

What works in employment support & job broker-coaching services?

Summary of evidence and practice-based findings across The Southern Initiative

Evidence Brief September 2021



This evidence brief shares:

- 1. Where we got our evidence**
- 2. What we set out to test**
- 3. What we did**
- 4. What did we already know and what did we learn about...**
 - The economy and society
 - Supporting people (as individuals and whānau)
 - Delivery models
 - Local ecosystems of support & delivery
 - How employers fit in
- 5. How good were our results?**
- 6. Where to next, based on this evidence?**



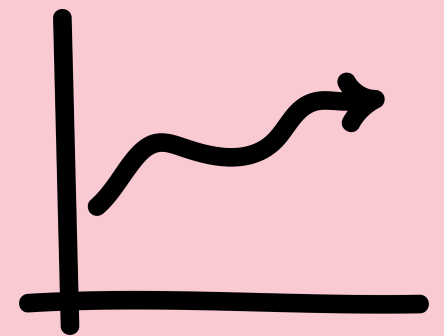
We have been learning about this from...

- Reading and analysing published research & evidence
- Practice-based reflective evaluation (TSI's 'Niho Taniwha' process), from our Employment Broker-Coach prototype that ran from 2017-2020, including how it intersected with TSI's Maori & Pacific Trades Training PTE prototype (MPTT) and TSI's early social procurement prototype within Auckland Council (now Amotai, the national supplier diversity intermediary).
- Continual learning from other providers and stakeholders in our networks, including via formal evaluations of our prototypes and the projects of others

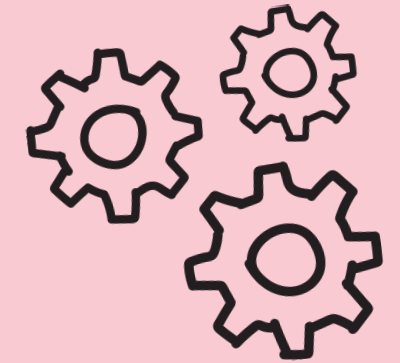


What were we trying to test?

- Can we effectively link bespoke demand-led and holistically-supported microcredentials straight into decent jobs via intensive case management and job brokerage?
- Can we integrate tikanga Māori effectively in this work?
- Can we engage employers to be part of this pre-employment training 'pipeline' via leveraging council procurement relationships?
- What comes first? Quality job with higher wages and job progression opportunities or an individual's career aspirations? Can we do both?
- Can we get high starting wages and wage advancement through employer engagement on skill gaps?
- Can we create networks of providers to buy into this approach?
- Can we get this approach to scale in the system?



What we did



- **Employment Broker-Coaches & social innovators worked on:**
 - Shifting the youth employment support provider **focus from ‘any job’ to ‘good jobs’** with good wage and career prospects
 - Engaging with employers to **establish pathways** to higher starting wages and wage strategies
 - Setting up site-based employer demand-led technical microcredentials / short-courses, with wraparound culturally-embedded support & soft-skills empowerment training
 - Pastoral **care post job-placement to support transitions** and labour market attachment
 - **Generating learning and insight** from all this work that we can seed into the system
 - Between 2017 and September 2020

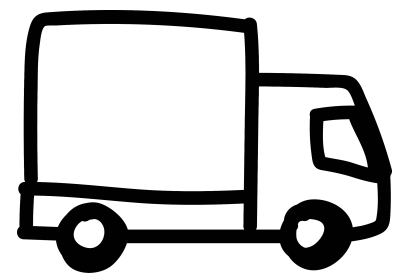
What did we **already know** & what did we **learn**?



- About the economy and society
- About employers
- About supporting people as individuals and whānau
- About local ecosystems of support
- About delivery models

What did we **already know** about the **economy & society?**

- **Massive income gaps** for South Aucklanders, and Māori & Pasifika generally (2018 Census)
- The national **living wage may need about \$5 added** on top to adjust for Auckland cost of living (Living Wage is calculated based on national median housing costs)
- Young people, Māori, Pasifika & South Aucklanders in general are more likely to be **in low-wage jobs with poor career prospects, with low resilience** to economic shocks and lack of future-proofing (HLFS, 2018 Census)
- **Covid impacts will likely hit these groups the most**, as they are overrepresented in the low quality customer-facing or manual jobs that are the first to go (HLFS, 2018 Census).
- Insecure, **low-paid jobs can contribute to low labour-market attachment and cycles of poverty** (Shildrick et.al, 2010; Ray et.al., 2010)
- Covid **stimulus risks replicating old, bad patterns** of focusing on minimum-wage job creation.



What did we learn about the economy & society?

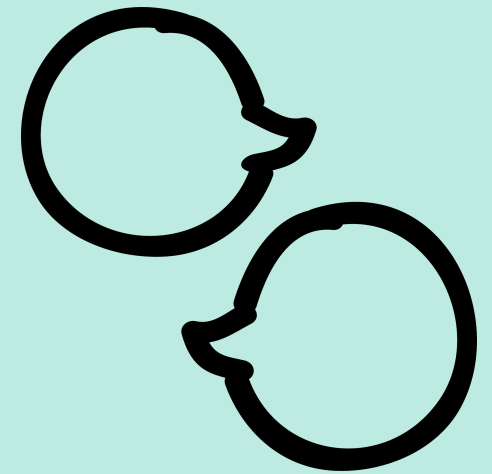
- **We encountered multiple structural labour market and equity tensions, particularly through the focus of the prototype on trades training and jobs:**
 - **Gender bias of trades** meant disproportionately low intake of female candidates (TSI Broker-Coach evaluation, 2020)
 - Social infrastructure and norms and the TSI prototype itself supported Māori & Pasifika youth into trades employment. At times this contrasted with aspirations of Māori & Pasifika youth towards self-determination for whānau via self-employment, business-ownership, or community leadership
 - Market uncertainty underlines the **need for broader approach to skills development aligned with the future of work; and resilient skills** that can weather the fluctuating impact of local and global recessions and booms
- **Challenges and opportunities are arising from the Covid-response period, emphasising the need for a broader approach to sectors for job ‘pipelines’**
 - As well as impacting low-paid industries and employees, towards the end of 2020 TSI heard **warnings from community advocates that better-paid employees & jobs were being shed in favour of new lower-paid positions** doing the same work.
 - At the same time, there will be **opportunities to push for higher wages in sectors that previously relied on migrant labour** that now have a labour shortage due to closed borders, e.g. horticulture and agriculture, and tech

What did we **learn** about the economy & society?

- **There is a need to expand the TSI and Māori / Pasifika focus to:**
 - More women-friendly sectors and future-proofed occupations beyond trades, which provide pathways to leadership
 - Ongoing workplace culture support for women who do enter trades
 - Future-focused technical / IT skills training that does not replicate gender inequity in intake and engagement
- **In a depressed and unpredictable job market, ensure scope for:**
 - Transferable entrepreneurial, creative & communication skills ‘in the meantime’ that can set people up for labour-market attachment, in the absence of good jobs now
 - Continuing to deliver this developmental capability support and maintain specific support relationships even if people take ‘any job’ right now to survive

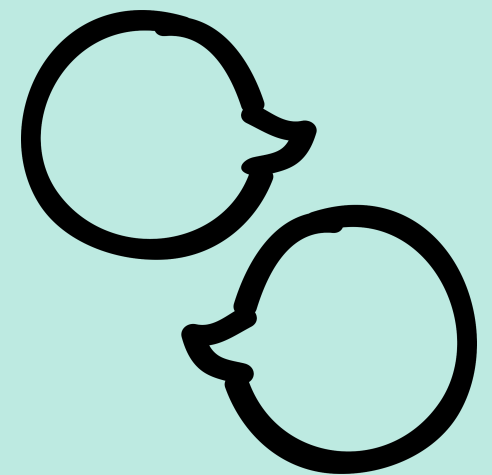
What did we **learn** about employers in the ecosystem?

- There is an intense deficit-driven focus on young people and the provider ecosystem supporting them, but not enough on employer responsibilities and roles in the ‘pipeline’.
- Many employers were resistant to paying the living wage as a starting rate despite social procurement or equity clauses – Employment Broker-Coaches had to target a small number of key employers to ‘work with the willing.’ This is slowly changing as social procurement becomes better understood across the employer landscape.
- Government plays an important role in defining the term ‘quality job,’ particularly for young people.



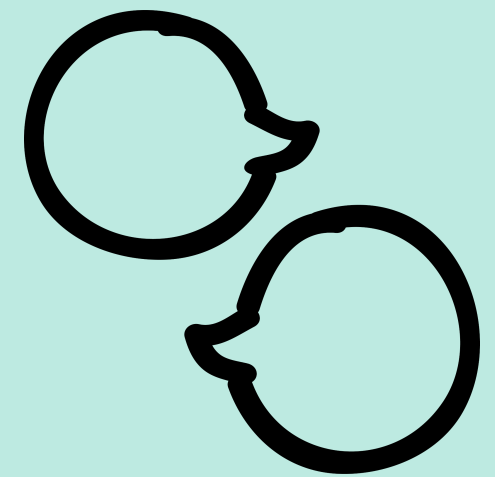
What did we **learn** about employers in the ecosystem?

- **We need to put more focus on employer responsibilities:**
 - Improve Employers ability to provide adequate training and development pathways for current or prospective employees.
 - Employers should be supported to take more direct roles in pre-employment training. For sustainable system-replication of demand-driven pre-employment training-to-work ‘pipelines’, employers need to be funding and designing.



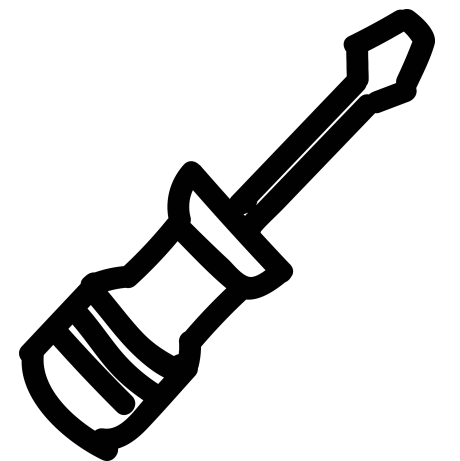
What did we **learn** about employers in the ecosystem?

- **To improve Maori & Pasifika employee success, Employers need support around HR management and social procurement. Our work showed they have gaps in:**
 - Capability to provide support on literacy and numeracy e.g. in supporting apprenticeships
 - Capability to provide pastoral care to employees – there needs to be a better connection to the social support ecosystem for struggling employees
 - Cultural competency and responsiveness in HR/hiring and working with existing employees
 - Social procurement capability for employment equity within procurement teams.
 - Ongoing research consistently highlights how ethnic and gender pay inequities are reinforced by structurally discriminatory hiring and promotion practices within firms, regardless of employee skills and experience.



What did we **already know** about **supporting individuals into jobs?**

- Get the basics of survival **sorted first**
- Use **whānau-centric, place-based and culturally-connected approaches** to build mana, soft-skills, confidence, and bandwidth to engage in technical training
- Technical **trainings are most effective when attached to paid work** experience or piped straight into real jobs
- **Transitions into work need to be supported** with pastoral care to maintain labour market attachment

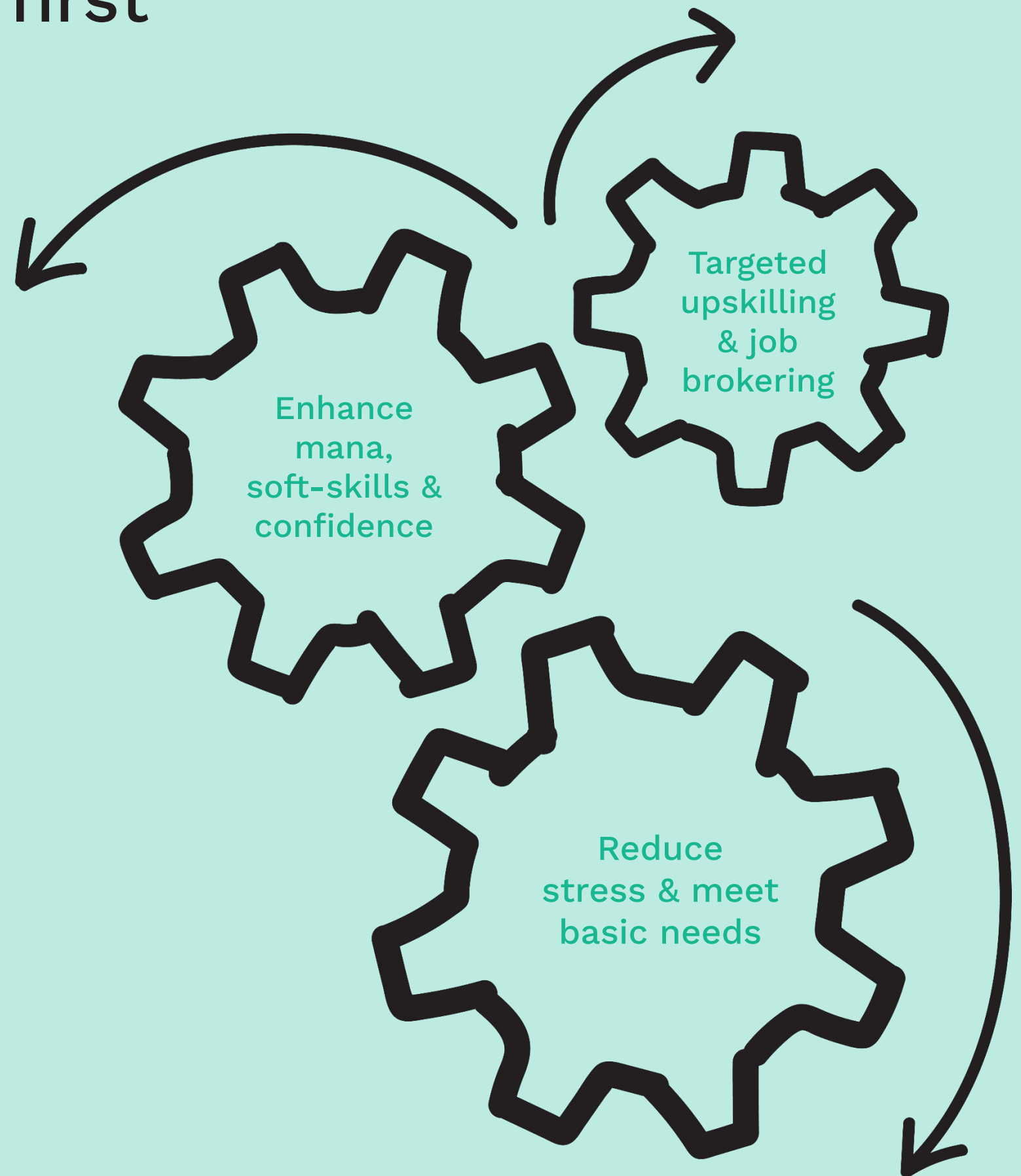


Getting the basics sorted first

1. **Reduce stress and create safe spaces**
for engagement by ensuring basic needs are met (housing, food, & space for mana and dignity)
2. **Enhance mana by strengthening whānau, relational and cultural wellbeing** (e.g. ‘soft skills’, cultural identity and confidence), as paths to empowerment
3. **Direct pathways into the labour market.**
Skills training plugged into paid work experience or direct job placements, with focus on good jobs and career paths

KEY:

It’s not always a linear process, but if the foundations aren’t in place, the rest won’t work well.



Most of what we learned at a practice-level reinforced existing evidence

Deliver as part of integrated holistic / wraparound service that is funded in a way that stops people 'falling through cracks', and makes sure basics are in place first.

Focus on work-readiness, soft-skills, empowerment and labour market attachment as outcomes rather than only trainings, job placements or even initial wages as outcomes.

Supporting cultural connectedness and identity in delivery enhances wellbeing and confidence for Māori & Pasifika youth.

Establishing deep, trusted relationships, whanaungatanga and safety are central to effective engagement in 'intensive case management'

Technical skills training works best when directly linked to jobs or paid work experience through brokerage & collaboration with employers.

Job-placement has ongoing on-the-job support and pastoral care – the relationship doesn't end.

What else did we **learn** about supporting individuals into jobs?

- Intensive noho marae tikanga-focused training model is promising for engaging with and empowering rangatahi with low self-efficacy at the start, especially rangatahi Māori
- Building a ‘firewall’ between those with the highest needs and the mana-diminishing parts of the system is crucial to creating safety, reducing stress, enabling people to ask for help, and building secure engagement.
- This protective ‘firewall’ is a key mechanism for why ‘intensive case management’ or ‘service integration’ approaches are effective. Re-exposure to mana-diminishing experiences during this process can substantially knock back people who have been making a lot of progress.
- The ‘wage strategy’ did not work as a ‘one-size fits all’ approach. It was most effective at attaining living wage starting rates when cherry-picking particular kinds of candidates (e.g. older, with work experience and qualifications) and focusing tightly on upskilling into specific skill shortage areas.
- Strong soft-skills were a good predictor of individual progress, and were highly prized by employers. Soft-skills training should always be part of the ‘package’ of learning offered to people.

What did we **learn** about **whānau-centric support for jobs?**

- **Activating whānau in support of individuals getting into work is crucial and needs dedicated resources and consistency. Leveraging whānau to activate household members, particularly rangatahi often requires:**
 - Intensive work on whānau mindsets. Risk averse or unsupportive parental attitudes can be “the biggest barrier” to rangatahi confidence and aspirations.
 - Individuals (rangatahi or otherwise) in Pasifika families do not make employment decisions on their own. Families play a huge role in the final decision. Long term gains are often sacrificed to meet immediate needs of the family.
 - Meaningful support e.g. through paying or compensating whānau who are supporting rangatahi transition into work

What was **already known** about **delivery models**?

For holistic wellbeing support

Unconditional cash transfers where whānau prioritise and direct their own spending, cuts out admin costs, and reduces stress and disempowerment, supporting material and social wellbeing. They **are one of the best-evidenced ‘interventions’ in terms of impact** on whānau, adult and child outcomes. Child Benefit and UBI (Universal Basic Income) are examples of unconditional cash transfers.

Integrated services are one of the best practice ‘service delivery’ type models

- Some partially integrated service examples in NZ are doing well e.g. Whānau Ora. Local spaces / place-based hubs can be effective hosts / sites of service integration and local empowerment.
- Many services have very limited integration, and risk becoming just another referral/information service without formal integration into provider networks.
- Key challenges for NZ are **funding structures that encourage competition** between providers, and do not enable collaborative pooling of money, resources and case-management around whānau.
- International evidence shows that employment/career support services work best with holistic social support services, but so far in NZ **there is a system gap** between these two types of services

What are integrated services?

Continuum	No integration	Limited integration	Partial integration	Full integration
Definition	Highly fragmented. Organisations work in isolation	Loose, informal cooperation	Formal sharing of resources / Information available on multiple services - through for example, a website or shared data system	Integrated technology, funding, case management, delivery tools
Concepts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“Networking” •“Networks of practice” •“Collaboration” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“Coordination” with “Champions” leading the action to make service accessible for families. •“Linked services” •“Shared assessment framework” •“designated case worker” / navigator •“Multi-disciplinary team” or “Shared specialists” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •“Joined-up” •“Integrated case management” •“Individual budget” •Family budgets” •Shared programme ownership with shared operating models
NZ examples		TSI Employment Broker-Coaches. Relationships with other providers, make referrals and check in informally with others in the same sphere. Limited to one major domain (employment)	<p>Whānau Ora. Uses case management and procurement to coordinate interventions</p> <p>Site-specific providers that function as wraparound one-stop shops, e.g. Vision West, Papakura Marae</p>	No example yet in NZ

What else was **already known** about **delivery models?**

- **How to bridge the gap between holistic whānau-based social services and career pathway support?**
 - **Labour market intermediaries embedded within holistic social service providers, e.g. Alternative Staffing Organisations (ASO)/Work Integrated Social Enterprises (WISE)** models that are common in the US, Canada, UK, Europe. Often capability-building focused ‘temp agency’ employer models, linked in with wraparound one-stop-shop social services and intensive case management.
 - Not common in NZ despite popularity overseas among social providers. Some wraparound providers here are exploring the model (e.g. Social Labour Supply).
 - Social enterprises sustained by mix of grant/govt funding for social services, and self-funded job brokerage through commissioning from employers willing to pay more due to the good level of wraparound support and preparation/training of workers (given low employer capabilities to deliver this).



What else was **already known** about **delivery models?**

- **How to bridge the gap between holistic whānau-based social services and career pathway support?**
 - **Combined unconditional and conditional cash transfers:** In wealthy countries, UBI/unconditional cash transfers support wellbeing, while conditional cash transfers linked to training options can support career development if delivered in a way that is not punitive or stressful. The two can be combined.
 - Working for Families is an example of conditional cash transfer that is **hard to understand and plan around** for families, and can result in unfair and damaging outcomes around abatement thresholds
 - Better conditional cash transfers would be e.g. direct payment support for upskilling or training, such as **easy access to student allowances.**



What else was **already known** about **delivery models?**

Other innovative options

- **Peer-to-peer networked delivery models are:**
 - An empowering intervention for the deliverers if they are trained and resourced to support other whānau.
 - Sustainably empowering for communities, as capabilities / knowledge becomes networked
- **Worker-owned cooperative incubators:**
 - The approach has huge potential, although substantial investment is required to start from scratch, both with individual families and at a system, policy and legal support infrastructure level.
 - Developmental family-focused work has been done by CIDANZ. Outcomes have emphasized skills and capabilities built, rather than wide-scale business successes thus far. However, this suggests that the model could be a good route for general entrepreneurial skills-development ‘in the meantime’.



What did we **already know** about the **local support ecosystem + delivery models?**

Challenges:

- There is resistance towards all but the most minimal of unconditional cash transfers, despite its clear effectiveness.
- Best practice trends are shifting towards increasing coordination around holistic social/health support and service integration delivered by community-based providers, but funding systems supporting this are not universal. There is a relative lack of coordination or integration of local services around individual cases, or networks for promoting good collaborative or integrated practices.
- Existing ecosystems of holistic social support provision are not necessarily plugged into skills, employment and career pathways. The roles require different skillsets.
- Employment-focused agencies and providers too focused on ‘any job’ at the expense of ‘good jobs’, resilience and wraparound social support.
- Local training pathways not adequately demand-led & not plugging skill gaps for employers.



What did we learn about the local support ecosystem + delivery models?

Strengths and potential:

- Community providers are receptive to ‘joining the dots’ between holistic social support and employment support/job brokering
- Existing wraparound service providers have strong potential for capability-building around job-brokering or ‘adding on’ job brokering
- It is easier for an existing social wraparound support & training provider to start adding on job brokering/ASO work effectively to their existing suite of support, than for an individual job broker to start doing or coordinating intensive wraparound case management
- Where local provider networks are less established or entrenched (e.g. West Auckland), there is more scope to convene and explore new forms of collaboration and to shake up and share practice
- Legacies of collaborative culture were also identified in West Auckland where former council invested in collaborative practice; in contrast with South where legacy investment had primary focus on public infrastructure/spaces – an example of how to invest.

What did we **learn** about the local support ecosystem + delivery models?

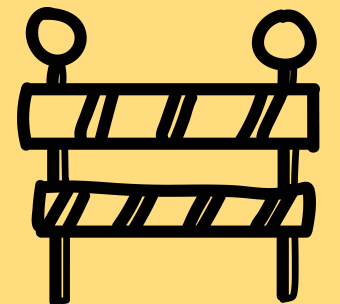
Strengths and potential:

- The microcredential demand-led ‘pipeline’ of just-in-time trainings, when designed and delivered with employers as well as training providers, works well and has had some systematic uptake by MSD.
- Some providers are exploring the ASO/WISE model (quite new in the NZ context) in acting as labour supply social enterprises i.e. acting as temp agency employers for a different approach to the funding model. This model has been identified as one with strong potential for sustainability.
- Expansion of social providers into job brokering may currently be motivated by the increased funding in the employment support space from central govt or the third sector as a Covid recovery response. But that funding needs to find ways to incentivise collaboration.
- Government procurement can play an important role in incentivising collaboration and changing provider behaviour.

What did we **learn** about the local support ecosystem + delivery models?

Ongoing barriers:

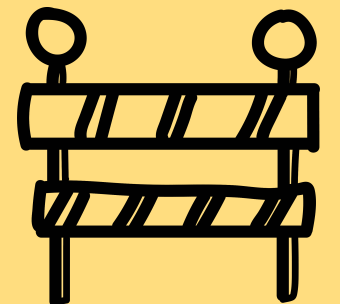
- The funding model is the main structural barrier to collaborative case management and service integration between providers, and also leads in the employment support space to:
 - ‘job hoarding’ and personnel hoarding, i.e. lack of sharing information and relationships for potential job opportunities and pathways for communities as a whole
 - lack of shared practice and tools around training / upskilling approaches
- It is hard for providers to see a way out of the competitive and fragmented funding model, focused on outsourced government contracts and grants from philanthropic funders.



What did we **learn** about the **local support ecosystem + delivery models?**

Ongoing barriers:

- People with low labour market attachment by definition cycle in and out of jobs, so ‘job placement’ as a contracted outcome can be misleading and limiting.
 - Typical funding-length for contracts are too short to track longer-term outcomes e.g. after getting a job, for those needing support in labour market attachment and career/wage pathways after job-placement
 - Resourcing required for longer-term support and relationships must be budgeted into work-planning for case managers/case management to avoid unsustainable accumulation of cases and damaging of existing relationships
- There is not enough system funding to advance people who are already in low-paid work; or to support people currently in low-paid jobs and likely to cycle in and out the job market.
 - People fall through specific gaps in funding support when transitioning in and out of jobs and/or training – where there is no-one ‘taking care’ of them and their pathways.



Summary



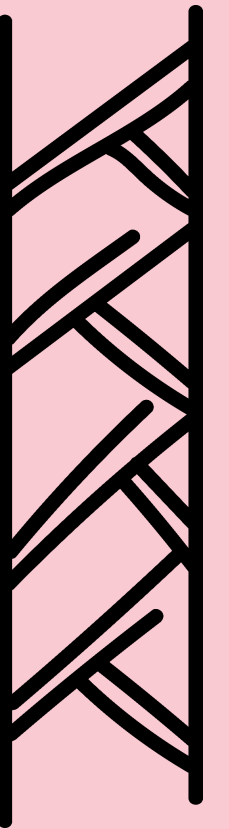
How good were our results?

- **Did we effectively link bespoke demand-led and holistically-supported microcredentials straight into decent jobs via intensive case management and job brokerage?**
 - To some extent, but the wage strategy was only effective for some. Our work continues to explore this concept.
- **Did we integrate tikanga Māori effectively in this work?**
 - Prototyped some effective practice at pre-employment training stage, which saw government uptake. However, there was a clear gap in culturally specific support for Pasifika candidates which we are now addressing through Uptempo.
- **Did we engage employers effectively via social procurement?**
 - Mixed results. There were prototype gaps in embedding the right outcomes within employee contracts, and monitoring this closely. This highlighted the need to focus on educating procurement teams & managers about social procurement, and to review what approaches work the best for engaging employers and filling these gaps.
- **Did we get high starting wages and wage advancement through employer engagement on skill gaps?**
 - Only by working with the willing, who were already doing it. Uptake is increasing but takes time.
- **Did we create networks of providers to buy into this approach?**
 - Yes, we did this through a combination of advocacy, networking, and contracting providers to actually deliver job brokerage, training and other social support, essentially stimulating the local market for this work.
- **Did we get our approach to scale in the system?**
 - One granular practice-level output (noho marae training) has been scaled via MSD, but pathways for change to specific alternative funding models, and or other innovations around service integration or delivery models that would deliver the system change desired require further development.

Where this has taken us?

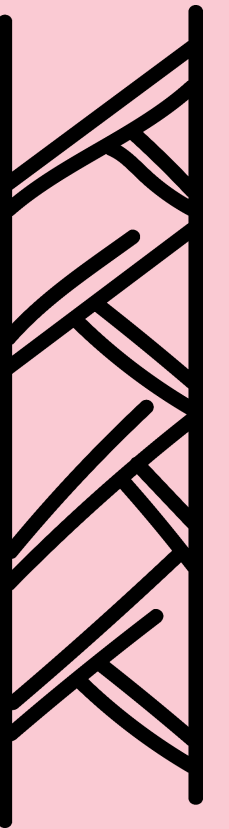
- **UpTempo whānau-focused initiative:**

- Partnering with holistic social service providers (The Fono) and its PTE to provide integrated Pasifika whānau-based career- and wage- pathway support for people already in low-paid work, especially for women.
- Partnering with key employers with the support of First Union to develop employer HR, training and workplace-based career pathway support (including Auckland Council libraries, and sport industry).
- Intensive case-management approach with pots of discretionary funding, to create a proxy of an integrated services experience for families.
- Including innovation strands deploying cash transfer approaches; and peer-to-peer networked support models.



Where this has taken us?

- **Youth Economy, Youth Lab & Youth Empowerment teams expanding the focus to entrepreneurial, creative, design, tech and future-proofed skills:**
 - Covid-era labour shortages may moderate unemployment for youth while borders are restricted, but this may be dominated by precarious work rather than ‘good jobs’; we still have to focus on skills-building for more solid future opportunities.
 - Identifying gender equity strategies for tech accelerator prototypes.



Where this has taken us?

- **Employer focus**

- Reviewing what works for engaging employers in employment ‘pipeline’ initiatives, and best practices on social procurement for employment equity, to feed into future strategies.
- ‘Working with the willing’ – scoping out and recruiting good employers individually to lead practice in collaboration.
- Some key partners from within the Amotai Māori & Pasifika-owned business network.

- **Communities of practice**

- Waitakere Future Focus, supporting West Auckland Together, WADE.

