



**RESEARCH & VALUATION  
ANNUAL PROJECTS SUMMARY  
MARCH 2018**

KIWI CAN • STARS • CAREER NAVIGATOR • PROJECT K • MYND

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## INTRODUCTION

It is the Graeme Dingle Foundation practice to stay at the leading edge in all areas of child and youth development, and evaluation is one of our key strategic drivers. With our University research partners we know our programmes: improve attitudes and behaviour; improve academic results; help young people set and achieve their goals; boost self-confidence; reduce truancy rates and at risk behaviours; and help young people feel more positive about the future.

This Research and Evaluation projects update provides a summary of past research projects, some key findings about our programmes and details research projects that are currently underway.

Research summaries are grouped into the five Graeme Dingle Foundation programmes:

**KIWI CAN • STARS • CAREER NAVIGATOR • PROJECT K • MYND**

This report is updated annually and is published on our website: <http://www.dinglefoundation.org.nz>



## KIWI CAN

### Summary of Past Research

**Graeme Dingle Foundation teacher and student surveys (2008-2009);** surveys administered by Graeme Dingle Foundation in a selection of Kiwi Can schools gathered student and teacher's perspectives of the impact of the Kiwi Can programme on the children's attitudes and behaviours. Following these evaluations, Graeme Dingle Foundation recognised the need to understand the programme theory to be able move forward and develop theory-driven evaluation and programme development.

**Promoting positive development in school children: Perspectives of the Kiwi Can programme in New Zealand** (Ahmed, 2010): This University of Auckland research study aimed to clarify the theory underpinning the Kiwi Can programme. The researcher consulted with key programme personnel, reviewed documents and observed the programme to develop a greater understanding of Kiwi Can and how it contributes to the children's positive development. As part of the study a programme logic model was developed demonstrating how Kiwi Can works to create positive change in Kiwi Can students. The model has facilitated effective programme planning and implementation to further develop and strengthen Kiwi Can

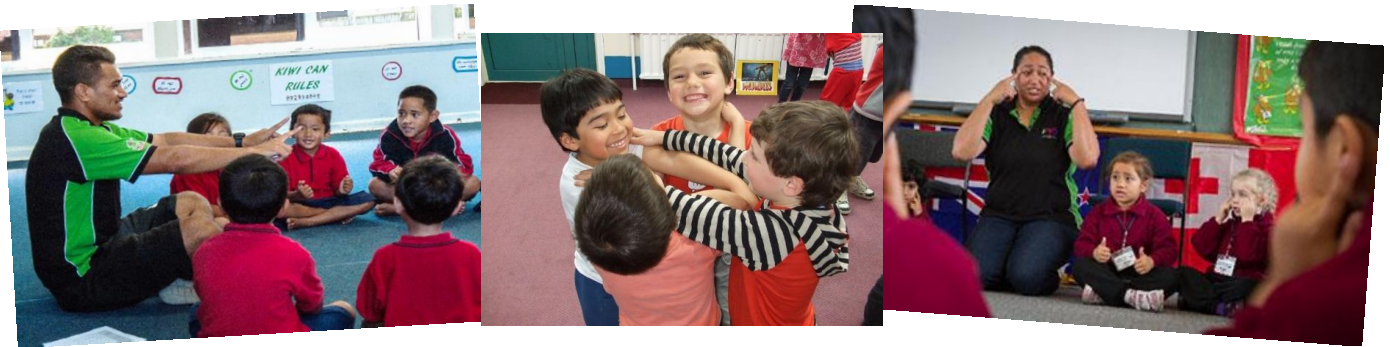
**Can It? An Evaluation of Kiwi Can, a School-Based Values and Life Skills Programme, in Aotearoa New Zealand** (Williams, 2013, 2014): This PhD study used a positive education-based theoretical framework to build on the above theoretical programme evaluation and examine the Kiwi Can programme implementation and outcomes.

To examine programme implementation, semi-structured focus groups were conducted with programme leaders, and questionnaires were administered to Kiwi Can students in eight regions.

The outcome evaluation used a quasi-experimental, pre-post survey design. Surveys were completed by students from 15 Kiwi Can schools across eight regions, and nine non-Kiwi Can schools. The survey evaluated the impact that participation in the programme had on individual developmental outcomes (Competence, Caring, Connection and Character) and the school social climate.

**Seeing through the eyes of students: The impact of Kiwi Can on the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development:** This qualitative project built on the 2013 outcome evaluation of Kiwi Can. The aim of the project was to give a voice to students that are engaged in the Kiwi Can programme in low-decile primary schools. Students were given cameras so that they could take photos representing what they have learned about the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and then took part in focus group interviews.





## What we have found so far

### Student Outcomes

Improvement in student behaviour and attitudes had been demonstrated through more positive behaviour and attitudes towards their peers, teachers and to learning, with students building caring, respectful relationships and resolving differences peacefully. Kiwi Can provides opportunities for social and emotional learning that are important to the development of resilient youth and a positive school culture.

Research shows that school programmes that emphasise social and emotional learning are important to the development of resilience and that *“students with higher levels of resilience were bullied at school or online less often, and among those who were bullied, resilience served as a buffer, insulating them from being affected in a negative manner at school.”*

- Schools report that Kiwi Can is particularly effective at building positive relationships and improving students’ social skills.
- Following their participation in Kiwi Can schools observe students using strategies taught in Kiwi Can to resolve conflict independently, more positive interactions amongst students, and increased resilience.
- Students and teachers report that Kiwi Can helps students to develop more positive and respectful relationships, and improve their ability to work with others and resolve differences peacefully.
- Principals say that Kiwi Can links closely with and complements the PB4L programme operating in their school.
- Improvement in student behaviour and attitudes had been demonstrated through more positive interactions with their peers, teachers and an improved attitude towards learning.

### Kiwi Can and the 5C’s

- Kiwi Can incorporates many of the components of best practice including Lerner’s “Five Cs” of Positive Youth Development, five ideal outcomes that youth development programmes want to achieve with young people i.e. Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring.
- Kiwi Can students taking part in focus group interviews were able to discuss the 5C’s in terms of what they look like (e.g. what a person did to demonstrate a specific characteristic). In particular,

they were able to identify and were enthusiastic when discussing caring, and could identify caring in a range of different situations.

### **The Kiwi Can Programme**

- Children look forward to Kiwi Can. They make every effort to come to school on Kiwi Can days and fully participate in the activities.
- Students report a high degree of learning and enjoyment in the Kiwi Can classroom.
- Students like their leaders and they are seen as making a positive contribution to the school.
- The leaders keep the children motivated and engaged and act as positive role models.
- Kiwi Can leaders reported that they had adequate access to resources, and felt that the Kiwi Can lessons were well organized, topical and structured to meet their needs.
- The programme has been found to be delivered to a high standard across all regions, and students regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity, report a similar high degree of learning and enjoyment of the Kiwi Can programme.

### **Transience and Kiwi Can**

- An unexpected finding from an outcome study of Kiwi Can was that long-term Kiwi Can students from highly transient schools reported better social health outcomes than students from new or control schools.
- This finding that sustained participation may have attenuated the negative effects that a highly transient environment had on the social attitudes and behaviours of non-transient children indicates that there may be a 'protective effect' of participation in Kiwi Can under highly transient conditions.

## **Current Kiwi Can Research**

### **Kiwi Can Online**

Kiwi Can Online is a pilot programme that will make Kiwi Can available to many more young people particularly young people in remote and rural areas. Kiwi Can Online provides online tools and resources for Kiwi Can Leaders to deliver the programme in conjunction with the school and supported by our National Support Office.

An exploratory evaluation will investigate the effectiveness of Kiwi Can Online from the perspective of participants, school and programme staff using interviews, focus groups, and self-report surveys. The aim is to explore what works well and what does not work well, and to explore further the impact of participation in Kiwi Can on social health outcomes for students in highly transient schools. Findings will be used to guide the on-going development of Kiwi Can online.

## Kiwi Can and the Transformational Journey

Currently in the planning stages, this longitudinal project will examine outcomes for a cohort of students attending schools in Papakura. The project will look at the impact of participation in Kiwi Can on a variety of measures such as student behaviour, attitude, confidence and school attendance through primary school and as the cohort transition into intermediate and secondary schools.

“Kiwi Can has been an effective model of positive relationships which has engaged students and staff together. Students enjoy the lessons and so are engaged and want to attend. We gather data on bullying throughout the year and have noticed a reduction.”

*(School principal, Innovations Fund school survey)*

“I really like Kiwi Can because they try there hardest to help in every possible way. They don’t stop caring and they are always there to talk to. I find Kiwi Can fun because they have great activities and I like them a lot.”

*(Kiwi Can Student)*



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## STARS

### Summary of Past Research

**School-Based Mentoring: Examining the Cultural and Economic Variations in Engagement and Effectiveness:** (Noonan, 2012) This Master of Arts thesis examined the effectiveness of Stars and looked at the association between the effectiveness of Stars, school decile and cultural context. Participants were Year 9 students from eight ethnically diverse schools that ranged in size and decile.

**An Examination of Stars Longitudinal** (Naomi, 2012): This project examined data collected for the longitudinal project that ran alongside the evaluation of the Stars programme. Starting in 2006, Schools taking part in the Stars programme were asked to participate in a longitudinal study examining several aspects linked to youth health and well-being. This project was undertaken as part of Graeme Dingle Foundation's commitment to conducting research aimed at improving student outcomes.

**Mentee Experiences in the Stars Peer Mentoring Programme as Predictors of Post-Programme Connectedness and Attitudes about the Future** (Henderson & Deane, 2013): This University of Auckland summer scholar project investigated how Year 9 students' experiences within the Stars programme predicted later outcomes for the Year 9 students. The project explored the ways in which the mentees' experiences within each component of the programme predict their levels of peer connectedness, teacher connectedness and future orientation, at the end of the programme.

**Stars Adventure Camp and Variations in Outcomes** (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2015): The Stars Adventure Camp is a component of the Stars programme and was designed as a 3-5 day residential camp at the beginning of the school year. Modifications of the Stars Adventure Camp have been made over time to accommodate the needs of participating schools. This project examined the impact of the Adventure Camp on life skills and factors thought to be linked to students' ability to successfully transition to secondary school. It also examined whether there were any differences in these outcomes based on the school or the camp the students attended.

**The Impact of Stars on Peer Mentors** (Deane, Moore, Gillham, & Brown, 2012-2015): This was a collaborative research project between Graeme Dingle Foundation's Research and Evaluation Unit and a researcher in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland. The goal of the project was to determine the impact of Stars on positive outcomes for the Stars Peer Mentors and to contribute to the broader knowledge base on youth peer mentoring. Peer Mentors completed questionnaires at several time points from the start to one year after the completion of the Stars programme.

## What we have found so far

### Stars and the Year 9 students

- Stars Year 9 students evaluated the programme highly.
- Stars Year 9 students who rated their experiences very positively were more likely to have higher connectedness and future orientation scores at the end of the programme.
- The experience within the mentoring component was the strongest predictor across all of the outcomes (i.e. peer connectedness, teacher connectedness and future orientation).
- The programme contributed to the well-being of the students by helping them to gain practical skills and life skills such as: working with others, connecting to their communities, achieving their goals, improving relationships with friends, and developing relationships with older students.
- While Stars benefited all Year 9 students, those from low decile schools appeared to benefit the most from Stars.
- Schools with greater proportions of Pasifika also appeared to benefit the most. It was suggested that this was due in part to the cultural appropriateness of the Adventure Camp for New Zealand youth and of group mentoring for Pasifika and Maori students.
- Stars incorporates many of the components of best practice and in particular Lerner's (2010) "Five Cs" of Positive Youth Development (competence; character; caring; connection and confidence) that specifies the five ideal outcomes that youth development programmes want to achieve with young people.

### Stars Wilderness Adventure and the Year 9 students

- In previous Adventure Camp evaluations, thematic analysis of students' answers to open-ended questions have revealed five major themes across responses:
  - Development of practical skills
  - Working with others
  - Personal development
  - Friendships
  - Peer mentors
- When outcomes from the Wilderness Adventure (and Adventure Days) were compared, there were significant differences in outcomes at the school level (i.e. based on the school/camp experience the student attended). It was found that consideration given to the programme objectives, students' developmental needs, and the cultural relevance of activities for the youth participants within a particular school during the preliminary planning stage can enhance outcomes for students.



## Stars and the Peer Mentors

- Over the duration of the programme Peer Mentors reported significant increases in their social competence (how able you feel in social situations) and character (your belief in the importance of values associated with honesty, responsibility, and integrity).
- One year after the programme the increases in social competence and character were still apparent. In addition, mentors also reported significant increases in self-confidence (confidence in your abilities, knowing that you can do what you need so that things work out well), task leadership (how well you lead other people, especially when you need to get something done) and intellectual flexibility (being able to change the way you think and use new information as it becomes available to you).
- The gains in social competence, self-confidence, intellectual flexibility, and active initiative were greater for Peer Mentors who attended many (i.e. over 20) sessions.
- The vast majority of Stars Peer Mentors said they had a positive experience. The peer mentoring helped them to build positive connections (new friendships and bond with others), develop more confidence (cope and face new challenging situations) and competence (socially and as leaders). It also provided enjoyable opportunities to help and influence others, and to feel respected and listened to.
- Six months and one year after the programme, participants told us that Stars continued to influence their lives because of the positive impact the experience had on their confidence and competence (socially and as leaders) and their levels of maturity and sense of responsibility.
- The biggest challenge for the Peer Mentors was relational challenges. The Peer Mentors found particularly challenging having to cope with mentee behaviour that was out of control, the negative attitudes of some mentees and lack of interest or participation.
- Second to the relational challenges was the need to overcome personal inadequacies and anxieties, such as managing stress, having the courage and confidence needed to speak in front of the mentees and to be a leader. However, overcoming these challenges can also be viewed as contributing towards personal growth, such as the increased confidence and competence found in this project.
- Findings indicate that Peer Mentors academic achievements were above what can be expected relative to decile-based norms. It appeared that being a Peer Mentors can have positive impacts on the life skills and character of a young person while not compromising their academic achievements.
- Having more positive adult role models in their life is the strongest predictor of a Peer Mentor returning to mentor for another year.

## Current Stars Research

### Stars Papakura High School and the Transformational Journey

The Stars programme introduced into Papakura High in 2018 has been ‘gently’ adapted to enhance outcomes for Papakura High students by supporting the school’s whanau and ko toko toko structures. Additionally, many of the Papakura High students may have taken part in Kiwi Can while attending intermediate and Primary schools in Papakura. A Longitudinal evaluation project has therefore been designed in partnership with Papakura High School to explore outcomes for the students and the school. The project provides an opportunity to examine ways that Maori well-being can be enhanced through a programme designed to support year 9 students to successfully transition to secondary school, and to explore any additional benefits for a young person who has experienced Graeme Dingle Foundation’s programmes from primary to secondary school.



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## CAREER NAVIGATOR

### Summary of Past Research

**Graeme Dingle Foundation Exploratory Evaluations (2012 to 2014):** A three year pilot of Career Navigator was evaluated in partnership with Manurewa High School. Exploratory evaluations of Career Navigator were conducted using interviews, focus groups, and pre and post self-report surveys to investigate the effectiveness of the Career Navigator modules from the perspective of participants. To guide the on-going development of Career Navigator the evaluations explored what worked well and what did not work well.

**Theory of Change and Evaluability Assessment for the Career Navigator Programme (2017):** As part of the exploratory evaluation process this project aimed to produce a stakeholder-driven theory of change representing a shared understanding of how Career Navigator produces positive participant outcomes and the conditions that influence programme success. The Theory of Change workshop provided an opportunity for discussions with programme staff and stakeholders, including recipient schools, regarding programme processes and outcomes, and to examine which elements of the programme are assumed to lead to which outcomes for young people.

### What we have found so far

#### Module One - Group Career Mentoring

The Workplace Mentoring module provided an opportunity for Manurewa High School students to receive help and guidance from mentors who have experience and expertise in a particular vocational field. The evaluation showed:

- At the start of the mentoring, the mentees saw the value of having a mentor as having someone to help connect them to a job or career that they are interested in and to help them look for a job. After the programme they said the greatest impact of having a mentor was having someone to help define and support their career path and goals, and learning from their experience.
- After the mentoring, mentees reported feeling more confident about successfully completing job seeking tasks and navigating a career path. This was supported by an increase in their levels of career self-efficacy, indicating an increase in their confidence to perform career related tasks.
- The group career mentoring provided a mix of individual and group mentoring, and all mentees benefitted from the collective mentoring and learning.
- Group mentoring events, such as rock climbing were ideal opportunities for breaking down barriers and building trust.



- The workshops and the school project also provided mentors with the opportunity to teach life and career skills such as the value of planning, working efficiently and not losing focus.
- Mentees said they benefitted from the mentors' experience and knowledge, and their perspective of the workplace. They described their mentors as knowledgeable and realistic, and said that the mentors helped provide direction and motivation, which in turn helped them to approach job seeking with confidence.
- The mentors enjoyed the 'feel good factor' and the opportunity to give something back and make a difference in the lives of their mentees.
- Individual contact between mentors and mentees outside sessions were restricted by mentees limited access to transport, home computers and cellphones (or no cellphone credit).

### **Module Two – Experiential Workshops:**

The Experiential workshops module, designed for Year 12 and Year 13 students provided learning experiences to support Manurewa High School students to obtain occupational and other work-ready skills valued by employers. The evaluation finding suggested positive outcomes for the workshop attendees and have helped to inform the ongoing development of the workshops.



### **Module Three - Career Pathway Events**

This module was designed to provide students with a taste of possible career and employment opportunities and pathways. Evaluations of the Career Pathway events in Manurewa High School show that participants gained:

- A greater awareness of what will be expected from them to be successful in the workplace,
- Increased skills and confidence in their ability to make career and subject choices,
- Help to identify suitable career and subject choices, and confirm their current options,
- Encouragement to carefully consider their future career path and relevant subjects,
- Increased confidence that they can research and get information about careers, and set their own career goals.
- In addition, employers reported valuing the opportunity to raise their profile and to help young people in their community.

“[I learnt] that anything is possible, and I can do what career I want to do through hard work.”

“I wouldn’t have taken that apprenticeship without my mentor telling me about it”

“Yes, I got a job, it helped me to talk to the person that interviewed me. I already had it [a career choice] in mind but my mentor helped me change my mind set, like work harder, for me”

“My mentor he influenced us to try and be better like not go for the lowest job and qualifications but try and go higher”

“It helped me a lot because I came in here knowing nothing about how to get a job, now I am getting some great ideas.”

“I know what is expected from me in a workplace and I can start practicing that while I’m in school.”

“There is a lot of opportunity out there. A lot of people care.”

*(Career Navigator Mentees)*

### Theory of Change Outcomes

- The evaluability assessment indicated that the soundness of the Career Navigator’s theory of change is at the cusp of a “Very Good” rating.
- There was a strong level of agreement amongst stakeholders who have been involved in Career Navigator’s design, programme development, delivery and evaluation about the rationale for the programme, its essential strategies, desired outcomes and moderating influences.
- Almost all of the programme theory components were in line with the existing evidence base.
- Based on report recommendations the target group for the programme was revised and clearly defined.

### Current Career Navigator Research

- The Theory of Change process has provided a shared understanding of Career Navigator and it’s the core features that has enabled us to implement the programme with fidelity across New Zealand. Moving forward it will be used to guide future programme expansion and decisions about relevant evaluation questions and measures.

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## PROJECT K

### Summary of Past Research

**The Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) Evaluation of Project K** (QIAO, McNaught, 2007): From September 2004 through June 2007 an outcome evaluation was carried out by the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE), Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The project analysed data from a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) developed by Graeme Dingle Foundation and the University of Auckland. Graeme Dingle Foundation collected demographic and outcome data for the 94 Year 10 students participating in the Project K programme at 8 high schools. A control group of the same number of students who did not take part in Project K, was selected from the same schools.

**Young Māori Perceptions of a Youth Development Programme** (Hollis, 2009): Developed in response to the CSRE evaluation finding that Māori students in Project K showed significant improvement in academic and social self-efficacy. This Master of Arts project used a new narrative interview style of investigation to gather information from the perspective of six young Maori graduates on how Project K accommodated for Māori and influenced self-efficacy.

**The Effectiveness of Project K on Participants' Health and Lifestyle Behaviours** (Zhang, 2011): The primary aim of this Master of Arts thesis was to evaluate the effectiveness of Project K on participants' health and lifestyle behaviours using data collected for the RCT. The study also examined how Project K directly and indirectly addresses health behaviours and how potential barriers can be overcome.

**Project K in Black & White: A Theory-driven & Randomized Trial Evaluation of a Youth Development Programme** (Deane, 2012): To further examine outcomes for Project K students and to give insight into the function of Project K, the RCT was extended by Graeme Dingle Foundation to include 606 students taking part in Project K programmes and a comparison group of 575 students who did not take part in Project K.

This University of Auckland PhD project applied a Programme theory-driven evaluation science (PTDES) framework to the evaluation of Project K. The study analysed the extended RCT data to investigate the effects of Project K on self-efficacy and academic achievement and the effect of Project K on different subgroups (based on gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status). In addition, a Programme Logic Model was developed that showed Project K incorporates many of the best practice principles discussed in the literature.

**Predicting Improvements in Relatedness and Sense of Community for Participants of the Project K Youth Development Programme** (Chapman, 2012): The aim of this University of Auckland study was to assess whether Project K participants gained a greater sense of community and relatedness over the course of the programme. The study also added evidence to a currently scant literature about how youth programmes utilising mentoring can promote healthy social relationship skills and experiences.

**Changes in Protective Factors with Project K** (Furness, 2012): This Massey University doctoral thesis explored whether Project K helps improve students' self-efficacy, resilience and connectedness to school.



Participants were one group of 49 Project K students and a comparison group of 31 students not taking part in Project K.

**Analysis of the RCT Evaluation of Project K** (Leeson, Harré, 2013): Two reports on the analysis of the RCT data were produced by the School of Psychology, University of Auckland:

*Analysis of the Project K Randomised Controlled Trial Evaluation of Project K: The Final Report* - The purpose of this report was to evaluate the effectiveness of Project K in relation to several of the outcome variables that were measured in the randomised controlled trial (RCT). The impact of the programme in different schools and regions, amongst girls versus boys and amongst participants of different ethnicities was also examined.

*Analysis of the Project K Randomised Controlled Trial: The General Report* - The key aim of this report was to present analyses describing NZ young people in Year 10 and then Year 11 or 12 on key outcome variables (self-efficacy, substance use and risk behaviour, eating behaviour, family cohesion, parental monitoring, parent-rated social competence and work and training status), as well as comparing these outcome variables by gender, ethnicity and region.

**An innovative Exploration of Engagement using Participant Observation in an Outdoor Adventure Youth Development Programme** (Burnett, 2017): This University of Auckland PhD project used unique and innovative methods to investigate the factors that influence youth participant engagement. Immersive Participant Observation (IPO) was used to explore the complexity of youth engagement in the Outdoor Adventure (OA) component of Project K. The researcher lived alongside the participants for the full duration of two different deliveries of Project Kiwi Can's three-week Wilderness Adventure.

According to one of the examiners the final thesis produced "many important findings, for example, on the need to recognise engagement and disengagement as separate issues and on the hierarchy of engagement, that have an importance way beyond OA programs" (Reed Larson, Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, University of Illinois).



## What we have found so far

### What we know about New Zealand Youth

The data collected for the Randomised Control study, in addition to providing a detailed evaluation of Project K, is “a rich source of information on the development of young people with low self-efficacy across a number of years” (Leeson, 2013) treated as a single group of 1187 low self-efficacy youth the data was examined to provide a description of these NZ young people on key outcome variables (self-efficacy, substance use and risk behaviour, eating behaviour, family cohesion, parental monitoring, parent-rated social competence and work and training status), as well as comparing these outcome variables by gender, ethnicity and region.

Some key findings:

- Young people reported a greater belief in their social ability than their academic ability.
- Girls reported significantly higher confidence in their academic ability than boys.
- Pasifika students reported higher self-efficacy than NZ European students.
- Maori reported more alcohol frequency, negative consequences of alcohol, substance abuse and risk behaviour compared to NZ European students and ‘other’ students.
- Females reported significantly higher alcohol frequency, substance abuse and risk behaviour than males. However, compared to females, males increased in frequency of drinking alcohol, substance abuse and risk behaviours more sharply over time.
- Boys reported a greater change in behaviour over time. A greater proportion of boys than girls who had not smoked, used marijuana, or illegal drugs in Year 10 reported engaging in these behaviours 18 months later.
- Male reported significantly higher breakfast consumption than females. Females reported eating more vegetables and less unhealthy eating than males.
- Family cohesions increased slightly over time, while parental mentoring decreased slightly. The two variables are strongly related, as family cohesion increases, parental monitoring increases (and Vice versa).

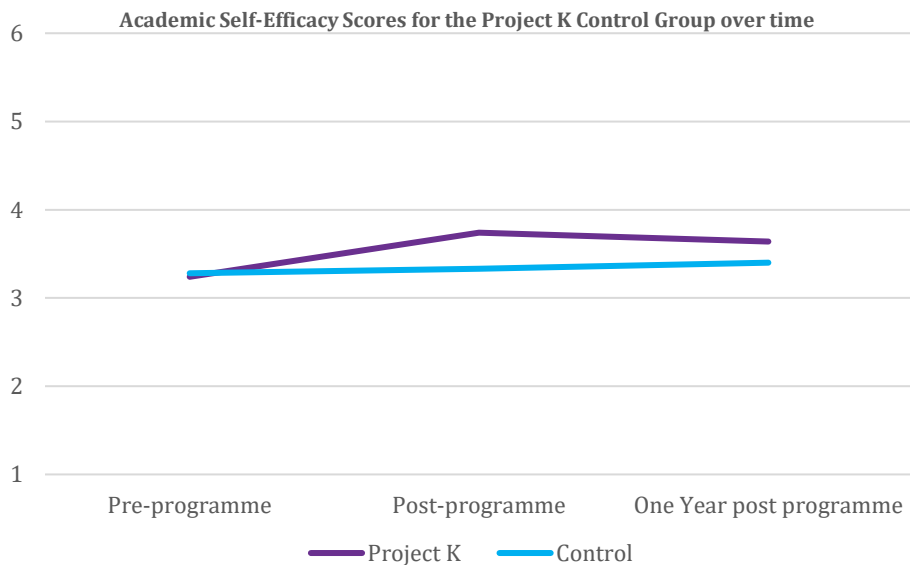
The same RCT data has been used by several research projects to examine the effectiveness of Project K for New Zealand youth through a comparison of the Project K group and the control group. The following outlines some of the key findings around: self-efficacy; education and academic achievement; health behaviours; social competence; relatedness and sense of community; and resilience and connectedness to School.



## What we know about Project K Students

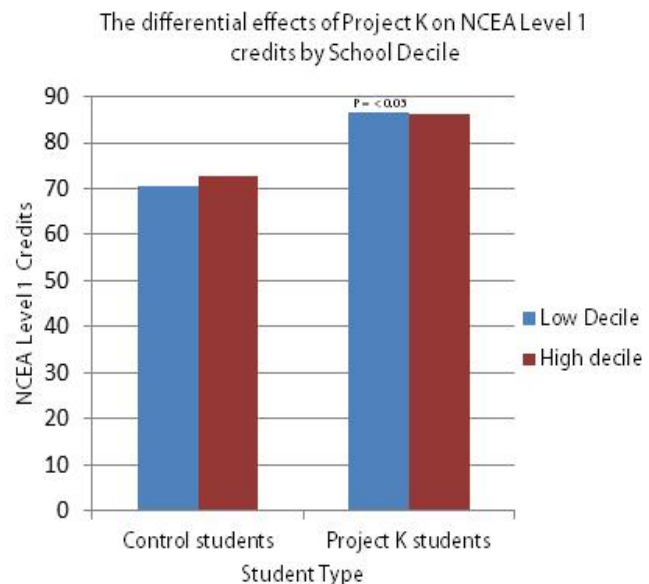
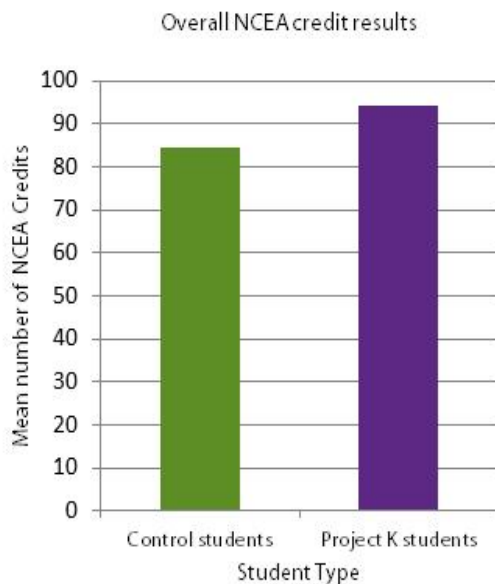
### Self-efficacy

- There was strong evidence that, on average, Project K had a consistent positive effect on all efficacy outcomes.
- In comparison to their control peers, Project K participants ended the programme with higher levels of academic, social and help-seeking self-efficacy.
- Project K was found to be effective in improving academic and social self-efficacy from pre to post programme, and this was sustained one year later. Parents' perceptions of changes in their child's interpersonal skills support these findings.
- Students who entered Project K with very low levels of self-efficacy are likely to gain more from the programme i.e. increase their confidence in their social, academic and help-seeking abilities.
- Project K appeared to reduce discrepancies between different subgroups. For example, post programme male students who did not receive the programme reported lower levels of academic self-efficacy than the female students. Whereas, the male and female Project K students showed no difference in levels of academic self-efficacy.
- One year after starting the programme there was evidence that Project K was more effective in boosting academic self-efficacy for students who started the programme with very low self-efficacy and for students from low decile schools.
- Project K participants reported higher career decision self-efficacy one year post programme, than a similar group of students that did not receive the programme.



## Education and Academic Achievement

- One-year post programme there was evidence that Project K students were less likely to truant.
- One year after the programme, more Project K students than controls reported attending school, full-time education, being employed full-time and looking for educational opportunities.
- Project K seemed to work more effectively for students in low decile settings when it comes to influencing academic achievement, a finding that implies Project K can close the achievement gap between students from low and high decile schools.



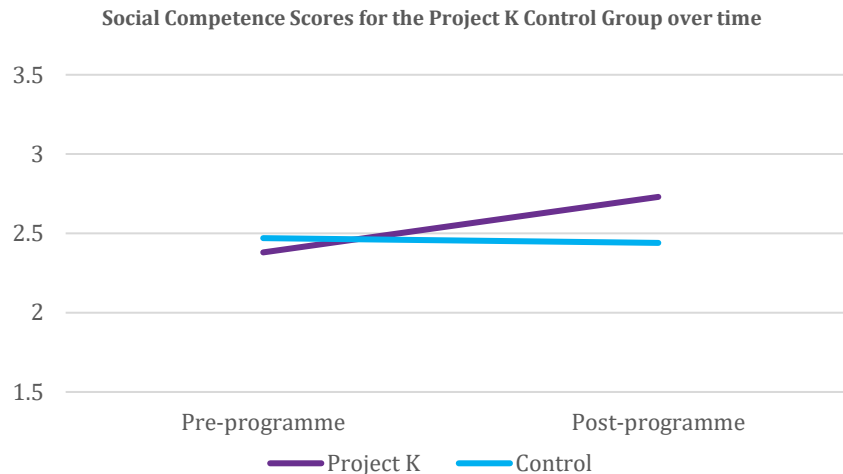
## Health Behaviours

- Project K had a positive impact on eating healthily, i.e. eating breakfast and vegetables more often, and on eating less unhealthy foods.
- Compared to controls, Project K students were more likely to reduce illegal drug use over time.



## Social Competence

- Parents confirmed the positive outcomes for Project K students, rating their children as significantly more socially competent than controls post programme.



## Relatedness and Sense of Community

- Overall, participants showed improved relatedness and sense of community after Project K.
- Participants who began relatively low in these measures showed the most significant gains over time.
- These improvements were predicted by participants' engagement and experiences of support and relatedness throughout the programme (controlling for pre-programme levels and demographic variables of interest).
- Perceived mentor support was an especially powerful predictor of these social gains.



## Resilience and Connectedness to School

- On average, Project K students finished the programme with higher resilience scores than when they started while the comparison group resilience scores declined.
- On average, Project K students and the comparison group finished the programme with higher connectedness. However, on average the Project K student scores increased 23% while the comparison group scores increased 5%.

## **Positive Outcomes and the importance of Engagement and Disengagement**

Contexts and situations in which factors are most effective to increase engagement and when they can have a negative affect and lead to disengagement.

- Participant engagement is essential to maintain the process of change, leading to increased outcomes.
- Programme environment (intense, safe and supportive) and Interpersonal dynamics (group dynamics and relationships between the group and the facilitators) are key factors that influence engagement.
- Novelty, accomplishment and reflection are key processes that lead to positive outcomes.
- Factors that influence engagement are the nature of the activities and the environment and peer and facilitator support.
- Factors that influence disengagement are levels of physical challenge (too much or a lack of), negative social influence and limited facilitator attunement.

## Current Project K Research

The following PhD project, in partnership with the University of Auckland, will be completed in 2018. The project will help support the delivery of the Project K programme by ensuring students get as much as possible from the experience.

**Family reintegration experiences of young people after a positive youth development programme:** This project aims to address a major gap in the literature by examining the reintegration experiences of young people into the home environment after Project K's Wilderness Adventure, and how parents can support participants' successful transition back to school and into the home following this intense experience.

Through interviews the project will:

- Explore Project K participants' experiences of reintegration after the Wilderness Adventure.
- Investigate parents' or caregivers' and programme providers' views on reintegration



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## MYND

### Summary of Past Research

**Youth New Directions: A Prospective Step-Wise Cohort Study of the Mentoring Youth New Direction (MYND) Programme for Adolescents With or Without Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (SPARX-R) (Fleming et al, 2013-2015):** This prospective step-wise cohort study was a joint project between Graeme Dingle Foundation and the Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Auckland. MYND participants were invited to take part and allocated to receive MYND and SPARKS or MYND only. The main aims of the project were:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the MYND programme with SPARX-R computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (cCBT) compared to the MYND programme only, with respect to measures of mood and behaviour.
- To examine participants and staff satisfaction with SPARX-R, and the feasibility of the implementation of SPARX-R in the MYND programme,
- To explore the effectiveness of the MYND programme on selected outcome measures (participants allocated to MYND only).

**MYND Sibling pilot** (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2012): This evaluation examined outcomes from a MYND early intervention programme pilot. The programme's aim is to improve life outcomes for the siblings of youth offenders and to reduce the likelihood of future offending. The MYND Sibling programme aims to provide the siblings' with positive role models and life skills that build resilience, reduce negative behaviour, increase engagement with education and facilitate access to community services and support, and to support caregivers to develop healthy family relationships. The MYND Sibling programme aligns with MSD priorities for Vulnerable Children.

**The MYND Sibling Programme** (Graeme Dingle Foundation, 2015-2016): In 2015 and 2016 the programme was delivered consecutively to two groups of six young people (the first programme group from July 2015 to December 2015 and the second programme group from January 2016 to August 2016). The MYND Sibling programme participants were selected in consultation with NZ Police, Child Youth and Family Services and the MYND staff, based on their knowledge of youth offenders and their families in South Auckland.

A mixed methods evaluation was designed to understand whether and how the MYND Sibling programme worked to enhance protective factors for the siblings of youth offenders. A range of measures examined participants' resilience, school attendance, classroom engagement, and social competence (emotional regulation, and prosocial behaviours), at the start of the programme, and at the end of the programme. Information on the siblings and the programme was gathered from the perspective of caregivers, teachers, programme providers and the siblings.

## What we have found so far

### The MYND programme

- Due to the low levels of MYND participants who completed SPARX the researchers were unable to compare SPARX and no SPARX groups.
- However, examining participant changes over time, it was found that there was a statistically significant reduction in depressive symptoms and anger from baseline to a 20 week assessment.
- Although not statistically significant there was a downward trend in participants' reports of antisocial cognitions (as measured using the 'How I Think' questionnaire).
- There was also a beneficial change in the majority of help-seeking intentions and conduct behaviours.

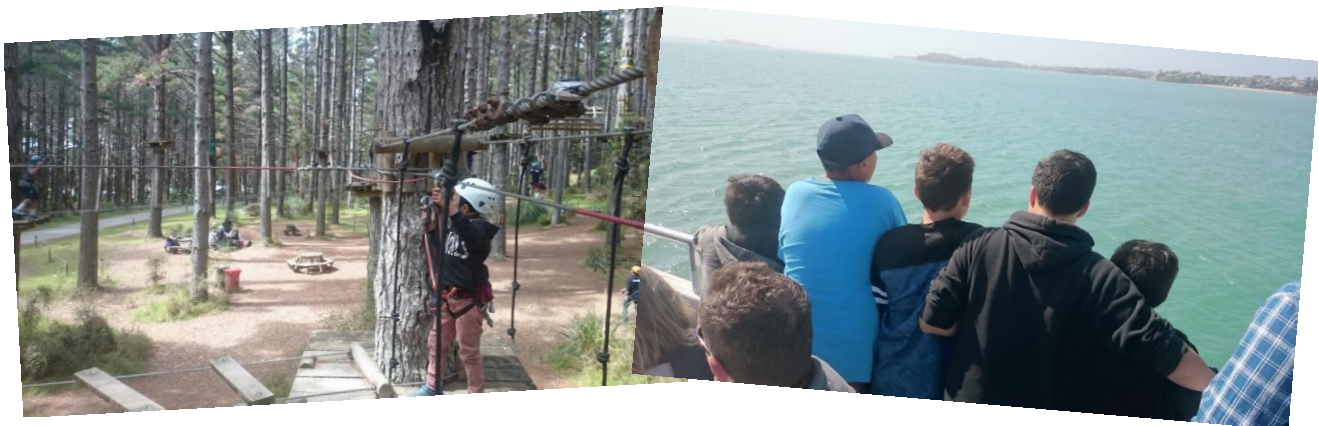
### The Sibling Programme

- The evaluation of the 2012 Sibling pilot provided anecdotal evidence that the siblings had made positive changes in their lives. The programme helped many of the siblings to develop positive relationships and social skills, and engage more positively with school. Of particular note was the improvement in the sibling's behaviour, attitude and general mood, and as a consequence the improvement in their school and family relationships (as identified by two mothers interviewed). All the participants were highly engaged in the programme, and throughout the programme there were high attendance levels for all activities.
- The 2015-2016 evaluation provided a more in-depth exploration of the outcomes of the MYND Sibling programme, for the siblings and their families. The evaluation design, evaluation methods, and outcomes for each of the two programmes have been presented in four reports.
- The evaluation revealed the multiple risk factors in the siblings' environment that have a negative influence on their development. For example, low confidence, internalised behaviours such as withdrawing from the family or externalised anti-social behaviours such as fighting and truancy.
- There was evidence of increased prosocial behaviour, emotional regulation, positive thinking, interpersonal skills and school attendance.
- School engagement is an important protective factor and the siblings identified school as a significant connection in their environment. The programme succeeded in increasing school attendance for most of the siblings.
- An important protective factor for vulnerable youth is a positive connection to community, peers and family. The results show that since taking part in the programme the siblings are more motivated to join prosocial organised activities such as sport, church youth and Kapa haka groups, which helps them to connect to their heritage and to other people in the community and builds their sense of belonging and confidence.
- There were barriers to programme effectiveness; for some of the older participants the presence or absence of other factors that accompany early adolescence had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the MYND Sibling programme, and for both younger and older participants significant learning difficulties were a barrier to engaging fully with school and the programme.

- At the end of the programme the siblings described positive life goals and envisioned a positive future.
- The results of this evaluation of short-term outcomes show that although there are many risk factors in the lives of the participants, the programme supports the younger siblings of youth offenders to build their resilience, increase social competence and engage with school.
- Caregiver support and the siblings' experiences of success at school increases the likelihood that these positive changes will be sustained, and enhance the chance of a better future for the sibling.

“I asked him what kind of skills he’s learnt and he said thinking, doing the right thing, helping to control his actions when he’s feeling left out or angry. He talked about having more strategies so he can calm himself and others down. I’ve noticed an improvement in his communication and his openness and willingness to talk. But even he recognised that he’s more able to talk to other people. And I’ve seen also the difference in his face. Normally, previously, he’d walk around with a bit of a frown, bit of a scowl. But over time, his eyes are wider, he’s a happier little boy. And he’s said that he’s got positive thoughts now about his future. He wants to be either a policeman or a rugby league player.”

*(Teacher, Report 2a, p14)*



## Current MYND Research

### The MYND programme

The results from the Prospective Step-Wise Cohort Study of MYND were promising and we are planning to build on this earlier research to examine these outcomes further. Currently a PhD research project is being developed that use the Theory of Change methodology to clarify expected behavioural and cognitive outcomes and explore what elements of MYND influence these outcomes. The Theory of Change model will then be compared with relevant academic theories and empirical evidence. This research will help us to understand more about why youth offend, the impact of the MYND intervention on these measures, and what aspects of the MYND programme are successful in reducing re-offending behaviour.



### The MYND Sibling Pilot programme

In preparation for the launch of the sibling programme in 2018, we will be conducting a stakeholder-driven theory of change workshop. The aim is to provide all stakeholders with a shared understanding of the sibling programme, how the Sibling programme produces positive participant outcomes and the conditions that influence programme success. This process will guide communication, training, future evaluation and programme development. Also, in 2018 the programme activities and materials will be reviewed to ensure they are consistent with academic theories and empirical evidence and work with children of all language and comprehension abilities.



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