

I Have A Dream: Turning Dreams Into Reality For Children Living In Poverty

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Abstract

The "I Have a Dream" (IHAD) programme has evolved over 30 years in the US to become one of the foremost systems for addressing the multi-faceted and long-term problems of poverty and educational disadvantage. The programme has involved over 15,000 children in over 200 projects.

The "I Have a Dream" programme helps children from low income communities reach their education and career goals by providing a long term programme of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment. It also provides tuition assistance for higher education.

The IHAD project in Mt Roskill, Auckland, was the first project to run outside the United States and was initiated in the small community of Wesley, in Auckland. It was a long term commitment to a group of children to address the social, employment and academic challenges facing many children from families living in poverty. The aim of the IHAD project was to ensure that all children had the opportunity to gain tertiary qualifications, to increase their contribution to society and to make better lives for themselves.

This paper presents the evaluation findings from the twelve year longitudinal study of 53 children who participated in the IHAD project in Auckland. It describes the impact of IHAD on educational, social and employment outcomes for all of the children and the factors that affected success, the life challenges facing each child and the outcomes achieved by all participants. The evaluation provides clear evidence of successful outcomes for the vast majority of children. Implications for educational policy will be explored with a view to improving educational and social outcomes for more children in New Zealand.

Background

The mission of the I Have A Dream (IHAD) Project is to help children from low-income areas become productive citizens by providing a long-term programme of mentoring, tutoring and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education. IHAD is an American-based programme which has run for over 30 years, with more than 200 programmes in operation in 60 cities and involving over 15,000 students.

IHAD is a project that places significant adults at the heart of the relationship between adults and children. A number of IHAD projects associated with the American programmes¹ demonstrate that IHAD can have a dramatic impact on helping students succeed in the following aspects of their lives:

- improvements in school attendance
- higher rates of attendance at university or tertiary study
- improved high school completion and academic performance as indicated in grades and test scores
- the development of resilience, determination and the opportunity to realise their dreams

In New Zealand, a 2011 Department of Labour report stated that there were over 80,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 that were not in education, employment or training²

This is a major concern on many levels:

- It is a tremendous waste of human potential
- It is unfair that some children do not have the same opportunities and access to resources as other children
- Negative social outcomes: unemployment, gang membership, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol use, crime and prison

Pasifika and Māori youth were overrepresented in these data. Pasifika and Māori parents, like most parents, place great emphasis on gaining formal educational qualifications. Indeed, for Pasifika peoples this has been the main driver for coming to New Zealand, primarily to provide better educational opportunities for their children (Macpherson, 2004). Despite Pasifika parents' high expectations for achievement Pasifika their children have generally achieved less well than other groups of students (LEAP, 2013).

For low achieving students, Hill and Hawk (2000) argue that a strong relationship between teacher and student is a prerequisite for learning. Low achieving students will not be motivated and will not succeed unless they have a positive relationship with their teacher. There are implications for the other significant relationships such as between parents and teachers. Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph (2003) argue that there are various forms of educational relationships operating in schools, not all of which are effective. Those relationships which are based on deficit views and not responsive to the needs of families can be ineffective and even counterproductive. Programmes which are effective

¹ <http://www.ihaveadreamny.org/results/>

² http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/employment_and_unemployment/household-labour-force-survey-info-releases.aspx

respect parents and children, are socially responsible, and are responsive to families and the social conditions that shape their lives (Biddulph et al., 2003)

Constructive relationships empower those involved by fostering autonomy and self-reliance within families, schools and communities, building on the strong aspirations and motivation that most parents have for their children's development and by adding to (not undermining) the values, experiences and competencies of parents and children. The evidence is that adults can do much to initiate such constructive partnerships (Biddulph et al. 2003).

Gipps (2002) argues that in an open communicative relationship, communication is oriented towards understanding and respecting the perspectives of others. For example, positive relationships include adults demonstrating an understanding of the worlds of the students, that is, the worlds of community, home, church, school, friends and work. Positive relationships also include respect, fairness, optimism, participation and reciprocity (Hill & Hawk, 2000).

In a sociocultural analysis, attribution and efficacy theories inform the emergent interaction of motivational dynamics, which are the "stuff" of identity (Ferguson, Gorinski, & Samu, 2008).

(Nakhid, 2002) describes the identity process through the use of a class photo analogy:

No matter how often we look at these pictures, the first person we look for is ourselves. If we are not there, we notice our absence. It is the same with our experiences of school. We know by looking beyond the superficial displays of culture whether or not we are represented within a school culture.

Schools have a powerful influence on the "identifying process". Recognition of the rights of students to construct their own identities and to see their cultural identities reflected in the education system is necessary, if equitable educational outcomes are to be achieved (Ferguson, Gorinski, & Samu, 2008). Nakhid (2003) supports this view and states that not only should schools recognise these rights but that the education system must make space:

For Pasifika students to carry out their identifying process and for them to be able to bring, form, or connect with their own representations of who they wish to be, and for those representations to be as valued as all other representations and identities within educational institutions (Nakhid, 2003).

Personal identity is linked to motivation and self-efficacy. Students who know who they are and who they want to be are motivated to learn and tend to display high levels of self-efficacy.

The concept of self-efficacy is defined as a belief that you can learn and that you are capable of improvement (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 2001). Self-efficacy affects students' behaviour, thoughts and emotional reactions (Stipek, 1998, Zimmerman, 2000).

Students seek out activities and situations which they judge themselves capable. Students who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to set higher goals, choose more difficult tasks and persist longer with tasks. Students with lower self-efficacy become anxious and preoccupied with feelings of

incompetence and are concerned with the notion of failure (Stipek, 1998, 2001).

Self-efficacy beliefs are not a single disposition, rather they are multidimensional. Efficacy beliefs about how well a student might perform in a numeracy test may differ from efficacy beliefs about how well they can write a report. Self-efficacy judgements are based on future functioning and are assessed before a student engages with the relevant task. This positions self-efficacy judgements as a causal role in academic motivation (Zimmerman, 2000). Students' self-beliefs about academic capabilities play an essential role in their motivation to achieve (Zimmerman, 2000).

Stipek (1998, 2001) and Schunk (2001) argue that it is the interaction between self-efficacy and the environment that is of critical importance in changing a student's self-beliefs and therefore increasing the level of self-efficacy. As students work on tasks and are made aware of their progress towards their learning goals self-efficacy levels are changed. Progress indicators "convey to students that they are capable of performing well", which enhances self-efficacy for continued learning (Schunk, 2001).

Students are motivated by success and intrinsic motivation is a key factor in becoming a lifelong learner. Students who see their success or failure as a result of factors within their own control are more likely to be successful than those who attribute success or failure to external factors (over which they have no control) (Hill & Hawk, 2000).

Schools are sites wherein both teachers and students may encounter ethnic diversity for the first time. Schools are often places where minority students such as Pacific Islanders learn about the social positioning of their cultural and ethnic groups in wider society. In other words, it may be their first exposure to an awareness of where they are located in the wider social order (Lei, 2006).

...the greater need to understand how the...order manifests itself within the education system...[and] how...Pacific Islanders are positioned in classrooms—as model minorities, 'honorary whites', cultural or racialised beings, foreigners, or are they simply invisible? (Lei, 2006, p. 93).

Students must be able to "be themselves" and to "see themselves and their culture reflected" in the school environment (Benham, 2006; Cahill, 2006; Lei, 2006; Rata, et al. 2001; Tupuola, 1998). Relatedness is one of three basic human needs, along with feelings of competence and self-determination (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Research by Connell and Wellborn (1991) showed that students' feelings of relatedness to their teachers and classmates are strong predictors of their cognitive, behavioural and emotional engagement in classroom activities.

Because the New Zealand school system operates predominantly on Western values and norms, there are competing demands on students that may impact upon their achievement in negative ways (Cahill, 2006).

Hawk and Hill (2000) further argue that for many students [from low socio economic communities], there is no significant adult in their school lives that monitors their needs to ensure that they are being met as well as possible. Often, the response is reactive. Often it is not until a crisis arises that

all the pieces of the jigsaw of a student's life will be pieced together and the people directly involved will meet and organise a comprehensive and holistic programme of support. As a result, some students 'slip through the cracks'.

A more holistic approach to the care of individual students is a critical factor to gaining successful educational outcomes. A 'significant adult' could, if they had time, establish a critically important relationship with a student that would involve knowing them, their needs, their academic progress, their family, their co-curricular interests and abilities and their aspirations for the future. A significant adult could teach life skills, study skills, communication and decision-making skills, and time and self-management (Hawk, Hill, Seabourne, Tanielu and Filiaki, 1996).

Based on the success of IHAD in America and the body of evidence to be found in the literature the IHAD Charitable Trust was established in New Zealand with a view to setting up IHAD programmes in low-income areas in New Zealand. In 2002 Wesley Primary School agreed to be the first school to participate and a Year 4 cohort was identified as an initial 'Dreamers' group. A Project Coordinator³ was appointed and the programme got underway in 2003. The Project Coordinator was (and is) a full-time staff member who was called on to facilitate services which provided advice, guidance and resources to ensure a wraparound service was provided to the Dreamers and their families. Key services included:

- After-school tutoring: Students could access tutors to assist with both homework and aspects of learning that were challenging
- Mentor for each Dreamer: Mentors formed long term relationships with the Dreamers. They took Dreamers to places they would otherwise not have experienced and at times provided financial assistance for things such as school books. They also provided emotional support; helped Dreamers to dream big, and kept them on track with their goals. Throughout high school Mentors were involved with academic goal setting and tertiary education planning
- Interventions with Social Service and Government Agencies as required: At times the Dreamers needed the support of Social Service Agencies and the Project Coordinator was able to facilitate access
- Interventions with the School to ensure continuity of quality education: Many of the Dreamers required direct support to advocate access to the appropriate courses to gain University Entrance qualifications. The Project Coordinator was able to provide this much needed support. The Project Leader intervened on behalf of Dreamers about school attendance, conduct and disciplinary matters, with the teachers, the Deans, the Principal and on some occasions even the Board of Trustees
- Academic counselling: Making the right choice of subjects and course of study was essential if Dreamers were to access the tertiary studies that would lead them to their chosen career pathways. IHAD provided ongoing academic counselling to ensure Dreamers chose appropriate courses to achieve their dreams

³ The Dreamers all called the Project Coordinator Coach. We refer to him in the same way in this paper.

- Work place visits and work experience: This provided Dreamers with the opportunity to experience first-hand the possibilities of employment
- Working alongside families: The families were a strong partner in the process. They often attended parent meetings at the Dreamer centre, or the Project Coordinator would meet them in their home to discuss topics relating to the programme and their child's schooling. At time families would be in crisis. This was often the result of financial stress or conflict within the families. IHAD provided counselling/advocacy services and on limited occasions intervened with financial support to families
- School Holiday Camps and Outings: The camps provided Dreamers with the opportunity to experience different parts of New Zealand. The camps also provided the opportunity to develop skills for life including: health education, essay writing and job interviews. Dreamers were encouraged to reflect on their growth, what they were learning and their goals for the future
- Community service projects: True generational change is only achieved when we create change-makers who can impact their own families, communities and culture rather than always having "outsiders" helping them. Dreamers got involved in community service projects and giving back to their communities. Projects included things like beach clean-ups, running Christmas events for the community, and going back into their old primary/intermediate schools and other low-decile schools sharing their Dreamer stories to inspire their community peers, and the next generation of priority learners.
- Guest speakers: Motivational speakers were invited to share their experiences and provide positive role models for the Dreamers
- The programme guaranteed to pay the tertiary fees for each Dreamer

The IHAD Trust set up an after school Dreamers' Centre where Dreamers could come to study, 'hang out' and meet with their tutors and mentors, and the Project Coordinator. As the Dreamers got older, the Dreamer Centre also became a focus of evening and weekend activities.

The IHAD evaluation report of 2012 indicated that the project produced similar results as their American counterparts. That is, improved attendance at school, access to tertiary study and graduation rates. These improvements were dramatic when contrasted with the Comparison Group.

Today the Dreamers have graduated from secondary school and are pursuing various career pathways. Over the life of the project 15 Dreamers left New Zealand and went to live in Australia. Of the 38 New Zealand based Dreamers, 32 completed Year 13 (final year of secondary education). All of the Dreamers living in New Zealand are still in contact with the Project Coordinator.

Methodology

Evaluation of the Programme and Outcomes for Students

Since its inception in 2004, the IHAD (NZ) programme has been evaluated. Baseline data were collected in 2003 and the final evaluation was completed in 2012 when the Dreamers were in Year 13, their last year at high school.

Scriven (1991) describes evaluation is a process of making judgements about the merit, value or worth of something and the outcomes of that process. It is either about *proving* something is working or needed, or *improving* practice or a project (Rogers, 2008). Programme evaluation can be both formative and summative. Stufflebeam (1994) argues that in order to make informed decisions, project and programme decision makers need more than findings after the fact. In his view, evaluative input on client needs; the range of available, actionable design options; the adequacy of project implementation; and success in serving the target recipients are also required. IHAD is an American-based programme designed for an American demographic, often involving Afro-American and Hispanic students.

The NZ Dreamer programme was the first IHAD programme to operate outside of the USA. The IHAD (NZ)Trust recognised the importance of ensuring the suitability of the programme for a community of predominantly Pasifika and Maori students and their families and, with this in mind, commissioned the evaluation of the programme. The Trustees and the Programme Coordinator wanted the research to both affirm areas of good practice and to inform them of improvements and changes needed. Both the formative and summative strands to the evaluation were guided by a set of questions that remained largely unchanged over the ten years.

The formative evaluation methodology involved an annual student survey, document analysis and interviews and group discussions with key stakeholders - the sponsor, the Programme Coordinator, the Dreamers, mentors, after-school volunteer tutors, parents and whanau. The summative evaluation included the collection of data related to student achievement and qualifications, retention at school, career pathways, perceptions of themselves, their relationships, attitudes school and learning, alcohol and consumption, pregnancy and involvement in crime.

Each year, a comparison group (CG students) completed the student survey and their academic data were compared with those of the Dreamers. As noted earlier, these students were one year older than the Dreamers but were from the same community and attended the same primary, intermediate and high schools. The naming of this group as a 'comparison group' indicates that it was not seen as a 'control group' and the limitations comparing the Dreamers with such a group are acknowledged. Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (2009) quote Carol Weiss (1972) as saying that social programmes are inherently inhospitable environments for research purposes and the nature of programme circumstances, and of the particular issues the evaluator is called upon to address, frequently necessitate compromise and adaptations of textbook methodological standards. This was such an instance but it was anticipated that having a group against which indicative comparisons could be made would be useful. This proved to be the case, despite the 'untidiness' of such methodological tool.

Case Studies

Two years after the Dreamers left school (2014), case study research was undertaken with a cross-section of Dreamers. The purpose of the case studies was to elicit from Dreamers their experience of IHAD. The descriptive nature of case studies makes them more accessible to a variety of audiences because the language tends to be less esoteric and less dependent on specialist interpretation than conventional reports from research.

Narrative case study was selected as the preferred methodology. Narrative inquiry is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural context (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Narrative inquiry is a means by which we systematically gather, analyse, and represent people's stories as told by them, which challenges traditional and modernist views of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood.

Analysis (meaning making) occurs throughout the research process rather than being a separate activity carried out after data collection (Gehart et al 2007).

The emphasis is on co-construction of meaning between the researcher and participants. While being involved in/ listening to/reading the conversations, researchers take in what is being said and compare it with their personal understandings, without filling in any gaps in understanding with 'grand narratives', but rather inquiring about how pieces of the stories make sense together. The process of 'data gathering' and 'analysis' therefore becomes a single harmonious and organic process (Etherington, 2013).

The Dreamers were selected as case study participants based on gaining a cross section of Dreamers. The cross section included a balance of male and female Dreamers, a range of ethnicities and academic abilities. A preliminary list was established and Dreamers were approached to seek their consent to share their stories. All of the Dreamers that were approached participated willingly. Each Dreamer read a first draft of their story and were able to have their story amended. This ensured the researcher had captured an accurate account of their journey with IHAD.

Once each Dreamer was satisfied that their story was an accurate reflection of their journey with IHAD they signed a consent form that allows IHAD trust to use their anonymised stories to promote the work of IHAD and to encourage other agencies and communities to work together to strengthen educational opportunities for children who might not otherwise have access.

Data were gathered from:

- Eight Dreamers
- The Project Coordinator (Coach)
- The Project Sponsor

An interview schedule was used in all interviews to allow for analysis within each case and across cases. All interviews were taped and notes were taken. The qualitative data were analysed thematically using content analysis procedures.

The researcher also analysed a range of documents including:

- Student profiles
- Academic records (primary and high school)
- Previous evaluation reports
- Media reports: Metro Magazine, New Zealand Herald, Television Three
- Individual Dreamer records and notes stored by the Project Coordinator and Sponsor

Each case was written up as single cases and then themes were identified across all of the cases.

Profile of the Case Study Dreamers

This section describes the Dreamers' family background, life experiences and academic achievement as they entered the IHAD project. Table 1 shows the ethnicity and size of each Dreamer's family.

Table 1: Ethnicity and family size of the Dreamers

Dreamer	Ethnicity	Number of children in family	Living with one or two parents	Extended family members living in the home	Total number in household
A	Tongan	5	2	0	7
B	Tongan	8	2	0	10
C	Tongan	4	2	2	8
D	Tongan	4	2	1	7
E	Ethiopian	3	1	0	4
F	Samoan	4	1	0	6
G	Tongan	4	2	2	8
H	Tongan	8	2	1	11
Average household size					7.62

All but one of the case studies were Pasifika and six out of the eight case study Dreamers came from Tonga. All of the Dreamers came from large families. The average size of the case study families was 7.62 people in each household significantly higher to the average number of people living in households in New Zealand which is 2.65⁴.

All but two of the IHAD families were two parent families. In one case a parent lived for a time with a de facto partner. This compares with just 60% of New Zealand households having two parent

⁴ Source: OECD Family Database

http://www.oecd.org/social/soc/SF1_1_Family_size_and_composition_Jan2013.pdf

families⁵. In four case study families members of the extended family also lived in the household.

Poverty was a major issue in the lives of all of the case study Dreamers. In almost every case, parents worked one or more jobs in order to provide the necessities of life for their children. However, most parents worked in lowly paid jobs and so at times providing the necessities was a struggle.

Gang association was prevalent in the lives of five of the Dreamers. This included older siblings and extended family members being involved in gangs. In the case of two Dreamers, family members served time in jail.

⁵ Source: OECD Family Database

http://www.oecd.org/social/soc/SF1_1_Family_size_and_composition_Jan2013.pdf

Findings

IHAD Evaluation: Academic Outcomes

This section of the paper compares the key academic results of the IHAD students and the Comparison Group (CG) students in Years 11, 12 and 13. The data only considered those students who attended a high school in New Zealand in any given year. When making comparisons, it is important to keep in mind that the numbers in both groups are small.

The data show that the Dreamers achieved better results than their CG peers across all aspects of performance measured - retention at school, National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)⁶ pass rates, the quality of the results and, consequently, their entry into tertiary study.

Table 2 shows the rates of retention of the Dreamers and CG students in school, in New Zealand, in Years 11, 12 and 13, the period when they were working on their NCEA qualifications.

Table 2: IHAD and CG student retention rates

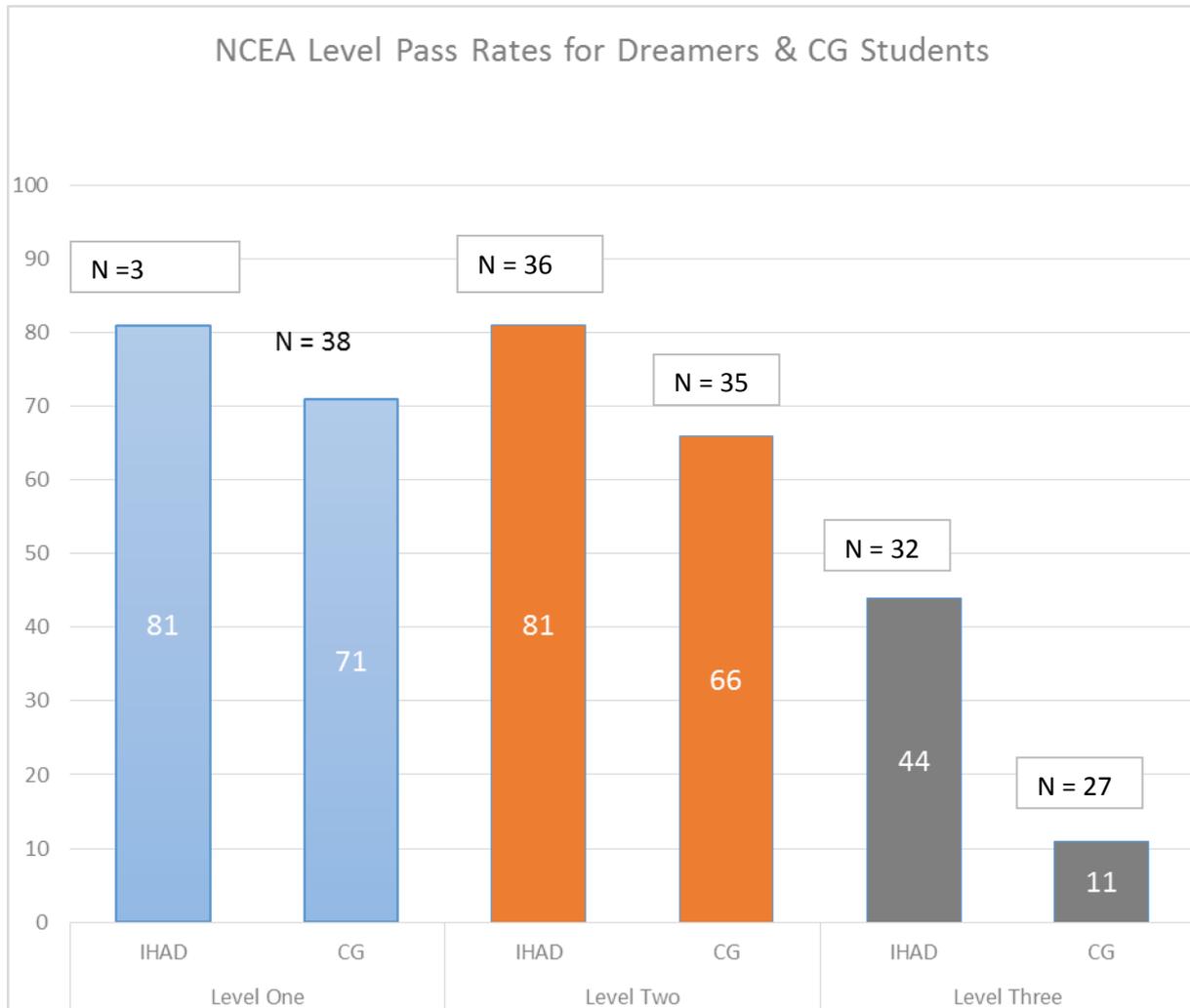
Year of schooling	IHAD N=	CG N=
Year 11	37	38
Year 12	36	35
Year 13	32	27
Retention rate over the 3 years	86%	71%

The Dreamer retention rate exceeds that of the CG students by 15%.

Graph 1 compares the numbers and percentages of Dreamers and CG students who achieved NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3.

⁶ The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the main national qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand. It is recognized by employers and used for selection into universities and polytechnics, both in New Zealand and overseas. It is a standards-based qualification, comprising both internally and externally assessed standards. When a standard is achieved, a certain number of credits are gained and students must gain a certain number of credits to be awarded a certificate. There are three levels of certificate and, in general, students work through Levels 1 to 3 in Years 11, 12 and 13, the latter being their final year at secondary school. Students are recognised for high achievement at each level by gaining a Merit or an Excellence. These can be applied to a standard, a full course or an NCEA certificate.

Graph 1: Cumulative NCEA Level 1-3 pass rates for Dreamers and CG students



The Dreamers out-performed the CG students at every Level and by an increasing percentage as they progressed through the Levels. 33% more Dreamers gained Level 3 than their CG peers. Last year's data show that more Dreamers passed Level 2 in their first year than CG students (45% compared with 32%) or may well have accumulated more Level 2 credits in Year 12. This gave more Dreamers the opportunity to achieve Level 3 in Year 13 rather than having to focus on completing a Level 2 Certificate.

Students require 42 credits at Level 3 or higher to qualify for university comprising 28 credits from two approved subjects and 14 additional credits from one or two additional domains or approved subjects. The students taking three or more approved subjects put themselves in a good position to enter university. Table 3 compares the number of University Entrance⁷ approved subjects taken by the Dreamers and the CG students in their second and third years of NCEA.

⁷ University Entrance (UE) is the minimum requirement to attend a New Zealand University. Credits in approved subjects and a certain number and level of Literacy and Maths credits are required.

Table 3: University Entrance Approved Subjects Taken By Dreamers and CG Students

	Level 2		Level 3	
	IHAD	CG	IHAD	CG
No. of subjects	No. of students (N=36)	No. of students (N=22)	No. of students (N=32)	No. of students (N=20)
6	3	-		-
5	9	1	6	1
4	2	1	4	1
3	5	2	3	-
2	5	2	4	2
1	8	7	5	4
Totals	89% (32)	59% (13)	69% (22)	40% (8)

53% of Dreamers compared with 18% of CG students took three or more university approved subjects in Year 12. 41% of Dreamers compared with 10% of CG students took three or more university approved subjects in Year 13.

Getting the students into these courses paid important and life-changing dividends for the Dreamers. The numbers and percentages of students who gained University Entrance are shown in the table below.

Table 4: University Entrance results for Dreamers and CG students

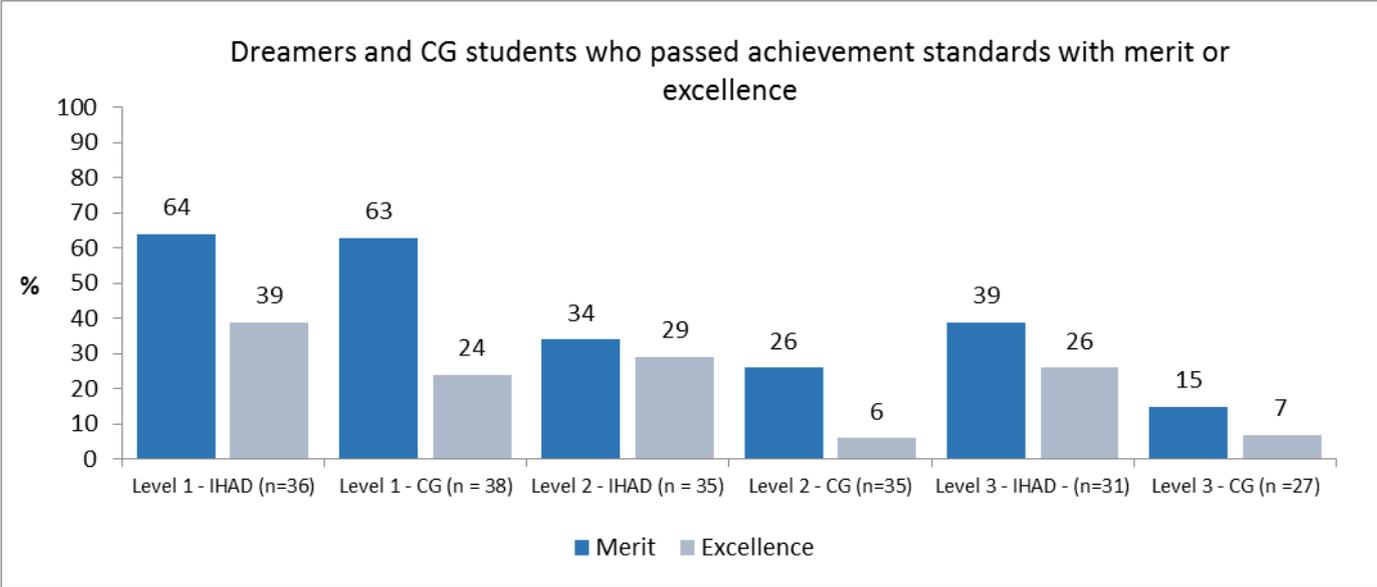
IHAD Year 13 No. of students (%) (N=32)	CG Year 13 No. of students (%) (N=20)
12 (38%)	2 (10%)

28% more Dreamers achieved University Entrance than their CG peers. These data convey an important message about the importance of the IHAD Coordinator's expectations and advocacy to the academic outcomes of these students.

Graph 2 and Table 5 summarise the Merits and Excellences achieved by the IHAD and CG students at each Level and the numbers of students involved.

The numbers in Graph 2 for each cohort, at each Level, do not add up to 100% as any student could gain both Merits and Excellences. The data for one Dreamer was not available.

Graph 2: Dreamers and CG students who passed Achievement Standards with Merit or Excellence



While a similar number of Dreamers and CG students gained Merits at Levels 1 and 2, the Dreamers gained 24% more Merits at Level 3 and between 15% and 23% more Excellences at all three Levels.

The next set of data show the number of Merits and Excellences gained by individual students. The data for one of the Dreamers was not available.

Table 5: Numbers of Merits and Excellences gained by Dreamers and CG students

	Level 1				Level 2				Level 3			
	IHAD N=36	CG N=38	IHAD N=36	CG N=38	IHAD N=35	CG N=35	IHAD N=35	CG N=35	IHAD N=31	CG N=27	IHAD N=31	CG N=27
Credits	Merit		Excellence		Merit		Excellence		Merit		Excellence	
50+	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
40-49	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
30-39	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	1	-
20-29	1	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	5	-	1	-
10-19	8	4	4	4	2	2	2	-	1	1	1	-
0-9	12	17	7	5	5	6	5	2	4	3	4	2
Total	23	24	14	9	10	9	10	2	12	4	8	2
%	64%	63%	39%	23%	29%	26%	29%	6%	39%	15%	26%	7%

The data in the table above show that more Dreamers gained more credits, especially in the 30 to 50+ categories. No CG students achieved in these categories. Once again, the data show that the overall quality of Dreamer’s results is superior to those of the CG students.

The final table in this section shows the pathways the two cohorts followed in their first year after leaving school (2013 for the IHAD students and 2012 for the CG students). The data were gathered in

the few months of 2013. Three of the CG students and one of the NZ-based Dreamers had a baby and all are included in the data. The three CG students are in the 'unqualified workforce' or 'unemployed' categories and the Dreamer is included in the 'certificate' data as she is enrolled in a university Level 4 certificate course for 2013. Students who left for Australia are not included. These data represent the final comparative data available. The data for one of the CG students was not available.

Table 6: Dreamer and CG Pathways Data

Pathways	IHAD		CG		IHAD	CG
	N=	%	N=	%	%	%
Degree (L7)	11	30	1	2	80	30
Diploma (L5/6)	5	14	2	5		
Certificate (L3/4)	12	33	8	22		
School Yr 14	1	3	-	-		
Gap Year	3	8	6	16	20	70
Bridging Course	1	2	4	11		
Unqualified workforce	3	8	11	30		
Unemployed	1	2	5	14		
	37	100	37	100	100	

80% of the Dreamers entered tertiary education (one of these has remained at school with the intention of beginning post-high education in 2014) compared with only 30% of the CG students. 50% more Dreamers are enrolled in tertiary programmes. Conversely, 50% more CG students are represented in the non-tertiary categories and especially in the 'unqualified workforce' and 'unemployed' categories. This is a significant achievement for the IHAD project. It is important to note that the data could change over the next one to three years as these data represent only the start of their post-school lives.

Case Study Findings

It is clear from the evidence that IHAD has been highly successful in influencing the outcomes for the majority of Dreamers across all of the project aims. What is also clear is that there has been no one single factor but rather it was a suite of support services provided through the IHAD Trust that has led to the success for each Dreamer.

The case studies allowed the researchers to probe the factors that contributed to the success of the Dreamers. All of the case study Dreamers improved school attendance, graduated from high school and gained qualifications that allowed them to access tertiary study.

Academic Counselling and Advocacy

Academic counselling and advocacy played an important part in making sure that the Dreamers were able to reach for the dreams they held for their futures. Coach worked with each of the Dreamers to establish a clear vision of what is was each Dreamer wanted to achieve. Table 7 shows the dreams for each Dreamer and the ways in which they changed overtime.

Table 7: Dreamers' Dreams Over Time

Dreamer	Initial dream (Primary school)	Emerging dream (High School)	Current dream (After graduation from High School)
A	University	Air Steward Medicine Fashion design	Fashion design
B	Doctor Nurse	Teacher	Social work
C	University	Policewoman	Policewoman
D	University Lawyer	Politician	First Pacific Island Prime Minister of New Zealand
E	University Animator	Doctor	Engineering
F	University	Policewoman	Youth work
G	University Doctor	Doctor	Doctor
H	University Artist	Artist Sportsman Historian	Historian

IHAD personnel dared the Dreamers to have big dreams and to set lofty goals for achieving their dreams. Prior to IHAD only two of the case study Dreamers had their sights set on university. Coach worked closely with each of the Dreamers as they navigated high school and made choices about what courses to take. This was especially important as the Dreamers entered senior high school.

For Dreamers with multiple goals it was important that they kept their academic options open. For example, Dreamer H had two talents that he was keen to advance. The first was in the Arts and the second was in History. During his NCEA Level One year Dreamer H developed and strengthened his passion for History. His passion did not go unnoticed by Coach and his mentor. Through IHAD, a historian from Auckland University made contact and offered to coach Dreamer H. This support was invaluable in allowing Dreamer H to see the opportunities that a career in History could offer. He was hooked.

Mentor for Each Dreamer

All of the Dreamers talked about the impact that their mentors had on their successes. The mentors exposed the Dreamers to activities that they would not otherwise have experienced. They also provided emotional support to keep the Dreamers 'dreaming big'. This included working with the Dreamers as they moved through high school, setting academic goals and planning for their tertiary studies.

In a number of cases the mentors provided academic support. This included helping Dreamers with their homework and assisting them to prepare for exams. Dreamer D's mentor would travel 15 kilometres to D's house and help him with homework.

Another mentor provided a home for Dreamer B. As Dreamer B was preparing to enter her final year of high school she found out that the school would not allow her entry into the university approved subjects she needed in order to enrol at university. Her poor attitude and frequent absences from school excluded her from these subjects.

It felt like I wasn't good enough for them [the school]. It felt like they were saying I wasn't smart enough to take the subjects (Dreamer B).

Despite Coach's advocacy for Dreamer B the school held its ground and would only offer her two out of the five university approved courses she needed. Coach approached two other schools but they also said 'no'. Dreamer B's mentor then offered Dreamer B the opportunity to move away from home and stay with her. Dreamer B could attend a school not far from her mentor's house. At first Dreamer B was not keen on the idea but the more she thought about the keener she became. She wanted a fresh start and she wanted to achieve her dream. She agreed to move into her mentor's home and attend the local high school that accepted her into all of the university approved courses she needed.

My mentor put an offer on the table. She took a long shot and offered for me to move in with her and her husband and attend the school on the [North] Shore. I couldn't believe that someone was offering me a place in their home (Dreamer B).

Dreamer B worked hard at her new school. She had both her mentor and Coach to encourage her to complete assignments on time and to pass her exams. Her mentor put up a wall planner so that

Dreamer B could map out her assignment dates and commitments. She also supported Dreamer B to stay on top of her assignments. Coach assisted by working with her to get assignments completed and to help her understand what was expected in the assignments.

Dreamer B succeeded in achieving Level Three NCEA and achieved University Entrance. This would not have been possible without her mentor's and Coach's intervention.

Dreamer D's mentor provided much needed emotional support during his high school years. When Dreamer D suffered a depressive episode his mentor was there for him. Dreamer D's mentor played an influential role during this time and helped Dreamer D to understand that he did not have to say yes all of the time and act as though he had lots of money to splash around. His mentor taught Dreamer D to say 'No'.

My mentor taught me about budgeting. If we went somewhere and we saw something I wanted he would say 'Don't buy it unless you need it. There is a big difference between wanting something and needing it' (Dreamer D).

Dreamer E's mentor provided a much needed male role model. He spent many hours talking with his mentor about life experiences. Dreamer E was the only male in his household and his father did not play a role in his life. Having an IHAD mentor contributed to him being able to seek advice and guidance from another man.

He was like a mate. I live most of my life with my mum and my sisters. He was like the man in my life (Dreamer E).

Each of these examples shows the significant importance of the mentors to the Dreamers. The long term relationships that were forged were critical to the ongoing success of the Dreamers as they strived to achieve academic and life success.

Camps

Camps provided the Dreamers with an opportunity to experience different parts of New Zealand and to develop life skills. These camps provided opportunities for things such as health education, essay writing and job interviews. Camps contributed to each Dreamers focus on success and were an important element of keeping Dreamers on track to achieve their goals.

Dreamers were encouraged to extend their thinking with regard to their dreams and were constantly encouraged to reflect on how they were going and what they might need to focus on for the future.

All of the Dreamers were unanimous in talking positively about the camps they attended. Camps would typically include a challenge course such as high ropes and the opportunity to explore leadership potential. The promise of a camp during the school holidays motivated the Dreamers to earn a place at each camp.

You had to earn your holiday retreat. We had a system called 'go for the peak'. You had a sheet that you took around your teachers and at the end of the day you got evaluated. You needed 50% to be at the middle of the mountain and 80-90% you go to the peak. I really liked that (Dreamer D).

All of the Dreamers talked about the strong friendships they developed at camp. The idea of belonging to a large family was a dominant theme expressed by the Dreamers.

Camps were all about bonding together, working in groups and having fun (Dreamer C).

These experiences contributed significantly to the Dreamers' sense of self-worth and resilience. Dreamer E's success can be summed up by a conversation he had with Scott toward the end of his first year at University when he attended yet another Dreamer Camp. The Dreamers were off to Tongariro to complete the Tongariro Crossing⁸. Dreamer E was a passenger in Scott's car. As they drove along Dreamer E quizzed Scott about his entrepreneurial business ventures. He was really interested in the process of starting up a company, product development, marketing activities and getting investors. Dreamer E was excited by the idea of *doing it himself*. He also liked the idea that Scott was able to fund the IHAD project with the resources from the sale of a software company that he had co-founded while living in the United States. After a while Dreamer E softly said, *"You must be really proud of your accomplishments, Scott"*. Scott's response was that he was not proud as much as appreciative of all he had been given, from both of his parents and growing up in New Zealand at a time when it was really a quite wealthy and progressive nation. In fact Scott replied: *If I couldn't become reasonably successful with all of these inbuilt advantages, then shame on me.*

Scott went on to tell Dreamer E that it was he that was proud of Dreamer E's accomplishments.

Here he was, successfully completing his first year at University and look at what he had overcome:

- *He was an immigrant*
- *Spoke no English when he arrived*
- *His father did not live with him*
- *No one else in his family had university qualifications*
- *His family survived on a very low income (Scott).*

Dreamer E's modest response was *'Yeah, that's what Mum says'*. To which Scott quickly responded *"You've got a damn fine Mum there!"*

After-School Tutoring

All of the Dreamers needed support with their academic studies. Prior to attending IHAD they all achieved average to below average scores in PATs and if they were to graduate from college and move onto tertiary study their grades needed to improve.

The Dreamers all attended the Dreamer Centre regularly. At the Centre they completed homework and accessed tutors for subjects for which their required additional support. This directly led to the Dreamers improving their reading, writing and mathematics achievement, as well as their general study skills.

⁸ The Tongariro Alpine Crossing in [Tongariro National Park](#) is one of [New Zealand's](#) most spectacular [tramping tracks](#), and is considered the most popular^[1] one-day tramp in New Zealand. The crossing takes about seven hours of steady walking to complete in good weather.

Academic tutoring was provided right through each Dreamer's schooling. Although the Dreamers had received a great deal of tutoring during their primary and intermediate education they became even more aware that they would need ongoing support at high school.

Starting college [high school] now was a big deal. I had no idea about writing an essay, doing creative writing and mathematics stuff that I was doing at school. It was so hard. The support that Coach constantly gave me was so helpful (Dreamer B).

There were times when the Dreamers faltered and wanted to give up on their studies. The ongoing support of Coach and the IHAD mentors and tutors made an enormous difference to the academic success of the Dreamers.

When I was at school Coach and I spent many days working hard on my assignments. We spent nights, school holidays and after school hours at the Dreamers Centre. It paid off. Having someone like Coach helping me with my assignments got me my first Excellence. It felt good to get a high mark and show that I could do it (Dreamer B).

Coach was there for me 24/7. It was like he had two families; the Dreamers and his own kids. He would chase me to do well at school. He made me believe in myself (Dreamer A).

One Dreamer exemplifies the role that the after school tutor played, especially in his last year at high school. As Dreamer H began to decide what courses he would take for his final year at high school he found himself in the Dean's office listening to information about an alternative education course for a small group of Pacific Island peers. Dreamer H felt angry and offended that he had been asked to attend the session. *Why was I there?* Dreamer H's academic achievements showed he had the intellect to achieve university entrance.

Coach believed that because of Dreamer H's previous poor behaviour and attitude teachers had not taken note of his academic record and therefore selected him as a potential candidate for an alternative education programme for his final year at school. Needless to say Dreamer H rejected any invitation to attend such a course. Coach subsequently worked with him to ensure he enrolled in university approved courses which included Statistics, History and Classics.

During his final year at high school Dreamer H racked up the highest amount of time spent with tutors at the Dreamer Centre. In one month alone he racked up 33 hours. This support and Dreamer H's positive attitude to his learning ensured that he gained University Entrance in five approved subjects.

Academic Success

The Dreamers all took full advantage of the academic services provided by IHAD and this directly contributed to the academic success experienced by all of the Dreamers. Table 8 shows the Dreamers' National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) and University Entrance results.

Table 8: Dreamers' Academic Record for NCEA and University Entrance

Dreamer	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	University Entrance
A	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	✓	✓		
D	✓	✓		✓
E	✓	✓	✓	✓
F				
G	✓	✓	✓	✓
H	✓	✓	✓	✓

All but one Dreamer achieved Level Two NCEA and six out of the eight Dreamers achieved the qualification necessary to give them entry to university.

Although Dreamer F did not achieve high school qualifications she is currently studying a diploma course in Youth Work. She is keen to give back to her community and make a difference for Youth. Dreamer F has suffered sexual abuse within her family and had moved to no fewer than four high schools before graduating.

Dreamer C was supported to map out a pathway to tertiary study. Coach met with Dreamer C to map out what she needed to do to get into Police College. She needed to build some experience, get a drivers' licence and keep up her physical fitness. It made sense for her to undertake some study that included a level of physical activity. Coach then took Dreamer C to Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and they met with a support person there who encouraged Dreamer C to enrol in a sport and recreation course. This would help her to gain a qualification and keep her active as part of the prerequisite required for application to Police College. Although Dreamer C has struggled with the academic rigour of study she has found employment in a café and is still pursuing her dream of being a policewoman.

All of the case study Dreamers were able to move towards tertiary study after their high school graduation.

Financial Support

Without exception all of the Dreamers were the first in their families to achieve the opportunity to go to university or to study at tertiary level.

The IHAD Trust promised all Dreamers financial support from the outset of the project. All of the families found it challenging to be able to support their children financially with the cost of tuition and materials for university. The financial support to undertake tertiary study was instrumental in allowing all of the Dreamers the opportunity to study at university.

I would not be here (university) if it was not for IHAD. We are poor and without the scholarship I would have to work instead of study (Dreamer E).

I could not have gone to university if it wasn't for Scott. I am so grateful that they [IHAD] have paid for my education (Dreamer D).

Transition to Tertiary Study

For all of the Dreamers, transitioning to tertiary study was scary. They described feeling overwhelmed by the paperwork that was required. In all cases Coach worked with each Dreamer to determine the best course selection and to support each Dreamer undertake the enrolment process.

Coach was there for me. I didn't know what to do. He helped me apply for Whitecliff [School of Art and Design] and AUT [Auckland University of Technology]. He even said he would come with me to the interviews (Dreamer A).

Paperwork completed and the reality of attending university kicked in for all of the Dreamers. Once again they all faced challenges. The challenges included:

- **Overcrowded homes and a lack of access to the internet**

Dreamer B struggled to find a quiet place to work at home. There was no access to the Internet and on numerous occasions she missed important email communication from the University.

- **Balancing the demands on their time with university study**

Dreamer D has a role as a Youth Advisor on the Auckland City Council Youth Panel. This has meant juggling the competing demands of study with the demands of the Auckland City Council. Coach has maintained contact with Dreamer D to help Dreamer D with strategies to try and get the balance right. He has met with both Dreamer D and members of the Advisory Panel to negotiate the balance. This year Dreamer D has been more focussed on his studies and is currently doing well in his studies.

Dreamer G made the decision to attend a university that was a one and a half hour flight away in order to remove herself from the constant demands of her family. Scott wanted Dreamer G to develop her independence and was aware that it would be difficult for her to keep up the family commitments of delivering newspapers every morning as she had done through High School, church, band and youth group every week as well as put the time required into studying. Coach supported Dreamer G to complete the necessary enrolment forms and also attended the pre enrolment interview with Dreamer G.

- **Being overwhelmed by the university environment**

All of the Dreamers talked about how overwhelming it was to find their way around the universities. For some it was the physical environment which felt daunting, large universities spread over several streets made it hard to find their way around. For others it was being one of only a few 'brown' faces. Dreamer H found the first semester at university really challenging. He was of the few 'brown' kids in class and this made him feel uncomfortable. Whilst most of them overcame their sense of anxiety, for a few Coach needed to intervene.

I showed him [Dreamer H] how to use the library and his mentor gave him a space at his office for him to work between lectures (Coach).

- **Ill health**

For Dreamer G ill health struck during her second semester at university. She had infected legs from injuries sustained in rugby. She came back to Auckland but did not initially seek the medical attention she required. The cost of going to the doctor and paying for the medication required was difficult for Dreamer G's family.

Dreamer G's family wanted to try some traditional Tongan methods for healing Dreamer G's infection. Coach became really concerned for Dreamer G and with her parents' permission took Dreamer G to hospital where she stayed for two weeks recovering from her infection.

During this time Coach also kept in contact with a liaison person at Otago University to ensure she was not disadvantaged by being away for such a long period of time. Fortunately for Dreamer G she was able to catch up with missed work and return to her studies. Coach's support was instrumental in Dreamer G getting the medical treatment she required and the support to keep her dream alive.

- **Financial pressures at home**

Whilst studying and struggling with her studies Dreamer C's family was also going through a hard time financially. They had to move out of their rented accommodation and were paying more in rent at their new place. Dreamer C was no longer eligible for a student loan as she had failed her course. Her family were not in a position to assist her with the cost of study. Once again Coach worked with Dreamer C to set new goals and to prioritise her efforts. She could attend a Level Three Youth Guarantee Course which would at least give her a qualification but not necessarily lead to employment. Coach encouraged Dreamer C to take a year to regroup. The reality was that she needed to earn some money to help support her family and she needed to rethink her dream.

I needed to think about what was best for me and my family (Dreamer C).

The reality for all of the case study Dreamers is that having made it to university the presence of Coach as a guiding light was critical. He helped them to continue to navigate life's challenges and to stay on track to achieve their goals.

I sort of feel proud of myself a little bit, just a little. You [Coach] taught me right from wrong and exposed me to things I would never have known. You showed me there was a world outside my family and that I have a brighter future to look forward to (Dreamer B).

Table 9 identifies the Dreamers current and future study goals.

Table 9: Dreamers' tertiary study foci

Dreamer	Tertiary Study Focus	Current Study Focus	Future Focus
A	Fashion and Design	Fashion and Design	Fashion and Design
B	Bachelor of Education (Teaching)	Volunteer IHAD project (America)	Complete her university studies in social work
C	Diploma in sport and recreation course	Gap year supporting her family	The New Zealand Sports Institute
D	Bachelor of Arts	Bachelor of Arts	Pacific studies Politics
E	Bachelor of Biomed	Bachelor of Engineering	Postgraduate study
F	Diploma in Youth Work	Diploma in Youth Work	Youth worker
G	Bachelor of Health Science	Bachelor of Medicine	Paediatrician
H	Bachelor of Arts	Bachelor of Arts	Historian

All of the case study Dreamers have set their goals high and have worked hard to achieve their goals. The success of IHAD is summed up by each of the case study Dreamers.

I want to be a fashion designer and own my own business. I am good at what I do and I love it. I just start sewing and I get these random ideas about how to make something more interesting. Dream big. Don't give up on your life. Dreams are like stars, so reach out for them (Dreamer A).

Life now is so much better for me. It is way more positive and more beautiful than I ever thought it would be for me (Dreamer B)

Without IHAD I would never have finished school. I would have been stuck at home without a job or a life. I am so glad to be a Dreamer (Dreamer C)

My biggest dream is to be a politician and [to] be the first Pacific Island Prime Minister of New Zealand (Dreamer D).

I lived in the warzone and I lived on the ground; I ate and slept on the ground. Then I came to New Zealand and now I have to make the most of everything I have. I have to use everything I have. Everything I have is a blessing (Dreamer E).

I dream now to help the world, change our community and pass my good learning to the next generation. I am a Dreamer. Once a Dreamer, forever a Dreamer. I carry this in my heart along with a strong saying, "I believe" (Dreamer F).

My life, my story, my dream went from wishing to hoping and now believing –all thanks to IHAD. I will always be proud to be a Dreamer and I will die proud being a Dreamer (Dreamer G)

It's kind of weird cos I was this PI [Pacific Island] kid and my street was all I knew. Dreamers taught me that I could go to university. For me it was university or bust (Dreamer H).

Discussion

The data show higher levels and higher quality of Dreamer achievement in almost every aspect of their NCEA Level 1, 2 and 3 results when compared with their CG peers:

- Staying at school until Year 13
- Level 1, 2, and 3 NCEA pass rates
- Literacy and Numeracy pass rates at Level 1 and UE
- Merit and Excellence Level Certificate Endorsements
- Merit and Excellence Course Endorsements
- The number of credits passed with Merit or Excellence across all three NCEA Levels
- The number of students taking university approved subjects through to Year 13
- The number of students who went on to tertiary study on leaving school

It is interesting to note that the differences between the two cohorts increased as the students moved through the qualifications programme. Once again, this reflects the importance of supporting students to consider qualification pathways and make sound course choices from the time they enter high school. Adult advocacy and academic mentoring is fundamental to the success of this process.

As stated in the introduction to this paper, IHAD's aim is to help Dreamers succeed in the following aspects of their lives:

- Improvements in school attendance
- Higher rates of attendance at university or tertiary study
- Improved high school completion and academic performance as indicated in grades and test scores
- To develop resilience, determination and to realise their potential

It is clear from the evidence that IHAD has been highly successful in influencing the outcomes for these case study Dreamers across all of these aims. The majority of Dreamers and all of the case study Dreamers showed improved school attendance, graduated from high school and gained qualifications that allowed them to access tertiary study.

As policy makers engage with these findings there is much to be learned from the experiences of these Dreamers. There is no silver bullet that will address poverty and educational outcomes for children living in poverty. It was not a single factor but rather a suite of support services provided through the IHAD Trust that led to the success of the Dreamers. IHAD provided this consistent set of services for 12 years and continues to support Dreamers when there is a need. Initiatives aimed at supporting children in poverty must be a long term commitment to the children and their families.

For a long time, policy makers in New Zealand have focussed their attention on the quality of the teacher as having a profound effect on academic outcomes for students. The researchers do not dispute that teachers have a strong influence on academic outcomes. However, they argue that to focus solely on the quality of teaching dismisses the wider needs of children living in poverty. Research conducted by Hawk and Hill (1996) indicated that these students need significant adults in

their lives and, in the case of IHAD, to be part of their lives throughout their childhood and into their young adult lives. Hawk and Hill (ibid) also suggest that, in order for the most vulnerable of students to be in a 'teachable state', holistic care is essential and this is often beyond the scope of what teachers could be expected to provide. The Project Coordinator took an active role in the Dreamers' personal lives, at times, putting himself in a vulnerable position with schools and agencies, in order to be a strong advocate for the Dreamers. He crossed lines that teachers could not cross.

There is a key role for schools to play in supporting students like the Dreamers to traverse the worlds in which they live - to be responsive to their needs rather than judging their poverty, ethnicity and/or behaviour as a determinant of potential. Some of the case study Dreamers talked about being offered less academic courses in their senior years or being excluded from academic courses because of a 'poor attitude'. The reality for many Dreamers was that their family lives were stressful. For some, their lives outside of school were characterised by violence, drugs and poverty. What they needed from their schools was support, not judgement.

IHAD was able to combine a suite of services in such a way as to have a significant effect on the outcomes for all of the Dreamers. It is the hope of the IHAD Trust that policy makers will engage with the Trust and enable them to make a significant difference to the lives of many more children living in poverty in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

For more information and copies of the research reports go to:

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

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