



Bun is Bàrr: Na Gaisgich Òga Pilot Project Survey Report



Prepared by Frances MacEachen
Gaelic Affairs

October 17, 2014

Executive Summary

Bun is Bàrr: Na Gaisgich Òga pilot program was a community-based youth mentorship program that was supported by Colaisde na Gàidhlig and Gaelic Affairs and a team of volunteers, parents, community partners and mentors. Ten young people participated in this program from September 2013 until July 2014. They attended monthly Thursday to Saturday residential sessions, held in homes throughout Northeastern Nova Scotia. They had one session at Colaisde na Gàidhlig and one at Taigh an t-Sagairt cultural centre, Glendale. In between sessions they worked with a personal mentor for at least four hours a month and did homework assignments. The educational focus was on learning Gaelic through Gàidhlig aig Baile sessions, formal language instruction, history lessons and social activities. Gaelic elders and cultural resource people were part of each session.

As a sponsor, Gaelic Affairs wanted to capture what was learned and experienced in this program. On-line surveys were developed for parents, mentors, educators and volunteers. The youth participated in a facilitated evaluation session and filled in a youth survey.

Overall a large percentage of respondents believed the program was either successful or very successful in meeting its goals, with youth and educators giving it a slightly higher success rating than the other groups. Most of the youth felt the goal “Develop awareness in youth of the responsibility they have to contribute to the sustainability of the language,” carried with it a burden of responsibility they did not want to assume. Two educators questioned this goal as well.

All groups felt this provided a wonderful opportunity for youth and that the children bonded as a group of Gaelic friends. Educators felt the youths’ language skills came along, but all educators (and some mentors and parents) felt too much English was spoken during the sessions. Defining the Gaelic content for future programs will be important. Other programs that teach French in Nova Scotia and aboriginal languages in British Columbia are done through immersion.

All groups surveyed valued the contribution of the Gaelic-speaking elders, particularly the youth. Youth seemed to want less technology as part of Na Gaisgich Òga, and favored hands-on learning, outdoor activities, field trips, time with elders and enjoyed learning about history. However, a few said they didn’t like long lectures and documentaries. Their comments showed they are thinking about the role of Gaelic in their lives. They liked going to different homes and communities, although this was challenging for some parents and some educators. Their posters paint a picture of strong inter-generational and social learning impact. Exploring how to get strong language learning outcomes in addition to supporting youths’ social development and community building outcomes will need sustained attention in future programs.

Some parents stressed they did not like their children missing two days of school and found it a challenge to get to the community locations. Most parents expressed thanks to the teachers, volunteers and organizers and felt that their child was fortunate to be in this program.

Mentors enjoyed the time with the youth, but said the program would be improved with a mentors’ orientation, more communication between program educators and mentors and greater mentor participation in the weekends. Volunteers also enjoyed their time with the children and felt this was an important program. They would have liked Gaelic language lessons to allow them to participate in a

Gaelic immersion environment, and felt a person should be paid to buy groceries and cook if held in community venues.

Na Gaisgich Òga was an ambitious program and it took a lot of resources and effort to get it going and keep it going until the end. There were many high points, with adults drawing energy and inspiration from the children's progress and enthusiasm. Everyone could see how important this was for the children, and contributed 100% to make it happen. The final budgets estimates that close to \$25,000 worth of in-kind support was provided, with Colaisde na Gàidhlig and Gaelic Affairs offering twice that in in-kind and monetary resources. How to build on and sustain these significant efforts is what this survey report seeks to explore.

The report concludes with some suggestions and questions raised by the survey data. It also offers links to French and Aboriginal languages youth camps, including a 33-page handbook on setting up aboriginal language and cultural camps in British Columbia. Hopefully the information offered in this report will be useful to the Na Gaisgich Òga program currently being offered by Colaisde na Gàidhlig and future Gaelic programming in Nova Scotia.

Background

Bun is Bàrr: Na Gaisgich Òga was a community-based youth mentorship program that was initiated by Emily MacDonald and Tracey MacNeil, when they worked in Gaelic education and programming at Colaisde na Gàidhlig. It was associated with Bun is Bàrr mentoring programming developed by Gaelic Affairs. Some materials from Bun is Bàrr were adapted for use in the Na Gaisgich Òga program.

Na Gaisgich Òga was supported by Colaisde na Gàidhlig and Gaelic Affairs, and a team of volunteers, parents, community partners and mentors.



The Goals of the Bun is Barr: Na Gaisgich Òga Program were to:

- Create Gaelic speakers who are motivated to learn, enjoy, share and champion Gaelic Nova Scotia
- Provide young learners with an opportunity to be immersed in Gaelic language and culture
- Cultivate a sense of identity as young Gaels living in Nova Scotia
- Enlighten youth to become aware and to respect intergenerational opportunities in regards to Gaelic cultural acquisition.
- Develop an awareness in youth of the responsibility they have to contribute to the sustainability of the language

In August 2012, Colaisde na Gàidhlig received funding for the first phase of Na Gaisgich Òga from Gaelic Affairs through the GLIC (Gaelic Language in Community). This supported Colaisde na Gàidhlig in allowing their Gaelic Director, Emily MacDonald, to plan and develop all aspects of the program, which was to be delivered over 10 months beginning in September 2013. It also received program delivery funding under the June 2013 GLIC deadline.

Emily MacDonald set up and was a member of a community advisory committee to guide the program's development. Other members were Stacey MacLean, Margie Beaton, Goiridh Dòmhnallach, Emily MacDonald and Ian MacCalder.

The program was announced in May 2013 at Colaisde na Gàidhlig's Là na Sgoilearan event, with accompanying brochure, poster and video. Deadline for applications was June 10. Fourteen young people applied and 10 were selected by the selection committee. Successful applicants were contacted in August. Na Gaisgich were: Alasdair Cameron, Nora MacNeil, Stephen MacIntyre, Sarah MacInnis, Mabou; Lili Watson, Little Judique; Logan MacLellan, Ottawa Brook; Mikayla MacNeil, Washabuck, Grace Campbell and Leah Morrison, Sydney and Abigail MacDonald, St. Andrews.

These young people were to attend monthly three-day immersion sessions (Thursday to Saturday) for 10 months. They would be excused from school on days they were not in attendance, and planners tried to have the weekends coincide with school in-service days, which was a challenge since the children went to schools in two separate school boards.

There were eight full sessions held and one ½ day session in December, which had to be shortened from the intended full day due to weather. The January session was cancelled due to illness.

The sessions were held in parent/volunteer homes in Mabou, Ottawa Brook, Little Judique, St. Andrews, Sydney Mines, Iona and at *Colaisde na Gàidhlig*, Mabou Renewal Centre and *Taigh an t-Sagairt* (Community Centre), Glendale.

In between monthly sessions, participants worked with a personal Gaelic language mentor for at least four hours per month, which kept them engaged with Gaelic language and culture. Volunteer mentors were: Kenneth MacKenzie (Nora), Bernard Cameron (Alasdair and Sarah), Joanne MacIntyre (Stephen), Jim Watson (Lili), Emily MacDonald (Logan), Stacey MacLean (Mikayla), Amber Buchanan (Leah and Grace) and Kathleen Reddy (Abigail). Na Gaisgich were expected to write about their monthly and mentoring sessions in their journals, do assigned homework, which may include listening to a Gaelic story and answering questions about it, listening to recorded NGO and mentoring sessions, memorizing proverbs, and/or watching a documentary on the Gaels. They also were asked occasionally to produce their own short Gaelic video and post it to the Na Gaisgich Òga YouTube channel, and to phone their assigned phone buddy. The degree to which Na Gaisgich did this work and worked with their mentors between sessions varied from youth to youth.

The educational focus was on learning Gaelic through Gàidhlig aig Baile sessions, formal language instruction and other social activities. Children were also given history lessons on the Gaels. Gaelic elders were part of each session. The elders were: Catherine Cameron, Mabou, Hughie Chisholm, Kingsville; Michael (Migi) MacNeil, Jamesville, Anna MacKinnon, Inverness, Joe MacKinnon, Lower South River, Margaret MacPhee, Baddeck, and Jean MacKay, Westmount. The children also interacted with Gaelic speakers, local historians and musicians, including: John Phillip Rankin, Alex Hugie MacInnis, Shelly Campbell, Colin Watson, Jim Watson, Angus MacLeod, Nona MacDonald Dyke, Stacey MacLean, Naomi Harvey, Joyce MacDonald, Colin MacDonald, Mary Jane Lamond, Amber Buchanan, Susan Cameron, Angus Farrell and Kathleen Reddy.

Community events and field trips were part of the program. There was a community céilidh at the MacNeil's home in West Mabou, at the MacLellan home in Ottawa Brook, An Drochaid, Mabou, at the Celtic Music Interpretative Centre in Judique, and at Comunn Gàidhlig Antaiginis/Gaelic Society of Antigonish in Antigonish. Na Gaisgich toured Glendale parish with Goiridh Dòmhnallach, visited Kathleen Reddy's Gaelic class at St. F.X. and toured the University's Special Collections with librarian Susan Cameron. They went on a trip to Two Rivers Wildlife Park and participated in animation activities at Nova Scotia Highland Village Musuem.

Activities included horseback riding, outdoor games such as kick the can, hopscotch, wizards/giants/elves, making Halloween and Christmas crafts, lessons and traditions associated with the seasons and holidays, stories and proverbs, kinship, basic conversation, writing lessons, history lessons and documentaries, making foods like *maragan*, oatcakes, *bonnach*, *bonnach buidhe* (cornbread), *sruthan* (St. Michael's cake), mincemeat, planting seeds, yoga, storytelling through drama, story boarding with felt pieces, playing cards, board games, traditional remedies and medicine making, learning and singing songs, making short video blogs (vlogs), milling frolics and step dancing.

Changes in program leadership happened about midway through the program. Emily MacDonald left as lead educator in December of 2013. After leaving her position at Colaisde na Gàidhlig in June of 2013, Tracey MacNeil continued to support Na Gaisgich Òga as a volunteer until January of 2014. Tracey

solicited support from community groups, and held meetings with Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society / Féis Mhàbu, the Cape Breton Gaelic Society, Feis an Eilein, Rankin School of the Narrows, and Highland Village. Donations/program investments resulting from these meetings totalled \$2,526. She organized fundraisers at the Red Shoe in Mabou raising an additional \$476. These fundraisers were significant in that they raised the profile of the program in the community. The last fundraiser at the Red Shoe, for example, was attended by many of the children who sang and played the fiddle during the jam session.

Gaelic Affairs began providing more administrative support beginning in the fall of 2013. It increased its human resource and financial support of the program in 2014. Shay MacMullin replaced Emily MacDonald as lead educator in January 2014. Goiridh Dòmhnallach continued in his role as educator and Joyce MacDonald, interim Gaelic Director at the Gaelic College, provided support on some weekends, as did Colin MacDonald, who as the newly hired Gaelic Director attended the May session. Glenda MacNeil and Phyllis MacLellan were steadfast as chaperones, cooks and volunteers throughout the program and were assisted on occasion by Emily Clegg, Nancy Cameron, Mary Elizabeth MacInnis, Emily MacDonald and Kathleen MacDonald

Gaelic Affairs sponsored a trip to Halifax for Na Gaisgich to participate in the Gaelic Awareness Month opening ceremonies at Province House on April 30. While there they received certificates from the Minister of Gaelic Affairs, Randy Delorey, recognizing their participation in the program. They participated in a government webcast on the event, sang, danced a square set in Province House, and toured Province House. They were introduced from the floor of the House by MLA Allan MacMaster and recognized by Minister Delorey.

(Photos in this report are courtesy of Nancy Cameron, Joyce MacDonald and Frances MacEachen).



Budget

Revenue

1. Gaisgich registration paid by parents	4,000
2. Gaisgich fees paid by Rankin School of Narrows	1,000
3. 50% Jacket payment collected	520
4. Fundraising	<u>1,526</u>
	\$7,046

Gaelic Affairs Contribution

1. GLIC funding to Gaelic College	10,364
2. Gaelic Educator (3 months)	4,800
3. Staff time (in-kind)	15,000
4. Contribution to poster	<u>627</u>
	\$30,791

Gaelic College Contribution

1. Lead Educator wages (planning and 4 mos of program)	9,000
2. Posters and Brochure	617
3. Facility rental (in-kind 2 nights x 33 x 13 + \$100)	958
4. In-house design of poster and brochure (in-kind)	700
5. In-house educational support and administration	<u>1,000</u>
	\$12,275

Total Gaelic College, Gaelic Affairs and Fundraising **\$50,112**

Other Sources –Volunteer and In-Kind

1. Travel money returned (donation)	50
2. Mentor stipend returned (donation)	130
3. Parents provided supper, Mabou	200
4. Buying Groceries (7 Trips	1,050
5. Cook (7 Sessions)	1,750
6. Chaperones/Volunteers	3,450
7. Travel to 9 sessions (volunteers and educators)	3,000
8. Honorariums not taken (donation)	600
9. Mentoring Services (8 mentors x 40 hrs x \$20/hr)	6,400
10. Field trips (mileage)	360
11. Volunteer Administration	1,000
12. Facilities (home, community centres, Gaelic College)	5,577
13. Ceilidh events (tea and facility)	250
14. Facilitates for instruction	600
15. Highland Village Support Staff and site (in-kind)	<u>800</u>

Total In-kind **\$25,212**

Total Revenue **\$75,329**

Expenses

Equipment and materials (specify below)

1. Brochures and Poster	1,944
2. Programming materials	657
3. Food	4,942
4. Jackets	1,093

Staff cost or resource person fees & expenses.

1. Project planning wages (Phase 1)	7,200
2. Main Educator Wages (Program)	16,000 (\$20/hr x 80 hours month)
3. Second Educator (GA in-kind)	10,000
4. Mentoring (in-kind)	6,400 (8 mentors x 40 hours x \$20)
5. Elders/Guests (\$600 in-kind)	1,410
6. Cook (in-kind)	1,750 (7 sessions x \$250)
7. Chaperones/volunteers (in-kind)	3,450 (3 chap.x 23 days/15 nights @ \$50/day)
8. Gaelic College support in-house support	1,000

Administration

1. Volunteer (in-kind)	1,000
2. Gaelic Affairs (in-kind)	5,000
3. Buying Groceries	1,050

Facilities

1. Homes, Gaelic College, Taigh an t-Sagairt	6,435 (\$33 x 15 nights x 13 people)
2. Ceilidh Events (tea and facility)	250
3. Venues for Classes	750 (\$100 x 7 sessions, convent in Mabou \$50)
4. Highland Village venue and staff support	800

Travel

1. Steering Committee	454
2. Mentors	1,179
3. Educators/Volunteers to monthly sessions	3,000
4. Field Trips	360

Total Expenses **\$76,124**

Shortfall **\$795**

Survey

Gaelic Affairs wanted to capture what was learned and experienced in this program, which could inform future Gaelic programming. In June, on-line surveys were created by Gaelic Affairs to collect feedback on the pilot program from parents, educators, mentors, and volunteers. These were administered through Survey Monkey. Five surveys tailored to the respondent groups were administered.

The youth survey was facilitated by volunteer Bernadette Campbell, a child and adolescent counsellor and principal of Inverness Education Centre. She has experience in administering youth surveys, and met with the youth at the end of the May session. Three youth were not present, but surveys were sent to them and their parents by email. Two later sent their feedback in; one did not. Nine of the 10 Gaisgich responded. We've included the youth's feedback as well as the facilitator's observation in the youth section. For more detailed survey results see the document *Na Gaisgich Òga Survey Results*.

Results from Common Questions

Participants in all five surveys were asked to rate how successful Na Gaisgich Òga Pilot Program was in meeting its goals. The question was worded slightly different in the youth survey (*How strongly did this program meet the following goals?*). Here are the overall results. (For individual group responses see Na Gaisgich Òga Survey Results.)

The average rating is calculated by multiplying the number of responses by the assigned weight of each answer (see number in parentheses), adding the total and dividing by the sample size. The highest possible score is 5. You will see in the following table that respondents felt that goals 3 and 4 were most successfully achieved (4.30) while goal 5 was least successful (3.69).



Q1. How successful was Na Gaisgich Òga Pilot Program in meeting the following goals?

	Not successful (1)	Somewhat successful (2)	Neutral (3)	Successful (4)	Very successful (5)	Total Responses	Average Rating
1. Create Gaelic speakers who are motivated to learn, enjoy, share and champion Gaelic Nova Scotia	3% 1	20% 6	3% 1	27% 8	47% 14	30	3.93
2. Provide young learners with an opportunity to be immersed in Gaelic language and culture	3% 1	17% 5	3% 1	40% 12	37% 11	30	3.90
3. Cultivate a sense of identity as young Gaels living in Nova Scotia	0 0	13% 4	0.00% 0	30% 9	57% 17	30	4.30
4. Enlighten youth to become aware of and to respect inter-generational opportunities in regards to Gaelic cultural acquisition	0 0	7% 2	3% 1	43% 13	47% 14	30	4.30
5. Develop awareness in youth of the responsibility they have to contribute to the sustainability of the language	3% 1	14% 4	14% 4	48% 14	21% 6	29	3.69



Overall a large percentage of respondents believed the program was either **successful** or **very successful** in meeting its goals. For example, 74% of respondents felt NGO program was either successful or very successful in achieving Goal 1. Seventy-seven percent, (77%) said the same for Goal 2 -- 87% for Goal 3, 90% for Goal 4 and 69% for Goal 5.

Youth and educators rated the program's success highest of all the groups, while parents, mentors and volunteers gave the goals a slightly lower success rating. Two respondents thought they may not be close enough to the program or have enough Gaelic to be able to rate the goals. One mentor wrote: *"I have little knowledge on which to base my goal ratings as I didn't attend Gaishgich Òga weekends or spend time with participants other than my mentor partner."* One respondent out of 30 felt the program was **not successful** in meeting 3 of its goals.

Comments on Goals

Most respondents felt the program offered a wonderful opportunity for youth, and that this was a great beginning for youth programming, which is badly needed in Nova Scotia. Educators felt the youth made language progress, given the limited time they had together, and they especially bonded as group of Gaelic friends. Educators expressed challenges with student engagement at times, sometimes due to the layout of rooms they taught in or late nights that caused sleepiness. Interest, engagement and learning varied among youth.

Several respondents -- parents, mentors, and all four educators -- said there was too much English spoken during the sessions. One educator regretted there was no assessment of the youths' language skills at the beginning and end of the program.



The final goal, “Develop awareness in youth of the responsibility they have to contribute to the sustainability of the language,” received the most specific feedback. One educator did not score this goal, writing: *“I have always felt uncomfortable with the ‘duty’ aspect of outcomes. Even in the name of the program. The pressure created by this role/responsibility can be crippling and heavy. I think by instilling a love of language and culture in learners, you’ll find that they naturally become advocates if they are called to do so.”* Another educator felt, however, it is important to reinforce this with youth and thought more issues could be included like cultural diversity, and the relationship between identity and spiritual and economic health: *“It is important to plant seeds on these issues, even if they really only start to ponder them years from now.”*

This goal was problematic for a number of the youth. Six of the nine young people wrote about it in their evaluations. They said stress, expectation and pressure come with this responsibility. They say they are too young. Some expressed guilt with not being able to fulfill expectations.

Youth are obviously thinking about the role of Gaelic in their lives as is evident from the comments collected during their evaluation session (see page 14). In response to the goals, two youth said they are the only person in their home or at school with Gaelic, one said her/his Gaelic and English lives are separate, and one said they don’t see how Gaelic will fit in with what they choose as a career. They love the Gaelic elders, are more passionate about Gaelic now, more confident about speaking it and have a stronger identity. Two children said they didn’t like performing and one said they would like more real rather than technology and 2014 stuff.



Other comments on goals included that it would be good to have local programs and more elder native speakers involved. One parent shared concerns that performance and showcasing the children became a focus at the end of the program, as well as “political intentions” that seemed to override the priority of Gaelic immersion.

What did you value about Na Gaisgich Òga?

Opportunity was mentioned again by all groups. A parent said he/she appreciated how his/her child has the chance to visit Gaelic communities and take part in Gaelic culture. Another parent mentioned how valuable it was for her/his child to have total immersion sessions with his/her mentor. Quality of instruction, immersion experience, program goals and developing *“her appreciation of culture and desire to learn about it,”* were also cited. “Belonging” was a word used by two of the eight parents who responded. One said he/she valued *“my child’s sense of belonging to the group. “And to see how much Gaelic my child actually learned this year has been amazing.”*



Educators could see the valuable opportunity this offered youth, but also to them as they got to teach *“10 amazing young people.”* One educator wrote: *“The opportunity to educate some of the keenest young people . . . this group of Na Gaisgich Òga made stellar progress in a very short time. They received a fairly solid foundation in a number of important things: language, history, folklore, culture, the bonding of the group and sense of identity.”*

Another educator valued *“Time with elders, history, language lessons, storytelling, songs, community events, fun and bonding in a residential experience, preparing foods – all in the context of language.”*

Mentors also valued the opportunity it offered to youth and to them as well. One mentor wrote he/she valued *“having the opportunity to share my language and experiences with a young person who is learning the language.”* One said: *“I think the idea of developing a group of young people who are working toward fluency in Gaelic and expanding their knowledge of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia is excellent, and that the creation of this group has been achieved.”* They valued the youth’s enthusiasm and interest in Gaelic culture and values. Volunteers also mentioned this, and one added: *“It created a learning experience you can’t recreate in any classroom.”*

Youth were a bit more specific about the things they valued. These points were captured by Bernadette at the beginning of their evaluation session. They points were visually captured in the posters they did during the evaluation session (see pages 15 and 16):

- People, their friendship
- Our peer group
- The elders and native Gaelic speakers (love the elders)
- Volunteers and parents
- *Céilidhean*
- Being outdoors
- Visiting the places and community
- The late nights and talking among ourselves
- Our Gaelness (sic)
- Our Gaelic past
- Food (eating and making), Baking
- The jackets and t-shirts
- The pictures to help us remember
- The games—jumping the broom.
- The different houses (Catherine Cameron’s house specifically mentioned)
- Songs
- The Ceilidhs
- Dressing up
- Shay and Goiridh, Eamag and Archie
- Acting out
- Talking with each other
- Learning very important things
- Group sessions and one-on-one session
- Na Gaisgich Òga is pretty much perfect.

All groups surveyed valued the Gaelic elders, especially the youth who appreciated their time with them.



1) Na Gaisgich people / New friends!!



Elders / Native Gaelic Speakers



The Parents / Volunteers
WE Love you guys!!



History /
Gaelic
Pride

Seilich

Trips

Food!!



Outdoors

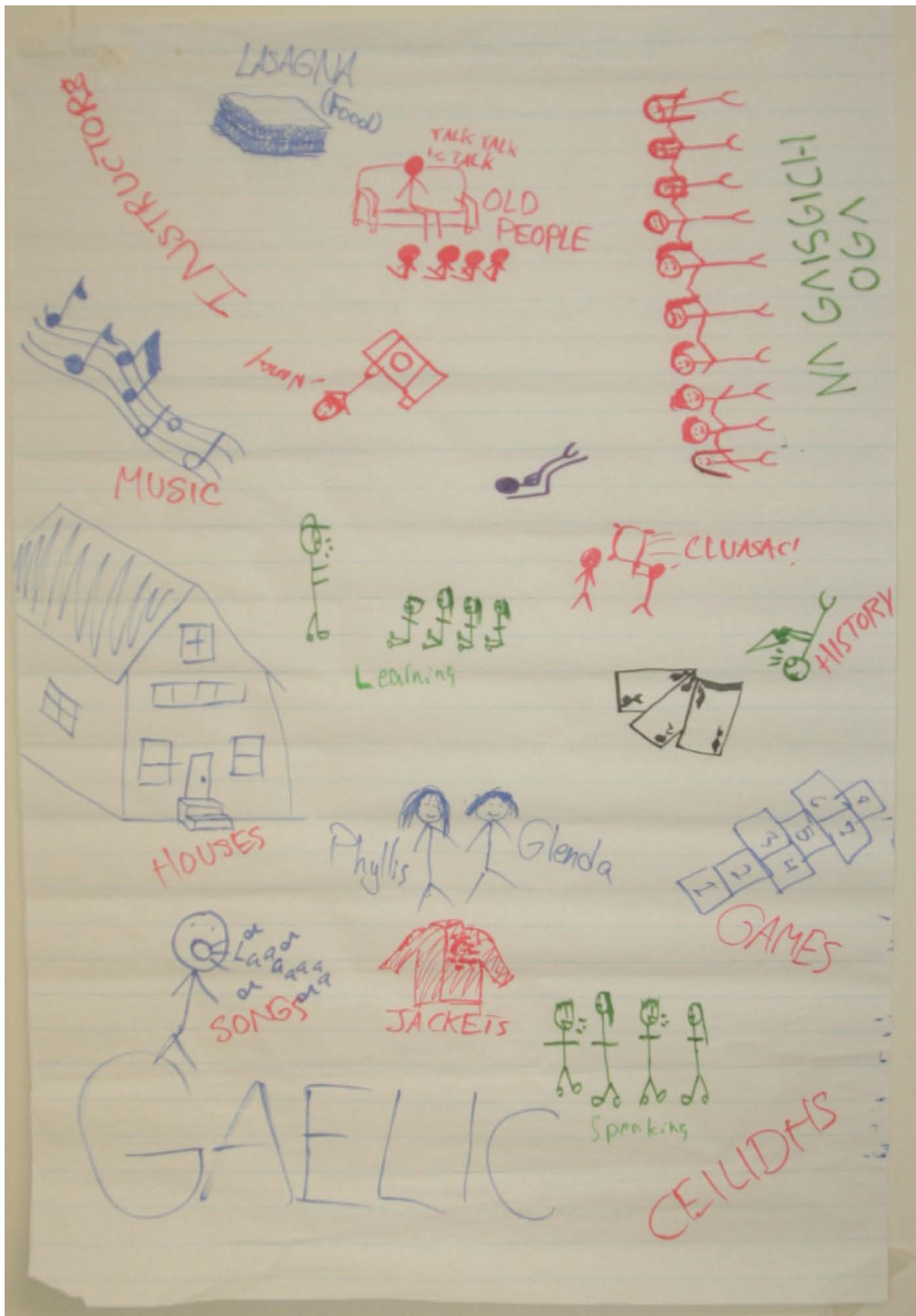
Stargazing
Nights

ANNA



Learning

Shay and
Gairidh



What did you find challenging?

A few parents repeated many times throughout the survey that having their child miss two days of school on most occasions was challenging. Two parents said they found having the session far from home made it difficult for the 9:00 a.m. arrival time and two said overnight stays a distance from home were challenging. Catching up on homework was mentioned. One parent said that her/his child felt overlooked and it seems some other children got more attention.

Educators also found the home locations challenging, especially homes which weren't big enough or laid out in way that minimized English conversations from the kitchen, for example. (Home locations, however, were valued for the natural learning environment they provided.) Continuing momentum between sessions was cited as was frustration with some of the youth not doing their homework, meeting with their mentors or keeping in Gaelic through the sessions. One educator wondered if youth were mature enough to direct their own study. He/she also said that he/she couldn't help but think that the social environment and "fun" was the main reason for some of them being there. Scheduling was mentioned as a challenge by three of the educators. They felt they didn't have enough time with the children and that sometimes time was lost when youth arrived late, or they took longer for lunch or breaks, or when weather or other uncontrollable facts resulted in a loss of time or last minute changes.

Having youth of different language ability was challenging. Youth ranged from those who spoke Gaelic in the home to those who have had limited instruction and exposure.

Keeping an all-Gaelic environment was mentioned as a challenge by all the educators. They acknowledged that this was not easy since some of their most valuable volunteers were not Gaelic speakers.

For their part, volunteers said it was challenging not to be able to support the immersion environment and said they would have appreciated time with instructors to learn some basic Gaelic phrases. "Make these weekends a true immersion experience for EVERYONE," said one volunteer.

Youth weren't specifically asked the question, "What did you find most challenging," but they were clear what they didn't like about the program. Top of the list would be homework. Some said they didn't like writing in their journals (one youth called this "busy work") and 7 of the 9 youth respondents said they didn't like making videos that they were expected to upload to the *Na Gaisgich Òga* YouTube website and for a few the phone calls were stressful. They valued much more outside activities, hands on learning, history, field trips and time with their elders.

Overall, mentors survey responses expressed a frustration with program management and communication which had some of them feeling they didn't have enough direction or involvement in

the program. Four mentors said it was challenging to find the time to meet with the youth they were to work with, and that the youth were not always self-directed enough to initiate meetings. One mentor cited “lack of long-range planning,” as a challenge.

How could this program be improved?

Respondents in all categories offered many suggestions for program improvement. Educators had the most. They were asked to suggest improvement to make the program more rewarding for them as an educator and more successful for youth in acquiring Gaelic language and cultural skills. Answers to both questions were similar. They felt that ensuring Gaelic is spoken more is important and one educator asked for a clearer policy on Gaelic-only time. One educator said activities they did in the pilot should be evaluated to ensure they are getting maximum language learning from these activities. He/she felt that perhaps some of the activities, like making crafts, were more focused on the activity than the language associated with it.

One educator felt that less time should be spent on learning history through the medium of English and more on *Gàidhlig aig Baile* activities. Another educator commented on the history component, saying it should be more recent history that they learn i.e. the Clearances, chain migration, regional dialects. A mentor suggested that there was no need of history lessons, especially if offered through English. He/she said: *“Gaisgich could be offered simplified historical and cultural context in Gaelic.”*

Educators said having more Gaelic-speaking people involved in the sessions would be important, as chaperones or guests, which would help keep them speaking in Gaelic and also allow 2:1 or 3:1 conversations. Having mentors come to the weekends would help, and also keep them in touch with the main program. A training session for mentors was deemed important and also training for all educators



(maybe with Gaelic teachers in schools) and better scheduling to ensure educators have time to meet, plan and debrief. Other suggestions included: stricter bedtimes, keep cultural experiences, more time together, better clarity of roles and responsibilities, more outside activities and storytelling through drama. Mileage and a place to sleep away from the programming location for the educator were mentioned by one educator. One educator stressed several times that

homes may not be the ideal location for language learning due to the presence of English speaking residents and layout, and preferred to have sessions at community venues or at Colaisde na Gàidhlig. Another educator said he/she liked teaching in the homes, especially Gàidhlig aig Baile.

One parent said knowing upfront the programming locations would improve the program. Another said knowing the curriculum for the year with expected outcomes, allowing children to take lead in planning the cultural events and clearer direction regarding homework and have it given out after the sessions. Having sessions closer to home was mentioned by one parent. One parent asked for a full evaluation by the program creators and analysis of Gaelic immersion programming and said that the program should be full immersion: no English. A parent said that it should be longer than 10 months.

Volunteer suggestions included a list of tasks and responsibilities for chaperones/volunteers and for students to be involved in food preparation, chores, clean up or cooking, which can all be incorporated in the *Gàidhlig aig Baile* method. More Gaelic instruction for the volunteers would make this an immersion experience for everyone. It was suggested that someone be hired to buy groceries, prepare meals and clean up and that the duty of the chaperone should be just to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

Mentors asked for an orientation session. One mentor said, "I think there could be a separate session at the beginning of the program, daylong, to initiate the relationship between the mentor/apprentice and to clearly outline everyone's expectations." Four mentors said this needed to be a complete immersion program. A mentor said the program "needs a blueprint," another remarked that parents need to do their part and another asked to ensure mentoring partners live close together.

Youth said they'd like to see more crafts and artistic expression through Gaelic, more outside activities, fewer documentaries and more fun activities. "Kids need fun to learn," wrote one youth. Food was important to them, and they asked for more variety. They seem to like more active rather than passive



listening activities. The social, “down time” was enjoyed by the youth. They were almost unanimous in not enjoying the homework, making videos for NGO YouTube channel, or phoning each other between sessions. They enjoyed the elder speakers and one youth asked for “more interesting subjects” (no elaboration) and that they should be focused on “Gaelic instead of going to non-Gaelic related activities.”

Would you participate again?

All the participants, except for youth, were asked if they would teach, volunteer/chaperone, register their child and mentor again.

Educators – 4 out of 4 said yes.

Parents – 4 out of 8 responded. 1 said yes, 1 said no, and 2 said I don’t know.

When asked what would need to change in order for them to send their children again, two parents said it needs to be total immersion, two commented again on travel and absence from school as a challenge, one parent asked for the youth to have a lead role in the next program and one asked for an educational plan.

Mentors -- 6 out of 7 responded. Three said yes, 1 said no and 2 said I don’t know.

One mentor said he/she is too busy, one said he/she would like to share the mentoring, one said pay for mentoring would be helpful. Two referred to the need for more support/communication.

Volunteer/Chaperones – 2 out of 2 responded. Two said “I don’t know”.

Both said it would depend on the people involved in the program.

Other comments

One educator said that local programs would be more do-able, but that regional groups should come together.

Four parents expressed thanks to all made this program possible. One wrote: *“I would like to say thank you to the teachers and mentors, organizers and chaperones who are all exceptionally giving, gifted and patient teachers – my child loves you all.”* One parent wondered where the program goes from here. *“They have come so far and I’m afraid without the support and challenges of a program, much of what they have learned will be lost.”* One parent said that leadership changes made it difficult for this program to achieve its goals.

Two mentors commented on the need for planning and developing an infrastructure for the program. One said she was proud of his/her mentoring partner and that the stipend was helpful. Another mentor said to ensure the best learners are in the program, and to keep the program based in community, with some sessions at the Gaelic College. Another mentor said awareness was the most important part of this program, that there should have been a public celebration at the end of the program to recognize the work that went into it. The mentors recognized the program's value and importance.

One volunteer said although there were bumps along the way, it was a good program and that the original team should be commended for their vision to create this program.

Results individualized group questions

Educators

Educators were asked what they found most rewarding as an educator in Na Gaisgich Òga. They all said it was rewarding to hear youth speak Gaelic without prompting, to teach them when they were seriously engaged, interested and asking questions. When asked what they learned, two educators mentioned this is a good age to learn a language, that they prefer working with children who are motivated to learn Gaelic, that children need rest to learn and that methods they have studied or tried in other language classes also work with these children. One educator said that it is a tremendous undertaking to deliver a program like this.



Parents

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction with components of the program.

- 7 out of 8 parents were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the level of supervision and safety, the variety of enriching and enjoyable activities offered, improvement of their child's Gaelic language and cultural skills, and the quality of the teaching.
- 6 out of 8 parents were either **satisfied or very satisfied** with the quality of communication offered by educational staff, the overnight component of the program, program organization, movement of the sessions from community to community, the Thursday to Saturday schedule and the involvement of elders and community Gaelic speakers
- 4 out of 8 parents were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the value of the program for registration fee paid (\$500) and with the community events.
- 3 out of 8 parents were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the quality of communication offered by program management.
- Components parents were **dissatisfied** with include Program organization (1 parent), level of safety and supervision offered (1), overnight (2) and involvement of Gaelic speaking elders and community Gaelic speakers (2).
- No parents were **very dissatisfied** with any of the components.

The components that tied for the highest average rating (4.38):

- Variety of enriching and enjoyable activities offered
- Movement of the sessions from community to community.

The components that tied for the lowest average rating (3.75):

- Quality of communication offered by program management.
- Value of program for registration fee paid.
- Thursday to Saturday schedule for sessions
- Community events

Mentors

Mentors were asked to rate their satisfaction with components of the program:

- 7 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with how engaged the young person was in the mentoring sessions
- 6 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the level of language progress made by the young person mentored.
- 5 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the quality of time they spent with the young person mentored, community events or other aspects they participated in, and the number of hours they volunteered in the program.
- 4 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with how easy it was to think of learning activity ideas, initiative taken by young person you mentored to plan meetings with you, and the involvement of Gaelic speaking elders and community Gaelic speakers.
- 3 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with their experience mentoring in Na Gaisgich Òga and how prepared they were to be a mentor.
- 2 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the quality of communication offered by program management and program organization.
- 1 out of 7 mentors were **satisfied** by quality of communication offered by educational staff in the pilot program.



- No mentors were **satisfied or very satisfied** with the support and training they received in this program.

Components mentors were **very dissatisfied** with were quality of communication offered by program management (1 mentor) and the initiative taken by the young person he/she mentored to plan meetings (1)

Components mentors were **dissatisfied** with were: Support and training received (3 mentors), quality of time you spent with the person you mentored (2), your experience mentoring in Na Gaisgich Òga (2), How easy it was for you to think of ideas for activities to do with the young person you mentored (2), Quality of communication offered by educational staff (1) program management (2), organization (1) language progress of youth (1), initiative taken by youth to set up meetings (1), and involvement of elder Gaelic speakers and community Gaelic speakers (1).

The component with the highest average rating (4.43):

- How engaged the young person you mentored was in the mentoring sessions.

The component with the lowest average rating (2.57):

- The support and training you received in the program.

Youth

The youth evaluation in Sydney Mines, for the 7 youth present, began with them talking as a group about what they valued in the program (see page7). They then completed the survey on their own, but could ask questions if they were unclear about anything on the survey. They had more comments and discussions as they progressed through the survey, which facilitator Bernadette Campbell captured in her notes. She provided her insights and notes, which follow:

“As an evaluator working with youth in Na Gaisgich Òga Program, it was apparent that the learners were articulate, thoughtful, and very self-aware.

My observation during the two-hour evaluation process was as follows:

- Youth were very joyful (They were smiling, singing to themselves, sitting close to one another indicating they were very comfortable with each other).
- Youth were expressive. (All verbally participated and articulated their ideas and expressions.)
- Youth were open, collegial to one another (They took turns, laughed at each other’s story or recollection, built on each other’s story or vignettes of their experiences.)

The students articulated:

1. Their understanding of what they learned about both Gaelic language and culture.
2. Expressed a kind of Gaelic pride having participated in the program.
3. Depicted their views about the program by depicting aspects of the program through symbols and create expression." (See posters)

Themes that were discussed in detail:

Gaelic life vs. English life

- "I am going to be a nurse. I am not going to need Gaelic to be a nurse."
- "I have a whole other life when I am not here."
- "You need family members speaking Gaelic to keep it alive."
- "My school life is in English, other students don't like or respect Gaelic."
- "I wouldn't want a job in Gaelic."
- "What if we don't want to be a seanachie?"
- We were too busy to ensure we kept Gaelic language and culture alive in our homes and communities.



Responsibility for Gaelic

Most did not feel this was their goal.

- It's a lot of pressure
- I feel guilty if I don't take responsibility
- Not now. Maybe when I am older.

General comments captured as they were filling out the surveys:

- I have a great deal of Gaelic pride
- I care more about Gaelic
- I'm more confident to perform out in my community.
- I'm less nervous singing and dancing in public
- I like the repetition, I can speak more Gaelic
- I like the outside settings for learning Gaelic
- The history sessions were like two hours a day. It was too long and too much every month.
- Mentoring session was awesome (one youth)
- Being put on the spot to speak Gaelic was difficult.

- I felt pressure to sing and participate in Gaelic activities
- Less performance
- Sometimes we do the same thing (at the ceilidhs)
- Friendships were the most important part.
- I now have Gaelic friends!
- I am more confident speaking with adults
- We sing together. Even when we aren't asked to. (They sang between a question on the survey).

Changes to consider next time:

- We'd like to help with planning menus
- Diversity of food offered
- Change or alter the video assignment
- Phone calls were kind of a challenge
- Less time talking at Wild Life Park. Let us go on our own.
- Respect our English time.
- Homework was not a priority, it was done too late.
- Clearer communication via email.
- Journals were too time-consuming. They had no meaning. Felt like busy work.
- Discontinue phone calls (5 minutes max)
- I would forget the emails so didn't do homework.
- Would like to be physically outside learning Gaelic.
- Would like more crafts or creative expression while learning Gaelic.



Other Survey Questions

Youth were asked to rate how their skills improved in the program.

- 9 out of 9 though their awareness of Gaelic history **improved a lot**.
- 9 out of 9 youth thought their Gaelic speaking skills **improved a little or a lot**.
- 8 out of 9 youth thought their Gaelic comprehension skills, their ability to communicate in Gaelic with their peers and with adults, **improved a little or a lot**,
- 7 out of 9 youth thought their ability to participate in Gaelic culture **improved a little or a lot**.
- 6 out of 9 youth thought their ability to communicate in English with their peers **improved a lot**
- 5 out of 9 youth though their ability to communicate in English with adults has **improved a lot**.

In answering the question on speaking Gaelic with their peers, youth wanted to stress that they were better able to speak Gaelic with “their Gaisgich Òga peers.”

Two youth mentioned they don’t like being put on the spot to speak Gaelic, and two mentioned they are now “fantastic” and “close” friends. One youth said she was interviewed on the radio and went in public speaking and another said the program made her more “confident to talk to other Gaisgich (in English).

(Note: The youth expressed frustration with the answer options offered in this section. They felt an option in between “improved a little” and “improved a lot,” should be offered, as many felt their progress fell somewhere between these two. (See Na Gaisgich Òga Survey Results, page 21 for table).



Youth were asked to rate their satisfaction level with specific aspects of the program. (Only 8 youth answered this question.)

- 8 out of 8 youth were **satisfied or very satisfied** with: moving the program from community to community, the chance to visit elder speakers, making food in Gaelic, playing games in Gaelic, learning about the Gaels history, the sessions held in the homes and our Gaelic teachers.
- 7 out of 8 youth were **satisfied or very satisfied** with: the community ceilidhs and events, dancing, learning and singing songs, the sessions held at the Gaelic College.
- 6 out of 8 youth were **satisfied or very satisfied** with: outdoor activities, storytelling sessions, the sessions held at Taigh an t-Sagairt (Glendale).
- 5 out of 8 youth were **satisfied or very satisfied** with: making crafts in Gaelic
- 2 out of 8 youth were **satisfied or very satisfied** with: making videos and sharing on YouTube and doing homework in between sessions.

Youth were **very dissatisfied** with doing homework in between sessions (1) and making videos and sharing them on NGO YouTube channel (1).

Youth were **dissatisfied** with making crafts in Gaelic (1) outdoor activities (1) dancing (1) storytelling sessions (1) and making videos and sharing them on YouTube (2).

We are cautioned with interpreting that youth did not like making crafts, dancing, storytelling or outdoor activities. For example, the youth who said he/she was dissatisfied with making crafts and outdoor activities said that he/she wanted more of these activities in another section of their survey. It could be that he/she was dissatisfied with the quantity/quality of the activity in this program. It is fairly



certain, however, that youth were not satisfied with homework and making videos as this is mentioned in other areas of the survey.

Youth were asked to imagine they are designing the ultimate Gaelic Youth Program and to rate five aspects of programming out of a list of 14, which they thought would have the greatest impact on their Gaelic language and cultural learning. They found this a very difficult exercise. They thought there were more than five that should be on this list. We gave each item they selected a point, 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important and added up the scores at the end. The top 5, with 5 being the highest were:

1. Community events that include music, dance and supporters or learners of Gaelic
2. History lessons on the Gaels
3. Field trips
4. Inclusion of an visits with Gaelic elders
5. **Hands on Gaelic immersion activities**

Here is the ranking of the 14 items from lowest to highest

- 0 Homework
- 2 More use of technology in lessons
- 3 Phone/Skype/Instagram/Voxer buddies
- 5 Gaelic only policy for certain activities/time periods
- 5 Gaelic lessons in the home
- 6 Opportunities to learn songs
- 6 Grammar lessons
- 8 Opportunities to learn and tell stories
- 11 Working with mentors in between sessions
- 13 Community events that include music, dance and supporter or learners of Gaelic
- 14 History lessons on the Gaels
- 17 Field trips
- 23 Inclusion of and visits with Gaelic elders
- 28 Hands-on Gaelic immersion learning activities



One youth divided her/his choices into two categories: learning Gaelic and learning culture. We used her/his choices for learning language above. If learning culture, he/she chose history lessons on the Gaels as the most important aspect to include in the program.

Observations/Suggestions/Questions

1. Consideration should be given to the goals, particularly the last one in light of the comments by the majority of youth in the program, who felt burdened by responsibility for sustaining Gaelic language and culture. Questions to consider:
 - Is pride and stewardship something that is taught, or it is something that comes naturally from creating positive experiences among Gaelic learners?
 - What are achievable (and measurable) goals in a program like this?
 - Should broad goals, or a program philosophy or intention, be established that related to the existing goals, in addition to measurable outcomes?
2. Regarding measurable outcomes, consultation with school educators may be helpful in defining and describing achievable outcomes for this age group, since they work to very specific outcomes in the school system. (or is this desired or possible in a program like this?)
3. Language assessments should be done at the beginning and end of program, if language learning outcomes are desired. What do we mean when we say Gaelic immersion? Is it all the time? During defined periods? Would there be consequences for speaking English? If it is not full immersion, can children be expected to become conversant in Gaelic? Can the same outcomes of social bonding, cultural and historical education happen in an immersion format? Whatever the format -- whether this is full immersion, part-time immersion or a cultural program -- it needs to be clearly communicated to parents, youth and other support people so they can decide if they want to participate in and support this program.
4. The inclusion of an advisory committee at the beginning of the program was a good idea. Future programs should include a steering/advisory/management group made up of individuals who can develop program policy and support curriculum and program delivery. They should



stay with the program until the end. Could a youth representative also be part of this panel?

5. Tracey Dares's fundraising efforts in the beginning of the program raised not only money but awareness and goodwill toward the program. A fundraising committee could be part of the program and may be something that parents could spearhead and contribute to. This committee could be part of the overall advisory or management group.
6. Some parents did not like that their children missed one to two days a month from their regular school hours. Some found delivering their child to locations far from home on a Thursday morning, when they had to go to work, difficult. Considering this was mentioned a few times in the survey, it would be important to look at whether Thursday to Saturday is the best configuration for program delivery. Could it work Friday afterschool to Sunday? Would March Break and summer camps of a one week or two week duration work better? Could local programs be set up, with children coming together from across the province on a quarterly biannual or annual basis work better? (We need to keep in mind that 6 out of 8 parents who responded were satisfied or very satisfied with the overnight component and the movement of sessions from community to community. Not all parents provided comments.)
7. It should be noted that 7 out of 8 parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of supervision and safety, the variety of enriching and enjoyable activities offered, improvement of their child's Gaelic language and cultural skills and the quality of teaching. These are important components in this youth program, and 88 per cent of parents felt positive about them.
8. Children felt that hands-on Gaelic immersion activities were the most important component of the "Ultimate Gaelic Youth Program." They also said Gaelic elder visits, field trips, community events and history lessons were important. Their "Ultimate Gaelic Youth Program," would be



supported by educational research provided in a Globe and Mail article, *Fresh Approaches Fosters Smarter Students*, (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/back-to-school/fresh-approaches-foster-smarter-students/article20081549/>). It says the traditional way of teaching with a teacher lecturing to rows of students isn't as effective as active learning strategies. "We've moved from a passive view of learning to one that's very active," said Krista Muis, an educational psychology professor at McGill University. In that same article the importance of sleep for language learning and music for fine-tuning the mind is highlighted. Another article in the Globe and Mail last month, *How Physical Exercise Helps to get Students Intellectually Fit*, talks about how important it is to get children up and moving while they learn. Midland Secondary School in Ontario calls them "spark" breaks. "Here, studying everything from history to calculus also includes soccer in the hallway, ultimate Frisbee in the yard, even "swimming" across the floor. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/how-physical-exercise-helps-to-get-students-intellectually-fit/article20284157/?page=1>

A program like Na Gaisgich Òga is already applying current research and best practices, but it would be good to make the connection more intentional and explicit. Having educators and researchers who provide a theoretical basis and support this program would be important, perhaps on the advisory panel. These are just two articles found through a google search. What more do we need to know about educational theory and practice, learning communities and second language learning strategies to deliver a first-rate programming for young Gaels?

9. One educator said that activities should be analyzed for their efficacy when it comes to language learning. It would good for NGO educators to have a discussion on the language learning activities that were part of the pilot and a workshop with other educators on other possible activities and approaches to include. This could include people from the Mi' mkaw and Acadian communities. It may also be interesting to include some of the youth in this workshop. Note: youth also wanted more arts, creative and outdoor activities.
10. Given the strong feeling youth had about doing homework, videos, phone calls etc. it would be good to also review this, with support from other educators. Their lack of enthusiasm for technology in a program like this should also be explored. Should NGO be an Ipod, cell-phone, internet free zone?
11. If sessions continue to be held in community venues and homes, then having a person hired to plan the menu, purchase groceries and prepare the meals is important. Otherwise these jobs need to be shared by volunteers. Chaperones would be on hand to watch the children when they are not involved in learning activities. Ideally these people should be Gaelic-speaking or be provided with Gaelic training to help them communicate without having to switch to English, if a full immersion program is desired. The role of volunteers should be seriously considered. Given the tight finances available to Gaelic programming, they are a crucial part to the program and will be needed to support future programming. Making the experience as rewarding and coherent as possible is important to retain and attract volunteers.

12. Given the comments from children on performing and at least one parent's discomfort with showcasing the youth, performing and showcasing should be discussed for future programs. What do they not like about performing? In what situations do they like sharing their talents? (Bernadette Campbell mentioned they were singing spontaneously during the assessment, many play instruments and they all seemed to enjoy dancing). Should youth act as ambassadors for the program and for Gaelic in Nova Scotia? How do you handle inquiries about having the youth perform as a group?

13. NGO sessions in a home provide a natural or every day environment for teaching language, especially Gàidhlig aig Baile activities. Youth really enjoyed the sleepovers and going to different homes and communities. Some of the educators liked the homes. Challenges included small rooms, keeping young people focused while other activity happens in the home and the difficulty in maintaining an all Gaelic environment due to English floating in from other rooms and English-speaking residents or visitors to the home. There are also consideration with safety

and all adults having the proper safety checks. If big enough, however, homes can work well, especially for hands on activities. One solution would be that if homes are used to have educators see these places before the learning sessions and plan out schedules according to the space. If it is an immersion program, educators need to work closely with other support



staff and home owners to create some ground rules and consciousness around an all Gaelic environment. Colaisde na Gàidhlig works well as a venue with lots of space, professional staff for meals and good sleeping accommodations. It is set up for residential programming. It doesn't have the homey environment, but it can be achieved, especially if plans go ahead to create a Gàidhlig aig Baile place at the College. More discussion needs to be had on the physical environment for teaching. Limited funds available may be a consideration as homes are more economical (due to the contribution toward heat, lights, water provided by the home owner), than bigger facilities.

14. The balance between formal lessons and activity based learning needs to be further explored among educators. During the one week session held at Université Sainte Anne in Church Point, Nova Scotia, youth over the age of 10, (and adults who can also attend these sessions), go to classes in the morning and in the afternoon participate in organized activities (canoeing, deep-

sea, tourist attractions, beaches). There is a different social activity organized each night (theatre, dance, music etc.) They have a strict French only policy. At the beginning of the session participants sign a pledge to speak French at all times during the program. As soon as the pledge is signed, the use of French is mandatory at all times. If a student is caught speaking English they will receive a warning. The third warning results in expulsion from the program. Université Sainte-Anne also has a five-week immersion program, but it is for people over the age of 15. It seems to have the same schedule and has the same French-only rules.

15. There are a number of other French language camps in Nova Scotia offered by Canadian Parents for French. Their website <http://ns.cpf.ca/activities/youth-activities/camps> gives information on nine different camps held in Nova Scotia last summer: two include trips to Îles de la Madeleine and St. Pierre et Miquelon. These range from overnight camps to day camps and are for ages 5 to 17. All activities are in French. The camps provide this information: "The first day of camp is an orientation day with instructions and rules outlined in English, after which camp is conducted entirely in French. Support and assistance to aid the campers' vocabulary will be continuous. Campers will be in groups according to their abilities in French. Morning and evening sessions will have campers participating in language activities in small groups; afternoons will be dedicated to the various recreational programs offered." The overnight camps are one or two weeks and are focused on getting youth using and improving their language skills through activities such as sports and other outdoor activities and crafts and games for the young group." Should children in Na Gaisgich Òga be divided according to language levels? Are ages 10-15 the right age groupings?
16. Na Gaisgich Òga has a strong local cultural and community component with a goal of building Gaelic identity and cultural skills among youth. In this way it is much closer to youth camps being offered in British Columbia for aboriginal youth. The First Peoples' Languages & Cultural Council has put out a very useful handbook *Culture Camps for Language Learning: An Immersion Handbook*. <http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/culture-camps-handbook.pdf> The 33-page document includes background information on why language revitalization and immersion are important and how language and culture are interconnected. It offers camp goals, and information on how to plan a camp, immersion activities, sample daily schedules, sample budget, information on language assessment. Like the French camps, these are immersion camps which they say should run for at least a week or two.
17. Berlitz Kids Summer Language Camps are held in large cities in Canada offering French and English programs. These three week sessions are held Monday to Friday (non-residential) and use the Berlitz method, which is a conversational approach that gets learners talking from the beginning. Camps are divided into ages 4 to 7 and 8 to 11. Like the aboriginal languages camp, the ratio of teacher to student is 1:3 or 1:4. . www.berlitz.ca/summercamps/
18. If future programs are total immersion programs then the history component may need to be reconsidered. In the pilot program, history sessions varied from session to session, but on

average included two, one-hour sessions every weekend. They were also assigned short pieces to read and videos to watch as part of their homework. Sessions covered history from the Ancient Celts to immigration to the New World and settlement and traditions in Nova Scotia. This had to be done in English so youth could understand. While two educators and a mentor questioned including these English lessons, the kids all seemed to enjoy the lessons (included in their top 5) and said they learned a lot more about Gaelic history. At least one student, however, didn't like the long lectures and other youth mentioned they didn't like to be talked to a lot. Could this information be conveyed in Gaelic to youth? Should modules (English and/or Gaelic) be produced that would be presented in short periods 20 to 30 minutes? How do we make the modules interactive and hands-on? Consultation with public school staff and other educational professionals may be helpful in this area.

19. Building in meal preparation and clean up as part of the programming, as is done in the aboriginal programming, would be practical and useful as a language lesson. It seems that there was more effort in the beginning of this program to do this. But it is an activity that is done every day in the home and language learning around these activities would be valuable. It would also be good for the children to have some responsibility for their food preparation and clean up. Home and community venues would offer this learning opportunity, as it is not possible for youth to help with food preparation and washing up at the Gaelic College.
20. Ensure everyone who is contact with youth has a vulnerable sector criminal record check.
21. Planning needs to include multi-year programming, so youth have something to move to and so this is not a one-off project. This planning could also integrate with other community based programming and school programming. Developing a multi-year strategy would be helpful and was a strong suggestion of one of the mentors.
22. Mentors, if used again in programming, need an orientation program and ways to connect with the bigger program throughout the year. This can include attending the monthly sessions and supporting Gaelic conversation, as suggested by the educators. It could include attending community events, having a mentor representative on the steering/advisory/planning committee.
23. It is interesting that 100% of mentors surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with how engaged the young person was in the mentoring session, however student engagement was sometimes a problem during the weekend sessions.
24. Six out of seven mentors said the mentoring experience was positive and their youth partner was learning. Challenges in mentoring were in getting the meetings to actually happen due to the youth not arranging the meetings or lack of time on the part of both mentor and youth. There were also issues with communication, isolation from the program and other teams, and lack of training and support. If these challenges are addressed in future programs it will likely enhance the mentoring relationships and progress made by youth.

25. Are 10-15 year olds mature enough to call an adult mentor they may not know well to arrange mentoring sessions?
26. Mentors volunteered their time and received a small stipend for travel. For some mentors, who are underemployed fluent speakers and skilled professionals, a larger stipend would be an acknowledgement of their important contribution and also an incentive to keep involved. Are there resources available to support mentors the way they should be supported?
27. Looking at points that got a low average rating from parents, it is curious that the value of the program for registration fee paid is among these, as well as community events. Further information on these points would be helpful. What would they consider good value for money? How could the community events be improved? There seems to have been a high level of community involvement in this program, compared to other language programs and other educational programs (see page 2).
28. Consideration should be given to the financial resources needed to deliver youth programming. One educator said "It is a tremendous undertaking to deliver a program like this." Anyone involved in the pilot program would likely agree with this statement. There are many stakeholders to consider and include and many moving parts. We should not underestimate the amount of time, funding, skills and resources to execute a successful professional program. Attention should be given to the scale of the project relative to the resources available.
29. Program beginnings and endings are important. It was lamented there was no public celebration at the end of Na Gaisgich Òga or mentors gathering or orientation to bring people together. Orientation and endings should be built into programming so that everyone feels included and appreciated.

