

Creating new pathways

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Why we exist



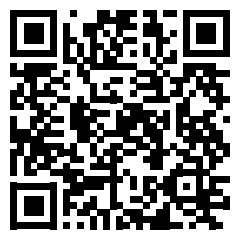
We help underserved people increase their access to the world of work.”

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Helping people towards a brighter future

Looking for ways into, or back into, work can be daunting for anyone, but it can be especially difficult for people who already face intersecting structural challenges. That’s why the Innovation Foundation was formed: to help underserved people recognize and value their current skills and future potential, to get back on the path to work. We do this by identifying people who are falling out of the workforce, assessing the gaps in the system that drive exclusion and creating practical solutions that help them increase their employability and access the world of work. We work with and for end users, and engage a variety of stakeholders and partners on the ground to scan the career support landscape, build solutions to fill gaps, and scale them. All so that we can remove barriers and make sure everybody has a better chance of a brighter future.



Check out our overview video here



In conversation with our leadership

Jean-Christophe Deslarzes and Cynthia Hansen



Dear stakeholders

Over the past year we have worked to not only implement our Scan, Build, Scale methodology, but to share and equip others. We recognize that this effort is more important than ever, as the dangers posed to already vulnerable populations are increasing and economic and geopolitical instability, armed conflict, and polycrises have grown. In an environment where it is impossible to know what comes next, having the tools to navigate uncertainty and the resilience to adapt will give vulnerable people the best possibility to survive and thrive. Thank you for coming with us on this journey.

A year of looking back and planning forward

Our last strategic cycle of 2021-25 was focused on proving that our Scan, Build, Scale methodology worked and could produce measurable and scalable social impact. With over 2.3 million people reached, 7500+ engaged in activities and 1500+ converted or placed in work, we proved that our pilots create real opportunities for real people. More importantly, we showed that we could hand over effectively to local partners who would continue to scale, independent of the Foundation.

The Youth@Risk project continued to scale in Mexico, fully under the stewardship of the local partner, YouthBuild Mexico. By year-end it was in 44 sites. Expansion into Brazil via CEDAPS (Centro de Promoção da Saúde) and United Way Brazil showed that we could localize effectively and scale into a new market and new target audiences. Based on these learnings, we are now building a globally scalable “solution in a box” to make this available to a broader network of scaling partners for greater impact.

Women Back to Work ran a second pilot in Barcelona, with the addition of Madrid, as well as new pilots in the Netherlands and UK. Most excitingly, we started cross-over pilots to test with other populations. With YouthBuild Mexico and World Vision, the Para Ti solution and interactive hotel job simulations enrich training programs preparing at-risk youth for jobs in the hospitality industry. Plans are underway for further cross-over testing with other pre-professional training programs, as well as with mature workers.

The Mature Workers project continued in the UK after further research into employer and intermediary needs in the market. A second round of ideation focused specifically on job-seekers 50+ coming through the government Job Centres. With a high ratio of men to women, long-term unemployment spells and strong representation of blue-collar trades, this is an underserved population with intersectional needs that the Job Centres struggle to accommodate. The new solution, Launchpad, is being co-developed with and for the Job Centre users and work coaches. It will better equip them to work together to repackage transferrable skills and create a new narrative of “what I can do” versus “what I have done”.

Where we are going

Whereas the last strategic cycle focused on proving the model, 2026-30 is all about scaling the model and impact. This hinges on two objectives: scale what we create in the lab and effectively equip other practitioners to use our methodology.

To create this new 2026-30 strategy, we committed to “drinking our own champagne” using the Scan, Build, Scale methodology. We scanned using an outside-in and inside-out view of where we had been and where we wanted to be, using a simple tool of “what were our assumptions, what did we try, what did we learn and what are we going to do differently”. We built by breaking down the strategic components and ideating on them as a team, with different staff members leading each. Then we tested our capacity for scale by looking at the resources (financial/social/human) required to be the kind of organization that could accomplish our ambitious goals.

Now with the new plan in place, 2026 is the start of the next cycle, with exciting developments including tech-enabled research and a brand new immersive training capacity. We can’t do this alone, so stay tuned, buckle up and get ready to engage; it is full steam ahead!

Warm regards,

Jean-Christophe Deslarzes
Chair of the Foundation Board

Cynthia Hansen
Managing Director

Labor market overview

In 2025, economic momentum slowed, with global unemployment at 5% and persistent challenges in terms of job quality.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) noted that informality and working poverty were harming the quality of jobs and the lives of workers.¹ At the same time, technological change raised the stakes; 63% of employers described skill gaps as the single biggest barrier to business transformation, while 85% said they plan to prioritize workforce upskilling.² Over three years, 32% of skills needed for the average job has changed, a sharp reminder that labor demand alone will not translate into access.³

Regarding young people, the ILO estimated global youth unemployment at 12.6%, placing young people at risk of workforce exclusion or disconnection.⁴ The World Economic Forum reported that 52% of employers expect their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to focus on Gen Z youth,⁵ acknowledging that young people are both vulnerable to exclusion and central to future workforce renewal.

Women face less career support and fewer opportunities to advance as companies around the world showed a declining commitment to women's progress.⁶ Only half of the world's companies prioritized women's career advancement, as some scaled back support such as remote work and targeted career development.⁷

Barriers remain significant for mature workers. For example, across the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development), employment rates averaged 75.7% for those aged 55–59, 56.5% for ages 60–64 and 26.4% for those 65 and over.⁸ At the same time, AI and workforce redesign increased the pressure on employers to rethink job structures and skill development more broadly on a global scale. For the world's mature workers, this raises a practical challenge: as jobs evolve, re-entry to the workforce increasingly depends upon access to reskilling, healthier work options, flexibility and second-chance pathways that recognize the transitions that workers need to make in later life.

A further feature of 2025 was that inclusion infrastructure became less stable in some settings. In some organizations, the support that helps underserved populations advance or remain attached to work weakened at precisely the moment technological and demographic change made them more necessary.

The ecosystem that supports and enables these populations to succeed also came under strain. One-third of the world's nonprofits experienced at least one government funding disruption, and affected organizations were more likely to suspend programs, reduce staff and cut future hiring.⁹ When the architecture of training providers, intermediaries, community organizations and wraparound services becomes less stable, employability gaps can widen, even in an otherwise resilient labor market.

All of this has sharpened the case for the Innovation Foundation's role. The Foundation's contribution is to help design and test practical, human-centered responses where traditional systems are falling short – whether through flexible employability models, stronger skills pathways, employer-facing innovation or cross-sector partnerships that reconnect people to decent work. 2025 should be read not only as a year of global labor market pressure, but as a call for more intentional, evidence-based and scalable inclusion infrastructure.

2025 Labor market challenges

- Global youth unemployment is estimated to be at 12.6%
- Only half of companies prioritized women's career development, as they pulled back on the flexibility, advocacy and advancement structures previously in place.
- AI and workforce redesign increased pressure on employers to rethink job structures and skill development more broadly.
- DEI infrastructure itself became less stable in some settings.
- One-third of nonprofits experienced at least one government funding disruption.

63%

of employers said skill gaps were the biggest barrier to business transformation

85%

of employers plan to prioritize workforce upskilling

52%

of employers are focusing DEI efforts on Gen Z youth

Only

75.7%

of those aged 55–59 are in employment

1. ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2025. Historically low global unemployment level of 5%... persistent decent work deficits around the world. <https://researchrepository.ilo.org/esploro/outputs/report/World-employment-and-social-outlook-Trends/995632443102676#file-0>

2. Future of Jobs Report 2025. Skill gaps are categorically considered the biggest barrier to business transformation by Future of Jobs Survey respondents. https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_Report_2025.pdf

3. Lightcast Talent Intelligence Speed of Skill Change. Why smarter, faster, and more future-ready workforce decisions start with external context. <https://lightcast.io/why-lightcast/talent-intelligence>.

4. ILO World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025. Abstract. <https://researchrepository.ilo.org/esploro/outputs/report/World-employment-and-social-outlook-Trends/995632443102676>

5. Workforce strategies chapter. 'Gen Z' youth... are the third most considered group. [https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/4-workforce-strategies/McKinsey Women in the Workplace 2025](https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2025/in-full/4-workforce-strategies/McKinsey%20Women%20in%20the%20Workplace%202025). Introduction. [https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/women-in-the-workplace#/Urban Institute report](https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/women-in-the-workplace#/Urban%20Institute%20report). A third of nonprofits reported experiencing federal, state, or local government funding disruptions. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/how-government-funding-disruptions-affected-nonprofits-early-2025>

6. OECD Pensions at a Glance 2025: Employment rates of older workers. Key messages. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pensions-at-a-glance-2025_e40274c1-en/full-report/employment-rates-of-older-workers-and-gender-gaps_cb8a2f7b.html

7. Urban Institute report. A third of nonprofits reported experiencing federal, state, or local government funding disruptions. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/how-government-funding-disruptions-affected-nonprofits-early-2025>

Innovation Foundation at a glance, Why

We are focused



Our vision

A world where everyone can access and stay in work.



Our mission

To create real world solutions that boost employability and access to labor markets for underserved people.



Our values

We lead by example and foster courage, creativity, and inclusiveness in everything we do.

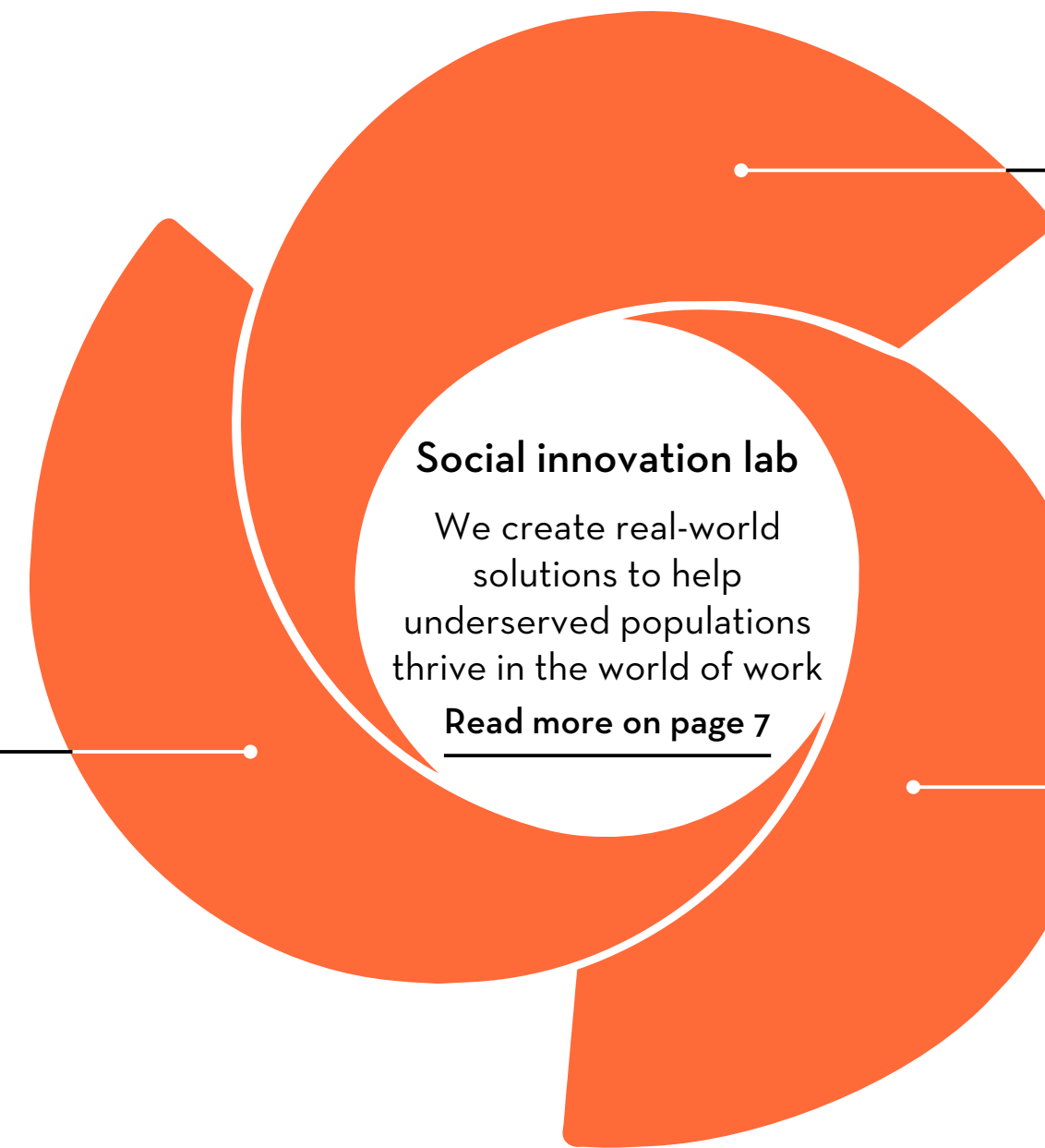


We drive social innovation



Scan

We use data and field research to identify underserved populations and the barriers they face regarding work.



Social innovation lab

We create real-world solutions to help underserved populations thrive in the world of work

[Read more on page 7](#)



Build

We leverage design thinking and field testing to co-create solutions, then create Venture Teams to turn the most promising ones into real products.



Scale

We then scale the products beyond the original geography and target audience, spinning them out of the Foundation and into partner organizations or as stand-alone entities.

We design from the ground up

Our activities

Since the Innovation Foundation was formed in 2017, our unique Scan, Build, Scale methodology has helped us create practical solutions that enable underserved people to access work and build a secure future.

Our current projects

Youth@Risk

Young people are often excluded from work because they lack skills, competencies and experience. Our Youth@Risk project focuses on pathways to work and skills gained from lived experience.

[Discover the latest on our Youth@Risk project on page 9](#)

Women Back to Work

Women returning to work after a career break face many challenges in accessing job opportunities, but our solutions can help overcome them by testing and showcasing transferrable skills.

[Find out more about the progress we made this year on page 10](#)

Mature Workers

Financial pressures are forcing many people to work longer, but finding work can be especially challenging for those over 50. Our Mature Workers project helps people over 50 to re-enter work by repositioning the value they bring.

[Read more about our work on page 12](#)



A new way to drive change

Adecco Group's purpose is to make the future work for everyone, and through our global Innovation Foundation and our five national foundations, we turn that purpose into action for underserved populations- powered by innovation, inclusion and the agility advantage.

The Innovation Foundation isn't a typical corporate foundation, or a grant-giving organization, incubator or accelerator. We operate as a Social Innovation Lab with a complementary mission and purpose to the Adecco Group, but we approach things in our own unique way.

We recognized that many people facing economic or social barriers were struggling to enter or re-enter the labor market and did not always have access to tools that would help them break through. So, by co-designing solutions with and for end users, we began working to push the boundaries of what a corporate foundation can do by operating more like a "venture studio for society".

How we align with the Adecco Group

As the global foundation of the Adecco Group, the Innovation Foundation plays a unique role in advancing the Group's mission of making the future work for everyone. We demonstrate the Adecco Group's approach to philanthropy through our core mission to help people in underserved populations become more employable and have greater access to labor markets. And we make our partners, both organizations and practitioners, more powerful by sharing our unique methodology, best practice, know-how and insights from the ground. By leveraging the reach, insight and expertise of the Adecco Group, we're able to deepen our impact and, in turn, raise the profile of the Group by designing and scaling inclusive, human-centered solutions that create opportunities and help underserved people find new pathways into work.

1

We create our solutions through a unique Scan, Build and Scale methodology that focuses on the challenges and needs of underserved people. We don't give grants, incubate start-ups or accelerate external ideas.



2

The input of end users, experts and partners is built in to our designs at every stage of the production process.



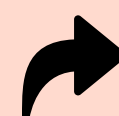
3

All our solutions are designed to be taken forward by others. So everything we do is built to spin off to a partner or as a stand-alone entity.



4

We open-source our findings and make our methodology accessible to others so that our work continues to contribute to discussions on the future of work.



The evolution of the Innovation Foundation

After launching as The Adecco Group's first global-level corporate foundation in 2017, we recognized the potential to use this vehicle differently to drive scalable, lasting impact. In 2020, we moved away from running a range of legacy programs and projects, narrowing our mission: to help underserved populations increase their employability and access labor markets to secure sustainable livelihoods. This took us in a new direction to become a fundamentally different type of organization. One with its own identity, specific methodology and totally new approach to corporate philanthropy.

- What would later become the Innovation Foundation was initially formed as the Adecco Group Foundation. It took over the management of several global social impact programs and projects already established by the Group, including Win4Youth and CEO for One Month, also covering areas such as disability and humanitarian assistance.
- In 2020, we agreed with the board to transform into a Social Innovation Lab with a new mission and a clear focus: to help underserved populations increase their employability and access to labor markets.



- The Innovation Foundation was officially launched as a new kind of organization, more like a venture studio for society.
- We began our **Women Back to Work** project to support women returning to the labor market after a career break for caring responsibilities.



- **Women Back to Work** was tested in new markets—Mexico, the Netherlands and the UK—again within the hospitality industry, while further testing was conducted in Spain.
- We started building our **Mature Workers** solution.
- Our partner YouthBuild Mexico took on the day-to-day running of **Youth@Risk** and managed a successful local expansion, scaling and funding a continuing roll-out that has brought the solution to 44 sites.
- **Youth@Risk** scaled into Brazil.

2017

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

- In 2021, we changed our name to the Innovation Foundation and developed branding for our new identity.
- We also changed our operating model, recruiting new people and reskilling existing ones to pursue our new mission.
- Governance was revised, with two external board members added to bring broader representation and an outside-in perspective.
- Our funding also changed, to include an annual gift from the Adecco Group, in addition to the original endowment.
- We began our **Youth@Risk** project to increase the employability of young mothers who have dropped out of school and work and are living on or below the poverty line on the fringes of urban areas. This was the first project to be planned from scratch using the new Scan, Build, Scale model.

- We began our **Mature Workers** project to help unemployed people over age 50 to re-enter work, focusing specifically on men from the trades.
- **Youth@Risk** began to roll out with a pilot in Mexico City, which reached over 2 million people.
- **Women Back to Work** designed two initial solutions, Yosotras and Para Ti.

- We scaled **Youth@Risk** in Mexico, which reached 19 cities by the end of the year, proving that the solution is sustainable, scalable and valuable.
- Pilots of the **Women Back to Work** Para Ti solution began in Spain.

- Further refine the Scan, Build, Scale methodology.
- Establish a new training mechanism—the Foundry—to increase uptake and application of our methodology and help users magnify their own social impact or engage directly with our projects.
- Enhance the team and model the kind of organization we need to be.
- Share what we do with the Adecco Group and other stakeholders.

Our methodology



Scan

In the Scan phase, we identify key trends that are forcing groups of people out of the labor market and the barriers that hold them back from finding meaningful work. From these findings, we identify the drivers, personas and the areas that are ripe for development.

Our data

We gain our insights by analyzing public, proprietary, social and field-based data, talking to both experts and end users. We then use that data to shape our designs.

1. Mapping

High-level global trend mapping indicates which trends are pushing people into a higher risk of long-term unemployment and labor inactivity.

2. Distilling

We use heatmapping and observations on the ground to identify white spaces for deeper research as well as weak spots in our research.

3. Sense testing

We analyze gaps in the data. This results in a long list of “how might we” challenge statements. We then explore existing solutions and look for where systems and solutions are broken.

4. Calibrating

It is important that our goals are achievable and practical, so once we have a short list of possible challenge statements, we apply a set of filters to narrow the “how might we” questions to determine which are the best fit for the Foundation. These are:

- Scale: Is the issue significant enough in scale? Are its implications widespread and profound?
- Future orientation: Is the topic likely to remain relevant in the medium to long term?
- Urgency/momentousness: Is the identified topic pressing in today’s context? Will there be far-reaching consequences if we do not tackle this issue now?
- Gaps in solutions: Are there enough solutions available for this topic, and what gaps need to be filled?
- Scalability: Are the potential solutions around this topic likely to be scaled to other populations and worldwide?

5. Validating

We make sure our challenge statements are relevant by testing with different stakeholder groups.



Build

In the Build phase, we prototype and test solutions that respond to the challenges we identified in the Scan phase. We work in close collaboration with our partners on the ground.

Project Working Groups

Our multi-stakeholder Project Working Groups ideate initial solution concepts using human-centric design and systems thinking.

Testing and focus groups

Our testing and focus groups trial the proposed solutions so we can make sure our designs are practical and impactful, narrowing down the most promising ones.

Prototyping

We choose the most promising solutions and then build them out via Venture Teams, made up of a Venture Lead and Fellows.

Sprints

Working in sprints, we build, test and prioritize solutions to create working prototypes – basic versions that can be tested with end users.

Market testing and refinement follow, with the creation of a roadmap showing how the solution can survive, thrive and scale to be used beyond the Foundation. This stage culminates in Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) that are ready to be scaled.



Scale

In the Scale phase, we prove that our solutions can scale first in the original context, then to new target audiences and geographies. We continually feed our learnings and insights back into our work, helping us develop better and more effective solutions.

Spin-off

Then, we must prove that our ventures can spin off from the Foundation, either into partners (non-profit or for-profit) or as stand-alone entities. In addition, we must ensure they will thrive and continue to scale sustainably without our support and involvement.

Partner recruitment

Everything we do involves partners along the way. These are not donor relationships, and we do not pay partners for implementation. Rather, these are true partnerships with shared investment and benefits. We choose different partners at various stages, based on what we want to achieve. We are always looking to collaborate with partners who share our passion and bring the complementary expertise and reach that will help us create and scale innovative solutions.



Where we're focused

Bringing Pathways to Life



Through the Innovation Foundation, I have discovered many things I didn't think I was capable of."

Woman returner, Madrid

Where we operate

📍 Mexico | 📍 Brazil | 📍 UK | 📍 Netherlands | 📍 Spain



Youth@Risk

First launched in 2021, our **Youth@Risk** project is helping disadvantaged youth, and particularly young mothers, to imagine a new life for themselves. Started in Mexico, the solution is being scaled to new locations across Latin America.



I want to thank the Innovation Foundation for giving me the opportunity to discover my skills and feel confident.”

Young mother, Mexico City

Challenges for young people

For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, access to the world of work can be a challenge. A lack of opportunity for education, training, building networks and exposure to work leaves many with a skills and experience gap, which damages their confidence and makes accessing work harder still.



Identifying whom to design for

To find the young people who most need help, we used our Scan methodology to analyze data, complemented by our own field work. This enabled us to identify youth most in danger of never joining the workforce. We then helped them to see a pathway they could take into work where they could showcase the skills they already have.

To deliver impact, solutions need to be grounded in evidence and context, not shaped around assumptions. Based on extensive field research interviews with young people and relevant stakeholders, we defined a target group to design for: young mothers aged 16-24, not in education, employment or training (NEET), at or below the poverty threshold and living on the fringes of Mexico City. The challenges were:

1. Little credible information about pathways into work.
2. Difficulty recognizing and showcasing the skills and competencies they already had.



Building solutions

To address these challenges, we built two solutions.

1. A social campaign called Mamás Chingonas, developed in collaboration with YouthBuild Mexico, which used peer role models to help young mothers see possible pathways into work.
2. The SkillMap application, an AI-based solution developed with our tech partner SkillLab, which translates lived experiences into employable skills and creates a CV.



Scaling our impact

We scaled during 2024, hand in hand with our local partner, YouthBuild Mexico. This resulted in 19 active sites, engaging over 5,000 young mothers to take action toward employment.

During 2025, YouthBuild Mexico continued to scale on its own, without further staff or the financial involvement of the Innovation Foundation. The result was an expansion to 44 sites. This has proved that the solution is sustainable, scalable and valuable enough to attract external funding.

While YouthBuild Mexico was scaling domestically, the Innovation Foundation scaled the solution into Brazil, where for the first time we worked with two new partners – one in Sao Paulo and one in Rio de Janeiro. This second phase built on the learnings gained from Mexico and careful localization with our new partners, Centro de Promoção da Saúde (CEDAPS) and United Way Brasil. Two of the scaling partners are affiliated with YouthBuild Global and all three are associated with the Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN). With the addition of these partners, we now have more global networks through which we can scale.

Our solutions have been a great benefit not only to end-users but also to our partners. These local organizations often work with limited resources. Our projects give them access to more sophisticated technology, which allows them to work with more powerful solutions and benefit from the ability to measure impact in a credible way. In turn, our partners are more attractive to funders, who increasingly look for powerful technology and social media solutions that are easier to scale with limited resources.

Our vision for the future

Building on the learnings from Mexico and Brazil, we plan to develop a more globally scalable model. This will consist of the core campaign and tech tool, bundled with all the considerations for localization (for example, language, culture, ecosystem, partners, labor market and more).

[Discover our Youth@Risk end users here →](#)



Women Back to Work

The **Women Back to Work** Project is helping women at the mid- and low-skill level re-enter work after a career break. This year, we began scaling the project to new geographies and cross-over audiences.

The challenges women returners face

In general, people returning to work after a career break face bias and discrimination. Women returners often face another challenge, as many workplaces do not flex to accommodate caring responsibilities. Those in mid-career (35-45) are often the “sandwich generation”, with young children and aging parents.

Understanding the barriers

In the Scan phase, we analyzed public, proprietary and field research data to create a persona as a guide when designing our solution. This persona is a woman with caregiving responsibilities who has some work experience and vocational skills but has spent an extended period of time outside the job market. She wants to re-enter into a role with more flexibility, and not the same kind of job she had in the past.

We decided to design a solution in Spain working collaboratively with our sister foundation.

Designing with empathy

The multi-stakeholder Working Group consisted of employers (including Marriott, Hilton, Dow and Microsoft), grassroots organizations and hiring experts. The ideation process yielded two solutions around which we built Venture Teams:

1. Yosotras: Community-based, peer-led groups providing emotional support, a light curriculum and a “train the trainer” model to empower facilitators from within the community.
2. Para Ti (“for you”): A digital platform that lets women state what they need to be successful (such as, part-time, flexible working, transport, and other considerations) and then uses AI-driven, online job simulations to showcase transferable skills.

Scaling with purpose: where we are now

At the end of the first design sprint, Yosotras was handed over to a local partner to take forward, rather than scaling within the Innovation Foundation.

The second solution, Para Ti, was developed with technology partner TaTiO, whose interactive job simulations to let women try new roles and prove their transferable skills and trainability. Pilots were launched with Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott.

In 2025, we repeated the Barcelona pilot, added one in Madrid, and began testing in new markets – Mexico, the Netherlands and the UK. We expanded within the hospitality industry and started exploring its use in other industries like retail and call centers.

Our vision for the future

To respond to changing market needs, we have experimented with rolling out the Para Ti solution to other demographics. A successful test with young people in Mexico being trained in hospitality yielded positive results. Other pilots are planned for South Korea and Morocco. If pilots continue to be successful, Para Ti may also become a component of the Mature Workers solution.

“Helping women return to work means recognizing the experience, resilience and potential they already bring – and creating pathways that make opportunity accessible again.”

Woman returner, Barcelona



← Find out more about Eloiza's story who was featured last year

Carolina's story

Carolina Caballero is from Paraguay, but has lived in Spain for over 15 years, in a municipality called Galapagar, northwest of Madrid. She took part in our **Yosotras** program, which uses community-based, peer-led groups that offer emotional support and skill-building, as they seek to re-enter work. She told us how it helped her to thrive in the workplace and enriched her daily life.



Now that I can count on the support of other women, I feel stronger.”

“The biggest challenge I faced in looking for work when I came to Spain was the lack of recognition of my qualifications here. I felt like I had to start from scratch. I also felt far removed from my family and my contacts back home. It was a pretty tough period.”

In the face of these disadvantages, Carolina says Yosotras gave her a lot of confidence and an opportunity to channel all the experience she gained back home in Paraguay into practice in Spain.

“Now that I can count on the support of other women, I feel stronger. Most of the women who have participated in this program are migrants, and this is a heavy backpack that we carry with us. Through Yosotras, we have had the opportunity to share our experiences in a safe space to see different ways to work together and strengthen our connections. Whether we are making contacts for employment or talking about our own lives, we feel understood and listened to.

“Being part of the team of Coordinadoras (local hosts of the groups) has given me a lot of confidence and also the opportunity to put into practice all the experience I have had in my country, because I have always worked in foundations, in NGOs. I have had this social sense for several years, and I like to put into practice participatory methodologies, which enable us to share our experiences and reach the objectives we are aiming for. The opportunity to be a Coordinadora has helped me to realize that I can not only learn and share knowledge about working but also learn about myself and apply that knowledge in my daily life.”

Carolina feels that Yosotras could also serve many other women.

“I would recommend the Yosotras program to all women because it is a valuable opportunity to feel that we are in an environment where we can be listened to, where we can feel free to express ourselves, where we will not be judged. I have been able to share my experiences and my learning, and also learn a lot myself. The most valuable thing that I have put into practice here is that I live the Yosotras program internally, and that is something super valuable for life itself.”

Q What sort of woman would make a good Yosotras Coordinadora?

A She should feel free to be the way she is, to be able to express what she feels, because all her experience and all her life background is very important and contributes to the enrichment of the program. I would say that because it's a very safe environment, it's an environment of trust and it's an environment where she can really be herself.

Q Could you summarize the experience of taking part in Yosotras in a word or a phrase?

A That is very difficult for me because several words come to mind. Synergy comes to mind, continuous learning, sharing—these are just a few. It's like feeling that we are no longer alone, but that we can do what we want and make our dreams a reality. It feels good knowing that we are also part of a powerful network of women. The experience I've had has been very varied and enriching, and each day was a new learning experience. So, if I had to choose one word from all of those, I would choose synergy.

See how we're helping women find new opportunities here.



← Check out Carolina's full story

Mature workers

Despite their valuable skills and experience, many **Mature Workers** who have been out of the job market struggle to re-enter the workforce. This threatens their financial security and well-being, and has knock-on effects for their families and communities. Our program aims to improve access to labor markets for mature workers and produce positive ripples of impact.



I was feeling lonely. This group approach is refreshing. I am not alone and I am happy that I now know a few people who are in a similar situation.”

Mature Worker, Glasgow

[Find out more about Graham's story →](#)



The emerging challenge

Many countries are experiencing a significant decline in employment growth, mainly due to an aging population. Although there is a need for talent and experience, workers over 50 increasingly find themselves shut out of the labor market. The trend is prevalent in the global north, and is already extending into emerging markets.



Scanning the landscape

Our initial Scan phase carried out primary research and surveys with mature workers globally. The findings were clear: many older adults leave work not by choice but due to structural shifts, and re-entry proves difficult, especially when switching industry or type of work. They struggle to find roles that match their competencies and circumstances, and many employers simply don't see their value. The core question became how to bridge the gap between reality and perception, showcasing the holistic value mature workers bring to employers and debunking the risk myths.

We created a persona of men between the ages of 50 and 65 who previously worked in a trade such as construction or manufacturing and had fallen out of work before pension age. We chose the north of England as a test bed due to high rates of unemployment in this demographic, particularly in post-industrial areas, and a strong interest from the government and civil society to help older working-age people return to work.

Our first round of ideation identified two solutions to prototype and test:

1. A peer-supported career coaching experience designed to replicate employer-paid career transition programs for those without access to them.

2. A tech tool that helps employers assess the return on investment of hiring mature workers compared to other talent pools, emphasizing the value of their transferable skills and lived experience and aligning with the coming shift toward skills-based hiring.

Product development began in 2024, and the two prototypes were pitched at the end of the year. However, the Pitch Committee and the Innovation Foundation Board decided that further research on employer pain points and UK-specific labor market trends would make the outcomes stronger. The Venture Team's work was paused and a new round of research and ideation was conducted during the first half of 2025.



Build 2.0

With new learnings and insights, we decided to create a cohort-based “personal accelerator” program, to be co-designed with local Job Centres in the UK.

The new “Launchpad” solution identifies the valuable transferable skills mature workers can offer to employers and repackages them into a compelling narrative. It works with and through the Job Centre coaches, building their capacity and letting them focus more on the human aspect of support and confidence-boosting.

Across our three projects, we see that there are opportunities to apply previous learnings and solutions to new target audiences, creating additional scaling of social impact. Mature Workers is the first project to cross-leverage previous solutions (SkillLab and Para Ti) to serve a new user group, showing the adaptability of our solutions and the potential to scale their impact.

* <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/employment-and-social-trends-2026>

Who we work with

Collaboration for Impact

“

Equipping others to use our model is key to scalable impact.”

Cynthia Hansen
Managing Director, Innovation Foundation

Meet our fellows

Innovation Foundation Fellows are high-performing professionals, researchers or entrepreneurs selected to join our Venture Teams, gaining real-world experience of venture-building and social innovation. Here, we talk to two Fellows who have completed the program. They found that the tools and methodologies we use have enhanced the way they work and recognized the Innovation Foundation as a model for achieving positive change at scale.



Nivea Virgolino Junior Services and Quality Manager, Adecco Brazil

Q How did working with the Innovation Foundation change how you approach your work?

A The Scan, Build and Scale methodology helped me shift from ideation to execution with much more discipline. It taught me how to design solutions that are not only innovative but also realistic, testable and applicable in a business context. Working in an HQ environment, I often design with a single market or reality in mind. Being part of Innovation Foundation pushed me to consistently ask: Can this work beyond Adecco? Can it scale across different countries, maturity levels and operational realities? This scalability lens has become a default in how I structure solutions internally at Adecco.

The Foundation also showed me the power of building an impact chain. I learned that meaningful change doesn't happen in isolation, it requires intentionally engaging both internal and external stakeholders. Innovation Foundation helped me understand how to connect people, capabilities and partnerships to create systemic and lasting improvements in the world of work.

Q Can you give an example of this?

A A very concrete example is the app we are currently developing at Adecco Brazil. My learnings from working with the Innovation Foundation have influenced every stage of this project. From the beginning, we started by scanning the market to gain a deeper understanding of user needs, rather than jumping straight into solution design. We continuously validated our assumptions and involved recruiters, candidates and clients throughout the process, especially during prototype validation, fully applying the Innovation Foundation design thinking and experimentation mindset. Although we designed the app with the Brazilian market in mind, we deliberately structured it with scalability in focus. As a result, we have already mapped out how this solution could be adapted and expanded to other countries in the region, aligning with Adecco's broader strategic vision.

“The Foundation also showed me the power of building an impact chain. I learned that meaningful change doesn't happen in isolation.”

Q How did working with the Innovation Foundation change how you approach your work?

A One of the most important shifts for me was how I approach large, complex problems in systems with multiple stakeholders. I learned how to slow down in the right moments to better understand each partner's perspective, create shared understanding and then confidently bring people together around a way of working. The real change was learning how to move towards decisive action without needing certainty on everything, building enough alignment to move forward while accepting that ambiguity will always be part of the system.

Q Can you give an example of this?

A I applied this directly when redesigning the annual planning process for career transition at Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH). I designed and delivered a collaborative planning process that brought together the full team and key stakeholders to jointly set strategic direction and priorities. Rather than defining the strategy by myself in isolation, I created a process that gave other stakeholders across the system a genuine seat at the table. I've since applied the same approach to other initiatives, including the redesign of our career resource network and the development of a new AI-powered career assistant that is now a core LHH product.

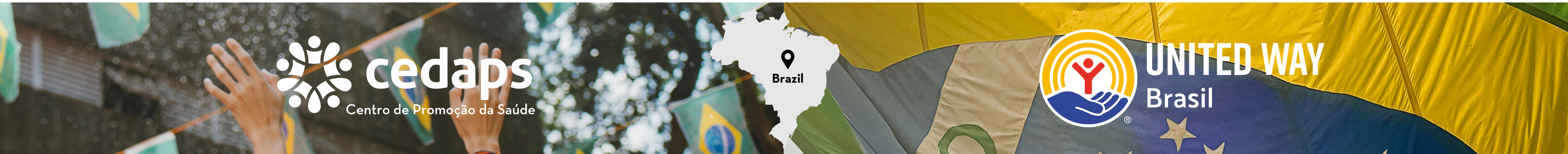


David Scicluna formerly Senior Innovation Project Manager, Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH). Now Experience and Design Lead, Innovation Foundation

“The real change was learning how to move towards decisive action without needing certainty on everything, building enough alignment to move forward while accepting that ambiguity will always be part of the system.”

A closer look at how we collaborate

Off the back of our successful pilot in Mexico, we are working with two new partners to scale Youth@Risk into Brazil.



→ [Find out more about CEDAPS here](#)

→ [Find out more about UWB here](#)

Q What projects are you working on with the Innovation Foundation?

A Under the umbrella of the Youth@Risk project, we have adapted the original Mamas Chingonas solution to the Brazilian context. One is called Vou Brotar, a self-awareness workshop designed to improve young people's confidence and employability by helping them recognize that they have already developed useful, transferable job skills through everyday life experiences. The other is an awareness campaign called Corre de Mãe (Mother's Dash), which aims to help young black mothers overcome barriers in the labor market by recognizing and valuing the skills they have developed through motherhood.

Q Why do these projects matter?

A Both address an important issue: the lack of opportunities for young people. At a critical stage of life, and in the face of multiple barriers related to race, gender, background and territory, it is essential that young people value their life journeys and experiences. We can help them do this with the use of Innovation Foundation AI tools, which were a key part of the Corre de Mãe campaign. Motherhood develops a range of soft skills that companies heavily invest in to help their employees build—so why are young mothers the ones who face the greatest difficulties in getting or keeping a job?

Q Have these projects succeeded?

A Both initiatives have been highly successful. The Vou Brotar workshops achieved a 100% participation rate and a 74% job placement rate, which are outstanding results. During our first workshop, held in the Borel favela, one of the young participants said: "Thanks to what I learned in Vou Brotar, I had a job interview today and got the position. I was able to identify my strengths and the areas I need to improve, and everything went much more smoothly during the interview!" This shows that the methodology can generate immediate results.

Q How has CEDAPS benefited from the partnership with the Innovation Foundation?

A It has brought new tools and a different perspective on how AI can spark positive change for disadvantaged young people. It has also taught us to rethink how we apply these technologies to help young people in Brazil become more employable.

Q What projects are you working on with the Innovation Foundation?

A We are also scaling Vou Brotar, an economic empowerment program for young mothers, focused on young women aged 15 to 30. The program includes socio-emotional development training, mental health and positive parenting content, and entrepreneurship education, alongside technical training in the beauty sector. It uses the SkillLab platform to identify skills, help mothers write effective CVs and offer access to career pathways and professional training opportunities.

Q Why does this project matter?

A This project is important because it gives disadvantaged young mothers greater access to the job market. In Brazil, three out of four families with children in early childhood are cared for by single mothers, and 43% have no source of income. Many of these young women lack confidence in their own abilities and face the challenge of trying to balance motherhood, education and work. By giving these women socio-emotional development, technical training and connections to professional opportunities, we can boost their confidence and employability to give them a better chance of earning a fair income.

Q Has the project succeeded?

A Vou Brotar has demonstrated significant results, empowering 92 young mothers aged 15-30, all of whom completed the program. By December 2025, 84% said the program had either expanded their knowledge, given them more work opportunities or had already helped them find jobs. By the end of 2025, 10 mothers had started working. One participant gained the confidence to begin offering beauty services independently and was exploring opening up her own beauty studio.

Q How has United Way Brasil benefited from the partnership with the Innovation Foundation?

A It has significantly strengthened our work by expanding our capacity to generate social impact and provide real opportunities for young mothers in vulnerable situations. The collaboration has given us access to tools and solutions that help young mothers increase their employability and professional development, improving both the results and the overall reach of our work.

Collaboration at our core

Our collaboration with CEDAPS and United Way Brasil highlight the important role that partnerships play in making our solutions a success. At every step of the process, we collaborate with a diverse network of partners, from NGOs and tech providers to implementation specialists and employers. The Social Innovation Lab model gives us the flexibility to work with different partners at all stages of the process, based on what each brings to the table. This means we can be laser-focused on what we want to achieve. These partnerships are built on collaboration and mutual investment of different types of resources, not transactional relationships or a donor-recipient dynamic. We believe that true partnership delivers better, more scalable results, ensuring we create shared value.

→ Interested in partnering with us? [Contact us here](#)

Our 2025 project and implementation partners

Institutional Partners



Contributors



National Foundations

We work closely with the five national Adecco Group Foundations.

France

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

FONDATION
THE ADECCO GROUP
Abritée par la Fondation de France

Germany

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

Adecco Stiftung

Italy

Fondazione Adecco
fondazioneadecco.org/

FONDAZIONE ADECCO
THE ADECCO GROUP

Spain

Fundación Adecco
fundacionadecco.org/

FUNDACIÓN ADECCO

USA

The Adecco Group US Foundation
www.adeccogroupfoundationus.org/

THE ADECCO GROUP
US FOUNDATION

Our 2025 Board

Our Board draws on the experience and skills of a diverse group of individuals from different backgrounds, sectors and industries to steer the strategy of the Foundation.

→ [See more about our Board here](#)



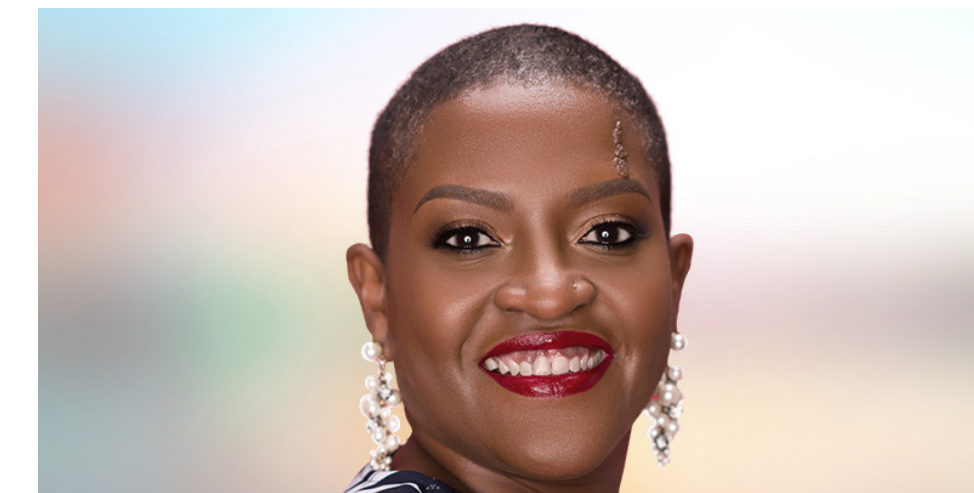
Jean-Christophe Deslarzes

Chair of the Innovation Foundation Board



Daniela Seabrook

Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



Ory Okolloh

Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



Rob James

Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



Virginia Wilson

Member of the Innovation Foundation Board

Our 2025 team

Our Team is the fuel that powers the Innovation Foundation, bringing together diverse expertise, experience and perspectives to drive delivery and impact.

→ [See more about our team here](#)



Cynthia Hansen

Managing Director



Camila Müller

Operations Manager



Garrett McKenna

Senior Brand &
Communications Manager



Shareena Hatta

Head of Innovation Lab



David Scicluna

Experience and Design Lead



Kaithline Larmigny

Innovation Project Manager



Lidia Lafoz

Research Specialist



Sonia Franzetti

Team Coordinator - Admin



Vijay Raju

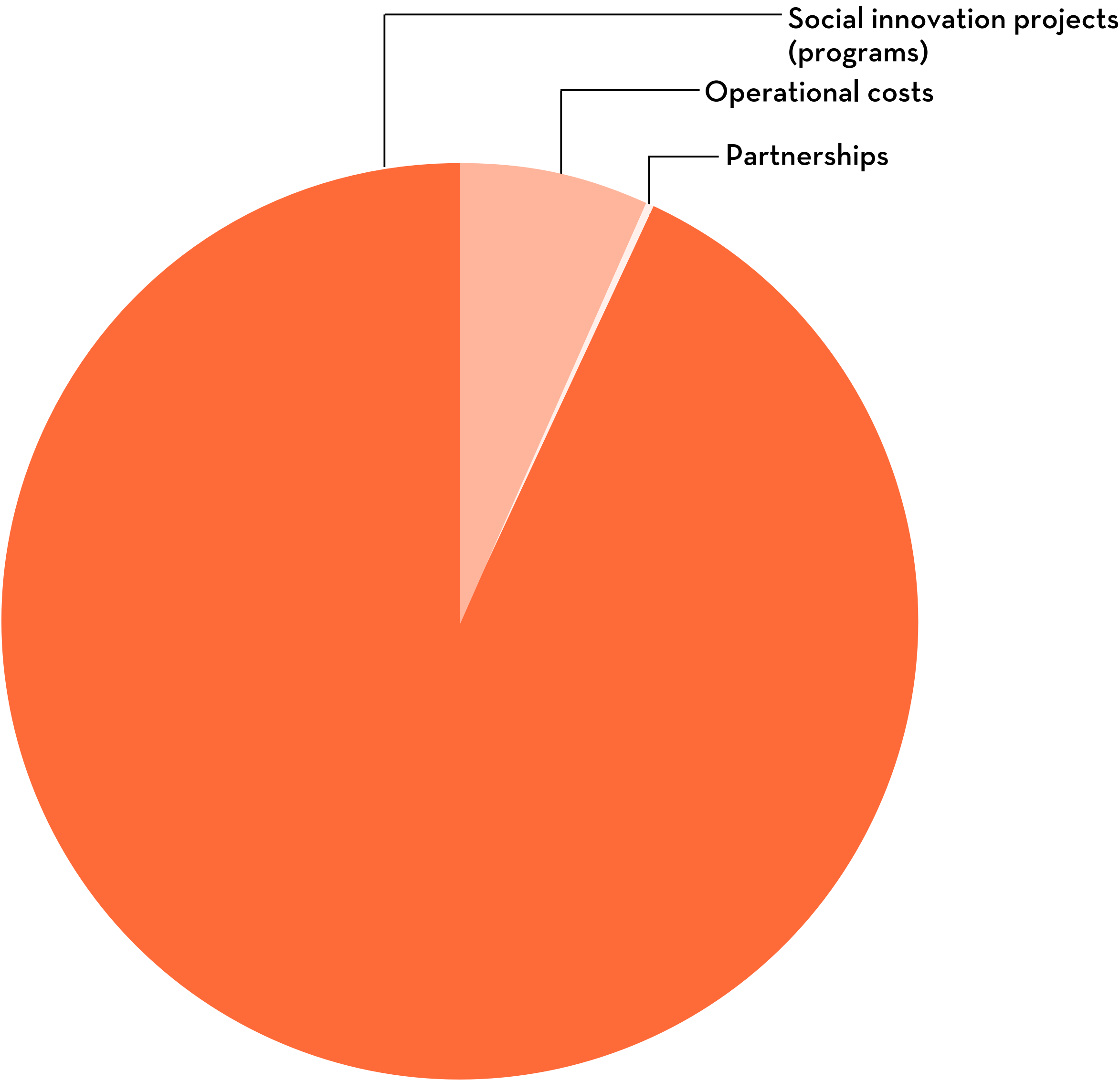
Entrepreneur in Residence

Our financial information

Our expenditure suits the evolving needs of our three ongoing projects as they pass through the Scan, Build and Scale stages of our methodology.

For the period ended 31 December (in CHF)	2025	2024	2023
Contributions*	1,109	4,787,019	4,993,386
Partnerships	(13,792)	(11,640)	(13,487)
Programs	(2,981,249)	(3,110,720)	(3,163,473)
Administrative expenses	(188,962)	(228,212)	(229,666)
Financial income/(expenses), net	25,450	232,547	86,605
Net income/(loss)	(3,157,444)	1,668,994	1,673,365

* Considering IF's significant endowment, contributions from the Adecco Group have been temporarily paused.



What is coming next?

The Innovation Foundation has pioneered a completely new approach to corporate philanthropy and demonstrated its ability to create measurable impact. Only by sharing can we truly scale our impact.

As mentioned, the focus of our last strategic cycle (2021-25) was to establish and prove the viability of the Social Innovation Lab model. Going forward, the focus of the 2026-30 strategic cycle will be two-fold:

1. Scale the impact of the lab solutions.
2. Equip other practitioners and organizations to use our approach to drive their own social innovation.

Key priorities for 2026

Further refine the **Scan, Build, Scale** methodology, particularly using generative AI to improve the Scan capability



Establish a new training mechanism - the Foundry -

To train social innovation practitioners and organizations into our methodology. This will allow them to use it for their own purposes, and for us to talent spot people and partners to bring into our projects

Evolve the team, organizational structure and culture to equip us to deliver the impact we envision





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