



GRAEME DINGLE FOUNDATION

Empowering kids to overcome life's obstacles
Whakamanawatia ngā tamariki kia eke panuku

Research & Evaluation Annual Summary 2021



Contents

Introduction.....	1
Kiwi Can.....	3
Summary of Past Research.....	3
What we have found so far	5
References.....	8
Stars.....	9
Summary of Past Research.....	10
What we have found so far	12
References.....	15
Career Navigator.....	16
Summary of Past Research.....	17
What we have found so far	18
Current Career Navigator Research.....	21
References.....	23
Project K.....	24
Summary of Past Research.....	25
What we have found so far	28
Current Project K Research.....	38
References.....	39
MYND and Kiwi Tahi.....	42
Summary of Past Research.....	43
What we have found so far	45
Current MYND & Kiwi Tahi Research	47
References.....	49
Youth Research	50
Social Media and youth Mental Health and Well being.....	50
Covid-19 and the Parallel Pandemic	52

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**

And a Youth Research section that outlines a New Zealand wide youth research project led by the Graeme Dingle Foundation

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<http://www.dinglefoundation.org.nz>



**NOT ALL CHILDHOODS
ARE CREATED EQUAL.**



Section One
Kiwi Can

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 5C's of Positive Youth Development and then took part in focus group interviews.

Kandoo Can: Make Friends: The Kandoo Can: Make Friends book narrates the story of Kandoo the Kiwi and his quest to find friends to join his team that reveals the value of each individual's contribution. The Graeme Dingle Research and Evaluation team designed and delivered an evaluation to assess the children's recall of the story, and to explore how the children perceived and interpreted its theme of positive relationships. The book was given to children in a Kiwi Can school and a non-Kiwi Can school.



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 C's" 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). 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 are 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.



Kandoo Can: Make Friends

Asked about the book several months after it was given to them, the children could recall the book, its story, and its characters. They said that they had taken the book home, had read the book, and they could tell us where the book was now. Some children also said that the book had been shared at home and read to them by a sibling or a parent. The level of recall indicated that the children found the book engaging and interesting. The children's responses also indicated that all the children understood the book's message around friendship and inclusivity. How the children in the Kiwi Can school described the concept of friendship and how they practiced positive relationships reflected many of the teachings of Kiwi Can.

"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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**Section Two
Stars**

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 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 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 coping with behavioural issues of the mentees particularly challenging and also the negative attitudes and lack of interest or participation of some mentees.

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.

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Section Three Career Navigator

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.



What do the students say?

"[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 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

Testing the Career Navigator Theory of Change Model

Since its development, the theory of change process has provided a shared understanding of Career Navigator and its core features that has enabled us to implement the programme with fidelity across New Zealand. In 2021, a mixed method evaluation will test the model to ensure it accurately illustrates Career Navigator expected outcomes. Participants will complete surveys pre-programme, mid-programme, and post-programme that examine their levels of career self-efficacy, social self-efficacy, employment hope, employability skills and work readiness. In addition, participant interviews will help us to gain a deeper understanding of the programme, identify any unintended outcomes and areas for development.

Career Navigator Community Based Programme

In 2020 Career Navigator was extended to young people in the community in the Marlborough region. The community programme was evaluated using mixed methods, pre-programme, post 8-week intensive, and 8-weeks post programme. Interviews were also conducted with the young people post-8 weeks intensive and at 8-weeks post-programme. Interim findings include:

- Of the nine young people who took part in the first Career Navigator Community programme (cohort one), programme staff were able to contact eight, who were all actively engaged. Five of the seven (or 71%) were in employment, two in further education or training, and one was employed in casual jobs and unpaid projects while working towards his career goals.
- The young people in cohort one said that the Career Navigator Community had motivated them to seek employment and actively work towards their future by increasing their confidence and motivation. These are important gains considering the levels of disengagement previously reported by participants (see interim report, May 2021).
- Many of the young people who took part in the second Career Navigator Community programme (cohort two) said they had left school because the school environment was no longer a good fit for them, this usually followed a stressful life event. After leaving school most went into 'fill-in' jobs or courses that they often did not find enjoyable or fulfilling.

- Similar to cohort one, cohort two described the most common barriers to employment as a lack of confidence, not having a clear direction, transport difficulties and health problems.
- Career Navigator Community helped participants to overcome their resistance and avoidance of new experiences due to shyness or social anxiety and showed them that they can connect and 'fit in' with other people.
- Successfully interacting with others and learning about oneself offered the young people a new perspective on past events, on their abilities and on future employment opportunities. This new perspective prompted the young people to see things through a more positive lens, increased their confidence and employment hope, and motivated them to find a job that is a good fit for them.

At the end of the pilot programmes, a stakeholder workshop will be held in the Marlborough region to reconstruct an explicit theory of change incorporating the perspectives of those who have intimate knowledge of the programme.



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**Section Four
Project K**

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, 2018): This University of Auckland PhD project used unique and innovative methods to investigate the factors that influence youth participant engagement. Immersive participant observation was used to explore the complexity of youth engagement in the outdoor adventure component of Project K. The researcher lived alongside the participants for the full duration of two different deliveries of Project K's three-week Wilderness Adventure.

According to Reed Larson (Professor, Human Development and Family Studies, University of Illinois) 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 – to educational psychology more generally”.

Impressions from the wild: A thematic analysis on the effect of the Project K

Wilderness Adventure on adolescent self-efficacy (Jones, 2018): This Master of Arts project, in partnership with Massey University, provided valuable insight to the existing body of literature by examining the effect of the Wilderness experience on self-efficacy from the perspective of the student participants.

Thematic analysis was conducted on eight focus group discussions with 23 Project K participants on their Wilderness Adventure experience.

This study informs PYD programmes, particularly involving wilderness interventions, by communicating the experience of adolescent participants, and the challenges and outcomes that were perceived to be meaningful for them.

To the Woods and Back Again: The Reintegration Experiences of Young People Following Participation in a Positive Youth Development Wilderness Adventure Programme

(Kanakkappally Antony, 2019) This project addressed 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.

Project K Alumni (Moore, 2020) Project K Alumni were asked to complete an online survey to explore the current status of the Project K graduates and gather their perceptions of the impact that Project K had on their education, career, and other life achievements. The earliest respondents graduated in 2010 and completed the survey nine-years post programme. The largest number of respondents graduated in 2015 and 2016 and completed the survey three/four-years post-programme.

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).

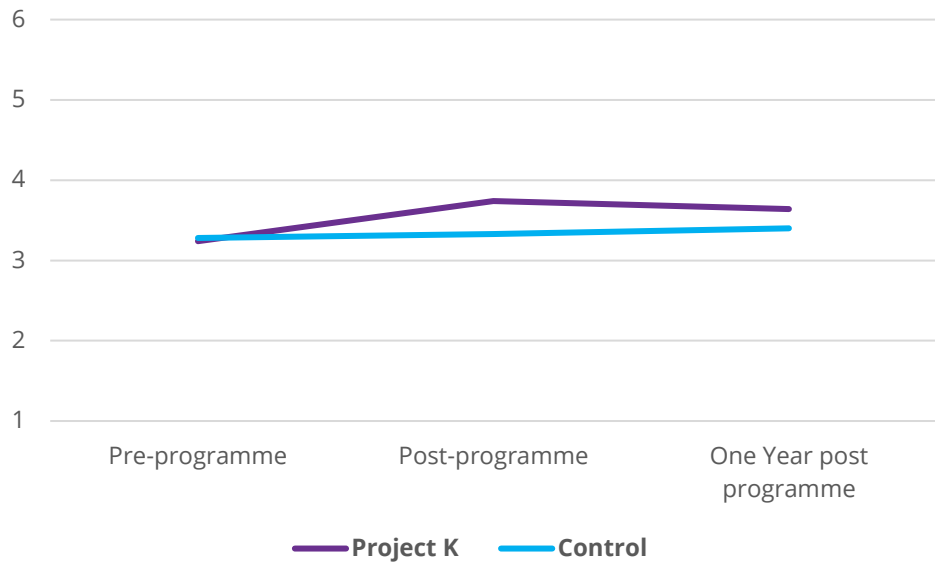
The same RCT data has been used by several research projects to examine the effectiveness of Project K for New Zealand youth through a comparison of the Project K group and the control group. The following outlines some of the key findings around: self-efficacy; education and academic achievement; health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

What we know about Project K Students

Self-efficacy

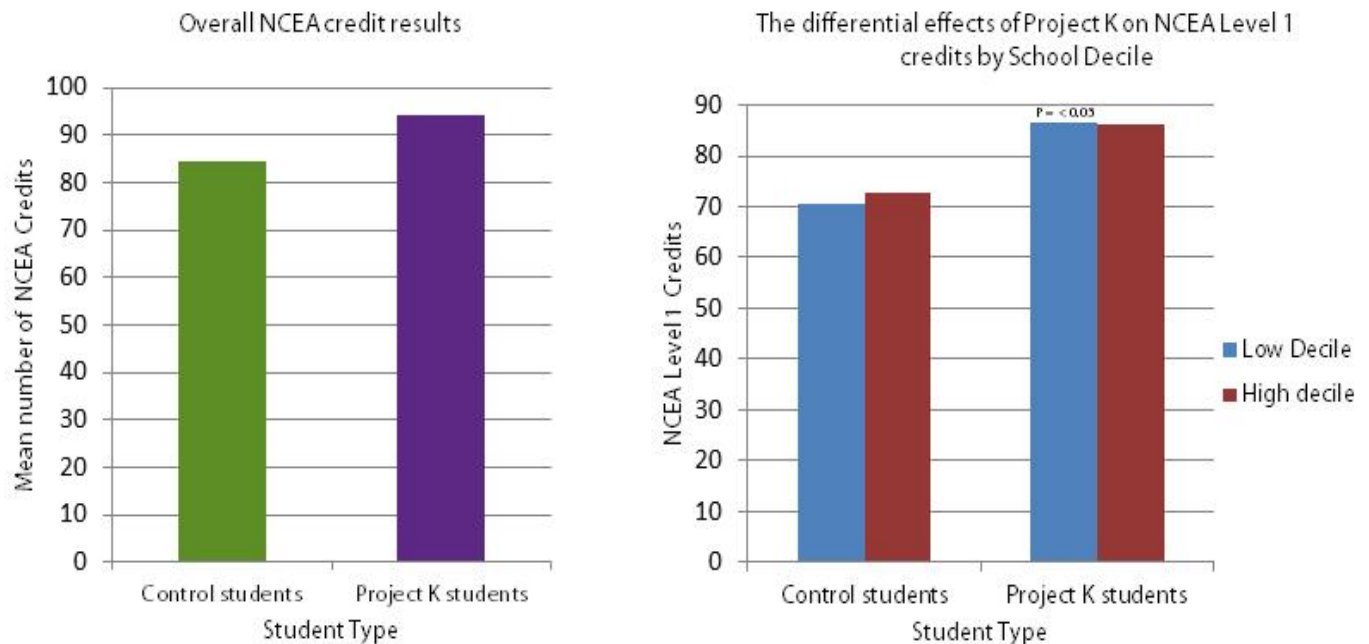
- There was strong evidence that, on average, Project K had a consistent positive effect on all efficacy outcomes.
- In comparison to their control peers, Project K participants ended the programme with higher levels of academic, social and help-seeking self-efficacy.
- Project K was found to be effective 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.

Academic Self-Efficacy Scores for the Project K Control Group over 12 months



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.

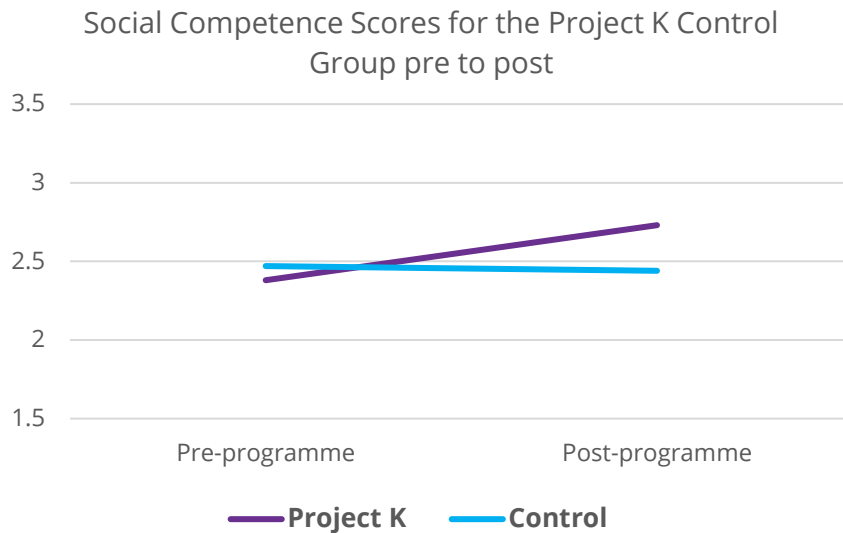


Health Behaviours

- 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%.

The Wilderness Adventure: importance of Engagement and Disengagement

“Engagement refers to the process of active involvement in an activity and is evident in behaviours (such as effort and attention) and emotions (such as interest and enjoyment)” (Roth et al., 2010)

- The research confirmed the importance of engagement to the effectiveness of youth development programmes.
- Provides a further understanding of the patterns of engagement and disengagement.
- Understanding disengagement can inform programme practices and help to prevent participants becoming disengaged, reducing programme drop-out and increasing outcomes. It is one of the few pieces of research that views disengagement as a separate construct to engagement.
- The findings have begun to reveal a hierarchy of the three components of engagement (behavioural, cognitive, and emotional). Behavioural engagement leading to cognitive and emotional engagement, and emotional engagement leading to cognitive engagement.
- The research illustrates the importance of understanding the uniqueness of each participant experience.
- Key factors that influence engagement are the nature of the environments and activities (natural environment, novelty, necessity, accomplishment, reflection, leadership, and competition); peer support (emotional, informational, and instrumental support); and facilitator skills (the provision of emotional and informational support, supporting autonomy, and adapting to the needs of the participants).
- Factors that influence disengagement are levels of physical challenge (too much or a lack of), negative social influence and limited facilitator attunement.

Trajectories of Engagement

- The key processes that lead to positive outcomes are novelty, accomplishment, and reflection.
- The three trajectories of engagement are 1. High engagement: Generally engaged from the start and throughout Wilderness Adventure, with brief periods of disengagement, 2. Variable engagement day to day with no consistent pattern

throughout the Wilderness Adventure, 3. Increased engagement throughout the Wilderness Adventure.

Challenges and consequences

- The major challenges for participants are being outside their comfort zone; facing real consequences; and navigating personal challenges.
- Within the real consequences of the wilderness environment participants experiment with strategies, such as taking responsibility and finding ways to resolve interpersonal conflicts.
- The Wilderness Adventure promotes mastery experiences, responsibility, and interpersonal skills, as well as the five C's of PYD (particularly Competence, Connection, confidence and caring).
- Participants also develop a more positive attitude and increased gratitude.

Reintegration

- Outdoor Adventure based Positive Youth Development programmes need to consider reintegration strategies in order to smooth the transition of young people back into their daily lives.
- The study highlighted the initial adjustment period of emotional upheavals and discomforts associated with the reentry experience immediately after the Wilderness Adventure, similar to the concept of expedition reverse cultural shock.
- One of the key findings is that the positive reception of parents, teachers, and programme staff has the potential to moderate the emotional upheavals experienced by participants immediately after the WA.
- The reintegration experiences comprise five major modes: preparation mode, memory mode, reaction mode, adaptation mode, and transfer mode.
- Preparation - Successful reintegration requires participants and their parents to having a clear understanding of the programme and the expected learning outcome prior to the Wilderness Adventure. it is important to address language barriers and cultural differences that may hinder parent's understanding of the programme.
- Memory – The Wilderness Adventure was remembered as a once in lifetime experience although those memories faded over the following six months period. Project K participants often become a “wolfpack” family and have enjoyable memories However, interpersonal conflicts can ruin the participants' memories and lead to disengagement from the programme. This emphasises the importance of creating the Wilderness Adventure as an 'enjoyable' or 'everlasting' experience and

the significant role instructors play to adequately address the group dynamics and interpersonal conflicts.

- Reaction - Participants experienced emotional highs and lows when they returned to their normal routines after the Wilderness Adventure. They experienced a 'brand new' or born again feeling, and although they were exhausted physically, they were enthusiastic. They also felt 'discomfort in the comfort zone'. This is helped by a positive reception and allowing the participant time and space to re-settle and tell their stories. Connections and communication with their "wolfpack" helped some to regulate their emotions. Parents also play a crucial role but may not completely understand and grasp the youths' unique and intensive experiences.
- Adaption - during this phase participants adjust back to their reality. Findings showed that participants experience difficulties in adapting into the structured school environment. Adjustment was supported by positive encouragements and support from parents and teachers, and peers. Additionally, schools providing support to catch up with missed class work helps the youth adapt more quickly.
- Transfer – As participants continued to encounter support and challenges, all youth were able to transfer their learnings and some of the coping strategies learnt on the Wilderness Adventure to re-adapt to their social environment. Parents and key informants shared that they saw behavioural changes in terms of positive self – concept, responsibility, skill development, academic success, and an outdoor orientation. The opportunity to apply their skills at home, school and in their community plays a crucial role in sustaining positive changes
- Findings provide empirical evidence of the importance of ongoing inputs, interpersonal dynamics, and individual characteristics to the success of the programme. Factors that promote positive reintegration include positive characteristics of the youth, positive parental support, positive peer influence, support from school and teachers, reconnecting with the 'wolfpack', community challenge, mentor support, programme staff support and participation in other community activities

"I'm stronger than I thought...like not physically...It was just more like mentally... being away from home and being in the bush"

"I'm more, I guess, willing to do things, like if someone says- well, my mum, for example says, "I'm walking the mount do you want to come?" I would say yes, and I used to say no, and that's changed"

"Like, not arguing with my brothers, as much...I just don't start it...attitude towards class like, towards schoolwork. Just putting my head down and doing it. Because not everything is easy. I know now"

"I used to like, be naughty and stuff with my friends, like drink and stuff. And I learnt now that like...there's not really any point doing it because like- hard to explain but like, there's better things I could be doing than that...I learnt that that's just not the way to go, like being in the nature and stuff I was like, nah all that's bad."

Project K Participants



The Wilderness Adventure Experience

- The major challenges for participants are: being outside their comfort zone; facing real consequences; and navigating personal challenges.
- To complete the Wilderness expeditions, participants experiment with strategies, i.e. taking responsibility as a result of the real consequences of the wilderness environment and finding ways to resolve interpersonal conflicts.
- The Wilderness Adventure promotes mastery experiences, responsibility, and interpersonal skills, as well as the five C's of PYD (particularly Competence, Connection, confidence and caring).
- Participants also develop a more positive attitude and increased gratitude.



Project K Alumni

The alumni said that Project K helped them to recognise good opportunities, gave them the confidence to try new activities, motivated them to set personal/life goals, and helped them communicate with others and build positive relationships.

The alumni achievements and positive goal setting at school and beyond supports previous research that has shown Project K has a positive impact on academic self-efficacy.

The alumni say that by taking part in Project K they gained confidence, built their competence, and made positive social connections, which led to a more positive view of their abilities. In particular, Project K had a positive impact on social self-efficacy, an individual's belief in his or her capability to communicate with others, build relationships and assert a personal viewpoint, which is crucial for youth development.

The alumni said that they believe Project K is especially beneficial for young people who feel they do not fit in, are struggling in school, or are dealing with difficult life situations. They would recommend Project K to other young people because of the positive impact it had on themselves and the opportunities it offers.

The alumni said it helped them to grow in confidence and overcome interpersonal challenges, helped them to build positive personal relationships, to set and work towards personal goals and to make the most of opportunities as they arise. All of which helped the young people to make the most of academic and social opportunities at school and into the world beyond school.

“One of the biggest things for me was my confidence. I feel I now have so much more confidence in my abilities to meet/interact with new people and to ask for help when needed. I've come to realise all the opportunities that are out there for me and to have more confidence in my ability to know where I'm heading in life.”

Current Project K Research

Project K Community Scholarship

Graeme Dingle Foundation receives a number of enquiries each year from parents, youth organisations and services wanting to place a young person experiencing life and behavioural challenges on Project K. The Community Scholarship model was developed in response to a growing need to extend the reach of Project K.

A theory of change evaluation research project is supporting the development and evaluation of the community model by:

- Analysing, presenting, and reviewing findings of the exploratory evaluation.
- Continually obtaining stakeholder feedback and validation of a proposed programme model.
- Developing and revising the programme model in real time.
- Reflecting on outcomes at the end of the Project K Community Scholarship programme, and if necessary, further revising the model.
- Using the model to guide future programme development, process, and outcome evaluation measures, and determining who the programme is for, and who it is not for?



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Section Four
MYND &
Kiwi Tahī

MYND & Kiwi Tahī

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 aim of the programme 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 Kiwi Tahī Programme (previously MYND Sibling) (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.

The Kiwi Tahī Theory of Change

In 2018, a stakeholder-driven theory of change workshop was conducted. The process has provided a shared understanding of the Kiwi Tahī programme, how the Sibling programme produces positive participant outcomes and the conditions that influence programme success. Also, in 2018 the programme activities and materials were reviewed to ensure they are consistent with academic theories and empirical evidence and work with children of all language and comprehension abilities.

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 most of the help-seeking intentions and conduct behaviours.



Kiwi Tahī

The evaluation of the 2012 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 note was the improvement in the sibling's behaviour, attitude and general mood, and consequently 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 & Kiwi Tahī Research

Theory of Change Programme Model

The theory of change process was used to reconstruct an explicit theory of change incorporating perspectives of those who have intimate knowledge of MYND. Stakeholder-driven theory of change workshops were used to deconstruct assumptions about how MYND produces positive outcomes.

There were three groups of key stakeholders: management, youth workers, and the MYND participants themselves. Integration of feedback from all participants were used to create a final MYND model.

The researcher has provided the Graeme Dingle Foundation and MYND with a living document that represents a point-in-time picture of how the programme is presumed to operate, based on the perspectives of all those involved with the programme. It will provide a foundation from which to test and evaluate MYND and Increase the sensitivity of an evaluation design, increasing the chance of detecting effects. It will also be a useful tool for stakeholder communication and for monitoring implementation. The model can be revisited and modified as the programme evolves and/or other perspectives are obtained.

Kiwi Tahī Evaluation Research Project

This project is a collaboration between Graeme Dingle Foundation and the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT). We had to review and adapt the project and methods used to collect data to comply with Covid-19 social distancing guidelines and restrictions. As part of the revised project plan the study examining the long-term impact of the Kiwi Tahī programme has been postponed until 2022. The current study, using mixed method research informed by Positive Youth Development Framework, aims to evaluate, and examine participant engagement and the effects of Kiwi Tahī on positive life outcomes.



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Youth Research

Social Media and youth Mental Health and Well being

The Graeme Dingle Foundation and Nielsen designed a survey to explore questions on social media use and the mental health and wellbeing of New Zealand young people. The New Zealand wide survey of young people aged 14 -24 years asked young participants questions on social media use, relationships, sexuality related activity, and how social media activity impact their health and well-being.

“Inevitably, social media causes everybody to feel mental distress. The constant want and need for acceptance causes people to constantly post and talk about their lives on each separate platform, often leading to anxiety if posts don't get enough likes or people don't respond to messages. I have personally felt FOMO from people posting pictures and videos of themselves and others doing fun things, when I was not invited. This has caused me trouble sleeping as the want to check social media is fueled by the anxiety.” 16-17 Yrs.

“Social media is an instant way to pass the time at any time of boredom. It keeps me connected to friends and the family I have overseas. It's a good way to plan events, (mainly on Facebook) and arrange things with multiple people. Even being able to use marketplace on Facebook is useful for secondhand things.” 19-24 Yrs.

Some Key Findings

- Young people experience both positive and negative impacts on their mental health and well-being.
- The older age group have a degree of self-management and more ability to walk away.
- Several young people had experiences of people they know on social media posting worrying threats of self-harm.
- A quarter of young people have regularly seen or read something that made them worry about the safety of someone else.
- One in five young people have sought support from someone for issues and concerns they might have had about something they experienced on social media. Two-thirds indicated that they would trust a close friend to help them if they needed help, half would trust a parent, and just over a third a sibling.



Young Kiwi's Ask For Social Media Safeguards

Awareness & Usage



Overall, those aged 13 - 24 found Facebook, YouTube and Instagram the social media platforms with the highest levels of awareness.

61%

Tik-Tok

However, those aged 16-18 are more likely to be aware of Snapchat and TikTok

94%

Snapchat

33%

regularly worry about the amount of time they spend on social media.

“Every week 3.7 million New Zealanders access the Internet and 2.5 million interact on social media at least once a week, mostly through smart phones.”

- Social Media Study 2019

Health & Well-being

Nearly 30% regularly viewed online posts that make them feel negatively about their body image, social situation or background.

40%

regularly connected with a group that makes them feel positive about themselves.



The largest negative impacts are on sleep (addictive nature) and bullying (miss construed messages).



70%

Agree that it's hard to tell when influencer's are giving you their honest opinion, or are being paid to say or do something.

Experiences & Seeking Help

74%

agree safe social media use should be taught in schools as part of the curriculum.

56%

agree with the introduction of a social media usage pop-up warning.



20% have never sought help from anyone for issues or concerns they might have had about something they've experienced on social media.

“One in five have seen or read something that made them concerned about someone's safety to the extent they tried to do something to help them.”

- Ian Mills, Nielson.

“The research clearly shows that young people are telling us that they recognise areas where they are at risk from social media and they believe safeguards are needed.”

- Julie Moore Research and Evaluation Manager, Graeme Dingle Foundation.



www.facebook.com/dinglefoundation



dinglefoundation.org.nz

Source - Nilson Social Media Study completed by The Graeme Dingle Foundation 2019

Covid-19 and the Parallel Pandemic

Graeme Dingle Foundation invited young people to write about their experience of COVID-19. To share stories on the impact of Covid-19 and the ways they faced the challenges and restrictions on their lives. From their stories the main themes were:

- **Moving away from home** for the first time can be exciting and daunting. For some, Covid-19 interrupted the process of adapting psychologically and emotionally to their new independence.
- **Studying online** and losing motivation was a major challenge for the young people, along with feelings of disappointment when they felt they didn't rise to the challenge.
- There was a sense of **guilt and disappointment** for some students at not reaching academic goals and missing out on end of school social events.
- Covid created a **change in the mental health and wellbeing** of some students.
- Resilience was evidenced as young people talked **about the positives** they would take away from the experience.

"There were big changes in my life, and I had high hopes, I was looking forward to a lot of things, a whole new life. Then Covid came about and cancelled all the things that I had planned for myself and took me back to square one. It was hard for me to understand 'why right now?' when everything in life was happening"

"I don't like computers so adjusting to online learning and e-learning was an extreme challenge. It took me three days and I felt myself slipping away from school life. My sleep pattern dropped. I found myself falling asleep at 3-4 in the morning then waking up at midday. My motivation started dropping to the point where I wanted to give up on everything. I began to feel hopeless."

"I Admit that I did not do the greatest this year, especially compared to my previous year's results. And the fact that this was my final year in high school made it all the worse/important. Lockdown did take place towards the start of the school year, and I feel like I just lost all motivation in achieving my goals and leading a successful academic year...Reflecting back on my final year in high school, the guilt and disappointment hit hard."

"You are trying to study, classes are still going on and you're getting updates about the virus and lockdown, it was very scary, and I know a lot of the students were really scared at that time. My anxiety was really, really, high, I started having panic attacks and I had never had them before, I was terrified"

"But I would say the most important thing would be the support of the people around you. Because these kinds of things are a lot easier to handle when you have people and you know that you are in it together and that there are people there to help you, and to lean on."

Akonga and Disengagement

For many of our young people, the ever-changing world of Covid has significantly affected their life plans, disrupting their last year in school, first year at university, plans to travel and career goals. The stories told by young people have revealed their struggles to maintain motivation and engagement. Graeme Dingle Foundation is using a theory of Change process to 1. examine how and why some young people disengage from interactions with their peers and school; 2. develop community-based programmes to help young people to re-engage; and 3. examine the impact of youth development programmes on disengaged youth.

References

Graeme Dingle Foundation (2019) Social Media Survey Report (190830) The Nielsen Company.