

Making a difference

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



innovation
foundation

EMPOWERED BY
THE ADECCO GROUP



“We remove barriers so underserved people can choose their pathways into work.”


Empowering individuals to work.

At the Innovation Foundation, we help underserved people recognise and value their skills, discover or rediscover what they bring to the table, and get their feet confidently back on the path to work, as a means of securing sustainable livelihoods. The world of work is always changing, and at-risk populations often face even greater challenges, but the right support can help everyone remove barriers and open opportunities.

Our method is simple. We work with end-users, a variety of stakeholders, and partners on the ground to scan the landscape, build solutions and scale them. All so that everybody has a better chance for a brighter future.

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 [Check out our brand video here](#)

In conversation with our leadership

Jean-Christophe Deslarzes and Cynthia Hansen



Creating
different
futures

“Our human-centric approach informs our three-step lab methodology, in turn helping us create real change through our solutions.”

Dear Stakeholders,

Our new direction

Having established our new focus in 2020 and transformed the Foundation structure in 2021, we started 2022 as essentially a new organisation, operating for the first time as a pure Social Innovation Lab under our new name, the Innovation Foundation. This new incarnation builds on our legacy and positions us at the forefront of the evolution of corporate philanthropy.

Whereas corporate foundations usually focus on funding causes, incubating entrepreneurs or supporting NGOs, our model hinges on human-centric design from beginning to end.

Our social innovation method

Our three-part model of Scan, Build and Scale allows us to build from the ground up. The Scan phase is crucial to identifying who is falling out of the workforce and what their main challenges are. We get to know our stakeholders, even visiting their homes, meeting their families, and involving them directly in the co-creation of solutions. The Build phase uses design thinking to ideate, test and prototype solutions, working in collaboration with end-users plus other stakeholders from government, business, civil society and academia. Then, in the Scale phase, we take the most promising of these solutions and put them into our own accelerator to build them into products which go into the world via partners.

Creating measurable change

Each cycle leads to new insights, tweaks to the methodology and constant learning loops. How we measure the impact and learnings is also crucial to creating sustainable change. In every project we track a combination of reach (how many people we touched with our interventions) and conversion (how many lives were actually changed). This is not easy to measure, so we work with our partners to find the right metrics to track change of behaviour and patterns over time. In addition, we aim to demonstrate that our solutions can scale beyond geographic and demographic boundaries. For example, our work with young mothers in Mexico will scale across Latin America. The project supporting mid and low-skilled women in Spain to re-enter work after a career break will scale to others with caring responsibilities. No one can achieve systemic change alone. Our solutions go out into the world via our partners, bearing the stamp of the Innovation Foundation. We are the propeller. And this is only the start.

Yours sincerely,

Jean-Christophe Deslarzes

Chair of the Foundation Board

Cynthia Hansen

Managing Director

Labour market overview

The future of work is evolving quicker than ever. Automation, digitalisation, the transition to sustainable economies and a challenging economic outlook increasingly mean people have to adapt, pivot and reskill to make their way.

While companies are striving to hire and retain talent, millions of individuals are struggling to find and keep meaningful work. Their potential is often constrained by outside forces. Women, young individuals, mature workers, low and middle-skilled workers, and caregivers are not being seen, not being considered and are being left behind.

But not everyone has access to the structures of support, opportunities or resources to do this. Many people are falling out of the workforce, struggling to re-enter it or are unable to find a foothold to enter it in the first place.

Despite this, global employment rates have rebounded at record highs (69.4% in countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD), with tight labour markets and labour shortages the distinguishing characteristics of 2022. However, supply chain disruption and high inflation continue to shape employment dynamics and undermine the strength of the post-Covid-19 recovery.

Traditional ways of working continue to be re-evaluated. Even though the "Great Resignation" or "Re-Evaluation" is generating fewer headlines, the trend turned out to be much more than a passing fad. 50.5 million Americans quit their jobs in 2022, breaking the previous record of 47.8 million resignations in 2021.

This is despite a growing number of mature workers returning to work past their retirement age. There remains a lack of practical and tailored solutions that address the specific needs of these workers in today's labour market.

This is where the Innovation Foundation comes in. We saw that there was a lack of investment of time, people, money and effort to find solutions to help underserved populations enter and remain in the workforce. As a corporate foundation, we have the power to mobilise the know-how of the Adecco Group, provide a neutral platform to bring together an array of stakeholders and put funding behind developing practical solutions. We do this not as a granting foundation, but as a Social Innovation Lab, driving the process from end to end with the right partners via our own distinctive model.

1/3

number of people aged 55-64 in countries like Turkey or South Africa who were employed in 2022

29.2%

gender participation gap in the labour force in 2022, with female and male participation at 61.4% and 90.6% respectively

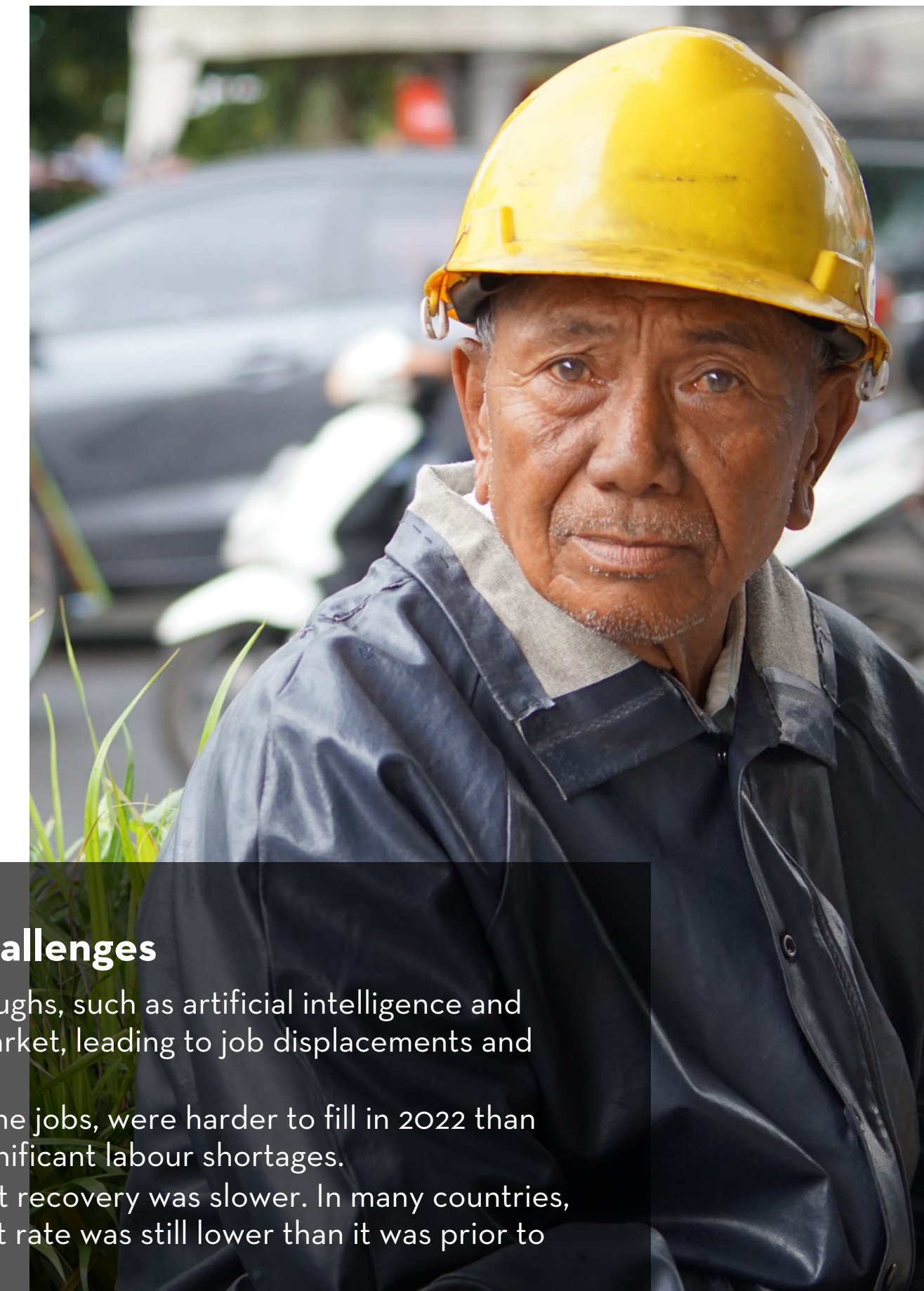
73 million

expected unemployed youth globally, in 2022

2022 Labour Market Challenges

- Rapid technological breakthroughs, such as artificial intelligence and robotics, altered the labour market, leading to job displacements and skill gaps among workers.
- Vacancies, especially in frontline jobs, were harder to fill in 2022 than before Covid-19, leading to significant labour shortages.
- For young people, employment recovery was slower. In many countries, the average youth employment rate was still lower than it was prior to the crisis.
- Real wages dropped, undermining purchasing power, with vulnerable populations experiencing the most significant erosion of real income.

Source: OECD



if at a glance

We are focused

Our vision

A world where everyone can access work.

Our mission

To help underserved populations increase their employability and access to labour markets in order to secure sustainable livelihoods.

Our values

We promote courage, creativity and inclusiveness through our actions and how we work.

We create innovative solutions

Accelerating social innovation

As a Social Innovation Lab, we create practical solutions that help people have better access to the world of work, no matter who they are. Our solutions are human-centric and are designed to be shared and implemented on the ground by our partners.

We Scan.



Our Social Radar identifies who is falling out of the workforce and why.

We Build.



Our Innovation Space creates solutions.

We Scale.



Our Accelerator develops the solutions into products that can be taken forward by our partners.



Partnerships make change possible

Working in partnership underpins everything we do. Through close collaboration, we turn insights into actions and help more people access the world of work. We invite partners to join us on this mission, based on what we want to achieve.



[Learn more about our 2022 partners here](#)

We never stop

Our activities and our vision

In 2022, our Scan, Build, Scale methodology really came to life and we developed the evidence that our model works and creates scalable impact.

Our current projects

Youth@Risk

Young people in OECD countries were hit particularly hard by the pandemic. Around one in six young people stopped working, with those aged 15-19, NEET (not in education, employment or training), and from low-income backgrounds particularly vulnerable. For those with caring responsibilities, the road is even harder. Our solutions are helping young mothers in Mexico see that there are many pathways into work.

[Discover more about our Youth@Risk project on pages 8-9.](#)

Women Back to Work

Women returning to work after taking a career break face multiple barriers. A lack of flexible working arrangements and bias from employers can be compounded by personal barriers including low confidence and perceived lack of skills. We are building solutions to help low- and mid-skilled women in Spain return to work in a way that suits them and their needs.

[Find out more about our progress on pages 10-11.](#)

Mature Workers

As the global population ages, older people are working for longer to make financial ends meet. However, mature workers face many challenges in the workplace and often lack viable solutions that address their needs. Our Social Radar is exploring the challenges mature workers face in the workplace in order to inform our choice of challenge to crack in the Build and Scale phases.

[Learn more about our Mature Workers project on pages 12-13.](#)

Our work is iterative. In 2023, we will continue to learn from our current projects so that our future efforts are better informed and that we can continue to help people overcome challenges preventing them from engaging positively with the world of work.

Our role in civil society

The Innovation Foundation isn't a typical corporate foundation or a grant-giving organisation. As a Social Innovation Lab, we have the unique ability to push the boundaries of how corporate foundations can contribute positively in civil society.

Our mission is closely aligned with the aim of the Adecco Group of "making the future work for everyone". While the Group is focused on the broader workforce, we zero in on those who are struggling to enter or stay in the world of work. In designing our approach, we draw on the expertise and examples from an array of foundations, corporate innovation labs, start-ups, incubators and accelerators to craft our own design process and methodology. So although we are a corporate foundation, we are run in a different way.

Because there is no precedent for doing this type of work, we believe we can create significant impact in this white space – not only via the solutions we create as a Social Innovation Lab but also in sharing our model and learnings to accelerate the work of others.

Corporate interest in social innovation is rising, but few corporate foundations have ventured beyond the grant-giving structure. By sharing our learnings and helping others apply our methodology, while still continuing to learn from other foundations as well, we are able to go further, effect greater change and advance the dialogue on the role of corporate foundations in civil society.

We are steering our corporate foundation in a singular manner

We are uniquely positioned in civil society in four ways:

- 1 We do not give grants**, fund entrepreneurs, incubate existing start-ups or accelerate external concepts. Our ventures come solely through our unique Scan, Build, Scale process. We craft the solutions from the ground up with an array of stakeholders and end users.
- 2 We collaborate at every step**, leveraging the expertise and insights of a multi-stakeholder group to fuel our innovation. This always includes end users too.
- 3 We build to share, not to keep**. None of the ventures or solutions stay in the Foundation; nor are they destined for the Adecco Group. They are designed to go into the world via whichever partners will create the greatest impact.
- 4 We open-source our findings and methodology** so that others can take our tools forward. This allows us to contribute to the ongoing narrative on the future of work and the evolving role of corporate foundations.



Our unique, human-centred methodology

Our own Scan, Build, Scale methodology was built in-house, using design thinking, and with the needs of end users at the very heart of it all. It ensures we are solving for the true problem, not just the symptom.



Our methodology

Our unique methodology is at the heart of everything we do and empowers us as we transform insights into lasting change.

Continuous learning and improvement

Our three-step social innovation propeller is spinning and we are constantly learning from our efforts and making adjustments to our model.

Partnering through every phase

We bring together experts, organisations and end-users throughout the process to ensure our designs address the right issues.



[Learn more about our own methodology here](#)



We Scan

Our Social Radar identifies underserved populations and the challenges facing them.

This first step allows us to identify who is at risk of falling out of the workforce and the social issues that influence labour market participation.

Our Data

The Social Radar uses public and proprietary data, social listening and consultation to generate insights that inform our solution design.

The Braintrust

Our Braintrust is a group of experts with invaluable experience of data and a deep understanding of the challenges underserved people face. The Braintrust evaluates our data, shares knowledge, identifies trends and serves as a sounding board.

1. Mapping

Our mapping allows us to use a combination of 5 global trends and 15 predictive factors to identify which groups are at risk of long-term unemployment and labour inactivity.

2. Distilling

We then create a heat map to identify white spaces, blind spots and weak signals.

3. Sense Testing

We sense test our findings with the Braintrust and end users.

4. Calibrating

We use five filters to identify which challenges hold the highest innovation potential. These are:

- future orientation
- innovation potential
- scalability
- current landscape
- social impact potential

5. Validating

We confirm the relevance of the selected challenges with end-user interviews, expert consultation and social listening.

Our unique, human-centred methodology continued



We Build

Our Innovation Space builds social solutions that tackle the identified challenges, in collaboration with our partners around the world.

Project Working Groups

Our multi-stakeholder Project Working Groups use the insights from Scan to ideate solutions that answer our challenge statements, using human-centric design and systems thinking.

Testing Groups

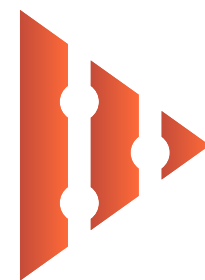
Between each design workshop, Testing Groups validate our proposed solutions and ensure our prototypes are practical and impactful.

1. Ideation

We create and test innovative solutions via a series of in-person and online design workshops, followed by testing on the ground with end users.

2. Prototyping

Our most viable solutions are developed into light prototypes before moving forward to the Accelerator.



We Scale

Our Accelerator turns the solution concepts into actual “products” to be taken forward into the world via our partners, to reach the people who need them most.

Through test-and-learn methodologies, we generate insights that feed back into our Social Radar via learning loops that allow us to continually improve our ways of working and the quality of our solutions.

Venture-building

Small teams, including an Entrepreneur in Residence and Fellows from the Adecco Group and partners, build our ventures.

Partner recruitment

We are always looking for new partners that share our passion and ambition to collaborate on creating and scaling solutions.

Round 1

Building, testing, prioritising.

Round 2


Refinement and market testing.

Round 3

Finalised products are prepared for launch with partners.



We create products, services, and ways of working that are designed to identify and remove the barriers for underserved populations to thrive in the working world.



if I didn't have to choose between learning and earning...

Young people from low-income backgrounds often feel pressured into dropping out of education to earn a supplementary income, forcing them to choose between furthering their skills and supporting their family. We are designing solutions to help broaden the options for young people at risk.

Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) are more likely to face social exclusion. In countries such as Mexico and South Africa, the proportion of young women who are NEET exceeds 30%. In Mexico, our data analysis revealed 69% of social media feeds by young people mention school dropout and poverty.

Source: OECD and Innovation Foundation proprietary research

Youth@Risk

Young people in countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were particularly impacted by the pandemic, with many leaving the workforce altogether. In 2022, we accelerated our efforts to return these young people to meaningful work.

The challenge

Even before the pandemic, young people in OECD countries were three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. As a result of the social and economic disruption caused by Covid-19, one in six left the workforce entirely.

Among the most vulnerable segments of this population are those aged between 15-19, NEET (not in education, employment or training) and those from low-income backgrounds. This is a demographic emerging from compulsory education, in danger of falling out of the system and at a higher risk of long-term unemployment. Feelings of demotivation are common and are exacerbated by the lack of information and resources, the limited belief systems of their environment and the inability to envision a different future.

Our data-led approach

Our Social Radar analysed a combination of public data, Adecco Group data and social media data to generate insights. These results were published in our Youth@Risk white paper.

We found that young women living in urban fringes, living at or below the poverty threshold and who had dropped out of both school and work were at high risk of negative long-term economic and social effects.

We identified an opportunity to create the most impact by focusing our efforts on helping disadvantaged young people overcome the perception that they need to give up learning to earn an income.

Building solutions

We carried out over 60 interviews with experts, organisations, partners and young people to refine our target group. This allowed us to identify a focal demographic of young mothers aged 16-30, NEET, living below the poverty line and located in the urban fringes of Mexico City.

We uncovered three central challenges. The first was that young mothers were growing up with a limited view of what they could achieve, the second was that they lacked access to credible information and the third was that their skills gained from lived experience were not acknowledged.

Our solutions are always created with and around the end-user. We assembled a multi-stakeholder working group to consider solutions to these three issues. After testing different solutions with target groups, we advanced two prototypes to the Accelerator: an awareness-raising campaign using peer role models to help young mothers see the possible pathways into work, and a tech-based solution to help translate the lived experiences of young mothers into employable skills.

Where we are going


Adapting techniques from corporate accelerators and incubators, we will continue building these two solutions into fully fledged products in 2023. Small, agile venture teams were assembled, in the end of 2022, to take each solution from a prototype to minimum viable product (MVP) and they will continue to work into 2023. These products will be incubated in the Foundation until they are ready to be taken forward by the partners.

“I don’t have time for training or studying. I’m either with my children, taking care of my house and family, or working. I don’t have any time left for thinking about my career.”

Project participant



[Read more about the project here](#)



if I could work flexibly around my family's needs...

Women taking a career break often find it difficult to return to work due to a lack of flexible working arrangements. Our Women Back to Work initiative is helping women secure flexible work that works for them and their caregiving commitments.

Women with small children are willing to forego 37.9% of their salary to avoid irregular, inconsistent work schedules.

An Innovation Foundation survey revealed that 73% of female part-time workers would take up full-time work if responsibilities at home were not a concern.

Source: Deloitte

Women Back to Work

Women returning to work after a career break face multiple challenges, including a lack of suitable jobs and low confidence. This year, the Innovation Foundation set our efforts to help women return to work.



The challenge

Women returning to work often face a lack of flexible positions, bias, discrimination as well as low confidence and a perceived lack of skills. The longer women remain out of the workforce, the harder it is for them to re-enter at all, leaving many at risk of long-term unemployment.

Our data-led approach

To understand the difficulties women experience and the groups we should target, we scanned public data, Adecco Group data and social media. Our Social Radar generated a range of insights, which were published in our Women Back to Work white paper.

We identified a target audience of women caregivers in urban fringes, living at or slightly above the poverty threshold as most at risk of long-term economic damage. Further research highlighted two primary challenges. Firstly, flexible and personalised working arrangements are crucial for women who balance work and caregiving responsibilities. Second, women returning to work after a caregiving break frequently pivot to employment with better pay, conditions and scheduling.

To further refine our scan, we ran over 30 interviews and consultations with women from the healthcare, hospitality and logistics sectors as well as individuals who had experienced a career transition.

After further consultation with organisations, experts and institutional agencies, we identified five core challenges.

1. Front-line, mid-skilled women lack flexibility due to rigid scheduling procedures and systems.
2. Businesses are not offering women the chance to pivot into new roles.
3. Women caregivers are time-poor and resource-scarce and have less time to upgrade their skills.
4. Women returning to work are looking for roles that match their talents and passions and can advance their careers.
5. Women in this demographic face technological challenges when it comes to navigating the tech-heavy recruitment process.

After our consultation, we refined our target group to:

- Women who have taken a long career break.
- Women between 25-50 who took a long break for caregiving reasons.
- Middle-skilled women, with vocational skills defined as between low and middle skilling.
- Women who held jobs with vocational training, such as front line and service jobs, prior to the break.
- Neither in employment nor in training, but actively looking for employment on their terms.
- Located in Spain, using Madrid to develop a place-based solution.

“We are experiencing a labour market disconnect. Employers are struggling to fill positions, yet many women find themselves unable to re-enter the job market at all.”

Kitrhona Cerri
Executive Director, TASC Platform,
Geneva Graduate Institute

We defined two challenge statements:

- How might we help mid-career women in vocational roles find the flexibility they need to return to work?
- How might we help women in this demographic pivot to other roles, industries and ways of working as they return to work?

Where we are going

In 2023, we will assemble a multi-stakeholder working group to co-create solutions. These will be tested with groups of end-users in Spain, where feedback will be incorporated into our Build process. After further testing, we will progress two or three solutions into the Accelerator.



[Read more about the project here](#)



if I knew I wouldn't be judged for my age...

More and more people are continuing, or returning, to work past the statutory retirement age. But for many mature workers, age discrimination is a major barrier to accessing labour markets. We are exploring solutions that help mature workers access employment opportunities.

According to a study by our sister organisation, Fundación Adecco, in Spain, 85.7% of unemployed workers over the age of 45 believe that age is still a barrier in passing a job interview.

Source: Fundación Adecco (2021).
Tu edad es un tesoro

Mature Workers

Mature workers are continuing to work, or returning to work, in ever-greater numbers. But without resources and assistance, they face many challenges preventing them from accessing labour markets. We aim to design solutions that will help mature workers overcome these barriers.

The challenge

The global population is ageing, with the proportion of elderly people growing in almost every country. As a result, more people are continuing to work for longer, sometimes due to a rising retirement age, other times by choice or out of necessity. There is a growing need for resources and solutions to help the increasing number of workers aged 55–65 overcome challenges – but a lack of viable solutions that can help.

Our data-led approach

We wanted to understand the challenges and risks facing mature workers. We carried out the initial Social Radar scan of this demographic in late 2022 and generated a number of insights. The full Scan process will continue to run throughout 2023 to further understand the needs and challenges in order to choose a relevant focus for our project work

The first phase of our scan analysed a combination of public data, Adecco Group data and social media data and identified key challenges for mature workers:

1. **Age discrimination:** ageism is a common barrier for many people, but our scan found levels of ageism are more common in some sectors. In healthcare, for example, an older age is associated more positively with experience, knowledge and skills. In IT however, perceptions captured by ChatGPT show that the perceived optimal age is much lower.

2. **Age inequality:** a growing number of workers are working past statutory retirement age in both high- and low-skilled jobs. In addition to some roles more commonly taken up during retirement, an increasing number of people with roles like taxi drivers, chauffeurs, guards and watchpeople are also returning to work.
3. **Unretirement is on the rise:** people are increasingly returning to work after retirement. Men are more likely than women to return to full-time employment after retirement, while women are more likely to return to part-time work. Marital status also influences these outcomes, with divorced and separated women being more likely than married women to work after retirement.

4. **Career changes and pivoting are more common:** workers in high-skilled jobs are pivoting to low-skilled jobs, with people in higher socioeconomic categories more likely to transition into self-employment during their 50s and 60s.
5. **Misperceptions on productivity and skills:** age-segmented and firm-level data has created the misperception that mature workers are less productive than younger workers, despite a lack of real evidence confirming this. Adecco Group data finds that mature workers are much less likely to incur workplace injuries due to experience and skills.

The above challenges typically affect workers between 60-70, those who were unemployed or retired for 12 months, low-skilled workers or divorced, single or widowed workers with dependent relatives.

Where we are going

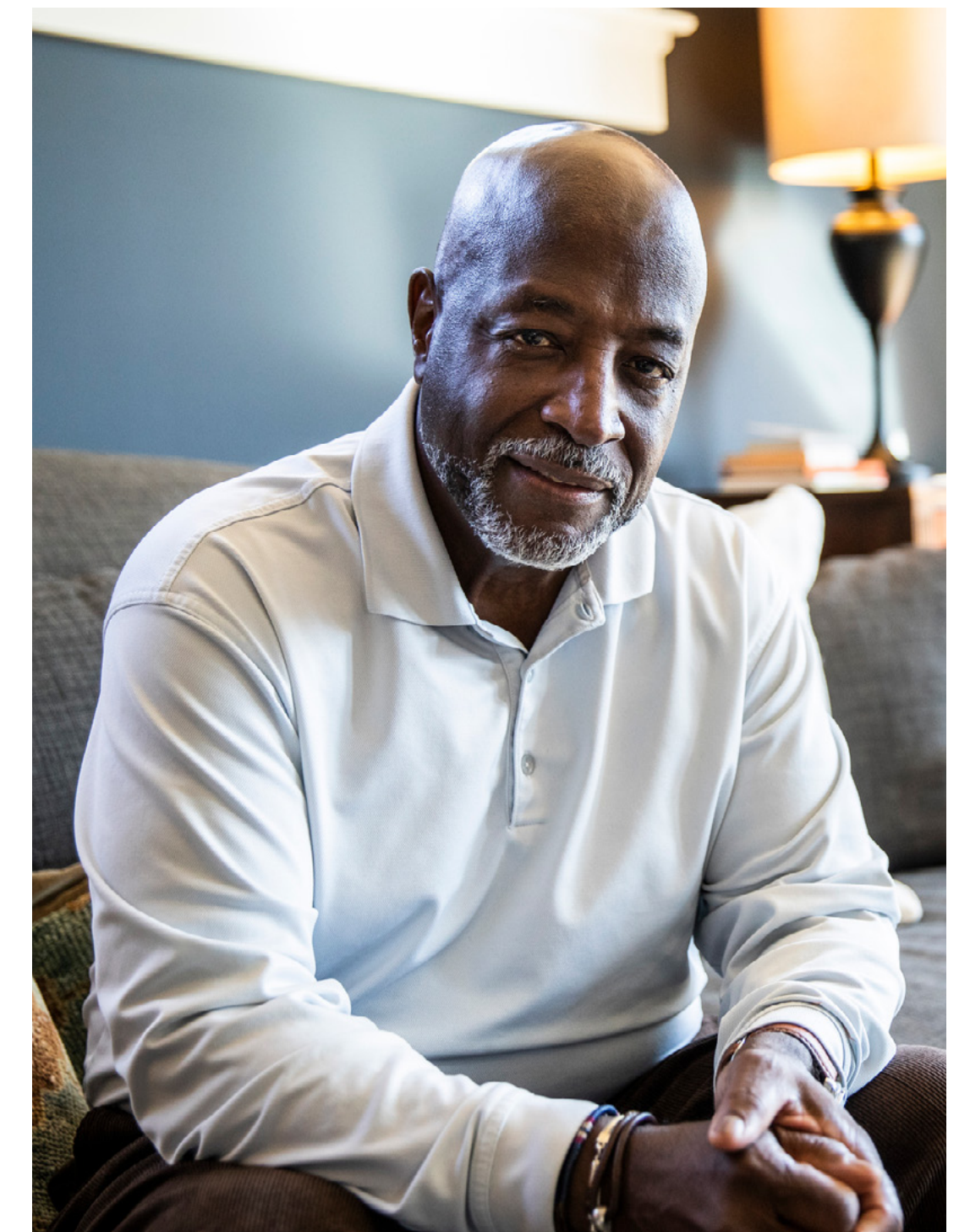
In 2023, the white spaces identified will be further explored, and the iterative insights will allow us to identify a specific challenge to crack in the future Build and Scale phases of the project.

1.2 billion

number the global 65+ population will reach by 2030

14.1%

individuals aged over 65 who live in relative income poverty (OECD average)



[Read more about the project here](#)

Who we partner with

As no single actor can create systemic change alone, we work with partners and end-users in every phase of our work. We are grateful to our partners across all three projects, who contribute their time, expertise and dedication to creating social impact.

Institutional Partners



*also a Programme Partner



Content Contributors

60 — decibels



drosos (...)



MONOCLE

Northwestern



National foundations

In addition to external partners, we work closely with the five national Adecco Group Foundations in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the USA.



France

Fondation The Adecco Group
www.groupe-adecco.fr/fondation/



Germany

Adecco Stiftung für Arbeit und soziales Leben
www.adecco.de/adecco-stiftung



Italy

Fondazione Adecco
www.fondazioneadecco.org



FUNDACIÓN ADECCO

Spain

Fundación Adecco
www.fundacionadecco.org



USA

The Adecco Group US Foundation
www.adeccogroupfoundationus.org

Our 2022 Board

Our Board draws on the expertise and insights of diverse individuals from varied professional backgrounds.

 [See our updated Board here](#)

2022 was a year of change for the Innovation Foundation Board. Alain Dehaze and Stephan Howeg, both founding Board members from 2017, stepped down after having steered the organisation through its establishment and evolution. We thank them for their leadership, support, and trust in the Foundation's vision. The Board will be further enlarged in 2023 based on complementary skills, competencies and representation.



Jean-Christophe Deslarzes

Chairman of
the Innovation
Foundation Board



Gordana Landen

Member of
the Innovation
Foundation Board



Ory Okolloh

Member of
the Innovation
Foundation Board



Virginia Wilson

Member of
the Innovation
Foundation Board

Our 2022 Team

Driven by passion for change and the desire to help underserved people build sustainable livelihoods, our Team brings the values of the Innovation Foundation to life in everything it does.



[See our current team here](#)



Cynthia Hansen

Managing
Director



Camila Müller

Team
Coordinator



Camille Demonchaux

Innovation Project
Manager



Garrett McKenna

Communications
Business Partner



Liana Melchenko

Head of
Innovation Insights



Lidia Lafoz

Research Data
Analyst



Rob James

Strategic Advisor



Shareena Hatta

Head of Social
Innovation Projects



Sonia Franzetti

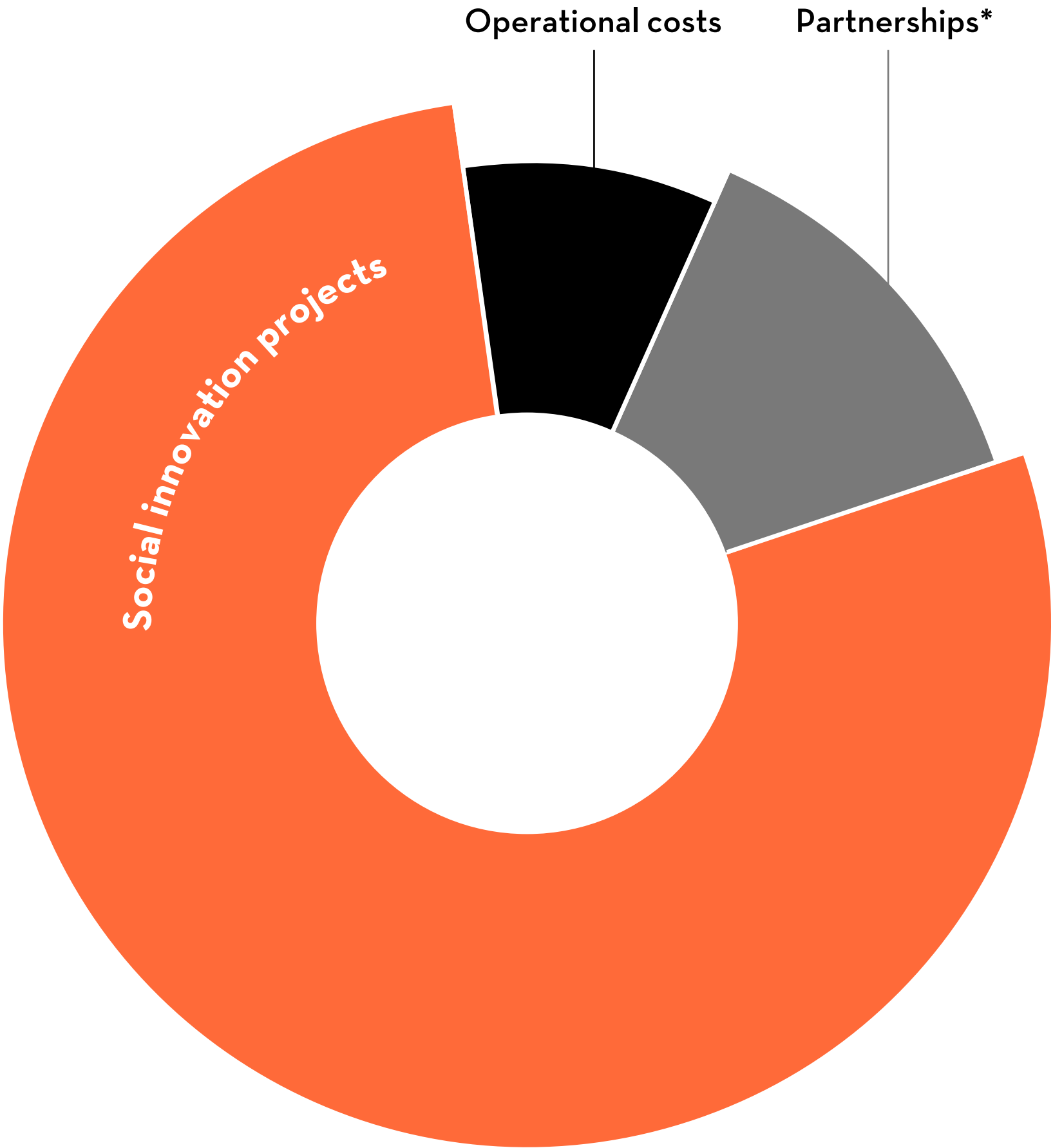
Team Coordinator
- Admin

Our financial information

Our 2022 expenditure was mainly dedicated to our operation as a Social Innovation Lab. The priority was creating the architecture to support projects through Scan, Build and Scale to ensure end-to-end value.

For the period ended 31 December (in CHF)	2022	2021
Contributions	6,405,588	15,004,877
Total income	6,405,588	15,004,877
Partnerships Programmes*	(386,702)	(1,261,499)
Thought Leadership**		(1,708)
CEO for 1 Month		(1,390,221)
Social Innovation projects	(2,302,495)	(1,456,197)
Administrative expenses	(269,005)	(120,067)
Financial income/(expenses), net	(2,033)	(18,883)
Total expenses	(2,960,235)	(4,248,575)
Net income/(loss)	3,445,353	10,756,302

* final donation for spun-off programme
** spun out of the Innovation Foundation





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