

A photograph of three women sitting around a white table in a space-themed playground. The woman in the center is wearing a dark blazer and glasses, holding a pen and looking at a document. The woman on the left is wearing a bright pink top and is also looking at the document. The woman on the right is wearing a white top and a pink necklace, smiling. On the table are several smartphones, a white mug, and colorful highlighters. In the background, there is a large mural of a space shuttle launch, a sign that says "SHUTTLE BAY 1", and a model of a rocket labeled "UNITED STATES".

THE ATTITUDE GAP CHALLENGE

A South Auckland Employment and Skills Challenge

JUNE 2016

NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4-7
PART A	
<i>The problem, the opportunity, the approach</i>	8-16
1. Attitude Gap Challenge Defined	9
2. Why is this Challenge so Important?	11
3. The Co-Design Approach	16
PART B	
<i>Current state and contextual understanding</i>	21-29
1. Global Trends about Young People and the World of Work	22
2. The Ecosystem and Current Initiatives	28
PART C	
<i>Discoveries and insights</i>	30-76
1. Personas and influencers	31
2. Overview of Finding—What is the Attitude Gap?	44
3. When and How the Gap Manifests and Contributing Factors	49
PART D	
<i>Change enablers and action opportunities</i>	77-101
1. Challenge Summaries and Opportunity Areas for Each Phase of the Employment Journey	78
APPENDICES	102-130
1. The Intent	103
2. The 26 Insights	105



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Attitude Gap Challenge is a multi-agency co-design challenge led by the Auckland Co-design Lab (the Lab) in collaboration with overall Lab sponsor, Auckland Council's Southern Initiative. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

The challenge centres on understanding the reasons behind the lack of connection between local employers and young people in South Auckland.

South Auckland has a broad and growing economy, rich cultural diversity and a young population. However South Auckland young people's high unemployment rate isn't explained by lack of educational attainment alone. This situation is both socially and economically costly to the region, with looming labour shortages and negative social and financial impacts for families.

Anecdotally, employers say they struggle to find local candidates with the 'right attitude'. On the other hand, young people report that the experience of applying for jobs and encountering workplace culture is like entering a foreign country, with unfamiliar and invisible practices, language and rules.

The overarching finding of this project is that the challenge that employers and young people face in South Auckland **is much broader than attitude, and is in fact a complex clash of norms and expectations, which could be overcome through greater preparedness and proximity between different groups involved.**

The challenge found that:

- The gap is self-perpetuating ie bad experiences equal more disengagement for both employers and young people.
- Current systems (especially in the recruitment phase) make it even harder for young people, and create frustrations and burdens for employers.
- Businesses and employers are sometimes aware of but don't know how to build on the cultural strengths and diversity of young people.
- Many employers view workplace culture as the norm, with little insight into how its unspoken rules can work to disengage young people or what support is required.

- For many people in South Auckland not only is whānau their number one priority they often have greater obligations and requirements to support their families, and young people can struggle to balance their family loyalties and obligations with the world of work.
- Conflicting communication norms serve to intensify initial connection issues and can impede ongoing employment progression once in the workplace, despite the fact that employers and employees broadly share similar goals and values.
- There is a need to build better connections, between all parties—from earlier in a young person’s life.

There is a lack of responsibility, accountability, and coordination amongst the multiple players in the education to employment journey and all have a part to play in building a robust roadmap.

- Bringing the different parties together and building understanding of and empathy for one another’s point of view helps to collapse the gap.

This report investigates how the gap is formed, and manifests itself in four critical phases of the employment journey:

1. Getting Prepared: learning about the world of work
2. Getting In: the invisible nature of the recruitment process
3. Staying In: balancing home and work life
4. Progressing: the cycle of motivation, risk and reward

The recruitment process, and the invisible, ineffective and demotivating way that young people are assessed, is the critical point of failure for many potential employers and employees. This phase also holds the biggest opportunity for whānau, community, educational providers and employers to create new ways to create mutual understanding and successful connections.

This report sets out themes mined from international research and insights gleaned from conversations with key players in the local ecosystem including employers, young people, government agencies and NGOs. The local findings echo international trends, but apply them to the unique cultural setting in South Auckland. Although locally based, the findings will resonate for communities across New Zealand. The report then provides glimpses of potential ways to work together to bridge the gap in future.

This report contains visual representations of the insights, impacts and potential future state. These have been prepared as resources and conversation starters. The Lab and its sponsors welcomes requests for digital files.



WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE GAP?
THE OPPORTUNITY
THE APPROACH

I. ATTITUDE GAP CHALLENGE DEFINED

The Attitude Gap Challenge is a multi-agency co-design challenge led by the Auckland Co-design Lab (the Lab), a place-based collaboration between central government and Auckland Council which is based in South Auckland. The challenge was sponsored by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

Labour market data for South Auckland suggests that lower employment rates are due to factors beyond the high percentages of people with low – or no – qualifications. Employers suggest that this is because young people in particular don't have the right attitude to be successful in work. The challenge was designed to test this perceived 'attitude gap' between young people and employers in South Auckland in terms of their respective knowledge, skills and expectations of one another. While these challenges are framed in South Auckland, the insights may have wider applications to other parts of New Zealand.

There is anecdotal evidence that many businesses in South Auckland struggle to find the talent needed to grow from within the local labour market but often have little focus on investing in local young people. This is due to a belief that young people have a "poor attitude" to work and therefore are an unreliable investment. What makes up this attitude is fuzzy, but often encompasses reliability, soft skills and motivation.

Understanding this 'attitude gap' is particularly important in South Auckland as it is rich with young people, a growing number of whom are unemployed, in an area with a broad and growing economy. This has both social and economic costs, due to increasing benefit costs to the taxpayer, lost human opportunity, and increased costs to local businesses to find labour from outside the local area or beyond New Zealand's shores. Given the complexity of this challenge the Lab was appointed to take a human centred approach to unpacking and understanding this 'attitude gap'.

The Lab established a cross-agency design team, with secondees from sponsor agencies MBIE and MSD, as well as Auckland Council, Ministry of Education, and Careers NZ, and appointed two experienced human centred design coaches. The challenge was overseen by a governance group that included representatives from sponsor and design team agencies as well as the Treasury, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and Te Puni Kōkiri.

The team worked together for 4 months to explore the perceived 'attitude gap' and to distil stories, insights and opportunities that create better understanding of both the causes of the current state and the potential levers for change.

Specifically, the Lab was commissioned to understand exactly what 'attitude' means, how it manifests in terms of beliefs and behaviours, and to provide potential directions to help to bridge the different beliefs and mindsets of the key stakeholders working in this space.



Image from the first hui event that launched the challenge attended by various stakeholders (governmental, local government, service providers, community agencies and employers)

2. WHY IS THIS CHALLENGE IMPORTANT?

While the problem of hiring and retaining young people is not a challenge solely for Auckland or even South Auckland (in fact research indicates it is a global challenge), the project team focused on the symptoms and causes of the problem primarily as they relate to South Auckland. Through taking a local lens, the team discovered locally relevant opportunities for change—ways in which people who live and work in South Auckland can be supported by different interventions in relation to employment. In many cases this will be more broadly relevant to other contexts.

Growth in South Auckland – Auckland’s most diverse community

South Auckland is experiencing strong growth rates – both in terms of population and economic growth.

South Auckland makes up 19.4% of Auckland’s overall population and 43.1% of these residents are under 25. This is higher than the Auckland average, which is 35.9%. It is also extremely diverse with 82% of people being Māori, Pasifika or Asian. South Auckland, like the rest of Auckland, also has a disproportionate share of New Zealand’s migrants.

South Auckland’s role in NZ’s economic growth

South Auckland plays a key role in New Zealand’s economic development story. With 20% of the Auckland population, of whom 10% of those of working age are unemployed, getting the Labour Market in South Auckland working is a strong priority.

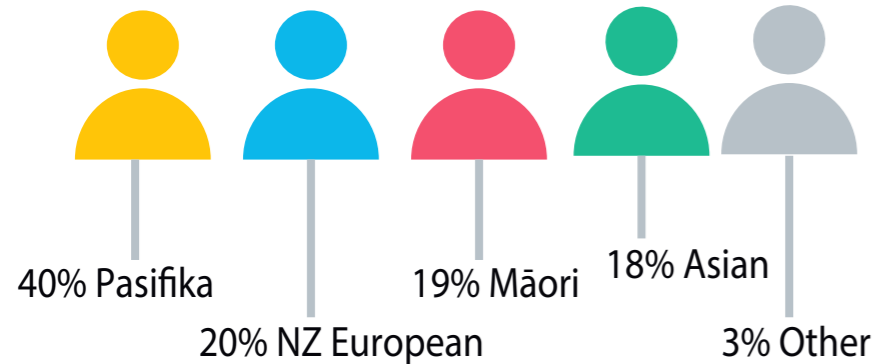
A significant number of high value growth industries have headquarters in South Auckland. These industries include engineering, digital and ICT, food, technologies and professional services. With 16,970 businesses located in South Auckland and increasing infrastructure investment, greater employment opportunities are emerging.

By 2040 South Auckland will create over a third of Auckland's job growth. Yet the unemployment rate of the working-age population in the region is 10.4%, compared with 5.8% for Auckland as a whole.

The following visual summarises the current youth statistics on unemployment in South Auckland and what they are projected to be, combined with the projections for employment growth from core industries resident in South Auckland. It helps to illustrate the business case for investment into a growing potential workforce that could meet future labour demand.

SNAPSHOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE (16-24) AND THE WORLD OF WORK IN SOUTH AUCKLAND*

48,640 Young People in South Auckland

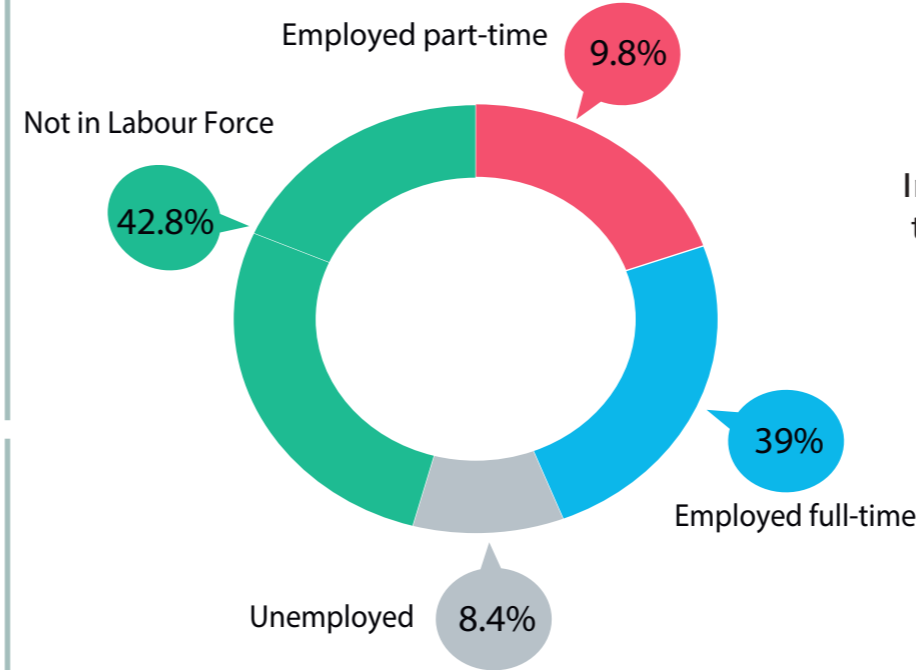


Makes up 22% of Auckland's young people

Source: Census (2013)



EMPLOYMENT STATUS (OF THOSE AGED 15 YRS AND OVER)



14.6% NEET

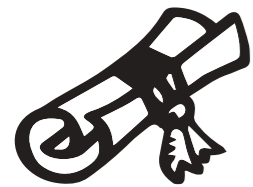
In Auckland the total NEET rate is 8.7% and in NZ its 11.3%



Young people from South Auckland who are employed are commonly in these main industries:

- ✓ 18% Retail
- ✓ 12% Accommodation & Food Services
- ✓ 11% Manufacturing
- ✓ 8% Transport, Postal & Warehousing

Source: Census 2013



HIGHEST QUALIFICATION (OF THOSE AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER)



16% of the rest of NZ have qualifications Level 7+

Source: Census (2013)

Source: HLFS December (2015)

Key terms:
Unemployed: People who are without a job and are available for work

Not in labour force: anyone who is neither employed or unemployed. This includes people who have personal or family responsibilities such as childcare etc, attend education institutions, are unable to work due to physical or mental disabilities, and are not seeking work.

NEET: These are young people who are unemployed (part of the labour force) and not engaged in education, or training, and those not in the labour force, and not engaged in education or training due to multiple reasons



YOUNG PEOPLE ON A BENEFIT

(Job Seeker, Support Living Payment, Sole Parent, Emergency Benefit & Emergency Allowance)

5,988 16-24 year olds receive a benefit

1865 have stayed on a benefit for approx 2-4 years

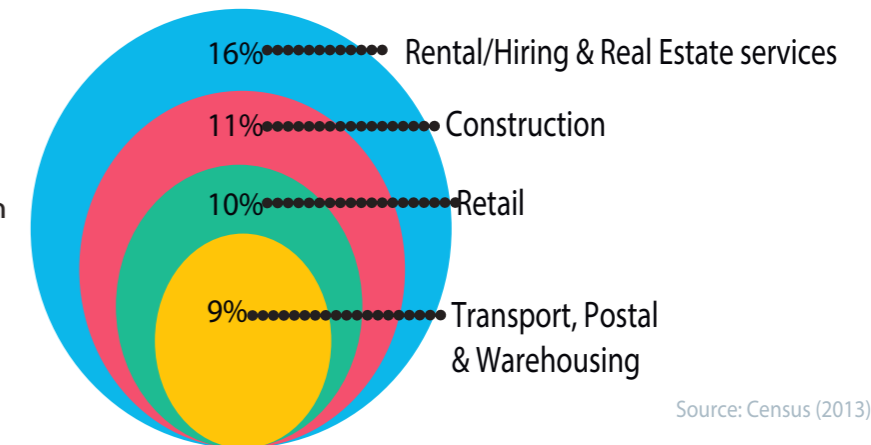
Source: MSD (2016)

💰 Youth receiving a benefit spend on average 19 years on the benefit, with a life time cost of \$239,000* (Source: MSD Actuarial valuation 2013)



17,760 Businesses located in South Auckland

Top 4 Industries based in South Auckland



Source: Census (2013)



FUTURE PROJECTIONS

- Employment will increase by 183,900 in 2024 Source: MBIE (2015)
- Strongest growth are projected to be in these industries: Retail, Accommodation & Food Services, Construction & Manufacturing Source: MBIE (2015)
- There's an estimated shortfall of 6,000 labourers in Auckland in the next 5 years alone. Source: Auckland Maori & Pacific Trades Training Infrastructure Consortia (2014)

- By 2040 over 1/3 of Auckland's employment growth is projected to be in South Auckland (including Howick and Franklin) Source: MBIE (2015)

* South Auckland covers Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, and Manurewa and Papakura

Social costs of youth unemployment

Youth who experience long-term unemployment face the risk of alienation – both socially and psychologically. They have less ability to participate in a range of activities and less ability to purchase necessary goods or services due to limited income. They can also be alienated from positive social networks and the link between poverty and crime, poor physical and mental health and other social ills cannot be overstated.

In New Zealand the rate of youth aged 15 to 24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is 11.3%, with Auckland's youth as a whole sitting at 8.7%. Against these figures, South Auckland is a stark outlier at 14.6%. While the body of New Zealand literature on the social costs caused by youth disengagement (primarily caused by long term unemployment) is limited, a paper by the Sustainable Business Council (2014) highlighted the following outcomes:

- **Criminal offending:** Longer durations of unemployment were found to be positively associated with a range of measures for youth offending, including violent offending, property offending, arrests and convictions (Fergusson, Lynskey, and Horwood, 1997).
- **Substance abuse:** Those who were exposed to unemployment had significantly higher rates of substance abuse/dependence (eg nicotine, alcohol, other substances) (Fergusson, Horwood, and Lynskey, 1997).
- **Suicide:** Being unemployed was associated with a two to threefold increase in the relative risk of death by suicide, when compared to being employed. For young males aged 18–24 years, a strong association between unemployment and suicide was also found (Blakely, Collings, and Atkinson, 2003).
- **Mental or physical ill health:** Increased exposure to unemployment was found to be associated with increasing risks of psychiatric disorders in adolescence. In fact, those exposed to unemployment (for periods of six months or more) had rates of disorders 1.5 to 5.4 times higher when compared to those who had not been exposed to unemployment (Fergusson, Horwood, et al., 1997).

Youth who experience prolonged periods of disengagement are also at risk of lower earnings, greater reliance on social assistance, higher unemployment rates, teenage parenthood or homelessness (Sustainable Business Council, 2014).

The scarring effects of inactivity have been empirically supported by Maloney (2004), who found that early spells of inactivity were positively and significantly related to later periods of inactivity. Global evidence supports this: young people out of employment or education are likely to have a lifetime of poorer outcomes in terms of employment.

Economic costs of unemployment

There is a large body of global evidence that shows that when young people disengage from work, there is an associated economic cost.

In the New Zealand context, Pacheco and Dye (2014) looked at the lifetime costs of youth who are NEETS in the UK and New Zealand. The overall observations they made included the following:

- Costs associated with long-term unemployment for those aged 16–18 years include educational underachievement, unemployment, inactivity, crime and poor health.
- Re-integrating 10% of NEETs into the workforce generated an annual saving of more than 10 billion euros.

Findings specific to the New Zealand showed:

- The estimated per capita costs (for the next 10 years) for Auckland's NEETs were higher than the comparable per capita costs for New Zealand NEETs (due to higher foregone wages in Auckland).
- The estimated per capita costs also suggested differences by ethnicity, with per capita costs for Māori and Pasifika NEETs being higher than the comparable per capita cost for NZ European youth NEETs.

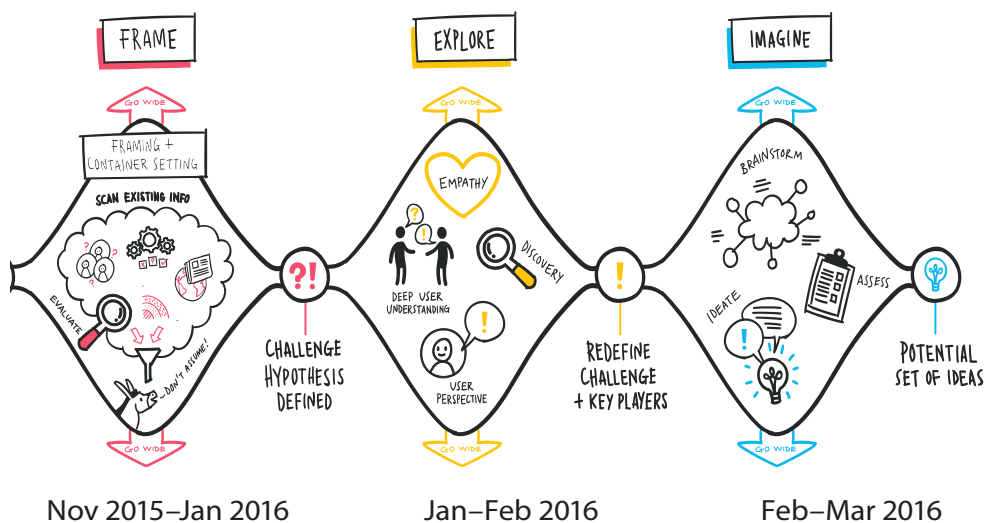
3. APPROACH AND CO-DESIGN PROCESS

The challenge was run using the Auckland Co-design Lab process, which employs a human centred design approach to work collaboratively with government, community and users to tackle complex social problems.

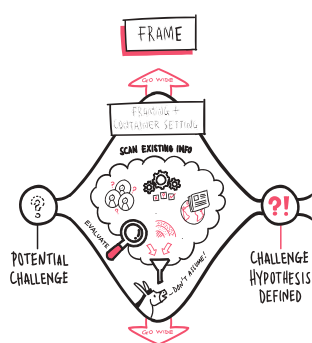
The process brings together a diverse range of people from stakeholder organisations to work together intensively in a short design ‘sprint’–in this case subject matter experts from MBIE, Auckland Council’s Southern Initiative, Youth Connections, Work and Income (MSD), and Careers NZ made up the design team.

As well as creating new insights and ideas, the ‘learning by doing’ approach increases the capability of the public and community sector to use these tools as an addition to people’s other problem-solving methods. To facilitate this learning, the design team was supported by two experienced design coaches from the worlds of social and business design.

The design process builds on current knowledge and practice to define the initial area of focus (Framing), then explores the needs and pain points of a wide range of stakeholders involved in that area to create a set of insights that help to redefine the challenge. These insights are then used as jumping off points to imagine user-centred ways to solve that challenge.



4. Engagement and involvement from different parts of the broader system (eg young people, employers, policymakers, education and employment system, whānau and families, providers etc) with initial emphasis on employers, young people and their families, extended to other influencers such as training and education system influencers and policymakers as time permitted.
5. The challenge crossed over a number of different complex systems (eg education system, job markets, youth systems); however, the project wasn't able to examine all aspects of these systems.



Design Phase 1: Framing

The team began the challenge by inviting a broad range of local stakeholders as well as representatives from central government to a hui to gather initial insights and experience around youth education and employment.

A team of cultural advisers representing the Māori, Indian, and Pacific communities helped to set the context, advised on appropriate practice and provided insight on the findings at each stage.

The next task was to synthesise international and New Zealand research (including interviews with local subject matter experts) around youth employment and the changing worlds of both work and young people.

An initial set of framing insights developed from these inputs were then tested at an open home session where again a wide range of stakeholders provided feedback, guidance and suggestions to refine the team's understanding.

These inputs were synthesised into the following intent statement:

- How might we better understand the current attitudes, expectations, perceptions, motivations and behaviours of young people, their families and employers to test the “attitude gap”?
- What are the behaviour and system changes needed to increase youth employment and how might we influence that change?

Design Phase 2: Explore

The team conducted initial empathy interviews with 14 employers, 22 young people and several sets of whānau and other key influencers including church and community leaders. They then synthesised 25 insights from these interviews from the viewpoints of both employers and young people.

The insights were then shared, tested and iterated in 5 workshops with over 100 young people (school and tertiary students, employed and unemployed, NEETS etc), teachers, employers, Wellington-based policymakers from relevant agencies, local training providers and agents. At each workshop the insights were prioritised from the point of view of a particular stakeholder group. There were 18 insights that were rated highly across stakeholder groups.

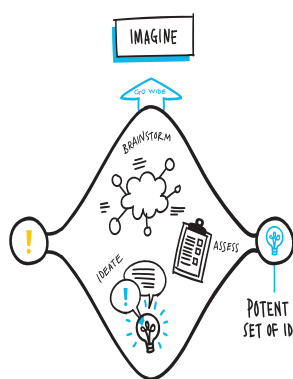


Image from the team's insight mining sessions.

These were then grouped under four different stages of the employment journey:

1. Getting Prepared: learning about the world of work
2. Getting In: the invisible nature of the recruitment process
3. Staying In: balancing home and work life
4. Progressing: the cycle of motivation, risk and reward

See Part C for visual representations of these findings.



Design Phase 3: Imagine

In the final phase the design team ran workshops with a wide range of stakeholders to co-design a vision for how 'things could be different'. Using the 18 prioritised insights and the different phases of the employment journey as a springboard, and looking through the eyes of both employers and young people, they imagined how things could be improved for each if different enablers were in place. See section D for a summary of these ideas.

Part B sets out contextual insights, part C explores the findings, and part D describes the areas of opportunity that stakeholders identified to try to bridge the gap.



CURRENT STATE
AND CONTEXTUAL
UNDERSTANDING

1. TRENDS IN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WORLD OF WORK

The complexity of this challenge is amplified by the 'changing world of work' and the 'changing world of young people', especially in the local context of Auckland's incredible diversity.

As part of the first stage of the design process (Framing) the team explored a number of macro global trends that seem relevant to the New Zealand youth employment challenge, and used these to inform the work done in the co-design project.



Image from mining out the international research.

The key global findings include:

- Fewer employers are hiring young people directly from school or tertiary (Keep, 2012)
- Providers are twice as likely as youth and employers to rate young people as prepared for work (McKinsey, 2012)
- Young people are leaving school with little or none of the work experience required by employers (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2011)
- Less than half of young people leaving tertiary education believe their post-secondary studies improved their employment opportunities (McKinsey, 2012).

To create a local commentary on these global trends, the Lab commissioned De Wet van der Westhuizen and Gail Pacheco from the Auckland University Work Research Institute to carry out a research and case study review. Their review, which is a companion piece to this report, found similar themes. Please see the full report for the in-depth findings.

The research review revealed an emerging understanding (both globally and locally) that youth no longer benefit from the work stability or ease of entry to the workforce their parents experienced, and what was once thought of as a 'career for life' has now become a lifelong journey of learning and discovery about what their career could be. The simple transition from school or tertiary study to work is now a lengthy and risky process of navigation—as set out below.

THE (HANGING) WORLD OF WORK

FROM



WORK STABILITY

"A JOB IS A JOB FOR LIFE"



CLEAR, SINGULAR CAREER PATH



SIMPLE TRANSITION FROM

EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT



A QUALIFICATION WILL GET YOU IN

TO

Casual jobs are on the rise.

Growth in casual contracts and part-time work means many young people are only in entry level jobs, or in jobs for a short period of time.

A decrease in job quality.

The jobs available to young people often don't appear to have much pathway for progression.

For some it's a lifelong journey of multiple roles, varying learning environments and mentors, to a clear career path.

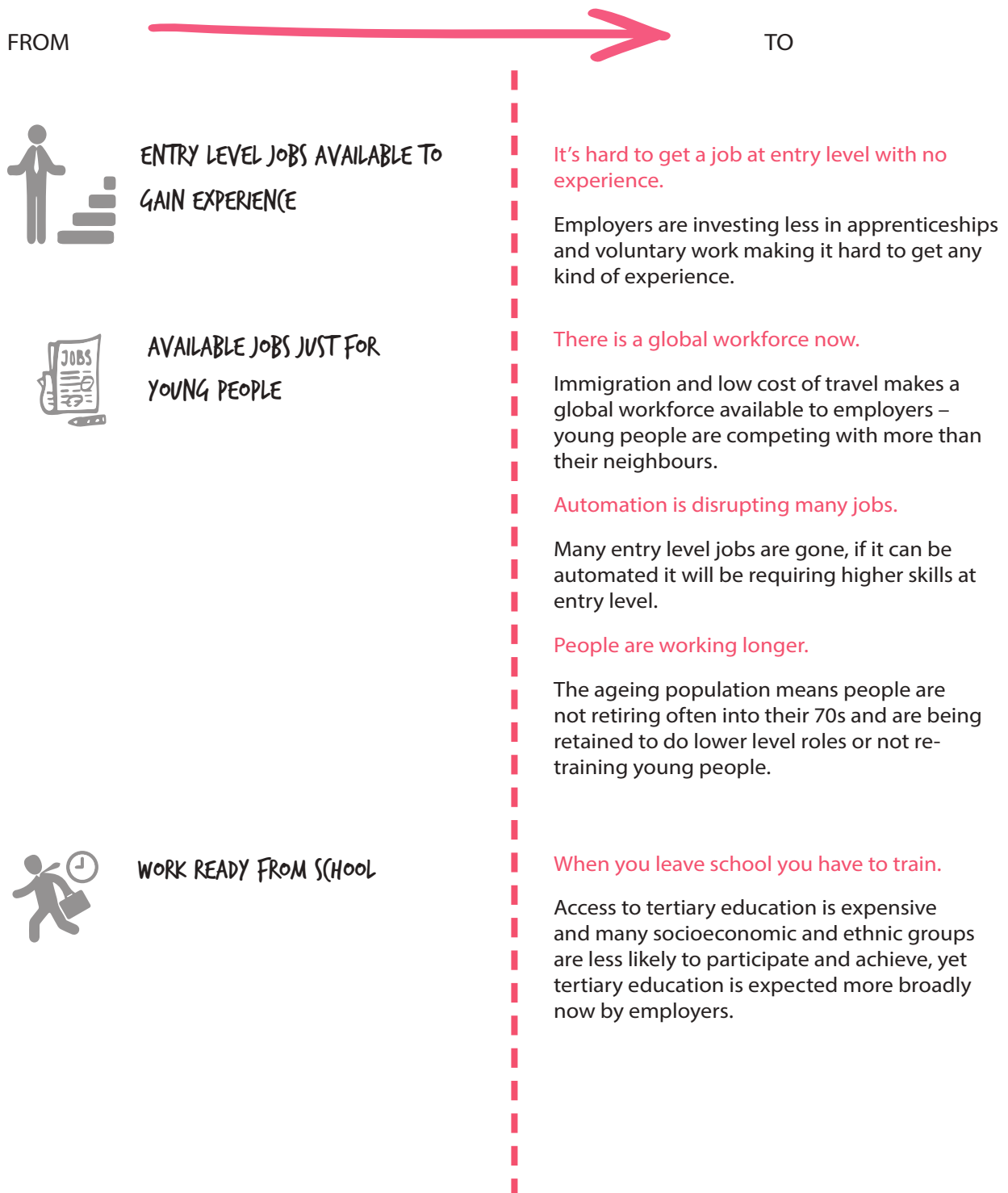
It is unlikely that young people will have 'one career'. They may have up to 3 in a lifetime making transitions key.

Getting a job from school is a high risk process of navigation that requires significant support.

Transition to employment now takes longer and is filled with obstacles- eg requires a driver licence.

You need qualifications + soft skills to get a job

Employers are looking for and expect to see 'soft-skills' evident from the outset- eg confidence, teamwork and networking.



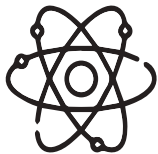
THE (HANGING) WORLD OF YOUNG PEOPLE



Young people are still developing cognitively and therefore it is inappropriate to assume they have the capacity for emotional and intellectual reasoning assumed of adults entering a workforce.



Transitioning from school to sustainable employment is intertwined with growing up and becoming a self-enabling adult. It's not a straightforward journey.



There is increased complexity and pressure on the lives of young people today – this causes heightened apprehension when they approach transitioning into the world of work. (This is particularly true for at-risk and 'disengaged young people').



Young people are not only a different generation from employers, but can also be different in culture/ethnicity, bringing increased complexity when navigating a new system.



The process introduces a different communication norms and media, so their efforts can be 'lost in translation'.



Beliefs and 'norms' around work are changing, yet the support networks around them are not. Parents' attitudes to work and education is often translated to their children.

In the local environment, the challenges become amplified when young people are disengaged from work or 'at risk' of long-term unemployment. Given that NEET statistics in South Auckland are higher than in the rest of Auckland, and qualifications lower, there is a need for increased focus on supporting these young people in the transition phase from school to working life—building their resilience and increasing their chances of success.

Seeking work and facing the challenges of transitioning into secure employment takes a lot of confidence, motivation and self-belief. The Pacific Adolescent Career Pathways report (MPIA, 2014) shows many young Pacific people are lacking the necessary confidence and self-belief, despite support from home and family networks.



Young people with low social and material capital, are most likely to have low expectations, be risk averse, need and want clear labour market signals and incentives (Keep, 2012).

The need for transition support is therefore seen as critical, and this has already been recognised in Auckland through the creation of programmes such as Youth Connections (an Auckland Council initiative specifically created to forge stronger connections between young people and employment).

2. THE ECOSYSTEM IN SOUTH AUCKLAND

The challenge set out to identify opportunities for influencing system and behavioural change across both the journey that young people go on to reach employment, and the journey that employers go on to hire and retain young people.

To inform this exploration, the team mapped the existing ecosystem to show the key current players serving both young people and employers. The following diagram shows the visual map of available resources, agencies and service providers in South Auckland.

As the graphic shows, this is a busy space, with many of services and players already involved in supporting young people to transition from school to work.

There is a perception from some employers and families/whānau of young people that there is a lack of coordination between agencies in terms of how they serve the needs of the young job seeker. There is an expectation that 'someone else' should be taking responsibility– yet no-one is accountable for overall responsibility of ensuring the right services reach the right person at the right time. In many cases all of these groups play interlinked and important roles.

I. HUMAN STORIES – PERSONAS AND INFLUENCERS

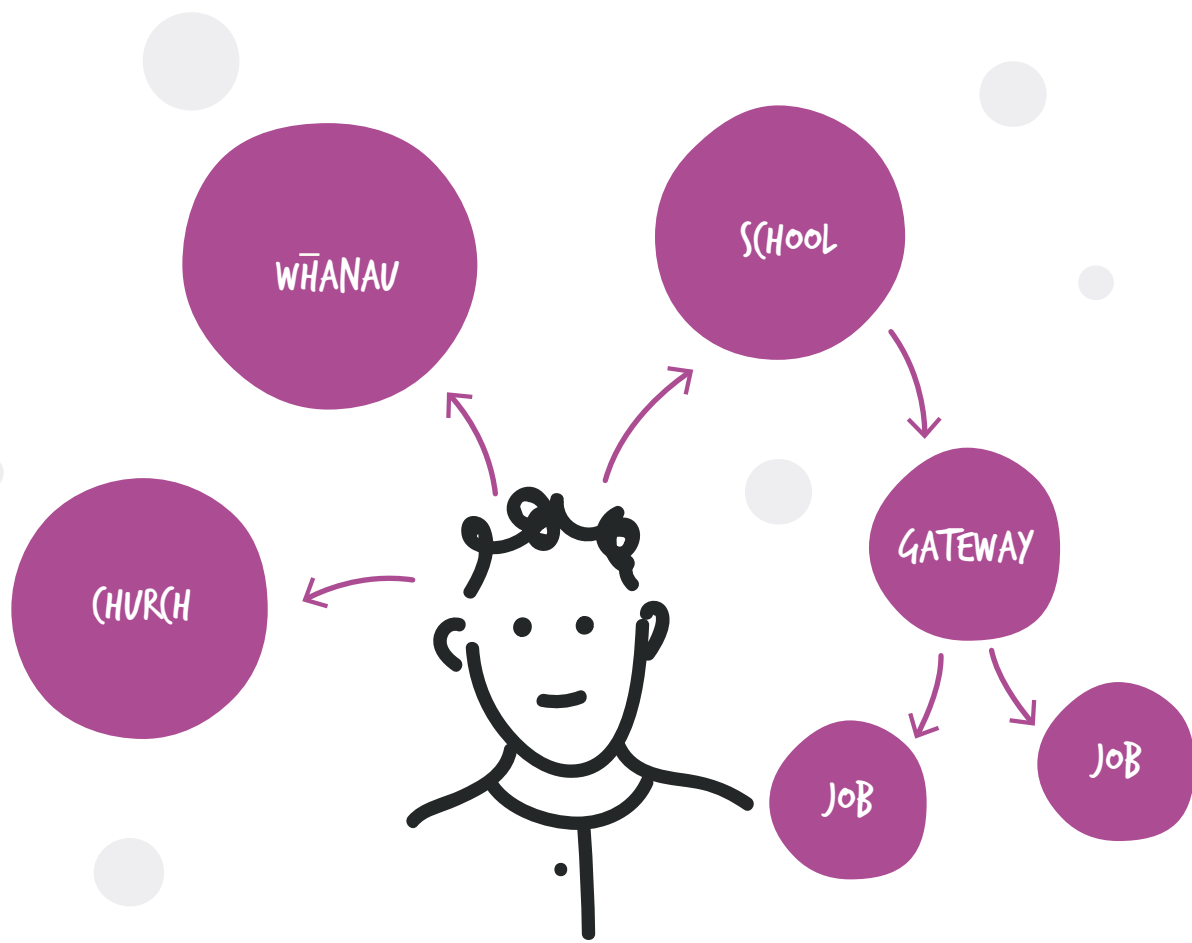
There are obviously a broad range of employers and young people in South Auckland. The challenge focused on finding areas and activities that hold the most promise of change and impact to increase youth employment.

As part of the synthesis of findings, 'personas' based on the interviewees and their stories were created to bring to life the experiences, the mindsets, the beliefs and the journeys of people who represented the risk points – and therefore the highest opportunity for impact through change.

The personas represent young people who are capable of work and who are motivated, at least initially, but who slip through the gap or are caught out by factors within it. The potential for a negative experience is high and can push them quickly towards disengagement and away from a pathway towards career success.

Our employer personas represent those in South Auckland who have roles applicable for young people and who are already providing (some) pathways for young people, and who show a willingness or interest in investing in young people. However, many are frustrated and do not think their investment is worth it. A negative experience with young people for these employers can quickly dampen their enthusiasm to support youth into work.

The personas demonstrate how the gap is experienced, risks of further disengagement and disconnection, and opportunities to build connection.



LEVI'S ECOSYSTEM

17 YEARS OLD

QUALIFICATIONS: LEVEL 2 NCEA

EXPOSURE OF WORK: HAS SOME THROUGH GATEWAY

CURRENT STATUS: STILL AT SCHOOL, YEAR 13

LEVI: YOUNG PERSON

“Work is important as it’s how you play your part in helping to provide for the family.”

'AIGA:

Levi lives with his parents and four younger siblings. They are very close to family both here and in Samoa. They all have wider roles within the church and this is a really important part of their lives. Levi has significant responsibilities as the eldest son. His mum cares for the kids and his dad is a general labourer.

LEVI'S JOURNEY SO FAR

He went through Gateway (school to work connector agency) and got some work experience at a large retailer –this provided him with valuable work experience, but not necessarily in something he wanted to do in the future.

He is motivated to do something that fits with his personal and cultural values.

He hopes that his future workplace will acknowledge his cultural values and identity, but he’s heard a lot of negative experiences including racism and other forms of discrimination from friends and family members. He wonders if he will need to change his name to something more pālangi when he applies for a job.

He believes that some employers can try and exploit young people and take advantage of them, and feels a bit suspicious about employers’ attitudes to young people.

RIGHT NOW

Levi is very unsure, but hopeful about his future. He feels a huge amount of pressure and expectation on his shoulders from all directions. He doesn’t feel at all ready to rush into a job or a career without first knowing what he wants to be or what he is good at. He is not sure if his parents can afford for him to go into higher education, and definitely doesn’t want to take on any debt. Church and family obligations are demanding, at times Levi needs to push to keep his education at the top of the list with his mum. He feels torn between what his parents want for him and needing to be independent.

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

Low

High

PERCEPTION OF WORK

Low

High

OPPORTUNITIES

With support, Levi can translate his church and community contribution and performance responsibilities into valuable soft skills that show he is committed and responsible.

Levi has some experience that he can refer to with future employers

The school has a careers counsellor available for an hour a week to help, but Levi will have to work out how to access and make time.

RISKS

Even with the valuable Gateway experience Levi has very low exposure to the options of work, or business norms and practices.

Levi and his parents have no understanding of the recruitment process, what to expect when he starts applying for real work or where to put his effort most effectively.

The norms and ways to show respect that he has learnt at home, school and church may not be the same as is valued or expected by future employers.

Choosing a pathway of further education is big investment for Levi and his 'aiga. What if he fails or starts down a pathway of something he doesn't like or struggles with?



ANARU'S ECOSYSTEM

22 YEARS OLD

QUALIFICATIONS: LEVEL 2 NCEA

EXPOSURE OF WORK: A FEW TEMP JOBS

CURRENT STATUS: UNEMPLOYED, SEEKING WORK

ANARU: YOUNG PERSON

"I watched my mum struggle when we were younger, she pushed us kids to do better than she did - 'If you want something you have to go get it'"

WHĀNAU:

Anaru has three older brothers and two sisters. Anaru and his family are very connected to their marae and wider whānau. There are nine people at home including his mātua. Some family members look after the older family members. His two brothers are working in Australia, and one is at home and isn't working. His sister recently started work after having looked after their Auntie. There was often not too much to go around when he was younger and he would like to be able to help his parents more.

ANARU'S JOURNEY SO FAR

The first time someone talked to him about what he wanted to do in terms of work he was 16 and at school. He worked at several temp jobs since leaving school a few years ago. He wanted to do IT but fell into labouring work through a family connection and hasn't been able to move out of that. He doesn't enjoy the monotony and routine of work and doesn't see a long-term future. It seemed like he didn't gain any reward for turning up and doing the work and he wasn't valued as an employee. He found that there was little respect culturally and reckoned probably his boss was taking advantage of him. He just stopped turning up to his last job because he felt he wasn't being valued.

He has taken two Level 3 courses with providers but only finished one. There was an interview recently but it required a drug test. His aunty offered to pay for the drug test, but he wasn't sure he would pass it.

RIGHT NOW

Anaru is on a downward spiral, he is frustrated and negative about work and feeling a bit hopeless. He was motivated when he left school, but now feels pretty bitter and unhappy about the lack of opportunities and experiences to date trying to find meaningful work.

He has very little money, and it's hard to afford to keep credit on his phone let alone afford new clothes for an interview and he can't travel easily with no car and no licence.

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

Low

High

PERCEPTION OF WORK

Low

High

OPPORTUNITIES

Anaru does have some work experience and qualifications, and with the right guidance there are services that can help him connect back into his original interest of IT and help build back his confidence

With the right support Anaru can tailor his CV to show his experience and potential for work

He has a supportive whānau who are keen to support him and would like to help him get back on track, but currently don't know the best way to do that.

RISKS

Anaru had a conviction for driving without a licence, this and casual drug use will create a significant barrier for getting through any application process

He is now lacking confidence and unmotivated, and unlikely to present well to employers. Even though he has aspirations and some qualifications he may drop out through the process

Anaru doesn't understand the application process and why he isn't getting more opportunities.



LELANI'S ECOSYSTEM

22 YEARS OLD

QUALIFICATIONS INCLUDE: DEGREE FROM TERTIARY PROVIDER

EXPOSURE OF WORK: WORKED IN A NUMBER OF PLACES,

FINDING HER GROUND IN CURRENT ROLE

CURRENT STATUS: IN WORK, CUSTOMER SERVICE

LELANI: YOUNG PERSON

“Me and my brothers will take on the support of our brothers and sisters and extended family back in Tonga when we are older.”

FAMILY:

Lelani and her family are really active in their Tongan community. Both of her parents are really supportive of her and her brothers and sisters. She watched her mum and dad really struggle when they were younger, needing support from others to get food on the table sometimes. Dad always pushed her and she felt pressure to live up to that, but it was also really motivating.

LELANI'S JOURNEY SO FAR

Lelani's dad didn't approve of her career choices, and earlier on she studied things that he wanted her to study. She tried a few different courses and her dad got really frustrated about her changing her mind a lot. One of Lelani's first employers was really hardline about “homelife” not coming into “worklife”. After trying a few things Lelani's mum encouraged her into her current role which she had to do specific training for. When she first started it was really scary. She was really anxious and thought about leaving after the first month because she wasn't sure she fitted in. Then she was assigned a mentor who helped to guide her, although the mentor was a lot older and pālangi, Lelani found it a bit hard to relate to her. She finds that the way people are at work is really different to home and church, and has found that she needs to speak up in the workplace. She recently spoke with her new manager about needing time off for an upcoming family event where she has responsibilities. She felt really nervous about the conversation, and about being seen to challenge her elders. Her manager appreciated that she had given lots of notice and they worked out a plan to balance work and family commitments.

RIGHT NOW

Recently her manager discussed with the team talking about what they wanted from their roles. It sounded like there could be real opportunities for progression. Lelani is feeling pretty positive, her dad is really proud of her and she is on track. She is wondering about how she would be able to take on more responsibility at work whilst home and family responsibilities are also growing.

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE



PERCEPTION OF WORK



OPPORTUNITIES

Lelani has found a workplace and manager who she is able to start building a trusting relationship with. This will help with working through how to manage her home and work obligations in the future.

Lelani's workplace recognises that young people need to be supported into thinking about progression and are providing some support for this.

Lelani is motivated and wants to be independent and be able to help support her family. They support her both in work and in her family responsibilities.

RISKS

Lelani needs to keep building her relationship and trust with her employer so that when issues crop up she has the confidence and ability to work through them.

Lelani may not be aware of the things that she needs to do to progress, or that her employers will still be assessing her on a range of implicit measures she isn't aware of so may not know if she is “performing well enough”.

Her situation is largely successful due the skills of her manager. A change in management could disrupt this.



ANIKA'S ECOSYSTEM

20 YEARS OLD

QUALIFICATIONS: 1 YEAR CUSTOMER SERVICE

(CERTIFICATE FROM LOCAL TERTIARY PROVIDER)

EXPOSURE OF WORK: HELPED HER AUNTIE AT THE MARKETS

(CURRENT STATUS: UNEMPLOYED ON THE BENEFIT)

ANIKA: YOUNG PERSON

"I look up to my Dad—he's a hard working man."

WHĀNAU:

Anika lives at home her mum and sisters. Her parents are separated, her dad is her role model. Last year he was made redundant after 12 years, but has recently got another job. Her mum is supportive too but isn't able to give much help. Mum doesn't work, and neither do her sisters. Anika doesn't want to be on the benefit. Anika's not interested in getting a massive student loan—she has watched her mum and her older brother get into trouble with debt and she doesn't want any of that. She's seen some friends go to university and sign up for a course just to get the \$1000 course materials. They never finished the course and are now stuck with big loans and no qualifications. She spends lots of time with cousins and helps her sister look after their koro and nana.

ANIKA'S JOURNEY SO FAR

Anika's introduction to the world of work was helping her aunty at the markets when she was younger. She was always interested in travel, and was able to get supported into a funded programme at polytech from school. During the course she was offered a cadetship but it felt like too much to take on whilst also juggling study and everything else with home life.

She got good marks in her programme and after completing the first year she decided to take a gap year. She expected to be able to pick up some work over that time in customer service, but she has been applying for what feels like "dozens and dozens of jobs" each month for nearly the whole year now, and still nothing. She has had one or two interviews but no job opportunities and lots and lots of rejections. She thinks this is because she hasn't got enough experience. It's not possible for her to know because there is no feedback from employers.

There isn't anyone to help her with this and Anika finds the online application forms particularly annoying. She thinks "How can they possibly judge you without even talking to you. It is so impersonal!"

RIGHT NOW

Anika is on a downward spiral down. Despite having a good experience getting funded into a tertiary programme she hasn't been able to get any work at all. A gap year has turned into a year on the benefit looking for work. She is disappointed, hōhā and confused about why she keeps getting "culled".

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

Low High

PERCEPTION OF WORK

Low High

OPPORTUNITIES

Anika has qualifications, and also experience from working with her Aunty when she was younger. With the right support though she can translate these skills more effectively in her CV.

Anika has got aspirations for a career and travel, and is motivated to get further than her Mum did, with the right support she can build on these aspirations.

RISKS

Anika is being encouraged to do lots of job applications by WINZ, but she is not customising them in any way and not presenting herself in a way that employers can see her strengths, this cycle of rejection lowers her confidence, capability and aspirations— in turn employers see her as less motivated and less employable.

With others at home not working, Anika has little family with positive experiences or knowledge of work, and few financial resources. Employers may assess this as a risk as it may affect her dependability and reliability.

Anika assumes the application process really starts at the interview stage when you get to meet in person. Anika has no understanding of the assessment happening in the application process, or how she is being assessed and is missing opportunities to show her potential.



JILLY'S ECOSYSTEM

47 YEARS OLD, PĀKEHA, HR MANAGER
 SECTOR: MANUFACTURING AND LOGISTICS
 DRIVERS: BRANCH PROFIT, SHAREHOLDER RETURN,
 INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

JILLY: EMPLOYER

"This company is a family, we promote from within and we expect everyone to start on the shop floor and 'muck in' ... we find young people are quick to lose motivation and they miss out on growth opportunities."

CULTURE & DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is part of being a business in South Auckland but it can be hard to explain especially to some of the older management. Young people need a lot of support to learn the ropes in the workplace as it's unlike anything they are used to at home or school. Jilly gets this perhaps more than some of the managers do. Jilly knows it's basically the quality and knowledge of managers that can make the difference in working well with young people and helping them transition into the workplace.

JILLY'S FOCUS

Jilly's role is led by the senior management directive to recruit capable candidates for branch managers to select and develop for longer-terms roles in the business. The employee is a cost to the individual branch so they must integrate quickly into the workplace culture, be productive asap and have the ability to learn, grow and contribute.

APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Attitude is everything, but hiring young people is a painful process. She's not sure how to approach local schools but wonders if she should. Many of the applications are low quality and don't tell you enough about their potential and out of school credentials.

They have strict intake criteria and prefer that applicants come pre-screened and with relevant skills—that is normally from the ITO rather than out of school. Temp agencies are an option for 'try before you buy' and it's worth paying the extra to get someone who is a proven 'fit'.

RIGHT NOW

Getting the right young people is a big job. Qualifications are important but it's mostly about young people who are a culture and future fit.

Jilly knows that young people bring the talent needed and this is important for future growth. They are also a risk because they require so much more support and it's harder to assess them without the experience behind them. Health and safety is a core value for the business and it's very expensive to put young people through all the training. They have zero tolerance for drugs. They get overwhelmed by opportunities to meet with schools and agencies. It's not worth their investment.

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

Low High

QUALIFICATIONS

Not important Important

ORGANISATIONAL FIT

Not important Important

PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY

Low High

OPPORTUNITIES

To invest in regular management training of best practice for employee development.

To have a senior management champion of new talent integration.

To have internal career days and job swap opportunities for youth to see pathways.

To create formal and informal opportunities for young people and managers to set goals.

To enable a culture of communication and cultural flexibility to integrate home and work culture.

RISKS

Industry Training Organisation recruits have high expectations about progression and salary.

Managers hold 'old school' approaches to inducting and training young people.

Young people lose motivation and exit when they are finally becoming productive.

Young people have too many whānau obligations - it's never ending.



LEONE'S ECOSYSTEM

35 YEARS OLD, MĀORI, HR MANAGER
SECTOR: RETAIL FOUNDED IN THE UK
DRIVERS: SALES VOLUMES, EFFICIENCY AND LOW COSTS

LEONE: EMPLOYER

“We don’t have a diversity strategy but our workforce reflects our community...we’ve got to explain to our managers why this is important.”

CULTURE & DIVERSITY

Leone’s employer has values that are set internationally but also values that are specific to Auckland. The culture enables everyone to reward each other when they display the values and for those rewards to accumulate into tangible items or experiences.

Even though young people achieve these rewards they often need managerial direction to take on additional training in order to be promoted.

LEONE’S FOCUS

Leone employs lots of young people on casual contracts and often shift work of varying hours. Young people either succeed and are promoted or leave after a short time—there is high churn. International business strategy forms the overarching employee approach and framework. However Leone is personally invested in providing support for young people in her community and the work environment. She feels rewarded to see young people succeed and ensures that all the available training programmes are full.

APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT AND PROGRESSION

Recruitment for roles is via SEEK and Trade Me and candidates are asked to complete the application form on the website. Leone reviews the application forms first and then looks through the CVs. Group interviews are scheduled and candidates take a drug test for health and safety reasons.

Small rewards and acknowledgements are great motivators for the team and they promote from within.

Leone’s team managers therefore have a good understanding of how to motivate and reward young people –there is quite a connection.

RIGHT NOW

Leone’s role is to recruit suitable team members for the store managers to select from. It’s non-stop and she gets at least 50 applications a week – even when she is not advertising.

It’s overwhelming and especially frustrating when she can’t get hold of the candidates because they won’t answer their phone or are aggressive.

She goes out of her way to provide feedback to candidates who really make an effort but most CVs are generic.

MOTIVATION & ATTITUDE

Low High

QUALIFICATIONS

Not important Important

ORGANISATIONAL FIT

Not important Important

PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY

Low High

OPPORTUNITIES

To recruit and train youth in the quiet times.

To give managers more training support and ensure they understand that is a key investment for success.

To provide more visibility to young people on what’s expected of them.

To give insight and expectation around cultural norms.

RISKS

We hire lots of young people for the busy times – there is a lot of pressure to get it right and fill positions fast.

Managers are so busy, when time is short the training and understanding suffers.

For those that don’t work out, we reduce the number of hours allocated.

2. KEY FINDINGS: WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE GAP?

The stories and journeys of the people we talked to, coupled with the research and stakeholder input were synthesised. The overarching finding is that the challenge employers and young people face in South Auckland is much broader than an attitude challenge. In fact, Attitude is shorthand for a complex mix of:

- **Expectations** of each other's behaviour, systems and processes
- **Understanding** (and interpretation) of each other's values and cultural 'norms'
- **Knowledge** of each other's backgrounds, drivers and definition of motivation
- **Language** sets derived from both generational and cultural paradigms

The 'gap' is a combination of all these components and has created an environment where employers and young people seem to be 'foreign' to each other— with different language, behavioural norms, expectations, cultures and generational and often ethnic differences.

The gap is widened by the lack of early understanding and exposure of:

- young people to the world of work and the culture and expected norms of working life; and
- employers to young people and their obligations, motivations and norms outside the world of work.

A lack of easily accessible networks and support further intensifies the disconnect. The gap is so great that studies by McKinsey and colleagues and local education organisation COMET report that young people, employers and education providers appear to "live in parallel universes".

While there is a high degree of enthusiasm for solving the problem, there is little accountability within the system for taking action and being held responsible for improving outcomes.

Employers and families/whānau of young people share the perception that there is a lack of coordination between agencies in terms of how to serve the needs of the young job seeker. There is also a widespread view that someone else “should” be taking responsibility, including individual responsibility – yet no-one is accountable for overall responsibility for ensuring the right services or opportunities reach the right person at the right time. Further, those with the greatest opportunity for early influence (family, schools and community) had little or no specific resources directed to supporting future-appropriate understanding of work.

Employers seem to have little incentive or ability to understand young people and how to interact, motivate, and manage them effectively. Without a strong business drive for hiring them, they tend to revert to hiring and retaining people who are more like themselves or “easier”- ie what they deem to be low risk. While this is not a paradigm exclusive to South Auckland, the local context compounds this. There is a greater degree of cultural diversity and socio-economic and resource ‘gaps’ between those who work and hire talent in South Auckland, and the families and young people that live there.

There is anecdotal evidence that some employers in South Auckland are not well connected into the local community, potentially blocking them from gaining valuable local understanding of the importance of culture, and the difference in attitudes and beliefs. This is compounded by the fact that many managers don’t live locally so lack the skills and know-how to engage effectively with their potential workforce. This can mean that their hiring and retention policies and practices may be out of touch with the local context.

This increases the level of disconnection and disengagement many young people feel when interacting with employers in an attempt to access the world of work. Their lack of connection is evident to employers –which in turn lessens their likelihood to invest in hiring local young people. What becomes completely evident is simply this– when young people seek to enter the world of work, **it is a new kind of relationship for them**. They have little understanding or experience of the norms of work, and what behaviours will be expected from them.

I don't know what I don't know.
Young Person

Similarly employers often have little experience or understanding of the world of young people and experience young people's behaviour as 'foreign' and evidence of a bad attitude. Yet, rather than being an attitude gap, this lack of understanding of each other's world means actions and behaviours are misunderstood, misinterpreted or missed entirely.

I am not their teacher, or mother...

Employer

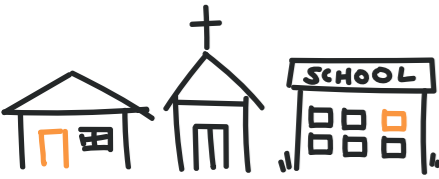
This is a two-way dysfunction that is leading to defensive attitudes from young people towards employers, and employers to young people, which lowers the motivation for both to engage.

Most employers realise that young people need support into employment, but there is not a clear understanding of what their role in this should be, and different employers take different positions on their level of responsibility. Employers hold different perspectives on their role in investing in young people and in on the benefits of doing so.

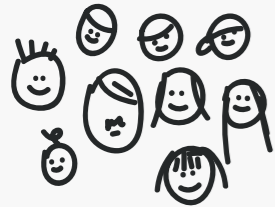
Neither are intentionally setting out to disengage with the other – in fact in some ways both need each other – but due to the absence of the right incentives and motivations for change, effectively become alienated.

TWO WORLDS

THERE ARE SHARED GOALS BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYERS (TO BE VALUED, RESPECTED AND TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION)
BUT THESE ARE EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY AND OFTEN NOT RECOGNISED BY THE OTHER PARTY.



ABOUT ME



I want to be independent and self-sufficient whilst also being able to support my whānau where required. I want to feel respected and valued by employers as someone who makes a contribution.

Key Influences that shape my perceptions, expectations and behaviours:

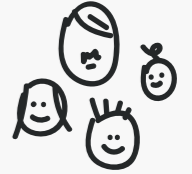
- Whānau/family
- Community network
- Friends
- School
- Media



50,000 AGED 15-24 YEARS
5,000 UNEMPLOYED AUCKLAND YOUTH

YOUNG PERSON

ABOUT ME



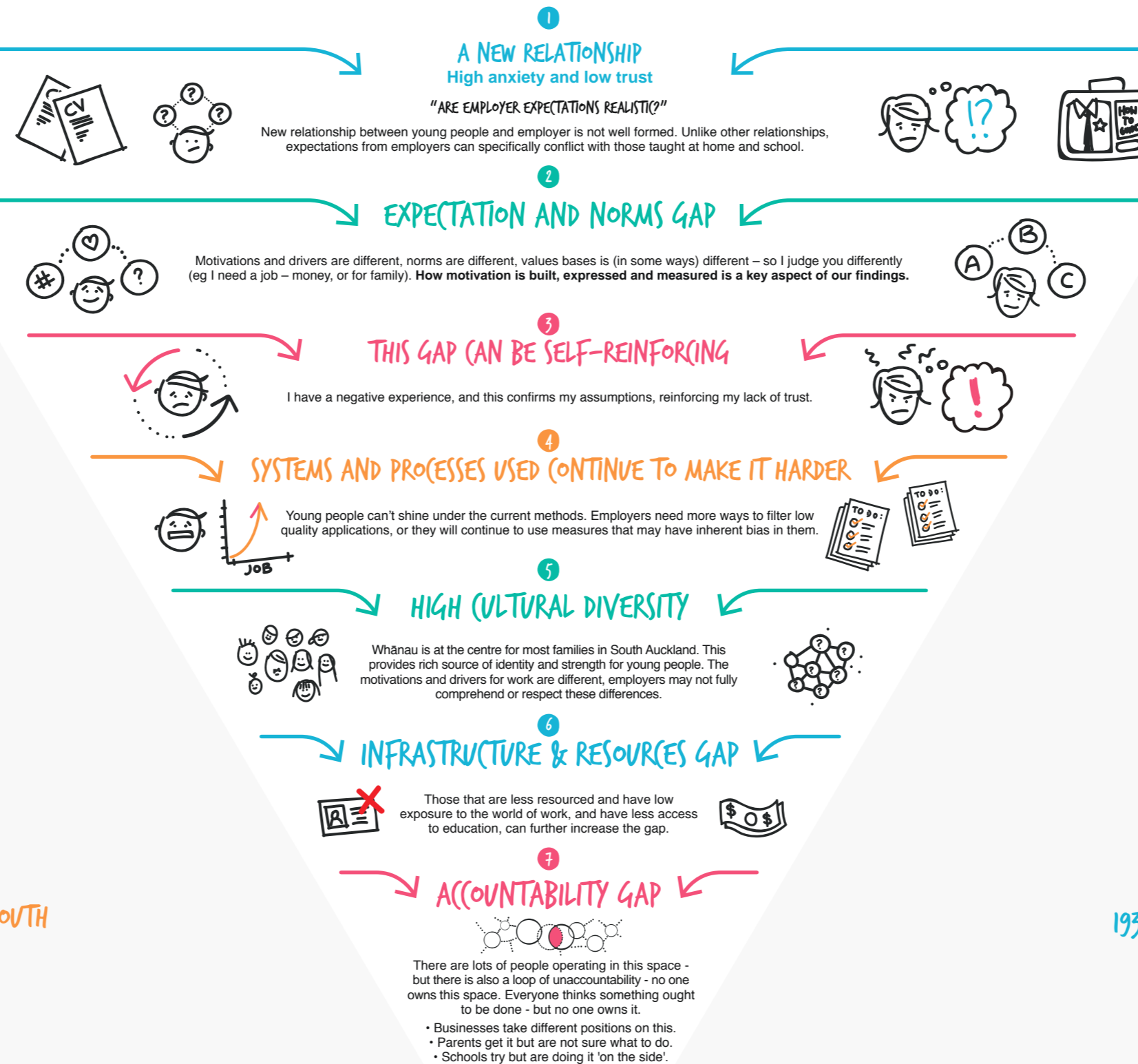
We want young people to show respect, value their role here and to make a contribution to the business that goes beyond the pay packet.

Key Influences that shape my perceptions, expectations and behaviours:

- Norms and culture
- Health and safety
- Business model, short or longer term investment
- Current make-up of staff and management
- Board/broader governance
- Legislation and compliance drivers

18,000 BUSINESSES
193,000 NEW JOBS BY 2024

EMPLOYER



→ OPPORTUNITY : (CHANGING WORLD OF WORK) ←

Young people need new skills.

World of work is changing, both young people and employers need to keep evolving.

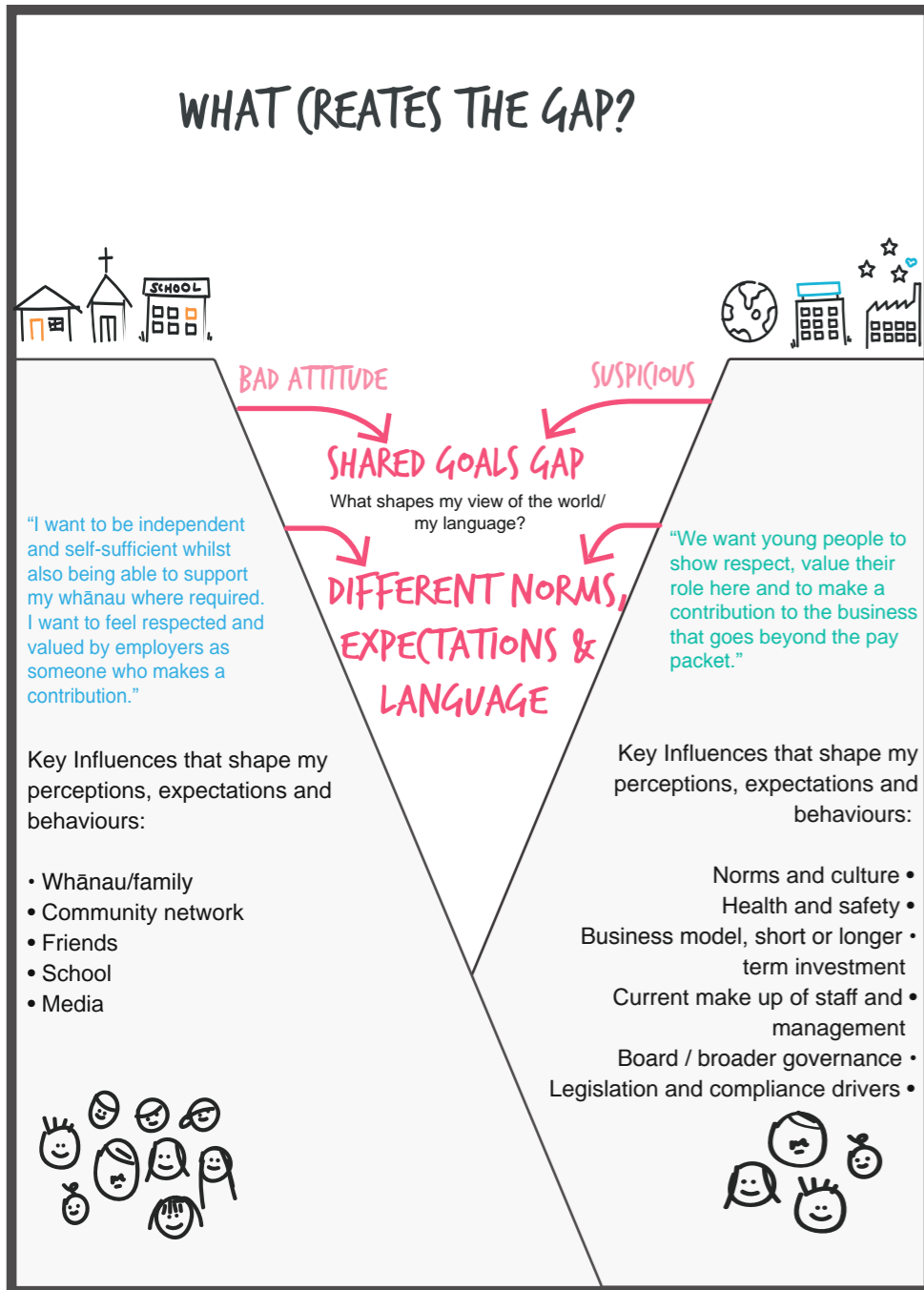
Employers need to change to understand the new norms of young people.



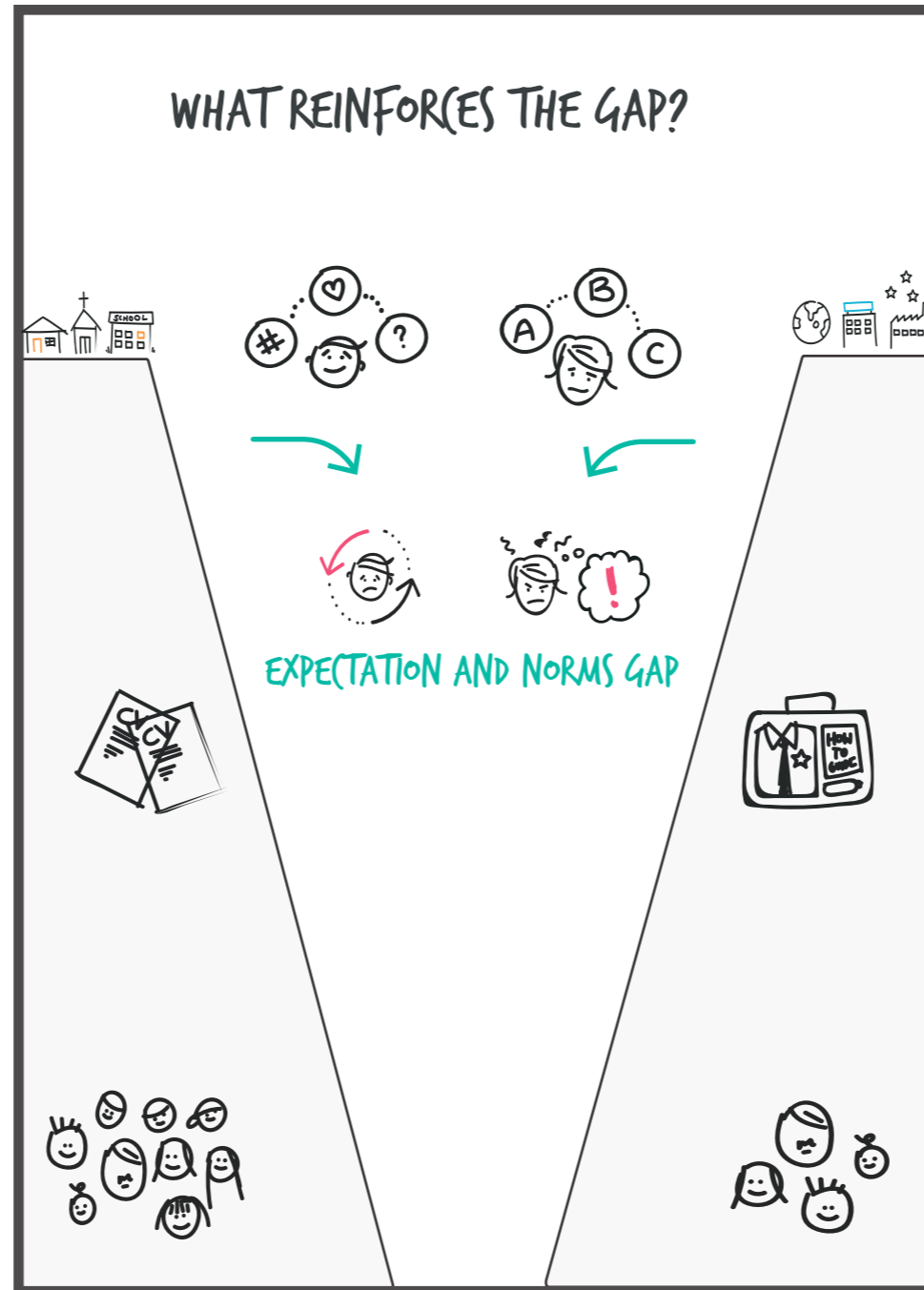
THE TWO WORLDS

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WORLD OF WORK

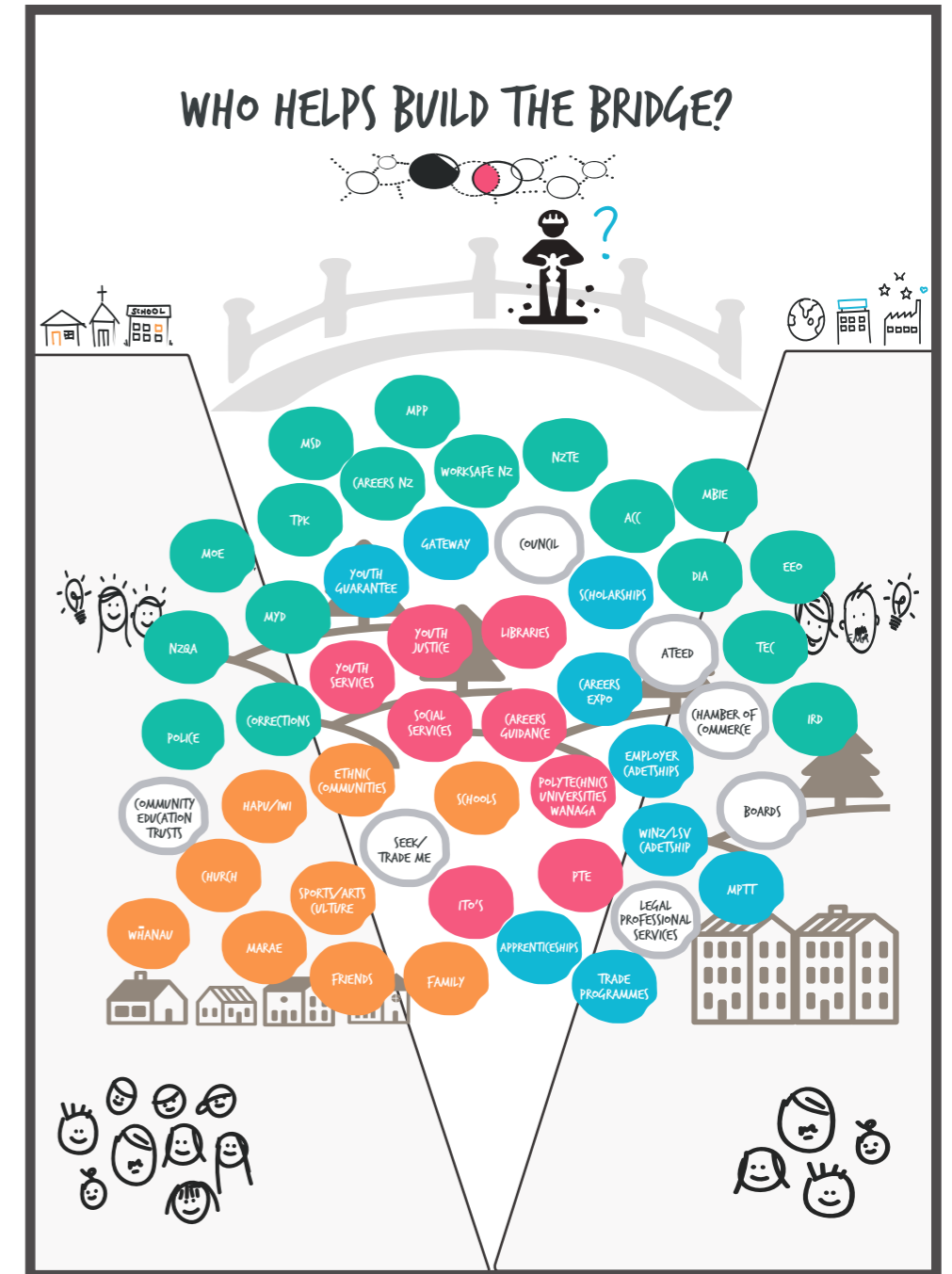
We found that the attitude 'gap' experienced by employers and young people is fuelled by an environment where employers and young people effectively live in two different worlds. While employers share similar long-term goals - success, prosperity, making a contribution and being and creating value these are often expressed and understood in very different terms.



There are shared goals (to be valued, respected and to make a contribution) but these are expressed differently and often not recognised by the other party. Language drivers and measures of success are wholly different and largely foreign to each other.



If either party has a "bad experience" or experience behaviour that they don't understand (of you as an employer or young person) it demotivates or frustrates them - reinforcing their perception of the other parties, lack of interest or understanding.



We know young people need support to close the gap. We can't expect young people to know what they don't know and go this journey alone. But who builds the bridge and helps them across?

3. FOUR AREAS WHERE THE GAP MANIFESTS AND INSIGHTS AROUND COMPOUNDING FACTORS

At the conclusion of the Explore phase the design team ran workshops with a wide range of stakeholders including young people, employers, education providers, whānau and other education to work transition stakeholders. The purpose of these sessions was to test, refine and prioritise the insights. The insights tested focused on the employment journey from two main viewpoints – that of the employer and that of the young person.

The outcome of these co-design sessions was a richer set of insights, and the synthesis and grouping of the insights into four critically important phases of the employment and hiring journey:

1. **Getting Prepared: learning about the world of work**
2. **Getting In: the invisible nature of the recruitment process**
3. **Staying In: balancing home and work life**
4. **Progressing: the cycle of motivation, risk and reward**

These four areas are the places where the mismatch of understanding, knowledge and expectations are being played out. Examples of the cycles and bias in process can be seen. Each stage is high risk for young people, as without the right resources and influences they can easily disengage from the world of work at each stage. Equally, they represent stages where employers can miss out on finding out the potential of young people they encounter. The visual framework below demonstrates how the disconnect of expectations and norms (identified earlier) between young people and employers is manifesting at different points in the journey.

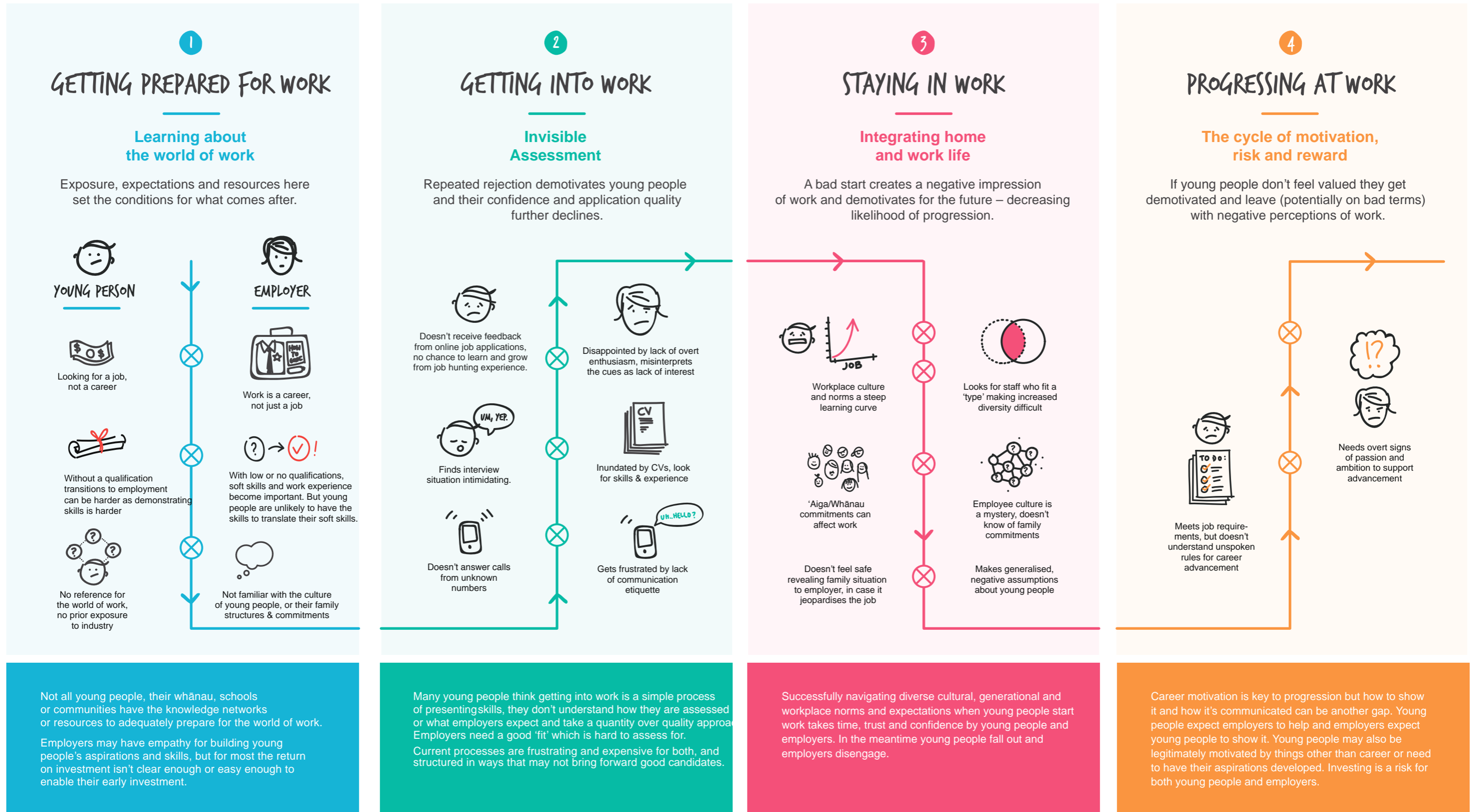
There are a range of drivers and contexts behind the different actions – what causes the main disconnection or lack of engagement at each part of the journey, and what is the impact. Each point in the journey can be the source of negative experiences and outcomes for both young people and employers. There is also often a compounding or cyclic effect where the negative experience then feeds actions and reactions on both sides that serve to further increase the gap.

The following visual illustrates the key points of tension, but also the key points of potential intervention where we can help improve the experience and outcomes of young people and employers –and act as a circuit breaker to the negative cycles that are currently in play.

EXAMINING THE "ATTITUDE GAP"

AN EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY IN SOUTH AUCKLAND

There are many key points of tension along the "employment journey" where young people and employers are disconnected and may 'drop out' – creating further problems in the future.



Not all young people, their whānau, schools or communities have the knowledge networks or resources to adequately prepare for the world of work.

Employers may have empathy for building young people's aspirations and skills, but for most the return on investment isn't clear enough or easy enough to enable their early investment.

Many young people think getting into work is a simple process of presenting skills, they don't understand how they are assessed or what employers expect and take a quantity over quality approach. Employers need a good 'fit' which is hard to assess for.

Current processes are frustrating and expensive for both, and structured in ways that may not bring forward good candidates.

Successfully navigating diverse cultural, generational and workplace norms and expectations when young people start work takes time, trust and confidence by young people and employers. In the meantime young people fall out and employers disengage.

Career motivation is key to progression but how to show it and how it's communicated can be another gap. Young people expect employers to help and employers expect young people to show it. Young people may also be legitimately motivated by things other than career or need to have their aspirations developed. Investing is a risk for both young people and employers.

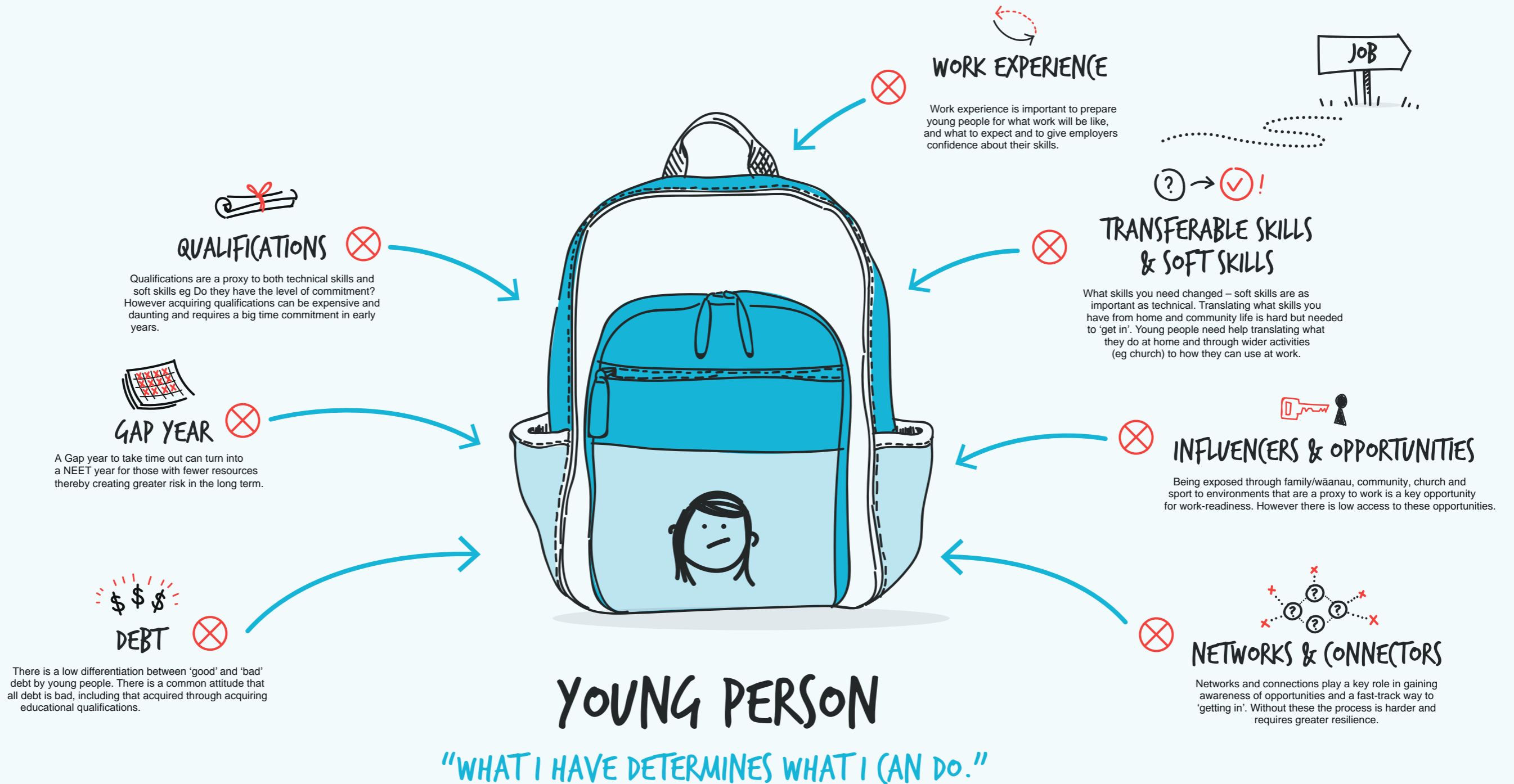


GETTING PREPARED FOR WORK

Learning about the world of work

Exposure, expectations and resources here set the conditions for what comes after.

Learning about and connections to the world of work, including from early in young people's life, is important for knowing how to successfully navigate into the world of work. Young people's awareness and exposure to the world of work shapes their understanding of the potential opportunities that are available to them, what they like and are good at, and the aspirations they build around work and employment. It is also critical to building a familiarity and understanding of the norms, expectations and practices that come with employment.





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Barriers and limitations

BUILDING VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE

FAMILY/WHĀNAU

If a young person's family and community networks have lower qualifications and resources, they are less likely to be able to connect young people to the world of work. And their own experiences may be negative.



INFLUENCERS & OPPORTUNITIES

Starting with no knowledge is a set-back. Being exposed through family/whānau, community, church and sport to environments that are a proxy to work is a key opportunity for work-readiness.



Young people's friends and community networks are also a channel and influence into the world of work.

MAKING GOOD, AND INFORMED CHOICES

KNOWING WHAT I WANNA DO

The more young people have been exposed to different options, the greater chance they have of making suitable choices



QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge about choices around qualifications and what subjects link to what career options need to be made early



What you have determines what you can do



SCHOOLS

Schools are another obvious key influencing environment for young people. However most schools have few connections and the work they do is 'on the side' and not incentivised.

OFTEN THE IMPLICATIONS OF BEING LOWER RESOURCED ARE LOWER QUALIFICATIONS AND FEWER CHOICES

→ ! TRANSFERABLE SKILLS & SOFT SKILLS

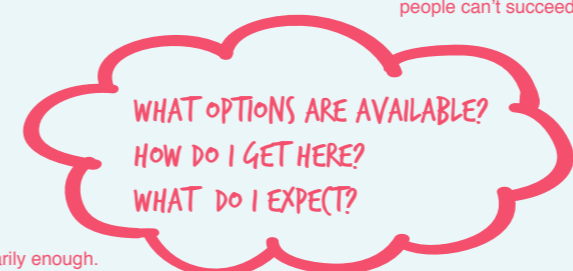
What skills you need has changed – soft skills are as important as technical. Translating what skills you have from home, community life is hard but needed to 'get in'. Young people need help translating what they do at home and through wider activities (eg church) to how they can use at work.

WORK EXPERIENCE

It's hard to break the cycle of "no experience – no job". Work experience is important to prepare young people for what work will be like, and what to expect and to give employers confidence about their skills.

LOW QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications are a proxy for soft and technical skills and commitment. Without a qualification it is harder for young people to demonstrate their skills. Young people in South Auckland are likely to have lower qualifications.



Not having good visibility or awareness doesn't mean people can't succeed, but it makes it much harder.

Knowing about what is possible is not necessarily enough. Young people respond to role models and seeing other people like themselves, this builds confidence.



Taking a year away from studies or work seems common in South Auckland for young people as a way to work out what they want to do next. Some will work part-time, which may not lead to the right full-time role on return (as often casual roles). Employers can see this year out as 'time-wasting' and an indication of a lack of motivation or the right attitude. Young people in South Auckland often don't have the resources or the connections to take a gap year that increase their employability.

WORLD OF WORK



The following section explores each of the phases in detail.

1. GETTING PREPARED: LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK

Learning about the world of work as early in young people's life as possible is important for knowing how to successfully navigate into the world of work. Young people's awareness and exposure to the world of work shapes their understanding of the potential opportunities that are available to them, what they like and could be good at, and the views they form on their level of aspiration towards work and employment.

Building on a strong cultural background can help to lay down the challenge to aspire: **Tama tū tama ora, tama noho tama mate – the active thrive whereas the lazy perish**: encouraging rangatahi to pursue employment and training opportunities for their and their families' well being (culturally, physically, whānau context, etc as all these things are intertwined within a Māori world view) .

It is also critical to building a familiarity and understanding of the norms, expectations and practices that come with employment.

Strong connections to and awareness of the world of work are built through key early influencers such as family/whānau, school and community networks. Families/whānau, communities and schools in South Auckland can themselves feel disconnected from the world of work, and need support building their own capacity to provide direction and guidance that is relevant.

Unemployment, lower incomes, and lower qualifications all serve to decrease the connections of whānau and community to the world of work and therefore reduce the opportunities of young people to build relevant experience and awareness. It also increases their perceived risk of studying higher level qualifications.

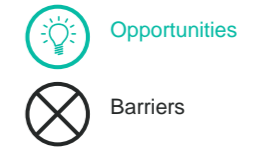
Most employers understand the value of early connections to young people but not necessarily how critical that is to shaping young people's understanding and ability to plan effectively or to integrate into the norms of the world of work. In addition they lack effective ways to connect or build early and scalable relationships with schools, whānau and community around talent attraction. As this can be costly and time consuming a clear return on investment for employers is required to make this a priority for business.

All these factors serve to increase the gap between employers and young people in South Auckland.

2

GETTING IN: The invisible nature of the recruitment process

The current state of recruitment has a cyclic effect of demotivating young people and frustrating employers who need to manage growing numbers of unsuitable applications. Young people are currently wasting time and money being unsuccessful. Young people feel rejected and dejected, while employers feel their time is wasted. Employers are potentially missing out on great hires because the process makes it hard for young people to successfully navigate these screening processes.



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SEE

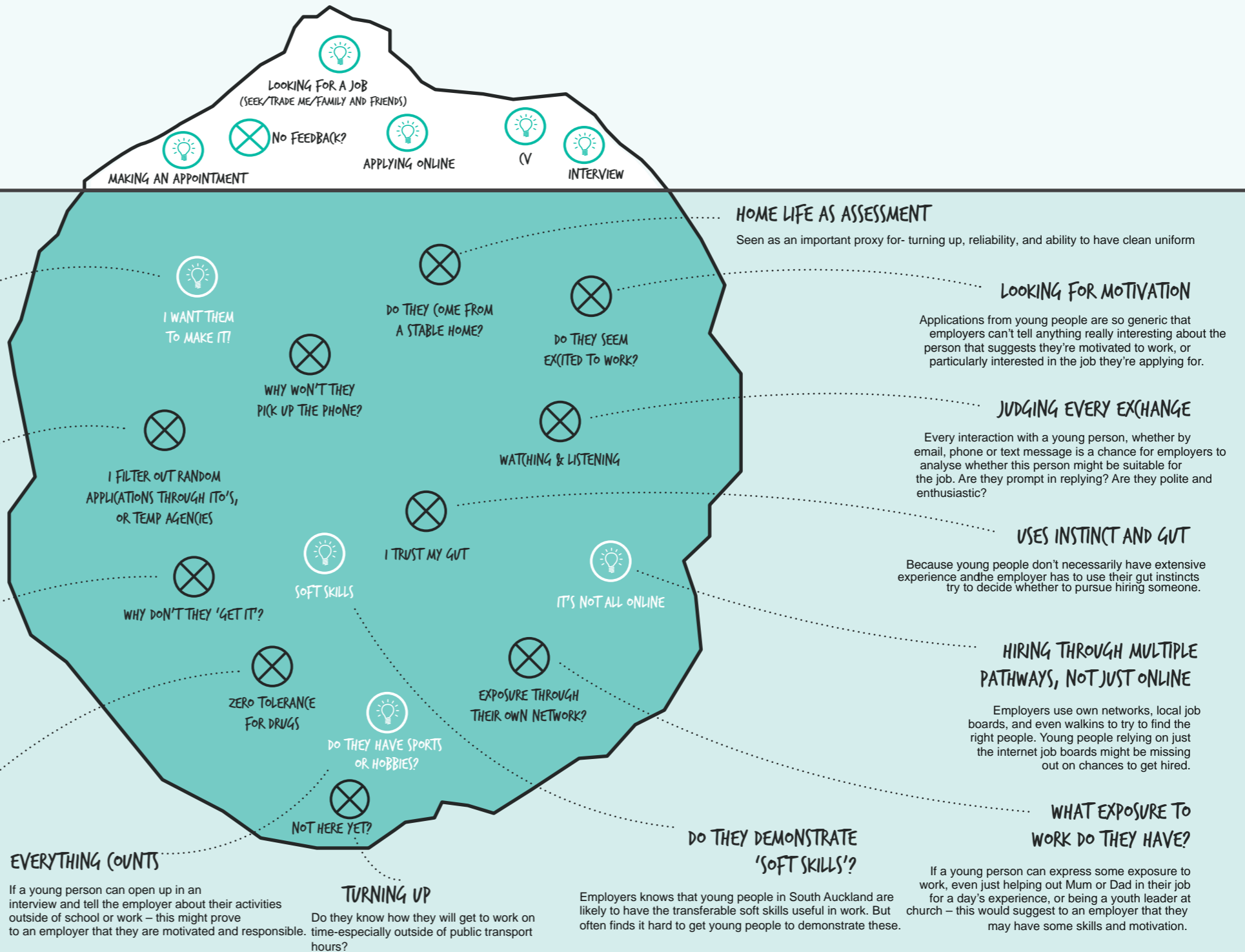
Young people think the process is a straight-forward presentation of skills, they don't realise that this is only a small part of recruitment.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SEE

Employers gets frustrated that young people do not present their skills (particularly soft skills) and experience in ways that make selecting candidates easy.

Employers receive high volumes of low quality applications and the screening out of young people who may be a good match for the job.

It also means employers have to rely on gauging their phone manner, ability to follow instructions during the application process etc.



2

GETTING IN:

Pain points across recruitment process

Young people think getting a job is a simple process of presenting skills, they don't understand how they are assessed or what employers expect and take a quantity over quality approach. Employers need a good 'fit', which is hard to assess for. Current processes are frustrating and expensive for both, and structured in ways that may not bring forward good candidates.

- Thoughts
- Insights
- Barriers/ drop-off points

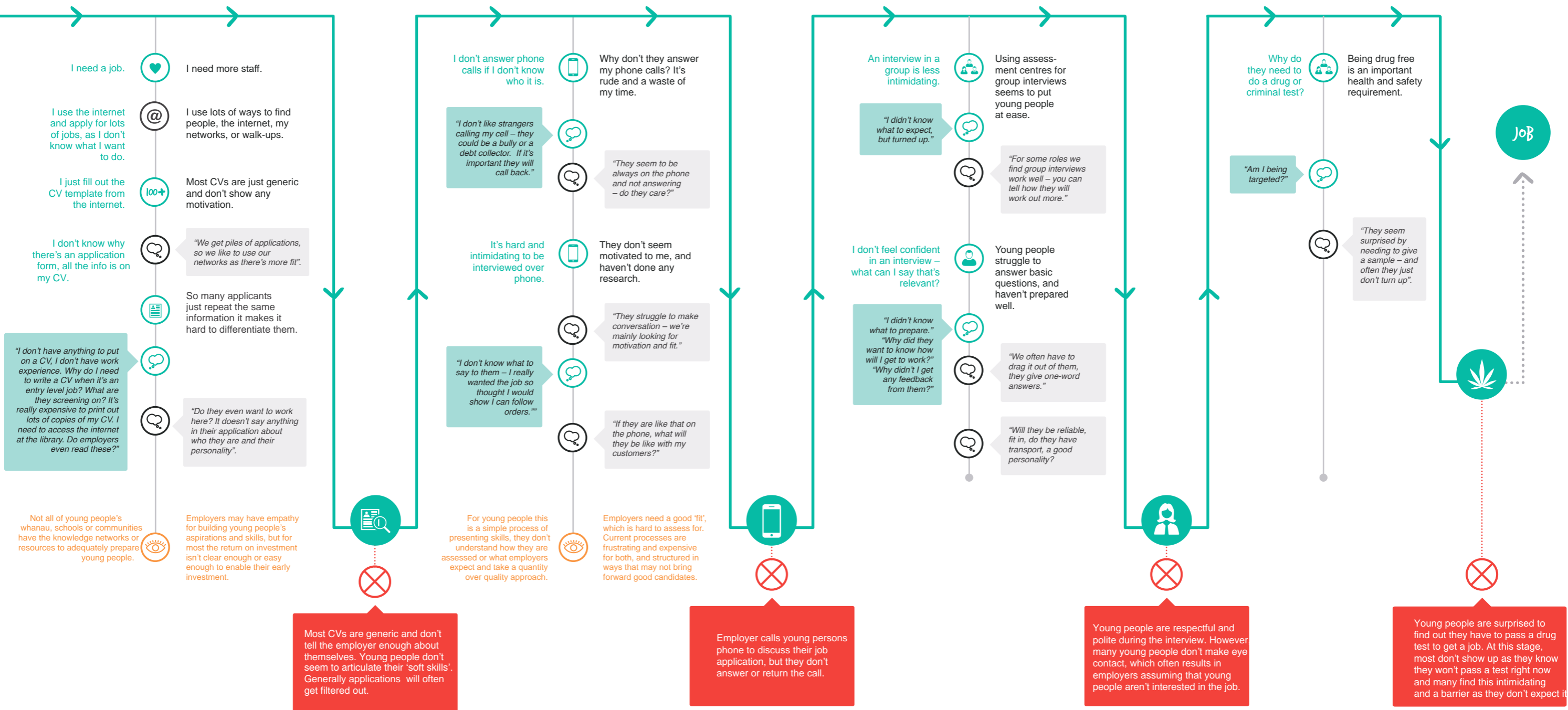


SEARCHING & APPLYING

PHONE SCREENING

INTERVIEWING

DRUG TESTING & CRIMINAL CHECKS



2. GETTING IN: THE INVISIBLE NATURE OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Insight – young person perspective

Most young people think when applying for a job that it's simply about presenting their skills and experience. They are generally unaware that it's as much **how they present** as **what they present** that will get them an interview and employment.



Young people are often unaware that they are being assessed across all steps in the process with regard to their “soft skills”; how they show if they are motivated to get the job; their general attitude; and likely organisational fit. Employers use these ‘screening out’ mechanisms to manage the large numbers of applications they receive in a short space of time.

This can lead to young people presenting poorly in the early stages of the application process as they are not aware of what they are being assessed on or how. Small actions, such as how they answer the phone, grammar used in their CV, correctly filling in the application form, or simply a lack of information – mean they are unlikely to progress to the next stage of the interview process, causing them frustration. As they don't receive any feedback on their applications they don't know why they are not being successful.

As they often have little or no support to guide them on how to present themselves, they will simply focus on quantity – applying for lots of jobs, thinking eventually they will ‘get noticed’. This continues the cycle of low quality CVs for employers, and the continued rejection is confusing and demotivating for young people.

I was on the dole for ages and then I started searching for work. I literally signed up for about 400 jobs on the internet and got told no by every single one or got no email back. That was a bit depressing—you just think oh okay you know maybe, maybe working life's not for you.

Young Person



Insight – employer perspective

Employers are frustrated that young people do not present their skills (particularly soft skills) and broader experience in ways that **make it easy for them** to screen and select candidates, particularly where many young candidates do not have qualifications or significant prior work history.

They perceive that young people generally don't present their skills appropriately or tailor their CVs to the job, causing them extra work to conduct screening of high volumes of low quality CVs. While they may recognise that in the 'screening out' phase there may potentially be candidates of merit, they don't see it as their job to educate young people on how to write a CV or to navigate the process. This is particularly important because young people, with less of an employment track record, are likely to be a riskier hire. Many see it as a generational problem which causes them extra time and cost when attempting to recruit young people.

As part of their screening they may rely on proxies such as phone manner, being able to follow simple application instructions and how tailored the application is to the position. These proxies may be easily met by young people, if they knew about them.

While many employers use open advertising many also used informal networks and referrals, which often reduced the costs of filtering applicants and increased the likelihood that they would be a good fit. Work experience, family connections and temporary employment labour agencies are often useful ways of making it through initial filtering or finding out about potential opportunities.

They really need to try and cater the CV to who they are applying for because a lot of times you will get the generic one that has gone out to everybody and it is like do you really want to work here or not?

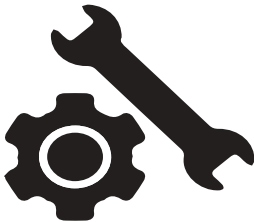
Employer



Impact

The current recruitment process for employers and young people is demotivating young people, and frustrating employers.

- Many young people are currently wasting time and money being unsuccessful.
- Young people feel rejected and dejected.
- Young people are losing faith in work due to early experiences of low success.
- Employers feel their valuable time is being wasted.
- Employers are potentially missing out on great hires because the process makes it hard for young people to successfully navigate through.
- Employers are prone to blaming a 'generation' and looking for others to fix the problem for them.



What's working?

- Some employers reported that they work with local community organisations and education organisations to support young people to apply for jobs, in some cases partner organisations such as iwi submit applications. This helps young people to tailor applications and access specific support through the process. It reduces the costs of screening and increases the quality of applicants.
- Several employers reported using text messages to keep in contact with young people through the application process, reducing drop-offs and increasing responses. In one case this includes automated text reminders and tips for the interview several times prior to the interview. Some provide freephone numbers for applicants, reducing cost as a barrier.
- Group interviews and informal information sessions were seen as useful by both employers and young people, particularly for entry level jobs with multiple intakes, for putting young people at ease and giving employers a better measure of young people's personalities and likely fit.



INSIGHTS AROUND COMPOUNDING FACTORS

The following sections provide greater detail around how the gap between the worlds of young people and employers can manifest during recruitment. They also help to shed some light on some of the contributing factors.

Communication

There can be a significant generational gap in terms of communication style, which becomes problematic when young people try to gain employment. Communication norms that are successful for young people, their peers and community can cause problems when young people interact with employers at early stages of the recruitment phase.

For example, many employers report:

- They cannot contact a significant proportion of young applicants (no answer or numbers don't work)
- applicants have inappropriate voicemail messages or email addresses
- applicants have very muted or short conversation style- ie one word answers.

The impact is profound for young people – if an employer comes across what they perceive as an inappropriate voicemail, it acts as a cue for employers to decide the young person will not be able to operate in the professional world and will result in that person being culled from the recruitment process.

Many young people are oblivious to the impact this is having, or why it would be important to employers.

Often these unconscious signals may in fact be self-protective mechanisms relating to their (lack of) personal experience. For example:

- They don't answer phone calls from numbers they don't know (specifically not answering blocked numbers), often because they are actively trying to avoid unwanted calls including bullies or debt collectors
- they often don't have credit on their phone so don't prioritise voicemail messages
- they are not used to communicating with 'employers' (people not like them) and may go on defence in terms of style- eg shut down.

CVs– quality versus quantity of applications

Young people know the importance of CVs but are not well guided through what a good CV looks like, or how employers use them in the assessment process.

We saw a pattern of young job seekers, particularly those who have been looking for some time, focus on the quantity of jobs they apply for. This may be reinforced through the behaviour of some providers and Work and Income who have a focus on how many jobs their clients apply for (often due to their own targets or key performance indicators (KPIs), or their own lack of understanding of what employers are looking for).

Young people were often not aware of the need to tailor their CV or application for the role, sending out generic copies of their CV to many of employers. It was common to not get any response from employers at all, and any responses were usually generic rejection emails that cannot be replied to. With no feedback the recruitment process is designed in a way that young people don't learn from it. It is very demotivating and effectively sets them up to fail.

Employers often use CVs and applications to access more than just the skills and experiences of applicants, but also the motivation, personality and potential fit of applicants. Employers feel frustrated with the high volume of low quality, generic CVs and often use automated processes and fast filtering systems, sometimes through other agencies, to manage the volumes of applicants. Due to the high volumes they don't take the time to give feedback to most people that apply.

This results in a negative loop, as more bad applications are submitted, and more young people get culled or discounted very early in the process. For employers it becomes a frustrating screen-out process to minimise cost.

Online application methods

Online applications increase the potential for poor applications. Technology enables young people to apply for multiple jobs which they may know little about, and reduces their ability to find out about the opportunity prior to applying.

While they are familiar with technology and comfortable using the internet for personal use, young people felt that hiring should be about face to face, and don't understand how an employer can make an accurate assessment about them based on an online application. Without understanding why employers use

online application forms, they can seem like a frustrating waste of time for young people.

The impersonal nature of the online process increases the possibility of demotivating young people to disengage or to be unsuccessful. This is increased through no feedback from the employer. Young people's online experience also creates expectations of immediate or timely response to applications, which are often not met and cause them to think that no response is a rejection, as is often the case.

While employers frequently use these application processes they also use informal networks and connections to both gain applicants and move people to the next stage of the selection process. Employers also reported they preferred referrals from trusted providers as a way to reduce volumes and increase quantity of candidates or high volumes of applicants.

The growing importance of soft skills

Employers use instinct to rapidly screen out candidates around a lack of 'soft skills', as they feel the ability to demonstrate soft skills is particularly important for those without qualifications. Employers often say they hire on soft skills and cultural fit, and train for hard skills. However, their screening processes can be poor at assessing the actual underlying skills and potential of young people.

Every employer has their own definition of what they are looking for – and it is often linked to the cultural values of the organisation (organisational ‘fit’) – but generally they are seeking validation in the recruitment process of a prospective employee’s capability around:

- building relationships
- inter-personal skills
- manners, grammar, language
- motivation, confidence, resilience
- emotional control.

Many young people either do not know this is a deal-breaker or do not know how to present themselves to meet the invisible standards. Young people know they need to demonstrate technical skills and things like ‘confidence’, but often do not know they need to showcase their soft skills and often do not see the relevance of home and community experience to the workplace.

Further, young people often don’t speak the language of ‘soft skills’, or recognise the value that employers place on people’s ability to relate to others or how to demonstrate it through experiences. Often they have high capability in these skills gained from home, school or community life, but struggle to know how to translate these skills to an employer or to communicate these skills through a structured screening or interview process.

Overall, it appears that no one is sure who is responsible for teaching or preparing young people in how to present their soft-skills in a way that successfully navigates them into the workplace.

Soft skills are harder to teach and to learn as it’s more nuanced than just having a well filled out CV. They are also harder to assess, particularly for people with less work experience.

Health and safety

Health and safety is very important to most employers in South Auckland because of the nature of their industries and recent changes to legislation.

Young people are often being screened out of jobs based on their perceived lack of awareness of or compliance with health and safety requirements. For example, they may get asked to take a drug or alcohol screening test to ensure they comply with health and safety standards, or employers will assess how likely they are to follow instructions. Several employers reported that they perceived younger people to be more likely to demonstrate risk-taking behaviour, and due to increased health and safety requirements, were less likely to hire them.

Many young people will not know the purpose of the test and find it intimidating, so simply won’t show up to interviews when they find out this a requirement. Or, they will fail as they do not perceive the importance of being drug and alcohol free when approaching employers or the workplace.

Part of employers’ health and safety obligations is to ensure that employees have the requisite driver licence if they are driving at work. The lack of a driver licence is a significant barrier to gaining employment, and the recent changes to health and safety legislation have made this requirement more compelling than previously.

Employers also feel that their duty of care extends to the responsibility to ensure that workers are travelling to and from work safely:

no licence would restrict them a lot because if they're working night shift we can't have people catching a bus or walking home at 2am

Employer

Resourcing

Recruitment is a high cost for both employers and young people. It requires both financial, physical and emotional resources.

Many young people in South Auckland have low reserves across all of these resource bases. They may not have access to the internet at home, many are using the library (for example) to fill out application forms and write and print CVs. They may not be connected to the right networks and resources to help them shortcut the process. They may also have significant home-life challenges such as sharing family care and overcrowded conditions.

Employers look for access to resources as part of their recruitment process. There is a tendency to cull people who appear in the employer's eyes not to have access to basic resources such as adequate housing, phone, food, transport (car and driver licence) or family support due to a perception that this will affect reliability and performance.

This creates a negative causal impact – **“What you have determines what you can do”**.

Another key resource that is often missing in South Auckland families is a driver licence. A recent Auckland Co-design Lab challenge found that driving unlicensed is endemic in South

Auckland. This is because the graduated driver licence requires a number of resources that young people don't have access to including a fully licensed driver to supervise them at all times, a warranted and licensed car to practise in, an understanding of the system, the ability to judge whether they are ready to pass, the money to (repeatedly) sit the multiple tests, literacy to pass the theory test, confidence, proof of identification.

Conversely, up to 70% of advertised jobs require a driver licence whether the job involves driving or not, as employers see the attainment of a licence as both a signal of motivation, and a way to prioritise applicants with no other qualifications and an enabler of reliability. This compounding lack of resources can take a toll on their emotional resilience.

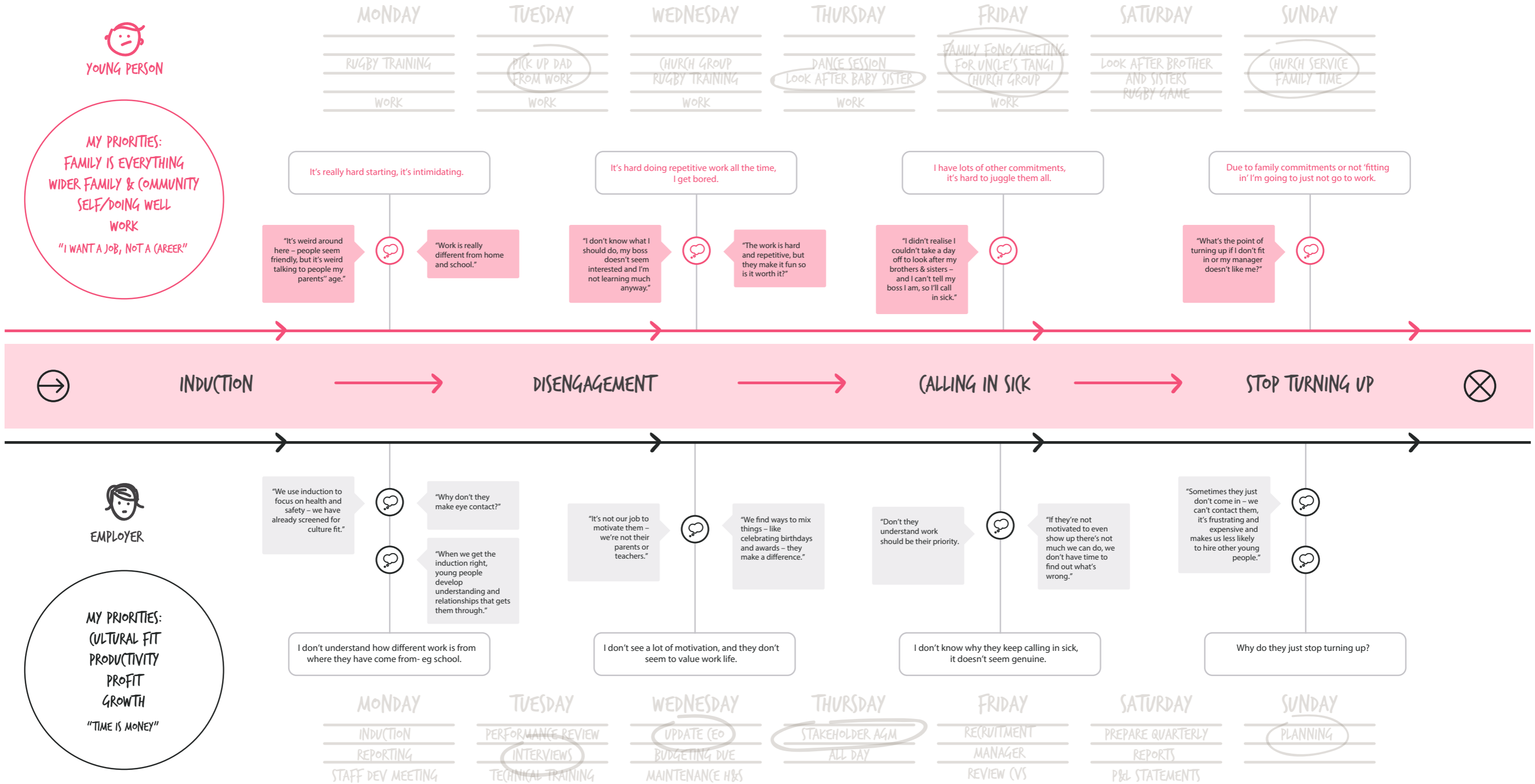
A solid family life I guess is important...I mean that's not always going to be the case, but if you've got no fixed abode that you can live in, how are you going to be able to get to work on time, with a clean uniform and be here, looking sharp because it's important to us. Because those are little things that if you let slide, then you know rubbish can slip through and then it just sort of starts to disintegrate the whole quality.

Employer

3

STAYING IN: Integrating homelife and worklife

Each workplace has its own set of cultural norms and expectations. Young people also bring a range of different and complex norms into the workplace. These different sets of norms and expectations can often lead to conflict or misunderstandings. This is particularly true for South Auckland where there are high levels of cultural diversity.



3. STAYING IN: INTEGRATING HOME LIFE AND WORK LIFE

Insight – young person perspective

Young people bring a range of different generational and cultural norms into the workplace with them. For many – particularly those with less exposure to work – they will have little understanding of workplace culture, how important it is to their employer, and what is therefore expected of them or how to integrate into it. It is important for young people to be aware that each workplace has its own set of cultural norms and expectations that may be quite different to what they are used to and can be overwhelming and alienating.

Unless adequate support or resources are made available to young people to navigate this from the outset, misunderstanding and disengagement can occur early on, often causing damaging consequences. Early disengagement from early experiences of employment can be particularly damaging for young people and reinforce employers' negative views of hiring young people.

The cultural diversity of South Auckland, and centrality of family and whānau to Māori, Pacific and Asian cultures, creates additional complexity when home life and work life intersect. Many Māori and Pacific young people in particular have whānau and community commitments, expectations, obligations and responsibilities external to work which are often invisible or unfamiliar to employers.

Young people need to balance a range of demands, and can feel torn between work and family obligations. They often will not raise these challenges with employers if they do not think they will understand their cultural/home-life obligations or have a trusting relationship with their employer.



They'll be like oh yeah, work's more important to you, you only want the money, God doesn't matter. Whereas if you went to church, your employer would think, oh no, this person doesn't care, we shouldn't have employed her and stuff. So either way there is always going to be some one that's disappointed and in the end it's always going to be yourself.

Young Person



Insight – employer perspective

For employers, organisational fit is seen as a key driver of productivity and staff retention, and is therefore a guiding focus in recruitment and management processes. Many focus on selecting for fit, rather than developing it, due to cost, capability and a view that fit is often fixed and not able to be developed or supported.

At the same time, the culture of an organisation and the expected behaviours that are used to measure good 'organisational fit' can be quite implicit, invisible and at times applied unconsciously by employers, making it hard to consciously induct people into it. This can be amplified by generational and cultural differences.

Employers will often standardise their screening and management practices to minimise costs and risks from employees that do not fit within the organisation, rather than increase support for young people and development for managers. This can lead to screening and managing on stereotypes during recruitment and even early exiting of staff.

I've had people that are not turning up, they're slow, you can tell that they're physically and emotionally distressed. So, I've sort of pulled them in, and they say: "Well, actually my Mum's picked up work and I actually have to stay home and look after the younger kids on that day and I just didn't want to tell you because I didn't want to be embarrassed to say that we've now had to pick up extra work at home." So it's just making sure that they feel comfortable enough to come in and actually be able to speak with you... and for them being aware that you can actually spend the time with them.

Employer

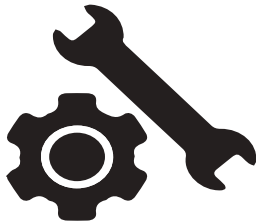


Impact

Learning about diverse cultures and how to accommodate them can be difficult and costly for employers, and difficult and uncomfortable for young people.

Knowing that young people draw a lot of confidence from the cultural community they know, giving up their 'norms' when starting out in work is a high expectation. If they feel compromised they are more likely to prioritise their home-life culture – which can result in disengagement from employment, such as unexplained absenteeism.

Understanding cultural differences is bidirectional (ie it requires effort and understanding from both employee and employer) and critical in building professional relationships and enabling a positive start for young people in a foreign environment.



What's working?

- Several employers reported that inductions that focus on culture and building relationships significantly reduced disengagement, partly because it enables young people to integrate but also it helps employers to be more aware of their workplace norms and expectations.
- Employers also reported that structured cadetships and apprenticeships helped integration.
- Employers and young people reported that buddies of similar ages and backgrounds were also useful for supporting integration.
- One employer reported that cultural training increased productivity by increasing the ability of managers to have discussions with their employees and to manage issues.



INSIGHTS AROUND COMPOUNDING FACTORS

The following sections provide greater detail around how the gap between the worlds of young people and employers can manifest during work life and home life integration. They also help to shed some light on some of the contributing factors.

Most employers select for fitting into norms and values

Fitting into the workplace is a key selection criterion for employers as it is seen as a core driver of productivity. For many employers being able to identify shared norms and values reassures them that the employee will display required behaviours and result in a positive relationship.

Employers often standardise their screening and management practices to reduce cost and risk of hiring someone who doesn't fit, instead of accommodating or integrating difference into their workplace.

Employers reported this was for several reasons:

- Some felt that cultural fit was fixed or outside of the control or role of companies to alter / or accommodate.
- Some felt that the cost, risk of failure, or knowledge required of them was too high (often based on past experience).
- Recruiting diverse people is perceived to lead to increased turnover, which has a direct business cost.

HR people often reported needing to support managers to consider more diverse employees, such as younger people.

The measurement of workplace fit or cultural norms is often hidden, making it hard for young people to display, learn and develop.

It also makes it hard for employers to change or challenge.

Seemingly simple tasks for managers, such as interacting with older colleagues, showing initiative, and picking up workplace jargon can be challenging for young people without support; particularly as some can be very specific to workplaces.

Forming meaningful relationships can be hard, and more complex to achieve in South Auckland due to the range of cultures, but these are important for learning norms and values.

Impacts include:

- Invisible cultural filters that can reduce hiring and building the right people, which can be a barrier for young people, particularly those with no prior work experience.
- Young people cycle themselves out of this invisible assessment on cultural fit and end up losing motivation to look for work, as quite often they misunderstand their rejection is based on lack of skills to do the job.
- Employers stick to hiring through known groups, therefore limiting their options.
- Employers end up screening out for risk and miss opportunities to hire capable young people.

Integrating young people into the workplace requires two-way relationships

Work is a new world and represents a set of different kinds of relationship for young people. Starting a job can be hard without the right support and resources, and often the culture of organisations can be the hardest hurdle for young people to learn and integrate into. School culture is not a great translation into work culture, as it does not prepare young people to build meaningful relationships at work or adapt to workplace culture.

Managers are not always trained in induction and recruitment, nor do they have the resources or understanding to support young people in the workplace. Employers reported that this is an even greater challenge where they had an aging management team or few positions that were targeted specifically towards young people.

We've had a few interesting conversations because we've got a lot of older branch managers...they're very open to them once they understand that that's what it's about, but it obviously I guess our Kiwi culture getting our heads around those different ethnic groups, and understanding those different things we have to accommodate now, because New Zealand is pretty diversified.

Employer

Successful inductions include both soft and hard skills

Employers report that inductions that work well for productivity and retention are focussed on communicating organisational norms, values, culture, and belonging– not just technical skills– to a new employee. It's more than a few introductions, it is the opportunity to share the culture of the business, values, expectations and standards, and develop relationships, besides the technical aspects of the job.

However, for many young people who might know little about how workplaces operate and the importance of integrating with cultural 'norms' set outside their family or community, they report their early days of work as intimidating, daunting and anxiety provoking. This is also backed up by a study of disadvantaged children in Britain (Oxenbridge and Evesson, 2012).

This may be intensified when combined with, for example Pacific cultures where different communication norms are adhered to, such as deferring to elders, or young women not speaking up (Generation One, 2012).

If the induction and first few weeks of work don't go well a potentially good hire can disengage or not meet their potential early on, leading to a downward spiral.

Managing obligations

Many young people have significant family and community obligations. In many cases contributing to the household budget or supporting family is a key motivation for working, so is part of their broader family obligations.

This can mean that family priorities such as looking after younger children or supporting church activities can lead to them de-prioritising work. Young people often find themselves in the middle of conflicting priorities.

Some employers will ask young people during the interview stages how they plan to manage their obligations. If young people haven't thought about it they may encourage them to speak with their families about how they will manage and support their work responsibilities and routine.

Other employers are more likely to select out people they think may have significant challenges, and a lack of preparedness by young people in this regard can also be read as a signal of high risk, regardless of the obligations. Many young people don't plan ahead as to how they will balance these obligations before starting work, and don't anticipate how to communicate this at an early stage in the process.

Employers also reported that often they are not aware of what young people are managing at home. Young people are unlikely to tell managers if they feel their needs won't be understood, instead they may just stop turning up or take sick leave. Employers reported that developing these relationships required significant investment but were ultimately

worthwhile as it increased retention, and enabled addressing issues at an earlier stage.

Employers adopt different risk mitigation approaches

Employers view young people as higher risk due to their lack of experience and track record, and their potential lack of motivation. Employers often addressed this through two main approaches, either greater testing and selection prior to employment—making it harder to get in; or creating lower cost or lower risk methods of testing and potentially exiting staff, such as starting on fewer assigned shifts or employing young people on fixed-term contracts during busy periods such as holidays and selecting for permanent staff from these people.

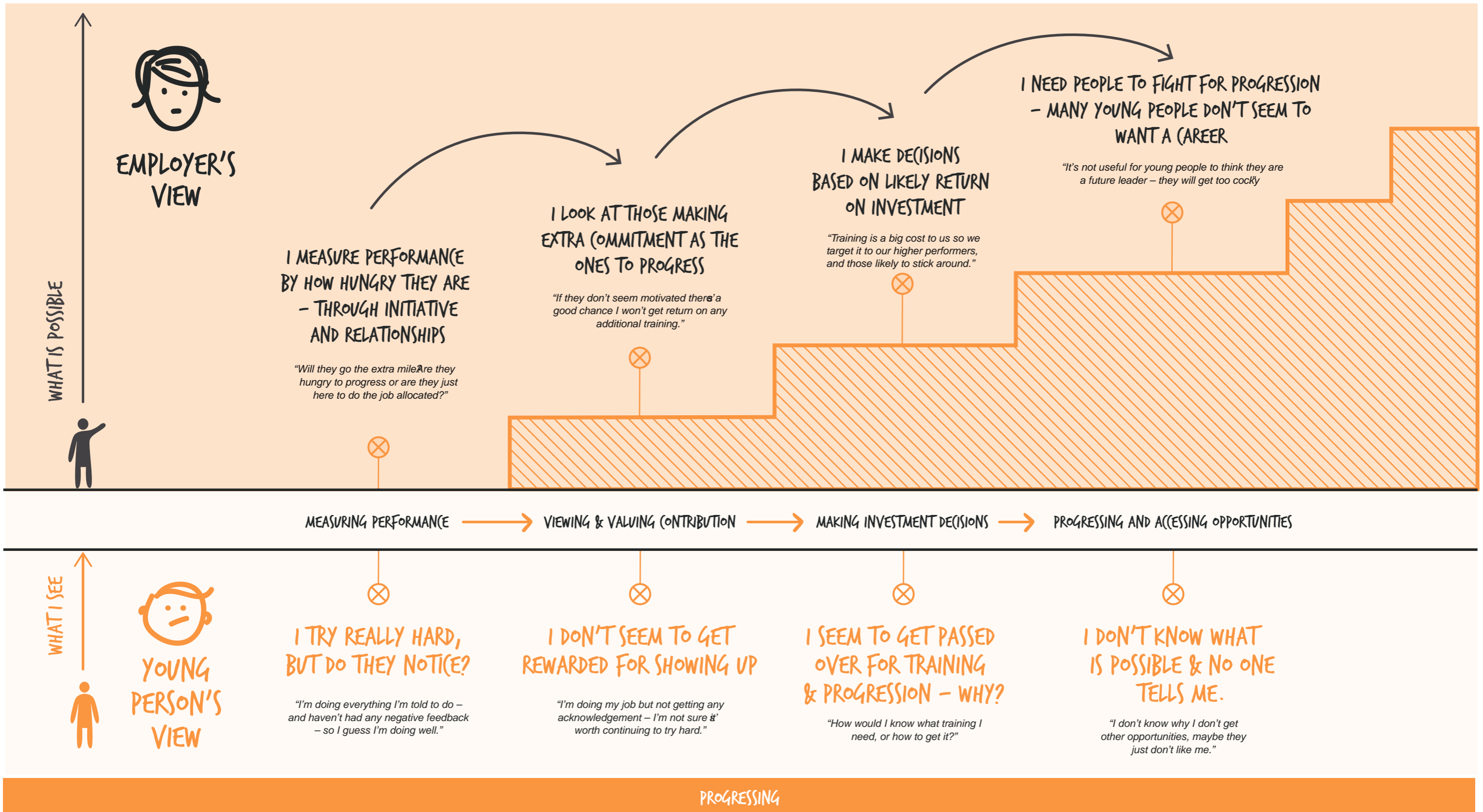
For young people higher thresholds for employment can result in fewer opportunities, and ultimately disengagement as they don't believe they are likely to gain employment. Ongoing selection processes can also be challenging for young people as they do not know how to be successful, view it as a negative sign from their employers or do not understand potential opportunities.

4

PROGRESSING AT WORK

The cycle of motivation, risk and reward

Career motivation is key to progression but how to show it and how it's communicated can be another gap. Young people expect employers to help and employers expect young people to show it. Young people may also be legitimately motivated by things other than career or need to have their aspirations developed. Investing is a risk for both young people and employers.



4. PROGRESSING: THE CYCLE OF MOTIVATION, RISK AND REWARD



Insight – young person perspective

Most young people need support to understand the opportunities that exist for them once employed. Some young people have specifically articulated career aspirations. Others, however, may be driven by more immediate needs to secure an income to provide for

themselves or their families, or may just be exploring opportunities. These young people are often **unconsciously giving out signals** that may result in them being passed over for progression.

I guess there is a sort of misunderstanding because employers are expecting us to come to be really motivated and come to the workplace prepared for what's happening. But especially if we are coming straight out of high school...this is new kind of territory for us and we've never been taught or learned or had any experience, so yeah, it's kind of a gap.

Young Person

Providing for family or wanting to cover basic needs or just wanting a job may not appear to employers as sufficient motivation to support progression. In some cases the difficult and confusing process of getting a job has

reduced their ambition. This can lead to young

people feeling they are not being acknowledged or rewarded, reducing their motivation, and therefore employers miss

out on the potential of many young employees' capability. Without the encouragement and support to consider how they could progress, many become disinterested in work and may drop out.

For many young people, they may be still deciding what they want to do and often only find out about the realities of working life or different roles, once they start. If they are unclear about their pathways when they join an organisation it can signal they don't know what they want to an employer and lead to them being passed over for progression because they are too much of a risk.

I don't know, being a Samoan young person sometimes you can get overlooked for a lot of things...like you need to show your employer, or your manager, like, that you know what you want. And that you have to also speak up for what you want as well. Or you're just gonna be like that person in the corner, and then they just look at you like, oh well, they look happy where they are.

Samoan 'aiga

Most young people – whatever their circumstances – will expect that employers will help them progress, and need clear signals from employers to develop and show motivation, including seeing tangible progression pathways and rewards. Without these they can become demotivated or believe they do not have opportunities.

In addition not all young people show motivation in the same way, particularly when work culture clashes with accepted cultural practices:

Kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka: The kumara doesn't speak of its own sweetness, whereby showing humility and respect for others, not putting oneself first is a proverb that sums up a cultural reluctance to push oneself forward which could work against young people in terms of showing or wanting to progress with a career pathway.



Insight – employer perspective

Employers form views on their employees from an early stage – and their perception of a young person's level of motivation to grow in their role is a key requirement for including them in development opportunities and progression pathways. It signals commitment and interest in growth and reduces the risk of investing in employees unlikely to stay or be unsuitable to progress.

Because motivation is a key requirement for progression and additional investment, employers are often intentionally unclear about progression pathways or development opportunities, until they have assessed a young person's capability or commitment level.

A strong work ethic, and again that doesn't mean working longer or more, it just means, you know smarter, you know that sort of thing. I want you to speak up and voice the expectations, as an employer we're not mind readers so we want to be able to make sure we know what you actually want, whether this is a role, a career, a filler, so we can help you.

Employer

No career path is going to be the same for any one person, there's many different opportunities, you've just got to grasp them, we're not into handholding, you've got to show initiative and enthusiasm and have a great attitude, and a good work ethic.

Employer

Employers also often observe and assess young people in ways that are invisible, so while young people think it's about the work they are doing, it's also about the relationships they develop and the signals they send about their level of commitment to the wider organisation. Measures of motivation are subjective and culturally informed.

Some employers reported that they have to push some employees, particularly Pacific women, to consider progression opportunities, often because they do not believe that those opportunities are available or suitable for them.

You know you got to open up that window of opportunity for them because they don't know it's there unless you approach them.

Employer

Impact

It can become a downward spiral for employees who may have either:

- high capability, but don't recognise a pathway to greater income for themselves, or
- a talented employee who is unable to show motivation beyond 'getting the job done' due to cultural tendencies not to come forward.

For employers the system they have created may be unwittingly resulting in many young people with high potential not being progressed – and potentially being lost from their organisation. The initial cost of recruitment and training is lost due to a misalignment around progression pathways designed to fit the individual, versus the organisation.

This can be costly for employers and young people – but the impact on young people is greater. Not progressing in an organisation and feeling 'passed over' after doing what they perceived as the right thing can have a long-term impact on their confidence or motivation. For some the previous steps in getting a job have reduced their ambition and ability to show motivation.





What's working?

Some employers actively support young people to develop and progress from a 'job' to a 'career', if they see potential. This includes supporting young people to rotate through several positions in a company, putting them through leadership training, and mentoring.

- These employers are helping young people to develop the ambition and awareness of a career pathway.
- Some employers employ more than one young person at the same time, so they can buddy up and support each other.
- Many employers are focused on developing clearer development pathways, and aligning training and development opportunities to these. Some employers have broken these down to specific competencies and motivations. This includes training for managers in mentoring, training and support.



INSIGHTS AROUND COMPOUNDING FACTORS

The following sections provide greater detail around how the gap between the worlds of young people and employers can manifest during work life progression. They also help to shed some light on some of the contributing factors.

Measuring and demonstrating motivation

Showing motivation is an important driver for employers– it is a signal that young people will work hard, have potential, will take up opportunities to progress and develop, and will remain engaged in employment. It is often more important than immediate technical proficiency, as it signals how likely employers are to get a good return for their investment in young people in the longer term.

Employers' assessment of young people's degree of motivation and ability to progress is continuous, invisible and subjective, often based on gut feeling and past experiences – possibly even stereotypes, which are open to unconscious biases. Employers keep their assessment hidden either because they are implicit or because they don't want to be committing to things about progression too early for young people. Meanwhile, young people often expect that employers will help them manage their development. This mismatch of expectations can lead to high turnover in some positions, and set up young people for negative experiences.

For young people there is commonly a perception that working 'just hard enough' and following instructions is enough. Without a clear steer on what matters, getting the job is most important and they do not understand the difference between showing organisational commitment versus doing the work. In some cases employment expectations are not communicated to the young people, so they don't realise they are not performing, or even what kinds of things

Everyone will be watching, everybody will be watching how you hold yourself, how you have conversations and relate to other people, how you sit in the lunchroom and I guess talk to other people, how you yeah how relatable are you, also what sort of questions you ask...

Employer

their performance is being measured on.

Young people are generally unaware that they are being observed and measured – not just by what they do, but how they do it. They are often unaware how to develop motivation (especially if they have been employed in an entry-level position) and importantly how to communicate or demonstrate that they may have motivation to progress – even if they don't love the work. They may also be unaware of the options open to them, or lack the confidence to believe such roles might be available to them.

Motivation and progression cycles

Because assessment and judgement on who to invest in is continuous, but often not communicated well, it is often unclear to young people how they are progressing. It can become a vicious cycle as young people believe there are no opportunities, or that their work is not valued, which affects their motivation and performance, and therefore their ability to progress.

This reinforces employers' beliefs in young people lacking motivation. Many employers reported that young people lost motivation after a month after starting well.

Young people expect and benefit from more regular and tangible signals or feedback from employers as they learn to adapt to a workplace and working life, to keep the job and remain engaged.

Young people are often unaware of the investment employers are making in them. Which could potentially betray a lack of reflection on the employer's part around what impacts the induction process (or lack of one) has on the young person.

Jobs versus careers

Employers often differentiate between those simply 'looking for a job' compared to those 'looking for a career' and invest accordingly. Often this judgement can be implicit and subjective, and they may not discuss this with their employees – it's based on what they see.

This can be challenging for young people as many do not understand the difference, particularly if they do not have role models, or are at a stage of their lives where they don't know what they want to do. It can also be high risk for young people who have not had prior work experience that helps inform what they want to do. How do they show what they don't know?

Some young people are primarily motivated by gaining any employment to meet their immediate personal and their family's immediate material needs, and need support to see wider opportunities. Often these young

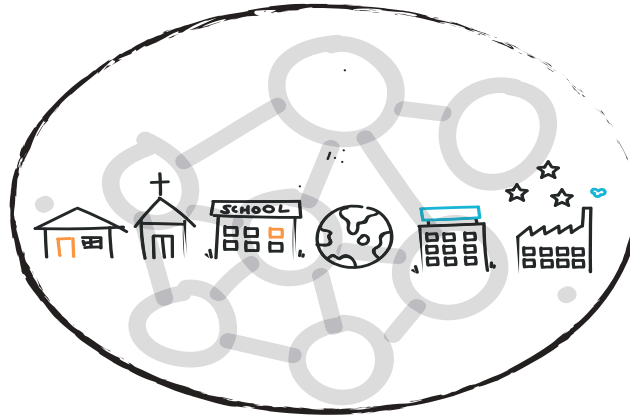
people that have a 'need' to work are more 'driven' to work hard consistently but less likely to progress, particularly young Pacific women.

Additional support and development opportunities could support them making career-based decisions in time, but often they are excluded from these.



(CHANGE ENABLERS
AND ACTION
OPPORTUNITIES

FUTURE STATE



In the final stage of the co-design process young people, employers, teachers, community members and service providers were brought together to collectively explore how we might address some of the challenges and opportunities identified around Getting Prepared, Getting In, Staying In and Progressing.

The following 11 opportunity areas represent the key areas for impact and change identified during these workshops. Those attending the workshops felt that further focus and investment in these areas were most likely to help to close to the gap between employers and young people. This could help break the negative cycles currently leading to disengagement by both employers and young people.

An overriding theme across all the workshops was a huge appetite by all stakeholders for change. What was desired was a clear owner or driver to catalyse the change. While many participants undertook to make individual changes in their own practice as a result of the workshops, for the more coordinated and substantial shifts, each group seemed to be looking to someone else to lead.

If we are to create change all players will need to play their part. For example, many of the issues employers are frustrated by are only likely to be solved if they embrace change themselves –ie increased investment of time/management training, longer-term expectations or adopting a youth focus when designing processes. Some employers seem willing to do more if they have clearer information on what to do (or clearer incentives and support) or if others are also changing (young people, whānau, churches, schools and government) whereas others did not feel that it was their role or that it would have a financial return.

As reflected in the ALL IN report by Sustainable Business Council (2013) – this is a collective challenge that everyone needs to take responsibility for. In each of the below action areas, we have shown who will could be involved in helping lead and create the conditions for change.



Image from Future State workshop at Strive, Mangere





Images from Future State workshop at Rainbow's End



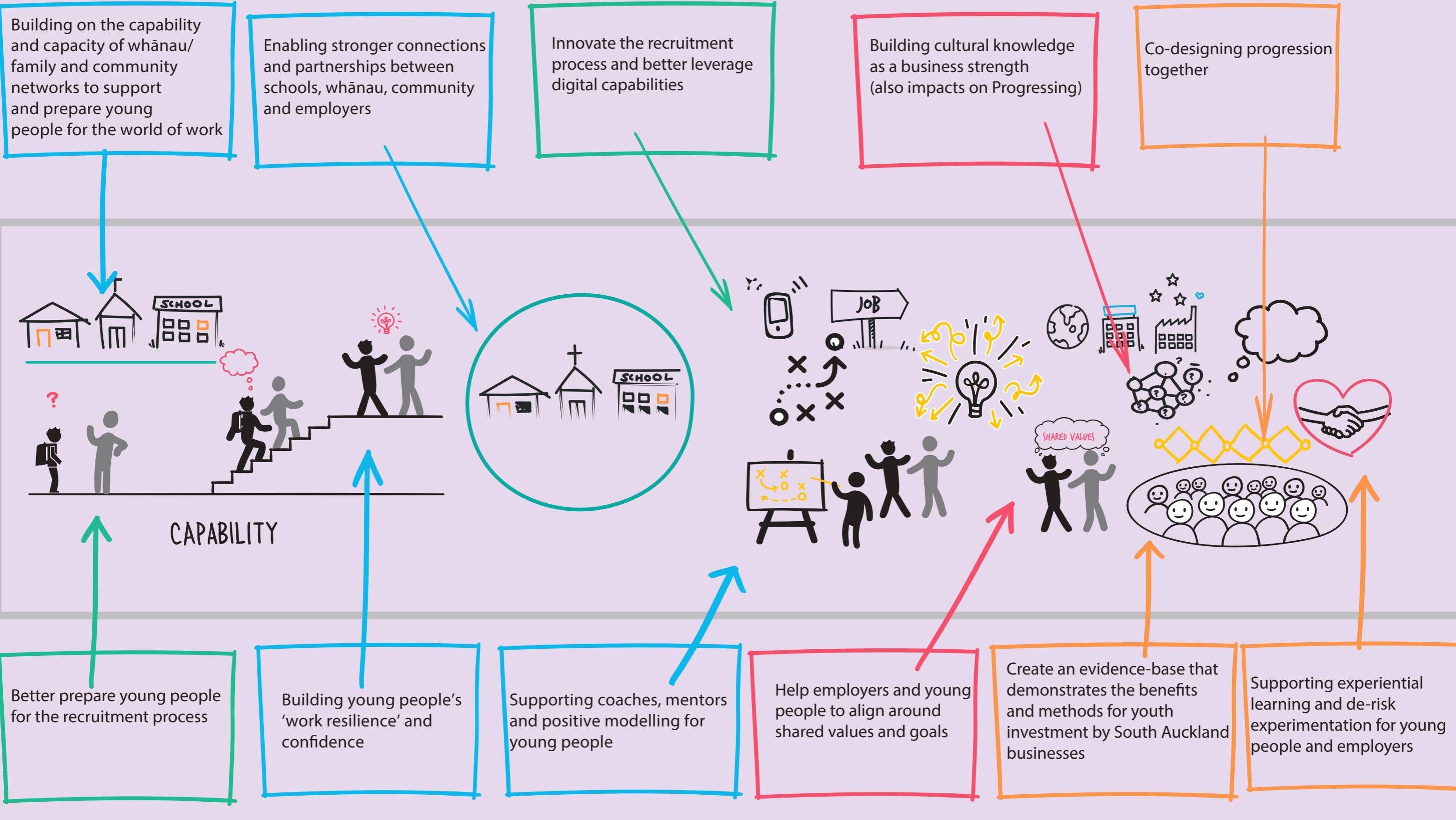


Images from Future State workshop at Rainbow's End



FUTURE OPPORTUNITY AREAS

In the final phase the design team ran workshops with a wide range of stakeholders to co-design a vision for how 'things could be different'. Using the 18 prioritised insights and the different phases of the employment journey as a springboard, and looking through the eyes of both employers and young people, they imagined how things could be improved for each if different enablers were in place.



GETTING PREPARED FOR WORK

GETTING INTO WORK

STAYING IN WORK

PROGRESSING AT WORK

It's interesting hearing from both managers and employers what they expect in a workplace. Some of it is common sense but employees/managers need to be reminded. The workshop made me realise just how important it is to COMMUNICATE and express any thoughts and ideas rather than become comfortable and let ideas slip by. I came back to work on a high and wanted to have a catch up with our manager straight away because I had lots of ideas I wanted to communicate but previously became placid and kept putting it off. After the workshop I caught up with our manager and expressed my thoughts of professional development and our manager really appreciated that. It was a great turn out for both of us (employee and manager).

Workshop participant



Image from Future State co-design-workshop at Rainbow's End- Young people discussing progression pathways

GETTING PREPARED: LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK

The challenge summarised

Currently the networks, resources and opportunities surrounding many young people do not provide them with the connections or experience they need to get prepared for the world of work or build aspirations and motivation for careers. Those who have the greatest potential to connect and support young people – whānau, community and schools – are themselves disconnected. In many cases there is a large gap in the knowledge and understanding between young people, whānau, schools, education providers and employers. All stakeholders feel that schools have a greater role to play. At the same time most schools feel constrained in their ability to provide connections and opportunities for exposure to the world of work.

Getting Prepared– Opportunity Area 1

Building the capability and capacity of whānau/family and community networks to support and prepare young people for the world of work

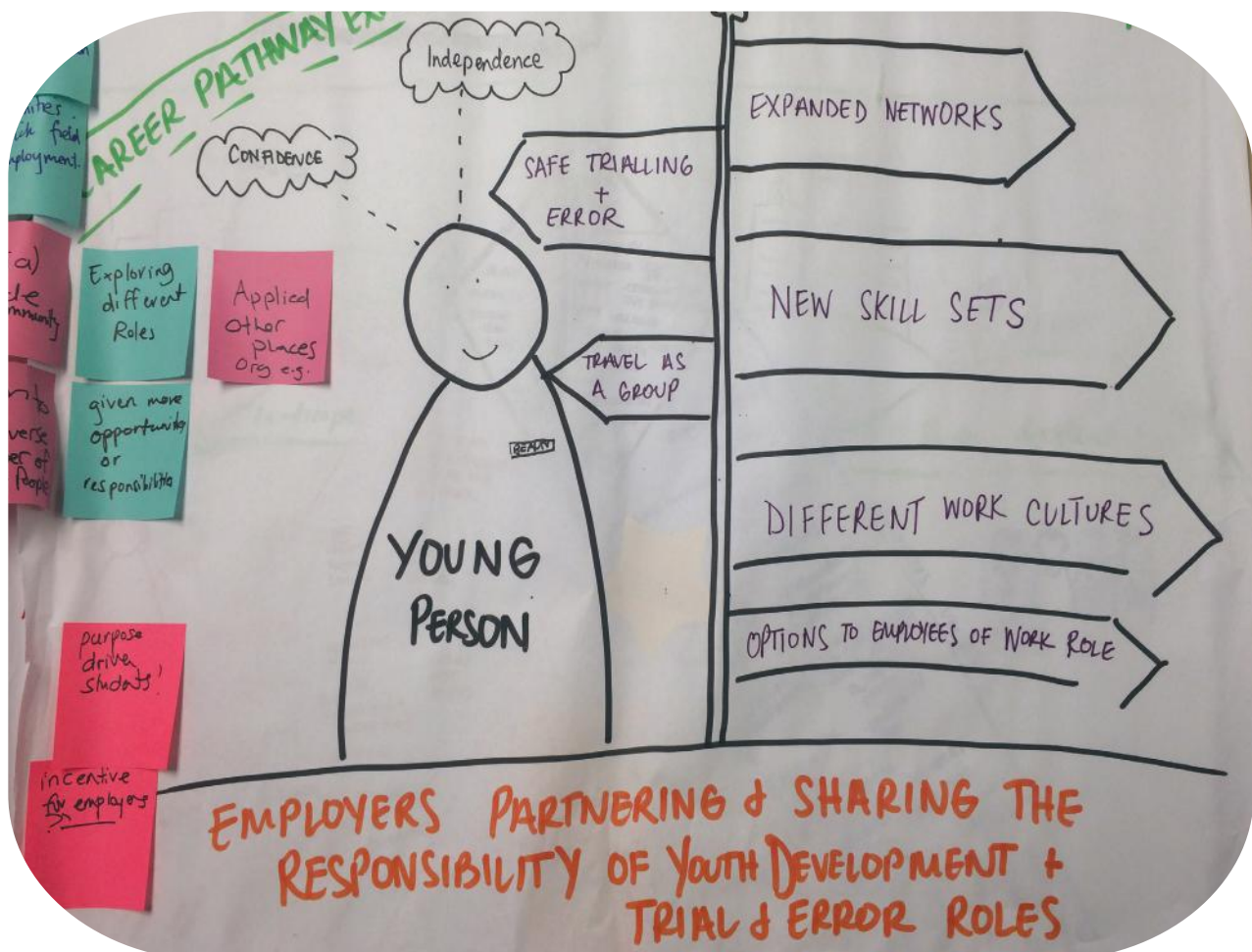
Supporting schools, tertiary providers, industry training providers, and employers to be more connected would enable teachers to better understand the world of work and integrate this into teaching. It would also enable employers to support what is taught, better understand what learners do, and provide relevant work-based experiences.

Whānau/family are often the greatest point of influence for young people. If supported to do so, whānau and families are best placed to deliver early support for greatest impact. Along with community and peer networks they help to create young people's connection to, and awareness and perception of, the world of work. Many whānau and community members we spoke to were aware of their own disconnect from the world of work, and of the limits of their own exposure, knowledge capability, and capacity to provide relevant guidance and support.

Ultimately responsibility lies with us, but we don't know how to help.

Whānau

Enabling whānau and community networks to provide this support from intermediate school onwards through content, funding and support was seen as a particularly high impact opportunity by workshop participants. For example: providing whānau with access to and the means to share information (on how the process works), data (on what jobs are growth areas, and what skills are needed), technical tools and skills (writing CVs, navigating interviews etc) and how career pathways might be navigated or achieved. Involving whānau/families more directly in the careers and job-seeking advice and support young people already receive would also grow their awareness and ability to support their young people.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Enable whānau/families to access knowledge about the world of work and to build their own capability to support and prepare their young people for the norms, expectations and opportunities of the world of work.

Provide or develop the resources with whānau that help to connect wellbeing and whānau health with the value of work.

Re-evaluate and re-direct funding and resourcing models to “follow young people” through their journey, placing the funding where the greatest opportunity for impact can occur, ie earlier in their journey.

Getting Prepared – Opportunity Area 2

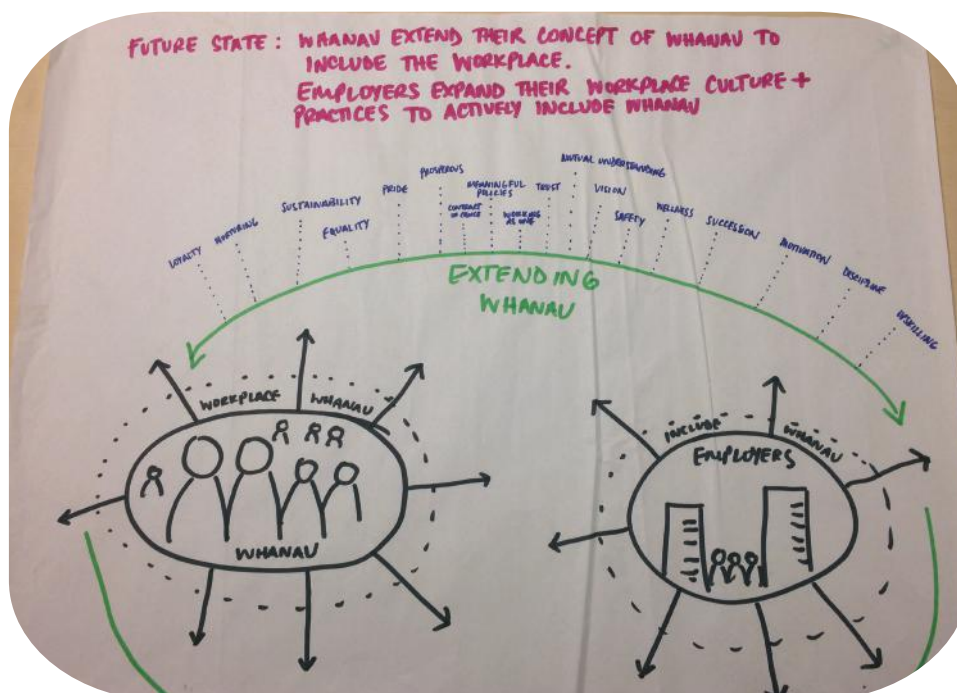
Enabling stronger connections and partnerships between schools and tertiary, whānau, community and employers

Greater proximity and connection between schools, employers and parents/whānau was seen as critical to providing young people with exposure and opportunities they need to build meaningful aspirations and knowledge around the world of work – particularly when this might not be accessible through home or community networks.

I can't believe this is the first time I've been in a working meeting with a local school – it's been such an eye-opener.

Employer

There was a recognition in the workshops that both schools and employers currently lack the incentives and means to better connect, and many current programmes and efforts are 'done on the side'. Participants questioned the relevance and currency of the knowledge educators currently have about the world of work, and the lack of opportunity for educators to themselves get 'beyond the school gates'. Employers participating in the workshops recognised the longer-term value produced by exposing young people to the world of work early and the role they could play in that. They need help making the case to within their business about 'why' this is important for them and 'how' they can do it effectively.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Grow, support and reward partnerships and connection between local schools, whānau, community, schools, education providers and businesses that increases visibility, awareness and opportunities for education to employment pathways.

Support/incentivise schools and tertiary providers to increase their focus on employability as well as educational attainment.

Enable and encourage better access by schools and tertiary providers, young people, whānau, and businesses to existing career resources.

Enabling teachers to get “beyond the school gate”, experiencing and connecting to the wider world of work, as part of their teaching role.

WHO?

Driver: Schools and employers

Influencer: Government agencies, business peak bodies, council, local youth focused organisations, education organisations

Driver: Schools and providers

Influencer: Businesses and wider government agencies

Driver: Schools and teacher training providers

Influencer: Employers and employer groups, government agencies

Getting Prepared – Opportunity Area 3

Building young people's 'work resilience' and coping skills

Significant resilience and coping skills are needed to successfully get into, stay and progress in the world of work. For many young people a new work environment is hostile or intimidating and they haven't had the experience that lets them build the confidence to manage the complexity of these new relationships and expectations. This can be particularly true for Māori and Pacific young people who may not see themselves or their cultures reflected in their workplace, and for young people who have been taught norms and communication styles that run counter to what is expected in the workplace.

Typical processes of application and rejection, integrating into a new workplace, managing the day-to-day challenges, routines and demands of the work environment and achieving progression all demand significant emotional and intellectual strategies and awareness. These are all points on the employment journey where young people without these skills can easily drop out, lose confidence and become demotivate or disengaged. The skill and ability to manage your own career and navigate the process of getting a career become even more necessary in a future world of work where there is greater instability and change.

Participants felt that young people are not being enabled to build the kinds of confidence and resilience they need to navigate and succeed in the world of work. These skills need to be built as foundational skills early on and as part of preparing young people for work. At the same time workshop participants also expressed frustration that young people are being 'wrapped in cotton wool', meaning they are not hearing or learning about what it takes to be independent, self-managing and self-motivating so that they can realise the careers and futures they want.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Provide resources and experiences early on that help to build the confidence, coping skills and resilience young people will need to be successful in the future world of work.

Driver: Schools, education organisations and careers advice and guidance services

Influencer: Government agencies, businesses, local youth-focused organisations

Getting Prepared– Opportunity Area 4

Supporting coaches, mentors and positive modelling for young people

Having someone like me to learn from would make things a lot easier.

Young Person

One of the most effective ways to motivate young people and to help them build confidence and aspiration around career possibilities is when they see or are able to interact with others like them. Workshop participants felt that investment in peer (youth) support, as well as local coaches and mentors who could support young people to build an understanding of the world of work, inspire them on specific pathways and/or support them and their whānau in navigating decisions and challenges, would have significant impact. This is especially so for those young people who don't have similar support or role models from within their own family.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Support and enable greater visibility of local success stories.

Provide support and access to coaching and mentoring for young people before transition.

Increase the opportunities for young people in South Auckland to connect with other working young people, and other people in management or higher roles to support their own building of aspirations.

WHO?

Driver: Employers, schools, training providers, youth support organisations, careers advice and guidance organisations

GETTING IN: THE INVISIBLE NATURE OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The challenge summarised

Currently young people are approaching the job seeking process with little understanding of what employers expect or how they are being measured and assessed. There is a pattern of quantity over quality in terms of job applications, which is being reinforced by some service providers who can also lack a deeper understanding of what employers are looking for and how to support young people to meet this. There is no feedback from employers to young people that can help them improve and adapt ineffective job-seeking strategies and behaviours. Repeated rejection has a further negative impact on young people's motivation, confidence and ability to present well.

The current process is frustrating, time-wasting and expensive for both, and opportunities for the presentation of skills and potential is limited. Employers are frustrated by low quality applications, which continues to reinforce their perception of young people as high risk and lacking capability.

Getting In – Opportunity Area 5

Better prepare young people for the recruitment process

Recruitment processes have evolved in response to a variety of short-term business needs and challenges but can have negative longer-term consequences. The process is often full of proxies and invisible assessments of applicants many of which are implicit even for employers. Participants felt that young people needed greater support and resourcing during this process.

Young people's use of language is also quite different and unique to their generation and seems foreign or sloppy to employers. Likewise, the language young people experience when interacting with existing resources for recruitment is foreign to them.

For many this is the first time they have encountered such a formal set of processes and language and it can be intimidating at best, alienating and threatening at worst. Creating guidelines that enable a 'common' understanding of what terminology means would go a long way to enabling young people to access the process more productively and confidently. Additionally, the inclusion of multilingual terminology and key phrases will short-cut understanding and build empathy.

Opportunities to help young people build confidence, make connections and promote their soft skills is particularly important for those with low qualifications or formal work experience.

For many young people job seeking is an isolated process, often done at places such as the library where there is internet access. The steps on the journey to work are largely invisible to young people, and existing resources should also be more accessible, particularly at the points where young people are job seeking. Participants also saw the need for practical resources that helped young people build confidence and prepare, as well as the need for resources to help with the emotional and financial burden of job seeking.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Better preparing young people for the language, norms and assessment measures common to the world of work.

Supporting young people through the application process as a learning process.

Better supporting at-risk young people through the job hunting process.

Getting In – Opportunity Area 6

Innovate the recruitment process and better leverage digital capabilities

Both employers and young people felt that the current process, particularly the focus on a CV, was creating unnecessary barriers and costs for both parties. Young people wanted more flexible ways to share their skills and talent and promote themselves. Employers wanted processes that reduced the cost and time of sorting and selecting candidates. For lower qualified and entry level roles, processes that would better support identifying value alignment and 'fit' would be particularly useful.

Current digital application platforms reinforce the problem by enabling large quantities of poor CVs, and no feedback for young people. Young people struggle to engage in a process that is so impersonal. Participants felt that digital platforms could instead offer new ways that young people and employers could interact or connect, and to support the application process as a learning process. Some employers are using group interviews as an alternative approach with positive results.

Innovation of the process would enable both parts of the partnership to benefit from reduced cost, time and anxiety, and increased 'hit-rates' of employment matches for young people.

Why do we even need a CV– who invented that?

Young person

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Develop new recruitment processes to recognise talent in different ways and reduce time and cost for all.

WHO?

Driver: Employers

Influencers: Education organisations, recruitment organisations, employers

STAYING IN: INTEGRATING HOME AND WORK LIFE

The challenge summarised

Young people entering the world of work must learn the particular and new cultural norms of the workplace. Building trust and communication is central to integrating home and work life, but workplace norms and communication styles may be in conflict with those taught and expected at home or at school. Successful integration also relies on employers and young people having an awareness of and ability to negotiate generational and cultural differences. What is expected of young people and how they are being judged and assessed is often implicit even to employers, – making it even harder to perform well or know what is expected. Businesses can underestimate the magnitude of the transition for young people and without strong knowledge and empathy for the experiences and perspective of the young person misunderstandings and conflict can occur – resulting in early disengagement from both young person and employer.

Staying In – Opportunity Area 7

Communicate and align around shared values and goals

Many of the conflicts and issues described between employers and young people could be understood as a result of a gap in expectations and norms. However, as young people, community members and employers worked together to map their needs and goals it was clear that in the larger sense, many of these were actually shared across the different working, family and community cultures – albeit described in different ways.

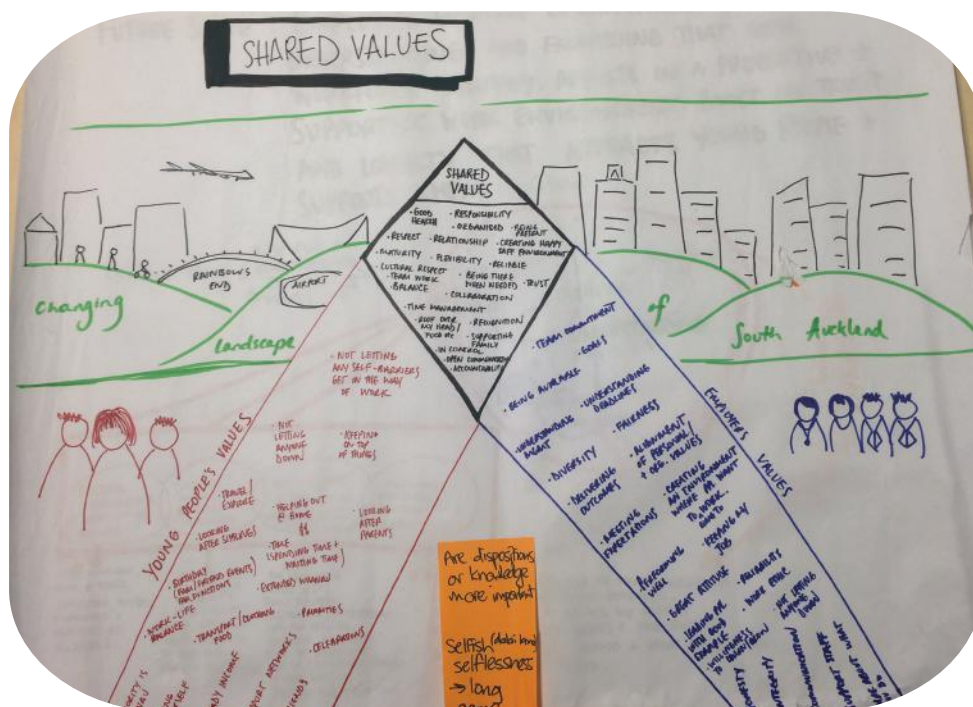
I need to have courage to be challenged by a young person.

Employer

The contract or job description might be the only thing defining the expectations between them and their employer, and employers are often not explicit about what is expected of new employees. In many cases young people will have been taught not to ask or to challenge and so may not speak up or share their concerns or aspirations. Participants felt that making visible the shared values and goals of whānau, businesses and community helped to demonstrate a more common, aligned and stable start point between employers and young people in South Auckland. It would also reduce the adversarial sense of “us and them” that characterises many conversations with young people and employers about each other.

Workshop participants specifically explored how recruitment and induction processes could enable employers, young people and whānau to align their shared values early on. A shared agenda or work plan would make explicit the mutual benefits and obligations of their relationship and creating a working basis to resolve conflicts around expectations and behavioural norms. This would accelerate trust and communication and decrease the risk of young people dropping out. Involvement of whānau in this process in some way would increase the likelihood that young people had the same support towards these mutual goals at home.

Currently for young people an interview can feel more like ‘an interrogation’ rather than an opportunity to explore the alignment of culture and values and this continues into the working context. Enabling stronger focus on hiring and promoting for values and skills could be a critical way to break the cycle of failure once a young person is employed.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Develop and support the ability for employers, young people and their whānau to culturally integrate into the workplace and share values and goals early on.

Staying In – Opportunity Area 8

Building cultural knowledge as a business strength to create inclusive and more productive workplaces

While young people and their whānau/family need to play their part, successful recruitment, retention and progression of young people can be highly dependent on the awareness and skills of managers. Effective managers are key to keeping young people motivated and to illustrate progression pathways. Some managers lack awareness and the support to effectively engage and support the needs of Māori and Pacific young people.

Unconscious bias can be embedded in hiring and assessment structures and 'bad experiences' that reinforce the sense that 'different' equals more risky.

Workshop participants felt that building the cultural capability and competency of managers was important to improving retention. Employee policies are often developed at a corporate level and local managers may need to advocate to senior management about the value of adapting to cultural complexities.

Workshop participants felt training providers and other neutral bodies had a role to play helping businesses better understand cultural issues, and ‘mediate’ or ‘facilitate’ conversations between family/whānau, schools, young people and businesses around cultural issues.

Workshop participants observed that young people can feel distant (and often suspicious) of those in power roles. For example the language used within the work environment can be confusing, intimidating and lacking relevance for young people, increasing a sense of disengagement and that their contribution is not valued.

Participants felt that holistic cultural frameworks such as Te Whare Tapa Whā could help businesses more productively engage with the values and world view of Māori and Pacific young people through a focus on the ‘whole person’ rather than only an employee.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Creating a neutral platform ‘mediating’ or ‘facilitating’ conversations between young people, their families, and the local community/businesses.

Give businesses practical tools and resources that better equip them to lead and manage in South Auckland, where diversity could be a powerful driver of cultural and commercial value.

Help employers to gain cultural competence to manage and support an increasingly diverse workforce, particularly in South Auckland.

Build the “soft skills” of workplaces and managers to support relationship building with young people.

PROGRESSING: THE CYCLE OF MOTIVATION, RISK AND REWARD

The challenge summarised

Investing in training, support and progression of employees is costly and young people are seen as a particularly high-risk investment. Progression pathways within businesses are often implicit, and employers favour young people who autonomously demonstrate a recognisable commitment and will to progress. In contrast many young people expect (and require the support of) employers to help them build their potential and confidence and show them possible pathways.

An unconscious bias can be at play as employers choose not to support young people who are less resourced, appear to be focused only on getting a job, or who have not yet gained the confidence and know-how to display their motivation and aspiration. Young people who don't know that they need to display certain implicit characteristics to progress at work may be overlooked. This can lead to a cycle where young people feel they are 'working hard' and not being rewarded or valued. Motivation is lost, and they disengage, reinforcing employers' perceptions of young people as being high risk.

Progressing–Opportunity Area 9

Create an evidence-base that demonstrates the benefits and methods for youth investment by South Auckland businesses

The workshops showed the interest many individuals and businesses in South Auckland have in investing and supporting local young people into employment. But businesses felt that to translate this interest into the kinds of changes in process or structure suggested in the workshops, a much clearer case for both **why this important and financially beneficial** as well as **how it can best be done** was required. Investing in young people takes a commitment from right across the business and the incentives and benefits for the business must outweigh initial perceived cost and hassle.

Workshop participants highlighted the need for more local exemplars around how such investment can best be done, what is required to do it well in South Auckland – and how this can lead to positive outcomes and returns for the business.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Offer a strong evidence-based business case for hiring of local young people which also shows the consequences of not investing.

Create/find and communicate best practice standards in relation to hiring, promoting and retaining young people, to achieve an outcome worthy of their investment.

Progressing– Opportunity Area 10

Co-designing progression together

For many young people there is a sense that ‘work is happening to them’, and that they are not actively involved enough in the design of their future. Young people can struggle to know how they might get from A to B and how entry level work may be a step to their future goals – even if it does not feel like it at the time. Young people and employers both need to feel their objectives are being met through their relationship.

Workshop participants explored what a new, more collaborative approach to management might look like where young people and employers together define a progression pathway. By mutually agreeing early on how the relationship could be a success, there is a stronger sense that young people will make the commitment to last the distance.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

WHO?

Provide tools for young people and businesses in South Auckland to co-design clear and mutually beneficial progression pathways.

Help young people better understand the different pathways they might take, and how to take advantage of early opportunities to build longer-term plans.

Young People/Employers

Influencers: Employer organisations/
education organisations

Progressing–Opportunity Area 11

Supporting experiential learning and de-risking experimentation for young people and employers

Experimenting with different jobs and work pathways can be part of gaining an understanding of what young people want to do and building their independence. However, this has a high cost for both employers in terms of turnover. Leaving a job or pulling out of training that doesn't work out can have significant financial and emotional costs for young people and their whānau as well.

Workshop participants saw the opportunity for businesses to collaborate and create pathways between organisations and sectors – to enable young people to experiment with and build their skill-sets in a way that was lower risk for both employers and young people.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

WHO?

Relieve the burden of experimentation (on both young people and employers) – as young people try things out and decide what they “want to do”.

Protect young people from ‘falling out’ of the employment journey by designing different pathways within – and between – organisations.

Employers

Influencers: Education and employment organisations



APPENDICES

APPENDICES

1. Intent statement
2. The 26 insights areas

1. INTENT STATEMENT

During the Framing phase it became clear that an 'attitude gap' was in fact a proxy for a broader gap in understanding, communication and expectations between young people and employers in relation to work.

Defining attitude can also be difficult, given it is based on perceiving and interpreting others' behaviours, which can be culturally specific. Attitude encompasses how a person sees a given situation– whether they focus on the positive or negative elements, and fundamentally whether their overriding persona is optimistic or pessimistic about potential outcomes. For example a person with a positive attitude, "sees the bright side of every situation, concentrates on the good things, and is optimistic things will work out for the best" (van der Westhuizen and Pacheco, 2016).

Given that there is also a prevailing perception by many that there is a link between a young person's positive 'attitude' and their 'ability to work', it was important to understand what influences those attitudes – what the determinants of 'attitude' are, and what circumstances may lead to a negative attitude.

Therefore, the output of the framing phase was a 're-framing' of the intent of the design project.



OUR APPROACH AND SCOPE

- A focus on South Auckland.
- A multi-agency team with a time limit of 4 months. We are testing a new approach, time and effort is split across project outcomes and capability outcomes.
- Cultural guidance from a diverse cultural advisory panel to ensure that the team was grounded in appropriate knowledge and practice to ensure that the way we engaged with community members was sensitive, appropriate and that they were able to interpret input correctly.
- Engagement involvement from different parts of the broader system (eg young people, employers, policymakers, education and employment system, whānau and families, providers etc) with initial emphasis on employers, young people and their families, extended to other influencers such as training and education system influencers and policymakers as time permitted.
- The challenge crossed over a number of different complex systems (eg education system, job markets, youth systems); however, the project wasn't able to examine all aspects of these systems.

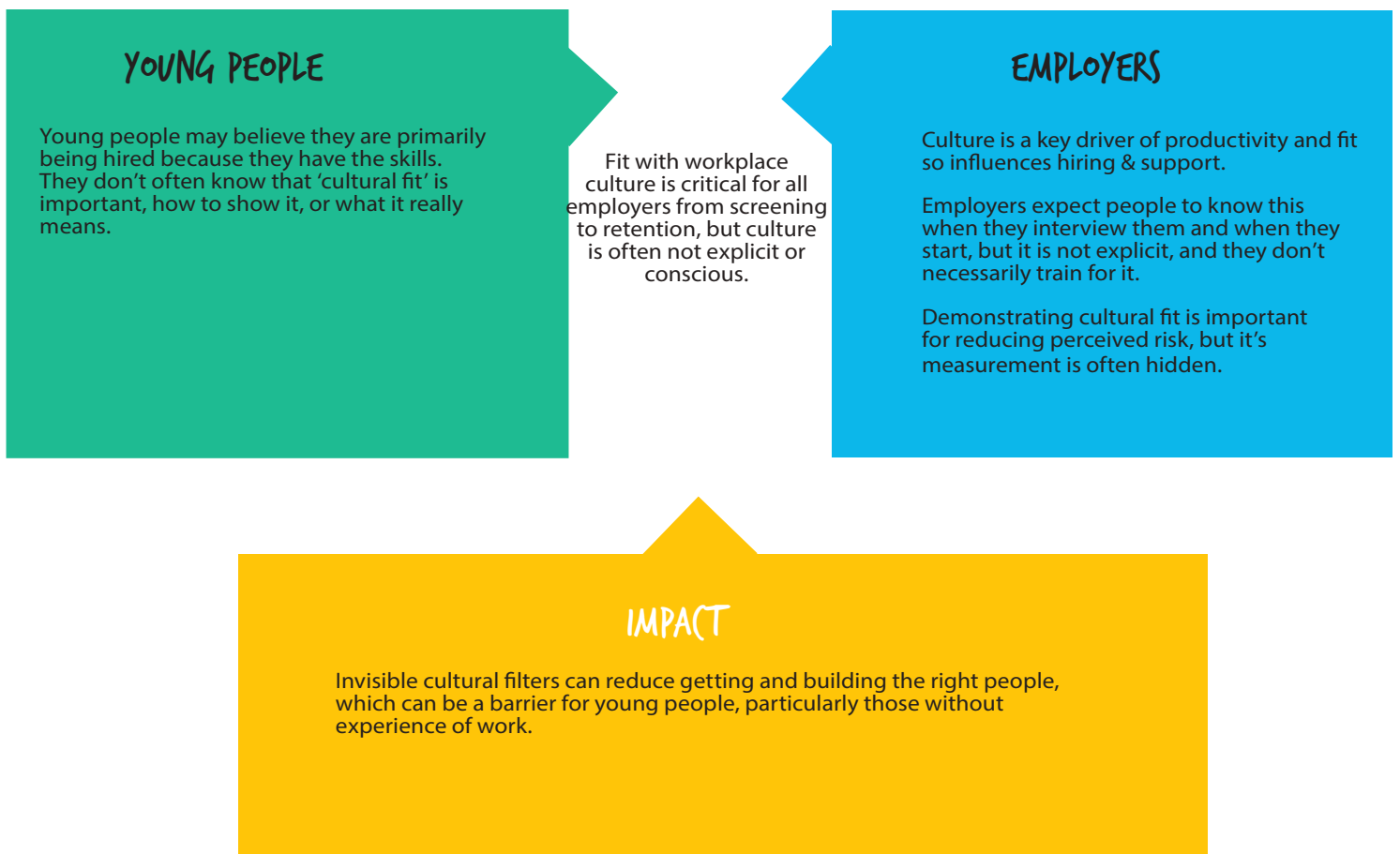
2. THE 26 INSIGHTS

As an outcome of the Explore phase, and having spent a considerable amount of time listening to and synthesising knowledge about young people and employers, we distilled and prioritised 26 insights about the world of work as it relates to young people.

These Insight areas were shared with the community as part of the co-design process and affirmed as providing valuable detail and insight into areas of opportunity and enablement.

The 26 insight areas in detail are:

1. WORKPLACE CULTURE



2. LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE

A good employer will invest in me especially when I show my capabilities...

We will invest in young people who invest in themselves from the outset. We are willing to train if they are willing to make an initial and sustained investment. We need people to take ownership of their own journey, self-manage

YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people feel they are not valued by employers.

They don't think that their 'managers' care about them and their progression.

Most employers agree young people need special support into employment, but there seems no clear agreement on who is responsible for developing young people and paying for it.

There's no obvious owner of the support process. This is a particular issue where young people are competing against older people for entry level jobs.

EMPLOYERS

Many employers stated that it's not their job or responsibility to develop young people to grow up. However, they commented that young people require additional support.

Other employers do invest in supporting young people, particularly if they specifically target hiring young people or if they expect them to stay employed with them for the longer-term.

IMPACT

Some employers are less likely to hire young people as they often require more support, particularly if other people are available.

3. ONLINE APPLICATIONS

I sent my CV to hundreds online with little or no response...

Youth don't understand the process/purpose of the process. What's the point?

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are doing many applications online with little support or feedback about why they are unsuccessful.

Expectations of immediate or timely responses are often not met.

The lack of personal and frequent interaction is demotivating for many young people.

EMPLOYERS

Employers feel frustrated with the high volume of low quality CVs & often use automated screening processes to cull the "noise".

Technology enables young people to apply for multiple jobs they may know little about, resulting in lots of low quality CVs to employers.

This also results in no or low feedback to young people about their application process.

IMPACT

Online is a low touch process and increases the likelihood that young people will disengage or be unsuccessful.

4. RISK FOR EMPLOYERS IN INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

I like to try lots of stuff. I'm happy moving jobs frequently, I don't need to be locked in.

We spend so much money on health and safety training, technical training, mentoring, company culture, we don't want people to leave for 50 cents per hour.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people feel that employers should just give them a chance.

Many young people don't know what they want to do until they have had some experience, or may be pushed towards certain pathways by parents.

Recruitment is a significant financial burden and risk to employers, will young people stay? Will they be the right fit?

Employers have different strategies for managing the risk and young people are often unaware of the investment employers are making in them

EMPLOYERS

Employers view young people as higher risk due to their lack of experience and track record, and their potential lack of stickability.

Risk mitigation strategies can be making it harder to get the job or hiring more young people but starting them on fewer shifts.

IMPACT

Strategies to mitigate risk can prevent young people from getting full-time jobs, which exacerbates young people's disengagement.

5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS JOBS VS CAREERS

I am looking for any work, just a job.

Some young people just come in here to earn money for rent, petrol and the next box of beers. Once they get enough money many won't turn up till the following week.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people are just looking "for a job" rather than a career. This can be as a result of having tried many options and being unsuccessful, or because their primary driver is to meet basic financial needs.

Young people new to the workplace expect that employers will let them know if they can get into a career, not realising that they need to present with that ambition in the first place.

Employers differentiate between those looking for a career.

Young people don't see the value or the difference between a job and a career.

EMPLOYERS

Some employers differentiate between employees who are there just for a job and those that want a career and invest accordingly.

Some employers do push young people to develop and progress from a 'job' to a 'career' if they see potential. These employers are helping young people to develop the ambition and awareness of a career pathway.

IMPACT

Employers are potentially missing out on talent due to existing screening criteria.

6. ASSESSMENT IS LARGELY INVISIBLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Why am I being asked all these questions?

We screen using social media for their public presence, if they don't understand this stuff is important they are too high risk for us.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are not aware of the reasons behind the many different steps in the application process and don't have support to get through the layers of assessment inherent in the job application process.

Young people with a 'heads up' on the application process will have an advantage.

Young people often underestimate the relevance of the experience they have.

The job application process and its use as a screening mechanism is not well understood by young people and they fail to utilise each opportunity to sell themselves to an employer.

EMPLOYERS

Employers are testing and assessing for multiple things in the job application process, including motivation and whether they believe the young person is capable of being successful in their company culture.

The initial stages are focused on screening out, not screening in.

IMPACT

Young people are not getting jobs that are vacant because they don't understand what employers want and how they screen them in or out!

7. DEFINING SELF-WORTH

A living wage should be the start if you have no qualifications... I expected to get way more with my qualifications.

We are not responsible for their attitudes – they are.

YOUNG PEOPLE

It's unclear how young people are forming salary expectations and calculating costs.

For many the shift in salary by a small amount- ie an extra 50 cents per hour- can make all the difference in applying for the job.

Young people often have unrealistic salary expectations that employers will not meet.

EMPLOYERS

Employers feel that young people have higher than reasonable salary expectations.

Making the starting salary low, or asking for salary expectations is one way candidates are screened out.

IMPACT

Young people can be disappointed that they are not valued, especially when they have invested in qualifications, further undermining confidence and motivation.

8. MANAGING COMPETING OBLIGATIONS

We have a lot of commitments and that's just the way we operate.... The love we have is not just for your family but your extended family, your spiritual family.

I've had people not turning up, you can tell they are upset. Mum's working and they have to stay at home with the younger kids but they're embarrassed to tell you.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have a lot to juggle in their lives—between family and community, sometimes work can't take priority.

Pacific young people carry extensive family and church obligations.

Whānau understanding of the world of work enables them to be more supportive.

Some employers recognise that young people (particularly in South Auckland) have family obligations and are willing to accommodate if they can; however, often young people are not able to communicate their needs.

EMPLOYERS

Employers feel that young people can be under family pressure to de-prioritise work for church and childcare.

Young people are unlikely to tell managers if they feel their needs won't be understood, instead just stop turning up or take sick leave.

Many young people don't plan ahead about how they will balance these obligations before starting work.

IMPACT

This is seen to be a significant driver of low retention, and reduces employer willingness to hire young people in the future. Some employers respond by being more explicit about work requirements, rather than being more flexible.

9. RESPECT

I'm not being respected for my worth on the job...others that I train get promoted...

It's life skills & attitude skills – not job skills that's missing.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people often expect employers to show respect to them as a person – for who they are.

It's important they feel accepted at work, as much as home.

There is a different interpretation of what 'respect' means.

EMPLOYERS

Employers expect to be respected within the organisation immediately by their employees.

There is no second chance if they don't see respect quickly.

IMPACT

Without respect relationships cannot grow. This hinders the employee journey.

10. CULTURAL COMPLEXITY AND UNDERSTANDING

If I don't feel my culture is understood or appreciated - I don't feel safe, so I check out.

We don't have a diversity strategy but our workforce reflects our community...but we've got to explain to our managers why this is important.

YOUNG PEOPLE

For young people work culture is a new and different kind of culture to learn about, with a different set of norms, obligations and expectations.

This can be confusing and conflicting, and it can be a challenge to integrate this with their existing worlds, norms and relationship. Many find it hard to educate others about their cultural reality.

There is a high level of cultural complexity in South Auckland.

Culture clash is happening on a number of levels in the context of youth employment, young people's culture, corporate culture, and multiple ethnic cultures.

EMPLOYERS

The cultural complexity of South Auckland is a reality for employers, many are actively managing and seeking to learn about supporting a diverse workforce. Upskilling managers and the staff themselves is a key part of this. For people outside of the area this can be particularly challenging.

Understanding young people's cultures makes it easier for employers to manage and respond to young people's needs.

IMPACT

Young people and employers are working within different norms which can lead to a misunderstanding about the motivation behind behaviours.

II. EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRESSION

Why do I have to start at the bottom & stay there, while others get promoted.

Do young people know whether employers have independent plans in place for them or to ask for it if they don't?

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people want to see clear and explicit signs of progress on the job, to keep the job and remain motivated.

EMPLOYERS

To enable progress and identify development opportunities, employers continually (and often invisibly) assess young people on their performance, their motivation and competence.

There are different expectations around progression.

Progression pathways are often invisible within businesses. Businesses can feel that this manages risk, but this can be demotivating for young people if they can't see progression.

IMPACT

This gives rise to friction and young people lose patience and may leave or slack off because they do not see themselves progressing or with options.

12. EXPECTATIONS OF 'ENTRY LEVEL' WORK

A lot of young people are not used to pressure and don't like structure, they are not prepared for the transition from school.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people can be shocked by how much is required of them in terms of effort and complexity given the pay and level of the job.

Young people are often unaware of the complexity and effort required for what seems like 'simple jobs', and sometimes unprepared for the effort required.

In some cases employment expectations are not communicated to young people, so they don't realise they are not performing.

EMPLOYERS

Employers find that young people are not prepared for the complexity of the work or the effort required in entry level positions. This can challenge how they learn during training and show motivation.

Some employers manage this by providing reduced hours which helps ease young people into 'work'.

IMPACT

This mismatch of expectations can lead to high turnover in some positions, and set young people up for negative experiences.

13. DEBT TERTIARY EDUCATION DECISION-MAKING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

There's no room for promotion or progression without higher qualification / certification.

Lots of young people don't understand about student loans, hence don't bother pursuing studies.

YOUNG PEOPLE

The fear of debt acquired through going to tertiary education is putting young people off getting new skills and qualifications, particularly if they have previously undertaken studies that haven't led to employment.

Many viewed student loans similar to other forms of debt, such as from loan sharks.

EMPLOYERS

Employers increasingly use qualifications as a proxy for soft skills, although most did not view them as important for doing the role.

Employers particularly valued candidates when they had relationships with the providers where they felt young people came 'prepackaged', otherwise they felt they didn't have a good understanding of what they knew had been taught.

Education debt is considered 'bad debt' in South Auckland on par with short-loan shops. This ultimately restricts opportunities for getting in and progressing.

IMPACT

Tertiary education levels will drop if qualities do not provide an 'ROI' on negatively experienced debt.

14. MOTIVATION

I would work harder if I was acknowledged...

They are not work ready – they do not know the basic principles of getting to work on time, working all day, five days a week. They stop when they have enough money for the weekend.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Without a clear 'steer' on what matters, getting the job is most important.

There is a perception that working "just hard enough" is enough.

Young people can become demotivated if doing the job is not praised.

Motivation and positive drive provide a big signal to employers on whether a young person will be successful. However, this is subjectively measured.

Not all young people are aware of the value of 'motivation', able to balance it between work and home, and how to present it in the recruitment process and beyond.

EMPLOYERS

Employers have strong instinct on those who are resilient and know how to self-manage. However some acknowledged that some young people show motivation in different ways that are not always obvious,

Young people that "need" to work are driven to work hard consistently.

A "rough diamond" who is hungry for the opportunity is very rewarding to support.

International students are seen as young people that are successful, demonstrating drive & ambition.

IMPACT

Motivation is an important driver for employers. Young people often don't understand how important this is, how to develop it and most importantly how to communicate this. There are also cultural factors of how young people show they are motivated.

15. DEMONSTRATING SOFT SKILLS

It was actually confidence that let them down which is really hard... when you are up against somebody for whom that's just normal, how do you compete with that.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people know they need to demonstrate technical skills and things like "confidence" but often do not see the importance and relevance of home and community experience to the workplace.

EMPLOYERS

Soft skills are important for cultural fit and also show young people's ability to relate to others and build rapport in the business.

Employers use instinct (more than specific techniques) to rapidly screen out candidates around 'soft skills'. The ability to demonstrate soft skills is particularly important for those without qualifications.

Employers want to know if a young person will 'last' in this business and whether they are worth the investment in hard skills.

Employers often hire on 'soft skills' and cultural fit, and are willing to train for 'hard skills'.

Young people often don't speak the language of 'soft skills', or recognise the value that employers place on people's ability to relate to others or how to demonstrate it through experience.

IMPACT

Potential productivity gap – not getting the right people, and not building and keeping the right people.

16. GAP YEAR

Gap years are a no no for me now... don't take a gap year if you want to stay in study and get more experience.

I see a lot of Polynesian/Pacific young ones coming through for our interviews. People who have left school but haven't done anything other than that. Like a long break.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Parents are sometimes encouraging a 'gap year' to let young people have a break after school and figure out what they want to do in life. It is often based on viewing work as something to avoid if possible.

It often results in young people doing nothing for a year, and it can be hard to transition out of it.

The idea of a 'gap year' away from study or work seems common in South Auckland for young people.

It can lead to a year of unemployment and a cycle of not getting education, training or employment.

EMPLOYERS

Employers are seeing a one year gap in the CV and wondering what was going on. They often use this as an indication of low motivation or poor attitude.

IMPACT

This can have roll-on effects in terms of time on benefit and experiencing not being able to find work.

17. INDUCTION TO CULTURE AND ROLE

My current position, –I was scared the first few days. Then I had a great mentoring/buddy system, it empowered me, my whānau ethos was appreciated.

Induction is crucial, if we don't give them a decent time of induction we lose them.

YOUNG PEOPLE

It's a new world, new words and different relationships for young people.

Joining an organisation can be hard, without the right support, and often the culture of a new organisation can be the hardest for young people to learn about and integrate in.

EMPLOYERS

It's more than a few introductions, it is the opportunity to share the culture of the business –values, expectations and standards, as well as the technical aspects of the job and the jargon.

Often employers focused on inductions based on technical skills, but those that focused on culture reported they were more successful at supporting retention.

Inductions that work well are focused on norms, values and culture, not just technical. This is important for productivity but is often harder and not always recognised as important.

IMPACT

If the induction doesn't go well good employees disengage or do not meet their potential.

18. EARLY INFLUENCERS

I'm actually grateful for the tough love that my Mum & Dad gave us – because it taught us a lot. Dad had such high hopes for us – that he can see that we achieve more than what we have now.

A lot of youth coming through, it's their first job. All they know is from their parents.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are influenced by a broad range of things, from family, friends, school, church and community.

A lack of support or strong connections to employment will impact young people's aspirations and confidence, but doesn't necessarily mean young people will not be able to achieve.

Some young people in South Auckland have strong early support and are actively encouraged to develop aspirations and understanding of work and career development through family and commitment. Others don't, and this can be a significant barrier to integrating into work.

EMPLOYERS

Employers recognise the importance of family support for young people to be successful in the world of work.

They don't see themselves as the responsible for this, and will often filter out people who don't have these influences as this often, but not always, impacts on their success in the role.

IMPACT

Young people who lack support, or for whom parents inadvertently give outdated advice, are less likely to enter or stay in the workforce.

19. COMMUNICATION NORMS

I don't pick up a private number because it might be a debt collector.

If they don't recognise the phone number young people won't pick up. If I do leave a message they either don't have credit to get it or know how a landline works and that they need to leave their name and number on the message.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Don't realise they are being judged on their voice messages, phone manner and email addresses.

They actively screen unknown numbers and don't always have credit to return messages.

EMPLOYERS

Judge young people based on their phone manner.

Rude messages or inappropriate voicemails are a cue for a young person not being able to operate in a professional world and will result in them being culled from the job process.

Often employers cannot contact young people as they do not answer their phones to numbers they don't recognise.

The communication norms of many young people clash with expectations by employers.

Many employers report that they cannot contact a significant proportion of young applicants.

IMPACT

The invisible nature of the way young people are judged and practical barriers of connecting can mean that great candidates are missing out on opportunities.

20. WORK EXPERIENCE

I secured an internship at Uni with Vodafone. I had to pay to travel from Papatoetoe to Northcote everyday on \$115 per week...and still study. I didn't realise volunteer work can be classed as experience...church, marae.

Work experience students often don't do the fun jobs but the things that the manager doesn't have time for. it is demotivating.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Gateway provides an important opportunity to gain work experience if you can get access.

But what is the relevance to work and how do you know?

EMPLOYERS

In South Auckland there are a lot of people not engaged in groups or community or some aspect of their life that builds confidence and insight into their personality. But employers report that young people struggle to translate it to make it relevant.

In addition employers report that they can generally only offer work experience that is demotivating for young people.

Work experience is central to getting employment later, but it's hard for young people to break the 'no experience- no job' cycle. Partly because they struggle to translate relevant experience.

IMPACT

Clash of expectations of what's normal could be blocking opportunities for potential good hires.

21. TRANSPORT AND DRIVER'S LICENCE

Reliable transport is a barrier –that's why I feel I need a driver license - to be able to get to and from work.

That would restrict them a lot because if they're working on day shift not so much, night shift we can't have people catching or walking home at 2am

YOUNG PEOPLE

Most young people recognise the need for a driver license, but can be put off by cost and fear of failing.

Public transport doesn't work for everybody due to issues of access, availability and convenience and therefore is not always a viable alternative.

Driver licences are being used as a proxy for competency and likelihood of turning up even if it's not required for the role.

EMPLOYERS

Employers use a driver licence as an assessment criterion. It can be a requirement as well as a sign that young people can get through a process like licensing.

IMPACT

Employers have staff shortages for semi and unskilled jobs in Auckland and Christchurch, most require a driver license. Many of those looking for work don't have a licence.

22. HEALTH AND SAFETY

My brother stole my safety boots so I couldn't work.

So definitely one of our values is safety, keeping yourself and others safe... that's number one for us.

YOUNG PEOPLE

It is not understood how important health and safety is, and how to show competency in the interview stage.

Who is responsible for helping young people build their capability and knowledge?

Health and safety is paramount to employers because of the nature of automation as well as recent changes in legislation.

Young people are not being skilled up around how critical this is for employers.

EMPLOYERS

Health and Safety can drive workplace culture and screening processes.

Employers ask young people how they would deal with dangerous situations and are amazed about what they say.

IMPACT

Young people are being screened out of jobs based on their awareness of health and safety issues.

23. DRUG TESTING

I didn't realise that cannabis stays in my system for 8 weeks... I won't bother going for an interview.....

Drug and alcohol screening seems to drive people not turning up.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people don't understand that this is going to be part of the screening process. And if it is, it's a risk to avoid, so young people are not showing up to interviews.

A significant number of young people fail cannabis drug and alcohol screening. Many others don't show up to be tested as they don't understand the process.

EMPLOYERS

Drug testing is a significant part of the selection phase for employers, in relation to health and safety obligations and as a way to assess motivation.

IMPACT

Young people are being screened out of jobs on this basis.

24. HOME LIFE AS ASSESSMENT

The less I have the less I get.

If you've got no fixed abode that you can live in, how are you going to be able to get to work on time, with a clean uniform and be here, looking sharp because that's important to us.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people felt that many questions around their living circumstances (ie people sleeping in one room etc) was inappropriate and awkward. They were generally unaware of how this could be used as a screening tool.

Employers use the presence or absence of adequate housing, phone, food, transport or family support as an assessment tool as these are considered as impacting on the young person's reliability and dependability.

EMPLOYERS

Another way that employers reduce risk is by assessing young people's support infrastructures.

IMPACT

Young people are being screened out of jobs on this basis.

25. AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY OF JOBS

I think my Dad just wants to get us jobs because, you know, well they lived before us, so they know the good jobs that are out there, that's good, that would be secure for us. It is not well known or readily accessible what opportunities are available out there...

We advertise jobs to our team members via the newsletter. I get hundreds of CVs every week.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Many young people's view of opportunities is shaped only by the strengths of their family and friend networks.

Young people find SEEK, Trade Me and Facebook so time consuming.

Young people's networks can make a big difference to how aware they are and can access job opportunities.

If you don't have networks you need to work it out for yourself, which is complex, and often jobs are hidden to young people.

EMPLOYERS

Employers are doing all they can to promote jobs in the most efficient way they have learned, often just going back to their own networks to hire more people- eg the same people/family members.

IMPACT

Young people's awareness and visibility of opportunities affects their aspirations, motivation and confidence.

26. CV QUALITY

At my school we all used the same template provided by the teacher... It takes a long time to match your CV to each and every job you're applying for...

I think, do they even want to work here if they haven't tailored the CV?

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people know the importance of CVs but are not well guided in what a good CV looks like, or how employers use them.

Young people feel they put a lot of effort into (a lot of) job applications, and often get no response and are not told why they've been unsuccessful.

Young people know the importance of CVs but are not well guided in what a good CV looks like, or how employers use them.

Young people are focusing their efforts on the quantity of applications.

Employers focus on the quality of applications.

EMPLOYERS

Young people know the importance of CVs but are not well guided in what a good CV looks like, or how employers use them.

Young people are focusing their efforts on the quantity of applications.

Employers focus on the quality of applications.

IMPACT

Young people are currently wasting time and money being unsuccessful. Young people feel rejected and employers are frustrated.

