Supporting young adult learners through stakeholder collaboration:

Designing intervention strategies for youth employability and learning success

Full Report

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This report is one of the outputs from the REAP Wairarapa project with Ako Aotearoa - "Supporting young learners through stakeholder collaboration: Designing intervention strategies for youth employability". Other outputs include the short guide for employers, "Creating a youth-friendly workplace".

Download free and find out more about this project at: https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/supporting-young-learners-through-stakeholder-collaboration-designing-intervention-strategies-for-youth-employability-and-learning-success/.

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"When the learner came here, she was very quiet, terrified to talk to anyone, hunched over and closed body language, even after a month of work placement. We gave her a part-time job to begin with and she now works for us full-time. She now banters with the team, speaks up and voices her opinion, stands tall, is confident." (Employer)

Executive Summary

Ngā Pūkenga Whai Mahi/employability skills development does not occur in a vacuum. That is the underlying premise and aim of our project, to evaluate key influences on young learners being work-ready, including programmes such as the Licence to Work (L2W), and training and community initiatives that support learners into sustained employment.

A growing number of studies, both in New Zealand and overseas, are stating that in order to tackle youth unemployment, there is a need to develop not only the work readiness of young people, but also develop youth-friendly practices in the workplace. Our project team were aware of the need to consider the wider context of youth employment within which the L2W programme operates and the ramifications of these on L2W learners' success. Investigating how other key stakeholders invested in young people's learning and employment success can work together to help build their capabilities to achieve this outcome was central to our project.

Four participant groups situated in the Wairarapa region were involved in the project, including learners who were currently completing the programme, learners who had graduated from the programme and are now in part- or full-time employment, the programme facilitators, employers, and community youth service providers including REAP Wairarapa personnel. We conducted the evaluation using case study methodology and involved a scoping of youth initiatives and interventions currently operating in the Wairarapa region, an analysis of the L2W programme documents, and individual and focus group interviews with the participant cohorts.

A core focus of our evaluation was to gather stakeholder voices to gain insights into their experiences, expectations, and views on the effectiveness of the L2W programme and the influence of other community initiatives in supporting young learners to be work-ready. Their voices collectively provide a depiction of the key influences on young people being work-ready, gaining meaningful employment, and/or undertaking further education or training.

Three key outputs have been developed from the project. These are available as appendices to this report and on the Ako Aotearoa website:

(i) A Learner Intervention Strategies Decision-making Model that assists stakeholders in determining effective interventions that support young people in gaining employability skills and developing behaviours that enable them to achieve sustained employment and/or choose to transition into further education or training.

(ii) A Learner Capability Evaluation Rubric that provides an additional mechanism for evaluating the L2W programme impact and outcomes regarding learner achievement of seven employability skills as identified in the Employability Skills Framework (NZ Ministry of Education).

(iii) A Youth-friendly Workplace Guide which provides employers with information about youth-friendly workplaces and strategies they can use to create this in their own work environment.

Background

The L2W collaborative programme teaches young people work readiness and employability (soft) skills. This collaboration comprises Youth Education, Training, and Employment (YETE), Wairarapa Rural Education Achievement Programme (REAP), COMET (the creators of the programme),and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). REAP Wairarapa is the provider of the L2W programme and is one of four youth employment initiatives operating in the region with the aim to increase the success of young people being work-ready and securing meaningful employment in the long-term.

The other three initiatives which are described more fully on pages 11-12 in this report are:

(i) The Youth in Training, Education or Employment (YETE) initiative, a collaboration of rangatahi, whānau, educators, and youth-friendly businesses to ensure all young people in the Wairarapa aged 16-24 years have the opportunity to successfully pathway into education, training, and employment.

(ii) The Ngā Pūmanawa Tūpuna programme, established in 2019, targets 110 at-risk rangatahi aged 16-24 years to build their confidence and skills for the workforce (New Zealand Government, 2019). The programme aims to help solve youth issues in Wairarapa such as high NEET (youth not in employment, education, or training) rates and skills shortages by involving local people and industries.

(iii) The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) is a pilot scheme in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and YETE, designed to help rural councils assist small to medium-sized businesses with recruitment, training, and subsidies to help them take on young workers or people who have been displaced due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Collectively, these other community stakeholder initiatives influence the young learner's transitional journey from school to further training and education and/or employment and support the learner at each transitional step. Leveraging existing relationships in the community is an effective way to get information needed to inform the L2W programme and connect the programme with the community, in particular employers.

The L2W programme was developed in 2016 by COMET Auckland (COMET) to give young people and employers a way to assess, develop, and verify an individual's employability skills. It is funded by Ministry of Social Development (MSD) which is based on completion of several milestones including the number of learners signing up for the programme, completion of skills development by the learners, work experience undertaken, and the number of work placements. An initial assessment is carried out with the potential learner to determine if they are ready for the programme, such as their level of interest/motivation and medical 'fitness'.

The programme is part of COMET's Youth Employment Programme (YEP) aimed at providing young people aged 15-24 years the opportunity to gain the insight, confidence, and skills to get work, keep work, and create careers. At the heart of the programme is the understanding that competency is based on the skills and knowledge that a learner can demonstrate in the workplace and other contexts. Many young people taking part in the programme have not been in employment or had work experience. However, they can use a variety of situations, both on and off the job, to develop skills (COMET Auckland, 2017).

The programme explicitly teaches the seven skills of employability and work readiness (NZ Ministry of Education, 2016) to assist learners in being better prepared for the work environment. Table 1 provides a summary of the programme's core components including a list of the seven skills.

Table 1 Core Components of the L2W Programme

7 Employability Skills	Programme Structure
1. Waiaro pai | Positive attitude 2. Ngā pūkenga whaakaro | Willingness to Learn 3. Whitiwhiti kōrero | Communication 4. He hiahia ki te ako | Thinking skills 5. Mahi ngātahi | Teamwork 6. Pakaritanga | Resilience 7. Whakahaere-whaiaro | Self-management	• 18-20 hours of skill-building workshops • 10-20 hours of voluntary work experience • 80 hours work experience with a local business • Skills based assessment

COMET operates at regional and national levels to support capability and capacity development in the youth employability environment. Working in collaboration with other stakeholders invested in supporting youth employment success is integral to the success of the programme. COMET works in partnership with several providers of the programme across New Zealand, of which REAP Wairarapa is one. The programme facilitators are REAP Wairarapa staff members who manage delivery and evaluation of the programme and support the learners from enrolment to completion. COMET provides initial and annual refresher facilitator training and ongoing support of the facilitators' role.

An evaluation of the programme was commissioned by COMET in 2016, its second year of piloting in the Auckland region, to determine its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement before scaling the programme throughout New Zealand. Since rolling out the programme nationally, there has been no further evaluation undertaken. REAP Wairarapa and COMET jointly agreed that evaluation of the programme in the Wairarapa region as part of our larger project purpose was timely to determine its impact on learner outcomes and establish if the programme would benefit from further development to achieve the aim of preparing young learners for employment.

The outcomes of our evaluation are reported in the Findings and Summary sections of this report. In essence, our project confirmed the L2W programme's ability to support young people in developing key employability skills with the L2W facilitators playing a pivotal support role throughout the learner's journey from pre-programme enrolment to employment. Additionally, strong strategic partnerships with whānau, iwi, and community stakeholders need to be threaded through the L2W programme to ensure its ongoing success and sustainability.

"The programme is giving them the opportunity for their voice. We emphasise the importance of their stories in every aspect of the programme." (Facilitator)

Project Aims

Employers need to have confidence that employees have the skills to successfully contribute to the economy. Part of this is supporting our young people in having the capacity and capabilities to contribute to the workforce and their local community. It is also about enabling better connections between business, employers, industries, local communities, and the education sector (Peter McNeur, Director, REAP Wairarapa and Tracey Shepherd, Education Manager, REAP Wairarapa).

The key aim of our project was to determine effective interventions that foster employability skills and support young learners to pathway into further education, training, and/or employment. We achieved this through an evaluation of the L2W programme and an investigation into how key stakeholders external to this programme and invested in youth learning and employment success can collaborate to build learners' employability skill development and be successful in their future endeavours.

Our evaluation of the programme aimed to identify if there are areas for programme improvement or adaptation, including an investigation of how other Wairarapa-based community and training initiatives work collaboratively with the L2W programme to achieve this goal. A central feature of the evaluation was gathering L2W learners' and other stakeholders' perceptions of the value from young people participating in the programme and how these perceptions could be used to inform any curriculum and/or practice change to ensure that the programme delivery and teaching strategies best meet learners' needs.

"They are doing really well, learning the skills they need to do the job – diligence, communication skills, completing tasks as required. They are also developing self-awareness and how to work with others as a team." (Employer)

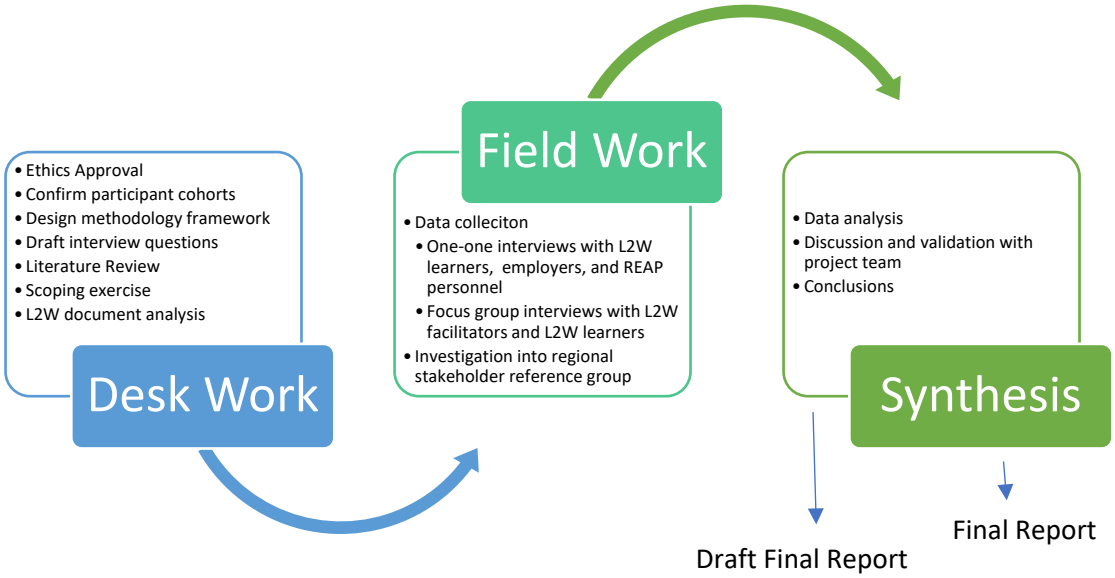
The L2W learner voice was central to the evaluation, enabling us to determine their perceptions of the value from completing the L2W programme and the outcomes they achieved, for example, securing part- or full-time employment, transitioning into further education or training. Their feedback can be used to inform any changes that may be required to ensure that the programme better meets young learners' needs and provide a mechanism for ongoing evaluation and review of the interventions and activities the programme offers. Objectives of our project included:

- Scope youth initiatives and interventions that are currently operating in the Wairarapa region to determine how they support young learners to gain employability skills and/or pathway into further education or training.
- Identify strategies and approaches to overcome the existing challenges and barriers that deter youth from entering employment or limit their success in the workplace.
- Engage with local employers who are interested in supporting youth transition and career success to develop guidelines for providing youth-friendly workplaces.
- Create a Community of Practice (CoP) comprising a cross-representation of key stakeholders to develop a collaborative, regional youth employment service approach.

Methodology

The programme evaluation was conducted within a qualitative research paradigm using case study methodology (Ball, 2017). It involved a scoping of youth initiatives and interventions currently operating in the Wairarapa region, an analysis of the L2W programme documents, and individual and focus group interviews with four participant groups invested in supporting young learners to gain employment and/or take up further education or training opportunities (*refer Appendix 1*). This approach was deemed suitable by our project team for gaining insights into the participants' experiences, expectations, and their views on the effectiveness of the programme and other initiatives in supporting learner success. Merriam (2002) recommends that a qualitative approach be used when the research objectives are exploratory and descriptive.

Our Project Approach



Programme Evaluation

Programme evaluation looks at the parameters, needs, components, and outcomes with an eye to improving student learning. It is a process of collecting, analysing, and using data to review the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes (Yale University, 2020). Objective 2 in our project states, "*Evaluate the L2W programme to determine its influence and impact on young learner success in gaining sustained employment.*" Our evaluation therefore included examining how the programme is functioning in relation to its goals and objectives and how it is influencing learner development and employability skill attainment to inform decisions about the future direction the programme might take.

Evaluation data of the L2W programme was obtained through the gathering of programme stakeholder voices. The participant groups and data collection methods included:

(i) Individual and focus group interviews with 22 learners completing or recently completed the programme. Of this group, 42% were Māori learners.
(ii) Individual interviews with eight employers.
(iii) Individual interviews with four programme facilitators; and
(iv) Individual interviews with four REAP Wairarapa personnel and youth service providers.

REAP Wairarapa is an experienced education organisation which specialises in developing and delivering learning solutions for those whom the formal and/or traditional education system has not worked. They are a member of the YETE partnership. The employers were representative of several industries in the Wairarapa region including building and construction, supermarkets, real estate, information technology, call centres, forestry, and the Wairarapa City Council.

Kaupapa Māori Theory and Research

Kaupapa Māori theory and research (Bishop, 1999) provided the theoretical underpinnings that reflected and catered for the learner participants' cultural and contextual perspectives and environments. This provided an appropriate basis from which we developed culturally responsive practices and an acceptance of multiple worldviews in our data gathering and analysis activities. It ensured that we put the primary care and concern of the learners and the other participants at the forefront of the project. Cultural advice was available from the project advisors and sought from local iwi in the Wairarapa region.

Participant Interviews

Individual and focus group interviews were conducted to gather participants' perceptions and feedback about the L2W programme (*refer Appendix 1*). The interviews were ended with an open question allowing for the participants to share any additional information or experience they felt were relevant that had not been explored or discussed during the interview. The data was analysed using a qualitative narrative analysis process. By the end of the data collection and transcription process, underlying themes were identified. These are reported in the Findings section of this report.

L2W Programme Document Analysis

Four documents make up the L2W programme resource kit including:

i. The Licence to Work Programme Principles and User Guide
ii. The Licence to Work Learner Workbook
iii. The Licence to Work Employer Guide
iv. The Licence to Work Parent Guide

Each of these documents explain the programme aims and objectives and provide guidelines on how the programme works to support young learners in their employability skills development. They also explain the concept of the L2W as a 'Certificate of Employability' and a means for learners and employers to assess, develop, and verify the learner's employability skills.

Programme Principles and User Guide

The Guide is a comprehensive document that describes the four values that inform the youth employability programme 'YEP: Licence to Work', drawing on the work of Ara Taiohi (2011) code of ethics for youth work in Aotearoa New Zealand. These are:

1. Āhuatanga Rangatahi | Young Person-centred
2. Āhua Whānaunga | Relationship-focused
3. Tikanga me te Horopaki | Culture and Context
4. Iwi Whānui | Community Contributors

The four values are at the heart of eight YEP: L2W principles. Each principle works interactively and dynamically with other principles to strengthen the YEP: L2W model and shape a robust, effective model of learning and engagement (p. 2). The eight principles include:

1. Agentic, high engagement methodology
2. Strong facilitator capability
3. Positive peer group dynamics
4. A framework for praxis
5. Voluntary work principles
6. Authentic work experience
7. Grounded assessment and solutions-focused feedback
8. Strong whānau/community engagement

Learner Workbook

In addition to outlining the seven employability skills and providing examples for the learner to assess themselves against attainment of each, the learner workbook describes nine elements of work readiness such as 'work search skills' and 'safety, health, and wellbeing'. In this section there is opportunity for the learner to assess themselves against a list of work readiness behaviours, the guide providing examples of how they demonstrate and develop these.

Employer Guide

As previously outlined in Table 1 (*refer p. 10*), the learners need to complete 80 hours of work experience with a local business. The employer guide informs how the employer can assess the young learner's employability skills in their workplace during this period, also explaining how the seven employability skills are developed and the employer's role in verifying that these skills have been demonstrated by the learner.

Parent Guide

The parent guide focuses on how parents can help their teenagers be successful in building skills that employers want most and suggests several ways in which they can provide this. For example, encouraging the young person to practice responsibility at home by taking on chores and using problem-solving skills at home in family situations and making sure they get to work on time with any special clothing needed (p. 1).

Context for the L2W programme

Scoping of Youth Initiatives and Interventions in the Wairarapa Region

A scoping exercise was undertaken to discover youth initiatives and interventions that are currently operating in the Wairarapa region that foster employability skills and support young learners to gain sustained employment and/or pathway into further education or training. Investigating how other stakeholders support young people's learning and employment success provided a comprehensive picture of the range of support mechanisms in the region, of which the L2W programme is a contributor. This exercise ensured that the L2W programme was not evaluated in isolation from other support services with the same objectives and enabled our project team to identify collaborators who could be invited to participate in a Stakeholders' Community of Practice which was one of the intended outcomes and a central activity in our project.

Youth in Education, Training or Employment (YETE)

YETE is a collaboration between rangatahi, whānau, educators, and youth-friendly businesses with the aim to ensure all young people in the Wairarapa aged 16-24 years have the opportunity to have successful pathways into education, training, and employment (yete.nz, n.d.). YETE is about helping rangatahi become work ready.

Launched in 2013, YETE connects with employers from a variety of industries that offer free employment-based opportunities for young people. It creates a powerful link between schools, training and education providers, and employers. Several events are organised for rangatahi to help them find out about local training and job opportunities. These include:

- *Industry Big Day Out*: Rangatahi spend a day visiting businesses, talking with employers and industry leaders.
- *Quick Fire Connections*: Provides an opportunity for rangatahi to practise interviewing skills with local employers.
- *Taster Days*: This event is a 'hands-on' day at the Universal College of Learning (UCOL) Wairarapa campus, designed for year 10 school students to start thinking about their career options.

Ngā Pūmanawa Tūpuna Programme

The Ngā Pūmanawa Tūpuna programme was established in 2019 targeting 110 at-risk rangatahi aged 16-24 years to build their confidence and skills for the workforce (New Zealand Government, 2019). The programme is run in partnership with REAP Wairarapa, receiving funding from the Poutama Rangatahi (HPR) initiative, which is funded in turn by the NZ Government's Provincial Growth Fund (PGF).

Ngā Pūmanawa Tūpuna aims to help solve youth issues in the Wairarapa region such as high NEET (youth not in employment, education, or training) rates and skills shortages by involving local people and industries. It supports the region to upskill local rangatahi to help meet the demand for workers in industries such as farming, construction, and hospitality.

Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) Community Recovery Programme

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) is a pilot scheme in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and YETE which was trialled for six weeks to the end of June 2020 to bring jobs into the Wairarapa in the wake of the Covid-19 lockdown (Anselm, 2020). The scheme is designed to help rural councils such as the Carterton District Council assist small- to medium-sized businesses with recruitment, training, and subsidies to help them take on young workers or people who have been displaced due to the Covid-19 crisis. The Carterton District Council has teamed up with YETE and REAP Wairarapa to support up to 25 young people into education, training and/or employment (Vorster, 2020).

A core focus of the scheme is on NEETs, providing rural councils with funding to create a minimum of 50 sustainable employment positions. After success in South Wairarapa, the programme is continuing into 2021 and has been scaled up around New Zealand, across 23 more councils.

Literature Review

"Youth do not have the ease of entry into the workforce or the work stability that their parents experienced. There is also a greater demand by employers for soft skills as well as qualifications." (Employment NZ, 2020)

Our project is about young learners being supported in developing employability (soft) skills and experiencing the world of work to prepare them for employment and/or pathway to further education or training. Understanding the key influences on their success in this context was gained through evaluating the effectiveness of the L2W programme, which supports learners to be work-ready, and other youth support initiatives that share these goals.

The Honourable Willie Jackson's (2019) foreword for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) youth employment action plan states the NZ Government's desire for all young people to get as much as they can from schooling and experience the smoothest possible transitions to either employment and/or further education or training. Jackson emphasises how the improvement of youth education, training, and employment outcomes is critical for setting young people up for lifetime careers and success, in turn impacting on community wellbeing and an inclusive society and economy. He explains the purpose of the Action Plan as "*Building on existing pipelines of support for putting our young people onto a stronger pathway to reaching their fullest potential and build resilience and adaptability for the future*."

The New Zealand youth [un]employment context

"Unemployment and non-participation in education or training can have a negative effect on psychological health, which itself becomes a barrier to employment or further education and creates an inability for the young person to move forward." (Potter and Macky, 2018)

It is widely accepted that there are links between education, access to employment, crime, and benefit dependency. Māori, Pasifika, people with disabilities, and people with caring responsibilities have amongst the highest levels of limited employment, unemployment, and/or non-participation in education or training. Recent analysis of education data (NZ Ministry of Social Development, 2016) has determined that young people who leave school without NCEA Level 1 and do not find employment will need to access the benefit system. They are also more likely to spend longer periods on a range of benefits than those who move directly into the workforce or pathway to further education or training.

MBIE (2019) states that most young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) totals around 90,000 at any one time and ten percent of these young people will experience a period as long-term NEET, that is, for six months or longer. Māori, Pasifika, young women, and people with disabilities are over-represented in this group. As the MBIE state, this scenario requires a focus on young people who are at risk of poor educational outcomes and long-term unemployment, as well as on young people who are already or are at risk of being NEET (p. 5).

Research shows that the Wairarapa region is underperforming in youth employment transitions, exacerbated by a lack of coordination and collaboration between schools, industry trainers, and employers. (NZ Ministry of Social Development, 2015)

There is a need for fostering and scaffolding 'beyond school' pathways for young people. For example, in the Wairarapa:

- Students are disengaging from traditional education processes and curriculum.
- Nearly a quarter of people living in the region have no qualifications.
- There is a disconnect between how the schools and tertiary education providers are developing students relative to what employers and industry needs.
- Many employers in the Wairarapa region are facing a supply shortage of skilled or work-ready labour (REAP Wairarapa Education Manager).

Ensuring youth make a successful transition from school into further education or employment has become an increasingly important focus in New Zealand, not in the least due to very high numbers of unemployed aged 15-24 years (Masterton District Council, 2019, p. 8). The Wairarapa region is currently experiencing increased challenges to keeping young people engaged as positive and contributing members of their communities. Successful transitions by young Māori learners from school or foundational education into further education, training, or employment continue to be problematic in the Wairarapa region compared to other populations.

Key Trends Affecting Youth

Employment NZ (2020) highlight that moving from education to employment is an important life stage for young people. They identify several economic and social trends affecting a young person's ability and opportunity to gain employment, such as:

- Transitioning from school to employment now takes longer with several obstacles to overcome, for example, needing a driver's licence.
- Qualifications and soft skills are needed to get a job.
- It is difficult to get a job at entry-level with no experience. Young people often find it hard to get any kind of experience before looking for a job.
- Automation is disrupting many jobs resulting in a decrease in entry-level jobs.

A real barrier for young people transitioning into the workforce is not having a driving licence. Young people who are NEET are less likely to hold a driver's licence than those in education or employment (Potter & Macky, 2018). As Potter and Macky point out, not having a driver's licence can limit employment and training opportunities, making it difficult to look for work, travel to work and training, and gain a job where driving is required (p. 7).

Joining the workforce can be challenging for the young person who is also enrolled in school, educational, or vocational training due to additional time commitments and managing the logistics of these (Alessi et al., 2018). Many young people juggle familial obligations and extracurricular activities – for example, church, sport – which although provide opportunities for their wellbeing also leads to conflicting goals and values with employer expectations and the job commitments. While employment plays a crucial part in transitioning into and establishing independence and autonomy, there will be complications for young people (Alessi et al., 2018).

MBIE (2019) talk about the range of needs of the young person making the transition from school to work, from being straightforward to the more challenging. For example, whilst one person may just require better information about who to contact [employer], others have more complex needs such as health conditions and disabilities, a lack of qualifications, underlying learning disabilities, low literacy skills, a lack of experience, or are young parents or have other caring responsibilities (p. 12).

The Importance of Soft Skills for Employment

Research shows that employers are increasingly prioritising the need for new hires to have soft skills over technical skills, as their ability to work with others, communicate well, and solve problems is critical to their success as employees. (Ignatowski, 2017)

Ignatowski states that there is a lack of rigorous and nuanced research and evaluation on soft skill formation and on interventions to foster them, limiting the opportunities to provide effective approaches to soft skills development for youth employment. In her review of evidence on what works for youth at risk of limited employment, McGirr (2019) states that interventions that include soft skills development, work experience or on-job training, and job-seeking assistance make for effective skills training programmes for young people.

MBIE emphasise how soft skills such as motivation, teamwork, self-management, and communication skills are an important part of the skillset required by young people to make the transition into paid work and work experience plays a key role in helping young people build and recognise these skills. They point out that a lack of work experience is a major employment barrier for young people who leave school with low or no qualifications and for young people who come from family backgrounds with limited social capital.

Child Trends (2020) add to this discussion, explaining how over the past 20 years, as the workforce has modernised around the world, soft skills – the skills, competencies, behaviours, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to navigate their environment, work with others, perform well, and achieve their goals – have become centrally important.

The NZ Ministry of Education's (2016) Employability Skills Framework is a resource that describes the employability skills most commonly identified by New Zealand employers for all young people to be work ready. The framework outlines the behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and personal qualities that employers in New Zealand and internationally are saying are essential for getting and keeping a job. The framework mirrors international studies on soft skills development for youth employability, for example, Lippman et al. (2015), who describe youth employability soft skills as competencies, behaviours, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable youth to navigate their environment, work with others, perform well, and achieve their goals.

Lipman et al. also state that there is not a clear consensus about which soft skills are most critical for workforce success, however they identify five key soft skills based on an extensive review of research and broad stakeholder input: 1) social skills; 2) communication skills; 3) higher-order thinking; 4) self-control; and 5) positive self-concept. They state, "according to researchers, employers, youth, and programme implementers, these soft skills most enable youth (15-29 years) worldwide to be successful in the workplace" (p. 2).

Supporting Young People into Employment

"When a young person has a job, they have three things: routine, self-esteem, and income." (Beacroft, cited in Baldwin et al., 2013)

Through work, young people can experiment with career pathways and identify future jobs or skills they would like to acquire. They also develop new identities related to work such as a worker, employee, financial provider, and contributing member of society (Alessi et al. 2018). Ideally, the young person's transition into employment allows for the development of a positive identity.

MBIE (2019) stress the importance of supporting young people to make good transitions from school to employment, further education, apprenticeships, and training. Interventions involving job search assistance, work experience and/or on-the-job training have been shown to be amongst the most effective in improving long-term employment outcomes. These interventions need to provide pathways to real and sustainable employment opportunities (p. 13). McGirr (2019) supports this thinking as she points to international evidence that shows how interventions involving job search assistance and work experience or on-job training are most effective in improving longer-term employment outcomes.

MBIE (2019) also highlight the importance of young people having access to pastoral care to support their physical, spiritual, and/or mental health. Pastoral care and mentoring support need to be delivered effectively, and for Māori and Pasifika young people, is based on cultural frameworks and approaches that build cultural and community strengths. Additionally, the MBIE think that all young people, regardless of whether they are in or outside the secondary or tertiary education system, or in work but looking for their next step, should have access to job brokers who are well-connected with employers and training providers.

Youth-friendly workplaces

> "Young people bring with them cultural connections and fresh ideas. Employing young people is an investment in the future of your workforce, industry, and community." *(Alessi et al., 2018)*

Employment matters to young people because it provides the opportunity for them to learn new skills, build confidence in their abilities, contribute to their communities, and create financial security (Alessi et al., 2018). A young person's experience of work is most often analysed in terms of their transition between education and employment, or between employment and unemployment. However, relatively little attention has been given over to what their experiences are once in employment, and how employers can best handle their needs and expectations in the workplace (Forth & Metcalf, 2014).

The Young Employee

Roberts (2013) talks about employment opportunities and initiatives needing to be created with an understanding of the job characteristics and employment types that are more likely to support young people. She emphasises that such initiatives need to acknowledge that adolescence is a time of transition and development and employment opportunities must address "the emotional, psychological, and social development needs of youth" (p. 13).

Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer (2006) describe adolescence as a time of exploration and identity construction, and how characteristics of work environments that matter most to adolescent development may differ depending on gender, race/ethnicity, background, socio-economic status, and future plans for work or further education. The authors talk about how the work environment provides adolescents with opportunities to interact with adults other than their family members and teachers. These workplace relationships have the potential to provide adolescents with role models and mentors in the adult-worker role, encouraging them to "*develop identities by providing occupational options*" (p. 7).

What Determines a Youth-friendly Workplace?

"Young people of the digital age are ushering in a new culture of highly unique values, perceptions, and expectations to the workplace. They are transforming the world of work, to the extent that keeping a youth-friendly organisation is no longer optional." (Akorede, 2017)

When employers listen to the young person and respond to their practical and emotional needs, they make it easier for them to remain in the workforce (Alessi et al., 2018). The authors describe a supportive employer-employee relationship as being based on perseverance and persistence. By this they mean the employer committing to the young person over time and acknowledging that employer support is highly valued and promotes a sense of wellbeing and belonging (p. 8).

Persistence and perseverance compensate for practical and emotional supports that are often missing from young people's lives. When employers are passionate about helping young people learn, they are better able to integrate into the workplace culture. They can foster agency in young people by keeping them at the centre of their work. Munford and Sanders (2015) in their study on vulnerable young people's transitions to adulthood explain how the young person's agency is about being heard and supported to make decisions, take responsibility, and develop resilience and independence.

Creating a workplace that gives young employees the opportunity to thrive involves mentoring, training, and progression. It is crucial when the young person first enters the workplace that their experience sets them up for a long and successful career (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 2012). Trunk (2016), in her article on retaining young employees, identifies several factors of youth-friendly workplaces from the point of view of what young people think is important. Her list includes:

- Involvement in good projects. Young people accept that bottom-rung work is necessary but that this is not the whole job. Employers should not make the promise of interesting work based on a long-term stay in the company.
- Flexible hours. When employers institute a policy of measuring work completed rather than hours in the workplace, employee turnover can decrease by 50% or more. Young people say flexibility is more important in a job than money.
- Training. Young people place value on mentoring and coaching.
- Feedback. Young people appreciate constant feedback. Employers need to provide their young employees with structured, regular feedback.

Billet et al. (2015) build on Trunk's ideas by suggesting strategies for creating a youth-friendly workplace that can support the young person's 'entry into employment'. They offer the following ideas:

- Employee mentoring
- On-job and ongoing professional development training
- Induction
- Work experience which provides opportunities for skill acquisition
- Buddying
- Soft skill and life-skills development
- A culture where it is 'okay to ask questions'
- Clear job performance expectations

How Employers Can Provide a Youth-friendly Workplace

"There is an opportunity for employers and young employees/job seekers to make changes at each stage of the employment journey: getting prepared for work, getting into work, staying in work, and progressing at work." (Employment NZ, 2020)

In their guidelines for employers of young people, Alessi et al. (2018) acknowledge the challenges for employers in employing young people, such as the young person requiring more attention, guidance, and flexibility. However, they also point out the many benefits employers gain, for example, young people are often technology savvy and can keep employers up to date with emerging platforms and communication styles. This enables employers to 'stay on the cutting edge' with developments in their industry as well as refine their mentoring and coaching skills (p. 5). The authors add that businesses and employers are sometimes unfamiliar with youth culture and do not know how to harness the cultural strengths and diversity of young people. Employers need to dedicate resources and time to helping young people adapt to a new job or work environment.

The gap between employer perceptions and the young person's understanding of workplace rules and practices can lead to disengagement from both parties, creating a barrier to effective employment transitions for the young person (MBIE, 2019). The MBIE talk about increasing employers' realisation of the young person's potential as 'the final stage of the youth employment support pipeline', acknowledging the role employers play in making the most of young people's skills and talents: "*Employers' capability, tolerance, and cultural competency can be built to support better engagement with young people*" (p. 7).

Whilst employers may have concerns about how young people manage themselves in the workplace (Auckland Co-Design Lab, 2013) young people also report confusion about how to manage in the workplace, such as struggling with the interview and performance review processes, how to prepare and present themselves to employers in interviews and being nervous about making a good first impression (Alessi et al., 2018). Employers can help alleviate these pressures by clearly communicating their expectations prior to the interview and having a welcoming demeanour.

Employers often look for young people to demonstrate the 'right attitude' and 'soft skills' before hiring (Employment NZ, 2020). The Attitude Gap Challenge, a project undertaken in South Auckland in 2013, was sponsored by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), aiming to understand the differences between young people's and employer's expectations of work readiness and the impact of these differences on youth employment. The Attitude Gap Challenge report highlights the role of employers, service providers, young people, and their whānau working together to improve employment outcomes for young people wanting to enter the workforce. Key insights summarised in the project report include:

- Employment expectations and ambitions of young people are built through the experiences they have early on, so having positive connections with employers is important.
- The process of applying for jobs can be demotivating for young people who do not understand what employers are looking for.
- Young people do not understand progression opportunities while employers are waiting to see motivation before they discuss progression and development.

Several themes resonate through the literature reviewed in this project as they focus on the support needed by young people to experience the smoothest possible transition from education to either employment and/or further education or training, given this transition is an important life stage for them. There is a particular need to focus on young people who are at risk of poor education outcomes and long-term unemployment.

Soft skills training is emphasised as paramount to the young person's successful transitioning. These core skills are increasingly becoming an expectation of employers and are part of the skillset required by young people to make the transition into paid work. These skills include problem-solving, communication skills, self-management, and motivation. In addition to soft skills training, interventions that include work experience or an on-job training programme, and job-seeking assistance make for effective skills training programmes.

Several reports highlight the influence and importance of a collaborative approach to improving employment outcomes for young people. Bringing together employers, service providers, young people and their whānau, government agencies, and community groups invested in young people's success will strengthen the likelihood of achieving this.

"We are teaching them essential life skills and talking to them about making informed decisions and choices." (Facilitator)

Findings

Four key findings resulted from this project in relation to the evaluation of the L2W programme and its connection to a Wairarapa-based stakeholder reference group, including the value of these to learners preparing to be work-ready and gain employment. Feedback across the four participant groups highlighted how the L2W programme is a vehicle for helping learners shift from a position of dependency – reliance on the unemployment benefit – to one of increasing independence – completing work placements, developing essential employability skills, getting a job, and undertaking further education or training. The participant voices across the four groups are reported under four themes:

1. The L2W programme provides learners with an avenue to gaining employability (soft) skills and supports them to pathway into employment and/or further education or training.
2. Learners experience internal and external challenges to being work-ready and gaining meaningful employment. These challenges are both internal (self-confidence, the belief that they can learn, and completing the programme) and external, such as social issues, drugs and alcohol, and lack of local employment prospects.
3. The L2W facilitator plays a pivotal role in supporting and sustaining learner success in the programme and beyond. This encompasses building relationships with employers and community agencies, teaching the L2W classroom sessions, assisting learners with securing part- and full-time employment or continuing their education, and providing ongoing pastoral care following programme completion.
4. Stakeholder collaboration significantly influences youth employment success. The L2W programme is part of a community stakeholder collaborative that is invested in the success of young people, providing a coordinated approach to enabling learners in the programme experience work and apply the employability skills they are learning in a real-world context.

1. The L2W programme provides learners with an avenue to successfully gain employability skills and/or pathway to further education or training.

The L2W programme was developed to give young people a way to gain the insight, confidence, and skills to get work and create careers, using a combination of classroom sessions and work experience placements. This provides a holistic approach to their personal and work-ready skill development. The evaluation of the L2W programme undertaken in this project identified several ways in which it achieves this objective.

How the L2W Programme Prepares Learners for Work

"The programme teaches them to be reflective about their behaviour and how this influences work opportunities for them in the future." (Facilitator)

Work experience is a critical aspect of the programme. The learner completes 80 hours of work experience with a local business which, in consultation with employers, COMET determined was a minimum period for the young learner to get settled, for other staff to know who they are and what they are doing, and for them to be ready to get involved in real work tasks. The work experience component further develops the learner's employability skills covered in the classroom curriculum, increases the learner's self-confidence, and can assist them in securing future employment.

What the learners said

"Even though the work experience wasn't in the right field or what I wanted to do, it actually created an opportunity for me to work in an area where I now have a job." (Learner)

When asked how the programme was helping them be work-ready, the learners' feedback offered a range of examples. A common theme was the development of communication skills, particularly in the context of preparing for and managing job interviews, keeping eye contact and speaking up in a group or work team setting, and asking questions in the workplace. These and other statements of work-ready skill development included:

> *"The programme put me out of my comfort zone a little bit. I wasn't used to doing things like interviewing skills and being a group leader. I am more confident now and working in a team environment, being a team player." (Learner)*

I learned that I can learn to do a job when I am willing to do it.

It has introduced me to other roles I hadn't thought of and given me some choices of job direction.

I am more open-minded and being more responsible for my actions and choices.

I talk a lot more now at work and have proper ways to respond to others.

Several learners shared how they had some initial concerns about the programme when they started, in the context of "*being forced into work experience that I end up not liking or failing at*" whilst others admitted they did not know what they wanted to do but they did want to get a job. Feedback from a learner who had recently completed the programme at the time of interview emphasised the outcome they had achieved from the programme:

> *"I did the work experience placement because I liked it, but it never occurred to me that it could be a job. I now have full-time employment and my employer is supporting me in completing my qualifications to work in care giving. I enjoy making people's day." (Learner)*

What the facilitators said

When the facilitators were asked how the programme helped prepare the learners for work, a common theme was about the learners making informed decisions and choices about their future. They commented that the programme breaks down the world of work for them and helps the learner unpack the L2W material and work experience "*in a safe place*" to identify where they are on the continuum of readiness for work. One of the key strategies to assist with this is the involvement of community youth service providers who are brought in to facilitate specific classroom sessions on work readiness skills, for example, Dress for Success, interviewing and job-seeking skills, and money management.

Work experience helps the learner make decisions about what they want to do in the future.

We encourage help-seeking behaviour so that the learners know where they can go to get advice and help. In the L2W programme we bring other youth service providers into the course to help them with this skill development.

We are teaching them essential life skills and talking to them about making informed decisions and choices.

"The programme explicitly teaches them skills required to be in the world of work. Then we expose them to components of the workplace, for example, contracts, business walk-throughs, Health and Safety. The programme scaffolds their learning with real life events." (Facilitator)

Adding to this part of the interview, the facilitators talked about how the programme was a "*springboard to getting off the unemployment benefit and onto a future-focused pathway*", whether that pathway was gaining part- or full-time employment or furthering their education. They emphasised that although the focus is on preparing learners for work, inherent in the programme is life skills development, reducing barriers for them, and helping learners make choices for their future, *"whatever that looks like."*

What the employers said

"It opened his eyes a lot, especially in the self-management area. He asked me "How do you remember everything you have to do?" (Employer)

Reflective of the feedback received from the facilitators, the employers identified the opportunity for the learners to experience the real world of work as a key benefit of the programme. They talked about how the work experience placement helps learners build a range of work-ready skills such as following instructions, working in a team, and developing work ethics. One employer further described the placement component as "*bringing them into the workplace versus teaching them employability skills with no support and therefore the opportunity to apply these skills in the real world (me).*"

The employers also commented on the personal development the learner gains such as developing self-awareness and communicating with other team members and the public. One employer described the programme as helping the learner "*realise the world is larger than their world.*" Other employer comments highlighting how the programme prepares learners for work included:

It gives them an expectation of how working really is – getting up to go to work, work ethics.

They have the opportunity to work in a team environment here.

The programme is bringing them into the workplace vs teaching them employability skills with no support and therefore offers opportunity to apply these skills in the real world (me).

They learn how to not waste time and work out how a work day 'works'.

"I believe there is huge value in this programme, where young people can learn employability skills and put them to use." (Employer)

What the REAP Wairarapa personnel and youth service providers said

The REAP Wairarapa personnel and youth service providers were asked to comment on how they thought the programme helped learners prepare for getting a job. Their feedback presented several perspectives including what was working well in the programme to support learners, and aspects that could be changed or improved. Effective aspects of the programme were identified as:

- Using real life examples and scenarios in the classroom sessions.
- The pivotal role of the facilitator as connector and coordinator for the learners with employers, schools, and community youth service providers.
- The positive and ongoing relationships with employers.
- Positioning of the learner's narrative as central.

Flexibility of the programme design and delivery was a key suggestion for how the programme could be improved to ensure it is meeting the needs of the learners and helping them be work-ready. This was explained as:

- Tailoring the content and approach to ensure the programme is learner-centric and able to meet individual learner needs.
- Customising the programme to meet the needs of the audience in the specific region (in this project, the Wairarapa region).
- Ensuring the learning is not prescriptive and based on a 'one size fits all' model.
- "*Taking the learner off the shelf and suiting the programme to their needs versus taking the programme off the shelf and fitting the learner to this*."

Learner Success

> "I got my driver's licence which made it much easier to get to my work placement. It meant I could also help with other activities such as driving the van. *I liked having that responsibility." (Learner)*

In addition to the learners' feedback regarding how the programme prepared them for work, they talked about the personal success they had achieved through participation in and completion of the programme, including their work experience. The employers and facilitators also mentioned the shifts and changes they perceived as learner success in the classroom and workplace settings.

What the learners identified as success

Being more motivated, open-minded, and self-confident were given by the learners as examples of their success in the programme. Gaining a sense of self through learning with other learners and getting support from the facilitators and employers were highlighted by several learners. Additional examples of success described by the learners included:

I am far more comfortable talking with others and building relationships.

I am managing my sleeping a lot better.

My days have much more routine now.

I feel motivated now. I don't feel motivated sitting around at home.

I got my Driver's Licence. I am so much more independent now.

"I wouldn't be in this position in a job I love. And, I am doing my first paper to become a qualified teacher, which I never dreamed of. I realise I can succeed in the education system." (Learner)

One learner saw their success as making shifts in their daily routine and in their motivation, as they said, *"Before, I would just sit in my room and play computer games. Now I get up, go to work, jump in my car, and visit Mum."*

What the employers identified as learner success

"They are doing really well, learning the skills they need to do the job – diligence, communication skills, completing tasks as required. They are also developing self-awareness and how to work with others as a team." (Employer)

The employers were asked what shifts and changes they had seen in the learners who had been, or were currently on a work placement, with them. Several employers referred to the learners' personal development and the observable differences from when the learner first entered the workplace. For example, one employer stated, "*He started with us not being able to look people in the eye, moving to managing the front desk*" whilst another said, "*Her mindset has definitely changed. She is far more confident and able to ask for help when she needs it.*" A statement made by one employer summed up their learner's success:

> "When the student came here, she was very quiet, terrified to talk to anyone, hunched over and closed body language, even after a month of work placement. Over the year *she now banters with the team, speaks up and voices her opinion, stands tall, is confident. Her phone manner is one of the best in our team." (Employer)*

When asked what they thought were important qualities of a good employer that positively influenced the learners' success in their work placement, a wide range of attributes were identified. There were several commonalities across the employer participant group, such as having patience, tolerance, a supportive attitude, and response. Providing structure so the learner knows what to do, what is expected of the job and of their role were also mentioned.

It was apparent from their feedback that the employers had realistic expectations of the learners' ability to manage the workplace environment and job requirements, acknowledging that "*they come with limited skills and don't have the skills I have developed over a number of years.*" Comments indicative of the employers' recognition of the impact they can have on the learners' success included:

We like to see people succeed so we support them as much as possible. I provide regular feedback so that he knows how he is doing.

I made sure he was a valued team member while he was with us.

You have to understand it's not going to be perfect. I am going to have to say things more than once until they get it.

I was conscious of how I responded to his questions. I encouraged him to ask questions at any time and as many as needed.

For me it is about having a good work environment and a team environment where everyone gets along. Integrating the young person into the whole organisation.

Vary the work experiences as much as you can.

Provide opportunities for job shadowing until they find their feet. Show them what to do instead of just telling them.

One statement from an employer who regularly provides work experience opportunities within the programme summed up the influence of the workplace environment and employer attitude on the learner's experience and success: "*You have to show an interest in and care for them. It might not work out this time, but it could make a difference for them in the future.*"

What the facilitators identified as supporting learner success

"The programme is giving them the opportunity for their voice. We emphasise the importance of their stories in every aspect of the programme." (Facilitator)

Feedback received from the facilitators in relation to the programme's influence on learner success focused on both the classroom learning component and work placement experience. Within the class environment, this was explained as providing the learning in 'manageable bites', aiming to give learners a positive experience of each learning component and competency. Involving youth service providers in the programme contributed to making learners aware of the skills they have and how they can evidence these. For example, managing their finances, gaining their Driver's Licence, looking after their self-care and hygiene, and presentation skills for job interviews.

Maintaining regular contact with employers and supporting the learners whilst on work placement were also central to the experience and outcomes learners achieved in the programme. This included involving supportive employers and getting their feedback throughout the learner's work placement and letting the learners know "*we are here to help them whenever they need us. We always follow up with each learner during and following completion of their work experience*."

2. Learners experience internal and external challenges to being work-ready and gaining employment

Several learner challenges were identified by the facilitators, the employers, and the learners themselves. Feedback from the learners, employers, and facilitators highlighted internal challenges typically faced by the learners such as low self-confidence and motivation, as well as external challenges including lack of good transport options to get to the workplace, and unhealthy daily routines, for example "*staying in bed and gaming all day.*"

How the learners described their challenges

"I remind myself every day to treat each day like it's the first day. It's easy to get complacent, less caring. This programme is a good way to keep motivated and keep learning." (Learner)

When asked about the challenges they experience in being ready to seek employment or further their education, the learners identified internal challenges such as low self-confidence, low motivation, and a sense of aimlessness. In the learners' feedback, these were described as:

Getting to work each day is really difficult. Some days I just want to stay in bed.

Managing my sleep is a real challenge for me.

I haven't got a CV and really struggle to understand what they are looking for in the job description.

I look good on paper, but I find interviews face-to-face really difficult.

The programme is helping me get out of the house but it's a struggle for me.

Having the confidence to ask a question, ask for help, or attempt a task totally unfamiliar to them were further descriptions of the learners' challenges. For many of them, the work experience placement was the first time they had experienced a real workplace environment, exposing them to roles, routines, and expectations (of the employer and the job role) that were unfamiliar and for many of them *"quite scary."* As one learner explained, the "*programme put me out of my comfort zone a little bit. I wasn't used to doing things like interviewing skills and being a group leader."*

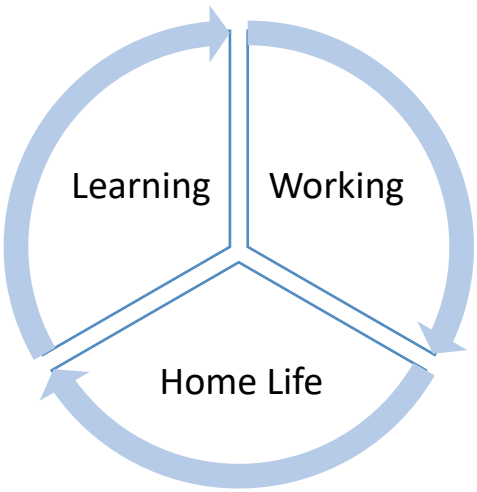
A common external challenge was not having a driver's licence which made it difficult for some of the learners to get to the workplace. Added to this, the feedback from these learners indicated an inability to find an alternative approach: "*There is no public transport where I live, and I don't have my licence yet. I am often late to work or don't go at all; it is too far away to walk."*

How the facilitators described learner challenges

"It's good and a challenge for them to be out of their bedroom at least once a week and come to the class sessions." (Facilitator)

The facilitators' feedback supplemented the learners' perspective regarding the internal and external challenges they see learners face to being work-ready and gaining employment, or deciding to undertake further education or training, as well as providing additional viewpoints. For example, they described the internal challenges as lack of daily routine and sleep routine, and lack of commitment to follow through with the expectations of the programme. One facilitator also talked about learners' low resilience, explaining this as *"They have great difficulty overcoming challenges and coping with change. They come up with an excuse instead of an explanation or solution."*

External challenges were also mentioned in their feedback, such as lack of a support person, little or no financial support, and finding employers who have the time to support the learners. The distances for some learners to travel to their work placement with limited public transport options and/or not owning a driver's licence were also raised as key inhibitors. Transitioning between the three worlds of learning (the L2W programme), working (the work experience component of the programme), and home life was presented as a significant challenge for many of the learners. The facilitators identified a key aim of the programme and therefore of their role as assisting learners in being able to create a life for themselves in which these three coalesced. One facilitator summarised this in her feedback: *"They step out of the world of learning back into the environment they know – hanging around home, staying in bed, doing nothing really."*



How the employers described learner challenges

"It can look like they lack motivation, but it can often be a lack of confidence. It can look like laziness, but it can be mental illness such as depression." (Employer)

Similar to the facilitators' comments, the employers provided an additional perspective as they were asked to comment on learner challenges in the workplace. They offered several examples specific to this context. Four hurdles for the learner commonly identified by all of the employers were i) turning up for work every day; ii) getting on with the team; iii) not wasting time; and iv) committing to a task until it is completed. These and other statements of learner behaviours that indicated their challenges included:

He kept himself separate from client conversations until prompted, preferring more of an observer role.

Getting to work on a regular basis.

Lack of confidence talking to strangers, so he struggled being on the front desk.

Minimal skill in being proactive and not engaging with clients or the team.

He was technically capable but not yet appreciating what it means to be business ready.

Presentation of themselves and hygiene. I gave him some feedback on this, and he changed a little, but he has a way to go yet.

Overwhelm. There is a lot to learn on the job and their internal dialogue is telling them they can't cope.

Anxiety. They get sick which is often stress-related due to anxiety.

During this part of the interview, an additional comment was made by one employer as they acknowledged their responsibility to avoid creating challenges and barriers for the learner: *"Our challenge is to not expect the young person to be 'able' after only a week of their work experience."* They recognised their role in supporting the learners being an employee and navigating the expectations and reality of work.

The employers were asked a follow-up question to explore their perspective on how they thought learner challenges could be addressed in the workplace. They offered several suggestions, evidenced by the following comments:

I made sure they had the opportunity to be part of the conversations I was having with clients. This helped him become more present in the conversations.

Try them in different jobs so that they can find out what they like to do.

Push them towards a job that interests them.

Identifying and acknowledging the skill and knowledge gaps gave me the opportunity to talk with him and go over what he needed to do in the job.

Help them change their patterns of behaviour to manage the work requirements. For example, managing their sleep and getting to work each day.

No shouting. This is not a negative environment.

Have a transitional pipeline for progression and development in place.

3. The L2W facilitator plays a pivotal role in supporting learner success in the programme and beyond.

"I want to prove to the community that these young people have value and a lot to offer." (Facilitator)

Feedback from the learners, employers, and facilitators illustrated the central role facilitators play in the programme and how they contribute significantly to the programme effectiveness and the learners' experience and outcomes. A significant finding was the facilitator's involvement at three distinct points in the learner's journey:

1) Liaison with Work and Income NZ to establish the young person's eligibility for the programme;
2) Teaching the L2W programme curriculum and liaising with employers to secure work placements; and
3) Providing ongoing pastoral care for the young person following completion of the programme, which could include in the workplace.

The learners' experience

"The facilitator helped me get a foot in the door with an employer through her contacts. *I now have a fulltime job." (Learner)*

When asked to comment on how the facilitators support them in the classroom setting and whilst on work placement, several learners talked about how the facilitator "*encourages us to step out of our comfort zone. I found it difficult talking in front of people and taking telephone calls. I am more confident in doing these now*" and "*they were super encouraging of me to push myself further and get some backbone*." Walking alongside the learners and helping them make decisions about their future were other significant ways in which the facilitators support learners through the programme. This was evidenced by comments such as:

They didn't push me in any direction. They said it was up to me, but they would help me as much as possible.

My family aren't interested in people-oriented work. It was good to talk to someone who was.

They gave me a heap of information about the work placement and what to expect before starting. That was a huge relief.

They gave me different work options to consider.

She helped me get a work placement and helped me with interviewing skills. I felt a lot more comfortable applying for a job as I wasn't doing it alone.

She puts my name out there to employers. That's not something I can do.

She checked my CV to make sure it was up to date.

"She pointed out to me how it is just as important to find out what I don't like (work wise) as much as what I do." (Learner)

The employers' perspective

"The facilitator is always available to talk things through with." (Employer)

Several of the employers' comments highlighted the importance of the relationship between themselves and the facilitators. They talked about how "*the facilitator is the link, mentor, and coordinator between the learner and me*" and the guidance they receive from the facilitator on how they can best support the learner in the workplace to ensure they don't "*micro-manage them*." Other attributes mentioned were mediator, encourager, advocate, connector, relationship manager, and community liaison. Having the facilitator regularly checking in with them on the learner's progress throughout the work placement also provided opportunity for the employer to discuss any concerns they may have.

At the conclusion of the work placement, the facilitator reviews this with the employer and the learner, working alongside them to fill in the evaluation form and "*have a three-way conversation*." One employer who has provided several placements for learners on the programme stated how this process was invaluable for reflecting on their role in the learner's work experience and development of work-ready skills. They also mentioned how the facilitator always checks the possibility of employment for the learners at the placement conclusion: *"They* [the facilitator] *are always looking out for the learner and trying to create opportunities for their future employment."*

The facilitators' perspective

"The joy of this role as a facilitator is seeing them get on a pathway they want to be on, and you have been part of helping them with this." (Facilitator)

When asked to describe their role in the programme, the facilitators' feedback identified several ways in which they thought they influenced the programme effectiveness and therefore the learners' experience and outcomes. They described their role as mentor and coach for the learners, one facilitator stating, "*they need a life coach alongside them as they start working. Someone who goes with them versus expecting the young person to ask for this support."* Helping the learners get clarity on and making decisions about their future pathway was mentioned several times. The relationship they built and maintained with employers was also mentioned as key to the programme's success. This was evident in their comments, such as:

It is so important to build and maintain a relationship with the employer. They are vital to the learner succeeding in this programme.

We don't want to take advantage of the employer, so constantly asking them if the programme is adding value to their business and being clear that they are under no obligation to be involved.

We work closely with employers, review the placement on a regular basis.

We always complete a learner assessment (workplace assessment) with the employer and find out if there are any employment opportunities with them in the foreseeable future.

Reflective of the comments made by the REAP Wairarapa personnel regarding how the programme prepares learners for work, the facilitators talked about their responsibility to ensure the programme was tailored to meet individual learner needs. This was explained as adapting the content and learning processes and adding components that are currently not part of the programme curriculum to improve and contextualise it. Examples of components they have added include:

- HEADS (psychosocial) Assessment
- Sleep pattern diaries
- Exercise and wellness
- Nutrition and diet
- Understanding employment contracts
- Information Technology phone use
- First Aid
- Driver's Licence
- Health and Safety
- 'Dress for Success' (professional appearance)
- Goal setting
- Brain development
- Mindfulness
- Drug and alcohol referrals
- Interviewing skills and practice

The facilitators were also asked the question "*Why undertake this role as an L2W facilitator?*" to gain an idea of how they contribute to the programme impact and outcomes. A common reason across the facilitator group was the reward of seeing young people succeed. As one facilitator said, *"When you see the learner realise that they are capable and can succeed, that's the ultimate reward of this job."*

4. Stakeholder collaboration positively influences youth employment success.

"They [L2W facilitator and employer] encouraged me to pursue a career and aim higher versus just doing what I think I can do." (Learner)

The findings verifying this theme are presented by the feedback received from the interviews with the facilitators, employers, and youth service providers including REAP Wairarapa personnel. The L2W programme's partnership with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Initiative (MTJI) stakeholder reference group is discussed, highlighting the influence of stakeholder collaboration on youth employment success.

Stakeholder Collaboration Within the L2W Programme

Stakeholder collaboration within the programme was found to have a significant influence on supporting the learners through the programme and importantly their ongoing journey whether into employment and/or further education or training. The relationship established with employers was emphasised by the facilitators as a critical collaboration to support the learners' successful transition into employment. This was evidenced in one facilitator's feedback as they stated, *"Involving good supportive employers is imperative for the learner's short-term [whilst completing the programme] and lasting experience, including their long-term attitude to being employed."*

The work experience is a primary component of the programme and provides a connection between the learner, the employer, and the facilitator. From the employers' perspective, the facilitator plays a central role in managing this connection to ensure the best possible outcomes for the learners. This view was apparent in their comments such as "*Having the review with the facilitator and the learner at the end of the placement is a good opportunity to talk through their* [the learner] *experience in lots of detail and see what I can do for future placements*" and "*The facilitator is always available to talk things through with which is good, especially if I am concerned about the learner's progress*."

This was further evidenced in the facilitators' comments about how they create collaborative links with community agencies including local businesses to support the learners throughout the programme. Phrases such as "*We work closely with employers*" and "*Maintaining a relationship with the employer*" were prominent in their responses. Further comments included:

We don't want to take advantage of them [the employers]. I constantly ask them if the programme is adding value.

It is so important to be clear that they are under no obligation to take on learners.

We review what is happening in the work placement on a regular basis and use the employer evaluation sheet to determine whether there are things we could do to further support and encourage the employer to stay in the programme.

It's about matching what the young person wants to do with an available and appropriate (youth-friendly) employer and workplace.

The relationship we have with the employer is critical.

A final remark from one of the facilitators summed up the strength of collaboration with employers as it impacts on learner success in the programme and beyond, saying "*the employers are the strongest advocate to bridge everything for the learners to succeed. We have a number of employers who really support the learners and value the programme as an opportunity for the learner as well as themselves and their business.*"

Support from REAP Wairarapa personnel was highlighted as a key influence on the facilitators' ability to coordinate and teach the programme, manage learners' needs, and collaborate effectively with employers and other stakeholders such as community youth service providers. As one facilitator said, "*The REAP managers act as intermediaries with COMET and the next level (for example, Ministry of Social Development), I can tell them what actions I need to take to help a young person and they support me in this.*"

REAP Wairarapa working closely with the facilitators is integral to the programme and learner success. This was evident in the comments made by both participant groups about the need to tailor the programme content and structure to meet individual learner needs. There was mutual agreement that a lot of the guiding principles of the programme work well, however, REAP Wairarapa support the facilitators in adding and adapting the content to "*make sure there is customisation not just prescription.*"

External Stakeholder Collaboration Supporting the L2W Programme and the Learners

"*We know partnerships that help us support young people into jobs and training will be key to our recovery as a nation. We all have a part to play in ensuring our young people are able to realise their potential*." (Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, 2020).

Youth service providers are actively involved in the L2W programme, providing a range of learning sessions in the classroom component managed by the facilitators through REAP Wairarapa. Another active community initiative supporting the learners as they progress through and following completion of the programme is a Wairarapa-based stakeholder reference group. The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs initiative has been set up in the Wairarapa region with a remit to link youth with employment opportunities in their region and get young people into sustained employment that is supported with education such as apprenticeships and cadetships. This was described by Tracey Shepherd, the REAP Wairarapa Education Manager, as the differentiating factor between this group and other community youth service providers.

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs acts as a conduit for community entities such as REAP Wairarapa to present ideas and strategies for supporting young people and helps inform the L2W programme's ongoing development and delivery to achieve its objectives. A good example of this collaboration is the establishment of internships and apprenticeships with Wairarapa-based employers, providing a conduit for young people to gain meaningful and sustainable employment. In other words, the stakeholder group is a direct line for L2W graduates to employment opportunities.

Leveraging existing relationships in the community is an effective way to get information needed to inform the L2W programme and connect the programme with the community, in particular employers. The stakeholder group is comprised of the following members:

- Six large industry employers: City Council, Transport, Information Technology.
- Business organisations and agencies: Recruitment, real estate, retail, construction.
- The ex-Mayor of Porirua acting as Chair.
- High School representatives including principals.
- Young learners aged between 18 and 24 years, including learners who are completing or have completed the L2W programme.
- REAP Wairarapa personnel including one L2W facilitator acting in a role as work-broker; one L2W facilitator in an educator role, delivering the L2W curriculum; and the Education Manager who is responsible for the YETE initiative.

Cultural guidance ensures that the group is grounded in appropriate knowledge and tikanga practice to ensure that engagement with each other is sensitive and appropriate. One of the actions taken by the group to support L2W learners is calling on iwi to encourage young Māori learners to complete the L2W programme and help the learner gain their driver's licence. Outcomes of the L2W programme are regularly reported to the group by REAP Wairarapa. Collectively, these stakeholders influence the young learner's transitional journey from school to further training and education and/or employment and support the learner at each transitional step, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Learner Transitions Support Network

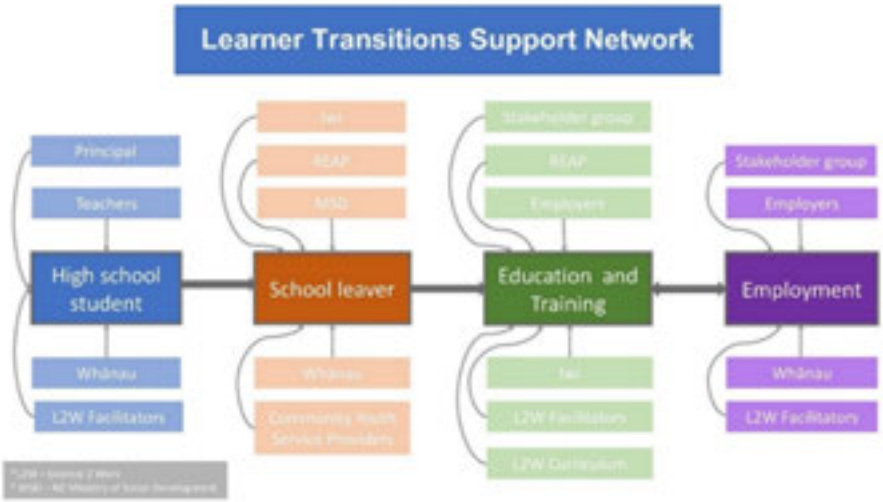


Figure 1 shows how the learner's journey through several transitional points is supported by multiple parties: REAP Wairarapa, L2W facilitators, employers, school personnel, iwi, whānau, and community youth service providers. As related in the facilitators' feedback, they (the facilitators) continue to provide pastoral care for the young person after they have
completed the L2W programme and secured employment by continued liaison with the employer and the young person until this level of support is no longer required.

The REAP Wairarapa Education Manager also explained in her interview how the group acts as a critical friend, providing strong feedback on what they see the L2W programme for example needs to develop or work on to ensure the learners are prepared for employment.

The group is a place where the L2W personnel (facilitators, REAP Wairarapa) can access and use local connections to discuss what employers are looking for and how the programme aligns its purpose and outcomes with this.

Project Outputs

As we have explained in the introduction section of this report, an evaluation of the L2W programme was deemed by REAP Wairarapa and COMET as a useful exercise to ascertain whether the programme is achieving its main objective of supporting learners in becoming work-ready. Prior to undertaking the evaluation, REAP Wairarapa had identified a need for additional strategies and resources to increase the programme's effectiveness, given their prior experience with delivering the programme. One of the objectives of our project was to use the evaluation findings to inform the development of these.

Two of the original five intended outcomes of our project were to design and trial a training package for employers on how to create a youth-friendly workplace, including a half-day workshop, and develop a set of guidelines for establishing and facilitating a cross-sector Stakeholder Community of Practice (CoP) as a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing learner success in gaining employment and/or undertaking further education or training.

Data collected from the employer interviews identified that they are fully aware of their role and responsibilities as an employer of young people and know how to provide youth-friendly work environments (the main foci of the intended training package). We therefore decided a training workshop was not going to meet employers' needs and focused instead on adding value by creating a Youth-friendly Workplace Guide (*Appendix 4*) that outlines the key components of youth-friendly work environments and how employers can support young people in the workplace. The Guide is a context-specific resource for the L2W facilitators to use in their discussions with current employers as a self-evaluation tool and to explain the benefits and expectations of youth-friendly workplaces in discussions with prospective employers. Accordingly, four outputs have been developed:

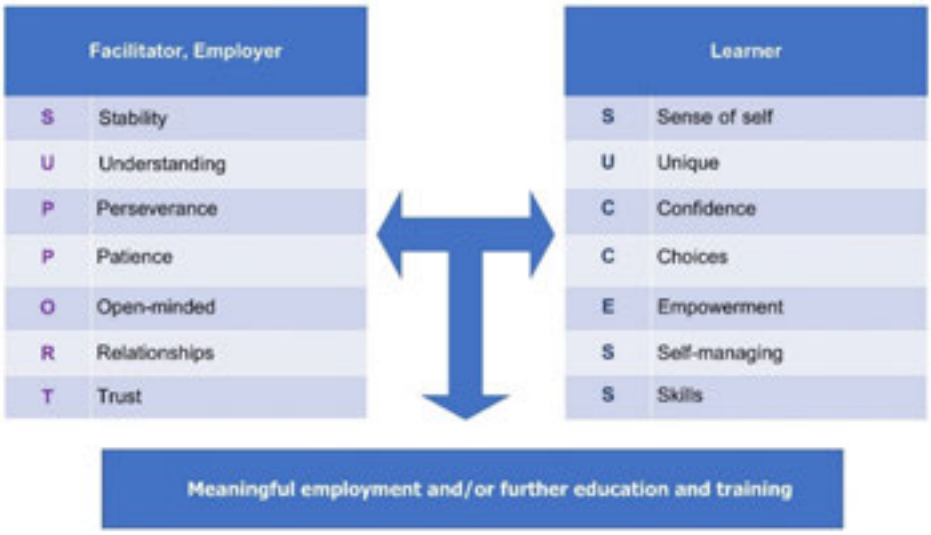
(i) A **Learner Intervention Strategies Decision-making Model**. The model assists stakeholders in determining effective interventions that support young people in gaining employability skills and developing behaviours that enable them to achieve sustained employment and/or transition into further education or training (*refer Appendix 2)*.

(ii) A **Learner Capability Evaluation Rubric**. The rubric provides an additional mechanism for evaluating the L2W programme impact and outcomes regarding learner achievement of seven employability skills as identified in the Employability Skills Framework (NZ Ministry of Education). A core principle of the rubric is that it acts as a self-evaluation tool for the learner as much as an evaluation tool for L2W facilitators and employers. It can be tailored to other education contexts where impact and outcome evaluation of employability skills development is desired (*refer Appendix 3*).

(iii) A **Youth-friendly Workplace Guide**. The Guide is underpinned by the literature in youth employment, a literature review on youth-friendly workplaces, and employer and learner participant feedback gathered from the interviews in this project (*refer Appendix 4 – available on the Ako Aotearoa website*).

(iv) A **Model for Supporting Young Learner Success**. The Support=Success model illustrated in Figure 2 was developed using the learners' description of positive elements of the L2W programme, how it helps them develop soft skills, and how it supports them in their future pathway to employment and/or further education or training. It also embodies the employers' and facilitators' feedback reflecting their perspective on what is required to fully support young learners in their future endeavours and success.

Figure 2 Support=Success Model



The model maps the attributes of stakeholders that influence learning and lead to better outcomes when working with young people. These attributes were determined from the findings of our L2W programme evaluation. The model can be applied in a variety of contexts by stakeholders whose focus is on supporting young people in their future success, be that gaining meaningful employment and/or undertaking further education or training. For example, any programme, support, service, or intervention to guide interactions with young people in developing employability (soft) skills and setting goals for their future, and a tool for workplace mentors to use with new employees. As young people develop themselves they are more able to actively engage in and achieve these outcomes. Support=Success is youth-centred, positioning the young person at the centre of the decision-making.

Discussion and Conclusions

The L2W programme provides a learning mechanism for young people to develop essential ngā pūkenga whai mahi/employability skills with the goal to gain meaningful employment and/or pathway into further education or training. Our project evaluated the key influences on young learners being work-ready, including programmes such as the Licence to Work (L2W), and its collaboration with other training and community initiatives that support learners into sustained employment. A central feature of the evaluation was the collection of L2W learners' and other programme stakeholders' perceptions of the value from young people participating in the programme and how these perceptions could be used to inform any curriculum and/or practice change to ensure that the programme delivery and teaching strategies best meet learners' needs.

Learner Success

Our project confirmed the L2W programme's ability to support young people in developing the seven key employability skills as identified in the NZ Ministry of Education's (2016) Employability Skills Framework, a resource that is available in Te Reo Māori and English. Feedback from the learners and other programme stakeholders in our project highlighted several areas in which the programme positively impacts learners to become work-ready, gain meaningful employment, and/or undertake further education or training.

Significantly, the programme facilitators play a pivotal support role throughout the learner's journey from pre-programme enrolment to employment. The willingness of local businesses to provide work experience which can result in part- or full-time employment for learners, is integral to the learners' and the programme's success. At the conclusion of our project, 24% of the learners had gone into sustained employment and 10% had gone into full-time study.

Learner Support

The Attitude Gap Challenge (2013) project findings identified that young people are often unaware that they are being assessed across all steps in the interview process by the prospective employer regarding their soft skills. This can lead to young people presenting poorly as they are not aware of what they are being assessed on or how they are being assessed:

"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" (p. 61).

The L2W facilitators, and community agencies and employers whom they work closely with, help the learners with these facets of employment, acting as a broker between the learner and other stakeholders such as the employer. They help the learners uncover and understand the 'hidden' processes of recruitment and be prepared for these through presentation skills training, preparing a CV, communication skills, and knowing how to follow instructions.

The pastoral and mentoring support provided by the facilitators is a critical component of the L2W programme, helping the learners navigate the curriculum, the work placement, and support services available in the community and develop essential skills that will set them on a trajectory of success, be that gaining employment and/or undertaking further education or training. As MBIE (2019) point out, this level of pastoral support improves the young person's self-esteem and self-confidence and must be effectively delivered. For Māori and Pasifika young people, this level of support is based on cultural frameworks and approaches that build on cultural and community strengths.

"I am more open-minded and being more responsible for my actions and choices." (Learner)

Challenges and Ways Forward

The MBIE (2019) stress the importance of support services taking a holistic and strengths-based approach to supporting young people to ensure that this support is tailored to the needs of the young person. This helps them make informed decisions and reach their education and employment goals. The feedback received from the facilitators confirmed the L2W programme has the flexibility to be adapted, improvised, and developed to meet the individual needs of the learners through a thorough analysis of each learner's needs. For example, tailoring the content and approach to ensure the programme is learner-centric and able to meet individual learner needs, customising the programme to meet the needs of the audience in the specific region (in this project, the Wairarapa region), acknowledging regional uniqueness.

McGirr (2019) emphasises the need for a clearer, shared understanding of youth employability interventions and creating access to combinations of interventions from more than one government agency to support youth transitions. Strong strategic partnerships with whānau, iwi, and community stakeholders need to continue to be threaded through the programme to ensure its success and sustainability. This is being achieved by the programme working in partnership with other community projects and stakeholder groups in the Wairarapa region that have been established with the purpose to make a difference for young people and help them succeed in the education and workforce spaces.

Over the past 20 years, as the workforce has modernised around the world, soft skills – the skills, competencies, behaviours, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to navigate their environment, work with others, perform well, and achieve their goals – have become centrally important (Child Trends, 2020). The L2W programme and other youth employment initiatives operating in the Wairarapa region are well aligned with global findings that enable young people to be successful in the workplace.

"When you see the learner realise that they are capable and can succeed, that's the ultimate reward of this job." (Facilitator)

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APPENDIX 1 Sample Participant Interview Questions

Learner Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose to enrol in the L2W programme?
2. What skills do you think you are gaining from the programme?
3. What skills do you think you are gaining from your work experience?
4. How do you know you are doing okay?
5. How has the L2W programme prepared you for your work placement?
6. How does your employer support you in the job/in your learning?
7. How do the L2W facilitators support you while you are on work placement?
8. What do you plan to do once you have completed the L2W programme?

L2W Facilitator Interview Questions

1. How does the L2W programme help prepare students for being on work placement?
2. How does the L2W programme help students prepare for getting a job?
3. How do you support students in their learning?
4. What do you think are important facilitator qualities?
5. How do you find out students' learning preferences and needs?
6. What are the main challenges for students completing the L2W programme?
7. What are some challenges students experience on work placement? How could these be addressed to improve the learning support provided for L2W students?
8. What support do you receive that helps you in your facilitation role?

Employer Interview Questions

1. How do you support the Licence 2 Work students on the job and in their learning?
2. How do you think the Licence 2 Work programme prepares students for work?
3. What are some challenges students experience on work placement?
4. How do you think these challenges could be addressed?
5. What have you found to be the main areas of support needed by students on work placement?
6. What shifts or changes have you seen in the students who have been or currently are on work placement with you?
7. How do you impact these changes as an employer?
8. What do you think are important qualities of a good employer?

APPENDIX 2 Learner Intervention Strategies Decision-making Model

Licence to Work Learner Attainment of Employability (Soft) Skills Learner Intervention Strategies Decision-making Model

The Licence to Work Learner Attainment of Employability (Soft) Skills Decision-making Model is made up of two components:

1. The Employability Skills Attainment Decision-making Framework
2. The Learner Intervention Strategies Mapping Tool

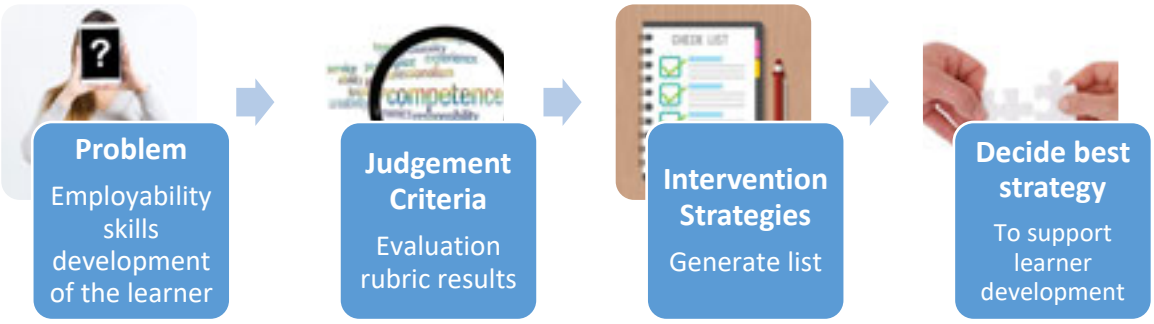
The aim of this model is to assist Licence to Work (L2W) programme providers, youth service providers, and employers identify and implement learning intervention strategies that will help young learners' transition into further education or training and/or employment. It is also a mechanism for learners to map their employability skill development progress and identify the support they need to assist with this.

The model is used in conjunction with the evaluation rubric, applying the learner rubric results to determine appropriate intervention strategies tailored to the individual learner's development.

The Employability Skills Attainment Decision-making Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the decision-making process, beginning with identifying the employability skill development needs of the learner (the *problem*), then using the evaluation rubric results as the criteria to judge the learner's needs (the *judgement criteria*) to develop a list of potential learning *intervention strategies* from which one or more are selected (the *best strategy*) to support the learner in their employability skills development.

Figure 1 **Employability Skills Attainment Decision-Making Framework**



The Learner Intervention Strategies Mapping Tool

The Intervention Strategies Mapping Tool assists L2W programme providers and employers in deciding the support required by the learners as they develop the employability skills deemed essential for being work-ready (identified in the Employability Skills Framework, NZ Ministry of Education). Learners can also use the mapping tool to decide what support they need to develop their skills within the L2W classroom sessions and/or in the workplace setting.

This tool is used in conjunction with the Employment and Work Readiness Capability Evaluation Rubric, the rubric providing data on the learner's stage of skill development via a rating scale against which the attainment of each employability skill is measured.

Results of the rubric rating scale indicate whether the learner is 'Capable', 'Progressing', or 'Not There Yet'. In the Intervention Strategies Mapping Tool, these are identified as 'Yes' (*capable*), 'Progressing' (*progressing*), and 'No' (*not there yet*). These are indicated in the legend.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES MAPPING TOOL

Employability Skill	Yes | Progressing | No	Support Intervention
Ngā Pūkenga Whaakaro - Willingness to learn		
He hiahia ki te ako - Thinking skills		
Whakahaere-whaiaro - Self-management		
Mahi ngātahi – Teamwork		
Whitiwhiti kōrero - Communication		
Waiaro pai - Positive attitude		
Pakaritanga – Resilience		

Legend	
Capable	Yes
Progressing	Progressing
Not there yet	No

Intervention Strategies Repository

The Intervention Strategies Repository provides a range of strategies that can be used to support the learner in attaining each employability skill. There may be more than one strategy implemented.

The intervention strategies are derived from the feedback received from the project participants including employers, L2W learners, L2W facilitators, and youth service providers including REAP Wairarapa personnel, and the literature on youth skill development for employment.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES REPOSITORY

- Feedback
- Mentoring
- On-job instruction/training
- Scaffolding tasks
- Reinforcement
- Praise
- Role modelling
- Job shadowing
- Cross-training opportunities
- Interviewing skills practice
- CV writing
- Strategic questioning
- Scenario-based learning opportunities
- Modelling (of a task/process)
- Buddying
- Career planning
- Opportunities to talk about everyday issues
- Progress reviews
- Induction

APPENDIX 3 Learner Capability Evaluation Rubric

Licence to Work Learner Attainment of Employability Skills for Employment and Work Readiness Learner Capability Evaluation Rubric

This evaluation rubric has been developed to provide an additional mechanism for evaluating the L2W programme impact and outcomes regarding learner achievement of seven employability skills as identified in the Employability Skills Framework (NZ Ministry of Education). It defines what is expected and what will be assessed and indicates that the evaluation will be undertaken according to specified criteria – the seven employability skills - making grading and ranking simpler, more transparent, and fairer.

On the left side of the rubric are the *criteria* (the 7 soft skills). The *indicators* are the capability statements that describe each employability skill. Each capability has a rating scale to provide a deeper level of evaluation of each skill.

Usually, a rating scale consists of an even number of performance levels. The rating scale values in this rubric are descriptive labels, reflective of the qualitative nature of the employability skill capabilities and therefore outcomes achieved by the learner.

The underpinning principles of this evaluation rubric are:

1. The language is accessible to all stakeholders.
2. Learners can self-assess using the rating scale definitions.
3. The rubric is a self-evaluation tool for the learner as well as an evaluation tool for L2W programme providers and employers.
4. The rubric can be tailored to other education contexts where impact and outcome evaluation of employability skills development is desired.

Licence to Work Learner Attainment of Employability Skills for Employment and Work Readiness Learner Capability Evaluation Rubric

1. Ngā Pūkenga Whaakaro | Willingness to Learn

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Willing to learn new tasks, skills, and information			
Curious and enthusiastic about the job, organisation, and industry			
Looks for opportunities to work more effectively to make the business better			
Accepts advice and learns from feedback			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

2. He hiahia ki te ako | Thinking Skills

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Identifies and assesses options before making a decision			
Recognises problems and uses initiative to find solutions			
Thinks about consequences before they act			
Recognises when they need to seek advice			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

3. Whakahaere-whaiaro | Self-management

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Arrives at work on time, with appropriate clothing and equipment to complete a workday			
Understands and reflects on their own words, actions, and behaviour and how these affect others			
Shows commitment and responsibility			
Is dependable, follows instructions and completes assigned tasks			
Is responsible for their own health and well-being; follows health & safety guidelines in the workplace			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

4. Mahi ngātahi | Teamwork

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Works well with others to complete tasks and meet goals			
Contributes to developing new ideas or approaches			
Works well with others of different genders, cultures, or beliefs			

Recognises the authority of supervisors and managers and follows directions			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

5. Whitiwhiti kōrero | Communication

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Understands, and reflects on, the way they communicate and how it affects others			
Asks questions when unsure or unclear			
Understands how employees, employers and customers communicate			
Speaks, listens, and shares ideas appropriately			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

6. Waiaro pai | Positive Attitude

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Is positive and has a “can do” attitude			
Is optimistic, honest and shows respect			
Is happy, friendly, and enthusiastic			
Is motivated to work hard towards goals			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

7. Pakaritanga | Resilience

Capability	3 Capable	2 Progressing	1 Not there yet
Adaptable and flexible in new and changing situations			
Handles challenges and setbacks and does not give up			
Able to seek support and help when needed			
Recognises and accepts mistakes made and learns from them			

Evidence (explain the rating given for this employability skill)

APPENDIX 4 Youth-friendly Workplace Guide

The Youth-friendly workplace guide for employers is an additional output from this project, available from the project page on the Ako Aotearoa website at: https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/supporting-young-learners-through-stakeholder-collaboration-designing-intervention-strategies-for-youth-employability-and-learning-success/

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