

AR STÒRAS GÀIDHLIG

Sgrùdadh-cùise: Fèisean nan Gàidheal (FnG) agus Blas



Tha an rannsachadh o chionn ghoirid air luach na Gàidhlig mar so-mhaoin eaconamach is shòisealta, a' sealltainn dhuinn eisimpleirean air ciamar a bhios gnìomhachasan, iomairtean sòisealta, agus coimhearsnachdan a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig, agus de cho cudromach sa tha i ann an conaltradh, amasan sòisealta agus coimearsalta. Tha an sgrùdadh-cùise seo a' taisbeanadh ciamar a tha Fèisean nan Gàidheal a' cleachdadh Gaelic mar so-mhaoin.

An-dràsta, tha 44 Fèisean (fèisean ciùil neo-fharpaiseach) gnìomhach ann, le còrr is 15 luchd-obrach làn-ùine ag obair eadar a' phrìomh bhuidheann agus Fèis Rois. Tha FnG agus Blas le chèile a' faighinn maoinachadh bunait bho Alba Cruthachail. A rèir rannsachadh a chaidh a dhèanamh bho chionn ghoirid do HIE, tro ghnìomhan nam fèisean, chaidh iomlan de 107 obraichean ionann is làn-ùine (FTE) a chruthachadh (a' gabhail a-steach FnG, Fèis Rois agus na h-oidean a th' air am fastadh). A thaobh àiteachan far a bheil fèisean air an cumail, 's iad na h-aon sgìrean air tìr-mòr no anns na h-Eileanan an Iar far nach eil fèisean Siorrachd Lannraig a Deas, Lodainn taobh a-muigh Dhùn Èideann, Siorrachd Chlach Mhanainn, Dùn Dè agus Fìobha.

Tha FnG a' creidsinn gu bheil an gnìomhan riamh air a bhith nan inneal airson inbhe a' chànanan àrdachadh an àite a' chiùil, ged is e 'an ceòl a tha a' tàladh dhaoine gu ruige nam fèisean.' Ged nach eil iad a' faicinn an cuid obrach mar theagasg Gàidhlig, tha iad a' creidsinn gum bu chòir gach pàiste a thig gu fèis blasad fhaighinn den chànan.

Tha FnG a' faicinn na Gàidhlig mar fheart a tha gan dèanamh eadar-dhealaichte bho phrògraman eile de dh'oidreachadh ciùil 'traidiseanta', a tha fhathast beò ann an Obar Dheathain is Dùn Èideann, le Gàidhlig na fheart a tha a' dèanamh nam fèisean cinnteach, agus a' tabhann eileamaid a tha gan dèanamh sònraichte. Leis a seo, tha FnG a' creidsinn gu bheil Gàidhlig a' cur luach ris an eòlas a tha còrr is 6,000 oileanach a tha a' gabhail com-pàirt gach bliadhna a' faighinn, agus dhan luchd-èisteachd – a-nis a' streap ri 8,000 gach bliadhna.

Cho math ri bhith gnìomhach taobh a-staigh nam fèisean fhèin, tha an luchd-ciùil òg agus iadsan aig a bheil ceangal ris na fèisean air am brosnachadh gus a dhol an lùib an fhèis co-cheangailte bhliadhnail, Blas. 'S e iomairt fa leth a tha seo, air a ruith le FnG ach cuideachd air a mhaoineachadh le Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd. Tha fòcas mòran nas fhaicsinneach aig a seo, agus tha e a' tàladh cuibhreann de luchd-tadhail eadar-nàiseanta.

Coltach ris na fèisean, tha fòcas làidir a thaobh na Gàidhlig aig fèis bhliadhnail Blas, le uallach air na daoine a tha a' gabhail com-pàirt a' Ghàidhlig a chleachdadh air an àrd-ùrlar, ann a bhith a' cur an aithne an luchd-ciùil agus ann an dòighean eile. Ann an 2012, nochd faisg air 8,000 neach aig cuirmean Blas a tha, ann am prionnsapal, air an cumail ann an coimhearsnachdan an àite bhith a' cumail chuirmean a nì airgead mòr ann an aon tachartas. "Airson tachartas ciùil a chur air bhonn air a' Ghàidhealtachd airson airgead a dhèanamh, chuireadh tu suas teanta mòr agus dh'iarradh tu airgead air luchd-amhairc, ach

tha an fheallsanachd air cùlaibh seo eadar-dhealaichte – tha sinn ag amas air tachartasan a thoirt a-mach dhan na coimhearsnachdan".

Tha measgachadh ann de luchd-ciùil – tha cuid de na daoine òga co-cheangailte gu dìreach ri FnG, agus cuid eile nan luchd-ciùil Gàidhlig le inbhe a tha mar-thà a' faighinn an consaidh tro cheòl. Ann a bhith a' cur air dòigh agus a' cur an gnìomh fèis Blas, tha ceanglan làidir an-còmhnaidh gan cruthachadh le daoine òga a tha mar-thà an sàs ann am fèisean, agus cuideachd le buidhnean leithid Sgoil Chiùil na Gàidhealtachd, stèidhte sa Phloc, agus le lionradh Promoters Arts. Am measg nan amasan, tha iad ag iarraidh gum faigh an òigridh a tha mar-thà air eòlas fhaighinn air obair nam fèisean an cothrom nochdadh air àrd-ùrlar còmhla ris an luchd-ciùil is luchd-ealain a mhiannaicheadh iad, mar sin a' toirt leudachadh a bharrachd air na h-eòlasan aca ann an raon ciùil is ealain.

Tha fios-air-ais bho luchd-amhairc a' cumail a-mach gu bheil 's dòcha 80% de luchd-amhairc aig fèis Blas a' toirt aithne gu cunbhalach dhan dòigh sa bheil a' Ghàidhlig a' cur luach ris na fèisean.

Ged a tha an teachd-a-steach bho thachartasan Blas a' strep ri cairteal a mhillean not (£230,000), tha an luchd-stiùiridh a' cumail a-mach gu bheil e duilich ceudachd a chur mu choinneamh na Gàidhlig oir "nan deidheadh iarraidh oirnn fèis a chur air dòigh, cha dèanadh sinn gu bràth e às aonais na Gàidhlig – mar sin, tha e aig 100% san t-seadh sin. Dh'fhaodadh tu tachartas gun Ghàidhlig a chur air bhonn ach cha bhiodh ùidh sam bith againn ann a bhith ga stiùireadh".

B' e an adhbhar a bha FnG cho dèidheil air a dhol an lùib nan gnìomhan aig Blas gun robh eileamaid shoilleir ann den Ghàidhlig, ach cuideachd gum biodh cothrom aig an òigridh an obair is an t-eòlas a bha na bhuannachd dhaibh taobh a-staigh nam fèisean fhèin a thoirt ceum air adhart.

Tha a' cheist a thaobh leasachadh sgilean fhathast na ceist chudromach do FnG, leis an dà chuid trèanadh Gàidhlig do dh'oidèan ga bhrosnachadh agus ga shùileachadh, ach cuideachd le trèanadh ga thoirt dhan òigridh airson com-pàirt a ghabhail anns na Slighean Cèilidh – tha seachd ann dhiubh seo an-dràsta. Tha trèanadh fad chola-deug ga thoirt airson seo, anns a' Phloc, le cuideachadh do chloinn fa leth cuideachd ga libhrigeadh gus an tèid aig an fheadhainn a tha an làthair a dhol air chuairt nan sgìrean fhèin, a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig anns na seatan aca. Tha Fèis Rois, san aon dòigh, a' dol air 'slighe cèilidh nàiseanta', leis a' Ghàidhlig a' faighinn fiù 's cho fada ri Fèis ann an Cambridge.

Tha trèanadh ealain a bharrachd air a thabhann le buidheann foghlaim dràma Gàidhlig FnG, a tha a' cuideachadh gus dràma a leasachadh ann an sgoiltean Gàidhlig gach bliadhna agus a tha a' cur air bhonn Sgoil Shamhraidh Ghàidhlig. Tha FnG cuideachadh air seirbheis a chur air bhonn ris an canar Fèisgoil, seirbheis foghlaim Gàidhlig far a bheil FnG a' togail air an obair a tha iad air a bhith a' dèanamh ann a bhith a' brosnachadh ceòl Gàidhlig anns na sgoiltean, le bhith a' cur oidean a-steach gu sgoiltean anns nach eil FMG, oidean aig a bheil Gàidhlig agus a tha a' cuideachadh leis an iomairt Luchd-ionnsachaidh Gàidhlig sa Bhun-sgoil (GLPS). Tha seo gu tric ga dhèanamh le bhith a' toirt a-steach òran no pios dràma, agus tha ùghdarrasan ionadail a' cur fàilte air.

A thaobh a bhith a' cleachdadh Gàidhlig mar so-mhaoin, tha FnG den bheachd gur e buidheann a th' ann a tha air leth làidir a thaobh na Gàidhlig, a tha a' tàladh dhaoine òga a dh'ionnsaigh a' chànan, tron chultar, ach cuideachd an uair sin dhan tilleadh gu ruige an coimhearsnachdan le dreachd nas làidire de thraidisean beò agus, mar sin, a' cuideachadh leis an tarraing is an leantailachd aig traidisean na Gàidhlig taobh a-staigh raointean ealain is cultarail na h-Alba.

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 air Fèisean nan Gàidheal (FnG) agus Blas, thigear gu www.feisean.org agus www.blas-festival.com

Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean,
Taigh Friseal, Sràid nam Manach,
Inbhir Nis, IV1 1BA, Alba

t. **+44 (0)1463 234171**
f. **+44 (0)1463 244469**
e. **info@hient.co.uk**

FnG believes its activities have always been a vehicle for promoting the language rather than the music, although 'it is the music that attracts the people to the fèisean'. Although it does not see its job as teaching Gaelic, it believes that every child who comes to a fèis should experience the language.

FnG see Gaelic as the component that distinguishes the fèisean from other 'traditional' music tuition programmes, which still exist in places like Aberdeen and Edinburgh, with Gaelic being the added component that both makes the festivals authentic, and provides the element that makes them special. This being the case, FnG believes it adds Gaelic value to the experience of the 6,000 plus students who take part every year, and the audience - now in the range of almost 8,000 people annually. As well as being active within the fèisean themselves, young musicians and those linked to the fèisean are encouraged to become involved in the allied annual Blas festival. This is a separate initiative, run by FnG but also funded by The Highland Council. This has a much more outward looking focus, and does attract some international visitors.

Like the fèisean the annual Blas festival has a profoundly Gaelic focus, with artists taking part also obliged to use Gaelic from the stage, in introducing their acts and in other aspects of their involvement. In 2012 almost 8,000 people came to the Blas events, which on principle, are held within communities, rather than consisting of big money making single events. "To put on a music event in the highlands to make money you would just put it in a big tent and charge, but the ethos of this is different – it is to take events out to communities".

The performers are a mixture – some young performers directly linked to FnG, and others are quality Gaelic artists already performing for a living. In the organisation and performance of the Blas festival, strong links are always made to the young people within the fèis movement, and also to organisations such as the Plockton-based National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music, and the Promoters Arts network. One aim is to give young people already involved in the work of the fèisean an opportunity to perform alongside their preferred musicians and acts, thus further developing their experience in the music and arts field.

Audience feedback suggests that perhaps 80% of the Blas festival's audience regularly acknowledge the enhancement added by Gaelic to the festivals.

Although the Blas events have a turnover approaching a quarter of a million pounds (£230,000), the organisers suggest that it is hard to specifically attribute a percentage of this to Gaelic since "if we were asked to run a festival then we wouldn't ever do it without Gaelic – so it is 100% from that point of view. You could put on a non-Gaelic event but we wouldn't be interested in running it".

The incentive for FnG to become involved in the Blas activities was both that there would be a clear Gaelic element, but also that young people would have the chance to further develop the work and experience they had gained within the fèisean themselves.

The issue of skills development continues to be an important one for FnG, with both Gaelic training for tutors being encouraged and expected, but also training provided for young people to take part in Cèilidh trails – of which there are currently seven. A fortnights training provision is provided for this in Plockton with one-to-one help also given so that those taking part can then go touring in their local areas, using Gaelic in their sets. Fèis Rois similarly undertake a 'national cèilidh trail' even taking Gaelic to the Cambridge Folk Festival.

Further arts training is given by the FnG's Gaelic drama theatre education group which helps develop drama in Gaelic schools every year and includes a Gaelic Summer School. FnG has also set up what it calls Fèisgoil, a Gaelic education service where FnG builds upon the work it has done in promoting Gaelic music in schools, by helping provide tutors in non-GME schools, who, being native Gaelic speakers help with the Gaelic Learners in the Primary School initiative (GLPS). This is often done with the inclusion of a song or bit of drama, and is welcomed by local authorities.

In terms of using Gaelic as an asset, FnG believes it is a profoundly Gaelic organisation that both brings young people to the language, through the culture, but also then takes back a constantly enriched version of a living tradition, into the communities themselves, thus helping the attractiveness and cohesion of the Gaelic tradition within Scotland's arts and cultural fields.

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For more information on Fèisean nan Gàidheal (FnG) and Blas visit www.feisean.org and www.blas-festival.com

Highlands and Islands Enterprise,
Fraser House, Friar's Lane,
Inverness, IV1 1BA, Scotland

t. **+44 (0)1463 234171**
f. **+44 (0)1463 244469**
e. **info@hient.co.uk**

AR STÒRAS GÀIDHLIG

Case study: Fèisean nan Gàidheal (FnG) and Blas



The recent research into the economic and social value of Gaelic as an asset, highlights some key examples of how businesses, social enterprises and communities are using Gaelic, and its significance in fulfilling their communication, commercial and social objectives. This case study demonstrates how Fèisean nan Gàidheal (FnG) and Blas use Gaelic as an asset.

Currently there are 44 active fèisean (non-competitive Gaelic music festivals), with over 15 full-time staff working between the central organisation and Fèis Rois. FnG and Blas receive foundation funding from Creative Scotland. According to recent research for HIE, through the activities of the fèisean, a total of 107 full time equivalent posts have been created (encompassing FnG, Fèis Rois and the tutors employed). In terms of geographical coverage the only areas of the mainland and the Western Isles not covered are South Lanarkshire, the Lothians outwith Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, Dundee and Fife.