



# Pasifika PowerUP Plus

Talanoa Case Studies 2016

## Report Information

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Prepared for Ministry of Education

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### Research team

This case study project was designed and undertaken by an internal team from the Ministry of Education who were closely involved with the Pasifika PowerUP Plus programme – Fatulatetele Tolo, Gabrielle-Sisifo Makisi, Tulima Nonu and Shelley Kennedy. The report was then developed by Judy Oakden of Pragmatica Limited, in consultation with the internal research team. Shelley Kennedy developed the original conceptualisations of the family cases and wrote two of them (as noted).

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## Disclaimer

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# Executive summary

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The Pasifika PowerUP Plus (PowerUP) programme delivers targeted workshops to Pasifika parents, families and communities; primary and secondary students; and children in early childhood education (ECE).

The key desired outcomes from the programme are:

- building the capability, knowledge and voice of Pasifika parents, families and communities (PFC) to drive and accelerate Pasifika educational success
- providing access to quality registered teachers in all education settings to ensure students get the right information at the right time
- ensuring fit for purpose, culturally appropriate, inclusive and effective approaches to best meet the local needs of Pasifika parents, their children, students and families
- ensuring value for money and achieving real results in real time.

The six case studies included in this report were developed from a guided Talanoa<sup>1</sup> data collection series. Families shared what they had learnt through the PowerUP programme and how this changed their thinking towards ways they might support their children's learning. Case studies were chosen to hear the parents' voices and to show the changes that occurred were in line with the desired programme outcomes.

Five of the six case studies were drawn from individual families, and the sixth case study was developed from a combination of several families' experience. The case studies feature Pasifika families (with links to Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau and the Cook Islands) living in large urban areas and regional towns. Older family members might be New Zealand-born or Pasifika-born, but most of the children in the families attending the PowerUP programme were New Zealand-born.

The Ministry of Education commissioned Pragmatica Limited to write these selected Talanoa into case studies to show clearly:

- the progression of families through the PowerUP Programme and the changes in beliefs, expectations and valuing that occurred with regards to their children's learning
- the parents' place in their children's learning journey.

## Key findings

As identified in the earlier evaluation report *Pasifika PowerUP Plus: An evaluation of adult and student perceptions* (Oakden, 2017) the programme was highly beneficial for both parents and students. Changes that occurred for Pasifika students, parents and families were aligned to the desired outcomes of the programme, as indicated by the following comments from parents:

- Desired outcome: building the capability, knowledge and voice of Pasifika parents, families and communities (PFC) to drive and accelerate Pasifika educational success

*I have no words to explain how PowerUP changed my family's attitude and my role to plan in my children's educational journey to success.*

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<sup>1</sup> For more information of guided Talanoa, please see the methodology section on page 6.

*I wished I knew this information when my two oldest children were in high school; I would have provided support and been a part of their decision making. Now I can be part of my younger children's education.*

*Knowing all of this gives me more of an understanding on how I can support all my kids. I have kids from primary right up to high school sitting NCEA, so I really need to be aware of how I can better support my kids to be the best they can be. I want them to be happy and confident with who they are and their strengths and skills. All I want is for them to make something of them to help them in their future.*

*It's important that the team is the parent, teacher and children. Parents should know what they [the children] are doing and how well they're doing.*

- Desired outcome: providing access to quality registered teachers in all education settings to ensure students get the right information at the right time

*They love the PowerUP programme because my children got the help with their school work from the teachers... Not only that, but they are learning with other Pasifika children.*

*I like how the teachers are fully engaged and appreciate the one-on-one tutoring my daughter receives. [For example] she was getting good support for her English speech that she needed credits for. The teachers gave her good tips on how to structure her thoughts.*

- Desired outcome: ensuring fit for purpose, culturally appropriate, inclusive and effective approaches to best meet the local needs of Pasifika parents, their children, students and families

*They taught our children the importance of our culture and our language. We know that our children are safe.*

*My children's education is really important for me and because PowerUP encourages the involvement of parents/caregivers it gives more confidence as it shows that there are other people, especially Pasifika people, that really push educational success.*

*To have the support out there for students and their families in the community to embrace and encourage learning is a great initiative. But more so for social and interacting outside of school hours also encourages learning. My kids have more confidence knowing that there is support for them in the community.*

- Desired outcome: ensuring value for money and achieving real results in real time.

*At school, they explain but here I did it with [name] she was really good at helping me to understand my children's report.*

*With my large family, I have to keep track of where they are at and it is important for me to make sure I have a plan on how to manage it.*

*One of the main things I did to support one of my children's educational journey was to fulfil what she asked for.*

Parents reflected that their support for their children's education is likely to be sustained, as the PowerUP programme embraces the culture of the family and how they do things. For example, parents reflected on how the programme helped enhance their communication as a family.

*We are more open with our children and vice versa. Our children are able to ask us for help and we can hold conversations with them, especially our children in high school. We are*

*more receptive of their ideas and suggestions and we actually set aside time to listen to them.*

*Before, my older children would help younger siblings with their homework. Now we all do it together. Every evening after “lotu” and dinner, we spend about an hour or two doing their homework and just talk about their day and what they learn in school. My children love it because they get to talk about anything. My husband and I are learning to be open-minded and good listeners.*

## **Progression as a family through PowerUP**

The extent of change that occurred in a relatively short time for Pasifika families participating in PowerUP was notable. Similar characteristics of families’ progress are clearly evident across the Talanoa, and consistent themes of change emerged as early as four weeks in to the programme. The change observed is summarised in the diagram on the following page.

***After as little as four weeks the change in the way parents, children and families engage with their children’s learning is noticeable – this is a key finding.***

By eight weeks’ families noticed significant change in their homes – specifically the way they speak about engaging with teachers at school and the questions they ask. The Talanoa also reveal the importance of a safe Pasifika environment: PowerUP parents and children know and trust the people involved in the programme. It is significant for the families that they are champions from their Pasifika communities – known in their community and adept in their languages.

By the mid-point of the PowerUP programme parents typically form cohorts or communities of learning which support them on their learning journey. The parent cohort trajectories across the sessions, known as PowerStations, are similar. There were differences that might have had an effect, such as where parents and children were born, their Pasifika background, how recently they migrated, their religious affiliations, and their work and education experience. The Talanoa revealed that, regardless of these differences parents moved through similar progress points in their cohorts.

## Progression as a family through PowerUP

### Mobilisation

#### Adult led:

Invitation from someone they know and/or respect:

- PowerUP champion
- Community leader (education)
- Family member (face to face or Facebook)
- Someone from church or through church notices
- Friend attends

#### Child led:

- Hear about it at school
- Friends attend

### Early on in the programme

#### Changes in adult

- Settle/relax into a 'safe' learning space (at PowerUP)
- Report listening to children more
- Have a better understanding of each child's aspirations
- Help children set goals and keep track of them

#### Changes in child:

- Feel safe, have fun at PowerUP
- Talk more with parents at home
- Engage with teachers and mentors at PowerUP to get the help they need

#### Changes in family

- Set up routines around talking with each other, studying, going to school regularly
- Prioritise education and learning in the family and make space for this
- Enjoy time out / change of scene at PowerUP and the family meal

### Mid programme

#### Changes in adult

- Start to see their role in relation to education more clearly and learn skills to engage with schools in a child/parent/teacher learning conversation
- Enjoy sharing ideas with other parents/feel supported/form cohort

#### Changes in child:

- Enjoy learning success
- Enjoy being with others from Pasifika community also experiencing learning success
- Understand learning important
- Have goals, possibly a career path, and a plan for achieving their goals

#### Changes in family

- Parents report things are more settled at home - less family stress, better communication
- Enjoy family time at PowerUP
- Engage with a broader Pasifika community

### By the end of the programme

#### Changes in adult

- Confident to engage with school on their own terms
- Can ask for explanations and extra help and can advocate for children
- Enjoy the support/ideas from the other parents at PowerUP
- Enjoy PowerUP and commit to returning

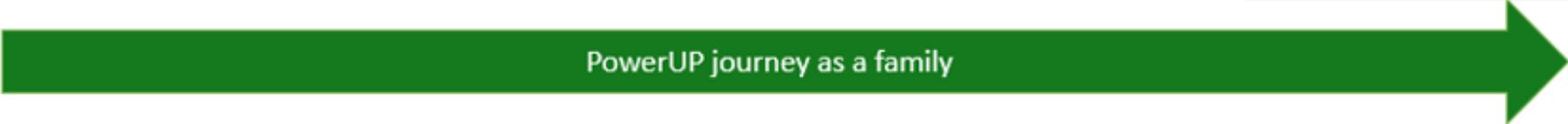
#### Changes in child:

- Children understand what they are trying to achieve
- Teachers notice children are more vocal in class, asking more questions, more engaged
- Children view education more positively and experience positive outcomes

#### Changes in family:

- Parents understand how to support and access education for their children
- Parents understand how to support education as a priority, learning challenges are resolved or reduced.

PowerUP journey as a family



# Background, objectives and methodology

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## Introduction

The PowerUP programme aims to accelerate participation in early learning and to lift achievement for Pasifika primary and secondary students. To achieve this, PowerUP delivers targeted workshops to Pasifika parents, families and communities; primary and secondary students; and children in early childhood education (ECE).

The desired key outcomes for the programme are:

- building the capability, knowledge and voice of Pasifika parents, families and communities (PFC) to drive and accelerate Pasifika educational success
- providing access to quality registered teachers in all education settings to ensure students get the right information at the right time
- ensuring fit for purpose, culturally appropriate, inclusive and effective approaches to best meet the local needs of Pasifika parents, their children, students and families
- ensuring value for money and achieving real results in real time.

PowerUP has been running since 2013. In 2016 providers were contracted to deliver the PowerUP programme for three years, and a total of 20 PowerStation venues were operational from June through to November 2016. PowerStations were located in Auckland (seven) Hamilton, Tauranga, Tokoroa (two), Rotorua, Napier, Flaxmere, Palmerston North, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Christchurch (two) and Dunedin.

In the 2017–2018 year the PowerUP programme is running for 26 weeks at 20 PowerStations. During this time PowerUP is expected to reach a maximum of:

- 800 Pasifika parents and families along with their children aged five years and under
- 1,500 Pasifika NCEA students, of whom a minimum of 800 are doing NCEA level 2
- 1,000 Year 9 and 10 (pre NCEA-level) students
- 1,000 primary school students.

The six case studies in this document aim to help inform the 2017–2018 work, based on feedback from Pasifika parents. These case studies draw from Talanoa-style interviews with 44 families attending PowerUP. The Talanoa took place over a series of at least 10 weeks.

The purpose of the case studies were to show:

- the progression of families through the PowerUP Programme and changes in beliefs, expectations and valuing that occurred with regards to their children's learning
- the parents' place in their children's learning journey.

# Methodology

## Talanoa

Providers used a Talanoa process, developed as a series of questions which supported a guided conversation over a series of weeks, to capture the change and progress in families attending the PowerUP programme.

The word “talanoa” is made up of two parts: “tala” or “talk”, and “noa” or “normal”. Talanoa is used throughout the Pacific to mean discussion on a topic to determine outcomes and arrive at a decision. Talanoa as a research methodology (Vaiotei, 2006) is used predominantly in Pasifika research to talk through a topic or phenomena in a natural way, revealing the thoughts, feelings, views and perceptions of the people talking. Talanoa as a methodology was chosen to allow the parents to speak for themselves (in their Pasifika language or English or both).

## Case study participants

As part of the ongoing learning and monitoring of the PowerUP programme, providers from each PowerStation agreed to select two families that they would collect more detailed information from over the course of the programme.

A total of 44 families took part in Talanoa-style interviews. The Talanoa were collected on set dates across the PowerUP programme, which varied in duration from 10 to 26 weeks depending on when provision began. PowerUP operated between June and November 2016.

Where possible, Talanoa were completed in the language most comfortable to families: for example, providers may have translated questions from English to another language where able and then recorded responses in English.

## Information collected

The purpose of the Talanoa profiles was to provide the parental and family voice – capturing their perceptions about education, their role and the value of attending a PowerStation, as well as the progressive changes occurring in their family. As such they are valuable in showing Pasifika parental beliefs, values, attitudes towards and expectations of the education system in New Zealand. These lived experiences shape how Pasifika parents see their role within their children’s education. The Talanoa profiling also articulates what these families learnt during PowerUP, how they used this; and if and how this information changed their beliefs, values and attitudes to education. The profiles are also valuable to show meaningful and effective ways schools can engage with Pasifika families to support their children.

## Case study approach

The six case studies included in this report were developed from the Talanoa data collection series. Five of the six case studies were drawn from individual families, and the sixth case study was developed from a combination of several families’ experience.

During Talanoa, families shared what they had learnt at the PowerStation sessions through the PowerUP programme, how they felt about this and how this changed their thinking about the ways they could support their children’s learning. The specific Talanoa stories chosen for the case studies were selected to give voice to parents and show how the programme supported families in ways

that meet the programme outcomes. Analysis consisted of reading through the Talanoa and coding the text thematically according to the four statements about desired programme outcomes.

The Ministry of Education commissioned Pragmatica Limited to write these selected Talanoa into case studies to show clearly:

- the progression of families through the PowerUP Programme and changes in beliefs, expectations and valuing that occurred with regards to their children's learning
- the parent's place in their children's learning journey.

### *Individual family case studies*

The five cases selected for the study were *key cases* and are treated as *single cases* that each reveal interesting aspects of the family's participation in PowerUP. (The *subject* of each of the five family cases was the family. The *object*<sup>2</sup> of the case was their participation in PowerUP.)

The Ministry of Education Pasifika Education team did the initial selection of Talanoa profiles for the key cases based on the rich descriptions of the change that occurred within the families from attending PowerUP. The selection was then narrowed down to ensure it represented a range of:

- ethnicities: two Samoan, one Tongan, one Cook Island Maori and one Tuvaluan family were selected for the cases
- birthplaces: families were selected to include some with Pasifika-born parents and some with New Zealand-born parents, and same for the children.
- family compositions: there were families headed by sole parents, families where both parents attended and others where just one of a pair attended, and some were specifically identified where the father attended
- languages spoken: there were families where a Pasifika language is mainly used and others which mainly speak English
- children's age and school stage
- urban and regional settings.

### *Case from a range of families*

The sixth case was made up of several families' Talanoa, and it has a more thematic approach. It was treated as a *local knowledge case*, where the *subject* was the families completing Talanoa profiles not used in the five family cases. The *object* was their experience and learnings from attending PowerUP<sup>3</sup>. This case explores the themes that emerged as parents reflected on their journey with PowerUP through the Talanoa process. This final case explores: how families are mobilised to attend PowerUP, the impact on relationships of attending PowerUP – both within and outside the home, and the ways in which PowerUP being a safe space is important for participating children, parents and families.

## Limitations

There are a few limitations to these cases that are worth noting:

- The case studies only contain feedback from the parent who spoke with the PowerUP provider and do not include perspectives from the children or the providers. As such they are a form of self-reporting. It is intended that in 2017 the research programme will involve young people to add the student voice.

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Thomas, 2016

- The Talanoa process occurred over several weeks, so it does produce some longitudinal information. However, as the different providers ran sessions over varying numbers of weeks (from 10 weeks to 25 weeks) the case from a range of families only compares learnings at the beginning, middle and end PowerUP session, which are not strictly comparable in terms of the input gained from attending sessions. That said, the researchers did see interesting shifts across the families regardless of the number of weeks on the programme.
- The Ministry is planning to compare the results of the 2016 Talanoa with another parent group formed in 2017 to see how programme develops as it caters for families attending for a second or third year. This will help to assess what needs to occur to continue to make the programme meaningful.

# The Cases

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## *Summary*

Parents featured in the case studies were all of Pasifika origin. They comment that the PowerUP process is very affirming of their role as Pasifika-origin parents leading learning in the family and helps build some additional skills and strategies to support their children's educational success. These cases show some of the ways PowerUP's strong focus on parental and family learning is evident and how the programme is useful for families of different types in a variety of Pasifika contexts.

### *Case One: Parenting a wide range of learning needs in a family*

A mother describes how she learns strategies for keeping track of the educational needs of her large family to support them effectively. She describes the changes made to the family routine to support the children's learning.

### *Case Two: Navigating the New Zealand education system as a family*

A mother who is relatively new to the New Zealand education system and with English as a second language describes how useful it is to have the National Standards and NCEA systems explained to her. The case shows the ways she and her husband have used this new knowledge to support their children's learning.

### *Case Three: Moving forward as a family*

A mother describes how PowerUP supports the family face the day-to-day difficulties of life after the death of her husband, while also focussing strongly on the educational needs of their children.

### *Case Four: Supporting an NCEA student through better family communication*

A father describes his own learning journey and the educational journey of his daughter. By listening deeply, he helps build her confidence on her NCEA journey.

### *Case Five: Supporting a child's aspirations as a family*

A mother attending PowerUP for a second year describes how she listens deeply to both daughters and supports them to make strategic decisions about subject choices. She helps one of her daughters negotiate with her school to ensure she meets her NCEA goals – in a way that demonstrates her nuanced understanding of the NCEA system.

### *Case Six: Engaging with PowerUP as a family*

This case describes how a range of Pasifika families are mobilised to attend PowerUP, the impact on family relationships of attending PowerUP and the ways in which PowerUP being a safe space is important for learning for Pasifika children, parents and families.

*“With my large family, I have to keep track of where they are at and it is important for me to make sure I have a plan on how to manage it.”*

*“I find that in my parents’ session I can really relax ’cause we don’t always sit in chairs; we might lie on the floor and chat. So it’s really cool for me, and [I can] just listen to the discussion and add to it.”*

*“Everyone in the schools, community and families all have a part to play. We can do it together.”*

## **Case One: Parenting a wide range of learning needs in a family**

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By Judy Oakden – Pragmatica Limited

### **The family**

Malia and her husband have seven children all New Zealand born. Their first language is English, but they also speak their own Pasifika language. Her father lives with the family and is a strong advocate for fluency in both languages. He is fluent in both English and his Pasifika language.

The children range from one to 15 years old. The oldest child is preparing to undertake NCEA Level 1 at the local high school. The other children are at kindergarten or primary school.

Malia is a full-time mum, and her husband and father are both in work. Malia didn’t particularly enjoy school herself and says she disliked many aspects of it. Despite this, she went on to experience educational success. Both she and her husband have tertiary qualifications.

### **Case method**

This case study is derived from Talanoa between a parent, who will be known as “Malia”, and a PowerUP local community champion on six different occasions over the course of the 10 weeks in which she and her family attended.

The first Talanoa took place in the second week of the family’s participation in the programme, and the last Talanoa took place on the final night of PowerUP for 2016. This made it possible to track changes within the family over the time that they attended PowerUP in their local community. For example, they gained knowledge about aspects of education and learning, confidence levels in relation to communicating about learning, and behaviours in relation to understanding and supporting learning.

## Ways that participants benefitted from PowerUP:

### Malia as the parent...

- Reinforces that she already follows many good practices to support her children's learning
- Encourages her to set goals with each of her children and keep track of their progress
- Increases her confidence to talk with schools to get help for her children
- Demonstrates the importance of continuity of learning over the school holidays

### Her children...

- Engage in their groups and find they love attending PowerUP
- Access resources at PowerUP that they don't have at home
- Meet new people and gain confidence to interact with other children around their learning
- Experience different teaching and learning styles
- Gain confidence as learners

### The family as a whole...

- Have a developed a routine for learning which is built into daily family activities
- Spend time as a family when they attend PowerUP (which includes the oldest son who is not living at home)
- Wider community benefit from the children's reading group Malia has set up during the holidays.

Malia decided to come to PowerUP because the children heard about it from their primary school and wanted to attend. Both her husband and father encouraged her to take the children to PowerUP. Malia hoped attending would help the children gain more drive to achieve so they "get the edge to get ahead".

The family is engaged in the community in several ways. They are very active in sports, with the father coaching a premier rugby league team, and the children all play a range of sport including netball, rugby league (girls included) and basketball. The family are also active in their local church (where her father is an elder). They have elected to send their primary-aged children to a church primary school of a different faith while the oldest child is at the local high school. Malia is active in the primary school's Parent-Teacher Association.

As the family is without any technological devices (computers, smartphones or iPads) their use of the internet is limited but they do have access to it through their telephone provider.

### Malia's reflections

Malia found the PowerUP sessions both affirming and a safe place to learn and get support from others for trying new approaches at home. She particularly valued the parent sessions.

*"Our parents group is led by [name] who is so down-to-earth but really firm about encouraging our children to succeed... [PowerUP sessions] really show how the school, family and community can work so well together."*

During the fourth Talanoa Malia reflected that their eldest son had struggled with his learning needs and that the school had not always been responsive. By the fifth Talanoa Malia had learned about the steps in NCEA, the importance of setting goals and the importance of reading. Armed with this knowledge, she identified that two more children are below National Standards in reading, while three of her other children are on track. At that time, she also enrolled her youngest child into early childhood education (ECE). She observes that in a large family everyone benefits if she has a way of keeping track of each child's educational progress:

*With my large family, I have to keep track of where they are at and it is important for me to make sure I have a plan on how to manage it.*

PowerUP shows her ways she can be more encouraging and responsive to her children's needs, including building a routine of learning into the household activities.

*I guess [now] I know [more about] what it is they need then I can encourage them and make it part of our family routine. It also helps that I can find out how to support them in things like maths and can ask for help.*

Malia commented by the fifth Talanoa that she is more confident and well-equipped to talk with teachers to support her children's learning:

*[PowerUP] already helps right now. I have two children who are below their reading and I am more confident of asking the 'right' question. It is not enough for the teacher to say – broaden their vocab or read more to them. I feel they need specialised help, which they [the school] are addressing.*

The family also found that PowerUP provided support for them in another important way: providing a venue for engagement with their oldest son, who is no longer living with them.

*My eldest child, well let's just say we have had some challenges and he has not been at home with me and is staying with other family. [But] he is still coming to PowerUP, which is something I guess.*

During the seventh Talanoa, Malia commented that all her children are happily engaged at PowerUP, and she is too. The youngest one is playing with the other children. She believes her presence at the weekly PowerUP sessions helps settle the children so they are primed for learning.

*I think it is really important for parents to be there and do things with their children.*

## **How the family gained from attending PowerUP**

By the end of the PowerUP programme (2016), Malia expressed that she saw great benefit for her family from attending and placed particular emphasis on the role of the Pasifika community in the programme:

*Their confidence to interact with other kids of all ages, the genuine interest by other educators that they don't [normally] have contact with, and just being such a positive space with passionate people who are Pacific and mostly Cook Islands is an amazing place. I am glad we have such a programme. I am especially thankful to [all those involved with PowerUP] who just provide all of the other stuff around it, with mentors, transport, food, and other resources.*

Malia thinks her children benefit from interaction with a range of teachers with different teaching styles at PowerUP. It also benefitted her own understanding about how children learn:

*I think they have also grown with the different learning and the learning styles that they have seen, so there are lots of ways to learn. One session they took primary outside and played bubbles with them but asked them to count how many bubbles, so really they were doing maths. That was cool.*

PowerUP also helped Malia establish a positive routine for the family that has a real focus on learning. During Talanoa 7 Malia commented:

*Because there are children of all ages, [PowerUP] has become a real cool place to hang out [and where it is cool to be learning].*

And

*We all love having a hot meal [and learning] together and then just coming home for showers and wind down from the day before bedtime.*

By midway through the programme the family had made changes in the way they did things at home. Malia shared that they really embrace reading now and involve the wider community in a weekly reading group.

*We definitely still read together but have involved the extended family. So we kinda set up a reading group on Tuesday and Thursday in our home for the other kids in our street to come along as well. So we can have up to 10 kids on any day, just sitting in the lounge. Either, one is reading aloud to everyone or someone is reading to another person. It just meant I had to do some more baking!!*

Malia told the Champion that since attending PowerUP she had greater knowledge and skills to engage with the school to get additional support for her two children who are behind in reading. This in turn benefits the children's confidence to learn:

*Because the school has given extra help to my two girls they are picking up [their reading] and feeling better about where they are at.*

Malia is planning to bring her family back to PowerUP next year, but she is also planning strategies over the summer break to ensure that they continue to accelerate their progress with reading and learning.

*We were talking about what we can do in the [summer] break, and they have made up a resource pack... on this day read one book; on this count up to 50 different things. So that is helpful.*

Malia is a passionate advocate for spreading the word about the benefits of PowerUP:

*I have always told them the benefits [of PowerUP] and will keep doing it. It really is a great place to learn and gain knowledge in a welcoming Pacific place with awesome people committed to the success of our families.*

Her final comment at the final PowerUP session for 2016 was:

*The [children's] success [in education] needs to involve everyone, not just in their own family. Everyone in the schools, community and families all have a part to play. We can do it together.*



*“I wished I knew this information when my two oldest children were in high school; I would have provided support and been a part of their decision making. Now I can be part of my younger children’s education.”*

*“My husband and I are learning to be open-minded and be good listeners.”*

*“Education is a collaborative effort, teachers, parents and community must work together.”*

## Case Two: Navigating the NZ education system as a family

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### Case method

This case study explores the views of a parent attending PowerUP for the first time. It is derived from Talanoa between a parent, who will be known as “Ana”, and a local PowerUP community champion. The discussions took place on several different occasions over the course of the 26 weeks in which she and her five children attended PowerUP Plus at an independent tertiary provider setting.

The first Talanoa occurred during the first session the family attended, and the last Talanoa took place on the final night of PowerUP for 2016. This made it possible to track changes within the family – for example, knowledge about aspects of education and learning, confidence in communicating about learning, and behaviours relating to understanding and supporting learning over the time that they attended PowerUP in their local community.

By Judy Oakden – Pragmatica Limited

### The family

Both Ana and her husband are Pasifika. She completed her education in her home country and her Pasifika language is the one primarily spoken at home. The family came to New Zealand fairly recently and one of their 10 children was born in New Zealand. The two oldest children have completed school. Five children are attending PowerUP, ranging from primary school to secondary school-age. Ana heard about PowerUP from a Whanau Ora provider and came along to support her Year 11 child to pass NCEA and help her younger children to excel in their subjects.

Ana and her husband chose the children’s schools to be close to home. The children are involved in sport, playing rugby, soccer and touch. They also all enjoy music and play the guitar.

Ana and her husband have an active role in the church community as ministers in their church. They do not have paid employment, and at

## Ways that participants benefitted from PowerUP...

### Ana as a parent:

- Realises she has an important role in her children's education
- Now better understands the New Zealand education system and can participate and contribute more to her children's learning and career choices
- Believes education works best when parents work in partnership with the learner and the school
- Has discovered that by listening to her children she can help them to find ways to make their education relevant and identify possible career pathways

### Her children:

- Enjoy learning within a Pasifika community of learning where they can relax and be themselves
- Like the individual support from the PowerUP teachers
- Enjoy being in a learning environment with their mother
- Appear more confident to engage in their learning

### The family as a whole:

- Believe learning is for all the family and putting aside specific time to discuss and share learning as a family is important and necessary
- Family routines support educational success
- Children and adults talk and listen, and share ideas and dreams in a safe, affirming manner.

times the family is stretched financially which can restrict their ability to participate in outside activities. The family has access to the internet at home.

At the start of PowerUP Ana said she was "not very familiar and not very informed" about NCEA or National Standards.

### Ana reflections on what she learned through attending PowerUP

By week five of the PowerUP programme Ana felt she had already learned things that would help her family with their education journeys. This helped her to talk more effectively with the school about her children's learning.

*I can visit the school at any time if there are matters concerning my child's education and/or wellbeing at school. If I am unclear about anything it's good to pay the school a visit. I should be more informed of my children's education in order for me to better help my children.*

Ana learned, for example, that she can support her children's educational success by tracking and monitoring their learning and that she is entitled to seek support when needed.

*... Having this information has developed my confidence to approach the school when needed.*

Ana particularly valued this information for supporting her children at secondary stage.

*I have [two] children at the high school level and I am trying to be involved in their career choices and be supportive without imposing on their choices.*

There were a couple of weeks where the family was unable to attend PowerUP due to community commitments. However, at the Talanoa during week eight Ana reflected that missing PowerUP had impacted on her children's enthusiasm to learn and she realised that there was a lot of benefit to her family in attending.

*This afternoon when told we were going to PowerUP their faces lit up and they were excited. Personally, I feel I've failed them [by not coming for a couple of weeks]. Education is a*

*collaborative effort: teachers, parents and the community must work together.*

One aspect of the PowerUP programme that has been particularly useful to Ana was the NCEA workshop.

*The NCEA workshop in particular is the one that really stands out for me. I wished I knew this information when my two oldest children were in high school. I would have provided support and been a part of their decision making. Now I can be part of my younger children's education.*

By the eighth week, Ana thought attending PowerUP had changed the kinds of learning conversations that were happening in the family.

*We are more open with our children and vice versa. Our children are able to ask us for help and we can hold conversations with them, especially our children in high school. We are more receptive of their ideas and suggestions, and we actually set aside time to listen to them.*

Ana reached an important realisation that it is not only the school's role to educate or take responsibility for her children's learning but there is also a role for parents. By the second-to-last PowerUP meeting Ana could clearly express how the programme had changed her attitude to her children's education journey.

*We are [as parents] more informed, more engaging with our children's education. I've always known [that] a good education leads to success, but I've always left it to the school to do that. Now I'm making it a priority to be engaging and involved.*

At the final Talanoa Ana reflected that she had learned a lot of new information to support her children to be successful at school and to build a relevant educational path to a career. At times this meant providing support at home; at times it meant talking to other parents at PowerUP; and at other times it meant asking for help either at PowerUP or at school. She reflected that PowerUP provided direct benefits for parents and children.

*Learning new things and being informed about things or matters we need to know about our children's education. Not only that, sharing ideas with other parents. For my children, it's getting extra help with their assignments and school work, especially in areas they have difficulty [in] at school. [Also] understanding NCEA, career paths and what is also available for us as parents.*

## How the family gained from attending PowerUP

During the week 23–24 Talanoa Ana reflected on the changes she had noticed in her children, some quite profound. This included a newfound confidence – demonstrated by them “finding their voice” and being able to ask for help with their learning.

*My children have always been quiet kids and quite shy about everything. Ever since they've been a part of the PowerUP, they are much more vocal now. They are also very keen and excited to go to school.*

A central benefit of PowerUP to Ana was that her children got help with their learning from the teachers there and also a chance to learn alongside other Pasifika children. There was a sense that PowerUP is “their place”.

*They love the PowerUP programme because my children got the help with their school work from the teachers... Not only that, but they are learning with other Pasifika children.*

Parents can talk and support one another in relation to their children's learning. Ana could see the benefit of attending as the parents of her children's friends and peers were also there. She thought that her younger children liked her coming to PowerUP with them more than her older children.

*My older children not so much, but my younger ones really like me coming with them to PowerUP. My older children are getting used to it as they see their peers and friends' parents attend as well.*

In the second-to-last week of PowerUP Ana gave a powerful example of how, as a result of attending PowerUP, she and her husband had changed their family routine to support their children's learning. Ana recounted that they had also had changed their thinking about how their children might communicate with them and had decided to listen to their children more.

*Before, my older children would help younger siblings with their homework. Now we all do it together. Every evening after "lotu" and dinner, we spend about an hour or two doing their homework and just talk about their day and what they learn in school. My children love it because they get to talk about anything. My husband and I are learning to be open-minded and good listeners.*

In the final week of PowerUP Ana was very clear that they would attend PowerUP in the future. As well, she intended to promote PowerUP to the rest of her church members.

*We are ministers of our church and we have been promoting the PowerUP at our church and to some of our church members attending PowerUP. We explained to them how useful the programme is, not only for the children but for the parents as well as we covered other matters we needed to know for the wellbeing of the children.*

The key messages that Ana shares with people when she suggests they attend PowerUP are:

- *Children will get extra help*
- *Creative learning happens in the class*
- *We are fed and as [PowerUP] happens during dinner time [the pressure of preparing a family meal is taken away and we can focus on learning]*
- *A lot of teachers and mentors [are there] to help our child and provide opportunities for one-on-one [learning].*

*“You get to learn with your kids.”*

*“The best things about PowerUP is doing things together because it’s a family thing. This PowerUP is like family.”*

Parent reflections

## Case Three: Moving forward as a family

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By Shelley Kennedy – Ministry of Education

### The family

Sofia is raising her children alone after being recently widowed. She and her five children, ranging from 1 to 15 years old, have attended Pasifika PowerUP Plus (Power UP) sessions the second half of the school year (2016). Two children are at secondary school and three attend primary school. Sofia was born and raised in a Pasifika country, while all five children were born in New Zealand. Her Pasifika language is the main one spoken at home, but the family also speak some English together. Sofia enjoyed learning to read and write during her own school days, but she found maths very difficult to understand and grew to “hate” it. As an adult Sofia has attended courses to boost her literacy and numeracy.

Sofia was encouraged to attend PowerUP with her family by a Samoan teacher at her children’s secondary school. Sofia feels comfortable to talk with this teacher about her children’s education.

The family is facing challenging times and Sofia is working hard to ensure she meets her children’s basic needs of shelter, clothes, stationery and lunch for school. She sometimes has cause to be grateful that her children’s schools provide lunch for her children when resources are particularly stretched. The family is unable to afford the internet at home and does not have its own transport. Since her husband passed away,

### Case method

This case study is derived from Talanoa between a parent, who will be known as “Sofia”, and a PowerUP local community champion. These occurred on six different occasions over the course of the 14 weeks in which she and her family attended PowerUP at a community hub in a major urban centre.

The first Talanoa took place during the second session the family attended and the last Talanoa took place on the final night of PowerUP for 2016. This made it possible to track changes within the family over the time that they attended PowerUP in their local community – for example, knowledge about aspects of education and learning, confidence levels in relation to communicating about learning, and behaviours in relation to understanding and supporting learning.

Sofia has stayed at home to care for her children but hopes to obtain employment in the near future. She is an active member of her local church and has become a member of the Pasifika Parents' Association in order to "support my fānau".

Sofia has a strong desire for her children to have a good education to give them a positive future.

*I want my children to be successful in their education and because I am a widow, I want the best for them.*

Sofia's children attended preschool and she feels that this enabled them to get a good start in their schooling. But since their father had died she has found everything harder.

### **Sofia's reflections on what she learned through attending PowerUP**

At the beginning of PowerUP Sofia's response when asked what she most wanted her family to learn, achieve and gain from PowerUP was about the education basics.

*I want my children to be good at reading and writing.*

Sofia also wanted her children to gain qualifications at secondary school to help them for the future. And for herself, Sofia wished to learn more about "how to help my children with their homework" and "help learn and improve my English".

Sofia regularly attended parent interview nights at her children's schools "to find out about their learning progress". She felt happy with her children's schools (especially because the schools acknowledge Pasifika; they have a good learning programme; and friends and family also attend). She was not afraid to approach the school or individual teachers if she felt she needed to sort out something (such as, a bullying incident) on behalf of her children.

*Anything happen in the school I always come and talk to the teachers.*

However, over the course of PowerUP Sofia became increasingly aware that her previous interactions with the schools didn't provide her with as much information about her children's learning and progress as she needed if she was to support them well. She also realised that while she felt confident to ask questions she didn't necessarily have enough knowledge to know what questions to ask. For example, while she had previously thought her primary school children's reports were straightforward and easy to understand she became aware after presentations and discussions at PowerUP that she hadn't understood how National Standards actually worked, nor had she previously gained enough knowledge about NCEA to be able to discuss subject choices with her secondary school children or to ask more informed questions when talking with teachers about this.

During Talanoa in weeks six and seven of PowerUp, Sofia said that she had gained valuable knowledge.

*"... [I have] more understanding about maths, reading and National Standards and now I know more about NCEA."*

She added that her increased knowledge and understanding helped her talk with her children's teachers.

*I'm definitely more confident to talk to teachers now.*

She also had more detailed information about NCEA.

## Ways that participants benefitted from PowerUP...

### Sofia as the parent:

- Has learned how to have more effective conversations with teachers about her children's learning progress
- Is gaining help with her own learning – improving her maths and English
- Enjoys learning with her children
- Enjoys meeting other parents and learning from one another in a Pasifika environment

### Her children:

- Appreciate PowerUP because they get useful help from the teachers and mentors
- Have seen improvements in their learning
- Are happy to come and enjoy learning with the teachers and mentors
- Believe it's a good programme for them and that they learn more about reading, writing and maths at PowerUP
- Like meeting other children in their own age category and making friends from other areas in a learning environment
- Are more focused
- Are now also happy at school
- Have a changed attitude to learning

### The family as a whole

- Has experienced significant changes including a huge improvement in their learning which Sofia maintains is because she is around them in a learning environment
- The opportunity to go out as a family and be part of a positive, supportive community was of great value.

*I received the [NCEA] timetable [from PowerUP] for when externals were – before the school shared that timetable. I learned [at PowerUP] how important it is to choose the right subjects so your children can be what they want to be...*

*I want to help my children plan [for their futures] – to find out what qualifications are needed and the subjects. I talk to [one of the teachers at school that I know and also one of the teachers here at PowerUP] about subject choices for Year 11. [Two of my children have particular career aspirations] so need to align subject choices. So we chose subjects related to the employment. I'm confident to talk to other teachers too [now].*

During the Talanoa at the end of the 26 weeks of attending PowerUP, Sofia said:

*With my oldest [child] we talk about how many [NCEA] credits and when will you get the other credits. It's really good talking about it [together].*

Also, in relation to reading, Sofia acknowledged that she had received advice during parent–teacher reporting meetings at school to do more reading with her children at home but she didn't fully appreciate how to go about this effectively. Sofia found that participation in PowerUP helped build her understanding and provided practical suggestions for engaging her children so that they enjoyed it more and benefitted more from their reading.

*From PowerUP, I understand more about reading now. I know how to support my children about their learning, their reading. When I read, I read the book, I talk about the picture and the meaning of the words we read. I take the children to the local library and read Pasifika texts to them. I know it is important to keep the children's Pasifika language going. It's important for me to be able to help my children to understand their reading – to talk about what they are reading.*

### How the family gained from attending PowerUP

Sofia felt that coming to PowerUP provided a positive focus for the family each week and was increasingly something she and her children looked forward to. The family learned new knowledge and skills to help their individual and collective learning and gained a greater appreciation of the rewards of more actively engaging in and advancing their own

learning. Through increased knowledge and understanding, Sofia has gained in confidence, and this helps her to ensure that the family regularly talk and work together on homework and other learning matters:

*We talk more about their school work now, not just 'how was your day', but we talk about reading and what they learn in maths and what they are doing.*

*I know it's different [because of] how I have changed. [Now] they do homework every night, they read a book, and they listen to me [about] when they [need to] do their homework.*

And, just as importantly, PowerUP came to represent time out as a family from the day-to-day difficulties of life: a place where they can be part of a community with a common purpose, make new friends, and have fun and enjoy feeling supported in a positive, constructive environment. This weekly experience helped the family feel happier and more settled, with a clear sense of direction.

*I like the programme. And [I'm] so happy to meet with other parents and to share what they do to help with their kids.*

*We eat together. The best thing about PowerUP is doing things together because it's a family thing. This PowerUP is like family.*

*Now I know more and that helps me to help my kids more. Learning is very important and it's good we have PowerUP to help us and my kids. We have a positive attitude and PowerUPs makes our education easier.*

*My children are better now and I am better too.*

In the final Talanoa with Sofia, she emphasised that she and her children are keen to attend PowerUP again next year:

*Yes, because my children love it. They always remind me it's Tuesday PowerUP! They like meeting their friends and they like the [PowerUP] teachers. Me too, I like coming to meet other parents and I learn too.*

*"[My daughter] loves the PowerUP environment and being able to get help where she needs; with school work as well as being able to talk to the female mentors about social issues that interfere with her studies."*

*"We, and others, have noticed how [my daughter] now works harder, and her attitude has changed in a positive way."*

Parent reflection

## Case Four: Supporting an NCEA student through better family communication

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By Shelley Kennedy – Ministry of Education

### The family

Loto and his wife were born in a Pasifika country. Two of their three children were born in New Zealand. The oldest two children are now in employment or further education. The youngest child is preparing to undertake NCEA Level 1 and was approached by a PowerUP mentor to participate in PowerUP. She agreed to participate because she wanted to: Improve her learning and gain more credits and bond with new people.

Loto was aware that his daughter was not enjoying maths – she had complained that she had trouble understanding her maths teacher, and that she tended to lose focus with her studies. When Loto learned that his daughter wished to attend PowerUp, he wanted to support her by also participating as much as he could. His long working hours meant that he would not always get to PowerUP at the beginning of the weekly sessions – and sometimes was not able to attend at all.

### Case method

This case study is derived from Talanoa between a parent, who will be known as "Loto" and a local PowerUP community champion. These occurred on several different occasions over the course of the 26 weeks in which he and his daughter attended PowerUP Plus at a community hub in a large urban centre. The first Talanoa took place during the second week the family attended, and the last Talanoa took place on the final night of PowerUP for 2016. This made it possible to track changes within the family over the time that they attended PowerUP in their local community – for example, knowledge about aspects of education and learning, confidence levels in relation to communicating about learning, and behaviours in relation to understanding and supporting learning.

## Ways that participants benefitted from PowerUP:

### Loto as the parent:

- Believes it's important for parents and children to work together as a family
- Has learned that the more parents know (such as, learning about what NCEA is) the more they can help their children
- Realises it's important to proactively engage with the school culture
- Has become better prepared to communicate with the teachers at school over children's learning
- Understands there is support in the local community: the tutors and staff who are here to help with the children's learning.

### His child:

- Now finds joy in learning and study
- Talks with her parents more
- Really enjoys attending PowerUP every week, especially being in a learning environment with the group of close friends she attends with
- Is making more conscious decisions at school: like knowing her credits, building up the right skills that are needed for a better future, and learning to balance academic commitments with sports commitments

### The family as a whole:

- Finds attending PowerUP is a good way for the whole family to learn and grow in confidence together
- Notices there is better communication amongst the family – everyone knows what is happening and can find better ways to support each other in their learning and in identifying educational pathways.

Education is seen as important to the family, to open up opportunities for the future. Loto and his wife hope their children will undertake university education and then find a good job. They enrolled their children in early childhood education with the hope that their children "would be exposed to an educational environment before primary – and so they could learn English and be able to read".

Loto and his wife have done their best over the years to support their children's learning by trying to ensure their children do their school work. The family do not have access to the internet at home. They support their children's interest and enjoyment of sports and music (playing the guitar and piano). The family are actively involved in their local church.

### Loto's reflections on what he learned through attending PowerUP

As the PowerUP Plus programme progressed, Loto became more "aware of what we could do better to help [our daughter] in school".

During the Talanoa in week seven of PowerUP, Loto could point to specific valuable things he had learned in the previous two sessions by generally understanding what he can contribute as a parent.

*Learning what NCEA is... [Knowing I need to] meet with the school regularly and not just wait for the school report... Provide a suitable study environment at home so that my child can have practice at home and then take those skills to the school place.*

*It's important to be engaged with the school culture. The more we know the more we can help our children. The better prepared I am the better I can communicate with the teachers at school and not just rely on the school reports that come in or the parent-teacher interviews. I then know better ways to try and connect with my child so that I can ask the teacher clearer questions.*

During Talanoa in the eighth to tenth weeks of PowerUP, Loto advised that he was now communicating more effectively with his daughter.

*[I am] having Talanoa sessions [with my daughter] when I get home from work about her studies. [I am] asking better questions to get her to talk more about what she is enjoying and not enjoying [in her learning]. [Also] giving her space at home to do her work and not giving her a lot of chores.*

By twenty-third and twenty-fourth weeks of PowerUP, Loto found that his daughter was talking more about her studies.

*She loves talking [at home] about what she learnt at PowerUP. She also encourages others around her to do the same with their studies.*

## **How the family gained from PowerUP**

During Talanoa over the 26 weeks of the PowerUP programme, Loto talked more deeply about how he, his Year 11 daughter and the family as a whole had benefited from participating in PowerUp. Loto felt that a key thing he had learned as a parent was listening and building trust.

*Learning to listen to the child rather than always thinking that the parents know best. We are trying to understand our child/ren. And to build trust. This is important. We want our children to trust us and for us to trust them.*

In Talanoa in the final week of PowerUP for the year, Loto felt confident about its value for his family:

*There is a building of trust within our family [and that] we have a better value of education. [And] I know that [our daughter] does appreciate the support [when I come to PowerUP].*

The upcoming NCEA Level 1 qualification was the main impetus for Loto and his daughter to attend PowerUP. The previous year the school had contacted the family to express concerns about his daughter's studies, and Loto was advised by the school that his daughter tended to be easily distracted.

*Last year, my daughter never did her homework, her teachers would call home to tell me that she doesn't do her work.*

This was a considerable worry for Loto and his wife. But by the last week of the 26 weeks of PowerUp sessions, Loto was very happy to report that things had changed:

*This year it has been different – she has a new attitude and is doing her work and gaining credits. This is empowering... I have noticed that [my daughter] is better off attending PowerUP and this has shown through the development in her studies, and the work [at PowerUP] – it helps keep her on track. It's good to know that the PowerUP team keep the children accountable and build their sense of responsibility. I believe PowerUP has helped us a lot and especially me with seeing my daughter gain her [NCEA] Level 1. We are really happy with her progress so far and seeing her grow in confidence. She has expressed that she understands what she is doing in class now, she had gained more knowledge – it has pushed her to achieve more in class. She is more motivated to do her work and it has helped her enjoy studying.*

Loto expressed appreciation for the support provided by the teachers, tutors and mentors at PowerUP.

*I like how the teachers are fully engaged and appreciate the one-on-one tutoring my daughter receives. [For example] she was getting good support for her English speech that she needed credits for. The teachers gave her good tips on how to structure her thoughts.*

Loto also expressed appreciation for the strong sense of community within PowerUP, which he felt benefitted not only those who attended in person, but the wider community.

*My daughter loves the environment at PowerUp. I know that my child enjoys learning when she is in a good environment. She feels accepted and valued. I think this is an important part of her learning. She is very comfortable with everyone at PowerUP and gets along well with everyone. She also has a close group of friends who attend PowerUP as well so it is good to know that they are making the most of the opportunity. [And as a family] we are aware of the community and environment that we are surrounded in, the tutors and staff who are here to help. This is encouraging.*

*“My daughter quit the science, as she told me that she better used her time focussing on other subjects rather than wasting time attending classes and getting nothing... One of the main things I did to support one of my children’s educational journey was to fulfil what she asked for.”*

*“My daughters love PowerUP... as they have the opportunity to share their ideas... and gaining ideas from children who are part of them as Tuvaluans and Tokelauans.”*

*“I will definitely attend PowerUP next year [for a third year] as I know it supports my children with their educational growth.”*

Parent reflections

## Case Five: Supporting a child’s aspirations as a family

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By Judy Oakden – Pragmatica Limited

### The family

Sina was born in a Pasifika country. Her husband is from another Pasifika group. Two of their three children were born in New Zealand. The family mainly speaks the parents’ two Pasifika languages at home.

Sina is an early childhood teacher and also attended PowerUP the previous year.

***This case shows the value of continuing to attend PowerUP – applying the knowledge to really ensure the child’s aspirations are met through making good choices.***

In 2016 their son is at university and their daughters are studying in Years 13 and 11. At the start of the programme in 2016 the oldest girl had achieved NCEA Level 2 and was studying for Level 3, with

### Case method

**This case study explores the views of a parent returning to PowerUP for a second year.** It is derived from Talanoa between a parent, who will be known as “Sina”, and a local PowerUP community champion. These occurred on several different occasions over the course of the 26 weeks in which she and her two daughters attended PowerUP Plus at a community hub in a large urban centre.

The first Talanoa took place during the first session the family attended, and the last Talanoa took place on the final night of PowerUP for 2016. This made it possible to track changes within the family over the time that they attended PowerUP in their local community – for example, knowledge about aspects of education and learning, confidence levels in relation to communicating about learning, and behaviours in relation to understanding and supporting learning.

## Ways that participants benefitted from PowerUP:

### Sina as the parent:

- Was reinforced in believing that her efforts to support her children's learning is important
- Was boosted in her general confidence in relation to her children's learning and progress and overall education (although as a parent she was already confident and capable)

### Her daughters:

- Benefitted in their learning from the expertise of PowerUP teachers who, for example, help to understand concepts, tackle homework
- Became clearer about their learning and career aspirations and goals
- Learned and built different strategies for approaching study and homework

### The family as a whole:

- Consolidated and strengthened good practice already existing in the family
- Increasingly discussed each child's learning and their future goals within the family as a whole
- Is working actively to learning pathways for educational success that will lead to meaningful careers.

the intention of attending university in 2017. The youngest girl was preparing to undertake NCEA Level 1.

Sina and her husband chose the secondary school their girls attend because it is close to where they live and is a religion-based school that teaches Christian principles. Sina described her relationship with the school as "great".

The family have access to the internet at home. Both daughters have their own device for use at school and for homework – a requirement from the school.

Both daughters play competitive sport for their school and at representative level for their local sports club. The oldest daughter also plays guitar, ukulele and is learning keyboard at school. The girls also attend youth activities through their local church.

### Sina's reflections on what she learned through attending PowerUP

Sina says that attending PowerUP last year helped her daughter achieve NCEA Level 2, and thus she sees real benefit in the programme. She started the second year feeling generally confident, and understood the NCEA credits system and how it links to further study.

*As a mother, I feel that this PowerUP helps with my children's learning towards NCEA levels. [Helping them] to achieve their [hopes and] dreams of succeeding in their NCEA levels.*

Sina felt she had gained the ability to act on knowledge to make choices and decisions specific to her children's needs. From the in-depth conversations she had with her daughters about their studies, Sina felt then she had more "fuel" to discuss the best options and paths for her daughters with teachers at school.

For instance, one daughter felt she was not able to build a workable relationship with a teacher and could not follow their teaching. This was sufficiently concerning to Sina that she discussed her daughter's comments with the Pasifika Coordinator at the school and then also discussed it with the Year 13 Dean. After careful investigation, Sina and the school concluded that

withdrawing her daughter from that class might be her daughter's best option.

*My daughter quit the science, as she told me that she better used her time focussing on other subjects rather than wasting time attending classes and getting nothing... One of the main things I did to support one of my children's educational journey was to fulfil what she asked for.*

While it may be considered a suboptimal solution for a student to withdraw from a subject, Sina supported her daughter to ensure she remained on track to achieve her overall NCEA goal. On balance, in consultation with the Pasifika Coordinator at the school and the Year 13 Dean, this was considered the better option for the daughter than persevering with a teaching and learning experience that might derail her NCEA goals.

### How the family gained from PowerUP

Sina was already committed to supporting her daughters' education and learning, and had developed skills from attending PowerUP the previous year. In the Talanoa over the 26 weeks of her second year in the PowerUP programme (2016) she talked about how she had gained an even greater understanding of how to support her daughter's education.

From attending PowerUP, Sina saw that her support and efforts are important to help her daughters achieve their goals. This demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the education system and also the importance of really listening to children's concerns, which she credits to her involvement in PowerUP.

*As a parent, I feel that the... thing that my husband and I are doing [differently] is to... listen to what our children are saying.*

A key change for the family was that the daughters' career aspirations were now well known and understood, and they all also knew the educational pathways required to meet them. Making a clear link between education and possible future careers benefitted both the daughters currently at PowerUP as well as an older sibling at university. In the week four Talanoa of PowerUP Sina said:

*Our son would like to set up his own business, the second child would like to be a teacher, whereas the younger one prefers to be a flight attendant. As parents, we will just go with the child's lead.*

Overall, there is evidence that the level of discussion about learning and future goals has increased markedly within the family and this discussion is seen to be valuable by everyone. It appears that PowerUP has helped consolidate and strengthen good practices already existing in the family. By the eighth to tenth weeks of the Talanoa, the family's learning and ideas for the future for their children had been fleshed out in more detail and were more aspirational.

*In my family, we always talk about our children's education every day during our evening devotion time. We talk about the theme of the day then reflect on the educational perspective of it. At the moment as our older son is now at university and the oldest girl is about to attend university, the discussion of each evening is sort of based around their plans. For example, the son talks about setting up his... business and the eldest daughter talks about her dreams of doing a PhD after her Masters, whereas the youngest daughter dreams of becoming a flight attendant then moving on to a management role to set up her own branch of [business name]. To me these views of personal progress within my three children is the result of the three of them attending PowerUP [with me] and my prayers to our Heavenly Father to guide and fulfil my three children's career dreams.*

Overall, feedback from this participant indicates that a key benefit of PowerUP is helping students find purpose in their study by linking subjects taken with possible career pathways of interest. Sina

affirms this, recounting that a real breakthrough for the oldest daughter was settling on teaching as a possible vocation.

*[After] the information from NZ Careers [I] started talking with my daughter [to see] if she has made up her mind on what she is going to take up. She answered me, 'Mum, my passion is on the teaching and I will take up teaching'... I have lots of confidence that my daughter will be doing well with her chosen teaching career as she [has] already made goals for it. For example, she told her Dad and myself she is going to do her Bachelor of Education in primary teaching first and then move on to her Masters.*

In the twenty-third and twenty-fourth weeks, Sina indicated that she valued the culturally appropriate and inclusivity of PowerUP. She stated that the family enjoyed the experience of everyone who attended learning together and actively supporting one another. Indeed, one simple but powerful step for Sina was simply to attend PowerUP along with her daughters. Sina thought her daughters benefited from her attendance in several ways.

*They love and enjoy me attending [PowerUP] with them. They said that my presence made them feel comfortable to greet other people and especially meeting their friends and families at each PowerUP session.*

Also, Sina observed the difference in her daughters' achievement. The girls appreciated PowerUP teachers working in small groups with students so they received the more individualised attention they needed for effective learning. She could also see how her daughters' learning benefitted from the expertise of PowerUP teachers, for example help to understand concepts and tackle homework. Further, because of PowerUP Sina observed her daughters choose to spend time on Saturdays together doing extra homework and discussing study, goals and so on.

During the final Talanoa, in the twenty-sixth week, Sina expressed her appreciation for the PowerUP approach and urged others throughout New Zealand to attend.

*I will tell my relatives, friends and people within my community to use these supports from the Ministry of Education and for them to attend the PowerUP... Not only this one... but any PowerUP programme that runs anywhere in New Zealand. They will get support for their children and for them [as] parents [so it is important for parents] to attend as well.*

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*"[Champion] explained to us and the children the PowerUp programme and how our children's education will benefit from the programme... She was a big influence in my decision to bring my children to PowerUP."*

*"Knowing that there are other parents/families going through the same situation makes me more confident to ask for assistance as I am not the only one."*

*"The environment created is safe, reliable and encouraging."*

*"I have kids from primary right up to high school sitting NCEA so I really need to be aware of how I can better support my kids to be the best they can be, and I want them to be happy and confident with who they are and their strengths and skills. All I want is for them to make something of them to help them in their future."*

Parent reflections

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## **Case Six: Changes during the PowerUP journey as a family**

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By Judy Oakden – Pragmatica Limited

The final case explores how families are encouraged to attend PowerUP, the impact on relationships within families outside of PowerUP (as a result of attending PowerUP), and the ways in which PowerUP being a safe place is important for children, parents and families.

This case draws on the comments from the Talanoa profiles of 28 families. It explores the themes that emerged as parents reflected on their journey with PowerUP through the Talanoa process.

There are three key themes this case study explores:

- How are families encouraged to attend PowerUP?
- What impact does PowerUP have on relationships both within the home and outside the home?
- There is a sense that PowerUP creates a safe space for learning for families. What is this safe space and how does it benefit children, parents and families?

On the following page, we present a diagram that summarises how PowerUP benefits parents, children and families overall. We describe their journey from the early weeks to the later weeks to explore the changes that occur over time.

## Progression as a family through PowerUP

### Mobilisation

#### Adult led:

Invitation from someone they know and/or respect:

- PowerUP champion
- Community leader (education)
- Family member (face to face or Facebook)
- Someone from church or through church notices
- Friend attends

#### Child led:

- Hear about it at school
- Friends attend

### Early on in the programme

#### Changes in adult

- Settle/relax into a 'safe' learning space (at PowerUP)
- Report listening to children more
- Have a better understanding of each child's aspirations
- Help children set goals and keep track of them

#### Changes in child:

- Feel safe, have fun at PowerUP
- Talk more with parents at home
- Engage with teachers and mentors at PowerUP to get the help they need

#### Changes in family

- Set up routines around talking with each other, studying, going to school regularly
- Prioritise education and learning in the family and make space for this
- Enjoy time out / change of scene at PowerUP and the family meal

### Mid programme

#### Changes in adult

- Start to see their role in relation to education more clearly and learn skills to engage with schools in a child/parent/teacher learning conversation
- Enjoy sharing ideas with other parents/feel supported/form cohort

#### Changes in child:

- Enjoy learning success
- Enjoy being with others from Pasifika community also experiencing learning success
- Understand learning important
- Have goals, possibly a career path, and a plan for achieving their goals

#### Changes in family

- Parents report things are more settled at home - less family stress, better communication
- Enjoy family time at PowerUP
- Engage with a broader Pasifika community

### By the end of the programme

#### Changes in adult

- Confident to engage with school on their own terms
- Can ask for explanations and extra help and can advocate for children
- Enjoy the support/ideas from the other parents at PowerUP
- Enjoy PowerUP and commit to returning

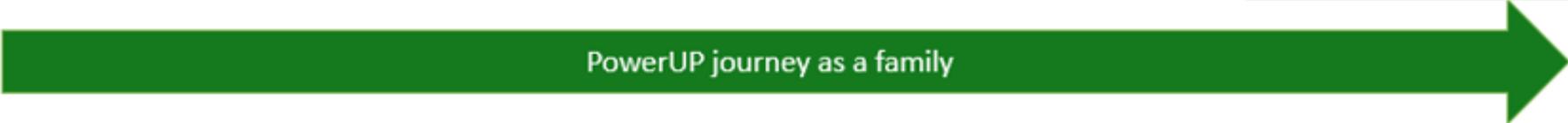
#### Changes in child:

- Children understand what they are trying to achieve
- Teachers notice children are more vocal in class, asking more questions, more engaged
- Children view education more positively and experience positive outcomes

#### Changes in family:

- Parents understand how to support and access education for their children
- Parents understand how to support education as a priority, learning challenges are resolved or reduced.

PowerUP journey as a family



## How are families encouraged to attend PowerUP?

Parents find out about PowerUP in a range of ways, and most of these involve conversations with people they trust, either because they are someone they already know such as a family member or because they are a leader in the community.

Many parents come to PowerUP when they have a child doing NCEA. Supporting their children at this level seems to be a common driver.

### **PowerUP advocates**

People who can be identified as advocates – or PowerUP “champions” – are frequently mentioned as being the person that identified the family and suggested they attend PowerUP.

*[Champion] explained to us and the children the PowerUP programme and how our children’s education will benefit from the programme. We all decided... to join the PowerUP programme. She was a big influence in my decision to bring my children to PowerUP.*

Some PowerUP champions are family members who are passionate about education and considered very credible within the family.

*My sister [name]. She’s great with kids and a firm believer in good education. Also, [I] was looking for a different environment from home to help motivate my son with homework.*

Other champions are known to participants through church networking.

*[Champion] She attends our local church. She spoke about this ‘PowerUP station’ during our church notices and I thought this would be good for my daughter to attend.*

*Our priest spoke about it at church, as well as having the coordinator for the PowerStation attends my church also.*

*We heard through one of the members at church who is currently working at MOE [the Ministry of Education], also through one of the staff members who is coordinating PowerUP.*

### **Other influencers**

At times families learn about PowerUP through family Facebook pages, although this form of communication can be a little confusing. This indicates providers might consider giving family who want to advertise PowerUP on Facebook some wording to use.

*A family member posted on our family Facebook page. At first I thought it was an exercise programme for Pasifika families to help us push play or undertake better wellbeing in the Pasifika community.*

*I had seen the post on Facebook but wasn’t sure what it was about so ignored it. Then a couple of days before the first session, my cousin texted me to ask if I had heard about it and she gave me a bit more info on what it was about.*

At other times the message is transmitted between friends.

*I told my friend about the programme (and she jumped on board last week) and told me she gained a different picture about the whole hub - she saw the kids’ progress, having fun, getting involved, them being more confident and then that what a shame she only just found out about the programme at the end. [Others] have to come and experience it for themselves.*

Those working or volunteering in education settings sometimes learn about PowerUP through their workplace or through other service providers.

*Heard about the programme though ECE centre where she volunteers as a parent.*

The decision to attend PowerUP is not always made at a family level: in some instances, families attend after consultation occurs in their community and their wider community decides to attend.

*We knew about PowerUP through our local Island community of [...] which is a member of the [...] community in Auckland. The consultation with our [role] community representative made my children and I arrive at a collective decision to attend the programme.*

*Because my older (step)son is the community chaplain... that community chaplain forced us to come.*

At other times children find out about PowerUP from friends or hear about it at school and ask their parents to bring them.

*My daughter [16 NCEA Level 2] found out through her friend at her school who is currently attending PowerUP.*

These comments confirm the importance of having highly credible champions for PowerUP in each community to ensure families are invited, their early questions answered and they feel encouraged to attend in ways that are affirming and supportive.

## **Changes early on when attending PowerUP**

This section outlines the changes parents observed in themselves, their children and the family dynamics more generally during the early sessions of PowerUP. Early in the programme, parent sessions focus on ways they can lead the learning in their families, building on the positive aspects already present in their families. This section of the case discusses the early changes that occur as a result of parent learning.

### ***Changes in the parents***

Parents feel affirmed that they are already on the right track when they come to PowerUP. Parents enjoy the camaraderie they quickly build with other parents and are open to learning in a place where they feel it is OK to ask questions and seek support. They see other parents like themselves and find it possible to try new approaches together.

*The sessions we have with the parents have been so informative and encouraging that we are journeying together as a community with our children's education. I know that I also have a wider support network. It is empowering to hear other mothers' stories and gives me hope to know I am on the right track.*

*Knowing that there are other parents/families going through the same situation [attend PowerUP] makes me more confident to ask for assistance as I am not the only one.*

*At school, they explain but here I did it with [name] she was really good at helping me to understand my children's report.*

*If I didn't come here I wouldn't know how I can help him prepare, not just for now and exams, but for all the time.*

*We also interact with other families who attend PowerUP and feed off their support also.*

PowerStations aim to make all parents welcome regardless of their circumstances. For example, some parents cannot attend for every session due to work or community commitments; some families are late arriving due to work or sporting commitments; and some parents only have their children alternate weeks (due to custody arrangements). The Talanoa profiles show that in each of these instances families are welcomed to participate as much as they can.

Champions follow up with families that do not come for a couple of weeks to check there are not avoidable barriers to attendance, such as lack of transport. From the Talanoa profiles there was clear evidence that where possible the champions try to find ways for families to overcome these barriers.

A frequent reflection from parents is that in the past they thought they knew what they wanted for their children – for instance what they might do when they left school, or generally what was best for them. In many of the early Talanoa, parents reflect that by listening more to their children it is possible to support the children to make the right decisions themselves rather than deciding for them.

*What I have realised is that I never really listened to my children. I just think I assumed that I knew what their future looked like and directed them into a path I thought they wanted. Turns out that for most of them, I don't know what they want to be, even if it's a temporary goal.*

*Because things as teenagers happen and sometimes they need to talk without parents getting angry. And to believe they can do anything they put their minds to.*

*After PowerUP I understood that I need to listen more to what my children want and help them to make the right decisions for them.*

From listening more deeply and encouraging family conversations, parents reflect that they gain a better understanding of what the children want to achieve and can then help support them to achieve it. Parents believe taking this approach it leads to a positive climate in the family.

*For me [PowerUP] is building trust within my family. I want my children to know that they can come to us and tell us about anything.*

*The more we get involved [with PowerUP] the more our children enjoy and find it more helpful. It's important that our children know we as parents/caregivers value education – [it] gives them examples to follow.*

*We enjoy being involved in our kids' learning. It allows us to see how well they are going as well as address any difficulties they come across.*

*Learning and education conversations in our family have improved. I try my best to help my children with their work every night without doing it for them. It has become something we enjoy doing together.*

Parents are quick to take up new ideas about ways they can help their family with their educational journey. Talanoa profiles identify that within weeks parents start trying ideas suggested at PowerUP to provide educational guidance to their children and help keep track of their progress.

*PowerUP has helped our family to have one-on-one time. Not only that but our kids can come up to me and my husband – we can answer questions too. That is a great feeling.*

*Knowing all of this gives me more of an understanding on how I can support all my kids. I have kids from primary right up to high school sitting NCEA, so I really need to be aware of how I can better support my kids to be the best they can be. I want them to be happy and confident with who they are and their strengths and skills. All I want is for them to make something of them to help them in their future.*

*It's important that the team is the parent, teacher and children. Parents should know what they're doing and how well they're doing.*

*I have no words to explain how PowerUP changed my family's attitude and my role to plan in my children's educational journey to success.*

### **Changes in the children**

According to the parents, their children also find PowerUP a safe space for learning and quickly relax into a learning environment when they come.

*My children love it – interacting with other kids who they don't usually have contact with. Now they have the PowerUP family... It's encouraging to for them to see other kids and mates studying.*

*The support from one of the PowerUP staff members who has helped my daughter in Year 13 apply for scholarship... has given my daughter so much confidence in herself and also her education.*

*For [daughter], Year 11, [she] sees others studying and it encourages her to study and study at home too. Before PowerUP she was in front of the TV but now she's here she revises and sometimes can say, 'Oh no I've done it at PowerUP' as well as revising at home.*

Parents see PowerUP as a place where children can have fun and also get their learning needs met from highly competent mentors and teachers.

*Also, my son has been talking to me, sharing what he learnt from his one-to-one mentoring time. Having the opportunity to have a one-on-one tutor specifically in a subject that he needs assistance.*

*He has enjoyed his one-on-one sessions with his academic mentor [name]. He's opened up more, more interactive [with his] peers. [Mentor name] informed me of his learning strengths – he is a visual learner and needs things explained step by step.*

Parents observe that their children start talking more to them at home when they listen more.

*1. My children and I converse a lot more, especially around the dinner table. 2. I am still being proactive with following up on my children's learning. 3. Between my husband and I [we] will take turns spending one-on-one with our children e.g. reading.*

*I have found being honest with our children builds trust. Building those foundations strong now will be better for future communication when they get older.*

*My children have the confidence to ask questions when they need to.*

### **Changes in family**

Parents talk of setting up new routines for their family as an early change. This involves talking and listening more with their children, emphasising the importance of school and of attending regularly.

*I am more informed of what I need to do as a parent to support my children at school and at home. I and my husband listen actively to our children now and pay more attention to their educational needs and progress.*

*I just ask my children if there is anything that they are struggling with or anything they are unhappy with, before talking to the teachers and the school. I want my child to feel comfortable*

*sharing their struggles with me so I can work alongside my children's school to see what we can do to help them out.*

*Knowing more from discussions and talking with other parents has made me more confident to go into the school and support my child. Knowing there are other parents in the same situation as me. I suppose we give each other confidence when we meet and share our stories.*

Parents mention that they prioritise education and learning in the family and make space for this.

*PowerUP helps me restructure how I support my children's education and how to ask help from school about my children's learning and progress in order to reach their full potential.*

*At PowerUP [I've learned to] support my child at home by creating a safe environment and [provide a] place to study.*

Parents also reflected that they really enjoyed the family time together having a meal and a change of scene at PowerUP.

*They enjoyed meeting with friends and the delicious food after the PowerUP session (great idea).*

*I love the environment. The whole feeling of PowerUP is very family friendly... It's a brilliant programme run by brilliant people who care about learning and our children. It's also the best nights of the week when we attend, because I don't need to think about preparing for dinner.*

## Mid programme observations

Between about weeks four and eight, PowerUP runs a number of sessions that explain the NCEA credits system and also how to understand National Standards reporting. These sessions can be transformational for parents as they come to understand how the education system works. From reading the Talanoa profiles, it is evident this leads to a shift in the kind of things they focus on and questions they ask.

### *Changes in the parents*

Parents start to see their role in relation to education more clearly and learn skills to engage with schools in a child–parent–teacher learning conversation. They become more aware of the questions they need to be asking to support their children's learning journey. Where earlier they talked of engagement with the school being in terms of supporting the school, after a few weeks this shifts to learning conversations with the school about their child's progress. Here is an example of the kind of shift observed.

**Early comments:** *I have a fantastic relationship with all the school that where my children presently at because I have constantly involved in their school trip, cultural groups, raise funding and sport activities.*

**Later comments:** *We have a family Talanoa once a week to share what we achieve (physically, emotionally and spiritually) during the week and what planned for the following week. Since I came to the PowerUP Talanoa session I changed the way I communicate with my children. I discussed with my children their individual goals and how to achieve that goal. During the parent's interview, I discussed with the whanau teachers: What subjects for my child to take in order to reach their goal? What level they are at the moment? Have they any progressed more from before? What other help the school can offer? PowerUP helps me restructure how I support my children's education and how to ask help from school about my children's learning and progress in order to reach their full potential.*

*It has given me a better understanding and also the confidence of what to ask the teachers and what is expected of my child and the relationship that we have with the school and here at home.*

*Knowing this information (on how NCEA works) makes me more confident and also have an improved confidence about my children's learning... PowerUP provides a lot of new information to me as a parent.*

Parents enjoy sharing ideas with other parents and feel supported to try new things.

*The positive attitudes from other parents witnessing growth within their own families add to this [positive environment for learning] too.*

*[A strength of PowerUP is] being able to share matters with teachers, other parents... – the Pasifika environment – enjoying delicious food – helping one another.*

*If you are struggling to help your child at home with homework, then at least here you will get the support you need for both you and your kids. Homely, friendly atmosphere working towards same goal of encouraging empowering and supporting our kids to succeed.*

### **Changes in child**

Midway through the programme parents start to observe changes in their children. Parents really appreciate PowerUP when their children start to engage with their learning.

*It's encouraging to for them to see other kids and mates studying. For [daughter], Year 11, sees others studying and it encourages her to study and study at home too. Before PowerUP she was in front of the TV, but now she's here she revises and sometimes can say, 'Oh no I've done it at PowerUP' as well as revising at home.*

Parents say their children enjoy being with others from Pasifika community also experiencing learning success.

*They enjoy PowerUP – they are regular with their attendance. If they are late from training they still want to attend. Never want to miss the teaching, revision, fun in learning and meeting other students with their families weekly. If we attend, they love to discuss what they have learnt every week during our Family Quality time.*

*My children love it interacting with other kids who they don't usually have contact with. Now they have the PowerUP family. My children love it.*

*Being around other children in the same age group, same culture helps them to help them become more involved as they are not shy to share with them and receive help from them as well. Yes, my children enjoy their time at PowerUP they enjoy being around other children [its] fun [and] different and [they] enjoy the help provided by their teachers.*

Parents notice that children start to understand that learning is important.

*Encourages better attitudes towards school learning and the discipline of learning and studying.*

*My children are more interested in their work. Now that they're improving and understanding more they are more excited to do work and participate in more school activities.*

*I know my daughter will be more confident and most of all happy and passionate about what she is doing.*

Children also start to make goals, possibly find a potential a career path and developing a plan for achieving their goals.

*It has been a full-on three weeks, but I'm making sure that I check in with my children to how they are doing at school – setting family goals. It's an opportunity to build good habits [and] brings our family closer together – the children know that we value them.*

*My children have a greater appreciation for education and my children, as young as they are right now, have started talking about future education and careers they would like to pursue later on in life. Programme is already paving the potential options for my children.*

*Before we made decisions on our own without input from our children especially the older ones. For example, looking at potential subjects they should take next year and looking at potential careers and subjects relevant to pursue identified careers.*

### **Changes in family**

Parents report things being more settled at home – they are noticing there is less family stress and better communication after coming to PowerUP.

*[I'm] spending time with the kids – in particular reading time with the younger ones and conversations with my older ones. For me it has been a challenge to balance my time with family. I have a lot of outside commitments and community work [and balancing this] with my family obligations, and having eight kids and making sure they get all the support they need from my husband and I has been a challenge.*

*The environment created is safe, reliable and encouraging. Being inspired and motivated by guest speakers – staff/teachers who go the extra mile – relationships built with everyone – support in school work and family wellbeing.*

*Help from others that can support [us] relieves pressure for parents and child.*

*I am also more relaxed and not going to push my kids to just be the person I want them to be, but support and listen to what they want.*

Parents comment that they enjoy family time at PowerUP.

*The community thing for me which is why it works so well and is why we have more kids coming through and we gel with them and they see that the parents and teachers care about their learning – and we actually care – these adults will stay back until, after 7pm to feed us and all to help us with their credits. IT'S THE PASIFIKA WAY!*

*PowerUp is a good time for me to just pause and spent time with my family. My husband works full-time and is the main source of income for the family, and so for us to make sure that we spend quality time for our children is crucial. My children are awesome in supporting the community work that I do, but making sure that I balance and check in with their studies and goals is important and also good for me to be reminded of it every week.*

Parents also like the chance for their children to engage with a broader Pasifika community through PowerUP.

*My children's education is really important for me and because PowerUP encourages the involvement of parents/caregivers it gives more confidence as it shows that there are other people especially Pasifika people that really push educational success.*

*My daughter is connecting socially with girls from other schools. She is happy and able to organise her time and communicate with me about what she plans for the week. She was particularly happy with the tutors and the small group work.*

*To have the support out there for students and their families in the community to embrace and encourage learning is a great initiative. But more so for social and interacting outside of school hours also encourages learning. My kids have more confidence knowing that there is support for them in the community.*

*They taught our children the importance of our culture and our language. We know that our children are safe*

## **By the end of the programme**

In the final few weeks of the programme the families participated in three Talanoa. They reflected on their journey during these sessions. One participant summarised the sentiment of many of the families when they described changes on many fronts.

*Attending PowerUp has changed us a lot. It is an eye opener, we come to know our role [as parents] very well, we have given extra time on Family Quality Time. We have spent more time supervising our children's study. Also, we are working hard and try to give our children 100% support to give them the best education. PowerUP has also encouraged us to set our family priorities right. Children to come first – not to be neglected any more.*

Another participant noted that the programme offered opportunities for both her children and herself.

*Having the opportunity to be educated as well as [my] children, building upon career choices, voicing opinions and better communication [in the] family.*

## **Changes in the parents**

By the end of the programme parents reflected that they had a much greater understanding of how they might work in partnership with their child and the child's teacher to support learning. And they were more confident to do this on their own terms.

*Relationships with the school was only when there were specific dates such as teacher interviews. Now with PowerUP conversations I now know that I have a right to know where exactly my child is at and can access information by going to the school any time I want. I don't need to wait to be invited. I also intend to put myself forward the next time the Board of Trustees are advertising for the parents to apply.*

*Knowing all of this gives me more an understanding on how I can support all my kids. I have kids from primary right up to high school sitting NCEA so I really need to be aware of how I can better support my kids to be the best they can be, and I want them to be happy and confident with who they are and their strengths and skills. All I want is for them to make something of them to help them in their future.*

Parents comment that now they can ask for explanations and extra help for children and can advocate for their children at school

*At Parent-Teacher interviews, I know what to ask for and results to bring for next year. I feel confident in myself as a Mum that I can talk things through with the kids.*

They enjoy the support and ideas from the other parents at PowerUP:

*The community working together, meeting other leaders. For example, culturally I would not talk with a minister – as we have that respect not to talk to the leaders. But this forum has enabled us to break down barriers and feel able to have a voice. This has been a great way of me breaking down those barriers and [they] only exist if I make them exist.*

Many families made positive comments about enjoying PowerUP and were committed to returning:

*[At PowerUP there are] great people, great learning, great food. Rate it a 5 all the way [definitely return next year]. Mostly because we are together in the same learning space, I have met some*

*amazing people both from the community and different teachers from all areas of education – it is mean.*

### **Changes in child**

Parents report that teachers are telling them that their children are more vocal in class, asking more questions, and are more engaged:

*[Name] my oldest son is more interested in his learning now. I have just had parent interviews. His teachers have said that he is more engaged in class and ask more questions. His voice is more heard [in class].*

Parents also notice that their children are happier and growing in confidence:

*[Name] really enjoys coming to PowerUP, she said especially within the last few weeks where guest speakers have come in from different organizations and shared their knowledge. She is the first one to put her hand up to ask questions which for me is a good indicator than she is growing in confidence.*

Parents also believe their children better understand what they are trying to achieve in their learning.

*Understanding the NCEA Achievements Standards and seeing my child develop her own thinking and being surrounded by others who share the same journey [are the strengths of attending PowerUP].*

As a result of being more confident and experiencing success, parents think their children view education more positively.

*It's empowering to see your own children invest their time and energy outside of the local school hours. Because of the investment they make, it's only right that you commit to it also, so that you share the journey and experience.*

*PowerUP has been a way of acknowledging [the children's] strengths and taking ownership of who they are and their achievements, also celebrating every ownership big or small.*

### **Changes in family**

One participant said that she has seen that every member of her family who attended PowerUP has gained increased confidence in speaking and expressing their views, asking questions, and making decisions about their future.

By the end of the PowerUP sessions parents were able to give examples of how they lead learning at home. Some of them have instituted wide-ranging changes, both within the home and in the ways they communicate with the school and the wider community.

*Examples of the ways our family has changed include:*

- *Sitting and supervising them when they study*
- *Draw up a study timetable and a daily routine and follow them consistently*
- *Have been attending all parent interviews/other school meetings*
- *Talking/communicate regularly with all subject teachers, to follow up closely on our children's performances*
- *Regular tracking on KAMAR website to see all that happening in school – and ways to improve my children's results in all subject areas*
- *Prioritise our family time so that our children are not left out – children first in all we do at home*

- *Doing a lot of talking/discussions with our children, giving them more encouragement on the importance of having a good education for a better future*
- *Involve them in the community network – church community, Fijian community, other cultural and sports communities that they can be part of and participate in more activities involved – giving them more confidence in developing their skills and talents.*

In conclusion, the Talanoa profiles clearly show that as a result of attending PowerUP many parents understand their role in learning, and they are clearer about how to make education a family priority. Furthermore, many of the educational challenges their children may have been experiencing have been resolved, reduced or at least addressed, and children are experiencing positive learning outcomes

*Learning at home for our family has been better. We see how excited she comes home sometimes and willing to share some of the experiences she's gained at PowerUP. It's not a perfect journey, but we see that she is trying to apply some of the tips that are taught at PowerUP at home. This is very encouraging for us as parents to see your children driven and most of all happy.*

*Communication at home is much more positive. [Parent] has learned to stop and think about how she addresses her kids about their education and career choices. Instead of letting emotion lead the conversation (impatience, frustration) she keeps in mind the way her children think and changes her approach. The result of this has been a happier family and home.*

### **Postscript**

A number of families attending PowerUP have attended the programme for more than one year. It was interesting to observe, as was also clearly illustrated in Case Five, how over time parents' understanding of how to support their children becomes more nuanced. This indicates there is benefit in encouraging families to attend for more than one cycle of the programme.

## Next steps

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In reviewing the literature about ways change occurs, the evaluation team identified that the PowerUP programme appears to support families to overcome a number of challenges over time. Often at the start of the programme, parents feel their relationships with schools are already working well. But the programme helps parents to see how they could be more effective if their conversations were more educationally focussed.

The project team who have attended the PowerUP sessions observed that an important part of the success of the programme is how the providers manage sessions, helping parents move through the different stages of transition. In the 2017 evaluation process, it may be useful to evaluate the talanoa in a theory of change framework to capture these changes. In 2017/2018 a provider talanoa may be also added to capture the other key voice in PowerUP.

## References

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