

<p><b>Institution: University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 27 Area Studies</b></p>
<p><b>Title of case study: Keeping Orkney's Cruise Industry Afloat</b> University of the Highlands and Islands (Centre for Nordic Studies)</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) Tourism is a major industry, worth £32 million annually to the Orkney economy. Cruise ships are a crucial component of Orkney's tourism industry (source: Orkney Harbours; VisitScotland Orkney Office). An average of 70 ships call at Kirkwall each year. In 2009 Orkney was in danger of losing its status as the UK's premier port of call and bookings were down for 2010, not least, as our research indicated, because there was a great shortage of language speaking guides. As a result of our research publications and expertise, CNS was approached by Orkney Harbours and other stakeholders in December 2009 to create a new Scottish Tourist Guide Association (STGA) Orkney Green Badge programme with language training. The Scottish Tourist Guides Association is the only provider of professional training for guides in Scotland, with both national (Blue Badge Guides) and regional (Green Badge Guides) qualifications. The course was highly successful due to its immersive approach to cultural heritage, which was a direct result of the interdisciplinary focus of the underpinning research, and its use of educational technology. It resulted in a multidisciplinary qualification with a highly marketable language component which allowed 28 people to set up their own businesses.</p> <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) The interdisciplinary and multilingual research which underpins this case study has been undertaken by the members of CNS as individuals for 14 years and has resulted in over 50 publications during that time, many of whom have defined their fields. CNS itself as a research group has been in operation since 2006. The underpinning research ethos of CNS is the use of research for cultural projects which contribute to the sustainability of the communities it serves. Being located in the communities themselves has given us a unique perspective and an impetus to apply our research to create cultural capital. This research has been able to enhance understanding of the unique cultural and (pre)historical offerings to international tourists within the Northern Isles of Scotland. Research has enhanced knowledge and understanding and the associated dissemination of this research has identified international interest in the lay public. We were also able to provide a unique linguistic aspect to the programme – staff are either native speakers or very fluent in nine languages including Swedish, Norwegian, German, Gaelic, Greek, and French.</p> <p>We used our interdisciplinary research and insight into the lived experience of the island communities, past, present, and future, combined with research into minority languages and literature, archaeology, and applied pedagogical research into networked learning (such as that found in Heddle's publication: 'Multimedia blended network learning: A Culture Studies case study', DIVERSE, 2006, which was instrumental in Heddle being awarded a THES award for Most Imaginative Use of Distance Learning in 2005) to create the programme materials and the teaching pedagogy which allowed us to create new opportunities for economic prosperity in the cultural and tourism sectors. This was in line with our research that revealed the need for the guides and what those guides would need to know about Orkney, its culture and heritage, in order to operate successfully. We refined the programme academically and pedagogically between each iteration and extended its scope and range of CPD opportunities. The Scottish Tour Guiding Association described the programme as "invaluable, innovative, and exciting". It is a 100 hour guiding and language course aimed at improving and adding to the guide cohort in Orkney which was also</p>

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available through technology across Scotland. We therefore influenced STGA policy and practice nationally in creating and delivering this type of course and have been asked to create a Scotland-wide multimedia version in 2014.

The programme itself runs over 6 months covering both practical and taught sessions to develop Tour Guiding skills to the Green Badge award level. Taught sessions are Part I of the course, and students may progress to Part II, the practical guiding sessions where they also undertake language assessments. All students graduated in more than one language with the majority choosing German as the need for German speaking guides was considered most acute by our stakeholders in the cruise industry. Other languages covered were French, Spanish, English, Polish, and Swedish.

Students learned about Orkney covering amongst other things; language (based on research outputs noted at references 2 and 3 below), literature, cultural history (based on research outputs noted at references 1-4 below), geology, climate, pre-history, art and architecture, mythology, historical figures, social demographics (based on research outputs 1-4 below), leisure recreation, entertainment and sports. In addition they received practical training in guiding; in rural and urban environments, on a moving vehicle, on walking tours, as well as in museums, art galleries etc. They learned all this from an interdisciplinary, holistic, and interactive focus which reflected best practice in integrative research.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Jennings, 'The Ethnic Enigma', in Andras Mortensen and Símun V. Arge, eds., *Viking and Norse in the North Atlantic. Selected papers from the Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress* (Torshavn 2005). The Viking Congress is an invitation only conference at the highest levels of the field. The volume contributions are peer reviewed and judged the best of the conference output.
2. Ljosland, Ragnhild 'Norse Cultural Influence in the Work of Christina M. Costie', in *Across the Sólundarhaf: Connections between Scotland and the Nordic World. Selected Papers from the Inaugural St. Magnus Conference 2011*, Journal of the North Atlantic Special Volume 4, 2013. One external peer reviewer commented as follows: "Clear research aim, analytical framework, empirical research and conclusions".
3. Reeploeg, Silke 'Reading Material Culture in the North Atlantic: traditional wooden boxes as intercultural objects', in *Across the Sólundarhaf: Connections between Scotland and the Nordic World. Selected Papers from the Inaugural St. Magnus Conference 2011*, Journal of the North Atlantic Special Volume 4, 2013. One external peer reviewer commented as follows: "Well structured and well written article using mix of research methods and empirical research to draw clear conclusions."
4. Sanmark, Alex 'The Case of the Greenlandic Assembly Sites', Journal of the North Atlantic, Special Volume 2 (2009-10), 178-192. One external peer reviewer commented as follows: "Well structured article, again with clear questions, methods and discussion".

#### Relevant research grants

- UHI Seed corn funding 2009 – dialect survey £5,000
- Innovation Voucher for DVD development from Scottish Funding Council 2009 £5,000
- NPP Northern Heritage project 2002-6 £333,000
- HERA/AHRC The Assembly Project (TAP) - Meeting places in Northern Europe AD 400 - 1500 is a collaborative project investigating the first systems of governance in Northern Europe 2010-2013 £850,000 (value to CNS: £108,511)

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- AHRC Orkney and Shetland Dialect Corpus Scoping Study Feb- Oct 2012 £13,226

Research from these projects was also deployed in the programme.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The project represents an innovative collaboration between a university cultural studies research centre and a commercial business which aimed to address a gap in the skills market for Orkney's cruise industry - developing language qualified tour guides. This was in response to research conducted on behalf of, and in collaboration with, Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Harbours, and Cruise Orkney.

This programme was aimed at addressing a shortage of qualified tourist guides who can explain the cultural context of Orkney in a range of languages so that visitors from all over the world can have the full benefit from their visit and carry away lasting memories. Many tourists visiting the region have very limited or no English language skills, especially those that are in the region for short periods of time such as those arriving on cruise liners. There is a growing and increasingly lucrative market for multilingual tour guides to enhance the Orkney experience. Orkney Harbours' Michael Morrison noted "This intensive course provided a much needed requirement for languaged guides for the cruise industry and for Orkney tourism generally." (Source: Letter from Orkney Harbours). The main source of revenue for tourism operators on Orkney is in fact tours from cruise liners. The major loss of revenue occasioned by tourists preferring to spend their money on a trip at another port which provided a language guide was a fundamental blow at the sustainability of the industry and also affected retailers, craftspeople etc who relied on the cruise liner spend.

The programme encouraged local people to see tourism and cultural heritage as providing career opportunities. It presented cultural heritage to local and tourist alike in a new and integrative manner and improved the understanding of cultural heritage as having economic benefits and thereby improving employment opportunities. Communities need to be able to create and manage their own cultural capital and to be empowered by an understanding of and value for what they have and the products thereof. There is a clear relationship between knowledge and power and our research agenda has allowed us to help the communities to make the leap from the theoretical to the practical, and indeed the practicable, use of their lived experience.

The course started in March 2010 and the first 11 students graduated in October 2010 in English, Spanish, French, German, Swedish and Polish. Bookings for 2010 and 2011 increased as a direct result of this course which was repeated in 2012 with 17 graduates and will run in Shetland in 2013. The first iteration was only available in Orkney. The second iteration was also placed online and attracted students from all over Scotland as well as in Orkney. The sessions were recorded and this allowed existing guides to undertake a recognised CPD opportunity by accessing topics and lectures of specific value to them. This was clearly successful. Orkney Harbours have pledged to finance any further courses (source: letter from Orkney Harbours). CNS has been asked by STGA to run a similar course in Shetland in 2013 and STGA have discussed the possibility of running the course in the Western Isles in 2014. STGA have also requested resources for a Scotland wide Blue Badge (higher level) course to run from 2014.

This project had impact in the following areas:

1. Economic prosperity. We applied our research to creating a course leading to job opportunities that were not previously available and which contributed to the economic prosperity of the Orkney community. We also safeguarded jobs attached to the cruise industry and income streams for local businesses which would have been severely affected by a downturn in business. This was a major stimulus to the tourist experience in Orkney

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and will impact on Shetland and the Western Isles in the years to come.

2. Cultural life. We interpreted cultural capital to create a sustainable resource with community ownership. We preserved and presented cultural heritage in a new, enriching, and interactive way which was considered excellent in every way by the stakeholders and clients.
3. Education. This was a unique education opportunity with economic and social inclusion benefits for lifelong learners.
4. There was also measurable impact on other cultural sectors, eg. Archaeology as fully trained tour guides were available to interpret the sectors and maximise tourist experience. Impact was therefore economic, social, and experiential. Indicators for this include the following:

The funding received from Orkney Harbours for both iterations of the course was given as it was deemed of crucial significance to the cruise industry in Orkney. Kirkwall was named the best British port of call in the 2010 UK cruise industry awards, and the islands as a whole were voted the UK's top destination for cruise liners in 2010 and 2011. Kirkwall came second in the international cruise industry awards in 2013.

74 cruise ships booked to visit the islands during 2012. Those booked for 2012 had a combined gross tonnage of 1.6 million tonnes and together will have 43,000 passengers. 2013 was shaping up as a bumper year, with Princess Cruises making three additional bookings involving 3599 passengers each time, bringing the total to 78 liners booked with 61579 passengers in total.

Disembarkation figures 2009-2012 (source: Orkney Harbours)

2009: **26,978**

2010: **25,464**

2011: **29,875**

2012: **41,563**

From these figures, it can be seen that the disembarkation numbers were declining until 2010 and increased incrementally after 2010 when the first tranche of fully trained guides were available. This increase was directly linked to the availability of such guides (source: Orkney Harbours) Impacts in Orkney from tour guide work generated by the first course, including induced impacts, are estimated at 7 ftes (11 in head count) and £140,000 in income. The second course generated an estimated 17 ftes and £340,000 in income (source: CNS Economic Impact Study commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise).

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Corroboration of economic impact: CNS Economic Impact Study commissioned by HIE
2. Corroboration of value and innovation of course: Statements from STGA Training Managers and letter of commendation
3. Corroboration of fundamental significance to Orkney's Cruise Industry: Letter and statistics from Business Development Manager, Orkney Harbours
4. Corroboration of economic, cultural, and educational impact: Statement from Orkney Tour Guides Association
5. Corroboration of economic, cultural, and educational impact: Statement from Islands Manager, VisitScotland Orkney Office