



The Gaelic Language Labour Market -The Evidence

Executive Summary

Skills
Development
Scotland

BÒRD NA
GÀIDHLIG



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gaidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

Foreword



Damien Yeates

Chief Executive, Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland has a statutory duty under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 to play its part in promoting Gaelic language. We published the second iteration of our Gaelic Language Plan on 30th June 2017 and one of our actions was to work in partnership with other public agencies to develop labour market information, in recognition of the value of Gaelic skills across Scotland. This study fulfils our commitment to this action. It has been resourced in partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highlands and Islands Enterprise and has been developed and guided by a Steering Group that included representation from Scottish Government, Scottish

Enterprise, the Scottish Funding Council, local authorities (Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Glasgow City Council, Highland Council) and Further and Higher Education (University of the Highlands and Islands, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Lews Castle College). I would like to thank all those involved in bringing this to fruition. I commend the report to all who have an interest and responsibility in promoting Gaelic language and I look forward to working with partners in taking forward the agreed actions.



Shona MacLennan

Chief Executive, Bòrd na Gàidhlig

Bòrd na Gàidhlig recently published the new National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP) covering the period from 2018 to 2023. The new NGLP has a clear aim - that Gaelic is used more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations - and goes on to highlight the important contribution that Gaelic is making to the social and economic well-being of Scotland.

The evidence in this study clearly backs many of the core principles underpinning the NGLP, that demand for Gaelic-essential jobs in the early years and child-care, education and public sectors will continue to be strong over the next few years and that fantastic new opportunities are likely to come on-stream for staff with Gaelic skills across the Creative industries, Tourism and Heritage sectors.

more often, by more people and in a wider range of situations. The key challenge for Bòrd na Gàidhlig and our education and skills development partners is to ensure that the flow of people with high quality Gaelic language skills entering the labour market is matched to the demand from employers across the public, private and third sectors, and from across Scotland.

In order to deliver the new NGLP, co-operation across organisations is essential and this study is an excellent example of this. I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and resources to its development, and in particular our colleagues at Skills Development Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise who jointly funded the project with us.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is clear that growing the number of both Gaelic-essential jobs and as well as jobs which use Gaelic are important in ensuring that Gaelic is used

Gaelic is fundamental to Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE's) unique remit which integrates economic and community development throughout the Highlands and Islands. Our Gaelic Plan 2017-22 sets out our aims and ambitions for Gaelic.

which enable Gaelic to flourish. These range from partner agencies such as Comunn na Gàidhlig and An Comunn Gàidhealach, to Fèisean nan Gàidheal and many others.

An important part of the plan is to encourage the use of Gaelic as an asset to add social and economic value in a wide variety of circumstances – as demonstrated in the HIE-led research report 'Ar Stòras Gàidhlig'. Researchers concluded that the potential economic value of Gaelic to the Scottish economy could be as high as £148.5m a year.

This Gaelic Language Labour Market study explores the current position of the demand and supply of Gaelic skills and highlights opportunities and challenges. We look forward to continuing to work with businesses, social enterprises and community organisations that can add value through using Gaelic to help realise its full potential.



Charlotte Wright

Chief Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise

We have played a central role in Gaelic development in the Highlands and Islands. Our support has helped create and sustain the impact of numerous organisations

Executive Summary

Gaelic Language

The 2011 Census identified that over 87,000 people in Scotland have some knowledge of Gaelic language. Whilst there continues to be a concentration of Gaelic speakers in areas that are traditionally associated with the language, such as Highland and Eilean Siar, there is also a growing number of speakers and learners in more urban areas. Glasgow City is now in the top three areas in Scotland for the largest number of Gaelic speakers.¹

The promotion of Gaelic language across Scotland has been driven, in particular, by Scottish Government policy such as the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, which aims 'to secure the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language'. As part of this aim, the Act established Bòrd na Gàidhlig (BnG) as a Gaelic development agency. BnG has a vital role in setting out national plans and strategy for Gaelic language as well as working with public bodies to help them form Gaelic Language Plans for their organisations. Education policy has also been a key driver of Gaelic Medium Education (GME), which has been particularly important for developing the language in areas less traditionally associated with Gaelic, such as Glasgow.²

A number of other organisations are playing an important role in developing Gaelic language. This includes Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), which has sought to emphasise the potential economic contribution of Gaelic language. HIE's "*Gaelic as an Asset*" research found the present economic value of Gaelic language to be approximately £5.6m and estimated that its potential economic value could be as high as £148.5m.³ Arts organisations such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, which organise community based tuition in Gaelic arts and An Comunn Gadhelic, which organises the Royal National Mod Gaelic arts and culture festival, have been important for raising the profile of Gaelic language and increasing its accessibility. BBC Alba has also been key in raising Gaelic's profile. Local Authorities, particularly Glasgow City, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Eilean Siar have also play a vital role in the provision and delivery of GME.

This study aimed to provide an evidence base of the current position of the Gaelic language labour market as well as looking at how it could be further supported and developed. In particular, it looked to focus on how the supply of Gaelic language skills relates to the demand for Gaelic language skills from employers. In doing so the study was

looking to build on The Gaelic Employment Audit, a survey of Gaelic language employers which was carried out in 2012. This Executive Summary is one of three outputs arising from the research. It is accompanied by a one page summary infographic and a more full report detailing all of the data and evidence collected.

Demand for Gaelic language skills

Gaelic language does not constitute a sector. Rather the need for Gaelic language skills exists across many different sectors. As a result, it is not captured within existing employment surveys. For this reason a survey of employers identified as likely to have an interest in Gaelic language skills was undertaken in order to gain an overview of current and future demand within the Gaelic language labour market. The survey did not constitute a census of employers and was not intending to capture a full picture of Gaelic language employment across Scotland. However, it has provided an illustration of current and future trends within Gaelic language employment.

1 <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2015/scotlands-census-2011-gaelic-report-part-1>

2 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/07/06161418/17>

3 <http://www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id=0e113231-5668-4945-b1db-e88a137a738d>

Spatial concentration of Gaelic employment

Mirroring the results of the 2012 Gaelic Employment Audit, the employers' survey showed that Gaelic language employment continues to be concentrated within the Highland, Eilean Siar and Glasgow Local Authority areas. This is a reflection of the fact that these areas have the largest numbers of Gaelic speakers and GME pupils. In Glasgow, in particular, there has been a significant expansion of GME in recent years as a new GME primary school opened in 2016 and there are plans to open a third GME primary school in the near future. The survey showed that GME continues to be a very important source of Gaelic language employment as Local Authorities accounted for over half of all Gaelic essential posts identified. Further and Higher Education was the most important sector for Gaelic desirable posts.

Employment by Gender

The survey also showed that the gender balance of Gaelic language employment continues to be weighted towards women as women held the vast majority of Gaelic essential and desirable posts identified. This is likely a reflection of the fact that Gaelic language employment tends to be concentrated within sectors such as Education and Early

Learning and Childcare which employ a higher proportion of women. Results from the survey suggested that Gaelic language posts tend to be in higher level jobs as most of the posts identified were in professional occupations and filled by degree holders.

Future Demand

Looking towards future demand, survey respondents anticipated the creation of 40 new Gaelic essential or desirable posts over the next 12 months. These were concentrated within the Local Authority sector and Glasgow City area. This is likely a reflection of the planned expansion of GME in the area.

More broadly the study also analysed employment projections across Scotland, focusing particularly on four sectors identified within the Gaelic as an Asset research as being important areas for Gaelic language employment: Public administration, Creative industries, Education and Tourism. The analysis found that, from 2015 to 2027, it is projected that there will be a growth of 98,000 jobs or four per cent across Scotland. In the Highlands and Islands area, where there is a concentration of Gaelic speakers, it is projected that employment will grow at a lower rate of one per cent or 2,900 jobs.

For the four key sectors, strong growth of nine per cent and 10 per cent respectively is projected for Creative industries and Tourism across Scotland, whilst declines in employment are forecast for Education and Public administration. It is important to consider the particular nuances of Gaelic language employment within these broad sectors. For example, growth in Tourism employment may have a particularly strong impact on Gaelic language employment as there is an increasing emphasis on Gaelic language tourism, led by VisitScotland.⁴ Similarly, whilst there is a projected decline in Education employment overall, employment within GME education may not follow this trend as consultees and the employers' survey suggested there will be continuing expansion in this area.

4 <http://www.visitscotland.org/pdf/VisitScotland%20Gaelic%20Language%20Plan%20-%203%20December%202015.pdf>

Opportunities

New Scottish Government policy will also create important opportunities for Gaelic language employment. The 2016 Education (Scotland) Act instituted a right for parents of pre-school aged children the right to request Gaelic medium primary education.⁵ This could help to expand the number of GME primary schools and hence teaching posts.

The 1+2 language commitment, which gives all children in Scotland the right to learn one new modern language from Primary 1, and another from Primary 5, could also lead to an expansion in the number of children learning Gaelic, which could, in turn, increase the need for Gaelic speaking teachers.⁶ The Scottish Government's commitment to increase the annual free childcare allowance to 1,140 hours for 2, 3 and eligible 4 year olds could also have important implications for Gaelic language employment. There is already increased demand for Gaelic medium early years provision and this would likely increase with the expansion of free childcare.

Challenges

As well as opportunities, there are also challenges for the Gaelic language labour market. Those identified within the survey and by consultees include:

- A lack of applicants for Gaelic essential and desirable posts
- A lack of candidates with the necessary Gaelic language skills
- Difficulty in securing candidates with the necessary mix of Gaelic and technical skills.
- Difficulty in attracting candidates to posts that are often located in remote areas.

Consultees also suggested that some Gaelic speakers do not feel confident in using the language in the workplace and that others feel that there is a lack of opportunity for progression in areas such as GME compared with English medium education. A number of consultees also suggested that negative perceptions of the sector and opportunities for progression may mean that it is difficult to attract Gaelic speakers to available opportunities in e.g. the Education and Early Learning and Childcare sectors.

More broadly it was felt that there is a need to increase awareness amongst parents, careers advisors and pupils of the many Gaelic language employment opportunities that are available.

5 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/07/06161418/17>

6 <https://go-gaelic.scot/exciting-time-gaelic-new-phase-teacher-training-begins/>

Supply and provision of Gaelic language skills

The number of people across Scotland with some knowledge of Gaelic language fell by 5,300 or six per cent from the 2001 to 2011 Census. However, there has been an increase in the number of Gaelic language speakers aged under 25.⁷

This could be a reflection of the expansion of Gaelic educational opportunities across Scotland. There are currently 3,145 primary school, 1,272 secondary school and 1,039 nursery GME pupils and there has been growth in pupils and students across all levels of Gaelic education. Whilst provision remains strong in areas traditionally associated with Gaelic such as Highland and Eilean Siar, there has also been notable expansion in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Nursery Level

At nursery level there has been a 29 per cent growth in pupils from 2011/12 to 2016/17. This has been particularly strong in Edinburgh where the number of pupils has more than doubled.

Primary Level

Similarly primary school GME has seen an increase of 727 pupils or 30 per cent across Scotland. With the opening of a new GME primary school in 2016, Glasgow has seen the largest absolute growth at 229, whilst proportionally the number of pupils in Edinburgh has almost doubled. At primary school level, there has also been a drive for Gaelic learners' education with over 7,000 primary school pupils taking part in Gaelic learners' programmes in 2015/16. These have been particularly important for reaching areas without any other Gaelic education provisional, such as Falkirk where nearly 1,000 primary school pupils took part in Gaelic learners' programmes in 2015/16.

Secondary Level

At secondary school level there has also been a smaller, 15 per cent, growth in the number of GME pupils from 2011/12 to 2016/17. Again this growth has been concentrated within Glasgow and Edinburgh. Over the same period there has also been a growth of 21 per cent or 552 secondary pupils taking part in Gaelic learners' programmes. Expansion has been particularly strong in areas such as East Ayrshire where there had previously been little or no provision.

Further and Higher Education

There has been growth in Gaelic education participation at Further and Higher Education level (FE and HE). At HE level there were 499 students enrolled in Gaelic related courses in 2015/16. This represents a 12 per cent growth from 2009/10. Gaelic related courses are dominated by Celtic Studies, but there are also some students studying Gaelic language courses. Another important element of Gaelic education at HE level is Gaelic teaching courses. In 2016/17 across Scotland there were 13 students undertaking a Gaelic PGDE course and 8 studying for a Gaelic BEd degree. It is important to note that despite these fairly low numbers, there has been a significant increase in the number of allocated places for Gaelic teaching courses, amounting to 153 in 2016/17.

At FE level there were over 1,400 students enrolled in Gaelic related courses in 2015/16. This represents a 10 per cent growth from 2008/09. Most of these courses are part-time or short courses, and many are beginners' Gaelic courses. The vast majority, 81 per cent, of enrolled students are studying courses that do not lead to a recognised qualification. In total 27 per cent of FE students are enrolled in courses taught and assessed in Gaelic.

7 <http://www.gaidhlig.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/national-gaelic-language-plan2017-22-en.pdf>

Gaelic enrolments at HE/FE level are concentrated within the Highlands and Islands region. Ninety-four per cent of FE students enrolled on Gaelic related courses in 2015/16 were located within the Highlands and Islands college region and nearly 60 per cent of enrolments on Gaelic related HE courses were at UHI.

Distance and Community Learning

Distance and community learning has also become an increasingly important element of Gaelic educational provision. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has offered distance learning courses since 2000 and these now range from beginners to postgraduate level. In 2016/17 there were just under 350 students enrolled in these courses, representing a small but stable increase from just over 300 in 2011/12.⁸ Community learning courses are also offered by a number of Local Authorities and colleges and these are important for offering adults both beginners and refresher courses.

An Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In reviewing the data and other evidence collected in the study, an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats was undertaken.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive policy framework which the Scottish Government has instituted to support the development of Gaelic language. • Increased GME provision, particularly in the central belt. • Increased prominence and focus on Gaelic language through media outlets, Gaelic arts, public body Gaelic language plans and an increasing recognition of the potential economic value of the language. • A changing profile of Gaelic speakers, i.e. a shift towards speakers under the age of 25 years. • There has also been an increasing recognition of the potential economic value of Gaelic language amongst young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of available data sources on Gaelic language employment, which makes it difficult to quantify the number of Gaelic essential and desirable posts and the potential gap between the demand for and supply of Gaelic language skills. • Issues within the skills pipeline were also highlighted as many consultees commented that many people who have Gaelic language skills or go through Gaelic education do not go on to use these skills in employment. • It was also noted that the pipeline can be leaky, i.e. those in primary school GME do not always go on to GME high school and then on to Gaelic related FE/HE courses. Consultees and survey respondents also commented on issues related to a mismatch between where Gaelic speakers are and where Gaelic related posts are available. This is an issue for GME schools and early years provision as there is an ongoing shortage of teachers and practitioners.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The favourable policy context and focus on Gaelic language within sectors such as Tourism and Creative Industries. • It also highlighted that the number of Gaelic speakers who are not currently utilising their skills in employment represents a market to whom Gaelic language opportunities and mid-career skills development can be promoted. • Community Learning Development opportunities/Adult Learning. • There are also opportunities to promote the economic benefits of Gaelic language skills to employers, particularly in areas such as Tourism, Creative industries, Early Learning and Childcare and Healthcare. The embedding of Gaelic language into Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships frameworks also offers opportunities to further open Gaelic language employment pathways to young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any potential future, negative policy shift; • The concentration of Gaelic speakers within certain areas, which may undermine efforts to promote the benefits of Gaelic language skills to businesses. • The current shortage of GME teachers and early years practitioners, which could prevent further expansion of GME and therefore restrict growth of Gaelic language skills. • Lack of coordination between different bodies to help increase the number of Gaelic essential and desirable posts available.

Actions

Arising from this research, four actions are proposed to maintain momentum on Gaelic language skills.

Action 1 – Strategic Leadership

Forming a national group with responsibility for Gaelic language skills, taking into account the issues raised in the report, and building on existing activities. This would likely include representatives from organisations such as: Scottish Government, BnG, HIE, SDS, SFC, UHI, Scottish Enterprise (SE), other relevant Universities, Visit Scotland, the FE sector, private training providers, industry and sector bodies, teachers' association such as Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS)⁹ and Comann Luchd-Teagaisg Àrd-Sgoiltean (CLAS)¹⁰. Leadership : BnG and SDS.

Action 2 – Monitoring and Evaluation

To demonstrate the impact of investment in Gaelic skills. Increased monitoring and evaluation activity, to be led by BnG, of strategies, initiatives, activities and funds in place and how they are contributing towards national and individual organisational objectives within various Gaelic Language Plans. This will offer a better understanding of what is working and where more activity is needed. Leadership : BnG.

9 <http://www.eis.org.uk/>

10 <https://clas123.wordpress.com/>

Action 3 – Responding to Opportunities

The evidence points to opportunities to further develop Gaelic language skills:

- In Community Learning Development. Leadership: Local Authorities/ BnG
- In specific sectors – Tourism, Creative Industries, Early years and Childcare and Health and Social Care. Leadership: SDS
- Continue embedding Gaelic language into SDS careers offer and Apprenticeship provision. Leadership: SDS

Action 4 – The Evidence Base

This study is the second of its kind in which partners have resourced a study to establish an evidence base on Gaelic LMI. Going forward, partners are committed to ensuring that this evidence base is maintained and further developed through future:

- Evidence developed on demand and provision. Leadership: SDS and the SFC
- Engagement with businesses through existing mechanisms such as business panels. Leadership: HIE and SE.

Contact us:

If you have any feedback or comments on this report,
please email rsa@sds.co.uk