



OPPORTUNITY

38

SCOPE TRANSITIONAL

UNCERTAINTIES

Systems, Values

MEGATRENDS

Future Humanity

TRENDS

Future of education
Future of purpose & work
Generational & cognitive diversity
Longevity & vitality
Mental health

SECTORS IMPACTED

Agriculture & Food
Automotive, Aerospace & Aviation
Chemicals & Petrochemicals
Communication Technologies & Systems
Consumer Goods, Services & Retail
Cyber & Information Security
Data Science, AI & Machine Learning
Digital Goods & Services
Education
Energy, Oil, Gas & Renewables
Financial Services & Investment
Government Services
Health & Healthcare
Immersive Technologies
Infrastructure & Construction
Insurance & Reinsurance
Logistics, Shipping & Freight
Manufacturing
Materials & Biotechnology
Art, Media & Entertainment
Metals & Mining
Professional Services
Real Estate
Sports
Travel & Tourism
Utilities

What if young people were paid to explore careers and retirees never retired?

FLIPPING THE CAREER LADDER

Reversing career trajectories: ‘pensions’ for young people, a growth period, then ‘internships’ for retirees encourages dynamic, diverse hiring and societal engagement across generations.





WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

By 2050, more than 4 in 10 individuals in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) economies are likely to be over 50 years old.⁷⁷³ By 2050, the average life expectancy around the globe is expected to reach 77.2 years,⁷⁷⁴ and the number of people aged 80 years or over is expected to triple, reaching 426 million.⁷⁷⁵

However, according to a 2023 Pew Research Centre survey, it is senior workers who most enjoy working.⁷⁷⁶ A survey of 34 global markets showed that in 2023 there was a significant decline in the number of people who believed they would retire before the age of 65 – from 61% in 2022 to 51% in 2023.⁷⁷⁷ Extending working lives could potentially boost gross domestic product (GDP) per capita by 19% by 2050 in OECD countries.⁷⁷⁸

In a survey on longevity conducted by the World Economic Forum and Mercer, a substantial portion of globally surveyed educated professionals reported feeling isolated (40%) and lonely (30%) even though 80% had a reliable circle of friends.⁷⁷⁹ The World Economic Forum has highlighted loneliness as a public health crisis, equating its impact to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.⁷⁸⁰

Concerns about the future of work, particularly for young people, are rising in the face of technological advances and artificial intelligence.⁷⁸¹ Coupled with this is a loneliness epidemic affecting not only retirees but also the younger generation.⁷⁸²



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With longer lifespans and the recognised positive impacts of societal engagement in later years,⁷⁸³ reversing traditional career trajectories could be an opportunity. Young early career entrants start with a 'pension' phase, which is followed by a period of growth (as today), before culminating in 'internships' for retirees.

They would be provided with a basic income, aiding them as they explore various career options within a time-limited framework. Conversely, older individuals have the opportunity to embark on 'internship' roles, keeping them engaged if they so choose. This approach not only shapes future workforces but also ensures that older generations remain actively involved. Designing workplaces as such would enhance intergenerational knowledge transfer and increase both productivity and organisational resilience.⁷⁸⁴

BENEFITS

Early career entrants explore interests without income pressure, focusing on achievements. Retirees remain engaged, leading fulfilling lives. UBI investment yields diverse returns and even aids charity hiring, which often struggles to attract early career entrants.

RISKS

Experience gaps for early career entrants and challenges in securing full-time roles later on. Challenges in securing suitable 'internship' roles for retirees. Reduced career motivation and less self-reliance.⁷⁸⁵



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