

Position Paper

# To Recovery & Beyond: Building an Equitable and Inclusive Future of Work

Working Group 2 | Inclusive Workplaces

Document for discussion

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## Acknowledgements

This position paper clarifies the ambitions of the B4IG coalition through a roadmap built in collaboration with the member companies to advance Inclusive Growth. It covers key areas of action on which members are willing to work to implement the B4IG Pledge that is anchored in three objectives that are fundamental to inclusive business: advancing human rights in direct operations and supply chains; building inclusive workplaces; and promoting inclusion in company value chains and business ecosystems.

The opinions and arguments expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the OECD or its member countries.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A Moment of Awakening

The global economy stands at a critical moment, confronting a number of simultaneous crises across the spheres of health, economy, employment, leadership, environment, geo-politics and social pressures rooted in long-standing inequities. These trends are well documented by the OECD and other international organisations.<sup>1</sup> As these crises perpetuate and escalate, they can reinforce one another to generate further uncertainty about the future.

At times of crisis, it is tempting to crave a return to the comfort of how things were before. As a coalition of organisations focused on positive change, *Business for Inclusive Growth* (B4IG) rejects this temptation. Rather, the B4IG coalition views this moment as an opportunity for business leaders and policymakers to create a future of work that is much better than what came before.

Every CEO, every worker and every citizen has experienced a shared moment of awakening. We have been awakened to the degree of interdependence between individuals and between organisations; we have been awakened to the intrinsic value of previously “invisible” workers; and we have been awakened to how collaborative, empathic and supportive we can all be, as individuals and as organisations.

The B4IG coalition contends that this once-in-a-generation moment must be harnessed immediately. Today’s economic crisis compels us to consciously shape a future of work that is more *equitable*, more *inclusive* and more *relevant* to future trends and shocks.

### More Equitable

Lockdown has highlighted and intensified systemic inequities, such as the divide between those with access to digital tools and those without; or those with access to social safety nets and those without. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the dangerous extent of these inequalities, and the degree to which economic systems depend on the contributions of the very workers that lack equal opportunities and social protection.

### More Inclusive

The employment crisis puts at risk recent improvements in workplace diversity and inclusion (D&I), as workers that are already disadvantaged and discriminated against are hit hardest. In fact, HR decisions in response to the current crisis will be a crucial determinant of whether we see a reversal of the D&I progress made over recent decades, or a new resolve for structural change. The spotlight on enduring racial discrimination sparked by recent events in the US, brings an opportunity to address key social injustices and widening gaps worldwide.

### More Relevant

The lack of global preparedness and cooperation in response to the pandemic has raised alarm bells for the future. Impending trends that will shake the workforce, such as the 4th Industrial Revolution, are accelerating due to this crisis. The response from business and government can be positive and constructive, such as investments in training and education for skills of the future, incentivising growth sectors like the green economy, the care economy or bio-tech, and

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<sup>1</sup> For example, OECD (2018), *Opportunities for All: A Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301665-en>.






anticipatory planning for future shocks, such as climate-related incidents. With challenges of this scale, global cooperation is crucial to shape that better future.

## Seizing the Moment

With this paper, the B4IG coalition identifies three priority themes to guide collective business and policy interventions. These are “The Future of Work”, “Diversity and Inclusion”, and “Good Jobs with Decent Wages”. Specific business and policy priorities are detailed within each theme. The OECD has drawn upon its long-standing expertise on these topics to present the policy challenges and areas for priority attention.

The B4IG member companies have already gathered 80 of their own initiatives across these themes, which have formed the basis of sessions to share experiences and learn from one another. Many of these examples are highlighted within this paper, and further information is available. These efforts have generated eight business priorities across the three priority themes, as summarised below:

### Priority themes to achieve a more equitable, inclusive and relevant future of work

 <b>THE FUTURE OF WORK</b> Ensuring equal opportunities for all in the future of work	 <b>DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION</b> Stepping up commitments to diversity and inclusion	 <b>GOOD JOBS WITH DECENT WAGES</b> Ensuring adequate protection for the most vulnerable workers
1. Preparing for accelerated automation and restructuring	4. Renewing leadership commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion	7. Reviewing rewards against fair living wage principles
2. Stepping up work-based learning for youth	5. Fighting racism inside and outside the organisation	8. Upgrading social protection
3. Accelerating digital capacity building	6. Supporting mental health	



In accordance with the B4IG Pledge, this paper intends to encourage concrete action. The writing of this paper has acted as a springboard to explore and define subsequent workstreams that form the B4IG programme of activities on Inclusive Workplaces. The intent of these workstreams is to stimulate and guide collaborative action towards an inclusive recovery. These initiatives are outlined in the paper and summarised below:

### **B4IG workstreams to accelerate an inclusive recovery**

WORKSTREAMS LAUNCHED FOR 2020-2021	WORKSTREAM TOPICS UNDER EXPLORATION
<b>Inclusive Restructuring</b>  Developing guidelines to help companies restructure in the most responsible and inclusive way possible	<b>Successful work transition systems</b>
<b>Diversity and Inclusion Framework</b>  Providing a framework to guide companies to improve action on Diversity and Inclusion, with an initial focus on gender and ethnicity	<b>Gender Pay Equality</b>
<b>Inclusive Apprenticeships</b>  Presenting successful approaches to attract, train and retain youth from disadvantaged backgrounds into productive employment with prospects for growth	<b>Living Wage commitments across the ecosystem</b>
<b>Bridging the digital divide</b>  Offers tangible approaches to improving affordable and universal access to secure digital infrastructure, tools, content and skills	

In response to today's historic crisis, the B4IG coalition launched a collective call for an inclusive recovery.<sup>2</sup> In an environment where government resources are stretched and business attention is focused on survival and financial sustainability, the risk of reversing decades of progress is real. Proactive intervention by both business and government is essential.

History rarely presents opportunities that bring together such broad consensus for transformative change. The B4IG members commit to harnessing this powerful moment of awakening and working together to ensure an equitable and inclusive recovery into a brighter future of work for all.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/businessforinclusivegrowth/press-release-The-B4IG-international-coalition-unites-against-the-inequalities-deepened-by-the-COVID.pdf>

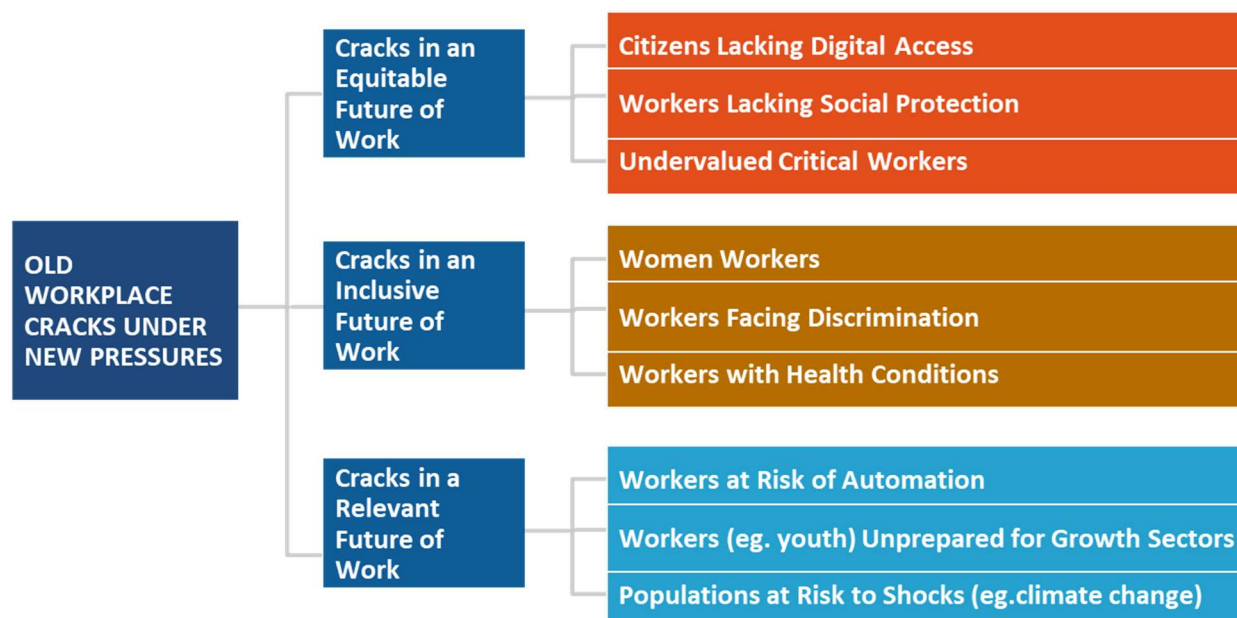
## I. OLD WORKPLACE CRACKS UNDER NEW PRESSURES

The multifaceted nature of today's health, economic, employment and social crises compounds the range of ways in which different segments of the workforce are affected. For example, young people have seen a deeper employment impact due to the sectors and roles they tend to work in, whilst also seeing their education and training opportunities curtailed, damaging their long-term employment prospects. Older workers have seen greater health risks, as well as more challenges in dealing with the technology-dependent realities of lockdown. Women's disproportionate role in services sectors, especially healthcare, has put them at greater risk, which has been compounded by the unequal burden of care at home, housework and home schooling.

In this section of the paper, we draw attention to groups of workers that have always been vulnerable to systemic inequities and discriminatory behaviours and practices. We underline how they have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its economic aftermath. We do not claim that the categorisations and challenges highlighted are complete and exhaustive. Indeed, the most vulnerable of workers would find themselves in multiple categories, compounding their disadvantage of intersectionality.

The objective of this analysis is to illustrate how today's crisis has exposed the gravity of these existing vulnerabilities and places new pressures on them. The vulnerabilities have been classified under three dimensions: those obstructing an equitable future of work; those obstructing an inclusive future of work; and those obstructing a future or work that is relevant to future trends and shocks (see Figure 1). For each vulnerability, we outline the challenges for recovery and also the challenges for longer-term resilience. Our intent is to build the case for urgent action to fix and reinforce these cracks before they reach breaking point. Those action areas will be explored in the following section of the paper.

**Figure 1: Cracks in an equitable, inclusive and relevant future of work**





## A. Cracks in an Equitable Future of Work

### 1. Citizens Lacking Digital Access

#### The Digital Divide is exposed and deepened

The pandemic has exposed that large sections of society in every country do not have adequate access to digital infrastructure, tools or skills. As schools tried to move to online learning, the dangerous gap between those with and without digital access was exposed. This gap affects close to 12 million students in the US.<sup>3</sup> As the business world moved online, workers with poor or no access to digital tools at home were also excluded. Older workers struggled with new technologies, and factors like the home environment, bandwidth and access to tech support became critical obstacles to productivity. Affordable access to reliable broadband became a necessity.<sup>4</sup> Up to a quarter of households in a study of ten OECD countries were found to lack a personal computer; in Turkey and Mexico, fewer than half of households have access to a computer at home.<sup>5</sup>

**One in five 15-year olds from socio-economically disadvantaged schools across the OECD do not have access to a computer for schoolwork.<sup>6</sup>**

**At present, only about 7% of people across the OECD have a fibre broadband subscription.<sup>7</sup>**

#### Inaction will accelerate division across society

As economic activity reignites, a significant portion will likely remain online, with digital channels remaining critical and sometimes essential. This places even more stress on those without digital access. A recent UK study found that more affluent employees are almost 2.5 times more likely to be working from home full time than the less affluent.<sup>8</sup> If already-privileged sections of society avail of digital schooling and homeworking whilst others remain excluded, the recovery would exacerbate economic inequalities and fuel social instability. Without active intervention, widening digital divides and their consequences must be expected.

#### Future resilience depends on affordable, secure access to all

Secure, affordable digital access must be available to every individual; young or old, rich or poor, urban or rural. This requires adequate infrastructure and power to reach all users; it means affordable access to digital devices and tools; it demands digital literacy to become a fundamental skill, like reading and writing; and it requires ubiquitous security of systems and information. These ambitions are far from today's realities, and the speed at which we bridge this gap will directly impact how today's digital divides translate into future economic and social divides.

<sup>3</sup>Anderson, M., & Kumar, M. (2020). Digital divide persists even as lower-income Americans make gains in tech adoption. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

<sup>4</sup> OECD (2020), *COVID-19: Combatting COVID-19's effect on children*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/combating-covid-19-s-effect-on-children-2e1f3b2f/>.

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2020), *COVID-19: Protecting people and societies*. OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-protecting-people-and-societies-e5c9de1a/>

<sup>6</sup> OECD (2020), *Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience*, <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/youth-and-covid-19-response-recovery-and-resilience-c40e61c6/>

<sup>7</sup> OECD Going Digital: Shaping Policies, Improving Lives, 2019, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264312012-en/1/2/2/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9789264312012-en&csp=311fc743132502e5a98ac461d9bcb3d8&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#chap-2>

<sup>8</sup> Smith, M. (2020). Many more middle class workers able to work from home than working class workers. YouGov, <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/economy/articles-reports/2020/05/13/most-middle-class-workers-are-working-home-full-ti>



## 2. Workers Lacking Social Protection

### *Inadequate social protection has exposed millions to poverty*

The pandemic has revealed the precarious nature of many forms of work, such as gig work, casual work, informal work and self-employment, in terms of weak or absent social protection in times of crisis. Across the OECD, workers in non-standard forms of employment are, on average, significantly less well protected than workers in standard forms of employment against the risk of job or income loss.<sup>9</sup> More than one in three individuals in these countries are financially insecure, meaning that they do not have enough financial assets to keep their family above the poverty line for more than three months, should their income suddenly stop.<sup>10</sup> Workers in the informal economy are particularly affected. The rate of relative poverty is expected to increase by almost 34% globally for informal workers, ranging from 21% in upper-middle-income countries to 56% in lower-middle-income economies.<sup>11</sup>

**According to the ILO, about 55% of the world's population is unprotected by social insurance schemes.<sup>12</sup>**

### *The scale of challenge demands urgent public and private action*

For many precarious workers, like gig workers and the self-employed, the option of remote working does not exist and they could find themselves out of work for a long period of time. Research by the AppJobs Institute found that during the lockdown, almost 70% of gig workers said they now have no income, and only 23% have some money saved.<sup>13</sup> Even in countries with well-developed social protection systems, many workers without standard employment contracts are struggling.<sup>14</sup> Urgent intervention is required to provide these workers with opportunities to work or to train for new work. The number of workers in this vulnerable category implies a need for large-scale initiatives, with both private and public sector support.

### *Policies and regulations must keep up with the realities of labour markets*

Social protection frameworks must adapt to modern labour markets and forms of work, with adequate social protection provided to all workers. This year's lockdowns have convinced many firms and employees of the benefits of flexible working arrangements, but these new ways of working must be accompanied by adequate protections. Especially urgent action is required to address the massive and growing informal sector, which entirely lacks social protection. In 2020, over 2 billion workers earn their livelihoods in the informal economy, representing 62% of the workforce. This reaches 90% in low-income countries. The ILO estimates lockdown measures to significantly impact 1.6 billion informal workers, with women over-represented in the most hard-hit sectors.<sup>15</sup> It should be in the interests of informal workers, formal businesses and government coffers to incentivize rapid formalization of the informal economy.

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2020), Supporting people and companies to deal with the COVID-19 virus, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/supporting-people-and-companies-to-deal-with-the-covid-19-virus-options-for-an-immediate-employment-and-social-policy-response-d33dffe6/>

<sup>10</sup> OECD (2020), COVID-19: Protecting people and societies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/resources/COVID-19-Protecting-people-and-societies.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, ILO.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_743146.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, ILO.

<sup>13</sup> Prevallet-Kinstle, A. (2020). Coronavirus vs. Gig Economy - Many Left Jobless. Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.appjobs.com/blog/coronavirus-effect-on-gig-economy>

<sup>14</sup> OECD (2020), COVID-19: Protecting people and societies, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/resources/COVID-19-Protecting-people-and-societies.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> ILO (2020), COVID-19 crisis and the informal economy, ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_743623.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743623.pdf)

### 3. Undervalued Critical Workers

#### *Undervalued critical workers have highlighted inequitable systems*

“Critical Workers” ranging from healthcare workers, to delivery drivers and those running essential power, food, transport, waste and security services, have been applauded for risking their lives to keep our economies running during the worst of the pandemic. Yet these jobs frequently attract low pay and poor conditions, and many lack social protection. In some rare cases, critical workers have received additional “hazard pay”, but this has not been the norm, especially for those that are self employed or on non-standard contracts. In many countries, these roles are disproportionately taken by ethnic minorities and migrant workers, further highlighting the degree to which the smooth-functioning of economies depends on these often-marginalised populations. For example, in the UK, about half of frontline care workers, some 1 million people, were paid less than the real living wage, as well as experiencing significant job insecurity, being four times more likely than average to be employed on a zero-hours contract. The proportion of women, single parents and ethnic minorities within this worker category is higher than in the overall workforce.<sup>16</sup>

**One in five home care workers in the US live in poverty, and about a half of home care workers and residential care aides are low-income earners.<sup>17</sup>**

#### *Prioritisation of critical workers will be crucial to recovery*

Workers in the full range of critical services need to be prioritized when rolling out protective equipment, therapies and vaccines. The safe and healthy continuity of their services is crucial to ensure the swift and safe recovery for all. For example, delivery drivers pose a greater threat to spreading further infection than homeworking professionals, and should therefore receive vaccines and other protections first. This is also true within organisations, where “critical staff” with high-frequency interaction should be prioritised over home-office workers. As the recovery takes hold, a bigger conversation will need to take place to review whether the pay and conditions of Critical Workers reflect the value they represent and their contributions during national emergencies. Business leaders and policymakers need to proactively prepare for these inevitable conversations and their implications.

#### *The pressure to reassess social contracts is rising*

Ultimately, the role of critical workers during this pandemic has revealed a need to reevaluate social contracts in the modern economy. Amid this crisis, societies have been examining the value they confer on certain roles, like teachers and carers. Moreover, parallel trends like the aging population and intelligent automation are redistributing the demand for, and therefore value of, innately human skills, like empathy and emotional intelligence, which machines cannot perform. As we enter the next socio-economic era, we will need to assess the emerging skills landscape and revisit our social contracts accordingly; the COVID-19 pandemic has officially opened this important conversation.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Tomlinson, Author: Mike Brewer, K., & Author: Maja Gustafsson. (2020). What happens after the clapping finishes?, Resolution Foundation. Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/what-happens-after-the-clapping-finishes>

<sup>17</sup> PHI (2020), It's Time to Care – A detailed profile of America's direct care workers, PHI National, <https://phinational.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Its-Time-to-Care-2020-PHI.pdf>



## B. Cracks in an Inclusive Future of Work

### 1. Women Workers

#### *COVID-19 has hit women from multiple directions*

Women have always been under-represented in the workforce, yet they are over-represented in the sectors most affected by the pandemic. Women make up almost 70% of the healthcare workforce, exposing them to a greater risk of infection. They also take on a disproportionate burden of family care and home-schooling responsibilities during illness and lockdown. Even pre-lockdown, women in OECD countries spent 2 hours per day more than men performing unpaid work, more than double the time on childcare activities, and were 50% more likely (in Europe) to have caring responsibilities.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, if we look at any vulnerable segment of the working population, female workers within that segment are seen to be unduly disadvantaged, often to a degree that puts their safety in danger.

**Women carry out up to ten times more care work than men, according to the OECD.<sup>19</sup> Many countries have reported increases in domestic violence during the pandemic of around 30%.**

#### *The role of women in the workplace risks backsliding during the employment crisis*

As attention turns to driving business sustainability and growth, it is essential that organisations adhere to the commitments they have made towards gender inclusion and empowerment. This includes decisions on recruitment, lay-offs and leadership. Gender employment gaps leave women more vulnerable to job loss, especially in countries where a large number of women continue to be in informal employment. Post-crisis employment decisions make a difference: After the financial crisis in the US, between February 2010 and June 2014, men gained 5.5 million jobs while women gained 3.6 million jobs.<sup>20</sup>

#### *The crisis and its aftermath offer many lessons for improving gender issues*

Government and business need tangible action agendas to unlock the full potential of women as thriving economic actors and leaders, in an inclusive work environment. Business and policy responses to the crisis and beyond must embed a gender lens and account for women's unique needs, responsibilities and perspectives. Much can be learned from this crisis, both in terms of discriminatory systems and practices that must be corrected, and in terms of opportunities to harness for the future. For example, the experience of homeworking has opened the eyes of many families to the unfair burdens on women, as well as the benefits that flexible working by both men and women can bring to female employees, and their employers.

<sup>18</sup>OECD (2020), Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/#section-d1e264>

<sup>19</sup> OECD (2020), Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/#section-d1e264>

<sup>20</sup> Economic Policy Institute (2014), Job Growth in the Great Recession Has Not Been Equal Between Men and Women. (n.d.). Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.epi.org/blog/job-growth-great-recession-equal-men-women/>

## 2. Workers Facing Discrimination

### *Discrimination is on the rise*

Different countries possess different minority groups that are discriminated against to varying degrees. Common reasons include ethnicity, nationality, religion and sexual orientation. In times of crisis, groups that are already discriminated against face additional pressures, as systems rally to support the concerns of the majority, often at the expense of the minorities. For example, the ILO has noted rising levels of discrimination and xenophobia against migrants, as well as unfair treatment and access to healthcare and social protection.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the COVID-19 virus has been seen to disproportionately affect groups that are discriminated minorities in many countries, such as the LGBTI community<sup>22</sup> and people of African heritage.

**Black people in the UK are more than 4 times as likely to die from COVID-19 than white people, with roughly half of this gap due to socio-demographic factors.<sup>23</sup> Research looking at job and wage losses in the US due to the pandemic found 38% of white adults affected, compared to 44% and 61% of Black and Hispanic workers, respectively.<sup>24</sup>**

### *Without proactive, responsible leadership, inclusion will deteriorate*

The major challenge lies in identifying and reaching out to those who face discrimination, building trust, and ensuring them access to relevant financial and non-financial support services, as well as training and work opportunities. Given this is a diverse set of people and with variations across countries, the fear of many falling through the cracks is real and would require a concerted and collaborative effort by all stakeholders. Recent events in the US highlighting systemic racial prejudice have led to global movements to address racial inequalities. For example the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK has launched an inquiry to tackle “deep-rooted inequality faced by ethnic minorities”, ensuring that this is “meaningfully addressed as the UK rebuilds.”<sup>25</sup> Every organisation and business is responsible for its part in ensuring that decisions around hiring, laying off and leadership result in more inclusive and diverse workplaces, with more opportunity for workers facing discrimination. Without proactive action, backsliding seems inevitable.

### *It is critical to harness today's opportunity for step-change improvement*

Incentives and enforcement are important to eradicate discrimination from the workplace and secure decent work for all. Progress in eliminating discrimination requires more than new laws and regulations and is dependent on cultural transformation in society and in the workplace. This kind of change must be led from the top of the organisation and perceived to be genuine, not window-dressing. Cultural change can be slow, and is not linear, so it will be important to harness moments that can stimulate step-changes in behaviour and habits, such as the current movement sparked by the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery in the US.

<sup>21</sup> ILO (2020), Policy Brief: Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms\\_743268.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_743268.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> OutRight (2020), Vulnerability Amplified, OutRight International, New York, [https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/COVIDsReportDesign\\_FINAL\\_LR\\_0.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/COVIDsReportDesign_FINAL_LR_0.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Nafilyan, C. (2020). Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020. ONS, UK, Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnigroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>

<sup>24</sup> Pew Research Center (2020), Financial and health impacts of COVID-19 vary widely by race and ethnicity, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/05/financial-and-health-impacts-of-covid-19-vary-widely-by-race-and-ethnicity/>

<sup>25</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2020), Inquiry into the impact of coronavirus on ethnic minorities. (n.d.). Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/inquiry-impact-coronavirus-ethnic-minorities>

### 3. Workers with Health Conditions

*We are experiencing both physical and mental health crises*

COVID-19 poses most risk to the lives of workers with underlying health conditions. These workers were already inadequately integrated into the workforce and their prospects have worsened through the pandemic. For example, the proportion of persons with disabilities in work in the US has fallen back below 2018 levels.<sup>26</sup> Workers with home-caring responsibilities for those with health conditions are also under immense strain. This, in addition to the extended confinement, adds to anxiety and stress levels, and mental health issues. In March 2020, calls and texts to the US Federal Disaster Distress Helpline jumped eightfold, to more than 26,000.<sup>27</sup>

**In April 2020, one month into the UK lockdown, population prevalence of clinically significant levels of mental distress rose from 18.9% to 27.3%.<sup>28</sup>**

**In the same month, 14% of US adults reported symptoms of serious psychological distress, more than triple the rate in 2018.<sup>29</sup>**

*Pending a successfully distributed vaccine, healthcare will remain a workplace priority*

In the absence of a vaccine or cure for COVID-19, non-medical interventions such as social distancing and confinement have played a key role in slowing the spread of the disease. However, as these measures continue for those with health problems, they are likely to have psychosocial, as well as physical and mental health impacts. The recovery period must therefore include targeted interventions for care and support. It is highly likely that the pandemic and post-pandemic period will result in a worsening of workforce integration for those with health conditions, making it all the more important to raise this agenda item on HR priorities during the recovery phase. However, the issue of mental health and wellness for the broader workforce should be a priority from today.

*Mental health must become a permanent workplace priority*

Physical and mental health considerations need to be imbedded into every organisation's workforce programmes. Companies and healthcare systems need to catch up with the increasing awareness and concern among workers about wellness. For example, research shows that almost all employees are personally touched by mental health issues, either their own or somebody close to them.<sup>30</sup> The World Health Organization estimates that depression and anxiety disorders already cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion each year in lost productivity.<sup>31</sup> Large numbers of talented, qualified people with physical and mental health conditions are currently excluded from workforces, often exacerbating their issues and depriving the economy and society of their contributions. Key challenges include designing supportive work environments, building awareness among the broader workforce, and instilling cultures and behaviours that promote inclusion and integration.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Accenture Research analysis based on US BLS data, April 2020

<sup>27</sup> Russell, D. (2020). Amid COVID-19, calls and texts to mental health helplines are surging. Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.invw.org/2020/04/24/amid-coronavirus-calls-and-texts-to-mental-health-hotlines-are-surging/>

<sup>28</sup> The Lancet (2020), Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30308-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30308-4/fulltext)

<sup>29</sup> McGinty, Presskreischer, Han, et al., Psychological distress and loneliness reported by US adults in 2018 and April 2020, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2766941>

<sup>30</sup> Barbara Harvey (2019), It's Not 1 in 4; It's All of Us, Accenture, [https://www.accenture.com/\\_acnmedia/pdf-90/accenture-tch-its-all-of-us-research-updated-report.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/pdf-90/accenture-tch-its-all-of-us-research-updated-report.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Mental health in the workplace. (2019). Retrieved September 23, 2020, from [https://www.who.int/mental\\_health/in\\_the\\_workplace/en/](https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/)

<sup>32</sup> Accenture (2018), The Disability Inclusion Advantage, Accenture, [https://www.accenture.com/\\_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf](https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/pdf-89/accenture-disability-inclusion-research-report.pdf)





## C. Cracks in a Relevant Future of Work

### 1. Workers at Risk of Automation

#### *Automation is accelerating, faster*

Investment in intelligent technologies is accelerating. The pandemic is being called an 'automation forcing event' that will fundamentally transform the economy.<sup>33</sup> After economic crises, firms tend to increase their substitution of labour for capital, and this crisis is no exception. In fact, the acceleration may well be faster as companies have leant heavily on new technology solutions during the lockdown, and customers have got used to using new tools, from AI chatbots to Virtual Reality headsets. Already before the pandemic, business leaders and governments were struggling to adapt workforces to the impending transformation in the nature of work; the urgency will now increase. Around 14% of jobs across the OECD are at risk of automation, while another 32% are likely to see significant changes.<sup>34</sup> Economies and training systems are not prepared for the accelerated displacement of jobs ahead.

**US \$11.5 trillion in cumulative GDP growth is at stake over the next 10 years if skill-building does not speed up to match the rate of technology progress.<sup>35</sup>**

#### *The supply of quality training must catch up with the escalating demand*

The challenge is to identify regions, sectors and workers at risk and provide them with rapid access to training and jobs. Government and business need to work together to offer appropriate work transition programs, apprenticeships, training and career guidance. Workers are showing appetite for learning: During lockdown, online learning platform Udemy saw a 425% increase in enrollments, with a surge in demand for data science (up 58%), neural networks (up 61%) and Chatbots (up 60%).<sup>36</sup> The challenge will be for business and government training schemes to satisfy the magnitude of need, especially with tight, crisis-hit budgets. Both the speed and scale of the challenge are daunting.

#### *Systems to support lifelong learning and work transition can no longer be postponed*

A sustainable approach to this challenge demands lifelong learning systems that are adapted to worker needs, with modular and flexible courses that can fit around life commitments, and learning techniques that are experiential, including the use of technology. We also need systems to anticipate future skills demands, which in turn should inform the design of curricula in training systems, as well as education systems for future generations of workers. Beyond training, skilling and work transition support mechanisms, future resilience demands wholesale upgrading of education systems, to make them fit for the realities of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. This includes the technical skills of designing, building and running the new world of intelligent technologies, but also preparing future citizens for a life of collaboration with intelligent machines.

<sup>33</sup> Salisbury, A. (2020). COVID-19 May Become "An Automation Forcing Event": Already Vulnerable Workers Look To Reskilling For Path Forward. Forbes, Retrieved September 23, 2020, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/allisondulinsalisbury/2020/05/07/covid-19-may-become-an-automation-forcing-event-already-vulnerable-workers-look-to-reskilling-for-path-forward/>

<sup>34</sup> OECD (2020), OECD Employment Outlook 2019, The Future of Work, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/employment/Employment-Outlook-2019-Highlight-EN.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Armen Ovanessoff, Eva Sage-Gavin and Laurence Morvan (2018), "It's Learning. Just Not as We Know It," Accenture, <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/future-workforce/transforming-learning>.

<sup>36</sup> Online Education Steps Up: What the World is Learning (from Home). (2020). Retrieved September 23, 2020, from [https://research.udemy.com/research\\_report/online-education-steps-up-what-the-world-is-learning-from-home/](https://research.udemy.com/research_report/online-education-steps-up-what-the-world-is-learning-from-home/)

## 2. Workers (eg. youth) Unprepared for Growth Sectors

*Structural economic changes are accelerating; some good, some bad*

The ILO estimates that working hours declined by the equivalent of 495 million full-time workers between Q4 of 2019 and Q2 of 2020.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, many growth sectors struggle to find employees. The Global Initiative of Decent Jobs for Youth survey in May revealed that more than one in six young people have stopped working since the crisis began.<sup>38</sup> Amid the inevitable employment churn, the challenge is to manage the transition between “old economy” sectors and “new economy” sectors. Signals are mixed. For example, 26% of sharing economy users plan to decrease their usage, even after the pandemic recedes.<sup>39</sup> But meanwhile, most consumers are consciously making more environmentally friendly, sustainable or ethical purchases<sup>40</sup>, with lockdowns bringing more cycling and walking, less congestion, cleaner air and more livable urban environments. The misalignment of consumer hopes, business capacity and availability of skills presents a challenge.

*The employment rate of today’s UK graduates is projected to be 13% lower in 3 years, than it would have been without the crisis.<sup>41</sup>*

*Workers must be oriented towards the jobs and skills of the future*

As millions of workers need to be re-employed, training, re-skilling and workforce transition efforts should be oriented towards jobs with the most productive and sustainable prospects for the future. These include the green economy, the care economy and the ethical and responsible design of new technologies. Many of these investments make strong short-term business sense, others will require enabling policies and incentives to guide investment into longer-term plays. For example, the ILO estimates that a shift to a greener economy could create 24 million new jobs globally by 2030 if the right policies are put in place.<sup>42</sup> The European Union’s Green Revival initiative hopes to achieve this by setting up a €560 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility fund to support digital and green technologies, including related skilling support.<sup>43</sup> The youth have a vested interest in shaping these sectors that will define their lives. In many cases, consumer values and appetite for change are clear, the question is whether firms with old-economy thinking have the vision, confidence, and capacity to use this moment to transform.

*Data-driven systems must better connect workplace trends with education and training*

Appropriate incentives and nudges are essential to align workforce training, placement and education systems with growth sectors that promise sustainable socio-economic progress. Revival from this crisis will benefit from accurate, real-time data about evolving needs in different sectors and types of jobs, allowing for more efficient training, transition and job placement. In the longer-term, better data and insights about skill needs should become a building block for education, training and workforce planning.

<sup>37</sup> ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition, ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_755910.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_755910.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fourth edition, ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_745963.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745963.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> IPSOS (2020), Sharing economy service use is down, could be slow to recover after coronavirus. IPSOS, <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/newsy-sharing-economy-april-2020>

<sup>40</sup> Accenture (2020), COVID-19 Consumer Research, conducted 20-25 May, 2020, Accenture, <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/retail/coronavirus-consumer-habits>

<sup>41</sup> Resolution Foundation (2020), Class of 2020: Education leavers in the current crisis, Kathleen Henehan, <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> ILO, World Employment and Social Outlook 2018: Greening with jobs, [https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_628654/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_628654/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>43</sup> EC (2020), Europe’s moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation, EC, Brussels, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_940](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940)



### 3. Populations at Risk to Shocks (eg. climate change)

*The report card on pandemic response is very mixed*

Most countries were unprepared and struggled in their response to COVID-19. Asian countries with experience during the SARS and MERS outbreaks could respond better and contain the spread. For example, in South Korea, 'legislation had already established a comprehensive framework to address infectious diseases and coordinate government and lower-level responses, including on how to allocate resources and collect data.'<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Germany attributes some of its success in reducing the number of fatalities to the development and implementation of its National Pandemic Preparedness Plan.<sup>45</sup> Beyond the pandemic itself, we have yet to see how disruptions to global trade flows and second-order effects will generate further economic devastation. Every country will be appraising their performance with a view to improving future preparedness. At the global and regional levels, there needs to be an assessment of the lack of cooperation and mutual support, especially in the critical initial weeks.

**The number of people in acute food insecurity may double by the year end to 265 million, due to the coronavirus.<sup>46</sup>**

*Effective global cooperation needs to improve, rapidly*

For a sustained recovery, global coordination and sharing of effective practices is crucial. Without this, the risk of subsequent waves of the pandemic rises. In workplaces, existing health and safety protocols must continually ensure alignment with the latest guidance from local and global health authorities. Effective tracking and tracing seems critical: the ILO estimates that this can reduce working hour losses by as much as 50%.<sup>47</sup> But this depends on effective cooperation and implementation across government and business. As confinement measures are gradually removed, accurate, real-time data will be crucial to understand what works and what does not work, and these lessons must be shared as widely as possible in order to minimize the risk of further major outbreaks.

*Lessons must be learned from 2020*

There is a tendency to plan for the previous crisis: this must be avoided. The lessons we learn from COVID-19 must prepare us for subsequent pandemics, but also for other predictable-but-different shocks, such as natural disasters, bio-terrorist attacks, incidents related to climate change, massive cyberattacks or systems failures. Governments and business must cooperate in making such preparations, to speed up crisis response, at scale. Data and analytics will play an increasing role in such efforts, and as well as tools to measure resilience, explore scenarios and inform investments. Moreover, it is essential that governments cooperate in planning, detecting and responding to future global crises.

<sup>44</sup>OECD (2020), A systemic resilience approach to dealing with Covid-19 and future shocks. OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/a-systemic-resilience-approach-to-dealing-with-covid-19-and-future-shocks-36a5bdfb/>

<sup>45</sup>OECD (2020), A systemic resilience approach to dealing with Covid-19 and future shocks. OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/a-systemic-resilience-approach-to-dealing-with-covid-19-and-future-shocks-36a5bdfb/#back-endnotea0z14>

<sup>46</sup>Anthem, P. (2020). Risk of hunger pandemic as coronavirus set to almost double acute hunger by end of 2020. WFP Insight, <https://insight.wfp.org/covid-19-will-almost-double-people-in-acute-hunger-by-end-of-2020-59df0c4a8072?gi=d77d33f174de>

<sup>47</sup> ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fourth edition, ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_745963.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745963.pdf)




## II. BUSINESS AND POLICY PRIORITIES

The case for collaboration between business and government to achieve equity and inclusion in the workplace is increasingly urgent. Responsible business action can be scaled up and complemented through policies that span across education, skills, labour market reforms and targeted interventions that support women, youth and workers at risk of job displacement.

OECD research has shown that well-designed policies can support businesses to create more inclusive workplaces. For example, employment protection legislation can be designed to yield predictable contract termination costs and bring job security across all types of work contract; and tax policies can be geared towards future-relevant skills development.<sup>48</sup> Overall, prospects to facilitate job reallocation and reduce the chances of persistent scarring impacts of COVID-19 can be improved through active labour market policies that target inclusion (OECD Interim Economic Outlook, September 2020).

Alignment between business leaders and policymakers is essential to ensure that structural reforms and the reallocation of labour and capital in the aftermath of the pandemic are focused on improvements in the productivity and quality of jobs. In this context, the B4IG coalition identifies three priority themes to guide action by both business and government, (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Priority Themes for an Equitable, Inclusive and Relevant Future of Work**

 <b>THE FUTURE OF WORK</b> Ensuring equal opportunities for all in the future of work	 <b>DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION</b> Stepping up commitments to diversity and inclusion	 <b>GOOD JOBS WITH DECENT WAGES</b> Ensuring adequate protection for the most vulnerable workers
1. Preparing for accelerated automation and restructuring	4. Renewing leadership commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion	7. Reviewing rewards against fair living wage principles
2. Stepping up work-based learning for youth	5. Fighting racism inside and outside the organisation	8. Upgrading social protection
3. Accelerating digital capacity building	6. Supporting mental health	

<sup>48</sup> OECD (2018), *Opportunities for All: A Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301665-en>.



## A. The Future of Work

### ***Ensuring equal opportunities for all in the future of work***

Transformational changes are on the horizon, from the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution to the Green Revolution; from aging populations to nanotechnology. These shifts are already creating entirely new roles and jobs, and this will only accelerate. Many of these jobs will be crucial to protecting and improving the wellbeing of individuals, societies and the environment. However, not enough is being done to align today's workforce with the skills, capabilities and opportunities of these burgeoning, innovative sectors.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, businesses and governments were ill-prepared for the re-skilling and re-training imperatives brought by automation. The urgency has stepped up. The jobs most at risk are not restricted to low-paid work; they include for example, white-collar roles that perform routine-but-complex calculations or well-defined procedures.

### ***New trends will affect the availability, nature and quality of jobs***

Investing in people across generations sets the foundations for inclusive labour markets, by promoting an environment in which high-quality jobs can flourish; preventing labour market exclusion and protecting individuals against labour market risks; and preparing for future opportunities and challenges (OECD, 2018 – The Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth; OECD, 2018 – Good Jobs for All in a Changing World).<sup>4950</sup> The polarisation of occupational structures into high-skilled and low-skilled jobs and between open-ended and various atypical forms of employment may entail further subsequent polarisation of wage structures into high-paying and low-paying jobs.

Education, training and skills translate into improved job opportunities. Adults with greater literacy and numeracy skills and with a greater number of years in education have better labour market outcomes (OECD, 2017)<sup>51</sup>. It is important to equip workers with the right skills in a context of rapidly-evolving skill demand, extended working lifetimes, and eroding incentives for the acquisition of non-transferable skills. At the same time, the incentives for businesses and employees to invest in firm-specific skills may be reducing due to the increasing fragmentation of production processes and the increased likelihood that workers will move between jobs more frequently.<sup>52</sup>

### ***The policy challenge***

Policy challenges for the Future of Work lie across multiple areas. For example, in the area of skills development, there is a need to design novel tools that reduce barriers to lifelong learning by linking education and training to individuals rather than jobs; updating existing tools like grants and loans to make them more accessible to all adults; reducing financial and time

<sup>49</sup> OECD (2018), Opportunities for All: A Framework for Policy Action on Inclusive Growth, <https://www.oecd.org/economy/opportunities-for-all-9789264301665-en.htm>

<sup>50</sup> OECD (2018), Good Jobs for All in a Changing World of Work, <http://www.oecd.org/publications/good-jobs-for-all-in-a-changing-world-of-work-9789264308817-en.htm>

<sup>51</sup> OECD (2017), *Educational Opportunity for All: Overcoming Inequality throughout the Life Course*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264287457-en>.

<sup>52</sup> The new *OECD Jobs Strategy* (OECD, 2019) presents a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of different national labour markets, going well beyond the standard measures of job quantity (employment, unemployment and broad underemployment) towards job quality (pay, labour market security, working environment) and labour market inclusiveness (income equality, gender equality, employment access for potentially disadvantaged groups).



barriers to taking up training; and ensuring that education and training programmes respond to skill demand.<sup>53</sup>

Another important focus is the need to strengthen work-based learning programmes, such as apprenticeships (OECD, 2019 – Good Jobs for All in a Changing World). Many vocational education and training programmes organised at the upper-secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education level prepare students for middle-skill jobs that have been exposed to structural changes and face a significant risk of automation. In a changing world of work, however, these systems need to adapt in close co-operation with social partners along with necessary investments in transversal skills (OECD, 2020).<sup>54</sup>

A further challenge is to ensure that workers remain protected against labour market risks in a world where flexible forms of work may increase. This includes ensuring that everybody has access to social protection and is covered by basic labour market regulations. As underlined in the new *OECD Jobs Strategy*, well-designed social insurance and assistance schemes, if combined with active labour market policies and policies to foster labour demand, can be very effective in protecting against shocks, while at the same time delivering better labour market outcomes.<sup>55</sup> Workers on ‘flexible’ labour contracts often have limited or no access to certain forms of social protection, such as workplace accident and unemployment insurance, and they may not be covered by basic labour market regulations. To some extent, it might be possible to address this concern by extending or adapting existing social security schemes and by clarifying and effectively enforcing existing labour market regulations.

OECD countries are exploring new approaches for extending social protection, such as, creating tailored benefit schemes; expanding the role of non-contributory schemes; implementing minimum floors to social benefits; and making social protection more portable. Another (more theoretical) possibility could be to introduce a universal basic income, although such schemes may not provide effective protection to all workers without significantly raising fiscal pressure, or making some people worse off because of the need to cut other targeted benefits to finance it.

### ***Policy Areas for Priority Attention***

- Improving lifelong learning and access to adult learning
- Linking training to individuals rather than jobs
- Improving accessibility of loans and grants for training
- Expanding work-based learning (apprenticeships and vocational training)
- Investment in transferable skills (skills strategy, portability of skills and training rights)
- Improving enforcement of labour market regulations
- Reforming education curricula and teaching approaches

<sup>53</sup> OECD (2020), “Enhancing Equal Access to Opportunities for All”, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/economy/Enhancing-equal-access-to-opportunities-OECD-background-note-for-G20-Framework-Working-Group-july-2020.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> OECD (2020), *OECD Employment Outlook 2020: Worker Security and the COVID-19 Crisis*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1686c758-en>.

<sup>55</sup> OECD (2019), “*The Economy of Well-Being: Creating Opportunities for People’s Well-being and Economic Growth*”, OECD Statistics Working Papers 2019/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/498e9bc7-en>.



## Business in action

B4IG companies are proactively investing in initiatives that aim to improve the future of work. The following selection of company examples are presented to stimulate the sharing and scaling of good practice. They cut across three areas of intervention: 1. Preparing for accelerated automation and restructuring, 2. Stepping up work-based learning for youth, and 3. Accelerating digital capacity building. More detail on each initiative has been gathered by the B4IG coalition to support further learning.

### Preparing for Accelerated Automation and Restructuring

#### Supporting training and transition for workers at risk of automation

- **Accenture's** Inclusive Future of Work initiative targets workers who are vulnerable to automation and lack access to training and transition support. For example, Accenture has partnered with UK-based social enterprise Stay Nimble on a digital career-coaching platform to help mid-career workers at risk of displacement envision new career pathways.
- **BNP Paribas** includes skills as a data point in most HR processes. Skills can be declared by employees on a voluntary basis, in an internal portal that can be seen and searched by all employees.
- **Danone** is working with the IUF, the global federation of unions in the food industry, to pioneer an innovative approach called "FutureSkills". The objective of this joint initiative is to counter upcoming challenges and support Danone employees who need new skills by offering them the opportunity to be trained and upskilled for the jobs of the future. Throughout the training programme, they will remain Danone employees and keep their benefits.
- **ENGIE** has developed ENGIE Skills, its tool of choice for anticipating and coordinating skills and training to boost the Group's development and performance. The aim is to develop a forward-thinking culture to prepare for major shifts in business and skills.
- **Schneider Electric's** Open Talent Market is an internal talent market leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to match the supply and demand of talent throughout the company. This program is crucial to efficiently funnel skills to where they are most needed.
- **Sodexo** is one of the first signatories of the International Charter for An Inclusive Artificial Intelligence launched by The Arborus and Orange Fund. The purpose of the Charter is to guarantee AI that is designed, deployed and operated in a responsible and inclusive way.
- **Unilever** has created a Responsible Automation Playbook to manage the impact that new technologies will have on their workers. The playbook focuses on the employee experience, assessing their comfort with new ways of working, providing guidance on reskilling and where necessary, offering alternative growth opportunities.
- **Unilever's** Future Fit Plan is a methodology that helps people explore the skills they might need to reskill or upskill in line with their purpose and opportunities within or outside the company. This purposeful approach has been found to be very successful in motivating people to commit to lifelong learning.
- **Unilever** has defined a range of new employment models that offer individuals opportunities to simultaneously learn and earn. These models have been designed to combine lifestyle flexibility with financial security.
- **VINCI** is using an AI-based system to guide workers towards jobs that are important for the company's future. The system is based on a deep analysis of technical, relational and organisational skills, using professional guidelines to steer employees towards new, future-focused career opportunities.



## Stepping up Work-based Learning for Youth

### Developing work-based, experiential learning initiatives

- **Accenture** helps young workers from under-represented groups access job opportunities via apprenticeships, placements and support. In North America, Accenture brought on more than 300 apprentices from under-represented groups in 2019 across 20 cities, focusing on jobs in the digital economy.
- **BNP Paribas** has introduced different programmes to encourage the training and inclusion of young people from disadvantaged areas in “tomorrow’s industries” such as tech, in which women and young people from rural and deprived areas are under-represented.
- **ENGIE** has renewed its commitment to apprenticeship schemes and is relying on work-study programmes to train new generations for the Group’s businesses.
- **Johnson & Johnson’s** “Bridge to Employment” initiative partners with nonprofit FHI360 to help young people improve school attendance, enhance academic achievement, and gain awareness of career possibilities in healthcare.
- **VINCI’s** “Give Me Five” programme seeks to enhance the inclusion and employability of teenagers from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. This includes personal coaching and support for internships and apprenticeships.

### Guiding training towards future growth sectors

- **GINGroup** has launched, “Mujeres Conectadas”, a project committed to women entrepreneurs and workers in the LATAM business ecosystem.
- **Henkel** has been joining forces with external partners, Teach First Germany and JOBLINGE, to address youth unemployment, helping disadvantaged young people to prepare and transition successfully from school to workplace. COVID-19 has raised the urgency of these interventions, reinforcing Henkel’s commitment to its targets.
- **Schneider Electric’s** “100 Chances, 100 Jobs” programme provides personalised career opportunities for adults aged 18 – 30 without higher-education qualifications or degrees.
- **Schneider Electric’s** “Access to Energy” programme helps prepare disadvantaged populations for jobs in important growth sectors like renewable energy systems. The program includes training on solar energy; electrical distribution; building management; global energy management; and process and machine management.

## Accelerating Digital Capacity Building

### Promoting training in digital and technology-related skills

- **Accenture** provides courses to help unemployed workers develop digital skills, as well as providing hardware and connectivity to households lacking Internet access during confinement due to COVID-19. Accenture works with DevicesDotNow to provide 1.9 million UK households without access to the Internet with tablets, smartphones and laptops, as well as connectivity, to help deal with isolation while building skills needed in a global, digital economy.
- **BASF** has set up a project team to work on concepts that continue the current spirit of mobile working into the future, develop new concepts of working, and connect opportunities of mobile work together with office work.
- **BNP Paribas** Group’s Digital, Data & Agile Academy provides employees with training in these domains, supporting the Group’s business transformation.
- **Henkel’s** digital skilling and digital working initiatives have been adapted and accelerated in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Confinement has raised the importance of effective remote and flexible working, as well as digital learning programmes, and digital tools to enhance activities from employee experience to recruitment.



### Supporting digital enablement of the ecosystem and community

- **GINgroup's** “Digital Inclusion” programme in Mexico aims to collaborate in the development of open, inclusive, integrated and intelligent business ecosystems that promote electronic commerce and the digital economy in Mexico, through projects and programmes of dissemination, training and networking.

*The examples above illustrate existing initiatives from the B4IG community. A larger inventory of B4IG examples with more detailed descriptions are available in the deck accompanying this paper.*





## B. Diversity & Inclusion

### *Stepping up commitments to diversity and inclusion*

As we work through the economic and employment aftermath of the health crisis, we can expect significant upheaval in job markets and restructuring of organisations. At such times, we see that the sections of the workforce that are already disadvantaged are disproportionately impacted. This threatens the reversal of years of progress by companies in making their workforces more inclusive and diverse.

### *The future of work brings opportunities, yet also risks widening disparities*

Labour market risks (such as job loss, accidents at work and skills obsolescence) faced by workers are evolving and at least partly related to the misclassification of some employment relationships (OECD, 2019). Over the past decade, labour market conditions have, for example, deteriorated for young people with less than a tertiary education in many countries, with a rising proportion out of work, under-employed or low-paid if in work.

As shown in the 2020 *OECD Employment Outlook*, during the lockdown top-earning workers were on average 50% more likely to work from home than those in the bottom quartile; the latter were more often employed in essential services during the lockdowns and at risk of exposing themselves to the virus while working. At the same time, low-income workers were twice as likely to have to stop working completely as their higher-income peers were. All these trends hit disadvantaged groups hardest, raising the urgency to take proactive action on diversity and inclusion.

From a gender perspective, in a number of countries, men have seen an increase in joblessness and under-employment. Nevertheless, under-employment remains more widespread among women, who are also more likely to be in low-paid jobs.<sup>56</sup> Working women are more likely to work part-time, for lower pay, and in less lucrative sectors such as public administration, health and education, while men are more likely to work in finance, banking and insurance. Women are also less likely to advance to management positions, and more likely to face discrimination in the workplace.<sup>57</sup>

OECD countries have taken great steps to improve access to, and the generosity of, sick leave and out-of-work income support as well as job retention schemes, whose take-up has been unprecedented in many countries. These policy responses were aimed at containing damage and supporting workers and companies, as well as facilitating the recovery by avoiding the destruction of viable work activities and competences (OECD, 2020 *Employment Outlook*).

### *The policy challenge*

The OECD 2019 *Employment Outlook* suggests conducting country-level assessments of the alignment of national policies with the future of work, and the impact on the most vulnerable. Much can be done to enhance the effectiveness of policies in areas such as education, adult learning and social protection, by undertaking a comprehensive spending review and deepening the “whole-of-government” approach to public policy objectives and solutions (OECD, 2019).

Governments can consider specific policy options to ensure that vulnerable groups and non-standard workers have access to adequate adult learning opportunities. These include building

<sup>56</sup> OECD (2019), *OECD Employment Outlook 2019: The Future of Work*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ee00155-en>

<sup>57</sup> OECD (2019), “*The Economy of Well-Being: Creating Opportunities for People’s Well-being and Economic Growth*”, OECD Statistics Working Papers 2019/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/498e9bc7-en>.



a learning culture among firms and individuals, removing the barriers to training that disadvantaged groups face, (for example by tackling unequal access to training based on employment status), encouraging firms to train groups at risk, and making training rights portable between jobs (OECD, 2019).

More is also needed to sustain efforts towards reducing the non-merit based gaps in earnings across groups; for example, by tackling gender-biased disparities in education and occupational choices, while increasing the representation of women in leadership positions.

Increased diversity and inclusion, as well as female representation in C-suites and boards, have been linked to higher business performance and shareholder returns (Hunt et al., 2015). In aggregate terms, boosting female labour market participation and reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 could add 1 percentage point to GDP growth across the OECD over the period 2013-25, and almost 2.5 percentage points if gender participation gaps were halved by 2025 (OECD, 2017)<sup>58</sup>.

#### *Policy Areas for Priority Attention*

- Assessing the impact of workplace trends on vulnerable workers
- Removing barriers to training that disadvantaged groups face
- Reviewing government spending and holistic approaches to inclusion
- Reducing non-merit based gaps in earnings across groups (eg. gender pay equity)
- Reducing gender disparities in education, employment and leadership

<sup>58</sup> OECD (2017), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>



## Business in action

B4IG companies are proactively investing in initiatives that aim to improve diversity and inclusion in the post-COVID era. The following selection of company examples are presented to stimulate the sharing and scaling of good practice. They cut across three areas of intervention: 1. Renewing leadership commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion, 2. Fighting racism inside and outside the organisation, and 3. Supporting mental health. More detail on each initiative has been gathered by the B4IG coalition to support further learning.

### Renewing Leadership Commitment to a Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

#### Renewing commitment to measurement and targets for diversity and inclusion

- **Accenture** has set goals to accelerate gender equality in the workplace. This means a workforce that is equally 50 percent women and 50 percent men, for those whose gender is binary. In addition, it will increase the percentage of women managing directors to 25 percent by the end of 2020.
- **Accenture's** Diverse Supplier Development Program matches senior executive mentors with diverse supplier "protégé" companies, to help them grow. The initiative pays particular attention to vendors that use AI and other innovative skills that are part of the digital future.
- **BNP Paribas'** Executive Committee members have signed a charter with #JamaisSansElles and reaffirmed the Group's strong commitment to gender diversity. BNP Paribas is the first company from the CAC40 to join this movement.
- **Danone** has designed a diversity and inclusion project focused on two principal objectives: increase gender equality awareness and increase the percentage of women employees, at its Toluca plant.
- **ENGIE's** "Fifty-Fifty" project, led by Group HR, in collaboration with operational and corporate functions, aims to achieve the goal of 50% women managers by 2030.
- **Goldman Sachs** has made a public commitment to require all companies they take public to have at least one diverse (women, Black or Hispanic/Latino) board director.
- **Johnson & Johnson** is constantly working towards emerging as an employer and healthcare company of choice for the LGBTQ+ community. Every day, the company is creating a diverse, inclusive and welcoming workplace; understanding and responding to the unique needs of LGBTQ+ consumers; and advocating for public and social equality.
- **Sodexo's** gender strategy is named "SoTogether", and includes a global advisory board dedicated to ensuring a culture of inclusion that promotes gender equality.
- **Sodexo** empowers women in disadvantaged communities with a global job shadowing programme called "SheWorks", covering 20 countries.
- **TIAA** launched its Inclusion Index in 2019, aiming to create a simple metric, based on an engagement survey, that leaders can use to measure inclusion, understand team perception, and gauge progress in comparison to peers.
- **TIAA** promotes an inclusive environment through its Policy on Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Workplace Standards. The goal of this policy is to ensure the safety, comfort and healthy development of transgender or gender non-conforming associates.

#### Nurturing a culture of flexibility and work-life balance

- **BNP Paribas** has joined the "1in3Women" network, the first European network of companies taking a stand against gender-based violence. Their first study aimed at identifying and measuring the impact on companies of domestic violence suffered by employees.

- **Danone** in Mexico developed initiatives providing tools to employees to address the increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Danone** in Italy has introduced flexible policies to encourage smart-working and caregiving, as well as the extension of benefits to interns and reskilling for external field forces.
- **Danone** in the UK and Ireland is developing a new flexible working model to accommodate employees' desire for increased flexibility and home working support. This measure is aimed at increasing access to strong, diverse talent.
- **Sodexo** Brazil has introduced a project called "Fairy Godmother" to protect female employees against domestic violence, in response to the increase in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 crisis.
- **TIAA** proactively conducted system stress testing in response to the COVID-19 crisis and was the first financial services company to close all of their offices and implement full-time work-from-home arrangements.

#### Improving accessibility and opportunity for workers with disabilities

- **BASF** undertakes a review of all assistive technology for workers with disabilities to simplify and extend access to these tools. Workers have the option of using a portal or bot-based solution to access this service.
- **Danone** in Spain is working with different companies in Spain such as the "Human Age Institute", "Fundación Adecco", "Randstad" and "Fundación ONCE" to help find people with disabilities to be recruited in the company.
- **GINgroup's** GINcluyete programme seeks to detect, develop and include the talent of people with disabilities into the economic market in a dignified way.

#### Fighting Racism Inside and Outside the Organisation

##### Addressing unconscious bias and opportunities for under-represented ethnic groups

- **Accenture** has reinforced its commitment to equality and justice for all by taking new actions in 2020 to fight racism, create more opportunities for employment and advancement, and become more inclusive and diverse. The actions include new goals for increased race and ethnicity representation in the workforce overall and among managing directors in the US, the UK and South Africa.
- **Accenture** is committed to removing bias from AI systems, developing solutions that detect and correct algorithmic behaviours that can disadvantage groups based on gender, race and ethnicity. Accenture, in partnership with the Alan Turing Institute, has prototyped a tool that helps businesses detect and address gender, racial and ethnic bias in AI solutions.
- **AXA** has organised structured, facilitated internal focus groups to listen to employees about ethnic inclusion at the company. Small groups share experiences and observations that will be used to drive actions which will be announced at a conference before the end of 2020.
- **BASF** has developed tools to cope with unconscious biases, which they consider to be one of the most important barriers to improving diversity in organisations.
- **Johnson & Johnson** is using its "Big for Good" approach to help create a more inclusive society. They have embedded inclusion into their programmes, policies and processes, and integrated inclusion throughout performance management, development and compensation conversations.
- **Sodexo** in the US has created safe conversation spaces to address biases and racism and to remind employees of the company's clear position against racism and inequality for people of colour. As a result of initiatives in the past four years, the number of African Americans in Sodexo US teams has increased by 28% in senior leadership roles and by 17% in middle management roles.



### Collaborating with external organisations to proactively confront racism

- **Sodexo** has collaborated with “Tent Partnership for Refugees”. Sodexo hires hundreds of refugees each year, and its employees provide mentorship and support with their job applications and resumes.
- **TIAA**’s “Be the Change” initiative is a leadership platform to challenge systemic racism through programmes, educational resources and communications focused on supporting its associates while also challenging the company to take action.

### Supporting Mental Health

#### Destigmatising and actively supporting mental wellbeing

- **Accenture** partnered with Thrive Global and Stanford Medicine to launch “Thriving Mind” in 2020. Available to all Accenture employees, Thriving Mind is a self-directed learning experience that prioritises mental well-being with pioneering research from Stanford Medicine and Thrive Global’s behaviour change expertise. Employees also have access to training, employee assistance programmes and a global ally programme.
- **AXA** has launched a programme called “How are you?” that seeks to reduce the stigma around mental health, upskill the support available to employees in need and encourage use of support.
- **Danone** North Latam is focused on the wellbeing of employees working remotely and has introduced a programme called “Danoners Siempre Bien”, where they provide information to employees on emotional, mental & personal development, health & wellness, and new ways of working.
- **GINgroup** has designed a holistic wellbeing platform aimed at helping employees get closer to self-realisation and happiness. The platform has four pillars – education and training, health, sports and recreation and patrimonial.
- **Henkel**, since 1912, offers every employee the opportunity to seek advice and receive consultation or practical support on all issues that affect them and their families via an employee assistance program, including a helpline service. This helpline service was complemented with a Corona helpline, providing special support to the employees linked to the challenges of the pandemic.
- **Johnson & Johnson** is responding to the impact of COVID-19 by supporting healthcare workers through targeted training and empowerment initiatives. Ultimately, building the physical and mental wellbeing of vulnerable communities is proving a critical support to social protection.
- **Sodexo** has broadened the awareness of persons with disabilities to include “invisible disabilities” as part of its commitment to zero harm in the workplace.
- **Sodexo** has launched a new on-site counselling service for 6,000 Sodexo healthcare employees, to help them deal with the pressures of working through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Unilever**’s Mental Wellbeing programme seeks to reduce the stigma associated with mental health by working with partner organisations and providing a combination of EAP support globally, together with community, individual and leadership support.

*The examples above illustrate existing initiatives from the B4IG community. A larger inventory of B4IG examples with more detailed descriptions are available in the deck accompanying this paper.*





## C. Good Jobs with Decent Wages

### ***Ensuring adequate protection for the most vulnerable workers***

The provision of decent work that respects the fundamental rights of workers to safe work environments and adequate pay is essential to achieve fair globalisation and poverty reduction. Many corporations have committed to the United Nations Global Compact Action Platform on Decent Work in Global Supply Chains. This platform builds the case for improving Decent Work in Global Supply Chains and demonstrates how labour rights and human rights are critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The progress made so far needs reassessing in the context of COVID-19, which highlighted the weakness or absence of social protection for many sections of the economy.

Beyond wages, being able to measure and assess the *quality* of jobs is crucial to improving working conditions. The OECD has developed a framework<sup>59</sup> to measure and assess the quality of jobs that considers three objective and measurable dimensions of job quality: earnings contribution to well-being, labour market security and quality of working environment.

Well-designed social protection systems can contribute to fostering productive employment and promoting inclusive growth and development. A serious examination and reassessment of social protection systems is well overdue, especially in the context of 1. the extending COVID-driven employment crisis; 2. the impending acceleration in automation-induced unemployment; and 3. the lagging policy response to protect new forms of work, such as the gig economy. This is on top of the persistent and growing issue of informal workers that lack protection entirely.

As shown by the 2020 OECD Employment Outlook, those who lose a part-time job or have unstable or short employment histories are disproportionately impacted. The self-employed and other non-standard workers are often poorly protected or not protected at all. At the same time, the assistance function of social protection systems (that aim to provide last-resort minimum-income benefits to those with little or no other resources) has been challenged (OECD, 2020). During the COVID-19 lockdown, the imposition of mandatory job-search requirements risks pushing workers whose jobs are at risk only temporarily, into lower quality jobs.

### ***The policy challenge***

The speed and severity of the pandemic shock was met with unprecedented levels of support to individuals and organisations, both in depth and in scope (OECD, 2020). The greatest challenge is to understand how the pandemic itself and the associated employment crisis will evolve, and how to meet that evolution through policy levers.

As employees fell ill, were quarantined, or lost their jobs, paid sick-leave schemes and unemployment insurance kicked in, and several countries expanded their scope and increased their payments. Alongside this, many countries have eased company access to short-time work schemes, stepped up means-tested assistance of last resort, introduced new ad-hoc cash transfers, and provided direct support for expenses. A large majority of OECD countries has introduced or extended job retention schemes to preserve jobs at firms experiencing a temporary reduction in business activity. Some have also introduced changes to employment protection legislation to either better protect workers with a permanent contract or to facilitate

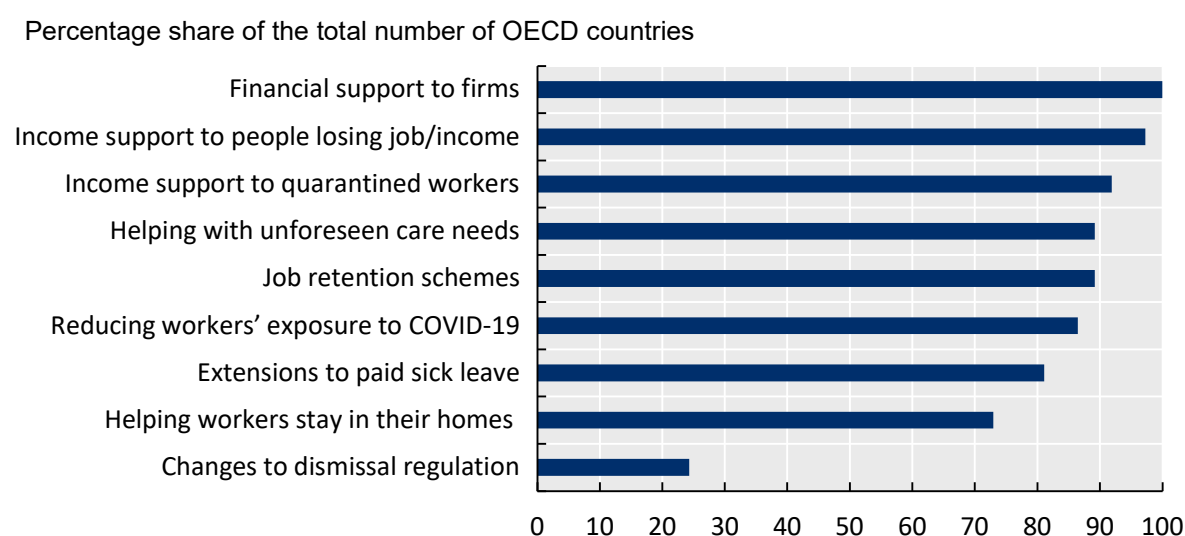
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<sup>59</sup> OECD Job Quality Measurement and Assessment Framework: <https://www.oecd.org/sdd/labour-stats/Job-quality-OECD.pdf>

the hiring or renewal of workers with a temporary contract.<sup>60</sup> A summary of the main measures taken across the 37 OECD countries is illustrated in Figure 3.

While these measures did much to address the immediate effects of the crisis, major questions remain open about the future.

**Figure 3. OECD countries introduced bold new measures or considerably expanded existing ones in response to COVID-19**



Source: OECD COVID-19 Employment and social policy responses by country, <http://oe.cd/covid19tablesocial>

#### **Policy Areas for Priority Attention**

- Enhancing access to social protection
- Improving the classification of workers (e.g. recognizing non-standard workers)
- Building systemic preparedness to future shocks (e.g. around short-time work schemes, job retention schemes, sick leave and unemployment benefits)
- Upgrading employment protection legislation
- Exploring innovative approaches (e.g. universal basic income)

<sup>60</sup> OECD (2020), *Job Retention Schemes during the COVID-19 Lockdown and Beyond*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=135\\_135415-6bardplc5q&title=Job-retention-schemes-during-the-COVID-19-lockdown-and-beyond](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=135_135415-6bardplc5q&title=Job-retention-schemes-during-the-COVID-19-lockdown-and-beyond)



## Business in action

As we enter the next phase of the pandemic and its subsequent employment crisis, action on ensuring good jobs with decent wages and adequate social protection is urgently required to mitigate the aggravation of poverty, inequality and social instability:

B4IG companies are proactively investing in initiatives that aim to improve the quality of work and pay. The following selection of company examples are presented to stimulate the sharing and scaling of good practice. They cut across two areas of intervention: 1. Reviewing rewards against fair living wage principles, and 2. Upgrading social protection.

### Reviewing Rewards against Fair Living Wage Principles

#### Reviewing workforce compensation and work conditions across the ecosystem

- **AXA** launched the “AXA Emerging Customers” initiative in 2016 to allow access to insurance offerings and protection services to those who do not have access to insurance or regular income.
- **L'Oréal** launched its Employee Human Rights Policy in January 2020, which focuses on guaranteeing a living wage for its employees around the globe, in partnership with the Fair Wage Network. The Network provides L'Oréal with a comprehensive and up-to-date database that can be used to define, build and deploy a living wage strategy throughout its operations, for employees of L'Oréal and its suppliers. Ensuring a living wage means providing workers and their dependents with sufficient revenue for food, housing and basic needs, regardless of the region where they work.
- **Schneider Electric** has enhanced its existing global benefit standards (Life, Health and Family Care) for all its employees worldwide in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Schneider Electric** believes that earning a decent wage is essential for all. The company is committed to paying employees in the lower salary ranges at or above the living wage to meet their family's basic needs, including food, housing, sanitation, education, healthcare, and discretionary income for local standards of living.
- **Sodexo** created a relief programme during the COVID crisis for workers facing partial unemployment and difficult financial situations. The programme draws funds from the bonuses of its top 200 management executives, half of its chairwoman and CEO's base salary and 10% of executive committee members.

### Upgrading Social Protection

#### Ensuring adequate protection of workers across types of contract

- **BASF SE** company management and employee representatives have extended the existing ‘site agreement’ that has been in place for many years. Even in this challenging year, they renewed their commitment to forgo forced redundancies until 2025.
- **Danone's** Support Fund in the UK and Ireland is an economic support mechanism for employees whose family circumstances may have changed as a result of COVID, for example resulting in reduced family income or the need to support family members. No employees have had their income reduced during the COVID crisis.
- **ENGIE's** ENGIE CARE project was launched in June 2019 and parts of it were adapted and accelerated in response to COVID-19. The initiative offers a minimum base of social protection for all Group employees throughout the world, including subcontractors, and allows for effective management of benefits through a digital tool.
- **Schneider Electric** Foundation launched the “Tomorrow Rising Fund” to support emergency response and relief activities post-COVID-19. Activities range from food and medical aid to education and training programmes.



### Working with external stakeholders to tackle informality and strengthen social protection

- **GINgroup's** "Transformation for Employment" programme seeks economic reactivation in partnership with stakeholders in the public, private and academic fields. GINgroup's workforce management model supports the onboarding of a large number of workers into jobs that offer a path to productive, formal labour at all skill levels. The programme is projected to help create 15,000 new formal jobs and provide training to about 5,000 workers in a year.

*The examples above illustrate existing initiatives from the B4IG community. A larger inventory of B4IG examples with more detailed descriptions are available in the deck accompanying this paper.*



### III. THE WORK AHEAD

This Position Paper presents the overarching narrative that is driving the work of the B4IG Working Group on Inclusive Workplaces. It states the coalition's position on the challenges facing an inclusive recovery, and the priority areas requiring intervention and progress.

Through the process of crafting this paper, the B4IG member companies have discussed and examined their own priorities and agreed upon a collective schedule of work for the next phase of the B4IG mandate. The intent of these workstreams is to generate concrete action to bring the inclusive recovery to fruition.

Four specific workstreams have been ratified and launched for 2020-21, and three further workstreams are being explored for the future. We outline each of these below:

#### ***Workstreams Launched for 2020-2021***

##### ***Inclusive Restructuring***

Led by: Michelin, Unilever

The COVID-19 crisis accelerates pressure for corporate restructuring, threatening job losses and disruption to communities, especially in areas that lack economic diversity. If restructuring becomes necessary, B4IG members insist that it must be done in accordance with the B4IG Pledge, ie. in the most responsible and inclusive way possible.

This workstream aims to encourage a proactive, human-centred approach to restructuring, including the provision of principles to support and guide responsible and inclusive processes, decisions and behaviours. These principles and guidelines will be based upon the research and experience of B4IG member companies.

##### ***Diversity and Inclusion Framework***

Led by: Accenture

The COVID-19 crisis distracts business leaders from progress on Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and risks falling back on D&I progress, as financial sustainability is prioritised at the expense of broader objectives. B4IG members insist that the crisis demands a greater focus than ever on D&I, especially as disadvantaged groups have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

This workstream is developing an overarching framework to guide companies in their actions to promote D&I, with specific initial applications on gender and ethnicity. The workstream learns from existing frameworks, supplemented by additional research and best-practice sharing circles across B4IG members.



### ***Inclusive Apprenticeships***

Led by: Unilever

The COVID-19 crisis is accelerating technological and economic trends that transform the nature of work. To make sure workers are prepared for these changes and that no one is left behind, B4IG members insist on the need to step-up work-based learning for young people. This includes the development of experiential learning initiatives and training systems that guide workers towards the jobs of tomorrow.

This workstream aims to present successful approaches to attract, train and retain youth from disadvantaged backgrounds into productive employment with prospects for growth. This initiative will be based upon the shared experience of B4IG member companies and aims to leverage the B4IG Incubator's projects related to apprenticeships.

### ***Bridging the Digital Divide***

Led by: Capgemini

The COVID-19 crisis has shifted large parts of the workforce to remote or home working. As economic activity reignites, a significant portion will likely remain online, which places even more stress on those without digital access. B4IG members believe that it is necessary to shrink the digital divide and ensure all workers have adequate digital access.

Using existing research as well as experience from member companies, this workstream explores tangible approaches to improving affordable and universal access to secure digital infrastructure, tools, content and skills.

### ***Potential Workstreams Under Exploration***

***Successful work transition systems*** – in collaboration with the OECD, we are assessing opportunities to understand the drivers of successful work transition, from career planning to reskilling and career guidance.

***Gender Pay Equality*** – the OECD's extensive body of work highlights the crucial need to make significant improvements on gender pay equality. There is an opportunity to learn from this work to chart a constructive path forward for business.

***Living Wage commitments*** – in collaboration with the B4IG Working Group on Inclusion in Company Value Chains & Business Ecosystems, we are assessing the potential to craft a B4IG commitment towards ensuring fair wages within companies and across ecosystems.