

Pasifika PowerUP Plus 2017

TALANOA CASE STUDIES

REPORT INFORMATION

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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 – Moe Saú, Gabrielle-Sisifo Makisi and Shelley Kennedy. This report was then developed by Judy Oakden of Pragmatica Limited in consultation with the internal research team. Shelley Kennedy developed the original conceptualisations and wrote the three family cases. Judy wrote the overarching student voice case, methodology and executive summary.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Pasifika PowerUP Plus (PowerUP) programme delivers targeted workshops to Pacific parents, families and communities; primary and secondary students; and children in early childhood education (ECE). The aim of the workshops is to lift engagement with education and student achievement. This document is a companion to Pasifika PowerUP Plus 2017: A mid-point evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of the programme delivery and benefits to participants (Oakden, 2018).

The four case studies presented in this document aim to help inform the 2018 work of PowerUP, based on feedback from Pacific parents and students. They are part of a planned series of evaluation reports to support the PowerUP work over three years. The case studies draw from *Talanoa*-style interviews with 38 families attending PowerUP in 2017. A series of 12 *Talanoa*-style interviews took place with parents and three with their children between April and November 2017.

The purpose of developing these case studies was to show:

- families' progression through the PowerUP Programme – including changes in beliefs and expectations that occurred with regards to their children's learning
- what parents came to perceive as being their place in their children's learning journey
- the student learning journey.

KEY FINDINGS

PowerUP works best when parents, family and community support students in learning. At PowerUP participants work as a group, rather than as individuals. When parents, family and community attend PowerUP they learn important information about how to support their children's learning. Learning in a cohort with other adults gives multiple benefits for parents, family adults and community. These include:

- being in a Pacific-centric setting that feels natural, safe and comfortable makes it easier for them to think about their children's education
- learning how to have learning conversations to support their children's education, both with teachers at school and with their children
- experiencing support and success trying new approaches to support their children's learning
- their network of adults broadens, with a shared common focus on education
- they problem-solve together with other adults in a Pacific manner on issues of interest to the group
- the chance to think about their own education and explore possible training and work opportunities
- experiencing success as volunteers in their community and becoming more visible supporting their own community.

Children appreciate the support of their parents, family and community. They find it reassuring when their parents or family adults attend PowerUP with them. They say routines change at home and there is more focus on doing and completing homework. Parents now follow up on the homework feedback their children get from teachers. Students like the affirming and encouraging conversations about learning they have with their parents.

Students now know it is important to ask questions as part of the learning process and how to ask them. Students reported now feeling more confident to ask questions in class, to attempt schoolwork and to seek help when needed. They have a broader range of different places they can seek help from – including their families, peers, adults at PowerUP and adults at school. Rather than solely relying on teachers at school to oversee their education progress, they now also have the support of their families.

Changes in learning for the child appear to be easier when supported by adults at home. Home-school partnerships provide real opportunities to help lift students' educational achievement when parents or family adults have learning conversations with teachers.

As a result, many of the children included in the cases appeared to have become more focussed in their learning. They said they achieved more at school, often at a higher level, than before they attended PowerUP. They linked learning with vocational pathways, and said learning was much more relevant for them.

As also observed in the companion evaluation report, the researchers believe **PowerUP has the potential to bring about a positive and intergenerational change in the way Pacific communities engage with the education system and schools.** These four case studies show how that change occurs.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The Pasifika PowerUP (PowerUP) programme is a Ministry of Education-developed programme established in 2013. PowerUP aims to increase Pacific participation in early learning. It also aims to lift academic achievement for Pacific primary and secondary students. This occurs through Pacific families becoming more informed, knowledgeable and confident about education. At PowerUP it is believed that a powerful way to raise Pacific students' educational success is by taking a whole-family approach. PowerUP actively supports Pacific parents, family adults and communities to champion their children's learning. PowerUP was designed to:

- build the capability, knowledge and voice of Pacific parents, families and communities to drive and accelerate Pacific educational success
- provide access to quality, registered teachers at every level to ensure the right information is available at the right time
- ensure fit-for-purpose, culturally appropriate, inclusive and effective approaches to best meet the local needs of Pacific parents, students and families
- achieve real results in realistic time-frames.

In 2017 the PowerUP programme ran for 26 weeks. It was delivered at venues called PowerStations. There were 20 PowerStations throughout the country, specifically in: Auckland (7) Hamilton, Tauranga, Tokoroa, Rotorua, Napier, Flaxmere, Palmerston North, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Wellington, Christchurch (2) and Dunedin. Dunedin continued until the end of the year but did no reporting.

Providers collected *Talanoa* over 26 weeks in 12 *Talanoa* sessions. Thirty-eight families attending the PowerUP PowerStations participated in the process. Generally, two *Talanoa* were collected from each PowerStation.

This usually included both a family attending the PowerStation in 2017 for the first time and another attending for the second year. The Year 1 family was to test the assumptions developed from the previous Year 1 family and a Year 2 family to show progress. This data collection was part of a broader plan to collate longitudinal data over a three-year time span. Through the *Talanoa* it is anticipated the change that occurs both in family knowledge and outcomes from attending PowerUP will be captured.

First-year families were included in 2017 to test the conclusions from the 2016 year. In the 2017 year the focus was to see if the changes observed in the first year were repeated.

The voice of the children was added to the *Talanoa* this year. During the *Talanoa* process children were questioned on three occasions. This strengthened the children's voice in this evaluation and allowed triangulation of adult and student comments. It was found that many of the *Talanoa* observations or comments made by parents were also made by the children in separate interviews

The four case studies in this document aim to help inform the 2018 work, based on feedback from Pacific parents and students. The case studies draw from *Talanoa*-style interviews with 38 families attending PowerUP. A series of twelve *Talanoa*-style interviews with parents and three with their children took place between April and November 2017.

The purpose of these case studies was to show:

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

TABLE 1: Longitudinal approach to sample selection for *Talanoa* in each PowerStation

Family sample from each PowerUP PowerStation	
2016	2 x Year 1 families (Pacific parents or adult family members only)
2017	1 x Year 1 family (Pacific parents or adult family members and their children) 1 x Year 2 family (Pacific parents or adult family members and their children)
2018	1 x Year 2 family (Pacific parents or adult family members and their children) 1 x Year 3 family (Pacific parents or adult family members and their children)

METHODOLOGY

Guided *Talanoa* Series

Providers used a guided *Talanoa* series - a process based on a series of questions, to interview or converse with the families. *Talanoa* supported a guided conversation that took place over a series of weeks. It captured the change and progress in families attending the PowerUP programme.

Talanoa is made up of “tala” - “talk” and “noa” - “normal”. *Talanoa* means outcome through talk, decision through discussion or to discuss a topic. It is used throughout the Pacific as part of everyday life. It is also a formal, recognised research methodology (Vaiolleti, 2006). Pacific researchers use it to talk in a natural manner through a topic or phenomena. *Talanoa* shows up the thoughts, feelings, views and perceptions of the people talking. *Talanoa* was considered the most useful and authentic way to engage with the parents and families participating in PowerUP. It allowed the parents and students to speak for themselves (in their Pacific language or English or both).

Case study participants

Talanoa was part of the ongoing learning and monitoring of the PowerUP programme. Providers from each PowerStation selected two families to collect more detailed information from over the course of the programme. A total of 38 families took part in *Talanoa*-style interviews. This usually included both a family attending the PowerStation in 2017 for the first time and another attending for the second year. The first-year family was included to test the assumptions developed from the previous first-year family and a second-year family was included to show progress.

Where possible, *Talanoa* were completed in the language most comfortable for families. For example, questions may have been translated from English to another language and then responses recorded in English.

Providers did the *Talanoa* within the 26-week period that PowerUP operated. They had up to 12 *Talanoa* sessions with parents and up to three sessions with the children in each family. This data collection was part of a broader plan to collate longitudinal data over three years.

Information collected

The purpose of the *Talanoa* profiles was to provide a way for parents, family and students to have a voice. *Talanoa* captured their perceptions about education and also articulated what the Pacific families and students learnt during PowerUP and how they used this information. For many, PowerUP changed their attitudes towards education. During the *Talanoa* process, they reflected on their role and the value of attending a PowerStation. They also observed the progressive changes occurring in their family, which included changes to their thinking about how they could support their children’s learning. Some of their comments were also about how PowerUP had changed their behaviours. As well as being a tool for evaluating PowerUP, the *Talanoa* are also valuable to schools. They show meaningful and effective ways that schools can engage with Pacific families to support their children. They provide a body of authentic Pacific parent, learner, family and community voice on their perception and experience of education.

Case study approach

The four case studies included in this report were developed from the *Talanoa* data collection series. The first case study was developed from a combination of several families' experience, with a focus on the voice of students. The other three case studies were drawn from individual families. The *Talanoa* stories used for the family case studies were chosen to show the kind of change possible over one to three years. The cases show how PowerUP can support important change in a family's approach to education and learning. Analysis consisted of reading through the *Talanoa* and coding the text thematically. Themes showed the ways PowerUP works towards the desired programme outcomes and what the families noted about the changes occurring.

Case from a range of students

The first case was made up of the voice of students from 12 families' *Talanoa*. This case draws on the *Talanoa*-style discussions held with children. Discussions occurred at the fourth, seventh and twelfth *Talanoa* sessions with each family. Families selected were all in their second year of attending PowerUP to capture their rich story of change.

This case explores the themes that emerged as students reflected on their PowerUP journey. The case was treated as a local knowledge case, where the subject was the students completing *Talanoa*. The object was the students' learnings and experiences. The case captured changes in student attitudes and behaviour from attending PowerUP.

Fa'afaletui (Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese) was adapted to provide a frame to facilitate, gather, analyse and validate the knowledge in each case through a Pacific lens. Tupua Tamasese's Fa'afaletui provides a Pacific frame for the thematic analysis of students' voice. Fa'afaletui draws on three perspectives: the top of the mountain, in the village and out at sea fishing. Significantly, Fa'afaletui allows people into the framing.

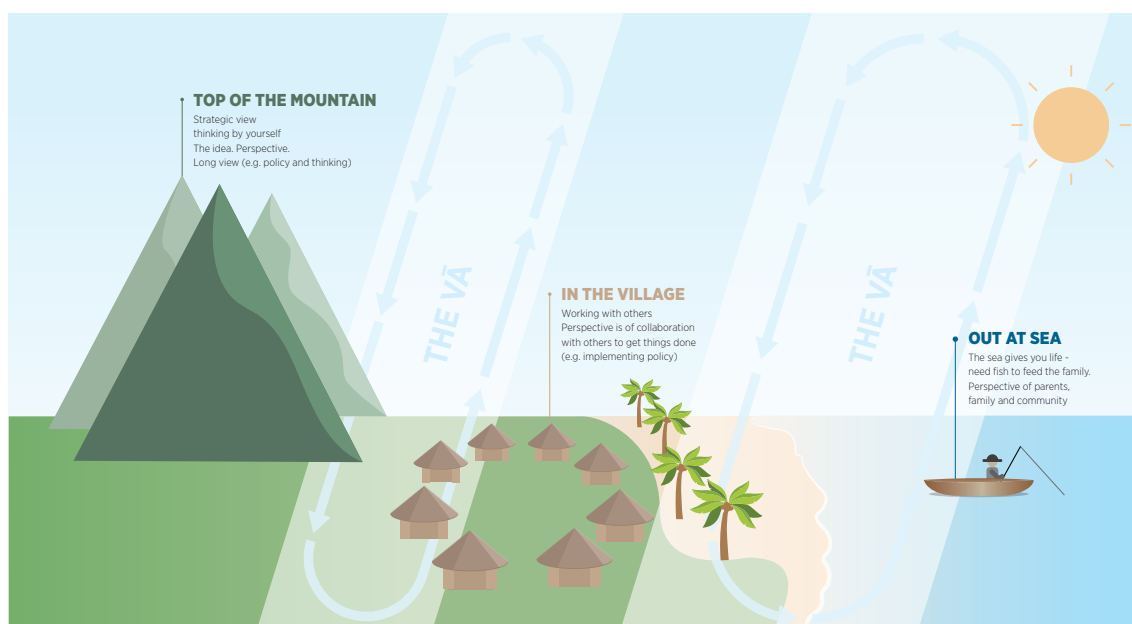
Fa'afaletui sorts and links the different parts of the work of PowerUP to ensure all levels of thinking and activity are included. *Talanoa* is the mechanism for discussion and consultation, and Tausi Le Va or looking after the space or the Va – is the mechanism for looking after the relationships between all three perspectives in relation to people and work.

The student voice relating to Fa'afaletui was developed around three thematic levels:

- Top of the mountain – students reflections on the changes that occurred when supported by their parents, they took a strategic longer-term view of their study
- In the village – students reflections on the impact of attending PowerUP on their relationships – in the home, within the PowerStation, and at school
- Out at sea fishing – what students observed about learning to learn.

"In Samoan Culture, there are three perspectives. The perspective of the person at the top of the mountain, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree, and the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the school of fish. In any big problem the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person fishing in the canoe may not have the long view of the person on the mountain or the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish."

(Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 1997)



Individual family case studies

The three cases selected for the study were key cases and are treated as single cases. Each reveals interesting aspects of the family's participation in PowerUP. These cases are success cases rather than typical cases. They were selected to show what significant change looks like when PowerUP works well. The subject of each of the three family cases was the family. The object of the case was their participation in PowerUP. The focus was on ways parents and children gained confidence, engaged in education, and the importance of feeling safe, included, comfortable and supported.

The Ministry of Education Pacific Education team made the initial selection of *Talanoa* for the key cases. Selections were based on the availability of rich descriptions of the change that occurred within the families due to attending PowerUP. The selection was then narrowed down to ensure the selected cases represented a range of:

- Origin of birth: two families had parents who were NZ born and one had Pacific born parents
- ethnicities: a range of ethnicities were selected for the cases including a Samoan, Cook Island and a Tongan family
- family compositions: there were families headed by sole parents, families where both parents attended and others where just one of a pair attended
- languages spoken: there were families where a Pacific language is mainly used and others which mainly speak English
- children's age and school stage
- urban and regional settings.

LIMITATIONS

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

- The feedback is a form of self-reporting, that is, it is not the result of objective or independent measures. Some *Talanoa* are more complete than others. Of the 38 *Talanoa*, 36 were considered of sufficient quality to use for reporting.
- The *Talanoa* process was repeated over many weeks, producing some longitudinal information. However, the different providers ran sessions over varying numbers of weeks (from 12 weeks to 27 weeks). Therefore, the student voice case from a range of students only compares learnings over time rather than at specific time points. 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 and 2017 *Talanoa* with another parent group formed in 2018. This will provide insight into how the programme develops and caters for families attending for a second or third year. This will also assist the Ministry to assess what needs to evolve for the programme to continue to be meaningful.

THE CASES

The PowerUP process was very affirming for Pacific-origin parents as leaders of learning in their family. Parents said PowerUP helped build some extra 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. These cases also show how the programme is useful for families of different types and in a variety of Pacific contexts.

CASE 1:

Students discuss the changes they experience in their learning, relating to others and planning for their future.

- This case draws on comments from 12 families participating in PowerUP for a second year. In total it reflects feedback from 25 students of a range of ages who took part in the *Talanoa* process alongside their families for the first time this year. It captures the changes that occurred when, supported by their parents, they took a more strategic, long-term view of their study. It also explores the impact of attending PowerUP on their relationships – both in the home, within the PowerStation and at school. It also captures students' observations of the importance of learning in a culturally affirming setting. An adapted version of Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Fa'afaletui was used to frame this case study.

CASE 2:

Support of an NCEA student through better family communication. (Year 2 family)

- A mother whose teenaged daughter and primary school-aged son attended for the second year described the transformation in her daughter. In 2016, the mother, Serena (not her real name), was keen for her family to attend PowerUP because she was worried about her daughter Kelsey (not her real name). Kelsey was in her first year of NCEA but struggling. She was also suffering from anxiety, lacking confidence in her interactions with others and in her own ability to succeed at anything. She also felt that her mother didn't care about her. She had no future goals in mind and was in real danger of dropping out of school. From a reluctant start, Kelsey began to enjoy her time at PowerUP, coming to realise she had qualities, abilities and skills which would enable her to succeed.

CASE 3:

Mother actively supports her children with educational activities and learning goals. (Year 3 family)

- A family of ten participated in the PowerUP programme for the third year. The mother, Elena, describes how her PowerUP experiences significantly changed her attitude to the role she plays in her children's education. She now considers it very important to learn how to actively help and support her children with educational activities and learning goals. As well as the positive benefits of PowerUP for each of her children individually and for her family as a whole, Elena gained considerably in her own right.

CASE 4:

Using new knowledge about the education system to support the learning needs of the family. (Year 1 family)

- A mother saw her three children needed urgent support to get on a more positive track with their learning at school. Marie quickly gained confidence from her interactions with PowerUP staff and other parents. She was proactive in putting into practice the information and strategies she learned to support her children's learning. She also came up with innovative solutions of her own to address and overcome her family's challenges.

All three family cases show how PowerUP as a community of learning fosters capability, confidence, engagement in education and working together as a family.

QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

These reflective questions are offered to help schools to explore the ideas discussed in the cases. These would be particularly relevant for school leaders and teachers within schools and community of learning groups who want to improve the school climate for Pacific learners.

TABLE 2: Reflective questions for schools

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AS YOU READ THESE CASES

Understand what you are hoping to achieve

Why would your school form relationships with Pacific parents? What is the benefit for learners?

- In what ways does the school value and help form relationships with Pacific parents?
- Why would the school form partnerships with Pacific parents? Why does this matter to learners?
- What steps do you need to take (in terms of your own assumptions, attitudes and approaches) for your school to engage with Pacific parents in genuine partnership?

Understanding the context

How do you go about forming relationships with Pacific parents, families and communities?

- What do you know about the Pacific cultures generally? What is your expertise? How do you go about building it?
- What do you know about the Pacific community in your school area?
- What community groups might Pacific parents belong to? Who are key influencers in these groups? How might you reach out to these communities to build a relationship with them as a school?
- What are Pacific parents, families and communities needs and priorities? Do the current ways schools and teachers talk with Pacific parents help, stress or challenge them? How might you make it easier for them to talk with teachers? What times of day work for them? Are there other ways of communicating or places for meeting that might work better for them?
- Do you present a warm, genuine and credible invitation, so Pacific parents, family and community believe you genuinely want to form a relationship with them? How do you know?
- How will you sustain any relationships built with Pacific communities in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the parents, families and communities?
- How will you ensure you create a Pacific responsive environment? What is needed? Who can you ask for guidance?
- How will you create a space – (both in terms of time and place for engaging with Pacific parents)
- What provision might be needed to support communication between parents and the school where they have English as a second language?

Improving your own capability to work with Pacific parents, families, communities and students

How will you build capability over time to work more effectively with Pacific students?

- Where do you go for support when you need to learn about Pacific culture and ways of being?
- What can you do yourself to improve the learning community for Pacific learners in your class or school?
- Working with Pacific parents, families, communities and students
- How do you set a school and classroom climate, where all learners are encouraged to engage with learning and all students feel comfortable, have a voice and make attempts to learn?
- How do you ensure that Pacific parents, family and community engaging with the school and Pacific learners in your classes are known to you, are encouraged and given space to ask questions, and feel supported their learning journey?
- How do you ensure that Pacific learners in your classes; get sufficient one on one time to progress, get additional attention where needed to ensure they can learn in the classroom?
- How will you know that the ways of working are working well for Pacific parents, families, communities and students?

CASE ONE: STUDENT VOICE

INTRODUCTION

This first case is from a range of students of all ages who took part in the *Talanoa* process alongside their families for the first time this year. In total this includes the voice 25 students including nine Year 11 – 13 students studying NCEA, nine Year 9 – 10 students, three Year 7 and 8 (intermediate level) students and four Primary school students. The student voice case explores students' experiences of PowerUP and how PowerUP impacted on their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. An adapted version of Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Fa'afaletui is used as the guiding framework.

The student voice relating to Fa'afaletui was developed around three levels:

- **Top of the mountain** – students reflections on the changes that occurred when supported by their parents, they took a strategic longer-term view of their study
- **In the village** – students reflections on the impact of attending PowerUP on their relationships – in the home, within the PowerStation, and at school
- **Out at sea fishing** – what students observed about learning to learn.

We begin the case with an overview of key changes observed by students overall. Next, in a section called Top of the mountain students reflect on taking a more strategic approach to their education. With support from their parents and family, students said study was now more aligned to their career aspirations. In the next section In the village we discuss students' perceptions of relationships. Students notice improved and extended relationships with parents, teachers, other students and mentors. In the final section, Out at sea fishing, students give observations about how they learn. They explain the importance of a culturally affirming learning setting. We document how this positively impacted on learning.

KEY CHANGES OBSERVED BY STUDENTS AFTER ATTENDING POWERUP

Students who took part in the *Talanoa* experienced important positive gains from attending PowerUP. Often students were initially anxious and feeling lost at school when they first came to PowerUP. They quickly came to view PowerUP as a safe, Pacific responsive setting and settled into learning. They said they made good progress when they could learn in a way and at a pace that suited their learning style. When they experienced success, their engagement and expectations of learning increased. Over time students maintained the ways PowerUP supported them deepened. The cumulative findings over the two years are summarised in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Changes in students after attending PowerUP

Before PowerUP	After PowerUP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many students were not particularly confident to approach a teacher • Some students reported being anxious and feeling lost in class at school • Many students felt the pace of class at school was too fast and reported feeling left behind • Many students only partially understood the education system • Some students were not particularly engaged in school or had disengaged with school • The students' peer group may not see it as cool to be smart and succeed at school • Many students made no clear links between education and after-school pathways in many cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students became confident to approach teachers, thought they were "cool" and "made learning fun" • They said PowerUP is a safe place to learn, in a way that suits their learning style • They feel much more confident and believe that they can learn • Some said it took them more time to learn, but they are determined and resilient • Those who were not attending school started attending again • They were part of a peer group where it was cool to be successful in education • They felt their parents (if they attended PowerUP) better understood what their education was about and supported it more • They understood what they need to do to be successful in learning • They developed a love of learning when they believed success was possible and they consistently experienced success • They reported that teachers at school commented on a change in their engagement with learning and now worked with them more • They understood why succeeding at education was worth pursuing • They started seeing exciting possibilities for themselves • They were motivated to work towards possibilities and were resilient when there were setbacks • They felt support from their families (if they also attended PowerUP).

Adapted from Oakden, J. (2018). Pasifika PowerUP Plus 2017: A mid-point evaluation of stakeholder perceptions of the programme delivery and benefits to participants. Wellington: Ministry of Education (pages 30–31).

TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN - STRATEGIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION

In our adaptation of Fa'afaletui the mountain level encompassed the strategic approach that students and their parents, families and community might take towards education. This aspect was about students taking a strategic view, having a long-term perspective and thinking for themselves.

Students who had been at PowerUP for a while became aware of their parents' ability to think and have a longer-term view than they (the students) might have.

"[To start with] Mum made me go [to PowerUP], but in the end I wanted to go." (Student)

Students said PowerUP helped them to identify, with their parents' assistance, possible goals, study aspirations and career pathways. Parents were also helpful in providing support to follow through possible options.

"Has helped me and my parents know what we need to change to help further my education. It has helped me only want to set higher goals." (Student)

The goal-setting sessions at PowerUP were very useful for students and parents, family and community. The sessions helped them to jointly take a more strategic view of each student's possibilities and potential. At times students had more potential than they or their families might have originally anticipated.

Many students talked of a possible career path of interest to them during the *Talanoa*. Some students who had received career advice said they were much clearer about the subjects they needed to take and why. Students also knew the level of achievement required to keep their vocational pathways open. For example, one family decided to switch their daughter to another school. They identified that the curriculum offered there was more likely to meet her career goals. This student commented:

"My parents have made the decision that next term I will be attending [another school] to help me with my learning and proper structure." (Student)

For the secondary school students there were lots of examples of where they:

- made sure they were taking the right courses in Years 9 and 10 to ensure they could take the right NCEA courses in Years 11-13
- made sure they were taking right NCEA courses during Years 11-13 to have viable pathways to their career aspirations.

"I am moving soon to Level 1 NCEA next year. Learning about this and credits has helped me to prepare and think more about what subjects I want to take next year. We have had many speakers come in and talk to us about what they do and who they got there. This has also helped me think about what I want to do when I leave secondary school." (Student)

Students said they were much clearer about how NCEA works. One student reflected the view of many when they said they "understand where it fits for me". Taking a more strategic approach, students also understood why they needed to get merit or excellence.

"I have more of an understanding of the system and am challenging myself to get more E grades." (Student)

When students started to make links between their study and a possible vocational path, they were more purposeful. Lots of students spoke of possible vocational pathways. These were varied as the following quotes show:

"We both want to study first year health sciences at Otago University or Auckland University once we complete NCEA Level 3." (Student)

"I want to be a professional builder when I leave school." (Student)

"I want to be a teacher. I'd like to go overseas to Korea." (Student)

"I'm really keen to be a fireman now. But I know how important it is to get good marks in English and Maths." (Student)

"I want to be a lawyer." (Student)

"I want to be a secondary school teacher." (Student)

In some instances, students' experience of learning success raised their vocational expectations. While some felt an obligation to help their families by getting out into the workforce, many of the secondary students who took part in the *Talanoa* were now planning to go into some kind of tertiary study.

"I want to work after high school to help my parents, but we will see when I get to Year 13.... [At PowerUP, I would like to learn] more about career pathways and higher learning/universities and polytechnics."
(Student)

IN THE VILLAGE – STUDENTS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

In our adaptation of Fa'afaletui, the village level encompasses relationships. In this section, we cover the relationships students developed through PowerUP. Good working relationships helped parents, family, community and students to work with others to learn. Relationships can be thought of as the Va – the space between. The concept of *tausi le va*, which is about looking after the space, is also evident. In this instance it translates to looking after the relationships. Thus, important aspects of Pacific culture are:

- building strong relationships
- working collaboratively with others
- making an effort to maintain relationships over time.

Students reflected on the benefits of attending PowerUP and told us about:

- their enhanced relationships with their parents and family members
- the positive climate providers set to build and maintain effective relationships with them
- how relating with others at PowerUP (including teachers, other students and their families, and mentors) helped students both in the short-term and in the longer-term.

Relationships in the home

In some instances, parents prompted their family to attend PowerUP. At other times students learned of PowerUP and began, and their parents started attending later. Over time students came to value their parents attending PowerUP.

"(Our parents attend PowerUP and we love having them come ... and they too love being part of PowerUP.)" (Student)

"I love going together with my family and my parents [and] sometimes my Papa. We always look forward to it."
(Student)

"I like it when I go with Mum...If I don't go I feel sad and angry to my Mum."
(Student)

"[One of the best things about attending PowerUP was] that Mum came to all the PowerUP stations [with us]." (Student)

"We feel very comfortable coming to PowerUP because it is gathering with familiar community people, it is happening in our suburb. Also, parents are around and families. We feel secure and know it is something that we belong to." (Student)

Students valued their parents attending PowerUP for many reasons. They liked their parents seeing them learning. Students also liked seeing their parents trying new things. Parents attending better understood the learning tasks and when students needed to complete them. Students said that their parents now helped them keep on track.

"We have been given the opportunity to get extra help and to have our parents take part in what we are learning. ... Your parents get to see what you are learning." (Student)

"My Mum comes to PowerUP – I'd tell other parents to come and support their children to help keep them on track with the learning and to be part of their education." (Student)

"Another thing that makes us engage more is we know that Mum or Dad is around, no more nonsense ... hahaha." (Student)

"[I] enjoy attending this with my Mum. My Mum gets to understand more about NCEA works and in Year 9 I get to understand it a bit more because the teachers here are caring." (Student)

Q: "What are three things you have learned in the past weeks of PowerUP?"

A: "One thing I learned is that heroes don't have to wear capes or fight people. [This is important because] sometimes people think that heroes come from cartoons, but they are real like my Dad, my Mum, my Papa and my teacher at school, [and] my family are heroes too."

Q: Why do you think they are heroes?

A: "Because they are around me all the time, when I need help, I can always ask for help." (Student)

Some students thought their parents were more involved in their learning generally as a result of attending PowerUP. Students said their parents asked them more questions at home and also asked teachers more questions at school. Many older students could describe conversations about NCEA progress with their parents.

"[PowerUP] really empowers us to engage more in our educational needs and strive for the best in our future journey. ... [Being more confident] improves our learning and develops our stronger relationships with people who assist us mentally, physically and spiritually. Our parents always advise us that we should look after our health and have faith in God. We believe if we grow healthy and empower [our learning by developing resilience] we will be more successful in our education." (Student)

"[From attending] PowerUP [my] family is more supportive of [my] learning." (Student)

Students also liked having parental support to plan vocational pathways. For some students this started as early as Years 5–8. Children who had aspirations to do well from early on were more confident in their subject choices. Those entering secondary school appreciated having help to make subject choices that linked to possible careers.

"[I've learned] that my friends won't always be there to help me, but I know that I have the support of my family and my teaches.... I am not sure what I want to do yet, but I know I want to go to University." (Student)

Over time, a shift in the relationships with parents was evident. Students said they felt supported on their education journey, and many indicated that education was a family priority. Students said the conversations with their families had widened beyond conversations about learning. Often there was evidence the family was working together in a more cohesive manner than before attending PowerUP.

Setting the climate for relationship building at PowerUP

Many of the students said an important aspect of PowerUP was they felt comfortable at the PowerStations. They liked and appreciated the Pacific way of doing things there-of behaving and communicating with each other. At PowerUP, a number of Pacific students commented that “everyone was the same as them” and they felt “at home”.

“[PowerUP is a] good, safe learning environment where you feel at home.” (Student)

“I’m comfortable because everyone has sort of the same culture, so you can be yourself.” (Student)

Many students thought the PowerStations ran in a way that built a strong community of learning. An important aspect of the culture of PowerUP was that everyone was there for a common educational purpose – to get work done. Students commented that they liked the positive vibe and that PowerUP felt very inclusive.

“We have more faith in ourselves that we can achieve our academic goals and go for further studies to get our future career jobs. We believe we can be as high achievers as other ethnicities if we commit to our education.” (Student)

“Learning about other cultures is important in embracing and being including with one another.” (Student)

Students said they liked the fellowship at PowerUP. Many students also liked the opportunity to connect with other Pacific families and students. They observed that without PowerUP they might not otherwise have had contact with this wider group.

“[There are] mostly Pakeha in my school. Being part of the PowerUP team I felt like I was home, so I looked forward to that, having a place I feel at home. I like school and all, but [I have a position of responsibility] so it is hard to relax totally at school. You are surrounded by people who go through the same things at school and no one judges you if your dumb or smart. We are all treated equally.” (Student)

“[PowerUP] is different because your friends can help you with things you may be stuck on.” (Student)

“PowerUP is Pasifika as most people that makeup PowerUP are of Pasifika bloodline and or descent. This is expressed in the food particularly and the way the teachers teach students and babies how to behave and be more respectful. In saying that a small [number] of Maori and European [attend] which is also a good thing as it helps us to interact with one another more.” (Student)

“I like going there because I have time with my friends from other schools.” (Student)

“A strong cultural aspect of the programme was the food. Many students said they “liked the food”, and a chance to eat together. For one student the food was part of several ways PowerUP met their needs: Tummy is full, homework done, questions answered.” (Student)

“We sometimes have island food like chop suey for dinner.” (Student)

Overall, it was clear that students built a range of relationships through PowerUP – with PowerUP teachers, other students, mentors, and with other families. Over the year students became more confident meeting new people and commented that they “liked meeting new people”. Next, we look at the relationships students built with teachers.

Relationships with teachers

Many students appeared to develop effective working relationships with teachers at PowerUP. Students believed the teachers wanted to help them with their learning.

“I think these teachers care for our learning a lot.” (Student)

“My teacher always understands me and doesn’t laugh if I make a mistake.” (Student)

“Teachers [are] really caring and understand me.” (Student)

Students said teachers took time with them. They taught at the right pace for them and treated all their questions with respect. Students said they had enough one-on-one support to explore what they needed to learn with the teachers. Teachers then taught them what they needed to learn. Students commented that the teachers' approach to learning made it fun for them. Students said at PowerUP they enjoyed learning and started to master topics they had struggled with before.

"The teachers we have are so cool to listen to and they make learning so much fun." (Student)

By teachers offering a safe place to engage, students said they felt less anxious. Students talked of how they became more open to learning and able to learn. One student commented that PowerUP broke down some of the common stereotypes of Pacific peoples.

"Stereotype of Pacific are gone – you know those stereotypes that Pacific don't work hard. Well here at PowerUP those stereotypes aren't true – we work hard, and we want to do well." (Student)

Teachers encouraged students to ask questions. Initially students feel a bit unsure to do this. But a shift occurred as students achieved greater understanding of their subject areas. As students started to correctly complete some of their work, they became more confident to ask questions. Those who had been in PowerUP for more than a year often already had this confidence and were useful role models for other students.

Relationships with other students

Students valued PowerUP as a place where they could learn – in a peer culture of learning.

"Enjoy being with other Pacific kids who are excited to learn and do homework." (Student)

"It's different to learning at school because [I] don't have my friends around to distract me." (Student)

"There are more students really trying to do well." (Student)

Students valued PowerUP as a venue where they could develop good relationships with Pacific peers who also wanted to learn. It was

clear that at many PowerStations students gained the benefits of being in a cohort. Students said they benefitted from being in a group of like-minded people. They said they were with other students who were working hard, who wanted to do well and who were open to working together. They shared a culture of success.

"We kind of have the same group every week so we have gotten to know each other. We are all like a big family, and we can ask silly questions without being looked at funny." (Student)

"Meeting other students. It has been good to hear their experiences and challenges as well about how they are doing in school. I think we learn from each other too." (Student)

Several students commented that being part of mixed-age groups was also beneficial to them. Both younger and older students made this observation. The younger students said they liked hearing the older students' questions. The older students said they liked helping the younger students.

"I learn a lot from the older students." (Student)

From the cohort, students grew a network of people they knew. One student explained that when they transitioned from intermediate to secondary school this meant they knew older students at their new school.

"Met students at secondary school the year before [I] went there. Made it easier when I started college this year." (Student)

Relationships with mentors

Students also appreciated the mentors. Many of the mentors were Pacific university students. Students said they liked working with mentors because they were closer in age and hence good role models for them.

"Our new mentors are amazing and have been so inspiring. They have really shaped up how I want to learn...I am so much more motivated now." (Student)

OUT AT SEA FISHING - CLOSE LOOK AT LEARNING AND DOING SCHOOL WORK

In our adaptation of Fa'afaletui the fishing level framed the educational learning up close - doing the work. In the original model this aspect was about those out fishing and close to the fish. In this example the PowerUP the framing is of the PowerUP community learning to learn.

Parents as role models for learning

Parents were important role models of learning for the students. As already noted, students liked seeing their parents learning at PowerUP. Attendance by their parents showed students that learning and education was important to the family.

"Well Mum is asking more about my homework now. I can see she tries new things with us. It's cool that Mum is with us at PowerUP, so I don't have to explain too much stuff for her." (Student)

Some students thought one of the important ways their parents supported their learning was by encouraging study at home. Students described changes in the family routine. There was more time for study and more concern that work was completed, as well as an interest in the feedback from teachers.

"Mum understands now about assignments - [she is] always bugging me: what is due? When is it due? What did you get?" (Student)

"Even though the teachers talk a lot about preparing for NCEA, I can actually see where it fits for me. On our calendar at home, I actually put in more things about the topics I have at school, which I can do more work on, like English." (Student)

Student learning journey

Students said they started off at PowerUP by learning some basic skills and experiencing small successes.

"I'd been struggling writing essays, now I'm confident doing paragraphs." (Student)

Students said they learned not to be afraid to ask questions. PowerUP provided a safe environment to learn to do this. It was affirming for students not to be laughed at if they asked a question that was "a bit silly".

"At school all of us kids are sometimes too shy to speak out, but at PowerUP they make us feel comfortable, because they are here to help you and not judge if we don't make any sense." (Student)

"I can ask if I am in a smaller group, but with a lot of other students I tend to shy away from asking. But I am trying to get out of that and be bold and to ask - whether simple or in-depth questions." (Student)

"I used to be shy to ask, but the I found out that I am not the only one having the same problems. There are others who attend to have problems in Maths as well. It is important for me to do well in Maths and English for higher levels especially with NCEA when I am a senior." (Student)

"We have more understanding of how to get help, feel more confidence in talking and seek help. We believe that we have to communicate in order to improve ourselves." (Student)

Students also commented on how they learned good study approaches. They mentioned aspects such as time management and planning. This included putting reminders on the calendar at home, for instance. Good study habits also included the importance of working hard and getting work done, according to students.

"Being focussed gives me confidence to ask questions about things that I am not sure of. Being punctual helps because I can't ask the questions if I not at class. Being organised helps with success because then I am not rushing to do things and not stressed out or distracted." (Student)

Students demonstrated during the *Talanoa* that during the year they learned to ask questions, to persevere and to be resilient. They learned they needed to try, work hard, and complete work.

"PowerUP is motivating. If we work really hard, we can achieve a lot." (Student)

"I have to work hard and do homework and ask questions." (Student)

"Ask questions – don't be afraid to ask." (Student)

"The more I ask, the more I know, and the more I know then the more I will do." (Student)

Students said they valued the opportunity to work in groups in a Pacific way, where as a cohort they supported each other. They valued the chance for lots of discussion. From these sessions they started to learn how to have learning discussions. From these early successes students said they started to feel confident to speak in front of the group. Students reported that once they felt comfortable doing this at PowerUP, they started doing it at school as well.

"I feel smart when I know how to spell, read and write. I am ok to read in front of the class now. My teacher encourages me to give it a go. No-one laughs if I make a mistake." (Student)

"I feel more competent." (Student)

"I know I am doing more work [at school] than I did last year. But it's fun, I'm really enjoying it. [At PowerUP] I like doing group activities together – like, one of the sessions... we were able to build a bridge out of piece of wood. [One of the academic mentors has a background in engineering] and we got to do activities as a whole group which was really fun." (Student)

"I feel comfortable that we [my PowerUP tutor and me] talk about what I am doing in class. If they [PowerUP tutors or teachers at school] bring up something, I have an idea of what they are talking about. I already have a picture of what we are doing." (Student)

During the *Talanoa*, students were asked what they thought engagement meant. While there were some that were still not sure, many could speak about engagement in their learning.

"Never realised that being engaged really does help make learning easier. I'm... quite motivated now." (Student)

"[Engagement] is [being] more attracted to something, a strong connection...When you are learning you learn more about [things]. It becomes permanent and when you're assessed your less stressed as you've learned about it." (Student)

We improved our results last year as a result of being engaged in learning...We believe that we can be high achievers as other ethnicities if we commit to our education.

Students valued the chance to experience success in their learning. For many, PowerUP offered the chance to master material they were struggling with at school. For others it was a chance to see progress in their learning for themselves.

"I walk away from each [Power]Station feeling I have [done] work and have a clear understanding on what I was struggling with. (Student)

I got a spelling list to take home before and Mum helped me with my words and I got them all right. I know about adjectives now. (Student)

As students experienced mastery and success, their expectations of what was possible shifted. Those previously not passing or not doing work were pleased to pass. In the second year some students who had experienced success shifted from wanting to get merit to working towards excellence.

"I am wanting to really do well in my core subjects now. I want to try and achieve at my highest level and I know I can confidently do it." (Student)

"The more I understood about NCEA, the more confident I felt that I would do better and achieve higher." (Student)

"I have passed my science and maths test, I have been ahead in my class." (Student)

"All the help from the teachers [at PowerUP last year] helped me a lot with my school work and helped me [get] endorsed with excellence." (Student)

Student feedback was clear – it was easier to work hard when they could see a future path they were interested in. Many students could speak of their career aspirations and saw a purpose to their learning.

"PowerUP helps me focus, it helps me be organised, it helps me with time management and mostly now I have a better understanding on merit achievement and know it's not just about passing a unit standard but passing with merit or achievement."
(Student)

"PowerUP gives me time to focus on study and get work done." (Student)

"Feel...productive. Builds a better bonded community, [we are] working towards a common goal." (Student)

"Do things differently, writing English is different to how we do it at school."
(Student)

SUMMARY

This case has clearly shown how students benefit from PowerUP. We give the last word to a student:

"School can be hard sometimes, but I have great support from my teachers, my family and now from PowerUP... I am motivated and excited to see where to go from here." (Student)

INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY CASES

As noted earlier in the methodology section these next three cases are individual family cases. The three cases selected for the study were key cases and are treated as single cases. Each reveals interesting aspects of the family's participation in PowerUP. These cases are success cases rather than typical cases. They were selected to show what significant change looks like when PowerUP works well. The subject of each of the three family cases was the family. The object of the case was their participation in PowerUP. The focus was on ways parents and children gained confidence, engaged in education, and the importance of feeling safe, included, comfortable and supported.

The Ministry of Education Pacific Education team made the initial selection of *Talanoa* for the key cases. Selections were based on the availability of rich descriptions of the change that occurred within the families due to attending PowerUP. The selection was then narrowed down to ensure the selected cases represented a range of:

- ethnicities: a range of ethnicities were selected for the cases
- family compositions: there were families headed by sole parents, families where both parents attended and others where just one of a pair attended
- languages spoken: there were families where a Pacific language is mainly used and others which mainly speak English
- children's age and school stage
- urban and regional settings.

This year the two of the families selected for the individual family cases had New Zealand-born parents, and one had Pacific born parents, reflecting the general composition of the Pacific population in New Zealand.

Each case begins with a description of the family context and how they came to be at PowerUP. Next, we explore the ways the parents, students and family as a whole:

- gained confidence
- engaged in education
- felt safe, comfortable and supported through attending PowerUP

Each case then concludes with key findings including how PowerUP positively impacted on learning.

CASE TWO:

SUPPORTING AN NCEA STUDENT THROUGH BETTER FAMILY COMMUNICATION

"My children are more engaged, and both have confidence in themselves about their school work and learning. Receiving the help and support at PowerUP has helped them both, [but] especially my daughter in high school. Having that support there and being able to do their work with their peers and also receiving the one-on-one support has made a huge difference." (Mother)

"Now, through PowerUP and then getting [NCEA] Level 1 [last year] my daughter sees she can do it. Before she was hating school and not attending and now she loves it... It's like my daughter is a new student and a new person; her confidence now is quite amazing to see. Additionally, my daughter has passed her NCEA Level 2 this year." (Mother)

"I wouldn't have passed NCEA Level 1 if I hadn't come to PowerUP last year... I understand a lot more now, and now I like going to school. I am very motivated because I know what I want to do, and I'm getting good support to go to university and reach my goal as a teacher for the deaf." (Year 12 student)

"My kids enjoy that I play a huge part in their learning. It also helps me to understand where they're at in their education. The best thing about doing things together is showing my kids that their learning is important to me. They know that I care about how well they do or not, and they see me being active in their education." (Mother)

CASE METHOD

This case study is derived from *Talanoa* between a parent, who will be known as Serena, and a local PowerUP champion or PowerUP staff member on eight different occasions in 2016 and seven occasions in 2017.

In addition, in 2017 three separate *Talanoa* took place with Serena's Year 12 daughter, who will be known as Kelsey.

Within each year most, but not all, *Talanoa* involved the same PowerUP champion or staff member.

THE FAMILY

In 2017, this New Zealand-born Samoan family of three attended PowerUP for a second year. The family is made up of the mother – to be known as Serena, a daughter in Year 12 at secondary school and a son in Year 3 at primary school.

Serena was keen for her family to attend PowerUP because she was worried about her daughter – to be known as Kelsey. In 2016 Kelsey was in her first year of NCEA but struggled with her studies at school. She also suffered from anxiety, lacked confidence in her interactions with others and in her own ability to succeed at anything. She also felt that her mother didn't care about her. She had no future goals in mind and was in real danger of dropping out of school.

Kelsey was reluctant at the start, but then she began to enjoy her time at PowerUP. She came to realise she had qualities, abilities and skills that would enable her to succeed. After several weeks at PowerUP she found she was eager to keep up with her schoolwork. Her mother and her brother, to be known as Samuel, also enjoyed their time at PowerUP. They too benefited from the supportive community environment within PowerUP and became more confident. It helped them all work together as a family to achieve education and life goals.

Kelsey achieved NCEA Level 1 at the end of 2016. She was the only one amongst her group of school friends to do so. It was a result she did not expect at the beginning of the year. It inspired her to strive for excellence in her future studies, rather than just passing. Samuel also achieved steadily and well in reading and mathematics and in his schoolwork overall. He enjoyed learning and being at school.

In 2017 the family consolidated and built on the knowledge, skills, confidence and social interactions they developed at PowerUP in the previous year.

Focusing primarily on Serena and Kelsey, the next sections illustrate the family's growing confidence in their own knowledge, abilities and understandings as they participated in PowerUP sessions for the second year. This case study concludes with some key findings, as a way of summarising the family's PowerUP experiences

GAINING CONFIDENCE

"My kids have more confidence knowing there is support for them in the [PowerUP] community." (Mother)

"Collaborative learning does wonders in a child's education, and that is what PowerUP Plus provides as well as one-on-one support." (Mother)

Mother's comments on changes in her own confidence levels

During *Talanoa* in 2017, Serena said PowerUP had helped her to develop confidence in her own ability and to understand the importance of providing leadership for her children's learning. She had begun to actively share responsibility for their learning progress and success. She said:

"[PowerUP]... has given me confidence as a parent to take responsibility for my child's education and not leave it to my child and the school – it's a partnership; well it should be a partnership. It's helped me to be more supportive in my role as a parent in my kids' education. It's helped me learn and understand more about the education system and how I can better support my kids – without sounding like I'm just a nagging mum. [Before], there was stuff I never knew; didn't know in depth – I didn't know how things worked, like NCEA Levels 1–3, the credits they need for literacy and numeracy [and so on]. Now [I know enough to know] where my daughter is at and I can have conversations with her about it, and with the teachers at school." (Mother)

With more understanding, Serena was able to work closely and more effectively with Kelsey's subject teachers and dean. She was able to ask them targeted questions about her daughter's learning strengths and needs, which then enabled her to better understand and help her daughter in areas of difficulty.

"[I've now had] conversations [with my daughter's teachers] around preparing for exams this year, and about what my daughter needs to do to achieve her goals for this year... Being able to ask the hard questions no matter how hard it is, or just asking questions full-stop, no matter how stupid it sounds, [enables me to play] an active part in my kids' education." (Mother)

PowerUP helped Serena actively support her children's learning:

"[It provided] ... strategies and ideas on how to improve and support my child at home with any struggles they have in a subject. [For example], I do fun things with Samuel for maths, like when I do cooking we measure things and count things. And I know Samuel is above [the level for his age] on his reading because he reads everything, he enjoys it, but I want to know more things to help him [do really well] and I can get that at PowerUP." (Mother)

In addition, Serena's increased knowledge and confidence facilitated more meaningful learning conversations with her children, for example:

"I actually have an understanding [now] of what my daughter is talking about when she talks about her subjects and what she needs to achieve to gain certain credits in NCEA." (Mother)

Mother's comments on changes in her Year 12 daughter's confidence levels

Serena was very happy to report that her daughter's confidence levels had developed markedly since she began attending PowerUP:

"Her confidence has shot through the roof. She was not confident at all until we started coming here – her communication with others, her social skills, have gone from being nervous to now being amazing. She LOVES coming here [to PowerUP]. It is her favourite thing." (Mother)

Serena added that her daughter enjoyed attending PowerUP because she "gets the help and support she needs weekly" and "enjoys it a lot that I [her mother] am there [at PowerUP too]. It gives us the opportunity to have conversations about learning and education on a weekly basis, and she sees that I care about her education and her progress." Serena also saw that Kelsey gained confidence from working with other students with a common purpose. She developed friendships with those students.

Student's comments on changes in her own confidence levels

Kelsey made the following observations about the way teachers helped her:

"Like they slow it down. Because I'm not a very fast learner, so they break it [subject matter] down for me so that I get it and know it – they wait until I get it... At school, because the teachers have lots of kids, they have to kind of forget about slow learners like me and just move on and then I don't get it." (Student)

"The teachers at PowerUP, the way they do it [teach], it's kind of like asking me the same questions but in a different way [than the teachers at school], until I understand. [PowerUP], it's a good place to learn." (Student)

"At PowerUP I get the help I need in the subjects I need help with; I get more work done there and am able to catch up on my [school] assessments; I learnt how to write an essay properly." (Student)

Kelsey emphasised that she particularly liked...

"... working together with my friends in catching up on [school] work, receiving one-on-one help from teachers and working with our university student mentors – they helped and encouraged us about going to university and they made it fun." (Student)

Kelsey gained confidence through experiencing "open communication about school and future goals". As part of this she received information about upcoming exams and learnt what she needed to do to prepare well for those exams:

"I feel well-equipped knowing what I'm walking into and knowing what to ask helps me in the long run. PowerUP prepares me well and sets me up to achieve what I want when I finish this year." (Student)

Kelsey shared that she had been achieving more at school since she started attending PowerUP, explaining that:

"I understand a lot more now, and now I like going to school. I am very motivated because I know what I want to do and I'm getting good support to go to university and reach my goal as a teacher for the deaf." (Student)

ENGAGING IN EDUCATION

"[My daughter] now finds that learning is fun and it's not a drag. She is much more engaged at school since attending PowerUP." (Mother)

Mother's comments on the impact of her own increased engagement

Serena realised that her own increased involvement in her children's education and learning was an important contributing factor in her children's more positive attitudes:

"My kids enjoy that I play a huge part in their learning. It also helps me to understand where they're at in their education. The best thing about doing things together is showing my kids that their learning is important to me. They know that I care about how well they do or not, and they see me being active in their education. I think it's vital for a parent to take part, to show support and show their kids they matter, especially in their education." (Mother)

Mother's comments on changes in her Year 12 daughter's level of engagement

Serena reported that since attending PowerUP Kelsey had progressed from "hating school" and not wanting to attend, to being "excited about her subjects and about school as a whole – now she loves it".

Serena went on to describe feedback from one of Kelsey's teachers at the mid-year parent-teacher meeting at Kelsey's school in 2017:

"Her teacher was amazed, absolutely amazed by her [Kelsey's] improvement... by her growth in self-confidence and in her schoolwork." (Mother)

Serena could see that her daughter had become "very motivated to learn, particularly as she has a goal now – to be a deaf interpreter. Seeing Kelsey's desire to work towards future goals prompted Serena to follow up a link she had been given for online information about choices and careers. Also she spoke with her daughter on a regular basis about the future and how to plan for that future.

They saw that one option for Kelsey was to pursue music and drama but, with her mother's support, she decided she would really like to be an interpreter for the deaf. Kelsey shared this new goal with her teachers at school, and the school provided support as she worked towards this goal. This include helping her select and undertake appropriate units of study.

Student's comments on changes in her level of engagement

Kelsey acknowledged that she had been significantly disengaged from school before starting at PowerUP. She was not attending school regularly, largely because she "couldn't understand anything".

After attending PowerUP for several weeks she began to attend school every day "... because now I understand [the work] and know where I can get help from... I wouldn't have passed NCEA Level 1 if I hadn't come to PowerUP last year."

In her second year of PowerUP Kelsey was particularly excited about her future because she knew what she wanted to do. She was looking forward to studying at university to achieve her goal. Some of the PowerUP mentors were university students close to her in age and she found she could now relate to them. They became role models for her, demonstrating that her dream of going to university was achievable.

FEELING SAFE, COMFORTABLE AND SUPPORTED

"It's about community [at PowerUP], not the individual - helping a brother/sister out. We [adults at PowerUP] believe in fostering that learning thing for the kids so they can understand. We're all there to genuinely help them get through. We believe in the kids, in each other! People at PowerUP care." (Mother)

Mother's comments on feeling safe and comfortable at PowerUP

Serena identified that the strong Pacific cultural values and collaborative and community spirit within PowerUP give those who participate a sense of belonging and help them feel safe:

"Even though we do encourage other cultures to come, our culture of it I believe is Pasifika. There's a real sense of belonging here for the kids... Everyone is made to feel welcome: the parent helpers, the teacher helpers, they are amazing, they wear their heart on their sleeve. The teachers are all amazing like that, and the way they make everyone feel welcome, everyone wants to learn." (Mother)

"The community thing for me is why it works so well and why we have more kids coming through and we gel with them and they see that their parents and teachers care about their learning. These adults will stay back until after 7pm to feed us and to help with [the students'] credits. IT'S THE PASIFIKA WAY!" (Mother)

"Unity between the kids in one place is amazing. Some kids who never connect at school are doing that at PowerUP. The little ones coming from other schools and seeing the older boys looking out for them and helping and caring for their younger students has been what I've enjoyed seeing." (Mother)

Student's comments on feeling safe and comfortable at PowerUP

Kelsey also valued the Pacific-style environment of PowerUP and liked that people from her community were all coming to PowerUP. She described it as “a good, fun and caring environment [in which] to learn”.

When she first came to PowerUP, Kelsey said she suffered badly with “social anxiety” but found that being around different people in the supportive environment at PowerUP helped her overcome this:

***“I enjoy PowerUP as it is a good opportunity to meet new people and make new friends who also help me with my work – we all help each other.”
(Student)***

SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

“PowerUP is 100% meeting my needs this year because I am so happy with my daughter's results. If we had PowerUP six years ago I think my son [now in Year 3] would have been doing even better than he is doing now because I've seen the improvement and the progress in [my daughter since attending PowerUP]. I'm not saying he's not doing well, but I think he could have done even better that's all.”

(Mother, in Talanoa July 2017)

Before attending PowerUP Kelsey said she often felt lost in class. Her lack of confidence to communicate was made worse by being unable to understand some of her teachers at school. She had little or no expectation of receiving the support she needed, which resulted in her falling behind in class. She grew to hate going to school and avoided attending as much as she could.

Through PowerUP, Kelsey got one-to-one teacher attention in a safe, sharing, Pacific-focused environment. They and the PowerUP mentors encouraged her to seek help when she didn't understand something. She also experienced working alongside others who were at PowerUP for a common learning purpose and eager to help one another. These two experiences helped Kelsey to become much more confident in her own learning. She realised that she had to take the initiative at school and ask questions in order to progress her own learning – and she felt equipped to do so. She was rewarded for her efforts and said she got more support and positive feedback from her teachers at school.

Kelsey became motivated to achieve as well as she could, especially after she surprised herself by passing NCEA Level 1. She became keen to attend school regularly and to work towards NCEA Level 3 and beyond. She began to think in some depth about goals and future career options and to talk about these with her family, teachers and friends.

In addition, Serena saw that her daughter become much more confident in herself generally, forming new social relationships and mixing with a wide range of others at PowerUP. Serena expressed strong gratitude to the teachers, mentors and everyone at PowerUP for enabling Kelsey to experience success in her learning. Serena believes Kelsey now looks forward to a positive future.

Serena became increasingly aware through her attendance at PowerUP that active parental support is integral to children's success. She saw that children are most likely to achieve success in their learning when there is an active partnership between home, family and the community.

Serena was very grateful for the opportunity PowerUP gave her to grow her own knowledge, experience and confidence. Gaining knowledge and understanding about the education system, including assessment and reporting, enabled her to communicate more effectively with her children's schools and teachers. She found she could now ask targeted questions about her children's learning and progress and seek advice about what she should do to best support her children's learning and educational pathways.

She found that becoming more informed also helped her communicate more effectively with her children. She said the family had positive conversations about learning, goal setting and achievement, as well as future education, career and other life options.

By the end of 2017, Serena was keen to have conversations with as many other parents as possible in her community to encourage them to attend PowerUP. She talked about it as a means to learn more about supporting their children's learning. She highlighted the benefits of enjoying learning together as a family and within a wider Pacific community. She particularly wanted to reassure other parents by telling them about PowerUP's emphasis on aiga – helping and supporting one another.

Serena learned the importance of targeted, timely support through witnessing her daughter Kelsey progress from being close to dropping out of secondary school to becoming a resilient, successful and increasingly self-directed learner. Samuel is also doing well at primary school. Serena is keen to help him by continuing to put into practice the knowledge and skills she learned at PowerUP. She said she would monitor his progress and offer timely support where needed.

Finally, Serena summed up how she and her children felt about PowerUP:

"I always check in with my kids every week after PowerUP to see how it was for them and they both love it and enjoy it. For me personally a real strength of attending PowerUP is seeing these kids making an effort to attend. Religiously they show up week after week, which is great to see, and they encourage more of their friends to attend. This to me speaks volumes about the support they are getting at PowerUP." (Mother)

CASE THREE:

MOTHER ACTIVELY SUPPORTS HER CHILDREN WITH EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING GOALS

"PowerUP has been a huge help to all my children. Although it doesn't show straight away, [the benefits] have shown throughout the three years our family has come to PowerUP." (Mother)

"[For me] PowerUP has changed that attitude I had of kids having to do it themselves. Now it's all about helping and supporting each other." (Mother)

"We can all relate to each other's learning a lot more now, everyone [in the family] is studying; we can talk about school more now. [My children] also talk about that they are super-excited when they get something right at school after [their PowerUP teacher] taught them." (Mother)

"They [our children] have grown in learning, their confidence in learning has improved." (Father)

"One of the best things about PowerUP for me was learning how to ask for help." (Student)

"I have learnt how to expand in my learning. Last year [in Year 9], my attendance wasn't good. This year, handing in an essay is a huge accomplishment for me, and the teachers [at school] praise me and say it's good that I'm changing. My teachers, I connect more with them when I hand in my assignments." (Student)

CASE METHOD

This case study is drawn from *Talanoa* between a mother, to be known as Elena, and a PowerUP coordinator on seven occasions between June and November 2017. On one occasion (when Elena was unwell), the father, to be known as Fokisi, took part in *Talanoa* with the PowerUP coordinator.

In addition, separate *Talanoa* were conducted by the PowerUP coordinator with a Year 10 daughter (on two occasions), with Year 13 daughter (one occasion) and Year 11 son (one occasion). A three-year-old grandson also volunteered to contribute during the *Talanoa* with his Year 11 uncle.

THE FAMILY

In 2017, this Tongan family were returning to PowerUP for a third year. Ten members of the family participated in PowerUP in 2017. Along with the mother, to be known as Elena and father, to be known as Fokisi; there were four secondary school-aged children, three intermediate or primary-aged children and a three-year-old grandson. The children are described in this case as daughter, 'Laaka' (17 years, Year 13); son 'Michael' (16 years, Year 11); daughter 'Lautoka' (15 years, Year 10); son 'Etuate' (14 years, Year 9), son 'Henry' (12 years, Year 8); daughter 'Kalasia' (10 years, Year 6), son 'Komaki' (8 years, Year 3), and grandson 'Atonio' (3 years).

Elena shared that she often wagged school when she was young because she didn't understand the work being done in class. Similarly, she could see that her own children were having difficulties with some of their schoolwork and not enjoying much of what was happening at school. Elena realised that it was important to take steps to avoid her own children disengaging from school and limiting their opportunities for a positive future. In 2015 this gave her the courage to enrol her family at PowerUP, which had recently begun in her local area.

The next sections show how the supportive environment of PowerUP fostered the growth of this family in its third year of participation. It illustrates how different family members became increasingly confident in their own abilities and more engaged in education both at school and at home. Finally, the key findings section provides a summary of the family's experiences through PowerUP and the impact of those experiences. In particular, it highlights how they became more united as a family, working together to achieve education and life goals.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

"PowerUP makes it easier for me at school. I understand more at school because of PowerUP. It was hard before, but when I got one-on-one help from my PowerUP teachers, my confidence has improved." (Year 11 student)

"I've learnt to connect more to the teachers and everyone at PowerUP. If I'm not sure I can ask questions and ask my peers or anyone sitting around me. It's helped a lot." (Year 10 student)

Mothers comments on changes in her own confidence levels

The PowerUP experience over three years changed Elena's attitude to the role she should play in her children's education. She could now see the importance of learning how to actively help and support her children with educational activities and learning goals.

As she learned about the education system and children's learning needs, she became more confident in this role. This in turn improved her relationships with her family around learning and more generally. She learned to be more patient and to change how she expressed herself. She saw that instead of criticism she could use strengths-based language and give encouragement.

"It has changed that attitude I had of kids having to do it themselves. Now it's all about helping and supporting each other, and for myself personally, my children have said that my language has changed, and this comes from the influence of the PowerUP coordinator, and now also from my own [health professional] studies. I'm using more strengths-based language now, and it's all just encouraging words, like 'Let's see what you are doing, and I'll see what I can do to help', changing my tone of voice, and of course letting them take control of their learning but with lots of support ... I have become a better role model to our PowerUP kids as well as our own kids." (Mother)

Elena reported that her children had expressed their appreciation of these changes in her relationships with them. She was increasingly conscious of the importance of inviting and listening carefully to her children's views, realising that it is not always about adult perspectives.

As well as the positive benefits of PowerUP for each of her children individually, and for her family, Elena gained considerably in her own right. She acquired new knowledge, skills and understandings which gave her more confidence to give back to the community. In this way the impact of PowerUP is widened.

Despite a troubled pathway through her own schooling, she developed the confidence and determination to pursue higher goals for her future. She decided to study to become a health professional. She also became a local PowerUP Champion to help and encourage other parents and families. She was aware that her own children are influenced by this as well: "Being a good role model at PowerUP and at home sets a good example for my family." Her children were proud of her and she gained affirmation in the community for her efforts in promoting children's success and mentoring and supporting other parents.

PowerUP has made me more confident with talking to other parents, especially just supporting them. I was invited to a disciplinary hearing for a student. To be asked like that was a big thing. I was able to look at the positives instead of looking only at the negative facts. Once you gain confidence - not cockiness - and put your mind to it, you can do anything. I'm able to help families in the community. It makes me feel good. I've learnt all this at PowerUP, and people have put that much trust in me. It feels good to be valued as well." (Mother)

Mother's comments on changes in the family and in the children

Elena reflected that the children benefited from PowerUP in two ways: through their own individual experiences at PowerUP and also through gaining more support from their family at home as a consequence of the whole family's participation in PowerUP. They became steadily more confident in themselves and did better at school.

The family were learning to communicate more openly and honestly about all aspects of education. The children shared their exam and other school results with their parents and talked about things they were struggling with. They were now confident that they would receive help to address their difficulties.

"Now they, and I, understand more, my children come home with their exam results. They didn't... before, but now we can have a look at their results together." (Mother)

Elena discovered that "setting a learning culture" with her children applied at home as well as in the classroom. This was an important way of supporting her children to persevere even when learning was difficult. She wanted them to experience the confidence and satisfaction that comes from planning ahead, being well-organised and undertaking study or completing homework on a regular schedule. This would prepare them to achieve goals and become resilient, motivated and successful life-long learners.

"The structures practised at PowerUP - for example, time management - and then bringing those home helps build on how they learn at school and builds confidence in themselves." (Mother)

Describing some of the changes she saw in her children's attitudes to their education and learning, Elena said:

"PowerUP has played a big part with all my kids, they are way more confident. Instead of just saying 'good' when asked about school, they explain why. My oldest [Year 11] boy had an English test and he was really confident about it [whereas he previously struggled with English]. ... My [Year 9 son] is really eager to go to school because he comes to PowerUP and gets his homework done. He started at PowerUP when it first began, and he keeps growing. He learns new things - it is not the same teacher as he has at school, and he gets shown different ways of how to do things. All my kids meet new people at PowerUP, and they appreciate having teachers from different cultures than at school - this motivates them." (Mother)

Students' commented on their increasing confidence

The 15-year-old Year 10 daughter, Lautoka, grew to realise the importance of asking questions to promote her own learning and achievement, and to take more control of her learning. She said:

"My Mum always tells me to ask questions in class even if you don't want to; not just keeping it to yourself. You learn more when you are connecting to people within your subject; much more... To connect more is confidence. When it comes to speeches or internals [for example], it's more helpful when you know you can go to people for help either at home or PowerUP... I have learnt how to expand in my learning." (Student)

Like his sister, 16-year-old Year 11 student Michael also emphasised that learning to take action – speaking up and asking for help when he needed it – increased his confidence in his own learning abilities. A safe starting point was receiving one-on-one help in the areas he was struggling. He then tested his ability to ask questions. He learned to do this in a way that did not make him feel embarrassed. When he got useful answers his knowledge and understanding were extended. He said:

"I've improved at school when I get help from PowerUP teachers. I found out I'm a visual learner. PowerUP makes it easier for me at school. I understand more at school because of PowerUP. It was hard before, but when I got one-on-one help from my PowerUP teachers, my confidence has improved. I've learned how to write essays. Before, I used to ramble on but I've gotten better... The best things for me about PowerUP was learning how to ask for help and getting to know the local kids." (Student)

Engaging in education

"Our boys have a good relationship with the teachers and students at PowerUP – it's being comfortable to ask questions and having someone explain things to them from a ground level. Now they begin to love being at school because they understand." (Mother)

Parents' comments on becoming more engaged in their family's education

In 2017, Fokisi, Elena's husband and the children's father, also participated in PowerUP for the first time. Work commitments meant he was not able to attend PowerUP regularly. However, through his family's involvement he gained insights into the importance and value of becoming more actively involved in his children's education and supporting his wife's efforts.

After attending a PowerUP session, he saw how his children had grown confident in their learning and mixing with a wider range of people. His children were happy that he came to PowerUP with them. The Year 11 son said, "When my Dad is free, I would say that his kids need him to help them."

After this, Fokisi found that his children were more willing to be open and share real information with him about how they were getting on at school, instead of "telling me what they think I want to hear. My kids have struggled with being distracted easily, but I know their potential when they focus."

Fokisi realised how much PowerUP had helped to give his children more positive and focused attitudes to school and to learning. He also saw how PowerUP empowered his wife to provide them with further support. He observed that "now they [my children] wish PowerUP was more than once a week". He was aware that as a family they needed to build on the foundation provided by PowerUP.

Elena also realized that PowerUP has increased her engagement in her children's education. She said:

"Between now and the time PowerUP wasn't around, my children are more motivated and excited to learn because their mother is studying and involved with education as well. I had an assessment due last weekend and we all needed the laptop at the same time, so we worked together and encouraged each other to get the work done. Me being involved is a big thing. I do my best to assist them in any way I can. [For example], I plan to set one-on-one time reading with my kids."
(Mother)

Mother's comments on her children's increased engagement in education

Elena believed all children in this family felt encouraged and supported in their education and learning from attending PowerUP. As a result, they were more motivated to engage in school and achieve success in their studies.

The oldest daughter, a 17-year-old Year 13 student Laaka, for example, was in alternative education after dropping out of mainstream schooling. Now, with the help of teachers and other students at PowerUP and more support at home, Laaka returned to school and achieved NCEA Level 3. She set goals for higher education.

Michael in Year 11 got one-on-one help with English, which had always been difficult for him. He was progressing steadily overall despite some continuing difficulties, for example in maths.

Lautoka in Year 10 was gaining more confidence to ask questions. She also benefited from the individual support available at PowerUP. She now attended school regularly and handed in assignments. She was more positive about her teachers at school and they responded with more support.

A 14-year-old Year 9 student, Etuate, really valued being able to get help with completing his homework at PowerUP each week. This made him feel well-prepared for school, a feeling he enjoyed.

Early in 2017, the youngest son, an 8-year-old Year 3 student Komaki, began to play up at school. He just wanted to spend time on his laptop rather than paying attention in class and completing schoolwork. Elena discussed the issue with her husband and consulted the

HOW POWERUP HELPED ESTABLISH A POSITIVE EDUCATION PATHWAY FOR A STUDENT WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL

"Our daughter, she's now Year 13, has completed her NCEA level 3. She was excluded from her secondary school in Year 11 and went to ALT [alternative education] school. She has worked hard to get back into mainstream education where she has now completed her level 3 and is recipient of an award at the end of the year. Had it not been for PowerUP and the continuous support and encouragement from the teachers and other students at PowerUP she wouldn't be where she is today." (Mother)

Asked how PowerUP had helped her, Year 13 daughter Laaka explained:

"At PowerUP you are learning in a smaller space and teachers have time for you. Learning in smaller spaces, teachers can pick up more easily what we are struggling with, and it helps me learn to adapt in bigger spaces." (Student)

"PowerUP has helped me [engage more] at school - it's being able to have the confidence to ask questions and not be shy."
(Student)

school. She also sought advice at PowerUP about how to get him back on track.

They decided to focus on Komaki's creative writing. Elena encouraged him in creative writing activities at home. He also received praise at school for his work, including having a piece of his writing included in the school newsletter. This helped Komaki re-engage with his learning.

Two younger sons, in Year 6 and Year 8, were also benefiting from the collaborative learning environment at home and at PowerUP. They were both well on track with their studies and interactions at school.

Student's comments on increased engagement in education

For Year 10 student, Lautoka, learning to connect more with others at PowerUP and at home had a positive effect at school too. She still preferred to ask her PowerUP teachers for help with her schoolwork, but her attendance at school improved. She also made a big effort to hand in essays and other assignments at school. She earned praise from her teachers at school for the changes she was making. Lautoka mentioned that she now liked her teachers at school. She had a helpful one-on-one session with her English teacher – she felt they had connected. During the *Talanoa* she said:

"At school, I didn't feel like asking the teachers 'cause I feel if I go deeper into a question it will be boring, but I can ask the [NCEA] level teachers at PowerUP] anything one-on-one. I can just keep asking them questions, and they will just keep giving me responses. Last year [in Year 9] I was with my friends [at school] and we were all in the same classes, my attendance wasn't good. This year, handing in an essay is a huge accomplishment for me and the teachers [at school] praise me and say it's good that I'm changing. My teachers, I connect more with them when I hand in my assignments. My teachers at school wanted me to get more help [which I've been getting at PowerUP and from home now] – I feel like literacy has helped me with my English. I like my teachers now, I find them helpful. I have two different English teachers [at school], connecting with them I feel is good. With one of them, we had a one-on-one conversation about things where I needed to improve. I felt good after handing in my essay after her advice." (Student)

FEELING SAFE, INCLUDED, COMFORTABLE AND SUPPORTED

Our children are achieving better because of PowerUP, especially because in the schools they are at [it often seems like] they are just a number. At PowerUP there is more opportunity for engagement – they become a student that not only learns academically but they are prepared socially and in faith-based values. (Mother)

Mother's comments about changes she saw in herself

Elena shared that learning about "building relationships" at PowerUP was something she really appreciated for helping her grow as a person and increasing her ability to support her children and others.

"It's learning to be patient, which takes a bit of encouraging... And it's actually stopping and listening, letting the students and kids know they are worthy. Kids don't always get it right. Listen to your gut feeling, listen to kids' views; it's not always just about what adults are saying. Give them a chance to tell their story. Giving them attention, thinking of what else you can do to support them." (Mother)

Elena particularly emphasised how valuable and rewarding it was to have ongoing discussions with other parents at PowerUP. They learnt from each other and she received support and affirmation of what she was trying to do as a parent:

"If I'm talking to other parents about how my kids are doing – if it's been good or not so good – sharing with them from both sides [the ups and downs], is a challenge but also a positive in that they may be going through the same thing with their family. We all share the same load, just in different ways." (Mother)

Mother's comments on the benefits of PowerUP for the family

Both Elena and family members gave many reasons for why PowerUP worked for them and why they valued it highly. These were: the Pacific culture and sense of community within PowerUP; feeling safe and comfortable enough to have open conversations about problems and issues; experiencing being able to seek advice and support without fear of being overlooked or judged; an environment where working collaboratively with each other is encouraged, and just enjoying the company of others there for a shared purpose. Elena said:

"I feel that PowerUP meets needs of our Pacific community in the way that we cater for not only the child but the whole family, not only for the academic need but covering the physical, social, faith [needs, and] setting rules and regulations, setting the culture for them. If they learn that at PowerUP they can take that back home ... PowerUP is very Pasifika, especially when we incorporate the language weeks. PowerUP gives the kids a sense of identity as it is a struggle [sometimes for them to maintain that in the wider society]. During Samoan language week, all the Samoans were excited, they were proud to be in that culture, we were praying in that culture, talking about what they love in that culture. We have also covered all the cultures [represented] here at PowerUP... PowerUP is very inclusive. It's awesome to see the old ones interact with the younger ones." (Mother)

Children's comments on the benefits of PowerUP for them

The children showed they felt secure in the opportunities that were available to seek and secure help with their schoolwork from teachers, tutors, mentors and fellow students at PowerUP. At the same time, all of the children in the family enjoyed simply being part of PowerUP. This included the three-year-old grandson. They all gained confidence in social relationships and also in cultural understanding – how to engage and “connect” with people. For example:

"At PowerUP I've learned to connect with more people, not just my little group – I'm able to talk to anyone. By coming and learning more about people and what they like, I learnt how to talk to people school-wise [that is, about school things], and anything else, for example, sports, other extracurricular activities, what goes on in the week, church." (Student)

KEY FINDINGS

***"To connect more is confidence."
(Student)***

In its third year of attending PowerUP, this family continued to learn and grow. They consolidated and built on knowledge, skills, attitudes, study strategies and habits developed at PowerUP in the previous two years.

Elena acknowledged that prior to PowerUP there was much she didn't know about children's learning needs and about the education system. She wished she had known more to help her older children earlier in their education pathways. However, she felt her younger children would benefit from her increased knowledge and understanding. Elena, with input from her husband Fokisi, also tried to help her older children as much as possible. She aimed to reinforce support they received at PowerUP and increasingly from their schools. It was clear that the schools were responding to the changes they could see in her children's more positive attitudes and commitment to their learning and achievement.

Increasing her knowledge about NCEA and National Standards helped Elena to have focused discussions with all of her children about their schooling and their short-term and long-term goals. She now understood their assessment results and school reports, and they were now happy to share these.

***"Now that I know what I'm talking about. I can ask them specific questions – instead of just asking 'How was school today?' I can ask 'Did the maths formula [you learned at PowerUP] work in maths class today?'"
(Mother)***

Learning about these things also helped Elena as a parent "feel equipped to ask questions at school and feel confident to ask the right questions now".

To ensure their ongoing success as learners, Elena made a particular effort to regularly encourage all of her children to keep asking questions, even when it was hard for them to do this. She knew they needed to do this to consolidate their understanding of essential concepts and principles of learning, learn new things, and foster enquiry and a love of learning. Elena and Fokisi also now kept a close

eye on their children's school attendance, understanding that missed school meant missed learning opportunities.

Their experiences at PowerUP encouraged the family to repeat at home the sharing culture that characterised PowerUP. The family now worked closely together on learning assignments, made time in their busy lives to spend time together, and derived greater enjoyment than they used to in spending time together.

***"The other thing that makes PowerUP unique for my children is that they all get to learn together which is also transferring to our home."
(Mother)***

***"We [in our family] have previously been too busy for each other, but now we find time bringing the family together – PowerUP has helped with that. We are going to do more things together and we support each other more."
(Mother)***

***"Conversation is different in the house, we have a lot more family time and we can stand to be with each other a lot longer: we practise it at PowerUP and we practise it here at home. The best thing is getting to know each other better."
(Mother)***

The family benefited greatly from PowerUP in several ways. They gained one-on-one help with tackling specific learning problems and tasks; understood more about the education system and education pathways; learnt how to take more responsibility for their own learning; extended their social and cultural relationships; and, importantly, understand that working together as a family is a major force in nurturing a successful learner.

The family was looking forward to returning to PowerUP in 2018. They wanted to ensure that every family member established and maintained a positive education pathway for themselves. Their three-year-old grandson showed he already has a sense of an education pathway for himself:

***"I like playing [at PowerUP] with [the ECE teacher there]. I like playing 'My Kitchen Rules'... I want to make toys when I grow up... I am excited to come to PowerUP next year."
(Student)***

CASE FOUR:

USING NEW KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THE LEARNING NEEDS OF THE FAMILY

"I was not happy with my kids' mid-year reports [just before we started PowerUP this year] as they were all either 'below' or 'well below' [on National Standards]."
(Mother)

"PowerUP has definitely challenged me to be a better parent regarding education at home... I used to be a parent who just let my kids do what they wanted when they got home – for example, watch YouTube, movies, games." (Mother)

"PowerUP has given me the confidence and belief that I am capable of helping with my kids' learning at home: the confidence to find out what is valuable to my kids and finding out what they actually love doing education-wise."
(Mother)

"[Since we've been going to PowerUP], my kids can no longer just do what they want in the evenings and weekends, they all know that they need to do their reading, homework, writing, wherever they go. Basically, no excuses any more. No work = no gadget time. My kids' attendance [at school] has improved immensely. Since PowerUP, my kids have been receiving certificates for all their efforts. I am very happy now with my kids' progression in education." (Mother)

CASE METHOD

This case study is on the basis of information from *Talanoa* between a parent, to be known as Marie, and a local PowerUP champion on three occasions during the second half of 2017.

Towards the end of the year Marie also provided written answers to questions intended for *Talanoa* sessions. She was undertaking some evening employment and it was difficult to arrange a time to meet for *Talanoa*.

THE FAMILY

This New Zealand-born Cook Island family of four attended PowerUP for the first time in June and July 2017. The family is made up of a working mother, to be known as Marie, and her three primary-aged children.

Marie learned about PowerUP when a cousin alerted her to the local Power Station's Facebook page. At first, Marie didn't particularly think about PowerUP in relation to enrolling her own family. However, her thinking changed one day when she noticed her 12-year-old daughter, to be known as Annaliese, struggling to complete her Year 8 maths homework:

"What made me convinced to do something occurred when my daughter was doing her maths homework at home and she was using her fingers to count and not able to solve the calculation." (Mother)

Soon after, Marie received the mid-year school reports for her sons, a 10-year-old in Year 6 to be known as Atafai and an 8-year-old in Year 4 to be known as Isaac. She realised they also needed quite urgent support to get on a more positive track with their learning and progress at school.

"I was motivated to do something that was going to help my children achieve the education level that they should be at." (Mother)

Health issues – weight and skin conditions – meant her children were more and more frequently absent from school. The children often felt unwell and were also being bullied. As a result, they fell behind in class. These challenges affected the children's emotional well-being and led to some negative behaviours such as fighting. Marie knew she had to take steps to turn things around for her children, but she did not know how.

As shown in the following sections of this case study, Marie very quickly gained confidence from her interactions with PowerUP staff and other parents. She put into practice the information and strategies she learned to support her children's learning. She also started to come up with innovative solutions of her own to overcome her family's problems.

GAINING CONFIDENCE

Mother's comments on becoming more confident in her own abilities to support her children's learning

After enrolling her family at PowerUP, Marie wanted to know how to "to take the new learning tools [I learn about] and implement them at home." Key things she learned about at PowerUP sessions were: goal setting, actions, note-taking, NCEA, and National Standards. She commented that:

"These things are important for me [to know] as I didn't realise just how important note-taking will be for my kids once they reach college. And goal setting has now become a norm in life for me regarding my kids, home, life. Knowing the importance of actions, has played a huge part in actually reaching goals in our daily schedule, as well as implementing life goals... All of these things will enable each child to succeed in school and in life. If I teach them now then they will be able to tend to daily issues that may arise in their school curriculum." (Mother)

It was clear that Marie was determined to make a difference for her family by working out how to directly apply the knowledge gained at PowerUP to her own family's situation and specific needs:

"I have already started goals – we learned about them during the goal setting session. For example, I recently secured a weekly paper run for my children. One of my goals was to help them with their fitness which is why I signed them up to do a paper run. I figured it would also help [my youngest son] with learning numbers. This piece of work will help the children with their health and fitness and, also importantly, it helps them to use maths calculations to plan and deliver to the number of houses [on their route]. When they prepare the paper run they're taking notes, counting the number of units of paper with street houses, and estimating delivery time. The children are learning discipline and that preparation is important with the paper run and I hope they understand these things cross over to their education. My kids also like to go through some of the catalogues that they deliver which means reading too. My kids are now reading for 10–20 minutes at least three to four times during the week. There are positive benefits for them in many ways – they're still learning while they're [working to boost their health and well-being]." (Mother)

As a further example, Marie took steps to help her daughter to become as well prepared as possible for secondary school in 2018. Marie was worried that her daughter would not be able to cope with the higher level of work and generally increasing demands, given the difficulties her daughter was experiencing as a Year 8 student.

"I am constantly getting her to read now and am also in the process of signing her up for a tutor. I am focusing mainly on [my daughter just now] regarding extra learning due to the fact that she is starting college next year." (Mother)

"We had a presentation provided by PowerUP and I believe that with my understanding of National Standards now, I know what is required of my daughter and I will be able to help her keep to schedule. [As well as her reading] I have been helping my daughter with her writing." (Mother)

It was evident that the extra, targeted input and support for her daughter was having a positive impact:

"My daughter is receiving an award at school tomorrow which I am proud of. She has also come a long way regarding her confidence since joining PowerUP. I am hoping to see a huge change in her end-of-year report as this will mean she will be able to cope and comprehend the education level of college." (Mother)

Marie found that a particularly important benefit was gaining confidence herself as a parent: "knowing how I can support my kids at home". She was happy to know she could be more effective in supporting them:

"Knowing that when my kids need help, being able to provide it for them... I used to just say to the kids: 'Go to your room and read or do your homework'. But, now I monitor my kids and make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing." (Mother)

ENGAGING IN EDUCATION

"My kids are more aware of what is required from them. They hate missing school now as they know that they benefit more from attending and realise that missing lessons means missing out on opportunity. They now know the benefit of reading 10 minutes daily; it has helped them improve a lot with their writing."

Mother's comments on becoming more engaged in her children's education and the impact of this for her children

Prior to enrolling in PowerUP, Marie thought that she had a good relationship with her children's school. She now realises that some fundamental communications about her children's progress and achievement were lacking. She was shocked when she learned her children were significantly behind. She was also dismayed that after years of schooling her Year 8 daughter had not yet mastered some of the basics of numeracy and literacy:

"[My Year 8 daughter] is still not understanding how to write a sentence properly." (Mother)

At PowerUP Marie learned about National Standards, how to interpret her children's school reports and what she might need to follow up on at school. She also felt that by gaining increased knowledge and confidence she could participate better in parent-teacher interviews and other more informal meetings with teachers:

"I found everything [at the meetings] easier to understand due to PowerUP and it allowed me to ask questions regarding [my children's] progress and improvements needed." (Mother)

Marie began to actively seek advice and support from her children's school on how she could work with the school and teachers to better support her children's learning. The school was happy to provide this. It included help with getting her children to read regularly at home:

"I have now asked teachers [at school] to ensure that my kids come home with books to read and they support this ... Before PowerUP I would just ask my kids about their day and what went on at school but now the teachers have my email address and they email me when the kids have homework. I email their teachers [to ask that] the kids come home with books. The teachers email me what the kids need help with and how I can help them at home."
(Mother)

She took pleasure in "... allowing my kids to have a passion for reading by supplying books that they are interested in."

More effective, two-way communication was established between school and home. Exchanging information and understandings with the children's teachers gave Marie a better picture of her children's learning strengths and difficulties. It also enabled the teachers to understand the efforts the family was making to achieve a positive education pathway for each child.

"[My sons' mid-year reports] stated that they were either 'below' or 'well below' where they should be, and yet teachers are amazed now at how well they can write and how well they can read [now]... [My Year 6 son's] teacher didn't realise he could read at Level 3 and was amazed at how well he could read. [His teacher] says he also writes really well and that she enjoys reading his stories." (Mother)

Her more focused, in-depth discussions with teachers also helped Marie realise that her children's frequent absences from school hindered their learning and contributed to their emotional and behavioural difficulties.

"[The teacher] loves teaching [my son] but explained that his absences interfered a lot with his learning."
(Mother)

Marie took action to help her children become fitter and healthier, so they could study better. She wanted them to be able to do their homework, complete tasks and attend school regularly. Marie also addressed some behavioural issues, for example, "helping my youngest with team-play".

Marie came to understand the importance of the children not only learning the basics of each subject or curriculum area but also of developing a love of learning and a desire to "strive for better".

Mother's comments on her children's increasing engagement in education

Soon after the family started at PowerUP Marie commented that her children, particularly her sons "... easily give up and I hope they complete tasks and activities by going to PowerUP." After some time at PowerUP, Marie was able to say that she could see real changes in her children's ability to persevere, and to commit to what they were doing:

"I have seen too often my children start on something but give up easily. The fact that my children are still attending PowerUP with or without me [some nights my work commitments prevent me attending] is such a big step of approval that they enjoy coming." (Mother)

She could see the changes in their attitude towards school too:

"My kids are wanting to go to school now, instead of making excuses... It became a habit for us all to go to PowerUP and so school became a habit too." (Mother)

Marie felt that the children were now on the right track:

"I'm looking forward to seeing [my children's] end-of-year reports to see just how much they have progressed, considering the amount of effort they have put in at home as well as at PowerUP. Also, with [my younger son's] skin condition improving immensely his attendance should be good too." (Mother)

"As I mentioned earlier, my kids have been receiving certificates at assembly. I received a text from school, to notify about [my Year 6 son] receiving a certificate in the next assembly. It was a proud moment for me." (Mother)

Mother's comment on her extended family's increasing engagement in the children's education

Marie explained that because of her work commitments, it was necessary for her children to go to their grandmothers' or aunts' houses after school and sometimes in the weekends. This made it more difficult for the children to put into practice what the family was learning at PowerUP. She knew that regular, sound, study habits need to be part of everyday life. Marie tackled this by talking with her family and explaining how important it was for the children to complete their homework and daily learning tasks before having free leisure time.

"Because my kids spent a lot of time after school at grandmas' [houses] until I finished work or at aunts [places] during the weekends I never used to have any expectations of them learning-wise [and they were free to do what they wanted]. But ever since PowerUP, my kids go over [to their grandmas or aunts] with a list of learning [tasks to do during their time there] – do reading for 10–20 minutes, timetable chart, writing, etc. I now let the adults in my family [the children's grandmothers, aunts] know what I require of my kids before they are allowed on any gadgets and I follow up on it too." (Mother)

Marie was grateful to report that: "All family members are on board with my kids' daily education [tasks] now."

KEY FINDINGS

"I'm constantly asking my kids now what have they learnt at school; asking if they struggled with any of their work or lessons in class. PowerUP has allowed me to understand the importance of education at school and especially at home, and also about finding outside resources to help with my kids' learning."

"My kids really enjoy PowerUP. They are constantly asking 'Mum, are we going to PowerUP?'. ... They [enjoy me attending with them] because it shows them I am interested in their education and finding new ways to help them education-wise."

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Marie's children had health issues that hindered their progress both academically and socially. Once Marie realised that her children were behind at school, she was keen to address the situation. Firstly, she improved her own knowledge and understanding so she would know how best to support her children. She became hungry to learn and to take constructive action. Attending PowerUP with her family empowered her to do this.

She took steps to improve her children's health and fitness. As this improved, so too did their desire to attend school, do well in class and interact in positive ways with teachers and classmates. Making positive progress in their learning made the children more motivated and resilient learners.

"My daughter is now sharing to her classroom and teacher as part of their preview of their week on Monday mornings how she's enjoying the new things she's learning at PowerUP."

With her children feeling happier, and with the confidence that came from seeing how her efforts on their behalf had already benefited her children, Marie felt they were much closer and more united as a family. They had become a family who really enjoyed spending time together.

"Our relationship as a family has improved immensely as well. [For example], we have dinner together, then we have a quick quiz time. Quiz time, we all enjoy, as we are doing it all together."

Marie and her children were eager to return to PowerUP in 2018 to continue to learn and grow.

NEXT STEPS

These cases show the power of Pacific parents, families and communities supporting their children to engage with education. It is clear that PowerUP is able to create a climate for learning that is effective for Pacific learners. In these settings Pacific learners quickly make good progress. It is also clear that at times, schools are not creating a suitable climate of learning for Pacific learners.

It may be useful in the final data collection to speak with some of the schools where students are now engaging successfully in the classroom. What have teachers observed changes when students attend PowerUP? How might schools build on that new-found confidence? How might a climate be established in all schools so Pacific learners have a genuine opportunity for learning?

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