



STRENGTHENING TRUST AND LABOR KNOWLEDGE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS APPROACHING GRADUATION

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Abstract

The following report describes the project carried out by the group **"Lost in Translation,"** which addressed the issue of difficulties in youth labor insertion, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: **Decent Work and Economic Growth**.

The main cause identified is the lack of essential tools, such as interview preparation and the preparation of an adequate *curriculum vitae* (CV), due to the prioritization of formal academic education over practical workplace skills in the educational system. The objective was to implement a formative and interactive talk aimed at high school students who were close to graduating, focusing on CVs, demanded soft skills, and frequent situations in job interviews.

The methodology consisted of a quantitative descriptive study applied to sixth-year students in a technical orientation (18–19 years old) from Epet No. 18, using surveys before and after the intervention. The results confirmed the need for the intervention, given that **55.6% of participants had no work experience**, and **92.6% had never had an interview**. Significant knowledge gaps were detected, as **51.7% reported having "very little information"** on how to put together a basic CV before the talk, and 75.9% did not know about employment platforms in the area, apart from LinkedIn.

Following the intervention, a high positive impact on perceived preparedness was recorded: **96.6% stated they had obtained sufficient tools to feel more confident** when seeking employment, and **100% analyzed general guidelines regarding a job interview**. The level of interest was notably high, with **93.1%** of those surveyed rating the talk with 8, 9, or 10 points. The conclusion establishes that the talk was an



effective catalyst for confidence and knowledge in the short term [Revised Conclusion]. To consolidate the long-term impact, the creation and delivery of a digital guide (PDF) with CV templates and frequently asked questions is recommended, facilitating autonomous learning and reinforcing the quality of the intervention.

Keywords:

- Youth labor insertion
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Job interviews
- Soft skills
- Employability

INTRODUCTION

The problem of youth labor insertion is a global concern, acquiring particular relevance in Latin America where unemployment rates and the high incidence of labor informality disproportionately affect young people (Díaz & Rosas, 2016). In Peru, for example, it has been documented that approximately 80% of employed youth work in the informal economy, which underscores the urgency of developing and evaluating effective policies for their integration into the formal market (Díaz & Rosas, 2016). In this context, Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs), which include technical training programs and work experience through internships, have been consolidated as key strategies. Their primary objective is to improve the human capital of beneficiaries—encompassing technical, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills—and facilitate their first formal work experience, which is fundamental for successful and sustained insertion (Díaz & Rosas, 2016; Tomlinson, 2017).

Participation in work experience opportunities, such as university internships or professional practice years (Work Placement Year), has been shown to be associated with significant improvements in graduate employment outcomes. These improvements include a higher probability of accessing professional-level jobs and higher salaries (Divan et al., 2022; Brooks & Youngson, 2016; Di Meglio et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2018). Beyond technical skills, these experiences are also crucial for building social and cultural capital, elements highly valued by employers that foster "employability" (Divan et al., 2022; Tomlinson, 2017).

Effective preparation for the job search process is essential. The ability to prepare a *curriculum vitae* (CV) that stands out and the development of robust job interview skills are pillars of this process (Lestari & Sihombing, 2022; Idris et al., 2024; Bolles, 2019). A well-prepared CV constitutes a candidate's first impression (Lestari & Sihombing, 2022), while the interview is a critical moment where not only experience is evaluated, but also aspects like verbal and non-verbal communication, confidence, and preparation (Idris et al., 2024; Campion & Campion, 2018; Cutler et al., 2007; Navarro, 2008). The lack of these competencies can be a determining factor in the failure of a candidacy (Idris et al., 2024; Kessler, 2012). Likewise, the recognition of



socio-emotional skills, such as motivation and perseverance, as essential for job performance, has gained prominence in academia and among employers (Díaz & Rosas, 2016; Heckman et al., 2006).

Despite the importance of these areas, limitations exist. Evaluations of training programs have had variable methodologies and have not always measured long-term impact or the improvement of socio-emotional skills exhaustively (Díaz & Rosas, 2016). Regarding work experience, although its general benefits are unquestionable, evidence indicates that access and results are not equitable for all students. For example, statistically significant disparities in participation in practice years were revealed, with lower rates among mature students, those with disabilities, and differences by gender and type of school. More worryingly, even with participation in an internship, gaps in post-graduation employment prospects persist, favoring men over women (Divan et al., 2022). This suggests that current interventions are not completely mitigating pre-existing inequalities, especially for young people in disadvantaged situations or with specific demographic characteristics.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of training courses in job interview skills has not always been conclusively evaluated, and a deeper understanding is required of how this training translates into real perceptions and outcomes for participants (Idris et al., 2024). Additionally, while digital tools like Canva facilitate the creation of creative CVs (Lestari & Sihombing, 2022), specific research on how these platforms can optimize candidate presentation and creativity, particularly for high school students transitioning to the labor market, is an area still in its early stages of exploration. These gaps highlight the need for more holistically designed and adapted interventions that address not only skill acquisition but also structural barriers and equity in access to opportunities for young people.

In response to the imperative need to strengthen youth preparation for the labor market and close the gaps identified in research on the equity and effectiveness of interventions, the present study proposes to design and implement a formative and interactive talk. This initiative is aimed at high school students or graduates who are in the phase prior to entering the world of work.

The objective of our research is to give a talk on how to put together a résumé, what soft skills are in demand today, and what frequent questions or situations may arise in job interviews, aimed at high school students who are of age to enter the labor market.

The talk will be structured around three essential components to address the crucial competencies identified: (a) a practical guide for the preparation of a *curriculum vitae*, incorporating the strategic use of digital platforms to foster creativity and presentation personalization (Lestari & Sihombing, 2022); (b) Which soft skills are demanded in the current work environment, whose importance has been highlighted in improving employability (Díaz & Rosas, 2016; Idris et al., 2024); and (c) preparation for facing job interviews, including practicing answers to frequent questions, handling common situations, and developing effective verbal and non-verbal communication to make a positive impression (Idris et al., 2024; Navarro, 2008).



Through this intervention, we seek to equip young people with concrete tools and essential knowledge that allow them to approach their first work experiences with greater confidence and success, thus contributing to reducing informality and labor inequality from an early stage of their professional trajectories.

METHODOLOGY

The field report is based on a **descriptive study with a quantitative approach**. This type of research was chosen because the short timeframe available for the report and the tools at our disposal allow us to survey and analyze, through concrete data, the impact of an informative talk on job interviews and *curriculum vitae* preparation on high school students.

The sample was composed of high school students from Epet No. 18, specifically from the sixth year, aged between 18 and 19 years old. Three sixth-year classes participated, with approximately 25 students in each class. All participants are pursuing a technical specialization, graduating with the title of electromechanical technician. The sampling was intentional, as the classes that were close to graduating and, therefore, facing job interviews and CV preparation, were selected.

The data collection process was carried out in several stages:

1. First, a preliminary survey was administered to the teacher in charge of the courses to gather students' prior knowledge and experiences regarding interviews and CV preparation.
2. Afterward, a presentation and a PDF file were prepared about the main concepts for facing job interviews and compiling a *curriculum vitae*.
3. Subsequently, an informative talk was given on October 14 and 17, where the main concepts and basic tools for facing job interviews and compiling a *curriculum vitae* were addressed. At the end, a PDF file with the content covered was delivered to the students.
4. Finally, a closing survey was applied to measure the impact of the activity and the knowledge acquired.

The data collected through the surveys (preliminary and final) were processed and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. A comparison of the results obtained before and after the talk was carried out, which allowed for the evaluation of the level of learning and the impact of the intervention. Additionally, the qualitative comments obtained in the feedback were analyzed to identify participants' perceptions and suggestions.

RESULTS

The results presented come from two surveys: the "Post-Talk Survey" and the "Labor Expectations" survey. The predominant age of the participants in the surveys is between 18 and 19 years old.

Regarding work experience, **55.6% of the participants are currently not working or have never worked**. Of the total, a large majority (**92.6%**) indicated that they had never had a job interview (Fig. 1).

¿Trabajas actualmente o trabajaste alguna vez?

27 respuestas

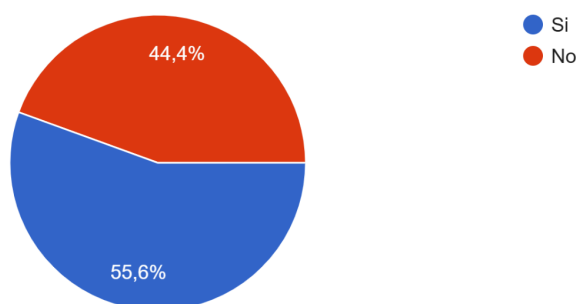


Figure 1.

The aspirations of the students upon finishing high school are mainly divided into three categories, all with the same proportion of responses (33.3%) (Fig 2.):

1. Study a University degree.
2. Study a technical degree.
3. Work and study.

¿Qué te gustaría hacer después del secundario?

27 respuestas

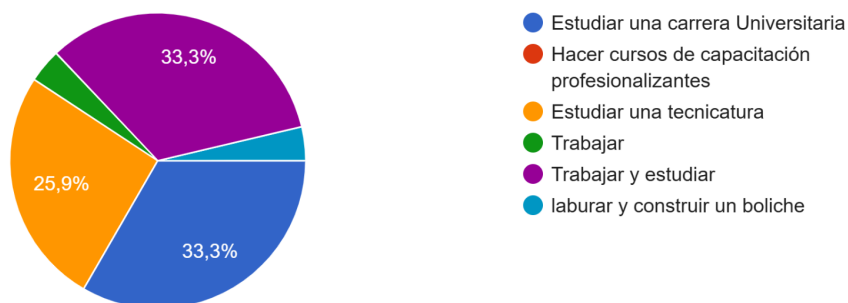


Figure 2.

Among the careers or technical degrees that students mentioned wanting to study are: Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology and Physiatry, Civil/Electronic/Mechanical Engineering,

Medicine, Psychology, Nutrition, Law, and various technical degrees in the area of Safety and Hygiene and Hydrocarbons (drilling and completion of oil wells).

When asked what they consider necessary to get a job (Fig. 3), participants prioritized the following factors:

- An authorizing degree (**59.3%**, 16 responses).
- Experience (**51.9%**, 14 responses).
- A good presentation (**44.4%**, 12 responses).

Other important factors considered included Soft skills (29.6%, 8 responses), Contacts that allow entry into the job (22.2%, 6 responses), and Courses or training (22.2%, 6 responses).



Figure 3.

Before attending the talk, knowledge about how to prepare a basic CV was limited. In the post-talk survey, only 24.1% said they knew how to prepare a basic CV (Fig 4). The rest indicated that they did not know (24.1%) or had "**very little information**" (**51.7%**) (Fig 4). In contrast, in the Labor Expectations survey, 55.6% affirmed knowing how to put together a *Curriculum Vitae*, while 44.4% indicated they did not know. **We can observe that the students who believed they knew how to put together a *curriculum vitae* discovered after the talk that they lacked information.**

Antes de la charla, ¿sabías armar un CV básico?

29 respuestas

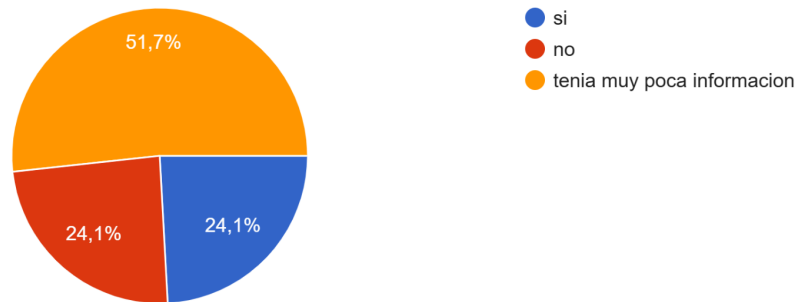


Figure 4.

Before the talk, **75.9% of the participants did not know about the available platforms for job vacancies in Neuquén** (such as Computrabajo, ZonaJobs, or internships). Only 24.1% did know (Fig. 5). In the Labor Expectations survey, the most known platform was LinkedIn (85.2%, 23 responses), followed by Emplea Neuquén (14.8%, 4 responses) and Computrabajo (7.4%, 2 responses) (Fig 6). **We can emphasize that prior to the talk, students, apart from LinkedIn, had very little knowledge about employment portals or online job banks.**

Antes de la charla sabias sobre las plataformas disponibles para la bolsa de trabajo en Neuquen?(compu trabajo, zonajobs, o pasantias)

29 respuestas

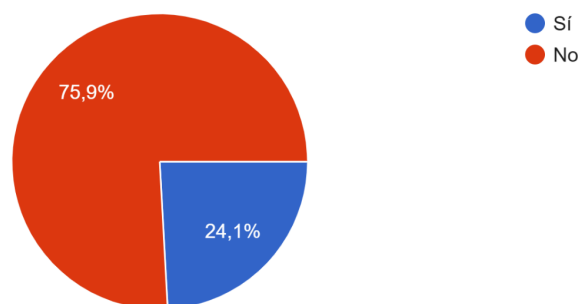


Figure 5.

¿Conoces algunas de estas páginas?

27 respuestas

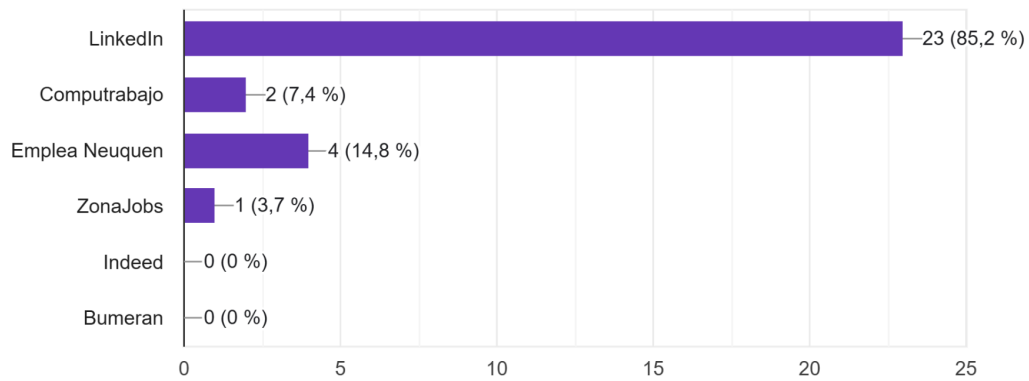


Figure 6.

The results indicate that the talk had a high positive impact on participants' perception of preparedness:

- **Tools and Confidence: 96.6%** of those surveyed affirmed that the talk provided them with sufficient tools to feel more confident when facing a job search process (CV and interview).
- **Interview Guidelines: 100%** of participants indicated that the talk helped them analyze general guidelines regarding a job interview.
- **Recognition of Advantages: 96.6%** felt helped to recognize the advantages they can offer an employer, such as their knowledge, enthusiasm, or willingness to learn.

Identified Soft Skills: When asked what soft skill they would highlight in themselves for future employment, the responses were distributed as follows (Fig. 7):

- Teamwork (**20.7%**).
- Problem-solving (**20.7%**).
- Positive attitude (**20.7%**).
- Communication and transmission (17.2%).
- Leadership (13.8%).

Cual crees que seria una habilidad blanda que destaque en vos para el futuro laboral?

29 respuestas

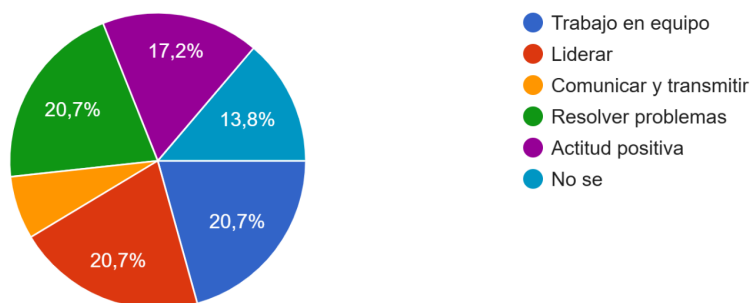


Figure 7.

Most Valuable Aspect of the Talk: The aspect that participants indicated they gained as the most valuable from the talk was **"having essential information for when I undertake my working future" (44.8%)**. Other highlighted aspects were "being able to prepare my curriculum better for the first time" (24.1%) and "being able to expand my applications to platforms" (24.1%) (Fig. 8).

Que es lo que mas te llevas de la charla?

29 respuestas

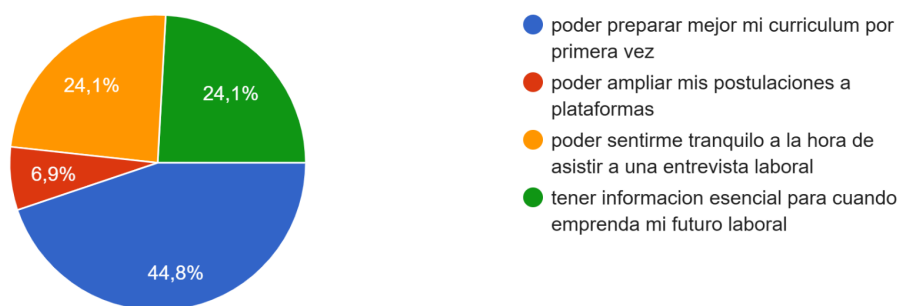


Figure 8.

Level of Satisfaction and Additional Topics of Interest: On a scale of 1 (not interesting at all) to 10 (extremely interesting), the talk received very high ratings (Fig 9):

- 37.9% (11 responses) rated the interest with an 8.
- 31% (9 responses) rated the interest with a 10.
- 24.1% (7 responses) rated the interest with a 9. In total, **93.1%** of those surveyed rated the interest of the talk with an 8, 9, or 10.

En una escala del 1 (nada interesante) al 10 (extremadamente interesante), ¿qué tan interesante te pareció el contenido de la charla de hoy?

29 respuestas

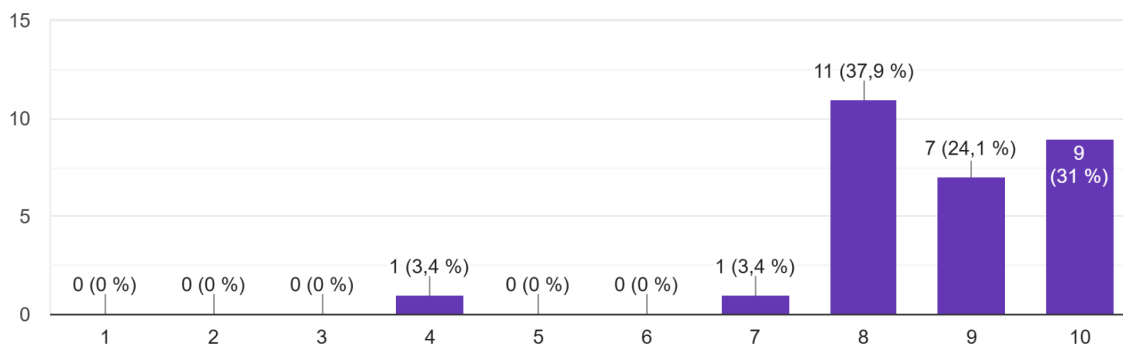


Figure 9.

When asked if more time should be added to a particular topic, the areas of greatest interest for deepening were:

- **Job Interview:** Multiple responses requested more time on this topic, including "Job Interview," "labor interviews," and "key types of labor questions".
- **CV Creation:** Requests were made for "more visible CV formats," "CV creation," and "Fundamental information for each topic of the CV composition".

DISCUSSION

The project aimed to address the central problem of difficulties in labor insertion, a challenge that disproportionately affects young people entering the market for the first time. The intervention was aligned with the objective of Decent Work and Economic Growth, seeking to provide tools to guarantee decent work.

The results of the report validate the need for this intervention, given the profile of the participants: sixth-year technical orientation students aged 18 to 19. **55.6% of them have no prior work experience (Fig. 1), and a large majority (92.6%) have never had a job interview.** This lack of experience and the imminent transition to the world of work fully justified the project's focus.

The preliminary research of the project identified that a root cause of the difficulty in labor insertion is the lack of necessary tools, such as a good résumé or skills to navigate an interview. The survey results confirm these gaps:

1. **CV Knowledge:** Before the talk, knowledge about how to put together a basic CV was limited, with **51.7%** of those surveyed indicating they had "**very little information**" (Fig 4). This finding is critical, as the ability to prepare a stand-out *curriculum vitae* constitutes a candidate's first impression. The results suggest that even those who thought they knew how to assemble a CV (55.6% in one of the surveys) discovered after the talk that they lacked information.
2. **Platforms and Opportunities:** A low level of knowledge about job board platforms in Neuquén was confirmed, with **75.9%** of participants unaware of their existence (apart from LinkedIn). This highlights the necessity of expanding applications to platforms, which was a key aspect of the talk.

The project's objective, focused on giving a talk on CVs, soft skills, and interviews, demonstrated a high effectiveness and a positive impact on participants' perception of preparedness.

- **Increased Confidence: 96.6%** affirmed that the talk provided them with sufficient tools to feel more confident when facing a job search process.
- **Recognition of Advantages: 96.6%** felt helped to recognize the advantages they can offer an employer, such as their knowledge, enthusiasm, or willingness to learn. This is vital, since "employability" depends not only on technical skills but also on social and cultural capital.

The talk also fulfilled its objective of highlighting the soft skills in demand today. Participants identified teamwork, problem-solving, and positive attitude as their main strengths (each with 20.7% of responses). The recognition of these socio-emotional skills is fundamental, as their importance has gained prominence among employers.

The most valuable aspect for students was "having essential information for when I undertake my working future" (**44.8%**) (Fig. 8), which underscores the value of practical career guidance that, according to the project's cause analysis, is not always included in the traditional educational system.

The high valuation of the talk, with **93.1%** (Fig 9) rating the interest with 8, 9, or 10 points, suggests that the topic is of extreme relevance for young people nearing graduation.

However, participants suggested extending the time dedicated to two key areas: the job interview and CV creation (requesting more visible formats and fundamental information). This highlights the need to transform theoretical knowledge into practical and visual skills, which justifies the proposed improvement of creating and delivering a digital guide (PDF) with editable CV templates, lists of soft skills, and frequently asked questions. The use of digital follow-up resources aligns with the recommendations of organizations like ECLAC and UNESCO, which indicate that support material consolidates knowledge and facilitates subsequent autonomous learning.



CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to design and implement a formative and interactive talk directed at high school students, in order to mitigate the direct causes of the difficulty in youth labor insertion, such as the lack of adequate tools and practical guidance. The immediate objective of the intervention was successfully achieved in terms of perception and acquisition of basic tools.

The talk had a positive impact on the generation of confidence and knowledge in the short term. The results demonstrate that **96.6% of participants affirmed having obtained sufficient tools to feel more confident** when facing a job search process. **100% analyzed general interview guidelines**, and **96.6% felt helped to recognize the advantages they can offer an employer**. This data confirms that the intervention achieved its goal of reducing uncertainty and establishing a base of essential knowledge, which are key precursors to employability.

Despite the success achieved, the problem addressed—sustained youth labor insertion—is a complex phenomenon whose final impact cannot be evaluated immediately after a single intervention. The consulted bibliography points out that evaluations of training programs often have variable methodologies and do not always measure the long-term impact or the real improvement in employment outcomes.

The talk fulfilled the function of providing the necessary knowledge about CVs, soft skills, and interviews so that young people can begin their job search. However, the materialization of the large-scale objective requires a perspective that allows verifying whether these tools effectively translate into a lower unemployment rate or faster access to formal jobs.

In summary, the talk has established the necessary foundation by equipping participants with essential tools and the confidence to begin their professional trajectory. **The true success of the project will be measured when students use this knowledge to overcome initial barriers and, over time, achieve decent and sustained labor insertion.**



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APPENDICES

Survey 1

Expectativas laborales 2.0

* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria.

1. ¿Qué te gustaría hacer después del secundario? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Estudiar una carrera Universitaria
☐ Hacer cursos de capacitación profesionalizantes
☐ Estudiar una tecnicatura
☐ Trabajar
☐ Trabajar y estudiar
☐ Otro: _____

2. ¿Que consideras que es necesario para conseguir un trabajo? *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- ☐ Experiencia
☐ Un título habilitante
☐ Contactos que me permitan ingresar al trabajo
☐ Habilidades blandas
☐ Cursos o capacitaciones
☐ Una buena presentación
☐ Otro: _____

3. Si elegiste estudiar, indicar que carrera/tecnicatura/curso te gustaría estudiar

4. ¿Sabes armar un Curriculum Vitae? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No
- ☐ No se que es un Currículm

5. ¿Conoces algunas de estas páginas? *

Selecciona todos los que correspondan.

- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Computrabajo
- ☐ Empleo Neuquen
- ☐ ZonaJobs
- ☐ Indeed
- ☐ Bumeran

6. ¿Trabajas actualmente o trabajaste alguna vez? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No

7. ¿Alguna vez tuviste una entrevista laboral? *

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No

8. Edad

Encuesta post charla

Es muy importante para nosotros que hagas esta encuesta, dura menos de 5 minutos en responder.

1. Antes de la charla, ¿sabías armar un CV básico?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ si
☐ no
☐ tenia muy poca informacion

2. ¿La charla te proporcionó suficientes herramientas para sentirte más seguro al momento de enfrentar un proceso de búsqueda de empleo (CV y entrevista)?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Si
☐ No

3. ¿La charla te ayudó a analizar pautas generales respecto a una entrevista de trabajo?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ Si
☐ No

Informe de investigación

4. Antes de la charla sabías sobre las plataformas disponibles para la bolsa de trabajo en Neuquén?(compu trabajo, zonajobs, o pasantías)

Marca solo un óvalo.

☐ Sí

☐ No

5. Como estudiante de sexto año, ¿la charla te ayudó a reconocer las ventajas que puedes ofrecer a un empleador, como tus conocimientos, entusiasmo o ganas de aprender?

Marca solo un óvalo.

☐ Sí

☐ No

6. Cual crees que sería una habilidad blanda que destaque en vos para el futuro laboral?

Marca solo un óvalo.

☐ Trabajo en equipo

☐ Liderar

☐ Comunicar y transmitir

☐ Resolver problemas

☐ Actitud positiva

☐ No se

Informe de investigación

7. Que es lo que mas te llevas de la charla?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- ☐ poder preparar mejor mi curriculum por primera vez
- ☐ poder ampliar mis postulaciones a plataformas
- ☐ poder sentirme tranquilo a la hora de asistir a una entrevista laboral
- ☐ tener informacion esencial para cuando emprenda mi futuro laboral

8. Si hubiera que agregar más tiempo a un tema en particular, que te hubiese interesado investigar mas?

9. En una escala del 1 (nada interesante) al 10 (extremadamente interesante), ¿qué tan interesante te pareció el contenido de la charla de hoy?

Marca solo un óvalo.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>