



# Making a difference

Annual Report 2021



innovation  
foundation

EMPOWERED BY  
THE ADECCO GROUP



# Together we ask what **if**?

The world of work is changing rapidly, and it is important that no one is left behind. At the Innovation Foundation, we are removing the barriers that prevent millions from finding meaningful work.

By focusing on real challenges that underserved populations face, we are scanning the landscape and building and scaling practical solutions, services and ways of working that have big impacts on employability and access to labour markets.

But it all starts with a single question: what IF?

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 When you see this symbol, it means you can click on the link!

# An introduction from our leadership

Jean-Christophe Deslarzes and Cynthia Hansen

## Dear stakeholders,

Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 crisis, an economic downturn and growing social unrest, 2021 was a year of turmoil and change. As the Adecco Group research showed, the Great Resignation led to more vulnerable people dropping out of the workforce, including women, young people, those with disabilities and others in precarious situations. At the same time, many people pivoted to new ways of working, into new jobs, and a greater integration of work and life. But not everyone was at the positive end of the change. Thus, there is an ever greater need to understand who is falling out of the workforce and the deeper reasons behind this. Only by working from the ground up with an array of stakeholders can we create appropriate, sustainable solutions to keep people in work or help them re-enter. This requires new ways of working and new kinds of collaboration.

## Refined focus

In response to this changing context and the danger of leaving people behind, in 2021 the Adecco Group Foundation transformed into the new Innovation Foundation. This evolution entailed a tightening and narrowing of focus, resulting in a new strategy, organizational structure and cultural evolution. We moved from a broad mix of activities around employability and wellbeing to a crisper focus on

**employability and access to labour markets for underserved populations as a means of securing sustainable livelihoods.** In addition, the Board agreed that we would move away from running legacy projects and operate as a Social Innovation Lab. Thus, we spent 2021 spinning up and off the legacy pieces including Win4Youth, Workforce Vitality, CEO for One Month, the ICRC Career Development Programme, the Young Musicians Training Programme as well as Thought Leadership. At the same time, we continued to flesh out the Social Innovation Lab, bookending the projects with the new Social Radar and Accelerator, creating the end-to-end “Scan, Build and Scale” model.

## New name and identity

With the refined focus came a desire to reshape the identity of the Foundation placing people and innovation squarely at the centre, strategically as well as visually. The new name and recurring “What IF?” questions came as a result of our brand-tightening workshops. The resulting look, feel, and name reflect the warmth, direct gaze, human connection and provocative questioning that are at the heart of who we are and what we do.

## New ways of working

In order to achieve the impact we want, we equipped ourselves with a strong team and the appropriate governance. We were pleased to welcome our first



two external board members, Ory Okolloh and Virginia Wilson. Also, as we pivoted to work as the Social Innovation Lab, we upskilled the team expertise in design thinking, systems thinking, theory of change and agile working. We committed to regularly review our composition, structure and practices, KPIs and impact measurement to ensure we spend our capital (financial, human and social) most effectively to drive the change and results our stakeholders need and want. We are also forging closer ties with all parts of the Adecco Group to continue to benefit from the immense know-how and to share back our learnings, insights and ways of working.

## Where we go from here

As we go forward from 2022 onward, we have an exciting pipeline of projects on Youth@Risk, Women

Back to Work and older workers. An impactful future hinges on collaboration and complementarity, as no entity can create this change alone. We invite you to be part of this journey.

Yours sincerely,

**Jean-Christophe Deslarzes**  
Chair of the Foundation Board

**Cynthia Hansen**  
Managing Director

What **if** my  
past didn't  
define my  
future?

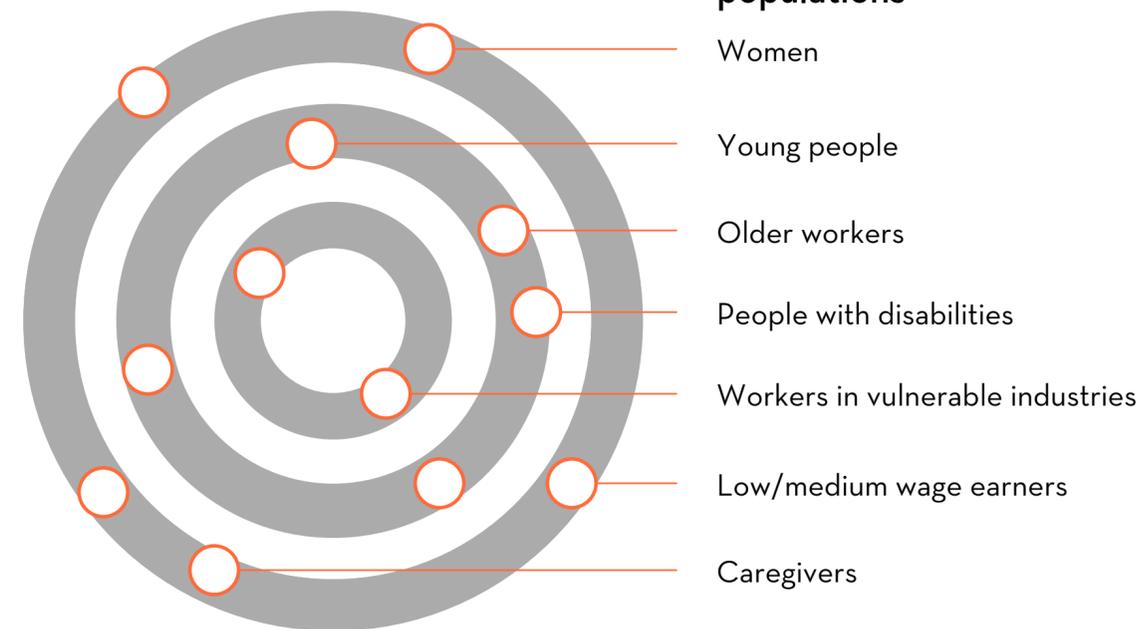
# Identifying the gaps in the labour market

In a world where the future of work is evolving quicker than ever before, people have to adapt, pivot, reskill, and make their way. However, not everyone has access to structures of support, opportunity, connections, or resources to do this. Many people are falling out of the workforce, struggling to re-enter it, or unable to find the foothold to enter it in the first place. These people are not being seen, not being considered, and are being left behind.

### Market challenges:

- A lack of investment of time, people, money and effort to find solutions to keep underserved populations in the workforce or to help them enter or re-enter it
- Limitations of short-termism, election cycles, and competing stakeholder priorities

## From a challenging landscape...



**5.4%**

2019 (pre-pandemic) global unemployment rate

→ **6.3%**

2021 global unemployment rate

**220 million**

unemployed people, globally, in 2021

## ...to a new future of work

### Together we asked

- Who speaks up for these underserved populations?
- Who invests in them?
- Who listens - really listens - to what they have to say?
- Who analyses the challenges they face in order to develop viable solutions with and for them?



### The Innovation Foundation

This is where the Innovation Foundation comes in. We saw a gap in the landscape and an opportunity for underserved populations. 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.

# Why if?

## 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 in everything we do.

## We create end-to-end solutions

**Accelerating social innovation**  
As a Social Innovation Lab, we create practical solutions that identify and remove the barriers that currently prevent underserved populations from thriving in the working world. Our solutions are designed to be shared, and are taken out into the world with the right partners on the ground.

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

**We build.**  
Our Innovation Space creates prototype social solutions to address employability barriers, head-on.

**We scale.**  
Our Accelerator develops the products to the point they can be taken forward by partners.

**Building strong partnerships and real-world solutions**

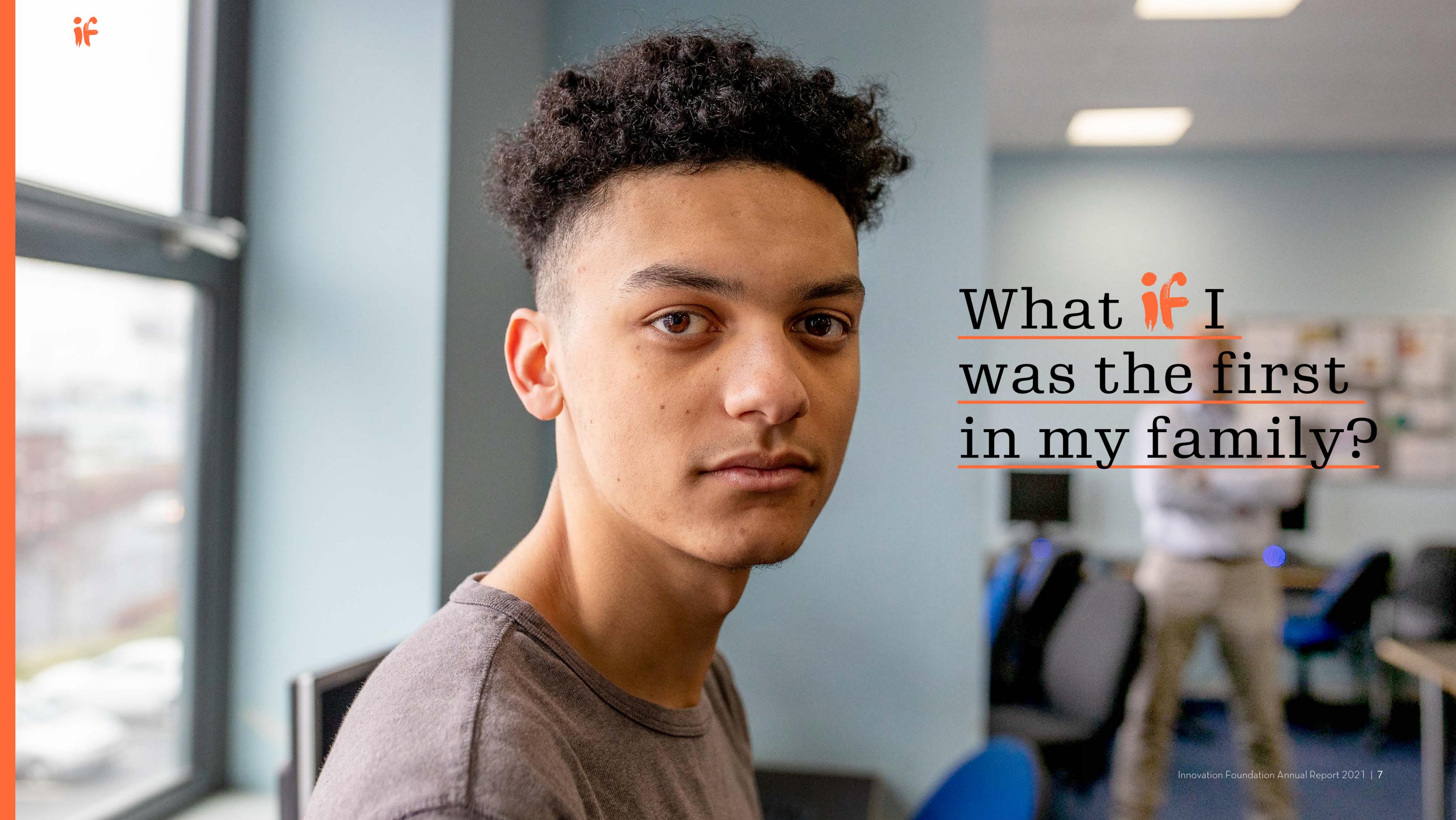
We invite innovative partners to join us in turning insights into action and taking our most promising prototypes to the places where they can have the most impact. This collaboration is what makes real change possible.

## We never stop

**Where we are and where we are going**

2021 was an important year of change and growth at the Innovation Foundation. We implemented a new strategy, as agreed with the Board in November 2020. We tightened our focus on helping underserved populations create sustainable livelihoods by enhancing employability and labour market access. As a result, we are moving forward as a Social Innovation Lab with our own unique Scan, Build, Scale methodology, working alongside a range of partners to drive sustainable solutions.

In 2022 we will continue to demonstrate the value of our approach to our stakeholders by showing how our solutions deliver measurable impact for underserved populations. By doing this we are also positively contributing to the global dialogue on the future of work, and evolving the role that corporate foundations can play in driving social impact.

A young man with dark, curly hair and a serious expression is looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a grey t-shirt. The background is a blurred office environment with desks, chairs, and a window on the left. The text 'What if I was the first in my family?' is overlaid on the right side of the image, with 'if' in orange and the rest in black. The text is underlined with a thin orange line.

What if I  
was the first  
in my family?

# Solutions for the changing world of work

The Innovation Foundation is not a typical foundation and we are not a grant-giving body. We are an active and dynamic organisation that creates positive social impact in a fast-paced world. Our practical solutions break down barriers to work and increase employability and access to the labour market for underserved populations.

The world of work is undergoing seismic changes. While some employers and employees adapt by reskilling, developing new talents and mastering emerging technologies, there are still millions of people battling to find and keep meaningful employment. Often the opportunities open to these people are limited by factors outside of their control. That is where we seek to create positive change. The Innovation Foundation is working to eliminate the structural obstacles people face in the labour market. With a series of successful programmes already in our portfolio, we are continuing to bring a unique approach to the field of social impact.

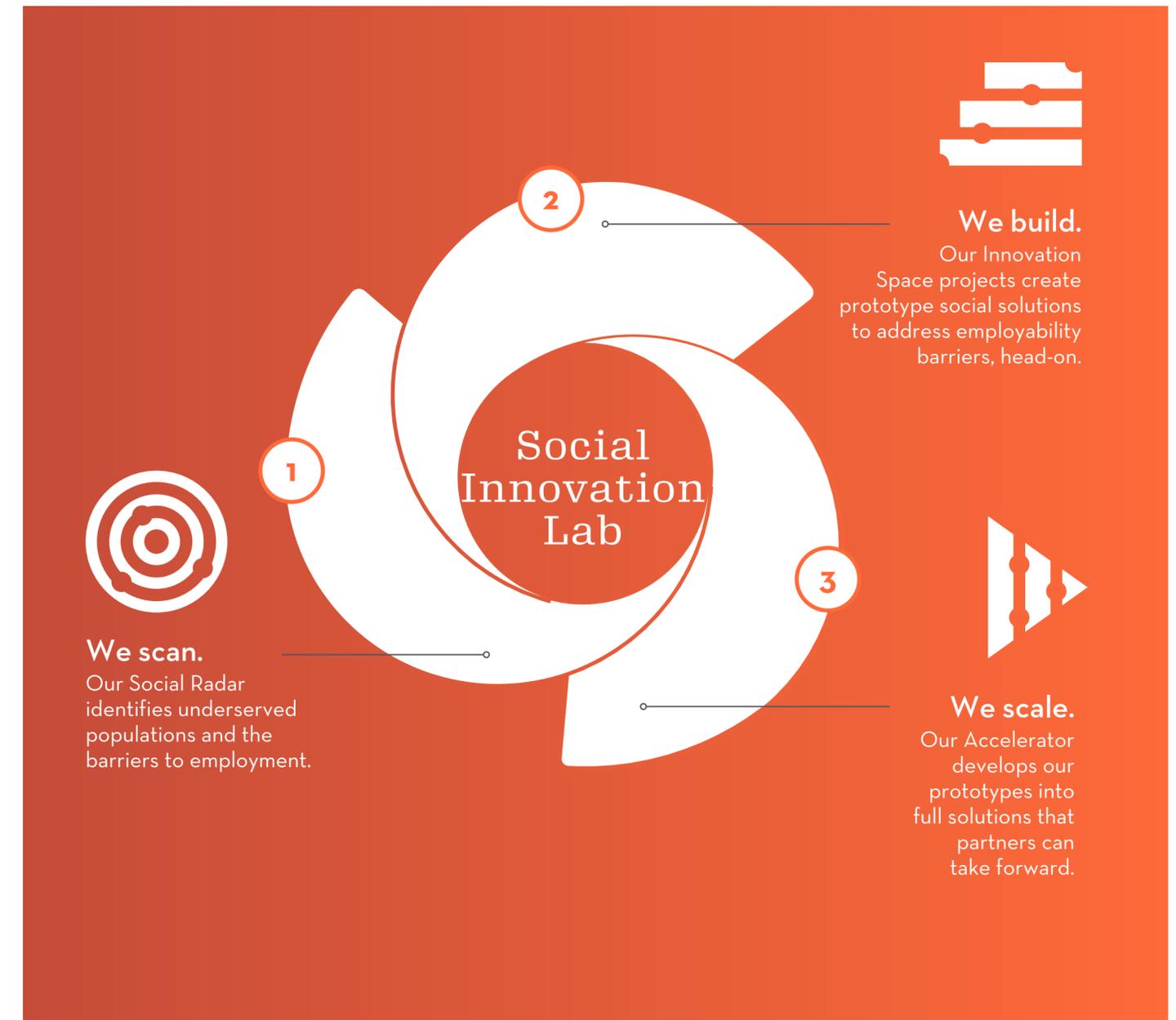
## Becoming the Innovation Foundation

Established in 2017 as the Adecco Group Foundation, we were originally structured as an umbrella for a number of legacy social impact programmes from the Adecco Group. Following a comprehensive review in 2020, we rebranded as the Innovation Foundation in alignment with our revised focus on increasing employability and access to labour markets for underserved populations.

Now working as a Social Innovation Lab, our goal is to incubate solutions that help traditionally overlooked groups build sustainable careers. Using our neutral platform to convene stakeholders and end-users, we design practical solutions with partners who can amplify their reach.

### Clear vision. Clear methodology. Clear impact.

At the heart of our work is our unique Scan, Build and Scale process. This data-driven approach allows us to ask the right questions, engage the right stakeholders and create and accelerate targeted tools and solutions that bring real, tangible everyday benefits to people all over the world.



# We scan

Our Social Radar searches and interprets data and insights to identify underserved populations and the barriers that keep them from thriving in the world of work.

In this initial phase, we aim to discover both under-addressed social issues that influence labour market access, as well as innovative solutions with the highest potential to positively impact underserved populations.

We use these insights to create recommendations for our social innovation project pipeline and the research agenda.

## Our data

The Social Radar uses a combination of public, proprietary, and social data feeds to generate the insights we need to create the most impactful solutions possible.

## The Braintrust

Our Braintrust is a group of experts with invaluable experience of working with data and a deep understanding of the challenges that underserved populations face. They represent a geographical and thematic diversity of insights, which helps to enrich the work we do. The Braintrust evaluates our data, shares knowledge, identifies potential trends and helps the Foundation develop effective strategies.

**1. Mapping**  
Our research and data allow us to spotlight the drivers that make our target groups more prone to long-term unemployment, discouragement and inactivity, as well as other problems in the labour market.

**2. Distilling**  
Using our data, expertise and studies from pilot countries, we highlight trends and potential indicators of change that help us predict shifts in the future employment landscape.

**3. Sense testing**  
For each indicator, we examine what it means for our target groups, the challenges it may present them and why current solutions fall short.

**5. Validating**  
Using social media data-crawling alongside expert and end-user interviews, we confirm the relevance of the selected challenges and start thinking about solution directions.

**4. Calibrating**  
Next, we narrow down the identified challenges to those with the highest innovation potential using five filters:

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



# We build

Our Innovation Space runs short-cycle projects to build prototype social solutions that address employability barriers, head-on.

The solutions developed by our team in the Innovation Space are created in collaboration with our commercial, innovation and policy-making partners around the world.

## Project Working Groups

Our solutions are designed to be shared, which is why we prioritise co-creation with our partners. Project Working Groups, which also include end users, are the engine for turning ideas and potential solutions into viable working prototypes. These multi-stakeholder groups guide initial ideas through the build process, ideating using a human-centred, design thinking and systems thinking process.

## Focus Groups

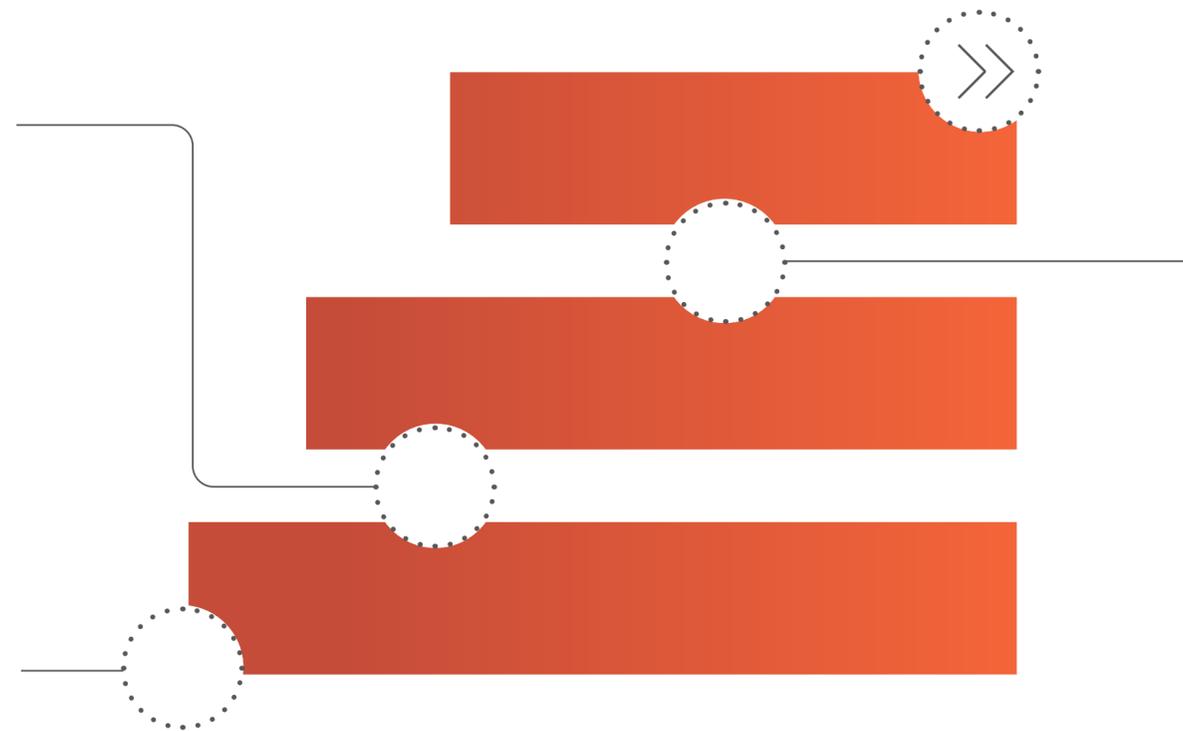
Creating solutions with user needs at the heart of it all is what our design is all about. Focus Groups are essential for validating our proposed solutions, allowing us to test and re-test to be sure that their needs are being met. They give us confidence that our prototypes are practical, impactful and sustainable.

## 2. Ideation

Next, we begin to create innovative solutions based on the insights we have gathered from previous stages. Between each ideation round, we test with end-users on the ground.

## 1. Needs finding and research

Initially we focus on who we are designing the solution for and what their actual, underlying needs are. This gives us a clear picture of what data we need to gather and whether any similar solutions exist in the market already.



## 3. Prototyping

Finally, we need to make decisions about the viability of our proposed solutions and who will build them as well as what strategies we can use to make sure they create maximum impact out in the world. At the end of this process, the most promising prototypes move forward to the Accelerator.

# We scale

Our Accelerator prepares prototypes for growth, creating release strategies in collaboration with our partners that ensure our solutions reach the right people.

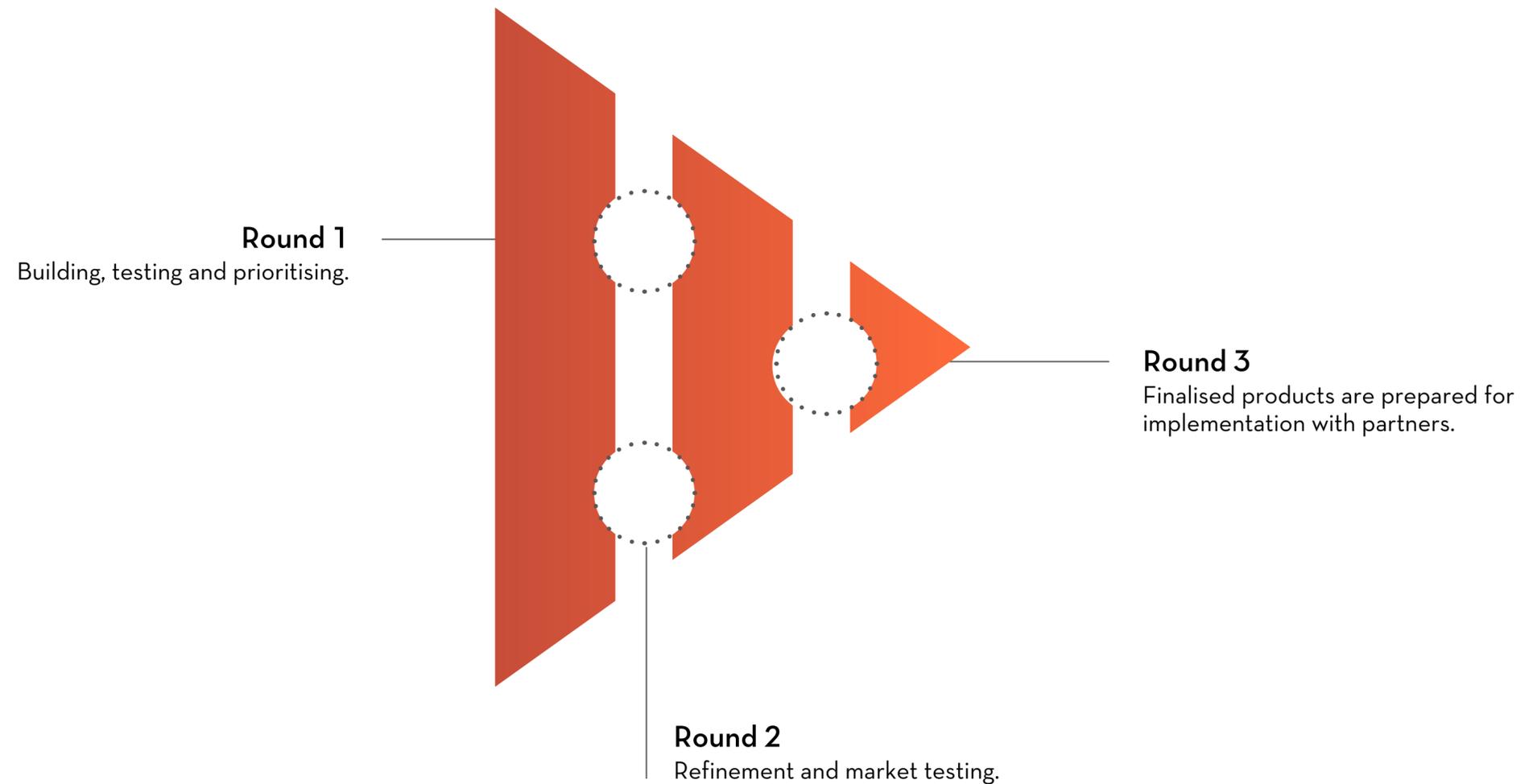
We use test-and-learn methodologies to create scalable impacts and insights that always feed back into our Social Radar knowledge base. This allows us to continuously develop and test innovative solutions to complex problems, ensuring they are ready to be taken forward with the right partners through joint resourcing and shared implementation.

### Venture-building

To build our ventures, we assemble small, flexible teams comprised of an Entrepreneur in Residence and secondees from the Adecco Group and partner organisations. The aim is to run short sprints to create a minimum viable product, and then develop it to the level that a partner can take forward.

### Partner recruitment

We are always on the lookout for partners that share our passion and ambition to collaborate on both creating and scaling solutions.



if

What **if** my  
skills are  
not visible?



# Our legacy projects

We design solutions to share, not to keep. Our mission is clear and our methodology is proven, as demonstrated by a range of successful legacy projects. These are the Innovation Foundation projects which have undergone the entire Social Innovation Lab process - from Scan, to Build, to Scale. Each of them has yielded invaluable learnings and we are immensely proud of the ways they are breaking down barriers to employment.

We have accelerated a number of programmes that came from the Group and are now placing them in new homes where they can thrive. These legacy projects highlight the magnitude of the challenges we face in supporting underserved populations in attaining sustainable livelihoods, as well as the success of our approach and the value of the solutions we create to address them.

As we tighten our focus and move forward as a Social Innovation Lab, we will maintain strong ties with our legacy programmes so that we can continue to benefit from the insight, learnings and inspiration they give us. They are both demonstrations of the benefits our work creates as well as signposts towards our future as an organisation.

- **Win4Youth**
- **Workforce Vitality**
- **Young Musicians Training Programme**
- **ICRC Career Development Programme**
- **CEO for One Month**
- **Thought Leadership**

“As we tighten our focus and move forward as a Social Innovation Lab, we will maintain strong ties with our legacy programmes.”

# Win4Youth

This longstanding Adecco Group programme brings together our employees, associates and clients to raise money for our global NGO partner, Plan International. The central idea is simple: every minute of healthy activity logged by participants is converted into donated funds. The programme utilises the Workforce Vitality Model (see adjacent description) which was the first product of the Social Innovation Lab.

Today, Win4Youth and the Workforce Vitality model have been integrated into the Adecco Group's global HR function, as part of the Group's comprehensive approach to wellbeing.

€3 million

raised for youth charities since 2010

60

countries where employees and teams have taken part

[Find out more about Win4Youth](#)



# Workforce Vitality

A vital, healthy workforce is good for business, people, and society. This first Social Innovation Lab project aimed to create a new paradigm of what a good employer does to make the global workforce holistically healthy and fit for purpose. Initial research by the Economist Intelligence Unit fuelled a series of design thinking co-creation workshops with a multi-stakeholder working group. This resulted in a new model for how a company can more effectively and holistically engage its employees to create healthy behaviours. The model uses four elements of wellbeing – physical, mental, social and purpose – combined with a set of four enablers to help organisations test their wellbeing programmes and identify what to build.

[Find out more about Workforce Vitality](#)



# Young Musicians Training Programme

Building on what was originally a corporate sponsorship, we worked with the Lucerne Festival and Davos Festival to create the Young Musicians Training Programme. This was based on identifying and filling a gap in how musicians are prepared for the world of work. The pilot took place between 2018 - 2021, with the prototype finally being scaled to a product ready for handover. The solution includes training curriculum, train-the-trainer materials, a business model, draft budget, staffing structure and pipeline of potential clients. We are working to identify the right partners to take this solution out into the world.

[Read more about the programme here](#)



“The Young Musicians Training Programme opens young musicians’ minds up to begin critically thinking about their careers. This is not so common in the world of music, where we traditionally focus all our attention and energy into our craft. They get musicians to think about who they are, what they want, and where their own skills lie.”

**Jens Bracher, trainer of the Young Musicians Training Programme**



# ICRC Career Development Programme

The Career Development Programme is the result of a partnership between the Innovation Foundation and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It supports people with disabilities, in emerging markets, in achieving their full potential in society by providing career training, enhancing employer and governmental awareness, increasing access to jobs to enable a more inclusive workplace, and providing self-employment support. Working closely with our partner, we developed curriculum and trained 30 ICRC Inclusion Advisors, across 25 countries, to prepare people with disabilities for the world of work.

The programme has been handed over and is now fully integrated within the ICRC.

[Read more about the programme here](#)



“When we improve the employment skills of people with disabilities, we are helping them in accessing job opportunities and earning an income that will allow them to live independently and achieve their full potential in society.”

**Haya Rawi, ICRC Inclusion Advisor**



# CEO for One Month

The CEO of tomorrow requires a new set of skills from those running businesses today, and both can learn a lot from each other. This programme sees 47 young, creative and innovative leaders compete for the opportunity to spend a month shadowing Adecco Group CEO, Alain Dehaze. During its time with the Foundation, the programme was enhanced to increase the employability of all who apply, not only those who make it to the final rounds. All applicants benefit from an array of advice and information through our Career Centre.

At the end of 2021, CEO for One Month transitioned to Lee Hecht Harrison, the part of the Adecco Group that is focused on leadership development and career transition.

143,000

applications to our 2021 spring campaign

31

number of countries we received applications from

6,600

participants in our virtual work experience day in 2021



The 2021 Global CEO for One Month, Mani Makkar, is set to do his shadowing later in 2022. It was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



“The key takeaway for me here is the importance of investing heavily in people and nurturing talent development within your organisation. There’s a great framework that Alain taught me - what he calls the 3 Cs of people management: collaboration, culture and coaching. And if you look at both startups and Fortune 500 companies, much of their success can be boiled down to how companies value and invest in these.”

**Jordan Topoleski, the 2020 Global CEO for One Month**

[Discover more about the programme](#)

# Thought Leadership

Thought Leadership (TL) was mandated in the Adecco Group in 2016 within the Marketing & Communication department. It was then further incubated within the Innovation Foundation between 2019 and 2021 before being moved back to the Group as a corporate function in 2021. The strategy, structure, research methodology and partners fostered in the Foundation provide a solid footing for the new function. Thought Leadership projects in 2021 included overseeing the production of the Reset Normal research project, producing joint research with the University of Zurich under the HR Valley initiative, launching the Future of Work Conversations and organising the annual FU.SE event on the future of work.

[Find out more about Thought Leadership](#)

## Future of Work Conversations

Ken Cooper, the CHRO of Bloomberg, makes the argument for hiring new workers and employees that possess one key skill: the ability to quickly adapt and change to new situations.

He sat down with Cynthia Hansen, Managing Director of the Innovation Foundation, to discuss this and more as part of the Future of Work Conversations series.

[Watch the interview video](#)



What if  
I can't afford  
to travel to  
an interview?



# The way forward

We are a forward-thinking, ambitious organisation. As the world of work continues to change, we will work to identify the challenges that impact underserved populations as well as any new groups that need our help. We know we can provide value through our approach to innovation and our proven model that is already achieving fantastic results around the world. And by continuing to build a network of committed, capable partners, we can be sure our solutions positively impact those who need them. While 2021 was a year that saw us build our internal capabilities and strengthen our operation as a Social Innovation Lab, it has also positioned us to deliver more projects in the coming years.

In 2022 we will:

## Youth@Risk

- Finalise and publish the outputs for our Social Radar on Youth@Risk
- Deliver the first set of prototypes from the project
- Feed the most promising into the Accelerator



## Women Back to Work (WBTW)

- Finalise and publish our Social Radar output on WBTW
- Conduct our first Radar-driven piece of research in collaboration with the TASC platform at the Graduate Institute
- Propose WBTW projects to the Innovation Foundation Board, for kick-off in Q3 2022



## Silver Workers

- Run a Radar round on Silver Workers in Q4 2022 for publication in Q1 2023



## Building our capabilities

- Continue fine-tuning our Social Radar methodology based on how it behaves with different topics
- Integrate more data from the Adecco Group and refine the ways we collect and use social listening data
- Build our Accelerator and run the first set of ventures
- Host our first annual workshop and celebration of all legacy projects and programmes to ensure ongoing sharing of best practice and maintain our close ties to these teams

In everything we do,  
we want to continue  
contributing to the  
dialogue around the  
future of work and  
the evolution  
of corporate  
foundations.



# Building strong relationships

Courage, creativity, inclusiveness. These are the values that drive how we work. The solutions we incubate and accelerate are designed to help solve the real challenges that millions of people face every day when trying to build sustainable livelihoods. To impact the people who need us most, we need the expertise, insight and capabilities of partner organisations. They work alongside us to build our solutions and take them out into the world.

## Our 2021 project and implementation partners



Plan International



International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)



Lucerne Festival



Davos Festival

Join the movement and partner with us.



[innovationfoundation.net](http://innovationfoundation.net)



[adeccogroup.com/innovationfoundation/contact/](http://adeccogroup.com/innovationfoundation/contact/)

## 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.

FONDATION THE ADECCO GROUP  
Sous l'égide de la Fondation de France

**France**  
Fondation The Adecco Group  
[www.groupe-adecco.fr/fondation/](http://www.groupe-adecco.fr/fondation/)

Adecco Stiftung

**Germany**  
Adecco Stiftung für Arbeit und soziales Leben  
[www.adecco.de/adecco-stiftung](http://www.adecco.de/adecco-stiftung)

FONDAZIONE ADECCO PER LE PARI OPPORTUNITÀ  
THE ADECCO GROUP

**Italy**  
Fondazione Adecco per le Pari Opportunità  
[www.fondazioneadecco.org](http://www.fondazioneadecco.org)



FUNDACIÓN ADECCO

**Spain**  
Fundación Adecco  
[www.fundacionadecco.org](http://www.fundacionadecco.org)



THE ADECCO GROUP US FOUNDATION

**USA**  
The Adecco Group US Foundation  
[www.adeccogroupfoundationus.org](http://www.adeccogroupfoundationus.org)

# Our 2021 Board

A mix of backgrounds, areas of expertise and geographical locations, with one common driving factor: helping to make the future work for everyone - truly everyone.



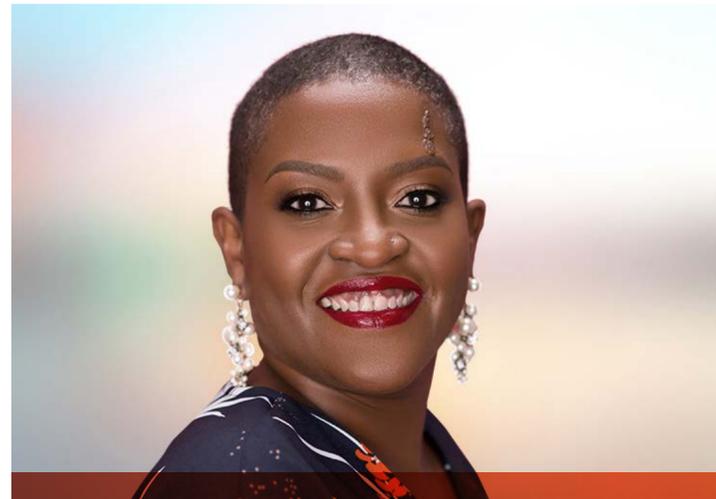
**Jean-Christophe Deslarzes**, Chairman of the Innovation Foundation Board



**Alain Dehaze**, Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



**Gordana Landen**, Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



**Ory Okolloh**, Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



**Stephan Howeg**, Member of the Innovation Foundation Board



**Virginia Wilson**, Member of the Innovation Foundation Board

To see our current Board, please refer to our website



# Our 2021 Team

The Innovation Foundation Team is driven by their passion to make positive change in the world. A dedicated and innovative group of individuals who bring the spirit of the Innovation Foundation to life in all that they do.

To see our current Team, please refer to our website 



**Cynthia Hansen**, Managing Director



**Adam Valenta**, Programme Manager, CEO for One Month



**Camille Demonchaux**, Innovation Project Manager



**Esmeralda Izquierdo**, Programme Manager, CEO for One Month



**Garrett McKenna**, Communications Business Partner



**Jacqueline Maag**, Social Innovation Lab Process Architect



**Liana Melchenko**, Head of Innovation Insights



**Rob James**, Strategic Advisor



**Shareena Hatta**, Head of Social Innovation Projects

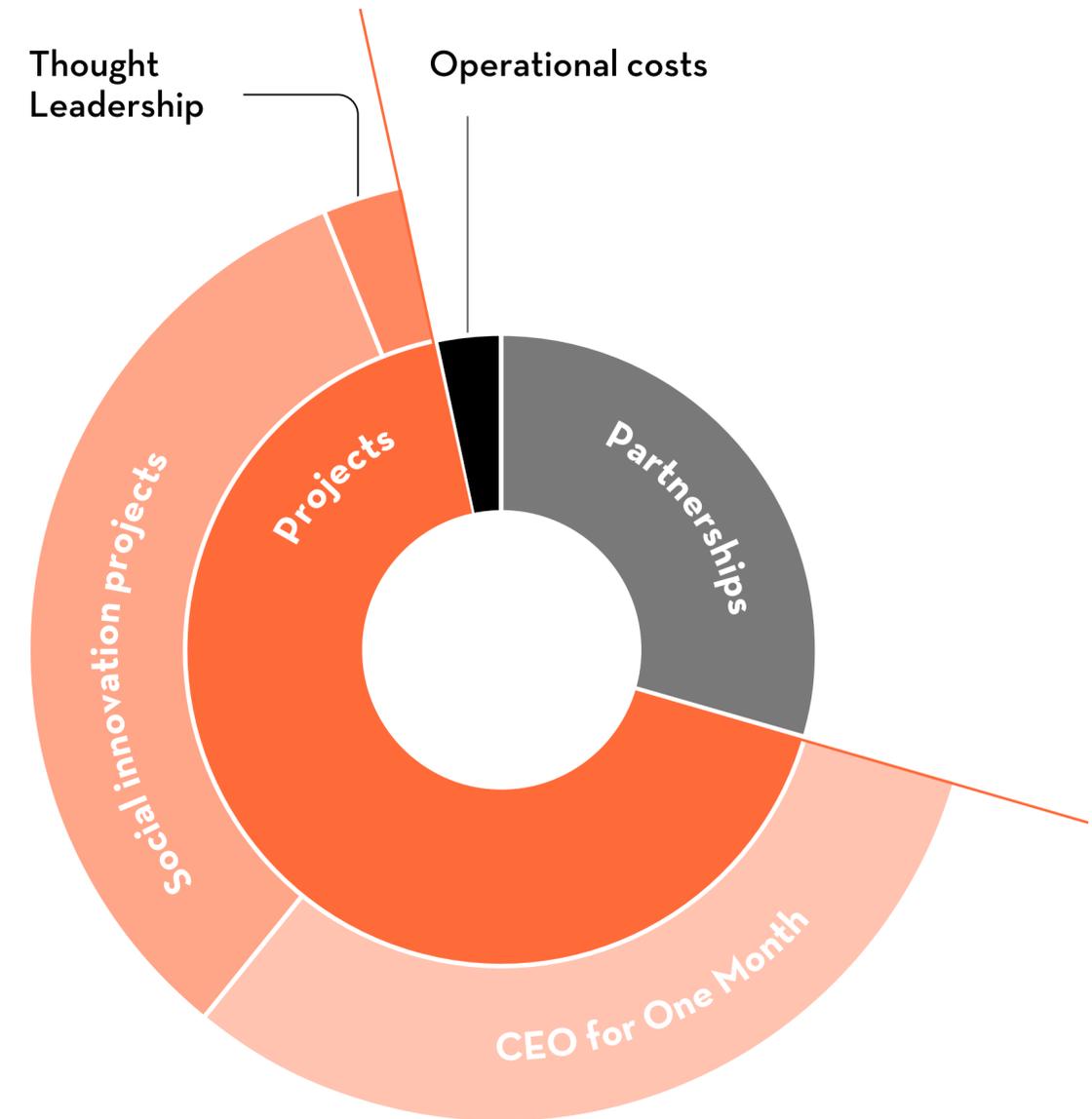


**Veronika Bilá**, Team Coordinator

# Our financial information

In 2021, much of our expenditure was dedicated to legacy projects and partnerships. As we go forward, resources will be invested in research, solution creation and the Accelerator.

For the period ended 31 December (in CHF)	2021	2020
Partnerships	(1,261,499)	(2,832,563)
Projects		
CEO for One Month	(1,390,221)	(1,199,444)
Win4Youth		(617,543)
Social Innovation Projects	(1,456,197)	(990,138)
Thought Leadership	(1,708)	(1,214,296)
Administrative expenses	(120,067)	(181,786)
Financial income		171
Financial expenses	(18,883)	(26,043)
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>(4,248,575)</b>	<b>(7,061,642)</b>





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[innovationfoundation.net](http://innovationfoundation.net)