

**Impact Assessment of
FilmG
the Scottish Gaelic short film competition**

Solas Business Services Ltd

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Executive Summary

FilmG is the Gaelic short film competition which was launched in 2008. Its aims at inception were to seek out and nurture new talent for the Gaelic digital service, BBC ALBA, launched in the same year. The competition is open both to young people (aged 12-17) and to adults. There are three component parts: provision of training and support through web-based materials, access to professional mentors and workshops; the competition; and the awards ceremony.

This report covers specifically the impact of FilmG on education; language; social development; cultural development and media coverage. It has not investigated value for money or economic impact. Suggestions for changes to the competition are contained within a separate appendix, as is a list of contacts made.

The research was carried out through desk-based review of materials; an online survey; individual interviews with a range of entrants; school teachers/lecturers; judges; tutors/mentors; prize sponsors; funders and stakeholders; as well as MG ALBA and Cànán staff.

In numerical terms, over the five years, entry levels have ranged from 56 films in Year 1 to a high of 76 in Year 4. The number of entries by young people has more than doubled over the 5 years while the adult entries have decreased quite significantly from 37 in Year 1 to 20 in Year 5.

The report considers four areas of impact – educational, linguistic, social and cultural. It also assesses contribution towards stakeholders' strategic aims and media coverage for FilmG.

- Education and development

This aspect of the project has been extremely successful. All research strands provided evidence of significant impact in increasing skills, competence and knowledge. School teachers praised the training intervention for its engagement with pupils of all ages and personalities, the opportunities for practical and creative learning, and contribution towards implementation of Curriculum for Excellence.

Adults reported major benefits in terms of creative and technical skill development, hands-on learning, motivation to learn and opportunities for career progression. Examples of FilmG creating opportunities for new talent were cited by many interviewees.

One challenge identified is the belief that FilmG has firmly established entry level opportunities for Gaelic media and that the next stage is to provide support for the talent that has emerged. Another opportunity is to provide feedback from judging process to enable participants to develop their skills.

- Language

School teachers and students reported: a substantial change in motivation and interest in using Gaelic; continued increased use after participation in FilmG and increased confidence in usage; and for pupils a fun, modern, interactive project which engages pupils in language use. Teachers reported changed perceptions due to 'externals' speaking Gaelic; and expanded vocabulary though many technical terms are the same as English.

For non-Gaelic speaking adults, research demonstrated an increased desire to learn Gaelic; and for those who are learners, a motivation to increase their language skills. For fluent speakers, FilmG provides an opportunity to be creative in Gaelic. It also provides examples of inter-generational transmission through a number of films which tell stories narrated by older people. Through the training, competition and awards, the project has increased language normalisation in schools, communities and creative industries.

- Social

The three areas which provided most social development according to the research were relationships built through workshops and participation in FilmG and the awards event. In schools, teachers reported cross-year relationship building and attendance at the awards as two very positive social aspects. Adults referred to meeting fellow participants at workshops and networking opportunities with professionals, both in workshops and at the awards. FilmG is one of the leaders in development and usage of social media in Gaelic with its Facebook page friends growing from 380 to 2,274 within 4 years.

The awards event was highlighted by many as a great social event, particularly as interviewees considered there was nothing else like it in a Gaelic context. The event itself has gained national recognition through “Best Cultural Event 2012” award by Scottish Events.

Opportunities to make more use of existing films to create community events and to increase audience for BBC Alba were evident in the research.

- Cultural

FilmG has had a resoundingly positive impact on people’s perceptions about Gaelic. This has been founded on the nature of the project, its branding, and the delivery partner’s efficiency and effectiveness. It appeals to Gaels and non-Gaels alike; school pupils and adults; and is perceived as fun, lively, accessible and at the same time professional and of strategic importance.

Over the five years, it has developed a significant volume of Gaelic content for the web.

Although the films are available, it was felt that they could be used much more extensively in different ways.

The workshops, judging and awards event all connect Gaelic with media industry experts and professionals. Many were of the view that this was beneficial, enabling people to access training and network opportunities. However, some people were concerned with the dilution of the awards event Gaelic nature by actors from English-medium drama.

FilmG is seen as providing an opportunity to develop creative skills and the motivation to actually use these. It further encouraged individuals to develop other cultural content, both in Gaelic and English.

Media coverage has grown over the five years, starting from a disappointing take-up at launch in 2008. This has changed dramatically with press coverage for the launch, shortlists and awards featuring in local weekly publications as well as national dailies, and this year in an international magazine.

In summary, the research has shown that FilmG meets stakeholders’ strategic aims; has become normalised as part of both school curriculum and the creative landscape for adults; has produced new faces, voices and ideas in Gaelic media; delivered skills development; has fostered new collaborations and relationships across and within various communities in Scotland; and provided Gaelic with a modern brand and genuine product.

After five years, its impact has been impressive but it is still too early to gauge fully what difference it has and will make. The challenges now are in making more use of the content that it has generated; and developing a strategy for nurturing the talent FilmG has uncovered through to the next stages of development.

1. Overview of FilmG

FilmG was designed to seek out and nurture new talent for the Gaelic digital service, BBC ALBA. It was launched in 2008 and has since been delivered annually. The aims were defined in 2012 as:

- To encourage and develop skills in grass roots filmmaking and on-screen story-telling within Gaelic communities, schools and post-school education
- To generate and present significant amounts of new and engaging Gaelic online content
- To encourage Gaelic-speakers and non-Gaelic speakers to create, enjoy and become active within Gaelic media
- To develop and grow an online community of people actively interested in the opportunities presented by new and emerging digital media technologies for Gaelic
- To uncover Gaelic-speaking talent for BBC ALBA¹

It comprises:

Training and development

FilmG provides a range of training opportunities for both adults and school pupils. For schools there are online materials which include a schools information pack, 3 lesson plans and a workbook. All materials are produced in both Gaelic and English and are downloadable. These materials guide the pupils through the preparatory stages for film-making.

Schools are also offered training days which now comprise 2 days (originally 1, then 1.5) of 2 tutors going to the school and taking the pupils through the creation of the film, using the plans they have developed. The two days of tutoring involve one day of filming and one of editing. The tutoring is provided by professionals and is through the medium of Gaelic, unless the pupils' language skills necessitate using English. FilmG also provides the equipment for filming and editing.

For adults, there have been regular workshops on different aspects of film-making, and these have taken place on a wide geographical basis. There has also been access to industry professionals as mentors and online resources (video and text). Support for those who want help for and with Gaelic in the different technical skills is offered through TalantG.

The competition

FilmG is now divided into two main categories – Young People (12-17 year olds) and Adult. The latter was originally sub-divided into Professional and New Entrants. The range of awards within Adult has changed focus on different aspects. In 2012 there were 7 awards for Adult and 6 for Young People.

Films must be between 3 and 5 minutes long and in Gaelic. The competition is open for entries for around 5-6 months. Only those who have previously been credited in a broadcast for producer, director, or performance² are ineligible for awards. Judging is carried out on a voluntary basis by a mix of industry professionals. Feedback is not provided to entrants due to time/administration constraints.

The value of the prizes has changed since 2008. Then the most valuable prize in cash terms was £5k and there was an overall budget of £35k; in 2012 the highest value prize was £1k and the total budget was c£10k.

¹ FilmG5 Project Plan, 2012

² Performance award only

Awards ceremony

As with other aspects of FilmG, this has evolved over the five years. First held in One Touch Theatre in Eden Court, Inverness, for the last 3 years it has been held in Glasgow. The format remains the same with live music; opportunities for networking; clips from short-listed films; and presentation of the awards. Its style is lively, modern and celebratory. The attendees number between 350-400 people.

2. Research methodology

Desk-based research

Substantial information was provided by Cànan who have been particularly helpful in assisting this research. This included monthly, quarterly and annual reports, awards programme booklets, and feedback from workshops and other aspects of FilmG. The FilmG website, facebook page and blog provided further information. Also included was online research into other organisations that may have an interest in or connection to FilmG.

Online survey

Promoted by the MG ALBA and FilmG websites as well as the FilmG facebook page, a simple survey, hosted by SurveyMonkey, was created in both English and Gaelic. The survey questions and responses are included in Appendix III. In total, 33 people responded to the survey.

Interviews

70 one-to-one interviews were conducted, primarily by phone. These included:

- 9 school teachers (19 contacted) and 5 school pupils
- 6 student entrants (12 contacted) and 14 adult entrants (25 contacted)
- 4 colleges/universities providing under- and post-graduate education in media (7 contacted)
- 8 FilmG tutors (10 contacted) and 5 FilmG judges (7 contacted)
- 10 representatives from stakeholder/sponsor organisations (12 contacted)
- 5 MG ALBA and 1 BBC ALBA staff
- 4 film/media festival organisers (4 contacted)
- 1 independent tv/film producers/production companies (9 contacted)

Two sectors, media businesses and higher education institutions, were not well represented in interview despite attempts to contact individuals.

3. Outputs

This section provides a brief overview of the statistics for training delivery and entries.

School workshops held

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu	Seachdain na Sgoilearan	Drama Summer School 1 & 2	Drama Summer School 1 & 2	Drama Summer School 1 & 2
Mallaig HS	Drama Summer School 1 & 2	Tain RA	Seachdain na Sgoilearan	Tain RA
Inverness RA	Sgoil Ghàidhlig	Dingwall	Tain RA	Dingwall A
Dingwall Acad	Ghlaschu	Gairloch HS	Dingwall	Dunoon GS
Lochaber HS	Greenfaulds School	Millburn	Gairloch HS	Gairloch HS
		Inverness RA		Inverness RA

Seachdain na Sgoilearan <i>Nicholson Institute Sgòil Lionacleit Castlebay HS Sir E Scott</i> ³	Islay HS Tain RA Portree HS Ardnamurchan HS Mallaig HS Inverness RA Dingwall Academy Lochaber HS	James Gillespies HS Lochaber HS Mallaig HS Tobermory HS Plockton HS Ardnamurchan HS Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu Islay HS Oban HS	Millburn Inverness RA Lochaber HS Mallaig HS Tobermory HS Plockton HS Ardnamurchan HS Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu Islay HS Ullapool HS Wallace HS Tiree HS Sir E Scott Sgòil Lionacleit Portree HS Nicolson Institute Castlebay HS Grange HS	Lochaber HS Mallaig HS Tobermory HS Plockton HS Alness A Ardnamurchan HS Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu Islay HS Ullapool HS Tiree HS Sir E Scott Sgoil Lionacleit Portree HS Nicolson Institute Castlebay HS Grange HS <i>Hazlehead A Kingussie HS Bishopbriggs A</i> ⁴
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Total number of workshops held: 87 (10-Yr1; 14-Yr 2; 16-Yr3; 24-Yr4; 23-Yr5)

Estimated number of tutor days delivered by FilmG: 266 (12 -Yr1; 39-Yr2; 48-Yr3; 72-Yr4; 95-Yr5)

Adult workshops

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
No and type	1 (2-day residential)	4 (2-day) 5 (1-day)	3 (2-day) 11 (1-day)	1(2-day residential) 1 (1-day)	8 (1-day)
Topics	Camera Sound editing production scriptwriting	Story (5 different locations) Weekend Residential (2 day): Directing Camera Sound Production Scripting Front of camera (Glasgow & Skye 1 evening	Story Directing Camera Sound Production Front of camera Film-making Vision/design Documentary Front of camera Story (8 locations)	Weekend workshops (2 day): camera Sound Directing Script Factual Directing master-class Editing Front of camera (Skye)	Film-making for community groups (Skye & Uist) Documentary (Inverness) Film-making (Glasgow): Writing Directing Technical skills Music video (2 workshops)

³ Workshops organised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and partners

⁴ Workshops booked but schools withdrew

		each) Film-making (Inverness 1 day): Directing Design (look for your film) Gaelic			Glasgow) Master-class (Glasgow & Skye)
Tutors	5	17 (10 tutors)	10	8	8
Attendees	17	82 (63 individuals)	81 (63 individuals)	49	89

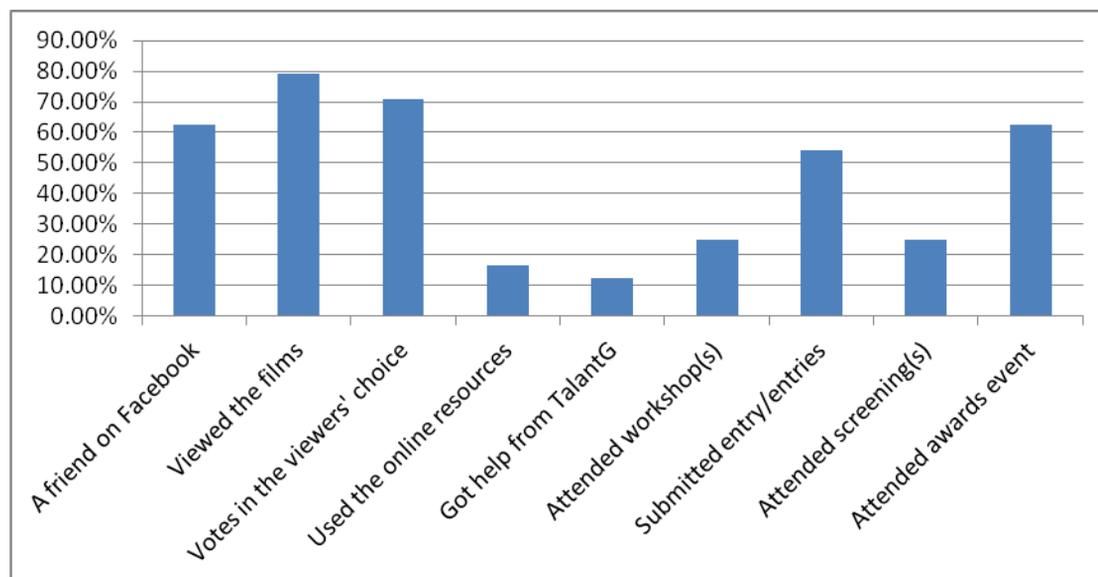
Films submitted

Total number of films submitted over 5 years: 319 (Estimated total hourage based on average of 4mins per film: 21 ¼ hours)

Submissions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Adult	37	31	34	26	20
12-17	19	23	37	50	42
Total	56	54	71	76	62

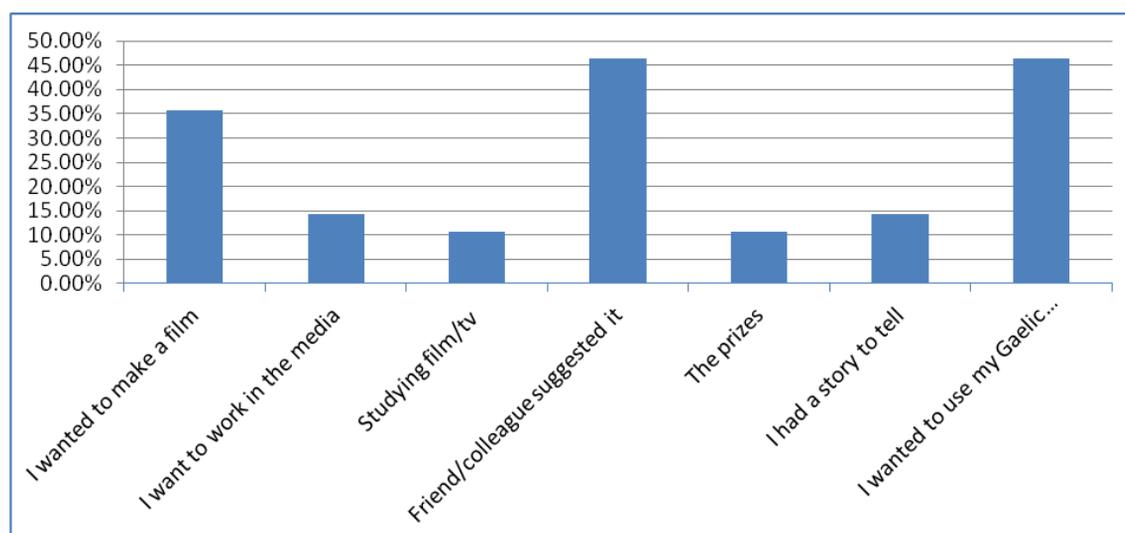
Engagement

The online survey demonstrated the range of ways in which people connect with FilmG:



Motivation

It also probed the reasons for taking part in FilmG and showed that desire to use Gaelic more was the most popular reason along with a friend/colleague suggested it.



4. Outcomes

The following is an extract from the FilmG Project Charter 2011-14 and sets the parameters for the assessment of FilmG’s impact:

- Grass-roots audiovisual experimentation, self-expression and story-telling in Gaelic, supporting education, communities and language revival in new ways
- An increasingly connected community of Gaelic speakers, learners and supporters who actively participate in the development of Gaelic digital media and who are confident in their own identity and self-expression
- The emergence of new faces, new voices, new ideas and other talent (Gaelic speakers and learners) and the progression of these into the media
- An active community of Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers who view, critique and enjoy Gaelic media independently or through community viewing opportunities.
- Recognition at a national level of the project and its outcomes as making a significant contribution to the culture of Scotland⁵

Some of the stakeholders, participants and tutors commented that as the competition has only been running for 5 years, its impact in terms of new talent progressing into the media and the generation of new content will not be fully realised. For example, school pupils who were in S1 at the start of the competition are likely still to be in school and not even have progressed to tertiary education or work. People who have learnt film-making skills through the project may still be generating new content and/or developed other creative products for many years to come.

5. Education and development

24 out of 33 responded to a question about the impact of FilmG for them:

What difference has FilmG made? (Tick all that apply)	A lot	Quite a lot	A little	No	N/A
I've learnt new skills	6	6	4	0	4
I'm going to enter FilmG again	7	4	2	1	7

⁵ FilmG Project Charter 2011-14

I've been to new places	5	4	3	2	5
Other (please specify) : Have opportunity to do films in much better conditions.					

Education and training in schools

The effect of FilmG in schools is substantial. Interviews and written feedback demonstrate that FilmG has:

- Increased knowledge and skills for teachers and pupils in understanding media, eg how tv programmes are created and the effects engineered by camera angles, sound, production values, etc
- Substantially increased pupils' technical skills and interest in all aspects of film-making - One pupil who had made her own film has been asked by her school to edit a film that's produced about the school for the p7 intake.
- Increased pupils' abilities to generate ideas for stories, whether drama or factual, and then equipped them with the skills to develop these into storylines
- Increased pupils' abilities to plan a project
- Increased team-working and motivation – *"It has given the young people I work with something to look forward to and has motivated them."*
- Increased confidence
- Provided opportunities for all personalities to become involved in the process with one teacher stating that *"it brought in even the quiet ones who usually don't put themselves forward"*.
- Encouraged pupils to consider careers using Gaelic *"It definitely pushed me towards working in the media, I wouldn't have thought about it before [FilmG]"*
- The delivery of workshops in schools was particularly highlighted as providing new perspectives in career opportunities in Gaelic

"Great initiative for secondary pupils. Gives Gaelic pupils in English speaking Sec schools a chance to be more valued since they are giving people access to this opportunity to win prizes with short films. Since it is the only Scot wide short film competition."

The quality of the training delivered by FilmG was recognised in 2009 by the award of Sector Leading Innovative Practice (SLIP) status by HMI.

Interviews with student participants who had come to FilmG through participation at school consistently stated that their decisions on which course to follow had been positively affected by FilmG - *"Loads of folk at SMO who've done FilmG"*

They reported that taking part in the competition had made them think about following careers in the media, and for some it had galvanised their desire to work using Gaelic.

Education and training for adults

Individuals reported varying degrees of change in knowledge and skills ranging from those who had never used a film camera or editing software before being able to create and enter a film to development of specific skills through attending the workshops.

Students interviewed stated that participating in FilmG gave them an opportunity to put class-based learning into practice. One interviewee was emphatic about the difference FilmG had made:

"I had to have a phone interview for my work placement and when I mentioned that I had taken part in FilmG... I was able to explain about the practical experience and learning that had given me. I'm in no doubt that it made a definite difference for getting the work placement."

All those interviewed who had attended a workshop were clear about the benefits to them of doing so.

"I enjoyed receiving high quality input at workshops and working with others in directing and producing film."

One interviewee who had attended a workshop at SMO described how the workshop had coincided with the Skye launch of the Inbetweeners' film and that this had added an '*unbelievable*' dimension. He also specified that the workshop had developed his technical skills and helped him to formulate ideas.

It is noticeable that the reduction in the number and the change in format/timing of adult workshops coincided with the drop in number of adult entries.

Four interviewees cited the availability of equipment for loan as a significant enabling factor in developing their skills; and one of these had one-to-one tutoring in using the camera and made use of the online learning resources which they used.

Other interviewees who did not attend workshops still reported that making a film had increased their skills and confidence. One community group, which is a centre for adults with special needs, is going to use their prize to buy an apple computer to enable them to make more films. The centre director stated that the making of the film had given her and others new skills and that they would develop more film-making as one of centre's activities for clients.

"I cannot believe that within the space of a couple of months I had gone from simply having an idea to writing/directing and producing a short film. Could never have been done without FilmG and has given me the confidence to do more."

One judge reported that their involvement had taught them a lot about different perspectives in film-making as the others on the panel were much more experienced in the industry.

Career progression

Some participants stated that they entered the competition with a view to developing a career in media, whether through full-time education or to build networks and create a platform for promoting their work.

Other feedback included:

- A number of interviewees cited access to professionals as a significant benefit of FilmG and singled out FilmG for its high level of support, particularly in comparison to other film competitions
- Some interviewees reported that they recognised that there were opportunities to network with professionals at workshops and the awards event but that these were not always used.

Interviewees who are involved in Gaelic development cited examples of new talent which has been fostered or discovered by FilmG. A number of participants reported that FilmG had been part of their skill development and they were now working with media companies.

Those whose aim was to develop a career in the media reported that they had used FilmG on their CVs: *"it was great to get an award and to be able to put it on my CV."*

One person reported that they had increased their income through filming adverts for local businesses and he *"would never have been able to do that properly without the training from Amanda [Millen] and sound/cinematography at Skye workshop"*.

A further measure of the impact is indicated by the freelance practitioner profiles on the Screen HI website. 9 out of 44 across the Highlands & Islands (including Orkney & Shetland) have listed FilmG entries on their profiles.

Some interviewees indicated that they believe that the focus of FilmG has moved away from encouraging professionals to participate and that this has led to a diminution in quality of

entries. The latter contrasts with other interviewees stating that quality has increased over the years.

There was a perception that FilmG has developed very successfully for new entrants and improvers but that there is now a gap for those who have developed their film-making skills beyond this level. This was expressed by one interviewee as:

“I think the adult competition requires a re-vamp, to perhaps allow the best use of the tutor skills, and to allow those with the best stories to make the best films that they can.”

A small number reported that they had subsequently entered other film competitions but this was not common. 3 entries in 2009 went forward for Scottish BAFTAs. The Loch Ness Film Festival reported having entries which had been entries in FilmG.

It was clear from interviews and the survey feedback that participants believed that it created opportunities for new entrants into Gaelic media and other creative industry careers. Individuals cited examples of how involvement in FilmG had been a catalyst for changes in their careers.

Examples:

- One entrant reported that when he first entered FilmG, he wasn't involved in tv at all; now he is working with a production company. He viewed the experience of creating a short film as a major benefit in gaining his post; he also gained major benefits from doing all aspects of filming himself thereby increasing his multi-skilling and employment prospects.
- One entrant said that taking part in FilmG had made the transition from research to direction possible. She used her entry to argue for opportunities to direct programmes which she has gone on to do.
- One who was involved at school reported that through FilmG she has gone on to front of camera work at BBC ALBA as well as work as a runner in production companies.
- Another school pupil said that she got an opportunity to be in Breab as a result of FilmG and has subsequently worked as a FilmG tutor.

Links with tertiary education providers

Course leaders and lecturers interviewed reported examples of students using FilmG to practice different aspects of film-making, thereby consolidating learning carried out in the classroom. Participation in FilmG has now been scheduled into the timetable for the Diploma in Media course delivered by SMO. One student on the course stated that most of their fellow students had participated in FilmG at high school.

What next?

One topic which surfaced in many interviewees was “[what next for participants?](#)”. There was a consistent message that FilmG is very successful in creating opportunities and motivating people to make films; that it's quickly established itself as mainstream and this has led to the question of how to nurture the talent that is brought forward through the competition to the next stages of development. For school pupils the route regularly followed is tertiary education - *“loads of students at SMO have done FilmG”* - but for adults it is much less defined.

6. Language

The online survey reported on the difference FilmG made with reference to people's language skills.

As a result of FilmG... (Tick all that apply)	A lot	Quite a lot	A little	No	N/A
I want to learn more Gaelic	6	5	0	1	7
I've become more confident speaking Gaelic	6	3	4	2	4

It also probed the motivation for participating in FilmG, with the most popular reasons being the desire to use language skills.

Young people

Teachers interviewed and written feedback reported:

- a substantial change in pupils' willingness to use Gaelic through participation in FilmG many reported continued increased use after participation in the project.
- common view was that it provided a fun, modern, interactive project which engaged pupils
- changed perceptions due to 'externals' coming into the school who spoke Gaelic in the course of doing their work, ie outwith an educational environment
- Increased confidence in usage; increased familiarity with particular words (those used for processes such as editing, sound, etc); slightly expanded vocabulary though many technical terms are the same as English (eg white balance)
- The online films provide material for in-class discussion about what is good/bad/liked/disliked and therefore a means of increasing communication skills
- It provides a bridge between school and the world of work

The project is viewed as equally beneficial for Gaelic learners:

"It was a great opportunity for my pupils, who were learners, to use their Gaelic in a real situation and have fun while doing it. It expanded their opinions of Gaelic and gave them a chance to see Gaelic in a practical setting rather than just as a classroom subject."

Others (tutors, stakeholders) also reported the benefits from FilmG as encouraging young people to use Gaelic in creative context; affording opportunities to talk about different topics from school curriculum; and to talk to adults other than teachers in Gaelic.

For adults/students

The feedback on impact on use of language was consistently positive even though the language skills of participants range from high-level usage to no Gaelic. Five interviewees who do not speak Gaelic reported positive attitudes towards the language, reporting

- A greater awareness of the language and its culture
- A desire to learn more Gaelic
- An openness to entering FilmG again in the future

Others who knew some Gaelic reported that they felt more confident about using Gaelic after making a film and also reported a desire to increase their language skills. There were two motivating factors mentioned for this – one a pride in the language and culture; the other was the possibility of creating a career in Gaelic media.

One entrant, who had been through GME, stated that she participated as a means to re-engaging with Gaelic. The year after her first film, she did a short course at SMO and entered another film. As a result, she has increased the presence of Gaelic in her life. Another who had spoken Gaelic as a young child but not again until he was an adult said that FilmG had made a

difference in the context he spoke Gaelic and it had made him more comfortable with the language.

Two interviewees reported that they had or were going to make films in other European languages and that participating in FilmG, as non-Gaelic speakers, had given them the confidence to do this.

A number of people saw FilmG as being an important bridge between Gaelic-speakers and non-Gaelic-speakers.

Views on the use of Gaelic at the awards ceremony ranged from the event being almost exclusively in Gaelic to there being far too little use of Gaelic – and these were reported about the same event. Some (6) interviewees questioned the relevance of bringing in non-Gaelic speakers to the awards event and whether that would give a mixed message particularly to young people.

7. Social impact

The evidence for the impact of FilmG in social terms has been provided by interview with individuals as well as data from the online survey. The following is an extract from the survey results.

What happened as a result of being involved in FilmG?	A lot	Quite a lot	A little	No	N/A
I've made new friends/connections	5	6	8	0	2
Other: FilmG has a wealth of people involved in it & allows amateur film-makers & those involved in the industry to come together for workshops, the awards etc					

Creation of new relationships

Interviewees cited different aspects of the project providing new relationships. These included adult workshops where individuals met fellow attendees who were previously unknown to them but have built friendships with them; one award winner received a ticket for Celtic Media Festival as a prize and has attended 2 CMF events – she reported created a new wide network of connections, personal and professional, as a result; five reported making new friends and professional connections through attending the awards event

In schools where the pupils are drawn from different year groups, the teachers reported much increased communication and friendship between pupils of different ages

Strengthening communities/inter-generational links

Interviewees involved in community films reported an increase in sense of community through using the making and showing of a film as a means of communicating about and celebrating a specific community.

For example, Fèis Cholla created a film which featured the first high school pupil from Coll studying Gaelic in high school interviewing native Gaelic speakers in a film which celebrated the transition from the old community hall to the new one. The film was then shown at the opening of the hall and the interviewee reported that the film had raised awareness of and interest in Gaelic and in making other films.

One survey respondent wrote *“This is a fantastic opportunity for people young and old to work together, people from all walks of life to enjoy each other’s company sharing emotions language and skills. Great job FilmG”*⁶

⁶ FilmG survey, April 2013

Awards event

FilmG has included an awards ceremony as part of the project since the start. Cànan has already surveyed participants on their views on the event in 2012. 11 out of 13 thought the awards was an important part of the project, citing such reasons as giving recognition to participants; showcasing entries, benefiting non-professional filmmakers; celebrating entries and entrants; promoting Gaelic and FilmG; and attracting media attention.

A number of interviews commented on the fact that there is nothing else like it in Gaelic context, noting particularly the mix of school pupils and adults, the professionalism of the event, the positive publicity generated by it; the link between esteemed media professionals and the competition (Michael Hines, Greg Hemphill, etc) and the opportunity for socialising and networking.

Teachers commented on the attractiveness of the event to pupils, again highlighting the impact on confidence, attractiveness of a Gaelic project and the pupils' enjoyment of an out-of-school event which Gaelic gave them access to. One person who had attended as a pupil said *"It was another award in itself going to the award"*.

The event won Best Cultural Event in last year's Scottish Event Awards, the competition organised by Event Scotland; giving it national recognition in an industry competition which is almost totally English-language based.

Community screening events

There was little reference in interviews to these happening except for the GoNorth 5-minute screenings at different festivals (eg Belladrum Tartan Heart, Loopallu), the Fèis Cholla film being part of new hall celebrations and the Na Gaisgaich Acrach (Kyleakin Connections) being shown in their café.⁷ Interviewees suggested that films could be given greater local promotion through screening in local independent cinemas and the Screen Machine prior to the main film.

8. Cultural Impact

Perceptions of Gaelic

The general view from interviewees was that FilmG is a major asset in promoting the language as a modern, relevant and vibrant. This is partly due to its content – film-making with professional support and technically-relevant equipment – and partly due to its branding. The latter was seen as edgy and contemporary, providing a very different set of imagery and styles from the 'traditional' Gaelic image.

Do you think that FilmG (tick all that apply)	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much	No	N/A
Makes Gaelic more attractive?	17	6	1	0	0
Changes people's views about Gaelic?	14	7	2	0	0
Gives opportunities for people who speak Gaelic?	16	7	0	0	0
Encourages you to speak Gaelic more?	10	8	4	0	1
Links Gaelic with well-known people?	11	9	3	0	0
Links Gaelic with media industry experts?	13	8	2	0	0

⁷ See Appendix II - Recommendations

“FilmG is great advert for Gaelic - it shows how you can use the language in different ways to tell stories, it gives people access to the skills required to do this, and it lets younger Gaelic speakers meet people who use Gaelic in their everyday lives”

The awards event was seen as a celebration of achievement, with a number of individual entrants stating that they felt seeing their work on screen in the company of professionals, amateurs, friends and family validated their work and they were very positive about this.

“I brought my family to FilmG Award events and involved them in peer reviewing of my film ... This is important, as not coming from a nowadays Gaelic speaking area, being able to increase their understanding in the language in a fun way makes them more supportive of my career choice in using Gaelic as a second language.”⁶

Again, the style, quality and level of professionalism of the awards event was recognised by many as having a very positive impact on Gaelic’s image.

School teachers were very positive about the event and reported that pupils hugely enjoyed attending. The combination of adult and youth was viewed as very important and a number of teachers said that it would not have the same impact if it was only for schools. One teacher stated that having actors from River City gave a different perspective to Gaelic for her pupils as it conveyed the impression that ‘celebrities’ are interested in Gaelic.

Stakeholders expressed the view that the event was very positive in terms of celebrating modern Gaelic culture – *“there’s nothing else like it in Gaelic”*; achieving significant positive press coverage; and providing network opportunities.

A small number of respondents expressed negative perceptions about the event. These included *“too much English used”*; using award presenters who did not have links to Gaelic and therefore the event giving mixed messages about the value of Gaelic; and the opportunity cost of holding an awards event.

Increase in Gaelic content online

The five years of the competition has generated at least 319 short films, all of which are available on the FilmG website. Schools reported that they used the online library to stimulate ideas for new films and to identify what worked and didn’t work in making a film.

However, very few other interviewees said that they viewed them once the awards ceremony was over.

There was a common view that the films are an asset which are not being fully utilised. Many interviewees said that they thought some films should be broadcast on the channel, whether individually as fillers or through the creation of a programme which includes footage from the awards as well. Post-event promotion and use of films were viewed as lost opportunities, both in terms of content and also audience attraction.

Social media

Many interviewees reported that they were Facebook friends of FilmG and the project is perceived as being an effective user and promoter of social media. Facebook, in particular, has been a focus of communications and its audience has grown from having 380 friends in Feb 2009 to 2,274 at the time of writing this report. This compares extremely well with other Gaelic organisations (approx 50% of SMO’s; almost 3 times Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s; over 5 times Cli Gàidhlig). All postings by FilmG are bilingual with Gaelic first; a random sample (June12-May13) of postings by individual friends showed 50% Gaelic only content; 50% English only content.

Film and other festivals

Organisers of two Scottish short film festivals and the co-ordinator of Celtic Media Festival were interviewed as part of the research. All were aware of FilmG and one had already

programmed some FilmG entries. All three were enthusiastic about giving a wider audience to the films as they saw the audience for film festivals as open to films in any language. Music festivals have been used as a platform for screening some FilmG entries. However, no audience feedback was available from this.

Developing other creative content

The online survey reports direct links between FilmG and creativity:

Do you think that FilmG (tick all that apply)	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much	No	N/A
encourages people to be more creative?	17	4	2	0	0

What difference has participating in FilmG made to you?	A lot	Quite a lot	A little	No	N/A
I've used these new skills for other projects	5	4	5	2	5
I'm going to make more films	2	8	5	1	4

One interviewee described FilmG as a mechanism which creates an intermediate ground where creativity flourishes, enabling those who do not speak Gaelic access to Gaelic language and culture and those with Gaelic to access the skills and support to express their ideas. Highlands & Islands Enterprise considers the creative industries one of its key sectors for growth and FilmG contributes to raising the profile of film-making and opportunities for skills development (cf Screen-HI practitioner profiles).

The impact of FilmG in providing a focus and motivation for film-making was stated by a number of interviewees. Survey feedback included this analysis of participation in FilmG:

“Having a reason to go out and create is priceless. Having an incentive is important.”

It was clear that without the competition deadlines and the opportunities to win an award, the motivation to create new content would be reduced.

9. Media coverage

At the very outset, press coverage for FilmG was disappointing but with increased input from Cànan, MG ALBA and Media House this was addressed and subsequent coverage has increased to the current level. There are three main triggers for coverage – the launch, the shortlists and the awards. The last is particularly important in generating coverage. Well-known actors are an attractive hook for press coverage and some interviewees questioned the wisdom of using non-Gaelic speakers to promote the competition.

Most local weeklies print stories based on local entrants, whether school pupils or adults and there is consistent coverage by Oban Times, West Highland Free Press, and Stornoway Gazette – all papers which traditionally carry such coverage. Other locals which have covered FilmG include Cumbernauld News, Kilsyth Chronicle, Galloway Gazette, Dundee Evening Telegraph, Inverness Courier and North Star. The wider geographical coverage can support awareness of the channel as well as Bòrd na Gàidhlig’s strategy for increasing numbers of Gaelic speakers in non-traditional areas and so complements their remit.

Coverage in national papers (The Herald circulation 43,157 and The Scotsman circulation 32,736) contributes to increasing awareness of Gaelic and the normalisation of Gaelic in the creative life of Scotland.

Broadcast, online and community publications are also used for promotion. For example in 2010, FilmG had online presence on Hebrides Today, Hi-Arts, the Scottish Government, All Media Scotland, BBC News, The Oban Times, Brighton Wired, Moray Firth Radio and Comunn

Eachdraidh Uig. One of the noticeable features of FilmG which media coverage makes more apparent is its geographic coverage and inclusive approach.

10. Conclusion

From the evidence gathered, it is clear that in five years FilmG has had a substantial impact through creating the opportunity to participate in film-making at both amateur and professional levels. It offers that opportunity to both Gaelic-speakers and non-Gaelic-speakers, demonstrating an inclusive approach which provides motivation to learn Gaelic or to use Gaelic more. It also has increased skill levels in technical and creative aspects of film-making in schools and communities. The results to date include 319 short films in Gaelic, new talent progressing into third-level education and careers in Gaelic media, as well as many people enjoying the ability to tell their stories to a wider audience.

Appendix I – Interviewees

School teachers

Catriona Campbell, Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu
Iain Cumming, Gairloch High School
Kirsten MacDonald, Tobermory High School
Mary Bell MacIntyre, Sgoil Lionacleit
Donald MacKay, Greenfaulds High School
Miri MacKay, Perth Academy
Karen MacKinnon, Plockton High School
Rupachitta Robertson, Tain Royal Academy
Mary Ellen Stewart, Grange Academy

Entrants 12-17 category

Alannah Beaton
Caitlin Ferguson (former school entrant)
Megan MacLellan (former school entrant)
Kerry Anne MacLeod (former school entrant)
Molly Robertson

Students

Gavin Humphreys (entered as student)
Ricky Hannaway
Cristin MacKenzie (entered as student)
MJ Mason (entered as student)
Sophie Maureen Stephenson (student)
Amy Warnock (student)

Adult Entrants

Seonag Anderson
Debbie Booth
Eilidh Daniels
Beth Friedan
Helen Graham
Tamara Hedderwick (community)
Annette Kerr
Alison Lang
Alan MacDiarmid (by e-mail)
Charlene MacLeod (community)
John Martin
Marina Murray (community)
Lynn Stewart
Elly Welch

Tutors

Catriona Lexy Campbell
Liz Carruthers
Artair Donald
Debbie MacKay
Kayleigh MacLennan

Iain F MacLeod
Amanda Millen
Morag Stewart

TalantG

Seonag Anderson
Joy Dunlop
Beth Friedan
Alison Lang

Judges

Mairead Cameron
Alan Esslemont
Michael Hines
Mairead Martin
Derek Murray
Margaret Mary Murray

Colleges/Universities

Kathryn Burnett, UWS
Stuart Hepburn, UWS
Catriona Johnson, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
Sarah Neely, University of Stirling
Professor Boyd Robertson, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Sponsors/co-funders

Stuart Pescodd, Scottish Government
Iain Hamilton, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Daibhidh Boag, Alasdair MacKinnon, Steven MacIver, Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Professor Boyd Robertson, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
Morag Anna MacLeod-Mitchell, The Highland Council
Arthur Cormack, Fèisean nan Gàidheal
Brian O h-Eadhra, Creative Scotland

Other

Paul Bruce, Edinburgh Short Film Festival
Andrew Doig, Loch Ness Film Festival
Henry Eagles, Creative Skillset Academy Network Manager
Catriona Logan, Celtic Media Festival
Margaret Mary Murray, BBC ALBA
Morag Stewart, Sealladh TV
Dawn Taylor, National Theatre of Scotland

Cànan

Floraidh Forrest
Kayleigh MacLennan
Morag Stewart
Donella Beaton

MG ALBA

Mairead Cameron
Domhnall Campbell

Alan Esslemont
Neil Graham
Annette Kerr
Murdo Morrison

Appendix II – Recommendations

The following is a summary of suggestions made during the course of interviews.

1. Strategic plan

- 2013 is the last year of the three-year plan for FilmG. It is suggested that work starts on developing the strategic plan for the next phase of FilmG. Suggestions 2 and 3 link to this planning.

2. Development of adult competition

- Some people suggested that one way to develop the adult category would be to pitch the competition at ideas level and the winner is mentored and/or production company work with winning participant to realise the idea into a broadcast production
- *“It should perhaps be a competition to get to make your film. Choose the best ideas, perhaps still using the existing categories (drama, factual, music video & community), and with co-ordination from the FilmG team & with tutor mentoring and a realistic budget to be able to employ some professional crew etc, the films will be good enough to show on the channel, and hopefully further afield.”*
“You will not only have uncovered the talent, but you will also have given the filmmaker the skills to make a film. The awards could still happen for the 12-17 competition & this could also be the transmission deadline for the adult competition - the completed films would all be showcased on that night.”
- The lack of feedback from judges was cited as disappointing by a few participants. As well as providing feedback from judges (which would probably require development of how the judging is currently run), it was further suggested that information is provided on how commissioning editors make decisions as this was not clearly understood.

3. Development of youth competition

- It was suggested that creation of different categories for fluent speakers and learners would encourage more teachers to participate in FilmG with groups of learners.

4. Timings/timescales

- Schools – teachers suggested that it would be very helpful for the competition to open before the summer holidays. Also, some found the closing date in December very challenging and would prefer it to be post-Christmas holidays.
- Adult workshops - it was suggested that these should be held early in the competition period to enable participants to make maximum use of what they had learnt. The lower number of entries for 2012 competition could be linked to the timing of the workshops near the closing date for entries.

5. More mainstream screening of films

- Using the channel as a platform for films and competition – suggestions included using films as short piece fillers, cf Fraochy Bay; creating a programme around the awards event
- Establishing a mechanism with Screen Machine and arts venues that screen films, eg Aros, An Lanntair, to show films prior to the main screening
- Building the audience for the channel through community showings

6. Tutor development

- Pre-delivery: training session for school tutors to ensure consistency of approach; common understanding of ethos, geared towards ensuring hands-on experience for pupils

7. Equipment

- Increase availability of equipment

Appendix III – Online survey April 2013

About you... are you?	Response Percent	Response Count
A school pupil	14.7%	5
A student (college or university)	20.6%	7
A school teacher	14.7%	5
Working in the media	17.6%	6
Part of a community group	8.8%	3
An independent adult	20.6%	7
Tutor/mentor/judge	2.9%	1
Other (please specify)		1

You, Gaelic and FilmG - do you think that FilmG (tick all that apply)	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much	No	N/A	Response Count
makes Gaelic more attractive?	17	6	1	0	0	24
changes people's views about Gaelic?	14	7	2	0	0	23
gives opportunities for people who speak Gaelic?	16	7	0	0	0	23
encourages you to speak Gaelic more?	10	8	4	0	1	23
links Gaelic with well-known people?	11	9	3	0	0	23
links Gaelic with media industry experts?	13	8	2	0	0	23
encourages people to be more creative?	17	4	2	0	0	23
Other:						
Responses	24					
Skipped question	9					

You and FilmG.... what interested you in FilmG? Tick all that apply.	Response Percent	Response Count
I wanted to make a film	35.7%	10
I want to work in the media	14.3%	4
Opportunity to practice what I'm studying (film/tv course)studying	10.7%	3
A friend/colleague suggested it	46.4%	13
The prizes	10.7%	3
I had a story to tell	14.3%	4
I wanted to use my Gaelic more	46.4%	13
Other		
<p>I have been making Gaelic films in Primary Schools for the last 20 years and this was a new opportunity for the p7s of the group I worked with.</p> <p>To give the students a new experience and opportunity to use gaelic</p> <p>I think is important to safe languages and knowledge which they discribing.</p> <p>I wanted to practice acting on film</p> <p>I needed something to aim for</p>		
answered question		28

What's been your involvement with FilmG? Tick all that apply.	Response Percent	Response Count
A friend on facebook	62.5%	15
Viewed the films	79.2%	19
Voted in the viewers' choice award	70.8%	17
Used the online resources for learning/improving film-making skills	16.7%	4
Got help from TalantG for Gaelic	12.5%	3
Attended a workshop/workshops	25.0%	6
Put in an entry/entries	54.2%	13
Attended a screening/screenings	25.0%	6
Attended the awards ceremony	62.5%	15
Other (please specify) - TalantG		1
answered question		24
skipped question		9

What's happened as a result of your involvement? Tick all that apply.	A lot	Quite a lot	A little	No	N/A	Response Count
I've learnt new skills	6	6	4	0	4	20
I've used these new skills for other projects	5	4	5	2	5	21
I've made new friends/connections	5	6	8	0	2	21
I've made contacts in the film/tv industry	4	5	9	0	2	20
I'm going to make more films	2	8	5	1	4	20
I want to learn more Gaelic	6	5	0	1	7	19
I've become more confident speaking Gaelic	6	3	4	2	4	19
I'm going to enter FilmG again	7	4	2	1	7	21
I've been to new places	5	4	3	2	5	19
None of these	1	0	0	0	5	6
Other (please specify): Have opportunity to do films in much better conditions. FilmG has a wealth of people involved in it & allows amateur film-makers & those involved in the industry to come together for workshops, the awards etc.						
answered question						24
skipped question						9

You, Gaelic and FilmG - do you think that FilmG (tick all that apply)	Very much	Quite a lot	Not much	No	N/A	Response Count
makes Gaelic more attractive?	17	6	1	0	0	24
changes people's views about Gaelic?	14	7	2	0	0	23
gives opportunities for people who speak Gaelic?	16	7	0	0	0	23
encourages you to speak Gaelic more?	10	8	4	0	1	23
links Gaelic with well-known people?	11	9	3	0	0	23
links Gaelic with media industry experts?	13	8	2	0	0	23
encourages people to be more creative?	17	4	2	0	0	23
Other (please specify):	Great idea for secondary schools. FilmG is great advert for Gaelic - it shows how you can use the language in different ways to tell stories, it gives people access to the skills required to do this, and it lets younger Gaelic speakers meet people who use Gaelic in their everyday lives					
<i>answered question</i>						24
<i>skipped question</i>						9

If you would like to tell us anything else about FilmG, please write in the box below.

FILMG IS AMAZING.

I have brought my family to FilmG Award events and involved them in peer reviewing of my film entered in 2012. This is important, as not coming from a nowadays Gaelic speaking area, being able to increase their understanding in the language in a fun way makes them more supportive of my career choice in using Gaelic as a second language.

great initiative for secondary pupils. Gives Gaelic pupils in English speaking Sec schools a chance to be more valued since they are giving people access to this opportunity to win prizes with short films. Since it is the only Scot wide short film competition. Not so good for animation!

This is a fantastic opportunity for people young and old to work together, people from all walks of life to enjoy each others company sharing emotions language and skills. Great job FilmG

It was a great opportunity my pupils, who were learners, to use their gaelic in a real situation and have fun while doing it. It expanded their opinions of gaelic and gave them a chance to see gaelic in a practical setting rather than just as a classroom subject.

Fantastic premise with perfect execution

Great idea! Amazing people! Wish You good luck!

This year's venue was very nice indeed, although i much preferred previous venues such as 'The old Fruit market" as it accommodated the amount of people much better, Taing airson a'farpais a cuir air doigh!

It has given the young people I work with something to look forwards to and has motivated them.

The prizes are not as enticing as they once were and I think that is reflected in the standard of film in the adult competition.

Personally, I think the FilmG 12-17 competition works really well. The schools enjoy it, the kids love it & it gives them access to skills they might not learn otherwise. It also shows them that there is a place for Gaelic outside the classroom and the response there has been to it over the course of 5 years shows that it works. I think the adult competition requires a re-vamp, to perhaps allow the best use of the tutor skills, and to allow those with the best stories to make the best films that they can. It's currently very difficult to motivate people to make a film as many see the language, the skills required & the technical equipment required as a barrier, without realising that FilmG can actually help with all those things! It should perhaps be a competition to get to make your film. Choose the best ideas, perhaps still using the existing categories (drama, factual, music video & community), and with co-ordination from the FilmG team & with tutor mentoring and a realistic budget to be able to employ some professional crew etc, the films will be good enough to show on the channel, and hopefully further afield. You will not only have uncovered the talent, but you will also have given the film-maker the skills to make a film. The awards could still happen for the 12-17 competition & this could also be the transmission deadline for the adult competition - the completed films would all be showcased on that night.

A fantastic evening - well done to the coordinators. I enjoyed the new venue - two areas made the crowd more intimate whilst seated.