



### Context

Today, in Europe and the US, 20-30% of workers gain their income from the 'atypical' labour market, and those numbers are growing. The increasingly more flexible and on-demand economy is challenging people to balance freedom and flexibility against uncertainty and a lack of security. ***What are the most important financial challenges individuals and households face due to the rise of flexible work/volatile incomes and how could they cope with these challenges?***

### Additional research questions identified during the workshop

- Does the gig economy help the 'unemployable' or labour market outsiders to gain work and income when they would not in the traditional labour market?
- Who are the flex/gig workers? How could we identify/classify these workers? Do labour regulation and statistics identify them properly?
- How instable is income of gig workers (in the short and long run) compared to traditional employment? Are gig workers more vulnerable?
- How can we counteract income volatility for flex workers? How can workers smooth their income to buy durable goods and what can banks do to help?
- Are there tools in place to help gig workers manage their budgeting, taxes, finances in general? To what nudges/approaches are gig workers more responsive?
- How could gig workers overcome short sightedness and have people consider long-term consequences from short-term decisions?
- Is there an income/wealth gap between financially trapped and successful gig workers? Are gig workers aware of the short and long term costs they are facing?
- How is the saving behaviour of the gig workers from a financial security perspective?
- How can we define labour market value of self-employed and flex workers?
- What are the main implications of flex work in terms of social protection risks? What could be created to 'protect' flex workers from job loss and other risks? (e.g. pension/retirement schemes, health insurance, sick and parental leaves, etc.) Is there real need for new regulations?
- Is Gig work a trap or a stepping stone?
- Would be consumers willing to pay a price premium to ensure better financial security of gig workers?
- How will the gig economy impact those who are not part of it? Will the employability of 'traditional employees' also change? How can they prepare?
- What measures can be taken by people in the gig economy to be prepared for expected and unexpected shocks and help plan ahead?
- Does the increase in gig employment lead to lower wage growth in the economy and higher wage share?
- Do people enjoy/are satisfied working in the gig economy? Is work-life balance indeed better?
- What are the risk preferences and other motives of people in the gig economy? Should the state jump in for their security?
- How could gig work influence people's decisions about work and investing in schooling? Is the gig economy disrupting the educational and traditional skill formation systems in relation to income generation potential? How would education evolve with technological change towards social change?
- Under which conditions do gig workers have the most bargaining power in regard to platform clients or platform companies?
- What ways could be explored to gain bargaining power for the self-employed and gig workers? How will the new models of trade unions look like?
- How will regulation develop for gig workers? How will the B2B or B2C consumer protection influence these developments? Will it help the financial health of consumers or businesses?

**Call for research proposals open until September 30, 2018**

<https://www.thinkforwardinitiative.com/research/call-for-research-proposals>