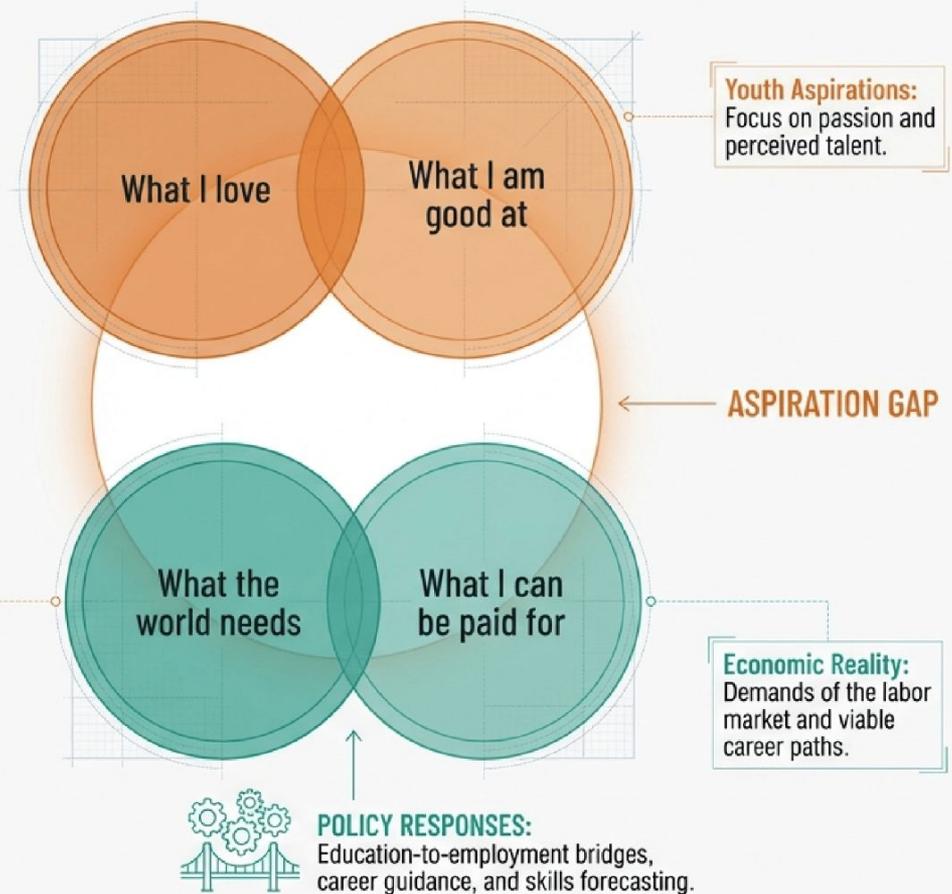


The Aspiration Gap: Aligning Youth Purpose with Economic Reality

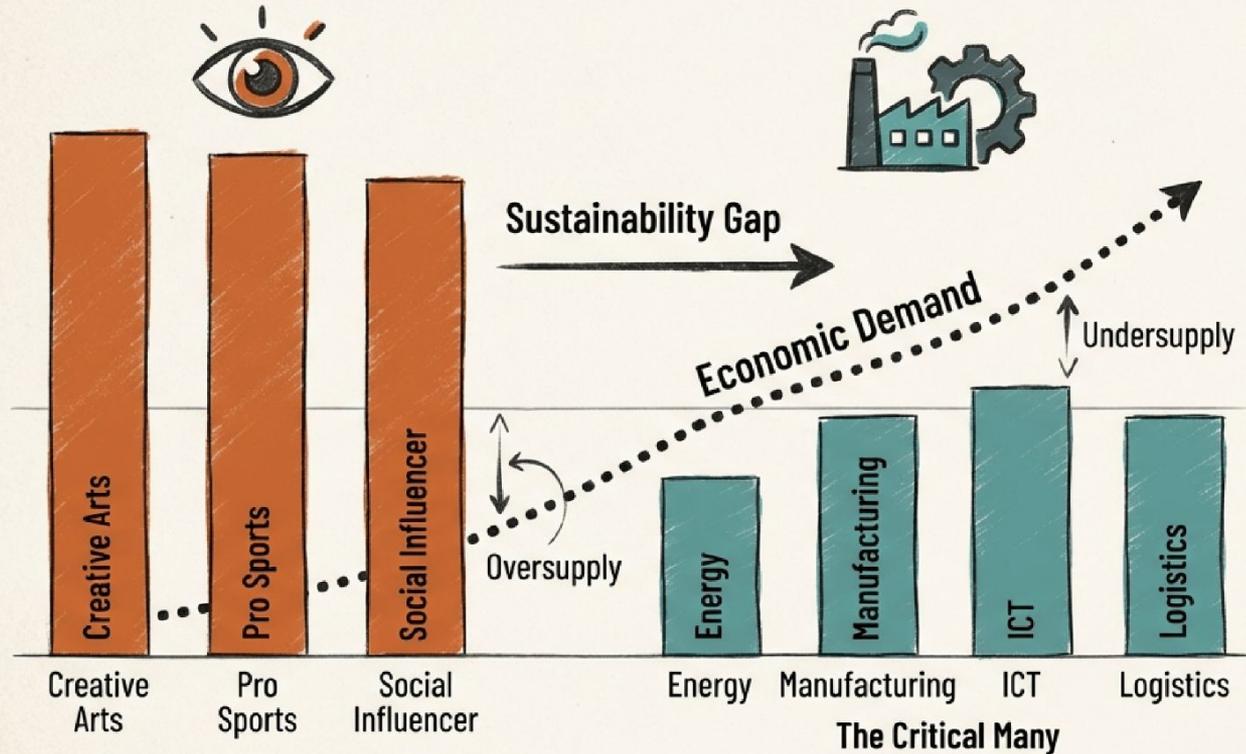
Structural drivers of workforce misalignment and evidence-based policy responses for Latvia and the OECD.



STRUCTURAL DRIVERS:
Information asymmetry,
outdated curricula, and limited
exposure to emerging sectors.



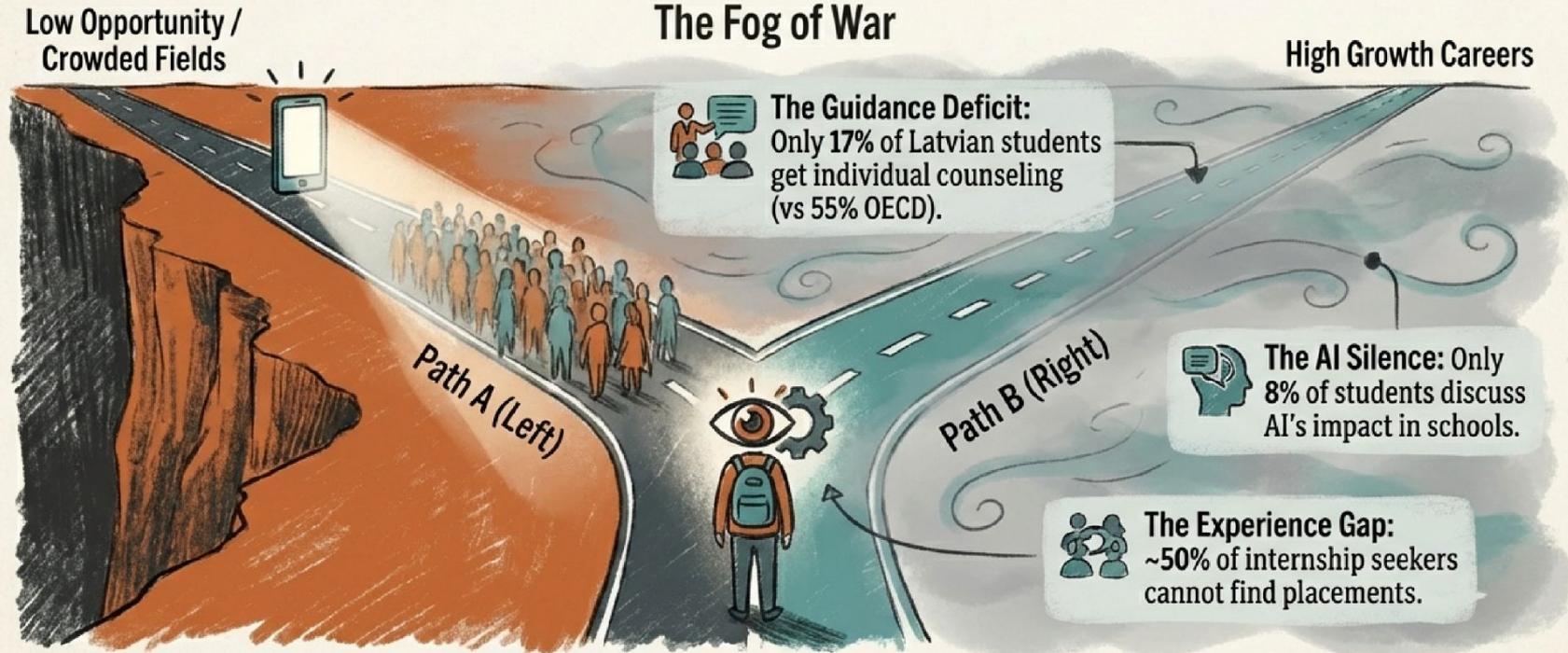
Misalignment is not a preference issue; it is a systemic information failure.



The Data Reality

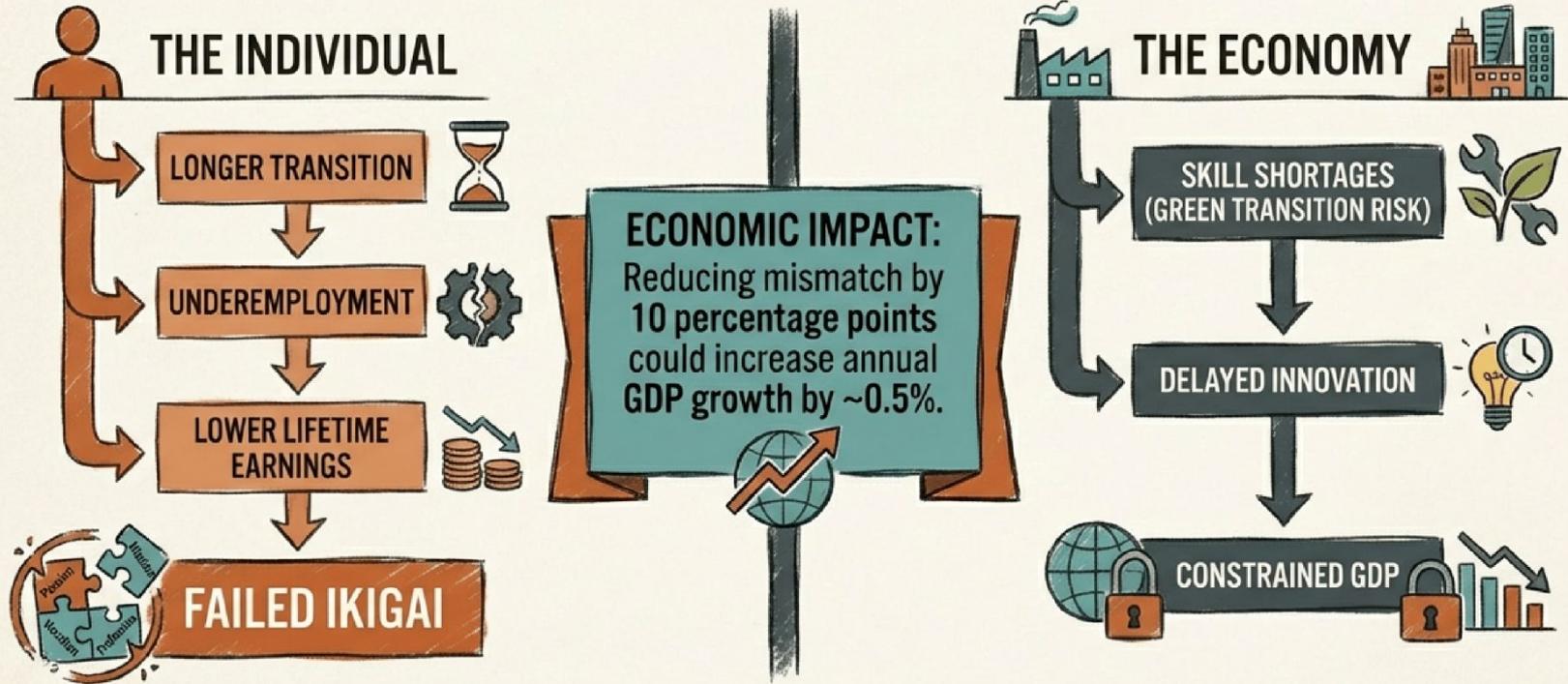
1. Narrow Focus: PISA data shows adolescents across **41 countries** cluster expectations in just **~10 occupations**.
2. Latvia Specifics: High interest in beauty/sports; critical sectors like cybersecurity attract consistently low interest.
3. The Bottleneck: Over **50%** of students aspire to professions employing **<10%** of the workforce.

Students are making life-defining decisions in a vacuum of professional guidance.



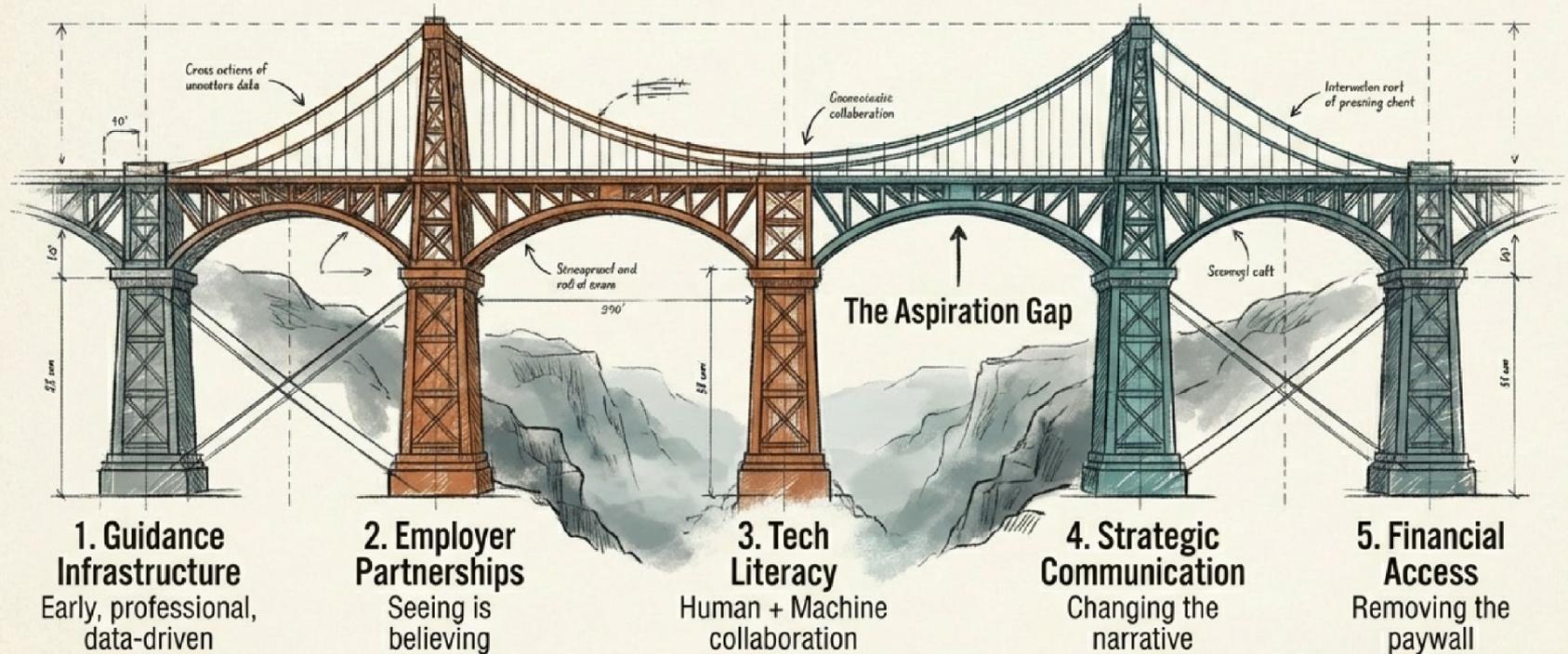
Insight: Aspiration-demand gaps reflect systemic information failures rather than inherent youth preferences.

The price of the gap is paid in lost productivity and broken potential.



“When talented individuals pursue careers in oversupplied fields due to information deficits, aggregate productivity suffers.”

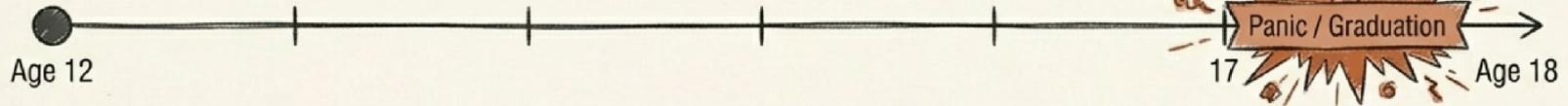
Moving from 'Passion-Blind' to 'Demand-Responsive' requires five structural pillars.



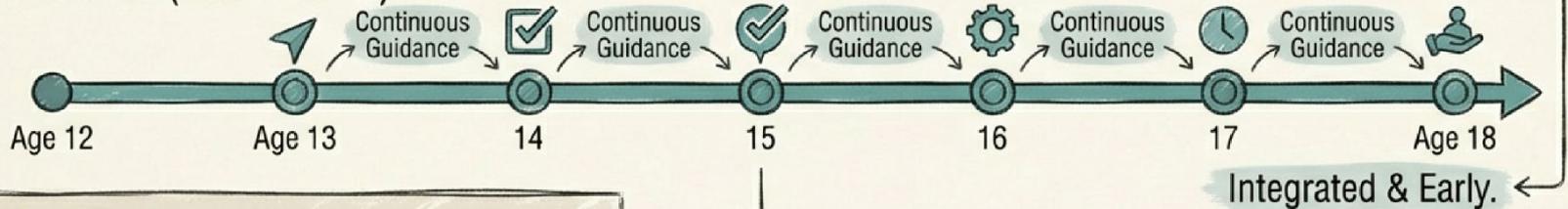
Interventions based on scalable models from Finland, Singapore, Germany, Switzerland, and Australia.

Pillar 1: Guidance must be treated as essential infrastructure.

Timeline A (Standard Model)



Timeline B (Best Practice)



Too Little, Too Late.

Integrated & Early.

Case Study



Finland: 1:250 counselor ratio. Specialists with graduate training.



Singapore: MySkillsFuture platform integrates real-time labor market data.



Impact: Early guidance (pre-16) makes students 30% more likely to align with employment and 25% less likely to face unemployment.

Pillar 2: Work-based learning translates abstract job titles into realities

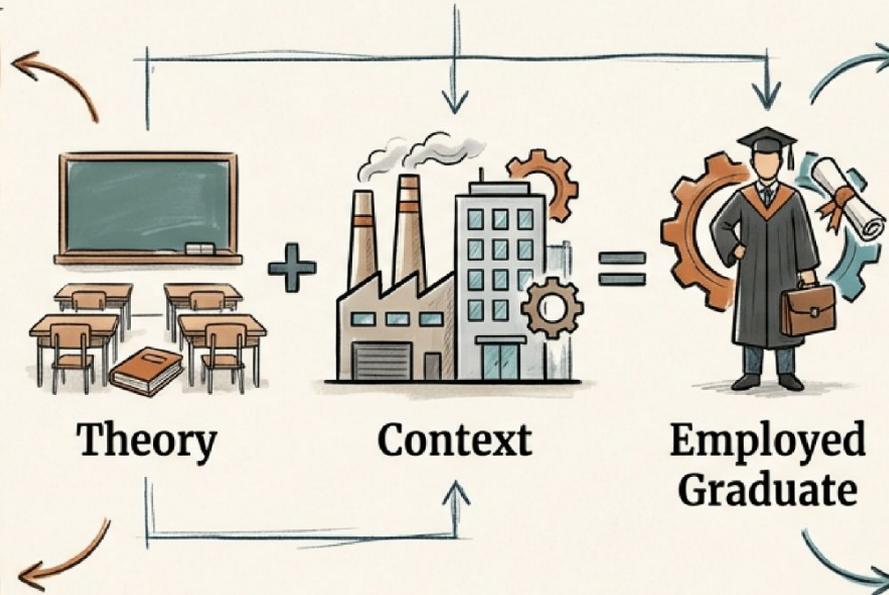
The Dual System

Germany & Switzerland:
The Dual VET System.

50%+ of youth enter
apprenticeships.

Employers co-finance
training.

↑ **Result:** Youth
unemployment
below **6%**



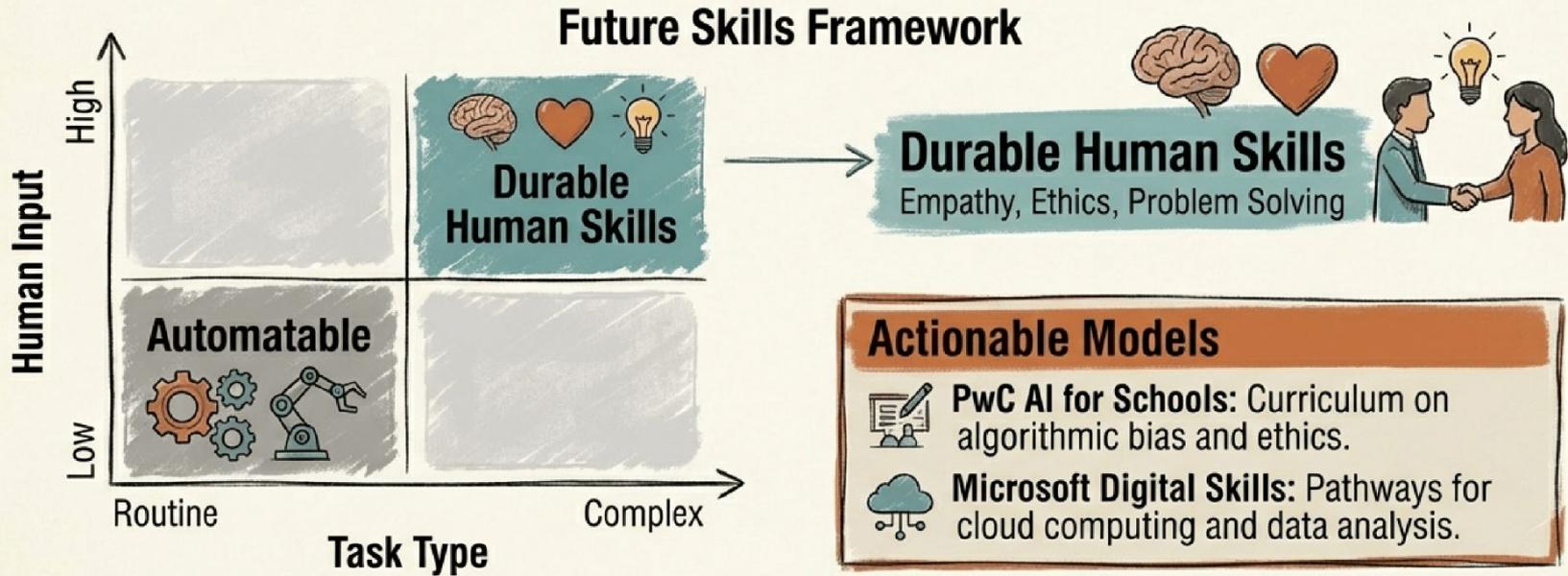
Partnerships

Australia:
Industry-School
Partnerships broker
relationships in
healthcare and
construction.



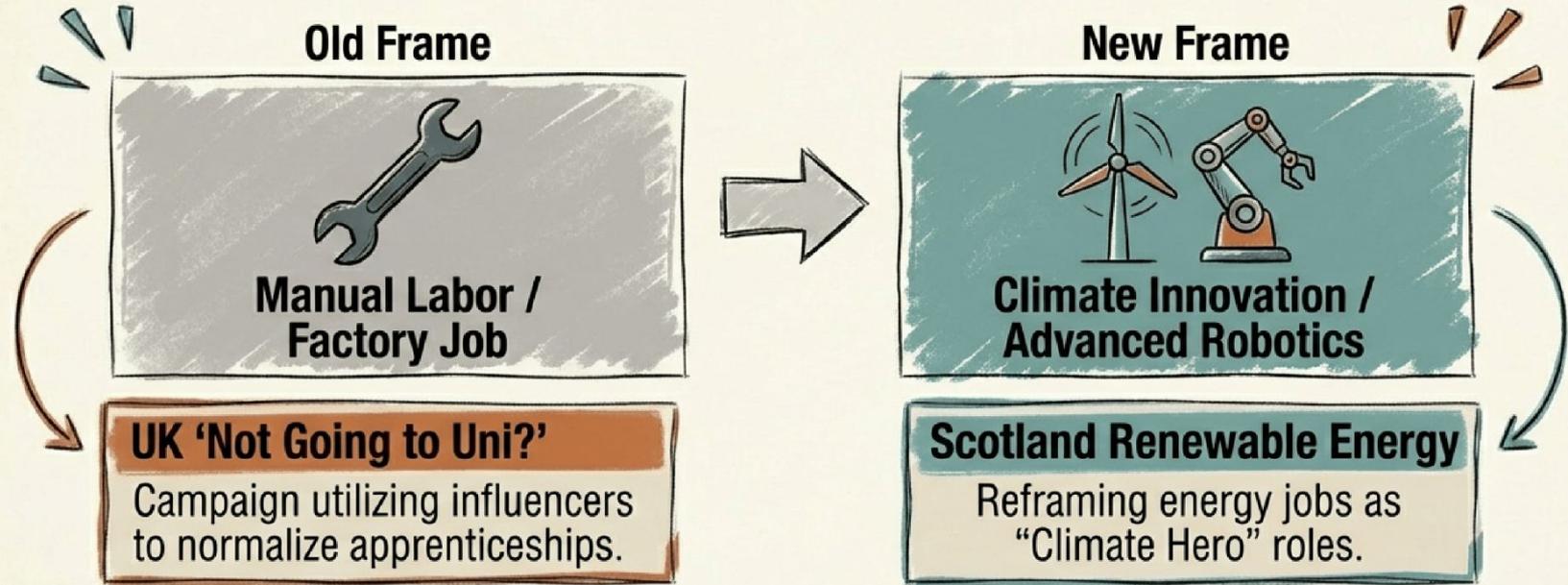
Key Stat: 4+ employer
interactions significantly
reduce NEET rates
(Not in Education,
Employment, or Training)

Pillar 3: Silence on AI breeds anxiety; education must teach collaboration.



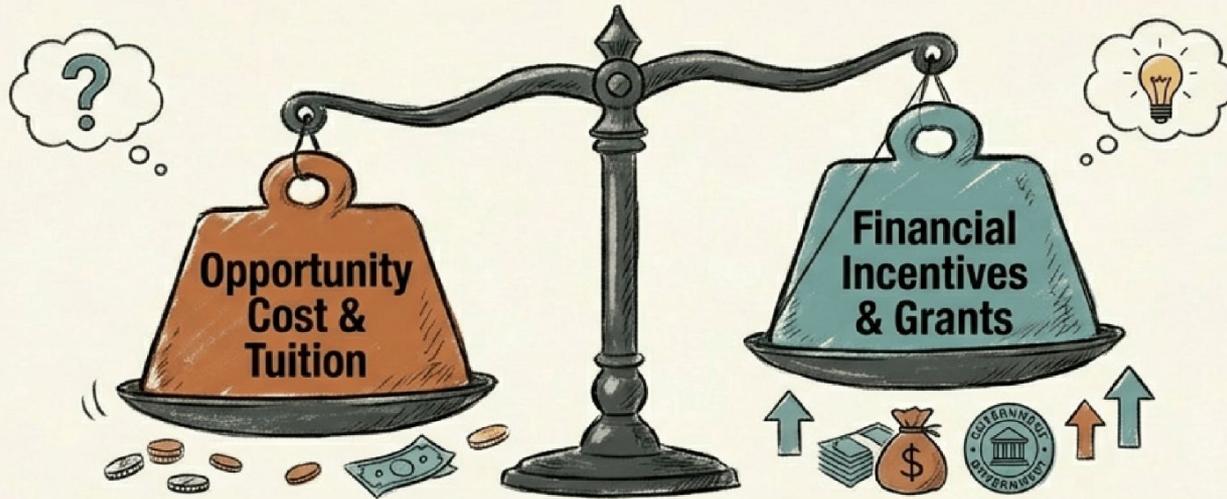
We must move beyond 'displacement' fear to 'task reconfiguration' literacy.

Pillar 4: If industry doesn't tell its story, social media will tell a different one.



Reframing technical trades as 'problem-solving' increases high-achiever interest by 20-30%.

Pillar 5: Passion shouldn't be paywalled.



Canada:



Apprenticeship Incentive Grants
(Cash for milestones).

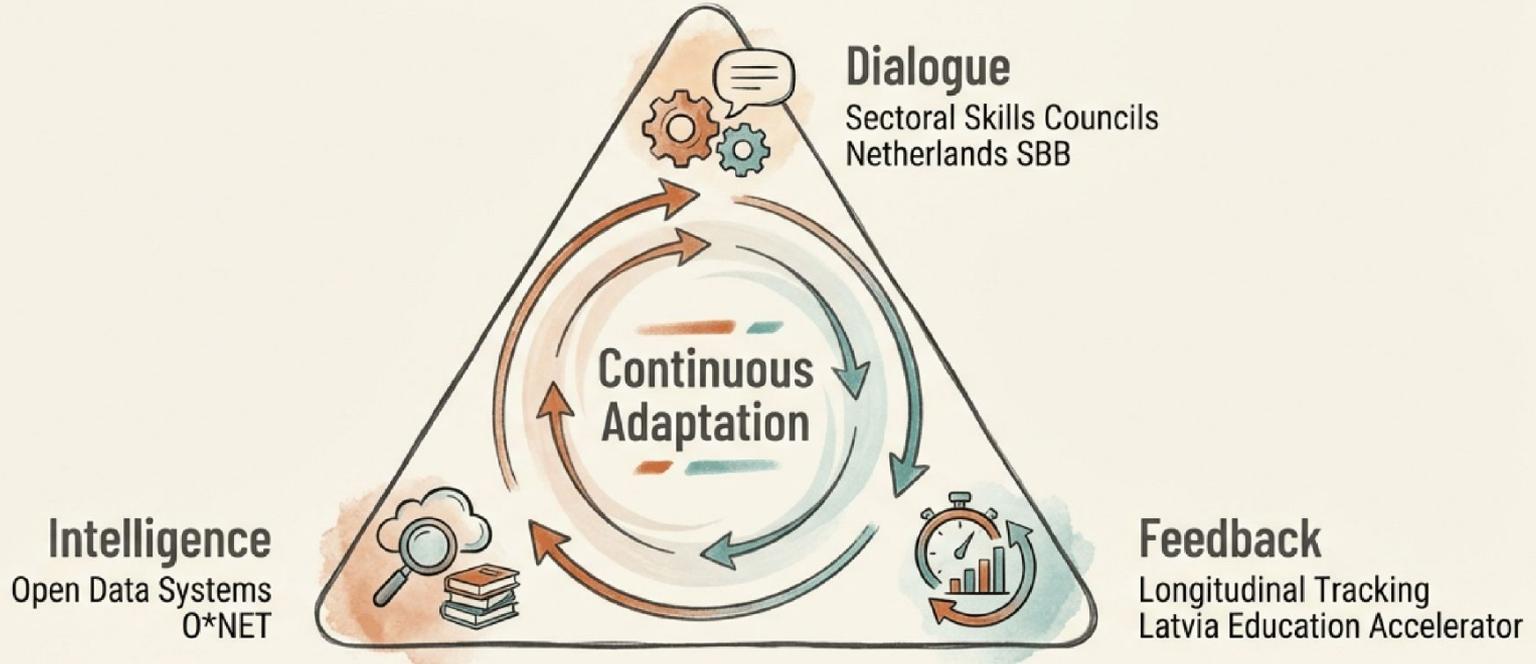
New Zealand:



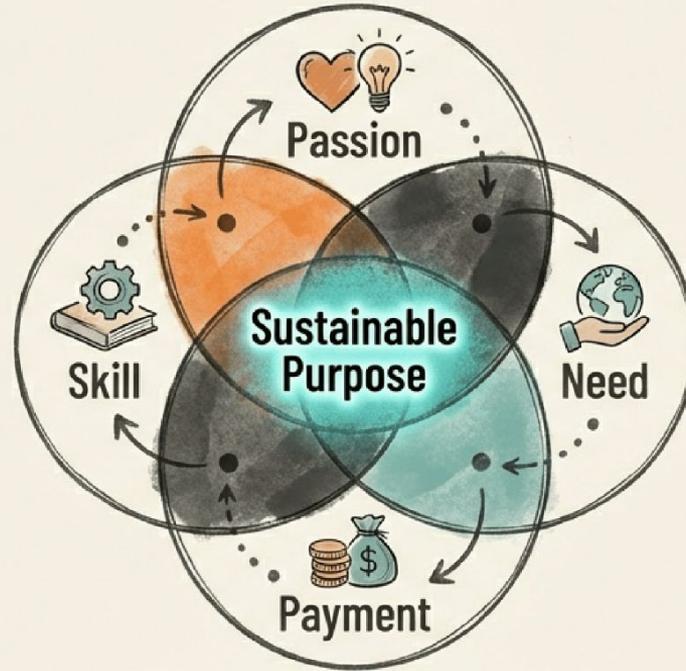
Fees-Free tertiary
education policy.

↑ Financial aid increases enrollment in high-demand technical fields by 30-50%.

Building Systemic Resilience: Three keys to long-term planning.



Achieving Ikigai: The intersection of passion, skill, and need.



CALL TO ACTION



- **Policymakers:** Invest in guidance infrastructure.



- **Employers:** Open doors for early exposure.



- **Educators:** Integrate labor market data.

“Aspiration alignment is not a one-time fix but an ongoing process of informed choice.”