



# Foras na Gaeilge

## Colmcille Strategy 2019 – 2021

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## Executive Summary

Colmcille is a partnership between Foras na Gaeilge in Ireland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig in Scotland. It fosters communication and collaboration between the Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic language communities. If the links between the two language communities grow both language communities and both minority languages are strengthened. The links may be considered as part of their social capital<sup>1</sup>. This social capital works at interpersonal, community and institutional levels.

Colmcille operates through grant schemes and through facilitating and initiating projects. This strategy has been drafted in consultation with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and is in keeping with its plan and the National Gaelic Language Plan, and this this document is concerned especially with the Programme of work of Colmcille within Foras na Gaeilge.

This document explains the background of Colmcille and the policy context in Ireland and Scotland. It lays out the mission “to bring speakers of Scottish and Irish Gaelic together”, and aim and subsidiary aims that relate to it

The following strategic themes are set out, and their contribution to the overall aim:

- The Arts
- Young People
- Heritage
- Learning Scottish and Irish Gaelic
- Community Partnership and Development
- Research

The strategic objectives for 2019-2021 are also set out. The work of Colmcille in 2014-2018 is given as an appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> See pages 10 to 11, and Appendix 2

## Colmcille: background

Colmcille is a partnership between Foras na Gaeilge in Ireland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig in Scotland. It fosters communication and collaboration between the language communities of Scottish and Irish Gaelic.

The history of Colmcille goes back to 1997, when the President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, and Brian Wilson MP, Minister of State in the Scottish Office for Education, Industry and Gaelic, launched the new initiative on St Columba's Day, the 9th June. The President talked about "creating an island space for ourselves in which Ireland and Scotland can share what they have in common." Brian Wilson spoke of his hope that Colmcille would foster support for Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and links between their language communities. Colmcille has had different structures since it was founded. For a number of years officers were based at the Gaelic college on Skye, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the ULTACH Trust in Belfast, and this was so when it was made a charity and registered company. In 2009 Colmcille was transferred to the language agencies in Ireland and Scotland: Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

In 2017 Foras na Gaeilge set up Coiste Cholmcille (The Colmcille Committee), a subcommittee of the board of Foras na Gaeilge, to look at the strategic objectives of Colmcille, and to report to the board on the work of the partnership. There is regular contact between officers of Foras na Gaeilge officers and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Each board has its own grants scheme or schemes, but they consult each other on the applications, and jointly fund projects in partnership with each other which have a particular strategic importance and which are on a scale which requires joint funding.

## The Policy Context

Recognition is given in the work of Colmcille to the the policy background and structures in which each board operates. There are significant similarities between the *20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030* in the Republic of Ireland and the *National Gaelic Language Plan 2018-2023* in Scotland. Education, status and usage are strategic themes in both of them.

The National Plan recognises cooperation with Ireland on pages 41 and 42 under the heading 'Increasing the Use of Gaelic'.

Tha buannachdan soilleir ann leis na ceanglaichean ri luchd na Gàidhlig ann an Canada agus na ceanglaichean ri Èirinn. Cha bheag na cothroman a th' ann airson fàs a thoirt air cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, co-obrachadh a bhrosnachadh agus ruigsinneachd eadar-nàiseanta na Gàidhlig a leudachadh.

There are also clear benefits in links with Gaelic in Canada and links with Ireland. These hold significant valuable potential to increase language use, to foster collaborative working and to increase an international presence for Gaelic. (P. 41)

Thèid pròiseactan rannsachaidh com-pàirteach a chur air dòigh le buidhnean ann an Èirinn gus faicinn dè na cothroman a th' ann a bhith ag obair còmhla air leasachaidhean, gu h-àraidh a thaobh teicneòlas cànan.

Joint research projects with Ireland will be developed to assess the potential to collaborate on joint development, particularly in language technology. (P. 42)

In the same section of the plan (p 43) Foras na Gaeilge is named on a list of partners among public bodies and authorities who will be cooperated with.

The work of Colmcille is detailed in the Foras na Gaeilge draft corporate plan for 2018 under the strategic objective *use*, "to foster the use of the Gaelic languages".

In 2018 the Foras na Gaeilge Colmcille Committee asked that Colmcille would work with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in developing relationships with Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia in Canada.

### **Mission of Colmcille**

To bring Gaelic speakers together

### **Vision of Colmcille**

Gaelic-speakers of Ireland and Scotland using, nourishing, and strengthening their languages in relationship and partnership with each other

### **Aim of Colmcille**

To bring together speakers of Scottish and Irish Gaelic:

- a) to find out about and get to know each other, their languages, culture and heritage
- b) to listen in depth to each other and share their cultural traditions
- c) to share information, and cooperate to meet each others' needs
- d) to raise awareness of the natural, physical and cultural environment in which they live, and further the health and well-being of the Gaelic languages as part of that environment
- e) to cooperate with the Scottish Gaelic speakers in Canada, and with speakers of Manx Gaelic

### **Strategic Themes**

Links between the Gaelic-speaking communities of Scottish and Irish Gaelige do not happen automatically. The communities are separated by geography, and minority language communities are often dislocated by unceasing competition from more dominant languages, in this case, English. In addition to competition from a dominant language, the communities are often eroded and dislocated by economic forces in their heartlands: by the depopulation of rural areas and islands, and by unemployment.

Online links and the social media are helpful, but it is important to foster common ground between the Gaelic languages; Elements of common heritage are helpful, as is the significant degree of mutual intelligibility and awareness of common needs. Partnership is a foundation in the work of Colmcille; it fosters friendship and relationships, and builds structures in which people can collaborate.

A significant part of the work of Colmcille is facilitating, encouraging and funding partnership. In 2017 Colmcille established a small grants scheme to assist organisations and groups to build more effective relationships among themselves, to carry out research and develop projects which make effective use of the available resources, and which will be sustainable.

Out of the contact between speakers of the two languages it is possible to build a common ground which is not entirely controlled by the dominant

language. Things that are familiar are often seen in a new way, different without being alien nor threatening. It is possible to leverage a new space for Scottish and Irish Gaeilge; strength in diversity. In the new space both languages have more status, and new use networks can be fostered.

The relationship between the two Gaelic communities is developed under the following strategic themes: the arts, young people, heritage, learning Scottish and Irish Gaelic, partnership and community development, and research.

### The Arts

The arts have a capacity for re-imagining a community and providing images new narratives and methods of story telling. They have their own genres and sources and provide occasions in which speakers of minority languages gather, where they build networks and develop audiences and new perspectives.

Traditional singing (and everything associated with it) is a good medium for people to explore each others culture and heritage. Colmcille supports a range of festivals in which traditional singing is central, from events in the Kerry Gaeltacht to a camping festival in County Meath, Féile na Gealaí. This festival attracts a younger generation of Gaelic speakers and fosters new music practices.

The capacity of the arts to re-imagine community can be clearly seen in the work of Theatre gu Leòr, a drama company based in Glasgow set up by Muireann Kelly from Mayo and Caitríona Lexy Caimbeul from Lewis. The play *Scotties* by Muireann Kelly and Frances Poet mediates between languages, Scottish and Irish Gaeilge and Glasgow English, between loss and memory, between Glasgow and Achill in the 1920s, between immigrants then and immigrants today.

Strategic objective	Desired outcome
Support the indigenous arts and the arts in general  Support projects which re-imagine and provide new	Indigenous arts and arts in general as an occasion for Gaelic speaker of Irish and Scotland to develop a relationship together, to to share knowledge with one another

narratives of community life	Reimagining and innovative new narratives of Gaelic-speaking communities
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## Heritage and Slí Cholmille

The indigenous minority languages are rooted deeply in the heritage of their regions and countries, and this heritage motivates interest in Scottish and Irish Gaelic and in new speech events. Cultural traditions, such as traditional singing has a special place in community events. Over ten years, thousands in Ireland have heard the Lewis Psalm Singers, a tradition which shows the breadth and diversity within the Gaelic world in Scotland and Ireland.

### Slí Cholmille

Colmille has a dedicated heritage project, Slí Cholmille, which links landscapes and communities in Ireland and Scotland where there is a link with Colmille, and other early Christian saints. It relates both to a period when Gaelic was to the fore in both Ireland and Scotland, and to present day Gaelic-speaking communities, from Gleann Cholm Cille to the Isle of Lewis. This historical and archaeological heritage is the subject of programmes in Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and in English. Information on the Slí, as well as maps and stories about Colmille, is available at [www.colmille.org](http://www.colmille.org).

Strategic objective	Desired outcome
<p>The Gaelic communities of Scotland and Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to exercise the Gaelic creativity and imagination in the Joint projects they will be developing</li> <li>to raise awareness on each other's heritage</li> <li>to raise awareness of the heritage of Scottish and Irish Gaelic as a valuable part of the heritage of the</li> </ul>	<p>Folklore, archaeology and the indigenous arts as occasions for Scottish and Irish Gaelic communities to meet and collaborate</p> <p>A review carried out of the website <a href="http://www.colmille.org">www.colmille.org</a> and recommendations made.</p> <p>The website be renewed ahead of the commemoration in 2020 – 2021 of the 1500th anniversary of the birth of Colmille (520/1)</p>

inheritance of Ireland and Scotland	To develop partnership with local authorities and other partners to organise commemorative events in 2020- 2021.
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## Young People

Colmcille aims to provide young people with a perspective of a Gaelic world which is larger than their surroundings and for them to find out about and get to know their peers who speak another kind of Gaelic, but with whom they will have an affinity.

As minority languages, Irish and Scottish Gaelic are in competition with a dominant language which is being normalised unceasingly in many areas of life. There is often a gap between ability in Gaelic languages (particularly in the education system) and usage or even capacity for use outside of the school setting. Outside of the school a young person has to make a positive decision to use Scottish or Irish Gaelic.

When young speakers of Irish and Scottish Gaelic meet and establish a thriving relationship, this can raise the status of Scottish and Irish Gaelic in their lives. And support them in making a positive choice to use Irish (or Scottish Gaelic) in their own peer groups (see the report in Appendix 1).

When young speakers of Scottish and Irish Gaelic meet each other and manage to establish a successful relationship, this can develop new relationship networks, strengthen the status of Scottish and Irish Gaelic among them, and support them in choosing to use Scottish or Irish Gaelic in their own peer group (see pp. 18-19 below).

Strategic objective	Expected outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support young speakers of Scottish and Irish Gaelic to interact with each other</li> <li>b) Increase the status and use of Scottish and Irish Gaelic among them</li> <li>c) That they learn about</li> </ul>	<p>Partnerships between schools and youth groups</p> <p>Project planning done and complete which helps to strengthen language use among them and raise awareness of the other Gaelic language.</p>

each other's variety of Gaelic	Organise a hurling/shinty festival, Iomáin Chomcille, on an annual basis.
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### Learning Scottish and Irish Gaelic

Links between Scottish and Irish Gaelic are best and most productive when speakers are able to understand each other's language, and especially when they can understand and speak it. Language learning is a part of many projects, and use of both Gaelic languages increases as the partnership programmes strengthen. In addition, Colmcille has a bursary scheme which provides between 30 and 35 bursaries each year, so that fluent Irish Gaelic speakers can take a week-long course in Scottish Gaelic. The bursaries are aimed at full time Irish Gaelic students, and at those already involved in cooperation between Scottish and Irish Gaelic communities. This increases the numbers who can communicate effectively in both Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and are in a position to where they can promote cooperation between the two language communities. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is in partnership with Gaelturas in Gaith Dobhair to provide courses for people who are working full-time in the Scottish Gaelic language sector.

Strategic objective	Expected outcomes
To support the learning of Gàidhlig	<p>A successful bursary scheme organised in partnership with language learning organisations in Scotland with at least 30 taking part annually</p> <p>Learning Gàidhlig to be part of the programme in partnerships with Scottish Gaelic communities, for example between schools and youth clubs.</p>

### Community Partnership and Development

Links between Scottish and Irish Gaelic communities do not happen automatically. The communities are separated by geography and, although

online links and social media are helpful, it is important to establish common ground and put it on a firm footing. Partnership is a foundation of the work of Colmcille; it fosters friendships and relationships, and builds structures in which people can cooperate with each other. A significant part of the work of Colmcille is facilitating, building and funding partnerships. In 2017 Colmcille established a small grants scheme to help organisations and groups to build more effective relationships and to build partnership between them before they undertake projects. The scheme is progressing well, and there is a better foundation for the projects and they have better outcomes as a result.

Language vitality depends on relationships within as well as between communities. Community development is also central, and necessary for the Gaelic-speaking communities, within and outside the Gaeltacht<sup>2</sup>.

### **Social Capital**

If the links within or between two language communities are successful both communities and minority languages are strengthened. The links can be reckoned as part of their social capital. This social capital operates at an interpersonal level, at a community level, and at an institutional level and the links between Gaelic-speaking communities in Ireland and Scotland can be considered part of it. As well as the links within and between communities it can also be seen as the interlinking between social capital in educational, economic, cultural and community terms. This list of subjects, education, economy, culture and community, indicate which general range of subjects could contribute to the work of Colmcille. It is customary to reckon social capital as part of the networks and links inside communities, but the advantage of Colmcille can be seen in the networks and links between language communities in particular regions, and growth occurs which would not occur within a single region.

The subjects associated with social capital, education, economy, culture and community, give an idea of the range of subjects which could contribute to the work of Colmcille. Colmcille does not have the resources to serve all of these subjects; its particular role is to facilitate and develop partnership and facilitate

relationships between language communities. Subjects emerge as partnerships and resources become available or deployable despite geographical separation, and on this basis it is possible to prioritise them. A case in point is spórt. Sport can contribute significantly to social capital within a community. The GAA in Ireland provides ample evidence of this, as does the role in which Celtic Football club had in the history of Irish immigrant community in Glasgow. For a number of years, no partnerships were available which were sustainable and based in Scottish and Irish Gaelic networks, but in time partners came to the fore who would like hurling and shinty through the medium of Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and this provided an opportunity to facilitate and develop a partnership around Iomáin Cholmille. Iomáin Cholmille provides social capital to the broader communities of Scottish and Irish Gaelic through an event which enables them the opportunity to come together around hurling and shinty in the community language and fosters further work in this area (see Appendix 1).

Strategic objective	Expected outcome
<p>Put potential partners into contact with each other and to facilitate relationship between them</p> <p>Support organisations and groups to plan and put in place partnerships through facilitation and a small grant scheme</p> <p>Promote partnership with Bòrd na Gàidhlig</p>	<p>Partnerships with the capacity to plan and implement projects</p> <p>An increase in the standard of work and in the permanence of the relationships between the partners</p> <p>Regular relationship between officers and senior executives</p> <p>Agree a programme of jointly-funded projects</p> <p>Agree and maintain a programme of collaboration with Nova Scotia and communities in Scotland with a historical heritage of Scottish Gaelic and a</p>

	<p>community of living speakers</p> <p>Agree and maintain a programme of cooperation between Foras na Gaeilge, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Isle of Man.</p>
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## Research

Cooperation between countries often offers perspectives and skills which are not available within a single country. In supporting research, Colmcille prioritises applied research which provides insight to the use of Scottish and Irish Gaelic or supports either the learning of these languages, or collaboration between their speakers. Research projects are normally jointly funded by Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. In 2018 and 2019, the following research projects were funded:

- a. An online concordance of idioms in Scottish and Irish Gaelic, *An Sruth*, 2018 only
- b. A pilot study on a deposit of living speech in Scottish and Irish Gaelic, *An Taisce Ghaelach* 2018 – 2019
- c. Research on the use of Scottish and Irish Gaelic outside the classroom by teenagers who went through immersion education, a joint project between Trinity College Dublin, and Heriott Watt University, 2018-2019

Strategic theme	Expected outcomes
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<p>Joint research projects between Ireland and Scotland which strengthen the use of both languages</p>	<p>An online concordance of idioms in Scottish and Irish Gaelic and English, which will be searchable online, contributing to the learning of Scottish and Irish Gaelic and accessing native expressions not under too much influence of English.</p> <p>A video archive and a template for an video archive of speech from Gaeltacht communities in Ireland and Scotland</p> <p>Knowledge of the usage of Scottish and Irish Gaelic outside the classroom among secondary level Gaelic-medium education pupils, and learning tools as an outcome, sharing information with Gaelic-medium education organisations.</p>
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## Appendix 1 Report on the Period 2014-2018

Everything below is based on the reports given in writing and orally by organisers and participants who have been working with Colmcille.

### The Arts

The arts have their own genres and sources with which the common heritage of Scottish and Irish Gaelic can be cultivated and that heritage can be made known. The arts have occasions in which speakers of Scottish and Irish Gaelic come together. Singing and all associated with it is a good medium for people to get to know each other's common inheritance.

#### *Willie Clancy Summer School, Co. Clare*

Each year four or five musicians from Scotland are resident musicians at the Willie Clancy Summer School. They are involved in a wide ranging partnership programme:

- Classes and conversation circles in Scottish Gaelic
- A Scottish Gaelic singing workshop
- Éire & Alba concert with an emphasis on Scottish and Irish Gaelic and which is broadcast live each year on Raidió na Gaeltachta

People with Scottish and Irish Gaelic meet each other each year as well at the Willie Clancy Summer School, and that is true also on a smaller scale at the following events: Scoil Cheoil an Earraigh, Co. Kerry; Éigse Dhiarmaidín; Eargail Arts Festival; and Féile Sheáin Uí Dhochartaigh, Co. Donegal.

#### *The Other Tongues.*

*The Other Tongues: An Introduction to Writing in Gaelic and Scots in Ulster and the West of Scotland.* Irish Pages. First print: 2014, reprint: 2016.

*The Other Tongues* is the first anthology of its kind which brings together Scots and Scottish and Irish Gaelic before a wider public. The link between Irish Gaelic and Scots is important at a policy level in Northern Ireland, and Scottish Gaelic and Scots are recognised as indigenous languages of Scotland. The layout of *The Other Tongues* is based on the model of *Leabhar Mòr na Gàidhlig*, a book and exhibition which went throughout Ireland and Scotland

and many places in Canada and the United States of America. There is a selection of poems in each language as well as works of art and background details. The idea came from Colmcille, and *Irish Pages* was particularly qualified to undertake this project as they had editing skills in Irish and English already, and a distribution network in Ireland and throughout Scotland and England.

### *Guthanna na nGael*

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Dundalk & and the organisation Fèisean in Scotlan, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018

CCÉ (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann) Dundalk has created a partnership with youth clubs connected with Fèisean in Scotland. There are any young people in the Comhaltas in Dundalk who can speak Irish, but there is a gap between ability and use. This is the first project which made the young musicians use Irish among themselves. There is competition involved to get to go on the trip, with the young people knowing they will not get a place if they do not speak Irish. Colmcille funded a preparatory visit so that people on both sides who were involved in and administrating the project would get to know each other, and that they would make a plan for the partnership. Resources are shared by both sides as a result of the teaching of music and language, and the partnership has been a great success. Each year teenagers from Dundalk CCÉ a week in Scotland at a fèis chiùil for people of the same age as themselves, and in 2016 and 2018 teenagers from Scotland participated in Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

### *Tír Cholmcille*

The aim of Colmcille is that people will look again at the relationship between Ireland and Scotland, and for that reason the *Tír Cholmcille* map was created. This publication puts Ireland and Scotland on one single map and displays Scottish and Irish Gaelic placenames. The map encourages people to look again at the image they have of the two countries and their relationship with each other, because it is not the usual layout on the map. People do not remember or know that Scotland is to the north of Ireland as well as to our east. Between Ireland and the North Pole as well as between Ireland and Northern Europe. In 2012 a new edition of the map was made with new information from Scotland which was added to the map as a result of cooperation with Ainmnean-Àite na h-Alba. In 2014 the University of Chicago Press requested permission to use

the map in its book series *The History of Cartography*. The *Tír Cholmcille* map is one of the most effective publications with which Colmcille has been associated, and it has been an internal project. The first edition was issued in 2002 and the second edition in 2012.

### *Theatre gu Leòr & Scotties*

In 2017 Colmcille, in Ireland and Scotland, funded development work on *Scotties*, a play about the lives of immigrants from Achill engaged in seasonal work in Scotland in the 1920s, which deals with memory and loss, and the affinity between Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and how we look on the burden of history. This is an example of the advantage the arts have in imagining a community anew, and mediating between the audience and multiple aspects of life. As this report is completed in the autumn of 2018, the play is on tour in Scotland, and the 2018 tour will end in Achill Island where much of the development work was carried out.

### *The Arts – Conclusion*

The arts can present life and heritage in a way in which there is a brand new twist. A good example of that is *The Other Tongues*, an anthology which brings together the literature and song of Scottish and Irish Gaelic and Scots in Ireland and Scotland, and is associated with other work on *Irish Pages* in which all these languages are together. The arts can link areas of language use, such as music, the arts and education, and strengthen language use at the same time.

## **Heritage**

### *Slí Cholmcille –*

#### *Background*

Slí Cholmcille links Ireland and Scotland with a series of paths associated with Saint Colmcille and other early Christian saints. Slí Cholmcille has four main elements:

- Heritage
- Language
- Community (including Scottish and Irish Gaelic communities)

- Tourism

The Slí Cholmcille project is connected with Colmcille, a partnership between Foras na Gaeilge and its counterpart in Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Foras na Gaeilge directs the site on behalf of both organisations. The website is trilingual in Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and English.

The material and images on the site at present are of a high standard (see [www.colmcille.org](http://www.colmcille.org)). Foras na Gaeilge does not intend to build the site from scratch. What they wish to do is to adapt the site and organise the material so:

- that it will cater for a range of visitor requirements, giving an insight to the general visitor, and detailed information when necessary;
- that the link it has with partnership organisations in the heritage, community and tourism sector (including Scottish and Irish Gaelic) will be clearer;
- that new sites that are recognised as important, and new information that has come to light since the website was first created will be included in it;
- that it will be easier for visitors to navigate through it and that it will be accessible from mobile devices.
- that Foras na Gaeilge will be using effective and user friendly content management systems.

### *Developments from 2012*

Since the website was launched in 2012 significant changes have been implemented. These include:

- Adding Google maps to it
- Rearrange certain parts, for example the part on Iona, to keep the website up to date with the latest research
- Building links with local communities, including partnership in the production of local maps and leaflets, for example Gleann Cholm Cille, Derry City, and the Isle of Lewis

### *Developments in archeology and community participation*

Since the establishment of the website interest in the early Christian saints and the church sites associated with them has greatly increased, and there have been significant developments in archeology and medieval studies. For example, local communities are working in partnership with archeologists at Díseart Cholmcille in the Blue Stack Mountains, Drumhome in south Donegal, in Inishowen and the Hebrides. Some of this work influences the material on the website already, but there is other material, especially on sites not yet on Slí Cholmcille, yet to be considered. More mapping and material will be needed for that.

## **Sport**

### *Iomáin Cholmcille*

This is a sport festival, in which hurlers in the traditions of Scotland and Ireland come together for compromise rules. The festival has taken place 10 times between 2004 and 2017, and it is going from strength to strength. Men only took part at the start, but in 2016 there was a women's competition along with the men's competition for the first time. It greatly enhanced the event, and is part of it since. As a result of the result, from the autumn of 2018 on there will be a festival and hurling competition in Scotland for primary school children who are getting their education through the medium of Scottish Gaelic. The festival encourages interest in the link between Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic; it is a very good event in itself. There are particular opportunities to create relationships and communication between young people between 16 and 35, and between Gaelic medium education children who play in a mini competition. There are similarities between Iomáin Cholmcille and Comórtas Peile na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht football competition) Although Iomáin Cholmcille is smaller (around 3000 participating between all the players), the use of Scottish and Irish Gaelic is more secure in it.

## **Education and Youth Partnerships**

Children in Gaelic medium education are often isolated from other children of their own age, or from Gaelic speaking peers outside of their own school, and they have few opportunities for a Gaelic medium life outside of school. The partnership between Gaelic medium education in both countries gives an opportunity:

- to create a relationship with a school which speaks another kind of Gaelic and to use that Gaelic in their communication
- to learn about the life of those young people and about their culture and the things they are interested in
- to be working on aspects of the curriculum both schools are interested in (literacy in the case of Gairmscoil Chú Uladh and Aonad Gàidhlig Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic; heritage and the arts in the case of Gaelscoil Neachtain).

Colmcille is funding partnerships between schools since it came into existence, recognising possible partners and carrying out facilitation between them. Significant work is involved in a school trip, and it does not happen without resource and diligence or forward planning.

In 2015-2018 there were partnerships between the following schools:

Gairmscoil Mhic Dhiarmada, Árainn Mhór, and Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu (grant developed 2016 & grant for a school trip 2017)

Gairmscoil Chú Uladh, Gleann Fhinne, and Àrd-sgoil a' Phluic (school trip 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018)

Gaelcholáiste Dhoire and Àrd-sgoil Loch Abair, grant developed 2016 & and & school visit 2017; visit by Àrd-sgoil Loch Abair to Gaelcholáiste Dhoire planned for November 2018

Visit by Sir E Scott School, Harris, to Pobalscoil Ghaoth Dobhair 2015 & 2017 (funded from the Scottish side)

Gaelscoil Neachtain: Gaelscoil Neachtain has an art programme and a visit to Bun-sgoil Shlèite 2015, 2016, 2018

A visit by Sgoil an Taobh Siar, Leódhas, to Gaelscoil Mhichíl Cíosóig, 2018

There are additional challenges involved in primary schools visiting each other due to the age of the children, but here are some examples. Gaelscoil Neachtain, Dún Geimhin, made two visits to Bun-sgoil Shlèite in the Isle of Skye, and they made a third visit in April 2018. This partnership has a strong art and heritage programme. The heritage programme is base don the relationship

the O’Kane family on the north coast of Ireland had with Scottish islands, and with Ruairí Dall Ó Catháin, a harper from County Derry from the 17th century.

As well as funding from the trip itself, Colmcille helps through small grants which enable representatives from the schools to meet together, to get to know each other, and to develop a partnership plan. From evidence of the schools themselves, they succeed much more, when they have an opportunity to meet each other, to get to know each other, and to plan beforehand.

### *Youth and Music Organisations*

As minority languages Scottish and Irish Gaelic are in competition with English. There is particular importance in the language choice young people make, who are maturing, and, although they might have had Gaelic medium education, often support is needed to embed the use of Scottish and Irish Gaelic outside of the classroom.

In 2016, with facilitation and funding from Colmcille, Club Óige Lúraigh took part in Fèis Eilean an Fhraoich in Lewis. There is a strong sport (shinty) and music programme in the fèis, and Scottish Gaelic is part and a medium of much of it. There is a significant number in the club who were reared in Irish speaking families and who speak Irish among themselves. There are others who went through Irish medium education at primary level, but do not habitually speak it among themselves. Over eight days it became customary for all the members of the youth club to use Irish among themselves while at the club, and this habit has continued. The youth club recruits teenagers to go on the trip in the understanding that they will be happy to speak Irish among themselves and on their own; the activity greatly enriches the club, and in embeds the speaking of Irish at an formative age. Some of the young people were invited to play and sing at the Hebridean Celtic Festival and families from Lewis came to An Carn in Carntogher the first year. Since then it has become an annual trip, and it has greatly increased the efficacy of the youth club. Another outcome of this link is that a new partnership has been brought about between Club Óige Lúraigh and Muintearas, a youth organisation in the Gaeltacht. Six teenagers from Conamara and Donegal participated in the visit to Fèis Eilean an Fhraoich in 2018. This partnership is a valuable development for Club Óige Lúraigh and those at Carntogher with the foremost youth

organisation in the Gaeltacht. The youth club hopes to strengthen the partnership with Muintearas.

**Conclusion by Dónall Ó Baoill, May 2018<sup>3</sup>**

It is obvious that the attempts summarised above are succeeding well and that they are benefitting and influencing participants on both sides. Isolated Gaelic communities are strengthened by being a part of networks between Ireland and Scotland in which Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic are central, and it strengthens Scottish Gaelic in the network or local community. It contributes to their social capital (see the note below). This work should be built on and it would be no harm to spread out projects and bring new ventures to the fore.

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<sup>3</sup>Professor Dónall Ó Baoill cast an eye on the partnership activities of Colmcille in this period, and this conclusion is by Dónall, as is the note on social capital an Appendix 2.

## Appendix 2: Social Capital, Prof Dónall P. Ó Baoill

Social capital is a concept which has been to the fore for some 40 years, since P. Bourdieu wrote about it in 1983. Basically, it is an account of the interconnection between education, culture, economic and communities. The vitality of communities depends on the advances they make in applying particular concepts, and on the power this provides to them as a living sustainable community. The theoretical framework relating to social capital encompasses all the resources which the communities control on the basis of sustained daily interaction through means of institutions and other structures which create a common identity among communities, and which give them an understanding that they jointly own their own destiny.

It is clear that a great advantage to individual members of a community and to the communities as a whole is found in the ongoing language developments which provide resources in the form of various kinds of social capital, through participation in groups and networks within their own community, and in networks on a broader basis in their own country and with other countries in which related objectives are formed and pursued.

It will be evident to all that there is great potential and opportunities in this work which is being carried out already by Colmcille, and which is to be augmented on the basis of planning and developing research at various levels though trying and implementing new practices and contemporary innovations.

**Bourdieu, P. (1983)** 'The Forms of Capital' in A.H.Halsey et al (eds.) *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*, (New York: Oxford University Press.