



MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

Evaluation of Project K

[Summary]

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Summary of Findings

1. Project K participants improved their ability to master academic activities (e.g. How well can you pay attention during class? How well can you finish school assignments?). There was significantly greater improvement for Project K participants than control group students at the end of the intervention and one year post programme. A similar trend was found for New Zealand Maori, female and low decile school students.
2. Project K students showed significantly greater improvement than the control group in their ability to form and maintain peer relationships and social assertiveness in the classroom (e.g. How well can you become friends with other people? How well can you take part in class discussions?) at the end of the intervention and one year post programme. A similar trend was found for New Zealand European students, males, female, low and high decile school students. Male students benefited more than females.
3. Improvement in the ability to ask for adult help, information and support (e.g. How well can you get adults to help you with a problem? How well can you get the information you need from adults?) was not as marked as other outcomes. Overall, the Project K group showed significantly greater improvement than the control group at the end of the intervention. However, these gains were not maintained at one year post programme. Low decile school and female students benefited more than high decile school and male students.
4. New Zealand European and Maori Project K students' abilities to make good career decisions and successfully execute career-related behaviours (e.g. Work out what job would be best for you; Perform well in a job interview) significantly improved compared to the control group students at one year post programme. Project K students from high decile schools also showed significant improvement relative to the control group.
5. No changes were observed between groups on measures of health and lifestyle. However, risky behaviour increased significantly for both groups over time.
6. National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results were measured only at one year after Project K completion. New Zealand Maori students who participated in Project K showed significantly higher average total credits than their counterparts in the control group. Overall, Project K students earned more NCEA credits than those in the control group, but differences were not statistically significant.

Goals Achievement

7. This section reports goals that were set and goals that were achieved or attempted. Information was collected immediately after the completion of Project K intervention. This outcome was not measured for the control group.
8. Since 16.4% of the goals set were related to career or work and participants were still attending school when goal achievements were assessed, it was decided that a better measure of the intervention effect than merely goal achievement, was to account for both achieved and attempted goals (Figure 1).
9. The number of goals achieved or attempted for the intervention group was similar to the number of goals set at the beginning of the programme. The t-test showed no difference between the two means with a total sample size of 81 and $p=0.378$.

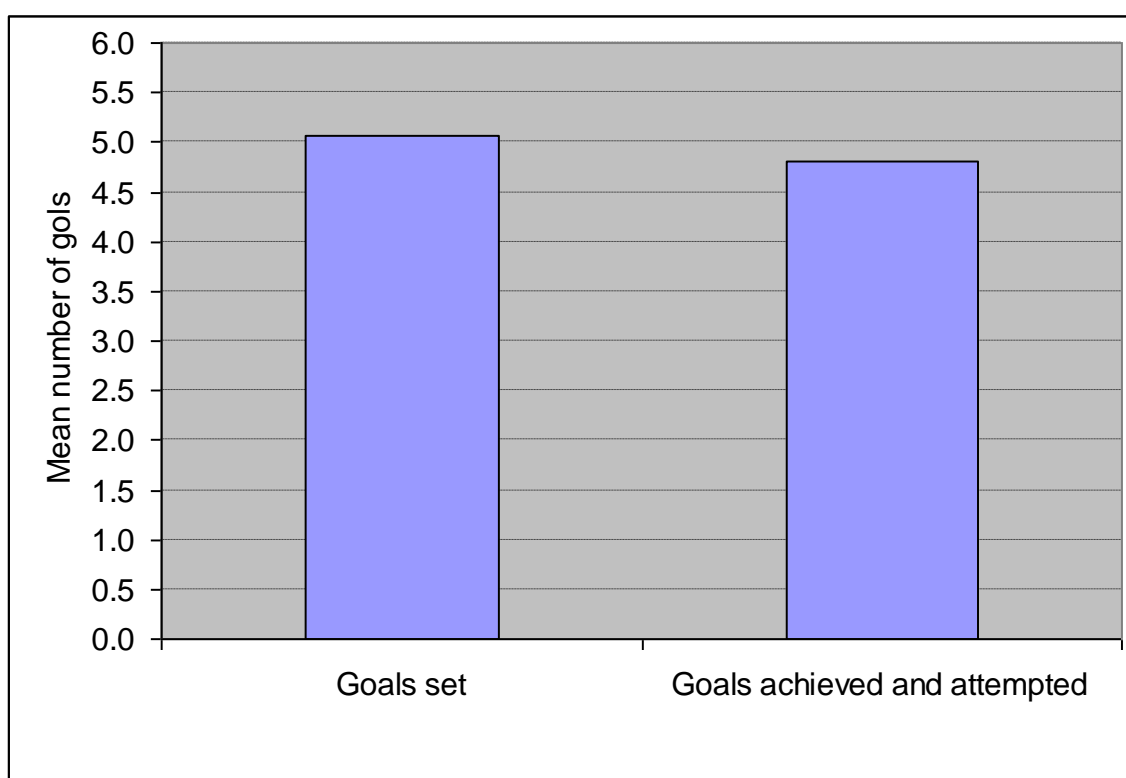


Figure 1. Goals achieved and attempted for Project K students at end of programme

Findings for all students

10. In general, students in Project K showed significantly greater improvement in different subscales of self-efficacy than their counterparts in the control group.
11. In academic self-efficacy, Project K students showed significant improvement at the end of the programme and the gain was well maintained at one year post programme. In contrast, the control group students showed no improvement at one year post programme.
12. Students from both groups showed significant improvement in social self-efficacy at the end of the intervention and one year post programme stages, but there was significantly greater gain for the Project K than for the control group.
13. There was significant improvement in help-seeking self-efficacy at one year post programme in both groups, but the gain in the Project K group slightly exceeded that in the control group.
14. Project K students showed significantly higher career decision self-efficacy than their counterparts in the control group at one year post programme. However, it was not clear if this difference was purely due to the project K intervention due to lack of baseline data at pre-programme stage.

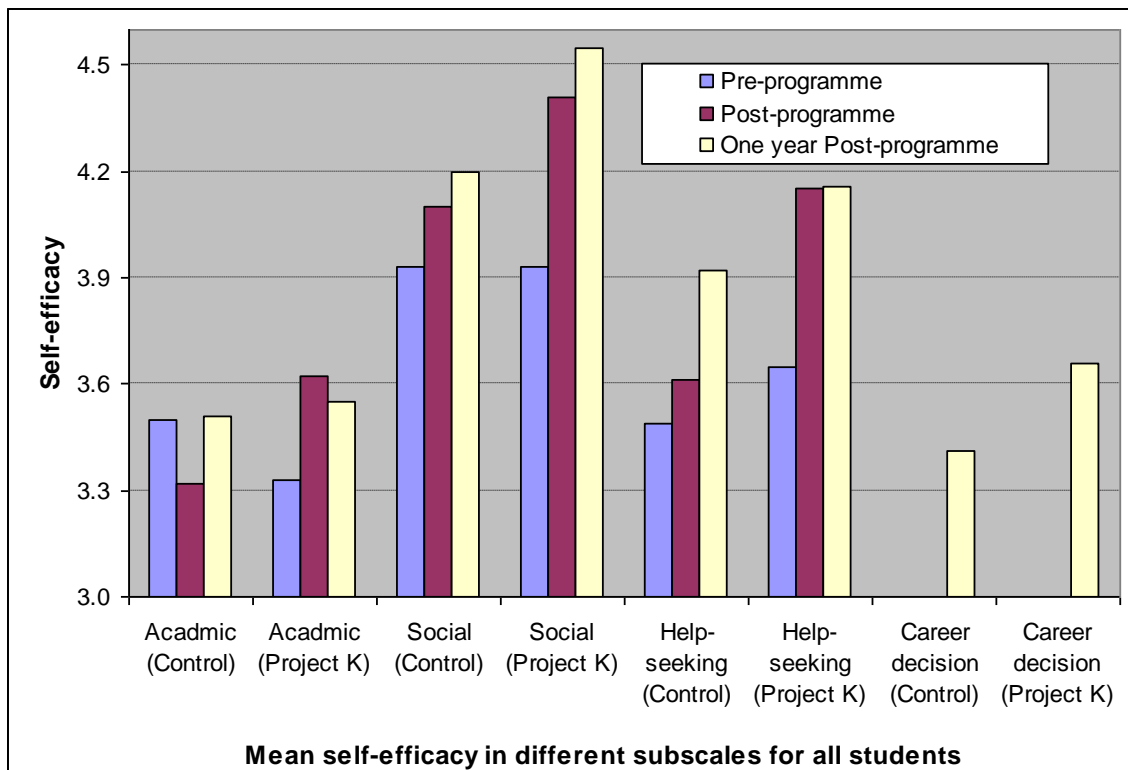


Figure 2. Changes for all students in Project K and Control groups

Findings by Gender

15. Male students in Project K did better than females although both males and females made gains. However, in academic self-efficacy, females (n=40) in Project K did better than males (n=39) but the difference was not significant.

Females

16. Figure 3 shows that female students in Project K did significantly better than did females in the control group in social self-efficacy. The Project K females showed slightly greater improvement than control group females in help-seeking self-efficacy although the difference was not significant. There were no significant differences between the control and Project K female students in career decision ability.

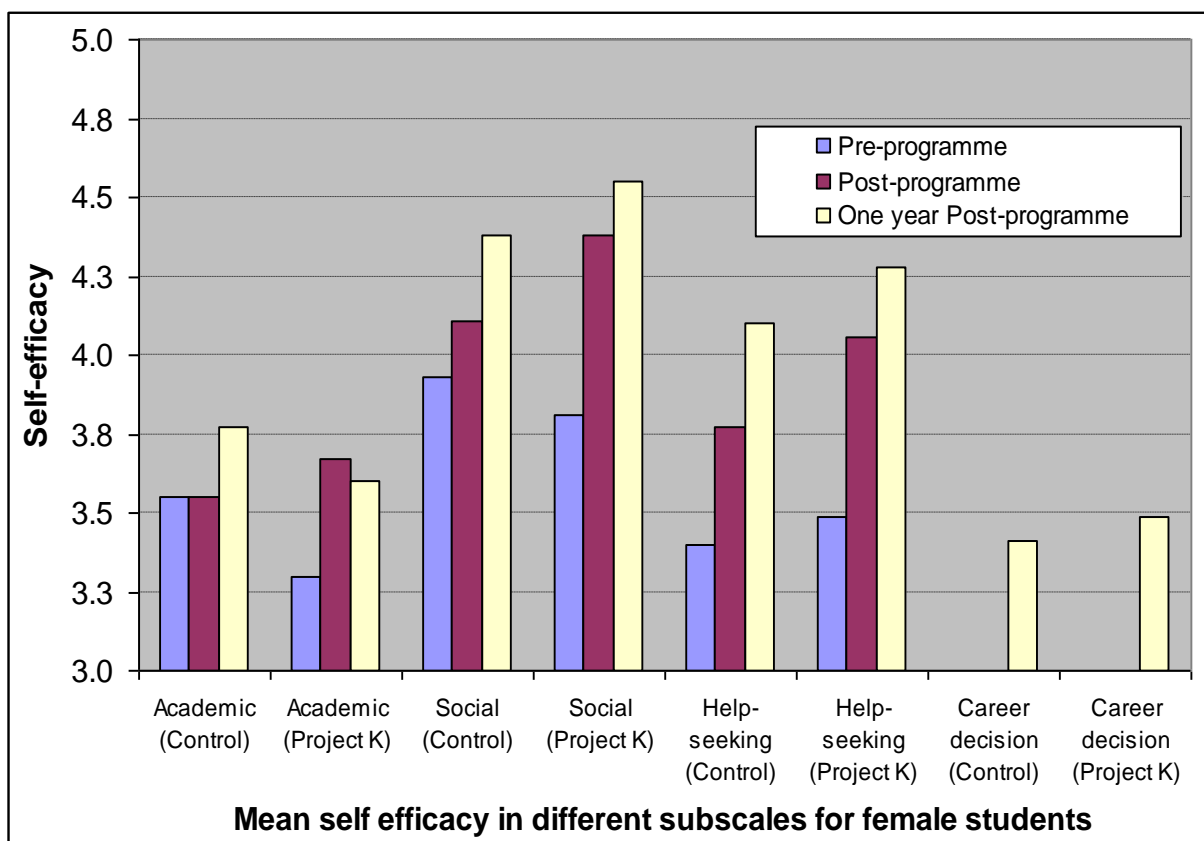


Figure 3. Changes for female students in Project K and Control groups

Males

17. Figure 4 shows that male students in Project K increased their academic self-efficacy at one year post programme while male students in the control group showed a significant decrease in academic self-efficacy at one year post programme. In addition, males in Project K showed significant improvements in social self-efficacy, whereas those in the control group showed no improvement.
18. There was significant improvement for males in the Project K group in help-seeking self-efficacy between pre-programme and immediate post intervention. However, the gains dropped slightly at one year post programme. There was some improvement in help-seeking self-efficacy at one year post programme for the control group but the increase was not significant ($p=0.284$).

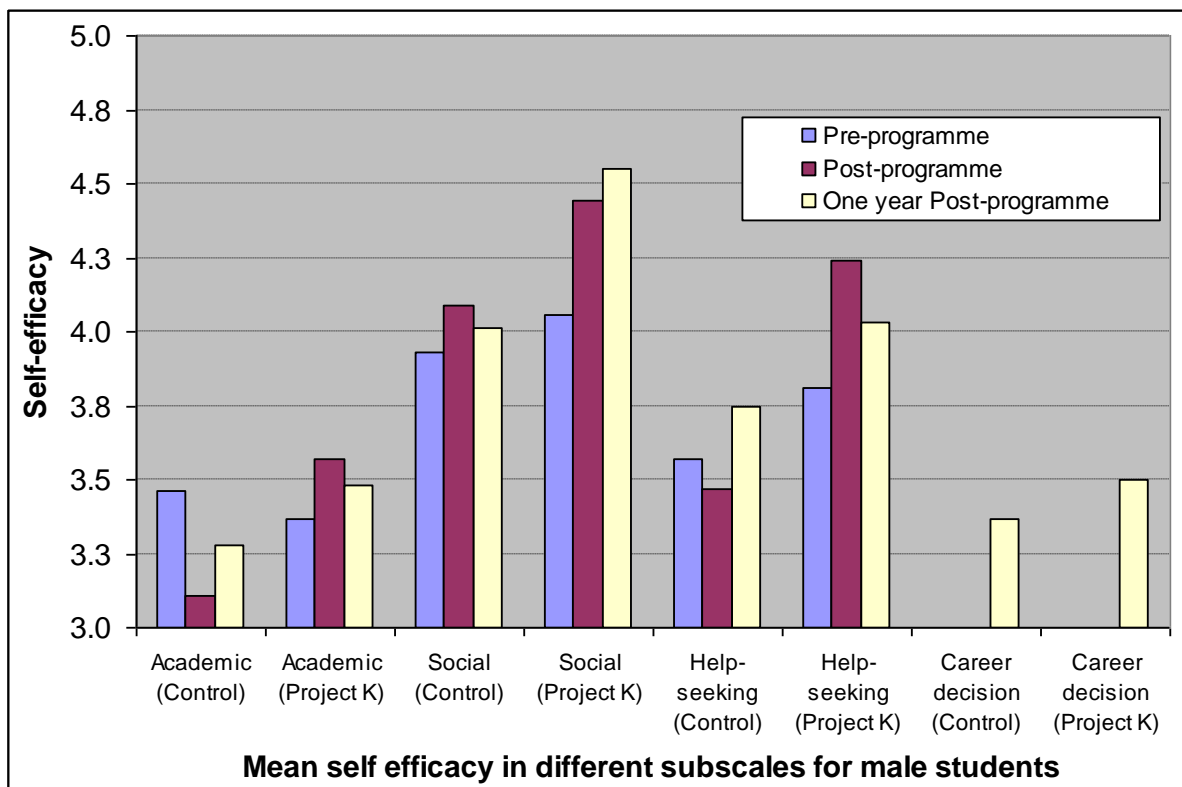


Figure 4. Changes for male students in Project K and Control groups

Changes for Māori students

19. Figure 5 demonstrates results for Māori students. Māori students in Project K (n=22) showed significant improvement in academic self-efficacy at one year post programme, whereas their counterparts in the control group (n=20) showed a significant decrease.
20. Māori in both the Project K and the control group showed significant improvement in social self-efficacy at one year post programme; however, there was no significant difference between groups in the gains achieved. Similarly, there was no difference between Māori students in Project K and the control group in the improvement of help-seeking self-efficacy at one year post programme. However, Māori in Project K showed significantly higher career decision self-efficacy than the control group (Figure 5). Māori students in the intervention group showed significantly higher average total number of NCEA credits earned than those in the control group (p=0.004) (Table 6).

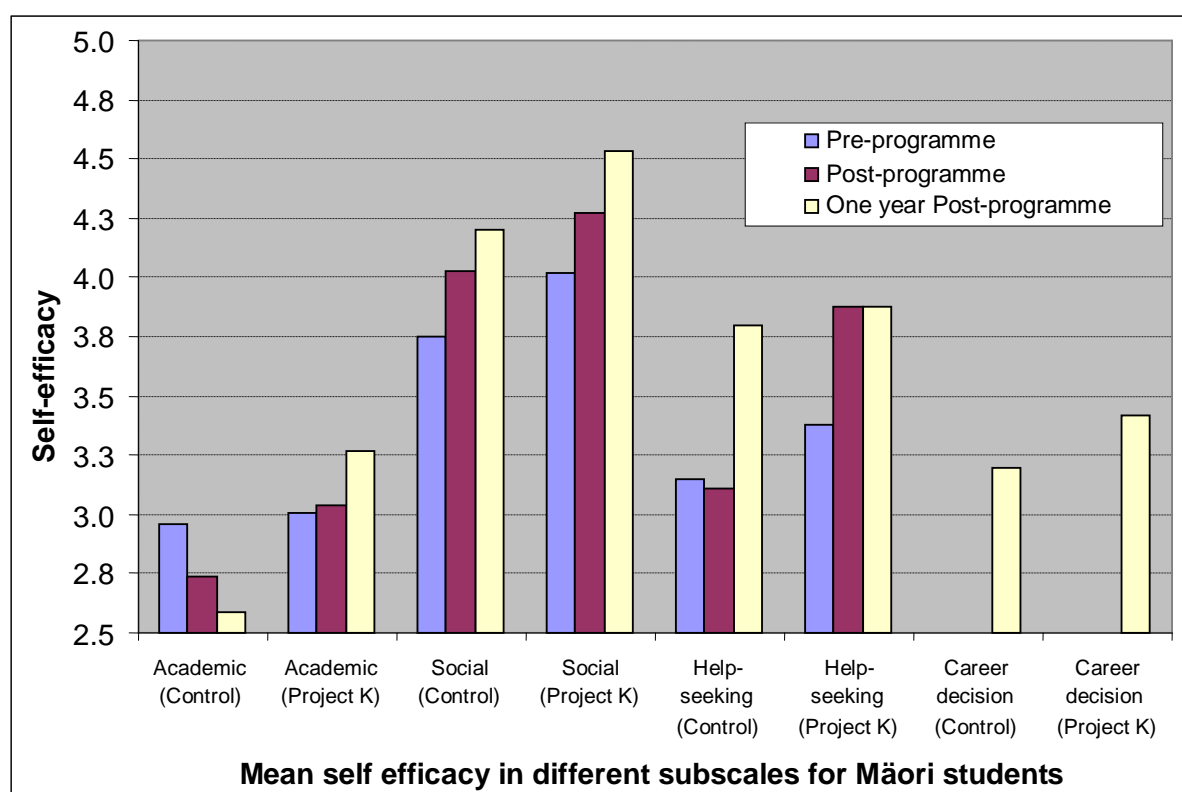


Figure 5. Changes for Māori students in Project K and Control groups

Discussion

21. Evaluation results demonstrate that the Project K intervention improved self-efficacy for all participating students and that the effects of the intervention were well maintained at one year post programme. Māori, male and low decile school students benefited the most.
22. Project K did not appear to have a major impact on measures of students' health and lifestyle. Moreover, risky behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse and unsafe sexual activity increased for both Project K and the control group students. This increase may have been due to adolescent tendencies. Research has shown that participation in risky behaviours increases from early to late adolescence (Duncan, Duncan & Strycker, 2001), with older students more likely to engage in multiple risk behaviours (Lindberg, Boggess & Williams, 2000). In addition, small sample sizes for the current programme may have caused bias in the measurements.
23. To avoid small sample size problems for subgroups such as females and ethnic groups, future evaluation of the programme would require substantially larger numbers of students. This would enable conclusions to be generalised more reliably and allow assessments of the impact on these sub groups. FYD has collected another large data set from both Project K and control group students and will report further findings in 2008.
24. In order to understand with greater certainty which population groups benefit the most from Project K, it may be useful to know more about the characteristics of each student in the study, such as their social economic background and specific risk factors. This could be achieved through extending the information gathered from parents/caregivers and students.
25. Project K believes that the long term benefits include a healthier youth population who:
 - Are better educated
 - Have enhanced employment prospects
 - Have greater self-efficacy and focus
 - Are more balanced
 - Are empowered and motivated
 - Will contribute positively to society
26. Understanding the programme's impact on these aspects of life for participants would require a longer period of data collection to follow students beyond one year post programme. It would be of great interest to understand firstly how the programme effects are maintained and secondly how they impact on students' long-term economic and social wellbeing as young adults. FYD has planned a three-year post programme data collection.
27. The design of the present evaluation allows data to be collected from both the intervention and control groups at pre, post and one year post programme. This enables the evaluators to assess the net effect due to programme intervention and sets up a good practice model/benchmark for the evaluation of future similar programmes.

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