

## OVERVIEW

Belong Aotearoa's internship pilot successfully bridged the gap between employees and employers, supporting seven skilled migrants to achieve positive employment outcomes and re-establish their careers in New Zealand, while enabling employers to tap into an underutilised talent pool. During their up to three-month paid internship, interns regained their confidence, improved their mental health and well-being, and increased their sense of belonging. Employers found the interns brought a wealth of skills, fresh ideas, and perspectives. They were productive and positive, and their workplaces particularly benefitted from the cross-cultural learning experience. As a result of their participation in this pilot, all seven interns have found employment which utilises their skills and expertise, and employers report they are committed to supporting skilled migrants into employment and creating a more diverse workforce. Whilst the impact of this project is limited to seven skilled migrants and five workplaces, it is hoped that the key insights generated from this pilot will inform the future work of Belong Aotearoa and others to bridge the gap between employees and employers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**"In this period of economic recovery, retaining the expertise of skilled migrants has been highlighted as a major consideration for the current and future economy and labour force of New Zealand."**

*(Professor Paul Spoonley, June 2020)*

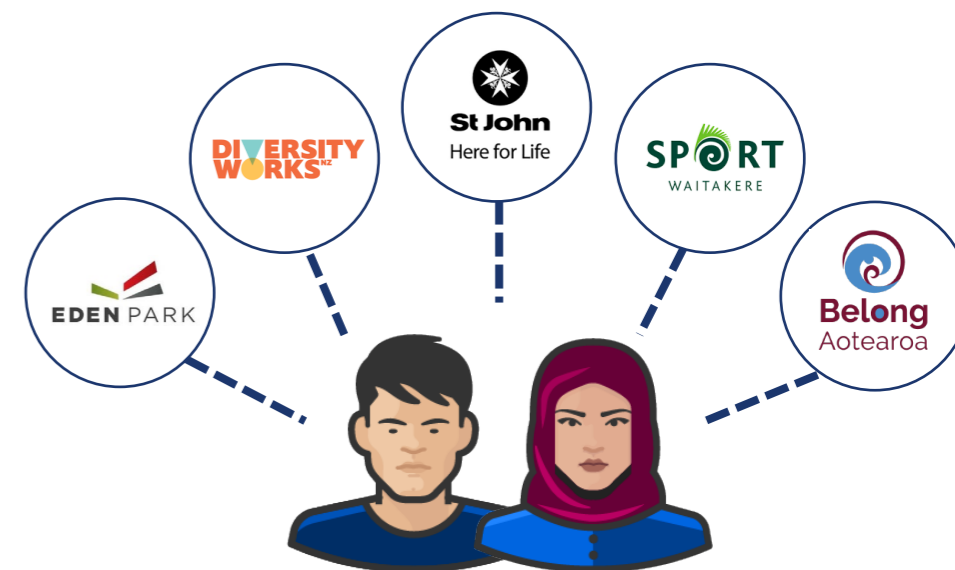
## PILOT OBJECTIVES

- To gain key insights about gaps in the system from interns' and employers' experiences to improve employment pathways for skilled migrants.
- To support positive employment outcomes for skilled migrants, primarily partners, to support retention of skills in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- To provide support to organisations to tap into an underutilised talent pool to support economic recovery in the current COVID-19 business context.
- To test the role of internships in bridging the gap between employees and employers.
- To provide support to interns to re-establish their careers.

A paid internship pilot funded through the Ethnic Communities Development Fund was implemented where skilled migrants, mainly partners, were matched to organisations through an up to three-month paid (living wage) internship, with half subsidised by Belong Aotearoa.

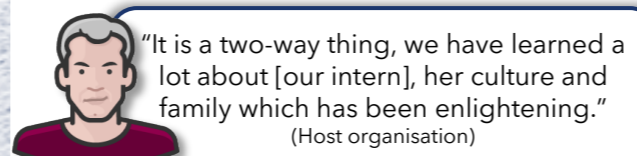
## 7 highly qualified interns were matched and supported throughout their internship by Belong Aotearoa

All seven interns had faced significant challenges before applying for the internship, including leaving unhealthy workplace environments, experiencing racism in their search for work and being made redundant during COVID, leading to many struggling with low self-confidence, social isolation, and poor mental health. They were, however, highly motivated to find meaningful work which matched their skill set, to learn more about New Zealand culture, workplace environments, and communities, build professional networks and gain valuable work experience.

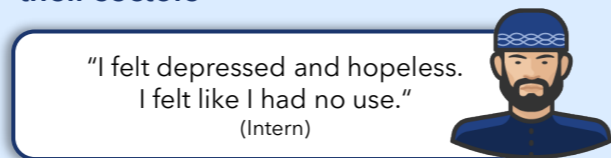


## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE EVALUATION

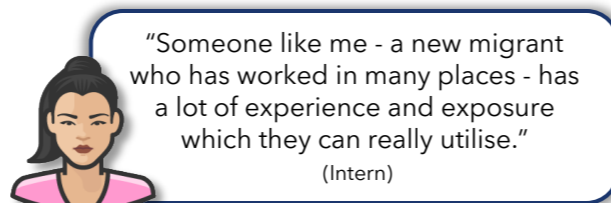
One of the greatest strengths of the internship pilot were the opportunities for cross-cultural learning.



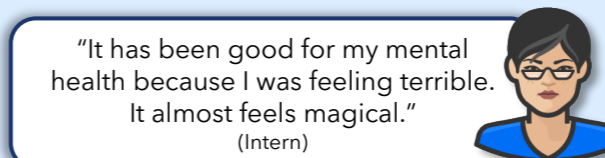
There is a huge gap between skilled migrants looking for work and people who need their skills and knowledge in their sectors



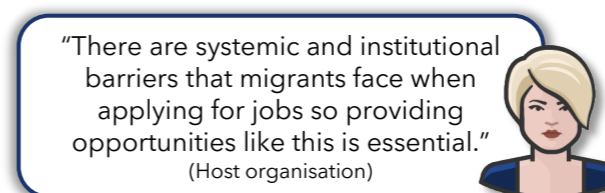
Interns shared and contributed their ideas, perspectives and skills and were productive in their new workplace.



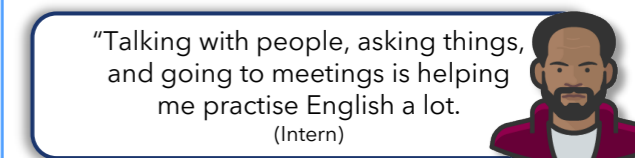
The 3-month paid internship helped interns regain their confidence, improve their mental health and well-being, and increase their sense of belonging.



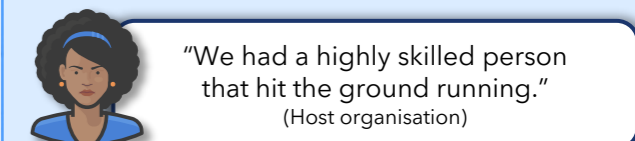
Host organisations value diverse workforces and are committed to supporting skilled migrants into employment, however there are many challenges for employers and potential employees when tackling this on their own. They would not have the capacity to set up their own internship programme in-house.



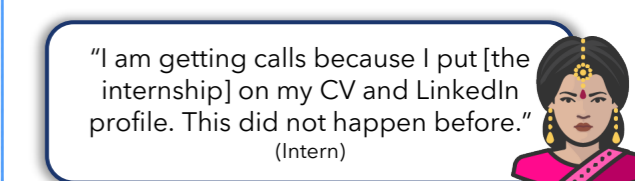
The internship supported interns to understand more about New Zealand workplace culture and increased their confidence speaking English in professional settings.



Host organisations were impressed by interns' skills, productivity, positive attitudes, fresh ideas and perspectives.



The internship opened doors and new employment opportunities for interns.





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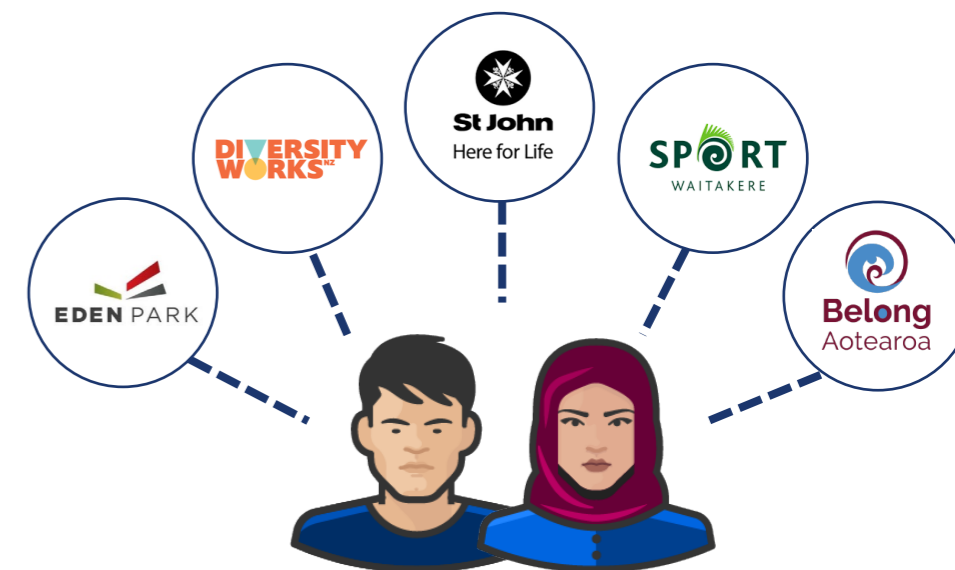
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## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE EVALUATION

The living wage subsidy provided by Belong Aotearoa was a key enabler for host organisations to join the internship pilot.

Belong Aotearoa found high-quality candidates and made the recruitment process seamless.

A less formal interview process put candidates at ease and provided a friendly environment for host organisations to confidently choose the interns that matched the roles they had to offer

One of the greatest strengths of the internship pilot was the opportunities for cross-cultural learning.

Host organisations were impressed by interns' skills, productivity, positive attitudes, bringing fresh ideas and perspectives .

The internship opened doors and opportunities for interns, through offering local experience, references, and networking opportunities. For some, they explained the pilot as providing a bridge between skilled migrants and employers.

Host organisations value diverse workforces and are committed to supporting skilled migrants into employment, however there are many challenges for employers and potential employees when tackling this on their own. They would not have the capacity to set up their own internship programme in-house.

Interns felt they were able to share and contribute their ideas, perspectives, skills and be productive in their new workplace. Many felt if the internship were longer, they could support some of the new ideas to be implemented

The extent to which interns were struggling before applying for the internship indicates there is a huge gap between skilled migrants looking for work and people who need their skills and knowledge in their sectors

Interns felt the 3-month paid internship helped them regain their confidence, improved their mental health and well-being, and increased their sense of belonging.

The internship has supported interns to understand more about New Zealand workplace culture and increased their confidence speaking English in professional settings. Interns wanted more opportunities to grow their knowledge and confidence around communication in the workplace.