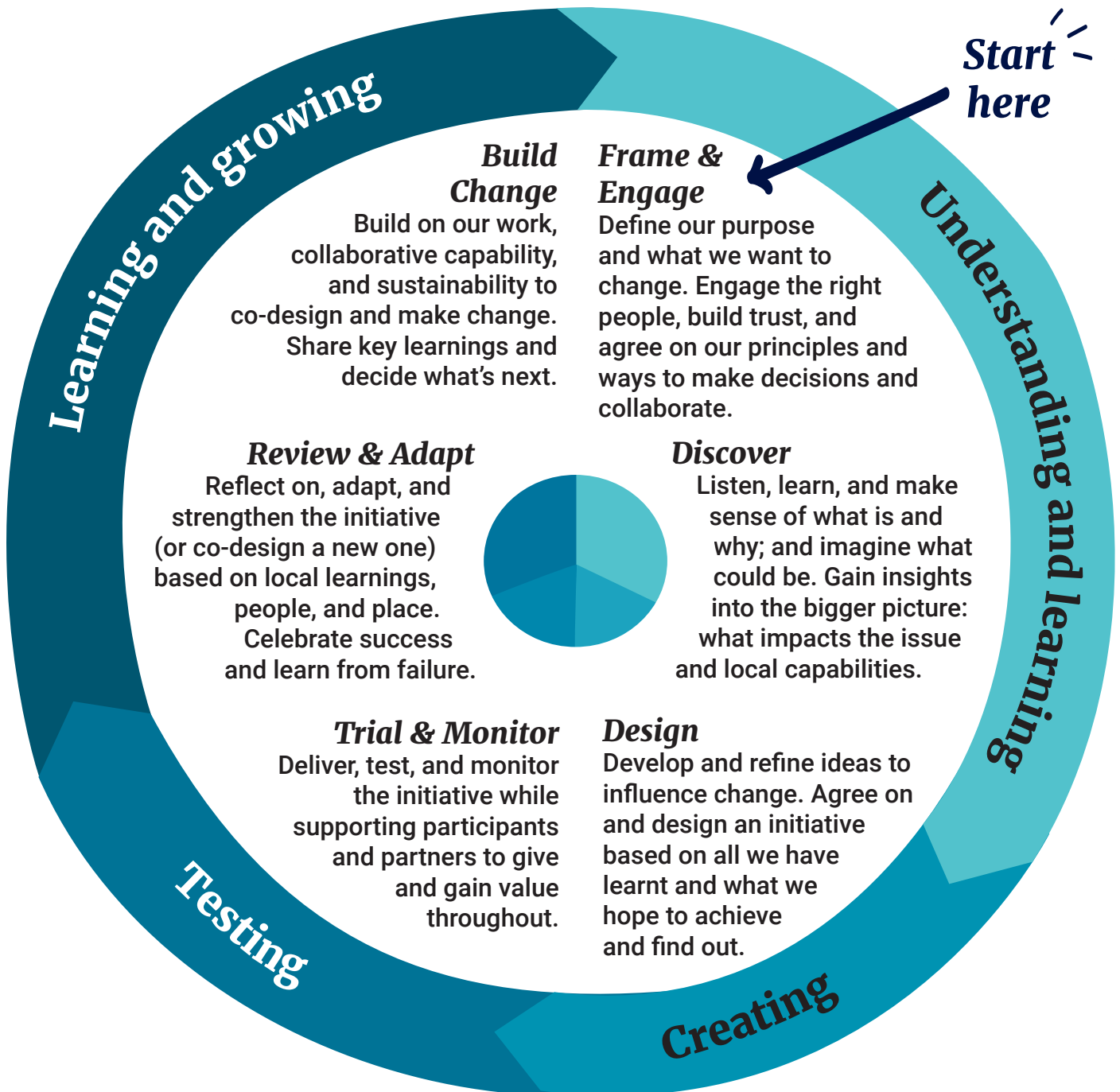


Guide to Co-design

Collaborating to better understand, create, test and learn new ways to bring about change and support quality youth employment.



There is no 'one way' to do co-design, just as there is no one person or organisation that can solve a complex problem. Each community has different challenges and strengths, which is why it is important to stay open to new ideas, ask questions, and learn together as you work side by side to change things for the better.

Frame & Engage

→ Define our purpose and what we want to change.

→ Engage the right people, build trust, and agree on our principles and ways to make decisions and collaborate.

Questions to discuss



What is the challenge and purpose of our co-design?

Who should we connect to and learn with in our community? Whose viewpoint is missing?

How can we include and support people to actively participate, especially those impacted by the issue? How will we build trust and equity in our work and collaboration?

How can we hold space for different perspectives and new ideas; to prioritise asking questions over needing answers?

How will our principles and values guide our decision-making? How will we share power and support people's agency to contribute?

How is our individual work linked to the shared vision? What support and local efforts can we access to help us work together?



Ideas for action

Set principles of how the co-designers will work together e.g openness to new perspectives, inclusion, flexibility, ongoing learning, acceptance that we don't have all the answers.

Bring together stakeholders with diverse expertise and lived experience, willing to contribute and commit to the 'group deal', including:

- Employer champions to provide work/experience; or detail on what's needed to support young workers.
- RTOs willing to tailor training with and for young people and employers.
- Employment providers to tailor support for young people and employers.
- Young people to provide insight on aspirations, challenges and enablers.
- Government at all levels to link in investments, sectors and policy makers.

Agree on the purpose/scope of what you plan to design e.g supported pathway into a local growth sector; pre-employment experience.

Get to know each other with and without an agenda to build trust and knowledge of what each can contribute e.g. informal coffee catchups between meetings.

Discover

- Listen, learn, and make sense of what is and why; and imagine what could be.
- Gain insights into the bigger picture: what impacts the issue and local capabilities.

Questions to discuss



How are we testing our assumptions? What do we already know about the issue in our community and what do we need to learn?

How do we gather and understand people's lived experience and stories? What matters to people, and what would success look like to them?

How do current structures and context help or hinder people to live lives they value?

What is already going well in our community? How can we draw on and add value to local efforts and resources, rather than replicate or compete?

What are we learning from evidence and examples of what might work best?

How can we reframe the issue into an opportunity that builds on strengths rather than deficits?



Ideas for action

Hold workshops to develop understanding of key challenges, what community want to shift and ideas on how to get there.

Listen and learn from those with lived experience (of youth un/employment, supporting or employing young people). Identify their concerns, hopes, strengths and ideas for action.

Set up and support young people's contribution e.g a youth reference group.

Engage with different sources of knowledge (data, evidence, good practice, lived experience) to understand the current system, local efforts and context, and people's experiences to inform your design ideas.

Access more knowledge to make better decisions, if needed e.g through the NYEB team, governance groups, and wider networks.

Mobilise further key expertise to address barriers e.g peak industry body

Identify funding, networks, and local assets to support ideas.

Design

- **Develop and refine ideas to influence change.**
- **Agree on and design an initiative based on all our learnings and what we hope to achieve and still learn.**

Questions to discuss

How can we test and improve our ideas with community to guide the design of our initiative?

How can we design the initiative, so every person involved is left better placed to take up opportunities no matter the outcome?

What changes, connections and resources do we need to achieve our ideas?

What are the potential barriers to success and who can we involve to help us develop structural solutions e.g transport or housing?

How does each person understand their proposed role and contribution to trial the initiative?

What is our process for people to raise concerns and be supported throughout the delivery of the initiative to do things differently?



Ideas for action

Design an initiative with:

- Input and expertise from young people to gain valuable youth involvement throughout the entire process.
- Clarity on initiative management and roles (who is doing what, when)
- Regular check in points and feedback loops to make improvements and address issues as they arise
- Shared goals, measures of success and ways to track progress
- Options for what could happen next (when the project ends)
- Committed resources

For example, if you were co-designing an employment pathway, you might learn from the steps of engaging and discovering, and choose to include the following elements:

- Awareness raising with young people or employers
- Career exploration and recruitment (employer talks, structural/material support, goal planning)
- Work readiness (tailored support, understanding work requirements)
- Pre-employment training (training, coaching, and learning support for core and foundational units)
- Work experience/induction (mentor, role clarity, employment or placement)
- Employment-based training (EBT)
- Continued learning and upskilling towards goals and sustainable work

Trial & Monitor

- **Deliver, test, and monitor the initiative,**
- **Support participants and partners to give and gain value throughout the initiative.**

Questions to discuss

How do we maintain roles, communication, and governance to ensure initiative oversight and problem solving is shared?

How will we conduct regular check in points and enable feedback to identify emerging opportunities and act on unexpected issues?

How will we support participants (young people, employers, and others involved) and work with them to develop workarounds if things aren't going to plan?

How will we collect data, stories, and different stakeholder experiences of the initiative for analysis of what worked and what didn't for whom and why?

How do we keep building community engagement and investment in the initiative; and leverage resources and expertise if needed?



Ideas for action

Provide scaffolded support for young people and employers throughout the trial of the initiative e.g transport, housing, work wellbeing, equipment.

Implement feedback loops and communication to suit each participant (young people, employers, VET, etc.) to understand how they experience the initiative. What young people need for success? How can young people safely raise their concerns? How can employers be supported to monitor progress and address issues?

Collect data, stories and experiences for analysis and review on what worked and what didn't for whom and why e.g feedback, in/formal meetings, 'aha!' moments, problems and solutions.

Communicate internally often, and with the NYEB team and stakeholders, to keep building relationships, momentum, and community support and investment in the initiative and shared vision e.g weekly SMS updates, Microsoft Teams.

Recognise, record, and celebrate early wins – even small changes matter.

Review & Adapt

- **Reflect on, adapt, and strengthen the initiative (or co-design a new one) based on local learnings, people, and place.**
- **Celebrate success and learn from failure.**

Questions to discuss



How can we support people with lived experience to reflect on feedback and evaluation findings?

What do we understand about the enablers and barriers of success for participants?

What was the biggest change experienced by those involved?

How was value recognised and added at each stage of the initiative?

What risks and issues emerged and how could they be better managed?

How can we adapt the trial in response to what we are learning? What are the core things that shouldn't be changed?

How will we respond to feedback and findings and show participants how this will lead to action?



Ideas for action

Support community, governance groups and those involved in the trial to review initiative findings. Identify key enablers and barriers, and advise on how to promote learnings.

Support young people to meet and provide feedback and insights.

Ascertain what value was added along the way from those involved, and if this changes ideas of success and outcomes.

Learn from failures as well as successes, experiences as well as outcomes and data.

Define the core or non-negotiable components of the initiative, and what was, or could be, adapted to suit different sector pathways or contexts e.g scaffolded support for young people; workplace mentoring; flexibility on licencing, work experience, or start times.

Redesign post-trial support if needed.

Build Change

- **Build on our work, collaborative capability, and sustainability to co-design and make change.**
- **Share key learnings.**
- **Decide what's next.**

Questions to discuss



What did we learn about the capabilities needed to co-design and implement the initiative, and make change?

What is needed to support participants and the pathway into the future?

How can we frame key messages about the co-design, participant, and collaborator experience to advocate for change and investment?

How can we enable more listening, accessible feedback mechanisms and better communication?

How did involvement help participants to learn, contribute, or take action e.g did employers engaged in feedback loops apply learnings or adapt workplace practices?

How can we build on our strengths to adapt, or co-design a new initiative?



Ideas for action

Implement post-trial support for young people and employers to ensure the value of their participation is extended beyond the trial e.g coaches help young people refine goal plans; employers discuss career progression possibilities.

Conduct a co-design team debrief to record what is needed to support a successful co-design process e.g dedicated coordinator, attending to expectations.

Advocate (tailor and share) learnings with the wider community, employers and young people, policy makers and government, training providers, the CIC and NYEB network e.g through a plain language summary, videos, hosting an MP visit or employer event, peer-to-peer advocacy.

Leverage new learnings, mindset shifts, and connections made to support development of further co-design projects e.g record and integrate our 'must haves'; support new champions to contribute to local and national conversations and change.

