the language, they can move away from focusing just on the grammar and towards the rich cultural and heritage that comes with the language. These events have been so popular that it is the hope that they will be carried on in some form by the community after the Gaelic Placement has ended. This reinforces the support that Gaelic has in the community and the desire for there to be an open space for all levels of Gaelic speakers to be able to come together and use the language.

These events that include Gaelic as an integral part of their organisation are reaching a wide audience as evidenced by the surveys. Out of all those surveyed, both learners/non-speakers and native speakers, 65.5% said they had been aware of events that the Trust had put on that involved Gaelic, with most giving examples of ‘Gaelic coffee mornings’, ‘ceilidhs’, and ‘lessons’.

A cleachdadh Gàidhlig anns an àm ri teachd

A dol air adhart, bu choir dh'an Urras cumail a dol a toirt a-steach Gàidhlig ma's fhuarrain dhaibh.. Chan e dìreach na daoine le Gàidhlig a tha ag iarraidh Gàidhlig fhaicinn anns an Urras ach cuideachd na daoine aig nach eil Gàidhlig agus nach biodh a cleachdadh an seirbhis seo. Thuairt 88% de luchd-ionnsachadh/gun Gàidhlig, gu bheil iad a smaoineachadh gum bu chòir an cànan air a bhith nas foilleasachadh anns an obair an Urras. Tha seo a sealltainn gum bi taic làidir ann airson barrachd Gàidhlig anns an Urras. Anns na suirbhidhean, ainmeach iad eisimpleirean de rudan a bha iad ag iarraidh fhacainn, mar eisimpleir meadhanan-sòisealta dà-chananach, tachartasan Gàidhlig airson an teaghlach gu lèir agus cothroman comhradh airson gach aois agus ìre de Ghàidhlig.

Future use within the work of the Trust

Going forward, the Trust should continue to work to include the Gaelic language to its best ability in its activities. This is supported not just by those who speak Gaelic but also those that don't and who would not necessarily make use of the changes. When asked, 88% of learners/non-Gaelic speakers said that they think the language should be more visible in the work of the West Harris Trust going forward. This shows that there would be strong support for additional Gaelic in the future work of the Trust. Some of the suggestions from survey respondents on how this could be implemented included continuation of bilingual social media posts, events for families where Gaelic is included, and conversational opportunities for all ages and all levels of Gaelic.



Tha Gàidhlig riamh air a bhith rud a bha iad ag iarraidh nuair a bha an Urras a coimhead airson luchd-obrach, ach chan eil doaine le Gàidhlig air obair anns an Urras a bharrachd air an greis-ghnìomhachais Gàidhlig ann an 2022. Airson atharrachadh fìor agus seasmhachd ri thaobh na Gàidhlig, bhiodh e feumail Oifeagar Gàidhlig a bhi steidhichte le prìomh-amas a bhith a brosnachadh Gàidhlig ann an obair an Urras. A-mach as a h-uile daoine a chuir freagart a-steach, thuairt 65.5% “tha” no “ ‘s docha” leis a cheist an robh iad ag iarraidh comhnaidh Gàidhlig fhaicinn a tighinn bhon an Urras. Thuairt dà neach-ionnsachaidh eile ged nach cleachdadh iad fhèin an seirbhis seo, bha iad fhathast airson seo faicinn. Tha seo a cuir cuideam air cho farsainn ‘s a tha an taic anns an coimhearsnachd airson barrachd Gàidhlig nuair a tha iad a comhnaidh leis an Urras agus gum bheil iad ag iarraidh cuideigin le Gàidhlig anns an Urras.

Dòigh eile airson a bhith cinnteach gu bheil na h-amasan ri thaobh a Ghàidhlig fhathast freagarach, ‘s e bhith tric a toirt sùil thairis air am poileasaidh Gàidhlig aca. Bhiodh seo a ciallachadh gum biodh na h-amasan a sealltain an suidheachadh an Urras aig an àm agus bhiodh seo nas fhasa dhaibh na h-iorratan a choileanadh.

Gaelic has always been a desirable criterion when recruiting at the West Harris Trust however, other than the 2022 Gaelic Student Placement, there has not been a member of staff previously with Gaelic. In order to deliver real and sustainable change, a Gaelic Officer would require recruiting with the specific role of promoting the language in the work of the Trust. This would be a way of ensuring the sustainability of any Gaelic introduced into the day-to-day work of the Trust. Out of all those surveyed, 65.5% answered ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ when asked whether they would like to see Gaelic communications coming from the Trust. Two others in the learner/non-Gaelic speaker survey said that while they themselves would not benefit from this, they would still like to see it as an option for those that would make use of it. This further emphasises that there is community wide support for further inclusion of Gaelic when communicating with the West Harris Trust and that there would be demand for a specific Gaelic role within the Trust.

Regularly reviewing the Trust’s Gaelic policy would be another way that the West Harris Trust can ensure that their targets surrounding their inclusion of the Gaelic language are kept up to date. This would mean that the goals would reflect the current situation of the Trust and make them more easily achievable.

Ged nach eil luchd-obrach le Gàidhlig làn-uine aig an Urras, cha mhor nach eil Gàidhlig aig a h-uile stuiriche air bòrd an Urras agus tha seo a ciallachadh gu bheil fhios aca cho cudromach sa tha an cànan anns an coimhearsnachd.

Le taing gu Fearran Coimheasachd na h-Alba agus Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson taic-airgeid.

While currently there are no permanent members of staff at the Trust that can speak Gaelic, nearly all directors of the West Harris Trust have Gaelic and therefore appreciate the role the language plays in the community.

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Credit: Morris MacLeod