



Three Scenarios of a Future Working World

Strategic foresight approaches to imagine and respond to a changing world of work for young adults living with a disability in Canada

Arif Jetha PhD

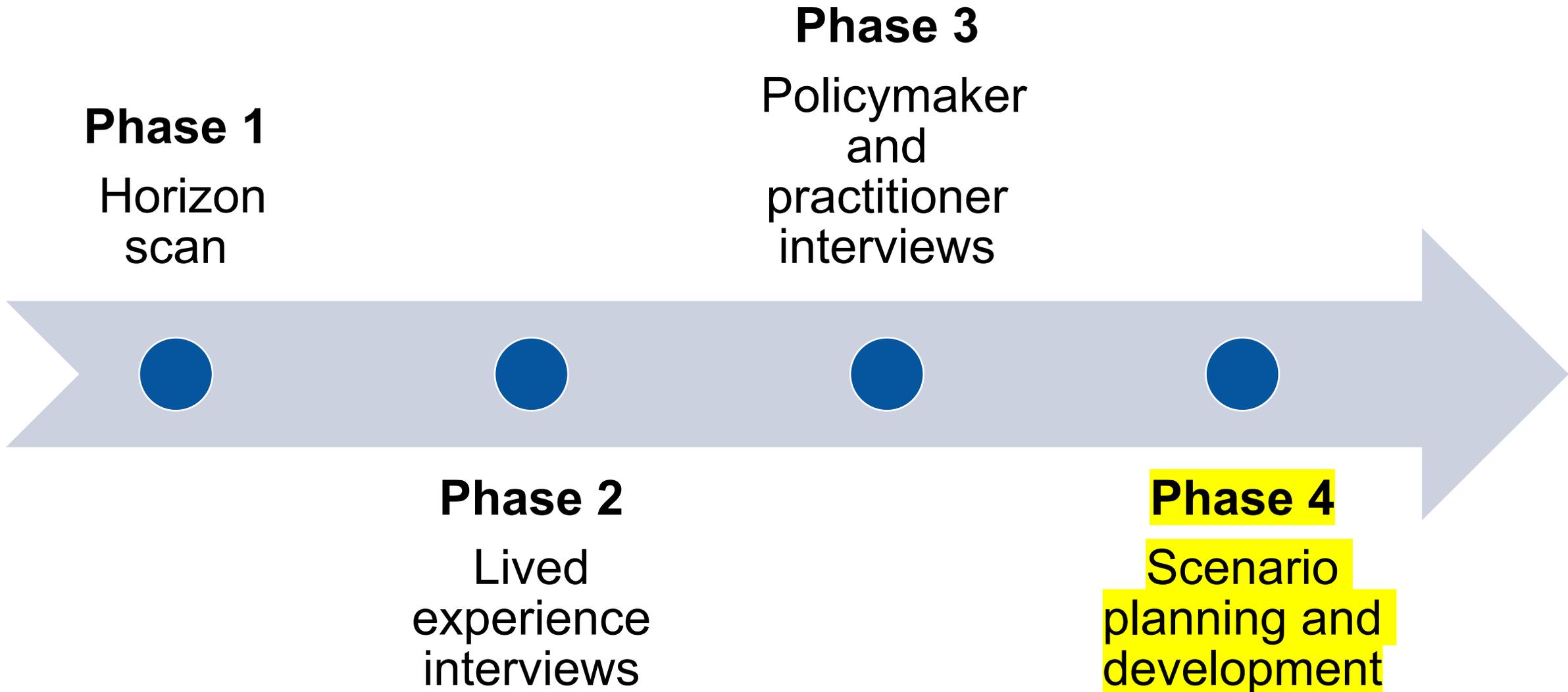
Scientist and Associate Scientific Director

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Multidisciplinary team and foresight specialist

| | Institution | Disciplines |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Arif Jetha | IWH | Public Health, disability |
| Ali Shamaee | IWH | Foresight |
| Cristina Banks | UC Berkeley | I-O psychology, workplace health promotion |
| Silvia Bonaccio | U Ottawa | I-O psychology, disability |
| Ute Bültmann | U Groningen | Life course epidemiology, disability |
| Monique Gignac | IWH | Social psychology, disability |
| Cameron Norman | Cense Design LTD | Foresight, public health |
| Peter Smith | IWH | Epidemiology, disability |
| Emile Tompa | IWH | Economics, disability |
| Lori Tucker | UBC and BC Children's Hospital | Transitional medicine |

Aims and Objectives

To develop scenarios that present various divergent stories of the future.

The scenarios we built addressed three key objectives:

1. To examine how working life in Canada might change in the next seven years
2. To unpack the implications of labour market changes on the sustained and inclusive employment of young persons with a disability
3. To examine potential strategies for inclusive employment that can be implemented in the present that are resilient to changes in the future of work

Report

Three Scenarios of a Future Working World

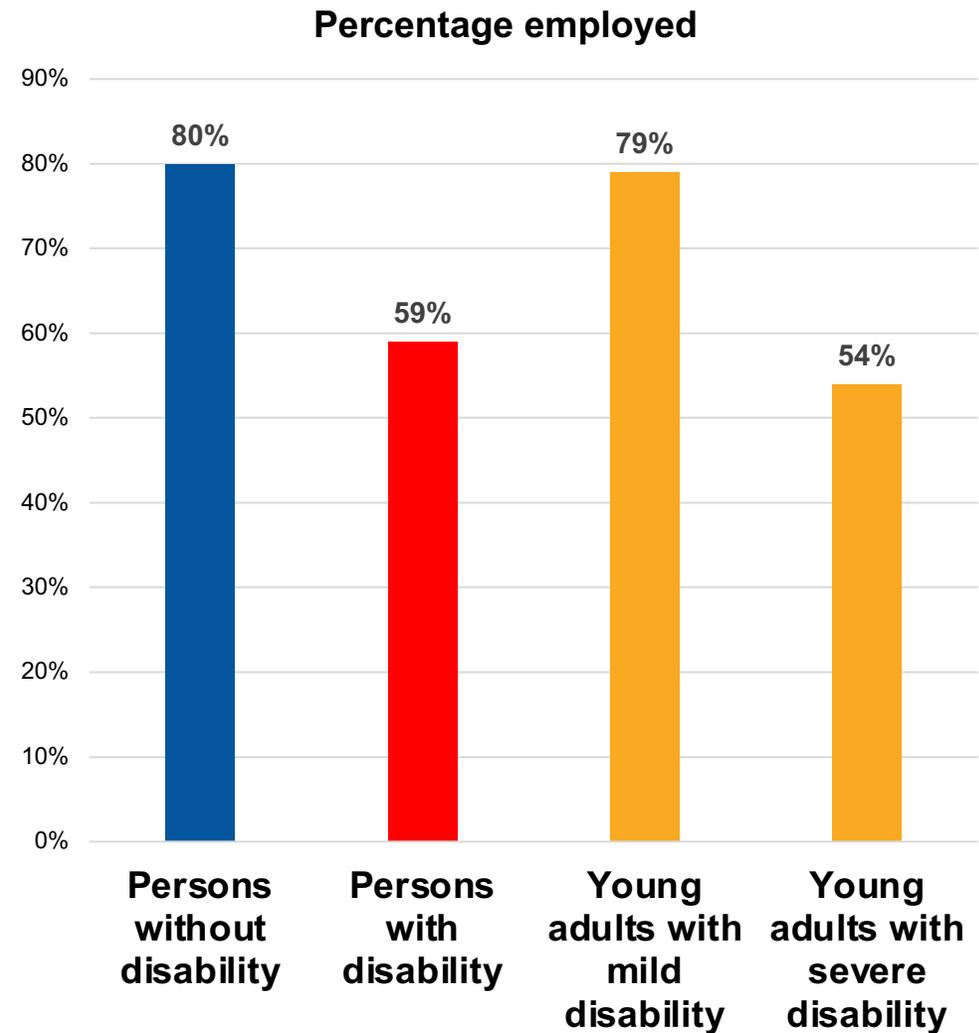
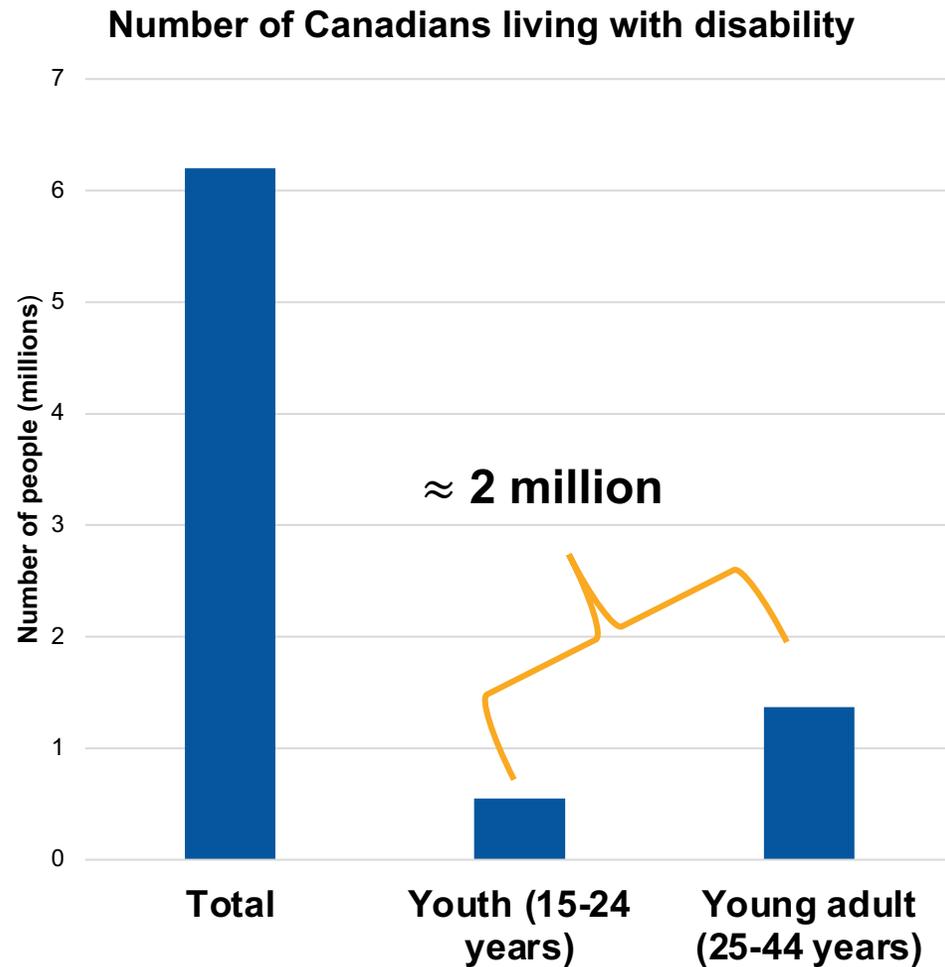
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Study context

Why we conducted this project?

Young people, disability and employment



Employment disadvantage of young persons with disabilities



Underemployment

Precarious work arrangements

Unsafe working conditions

Challenges obtaining career advancement opportunities

Difficulties accessing job accommodations and other workplace benefits

Research and practice gap

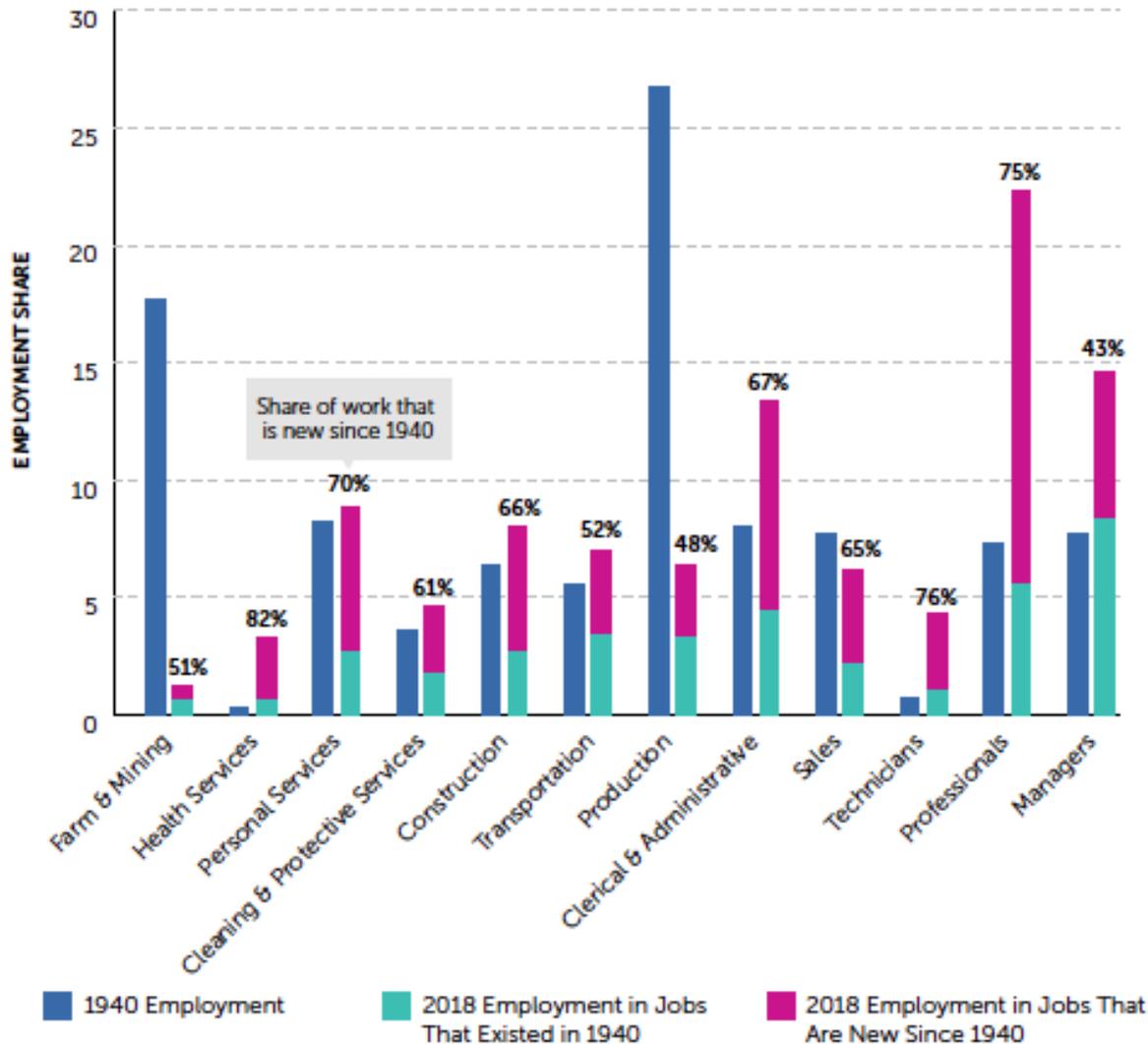
Absence of approaches which foster employment inclusion that are also resilient to changes in the future of work

What is the future of work?

- An ongoing and rapid changing to the nature of work, workforce and workplace
- Large-scale digitization and automation of diverse domains of work
- Coupled with social, demographic, political and environmental changes
- Reflects a dramatic change to every industry and transformation of all aspects of work life



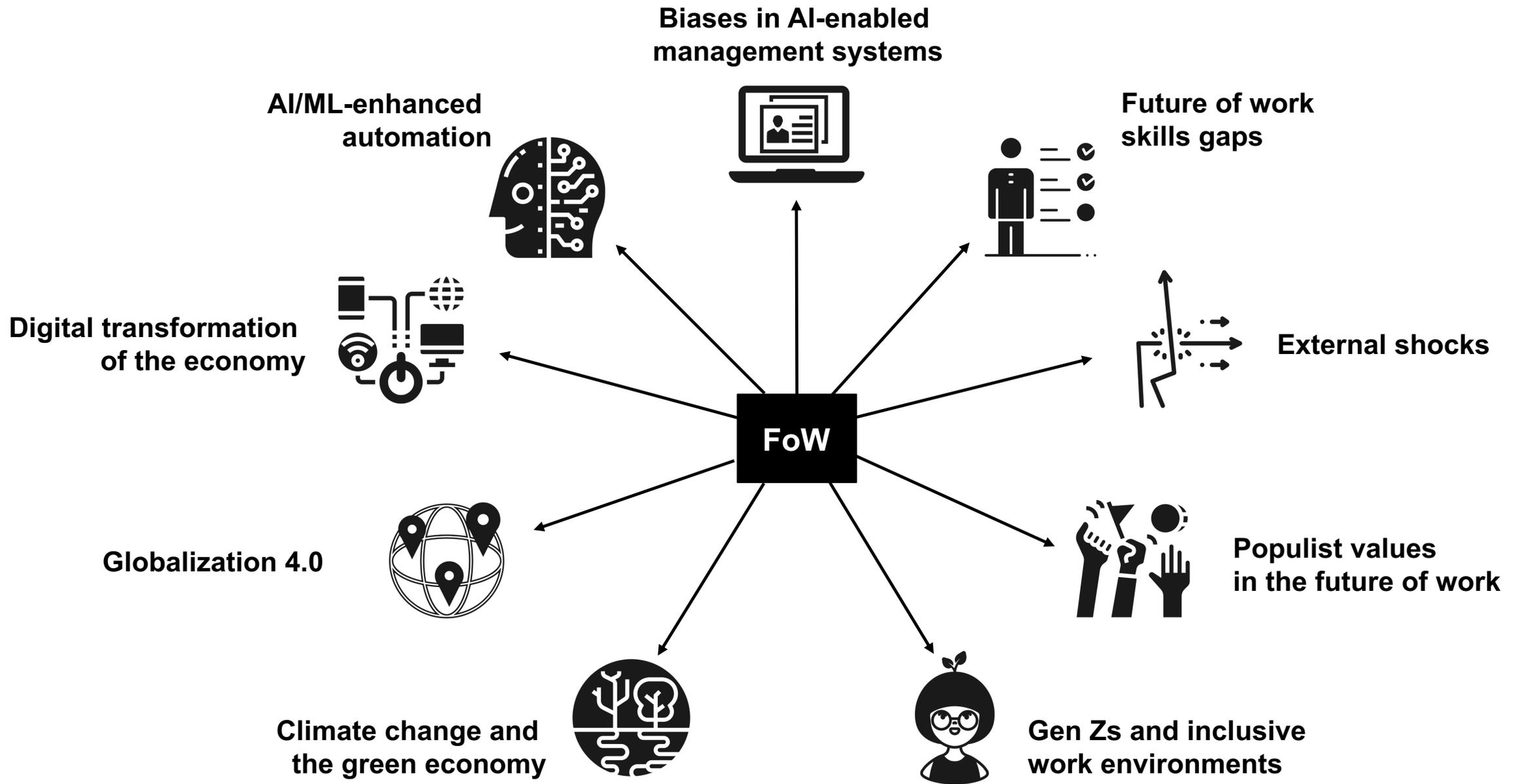
> 60% of jobs in 2018 not “Invented” in 1940s



What new jobs will be created in the future?

How will the working conditions within these new jobs contribute to barriers or facilitators?

What steps can we take in the present to address barriers to inclusion that may emerge in the future?



Strategic foresight



- Strategic foresight is a systematic, participatory and action-oriented methodological process
- To create coherent medium-to-long-term views of the future
- Explores alternative future scenarios that could emerge
- Draws on diverse expertise, ideas, and insights
- Generate evidence that fosters preparedness and resilience

Studying the future of work can be challenging

Interviews with 22 young people living with disabilities on their thoughts and perceptions regarding the future of work

Key finding

Many found it challenging to think about the future of work

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The future of work in shaping the employment inclusion of young adults with disabilities: a qualitative study

An inclusive future of work

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Arif Jetha
*Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada and
Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

Ali Shamaee
Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada

Emile Tompa
*Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada;
Department of Economics, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada and
Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

Peter Smith
*Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada and
Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

Ute Bültmann
University Medical Centre Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

Silvia Bonaccio
Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Lori B. Tucker
*BC Children's Hospital, Vancouver, Canada and
Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada*

Cameron Norman
Cense LTD, Toronto, Canada

Cristina G. Banks
University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, California, USA, and

Monique A.M. Gignac
*Institute for Work and Health, Toronto, Canada and
Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada*

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“It’s difficult for me to think about the future because I used to make plans and then life would go in very unexpected ways, so I just stopped.”

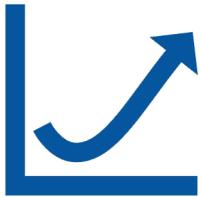
Research participant, young person with lived experience



Scenarios planning

- Evidence-informed narratives of the future
- Help us experience signals of change and driving forces might interact and shape the future
- Goal is to create possible futures
- Explore a wide range of opportunities and challenges
- Used to inform strategic planning activities

Alternative Futures Framework

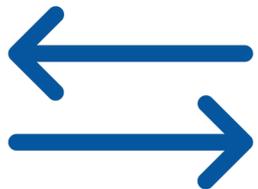
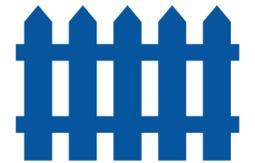


Growth

Current trends continue along an upward path, with economic growth as the central dynamic

Constraint

People and institutions make sacrifices for the common good in the face of a shared challenge



Transformation

New insights, technologies or social shifts make something that seems implausible today suddenly possible

Collapse

Cascading systems failures (often social and/or environmental) that are set in motion



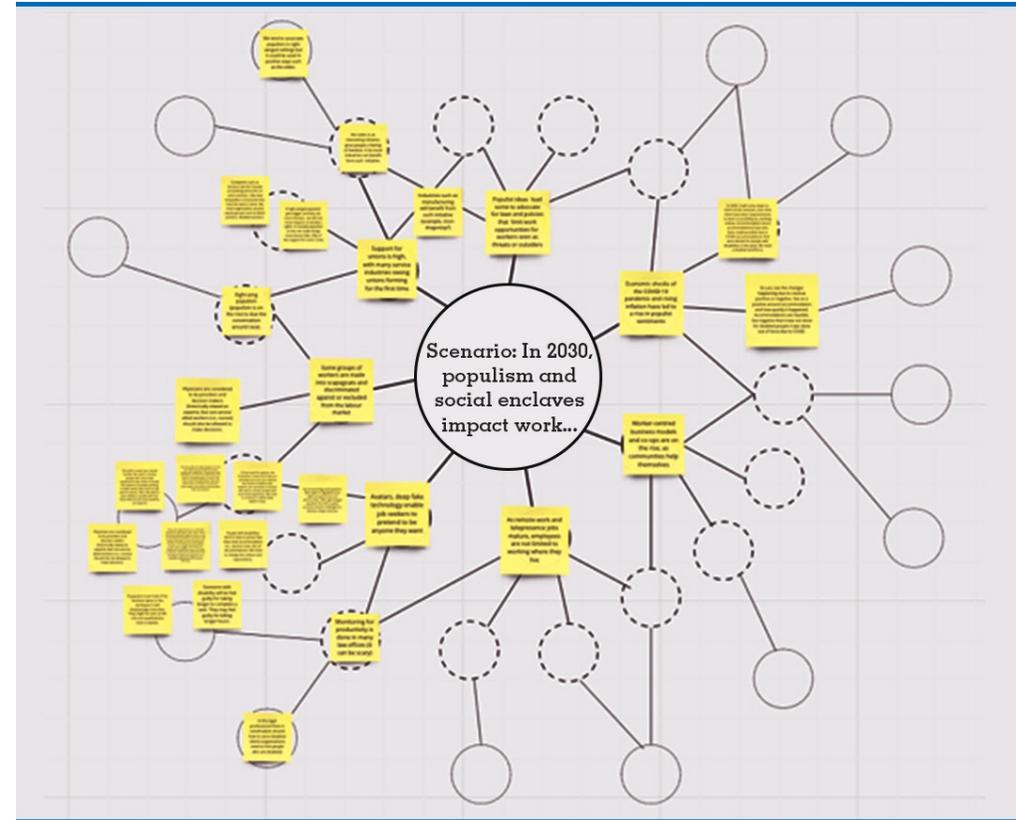
Engagement session 1: Interpreting drivers of change through lived experience

Young persons living with disabilities (n = 11)

Futures wheel approach

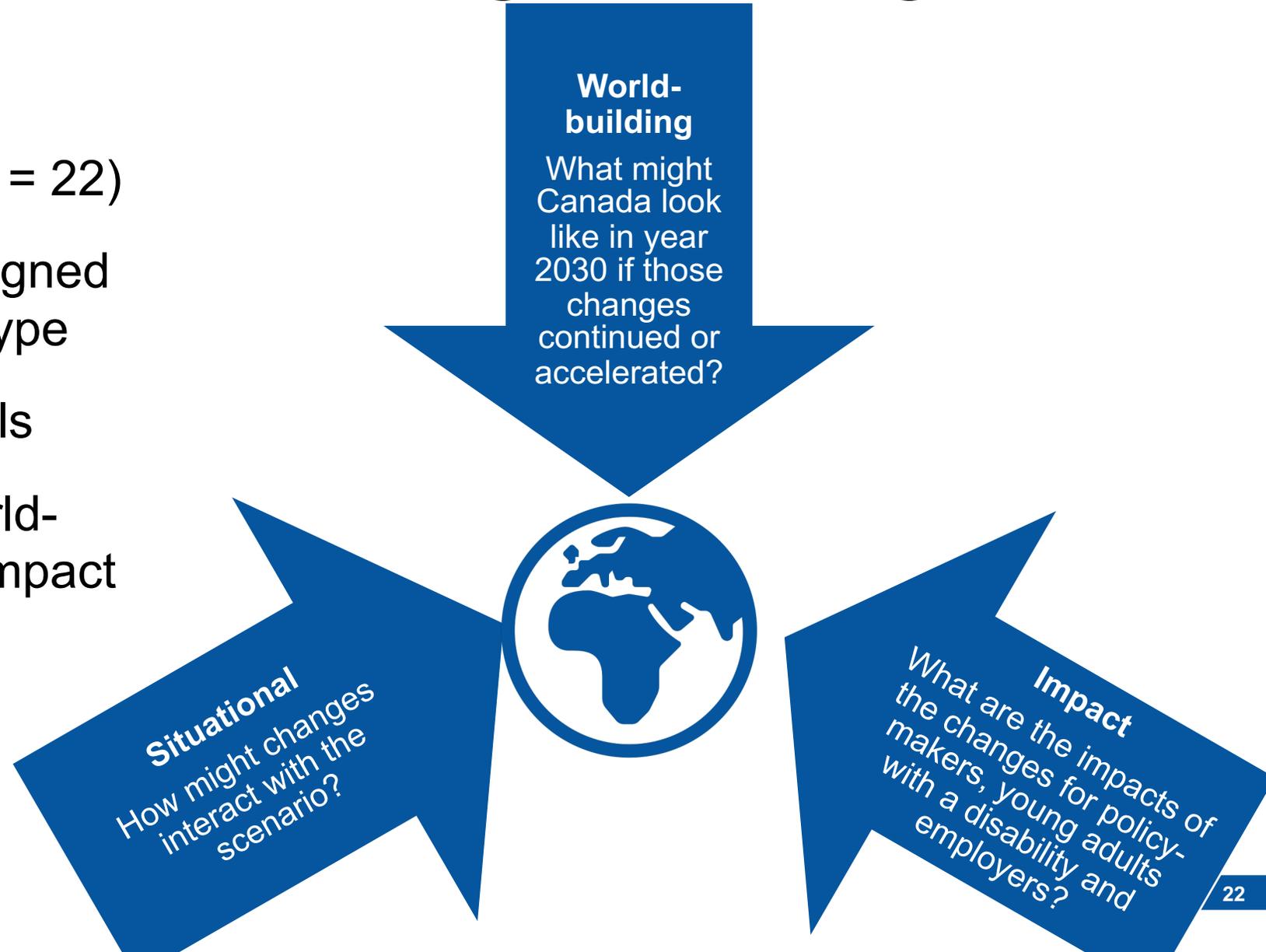
Explore how a driver of change impact employment

Primary, secondary and tertiary implications



Engagement session 2: Building scenario logic

- Subject-matter experts (n = 22)
- Breakout groups and assigned one generic future archetype
- Provided with weak signals
- Discussed a series of world-building, situational and impact prompts



Crafting Scenarios

A wide-angle photograph of a lavender field at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, pink, and orange. A dirt path leads through the center of the field, which is filled with rows of purple lavender flowers. The overall mood is serene and peaceful.

Outputs

Three scenarios



Future 1: Corp Circles
(constrain)

Future 2: Freedom 27!
(transform)

Future 3: Last In, First Out
(collapse)

**Role of
governance**

**Changing
working
conditions**

**Changing
climate**

**Economic
realities**

**Societal
values**

**Implications
for PWD**

Scenario 1

Corp Circles (constrain)

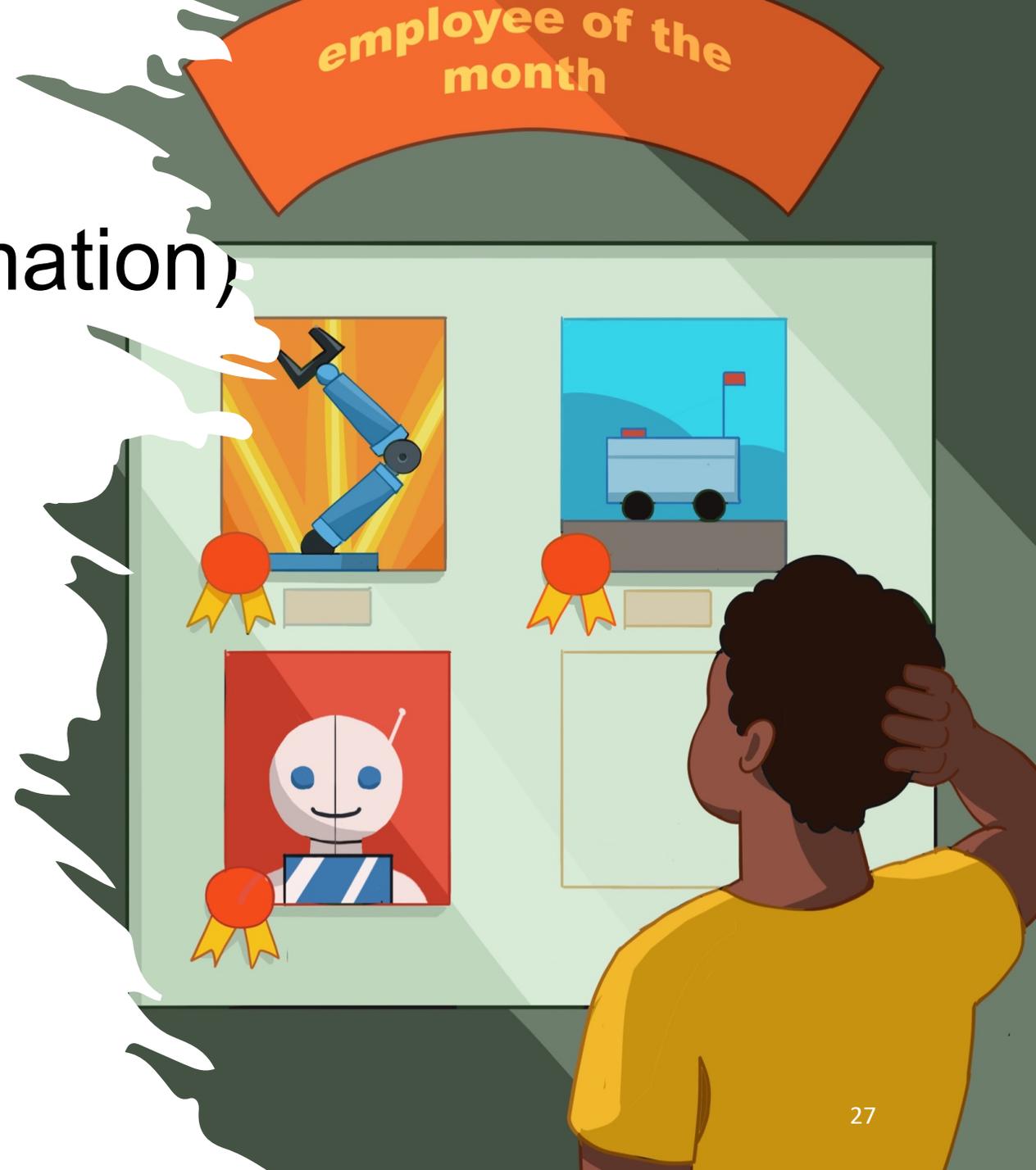
- Spurred by the digital transformation of the economy
- Growth in gig work for high-skilled and entry-level workers
- Extended benefits are portable and connected to the worker rather than the employer
- Private business groups set up training and employment networks



Scenario 2

Freedom 27! (transformation)

- AI contributes to mass layoffs
- Employers drastically reduce their reliance on human workers altogether
- Growing emissions from automation contribute to a green economy
- Shift to a three-day work week
- Implementation of universal basic income; a divisive policy change



Scenario 3

Last in, First out (collapse)

- Shifting location of work
- Growing offshoring of work
- Urban office towers abandoned; move to more exclusive suburbs
- Efficiency becomes the sole corporate priority
- Informal communities and an innovation economy form in previously vacated downtown commercial spaces



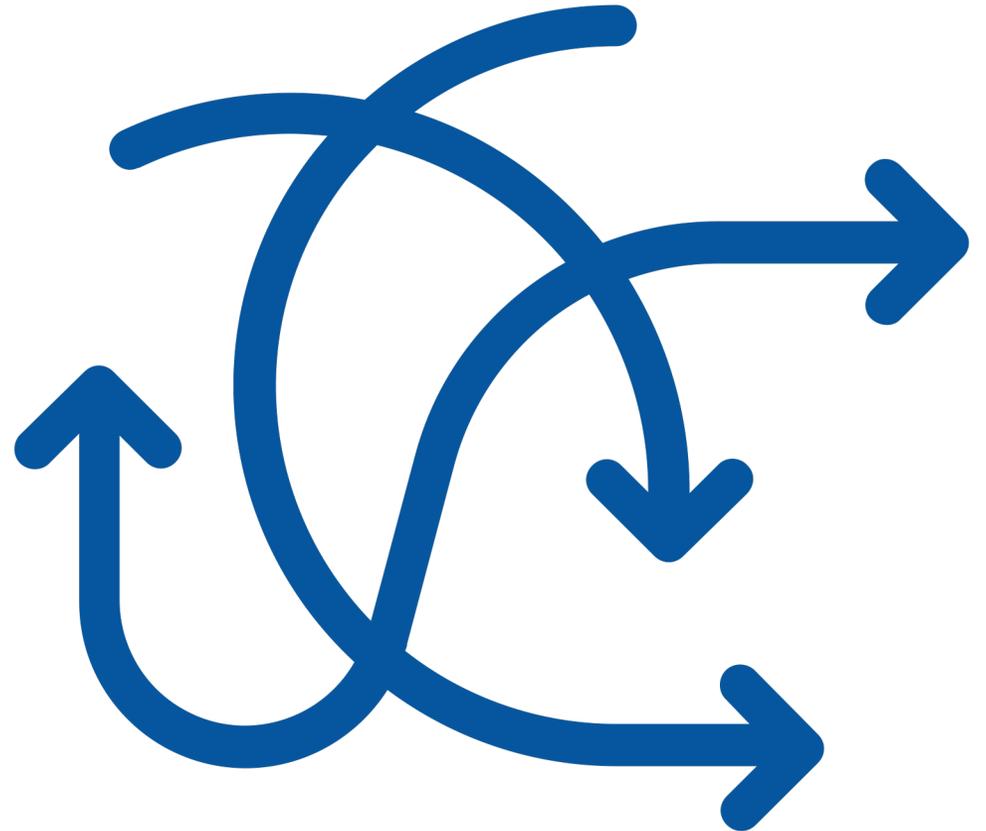
Discussion

What can we do with these scenarios?

- View the scenarios as a practical tool to encourage speculative conversations and visioning
- Foster strategic discussions on policy and programmatic developments related to inclusive employment
- Generate solutions that are resilient to potential changes in the future of work

Goal

Resilient solutions can be successful across multiple possible futures without triggering significant problems in any of the scenarios



Strategic questions

What challenges and opportunities are raised in each scenario that are relevant to inclusive employment?

What does each scenario have in common with the others in terms of challenges and opportunities for young persons living with a disability?

When considering the needs of persons living with a disability, what would well-designed strategies look like within each alternative future?

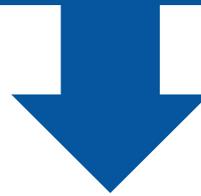
What indicators suggest the likelihood of elements within each scenario coming true?

Considering the long-term goals of your stakeholder group (i.e. the desired future), what near-term and longer-term actions would help achieve this desired future?

What actions would likely succeed in more than one of the future scenarios to help build resilience in the face of whatever the future holds?

Concluding thought, research in progress and next steps

Delphi survey where we have established consensus on specific strategies for inclusion in the future of work



Future 1: Corp Circles



Future 2: Freedom 27!



Future 3: Last In, First Out

Thank you

Arif Jetha PhD

Associate Scientific Director and Scientist



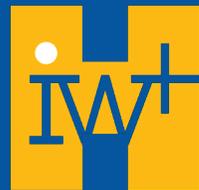
Ajetha@iwh.on.ca



ArifJetha



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