Gaelic4Teens Programme Evaluation Wicklow
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Gaelic4Teens – Programme Evaluation
Report compiled by Dr. Wesley O’Brien

Evaluation Acknowledgements:
The Wicklow Gaelic4Teens programme is a joint project between the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and Wicklow Sports Partnership, and is funded by dormant account funding secured through Sport Ireland. The programme aims to assist clubs to retain their current playing bases while also recruiting players in the 15-17 age bracket, which has been identified as a group with a high drop-out rate.

Report Background
As part of this Gaelic4Teens programme evaluation, a mixed methods research surveillance was undertaken between March and May 2018. The two key stakeholders involved in this specific research evaluation were:

1. The female ‘teenager’ i.e. the ‘adolescent’
2. The respective local ‘club coach’ i.e. a volunteer

In the report that follows, questionnaire data regarding the Wicklow female teenagers participation in physical activity, the psychosocial correlates of sport participation (motivators, barriers, physical self-worth, self-efficacy etc…), and their levels of understanding club coach behaviours, specifically as part of the teenagers engagement within the Gaelic4Teens programme will be presented.

Furthermore, focus group data regarding the respective local club coaches from Wicklow Ladies Gaelic Football Clubs will be presented. Specifically, the focus groups were used as a strategic means of understanding coaches engagement within the Gaelic4Teens programme, their level of coach development, and their particular understanding of the ‘teenager’ within sport practice.
It is important to note that the teenager questionnaires and the coach focus groups were each collected on two occasions:

1. **At the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme**
2. **At the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme**

The reason that all measurements were collected on two occasions was to evaluate the impact of the Gaelic4Teens programme over time— in other words, was there any behavioural changes from participating in the Gaelic4Teens programme

**Descriptive information to the Teenager Questionnaire**

*Clubs from the Wicklow region represented:* Baltinglass, Tinahely, Rathnew

*Mean age of teenagers:* 14.86 ± 0.80 years (39 questionnaires completed)

*Post-primary school years involved:* 1st year to 5th year
Part I: Descriptive Results for the Player Questionnaire

Result 1 Physical Activity and Sport Participation:

At the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, 0% of teenagers were meeting the recommended daily minimum of 60 minutes moderate-to-vigorous physical activity/sport participation on all 7 days in the week. On average, the teenagers were reporting to meet the 60 minute physical activity guidelines on approximately **4 days in the week**.

Following the teenagers participation in the Gaelic4Teens programme, it was encouraging to observe that **8%** of teenagers were meeting the recommended daily minimum of 60 minutes moderate-to-vigorous physical activity/sport participation on all 7 days in the week. Furthermore, and on average, the teenagers increased their ability to meet the 60 minute physical activity guidelines to approximately **5 days** in the week.

Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their participation in physical activity and sport from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

![Figure 1. Percentage of participants meeting the weekly physical activity and sport guidelines before and after the Gaelic4Teens programme.](image)

*Note. PA = physical activity; G4T = Gaelic4Teens;*
Result 2 Preferred Sport Participation:
At the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, the three most popular sports and physical activities for the teenagers in three Wicklow clubs were:

1. Ladies Gaelic Football
2. Running/Jogging
3. Soccer.

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, the prevalence of sport participation in the previous 7-days week were as follows; 91% had participated in ‘Ladies Gaelic Football’, 34% had engaged in ‘Running/Jogging’ types of physical activities, and 26% had reported to have participated in ‘Soccer’.

Following the teenagers completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, the prevalence of sport participation in the previous 7-day week increased to the following; 100% had participated in ‘Ladies Gaelic Football’, 51% had engaged in ‘Running/Jogging’ types of physical activities, and 31% had reported to have participated in ‘Soccer’.

Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their participation in their preferred sports from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

Figure 2. Percentage of participants who engaged in specific sports and physical activities over the past 7-days. *Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens*
Result 3 Screen Time:
In the current programme evaluation, screen time activities were classified as time in minutes spent engaged in the following:

1. Television viewing,
2. Playing video games and using the computer.

Healthy screen time guidelines of <120 minutes per day exist for teenagers. Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported to be accumulating approximately 73.61 (± 37.45) minutes of screen time per day. It was found that 17% of teenagers accumulated >120 minutes of screen time per day. Following the teenagers completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, a reduced engagement in overall daily screen time occurred, with approximately 72.45 (± 42.82) minutes of screen time per day reported. In total, a reduction in the proportion of those exceeding the screen time guidelines were found, with 12% of the teenagers accumulating >120 minutes of screen time per day.

Overall, it can be reported that participants reduced their overall screen time engagement from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

Figure 3. Percentage of participants not meeting the recommended daily screen time guidelines (>120 minutes per day). Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens;
** It is important to note in result 3 that time spent sitting with friends in school, using a mobile phone, completing homework, and listening to music were not measured as part of overall sedentary behaviour in this report.
Result 4 Overall Enjoyment when Physically Active

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported a mean score of **44 (± 8.53)** for overall enjoyment during physical activity – the maximum score possible using this scale was **50**. These responses included statements such as ‘When I am active, I enjoy it’, ‘When I am active, it feels good’, and ‘When I am active, it makes me sad’.

Following the teenagers’ completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, an increased overall enjoyment during physical activity was reported amongst the teenagers, with a mean score of **47 (± 3.88)** observed. In total, it was very encouraging to observe that **97.5% of teenagers disagreed a lot with the statement that ‘When I am active, it makes me sad’**, indicating that the Gaelic4Teens programme may have impacted the teenagers’ emotional health during physical activity.

Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their overall physical activity enjoyment from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

![Figure 4. Overall Enjoyment When Physically Active (Maximum Score=50)](image)

*Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens*
Result 5: Overall Physical Self-Worth

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported a mean score of 30 (± 3.98) for overall physical self-worth – the maximum score possible using this scale was 40. These responses included statements such as ‘I am happy with how I am and what I can do physically’, ‘I feel positive about myself physically’, and ‘I feel confident about myself physically’.

Following the teenagers’ completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, an increased overall physical self-worth was reported amongst the teenagers, with a mean score of 32 (± 4.85) observed.

Also, it was very promising to observe at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 95% of teenagers strongly supported the statement ‘I feel positive about myself physically’, in comparison to 80% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme.

Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their overall physical self-worth in a positive manner from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

Figure 5. Percentage feeling positive about themselves physically

*Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens*
Result 6 Overall Physical Activity and Exercise Intentions

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported a mean score of 39 (± 7.60) for overall physical activity and exercise intentions – the maximum score possible using this scale was 44. These responses included statements such as ‘Doing physical activity is fun’, ‘Doing physical activity makes me look better’, and ‘Doing physical activity helps me cope with stress’.

Following the teenagers’ completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, an increase for overall physical activity and exercise intentions were reported amongst the teenagers, with a mean score of 41 (± 3.18) observed.

Also, it was very promising to observe at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 100% of teenagers strongly supported the statement ‘Doing physical activity helps me cope with stress’, in comparison to 85% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme.

Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their overall intentions to engage in physical activity from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.

Figure 6. Percentage feeling that physical activity helps with stress coping

Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens
Result 7 Overall Barriers to Physical Activity

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported a mean score of 32 (± 7.79) for overall barriers to physical activity— the maximum score possible using this scale was 40 (*the higher the score, the less related barriers to physical activity). These responses included statements such as ‘I don’t have enough time to do physical activity’, ‘I am not as good at sports as other kids’, and ‘I’m afraid I might injure myself’.

Following the teenagers’ completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, an increase in identifying less overall barriers were reported amongst the teenagers, with a mean score of 35 (± 3.43) observed.

Also, it was very important to observe at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 21% of teenagers identified that ‘I don’t have enough time’, in comparison to a substantially higher 49% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme.

Furthermore, in terms barriers to physical activity, specifically perceived physical competence, it was notable to observe at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 28% of teenagers identified that ‘I am not as good at sports as other kids’, in comparison to a higher 34% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme.

Overall, it can be reported that participants reduced their overall barriers to physical activity and exercise from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.
Figure 7.1 - Percentage feeling that time is a barrier to physical activity participation. Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens; PA = physical activity.
Figure 7.2 - Percentage with low perceived physical competence acting as a barrier to physical activity participation. *Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens;*
Result 8 Overall Confidence in Coach Behaviour and Manner

Before the beginning of the Gaelic4Teens programme, teenagers reported a mean score of 57 (± 17.16) for overall confidence in their coach in terms of behaviours and mannerisms – the maximum score possible using this scale was 75. These confidence responses included questions relating to ‘Knowledge of the game of Ladies Football’, ‘Giving positive feedback to players’, ‘Coming up with new ideas for training’, and ‘Encouraging the players to play for fun’. 

Following the teenagers’ completion in the Gaelic4Teens programme, an increase for overall confidence in their coach in terms of behaviours and mannerisms were reported amongst the teenagers, with a mean score of 63 (± 9.35) observed. Also, it was very promising to observe at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 46% of teenagers felt very confident in their coach to ‘Use different equipment’, in comparison to 34% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme. Furthermore, it was refreshing to find out at the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme that 41% of teenagers felt very confident in their coach to ‘come up with new ideas for training’, in comparison to 25% of teenagers prior to their inception of the programme. Overall, it can be reported that participants increased their confidence in their respective coaches in terms of coach behaviours and mannerisms from the inception to the end of the Gaelic4Teens programme.
Figure 8.1. Overall Confidence in their Coach Behaviours and Mannerisms

Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens

Figure 8.2. Overall Confidence in Coach’s Ability to use Different Equipment

Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens
Figure 8.3. Overall Confidence in Coach’s Ability to try New Ideas at Training

Note. G4T = Gaelic4Teens
Summary Overview of Main Gaelic4Teens Questionnaire
Findings from the Players

In summary, positive findings within the following areas were observed with the players engaging in the G4T programme within Wicklow 2018. Measurements were taken at the beginning of the G4T programme, and upon completion of the programme, which suggests possible effectiveness of the G4T initiative for the teenager in terms of the following eight areas in the table below:

Table: Summary of the questionnaire indicators, which resulted in specific changes over time

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<td>Physical Activity Participation</td>
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<td>Sport Involvement Participation</td>
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<td>Screen Time Engagement</td>
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<td>Physical Self-Worth</td>
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<td>Physical Activity and Exercise Intentions</td>
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Part II: Descriptive information to the Coach Focus Groups

*Clubs from the Wicklow region represented:* Baltinglass, Tinahely, Rathnew

*Number of Focus Groups undertaken:* 2

*Number of Coaches involved:* 10

Three key themes emerged from the focus group data that were pertinent to the long-term investment of the ‘Gaelic4Teens’ (G4T) programme, from both a coach and player development perspective. These themes were:

1) **Coaches Thoughts and Viewpoints on G4T**
2) **Coach Development**
3) **The Teenager**

Nested under these three themes were a set of identified sub-themes, which specifically emerged from the data. In terms of theme one regarding the ‘coaches thoughts and viewpoints of the programme’, the following five sub-themes prevailed:

1. Coaches ‘Learning’ for Life
2. Coaches view the G4T model as ‘Player’ centred
3. Coaches value the ‘Role Models’ used
4. Coaches question the G4T’s ‘Timing’
5. Coaches concern on the teenagers ‘Age’

In terms of theme two regarding the ‘coach development’, the following three sub-themes prevailed:

1. ‘Innovative’ coaching practices
2. Importance of ‘Planning and Preparation’.
3. ‘Happy’ teenagers being present

In terms of theme three regarding the ‘teenager’, the following three sub-themes prevailed:

1. ‘Inclusive and Cooperative’ coaching styles effective
2. The on-site feedback from ‘Active Role Model’
3. Exposure to ‘Peer Pressure’
The following diagram visually illustrates the emergent themes and sub-themes from the focus group data with the coaches, following the completion of the G4T programme.

**Theme One:**
**Coaches Thoughts G4T**
- Coaches ‘Learning’ for Life
- Coaches view the G4T model as ‘Player’ centred
- Coaches value the ‘Role Models’ used
- Coaches question the G4T’s ‘Timing’
- Coaches concern on the teenagers ‘Age’

**Theme Two:**
**Coach Development**
- ‘Innovative’ coaching practices
- Importance of ‘Planning and Preparation’.
- ‘Happy’ teenagers being present

**Theme Three:**
**The Teenager**
- ‘Inclusive and Cooperative’ coaching styles effective
- The on-site feedback from ‘Active Role Model’
- Exposure to ‘Peer Pressure’

The following three pages provide a descriptive overview and a brief synopsis of the emergent themes and sub-themes from the focus group data with the coaches, following the completion of the G4T programme. The italicised quotes in the specific text boxes provide meaningful data which have informed the coaches in the development of their practice.
Gaelic4Teens
Coaches Thoughts

Coaches ‘Learning’ for Life
- Respecting player interest & the whole environment
- ‘I’m learning a lot how to communicate with players and keep them interested.’
- ‘The more you can bring to the whole culture section and the whole environment with the girls, the better for everyone involved.’
- ‘The experience that we’re gaining here today and the last day and the next two sessions, it’ll be with us for the rest of our lives.’

Understanding the player
- ‘Everything is showing us how to be fun and interactive with the kids and that comes from experience and the two presentations.’
- ‘Like that, the fun and music. But I thought the way when you stop the drill and bring them in and ask them questions, it’s more effective because they’re engaging in it.’

Coaches view the G4T model as ‘Player’ centred
- ‘Ask them questions and it’s more effective because they’re engaging in it.’
- ‘They’re coming up with the answers themselves, rather than being told what to do’.
- ‘But also vitally important that it’s not just the role of the coach, it’s all about them at the end of the day’.

Putting the player at the centre of the G4T experience
- ‘She’s played the sport, and she can relate to what she’s talking about’
- ‘You can tell kids all day what it is, but when they hear it from someone else, they say ‘well maybe he’s not lying’.

Coaches value the ‘Role Models’ used
- ‘It would be great if that was nearly, you know, pre-season’

Coaches question the G4T’s ‘Timing’
- ‘It’s too late a programme to introduce to under-16s, they’re set in their ways, I think. If it starts earlier, it’s going to flow through easier for the coaches.’
- ‘It’s not really age appropriate for the girls that are older on the team. They didn’t seem to engage’
- ‘When it comes to 16 years of age, I think if they’re gone they’re gone. At 12, 13, you have the chance of holding on to them.’

Note: **Green Box** = Areas of Positivity
**Red Box** = Areas for Consideration
Gaelic4Teens Coach Development

'Innovative' Coaching Practices

Using music as a new coaching tool

A willingness to go beyond 'comfort zone'

- 'The music is great, and I love the fun things that you gave us, like the hands, shoulders, knees and toes'.
- 'Yes, the music aspect was very good, it freshens things up in your mind'.
- 'I think also with the music involved in the sessions, I think it got the coach more involved in the fun aspect'.

- 'How's this going to go? Do I dance, or don't I? That's true, and that's a big challenge for people.'
- 'You can get more involved now. You don't feel like an idiot.'
- 'If different lads came in and were helping out, I'd take a back seat... I don't want them taking over any more.'
- 'I pushed my self-consciousness or dignity to one side and I got stuck in and they loved it.'
- 'I never put a ball in my hand. To go from not being able to hold a ball to this.'

Importance of 'Planning & Preparation'

Coaches benefiting holistically from advanced 'preparation'

- 'So that when the kids come, you're able to go and interact with them beforehand'.
- 'Be there before the kids, and have everything sorted'.
- 'Just obviously planning being the major things, and bringing in the fun throughout'.
- 'But also being aware of what is going on for them'.
- 'I was up there 15 minutes beforehand, and I had my drills ready as well'.
- 'Then a few WhatsApp messages along the line.'

'Happy' Teenagers being Present

Coaches desire for a fun & welcoming environment

- 'I love seeing the smile on their faces, that's what I love.'
- 'When the girls enjoy it, it's easier as a coach'.
- 'Rather than scapegoating the negative person, you're trying to keep going'.
- 'It was great to stand back and look the kids happy, laughing, dancing and playing'.
- 'They were all happy and even when we did it ourselves. It was all about the fun aspect of it.'

Note: Green Box = Areas of Positivity
Gaelic4Teens: The Teenager

- 'Inclusive & Cooperative' coaching styles effective
- The on-site feedback from 'Active Role Model'
- Exposure to 'Peer Pressure'

The importance of session 'variety' for teenagers:

- 'Well, I try get them all to interact, and get them all to join in.'
- 'Just give them something different every week. Don't make it boring.'
- 'Just basically fun, enjoyment, inclusion of everyone, and variety.'
- 'When they're scoring points, when they're running.'
- 'It was that kind of high pace, kept moving and there was lots of noise between the music.'

'Democracy' outweighs 'Dictatorship':

- 'Yes, make it more inclusive to everybody, that you're not a dictator.'
- 'Even if you're the manager, you're not calling all the shots. There's communication between coaches.'
- 'I'd say something new, a more relaxed kind of approach to it instead of being all shouting.'

Teenagers supported by 'active role model' on-site:

- 'She's been on a football pitch and she's played at a high level, they do look up to her.'
- 'They need people who've played the sport. They can relate to them.'
- 'They want to be the next Jackie Kennedy. It's fantastic to have her involved in anything.'
- 'Even at the session, she was giving you a little bit of feedback and pages of notes.'
- 'They have to look up to their county players, be they women or men.'

Peer pressure and social distractions a challenge:

- 'I think there's a lot of peer pressure outside the pitch.'
- 'I think it's when they go to secondary school, they broaden their friendship.'
- 'Some kids may not be involved in sports, so they're easily influenced to stay.'
- 'They might be tempted to go out, or go to the disco later.'
- 'Socialising, boys, men.'
- 'Too much focus on their self-image, and their weight. They don't want to be in a t-shirt.'

Note: Green Box(es) = Areas of Positivity
Red Box(es) = Areas for Consideration