RSA

Good Work Guild Journal

Inspiring the future

September 2022

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REALISING

We are the RSA. The royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce. We unite people and ideas to resolve the challenges of our time.

We are the RSA. The royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce. We're committed to a future that works for everyone. A future where we can all participate in its creation.

The RSA has been at the forefront of significant social impact for over 250 years. Our proven change process, rigorous research, innovative ideas platforms and diverse global community of over 30,000 problem solvers, deliver solutions for lasting change.

We invite you to be part of this change. Join our community. Together, we'll unite people and ideas to resolve the challenges of our time.

Find out more at thersa.org

We define our ambitions as:

Our vision

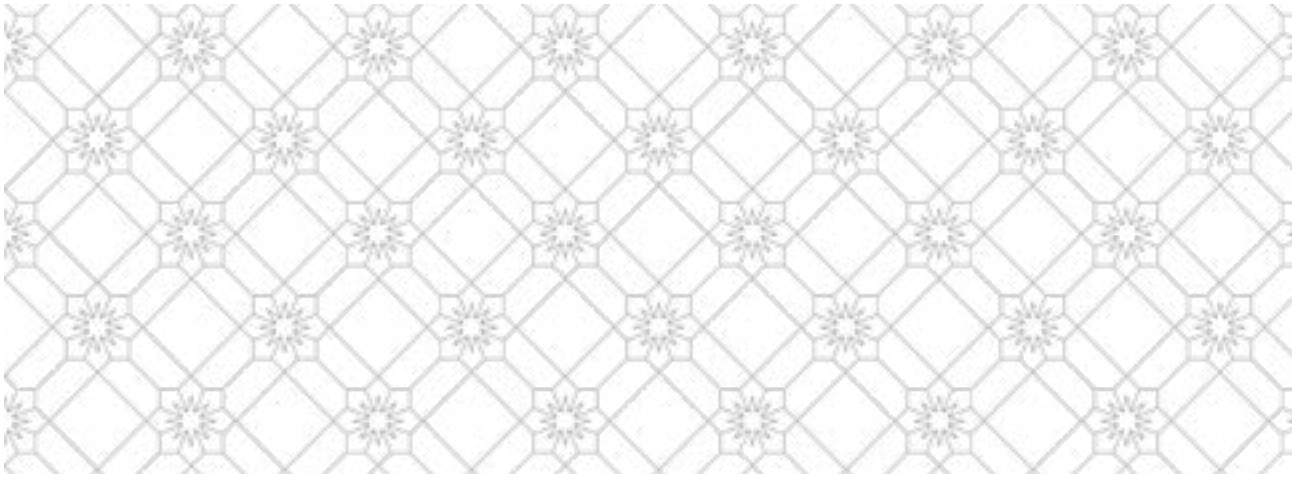
A world where everyone is able to participate in creating a better future.

Our purpose

Uniting people and ideas to resolve the challenges of our time.

We are

A global community of proactive problem solvers.



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WHAT IS THE GOOD WORK GUILD?

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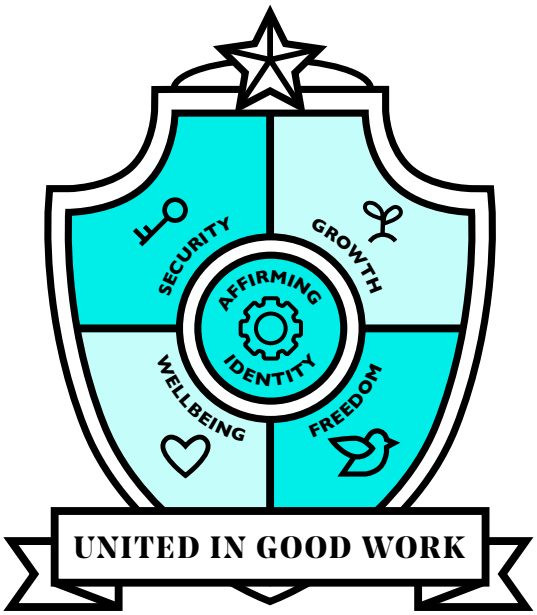
What is the Good Work Guild?

In September 2021, the RSA launched the Good Work Guild to reimagine a modern guild, focused on community and social innovation aimed at engaging future of work practitioners, advocates, and social entrepreneurs working together to ensure that everyone can pursue good work in an age of technological change.

The main goal of the Good Work Guild was to convene a diverse, global network of Fellows to tackle the most pressing issues related to economic security and labour-market transforming technologies by fostering collaboration, shared learning, and incubating opportunities for collective impact.

Underpinning this work were five principles which stated that everyone should enjoy work that:

1. provides enough economic security for people to be able to participate equally in society
2. does not harm people's wellbeing
3. allows people to grow and develop their capabilities
4. provides people with the freedom to pursue a larger life
5. positively nurtures their identity and sense of self



Over the Guild's 12-month journey, members explored the future of work landscape and participated in sensemaking and visioning exercises with the RSA Research team. They also hosted several case clinics that sought to demystify key challenges through peer-to-peer learning about economic security, worker voice, and co-governance of algorithmic systems in the workplace.

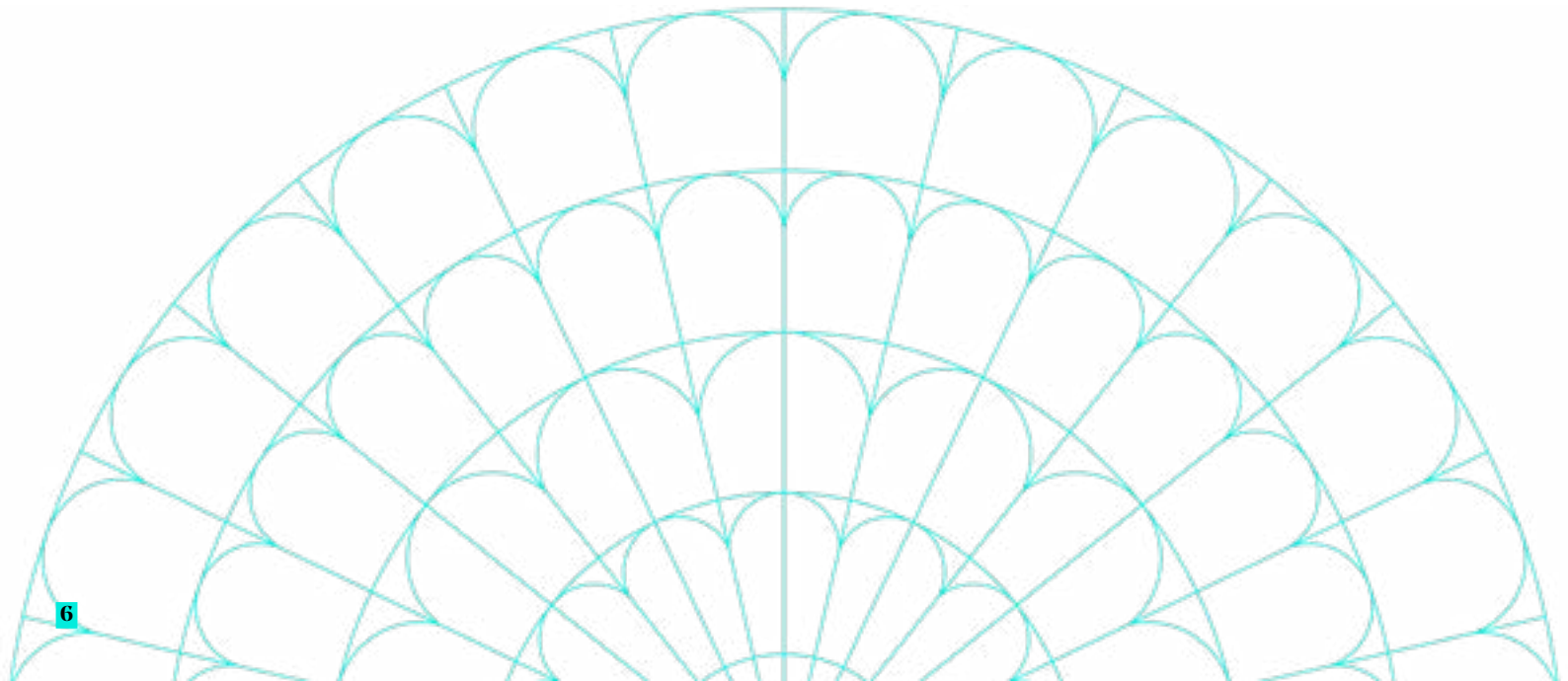
The Guild also self-organised and elected to pursue shared advocacy and collective action on a range of themes. These included how data-driven technologies can advance good work principles, learning about good work and socialising its values, economic security for a better planet, and promoting intergenerational dialogue around the future of work.

With Guild members from around the world and engaged in different aspects of the future of work ecosystem, the Guild became a powerful vehicle for the RSA's Fellowship to offer fresh perspectives to key stakeholders on the selected themes and to nurture possible areas of experimentation.

Some of the ideas generated include:

- An open-source diversity and inclusion assessment tool for organisations (especially for small and medium-sized enterprises).
- Redefining economic security to reflect the current planetary emergency.
- And policy recommendations that promote intergenerational perspectives on good work.

The Guild's 12-month journey serves as a powerful tribute to the RSA's living legacy of shared advocacy, social innovation, and community to confront 21st century challenges.



Profile of Good Work Guild members

Figure 1: Total number of members

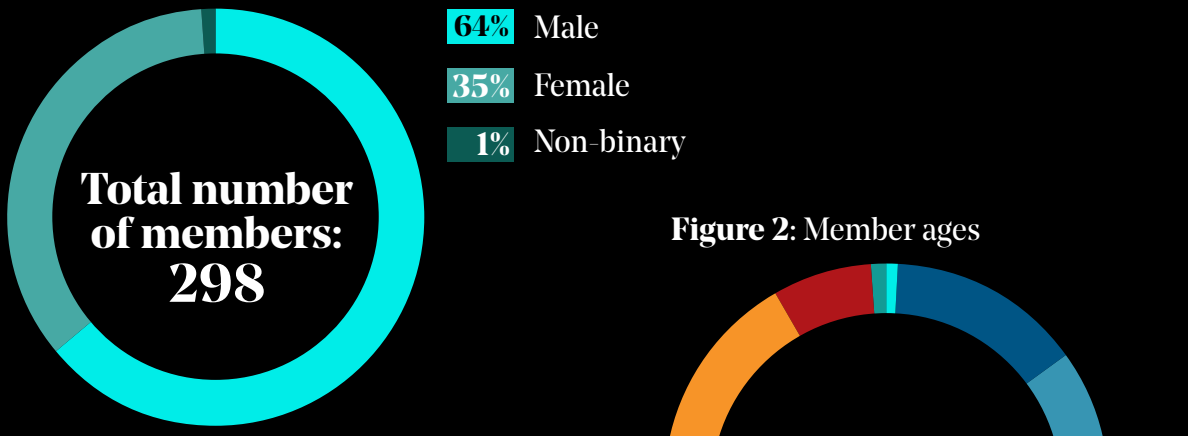


Figure 2: Member ages

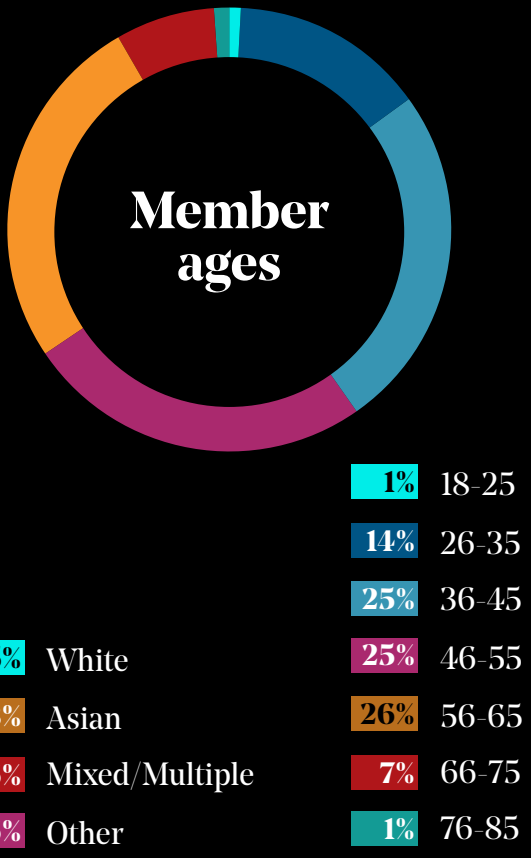
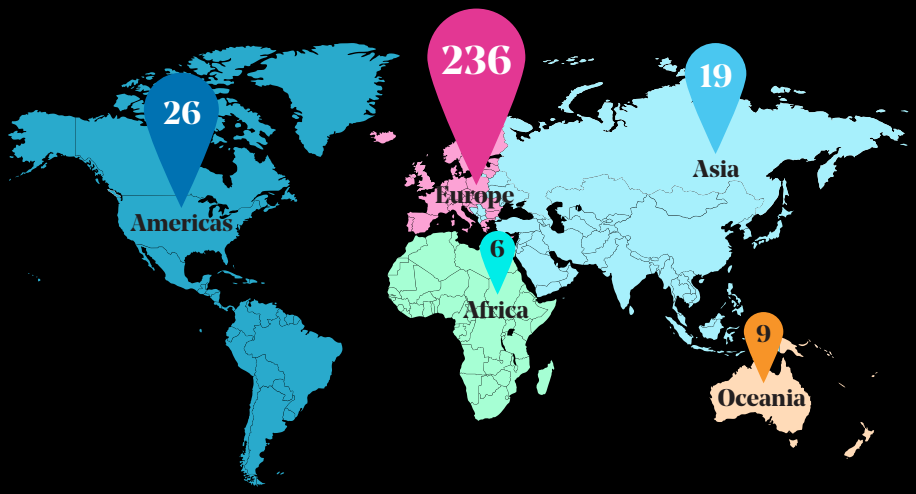


Figure 3: Member ethnicities

Figure 4: Global region breakdown of members



Good Work Guild member journey

SEPTEMBER 2021

Launch of Good Work Guild

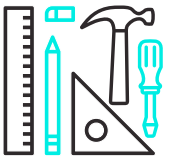
NOVEMBER 2021

Sensemaking workshop where Guild members gained a wider understanding of the future of work landscape.

Ambition setting workshop where Guild members self-organised and elected to pursue shared advocacy and collective action on a range of themes.

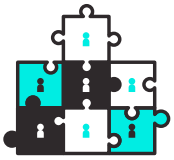
JANUARY 2022

Launch of nine thematic groups working on the following themes:



Skills and training: reimagining society

Worker voice: what is a 21st century union?



Diversity and inclusion: turning words into action

Economic security for a better planet

Learning about good work and socialising its values

Care: the invisible work that makes everything possible

Soft skills and creativity in the workplace

Promoting intergener-ational dialogue on the future of work

How can data-driven technologies advance good work principles?

From March – April 2022 we hosted a series of case clinics where members could 'ask an expert' and unpack a particular challenge. The experts were from the RSA research team or fellow Guild members.

MARCH 2022

Case clinic

Economic Security x Green Transition

Visioning Workshop

examining the four futures of work

APRIL 2022

Case clinic

How trade unions evolve to meet 21st century needs

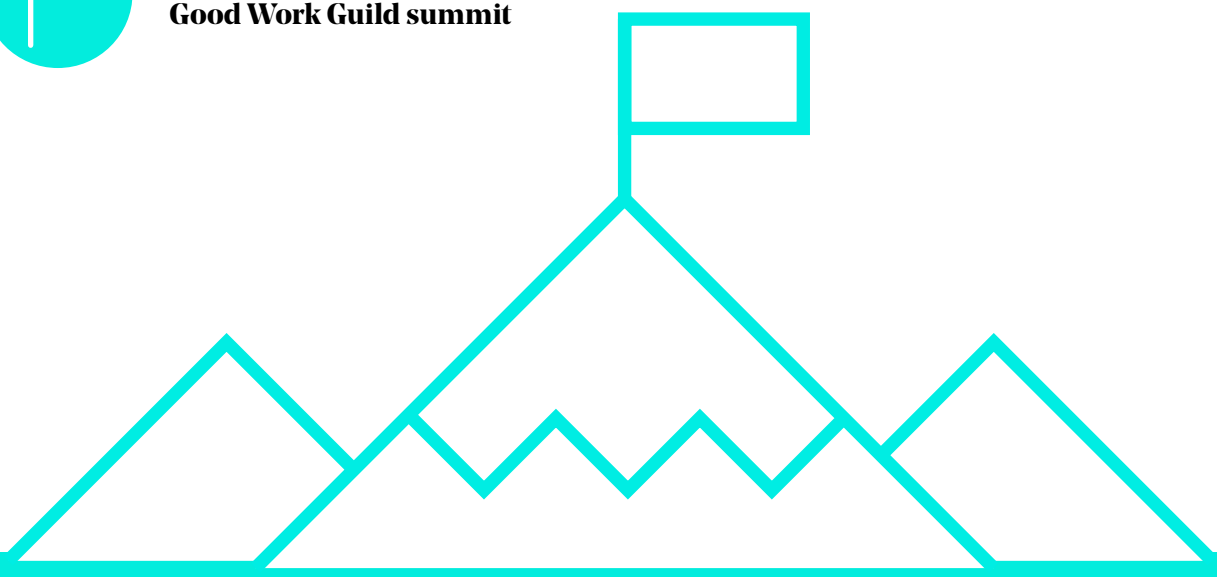
MAY 2022

Case clinic

Co-Governance of algorithmic systems

SEPTEMBER 2022

Good Work Guild summit



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GUILD IDEAS FACTORY

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Guild Ideas factory

Care: the invisible work that makes everything possible

By Jane Dennehy and Lynn Houmdi

Care is full of personal experiences which have a unique momentum in people's lives resulting in a **complexity of issues** for those that work in care delivery, the direct benefactors of care, and those that fund or pay for care.

The challenge for this theme was to identify an approach from which to begin unpacking the diverse elements of **paid and unpaid** care and their impact or potential impact on an agenda for creating/maintaining good work practices.

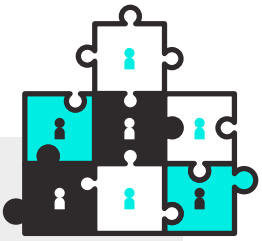
The theme's leaders decided to employ two models – **Seeds of Change** and an adaptation of Kate **Raworth's Doughnut** to start mapping the micro and macro aspects of care and their points of intersectionality.

The goal was to balance the needs of **individuals** with a broader discussion of what role **organisations** can have in using care as a platform for informing good work environments that are adaptive and responsive to the needs, including the unpredictable, of all workers.

The Care Collective's 'The Care Manifesto' offered an insightful contribution to discussions and thinking especially the concept of 'Promiscuous Care' which defined caring in ways which are 'experimental and expansive' and 'multiply who we care for and how.'

Diversity and inclusion: turning words into action

By Ian Dodds, Mat Parker, Olga Valadon, and Tiffany Grandchamp



The Diversity and inclusion (D&I) group met to determine best practices for turning D&I efforts into action. As a first step, the group discussed how D&I shows up in the workplace. Developing action plans to tackle diversity is challenging when you don't have a good understanding of how your workforce's diversity shows up (age, gender, ability, race, ethnicity, etc). This posed a problem for us. As other organisations, we were not quite sure where to begin, so we turned our attention to a solution that could help us achieve that — provide guidance on where to begin.

Our group decided that the best way to approach D&I would be to develop a standard assessment that captures how an organisation's D&I landscape looks. For example, if a company has a 50/50 gender representation rate, but fails to support employees with physical disabilities, creating a diversity strategy based on gender equity wouldn't be beneficial.

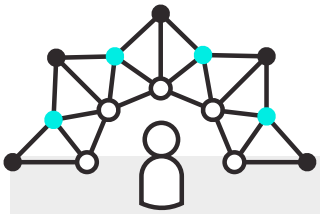
In order to improve D&I practices, our group advocated for a free, accessible, and standard D&I assessment. Through this assessment, companies could take targeted action with the information they receive, while also creating a common language for companies that perform the same assessment.

Economic security for a better planet

By Ashutosh Sudhir Naik and Claire Maxwell

The existing definitions of economic security across three different institutions, The Red Cross, the International Labour Organization and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, address economic security in terms of income, work, housing, and health.[1,2,3] In order to depict the changing geo-political situations and the paradigm shifts in technology and society it is important to include concepts surrounding human security and planetary security.

We propose a modified definition: Economic security for a better planet is the capacity of individuals, households, and communities to provide for, contribute to, and flourish within an environment where human security and the security of the planet and ecosystem are paramount.



How can data-driven technologies advance good work principles?

By Liana O'Cleirigh and Zoe Camper

It's clear to us that the world of work has and will be deeply impacted by the increasing use of data to measure need and effort, as well as value. Gamification of work through the use of data is happening now in the gig economy and is likely to proliferate all our working lives.

We want to promote the positive use of data and will actively promote platforms that give individuals and groups access to all the data they generate when working.

We believe education is needed to ensure we all understand the new and different business models and products that are generated by the use and exploitation of data by employers.

A world without data would be a poorer one, the world where data is used by all of those who generate it is a positive and beneficial place for all of us. We promote the good and open use of data wherever it exists.

Promoting intergenerational dialogue around the future of work

By Ashok Pandey, Bob Jeffery, Farheen Khan, and Tim Whitaker

This group explored the value of an intergenerational perspective on the workplace and the future of work. We contextualised our arguments in relation to the ageing society, aged-based inequalities, and trends in the landscape of work. In particular, we focused on the increasing polarisation of labour markets in terms of job quality and interrogated dominant narratives around generational conflict. While noting that younger and older workers sometimes face different challenges inside and outside of the workplace, many of their aspirations around good work are the same, and many of the problems they face have shared causes.

In advancing our vision of a more equitable future we explored a number of mechanisms by which younger and older workers are disadvantaged and how these problems might be addressed. These solutions range from tackling age-based discrimination, strengthening labour market regulation, instituting more supportive forms of welfare and supporting the transition into and between jobs, to building intergenerational solidarity, fostering new forms of collective association, and creating spaces for intergenerational dialogue.

1 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) (2015) What is Economic Security? [online] Available at: www.icrc.org/en/document/introduction-economic-security [Accessed 15 August 2022].

2 International Labour Organization (ILO) (n.d.) Definitions: What do we mean when we say "economic security". [online] Available at: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/ses/download/docs/definition.pdf

3 Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2009) Chapter 8. Economic security. [online] Available at: www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264307278-10-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264307278-10-en [Accessed 15 August 2022].

3

INSPIRING THE FUTURE OF WORK

3

Why we need more intergenerational dialogue on the future of work

Bob Jeffery, Farheen Khan, Ashok Pandey and Tim Whitaker

Despite an ageing society we still don't have an adequate policy agenda to address how younger and older workers can flourish in the workplaces of today and in the future. Instead, the dominant cultural narrative is one of generational divisions and conflict that belies a lack of mutual understanding — assumptions of older workers 'crowding out' younger people from the labour market, or about the attitudes and skillsets of younger workers.

Intergenerational dialogue about the future of work is neglected by policy makers but with multi-generational workplaces not just here to stay but set to become the new normal, we require a radical new policy agenda. The way forward isn't just about a few positive organisational 'best practice' case studies, but rather a systematic set of actions to induce change from government, employers, trade unions, the education sector, and local government.

Core to those changes is addressing the increasing polarisation of labour markets in terms of job quality, which ultimately feeds and refracts harmful age-based inequalities in the workplace.

Younger and older workers sometimes face different challenges inside and outside of the workplace, yet many of their aspirations around good work are the same, and many of the problems they face have shared causes. We need generations to work together to combat poor workplace practices. But to do so we also need to overcome the interactional distance between older and younger workers, particularly prevalent in societies where institutions, geographies and life experiences are so deeply stratified on the basis of age.

In advancing a vision of a more equitable future there are a set of solutions. A starting point must be tackling age-based discrimination at work and promoting age-friendly workplaces. The problems caused by insecure forms of employment that bedevil younger and older workers requires strengthening labour market regulation. The specific employment challenges facing many younger and older workers, particularly exacerbated with Covid-19, demonstrates the need for a more supportive welfare system. At an individual level, we need to have better advice and support for younger and older workers on the transition into and between jobs. The agenda also needs to build solidarity between different generations of workers. There is a pressing need to bring together older and younger workers to discuss issues about work and to explore new forms of collective associations to advance their interests.

There is no economic security without planetary security

Claire Maxwell and Ashutosh Sudhir Naik

Our intellectual journey began with three widely accepted definitions from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Labour Organisation, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We focused on economic security in relation to health, education, housing, and employment.

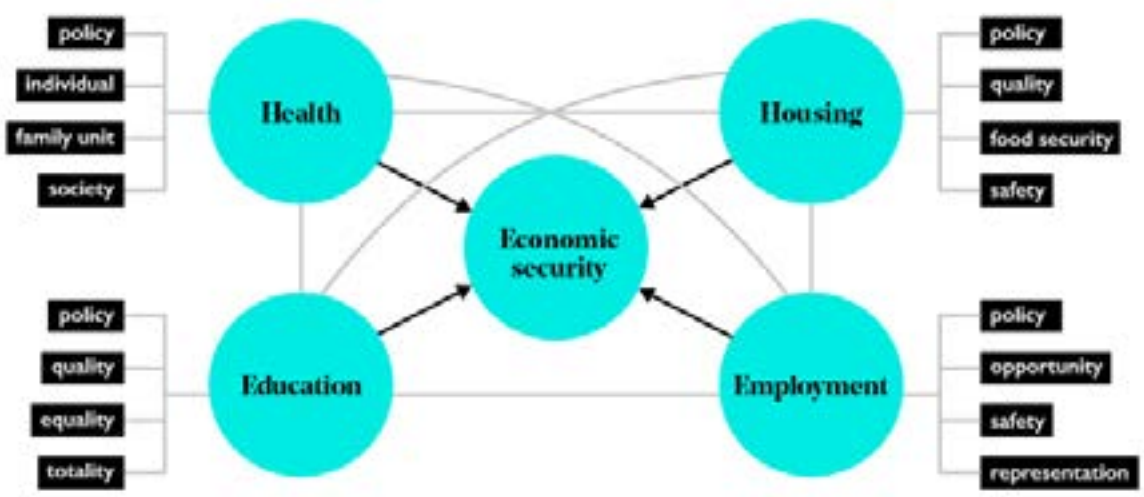


Figure 5: Causal loop diagram for factors affecting economic security

What we learnt

Having little to no experience in the field of economic security there have been several learnings gained. In relation to the topic:

i. Existing definitions do not accurately reflect evolving trends.

ii. Human and planetary security are not addressed.

iii. And given the impact of economic security on the world the paucity of literature highlighting the need to change was surprising.

Our personal journeys began with a realisation that (i) we concentrated on the concept and practice of economic and technological security — planetary security was never part of conventional pedagogy or literature and thus unintentionally ignored. (ii) Further, given the emphasis on growth in the global south and north, how possible would it be to reconcile the apparently competing paradigms of planetary and economic security? This question necessitated a deeper exploration on the impact of unrestricted growth on our planet (iii) When we began working with 'economic security ***AND*** a better planet', the focus shifted becoming infinitely more engaging and increasingly demanding.

Economic security for a better planet redefined

Economic security for a better planet is the capacity of individuals, households, and communities to provide for, contribute to, and flourish within an environment where human security and the security of the planet and eco-system are paramount. Within such an environment human or social security involves and includes living in societies that operate in a regenerative and resilient way. For example, in housing, health, income, and dignified work, ensuring that economic activities which contribute to wellbeing, productivity, and human rights are operated within the boundaries and capabilities of the planet.

Unlike traditional definitions written in more stable contexts, our minds and hearts must adapt, change, and expand. This requires embracing confusion and non-linear thought to enmesh planetary security with more familiar concepts.

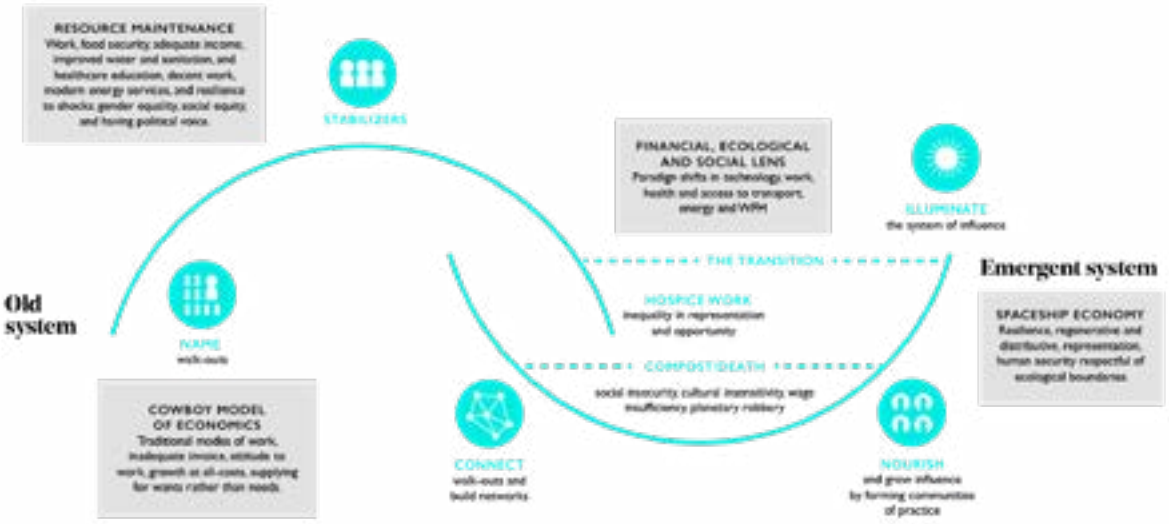


Figure 6: Proposed definition focusing on the emergent system based on the Berkana Model

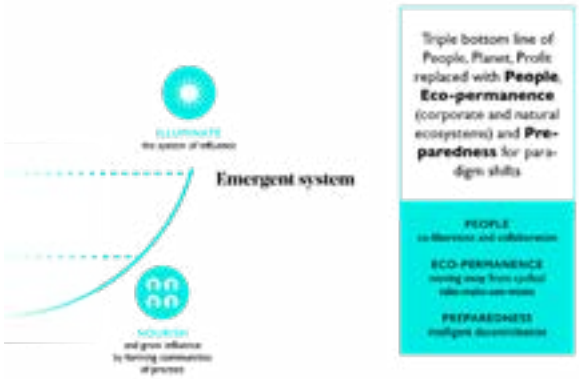


Figure 7: Emergent system based on the Berkana Model

Urgent conversations are required to address the proposed definition. Action is paramount, and we propose a new triple bottom line of People, Eco-permanence (corporate and natural ecosystems), and Preparedness for paradigm shifts.

4

INSPIRING THE FUTURE: GOOD WORK GUILD MEMBERS

4

Inspiring the future with views from Good Work Guild Members

What does 'Good Work' mean to you?

Good work ideally provides meaning, security, and joy to the individual and benefits society as a whole. I think it also helps to define work in a broader sense and not just focus on paid work, as a lot of unpaid work is crucial for our society to function. I've come to this understanding after doing a master's thesis on unconditional basic income and working on diversity and inclusion issues in the Swiss government for the last few years.

Bettina Duerr, labour market expert

Covid has made me rethink what good work is. Understanding that individuals can be just as productive working from home. But I'm concerned about the implications for workers who are customer-facing in sectors such as retail and hospitality. What will Covid and the future of work mean for them? What's "good work" if our local high streets are no longer able to exist, and what impact will this have our local community? And what's "good work" for young people, who may not experience going into the office or working alongside colleagues, how will they pick up skills taught in the workplace, such as teamwork, collaborative working, social networking skills, communication skills? After working with young people for over 25 years, these questions have never been more worrying.

Jamela Khan, director of education
Business Services International

Most recently, a lot of my understanding of good work has been reshaped due to working with a lot of people starting their "professional lives." I've seen a kind of diversity that didn't feel like was available to me in what these individuals want and their ability to make it happen. I've seen aspiring entrepreneurs, highly skilled freelancers, and small service agencies. I've met people running side hustles and people working two full-time data analyst roles at the same time. It has made me start to think of good work as more of a function of giving people greater freedom over their time.

Seth Trudeau, Good Work Guild advisor and managing partner of Routine Chaos, a boutique product and service design consultancy

For me, 'good work' is meaningful work. It allows someone to earn an income that is secure and supportive of a balanced life. Good work is work that contributes to society and is additive: it enriches society. It's surprising that care is often viewed as a 'break' from work, yet it both allows others to go to work, and is work itself. It's invisible yet additive to our society, so it's important that this gets reimagined. I think a key point of interrogation is: What is work? How is it defined and how are institutions structured to support it? Also, how will technology and climate change affect work? We need to reconceptualise work, to understand what it really means, before we think of good work that guarantees income security, personal and professional satisfaction, and adds value to our societies.

Sharmi Surianarain, chief impact officer for Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator

Honestly, failed models of work in the past have shaped our understanding of good work. When work is considered merely transactional in nature and doesn't include all of an individual's needs, it fails to support the whole person. Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be (and was in the past) applied to the work environment. This is a good start to reframing thinking about the work relationship- assessing barriers to self-actualization (equity, support, cultural honour, etc) and is critically needed in the workplace.

Tiffany Grandchamp, founder and CEO of Women lifting Women

What are you working on?

Ashutosh Sudhir Naik
Hyderabad, India | founder and director at Terra Verum

I am trying to get the idea of organic farming into brick-and-mortar buildings so that people can 'eat what they grow'. Also promoting the idea of zero-budget and zero-energy farming.

Founders and Mentors is the 12 Ronnies platform that provides free mentoring for pre-launch founders to help them to launch their start-up businesses more successfully.

Christopher Norris
London, UK | co-founder and director at Founders and Mentors

My company, Racefully, provides a platform enabling team connection through physical activity for distributed/hybrid workforces.

Chris Pointon
Cambridge, UK | co-founder at Racefully

Eddy Vandendaele
Ghent, Belgium | director at District09

Working on an in-house wellbeing improvement programme. Also exploring the use of trusted data sharing.

Elliott Goat

London, UK | director at Unhack Democracy

As part of my ongoing Churchill Fellowship, I am exploring how digital technology, combined with new forms of labour organising, can fill the void left by traditional unions to provide better support and protect self-employed, freelance and gig workers. I am examining trends around the future of work, from the shift to 'hybrid' working and the rise of employee activism to the emergence of a digital-led worker ownership model. You can read my latest report here: https://www.churchillfellowship.org/ideas-experts/ideas-library/reorganising-labour-how-digital-unions-can-work

Liana O'Cleirigh

Tokyo, Japan | student at Royal College of Art

I'm in the very early stages of a project on the effects of nudging techniques on gig-workers using Near-Eye Displays (smart glasses). Working hypothesis is that the same techniques used in gig-work apps to push users towards working longer for less may be extremely effective in NEDs. Basically, the effects of UI (User Interface) design in smart glasses on work habits.

Mark Elliott

London, UK | business coach at Startup School for Seniors

Startup School for Seniors is a playful programme for those over 50 to become self-employed or start their own company for the first time.

Currently a PhD candidate researching organisational change, with an interest in ethics and the future of work.

Sally Hopper

London, UK | director of Human Resources at Hertfordshire County Council

Tiffany Grandchamp

Minnesota, USA | founder and CEO of Women lifting Women

Women Lifting Women is currently focused on helping organisations become the choice employer for women, by using strategy, infrastructure, and behaviour optimisation. We do this by assessing their current state of gender pay and leadership equity through various analyses methods and then collaborating on measurable solutions together.

Acknowledgements

We are incredibly grateful to the Good Work Guild Stewards who served as advisors over the past 12 months. Thank you for the wisdom and guidance you each contributed throughout this incredible journey.

Good Work Guild stewards

Andrew Bartlett, Ashwin Ravichandran, Bettina Duerr, Christopher Maclay, Carlos Largacha Martinez, Femi Longe, Laetitia Vitaud and Seth Trudeau

Special thanks to the co-leads of the Good Work Guild thematic groups who each volunteered their time and energy to collaborate and explore the following themes with Guild members. We are so grateful for your efforts which hugely shaped our approach and inspired a rich tapestry of perspectives, insights, and innovative ideas.

Skills and training: reimagining society

Scarlett Yang,
Benjamin Kulka
Fiona Hiscocks and
David Langley

Worker voice: what is a 21st century union?

Bernhard Resch and
Emmet McNamee

Diversity and inclusion: turning words into action

Tiffany Grandchamp,
Mat Parker, Ian Dodds
and Olga Valadon

Economic security for a better planet

Claire Maxwell and
Ashutosh Sudhir Naik

Learning about good work and socialising its values

Chris Pointon, Amanda Miller, Tamzin Ractliffe and Chris Moriarty

Care: the invisible work that makes everything possible

Jane Dennehy and Lynn Houmdi

Soft skills and creativity in the workplace

Carlos Lagarcha Martinez, Lincoln Abbotts and Justin Donne

Promoting inter-generational dialogue around the future of work

Ashok Pandey, Tim Whitaker, Bob Jeffery and Farheen Khan

How can data-driven technologies advance good work principles?

Liana O'Cleirigh and Zoe Camper

Thanks also to the project team and the RSA research team for your insights and generous support.

Project team

Adanna Shallowe, Alexa Clay, Jessica White, Liv Chai and Sean Kline

RSA research team

Alan Lockey, Alice Mathers, Emma Morgante, Jake Jooshandeh and Fabian Wallace-Stephens

The RSA (royal society for arts, manufactures and commerce) believes in a world where everyone is able to participate in creating a better future. Through our ideas, research and a 30,000 strong Fellowship we are a global community of proactive problem solvers. Uniting people and ideas to resolve the challenges of our time.

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