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### **Crofting, Culture, and Language in the West of Scotland**

The goal of this project is to explore the relationship between, on the one hand, Gaelic culture and language, and on the other, past and present crofting practices. While much research has been carried out on both of these topics, relatively little has been done on the overlap of the two. So while we might know a lot about the economic and environmental value of crofting, we perhaps know less about how social, cultural, and linguistic values relate to crofting. I hope to explore themes related to questions of:

- How have crofting practices have changed, both in terms of what is produced, and in terms of how crofting townships are organized?
- What are people's motivations for crofting? How does crofting reflect a sense of belonging, or of stewardship of the land?
- What kinds of Gaelic terms are specific to agricultural practices? As these practices change, are these words lost?

In practical terms, I'm hoping to start the research in earnest from 2015. In addition to interviews with people, I'd also hope to actually spend time working with people on their crofts to get a better understanding of the work involved.

The project has several objectives, some of which are directed towards an academic audience, some towards a policy making audience, and some towards crofting communities themselves. Academic audiences will be primarily interested in theoretical questions about the ways productive practices engage with language. Policy makers may be interested in a detailed elaboration of the cultural and linguistic value of crofting, especially as the concepts of the public good comes to the fore in the revision of the Common Agricultural Policy. Communities themselves may be most interested in the immediate data itself; recording vocabularies of specific practices; place names; and so on.

If you have any suggestions or questions as to the directions this research might take, or if you'd be willing to be interviewed or have me spend time on your croft, do please get in touch, either by email or phone:

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