



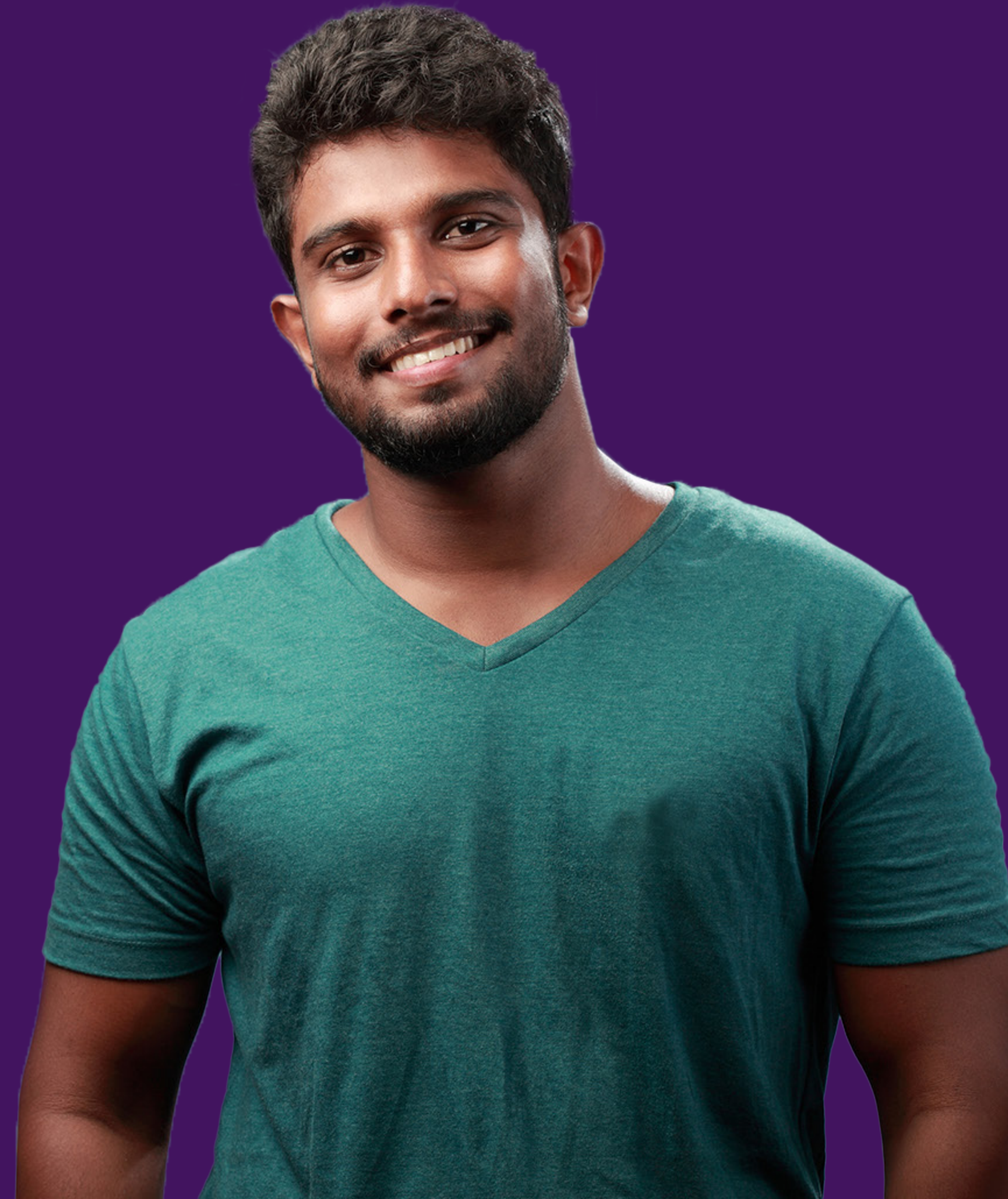
NatWest

CareerSense

Solving

Real

Problems



We're going to look at what these problem-solving techniques look like when put into practice.

Meet Ismael.

Ismael loves to keep busy. As well as studying business management at university, he volunteers at a youth club. He found the youth club in his hometown really supportive, so he wants to help out with one now.





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“I really love volunteering here. I gained so much from my youth club, and I just hope I can maybe help out some of the kids here.”

Ismael is also very environmentally conscious. One of his ideas for after university is to develop an app that will help people monitor how much single-use plastic they use.

Ismael was thinking about this when he was at the youth club one day, and he noticed there always seemed to be a lot of plastic being thrown away. Cups, bottles, cutlery...

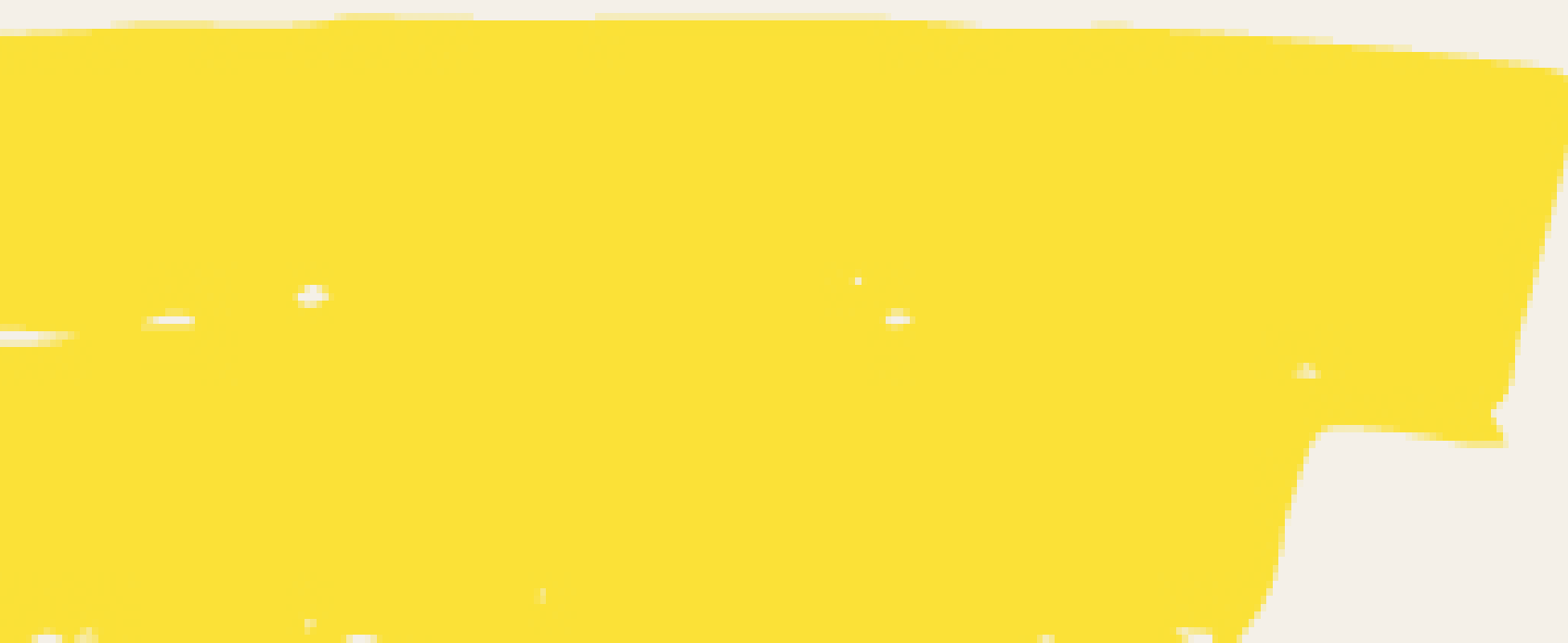




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“That can’t be right. It’s wasteful and it’s bad for the environment.”

Single-use plastics are a big environmental problem, and Ismael was keen to do his bit. But where do you start with a problem like that? Obviously, it wasn’t something Ismael could fix on his own. He’d need to speak to people and ask questions.

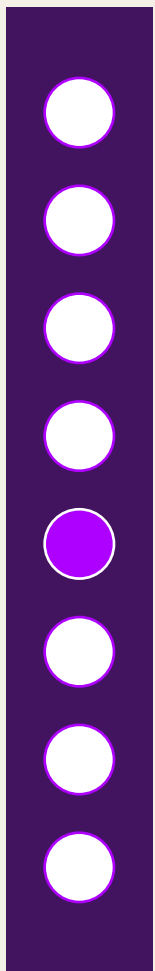




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Ismael thought about who he should ask, and what he should ask them. He realised that it would be best to talk to the volunteers in the kitchen.

“I guess the first question I needed to ask was ‘Why is there so much plastic being thrown out?’ And the answer I got was ‘Because we use too much.’”

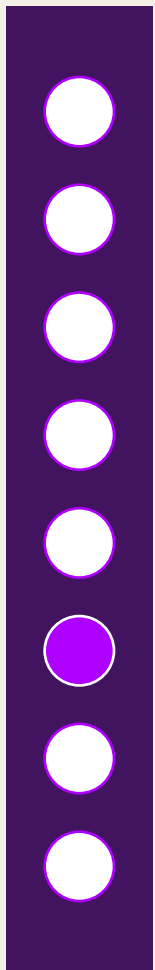




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“Well, that was an answer... but it definitely wasn’t the root cause! I knew I needed to keep drilling down.”

Ismael asked, *“Why do we use so much plastic?”* and the next answer he got was *“We don’t have enough reusable cutlery.”*



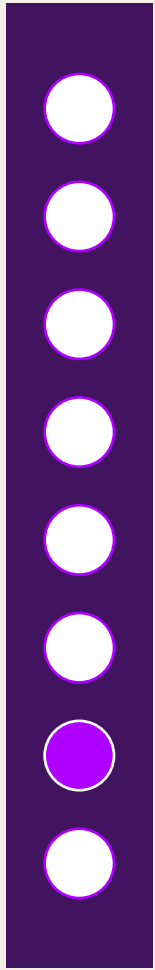


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“Finally, I asked ‘Why don’t we have enough?’, and the answer I got was ‘We’ve just always done it this way.’”

Ismael realised that the root cause of the problem was a matter of habit. The youth club had always just bought more single-use plastics when they needed them, instead of investing in multiple-use items.

“At the next volunteers meeting, I raised this as a problem, and I asked what everyone thought would be a good solution. I didn’t want to just start ordering people around!”





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The other volunteers helped decide on a solution – everyone was encouraged to go through their kitchen drawers and cupboards to find cutlery and other utensils they didn't use anymore.

“It was a little thing, but it meant that everyone ended up feeling like they were contributing to the solution!”

Ismael not only kept asking *Why?* until he reached the root cause, he also approached the problem with a collaborative mindset, meaning everyone arrived at a common solution that made everyone feel included.

