

# The Future of the Gig Economy

---

Transcribed by: Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.

**Speakers: S Alyson Shontell Lombardi, Karien van Gennip, Eynat Guez, Niklas Östberg, Sharan Burrow**

Around half of the gig workers globally lost their jobs during the pandemic and many of those who kept working lost much of their incomes. As the gig economy renews its rapid expansion, what policies are required to provide gig workers with safety nets so that job flexibility is combined with job security?

**Alyson Shontell Lombardi (Moderator)** - Thank you all for being with us. It's late in the day. Davos has been a long week for all of you. We want to help make this session worth your time. We want to make it interactive as well. We have an esteemed panel today. My name is Alison Shontel. I'm the Editor of Fortune. I would like the panelists to give a very brief introduction with your name, where you work, and how you view the gig economy in a sentence.

**Karien Van Gennip** - My name is Karien van Gennip. I am the minister for social affairs and employment in the Netherlands. I come from the private world. I started this journey four months ago in January. The gig economy or the self-employed is a big part of the Dutch economy as it is in most European and other countries. For me, it poses a challenge because I see the innovation those platforms bring but we struggle a lot with the work circumstances of the people riding the bikes and pushing the boxes, their perspective on careers, and their social security. There's a divide, at least in the Netherlands between people who work on flexible contracts and people who work on fixed contracts and that is putting a lot of pressure on society and those people.

**Sharan Burrow** - Sharan Burrow from the International Trade Union Confederation General Secretary. I represent the workers and I can tell you that despite some good and emerging legislation we need a lot more as these are informal jobs. Many of them are extra dependent employees. But there are solutions. There is a recipe

for this that was negotiated with employees and the government in 2019 in the Centenary Declaration of the ILO. But it's much broader than just transport. It's the internet-mediated platforms that are largely informal businesses that are almost undermining every aspect of professional services.

**Niklas Östberg** - I'm Niklas. The Co-founder and CEO of Delivery Hero. We operate in 71 countries. We deliver anything from food to groceries to anything you want. Of course, it's an important topic for us. We need to deliver an amazing experience and that can only happen if you have a happy workforce and make sure you get access to a large workforce. It's an extremely important topic and we believe that in general, it's a very good thing. It's a very accessible job, a very happy workforce who make good money, at least with our company. We want to keep a happy workforce and for that, we need to further legislate and improve to keep it that way.

**Eynat Guez** - Eynat Guez, CEO and Co-founder of Papaya Global. Papaya is a global payment and payroll platform. We are covering 160 countries supporting all types of workers from full payroll employees to contractors to EOR employees. What we see mainly in the gig economy from my perspective is that the gig economy cannot be said to have compliance. I think the balance between when it's good for the employee but also when it's a good choice for the employer, what are the risks on both sides and how do you eventually get into a place where you are covering the risks and you are not creating future risks in this relationship is a very big topic.

**Moderator** - Thank you so much. To open up, just for some perspective, the gig economy provides either full income or supplemental income for over a billion people worldwide. Niklas alone does a million contract workers. There's a lot of scale. It impacts a lot of people. The gig economy has existed for decades, not since Delivery Hero was founded or Uber was founded. It provides flexibility to find additional resources for the workers, but it can also be hard to earn a livable wage. The benefits and upward mobility can be a challenge and might not even exist in some instances. In terms of the pandemic, it has affected the gig economy. Half of the gig workers lost jobs due to the pandemic and many more lost significant incomes. Some countries are passing laws to turn gig workers into full-time employees. There's a lot of regulation happening. Every country seems to be doing it a little bit differently, which I'm sure is hard for companies to scale. It's hard to get all on the same page, but we're here to try and find some solutions today, the very best we can do is in a very

**challenging situation that affects a lot of people. To open, what is the state of the gig economy two years into COVID all these people did lose jobs and income? How has the gig economy impacted?**

**Karien van Gennip** – I think what we saw after two years of COVID is a lot of people working in gigs lost their income, not just their jobs, but also their income, which made a big difference in most countries. With the recovery of economic growth, we see many people coming back to those jobs. We also see many people choosing to have other jobs in other sectors with better pay, better social security, and better schedules. But when we look long-term, it might be the case that they make good money.

But the question is when they get into disability who is paying for that? Do they have disability insurance? Are they building up a pension? Are they making enough money to get a mortgage for a house and buy a house? So, there are a lot of disadvantages to it. I understand the innovation part. I understand that many people want to work in a gig but if you look long-term for the career of the people and the earnings that they make there's a real concern and we haven't solved that yet. One thing we are looking at in the Netherlands is legislation and that's also the same in the European Commission proposal that you assume that it is an employment relationship until proven otherwise and of course, you have to write what the criteria are and what the process is but that would make sense for people who are mostly in the lower side of our labor markets who are in a relationship with their employer or their assignee. That it's a working relationship and not an independent relationship.

What I see in the Netherlands is that most of those jobs actually when you add it all up, don't pay enough for people to make a decent life.

**Moderator – Eynat you have many gig workers on your payroll platform. Are their wages livable? What does wage look like for the average gig worker?**

**Eynat Guez** – First I think gig workers are not only blue-collar workers. It has expanded quite drastically during the pandemic to white-collar workers that once worked from exotic places in the world, but eventually, they don't have any kind of employment arrangement. I think the gig economy shifted from having a very

specific group of employees to highly paid employees that have the freedom and the power to go to their employers and say that they don't want to be hired by them. I agree with what you said that no one thinks about a worst-case scenario because, in reality, we don't want to think about what will happen if we are going to need medical insurance or life insurance, and so on. That is our biggest concern and advice to employers because, in reality, it doesn't matter what kind of engagement you have with a person, you are still responsible and if something happens you can't say that this is on you. When there's a real issue on the table somebody needs to step in and take accountability for it. This is where we see all of a sudden people realizing that they have no medical insurance and medical insurance can rise to tens of thousands of dollars for disability or in the case of death and you have the family against you asking why there's no certainty. I agree that eventually the way that wages have been currently structured it's good in the short-term. It's kind of nice when everything is good but it's the job of governments to secure the big picture. I think we do need to set very clear lines on what the gig economy is, and why someone needs to be hired as a freelancer or individual contractor. If I take Ukraine as an example ninety percent of the tech industry works as independent contractors because they have a very good tax regime in the country that is related to the fact that they have independent contractors. What has happened now? They are not protected anymore. They are solely dependent on the willingness of their employer not to dismiss them maybe because he's supportive. But in reality, they are currently getting into a place where they have zero protection.

**Moderator - Niklas I saw you raise your hand.**

**Niklas Östberg** - I can of course speak for only us. During the pandemic, we were the ones getting people and giving jobs to those who lost jobs and other opportunities. We were a help and a support in the economy. I think it's an important point what was said here that we should improve their social security and insurance and their needs to be legislated to help that. What we should not do in my view is disregard what the workers want and that is the flexibility and the ability to generally earn more money for it to be an employment relationship that feels better and secure. We don't want to go the other way and make it worse for them. I think in countries where we have the option to choose or they can be freelance but still have bargaining power or they can have social security is by far the most beneficial. We often speak like we all want flexibility. There's no difference. They also want flexibility and this unfortunately is not possible in practice at least not in our industry in that employment relationship we're speaking of.

I think the gig economy shifted from having a very specific group of employees to highly paid employees that have the freedom and the power to go to their employers and say that they don't want to be hired by them.

**Sharan Burrow** – I'm not sure everybody wants flexibility, some do, depending on their situation in life. I want to go back to the rules of the game. Governments forever have regulated labor markets. This part of the labor market has just escaped any kind of serious legislation discussion until now. Now it's a live topic in many countries. We see emerging legislation in France, and in Spain on remote work, which is undermining a part of professionalism. You can earn as little in journalism as 15 euros a day as that's the going rate for an article, but you can't live on 15 euros. Even at the high-end someone earning 60 euros an article when you got to do the research, writing, and copy editing, you can't live on that either in Europe. You've got to assess what you are doing here, and who is benefitting from an informal environment.

First of all, the minister raised the issue of the employment assumption that you are employed unless otherwise proven. That's the ILO standard and there are many test cases like the Uber agreement in the UK that arose because of a test case around whether they are employees or not. They are the same with Deliveroo and many other companies depending on the country. But if you go to the global rule of law what the Centenary Declaration says is that all employees irrespective of their employment arrangement are entitled to four fundamental pieces of rights. One is the fundamental right to join a union and to bargain collectively, to be free of discrimination in terms of forced or child labor. Occupational health and safety that will become a fundamental right at the ILO conference starting right now. And then you have an adequate minimum wage or income. We have to figure out what that means because you can't have people without living incomes and some control of the maximum hours of work. We say some control of working hours and that is a labor protection flaw for all workers. Then in addition you need social protection. Now if those things are in place, then let's look at what it means in terms of flexibility.

For genuine freelancers and registered freelancers whether the tax regime is fair or not, whether they are forced into it by the fact that it is indeed more beneficial,

many independent contractors or freelancers are starting to form cooperatives that have always had a long history. There are smart cooperatives that are providing business services. But even then, some of them want to be recognized and again there are court cases for employee status. So, this is a big debate in the EU and will continue to be a big debate in Europe but it's a debate everywhere because if the business sets up on this basis simply to avoid the employment relationship, then that is as bad as dehumanizing exploitation through our supply chains where you simply contract out layer upon layer till you have a hidden workforce, which we have in the formal economy where 94 percent workers in their supply chains are hidden workforce. In many ways, this is in addition to that but it's even worse because it's on an informal basis where the bulk of those being people, don't have a minimum wage, any form of rights, any rule of law, or social protection. We have to fix it and we can only do that by having a genuine dialogue that is in the interest of secure work.

**Niklas Östberg** – I agree that we should make sure that we can enable a lot of the things that Sharan mentioned. Again, going back to my main point what we should avoid is adding other things that people do not want. If you look at Norway, we have a collective bargaining agreement with the union. The legislation allows those who want to be freelance to work on a freelance basis. We just want the best for the riders. It's more expensive for us to pay a freelancer than an employee. It's just that if the majority wants to be freelance but we say that you can only be an employee we will not have enough riders. Having it open as either-or, is a good solution. If there is a need for one or the other, one has to look at what the majority prefers and have that as a basis and build upon that. We've seen a lot of good legislation. In France, legislation on self-employment is being improved with more on safety and security. Greece recently implemented to add a bargaining agreement and social security to it. We see a lot of legislation in that direction enabling self-employment. We have of course one or two cases that have taken the other direction. Spain and Switzerland did not turn out well. It lowered incomes and a lot of people lost their jobs and most people don't want that setup. I think in Geneva there was a job loss of 60 or 70 percent that never recovered. It gives lower pay because it often comes to minimum wage. Ideally, they should be able to choose. Our standpoint is we should listen to what the rider wants but also look at how we can add social security, protection, safety, and other rights in a bargaining agreement.

**Moderator - I assume you have done surveys of your riders. What do they want? You said they want flexibility. Do you have the stats?**

**Niklas Östberg** – We measure happiness. Generally, happiness is high and that is important. Otherwise, we cannot keep them on the job. If you ask our riders, they want flexibility because they came for flexibility and that opportunity opens up with easy access to a job.

So, this is the only case where we can offer both. 70 to 75 percent choose self-employment; 25 to 30 percent choose the employment setup. The problem there is if only you can address 25 percent of the population, then it is very hard for us to attract people to join. If we can address 100 percent, the best case is if we can address both, the second-best is if we can address at least what 75 percent wants.

From my perspective, this is much more concerning in the gig economy because as you said they are smart, they understand where they have tax benefits. They are paying taxes from a specific country where they have favorable tax benefits but in reality, they live in another country.

**Karien van Gennip** – I think the question is if you let them choose do they understand what they are choosing? They might choose a flexible job because it pays better, but if that flexible job does not offer a disability arrangement, and does not offer a pension then they are worse off. Or you might say maybe the rider doesn't care or the company doesn't care then the society has to pay for it. So, either the cost is with the employer, the cost is with the rider or the cost is with the society.

As an employer, if you don't want to bear the risk and the employee has to bear the risk but if the employee decides not to bear the risk, then it goes to society. The employee in the middle is the one who gets disabled, is long-term ill, wants to buy a house, wants to have a pension later on, and doesn't have it.

**Niklas Östberg** – I agree. Social security has to be paid by us or the employee. I think that's the legislation you have to bring forward to make it better, to make sure if you fall ill or have an injury that you are covered.

**Sharan Burrow - What do you think flexibility means which presumably means hours are not possible within an employment relationship?**

**Niklas Östberg** - First of all those who are flexible might work for many companies. Let's not assume that they don't understand what's best for them. I would say that they are very smart. They are very educated. I think they are very capable of knowing what's best for them. That's my belief.

**Karien van Gennip** - I didn't say that they don't understand but that they might make a choice that is more short-term than long-term oriented.

**Niklas Östberg** - I agree. They will work when they can make the most money. They may go to Uber or Delivery Hero or Deliveroo or decide now it's not good enough and so do something else or pick someone up, meet with a friend or pick up kids, and instantly make those decisions. If you have an employment relationship you have to know exactly when they are working and at what point in time because you can get them quickly out there. The good point is they make the most money when they are out because that's when we need the most. It helps us when they are making money. If we have to be the ones steering when they should be out then we have to make sure that they are out at the times we say they are out.

The younger generation they stay two-three years on a job. It's not like in the past when they stay for 30 years on a job. Many don't want that... So, there are different needs. So, it's very hard to say what all of them want.

**Eynat Guez** - I'll add to that. When we say flexibility, we ask what workers want but we saw that during COVID the digital nomad flexibility was completely different. We had people following the sun or following where there were fewer COVID cases and not in quarantine. When we look at those people that are working remotely, they are paying taxes in one country, and in reality, they are around the world in tons of other countries at the same time. From my perspective, this is much more concerning in the gig economy because as you said they are smart, they understand where they have tax benefits. They are paying taxes from a specific country where they have favorable tax benefits but in reality, they live in another country. If something were to happen to them, they will go to a hospital near where they live. In reality, employers don't know. There's no knowledge sharing and data



sharing about employees. Everyone needs to have one digital identity. In reality, I think I might earn my salary in many countries. In the same year, you will see digital nomads moving from one country to another. If you don't have one identity for them and data sharing, payroll needs to be rethought. Payroll is currently very local. If you have two or three countries it starts to become very complex. In the majority of cases, people will say it's not worth the risk, the accountants, the auditors, and the tax structures will cost me more. From a global perspective, this is something that needs to be addressed in terms of global trends because we will see more people who no one will know where they live, where they pay their taxes from, and if it's concerning the place where they live.

Sharan Burrow – But that's only possible within Europe. For somebody who has dual citizenship one of which is the US, a young person will end up paying taxes in two countries. I have people who are on consultancy contracts as I can't hire them in Belgium if they live in the UK or somewhere else. They've got American citizenship and the UK citizenship, for example, they end up having to pay a fortune reconciling taxes. No young person without representation can figure that out, so they get to 30 or 40 and suddenly they are in the sight of the IRS and that's a disaster. We do need to figure it out. My point is we have let the normal regulation of the labor market escape us. As analysts we sit down and work out, doesn't matter about choice, people can have a choice, but how do we work out that flexibility. Many people work two or three jobs. There's no difference in that. But there are rules in the game. There are rules for employers and their responsibilities to employees. I think we let it escape. We need to now say what all the vested interests are, including the worker and the responsibility of the employer, and let's make a formal working environment. Otherwise, 60 percent of the world's workers are now informal with absolutely no guarantees from a societal point of view. Is that what you want for your children and your grandchildren? I don't think so.

I agree with all that you said. To take your comment on manufacturing clothes with child labor, the people in the gig economy have the power. We need to ask them to come work for us on certain terms. This is a completely different kind of mindset. You said that very clearly.

**Moderator – A bunch of companies is trying to work on this as The Charter**

**of Principles for Good Platform Work which wants to establish a benchmark for job quality and the CEOs of Uber, Postmates, Grab, Deliveroo, Cabify, and MBO Partners got together and came up with eight different points. One is diversity and inclusion, safety and wellbeing, flexibility and fair conditions, reasonable pay and fees, social protection, learning and development, voice and participation, and data management. How close to reality is this? Is this just a pipe dream? Are we so far away that we can't even imagine it? Is it a work in progress? Can we all get on the same page?**

**Sharan Burrow** - What they avoided there was a legislative framework because I was part of those discussions and unlike your (Niklas) kind of attitude where the Norwegian environment there was absolutely opposition by the US companies to freedom of association or collective bargaining.

**Moderator - So we're still far?**

**Sharan Burrow** - We're a long way there. It's not impossible to solve. It's simply a matter of will. If we want to make it work for everybody provided that employers don't want to escape, we would argue that employers have to have a social license to operate. They have to pay taxes. Therefore, they have to figure out what the relationship between the employee and tax is. You can't just freelance the entire labor market and pretend that people are going to have any kind of security in terms of pensions, medical benefits, and broader social protection. It's just not humane.

**Niklas Östberg** - I think with the technologies we have the world has changed. Technology has changed. The way people want to work has changed. What the younger generations want has changed from when we grew up. There are changes to how we want to operate, and how we want to work today versus in the past. I think we are also stuck a little bit in that framework. I think we should enable that charter and maybe one or two more points must come there as well. A collective bargaining agreement could be one of them if it's not part of it. So, I think we have to realize that there is a difference in how we work today versus what was done in the past and we have to make sure that contains in the legislation. We also have to make sure to listen to what people want and not what we think they want, but actually, what they want. I agree that you have to make sure that it's not what they want in the short-term that may have negative consequences in the long-term, that

should be solved and should not be the problem.

**Karien van Gennip** – I think there are two developments at the same time that has come together now. One is, that we live in different times after Corona like the technological developments are not the way we used to talk about the future of work, and not the way people want to work. They want to work more in networks and they want to do more longer-term gigs. But it's different from working for the same employer for 30 years that you do step by step. That's changing. That's one big development.

I think the other big development that I have seen as an employer myself, we in Europe have developed our labor market laws so far that many contracts are fixed. It's difficult when you want to restructure a company. That's why you get a big insider-outsider discussion often led by the unions who often exchange much more with the insiders than the outsiders because there's a big divide between the insiders and the outsiders. What happens in a real economy and real life is that people found creative ways when they were outsiders. When companies wanted to use those outsiders that's one of the reasons that the gig economy started. Because employers saw that the fixed labor agreements were too fixed for their needs, so they needed more flexibility, and people wanted more flexibility. That's how a whole second labor market came into existence and developed itself but without a lot of legislation. And we are at this point where we have developed technology, and in what you wish to work. Then we have a labor market that is very fixed on one side and very flexible on the other side. There's a saying in Dutch politics that we want to make the fixed part in the labor market less fixed and the flex part less flex. Make fixed less fixed. Make flex less flex.

**Sharan Burrow** – That's why we negotiated with employers and with governments the Centenary Declaration about the basic labor guarantees for all workers. And my question would be is this way of working decided by workers? I'm committed to talking about flexibility or multiple jobs. We have dealt with this forever. I can tell you how the entertainment industry bargains for a fair contract. We have done that for decades. And they work for different gigs, literal gigs, in different venues if they are on films for different companies. It does not impede giving people the dignity of work. My question is, is it the employers who want this to happen, or is it the employees? Because none of the benefits you raise for me as a negotiator for more than 30 years are impossible. They're difficult and yes sometimes we run up against

the fear of other workers, but they're not impossible.

**Niklas Östberg** – Speaking of the younger generation they stay two-three years on a job. It's not like in the past when they stay for 30 years on a job. Many don't want that. When it comes to riders, some of them might have other jobs. Maybe they are bartenders. But they want to work more than being a bartender because that's only in the evening. Maybe they're DJs wanting to make extra, or maybe they're studying at university and need an extra income, or maybe they just lost a job and need a month to bridge and access. So, there are different needs. So, it's very hard to say what all of them want.

**Moderator – As the gig economy grows won't some of it take care of itself? Don't you Niklas have to have good benefits to be able to recruit and retain a million drivers?**

**Niklas Östberg** – That I think is the key and the core here. Because the perception is that we don't want to pay social security to the self-employed or tax. That's not the reason we prefer self-employment. It's because that's what they want. We need to hire as many as we can and that's what they want and we have to provide what they want. If you don't provide what they want, including pay, benefits, flexibility, and all the wishes they have, the more wishes we can fulfill, the more we can attract and that's hundred percent what we want. Hope we can provide legislation so that we can also add certain benefits like social security and pension.

**Eynat Guez** – The French model is a good example. Everyone who does business with France knows that it is one of the hardest countries to employ someone or dismiss someone.

A few years back they made this model, which is intended for the gig economy. You have institutions licensed by the government; you can register as a self-employed protégé salary. They will make the deductions; they will make sure you pay for the disabilities; they will be the responsible parent for your taxes but it still gives you flexibility. I think those types of arrangements are the ones we need to see more and more, ones that do not go to the employer. I think in reality what the governments are doing is going to the employer to check whether someone can work as a contractor or not, do tests, and get them to pay liability for some mistake. It's a huge work responsibility that eventually employers are taking and eventually they take tons of fines because someone decides that you haven't employed people

correctly. When they decided to employ them correctly, they did what the employees wanted and gave them what they wanted. They negotiated the terms. In the model of employing in gig economies where they are self-employed, you don't trust them to contribute to their pension and that's why currently governments put the monetary pension on the employer. I think it's doable but it needs to be in a way where governments are starting to move forward and understand that they need to support this.

**Moderator - I feel the world is a much better place because Uber exists. Personally, my life is better because Uber exists and a lot of people will feel the same way. They are innovative. But if they had to employ everybody full-time, they will be out of business. As they can't afford that. Is it financially viable for gig economy companies?**

**Niklas Östberg** - I would disagree with that. The challenge is most of them might not want it and it might be hard to find riders, maybe the service would lack, but it's not that it's cheaper for us to have the gig. We have to pay more.

**Moderator - Can you explain that a little bit more? What is the cost of employing someone on a freelance basis than full-time? Why would that be more expensive?**

**Niklas Östberg** - Generally how it works is that when a rider is a freelance, they are very good entrepreneurs. They make sure they can maximize what they can make and therefore generally they make more money. And some of that money goes to pay social security, tax, and other benefits that they would have as an employee. Because of their innovative spirit, they are generally better at optimizing when to be out, and how to make as much money as possible. We are not good at telling them when to go out, and the street they have to stand in. No data is as good as theirs to know exactly where to be when to be, and how to be and that's why it's favorable for Uber and others to give that responsibility to the riders. And therefore, you have a good service because they know where to be at the right time.

**Sharan Burrow** - They share intelligence, so they know the peak hours. During peak hours they are going to earn more. Uber for you is just an app. You pay in the middle of the day when there's no business, maybe half the price you pay at peak hours. But you still pay. So, for you, it's an app. Why would it matter that the worker

wasn't being exploited? Would you feel better if they had pensions and social security? They're offering a service to you. I'm not just worried about the transport people. I think that will be resolved by courts and by legislation because employment relationship is a live issue. What I'm concerned about is we've got young professionals who have gone to university for four years and come out with professional careers in legal services, medical services, journalism, and content information, it's now being undermined by internet-mediated platforms. There's nothing wrong with technology.

It's really about how you ensure those people like we have done for generations get a fair contract process. So, if they only want to take one job or two jobs a day or week, or month, then at least you know they're getting a fair contract for their work and people are not being exploited by undercutting each other at the base. They can bargain above that. But they can also join a union. You know between a government and employer's responsibility they can earn a pension; they can get access to health and indeed if they are injured or sick payments for the normal things you get with a work guarantee. So, that's what we have to figure out. And it's not impossible.

Many countries are starting and some of them have done it but it's going to have to take employers to put those principles together in good faith. But they will have to accept that they can't simply allow the model of the work to benefit them at the exploitation of the employee and it's got nothing to do with the choice of hours.

**Moderator - We've got a question from the audience.**

**Niklas Östberg** - Can I respond to that? I can answer only for delivery. If the food delivery people are exploited, we would not have any workers because they would not do it. The more we have to hire the more we have to pay. The thing is we can't compare that person is willing to work for five euros and the other person is willing to work for seven euros. If we need those jobs both will get seven euros and if you have thousand people in an area you have to pay the minimum that the thousandth person wants for everyone. So, even if someone has worked for less it doesn't work in the delivery business.

**Sharan Burrow** - It's not just about wages. What happens when one of your drivers falls off his bike and gets injured?

**Niklas Östberg** – They are secured.

**Sharan Burrow** – By whom?

**Niklas Östberg** – We make sure they are safe and secure.

**Sharan Burrow** – So you are a decent employer by choice. But that's not the case in many countries. So, then they can't earn any money at all and that's exploitation. They get sick in some other way; everybody else can go to the hospital but they can't.

**Eynat Guez** – But if the government is allowing someone to be a freelancer, they can eventually set the rules. To be a freelancer, they need personal medical insurance. This is an easy request you can impose on the gig worker.

In reality, I think that governments are not setting clear rules for gig workers. They are saying you are the employer; you know that this guy is young and irresponsible. But it's a very easy structure. They are paying taxes. They have a relationship with the government. This environment needs to be created and I think it has not been created properly.

**Question from the audience** – Just an observation. We are talking about worker exploitation. We're also talking about digital technologies facilitating a marketplace where exploitation is happening. Forget the pre-internet, and if we go back exploitation has been happening for decades and centuries. Wouldn't we just go to the source of demand for that exploitation and begin there. In other words, if we break the marketplace to say that the employers of these workers, not the platforms, whether it's the consumer's side. To the point on convenience, in the mid-90s when you were buying clothes and you figured out that those clothes were being manufactured by child labor somewhere in the world you made a conscious decision as a consumer, that I'm not up for that. It's the same issue based on what I'm hearing. But do you mind responding?

**Karien van Gennip** – I think there is a role for governments to legislate more of them, make flex less flex, and make fixed less fixed. I think there is a role for governments in the gig economy that starts to exist next to the hardcore economy.

The second one is if you want this to work then indeed the consumer has to play a

role as well and some consumers do. But there is a problem because the concerned citizen that you are now might be someone else in the calculating consumer. If you want to buy a t-shirt and think it's too cheap as a concerned citizen you might not buy it but if you can't make ends meet at the end of the month, you will still buy the cheap t-shirt. Yes, you're right there is a role for the consumer but it only goes that far. So, we have to do both. You have to be a responsible consumer; the government has to step in and bring more legislation on both sides to make the fixed hours less fixed and the flex hours less flexible. But the employers also need to be responsible employers because I find it difficult to understand that there are still employers out there who put people on the bike without proper insurance. But it does happen. All three have to play a role.

**Moderator** – One final comment and we're out of time.

**Eynat Guez** – I agree with all that you said. To take your comment on manufacturing clothes with child labor, the people in the gig economy have the power. We need to ask them to come work for us on certain terms. This is a completely different kind of mindset. You said that very clearly. This is how we should employ them to work for you. It's not the other way around. There's a huge difference.

**Moderator** – **Thank you. So, we have a lot of work to do. A lot of passion though and we'll get to a solution eventually with all the minds working on it. Thank you for the great conversation. Thank you to all of you for being here.**





Alyson Shontell Lombardi, Editor-in-Chief, Fortune Magazine.



Karien van Gennip, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands.



Eynat Guez, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Papaya Global.



Niklas Östberg, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Delivery Hero.



Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).