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# SUPPORTING PARENTS TO HELP THEIR TEENS MAKE GOOD CAREER DECISIONS



**LEWIS CLARK AND  
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REPORT ON THEIR  
NEW RESEARCH**

In autumn 2017, the government launched its Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP), a new partnership model, bringing businesses, civil society and government together to work on some of society's toughest challenges with the aim of benefitting all through a systemic change in the economy.

Supported by the Cabinet Office and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the programme is focussed on three challenges including 'Transition to work for young people'.

A competitive grant funding challenge run by NESTA, on behalf of government in spring 2018, led to 18 social innovators receiving IEP support including Career Alchemy and its 'INSPIRED Teenager' career coaching programme for parents/carers and their teenagers.

In 2017 we used our existing INSPIRED framework as a base to develop the programme in response to evidence that many teenagers struggle to make career choices in a rapidly-changing labour market. Research has consistently shown that most teenagers turn to familial figures for support, yet many parents feel ill-equipped to help effectively (AOC, 2014).

The programme is designed to encourage teenagers to work with their parent/carer to understand their potential and combine it with a clear sense of purpose so they can thrive and experience wellbeing, happiness and success through meaningful contribution. These themes are particularly important today as research tells us that Generation Z teenagers want to make a difference in the world through their work (30% Club, 2016).

Recognising the importance of measuring impact and evaluation, we commissioned ICeGS (International Centre for Education and Guidance Studies, University of Derby), to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, which focuses on building career confidence and clarity of direction.

## The programme

Consisting of eight parts, the programme encourages individuals to use the UN Strategic Development Goals as a lens through which to view their career options and create a purpose-driven career (see figure 1).

The programme reflects the changes in the current world of work as we move into the era of Industry 4.0, or so-called Purpose Economy (a term used by PwC [www.pwc.com/us/en/library/workforce-of-the-future/fulfillment-at-work.html](http://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/workforce-of-the-future/fulfillment-at-work.html)), and includes themes such as self-care and future skills.

at-work.html), and includes themes such as self-care and future skills.

figure 1



Once learned, the framework provides a lifelong mechanism for effective career management. It is underpinned by sound career guidance and coaching principles, designed to infuse an individual's strengths and talents with a clear sense of purpose for their career. The programme's focus on the themes of purpose and contribution provides a greater sense of motivation, stability and control.

## Evaluating different delivery formats

The research explored the effectiveness of the two programme delivery formats: online delivery and face-to-face delivery. One cohort of parents/carers and their teenagers were given access to the course as a standalone self-service video programme with a comprehensive eBook and forum support over a four-week period.

The second cohort experienced the programme as a pair of live workshops delivered by a careers practitioner with the support of staff from our delivery partner, Unilever, in their Port Sunlight manufacturing centre in Liverpool, an economic cold spot.

“At Unilever, whilst we believe that engaging with and attracting diverse young talent is key to building a business fit for the future, we know there are barriers which may prevent that first step being taken. We chose to partner with Career Alchemy as we see great value in their approach; not only equipping young people but also those in their support network, including parents and carers. We look forward to working together to bring young talent to careers they and their parents may not have previously considered.” *Sebastian Munden, General Manager for Unilever UK and Ireland*

## Research process and findings

Participant feedback was captured by disseminating pre- and post-programme surveys and an end of programme focus group.

### Face-to-Face Programme

While both delivery formats were successful in attracting a range of participants with varying socio-economic backgrounds, the face-to-face delivery was the more effective of the two.

As shown in the infographic (figure 2), the survey data and participant voice analysis suggested there had been a recognisable shift in career confidence (132%) and clarity for participating teenagers (113%) over the lifetime of the programme.

One teenager said, *"Before I did the sessions, I had met with a careers adviser and had a vague idea of what I wanted to do, but the sessions have given me a lot more clarity and I now have a more precise idea of what I want to do."*

There was also a marked shift in parent/carer confidence in their ability to help their teenager effectively by using coaching style questions, facilitated exercises and a one-page planner with them.

Parent feedback was positive: *"It's a very structured approach. It's a process to work through, it's not something that is always particularly easy, but it leads you somewhere and that has helped me. I feel better able to help my daughters."*

There was clear evidence that this approach encouraged meaningful intergenerational discussion between parent and teenager, enhancing mutual understanding. It also increased overall awareness of the changing world of work for both parents/carers and teenagers.

### Online Programme

There was a high up-take of registrants for the

online programme which successfully attracted a wider audience of participants beyond the intended population. The online programme also offered an effective and socially inclusive alternative for those choosing to engage who may have struggled to attend the live workshops. However, in line with past research, the online programme had a high attrition rate which highlighted the difficulties of sustaining participant engagement with online courses. While the reasons for this non-completion are unknown, online participants knew that they could access it after the evaluation period, as some have, which may have been a factor.

### Other insights

In addition to the themes above, the evaluation highlights social justice areas for further exploration: around digital versus face-to-face delivery; including differences in parental education and income levels at sign up, the gender of the parent helper and associated potential impact on career outcomes, and in particular, the benefit of having staff from an employer and a careers practitioner working collaboratively with parents and teenagers.

Parental reaction confirmed this, *"It was good that staff were dotted around the room. They were not just bringing answers to any questions but their own personal information on how they have done the same thing and what they do in their current role. That helped because they referenced real situations"*

### What's next?

The underpinning INSPIRED framework has already been successfully evaluated over the last three years in a range of professional and educational contexts, using tailored variants with university students and graduates, career changers and in an employee engagement context. Having research proof of the programme's impact in this teenager/parent context cements using the framework as a proven approach to helping individuals of all ages.

As a result of the IEP programme, Career Alchemy has already been working with organisations such as management consultants EY and Lambeth Council supporting parents and teenagers using tailored versions of the model and is now attracting interest from sector skills organisations, housing associations and education.

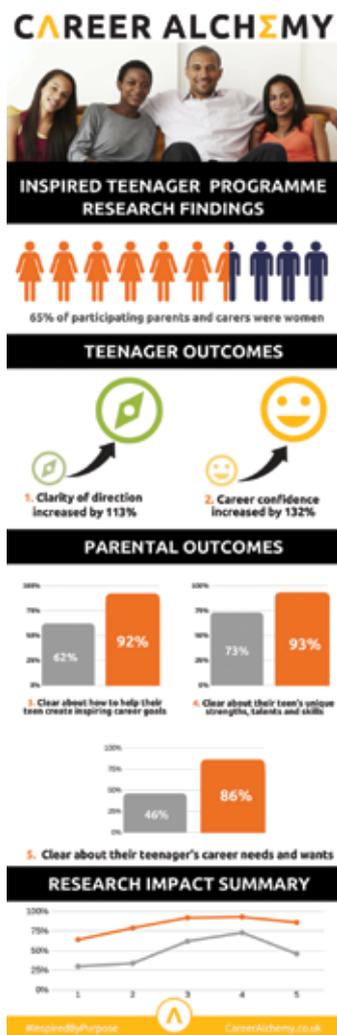
Moving forward, our next steps will be to train and license individual career practitioners and organisations to use this tool and approach.

To find out more, please visit [www.careeralchemy.co.uk/inspired-teenager-research.html](http://www.careeralchemy.co.uk/inspired-teenager-research.html) or [www.derby.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/centres-groups/icegs/publications/](http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/about-our-research/centres-groups/icegs/publications/)

### References

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[https://30percentclub.org/assets/uploads/UK/Research/Think\\_Future\\_Study\\_Final.pdf](https://30percentclub.org/assets/uploads/UK/Research/Think_Future_Study_Final.pdf)

figure 2



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