
The Demand for Gaelic Arts: Patterns and Impacts - a 10 year longitudinal study

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Leasachadh nan Ealan Gàidhlig
Developing the Gaelic Arts

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1. Introduction

Section 1: Background

The results presented in this report should be viewed as the most recent outcomes of a programme of research dating from 1993. This was designed to investigate the linkages between the development of Gaelic language and culture and a number of variables that may be significant in the economic and social development of the strongly Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland (defined as the Outer Hebrides and Skye and Lochalsh). This programme of work was initiated by a study commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise with the objective of identifying the direct and indirect employment and income effects attributable to activities designed to promote the Gaelic language within this geographical area. The motivation for commissioning the work was to measure any positive economic impacts that could be assigned to policies that had exclusively linguistic and social objectives. This, in part, reflected the public policy environment of the time in which heavy emphasis was placed on the economic impacts of policies supported from public expenditure irrespective of whether the central objectives of these policies were economic in nature.

The central results of this initial study (Sproull and Ashcroft 1993) suggested that Gaelic language-related activities had associated full-time equivalent employment effects of almost 1000 (FTE) and were associated with output levels valued at £41m in 1992 prices. The field work undertaken for that study involved a substantial number of 'elite' interviews with individuals holding very senior positions both in Gaelic-related private and public sector organisations and in agencies with responsibility for economic and social development in the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh. These interviews explored the underlying dynamics of the language-culture relationship and many of the respondents reported the view that Gaelic arts were significant in the development of Gaelic culture and in stimulating or 'validating' the acquisition and maintenance of the language.

The 1990's saw the emergence of a modest body of research in the UK exploring the links between artistic and cultural activities and economic development, but none that explored this relationship in the context of a minority language. This task was undertaken by one of this report's co-authors (Chalmers) as part of his doctoral research (Chalmers 2003) in the mid/late 1990's.

This research investigated in detail both the supply- and the demand-sides of Gaelic-related artistic and cultural activities, examining the scale, growth and impact of this 'sector'. As part of the investigation of the demand for such activities a large-scale postal survey was undertaken directed at approximately 25% of all adults living within the geographical area. Slightly over 2000 responses were received (25%) providing a statistically robust picture of the pattern of consumption of arts and cultural products and services, the factors influencing this consumption, the perceived impact of consumption on both the individual respondent and his/her own community, plus responses to a wider set of propositions exploring views as to the significance of Gaelic arts and cultural activities on various aspects of the social and economic development of the area (Sproull and Chalmers 1998) (Sproull 1996).

The large-scale demand-side survey was undertaken in 1996 in the context of a number of positive developments with respect to Gaelic cultural activities. Proiseact Nan Ealan (PNE), the Gaelic arts agency, had been established in 1987 by the Scottish Arts Council and HIE and had focused its first phase of activity on building a Gaelic arts infrastructure and support system for Gaelic artists, arts organisations and Gaelic communities wishing to engage in Gaelic arts across the art forms. This was beginning to bear fruit by the mid-90s and over the last decade this embryonic Gaelic arts infrastructure has continued to grow and develop with Feisean Nan Gaidheal supporting a growing network of 42 feisean across Scotland in 2005. Major Lottery supported capital investment has been undertaken in arts centres such as An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabhagh and An Tuireann, a BAFTA award winner Gaelic arts series Tacsí was produced, as well as other notable initiatives including the Gaelic theatre company Tosg, the award winning Ceòlas summer school, major new festivals such as the Hebridean Celtic Festival and Blas, and the internationally successful Leabhar Mòr. The Gaelic Arts Strategic Development Forum (GASD) was formed in 2001 with representation from the key Gaelic arts organisations and GASD and PNE worked closely with the Scottish Arts Council to create the first SAC Gaelic Arts Strategy in 2003

The collective success of these initiatives has resulted in SAC awarding Foundation status for a number of key Gaelic arts organizations in 2006.

The wider political and cultural context has also changed significantly over the past ten years. Scotland's new parliament passed the Gaelic Act in 2006 and the first Bòrd na Gàidhlig National Gaelic Plan will take effect in 2007. A new Gaelic television service, the first Gaelic-medium secondary school and UHI Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's new Gaelic arts campus will all come on stream during the year of Highland Culture in 2007. HIE's new cultural policy initiative sees the arts as a driver of social and economic development and this, combined with the emergence of Creative Scotland in 2008, will create new challenges and opportunities for the Gaelic language community.

Against this background of arts development and institutional change, the Gaelic Arts Strategic Development forum took the view that it would be potentially valuable to re-survey the population of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh by re-examining patterns of demand for Gaelic artistic and cultural products and services, the factors shaping the development of this demand since the last survey in the mid-90s and the present perception of the impacts of such consumption on attitudes and behaviours with respect to the links between Gaelic arts, Gaelic culture the Gaelic language and the social and economic development of the area. As well as offering the Gaelic Arts community an analysis of change over the last decade it was also anticipated that research results could feed into Gaelic arts contributions to the deliberations around the emerging Plan for Gaelic led by the recently established Bord Na Gaidhlig as required by the Scottish Executive.

The next section provides information on the conduct of the survey, response rates and the representativeness of the sample of respondents. Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the patterns of consumption of a full range of products and services. Chapter 3 reports on the factors that appear to be driving these patterns of consumption. Chapter 4 considers the impact of this consumption on individual attitudes and behaviours. Chapter 5 reports on responses to a wide range of propositions that address the potential linkages between Gaelic arts, language, culture and development. Finally chapter 6 draws some conclusions from the analysis.

Section 2: Methodology and response issues

In order to allow extensive and valid comparisons with the previous large-scale demand side survey in 1996, the sample was selected on the same basis and where possible the methodology replicated. As in the previous survey, the approach adopted was of a structured random sample, with a detailed questionnaire mailed out to every fourth name on the electoral register for the areas concerned. In 1996 this had resulted in 8,400 mailings – approximately 25 percent of the current population. In 2006, given the decline in the population over this period, this resulted in 7300 mail outs to reach every fourth constituent. The response in 1996 had been 2028 questionnaires returned, representing just under 25% of those mailed. In 2006, 1230 responses were received – representing 17% of those who had been sent a questionnaire, a response rate which allowed for a statistically robust analysis of the data..

Testing for bias

Several issues had to be examined in order to ensure that the characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaire were broadly representative of the actual population as a whole. To this, comparisons were made with the 2001 census on a range of factors. These are outlined further below.

The survey was based on a structured random sample of all inhabitants aged 18 and above. The details of the national census however referred in many cases to inhabitants from the age of 3 upwards. Given the age bands used by the census it was possible to examine census data either from 15 years and over, or from 20 years and over.

In order for us to approximate census figures for those aged 18 and over (our sample age range), we made the assumption (in the absence of any other evidence) that the individuals represented within the census age range band 15 – 19 years would be equally distributed in terms of individual ages within this band. We therefore adjusted the census figures by adding 40 percent of the age band 15 – 19 to the census data given for 20 years and above. This we believed would be the most accurate method of bringing the census data to approximate an age range of 18 and over in the sample concerned. The

census figures given below therefore refer to a census base of 18 years and upwards following our adjustments.

In examining whether a sample is representative of a whole population, an important issue is the elimination of any substantial bias across key characteristics. The term 'key characteristics' refers to attributes that may be expected to influence attitudes to Gaelic issues, broadly defined. The most obvious example is Gaelic language fluency. If the proportion of Gaelic speakers in the sample was significantly higher (or lower) than in the population as a whole then the survey results may be systematically biased by this over- or under-representation. Thus variables such as gender, Gaelic fluency, age and geographic location of residence were checked against the most recent population census in 2001.

69% of the respondents to the survey live in the Western Isles and 31% live in Skye and Lochalsh, with the comparative census figures for the population as a whole at 68% and 32%. This allowed confidence in the representative nature of the geographical split.

In relation to gender, there is some over representation of females in our survey respondents, with the census figures reporting a 49% / 51% male/female split in both geographical areas, whereas our representation is 44/56 in the western Isles and 38/62 in Skye and Lochalsh – representing an over representation of females in Skye and Lochalsh by 5% and in Western Isles by 11%. While this is not perfect, as is seen by the results given in further sections of this report, very few significant correlations are in fact found in relation to gender and the issues under study.

With regard to fluency, the central problem in assessing the representativeness of the sample lies in the substantial differences between the question used in the population census to determine Gaelic competence and that used in the survey. The survey sought a more fine-grained picture of language ability (fluent/native speaker; able to handle most everyday questions; limited ability in simple matters; a few words; none at all) than was the case in the census. To allow some comparison it is necessary to form a judgement on how individuals who responded to the survey by reporting very limited levels of Gaelic would have responded in the census. There is no scientific basis on which to make this

judgement. What was available was advice from the foremost academic expert on census analysis as it relates to Gaelic issues plus the judgement of very senior figures in the local communities. These individuals were unanimous in their view that within the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh individuals with very limited ability in the language would not have self-reported in the census as "speaks Gaelic".

On this basis the survey somewhat over represents those with the ability to speak Gaelic, by 7 percent in the Western Isles – (71% in the survey, 64% in the census) and by 6 percent in Skye and Lochalsh – (39% in the survey, 33% in the census). In our judgement this does not represent a major problem but it suggests that some caution is required when interpreting results of responses where there is a systematic association with language fluency.

Assessing the representativeness of the Age variable in the survey presents issues similar to those noted above due to slightly different categorisations being used by our survey and the census. As a result some estimation had to be made. For most age categories, the age bands of our sample were very similar to the census, with the exception that there was an under sampling in one age band (25 – 44) by 10% in the Western Isles (6% in Skye and Lochalsh) and over-sampling in the next age band (45 – 64) by 9% in the Western Isles (and 10% in Skye and Lochalsh). Within the Western Isles (but not Skye and Lochalsh), there was also an over-sampling of the 65 + age group by 10 percent.



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2. The level and pattern of demand for Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services

Section 1: Introduction

The first major set of issues addressed in the questionnaire concerned the patterns of consumption of Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services in 2005. The range of events and their geographical distribution during that year was found to be remarkably similar to the consumption recorded by the authors in their 1996 study.

A sixfold categorisation of Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services was adopted. These are:

1. Live Events

A broadly similar categorization to the 1996 survey was adopted. The Live Events category embraced performance events defined to include Gaelic music performances (concerts and ceilidhs, music performed in pubs and clubs, and choirs); traditional dance; exhibitions (such as those put on at An Lanntair, Taigh Chearsabagh and elsewhere), interpretative projects etc. wholly or partly in the medium of Gaelic; plays and theatrical events wholly or partly in the medium of Gaelic; Gaelic story-telling and poetry reading. Respondents were also asked to indicate their attendance or involvement in local or national fèisean or mòdan.

2. Listening to Gaelic related material on CD or tapes

Here, respondents were asked to state the proportion of their listening to CDs or tapes that were Gaelic or Gaelic related.

3. Watching Gaelic Television

Here details were sought of the number of hours viewed, changes in the viewing patterns over the previous five years, perceived reasons for such changes and perceived constraints to increasing their viewing.

4. Listening to Gaelic Radio

In a similar manner to viewing patterns, respondents were asked to outline current and previous listening patterns and possible factors behind any perceived changes.

5. Visiting Gaelic websites

Here, information was sought on the extent of internet usage through the medium of Gaelic or to Gaelic related sites, with details requested of the nature of such sites and reasons for respondents visiting them.

6. Reading Gaelic sections in the press

Here respondents were asked for information regarding the nature (if any) of their involvement with the Gaelic press and reasons for this.

In the sections below, the levels of consumption of these products and services within the sample population are outlined and any characteristics within the population significantly associated with the consumption of individual products and services are identified. Comparative figures from 1996 (where appropriate) are shown in brackets.

Section 2: Levels of Consumption of Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services : Performance events

Respondents were asked how frequently they had attended or taken part in the range of live events listed above. The percentage levels of consumption are summarised in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Consumption of Live Events in 2005 (1996 figures in Brackets)

Music:	never	1-5	6-10	11-20	21+
Concerts /Ceilidhs	36% (43%)	46% (42%)	9% (8%)	5% (3%)	4% (4%)
Music in Pubs/ Clubs	53% (53%)	31% (29%)	8% (7%)	4% (5%)	4% (7%)
Choirs	66% (76%)	28% (16%)	2% (2%)	1% (2%)	3% (3%)
Traditional Dance	50% (51%)	34% (35%)	7% (8%)	4% (3%)	5% (4%)
Exhibitions	54% (56%)	36% (37%)	6% (5%)	2% (1%)	1% (1%)
Plays/Theatre	71% (74%)	26% (24%)	2% (1%)	1% (1%)	0% (1%)
Story-telling*	87% (87%)	11% (11%)	1% (1%)	0% (1%)	0% (1%)
Poetry reading*	90%(87%)	9% (11%)	0% (1%)	0% (1%)	1% (1%)

* In the 1996 survey Story telling and poetry were placed in the same category. The 1996 percentages (shown italicized in brackets above) therefore refer to both events. In 2005, the survey separated both categories.

Table 2.2 indicates comparative figures for the Fèisean and the Mòdan.

Table 2.2 Attend/Participate in Fèis and Mòd in 2005 (1996 figures in brackets)

	Never	Occasionally	Often
Attended local fèis	55% (60%)	33% (30%)	12% (9%)
Participated in local fèis	45% (88%)	36% (9%)	18% (4%)
Attended mod	46% (45%)	36% (39%)	18% (15%)
Participated in mod event	81% (73%)	11% (20%)	7% (7%)

The information in table 2.1 suggests the continuation of a successful live Gaelic arts environment, with modest increases in participation in many categories over the last ten years. More than half of the population continue to report attendance at, or participation in, live Gaelic music events, approaching half have again attended at least one exhibition delivered (at least in part) through the medium of Gaelic, and similarly to the situation in 1996, over one quarter have attended a play or theatrical event delivered wholly or partly through the medium of Gaelic. Given the geographical distribution of the population, the travelling time to main centres of population and the continued very limited level of provision in some geographical areas and event categories these figures continue to underline the demand for such provision from the Gaelic arts sector.

The information in table 2.2 allows a comparison of attendance and involvement in the mòdan and the fèisean movement over the last ten years. This indicates an increase in both those attending and those participating in local fèisean. During this same period, attendances at mòdan have held steady, while although participation shows some decline, almost one in five respondents report participation in mod events.

The questionnaire sought to provide data on a range of personal characteristics covering location, age, gender, various measures of Gaelic language ability, the pattern of language use in current and childhood home, recent shifts in Gaelic use in the home, the desire to learn more Gaelic, employment characteristics, skill and income levels. These characteristics were examined in relation to patterns of involvement or attendance at Gaelic events in order to ascertain whether there were any characteristics positively or negatively associated with such activity.

Individual characteristics associated with the consumption of live Gaelic arts events

As the events covered in this category are diverse, few recurring patterns of associated characteristics were expected or found. As a result it is necessary to briefly report each type of event before drawing some general points. Only variables exhibiting a significant association are reported.

Live Event Category 1: Concerts/Ceilidhs

The Gaelic language competence of consumers indicates a distinct pattern. The first is that there is a significantly greater likelihood of consumption by individuals with any level of Gaelic than those with none. This holds for individuals who report an ability to speak or write the language.

A similar pattern is also exhibited in regards to the linguistic categorization of households, where the division in terms of consumption lies between those households where only English is spoken (who exhibit very little attendance), and all others, including those where 'mostly English' is spoken where higher patterns of attendance emerge.

In terms of reported changes in language use over the last five years, only where the use of Gaelic has 'significantly decreased' does this negatively impact on respondents' consumption.

In short, the frequency of participation/consumption increases appears to increase greatly with a shift from no acquaintance with the language to even limited use of the language.

No unexpected patterns appear in relation to age within this section, and neither does gender appear to be a factor in influencing attendance.

Geographical influences do however appear to play a part, with a greater likelihood of attending ceilidhs reported from respondents in Skye and Lochalsh, compared to the Western Isles.

In relation to employment categorization some limited patterns emerge – carers/ those with full time domestic responsibilities and those unemployed are more likely 'never to attend' and also report lower attendance in the 1 – 5 category than others. This correlates closely with patterns amongst the lowest income earners (below £5,000 per annum) and amongst those classifying their employment as 'manual'. The only other noticeable pattern of response is that those in the public sector are less likely 'never to attend', and are more likely to attend 1 – 5 times than those in the private sector or self employed. As might be expected, those employed in tourist related or culturally related jobs are more likely to show higher levels of consumption than others. Finally in terms of those on higher incomes, there tends to be reports of higher consumption.

Live Event Category 2: Gaelic musical performances in Clubs/plubs

Unlike the case with Concerts/Ceilidhs there appears to be no geographical pattern in relation to the consumption of music in Clubs/pubs. Surprisingly neither age nor gender appear to have an impact on the likelihood of attendance to such events (in contrast to the situation 10 years ago when such consumption was positively associated with males and younger age bands).

The patterns occurring between the variables that capture language competence and background are broadly similar to those identified in relation to attendance at concerts and ceilidhs, with the key split again being between those having no acquaintance with the language, who are unlikely to attend such events, and the rest of the population.

No significant links are found between employment category and attendance, although skills patterns and income show similar patterns to those apparent in relation to Concerts/Ceilidhs, with the exception that those classifying their skills category as 'professional' are less likely to attend such events in Clubs/pubs.

Live Event Category 3: Choirs

Here, there were few significant variations apparent in relation to respondent characteristics and attendances at Gaelic choirs. As was the case in relation to the 1996 survey only language competence tended to be a useful predictor of attendance.

Live Event Category 4: Traditional Dance (highland/ hebridean/ cèilidh dancing)

Similar to Concerts/Ceilidhs, Traditional dance appears again to be an artistic activity that is more commonly enjoyed in Skye and Lochalsh and the southern islands of the Western Isles chain than in Lewis and Harris, a pattern reflecting some of the differences in the cultural traditions between the islands. It is also the only activity where gender appears to play a role, with women more likely to have attended traditional dance than men. In terms of language competence and employment/ skills/ income patterns, it exhibits a similar pattern to that of concerts and ceilidhs.

Live Event Category 5: Exhibitions partly or wholly in the medium of Gaelic

Few patterns emerge in relation to Exhibitions, other than those associated with fluency where again the division appears to be between those with no Gaelic whatsoever, and other members of the community. Where Gaelic use had increased or been maintained, this was seen to have impacted on attendance positively, whereas reports of decline in Gaelic use were associated with lack of attendance.

Live Event Category 6: Plays/Theatrical Events/panto partly or wholly in the medium of Gaelic

Interestingly, unlike the 1996 survey, no geographical factors appear to play a role in discouraging or encouraging consumption of Plays/Theatrical events/panto, suggesting the take up of such events is now more widespread amongst the whole geographical area, than was the case in 1996.

Live Event Category 7: Organised story telling events partly or wholly in the medium of Gaelic

As with Plays/Theatrical events/panto, no significant characteristics appeared to play a role in encouraging or discouraging attendance at such events.

Live Event Category 8: Poetry Reading partly or wholly in the medium of Gaelic

As with Plays/Theatrical events/panto and Storytelling, no significant characteristics appeared to play a role in encouraging or discouraging attendance at such events.

In conclusion, the patterns of consumption of live events shows less diversity than the 1996 study. Although Gaelic language competence continues to show some association with certain types of event, this is no longer the case with the majority of events under study. Where such a pattern does exist, the division between consumption and non-consumption appears to exist between those with no Gaelic whatsoever, and the rest of the community. The other consistent pattern which emerges relates to issues of income, where for some key events, a low income – often linked to those not in employment, or who are involved in full time caring etc – seems to result in a major reduction in consumption.

Section 3: Proportion of respondents listening to material on CD or tapes which is Gaelic or Gaelic related

Table 2.3 below summarized the patterns of Gaelic related CD and tape listening.

Table 2.3 Approximately what proportion of your listening to CDs/ tapes/ records is to Gaelic or Gaelic related material?

	None	Up to 25% of listening time	From 26 to 50% of listening time	From 51% to 75% of listening time	Over 75% of listening time
Gaelic related materials on CD or tapes	22%	38%	15%	13%	13%

From the above, it is clear that almost 80 percent of respondents have a Gaelic component in their CD or tape listening. Within this, several patterns emerge, with higher levels of listening associated with age groups above 30, with those in the older age groups most likely to be associated with the highest percentages of consumption. In terms of linguistic ability, no clear pattern emerges other than that those with no Gaelic whatsoever are less likely to listen to such materials. Any acquaintance with Gaelic, or any ability in the language whatsoever impacts positively on consumption. Those categorized as unemployed or with full time domestic or caring responsibilities understandably tend to report the highest levels of consumption, whereas those working in the public sector tend to report a greater pattern of listening to Gaelic related materials than those in the private sector or the self employed.

Section 3: Levels of Consumption of Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services: Gaelic Television

Table 2.4 summarises the viewing patterns of respondents in relation to Gaelic TV.

Table 2.4 On average how many hours per week do you watch Gaelic TV?

	never	0 – 1	1 - 2	2 - 3	Over 3 hours
Number of hours viewing per week	20%	38%	29%	8%	5%

As indicated above, almost 80 percent of respondents reported that they watch Gaelic TV for at least one hour per week. As might be expected, most of the linguistic measures exhibit an expected pattern, with viewing being positively associated with fluency.

Interestingly, positive viewing patterns were also exhibited amongst those claiming ‘only a few words’ in terms of viewing for up to an hour per week. This was also mirrored in several other categories such as those who felt they could not speak or write Gaelic, but could understand it - those who could understand ‘a substantial amount’ exhibited a positive viewing pattern. This positive viewing pattern of viewing up to an hour per week also held for households with school age or pre-school children, and households whose language was categorized as ‘mainly English’ and even ‘always English’ perhaps illustrating the ability of Gaelic TV to break through more linguistic barriers than other services.

For those who believed their Gaelic use had ‘significantly increased’ over the last 5 years, higher occurrences of viewing were reported in the 1 – 2 hour category.

In terms of possible links between employment categories and viewing patterns, few were significant, although unemployed respondents were less likely ‘never’ to watch Gaelic TV, and more likely to exhibit patterns of higher viewing, as were those categorizing themselves as ‘self-employed’, while those in the private sector tended to be less prominent in this category.

In terms of tourist related employment and culturally related employment, while the former tended to report heavier levels of viewing, the reverse was the result for the latter (who also reported higher levels of 'never' seeing Gaelic television). It may possibly be surmised however, that this could represent patterns of work in the evenings which clashed with the limited amount of Gaelic TV available.

In terms of gender, results suggested that males were less likely 'never' to watch Gaelic television, and were more likely to watch higher levels of Gaelic TV. Few significant results appeared in terms of income apart from the likelihood of those in the lower income brackets of £5,000 – £15,000 likely to watch the greatest volume (3 hours or over) of television. One might possibly suggest that this could be linked to a pattern of working less full time hours, and therefore of being at home more often.

In terms of Island groups few significant patterns of viewing were noted, with the exception being that those in the Western Isles were less likely 'never' to watch Gaelic TV, and were more likely to watch it up to one hour per week than those in Skye and Lochalsh.

Table 2.5 below summarises changes in viewing patterns over the last 5 years.

Table 2.5 Over the last 5 years how has your viewing changed in relation to programmes in Gaelic on TV?

	Has increased greatly	Has increased slightly	Has stayed the same	Has decreased slightly	Has decreased greatly
Changes in viewing pattern	9%	29%	48%	8%	5%

Changes in viewing patterns

While 13 per cent of respondents reported that their viewing patterns had either decreased or decreased greatly, almost half of the respondents (48%) reported no change, with 38 per cent reporting some increase. This is of some significance, given the decline in hours of Gaelic broadcasting over this period and the increasing difficulty of viewing Gaelic programmes at a time of one's choice, and may indicate a high level of loyalty to Gaelic Television amongst its viewers.

Respondents were asked (below Table 2.6) to outline reasons for any change in their viewing patterns, with the option of giving multiple reasons where appropriate.

Table 2.6 What has been the main reason for this change?

	Changes in the overall availability of Gaelic programmes	The breadth of subjects covered by Gaelic Medium Broadcasting	Quality of treatment of subjects by programme makers	The quality of Gaelic used in the programme	The scheduling of Gaelic programmes
Percentage of respondents answering positively	41%	41%	24%	12%	45%

As can be seen above, while only 1 in 4 referred to issues of quality of treatment and 1 in 8 to issues of quality of Gaelic, over one third saw changes in the overall availability of Gaelic programming and breadth of subjects as an issue, and almost half (45 percent) referred to scheduling as an issue.

The importance of scheduling is also seen in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 What are the main constraints that work against you increasing your Gaelic TV viewing?

	Changes in the overall availability of Gaelic programmes	Your level of Gaelic competence	The subject matter of the Gaelic programmes	The quality of treatment of the subjects	The quality of Gaelic in the programme	The scheduling of Gaelic programmes
Percentage respondents answering positively	16%	27%	20%	6%	7%	53%

Here, scheduling is clearly the main issue, at 53 percent, almost double the next highest percents (27 %) outlining issues of fluency in Gaelic. Again, the subject matter of Gaelic programmes and changes in overall availability rank next as concerns, with concerns over the existing quality of treatment of subjects and of Gaelic being very small indeed.

Table 2.7 below summarises childrens' viewing patterns in relation to Gaelic TV programmes.

Table 2.7 If you have children in your home, on average how many hours per week do they watch Gaelic childrens' TV either at home, or in nursery?

	Never	0 – 1 hours	1 – 2 hours	2 – 3 hours	3 hours +
Number of hours viewing per week	54%	27%	15%	3%	2%

Here, almost half of those with school or pre-school age children at home reported some viewing of Gaelic TV programmes.

Section 4: Levels of Consumption of Gaelic related arts and cultural products and services : Gaelic Radio

Table 2.8 below summarises patterns of Gaelic radio listening.

Table 2.8 On average per week how often do you listen to programmes in Gaelic on the Radio?

	Never	Up to 3 hours	From 3 – 6 hours	Over 6 hours
Number of hours listening per week	37%	31%	13%	19%

As is indicated above, almost two thirds of respondents reported some level of listening to Gaelic radio.

In a similar manner to the issue of television viewing, gender was found to be significant here, with male respondents less likely 'never' to listen to the radio, and also more likely to listen to higher volumes (3–6 hours per week) than female respondents.

In terms of age, under 40s were more likely 'never' to listen (in contrast to those aged 60 or over who exhibited higher listening patterns or 3 hours or above). Under-30s were less likely to listen to very high volumes – i.e. 6 hours or more.

In terms of Gaelic fluency the highest volumes of listening (3 hours or more) were linked to those categorizing themselves as most fluent (ie 'fluent/native speaker'), while positive listening patterns were recorded for smaller volumes (up to 3 hours) for all language capabilities above a few words. In terms of those who described themselves as not able to speak or write, but able to 'understand' Gaelic, a positive association was evident for those categorizing themselves as able to understand 'a substantial amount'.

In terms of household characterization, any connection with Gaelic had the implication of a positive listening pattern. In households characterized as a 'minority' of Gaelic speakers there was a clear association with listening for up to 3 hours. Even those households where Gaelic and English were used in equal measure, fewer respondents were likely 'never' to listen than a normal distribution would suggest. This might suggest that where a respondent is able to speak Gaelic, Gaelic radio tended to provide a continuing link with the language and culture, irrespective of the linguistic ability of others in the household, or patterns of normal usage.

Surprisingly where there were children of school or pre school age, more respondents reported the likelihood of 'never' listening to Gaelic radio.

Unsurprisingly, in terms of employment, for unemployed people, there was less likelihood of 'never' listening to Gaelic Radio and higher likelihood of listening to higher volumes (also the case with carers/ those with full time domestic responsibilities). The only category over represented in the never listen category were the private sector and students.

No significant results were received for those working in the tourist or cultural industries, nor in relation to income. In terms of skills no clear pattern emerged. In terms of Island location, there was less likelihood of never listening if you lived in the Western Isles, and more likelihood of listening in high volumes.

Table 2.9 below summarises reported changes in respondents' listening patterns over the last five years:

Table 2-9 Over the last 5 years, how has your radio listening changed in relation to programmes in Gaelic?

	Has increased greatly	Has increased slightly	Has stayed the same	Has decreased slightly	Has decreased greatly
Changes in listening pattern	12%	20%	61%	3%	4%

While 7 per cent of respondents reported that their viewing pattern has either decreased or decreased greatly, almost two thirds of the respondents (61%) reported no change, showing a high level of loyalty to Gaelic radio, with 32 per cent reporting some increase.

A summary of the main constraints listeners reported in terms of increasing their listening patterns is found in Table 2.10 below, in which respondents could answer positively in more than one category.

While the scheduling of Gaelic programmes is seen as a constraint for over a third of respondents, unsurprisingly the extent of the listener's Gaelic competence is seen as the main issue for almost half (44 percent) of respondents. Interestingly only one in

Table 2-10 What are the main constraints that work against you increasing your Gaelic radio listening?

	Your level of Gaelic competence	The subject matter of the Gaelic programmes	The quality of treatment of the subjects	The quality of Gaelic in the programme	The scheduling of Gaelic programmes
Percentage respondents answering positively	44%	25%	6%	10%	37%

10 respondents believe the quality of Gaelic used in the radio to be a constraint, and even less the quality of treatment of the subjects.

Section 4: Internet issues

Table 2.11 below indicates the level of internet use amongst respondents and whether respondents were aware of websites in the medium of Gaelic:

Table 2-11 Do you have internet access at home

	Do you have internet at home?	Are you aware there are websites wholly or partly in the medium of Gaelic on the Internet?
Percentage respondents answering positively	71%	58%

Table 2.12 below indicates and the regularity with which they visited such websites, if at all.

Table 2-12 Have you visited websites wholly or partly in the medium of Gaelic on the internet?

	Never	Infrequently	Frequently/ regularly	Very frequently/ extensively
Percentage respondents answering positively	58%	42%	4%	2%

Respondents were then asked for information regarding the nature of their visits to such sites:

Table 2-13 If you do visit these sites, what category of information do you access/ look for?

	Cultural/ artistic information	News	Entertainment	General information	Chat	Gaelic learning materials
Percentage respondents answering positively	39%	27%	25%	49%	2%	29%

Clearly, while the majority of internet users in the sample were aware of the existence of Gaelic related sites these tended to be visited infrequently. For those who did make use of them, almost half sought general information, with Gaelic learning materials and cultural/artistic information being stated as the next important reasons for respondents to make use of them.

Section 5: Levels of Consumption of newspapers with a Gaelic section

Table 2.14 below indicates the level of involvement of survey respondents with Gaelic within newspapers.

Table 2-14 If you regularly read a newspaper with a Gaelic section, how would you describe your involvement with it?

	Never read it	Seldom read it	Normally read it	Never miss it
Percentage respondents answering positively	45%	27%	25%	4%

Here, just over half (55 percent) of respondents report some consumption of Gaelic within newspapers, although only 29 percent normally or always read such materials. Unsurprisingly, as Table 2.15 below indicates, the main reason for this relates to the respondents' abilities to read Gaelic.

Table 2-15 What are the main factors that influence your readership of a Gaelic section in the newspaper?

	Your ability to read Gaelic	Quality of the writing	Interest in the subjects dealt with in Gaelic language articles
Percentage of respondents answering positively	53%	7%	38%



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3. Factors shaping attendance at/ involvement with live Gaelic artistic and cultural events overview

After identifying current levels of attendance at or involvement with Gaelic artistic and cultural events the survey generated data allowing an investigation of the factors perceived by respondents to influence their attendance and or involvement in the Gaelic related artistic and cultural events.

Respondents were asked to gauge the relative importance of a range of factors in encouraging or discouraging attendance at or involvement in live events. The choice of factors covers three dimensions that potentially impact on consumption. Firstly, standard economic determinants of demand - price and availability; secondly the perceived

relevance of these artistic activities to the respondent, reflecting the local dimension and sense of connection with the activity; and thirdly the role of language variables, both the level of Gaelic competence to appreciate or participate in the activity, and the respondent's general support of, or interest in, Gaelic related activities.

The results on the economic variables of price and availability in encouraging consumption are presented in table 3.1 and those relating to the encouraging impact of local connection/ relevance in table 3.2. Finally the impact of Gaelic competence and commitment are shown in table 3.3

Table 3.1 The role of economic variables in encouraging the consumption of live arts and cultural activities

	Local availability			Level of admission/ purchase price		
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very important	Important	Unimportant
Concerts / Ceilidhs	54 %	26 %	18 %	18 %	41 %	40 %
Music in Pubs/ Clubs	45 %	28 %	27 %	18 %	36 %	46 %
Choirs	37 %	26 %	37 %	16 %	33 %	51 %
Traditional Dance	47 %	26 %	28 %	18 %	37 %	45 %
Exhibitions	47 %	30 %	23 %	21 %	40 %	40 %
Plays/Theatre	43 %	27 %	30 %	19 %	36 %	45 %
Story-telling	38 %	26 %	36 %	18 %	33 %	49 %
Poetry reading	36 %	25 %	40 %	16 %	32 %	52 %

Table 3.2 The role of local relevance in encouraging the consumption of live arts and cultural activities

	Local connection/ relevance		
	Very important	Important	Unimportant
Concerts / Ceilidhs	28 %	41 %	32 %
Music in Pubs/ Clubs	22 %	38 %	41 %
Choirs	24 %	36 %	40 %
Traditional Dance	21 %	36 %	42 %
Exhibitions	30 %	40 %	31 %
Plays/Theatre	24 %	36 %	37 %
Story-telling	25 %	38 %	37 %
Poetry reading	23 %	35 %	42 %

Table 3.3 The role of language/local relevance variables in encouraging the consumption of live arts and cultural activities

	Personal level of Gaelic competence to appreciate the event			Personal commitment/ interest in Gaelic language and culture		
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very important	Important	Unimportant
Concerts / Ceilidhs	29 %	30 %	41 %	37 %	33 %	30 %
Music in Pubs/ Clubs	24 %	26 %	50 %	30 %	30 %	40 %
Choirs	27 %	25 %	48 %	32 %	31 %	37 %
Traditional Dance	20 %	24 %	57 %	25 %	31 %	44 %
Exhibitions	25 %	32 %	43 %	28 %	36 %	36 %
Plays/Theatre	35 %	27 %	38 %	31 %	33 %	36 %
Story-telling	38 %	24 %	38 %	31 %	32 %	37 %
Poetry reading	38 %	24 %	39 %	31 %	30 %	40 %

While these figures make it difficult at first to discern a pattern, it is possible to rank the relative importance of each factor in each category, first by noting the cumulative percentage of respondents believing the factors to be very important or important, and then where possible ranking percentage for each individual category of event. This is done below in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Factors seen (very important/ important) by category, plus ranking

	Local availability	Level of admission/ purchase price	Local connection/ relevance	Personal level of Gaelic competence to appreciate the event	Personal commitment/ interest in Gaelic language and culture
Concerts / Ceilidhs	81 % 1st	59 % <u>4th</u>	69 % 3rd	59 % <u>4th</u>	70 % 2nd
Music in Pubs/ Clubs	73 % 1st	54 % 3rd	60 % <u>2nd</u>	50 % 4th	60 % <u>2nd</u>
Choirs	63 % 1st	49 % 5th	60 % 3rd	52 % 4th	63 % 2nd
Traditional Dance	73 % 1st	55 % 4th	57 % 2nd	44 % 5th	56 % 3rd
Exhibitions	77 % 1st	61 % 4th	70 % 2nd	57 % 5th	64 % 3rd
Plays/Theatre	70 % 1st	55 % 5th	60 % 4th	62 % 3rd	64 % 2nd
Story-telling	64 % 1st	51 % 4th	63 % <u>2nd</u>	62 % 3rd	63 % <u>2nd</u>
Poetry reading	61 % <u>2nd</u>	48 % 4th	58 % 3rd	62 % 1st	61 % <u>2nd</u>

Figures underlined above, indicate where the same ranking has been given to more than one factor, due to an identical percentage score for very important/ important.

In many cases in table 3.4, rankings are very close and it would be wrong to ascribe significant difference when figures are separated by only a few percentages. However, some clear patterns do seem to emerge, which is that in 7 of the 8 categories, local availability ranks as most important factor. Personal commitment/ interest ranks second or second equal in 6 of 8 categories, followed by local connection which is 2nd or second equal in 4 categories. Of less importance than these 3 factors is personal level of Gaelic to appreciate the event, while the importance of price ranks in most cases as 4th or 5th in importance as a factor in most categories. The 1998 report suggested that with the exception of the issue of availability, and to a lesser extent price, none of the other factors considered appeared to have a substantial impact on prompting attendance or participation. The major change to be noted with this current report is the decline in importance of price as a key factor. However, it should be noted that when respondent characteristics are considered against these factors there appears to be substantial sub-group of the population where price is a significant issue. Unsurprisingly, these individuals are typically on low incomes and are often unemployed or carers.



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4. The impacts on attitudes and behaviours attributable to the consumption of Gaelic-related artistic and cultural products and services

To gather evidence on the impacts of consumption respondents were presented with two clusters of questions. These were designed to address firstly, the personal impact on attitudes and behaviour attributable to the consumption of Gaelic artistic products and services, and secondly, the respondents' perceptions regarding the impact on attitudes and behaviours within the local community arising from the existence of Gaelic arts and cultural services and products. Questions on personal impacts explore shifts in the level of use of Gaelic by the respondent; views on whether Gaelic should be more widely used; the perceived relevance of the language, art and culture to the economic development of the area; employment opportunities in the area; the level of attachment to the local area; where relevant, the propensity to choose Gaelic-medium education and the relevance of Gaelic art and culture in the education and development of children. Questions on the perceived impact on the community and local area explored perceived changes in the regularity with which Gaelic is used in the community and in the home; on the attractiveness of the area to tourists; on preferences for Gaelic products/services where possible, and on the level of attachment to the local area and self-confidence within the community.

Section 1: The Impact of the consumption of Gaelic products and services on the individual respondent

Individuals were asked to identify the impact on seven aspects of their attitudes and behaviour attributable to the consumption of four sets of Gaelic arts and cultural activities or products – TV; Radio; attendance at live events; purchase of goods such as CDs, books etc. They were asked to identify whether this consumption had had a positive, negative or neutral impact.

Impact on how often the respondent used the Gaelic language

80% of the sample responded to this, with, on average 23% reporting that consumption had prompted greater use of the language, around two-thirds reported no change and 12% reported that these product/services had prompted a reduction in Gaelic use. The consumption of products (CDs, books etc) and radio listening had slightly more positive impact on language use than TV or attendance at live events.

Impact on the desirability of Gaelic being used in other areas of public life such as business and schools

Around two-thirds of respondents took a view on this issue, with on average 30% reporting that consumption had shifted their position positively, around 60% reported no change in their view and 10% reported a negative shift in their views on this matter. TV viewing had a substantially higher positive impact than the other art categories.

Impact on the perceived relevance of the language, art and culture to the economic development of the respondent's home area

Around two-thirds of the sample offered a view on this issue, with 35% on average reporting consumption shifting their views on this positively, around 50% reporting no change and 12% reporting a negative shift. As with the extension of Gaelic in public life, TV viewing has a substantially greater positive impact than the other art categories.

Impact on the perceived relevance of the language art and culture to the employment/careers of young people

Again around two-thirds of the sample reported a view on this, with a distribution of percentages almost identical to the more general proposition on economic development. Again, TV had a relatively greater positive impact on perceptions.

Impact on the willingness to choose Gaelic-medium education for own children where applicable

Slightly under half of respondents answered this question, with one-third responding positively, around a half reporting no impact and around 17% reporting that consumption had reduced their willingness to choose Gaelic-medium. TV, once again, had a stronger positive impact than the other categories.

Impact on the perceived relevance of Gaelic art and culture in the education and development of their children

Less than 50% of the sample offered a view on this issue. 35%, on average reported a positive impact, slightly more than half reported no impact with the remaining 13% reporting a negative shift. As above, TV carries the strongest positive impact on this issue.

Impact on the respondents desire to live and work within their local community

Two-thirds of respondents offered a view, with around 35% reporting positive impacts from consumption, approaching 60% reported no impact and less than 10% any negative effect.

Characteristics associated with positive responses

All of the responses to individual impact questions were investigated to establish whether any key characteristics of the respondents bore a systematic, statistically significant relationship to the answers offered. Three points of note emerged from this exercise. None of the following characteristics appear to have any influence on the likelihood of an individual reporting any one of the categories of arts activities as positive, negative or neutral with respect to their attitudes and behaviour – location of residence, age, gender, main employment, skill level or income.

In general the influence of the category of artistic activity appears clearly segmented according to the Gaelic language ability and background of the respondents. This runs from radio, where impact is mainly reported amongst fluent/native speakers, to live events, more commonly cited by those with much lower levels of fluency. The likelihood of any individual reporting a positive shift in their attitudes and/or behaviours with respect to any of the seven issues reported above as a result of radio listening is very strongly clustered amongst fluent speakers. This positive association with very high levels of Gaelic language ability is substantially weaker for Gaelic products (CDs. Books etc), weaker again for TV viewing and absent with respect to those reporting positive impacts from live events.

Of the variations that occur across the seven individual issues one is noteworthy. Responses to the issue of the economic relevance of arts and cultural development show no strong pattern by arts category – the likelihood of reporting a positive link is not strongly associated with any particular arts category. In contrast, reporting a positive response to the question of the relevance of the language arts and culture for the employment and career opportunities of young people sees a strong association with the arts categories most influential with fluent/native speakers. This presumably reflects the existence of a cluster of jobs and career routes that require (or are strongly enabled by) high levels of language competence.

Trends since the 1996 survey

The survey undertaken in the mid-1990's sought respondent views on the identical set of issues reported above, with identical wording being used in both surveys. The following points are drawn from a comparison of 96 and 06 results.

Across all the issues covered, Gaelic arts activities have broadly maintained their levels of positive impact on the attitudes and behaviours of the population. On average, in 2006 around one-third of respondents report that exposure to the four categories of arts activity has positively shifted their views, a figure very slightly down on that recorded in 1996 (in both cases the reported positive impacts on the frequency of individual Gaelic language use is lower at 22/23%). Where a clear shift has occurred over the last decade is in the growth in the number of individuals reporting that exposure to these arts activities has negatively altered their attitudes or behaviours across the issues investigated. On average those reporting negative impacts rose by one-third from 9 to 12%, with the increase in negative responses being higher with respect to radio (by 39%) than the other arts categories (all 28/29%). This suggests a limited degree of polarisation may be taking place in respect of influence exerted by Gaelic arts on attitudes within the population, but it is important to stress that the proportion of the population reporting positive impacts averages out at almost three times those reporting negative impacts and that the influences exerted in 2006 are achieved on a rising base. In other words, what is being measured by this set of questions is not how positive or otherwise is the population with respect to the issues covered (see evidence on this in chapter 5) but the extent to which Gaelic arts continues to change the attitudes and behaviours with respect to these issues. If the influence of the arts is an on-going process leading to a rising proportion of the population taking a positive view then the proportionate scale of any further positive shifts is likely to fall.

In 1996 one of the respondent characteristics systematically associated with positive responses across most of the seven issues addressed was 'Age' (with an 'income level' association also apparent on a few issues). These associations have entirely disappeared from the 2006 sample. In 1996 younger respondents were more likely to be positively influenced by exposure to Gaelic arts activities and products, by 2006 neither age nor income appear to have any influence on the likelihood of Gaelic arts having an impact on attitudes and behaviour, positive or negative.

The systematic influence of levels of Gaelic language competence on the likelihood of reporting shifts in attitudes and behaviours is noted above, particularly with respect to radio listening. Looking at this issue more generally, the distinction within the sample that emerged in 1996 between those reporting fluency or a high level of ability to use the Gaelic language and those with very limited or no ability in the language reappears in 2006. Unsurprisingly, across many of the issues considered here those with a high level of ability in the language are more likely to report that Gaelic arts have had a positive impact on their attitudes or behaviours than those with little or no ability in the language. In this context, the point noted above concerning the variations in impact of different art categories may carry policy significance for language development planners. To paraphrase, radio appears to have a strong impact on positive attitude/behaviour shifts amongst fluent/native speakers. This applies to a lesser extent to Gaelic products such as books and CDs. TV tends to be the most influential arts medium having its influence amongst both fluent/near fluent speakers and those with limited ability on the language. The impact of participation in / 'consumption of' live events appears to be much less dependent on high language ability levels and hence appear to be more able shift views amongst non-speakers or those with 'just a few words'.

Section 2: The perceived impact of the consumption of Gaelic products and services on the community and area of the respondent

To inform an analysis of the impact of the consumption of Gaelic arts activities and products the questionnaire also sought information on the perceived combined impact of all four categories of Gaelic arts activities on the local community of the respondent. Each individual was asked the question "in your view what overall impact has the existence of all of the above activities had on the following issues?"

Table 4.1 Impact of Gaelic artistic activities on community/area

Issue	Greatly increased	Slightly increased	Stayed same	Slightly decreased	Greatly decreased
The regularity with which Gaelic is used in the local community	12	37	35	9	7
The regularity with which Gaelic is used in local families	9	29	39	12	10
The attractiveness of the area to tourists	19	38	36	3	2
The attachment of local people to their community	17	33	41	7	2
The level of confidence within your local community	14	30	44	7	4
The preference of individuals in your community to chose Gaelic services products wherever possible	12	32	44	7	5

Considered individually or collectively these results present a strong positive view of the impact of Gaelic arts on a set of issues that are of considerable significance for language, economic and social development of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh. Between 75 and 80% of respondents answered these questions and the 'net' percentage of respondents reporting positive change ranges from 16% with reference to the regularity with which Gaelic is used in local families, through to 52% on the issue of the impact of Gaelic arts activities on the attractiveness of the area to tourists. Considering these issues in turn.

Almost 50% of the sample report that in their view Gaelic artistic activities had boosted the regularity with which Gaelic is used in the local community. This is an almost identical proportion to that recorded in 1996, but those reporting decreases has increased in the 2006 survey (from 11 to 16%).

None of the characteristics of the respondents appear to be systematically related to positive or negative responses apart from a weak 'language' effect, with fluent/near fluent speakers being somewhat more likely to respond positively than those with little or no Gaelic.

On the issue of the impact of the arts on the regularity with which Gaelic is used in local families (an absolutely critical dimension of language health) 38% report increases, with 22% reporting decreases. These are substantially less positive proportions than those recorded in 1996 (49% increase; 16% decrease). As in the case of the issue of Gaelic use in the community, there is a weak 'language' association with no other characteristic associated with particular responses.

On the impact of Gaelic arts on tourism, a very high proportion of the sample (57%) report some increase, with few (5%) reporting a decrease. These figures are slightly down on the 1996 responses (62% increase; 5% decrease). The 'language' effect is strong on this issue, with fluent/near fluent speakers systematically more likely to report a positive impact than others.

The issues of the impact of Gaelic arts on attachment to community and community self confidence have high proportions of respondents reporting positively (50% and 44%) with relatively few (9% and 11%) reporting negative impacts. These positive responses are slightly up on the 96 numbers (46%

and 42%) but the percentages of negative responses are lower in 96 (7% and 8%). The impact of the Gaelic arts on attachment to community is not associated with any characteristic of the respondent, being as likely to be cited by non-speakers of Gaelic as by others. In contrast, the likelihood of reporting a positive impact on community self-confidence is strongly associated with fluent/near fluent speakers. No other characteristics are significantly associated with the likelihood of a respondent offering a positive or negative response.

The final issue addressed relates to preference for the use/purchase of Gaelic services or products where available against their English language equivalents. 44% reported Gaelic arts activities have stimulated an increase in preferences for Gaelic alternatives, with 12% reporting a negative impact. These figures are weaker than those returned in 1996 (51% increase; 9% decrease). Again, the only characteristic associated with a positive response is Gaelic language competence, with those of limited or no ability in the language being less likely to respond positively.

Section 3: Views of individual respondents on the role of Gaelic language, arts and culture in the future development of their communities

The evidence of impact so far considered in this chapter relates to shifts in attitudes and behaviours that have been brought about by past Gaelic artistic activities. To explore the views of respondents on the role of Gaelic language, arts and cultural activities on the future economic and social development of the Western Isle and Skye and Lochalsh the survey included a set of statements on these matters. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with them. Percentage responses are reported in the table below. The statements are identical to those asked in the 1996 survey, thereby allowing direct comparison.

The regeneration of Gaelic language, arts and culture is essential for the economic development of your own area/island group.

The adoption of the word “essential” in this statement makes it a very strong proposition. It is therefore significant that over 70% of those surveyed agree with this statement, with a clear majority of this subgroup (55%) recording strong agreement. Earlier research into the links between language, arts and economic development referred to in the introduction of this report identified direct and indirect employment impacts plus some dynamic effects (for example via tourism) and some enhancement in the quality of job opportunities arising from the language development and arts related activities. These linkages now appear to be recognised by a substantial majority of the population, at least in the Western Isles (see below).

Table 4.2 Attitudes to statements on future role of Gaelic language, arts and culture

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No View	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The regeneration of Gaelic language, art and culture is essential for the future economic development of your own area/island group	39	32	11	12	6
The development of Gaelic language, arts and culture is making an important contribution to the level of self confidence in your own area/island group	27	39	17	13	5
The development of the Gaelic language, art and culture is increasing the attractiveness of your area to tourists	27	41	15	12	4
The development of the Gaelic language, arts and culture is increasing the desire of young people to live and work in their home area	17	30	20	26	8
Taking local and national factors into account, I am optimistic about the future health and development of the Gaelic language	16	42	15	20	7

Between 96% and 98% of respondents offered a view on these issues.

In 1996 59% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This has grown to 71% in 2006, with the characteristics now systematically associated with the likelihood of a positive/negative response also shifting. In 1996 there was no statistically significant differences between respondents in the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh, this has now emerged, with respondents in the Western Isles, irrespective of their other characteristics, now more likely to agree with the essential nature of the language, arts-economic development linkage. In 1996 employment sector, skills level and income levels were all systematically linked to negative responses, with those in senior managerial / professional positions (typically higher income earners) being less likely to support the proposition. Individuals working in tourism and cultural industries were more likely to respond positively. All these associations have now disappeared – income levels, employment status, and sector of employment no longer appear to systematically influence views on this issue. Given the importance of senior managers and professionals in the local decision making and opinion forming processes this may be a significant shift of view. As in 1996, the Gaelic language competence of the respondent continues to have a systematic impact on the likelihood of reporting a positive response – with those fluent/near fluent being more likely than others to support the proposition.

The development of Gaelic language, arts and culture is making an important contribution to the level of self-confidence in your own area/island group

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agree with this statement, with one-third of these individuals reporting strong agreement. Concepts such as community self-confidence are very difficult to define and measure – and respondents are likely to have drawn from a very diverse range of evidence when coming to a view on this statement. A clear link between the symbolic and enriching role of artistic and cultural activities and personal and collective self-confidence can be constructed, but the survey provides no evidence on the nature and strength of linkages, merely that a proportion of respondents believe that such links exist.

In 1996 60% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposition, with 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed (18% in 2006). In both surveys the higher the level of Gaelic language competence the greater the likelihood (other than equal) of

agreeing with the statement. However, the 1996 survey also found links between relatively high income / high employment status and the likelihood of negative responses which are now no longer in evidence. Again, a sub-group of individuals reporting sceptical views in 1996 (non-Gaelic speakers/those with very limited ability in Gaelic, managerial/professional, relatively high income earners) now appear to have, in part, shifted position to the point where these characteristics are no longer associated with negative responses.

The development of the Gaelic language, art and culture is increasing the attractiveness of your area to tourists

68% of respondents agreed with this statement, with 40% of these individuals strongly agreeing. With the exception of the 11% of the sample who directly work in the tourist trade the basis of the views expressed must be, to a large extent, indirect, but research work on 'Cultural Tourism' does support the view that a distinct and rich cultural heritage and lively contemporary arts developing that culture has a positive impact on the desirability of an area/region as a tourist destination.

The 1996 responses to this question are very similar to those recorded for 2006. 64% of respondents agreed with the statement, with 17% disagreeing (16% in 2006). As in 1996, the only characteristic systematically associated with the likelihood of a positive response was Gaelic language ability and background.

The development of the Gaelic language, arts and culture is increasing the desire of young people to live and work in their home area

47% of respondents agreed with this proposition, with 36% of these individuals strongly agreeing. As with most of these propositions, the processes whereby artistic and cultural activities can affect life style and location choices are very complex. Whatever their exact nature and strength, the proportion of the population supporting (and opposing) this proposition in 2006 remain almost unchanged over 1996 (47%), with 34% opposing in 2006 and 32% on 1996. The age of the respondent appears to have no systematic effect on the likelihood of offering a positive or negative answer, with Gaelic language ability and background being the only characteristics exhibiting a systematic impact.

Taking local and national factors into account, I am optimistic about the future health and development of the Gaelic language

This is the only proposition in the survey that relates to the Gaelic language in general as distinct from a Gaelic language-arts link, as such responses will reflect a very wide range of developments, from changes in the language mix of households to Gaelic-medium education. 58% of respondents agreed with the statement, with 28% of this sub-group strongly agreeing. 27% disagree with the statement, 25% of this sub-group strongly disagree.

These 2006 figures represent some loss of optimism in the population as compared to 1996. In that survey 64% agreed with the statement, with 28% strongly agreeing, with 20% disagreeing (30% of this group strongly disagreeing). None of the respondent characteristics measured had any systematic impact on the likelihood of optimism or pessimism apart from the level of Gaelic fluency, where again those with high levels of ability in the language are more optimistic than those with very little or no Gaelic.



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5. The Role of Gaelic language, arts and culture in shaping the distinctiveness of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh

Section 1: Background

This chapter reports the results of a set of survey questions designed to explore the issue of the distinctiveness of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh and to examine respondent views as to the relationship between Gaelic language, arts and culture. These are very difficult concepts to investigate via a postal survey, and they were not directly addressed in the earlier 1996 exercise. Before presenting the results it is useful to provide some background on the rationale for including this material.

One strand of academic research into the processes of rural development that is of value in examining the language-arts-culture relationship focuses on the capacity of local communities and sub-regional entities to recognise, give validity to and subsequently utilise distinct local resources in a manner that helps develop the social, cultural and (often) the economic infrastructure of the territory. In the context of the issues addressed in this report the means by which a distinct culture and its artistic expression can contribute to the development process can be characterised as operating through three main channels.

Firstly, the culture can be 'commodified', with its characteristics (especially the values it is perceived to embody by outsiders) being 'branded' onto products and services. This is a very familiar process in the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh – for example via tweed, cultural and general tourism, herbal/pharmaceutical products etc.

Secondly, cultural distinctiveness can be used to buttress arguments that suggest the necessity of a distinct territorial identity. This, in turn, can influence local authority boundaries, institutional arrangements within and between the 'sub-region/territory' and the larger polity and also promote policies and practices that are tailored to help secure strategic objectives defined at 'sub-regional' level.

Finally, the development of the artistic expression of the culture can help 'sell' or consolidate the culture internally. It can raise consciousness of local distinctiveness, confirm and enhance its perceived value, and boost confidence in a manner that could positively feed back into both further artistic development within the community and, more generally, build support for 'home grown' solutions and local empowerment across a wide spectrum of policy areas.

When reflecting on these channels of impact in the context of a large-scale survey of Gaelic artistic activity, it is impossible to avoid directly addressing the question of the relationship between the development of the language and the development of the artistic activity that utilises or draws upon that language. To-date the approaches typically adopted to promote Gaelic language development and Gaelic artistic development involve different agencies, access different linkages into the broader body politic in Scotland and are often supported or funded from separate sources. This situation has, at a minimum, promoted perceived language-arts distinctions and at worst, created them. Given this situation, it was judged that there would be value (even within the severe limitations of a postal questionnaire) in exploring the public's perception of the links between language-arts-culture. (The term 'Gaelic culture' is used here in the sense of a distinctive set of customs, rituals, achievements and products - including artistic outputs - that produces and reflects a Gaelic 'world view').

Any individual or organisation supporting the proposition that Gaelic artistic activity can act as a contributor to social, cultural and economic change needs to take a view on whether such activity can exist and thrive without the maintenance and growth of the language integral to much of the expressive power of Gaelic artistic output. This question raises the mirror-image issue of whether the culture and language can survive in any meaningful way if it does not develop and constantly reshape its distinct 'world view' via, inter alia, artistic activity that utilises and develops its own 'vocabulary' – both in the literal sense of language use and in the more abstract sense of utilising its own historically shaped conceptual understanding of the world.

Addressing such complex issues via large scale postal questionnaire is highly ambitious, and any results need to be treated with some caution, being supplemented (ideally) by research built on methodologies that allow a deeper understanding of the underlying processes being investigated. None the less, the fact that relevant large-scale data gathering exercises occur very rarely prompted the inclusion of questions designed to capture public perceptions on these issues.

Respondents were first asked whether they thought their area (Western Isles or Skye and Lochalsh) were highly distinct from the rest of Scotland. They were then asked to identify the sources of that distinctiveness and rank them by importance. Thereafter, irrespective of what sources (if any) had been identified respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with six statements relating to language/arts/culture linkages.

Section 2: The distinctiveness of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh

In response to the question “In your opinion are the Western Isles and/or Skye and Lochalsh territories that have a high degree of distinctiveness from the rest of Scotland?” 94% of Western Isles-based respondents reported ‘yes’ with respect to the Western Isles and 85% Skye and Lochalsh-based respondents reported ‘yes’ with respect to Skye and Lochalsh. No characteristic, including those covering language ability and background, has any systematic association with a positive or negative response. The distinctiveness of these territories appears to be a view widely shared across the communities. Views on the source of this distinctiveness are summarised in the table below – multiple choices are possible, the percentages are calculated only from those respondents located in the relevant territory. Around 80% of respondents offered a view.

Table 5.1 Sources of Distinctiveness

Source of distinctiveness	Western Isles %	Skye & Lochalsh %
Gaelic culture	78	68
Gaelic language	88	67
Gaelic artistic activities	59	62
The landscape	85	90
Range of economic activities (inc. crofting)	61	65
Religion/religious observance	77	39

Respondents were then asked to identify, in order, the three most significant sources of distinctiveness for either area. With respect to the Western Isles three sources stood out from all others – landscape (cited as the single most important source by 27%), Gaelic culture (cited as most important by 24%) and Gaelic language (cited as most important by 23%). In the case of Skye and Lochalsh the factors cited as most important were identical and in the same order, but with markedly different proportions (landscape cited most important by 62%, Gaelic culture cited as most important by 15% and Gaelic language cited as most important by 14%). In both the Western Isles and in Skye and Lochalsh in the vast majority of cases these three factors were cited (in various orders) as the three most important sources of distinctiveness.

The sources of distinctiveness, and those cited as ‘most important’ were examined to establish whether any of the available characteristics of the respondents recorded any systematic association with particular responses. Only one was evident – the likelihood that Gaelic speakers in Skye and Lochalsh would cite the Gaelic language as a source of distinctiveness. With this one exception, the absence of any patterns by age, gender, income, employment, language ability etc suggests views on the sources of territorial distinctiveness are widely shared across all groups in the population.

Section 3: Views on the relationships between Gaelic language, the arts and culture

Both language and culture appear to be major sources of territorial distinctiveness in both the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh. To explore views on the linkage between these and their relationship to Gaelic arts activities respondents were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with the following six propositions. Around 90% of respondents offered their views.

Proposition 1: The development of the Gaelic language is essential for the future health and development of the distinct culture of the Hebrides

This first proposition addresses the possible link between Gaelic language and Gaelic culture. 78% of respondents agree that an essential link exists, with almost two-thirds of them (63%) strongly agreeing with this proposition. The level of support for the proposition in Skye is slightly weaker than in the Western Isles and there is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and disagreeing with the proposition. Even here, over half of non-Gaelic speakers (55%) agree with the proposition, with 22% disagreeing (compared to 7% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language.

Table 5.2 Propositions 1 to 6 on the relationships between Gaelic language, the arts and culture

Proposition	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The development of the Gaelic language is essential for the future health and development of the distinct culture of the Hebrides.	49	29	12	7	5
2. The development of Gaelic culture depends on finding new ways of expressing the changing experience of the Gael through stories, poetry, painting, radio TV etc.	29	42	20	6	3
3. The growth and development of Gaelic artistic activities (TV, radio, CDs, dance, plays, storytelling etc) is essential for the maintenance of the Gaelic language.	38	42	13	5	3
4. A major motivation for young people to learn/develop their Gaelic language is access to Gaelic artistic activities such as TV, radio, internet, CDs, dance, plays, storytelling and the distinct view of the world they reflect.	38	39	15	5	3
5. Gaelic language is necessary to give full expression to the culture of the Hebrides.	49	29	11	7	4
6. If the Gaelic language continues to decline, a Gaelic understanding and view of the world will continue to exist and its distinctiveness could be maintained.	15	26	18	26	15

Proposition 2: The development of Gaelic culture depends on finding new ways of expressing the changing experience of the Gael through stories, poetry, painting, radio TV etc

This proposition addresses the possible link between Gaelic artistic activities and the health of Gaelic culture. 71% of respondents agree that the maintenance of Gaelic culture does depend on new artistic expression, with 41% of these strongly agreeing with the statement. 9% disagree. There is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and disagreeing with the proposition. Even here, almost 60% of non-Gaelic speakers agree with the proposition, with 11% disagreeing (compared to 9% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language. Otherwise none of the respondent characteristics are systematically associated with positive or negative responses to this proposition.

Proposition 3 : The growth and development of Gaelic artistic activities (TV, radio, CDs, dance, plays, storytelling etc) is essential for the maintenance of the Gaelic language

This proposition addresses the possible links between Gaelic artistic activities and the maintenance of the Gaelic language. 80% of respondents agree with this, with 48% of them strongly agreeing, only 8% disagree. There is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and disagreeing with the proposition. Even here, almost 70% of non-Gaelic speakers agree with the proposition, with 11% disagreeing (compared to 6% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language. Otherwise none of the respondent characteristics are systematically associated with positive or negative responses to this proposition.

Proposition 4: A major motivation for young people to learn/develop their Gaelic language is access to Gaelic artistic activities such as TV, radio, internet, CDs, dance, plays, storytelling and the distinct view of the world they reflect

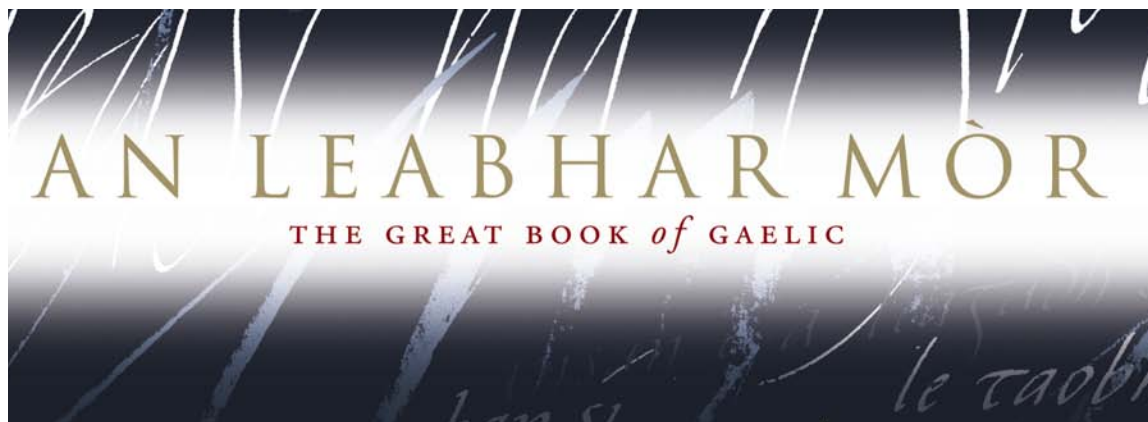
This proposition addresses possible links between Gaelic artistic and cultural activities and the potential growth of the Gaelic language via impacts on the motivation of young people to learn the language or enhance their ability in it. 77% of respondents agree with this, with 49% of this group strongly agreeing with the proposition, 8% disagree. There is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and disagreeing with the proposition. Even here, 70% of non-Gaelic speakers agree with the proposition, with 12% disagreeing (compared to 6% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language. Otherwise none of the respondent characteristics are systematically associated with positive or negative responses to this proposition.

Proposition 5 : Gaelic language is necessary to give full expression to the culture of the Hebrides

This proposition addresses the possible links between Gaelic language and Gaelic culture. 78% of respondents agree with the essential link between language and the full expression of the culture, with a clear majority of this group (63%) strongly agreeing, 11% of respondents disagree. There is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and disagreeing with the proposition. Amongst this group 56% agree with the proposition, with 23% disagreeing (compared to 3% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language. Otherwise none of the respondent characteristics are systematically associated with positive or negative responses to this proposition.

Proposition 6: If the Gaelic language continues to decline, a Gaelic understanding and view of the world will continue to exist and its distinctiveness could be maintained

This proposition was included to address the question of the extent to which the public perceived the survival of the Gaelic language as essential for the survival of some form of Gaelic culture. It is useful to consider it in the context of the preceding proposition, which made reference to the link between language survival, and the "full expression" of the culture. The responses to this proposition are symmetrical, 41% agree (37% of them strongly agreeing), 41% disagree (37% of them strongly disagreeing) and 18% neither agree nor disagree. There is a very strong association between speaking no Gaelic at all and agreeing with the proposition. Even here, one third of non-Gaelic speakers disagree with the proposition, with 38% agreeing (compared to 42% of those with some Gaelic). Across those reporting some Gaelic, there is a greater likelihood of fluent/native speakers agreeing with the proposition than other with lower levels of ability in the language. Otherwise none of the respondent characteristics are systematically associated with positive or negative responses to this proposition.



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6. Summary and Conclusions

In the introduction to this report it was noted that the present investigation forms part of a programme of research begun in 1993. The principal focus of earlier studies was the nature and scale of any linkages that exist between Gaelic artistic activities and the economic wellbeing of those territories where Gaelic culture and language remains highly significant (defined as the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh). The linkages identified extended beyond the obvious direct and indirect employment and income associated with the production and distribution of Gaelic artistic products and service to a series of dynamic effects. These arise as a result of the interaction of a set of social and cultural variables (enhanced by Gaelic arts) that contribute to the overall quality of life in these territories, a factor that in turn affects the economic decisions taken by individuals within these areas. Evidence was found of the perceived linkages between the level and quality of Gaelic artistic and cultural activities and decisions to remain resident in the area, locate in, or return to, the area, the number of visitors to the area as tourists, the level of community self confidence and the employment decisions and entrepreneurial behaviour of residents.

Investigating the nature, extent and development of the economic impact of Gaelic artistic and cultural activities necessitated a detailed mapping of the levels of consumption of the various categories of artistic products and services. Attempting to explain shifts in these consumption patterns required an identification of the main enabling and constraining factors influencing the individual consumption decision and any potentially reinforcing impacts that present consumption may have on future consumption via shifts in attitudes and perceptions about the personal value of these 'products' and their relevance to wider social and cultural development. During data gathering for these investigations an underlying set of issues or questions emerged which are critical for the future of Gaelic arts and Gaelic language more generally. These concern the relationship between Gaelic culture, Gaelic arts (broadly defined) and the Gaelic language. The present study, drawing data from 2005, therefore addressed the following issues.

- What has happened to the demand for Gaelic artistic and cultural 'products' over the decade since the 1996 survey and what explanations can be offered for these changes?

- What effect does the consumption of these products and services have on the behaviour and attitudes of individuals with respect to future consumption and the perceived significance of these activities on wider social and economic variables? Have these impacts changed over the last decade?
- What is the perceived impact of the existence of this set of artistic products and services on the behaviour and attitudes of the communities which access them? Have perceptions of these impacts changed over the last decade?
- What are the views of the surveyed communities with respect to the nature of the relationship between Gaelic culture, Gaelic arts and Gaelic language, and how important are these in defining and maintaining a distinct identity and world-view?
- The following conclusions can be drawn. When considering them please bear in mind that, as noted in the introduction, the sample characteristics may lead to some modest over estimation of positive or negative responses on issues where views are systematically associated with Gaelic language fluency. This should be borne in mind considering results.
- What has happened to the demand for Gaelic artistic and cultural 'products' over the decade since the 1996 survey and what explanations can be offered for these changes?

With respect to 'live events', (concerts, ceilidhs, music in clubs/pubs, choirs, dance, exhibitions, theatre, storytelling and poetry) the relatively high levels of consumption recorded in 1996 have increased modestly across almost all of the main categories of activity. Almost 2 in 3 of the population attended at least one concert or ceilidh in 2005, almost a half have attended at least one traditional dance, one exhibition, one music performance. 30% have attended at least one theatre production, and so on. Given the geographical spread of the population and the limited provision in some areas these are very healthy consumption figures. The average percentage rise in consumption is around 4%. Attendance and participation at local fèisean have risen substantially, with attendance and participation in mod events flatter over the decade. Considering the characteristics of the respondents in relation to consumption few patterns emerge. Gaelic language competence has an association with some types of events, but the main language-based distinguishing factor is between those with no Gaelic whatsoever and those with some competence, from limited ability to fluency. Respondents with very low incomes, carer

responsibilities and the unemployed (overlapping groups) are systematically less likely to consume 'live events' than others.

Almost 4 out of 5 respondents listen to Gaelic CDs/tapes, with one quarter reporting that this represented over half of their listening using these media. A similar percentage (80%) also report watch Gaelic TV at least one hour per week, with 38% reporting an increased level of viewing over the last 5 years (13% report decrease). Issues of programme scheduling dominate explanations of change in viewing patterns, with this issue being by far the most important constraint on increased viewing.

Responses on radio listening indicate almost two-thirds on average access Gaelic radio each week, with one-third reporting some increase in listening over the last 5 years (7% report decrease). Radio listening is strongly associated with high levels of Gaelic fluency and language ability is by far the most significant constraint to increased listening. A similar pattern is exhibited with respect to readership of Gaelic in newspapers. This is reported by 55% of respondents, with the ability to read Gaelic being the main constraint on increasing readership.

Comparing the figures for consumption of radio, TV and newspapers with those reported in 1996 shows modest increases, arising mainly from more intense levels of consumption rather than an expansion of the proportion of the population accessing these media. The main constraints on growth of consumption appear to relate to availability/scheduling plus the Gaelic language ability of the individual. This is highly significant for radio and newspapers, where high levels of ability are critical, less so for TV (and for most live events). With these categories the critical language dimension appears to be the 'none at all' / 'some Gaelic' split.

Given the importance for audience development of identifying the constraints on growth the issue was addressed in some detail in the questionnaire. This confirmed that availability remains, as in 1996, the key constraint on increased consumption/ attendance – cited as very important by around half of respondents when considering more general arts and cultural activities and by 30-40% for more specialist activities. Although much less widely cited as very important, the price of products/admission is still a key constraint for around one in five of the population. Unsurprisingly, the unemployed and

others on low incomes are more likely to cite this factor in their consumption decisions. It is also significant that language competence is a cited constraint by around two-thirds of respondents, being especially critical in theatre, story-telling and poetry. This reinforces the obvious point that the long-term health of Gaelic arts is inextricably bound up with the survival and development of the language.

In summary, the 2005 participation data demonstrates that given their characteristics there is a very high level of engagement within the surveyed territories with Gaelic arts activities and products. These levels of engagement represent, for most arts activities/products, a modest growth over the last decade. Enhancing levels of participation further appears to hinge mainly on issues of access – programme scheduling, geographical spread of performance events etc. Price appears an issue for a significant minority, a matter that may have to be addressed if Gaelic arts seek to further widen the already broad socio-economic base of their audience achieved so far. In the medium and long term Gaelic language competence continues to be a key factor in determining whether growth can be achieved for Gaelic arts and cultural products, the impact being felt unevenly across the art forms.

What effect does the consumption of these products and services have on the behaviour and attitudes of individuals with respect to future consumption and the perceived significance of these activities on wider social and economic variables? Have these impacts changed over the last decade?

The future development of the Gaelic arts depends fundamentally on the quality of the experience offered to the audience and participants of the various artistic activities covered in this report. 'Quality' in this context embraces both the immediate satisfaction achieved directly from consumption and the extent to which the act of consumption alters perceptions with respect to the relevance of the consumed 'product' in the context of broader personal and social developments. For example, if attendance at a Gaelic play, participation in a Gaelic story-telling event, or the viewing of a Gaelic TV drama (or other arts 'event') is not only enjoyable in itself but also increases the perceived

relevance of the Gaelic language to the development of the area in which the consumer lives then current consumption is likely to promote both future consumption and a set of behaviours and attitudes that will support wider Gaelic development policies and initiatives.

The survey addressed the attitudinal and behavioural impacts of consumption by seeking information on shifts in the level of use of Gaelic by the respondent; views on whether Gaelic should be more widely used in business, schools etc; the perceived relevance of the language, art and culture to the economic development of the area; employment opportunities in the area; the level of attachment to the local area; where relevant, the propensity to chose Gaelic-medium education and the relevance of Gaelic art and culture in the education and development of children. On all bar one of these variables around one third of respondents report a positive shift in attitudes and/or behavioural shifts as a result of their consumption of Gaelic artistic and cultural 'products'. Only on the issue of personal use of the language did the positive change percentage drop to around one quarter. In contrast around 13% on average reported that consumption of/exposure to these products had negatively shifted attitudes and behaviour. The positive percentages are slightly lower than those reported in 1996, but it should be borne in mind that what is being recorded is shifts in attitude as a result of Gaelic arts consumption, not the total exhibiting a positive (or negative) attitude with respect to these issues. This total appears to be growing through time. Those reporting a negative shift have grown since 1996, suggesting some polarisation of the impact of Gaelic arts.

Considering variations of impact within the Gaelic arts, a spectrum emerged which may be of value to those shaping language development policy. Across the range of Gaelic language competence radio appears to have the strongest impact on the attitudes and behaviours of native/fluent speakers, with 'live events' having the greater ability to shift attitudes and behaviours amongst those with lower levels of language ability. TV remains, as in 1996, the most influential medium.

Unlike 1996, neither the age of the respondent nor their professional status/income level has any systematic association with the impacts of Gaelic artistic activity. Previously older residents were more likely to report positive impacts, those in

professional/managerial posts/with high income were more likely to be neutral or negative.

In summary, the impact of consuming the outputs of Gaelic artistic activities on the attitudes and behaviours of individuals appears to be significant across a critical range of issues of central importance to language planners (i.e. personal use of Gaelic; the appropriateness of Gaelic use in the wider community – business, schools etc; willingness to use Gaelic medium education) and to those with economic and social development responsibilities (i.e. contribution to economic development, employment opportunities for the young, commitment to live and work within the local community and value in the education and development of children). The percentages of the population reporting in both 1996 and 2006 that such consumption had shifted their attitudes and behaviour towards these key variables suggest Gaelic artistic activity is a significant change agent. This view seems to be more generally held than was the case in 1996, a development that may be significant given that one of the sub-groups that appears to have shifted to a more positive view is individuals with professional/ managerial employment status.

What is the perceived impact of the existence of this set of artistic products and services on the behaviour and attitudes of the communities with access to them? Have perceptions of these impacts changed over the last decade?

As well as considering impacts on individuals attitudes and behaviours the survey also explores the perceptions of respondents with respect to the impact of Gaelic artistic activities on aspects of their community and area. As with the questions on personal impact reported immediately above, the aspects considered are of relevance to language development and to economic and social development. On the former, views were sought on impacts on the regularity with which Gaelic is used in the local community and within local families, on the latter, views were sought on the impact of Gaelic arts on the tourist trade, the attraction of Gaelic products/services vis a vis those delivered through the medium of English, the

attachment of local people to their area and the levels of self confidence within the local community.

The results indicate that a very substantial proportion of respondents are of the view that Gaelic arts are promoting the use of the language within the community and in the home by shifting behaviour. Almost 50% report a positive impact on Gaelic use in the community, with 38% reporting a similar impact on the regularity with which Gaelic is used in local families. The positive change figures are similar or higher with respect to economic and social variables such as enhancing attractiveness to tourists (57%), boosting attachment to community (50%) and raising levels of self-confidence within the community (44%).

Where comparable, the 2006 results are broadly similar to those reported in 1996. Again, as it is attitudinal and behavioural change that is being reported, the 2006 results are building on a rising platform of positive attitudes shaped in part by Gaelic artistic activities over the last decade. In contrast to 1996, very few respondent characteristic appear to be systematically associated with positive or negative responses on issues of community impact, a further indication that systematic variations in views on Gaelic arts related issues, where they exist, appear mainly related to Gaelic language ability, with the main split between non-speakers and the rest, with characteristics such as social status, location, age, gender etc having no systematic relationship to attitudes and behaviours on these matters.

In addition to asking respondents their views as to the personal impact of past consumption of arts and cultural activities on their attitudes and behaviour the survey also addressed their perceptions as to the future significance of these activities for their communities. The results indicate that arts activities are expected to be of continued significance in the future with respect to further building community self confidence, enhancing the individual's commitment to their locale to live and work and in enhancing the attractiveness of their area to tourists. In addition, over 70% agreed with the strong statement that the regeneration of Gaelic language arts and culture is essential to the future economic development of their area (up significantly on the 1996 figure of 59%). The overall view of Gaelic related developments, both local and national, led 58% to report that they were "optimistic" about the future health and development of the Gaelic language.

What are the views of the surveyed communities with respect to the nature of the relationship between Gaelic culture, Gaelic arts and Gaelic language, and how important are these in defining and maintaining a distinct identity and world-view?

These issues were not directly addressed in the 1996 survey. Two main factors lead to their inclusion in the present research. Firstly, the research that followed the mid-90s survey involved a series of elite interviews and broader informal and conference discussions that exposed differences with respect to the fundamental relationship between Gaelic culture, the arts and language. These differences are also evident in Gaelic policy formulation and implementation. Secondly, over the last decade academic approaches to rural development more systematically explored the nature of territorial distinctiveness and the ways in which this distinctiveness could be harnessed to promote economic and social development. In the context of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh, Gaelic language, arts and culture are obvious sources of distinctiveness that could be contribute to economic and social development. Exploring the interrelated set of issues embedded in the culture-language-arts relationship via a postal survey is difficult and results must be treated with caution, but as the survey offered a unique opportunity to test out public opinion in the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh a number of propositions were formulated on which views were sought. To paraphrase, these asked

1. Do you regard the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh as distinctive territories, and if so, what are the sources of that distinctiveness?
2. Is Gaelic language development essential to the development of a distinct culture?
3. Does the development of a distinct culture depend on new forms of artistic expression?
4. Are new forms of artistic expression essential for the maintenance of the language?
5. Are Gaelic arts are major motivator for the young to learn/develop their Gaelic?
6. Can a distinct Gaelic culture find full expression without the language?
7. If the language declines can a distinct Gaelic understanding and world-view be maintained?

Responses indicate that around 90% of residents viewed their islands as distinct from the rest of Scotland and that the main sources of that distinctiveness were landscape, Gaelic culture and Gaelic language. A very substantial majority of residents with some competence in Gaelic agree with the linkage as proposed in 2 to 6 above (between 70 and 80% note agreement, with between 40 and 70% of these 'strongly agreeing'). Proposition 7, included in the survey partly as a 'check' question produced an almost 50/50 split on the ability to maintain some form of cultural distinctiveness in the face of language decline.

These results indicate very strong support for the argument that the maintenance and development of the Gaelic language and the development and growth of Gaelic arts are fundamentally inter-dependant and that a healthy language and dynamic arts sector are prerequisites for the people of the Western Isles and Skye and Lochalsh to give full expression to their distinctive culture. These views appear to be shared by a large proportion of residents with some competence in Gaelic (and by a significant minority of non-speakers). The strength of conviction with respect to these propositions also appears related to the level of language competence of the individual, with fluent speakers registering very high and strong levels of support.

Current strategic and policy priorities for Gaelic arts

As a final set of comments it may be valuable to consider, in summary form, what the survey results (and earlier research conclusions) can contribute to the two central issues currently being confronted by Gaelic arts organisations both individually and collectively through the Gaelic Arts Strategic Development forum – audience development and the role of the arts in the broader development strategy for the language.

Audience development

- Current participation levels across the main categories of arts activity are relatively high, especially in the context of the difficulties posed by very thin population spread. This is a useful measure of success both internally and for funders.
- Growth in consumption of the arts across all categories has grown over the last decade by a relatively modest amount.

- The socio-economic profile of current consumers suggests a relatively high level of social inclusivity.
- Relatively low levels of participation are recorded for low-income individuals, the unemployed, old people and carers.
- The key access issue appears to be availability – both geographical and programme scheduling. This conclusion was also drawn from the 1996 survey.
- Price is not a generally critical constraint on increased participation but is significant for a substantial sub-group of the population.
- The level of Gaelic language competence possessed by the individual is a potentially critical constraint on audience growth especially in some categories of arts activity.
- In addition to their central purpose (to entertain and enlighten) Gaelic arts activities appear to impact on individual attitudes and behaviours in a manner that strongly supports key language development variables.
- Social perceptions support the proposition that collectively Gaelic arts activities are shifting behaviour within local communities in ways that strongly support the maintenance and development of the language.
- Although not central to its purpose, Gaelic artistic activity appears to make an important contribution to wider economic and social development objectives, with over 70% now seeking Gaelic development as essential to economic development.
- The perception that healthy and growing Gaelic artistic activity is essential to the development of the language is very widely shared by the surveyed population, this is especially true of Gaelic speakers.

The Role of arts in the broader language development strategy

A number of conclusions from the research can be extracted in support of the proposition that arts and cultural development can play a central role in language development.

- Arts and cultural activities have a high take-up/participation rate in the territories investigated, so any impacts are broadly distributed.
- Take-up rates are growing, albeit modestly.
- Take-up/participation is socially inclusive, so again impacts are broadly distributed.

- The linkage between arts and education (both formal and informal) in motivating learners, developing speakers, 'validating' the language in the eyes of speakers and further developing Gaelic as a living language appears to be very strongly supported across the population.

Teasing out the strategic and policy implication of these conclusions is beyond the scope of this report (and the competence of the authors!), but there is a strong prima facie case for a deep reflection on the means by which the linkages between arts and education can contribute to the development of Gaelic language and culture.

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THE DEMAND FOR
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