

JANUARY 2023



UPTEMPO

How employers can support
Pasifika workforce progression:

Uptempo insights and recommendations

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What is Uptempo?

Uptempo is a learning incubator testing ways to grow Pasifika intergenerational wealth and wellbeing in Aotearoa. We work in South and West Auckland, exploring how Pasifika-centred workforce innovation can enable Pasifika people to thrive. We work directly with 80+ Pasifika 'aiga (families), Pasifika-centred organisations including **The Fono, Tupu Toa, Social Labour Supply** and **First Union**, and with government, employers and Pasifika-centred adult education providers. We bring together the lived experience and strengths of Pacific people with the skills and knowledge of our partners, to identify changes that will strengthen Pasifika intergenerational wealth and wellbeing.

Uptempo is part of **Alo Vaka**, the Pacific Skills Shift Programme funded through the **Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment**. Uptempo is also funded by the **Peter McKenzie Project** (JR McKenzie Trust) and powered by **The Southern Initiative** (TSI), a social innovation unit nested within Auckland Council.

We acknowledge the Uptempo 'aiga, workforce intermediary partners and employers we interviewed, for their contribution to this report. Thank you for sharing so generously.



Pu'apinga

Our Values

Our values are the foundation for how we show up in our work, the mindsets we bring and our actions.

Transformative systems change is complex, messy, and uncertain. Our values help us stay true to our kaupapa and guide us, as we carve a pathway forward and energise a community of support around the need for change.



Tausi le va

SAMOAN

We honour our relationships and recognise that everything is connected. We are culturally grounded and through this, build trust, respect and impact.



Loto to'a

TONGAN

We have the courage to do new things and not being afraid to make mistakes, accepting our failures and learning from them. We are brave enough to challenge the status quo and hold ourselves and other people accountable.



Manaakitanga

MĀORI

Our actions demonstrate our love and care for our people and our kaupapa.



Haivae 'ag

ROTUMAN

We openly share and work together with others to achieve our goal of intergenerational wealth for all our people.



Fakamoliaga

NIUEAN

Our culture is a superpower! We are unapologetically Pasifika and walk our talk every day.

Employer action on Pasifika workforce progression



Employers are part of the solution to closing the Pacific pay gap and raising Pasifika intergenerational wealth and wellbeing. Equally important are government levers to incentivise employers to enable Pasifika workforce progression. Drivers for employers to support Pasifika workforce progression include attracting the best talent, managing labour and skills shortages, the knowledge that young Pasifika and Māori will make up increasing numbers of the workforce, raising productivity and economic development, growing workforce diversity and supporting social cohesion and equity.

We are finding that many employers need support to recruit, retain and promote Pasifika in their workplaces. By mid-2023, Uptempo will be launching an updated Good Employer Matrix (GEM), to support employers to do this and be good employers of Pasifika and others. In February 2023 we will produce an Evidence Brief on the role of social procurement to support employment equity for Pasifika.



Our inquiries

In this report we explore the following questions...



01

What is effective in supporting employers to enable Pasifika workforce progression?



02

What does employer readiness to support Pasifika employees to progress in work look like?



03

What support do employers need to become ready or to do more?



04

How can employers help create pipelines for Pasifika workforce progression?



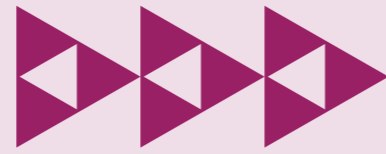
05

What system changes would incentivise employers to accelerate Pasifika workforce progression?



Our approach

In developing this report, we:



Reviewed research evidence on effective employer action to support (Pasifika) employee workforce progression



Reviewed Uptempo data, team reflections and practice-based learning



Interviewed six employers and two Uptempo workforce intermediary partners who work with employers – Tupu Toa and Social Labour Supply



Interviewed four members from different 'aiga, who have all been supported by Uptempo and partners to gain better employment

From here we describe the Pacific pay gap, followed by four strategies Uptempo has developed in response to the inquiries above and how we are testing these strategies. We then share our learning to date for each of the five inquiries, drawing on research evidence and Uptempo's practice-based evidence. We conclude with recommendations for government and for employers, to accelerate Pasifika workforce progression and help close the Pacific Pay gap.



The Pacific Pay Gap and forging new horizons

“Alongside Māori women, Pacific men and women experience the largest pay gaps compared to other ethnic groups. There is no sign that this gap is closing”

Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry 2022

In 2018 there was a \$17,700 gap between Pasifika and non-Pasifika incomes in Auckland (Census 2018). In 2022, the median hourly wage for Pasifika working in Auckland was \$25.24, compared with \$34.10 for Pakeha (Statistics New Zealand, 2022). In 2021, for every dollar earned by a Pakeha man, Pacific men were paid 81 cents and Pacific women only 75 cents. At the current rate of change, it would take over a hundred years to close this preventable pay equity gap (Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry 2022).

Systemic disadvantage in education is one reason that Pasifika get paid less and are promoted less. However, only 27% of the gap between Pasifika and Pakeha men's wages, and 39% of the gap for women, can be explained by background factors such as education, age, family situation or occupation (Cochrane & Pacheco, 2022; New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2022; Treasury, 2018). Income equality for Pasifika in New Zealand requires identifying and dismantling barriers across the employment landscape, including education, youth transitions from school, HR recruitment

processes, promotion processes, and pervasive discrimination and double standards (Came et al., 2020; New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2022).

Employers working with Uptempo understand that 'the future of the workforce is brown', with up to 30% of Auckland's working age population projected to be Māori or Pasifika in 20 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2022). Many employers are grappling with current labour shortages and realise that they need to change their approach, to access Pasifika talent and markets. Some employers are aware that Pasifika talent is often overlooked or screened out by current mindsets and systems. Some can also see that our education, training and employment systems can perpetuate and deepen this inequity. These systems are part of the complex structure that is institutional racism – change will require increasing understanding of current inequities and their implications and growing a commitment to workforce diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Uptempo rainbow – four connected strategies

Uptempo has been working with employers and the employment system to move from an ad hoc 'gap filling approach' to labour shortages, towards industry-level strategies that meet employer needs and pathway Pasifika into high quality, resilient jobs. Uptempo is learning that this requires four connected strategies:

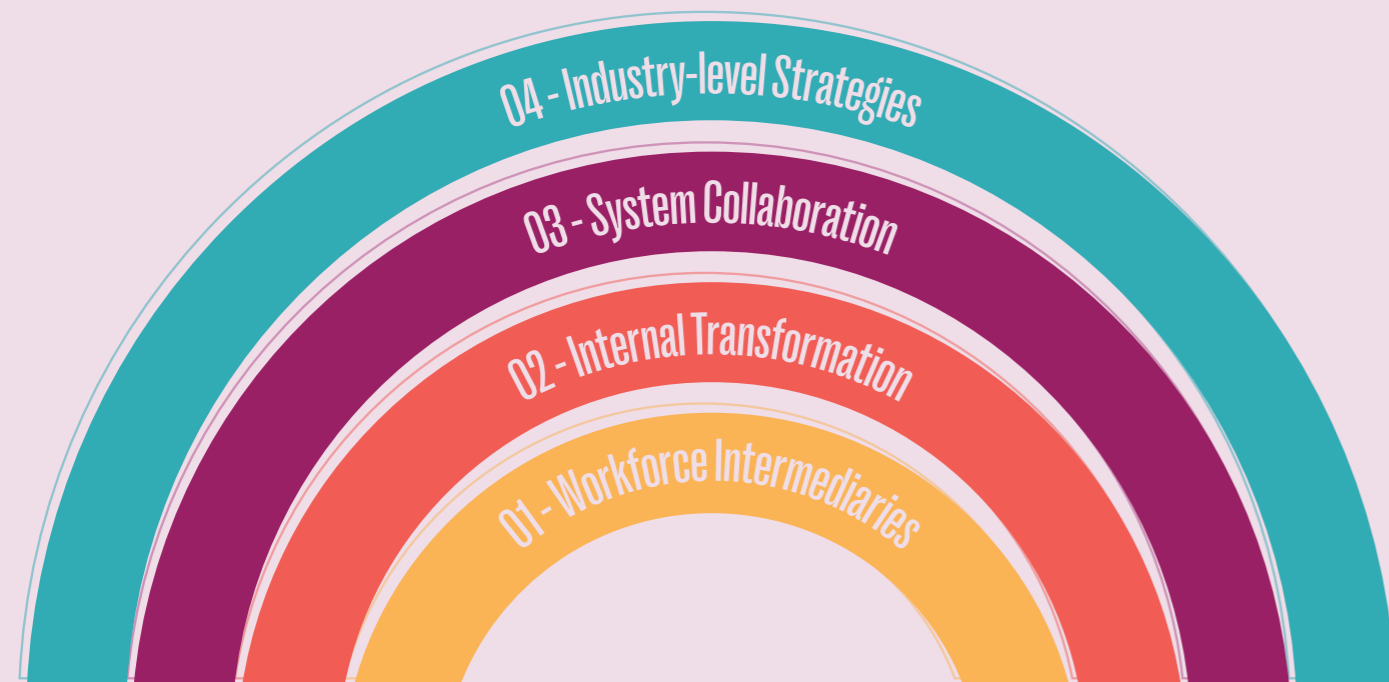


01 ▶ Employers meeting labour needs by working with culturally competent **workforce intermediaries** to recruit, retain and progress diverse (Pasifika) talent

02 ▶ **Internal transformation** via organisational culture change and applying tools like Uptempo's Good Employer Matrix

03 ▶ **System collaboration** to develop new qualifications, practices and pathways for Pasifika across sectors and industries

04 ▶ **Industry-level strategies** to increase Pasifika participation in sunrise industries and quality, resilient jobs



Uptempo has targeted two kinds of sectors and industries so far to test these strategies:

- 1. Sectors where Pasifika are traditionally clustered that are experiencing skill shortages**, such as construction and infrastructure, security, manufacturing, health and social care. The aims are to support Pasifika workers in low paid roles to move up the ladder faster via upskilling, start roles higher up the pay scale, and potentially open pathways into sunrise industries where there are more opportunities for progression.
- 2. Higher-paid industries where Pasifika are underrepresented**, such as tech, finance and insurance. One example is Uptempo's partnership with Datacom, described [here](#). Stepping-stone roles and upskilling pathways for Pasifika without specialised skills in these sectors are sought, through engagement in training that works for Pasifika and employers.

For both these approaches, **identifying stepping-stone jobs has been important** – where training and experience combine to immediately boost earnings and status, and open up opportunities for career progression. Stepping-stone jobs have good starting pay, ability for ongoing upskilling and pathways to sunrise jobs over time, including in potentially different industries, via transferable skills such as logistics, administration, customer service or project management.



1. What works to accelerate Pasifika and minority progression in the workplace?

1.1 Research evidence



Numerous robust research reviews of corporate and public sector diversity outcomes have clarified what supports recruitment, progression and retention of minorities and women (Atewologun et al., 2018; Dobbin & Kalev, 2007, 2017; Parsons et al., 2022). Key to success is adequately resourcing this work properly and managers taking ownership of it, which empowers them to feel like agents of change (Dobbin & Kalev, 2017).

	What is effective	What is ineffective, or even counterproductive
Organisation and culture	Senior leadership team all sit on a diversity taskforce with responsibilities for developing and implementing an organisation-wide workforce diversity, equity and inclusion plan, including within their individual teams	Diversity scorecards rating individual manager performance – evidence of backlash from non-minority managers, resulting in more hostile environment for minorities and declining minority numbers
	Full time staff member dedicated to equity and diversity in recruitment and workforce progression	Diversity mission statement or policy with no meaningful budget or staff
	Build organisational culture of inclusion and cultural competency, e.g. shown by concrete accommodations for how different people go about their work – improves retention of minorities	'Unconscious bias' training for individuals, and compulsory diversity training – little evidence of meaningful behavioural change, evidence of 'gaming' trainings, disengagement, and backlash from non-minority staff, resulting in more hostile environment for minorities
	Allocating 1% of budget to diversity initiatives	
	Track equity data across teams with transparent reporting on workforce diversity, equal pay and promotion targets, linked to internal or national awards system	
	'Snowball effect' – increasing diversity in management and higher levels of organisations leads to more diverse recruitment and progression overall	



	What is effective	What is ineffective, or even counterproductive
Recruitment and promotion	Targeted minority recruitment programmes to expand candidate pool, including through cluster-hires and programmes with tertiary institutes	Symbolic equal opportunity corporate statement in job ads – no effect
	Change recruitment processes to make applications and their assessment more holistic (for example including life experience)	
	Review the promotion and pay rise process for institutional bias (i.e. using equity data)	
	Work with workforce intermediaries to access diverse talent	
Training and development	Mentorship programmes where minorities can access mentorship from senior people at least two rungs up	Networking without senior staff mentorship or buy-in
	Voluntary diversity training of managers, focused on skills for managing a diverse workforce	Mandatory diversity training of managers – evidence of backlash from non-minority managers, resulting in more hostile environment for minorities.
	Management training programme targeting minority staff development	
	Skills training and development promoted appropriately to minority staff	

(Davenport et al., 2022; Dobbin & Kalev, 2007, 2017; Marschall, 2021; Parsons et al., 2022)

1.2 Practice-based evidence from Uptempo's work with employers



Uptempo employers have expressed a need for support to implement the approaches above. Uptempo has seen that Pasifika-centred workforce intermediaries such as Tupu Toa and Social Labour Supply are well placed to provide this support, as they are grounded in culturally specific knowledge about what works for Pasifika. Uptempo has found that what works for Pasifika to disrupt in-work poverty includes:

- Employers utilising existing support mechanisms such as the Ministry of Social Development's Mana in Mahi programme (note that this could be broadened to support progression across industries, as well as within industries).
- Supporting training to happen in paid work time.
- Employers working with Pasifika-centred workforce intermediaries and training providers that can connect with Pasifika communities and provide wraparound support.
- Supporting Pasifika mentoring and peer support networks in the workplace that are culturally-grounded and focused on upskilling for career advancement.

We are finding that employers respond to stories about how workers' lives change for the better via workforce progression and want to see more evidence of these benefits. One significant employer wanted to know "if other businesses have evidence-based programmes that work [for Pasifika progression]. We are working anecdotally."

Resources can be provided to employers on the existing evidence, linked to best practice and Pasifika-centred workforce intermediaries for Pasifika progression. This will be part of the toolkit to accompany the Good Employer Matrix (GEM), which Uptempo is developing with **Tupu Toa** by June 2023. The GEM will provide a practical guide for employers wanting to up their game in hiring, retaining and supporting Pasifika staff to progress in work. It will include **what** to do in terms of actions for employers, **why**, and **where to go for support**. Practical targets will support employers to assess, improve and transform their:

- a) organisational culture;
- b) recruitment and progression;
- c) pay and conditions; and
- d) training and development for Pasifika, based on evidence of what works. Employers can use the GEM to map their journey to becoming a good employer for Pasifika people across these four domains.

2. What does employer readiness to support Pasifika employees to progress in work look like?



Employers are at different stages of understanding and readiness to support Pasifika workforce progression. Similar to our 'traffic light system' for **'aiga readiness'**, Similar to our 'traffic light system' for 'aiga readiness, Uptempo has developed a traffic light system for gauging how ready employers are to embark on a DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) journey for Pasifika progression. While not hard and fast rules that are a one-size-fits all, these general indicators can help potential workforce intermediaries and other partners to assess where employers may need support. They also support employers to consider where they are on a journey towards being a good employer for Pasifika or any other under-served group and make connections to their organisation's purpose and values.



Employer ‘traffic lights’: Readines for equity journeys



Red

MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT AROUND KEY CONCEPTS AND BENEFITS NEEDED

Wage progression potential

Do not pay the living wage and are dependent on minimum wage labour with 40+ hrs per week as standard

Organisational motives and values

Transactional approach or no/low values-based motives – labour-gap-plugging, box-ticking

Flexibility

Low willingness to be flexible over recruitment requirements, i.e. not hiring for future potential, not able to see value beyond CV

Who is on board

No key person driving change, lack of management commitment

Getting help and building relationships with the wider ecosystem

Lack of awareness as to why a social support ecosystem for workers might be needed, that one might exist, or resistant to the notion that employers should take an interest in it

Data on recruitment, pay equity, promotion, progression

No data on workforce, resistance to collecting it



Orange

OPEN TO CHANGE, CLEAR POTENTIAL FOR ACTION

Good starting rate, i.e. at least the living wage. Open to developing a wage progression plan and strategy

Some values-based motives, though not clearly connected or fleshed out in practice yet

Willingness to be flexible over recruitment requirements, though not sure how to change this via standard practice

Key contact driving change, no extra resources available, support from above variable

Openness to building relationships with community-based partners, interested in learning more

No or limited data on workforce, due to not being sure why or how to collect it



Green

BEEEN TAKING STEPS AND MAKING PLANS, READY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SUPPORT

Wage progression plan in place, looking to introduce more progression supports

Values and pragmatic motives aligned with DEI and articulated

Willingness to be flexible over recruitment requirements, is willing to work with and trust socially-motivated workforce intermediaries

Key contact driving change, planning for extra resources to be available, support from above consistent

Ready to invest more formally in learning partnership with socially motivated recruitment, seeking improved connections to training partners

Ready to improve data processes, capture and reporting

3. What support do employers need to become ready or do more?

The updated Good Employer Matrix will present specific changes that employers can make to be an attractive employer for Pasifika (and others). Three further kinds of employer support are described below.

3.1 Employer education on Pasifika workforce progression



Employers interviewed for this report tended to focus on making training generally available for Pasifika staff, rather than on setting organisational goals for how many Pasifika staff should be upskilled and progressing, and by when. Employers who were Pasifika progression champions noted that understanding was inconsistent throughout their organisation, and that there was a lot of work to do. From Uptempo’s experience and interviews with employers and workforce intermediary partners, employers need support to diversify their talent, recruit and retain Pasifika talent and support Pasifika employees to progress. Uptempo employers interviewed wanted the why, what and how:

Why	What	How
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding why a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens in the workplace is important Seeing evidence of the benefits of hiring and progressing Pasifika, including from other employers Learning about different ways of valuing Pasifika employee experience and the benefits of this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of what works to support Pasifika recruitment and progression and appropriate targets Practical tools to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up fair wage strategies and transparent progression planning Collect hiring, pay and promotion data so progress can be tracked Guidance to review recruitment approach Guidance to set up and deliver mentorship and progression support for Pasifika 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers dedicating resources, staff and leadership to attracting and keeping diverse talent and workforce progression, including Pasifika progression Connecting to the Pasifika-friendly ecosystem of training, supported recruitment and employment, and social support for employees and their families



Uptempo partner Tupu Toa places Māori and Pasifika university graduates with large employers who can support them to progress. They describe strong employer competition to obtain Pasifika and Māori talent, with their university graduates in hot demand among big corporates aiming to source the best talent and hit diversity targets. Director Anne Fitisemanu explains that they put their employers “through an application process, do you have buy-in at the top, commitment to Te Tiriti, do you have a Māori and Pacific strategy – checking for why they want our talent. We want to see partners who have career pathways, who progress and develop people as leaders. We are a movement not a programme.”

Meanwhile, smaller businesses often have a tight-knit and supportive ‘family’ culture, where everyone in theory is able to access the same support, training and benefits, but without systems in place to check whether there is equity in uptake of training, or of career outcomes across different gender and ethnic groups. They do not tend to have a ‘diversity taskforce’ or a diversity officer, as large employers might, and may initially be resistant to diversity and equity policies. But some are aware that their Pasifika workers may need to be supported in ways that suit their circumstances and needs, to have a fair chance at progression.

A Pasifika-heavy trades-sector workplace we interviewed has a strong record on pay and conditions, but was against ‘special treatment’ for any one ethnic group. In discussing outcomes and progression for different groups however, a manager noticed that “We find a lot of our Pacific people are illiterate, so that’s gonna make them shy away from the admin responsibilities onsite [...] you always find it’s the Palagi people who are the heads of the sites. And that’s probably due to their schooling, not necessarily managerial skills, because the Pacific people I think they’re more in touch with their own peers and know how to get on with them.” The employer concluded that literacy training could be worth looking into for Pasifika workers, to level the playing field.



3.2 Partnering with those who can recruit diverse (Pasifika) talent

External recruitment can be hit and miss and a drain for employers, especially for small to medium enterprises. Many employers would prioritise attitude, potential and ‘the right fit’ over what is on a CV. However, standard approaches to job advertising, HR and recruitment tend to present barriers to Pasifika people who might be suitable candidates.

For Tupu Toa, “What gets in the way is bias in recruitment teams. They are mainly European, they come with mindsets and processes that are really Western”, often overlooking the transferable values, skills and talent that Pasifika people have in serving their communities and families. Employers might see “a single Mum hitting B-grades with three kids... [but] their story is a secret weapon – I am one of seven, the only person to have gone to uni in my family, I get called on to drive Mum and Dad everywhere, I look after siblings”. Employers need to “see richness, put a value to culture, to language, to navigating multiple worlds and cultures. We need to reframe that with employers.”

Workforce intermediaries can be empowered by employers to rise above inflexible HR recruitment processes: “With [X candidate], the interview was a formality, she already had the job, because we had a relationship with the employer. She’d already been interviewed by me” (Social Labour Supply). The expectation in the partnership was that the workforce intermediary was essentially doing the main part of the hiring, vetting and preparation process, and was trusted to do so after building up a relationship with key managers. This building of trust with a workforce intermediary may be challenging initially for some employers but can circumvent red tape and help get the right people on board.

Culturally grounded workforce intermediaries can help companies hire from communities they don’t typically reach. Employers in non-traditional industries for Pasifika noted a lack of Pasifika response to job ads: “I don’t know why Pasifika don’t put themselves out there, even when I advertise on Seek I have maybe one

[Pasifika] application”. Language, cultural framing and social accessibility of standard job ads are typical barriers to recruiting from minority communities. For Pasifika, overall lower levels of formal qualifications is a specific barrier. TSI research with ‘aiga found a fear of applying for jobs you are capable of doing if you don’t meet all the named criteria, and how reluctance to take risks is a self-protective trait in the context of a community struggling to meet basic needs (Uptempo, 2022a, 2022b).” This was described by an Uptempo Pasifika intern sourced via Tupu Toa as “the fear of failing, the fear of letting the team down.

Moreover, employers do not typically know how to tap into rich Pasifika social networks to recruit. Uptempo partnered with Datacom during a major recruitment of Covid contact-tracers, connecting via Pasifika community leaders and social media to thousands of willing Pasifika workers who had never been reached through Datacom’s standard job ads. “We now have access to talent and communities we’ve never traditionally engaged with, that’s the beauty” (Teresa Pollard, former Associate Director Strategic Partnerships for Datacom) (Uptempo, 2021).

Pasifika workforce research has highlighted that managers need to be more proactive in progressing Pasifika staff (The Southern Initiative & Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2018). An Uptempo Pasifika intern advocated for employers to nudge capable Pasifika employees out of their comfort zone: “They see that none of their people are represented in higher roles, they shy away and stick with what and who they are comfortable with. Sometimes the way to overcome it is just to put them in the roles. So they truly know what they’re capable of doing. And then other Pasifika people will see themselves being represented and just try and go for it as well.” Supporting Pasifika workers with potential to step up, even temporarily, can pave the way for other Pasifika to progress.

3.3 Partnering for internal transformation

As well as recruiting Pasifika talent, culturally competent workforce intermediaries can help employers make deeper changes to support Pasifika workforce progression. For example, Tupu Toa provides cultural competency training and capability support as a condition of internship placements – this is seen as a bare minimum to support new staff from Māori and Pasifika communities who are underrepresented in target workplaces. Workforce intermediaries working to place Pasifika candidates were all aware that employers generally need support to attract and retain diverse talent and be an equitable employer. They highlight the importance of the middle-management tier to implement change, as middle management is typically closer to operational realities than a CEO yet senior enough to be able to get things done.

A workforce intermediary such as Tupu Toa or Social Labour Supply can link recruitment, training, in-house mentoring and social support for employers, to advance Pasifika in their workplace. They can link employers with:

- **Training providers** – employers are not always confident about being able to find the best type of training for their Pacific staff, including how to encourage engagement and uptake
- **Social support services** for employee wellbeing
- **Guidance** for supporting internal coaching and mentoring that works for Pasifika career progression
- **NZQA and other agencies** – to access upskilling opportunities, accreditations, subsidies and apprenticeships.



The potential of social procurement

Social procurement for employment equity directs purchasing and recruitment spend towards employment for marginalised communities. Government procurement is a significant lever to improve employment opportunities and equity for minority communities. We are at the early stages in New Zealand of using social procurement for employment equity. We need tighter approaches, better tools, and more investment in contract monitoring and reporting that ensures public social spend is more directly informed by socially driven employers and skilled workforce intermediaries. An Evidence Brief on Social Procurement for Employment Equity will be released by Uptempo in February 2023.



4. How employers can help create training pipelines for Pasifika workforce progression



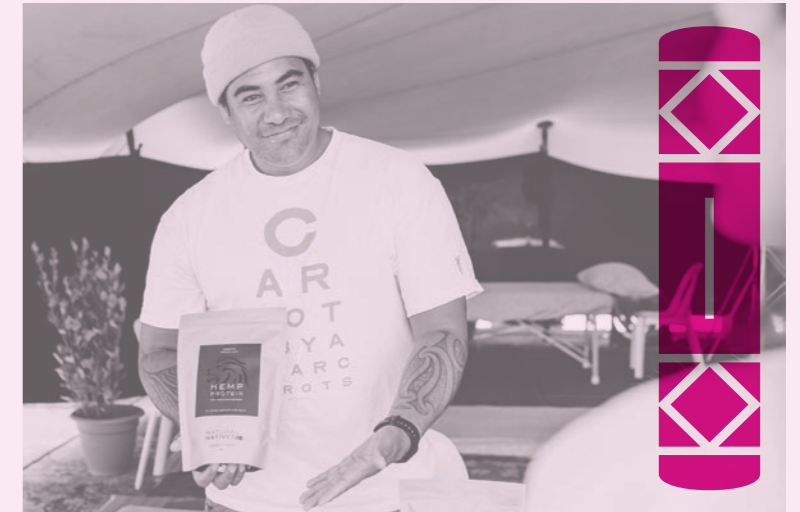
Employers have a crucial role to play in helping develop new training and apprenticeships for high quality jobs. Uptempo has partnered with employers and culturally competent training providers to design and deliver a range of training packages and micro credentials for Pasifika workers. Uptempo was able to quickly coordinate the development of niche training bundles, and NZQA-approved formal micro credentials, to fill critical skills gaps in high-paid industries. While design and NZQA accreditation typically took three months, implementation, delivery and scaling required far more investment and effort. In particular, there needs to be careful management of expectations and negotiations about:

- **Compensation for commercial intellectual property**
- **Compensation for time**
- **Rights to delivery and implementation of training packages** – who is allowed to deliver the training, and who can they deliver it to? Will it only benefit potential employees of the employer who developed it, or will the training be allowed to scale?
- **Lining up ‘pipelines’** of candidates who will do the training, and ensuring they are placed into work and supported on completion.

Uptempo’s experience supports Workforce Development Councils’ scaling this kind of work, to reduce New Zealand’s ongoing skills and productivity gaps by utilising the voice of industry to understand the issues and barriers. Greater industry-wide involvement is needed for scale. There also needs to be a consistent funder to oversee, resource and coordinate relationships between employers, training providers and workforce intermediaries. Government agencies are key to supporting scaling and **Industry Transformation Plans** can be a coordinating tool. In 2023, using the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Transformation Plan, Uptempo will outline what a collaborative approach looks like when centred around the aspirations of Pasifika workers in Auckland’s manufacturing sector.

In some industries, employers still need to deliver substantial on-the-job training after short training packages are completed. Scaling the pipeline will depend on coordination of the intake and having enough skilled staff capacity to support new trainees. This points to employer networks working together to integrate trainee cohorts. One employer partner of a new training prototype noted: “I need to be able to stagger trainings... we need to have 2-3 people with [a newly qualified trainee] to teach and train them, not a lot of jobs have that ability. I wear the cost, I don’t mind that, some places just can’t do it. We had originally planned to do ten people at once, but I can’t do that all at once.”

5. Recommendations



5.1 Recommendations for government

Approaches to supporting Pasifika employment, upskilling and workforce progression, including interactions with employers, are currently fragmented. Creating networks of good employers of Pasifika in key industries requires government investment in integration across the employment landscape. This can begin by mapping what larger-scale collaboration and coordination would look like to support Pasifika workforce progression in targeted industries, and how this might be incentivised and supported. It would involve reimagining the talent and skills flow of whole sectors, so that equity goals, diversifying talent, inclusive workforce development and productivity propel each other forward. This can occur at national scale and locally at industry level, so that support is tailored to the needs of local employers and the strengths of the regional workforce.

Government has a clear role in strengthening anti-discrimination and pay equity compliance in law, policies and regulations. Evidence shows that even the possibility of pay equity auditing by government increases minority representation and progression in workplaces. Stronger legal requirements around workforce diversity, equal pay and opportunity lead to more diverse workplaces (Dobbin & Kalev, 2017; Holzer & Neumark, 2006).

1. Implement the recommendations for government from the **Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry** (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2022):

- Urgently introduce pay transparency legislation.
- Match minimum wage to the living wage.
- Amend the Equal Pay Act 1972 to include ethnicity and disability.
- Establish a national pay equity taskforce to ensure Pacific, Māori and ethnic pay gaps are closed by 2042.
- Implement the Tripartite Working Group on Better Protections for Contractors.
- Ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) 190 Violence and Harassment Convention (2019).

2. Fund appropriate agencies to facilitate cross-sector collaboration in targeted industries

to support Pasifika workforce progression. This would involve coordinating community organisations, schools, training, adult education and industry bodies, and groups delivering Pasifika career advancement via placements, pastoral care, and employer capability-building. This should occur at both national and local levels.

3. Fund the growth of culturally competent workforce intermediaries

that link holistic social support and pastoral care with job placement support. Both government and employers require culturally grounded and skilled workforce intermediaries, and these need to be nurtured and powered up.

4. Expand social procurement policies and strengthen their delivery.

Use government levers to direct spending towards workforce equity – explicitly addressing the Pacific pay gap, workforce progression and representation goals. Set these goals collaboratively with unions, social service providers and workforce intermediaries. Improve monitoring of government contracts with social outcomes.

5. Help finalise and champion the Good Employer Matrix

, starting with supporting its adoption in the public sector. Key to uptake will be clear practical targets for employers, with resources and guidance on where to find assistance as needed.

5.2 Recommendations for employers

6. Test your organisational diversity, equity and inclusion practice

against best practice for employers outlined in section one, the employer DEI readiness traffic lights and the Good Employer Matrix.

7. Work with culturally competent workforce intermediaries such as Tupu Toa and Social Labour Supply to strengthen your understanding and practice of DEI and how to attract, retain and promote Pasifika talent.

Evidence the benefits arising. The importance of working with appropriate workforce intermediaries and learning alongside them is a recurring theme from Uptempo's practice-based learning on how employers can positively change their organisational culture.

8. Participate in initiatives to take more integrated approaches

to workforce planning and ensuring an ongoing pipeline of diverse talent for your industry or sector.

9. Use and share tools

like the Good Employer Matrix to grow organisational, industry and sector wide capability in attracting, retaining and progressing Pasifika workers.



Glossary

Social procurement for employment equity

– directs purchasing and recruitment spend towards employment for marginalised communities.

Sunrise employment – higher paid roles with opportunity for progression, in industries that are resilient to economic changes or shocks.

Sunset employment – roles paid under \$23.65 an hour (**the living wage** from 1 April 2023) with low or no chance of progression, in industries that are vulnerable to economic changes or shocks.

Workforce diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) – involves a commitment to increasing workforce diversity, developing a culture of inclusion where all employees feel safe, valued and supported to be their best, and a commitment to equity goals in the workplace such as pay equity and fair treatment and opportunities for all. Workforce DEI is a means to attract the best talent and increase economic productivity, social cohesion and equity in society. In February 2023 a three-day conference on **Workplace Inclusion** is being held in Auckland, reflecting growing awareness of the need for DEI in New Zealand workplaces. See <https://diversityworks.nz/why-diversity/> for a review of the evidence and benefits of workforce DEI.

Workforce intermediaries – workforce intermediaries broker the relationship between workers and employers, reducing uncertainty in the labour exchange process and managing transaction costs. Workforce intermediaries have the potential to be a key building block of new workforce systems at the local level, complementary to the wider employment landscape and able to link together its disparate elements (Marschall 2021).



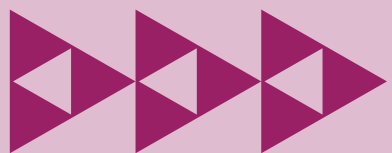
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