



RSA

Projects

Finding Employment and Education for Young People

A Discovery Framework

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The **RSA** in
partnership with



Future**Gov**

About the Interactivism Challenge

Amidst acute concern for the welfare and future of young people classed as “NEET”¹ in UK society, policymakers are eagerly searching for innovative approaches to improve their prospects. Although concerns have recently been raised about the negative role internet and social media can play in the lives of disengaged young people, there has been little to balance this account with illustrations of how it can help them reconnect with society, motivate themselves and improve their life chances through education and employment.

Against this backdrop, Google has unveiled a new Challenge, asking people of all backgrounds – software developers, young people, professional practitioners, teachers and policymakers of all levels – to put forward innovative ideas for how the internet and technology could support young people. These would be geared towards directing, inspiring, persuading or enabling young people to access the education, jobs, or training

opportunities that are right for them. This is the latest in Google’s series of ‘Interactivism’ Challenges, designed to harness the power of technology for social good. In running this Challenge, Google is working in partnership with the RSA, FutureGov and Livity.

Participants will be asked to submit their ideas to the Challenge from early December 2011 until late January 2012. Those shortlisted will then be invited to an intensive ‘Hackathon’ event where they will work with Google software engineers to turn their idea into a working software prototype.

In order to help the Challenge participants identify a new idea, this ‘Discovery Framework’ document summaries some of what we know about the problem and opportunities facing young people, and what has already worked well in supporting them.

1. NEET refers to young people who are not in any form of education, employment or training.

About the Discovery Framework

This paper outlines the beginnings of a ‘Discovery Framework’ which will aid participants in the Interactivism Challenge.

The Discovery Framework method was created and honed over three decades by Ashoka, an international network of social entrepreneurs who work together to solve some of the world’s most intractable problems.² In order to assist the generation of original and useful ideas, the Framework is designed to help people better understand the dimensions of a given problem and its likely causes, as well as the factors that may be common to effective solutions. The approach results in a Framework ‘Matrix’ diagram which problem-solvers can use to identify gaps in existing approaches, and find opportunities for social innovation. The aim is to prompt what Ashoka call the “a-ha” moment of recognition, in which a person pairs a powerful idea with a currently unmet need.

In order to build the Framework we follow a given process:

1. Describe the **context**, in terms of a social issue or problem that is being tackled
2. Outline a **Challenge Question** which summarises the goal
3. Identify the core **barriers** which are hampering efforts to find a solution to that goal
4. Pull together ‘**inspirations**’; exemplar initiatives already working to overcome these barriers
5. Draw out common **design principles** which have proven instrumental in addressing the Challenge
6. Create a **Framework Matrix**.

This provides an overview of the design principles different initiatives are using to overcome particular barriers. Depending on which barriers are being addressed and which design

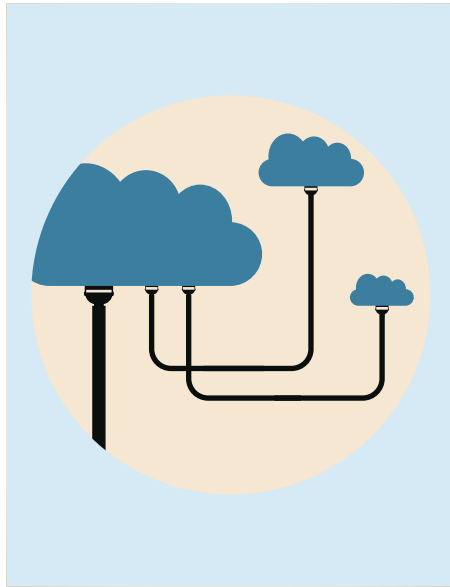
principles are being used, this table can then be used to identify new areas of opportunity

The strength of the Discovery Framework lies in its ability to examine potential solutions in the context of multiple barriers and other existing initiatives. It encourages users to systematically identify and analyse each, and clearly indicates where solutions might be better targeted and which design principles could be better employed. The Framework also benefits from placing a strong emphasis on exemplar initiatives. This allows those using it to draw upon the valuable insights of social innovators who have first-hand experience in tackling these issues.

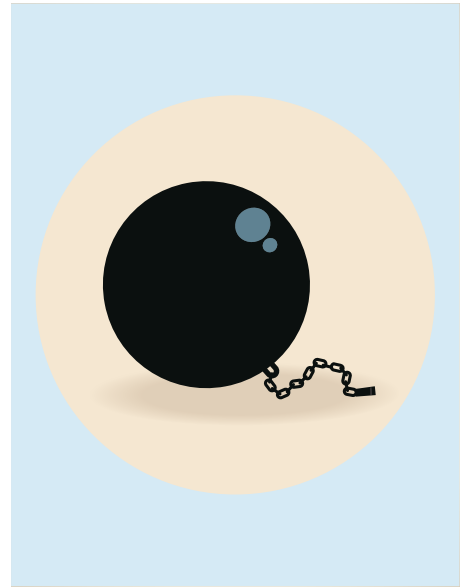
For this Google Interactivism Challenge, the task will be for participants to use this Framework to find an area where a new use of web technology might be able to add value in supporting young people. We have developed



1 // CONTEXT



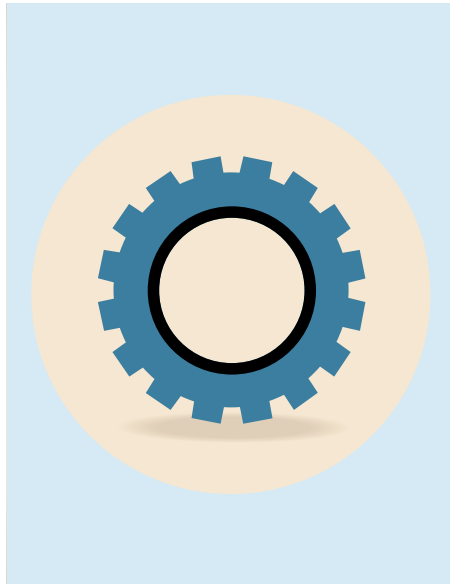
2 // CHALLENGE QUESTION



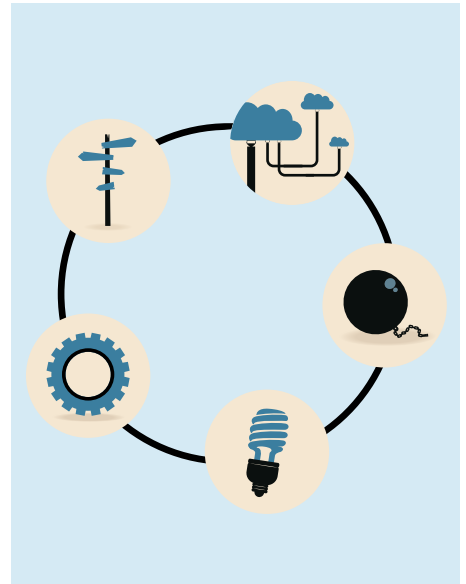
3 // BARRIERS



4 // INSPIRATIONS



5 // DESIGN PRINCIPLES



6 // FRAMEWORK MATRIX

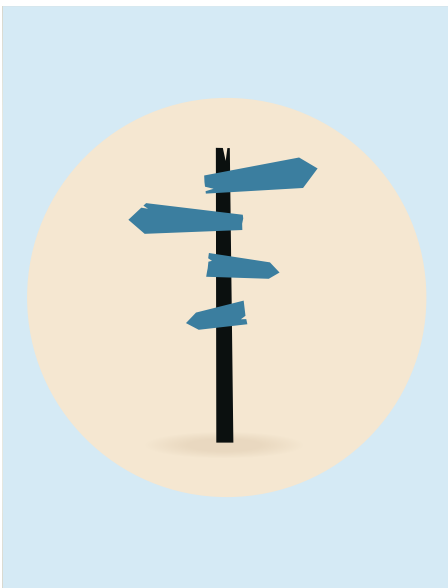
an indicative Framework for this particular Challenge, based on a mixture of desk research and correspondence with leading stakeholders, as well as a focus group with young people and a roundtable with those working in this field. While we have attempted to be thorough in our research, the scope

of this Challenge is such that we do not expect this to be a comprehensive account of what prevents and what enables young people to achieve their potential.

The rest of this paper will be dedicated to guiding you through each stage of the Framework.

2. For another example of how the Discovery Framework has been used, see C. Brown et al. *Leveraging Business for Social Change*. Available: www.changemakers.com/sites/default/files/Artemisia_Discovery_framework_Pre_competition_April_2010.pdf

1 // Context



Despite having recently emerged from one of the deepest recessions in living memory, the combination of a fragile economic recovery and a significant programme of public sector spending cuts has ensured that the experience of austerity continues for many people across the country. Among those most affected by these financial difficulties are the rising numbers of young people who are not in any form of education, employment or training. According to the latest figures from the Department for Education, nearly 20 per cent of 18–24 year olds are classified as “NEET” and over 1 million young people are unemployed.³

Throughout this paper we will draw upon the term NEET to describe young people currently in some form of economic or social hardship. While we do not want to rely too heavily on the term, many of the figures and papers which we reference are applicable only to those not

in education, employment or training. Therefore for accuracy we will occasionally refer to the term throughout the document.

Some key statistics highlight the various challenges young people face:

- Estimates suggest that the cost of supporting young people not in education, employment or training amounts to as much as £4.6 billion a year⁴
- The probability of a graduate becoming unemployed is 10 per cent, whereas the chance of somebody with lower than level 3 qualifications (A levels, NVQs etc.) becoming unemployed is 30 per cent⁵
- Research suggests that one in five young people classed as NEET think that life is not worth living, compared to one in ten of the general population. 37 per cent of young people in this situation claim to be often or always depressed as

opposed to 27 per cent of the wider younger population

- One study found that 69 per cent⁶ of young people not in education, employment or training believe their talent is being thrown away, while one in five abuse alcohol and just over one in ten take drugs⁷
- The Department for Education reports that NEET young people are more than twice as likely to live in social sector accommodation as the average young person⁸

Estimated per year cost

£4.6 billion

on supporting young people not in education, employment or training

In a bid to address many of these challenges and assist the life chances of young people, governments past and present have designed and implemented various policies. Below details some of the most prominent which have emerged over recent years:

The National NEETs Strategy, 2008⁹

– This National Strategy transferred the lead role for reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training to local authorities. The Strategy included plans for the introduction of a rigorous tracking and ‘destination monitoring’ process; the reform of the qualifications framework to ensure a greater number of diverse and flexible courses; personalised guidance and support for young people; and financial incentives to encourage the take up of further education.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act 2009¹⁰

– these acts enshrined many of the above plans into law. The act included a duty on all young people in England to participate in education and training until the age of 18; the transfer of responsibility for delivering Connexions services to local authorities; a requirement for local

education authorities to cooperate with local partners in delivering education and training services to 14–19 year olds; and the creation of a right to an apprenticeship for suitably qualified 16–19 year olds.

Educational Maintenance Allowance and Activity Agreements – In a bid to encourage more young people to stay on in education, the EMA was introduced by the last government to provide financial assistance (£20 – £30 per week) to young people facing economic hardship. A similar initiative was the Activity Agreement programme which gave a financial incentive for young people to participate in activities which would assist them as they search for suitable employment or learning.

Future Jobs Fund – The FJF was a £1 billion scheme set up by the previous government to support young people back into work. Businesses were paid up to £6,500 to create jobs which would last at least 6 months. The scheme finished in March 2011 and was replaced by the current Government’s new work experience programme (see below).

Current Coalition plans – Published in May this year, the Government’s ‘Supporting Youth Unemployment’ strategy paper has listed a number of proposals to support young people. This paper includes the following commitments:¹¹

- Funding for 250,000 more apprenticeships over the next four years
- Funding for 100,000 work placements over the next two years. Through this ‘work experience programme’, 18–21 year olds are matched with employers and work unpaid for up to 8 weeks, while continuing to receive their benefits
- Implementing many of the recommendations in the Wolf review of vocational learning. This includes ensuring that young people continue learning Maths and English to age 19 until they achieve a good qualification in those subjects
- Establishing a £10m per annum Innovation Fund to help delivery organisations experiment with innovative ways of helping young people not in education, employment or training

- Funding 24 new university technical colleges for 14–18 year olds, specialising in technical skills such as engineering and construction. These will be run as academies

The Government has also very recently launched a new ‘Youth Contract’, whereby a proportion of employers’ costs for taking on young people will be subsidised by the state. From April 2012, this will aim to provide 400,000 young people with employment, work experience or apprenticeship opportunities.

3. Department for Education. *NEET Statistics – Quarterly Brief* (DfE, 24th November 2011).

4. S. Sodha & J. Margo. *Ex Curricula* (London: Demos, 2010).

5. The Guardian. *Half of pupils are being consigned ‘to the scrapheap’ by schools* (The Guardian, 13th March 2011).

6. R. Davis. *Making life worth living* (The Guardian, 5th January 2009).

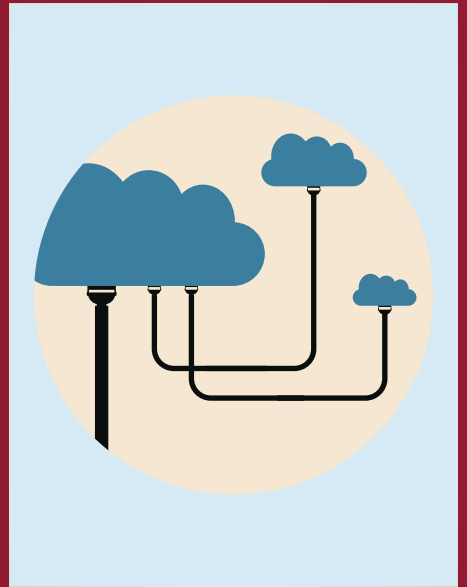
7. FutureYou. *FutureYou: A Wasted Generation* (FutureYou, 2011).

8. Department for Children, Schools and Families report cited in R. Davis. *Op cit.* 2011.

9. The Centre for Social Justice and the Local Government Association. *Hidden Talents: Re-engaging young people.* (London: LGA, 2009).

10. *Ibid.*

11. The Cabinet Office. *Supporting Youth Employment: An overview of the Coalition Government’s approach* (London: The Cabinet Office, 2011). Available: www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/support-youth-employment.pdf



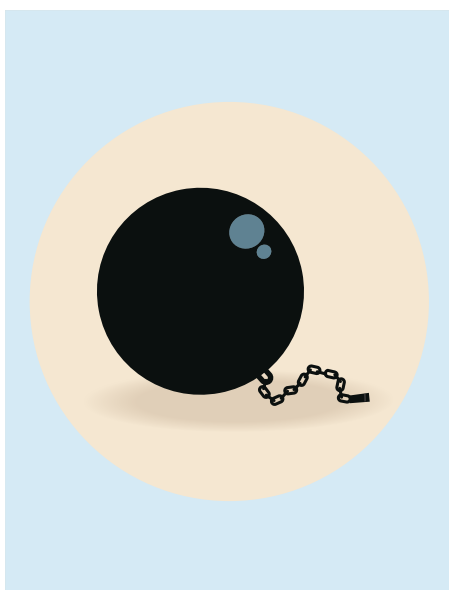
2 // CHALLENGE QUESTION

2 // Challenge Question

Against this backdrop, we have set the following Challenge Question for participants:

“How can we better harness the web to help young people get the work, education or training that is right for them?”

3 // Barriers



In answering the Challenge Question, we must first look at the barriers preventing young people from achieving significant and sustained employment, education and training. What follows is a list of the most prominent obstacles facing young people. While we acknowledge that one of the main barriers to employment is the fragile economic climate and scarcity of long-term job opportunities, this is to a large extent a major structural issue which we believe is beyond the scope of what Challenge participants would be able to address.

A lack of hard and soft skills needed for employment

According to an influential report by Demos, *The Forgotten Half*, some secondary schools routinely neglect pupils with vocational aspirations, have poor links with businesses and undervalue the importance of part-time work.¹² One of the key findings

to emerge from their research is that many of the vocational qualifications that young people are encouraged to aim for turn out to be of little value in providing them with the skills they need to be work-ready. Other research has shown that vocational qualifications often fail to develop practical talents because there is no clear progression route from one vocational qualification to the next. Added to this, many young people fare poorly in the core subjects of English and Maths early on in their education. In England, for instance, 8% of children leave primary school with very low levels of literacy and/or numeracy.¹³

From the experts and practitioners we have already spoken to, there is also a general sense that young people are not acquiring the right 'soft skills' necessary to find sustained employment. For instance, an attendee from the Challenge roundtable suggested that the most

critical factor in hampering young people's progress is their poor communication skills. The young people who we spoke to at Livity emphasised how important certain adult mentors (informal and formal) had been in helping them acquire these soft skills.

Patchy experiences and relationships with formal authorities

A few of the young people at Livity described a history of poor relationships with their teachers, with many claiming that they were prone to being disparaging about their abilities and future job prospects. Some teachers had explicitly told them that they would "not achieve anything in life", although a number of the young people suggested that their own behaviour in school had been the cause of these bad relations. Such poor relationships have only served to amplify existing problems of poor engagement and progress at school.

The high cost of higher and further education

According to the OECD, after increasing tuition fees to a maximum of £9,000 we now have the third highest university tuition fees in the developed world.¹³ Despite the availability of financial assistance for those on low incomes, many young people from deprived backgrounds will inevitably be put off by this increase. At the same time, there is a growing sense that the value of a university degree is becoming diluted as greater numbers of people attend universities. Our young people also identified the cost of retaking GCSEs and the removal of EMA support as key factors in deterring others like them from continuing in education.

Low or unrealistic aspirations and fragile self-confidence

The Prince's Trust report, *Broke, not Broken*, found that 25 per cent of those from deprived homes believe that "few" or "none" of their career goals are achievable, as opposed to just 7 per cent of those from more affluent families.¹⁵ What is more, one in six of those from poor homes say their family and friends have made fun of them when they talk about finding a good job. Many of those

attending our roundtable emphasised the damage that "psychological barriers" such as these can play in damaging the life chances of young people.

Evidence from government surveys suggests that staying-on in education or finding a job is heavily influenced by the circumstances of family and parents. It is concerning then that a Centre for Social Justice report describes 26 per cent of NEETs to be living in a household where no one is working.¹⁶ Young people also experience little in the way of inspiring messages from outside their circle of family and friends. The young people we spoke to at Livity saw the media portrayal of their peers as too heavily critical. They also thought that young people were presented with too many materialistic messages, giving them the wrong kind of aspirations.

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A lack of mentors, personalised career guidance and feedback

Careers services, including Connexions, have faced a considerable funding squeeze over the past 12 months and will continue to do so for some time. A study by the Institute of Career Guidance found half of its members' employers had made redundancies or issued "at risk" notices.¹⁷ This will put increasing pressure on an already fragile and limited provision of careers support; a quarter of teenagers already say that they have never received any careers advice.¹⁸ Of those services that stay, the concern is that many will continue to direct young people to jobs and other opportunities which they are not suited to or interested in. Research by Children and Young People Now found that some Jobcentre Plus advisers put pressure on young people to apply for any vacancy regardless of

its suitability, and are considered to be uncaring, intimidating and driven by targets.¹⁹

The young people we spoke to at Livity had mixed feelings about Connexions, with some praising their assistance and others feeling that the support service was too focused on achieving targets. Of bigger concern to these young people is the lack of feedback from the many job applications they had sent off. They said this left them feeling despondent and unable to see where they could improve.

Poor coordination between local services supporting young people

Many strategies for addressing the NEET in local areas have been hampered by poor relationships between key stakeholders. Demos, for instance, found that many schools have poor links with local businesses, meaning that young people miss out on beneficial work experience.²⁰ Jobcentres have also been known to refuse to refer young unemployed people to the innovative training courses of new organisations, in part because they were not a preferred or a pre-paid supplier.²¹

12. J. Birdwell, M. Grist and J. Margo. *The Forgotten Half* (London: Demos, 2011).

13. Ibid.

14. OECD. *Education at a Glance 2011: Highlights* (OECD, 2011). Available: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/5/48631550.pdf

15. The Prince's Trust. *Broke, Not Broken: Tackling youth poverty and the aspiration gap* (The Prince's Trust, 2011).

16. The Centre for Social Justice and the Local Government Association. Op cit. 2009.

17. Institute of Career Guidance. *Uncertain Futures: The impact of cuts to the careers service on the futures of young people* (ICG, 2011).

18. City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development. *New Directions: Young people's and parents' views of vocational education and careers guidance* (C&G, 2011).

19. Children and Young People Now. *Neet strategy not fit for purpose* (CYPN, 9th March 2010).

20. J. Birdwell, M. Grist and J. Margo. Op cit. 2011.

21. See for example CDI Europe. [Blog]. *From NEETs to schools: a shift in channels* (18th April 2011). Available: <http://cdieurope.eu/2011/04/18/neets-schools-shift-channels/>

4 // Inspirations



4 // INSPIRATIONS

Before considering how these barriers might be overcome, it is important to examine existing and past responses to these challenges. Below we outline a selection of inspiring initiatives currently working to improve the prospects of young people across the country. These are a mixture of social enterprises, charities, local government schemes, technological innovations and business initiatives.

FutureYou – FutureYou is an online support service offering advice to 14–25 year olds. Young people can use the FutureYou website to talk in real time with either trained counsellors or with other young people who have recently experienced, or are still experiencing, similar issues.²² FutureYou provides training and accreditation to anybody aged 14+ wishing to sign up as a mentor. The website also contains a Virtual Library of useful resources, for instance guidance on

CV writing and interviews. Since their launch in 2010, they have helped a third of their members find work and employment and 85 per cent of them have felt more positive about the future.

Inverness Training Hotel – Due to open in 2014 with the support of the Calman Trust, the Inverness Training Hotel will be a social enterprise geared towards providing on-the-job hospitality training to disadvantaged youngsters, while still retaining a profit-making element.²³ The hotel, loosely based on Rotterdam's Art & Woonhotel, is intended to be like any other four-star accommodation but with specially designed kitchens and training workshops for young people.

The Prince's Trust – Through a number of programmes taking place across the UK, The Prince's Trust aims to support NEET young people get back into employment, education or training.²⁴ Their

Box 1 // Findings from the Challenge Roundtable

In order to both build momentum for the Challenge and to test the credibility of the Framework, we presented this document to a selection of policymakers, social entrepreneurs, leading lights in the business community and young people at a roundtable event in November 2011. These experienced stakeholders were provided with an opportunity to reflect and comment on the content of the Framework, particularly the barriers and the design principles that any new initiative supporting young people should bear in mind. The rich set of insights that were raised throughout the discussion can be distilled into five overarching recommendations for participants in the Challenge:

1. Follow a holistic approach which takes into account the specific needs of young people and their life journeys
2. Recognise the value in offline face-to-face support for young people and try and dovetail any new online interventions with existing initiatives working on the ground
3. Get beyond a deficit model and stress the strengths of young people, what they are good at and what they can achieve
4. Create opportunities for relationships to be fostered, such as those between young people who find themselves in different circumstances and those between young people and businesses (particularly SMEs and big brands)
5. Appreciate the value of personal connections between young people and those supporting them, whether that is an inspiring teacher or a motivational key worker

Towards the end of the discussion, we also asked attendees to think of any innovative ideas that might set the ball rolling for the Challenge. The suggestions that were raised include: a professional networking website akin to a youth LinkedIn; an app that enables young people to gain points which can then be traded for something which will support them into suitable employment or training; and an app which allows friends to highlight one another's qualities and skills through social media platforms such as Facebook and Google+.

work is particularly focused on those who are struggling in school, are in or leaving care, are long-term unemployed and who have been in trouble with the law. Their activities include:

- The Team Programme – a 12-week personal development course, designed to help young people uncover hidden talents, take responsibility for tasks, develop team-working and communication skills, gain awareness of their local community and gain recognised qualifications. Young people join a team of up to 15 participants, comprising around 12 unemployed people and one or two employed people sponsored by their employers. Team members are encouraged to think about their futures and prepare a post-programme development plan. More than 70 per cent of participants go on to jobs, training or education within 3 months.
- Get Started – short courses run by professional tutors which use sport, music and the creative arts to increase confidence, skills and employability. Participants undertake a minimum of 5 days group activity, culminating in a final challenge or celebration bringing together the skills they have learnt.
- Get Into – short courses developing young people's skills in a specific sector, from construction to hospitality. Sectors are chosen according to regional employment needs. Courses vary from 2–6 weeks and contain a mixture of practical training and experience.
- The Enterprise Programme – supports young people interested in self employment to test their ideas, write plans and start their own businesses.
- Community Cash Awards – up to £3,000 is awarded to young people to design projects that will benefit the local community.

Barnsley NEET strategy – Barnsley local authority won an award for their strategy to address its significantly high levels of youth unemployment.²⁵ They singled out partnership working as key to their success, as well as their adherence to five key priorities for delivering their strategy: effective tracking and sharing of information; prevention; provision of training and learning; working with young people

already NEET; and providing a good quality IAG service. Their initiatives included creating an online 14–19 prospectus and forming partnership agreements and progression targets for schools and Connexions. They also established 'Ambition Barnsley', a careers fair based around diplomas, and have implemented a red/amber/green (RAG) rating for year 11 students.

The Yard Project, Lowestoft – The Yard Project is a Community Interest Company which took over a derelict builder's yard and, with the help of young people, transformed it into a community resource.²⁶ Key to the project was the involvement of the local community and the emphasis on sharing skills and expertise between the three generations of trainees involved in the building work.

More than
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Project 17, Hounslow – Launched in 2008, the Project 17 scheme involves youth workers in Hounslow visiting the homes of individuals who have been listed as NEET or 'unknowns' by the local Connexions service.²⁷ These mainly part-time workers offer emotional support, help write CVs, accompany young people to appointments, keep track of their progress and build relationships with anxious parents. The scheme led to a 3.9% reduction in the numbers of NEET young people in its first two years and a dramatic reduction in the number of 'unknowns'.

The Bright Ideas Trust – The Bright Ideas Trust invests in young people's ideas by loaning them at least £5,000 to help cover the costs of setting up a business.²⁸ Loan repayments are fed back into the charity's operations. The Trust also offers advice and mentoring to turn business ideas into real ventures. Applicants have to be between 16 and 30,

be based in London and not be in education, employment or training.

Young Researchers Network –

The National Youth Agency provided research grants to Nottingham City Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Swindon Borough Council to recruit and train young people as co-researchers looking into the effectiveness of youth services and NEET programmes.²⁹ Hertsmere used the funding to establish a young researchers group who work alongside borough officials to develop and design youth services.

Virtual College – Virtual College, based in Ilkley, has recently launched an initiative offering free e-learning courses to young people not in education, employment or training.³⁰ The suite of 6 free interactive and internet-based courses will provide learners with the knowledge to know where to look for job opportunities; to know how to complete an application form; and to understand how to climb the career ladder. For young people these free courses offer a means of accessing training at their pace and are a likely route to more in-depth training.

Headliners UK – Headliners is a charity which aims to inspire and encourage the personal development of young people through journalism. Young people are trained to produce stories on issues important to them for publication and broadcast in national and local newspapers, magazines, television, radio and online.³¹ Young people are involved in decision making at every level and can become trustees after the age of 18. Issues so far covered include gang wars, HIV/AIDs and size zero women.

Calderdale & Kirklees Careers and South West College apps – Two apps have recently been developed to support young people:

- Calderdale & Kirklees Careers partnered up with app developer Looking Local to develop an app specifically targeting NEET young people. The app offers young people information about local job opportunities and also enables personal career advisors to access information out of the office and in other informal environments.

- South West College worked with Astute Labs to produce an app which enables users to find training using ‘decision pathways’. By answering a series of simple multiple choice questions the application will lead the user to a programme which suits their specific needs.

The Mobile Learning Network

(MoLeNET) – MoLeNET aims to introduce and support mobile learning in education and training by using new technologies.³² One particular project in Accrington and Rossendale College used group text reminders to keep in touch with students, to motivate them and to ensure that they turned up to classes. Other colleges involved in the projects noted that the mobile technologies made them feel more part of the college community.

TheSite.org – TheSite.org aims to be the first place all young adults turn to when they need support and guidance.³³ All information and advice is intended to be impartial, allowing people to make their own decisions. The website provides factsheets and articles on key issues facing young people, including: sex and relationships; drinking and drugs; work and study; housing; legal issues and finances; and health and wellbeing. TheSite.org also have a peer-to-peer support system where young people can provide advice to one another.

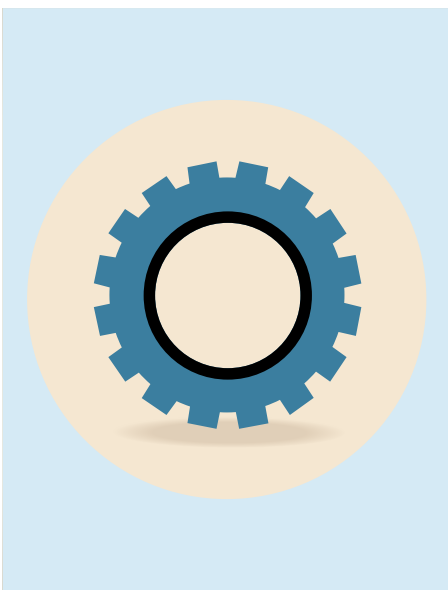
NOISE – The national NOISE charity increases the social mobility of young people under 30, many of whom are disadvantaged by physical, social and economic circumstances. Through NOISEfestival.com, young people build creative portfolios, develop skills and access professional networks. Noise enables them to gain income from their creativity via a biennial Festival showcasing some of their best work, as well as through events which take place in galleries across the UK. Among those promoting and endorsing the young people’s submissions are Zaha Haid, Sir Norman Rosenthal and Badly Drawn Boy.

24. See www.princes-trust.org.uk/
25. Centre for Social Justice and the Local Government Association. Op cit. 2009.
26. Ibid.
27. See www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/youth/vlpdetails.aspx?lpeid=306
28. See www.brightideastrust.com/
29. See www.nya.org.uk/integrated-youth-support-services/young-researcher-network
30. See www.virtual-college.co.uk/news/newsitem.aspx?id=c57
31. See www.headliners.org/
32. See www.molenet.org.uk/
33. See www.thesite.org/

22. See www.thefutureyou.org.uk/

23. I. Grigor. *Social enterprises tackling youth unemployment* (The Guardian, 15th February 2011).

5 // Design Principles



5 // DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Based on the common characteristics seen in the most successful initiatives supporting young people, we have assembled a list of key design principles which will help to inform further interventions. These include:

Highlight the potential

The term “NEET” has a number of negative connotations and to an extent creates a barrier for young people in itself. One of the clearest messages emerging from our roundtable discussion was that we should attempt to get beyond the deficit model currently shaping both public opinion and policy initiatives. Young people have a great deal of assets not found in the rest of the population and these should be drawn out and made visible.

Bring it all together

According to many accounts, integrating local youth services together can help

to provide a single point of access for young people, enable service providers to easily share resources, prevent the duplication of efforts, and gear the development of services to the needs of young people, rather than the professional interests of those providing them. One authority indicates that the number of NEET young people dropped to the lowest level in five years after it introduced a youth services ‘hub’, where youth workers broker young people’s access to the services they need, for instance housing information, careers advice and news of training opportunities.³⁴

Relationships matter

The ability of initiatives designed to raise the aspirations of NEETs are dependent on involving the whole of the community in their delivery, including parents, teachers and businesses. The Engaging Youth

Box 2 // Brainstorm with young people at Livity: implications for using technology

Towards the end of our brainstorm with the young people from Livity, we discussed what role technology could play in supporting young people to get the jobs, education or training that is right for them. When it was suggested that any new software might be available on a platform such as the iPhone, they were quick to point out that few of their peers have smartphones. They also said that even if they were to have these phones, they were not sure that many were likely to download and use the app. When asked what we should bear in mind when developing web-based approaches to supporting young people, they gave a number of suggestions:

- Allow young people to personalise their use of the technology
- Never try to be “down with the kids” in language or tone. It loses credibility
- Always remember that the programme is about young people, not adults
- Appeal to the mass market and use ‘guerrilla’ tactics to spread the word

Enquiry pointed out the importance of the ‘significant other’ in helping to re-engage people into education and training,³⁵ while FutureYou have shown that young people want support from people their age, their families and working people they can take realistic advice from. A young person at our Challenge roundtable event spoke of how having a close relationship with their key worker gave that supportive person greater leverage to challenge them. In addition, involving employers in this kind of support will be critical to ensuring that work experience programmes are made available and that training is better attuned to local economic needs. Many of the stakeholders attending the roundtable highlighted that big brands can be valuable sources of support, given their traction with young people. Starbucks and Marks and Spencer’s, for example, already provide opportunities to young people through The Prince’s Trust.

Make it personal

Young people progress at different rates and this should be reflected in any new models of support. The Centre for Social Justice has grouped NEET young people into three different categories according to their attitudes: The Open to Learning group who are positive about education and are likely to re-enter training; the Sustained NEET group who have a low educational attainment and have had a poor experience at school; and the Undecided NEET group who have little sense of what they intend to do.³⁶ Initiatives should be flexible so that young people can learn at their own pace and within different locations. As part of this, we should also recognise that not all training or employment is suitable for every individual. The Prince’s Trust and the Wolf report have already criticised the current provision of vocational training in the UK,³⁷ while Demos have argued that much of the training young people are encouraged to aim for proves of little value in the end.³⁸ They go so far as to recommend that schools actively discourage young people from taking up low-level vocational qualifications. Initiatives supporting young people should follow this lead and only direct them to truly valuable education, employment and training opportunities.

Create with, not just for

It is now widely assumed that public services can be made more effective and better tailored to the needs of users if they are co-produced alongside them. The Young Researchers Network in Hertsmere demonstrates how young people can be directly involved in evaluating and subsequently making suggested improvements to the youth services they access. Likewise, much can be learned from innovative governance models such as that used by Headliners, where young people involved in the project are invited to become trustees after the age of 18. In terms of co-delivery, the peer-to-peer mentoring services seen on websites such as FutureYou have proven highly popular with young people.

Technology for all

According to a Channel 4 report on UK ‘tribes’, young people have a preference for social media platforms that allow them to belong to a group, that enable

personal interaction and shared activities, and that provide information in a clear and non-patronising way.³⁹ It is also important to recognise that young people are not the ‘digital natives’ they are widely assumed to be, and that they are more likely to use apps that contain a social element than those that are solely geared towards learning and work. The MoLeNET technology project focused much of its attention on mobiles, knowing that these were the devices that young people were more likely to interact with. Likewise, the South West College app used simple questions on its app (‘decision pathways’) to direct young people to the appropriate opportunities, rather than complex signposting.

Stay the distance

A number of the experts and practitioners we have spoken to pointed out that young people should be provided with on-going pastoral support and mentoring, even after they have acquired employment, training or education. Any new initiatives seeking to help young people should consider including some element of befriending and listening support, in addition to providing information, advice and careers guidance.

34. N. Crawley-Lyons. *How bringing local services together could slash youth unemployment* (The Guardian, 6th September 2011).

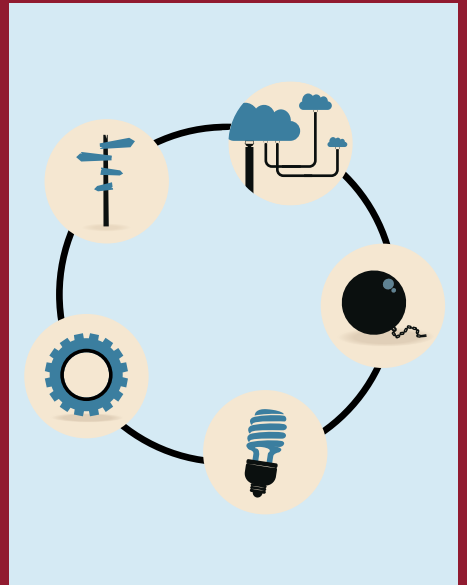
35. G. Hayward, S. Wilde and R. Williams. *Engaging youth enquiry* (Rathbone and Nuffield Review, 2008).

36. Centre for Social Justice and the Local Government Association. Op cit. 2009.

37. A. Wolf. *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report* (DfE, 2011).

38. In their report, *The Forgotten Half*, Demos note how current vocational training has three main problems: the lack of high quality vocational curricula that can combine academic and practical learning with the needs of business; the lack of schools preparation for post-16 vocational training opportunities; and a herding of too many people into studying for only low-level NVQ qualifications post-16 which have little value in the work place. They strongly argue for training and teaching which develops core literacy and numeracy skills, and which use creative approaches to build ‘soft skills’ and ‘character capabilities’.

39. For more information see K. Royle. *The breadth and scope of computer games in learning* (University of Wolverhampton, 2010).



6 // FRAMEWORK MATRIX

6 // Framework Matrix

Framework Matrix

The final stage of developing the Framework is to construct a 'Matrix' pulling all of our findings together. The Matrix enables us to see which design principles different initiatives are using to overcome particular barriers. We can see from the below table, for instance, that

the Inverness Training Hotel emphasises the importance of co-producing and co-delivering services to build the skills of young people.

The Matrix can be used to identify particular areas where a new use of technology might add value in supporting

young people, based on which barriers appear to be left unaddressed and which principles seem to be underemployed. For example, could a new solution bring influential individuals into the mix to overcome patchy relationships with people in authority?

Principles	Highlight the potential	Bring it all together	Relationships matter	Make it personal	Create with, not just for	Stay the distance	Technology for all
Barriers							
A lack of hard and soft skills	?	?	The Prince's Trust 'Team Programme'	The Prince's Trust 'Get Into'	Inverness Training Hotel	?	MoLeNET technology project
Patchy experiences with formal authorities	?	?	?	?	?	?	?
The high cost of HE and FE	?	?	?	?	?	?	Virtual College
Low aspirations / self-confidence	?	?	?	The Prince's Trust 'Get Started'	?	?	?
A lack of mentors, careers guidance and feedback	?	TheSite.org	?	Project 17	FutureYou	?	South West College App
Poor coordination between services	?	?	Barnsley NEET strategy	?	The Young Researchers Network	?	?

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The RSA has been a source of ideas, innovation and civic enterprise for over 250 years. In the light of new challenges and opportunities for the human race our purpose is to encourage the development of a principled, prosperous society by identifying and releasing human potential. This is reflected in the organisation's recent commitment to the pursuit of what it calls 21st century enlightenment.

Through lectures, events, pamphlets and commissions, the RSA provides a flow of rich ideas and inspiration for what might be realised in a more enlightened world; essential to progress but insufficient without action. RSA Projects aim to bridge this gap between thinking and action. We put our ideas to work for the common good. By researching, designing and testing new ways of living, we hope to foster a more inventive, resourceful and fulfilled society. Through our Fellowship of 27,000 people the RSA aims to be a source of capacity, commitment and innovation in communities from the global to the local. Fellows are actively encouraged to engage and to develop local and issue-based initiatives.

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The 21st century calls for radical social and commercial innovation, in a world characterised by explosive population growth, multiple resource pressures and fundamental challenges to our prevailing economic model. Globally, we cannot continue on our current economic trajectory without facing major systemic failures, whether natural, social or financial. The RSA is reviving its tradition of encouraging enterprising responses to such challenges through the new Enterprise Programme. Through research, open innovation and prototyping we look for ways to help us adapt or innovate our way through the century ahead. By doing so we aim to create new kinds of wealth, employment and social value.

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