FII INSTITUTE CHAMPIONS NEW AI INCLUSIVE INITIATIVE FOR ALL

LINK VENTURES, MCKINSEY QUANTUMBLACK AND **ENDIATX** ON THE AI OPPORTUNITY

SCAI, NEMAN VENTURES AND **PETER DIAMANDIS** ON EQUALIZING THE REVOLUTION

FRONTIERS OF INTELLIGENCE

IMPACT

TECHNO LOGY

AN FII INSTITUTE PUBLICATION

THE AI INCLUSIVE VISION FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

FII INSTITUTE
Future Investment Initiative Institute | Impact on Humanity

EDITORIAL

TAKING ACTION FOR AI INCLUSIVITY

JOINING THE FII INSTITUTE AS ITS NEW CEO is a great honor. And it's a pleasure to introduce you to our newest Impact report, highlighting the importance of one of our landmark initiatives: the AI Inclusive initiative.

One of the things that attracted me to FII Institute was its unparalleled global reputation as a "do tank," not simply a think tank. Through our regular events around the world, and our publications and actions, as well as the interaction of the FII Institute community, we show that it's possible to back up words with action. This is what we show here in our report scrutinizing the Frontiers of Intelligence, outlining the AI Inclusive Vision for Global Impact.

To do so, we have leveraged the insights of some of the leading lights in AI – members of our dedicated FII Institute community – for their thoughts on why it is imperative and incumbent on all of us to ensure the AI revolution is benefiting all levels of society. Backed up by proprietary FII Institute data, we highlight where global citizens feel the benefits, see the downsides of AI, look at how to capitalize on its advantages and how to restrict the negative consequences.

We also highlight how, through our AI Inclusive initiative launched in Riyadh at FII8 last year, you too can sign up to pledge to ensure AI benefits all humanity. The pillars of our AI Inclusive initiative are designed to make a meaningful impact.

I hope you enjoy and learn from this report. And we look forward to meeting you at our events around the world.

PHOTO: FII INSTITUTE; COVER: JOE WALDRON

Penny Richards
CEO, FII Institute

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JOE WALDRON

Joe Waldron is a UK based illustrator who has worked with a wide variety of clients based all around the globe such as Google, Adobe, United Nations, JP Morgan, BBC, BMW, NFL, Bayern Munich and many more on a variety of projects ranging from print to digital to advertising.

AN UNEQUAL DIVIDE ...

MENA has historically lagged behind the Global North by 10–15 years in adopting cutting-edge technologies. Bridging this gap requires inclusive strategies to accelerate technology adoption, including AI.

40% of businesses in MENA report workforce shortages in tech-based roles.

46% in MENA report that youth training in tech-related skills is insufficient.

... BUT THE PROBLEM IS GLOBAL

43% of global citizens are dissatisfied with data privacy and protection, cybersecurity measures, and censorship standards related to technology.

56% of global citizens are dissatisfied with the level of misinformation on the internet and social networks.

(SOURCE: FII INSTITUTE GLOBAL FUTURE OF WORK REPORT, FII PRIORITY COMPASS REPORT, FII HEALTHY LONGEVITY COMPASS REPORT)

48% of global citizens agree digital technologies create more jobs than they destroy.

32% of citizens in the Global North agree digital technologies create more jobs than they destroy.

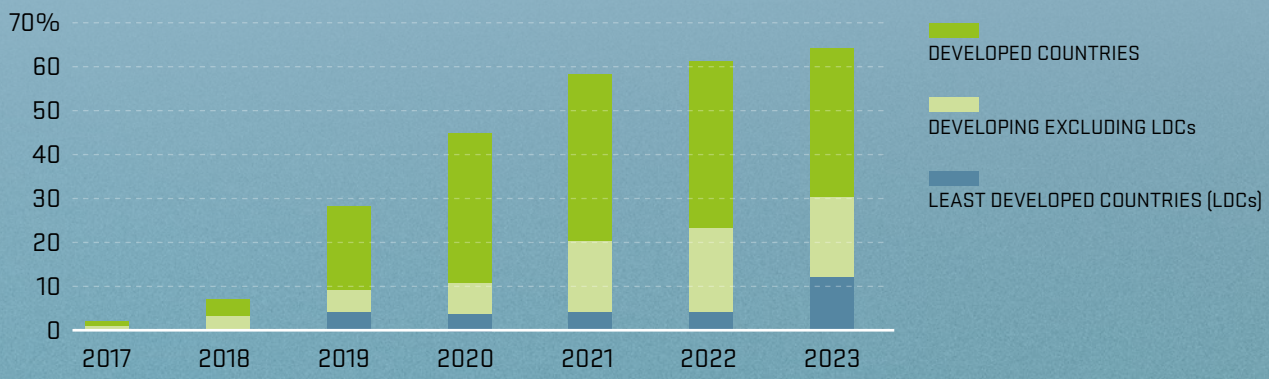
59% of citizens in the Global South agree digital technologies create more jobs than they destroy.

37% of global citizens agree technologies like ChatGPT and AI are a threat to society.

24% of global citizens do not agree technologies like ChatGPT and AI are a threat to society.

MIND THE GAP: THE STARK GLOBAL DIVIDE IN AI STRATEGIES

Cumulative share of countries with a national artificial intelligence strategy by country grouping, percentage, 2017-2023



(SOURCE: UN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) ELABORATION ON DATA FROM ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INDEX REPORT 2024 (STANFORD, UNITED STATES).)

WHY WE NEED AN AI INCLUSIVE WORLD

Few doubt that AI is going to change our planet and society. Many doubt that those changes will be felt equally.

AN EQUAL REVOLUTION

The AI moment is upon us – and it's incumbent on decision-makers and the FII Institute community to ensure it's an equal revolution.

FROM THE PREDICTIVE ALGORITHMS POWERING our weather forecasting to the chatbots redefining customer service, AI has already seeped into the existence of the modern world. It's reshaping how we work, learn, diagnose diseases, grow food and, increasingly, even govern. In boardrooms and classrooms, on farms and factory floors, AI is no longer a promise of the future – it's a present reality.

Yet as the technology accelerates, so does a pertinent question: who stands to benefit? For all its potential, AI also risks deepening the very divides it has the power to bridge. If we allow artificial intelligence to evolve unevenly, concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy nations and companies, we risk creating an even more fractured world – one where the dividends we're set to reap from AI bypass billions of people.

The stakes are enormous. AI is not just a tool of efficiency. It has the possibility to become a new layer of decision-making power in society. If only a small part of the world is building and benefiting from it, then the rest of us become passive subjects in decisions about our health, our education, our economies.

The range of opportunities from AI has been well-explored by the FII Institute community at our global events. But the AI revolution, and FII Institute's recently unveiled AI Inclusive initiative, are not just about technological progress, but about ensuring AI becomes a truly global asset – a force for inclusion, not exclusion.

A BALANCING ACT

Already, the global AI landscape reflects a familiar pattern of inequality. The United States and China alone account for over half of global AI investment. Europe is making significant strides, but much of the Global South remains on the fringes of the AI boom, despite FII Institute research suggesting those in this part of the world are more excited and energized about the potential of the technology than their counterparts in the North.

This disparity is not for lack of ambition. Across this part of the world, entrepreneurs and researchers are innovating with remarkable ingenuity. In Africa, machine learning models are helping farmers predict crop disease outbreaks. In Asia, AI tools are being piloted to improve early detection of harmful diseases.

But these examples often operate on shoestring budgets and struggle to scale. Access to high-quality data remains a significant barrier, as our interview with Peter H. Diamandis, Founder & Executive Chairman, XPRIZE Foundation, highlights in the coming pages. Reliable internet infrastructure is patchy in many regions, and local AI ecosystems are constrained by limited investment and a shortage of specialist talent. The playing field is far from level.

The consequences are both immediate and long-term. Without deliberate efforts to build capacity in the Global South, nations risk becoming mere consumers of AI products designed elsewhere – technologies that may not reflect their cultural contexts, social priorities or ethical values.

ARGUING FOR INCLUSIVITY

Computer scientists know all too well that AI is shaped by data and design. If these inputs are skewed toward the realities of the Global North, the outputs will be too. Bias is already a well-documented problem in AI systems, from facial recognition tools that struggle to identify darker-skinned faces to language models that overlook the vast linguistic diversity of the Global South – issues explored in our AI and the Future Impact report, published in 2024.

When AI doesn't understand local languages and ways of life, it cannot represent local challenges. And if it can't represent local challenges, it renders sections of the world invisible →

Wherever you are in the world, and whatever your background, in the future AI should help you.

→ in the digital realm. That means problems unique to certain areas of the planet may go unsolved.

Inclusive AI development is therefore not simply a charitable endeavor. It's a moral imperative, and an economic growth opportunity. Emerging markets represent some of the fastest-growing digital economies. Equipping them with AI capabilities can unleash new waves of innovation, entrepreneurship and social impact.

AI could contribute significantly to the global economy by 2030, but without greater inclusivity, much of this growth could remain concentrated in high-income countries. Ensuring broader participation is not just fair – it is economically smart.

BUILDING A FAIRER FUTURE

How do we create a more equitable AI revolution? The FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative proposes some solutions. It recognizes that investment is critical. Governments and international bodies must prioritize funding for AI research and infrastructure in underresourced regions. Private sector players also have their role – not only through venture capital, which we'll cover in the coming pages, including the thoughts of Shane Neman, CIO and General Partner, Neman Ventures, but also through partnerships that share knowledge and build local capacity.

Our experts, interviewed in this report, also highlight education as a global priority. Building AI talent pipelines in the Global South requires rethinking education systems, from primary schools to universities, to equip young people with the skills to participate in the digital economy. Data sovereignty and local context must also be respected. AI systems perform best when they are trained on data that reflects the lived realities of the communities they serve. This means supporting local data initiatives and respecting the rights of communities to control their data, rather than perpetuating extractive models that siphon information to global tech giants.

RESPONSIBLE ACTION

Global governance also needs to step up. Multilateral cooperation is essential to set fair standards for AI ethics, data use and accountability. International frameworks must include voices from the Global South, not merely as consultees, but as cocreators of the rules that will govern this new era.

The recognition that now is the time to shape this revolution for the better was behind the formation of FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative. It's a clarion call for action that will help show what is possible when technology meets local empowerment.

The coming decade will be decisive in dictating the future of the AI revolution. Get it right, and AI can be a bridge rather than a barrier – a force that advances innovation and justice, a tool and tech innovation that can benefit all of humanity. ■

BRIDGING THE GREAT DIVIDE

The global attainment gap in AI is keenly felt – all the more reason to take action.

53%
of global citizens say generative AI tools are already an important part of daily life.

33%
of citizens in the Global North say generative AI tools are already an important part of daily life.

67%
of citizens in the Global South say generative AI tools are already an important part of daily life.

48%
of global citizens say their country is prepared for the digital age.

35%
of citizens in the Global North say their country is prepared for the digital age.

57%
of citizens in the Global South say their country is prepared for the digital age.

39%
of citizens in the Global North say cost is a barrier to digital adoption.

32%
of citizens in the Global North say poor internet is a barrier to digital adoption.

49%
of citizens in the Global South say cost is a barrier to digital adoption.

46%
of citizens in the Global South say poor internet is a barrier to digital adoption.

AI PREPAREDNESS SCORE (OUT OF 1)

0.77	United States
0.64	European Union
0.52	Asia-Pacific
0.47	Global average
0.45	MENA
0.43	Latin America
0.34	Sub-Saharan Africa

SOURCE: IMF

(SOURCE: FII INSTITUTE GLOBAL FUTURE OF WORK REPORT, FII PRIORITY COMPASS REPORT, FII HEALTHY LONGEVITY COMPASS REPORT)

FII AI INCLUSIVE INITIATIVE

A grand plan to ensure the AI revolution is inclusive and equitable.

AT FII8, HELD IN RIYADH IN OCTOBER 2024, FII Institute introduced the AI Inclusive initiative, a landmark effort to encourage responsible and inclusive AI deployment in emerging markets. The initiative brings together investors, innovators, government entities, academics and technology leaders to foster an environment where AI start-ups can flourish, securing vital funding and advocating policies designed to leverage AI as a positive global force.

Central to AI Inclusive is the goal of securing private sector investments, each amounting to $100,000, directed at funding 50 impactful AI pilot projects across emerging markets. The projects will be selected according to their potential to deliver meaningful solutions that significantly enhance human equality. The initiative puts at its core the idea of creating an AI ecosystem that is both safe and ethically responsible, empowering start-ups to pioneer innovations and drive substantial positive change.

"Today's announcement is a call to action for all of you to join FII in this important AI empowerment journey," said Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, Founder & Executive Chairman of the XPRIZE Foundation, as he unveiled the initiative at FII8. The AI Inclusive initiative encompasses three strategic branches:

First, the Inclusive AI investment branch actively seeks and mobilizes crucial funding required to accelerate AI pilot projects tailored specifically to the unique challenges and opportunities present in emerging markets. Investments prioritize initiatives demonstrating responsible AI practices and inclusivity.

Second, the Capacity Building branch is designed to enhance local and global competencies necessary to develop and effectively deploy advanced AI technologies. Special emphasis is placed on explainable AI (XAI) and super AI (ASI), equipping emerging markets with the essential skills and understanding to responsibly navigate and maximize AI's transformative potential.

→ Third, the Digital Equity Accelerator addresses the critical need for democratizing access to essential computational resources, particularly GPU capabilities. Recognizing the digital divide faced by emerging markets, this branch aims to eliminate barriers by providing the necessary tools to foster local innovation. By bridging existing disparities, the initiative seeks to stimulate broad-based technological development, enabling widespread adoption and equitable benefits from AI advancements.

These three branches form a comprehensive strategy aimed at cultivating a vibrant, inclusive and responsible AI ecosystem in emerging markets. Through targeted investment, skill enhancement and equitable resource distribution, the AI Inclusive initiative strives to ensure AI technology serves as a genuine force for global good. ■

AN ONGOING CONVERSATION

Debate has roiled around the benefits of AI – and how to make adoption inclusive – at our FII events around the world.

"The biggest economic changes in AI will be seen in the physical world, offering significant opportunities for international collaboration. Autonomous cars and robots will reindustrialize the entire supply chain. We have to consider how the whole system fits together."

Benjamin Horowitz,
Cofounder & General Partner,
Andreessen Horowitz, speaking at FII8

"There are a set of values that are not western, but I would like to see them win in this new AI world. We'll see collaborations across countries with these shared values."

Alexis Ohanian,
Founder, Seven Seven Six; Cofounder & Former Executive Chairman, Reddit, speaking at FII8

"As I take a step back and compare AI to the industrial revolution, it's a different cohort that is going to be affected: it's not people who work with their hands, but a lot of people in this room."

Omeed Malik,
Cofounder & President, 1789 Capital, speaking at FII8

PHOTOS: FII INSTITUTE

“It’s so important to have robust discussions about AI ethics; technology is not the solution, but an enabler. If we’re not regulating it yet enabling it to do impactful things, we need to think of its ethical use.”

Christina Shim,
Chief Sustainability Officer, IBM, speaking at FII8

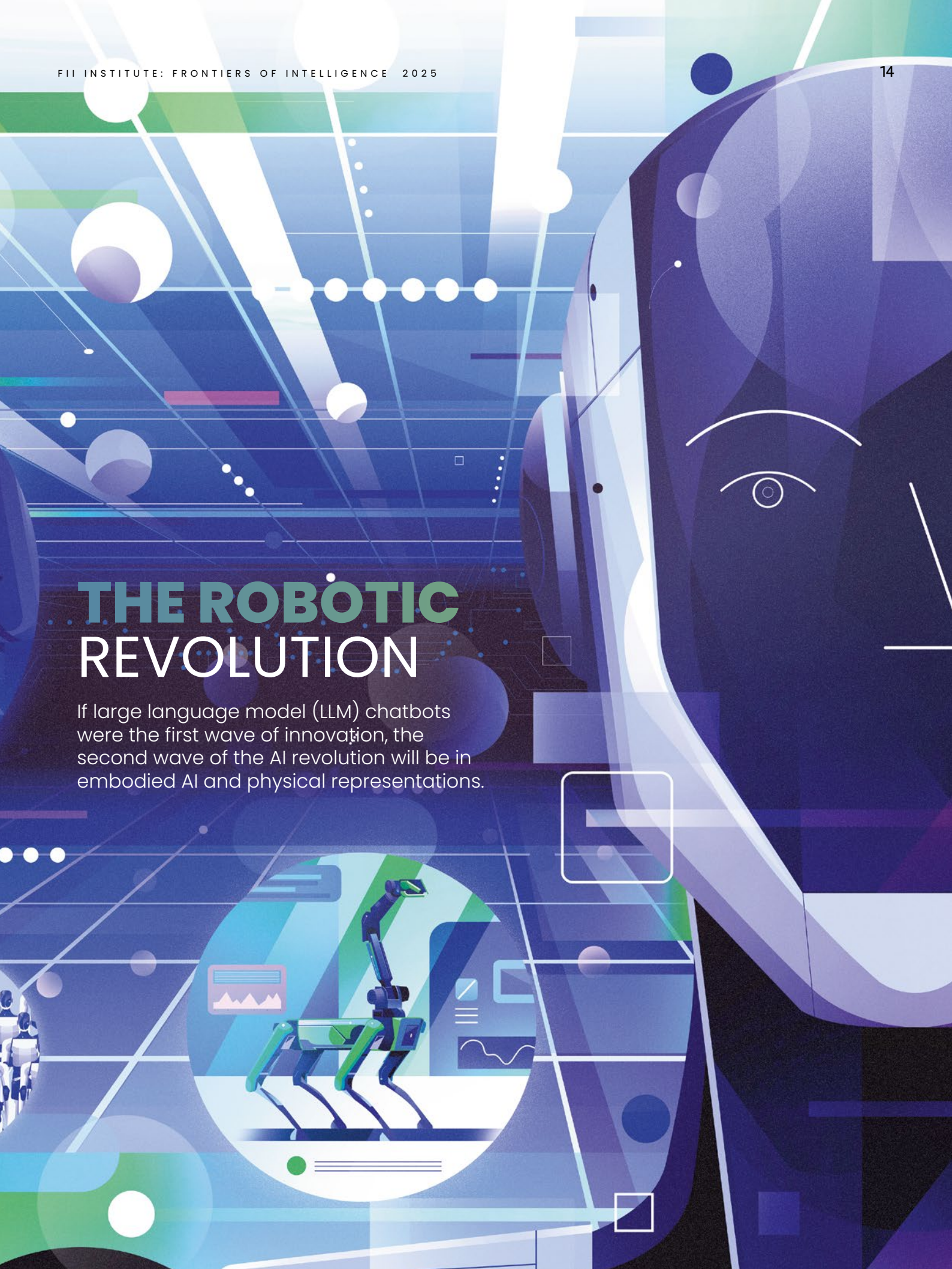
“Data is another national strategic reserve, because businesses rely on it. We need to see the growth of trust in the exchange of data between countries.”

Carme Artigas,
Cochair, UN AI Advisory Body, speaking at FII8

“AI is not just going to be something by itself. It will be something in everything. AI-based LLMs are going to be a part of everything you do.”

Safra Catz,
CEO, Oracle, speaking at FII PRIORITY Miami

PHOTOS: FII INSTITUTE



THE ROBOTIC REVOLUTION

If large language model (LLM) chatbots were the first wave of innovation, the second wave of the AI revolution will be in embodied AI and physical representations.

HOW THE ROBOTIC REVOLUTION COULD CHANGE WORK

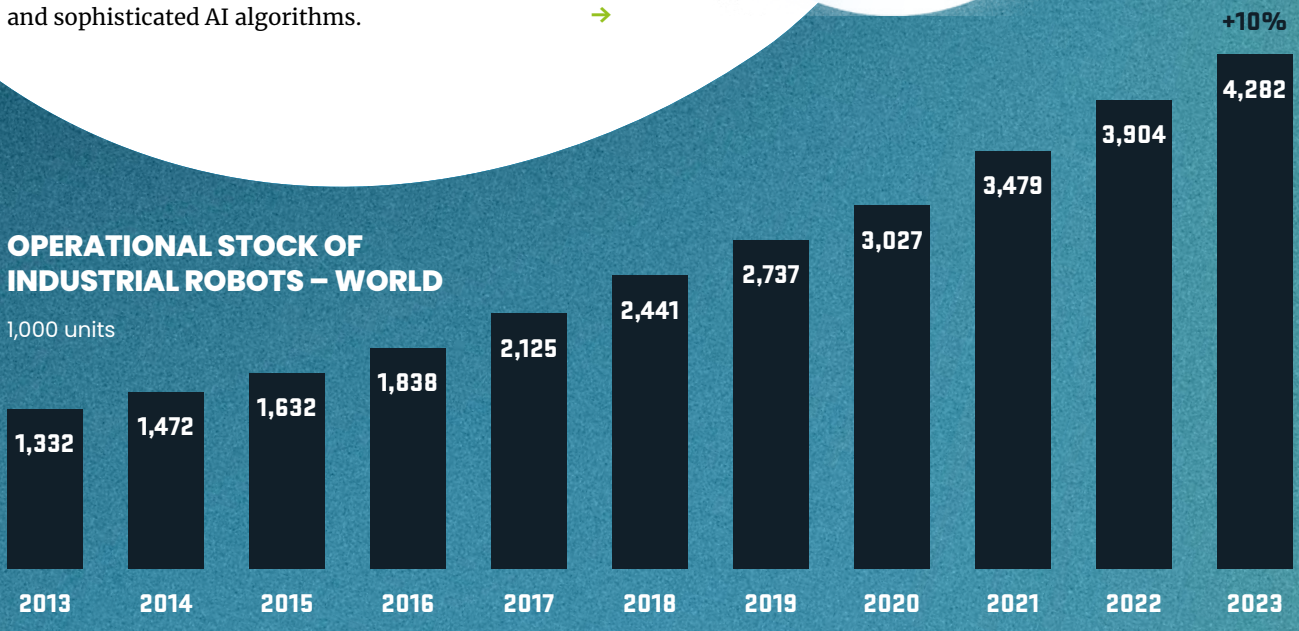
The world is on the cusp of a new labor change – enabled by the next step in artificial intelligence.

BUCKLE UP: IN FACTORIES, WAREHOUSES, hospitals and even farms, a rapid revolution is underway. Robotic workers, enabled by advanced AI, are reshaping the landscape of employment and productivity globally. There are now over 4 million industrial robots in operation worldwide, according to the International Federation of Robotics (IFR), marking a staggering growth in automation that is accelerating year by year. In the last year alone, the number has shot up by 10%.

Manufacturing is at the forefront of this revolution. The density of robots in manufacturing has more than doubled globally, from 74 robots per 10,000 workers in 2016 to 162 in 2023, underscoring a fundamental shift in industrial labor. South Korea leads the way, with over 1,000 robots per 10,000 workers, the sharp end of a global trend where machines take on increasingly complex tasks. These robots handle precision tasks such as welding, painting and assembly more accurately and efficiently than human counterparts, powered by machine vision and sophisticated AI algorithms.

OPERATIONAL STOCK OF INDUSTRIAL ROBOTS – WORLD

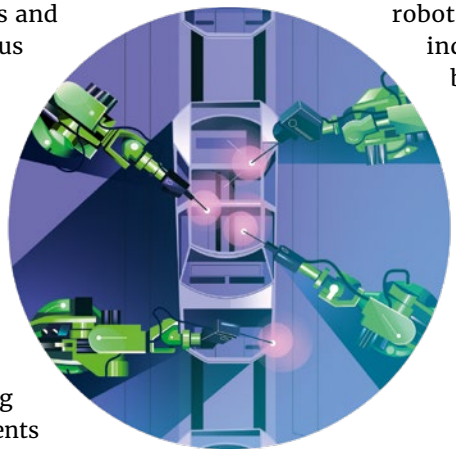
1,000 units



SOURCE: WORLD ROBOTICS 2024

→ But while robots continue to work away inside factories, one of the more ambitious aspects of this robotic revolution is the development and deployment of humanoid robots. Once confined to science fiction, humanoid robots are now about to arrive in huge numbers in our society, as versatile tools capable of performing a wide variety of tasks previously thought impossible for machines. Companies like Tesla, Boston Dynamics and Agility Robotics are leading the charge, developing humanoid robots designed to work seamlessly alongside humans or independently handle complex tasks in diverse environments.

Tesla's Optimus project aims to introduce humanoid robots capable of performing repetitive manual tasks, leveraging advanced sensors and AI initially developed for autonomous vehicles. Similarly, Boston Dynamics' Atlas robot showcases agility, balance, and dexterity, capable of navigating challenging terrains, performing physical tasks like lifting and carrying objects, and even conducting coordinated group activities. And Agility Robotics' Digit is designed specifically for logistics tasks, capable of picking and placing packages and operating in environments built for human workers.



That's the innovation in the United States, but more growth is happening elsewhere, too. China's stock of humanoid robots is developing at pace, and at a price that puts them in a more competitive position than the costlier alternatives in the US.

HELLO HUMAN

These humanoid robots allow the world a peek into a new future. Unlike traditional industrial robots that are fixed in place or limited to specific tasks, humanoids can navigate human-centric environments, using AI-powered perception systems to interact naturally with objects and people. Their anthropomorphic design allows them to interact with existing human infrastructure without requiring significant modifications, potentially transforming sectors like warehousing, retail, healthcare and domestic assistance.

However, humanoid robots also raise ethical and social considerations. The realistic appearance and advanced interaction capabilities of some humanoid robots can blur boundaries between human and machine, raising questions about identity, privacy and emotional attachment. Ensuring that humanoid robots are deployed responsibly, transparently and ethically is paramount to addressing public concerns and harnessing their full potential.

But that full potential is enormous. The near future promises even more sophisticated robots. Advances in AI-driven learning and adaptability mean they will become flexible, autonomous workers capable of handling variable tasks without reprogramming. Companies are investing heavily in technologies like AI vision systems that allow robotic arms to recognize irregular shapes and detect defects in real-time. By 2030, fully automated "lights-out" factories may become commonplace, with minimal human oversight.

Yet, it's not just manufacturing feeling the robotic revolution's impact. The logistics industry is rapidly automating, driven by the rise of e-commerce. Companies like Amazon epitomize this trend, deploying over 750,000 robots in its warehouses globally – up from only a thousand a decade ago. Autonomous mobile robots and robotic arms handle tasks from sorting parcels to packing goods, drastically reducing the demand for human labor in these roles. →

→ THE ROAD TO GOOD HEALTH

In transportation, autonomous vehicles are beginning to replace human drivers, at first in controlled environments. But the change is coming: self-driving trucks and delivery drones are moving from experimental pilots into commercial reality, raising profound implications for millions of logistics jobs worldwide. The International Road Transport Union highlights a chronic shortage of truck drivers globally, and posits that robots could fill essential gaps – though they also acknowledge such a significant shift will require significant regulatory, safety and ethical considerations, as machines take to our roads and skies.

Healthcare is another sector deeply transformed by robotics – as we'll learn later in this report. Surgical robots, like Intuitive Surgical's da Vinci system, enhance surgeons' precision, improving patient outcomes in thousands of hospitals worldwide. Sales of medical robots surged 36% in just one year, according to IFR data. And in some forward-thinking hospitals, autonomous robots transport medicines and supplies, disinfect rooms and assist in rehabilitation, freeing human caregivers to focus on complex patient interactions.

Health isn't just about cure, but prevention, and so good food can help ensure a healthy humanity. So robotic tech is being brought to bear in agriculture, too. Farmers now deploy drones and autonomous machinery for tasks like precision weeding and harvesting, dramatically reducing manual labor and environmental impact. AI-driven robots promise to transform agriculture into a hyper-efficient industry, capable of producing higher yields with fewer resources. Yet there are concerns about the changes coming – especially for developing countries, where automation threatens the livelihoods of low-skilled agricultural workers.

So while robots promise greater productivity and efficiency, they also pose profound questions about the future of work. Millions of jobs worldwide could be displaced, necessitating strategic workforce retraining and social policies to ensure this transition benefits all of society. The robotic revolution is an exciting vision of the future as much as it is a critical challenge, demanding thoughtful, inclusive approaches to responsibly harness its immense potential.

CHANGING THE WORKPLACE

AI and robotics' power to transform workplaces is something we're only just reckoning with.

#01 Artificial Intelligence (AI) development and implications	"AI taking jobs away from people with creative careers." UNITED STATES
#02 Technological advancement and innovation	"When technology improves, human life also improves." INDIA
#03 Cybersecurity and data privacy	"The cybersecurity issue is becoming a big issue in the country." NIGERIA
#04 Access to technology and the digital devide	"We are not that technically advanced and far behind other countries." SOUTH AFRICA
#05 Dependence on technology	"Technology is increasingly replacing people in professions." TÜRKIYE
#06 Technology in education and skill development	"Technology education should be given a higher priority because the world is really shifting to technology so that each person can access it well and knowledgeably." KENYA

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING DIGITAL SERVICES IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?

	GLOBAL	GLOBAL NORTH	GLOBAL SOUTH
ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET	86%	78%	90%
FINANCIAL SERVICES (E.G., ONLINE BANKING, INVESTING)	84%	77%	89%
E-COMMERCE AND ONLINE PAYMENTS	81%	72%	87%
DIGITAL TOOLS FOR E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES	72%	57%	83%
ONLINE LEARNING OR SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSES	70%	50%	84%
DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION	69%	53%	80%
DIGITAL TOOLS OR APPS TO MANAGE YOUR HEALTH OR WELLNESS	69%	52%	81%
GENERATIVE AI TOOLS (E.G., CHATGPT, MIDJOURNEY)	53%	33%	67%

(SOURCE: FII INSTITUTE GLOBAL FUTURE OF WORK REPORT, FII PRIORITY COMPASS REPORT, FII HEALTHY LONGEVITY COMPASS REPORT)

HOW AI IS CHANGING THE WORLD OF WORK

AI's transformational effects on how we work could catalyze change across society, believes George Nazi, Chief Executive Officer, SCAI.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS rapidly transforming the nature of work across the globe, reshaping industries, creating new jobs and redefining human-machine interactions. That's the belief of George Nazi, CEO of the Saudi Company for Artificial Intelligence (SCAI), who believes the next decade promises dramatic transformations, particularly influenced by initiatives such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which places AI at the heart of economic diversification and innovation.

"Artificial intelligence stands at the brink of revolutionizing the world of work," says Nazi, emphasizing AI's potential not just in automation, but as a fundamental driver of industry innovation and societal progress. In Saudi Arabia alone, AI is expected to contribute approximately 12% of GDP by 2030, highlighting the profound impact technology will have on the nation's economy.

It's not just in Saudi Arabia but in the wider Middle East where AI's impact will be felt. "AI's influence is poised to be equally transformative, with an anticipated contribution of $320 billion to regional GDP by 2030," says Nazi. "This underscores a significant paradigm shift towards more AI-driven economic frameworks across diverse sectors from healthcare and education to finance and transportation."

GLOBAL REVOLUTION

The changes are part of a worldwide revolution in the field of AI. Globally, Nazi says, "We are witnessing AI →

George Nazi, Chief Executive Officer, SCAI, is championing Saudi Arabia's contribution to the AI revolution.

→ not just as a tool for automating tasks but as a catalyst that streamlines industries, optimizes workflows and enhances decision-making processes." It's a narrative "equally compelling" across all parts of the world.

Importantly, Nazi foresees a shift toward AI augmenting human capabilities, rather than replacing them outright (FII Institute has reported in multiple Impact reports on the potential of generative AI to act as a copilot, rather than autopilot, in many jobs). As Nazi sees it, AI is an enhancer of creativity and innovation, setting the stage for workplaces where technology enhances human potential rather than diminishes it.

"AI will streamline routine tasks, which will inexorably change the nature of certain jobs," Nazi says. On the flip side, new careers are emerging rapidly in data science, robotics, cybersecurity and AI ethics – areas that were nascent or nonexistent just a decade ago. "It's fascinating to think that these fields barely existed and are now considered critical for the tech ecosystem," he says. However, those changes will be disruptive. "We must also recognize our responsibility to ensure workers are not left behind as the technological tide advances. The key lies in education and training. It's both practical and strategic to invest in reskilling the workforce to meet the demands of a technology-infused job market," he says.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

To effectively manage this world-changing transition, education and workforce training are essential. Nazi says Saudi Arabia's National Strategy for Data & AI, aimed at creating a specialized workforce of 20,000 AI and data experts by 2030, is one key initiative that is vital for preparing societies to adapt to technological advancements. "Ongoing learning and adaptability are becoming essential criteria for economic stability and growth," he says.

It's through education that the real benefits AI can bring for economies will be felt. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has put AI in a central role for economic diversification. AI-driven industries contribute significantly →

> "Saudi Arabia is not merely chasing growth, but crafting a future where technology empowers every individual."

GEORGE NAZI

is CEO of the Saudi Company for Artificial Intelligence (SCAI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Public Investment Fund (PIF). With over three decades of experience, He is a distinguished leader who has played an instrumental role in driving transformative growth and operational excellence within the AI, TMT and cloud industries. Before joining SCAI, He served as Global Vice President for The Telecom, Media & Entertainment and Gaming industries at Google Cloud, where he spearheaded visionary strategies across their four regions, developed high-performing teams from the ground up and expanded revenue.

→ to increasing the non-oil GDP sectors within the Kingdom, he says. Women's participation in the tech workforce has jumped from 7% to 35% – evidence, Nazi says, of substantial progress in building an inclusive, diverse workforce. "Through Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia is not merely chasing growth, but crafting a future where technology empowers every individual to contribute to and thrive in the nation's economic narrative," Nazi says, reinforcing the transformative power of AI in driving economic and societal change.

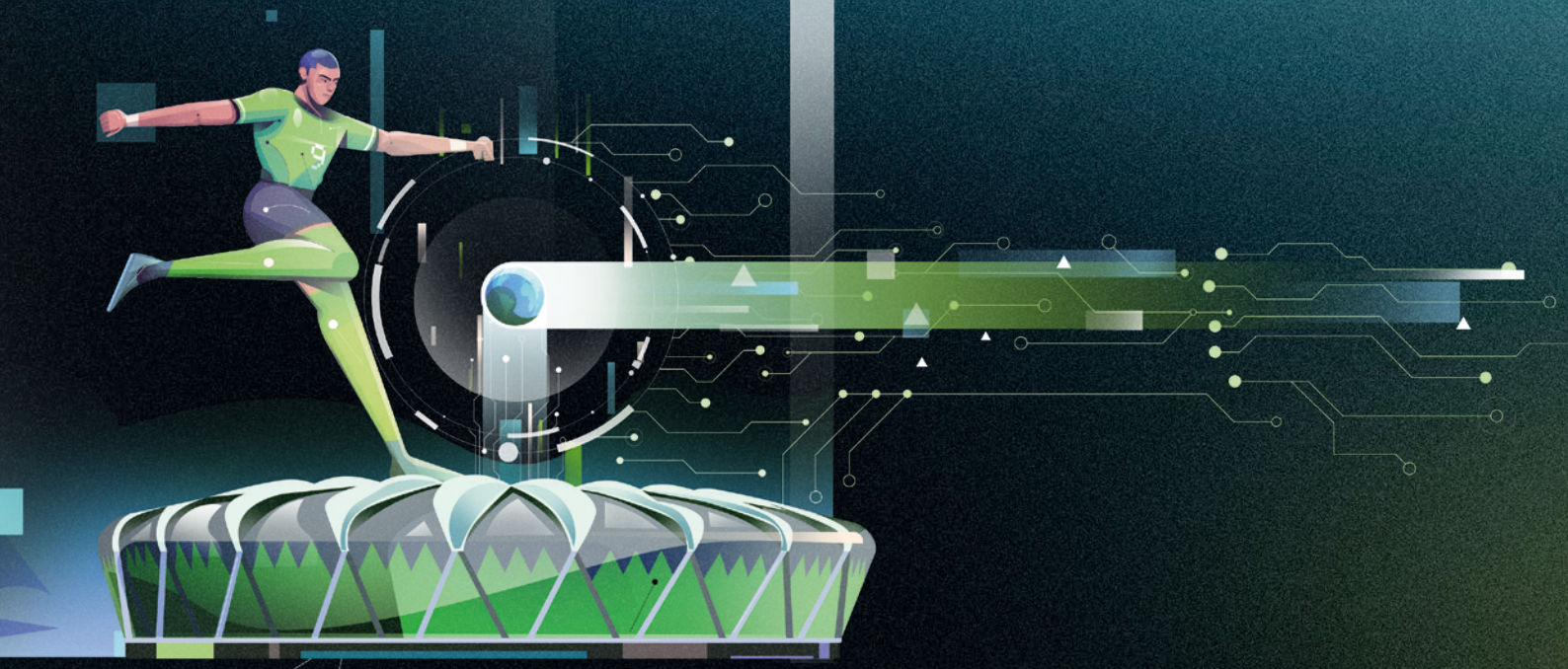
Inclusivity in the workplace is another key area of AI's influence. Nazi says AI could reduce biases in hiring by focusing strictly on skills, experiences and potential, rather than traditional, potentially biased parameters. AI has also enhanced workplace accessibility for employees with disabilities, utilizing innovations like speech-to-text transcription and real-time translation. These AI-powered tools "are not just tools; they are bridges to empowering individuals," Nazi says, underscoring the strategic and moral imperative for inclusive workplaces.

> "Ongoing learning and adaptability are becoming essential criteria for economic stability and growth."

RESPONSIBLY DEVELOPING AI

With great power comes great responsibility. Ethical considerations around AI are paramount in any revolution. Nazi outlines the importance of fairness, transparency and accountability in developing and deploying AI technologies. At SCAI, where AI solutions are transparent, regularly monitored and ethically accountable, these values form a core part of the company's operations. He champions the need for robust governance and stringent adherence to ethical standards, a view aligned with global concerns about AI's ethical deployment.

Partnerships, both international and cross-sectoral, are vital in maximizing AI's positive impact on employment. The AI Ethics Framework developed by the Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA) is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide the ethical development and implementation of artificial intelligence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Developing AI ethically can facilitate job creation, drive technological advancements and enhance workforce capabilities, he explains. Initiatives like the AI league further show how SCAI blends innovation with practical skill →



development, creating pathways for local and international talent in sectors such as sports AI.

Industries experiencing significant transformation due to AI include healthcare, manufacturing, finance and sports. Nazi notes that just in healthcare AI is projected to create $150 billion in savings in the US alone by 2026 through improved diagnostics and personalized treatment plans. The finance industry similarly benefits from enhanced risk management and personalized services, while the sports sector, preparing for Saudi Arabia's hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2034, is leveraging AI to optimize performance strategies and fan engagement. "We're setting the stage for new ways of thinking, new solutions to enduring problems and innovations we have yet to imagine," Nazi says.

TAKING PROACTIVE ACTION

The success of integrating AI into any strategy depends on reskilling and education, and getting ahead of trends is important. Nazi stresses the importance of proactive investments in STEM education and continuous workforce training, especially given the rapidly changing job market. "By 2030, the landscape of the job market in Saudi Arabia will undergo a profound transformation, with AI-related jobs expected to be among the fastest-growing occupations," he says.

But to get there, not just in Saudi Arabia, but everywhere, organizational culture must evolve significantly to fully harness AI's benefits. Nazi argues for embedding data analytics into workflows, democratizing AI literacy and shifting from rigid hierarchical structures to dynamic, AI-integrated decision-making. "Organizations embracing these cultural shifts are well-positioned to thrive in this AI-driven landscape," he says.

Nazi's vision is optimistic, but grounded in realistic strategies for education, ethical deployment and inclusive workplace practices. And done well, it'll be beneficial for all. "As a CEO, it's my personal mission to see a world where AI empowers every individual, irrespective of their geographical location," he says. "It's a journey filled with challenges, but the vision of a universally inclusive AI future makes every step worth it." ■

$320bn

AI's contribution to Middle East GDP by 2030

SOURCE: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, 2025

20,000

AI and data experts in Saudi Arabia by 2030

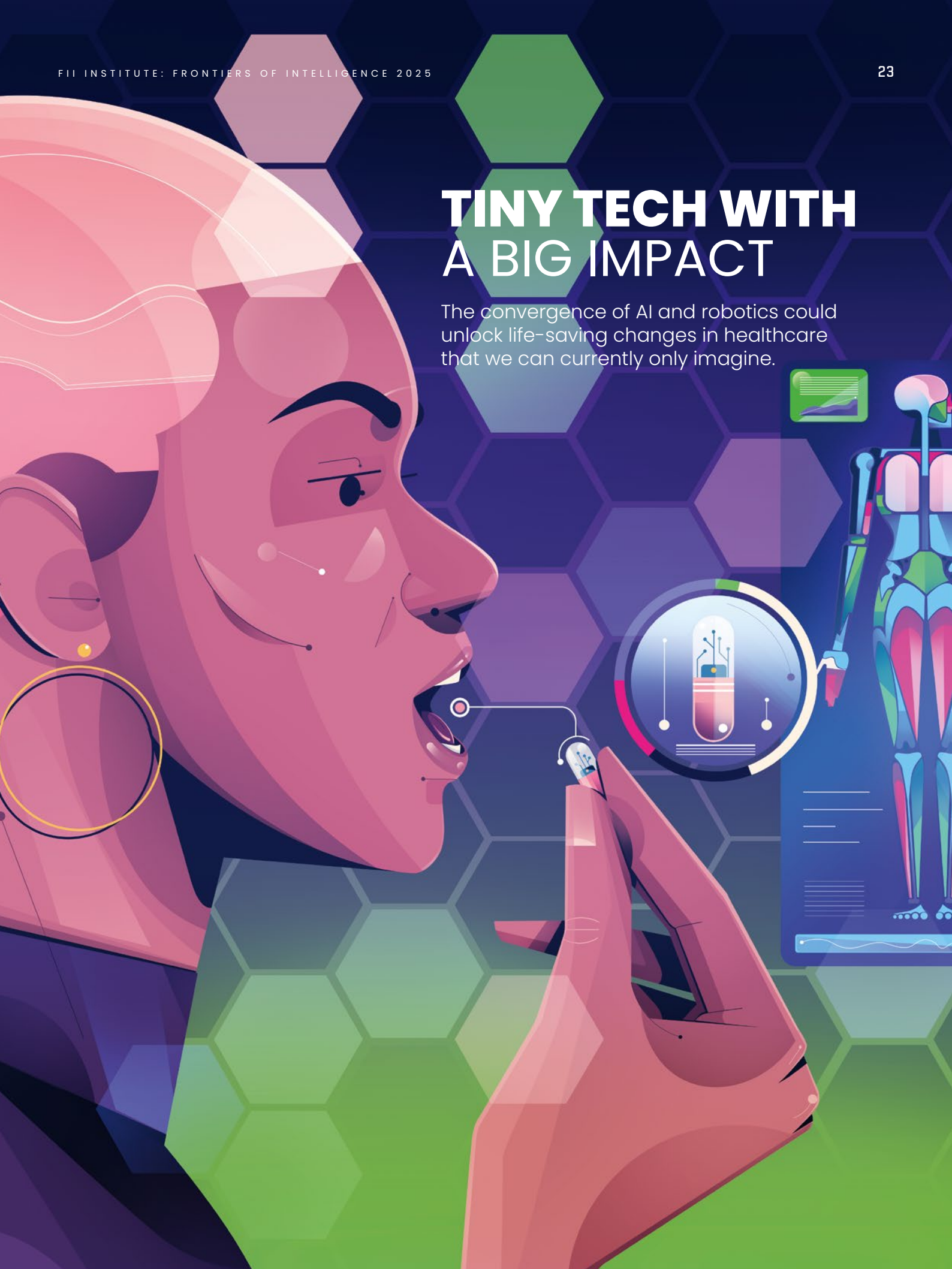
5,000

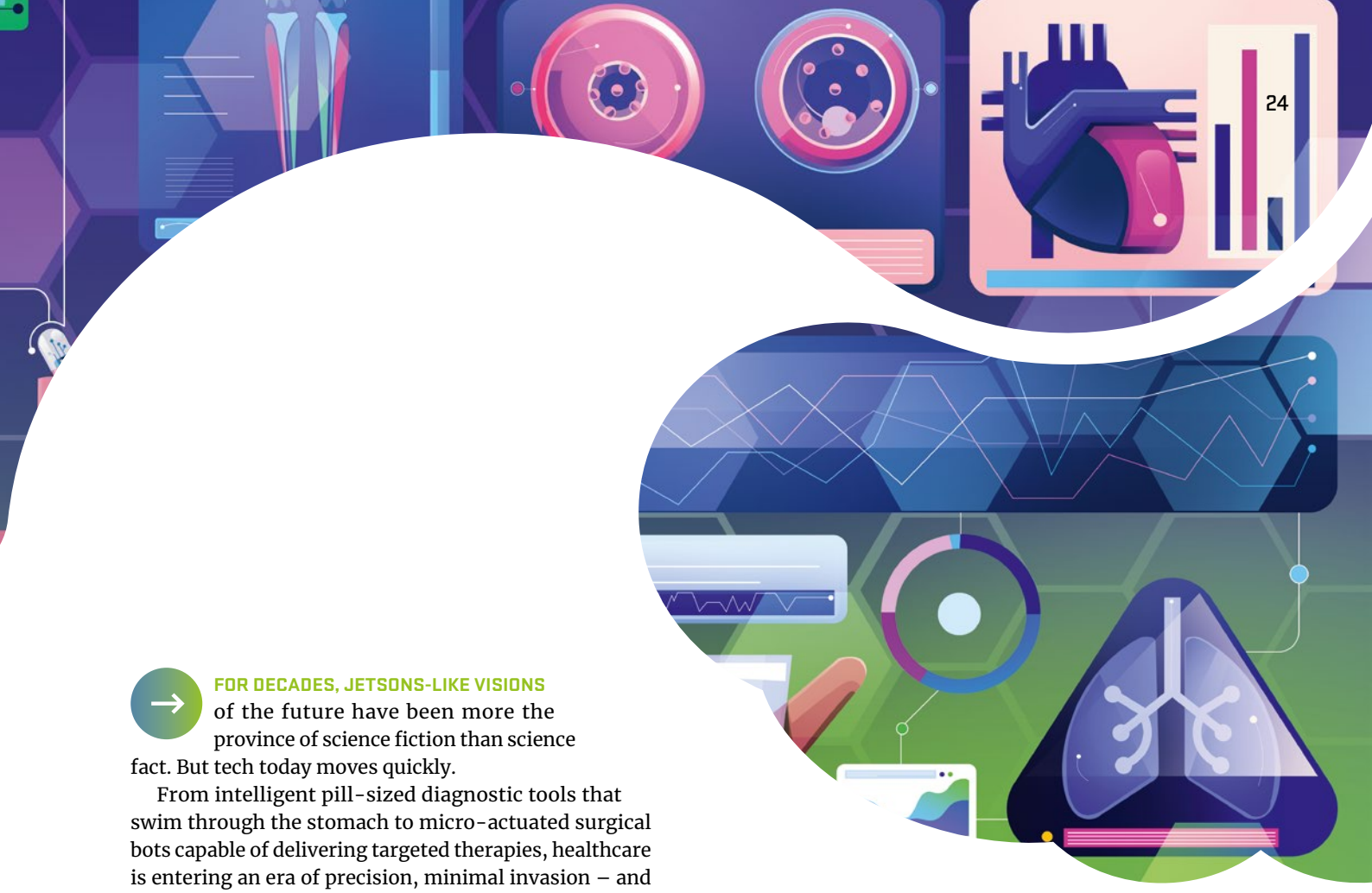
AI scientists in Saudi Arabia by 2030

SOURCE: GLOBAL AI SUMMIT: STATE OF AI IN SAUDI ARABIA, SEPTEMBER 2024

TINY TECH WITH A BIG IMPACT

The convergence of AI and robotics could unlock life-saving changes in healthcare that we can currently only imagine.





FOR DECADES, JETSONS-LIKE VISIONS of the future have been more the province of science fiction than science fact. But tech today moves quickly.

From intelligent pill-sized diagnostic tools that swim through the stomach to micro-actuated surgical bots capable of delivering targeted therapies, healthcare is entering an era of precision, minimal invasion – and expanded reach. But as these technologies evolve, so too does a vital challenge: ensuring they benefit not just the privileged few in wealthy nations, but the billions in lower-resource settings who stand to gain the most.

Miniaturized robots hold the key to addressing some of the healthcare system's most entrenched inefficiencies. Traditional diagnostics, particularly for internal organs, can be expensive, time-consuming and invasive. Procedures like endoscopy and laparoscopy require sedation, specialized equipment and highly trained personnel. They also often depend on centralized infrastructure, making access difficult in rural areas or countries with underfunded health systems.

But micro-robots – tiny, intelligent devices that can navigate through the body, gather diagnostic data and in some cases even deliver therapy, all with minimal discomfort and disruption – can change things. These machines are powered by breakthroughs in materials science, wireless communication, AI and battery miniaturization. They're built to work in complex fluid environments, like the stomach or bloodstream, with astonishing precision. And they're just around the corner, as revealed by our interview with Arman Nadershahi, Cofounder and CEO, Endiatx, on page 30 of this report.

REDEFINING DIAGNOSTIC ACCESS

One of the most promising uses of these new devices is in early-stage diagnostics. Being able to detect signs of gastric cancer, ulcers or inflammation without having to schedule a hospital appointment could be a game-changer.

This approach could radically improve outcomes for diseases that currently go undiagnosed in their early stages. Late diagnosis is a major factor in poor cancer survival rates globally, the World Health Organization says, particularly in low-income countries where specialist equipment is scarce and travel to medical centers can be prohibitive.

Micro-robotic diagnostics have the potential to bridge that gap. Not only can they help identify issues earlier, they can also support follow-up care and chronic disease management without the need for repeat hospital stays.

But miniaturized robots aren't just for looking – they're learning to act. They could soon deliver medication directly to inflamed or infected tissue, cauterize bleeding or do other tasks. Such capabilities could open up entirely new models of remote intervention, particularly in areas where access to surgery is limited.

There's also huge potential for use in humanitarian and emergency settings, where medical resources are thin and infrastructure may be damaged or nonexistent. A self-contained robotic capsule that can assess internal bleeding or deliver a stabilizing treatment could be life-saving in disaster zones or conflict areas.

→ WHO GETS ACCESS?

While the innovation in this space is astonishing, there's always a risk that the benefits of micro-robotic healthcare will be unevenly distributed. Most of the companies and research institutions driving this progress are based in the Global North, and early adopters of the technology are overwhelmingly in high-income countries. This mirrors a familiar pattern in medical innovation: breakthrough tools emerge in the West and take years, sometimes decades, to trickle down to the rest of the world. During that time, millions of people miss out on potentially life-saving care.

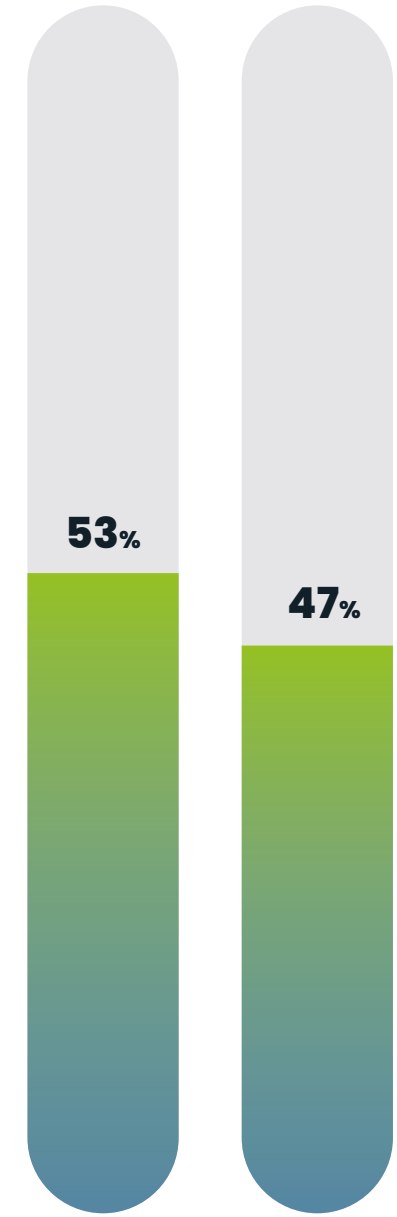
If we're to avoid repeating this inequity, accessibility must be designed into these systems from the start. That means low manufacturing costs, ease of use by non-specialists, robust remote control systems and minimal infrastructure requirements. It also means fostering international partnerships that bring these technologies to local health systems in the Global South, adapting them for regional needs and ensuring healthcare workers are trained to deploy them effectively. It's why FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative puts inclusivity at the heart of everything it does.

Governments, NGOs and global health foundations have a critical role to play in ensuring equitable distribution of micro-robotic technologies. Public-private partnerships could accelerate the approval, procurement and distribution of miniaturized health tools in low-income settings. Regulatory bodies should also work toward international frameworks that speed up safe adoption across borders, rather than relying on fragmented national standards that slow innovation and access.

Just as mobile phones leapfrogged landlines in many parts of Africa and Asia, healthcare robotics has the potential to bypass outdated infrastructure altogether. But that leap will only happen if the global health community ensures that these technologies are designed for leapfrogging in the first place.

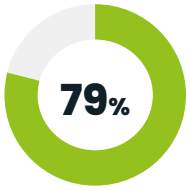
A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR HEALTH

New technologies could catalyze health innovation in unprecedented ways.

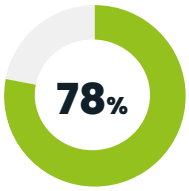


of global citizens are satisfied with innovative digital health services.

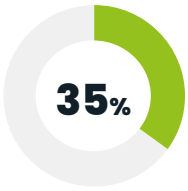
of global citizens are dissatisfied with innovative digital health services.



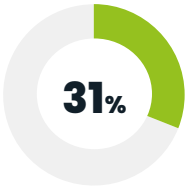
of US citizens are satisfied with innovative digital health services.



of Indian citizens are satisfied with innovative digital health services.

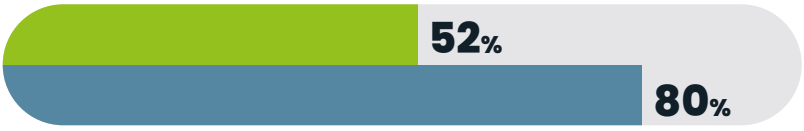


of Mexican citizens are satisfied with innovative digital health services.



of Argentinian citizens are satisfied with innovative digital health services.

of global citizens say digital tools to manage health and wellness are important in their daily lives.



of citizens in the **Global North** / **Global South** say digital tools to manage health and wellness are important in their daily lives.

(SOURCE: FII INSTITUTE GLOBAL FUTURE OF WORK REPORT, FII PRIORITY COMPASS REPORT, FII HEALTHY LONGEVITY COMPASS REPORT)

SUGARING THE PILL

AI-powered revolutions in healthcare could well look like this tiny pill, developed by Arman Nadershahi, Cofounder and CEO, Endiatx.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH your stomach, three things are generally guaranteed, wherever you are in the world. You're going to hospital, you're undergoing an endoscopy, and you're likely going to feel very uncomfortable.

"We set out to change that," says Arman Nadershahi, Cofounder and CEO, Endiatx. "Every year, millions of people around the world suffer or die from preventable gastrointestinal diseases – largely because the tools we use to detect them are expensive, uncomfortable and difficult to access."

PillBot is Endiatx's revolutionary response: a fully maneuverable, swimming robot that navigates the stomach to capture real-time, high-resolution internal images. Unlike traditional endoscopy, which demands sedation, hospital infrastructure and trained specialists, PillBot requires none of that. It's single-use, low-cost, remotely operable and designed to bring diagnostics directly to people who need them most, wherever they are.

"At its heart, PillBot is about access," says Nadershahi. "It's about empowering people with earlier, easier and more comfortable screenings – and saving lives in the process."

A VISION OF THE FUTURE

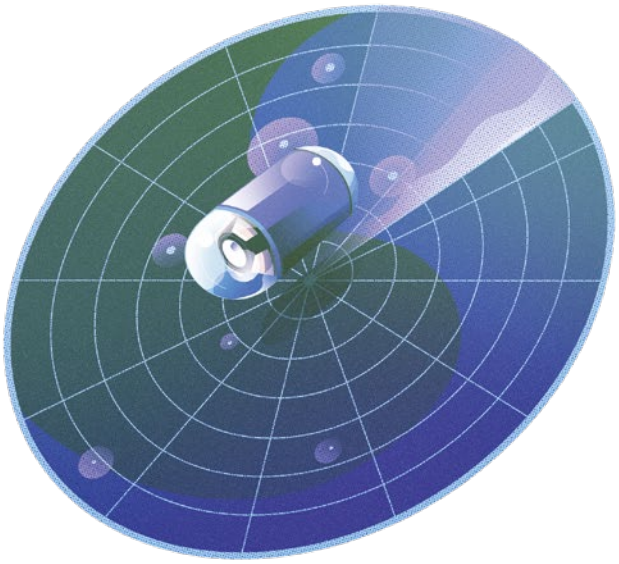
PillBot may look like a pill, but it's an engineering marvel. Inside the capsule sits a micro-robotic system built to traverse the chaotic and fluid-filled environment of the human stomach. Unlike passive capsule endoscopes that simply float through the GI tract, PillBot swims.

"PillBot isn't just a camera in a pill – it's a micro-submarine," Nadershahi says. Endiatx had to solve issues of fluid dynamics at a miniature scale, rethink propulsion systems and engineer wireless communications through human tissue.

The result is a platform powered by years of interdisciplinary innovation. With a team drawn from aerospace, robotics and systems engineering, PillBot is creating a totally new category of diagnostic devices – one that Nadershahi says "the world has never seen before."

SMARTER AND FASTER

AI is at the core of PillBot's evolution. Future generations will use AI to autonomously navigate the stomach, identifying abnormalities and collecting data with surgical precision – all without human steering. "In the near future, AI will guide PillBot through a complete, autonomous exam of the stomach," Nadershahi says. "As PillBot gathers data across thousands – eventually millions – of procedures, its AI will grow smarter. That will help doctors by flagging areas of concern, accelerating clinical review and finding early signs →



AMAN NADERSHAHI

is Cofounder and CEO, Endiatx. He is a corporate and patent attorney, and cofounder of several successful businesses and a number of innovative medical technology companies. Arman graduated with distinction from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a BA in Zoology and English Literature. He holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Minnesota Law School, a Master's in Biological Science from the University of Minnesota, an MS in Regulatory Science from the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy and an MBA from the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California.

→ of disease that would otherwise go undetected.

For clinicians, this means faster review times and more reliable screening results. For patients, it means real-time access to advanced care without waiting weeks for hospital appointments. "PillBot isn't just a smarter device – it's part of a smarter system for delivering care," he says.

GROWING EQUITY

While the technology itself is cutting-edge, the real transformation lies in how it might address glaring global health disparities. In much of the world, access to gastrointestinal screening is limited – by geography, by cost, or by a shortage of trained personnel. PillBot offers a model of care that can scale.

"Our vision for PillBot is a device that can be deployed quickly, even outside of traditional care settings, allowing patients to be evaluated without the discomfort or delays associated with conventional procedures," says Nadershahi. This is particularly promising for underserved regions where endoscopy units are scarce. The affordability and simplicity of PillBot means it could be used in mobile clinics, remote villages or even refugee camps. It's not just convenience. It's a potential game-changer for early detection in global populations that have been historically neglected by mainstream healthcare systems.

"Ultimately, we're not just creating a new tool – we're creating a new model for care delivery," says Nadershahi. "One that is patient-centered, data-driven and scalable."

FRONTLINE FILTER

Traditional endoscopies are expensive and often unnecessary. Over 80% return normal results, despite involving →

80%

of surgeries could be minimally invasive by 2030.

20%

faster recovery in patients with minimally invasive procedures

SOURCE: ENDIATX

→ sedation and high-end equipment. That doesn't mean checks shouldn't be carried out, but that the invasiveness can be a burden.

Instead, PillBot could function as a frontline filter, screening out low-risk patients and reserving hospital-based procedures for those truly in need. This triage approach could free up medical resources, reduce patient wait times, and drastically cut costs.

"By helping to triage patients more effectively, PillBot could one day allow hospitals and clinics to better allocate their specialized equipment and staff," Nadershahi says. "That's not just a win for efficiency, it's also a better experience for the patient." Long-term, the cost savings extend even further. If future iterations of PillBot can deliver drugs, cauterize bleeding or even perform microsurgeries, the financial and logistical burdens of conventional interventions could be dramatically slashed.

FUTURE-FACING INNOVATION

The same propulsion and sensor systems being refined for navigation now could soon enable minimally invasive procedures inside the body, without incisions, anesthesia or hospital stays. "This isn't decades away," Nadershahi says. "The building blocks are already coming together. Just as self-driving cars and generative AI went from concept to everyday reality in under a decade, autonomous micro-robotic intervention is advancing at an extraordinary pace."

Endiatx's mission to democratize medical robotics has drawn international support. Notably, its largest early investment came not from Silicon Valley, but from a Singapore-based fund. "It was a powerful early signal that investors around the world see the transformative potential of what we're building," says Nadershahi. "Since then, we've raised substantially more capital globally from US-based investors and others globally who share our vision for the future of medicine."

With the convergence of AI, automation and healthcare, PillBot is at the epicenter of a global shift in medtech. Its relevance is universal. "Given the favorable economics and wide accessibility we envision, this is a product with global relevance," Nadershahi says. "Investors recognize that, and their confidence is helping us bring this technology to patients everywhere."

MINIATURIZED TOMORROW

From real-time remote diagnostics to continuous at-home monitoring, the future that PillBot enables is one of proactive, not reactive, healthcare. By tracking gastrointestinal health over time, PillBot could one day allow providers to catch illnesses before symptoms arise.

"This creates the potential for a new standard in follow-up care," says Nadershahi. It could help track healing progress, treatment effectiveness and disease recurrence from home, reducing the need to return to hospital or undergo repeated procedures. And as the data collected by PillBot scales to a population level, it could revolutionize how we understand the early stages of disease. Longitudinal patient insights, personalized treatment plans, and preventative strategies become not only possible, but practical.

"Ultimately, this technology isn't just about diagnosing disease, it's about enabling long-term health and wellness," Nadershahi says. "By empowering physicians with better tools, better data and better reach, and by making monitoring part of everyday life rather than a crisis response, PillBot and its successors could help create a healthcare system that is more predictive, more efficient and more humane." ■

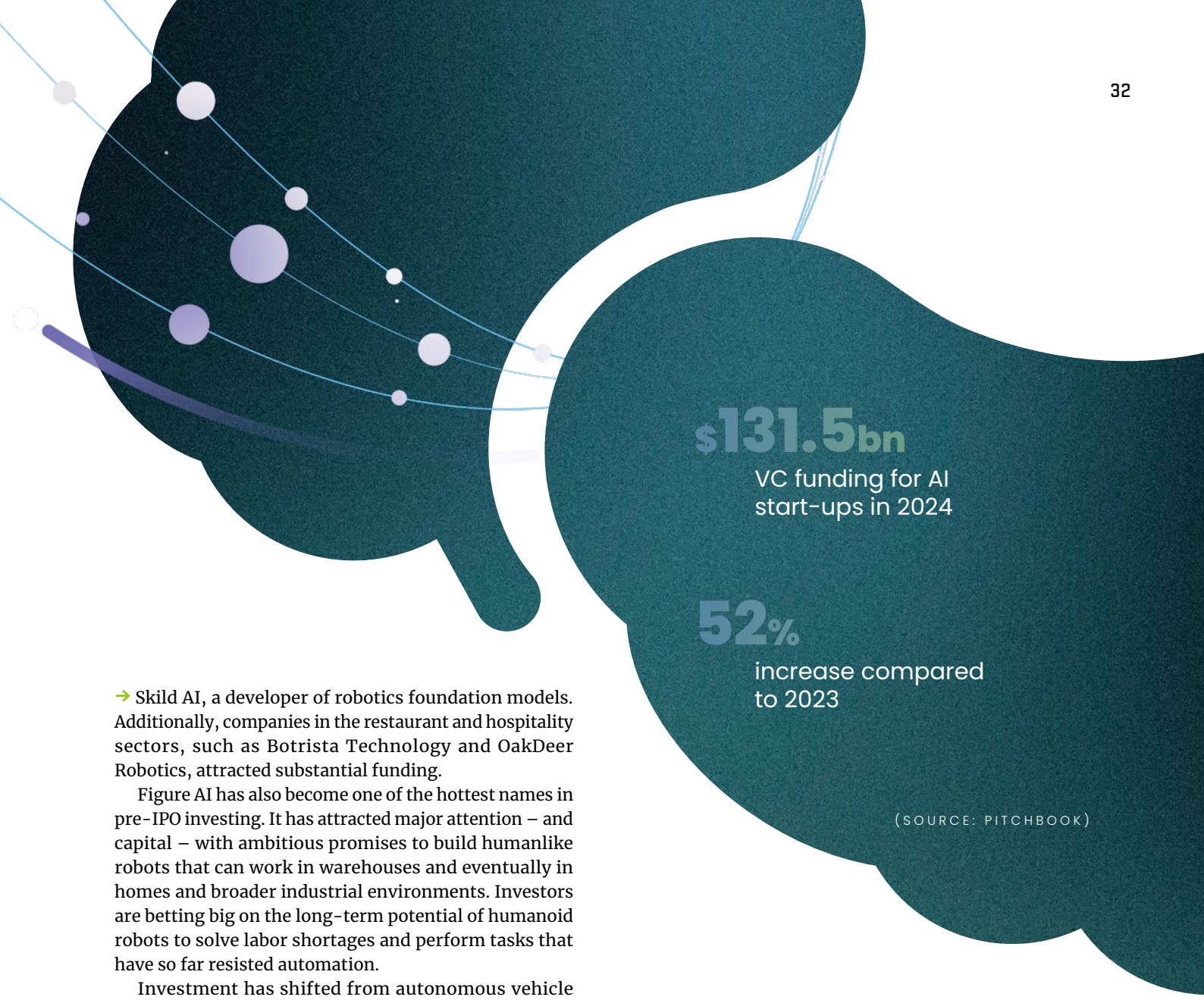
FOLLOWING THE MONEY

The investment space in robotics and AI is seeing a resurgence as the two technologies intertwine to offer new possibilities.

INVESTORS HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THE opportunities in AI and robotics at pace, with both areas experiencing significant growth and transformation in recent years, marked by substantial funding increases and evolving trends across various sectors.

In 2024, global venture capital funding for AI start-ups reached approximately $131.5 billion, representing a 52% increase from the previous year, according to data from Pitchbook. This surge in smart money supporting AI firms was driven by mega-deals exceeding $1 billion, with prominent AI model providers like Anthropic, Cohere and Mistral securing some of the largest funding rounds. The biggest name in the game, OpenAI, was no stranger to the investment space, either. It raised $6.6 billion in October 2024 at a valuation of $157 billion.

The robotics sector has also seen notable investment activity. In July 2024, robotics companies raised approximately $1.3 billion across 47 deals, slightly surpassing the 12-month trailing average of $1.2 billion. In the first seven months of 2024, nearly $10 billion was plowed into robotics start-ups. Significant investments included $300 million for Applied Intuition, a provider of simulation software for autonomous vehicles, and →



→ Skild AI, a developer of robotics foundation models. Additionally, companies in the restaurant and hospitality sectors, such as Botrista Technology and OakDeer Robotics, attracted substantial funding.

Figure AI has also become one of the hottest names in pre-IPO investing. It has attracted major attention – and capital – with ambitious promises to build humanlike robots that can work in warehouses and eventually in homes and broader industrial environments. Investors are betting big on the long-term potential of humanoid robots to solve labor shortages and perform tasks that have so far resisted automation.

Investment has shifted from autonomous vehicle companies to vertical robotics firms, which focus on industry-specific applications, such as logistics and medical robots. While overall venture capital investments in robotics declined from $18.5 billion in 2022 to $10.6 billion in 2023, according to F-Prime Capital, vertical robotics companies experienced net growth over the same period, indicating a strategic pivot toward more commercially viable robotics solutions.

Big companies are also getting into both games. Amazon CEO Andy Jassy has underlined the company's commitment to generative AI with substantial capital allocation for AI chips and data centers, while investing around $8 billion in start-ups like Anthropic to integrate advanced AI technologies into products such as the Alexa voice assistant.

Geopolitical factors are also influencing the AI investment landscape. The EU announced a €20 billion initiative to build AI gigafactories equipped with supercomputers, aiming to compete with the US and China in AI innovation. These facilities will focus on advancements in healthcare, robotics and scientific discovery, reflecting Europe's strategic push to bolster its position in the global AI arena. And of course, companies like China's DeepSeek are disrupting the AI industry by developing competitive AI models at a fraction of the cost incurred by established players. DeepSeek's advancements have led to significant market shifts, including substantial declines in the market capitalization of tech giants, underscoring the dynamic and rapidly evolving nature of the AI sector.

Overall, the investment space for robotics and AI is characterized by robust growth, strategic shifts toward industry-specific applications, substantial corporate commitments and significant geopolitical initiatives, all contributing to a vibrant and rapidly evolving landscape. ■

MAKING SMART INVESTMENTS

Deployment of capital in key projects can ensure a more equitable future aided by artificial intelligence, as Shane Neman suggests.

THE AI REVOLUTION IS hurtling ahead at breakneck speed, but it is its collision with robotics that is producing what Shane Neman, CIO and General Partner, Neman Ventures Family Office, calls "the most thrilling" evolution in technology. But for this transformation to truly serve humanity, Neman insists it must be globally inclusive, ensuring Global North and South can share the rewards and avoid being left behind.

"People don't really realize how rapidly embodied AI is advancing," says Neman, an investor and tech entrepreneur with deep roots in next-generation robotics. He likens today's moment to the development of the iPhone: "It's the merging of the hardware and the software that makes it so unique and so useful."

For Neman, this vision of the future is not just an abstract prediction. It's about putting your money where your mouth is. He is already backing robotics companies pushing the boundaries of embodied AI – machines that are capable not only of performing specific tasks but of understanding their environments intuitively – companies such as Figure AI and PillBot. "It's not just about a robot doing one thing," he says. "The humanoid is the optimal form. The entire world has been built to interface with a human form."

ALL HAIL HUMANOIDS

Humanoid robots are game-changing, Neman argues, because they can be retrained like any human worker. "You don't have to buy a specific robot for a specific task. A humanoid can basically do anything, just like any human can. That's what's happening right now."

The short-term implications may not look like the science fiction dystopias many fear. Rather, humanoid robots are initially poised to fill the labor gaps left by tasks humans no longer want to do – "crappy jobs no one wants," as Neman put it. "No one can hire someone to go and wash dishes all day. No one wants to do these things."

But he warns that the second- and third-order effects of widespread robotics are much harder to predict. "The economy is so complex, no one really knows how this is going to unfold," he admits. "Just like you couldn't have predicted the outcomes of Covid, even if you knew it was coming a year in advance." →

"The humanoid is the optimal form. The entire world has been built to interface with a human form."

→ ENTER INVESTORS

This uncertainty, though, does not relieve investors, technologists or policymakers of their responsibilities. On the contrary, Neman believes it requires them to act with even greater moral clarity. "Everything needs to be done with a moral objective," he stresses. "Like every technological inflection point, there are going to be learning curves. There's definitely going to be issues." And addressing those issues is the responsibility of those funding their root cause.

Regulation is essential, yet fraught with difficulty, reckons Neman. "It's hard to regulate something you're not even fully understanding yet," he says, acknowledging the paradox. "It's almost like you're putting the cart before the horse."

Nevertheless, Neman remains convinced of the net benefits of robotics. "It can be used to do dangerous things that humans don't want to do, to explore space, to benefit humanity," he says. "Why should someone be washing dishes? It's not the best use of a person's time or energy. So maybe we can focus on humanity working on other problems."

Yet for all the promise, there is an equally pressing challenge – to ensure that these benefits are not confined to the world's wealthiest nations. This is the challenge at the heart of FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative.

AN EQUAL REVOLUTION

"Just like with every other big industry, there's going to be a global race," says Neman. "But eventually the technology will mature, and the cost of producing these things will come down to the point where everybody can access it."

He draws a comparison with cars and smartphones, technologies once reserved for wealthy markets but now ubiquitous worldwide. "Every country pretty much makes cars. There's no reason why this is different. Robots will make robots. You can scale them that way," he says.

However, Neman acknowledges that a handful of nations and companies will likely emerge as leaders, while others fill specialized roles. He predicts that the sector will look much like the auto industry today: "You'll have a handful of leaders, and then a bunch of specialty manufacturers."

That creates both an opportunity and an imperative to foster inclusive investment strategies. "The smart investments are targeting companies that are addressing cash-impact problems," Neman says. He points to technologies with immediate real-world applications: AI systems that detect food spoilage through smell, industrial scanners that pinpoint defects in products without dismantling them and precision medical technologies that save lives. "These are tangible things that can be used right this moment," he says.

INVESTING SMARTLY

But smart investment, Neman argues, is not just about the product. It's about the people behind it. "I'm not just investing in the technology. I'm investing in the founder," he says. "You have to be very mindful of who you're investing in – their leadership, their thinking about the future."

The integrity of founders is crucial. He recalls Google's early mantra of "don't be evil," noting such principles resonate with investors looking for a moral compass in uncharted technological waters. "Those are the →

→ types of applications I personally favor," he says, citing ventures working on medical innovations or socially conscious technologies.

Ultimately, Neman believes this is a once-in-a-generation moment. "People don't appreciate the rapid rate of change that's going to happen," he says. "We're literally in the next two years going to have effective humanoid robots. They're already doing about a third of what a human can do. That's insane, if you think about it."

What sets this moment apart is the exponential pace of advancement. "Every time robotics companies solve one problem, they uncover another," Neman observes. "But that's how progress happens. We need to double-check our mental models about how fast things can change."

The stakes are high. But if the investment community, policymakers and innovators keep inclusion front of mind – across borders, sectors, and societies – the AI and robotics revolution could be one that benefits all. "We have to make sure this is a net benefit," Neman says. "And that means investing in the right people, with the right intentions, to solve the right problems – for everyone." ■

SHANE NEMAN

is CIO and General Partner of Neman Ventures Family Office. He strives to seize unique opportunities that hold immense potential for his family office and investors. He has experience investing in various asset classes, such as venture capital, private equity and real estate, which has led to a series of realized opportunities with outstanding outcomes. He continues to deploy capital in asymmetrically positioned companies and opportunities, gaining access to unique deal flows, and has backed over 50 start-ups, including FigureAI, Athletic Greens, Perplexity AI, SandboxAQ, Cirkul, Prose Hair, Lumafield, Flexport, Impossible Foods, Kraken, Allermi, Deep Sentinel, Future Fitness, VinePair, Hyperice, ScoutAI, Arbor Energy, GupsShup and more.

A CALL FOR INCLUSIVITY

Dave Blundin is one of the key thinkers in the world of AI – and has some important thoughts about how to ensure its benefits are felt by all.

DAVE BLUNDIN, FOUNDER & General Partner, Link Ventures, remembers a time when building artificial intelligence meant just that: building it. The question of for whom rarely came up. "Early in my career at MIT and DataSage, we were consumed with technical possibilities – building AI, not who it served," Blundin admits. "Inclusivity wasn't a priority."

But decades and many ventures later, including his current role as Founder and General Partner at Link Ventures, Blundin's perspective has radically shifted. "Narrow perspectives create blind spots and limit impact," he said. "Now, inclusivity is both a business and ethical necessity."

For Blundin, inclusivity in AI is not just an abstract goal, but a foundational principle that determines how useful, relevant and transformative a technology can be. At Link Ventures (which recently launched its fourth fund, the Link-XPV Fund), a key arm of his venture efforts, he backs start-ups that intentionally design AI for diverse populations. "Inclusive solutions reach broader markets and drive meaningful change," he says.

REWRITING AI INCLUSION

Blundin's dual lens, as both a technologist and investor, shapes a definition of inclusivity that's deeply personal, as well as strategic. "Personally, inclusivity means AI that uplifts everyone, regardless of background or geography," he says. "Professionally, it's about building better products with wider appeal. Diverse teams and inclusive solutions catch blind spots early, leading to stronger outcomes."

He points to his experience at Cogo Labs, an incubator he helped develop at One Kendall Square, steps away from the MIT campus, where teams that prioritized inclusivity consistently outperformed by addressing real world needs.

Yet we could still be a long way from inclusive AI being the norm. "Most models rely on internet data skewed toward certain languages and demographics," Blundin says. "That creates gaps in performance across cultures or contexts."

The solution? Diversify the data, the teams, and the testing. "Start-ups and global teams are pushing progress by diversifying data sets and testing, but the industry needs to accelerate these efforts." As Blundin puts it: "The potential is there, but so is the challenge." →

DAVE BLUNDIN

is Founder & General Partner at Link Ventures. He has successfully been incubating and investing in AI start-ups out of MIT/Harvard for more than 20 years, in addition to being an MIT instructor and a pioneer in quantizing neural networks. As part of Link Ventures, Blundin has overseen three funds to date (Link Ventures 1-3), including two portfolio companies in the Link Ventures 3 fund that have gone from zero to $2 billion valuations in less than two years: Liquid AI and Mercor. His fourth fund will be the largest and is called Link-XPV (Link Exponential Ventures).

→ INNOVATION AND INCLUSIVITY

One of the prevailing myths in AI development is that inclusivity comes at the cost of speed or innovation. Blundin couldn't disagree more. "Mitigating bias is about smart processes, not slowing down," he says. "Simple checklists – like testing across demographics – ensure inclusivity without derailing sprints."

At Link Ventures, start-ups are encouraged to run "inclusivity sprints," where edge cases are examined and tested. It's a process that has often uncovered underserved market needs and driven creativity, rather than stifling it. "Speed comes from integrating inclusivity into the core process, not treating it as an extra step," he says. "It's like security: build it in, don't bolt it on later."

AI innovation also needs to be diversified, Blundin reckons, to better improve inclusivity. "Centralization is a concern when only a few giants can train massive models, limiting diverse approaches," he says. "Smaller, specialized models are key – they're efficient, run locally and empower smaller players."

Platforms like Hugging Face, which champion open-source access to AI models, are vital to keeping the ecosystem healthy and competitive. "This decentralization fosters a vibrant, competitive ecosystem," he says. That's how to ensure innovation isn't trapped in just a few cities or companies.

SOCIOECONOMIC STRIVING

That concern extends beyond technical access. For Blundin, the socioeconomic barriers –access to compute power, tech education or even physical proximity to innovation hubs – are just as pressing. "Broadening access through open tools, like MIT's courseware, and supporting diverse founders are critical," he says. "These efforts unlock new perspectives and markets."

Blundin believes investors have a crucial role to play in shaping AI's trajectory, particularly when it comes to inclusivity. "We must ask: 'Who does this product serve? How are you tackling bias? What's your diversity plan?'" he says. "At our fund, we track progress and connect companies with diverse talent and users."

To him, prioritizing inclusivity is not just ethical – it's good business. "Inclusive AI accesses larger markets and avoids costly missteps," he says. "Investors who prioritize this drive both impact and returns."

A WEALTH OF TALENT

Finding the right talent doesn't need to come from big universities or the same old computer science courses. Suggesting it's difficult to find good talent in AI from the Global South is both a pipeline problem and a perception problem, he →

→ says. "Traditional pipelines – elite schools, established networks – are homogenous, but talent is everywhere."

At Cogo Labs, recruiting from bootcamps, international schools and underrepresented communities wasn't just ethical – it produced tangible business results. "Claiming 'no diverse candidates' often reflects outdated recruiting, not a talent shortage," he adds.

And while some in the industry resist regulation out of fear it will stifle innovation, Blundin sees a different path. "Responsible development is a competitive advantage, not a burden," he says. He points to his own past. At Vestmark, a financial services platform Blundin founded, which supports more than $1.5 trillion in assets, embedding compliance early built trust and fueled growth.

What matters, he says, is that regulation focuses on outcomes such as fairness and transparency, not micromanaging technology choices. "Clear frameworks build trust and clarity, enabling innovation within responsible boundaries."

GLOBAL AI FOR ALL

For all the focus on innovation in the US and Europe, Blundin is adamant that real progress depends on global inclusion. "Global inclusivity requires global teams who understand local contexts," he says. "Companies should use diverse data sets. Run early pilots in varied markets. Build modular systems adaptable to local needs."

He's especially focused on elevating voices from underrepresented regions like Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. They are "significantly underrepresented despite thriving tech ecosystems," he says. "At Link, we're investing in solutions to serve them and unlock massive opportunities and ensure AI addresses universal challenges."

Blundin believes the single most important shift for AI in the future is not technical, but structural. "We must democratize who builds AI," he says. "Concentrated talent in a few hubs creates blind spots." He envisions a world where accessible education, open-source tools and broader funding unlock innovation from communities long left out. "We're backing initiatives to make this happen," he says.

COCREATION, NOT EXPLOITATION

If there's one piece of advice Blundin has for young founders building AI for underserved communities, it's this: "Cocreate with your community: listen, engage and iterate," he says. "Define success by real impact, not just growth metrics. Build for resource constraints, like limited devices or connectivity."

The potential, he insists, is vast – and often overlooked. "Serving underserved markets unlocks vast opportunities others miss," he says. It's where impact and value align.

That's vital as AI changes, and the way we use it alters. "It will evolve from cloud-based 'magic' to specialized, ambient tools embedded in daily life," he predicts. "Focused models will empower individuals to solve local problems – augmenting human potential in education, healthcare and beyond."

But it will only work if inclusivity remains at its heart. "Combined with other technologies, AI will tackle global challenges, becoming less visible but more transformative – if we prioritize inclusivity at its core." ■

MAKING REVOLUTIONS EQUAL

Core to FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative is a simple maxim: every benefit from the AI revolution should be felt equally by all, wherever they are in the world.

CLOSING THE GAP

There are plenty of reasons to act, and few reasons to stay the same when it comes to the AI Inclusive initiative.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE CURRENT AI revolution and the past Industrial Revolution are commonplace. But they're important to acknowledge and act upon.

At the dawn of every industrial revolution in the past, technology has widened the distance between those who can afford to adopt it first and those who are forced to play catchup. Artificial intelligence is no different. But this time, the stakes are exponentially higher. Algorithms will decide who gets credit, how crops are irrigated and which vaccines reach remote clinics.

So an AI inequality gap threatens competitiveness as well as basic human development. Bridging that divide – especially for the Global South – is the animating idea behind FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative, launched at the FII8 summit.

ACT NOW

Looking at the details of private AI finance tells a blunt story. Between 2013 and 2024, US start-ups alone attracted nearly $500 billion in private capital, and Chinese ones another $119 billion. No emerging economy cracked the top ten. The imbalance isn't just about money. It shapes where data are labeled, where large language models are trained and who controls the patents that will underpin future industries – from drug discovery to green hydrogen.

The International Monetary Fund warns that 40% of jobs in emerging markets will soon be exposed to AI disruption, yet most of those economies lack the infrastructure or skilled workforces to capture the upside. Left unchecked, AI could therefore freeze today's hierarchy of wealth into tomorrow's algorithmic order, inconsistent with any plausible path to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Understanding the AI's imbalance is important. A gigabyte of data in sub-Saharan Africa still consumes around 5% of someone's average monthly income, versus less than 1% in the OECD. The risk is a self-reinforcing cycle in which low data flows depress local AI experimentation, which in turn discourages investors.

INCLUSIVITY FIRST

Historically, the world has tried to bridge technology gaps after they open, through aid packages, licensing deals or belated training programs. But AI's speed means that timeline is perilous. Foundational models trained on predominantly Western and Mandarin corpuses →

→ already struggle to recognize African dialects or indigenous legal frameworks, reinforcing cultural blind spots. Correcting such bias downstream is exponentially harder than designing for diversity from the outset.

And as the last three years has shown, AI rewards first movers with scale effects that are brutally efficient. The more users an application gains, the faster its models improve. If emerging markets are relegated to the role of data suppliers without domestic ownership of intellectual property, they risk becoming perpetual "raw material exporters" in the digital economy.

Which is why FII's AI Inclusive initiative is so important. It's a global pledge to channel patient capital and technical mentorship into AI start-ups headquartered in, or focused on, emerging economies. The Institute aims to corral at least 50 private sector investors, each committing a minimum of $100,000, to help local entrepreneurs scale pilots tailored to community needs.

BALANCING SPEED WITH CAUTION

But money alone won't close the gap. Emerging market regulators need pro-innovation guardrails that protect citizens without choking start-ups in red tape. The IMF has called for frameworks that allow AI sandboxes: controlled environments where firms can safely test models on synthetic or anonymized data.

Talent pipelines are equally urgent. India's $1.25 billion IndiaAI Mission demonstrates how public-private alliances can mobilize compute resources and upskill millions of programmers, pushing the country toward a projected $17 billion AI services market by 2027. But India is an outlier. Most low-income nations still grapple with brain drain. FII's AI Inclusive initiative therefore pairs capital with scholarships and on-the-job fellowships, aiming to seed local cohorts of data scientists.

AI is powerhungry. As model sizes balloon, so does energy demand, often sourced from carbon-intensive grids that predominate in the Global South. By supporting distributed, domain-specific models instead of monolithic ones, AI Inclusive aims to keep computational footprints manageable while democratizing ownership.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

We need to act. If the North-South gap remains, we risk a world where precision agriculture revitalizes depleted soils in Iowa while locusts ravage farms in the Sahel and personalized learning catapults Finnish pupils ahead while classrooms in Karachi still lack textbooks, let alone adaptive software. The price will be paid in slower global growth, fractured supply chains and a deepening mistrust between hemispheres.

FII Institute measures success in lives improved. But impact depends on speed and scale. Advanced economy firms controlling frontier models have a choice: treat emerging markets as margin-expanding afterthoughts, or as codesigners of a more resilient global system. We need to change thinking because history offers worrying precedents. During the last technology supercycle, mobile telephony leapfrogged fixed-line deficits across Africa, because handsets became cheap and policy allowed competition. AI offers a comparable leapfrog, but only if capacity-building keeps pace with adoption.

The divide must close, and fast. Because the algorithms that will map the genome, route relief convoys and balance fragile power grids cannot be the privilege of a few in the Global North. They must be the common resource of a planet whose future will be written in code. ■

ENSURING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Peter Diamandis is a champion of FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative – and hopes it will help narrow the global gap in attainment.

THE WORLD IS RACING TO define its AI-powered future. But Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, Founder & Executive Chairman, XPRIZE Foundation, believes the global conversation must pivot urgently to place emerging markets at its very center – not just as beneficiaries, but as cocreators of the digital age. Diamandis's roadmap can blend AI education, cultural preservation and economic opportunity to empower what he calls the "rising billion."

"We are at the beginning of a new age for humanity," Diamandis →

PETER H. DIAMANDIS

Named by Fortune as one of the "World's 50 Greatest Leaders," Peter H. Diamandis is the founder and executive chairman of the XPRIZE Foundation, which leads the world in designing and operating large-scale incentive competitions. He is also the executive founder of Singularity University, a graduate-level Silicon Valley institution that counsels the world's leaders on exponentially growing technologies.

→ says. "It's critically important that whatever we build preserves the cultures and knowledge of every nation on the planet." He points out that for now, the majority of the large language models being built have been based on the corpus of Western nations. "It will lead to a homogenization of human knowledge, and we know through history that that is not beneficial for our evolution."

His argument for diversifying AI access is both philosophical and practical. While current AI models, largely trained on Western data sets, race ahead, there remains a "narrow window" to ensure global diversity is properly embedded in these systems before they become too rigid.

TIME IS TICKING

"I think [the window closes in] the next decade," he warns. "There needs to be a definitive set of actions taken. We've talked about this at FII. It's like a public works project, in which countries proactively engage their youth to go into their nation to record the stories, the recipes, the songs and the artwork of their people."

Diamandis envisions an army of young "cultural vanguards" trekking across the globe, tasked with capturing the oral histories, traditions and unique local knowledge that risk being lost forever. "We have a window to capture those individuals," he says, referring to elders whose wisdom predates the digital era. "The individuals who are in their 70s, 80s, 90s, 100s – as they pass on, will we have captured their knowledge?"

But the idea is more than just an archival project. It's a foundation for future economic development. Diamandis argues that nations must treat cultural data as a national asset – vital not only for heritage, but for tailoring AI systems to local needs, ensuring relevance and accessibility for all. "AI can be used to actually →

→ parse through all the videos and photos and audio recordings, and identify what is real and valid and unique," he says. "Then incorporate those into a heritage data set people can use."

KEEPING CULTURE SAFE

The benefits are multifaceted: not only would the program preserve cultural identity, but it would also create jobs and upskill the next generation. Diamandis sees this as part of a broader effort to reimagine education systems worldwide. "What we need is to change the ethos," he says. "We need to change the conversation from 'using AI in school is cheating' to 'using AI in school is mandatory.'"

He cites China's recent directive, mandating AI education in all primary and secondary schools by September 2025, as a sign of things to come. Others are following suit. "We'll see country after country adopting that mindset," he said. "It doesn't mean we're going to make everybody AI experts, but we're going to empower everybody through AI."

Diamandis says that AI literacy need not mean deep technical expertise. Instead, it's about ensuring widespread familiarity with tools that are themselves becoming increasingly intuitive. "You have children now who will be able to express their desires, and it'll be coded into a game or a simulation," he says. "It's not us going over to meet their requirements, it's them coming over to meet our requirements."

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Beyond education, the AI revolution poses a basic infrastructure challenge: ensuring universal access to what Diamandis deems the new fundamental resources of human life – bandwidth, energy and AI compute. "These are going to be the →

> "There needs to be a definitive set of actions taken."

→ three things every country is responsible for delivering," he says. "It will become a primary resource, like water, air and food."

Critics may worry this vision risks entrenching the dominance of major tech multinationals, but the competitive landscape will remain dynamic. "I think there will be multiple players in the field," he says, pointing to emerging alternatives from Europe's Mistral, Meta's Llama, Google's Gemini and others. "If it was one player, it'd be concerning, or two players. But I think there's going to be probably a dozen players, and each will have different attributes. It will be up to the nation's leadership to determine which one plus their data sets they feel are safest and most reliable."

Ultimately, however, the most valuable currency will be home-grown data. "It's expensive to build these models and power them," he says. "Will they get cheaper over time? Yes. Will it get to a point where, in fact, countries can build de novo, their own large language models retrained on the data sets they have? Probably. But they need to have their data sets. The data is the most critical first step."

UNLOCKING INNOVATION

In this, Diamandis sees an untapped opportunity to spark entrepreneurial spirit across emerging economies. "If I were running this, I would create a mechanism by which an 18-year-old could get a job to go out and collect relevant cultural data using their phone, and earn a living that way," he suggests. "Imagine you had 300,000 cultural vanguards from the nation, running around, interviewing grandma and granddad, interviewing people on the street, photographing things – literally capturing the stories and culture of a nation."

Such an initiative could tackle two challenges at once: boosting employment in countries with large young populations and rapidly assembling the cultural data sets that future AI systems will rely upon.

Asked to fast-forward five years to 2030, Diamandis set out a clear metric of success for the FII Institute's AI Inclusive initiative: making this mission a national priority. "The single most important thing is, is this on the ruler or President's top 10 agenda items?" he says. "Understanding that there is a clock ticking, understanding what a set of recommended actions to be taken are, and best practices – that's the most important thing."

Policymakers and innovators alike can play their roles. "We could track the demonetizing cost of creating a national large language model," he suggests. "By 2030, we could project what it would cost for a country to build its own model. But again, the time pressure is the data aggregation and collection."

For Diamandis, the AI future will not be written solely in code. It will be written in the songs, stories and traditions of every village and metropolis on Earth – if the world acts quickly enough to capture them, and to do so equitably. ■

> **"Bandwidth, energy and AI compute ... will become a primary resource, like water, air and food."**

REWIRING OUR ECONOMY

AI has the potential to change the world of work in various ways – but an AI Inclusive future is possible, says Alexander Sukharevsky.

AI, BOTH IN SOPHISTICATED chatbots and embodied AI such as robotics, is dramatically reshaping the landscape of work, creating what Alexander Sukharevsky, Senior Partner and Managing Partner at QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey, describes as a profound "rewiring" of organizations and human roles. FII's AI Inclusive initiative, which QuantumBlack supports and Sukharevsky is an ambassador for, underscores the critical importance of this transformation, aiming to ensure that as the world navigates it, no individual or community is left behind. It's also why Sukharevsky cochairs FII Institute's AI conclave.

AI's broad utility and extreme accessibility position it to radically transform how people work. Research shows that gen AI could automate up to 70% of business activities by 2030. At the same time, it's still a nascent technology that is only going to get more intelligent, suggesting that companies must begin adopting it now or risk getting left behind.

Technological capability itself is rarely the primary barrier to adopting AI, says Sukharevsky.

> "If anything, AI provides superpowers."

Instead, the significant challenge lies in "human adaptability." The real hurdle in adopting AI is the difficulty organizations face embedding the technology deeply into their processes, structures and cultures. It's less about bits and bytes or inputs and outputs, and more about a shift in mindset, skills and operational ways of doing things.

This isn't a unique moment in terms of technology adoption, says Sukharevsky. There are analogies throughout human history. Elevators took decades to become commonplace, despite the technology being readily available. AI is undergoing a similar trajectory: its broad and meaningful adoption will hinge upon human readiness and structural adaptations – rather than the latest cutting-edge technological advancements.

Yet that adoption is challenged by a lack of unified multilateral governance for AI. Some regional cooperation exists through platforms like BRICS, ASEAN or the EU, but large-scale global coordination of the type seen elsewhere through institutions like the WTO or WHO is hard to come by. In its place, the AI race is increasingly shaped by bilateral competition between leading AI powers and fueled by national interests.

HUMANS IN THE LOOP

"We don't always have the skills to truly understand the technology," says Sukharevsky. Nor do we always have the language or the pages in a playbook to follow simply – meaning we have to come up with new paradigms. To leverage AI effectively, companies will have to fundamentally reinvent their business models, restructure IT architectures, manage cultural changes, and significantly upskill their workforce. These transformations, Sukharevsky admits, are complex and require visionary leadership and a willingness to experiment creatively.

Nevertheless, successful examples of companies adapt- →

3x
increase in AI use cases addressing UN SDGs.
SOURCE: QUANTUMBLACK AI FOR SOCIAL GOOD REPORT, 2024

Of **$500bn**
in private AI capital, just 3% went to developing markets (excluding China).
SOURCE: QUANTUMBLACK, STATE OF AI REPORT, 2024

50–60% of AI leaders' budgets go to change management, not model building.
SOURCE: QUANTUMBLACK, STATE OF AI REPORT, 2024

→ ing to AI share common features. They approach AI not merely as an efficiency tool but as an opportunity for comprehensive reinvention. "The recipe is the same," says Sukharevsky. "Organizations first decide how to reinvent their business domain. They then systematically address the data required, reshape their IT stack, select appropriate AI technologies and crucially, address human capability by fostering talent and upskilling existing employees." Those QuantumBlack has worked with to adopt AI across their enterprises include Tata Steel, Vistra, ING and Aviva.

But that organizational change must begin at the top, driven by CEOs and chairpersons who themselves must undergo significant education about AI. "Unless CEO or chairman, or both, are going through the same transition and are ready to drive this transformation, nothing meaningful will happen," he says. For an organization to truly become AI-driven, every level – from executives to frontline employees – must embrace the technology's potential and understand its implications.

Not only must leaders understand the technology, but also demystify it for their organization and tell a compelling narrative about its use, identifying key applications and bringing employees along on a value-creating journey. Only when everyone from executives to frontline employees embraces its potential and understands its implication will the organization be truly AI-driven.

CHANGING CULTURE

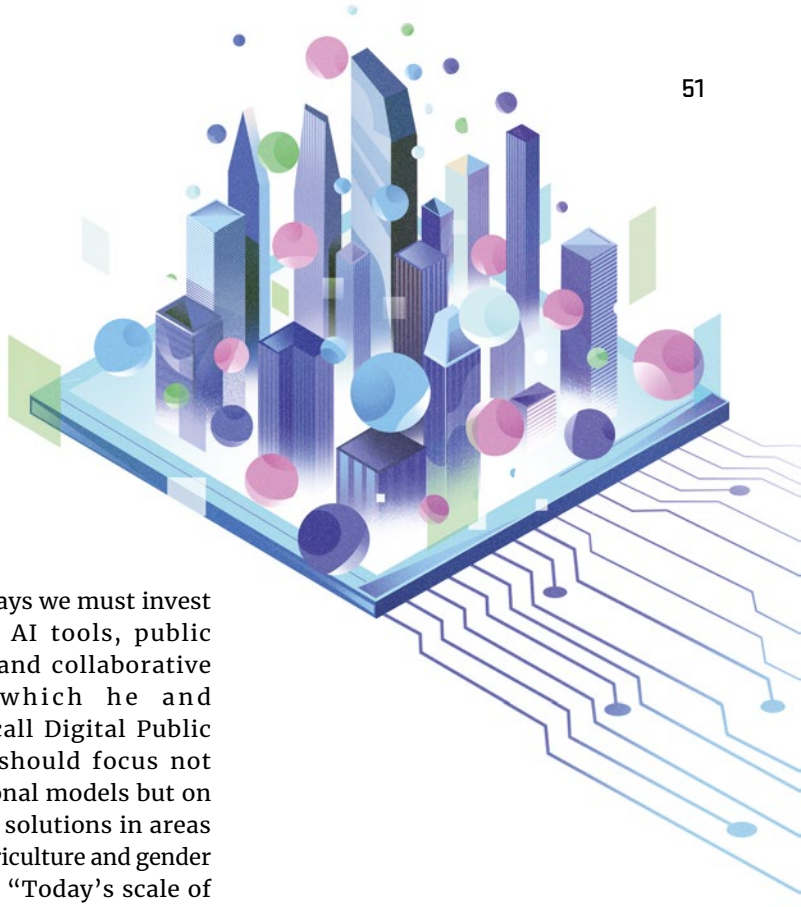
The transition also involves a substantial shift in organizational culture. Organizations must identify their most creative, influential and disruptive members, educate them deeply about AI, then leverage their influence to inspire broader organizational change. This strategy helps embed AI fluency throughout the organization, preparing employees to collaborate effectively with AI-driven systems.

But this isn't just a people problem. As organizations move to integrate AI, they face practical challenges around the software stacks that underpin their operations. Despite widespread fears of mass job losses at the hands of AI, Sukharevsky believes AI won't entirely replace human roles but rather transform them. "Software engineering won't disappear," he says. But he acknowledges that AI might replace software engineers who don't adopt AI tools, as their competitors gain an advantage in efficiency enabled by those tools. Here too, a rewiring of processes is needed.

This vision of hybrid intelligence – where humans and AI collaborate synergistically – is at the heart of future work practices. Sukharevsky suggests that future workplaces will routinely feature virtual factories, where physical and digital activities occur simultaneously, effectively creating dual operational ecosystems. "You prepare electronic equipment or consumer electronics on the one hand at the physical plant, but then in parallel, you have a virtual plant that prepares software and AI applications for these devices," he says. Such environments require employees to develop new competencies, including technological fluency, critical thinking and a deeper understanding of both virtual and physical operational elements.

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION

The educational sector will also be transformed dramatically by AI, with profound implications for workforce readiness. Sukharevsky believes there is enormous potential for AI in education, especially in personalized →



→ learning. AI could deliver tailor-made educational content suited to individual learning styles, significantly enhancing learning effectiveness and accessibility. He envisions future educational interactions as facilitated by digital twins of expert teachers, enabling immersive and personalized learning experiences even in remote or underresourced areas. "I'm not talking about just video conferences," he says. "That's the most obvious solution, but all of a sudden you could create, bring the most amazing curriculums to the most decent places on the planet."

Still, the transformative potential of AI needs to be handled carefully. It's for this reason that QuantumBlack supports developments like FII's AI Inclusive initiative to address inequalities, particularly in emerging markets. The digital divide remains stark. Where developed regions boast widespread internet access, emerging markets often lag behind. Addressing those disparities is the best way to ensure equitable AI adoption.

The AI Inclusive initiative stresses that technological advancements must not deepen existing inequalities but rather be leveraged as tools for societal leveling. "If anything, AI provides superpowers," said Sukharevsky. "It empowers individuals to perform tasks previously out of reach, bridging significant economic and social gaps." However, that happening relies on prioritizing education, creativity and structural support to individuals to ensure fair access and use of the technology.

Sukharevsky says we must invest in open-source AI tools, public data platforms and collaborative ecosystems, which he and QuantumBlack call Digital Public Goods. "These should focus not just on foundational models but on practical vertical solutions in areas like education, agriculture and gender equity," he says. "Today's scale of investment remains insufficient to meet global needs."

A RISING REVOLUTION

Get it all right and the world changes – dramatically and for the better. The successful integration of AI into the workforce holds tremendous promise, believes Sukharevsky. He foresees a world where AI will elevate and unlock human potential, freeing people to engage in more creative and disruptive activities – that, yes, are also innately human. Routine tasks will increasingly be outsourced to AI, allowing humans to concentrate on strategic, innovative and emotionally intelligent roles. Harnessed correctly, AI isn't a replacement for, but an amplifier of, human capability.

"The journey is still long," says Sukharevsky, "but the breakthroughs we're seeing today are already significant." With initiatives like AI Inclusive championing equitable adoption, the goal is clear: to harness AI's immense potential while ensuring its benefits are universally accessible, creating a future of work defined, not by displacement, but by augmented human creativity and innovation. ■

ALEXANDER SUKHAREVSKY

is global leader and managing partner of QuantumBlack, McKinsey's AI arm. Under his leadership, QuantumBlack has expanded within the firm to emerge as a recognized leader in applied AI, helping organizations undergo end-to-end transformation. His client work spans industries and geographies, helping organizations redefine their business models and improve performance through the responsible use of AI and technology. In addition, he is also a leader of McKinsey's research programs into areas such as generative AI, future technologies and the use of technology for the common good.

CREATING AN AI INCLUSIVE WORLD

Five key takeaways explaining why you need to champion the FII AI Inclusive initiative.

1 THE AI AND ROBOTICS REVOLUTION IS HERE, AND EXPANDING FAST

From humanoid robots to diagnostic microbots and AI-driven factory automation, technological advances are reshaping work, healthcare, agriculture and logistics. Yet this shift is not evenly distributed. The next wave, embodied AI and real-world applications, presents vast opportunity but also risk, especially for underserved regions without the infrastructure or investment to benefit equally.

2 THE DIVIDE IS DEEP – AND GROWING

Emerging markets risk becoming digital "raw material exporters" if AI development remains concentrated in the Global North. Access to data, compute power and capital remains skewed. FII PRIORITY Compass data shows a majority in the Global South already see generative AI as essential, but face systemic barriers like connectivity costs and limited infrastructure.

3 INCLUSION IS A MORAL AND ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

Exclusion from AI innovation is not just unjust – it's economically short-sighted. Failing to close the AI access gap risks freezing today's inequalities into tomorrow's algorithms. Inclusive AI could unlock growth in fast-developing economies, help local entrepreneurs solve unique challenges, and prevent cultural erasure from biased systems.

4 FII'S AI INCLUSIVE INITIATIVE OFFERS A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

The initiative calls for investment in private capital across 50 pilot projects, alongside capacity building and equitable access to computing infrastructure. Its three-pronged strategy – investment, skills and digital equity – positions it as a critical accelerator for responsible, inclusive AI development.

5 THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Whether in healthcare, robotics or AI-augmented work, the speed of innovation demands immediate, coordinated efforts to democratize benefits. The FII AI Inclusive initiative is a clarion call: inclusive design, education pipelines and ethical governance must become standard – not afterthoughts.

TAKE ACTION TODAY

FII Institute has laid down the gauntlet as a "do tank," not just a think tank, spearheading the AI Inclusive initiative, designed to create a better world. Many large organizations have already committed to change. Will you join them?

To sign up to the initiative, visit **https://fii-institute.org**.

CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVITY IN ALL WE DO

WE'VE ALL LIVED through the tech revolutions that have transformed our lives in the last three decades. We all know the potential it can have to improve our lives. AI promises to be all of that and more – in large part because of the way it will be layered into all our lives, in every way possible.

But we also have to recognize that in the long history of disruption – a word that tech champions as positive – we have seen negative impacts on other parts of the planet. What can catalyze a revolution in one area can leave another part of the world disempowered. Tech can often act as a fun house mirror to our lives, emphasizing the best bits and making the worst bits more grotesque.

The FII community spends its time convening conversations for change, leaving the world a better place than we found it. And so it's only natural that we would consider championing inclusivity in all we do. This is why FII Institute decided to unveil the FII Institute AI Inclusive initiative at FII8 in Riyadh in 2024, and why we continue to shout loudly about it today.

Because as we've seen in the previous pages, through the conversations of those thinking deeply about the AI revolution and its impact, there's a real risk of doing as much harm as good if we don't work hard to mitigate the issues.

THE FII INSTITUTE

is guided in all it does by a strong purpose, vision and mission.

PURPOSE
"Enabling a brighter future for humanity"

VISION
"Bringing together the brightest minds and most promising solutions to serve humanity"

MISSION
"Creating a purposeful present, promising future"

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MR. RICHARD ATTIAS
Chairman of the Executive Committee, FII Institute

H.E. YASIR AL-RUMAYYAN
Governor PIF, Chairman Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia

H.R.H. PRINCESS REEMA BINT BANDAR AL SAUD
KSA Ambassador to the USA, Saudi Arabia

PROF. TONY CHAN
Former President, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

H.E. MOHAMED AL ABBAR
Founder & Chairman EMAAR Properties, UAE

H.E. MATTEO RENZI
Senator of Florence, Italy (former Prime Minister)

DR. PETER H. DIAMANDIS
Founder of the XPrize Foundation & Singularity University, USA

PROF. ADAH ALMUTAIRI
Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at UCSD, Saudi Arabia

SIR NOEL QUINN
Former Group Chief Executive, HSBC

SOURCES

fDI Intelligence, AI dominates venture capital funding in 2024

FII Institute AI Inclusive Initiative

FII Institute Global Future of Work Compass, 2024

FII Institute Healthy Longevity Compass, 2024

FII Institute PRIORITY Compass, 2024

F-Prime Capital, State of Robotics in 2024

How AI Ate the World, Chris Stokel-Walker, 2024

IMF, AI Will Transform the Global Economy. Let's Make Sure It Benefits Humanity, 2024

The Robot Report, Robotics investments top $1.3bn in July, 2024

UNCTAD, Digital Economy Report, 2024

FII-I has three pillars to deliver its mission: THINK, ACT and XCHANGE

1 FII-I THINK
Identify societal challenges and current inhibitors. Curate the brightest ideas to address societal issues

2 FII-I ACT
Catalyze innovation and initiatives by mobilizing partners and resources

3 FII-I XCHANGE
Create platforms for live discussions on the future of humanity. Share knowledge, stories and publications with different stakeholders

IMPRINT

FUTURE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE INSTITUTE

PUBLISHER
Future Investment Initiative Institute
3884 Alakheel
District Unit 9
Riyadh 12382 - 6613
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

CONTACT
For clarifications and inquiries, kindly email:
info@fii-institute.org

EDITOR
Chris Stokel-Walker

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Janosch Wojcik
Carina Dylus

For details on how to become
a member, please visit
fii-institute.org/membership/

Powered by

FII INSTITUTE Future Investment Initiative Institute | Impact on Humanity

Founding Partner

PIF

Vision Partners

وزارة الاستثمار Ministry of Investment

aramco

Strategic Partners

ACWA POWER كوا باور | DIRIYAH | EMAAR | EFG Hermes An EFG Holding Company | FRANKLIN TEMPLETON | gfh | HSBC SAB الأول | KAFD | مطار الملك سلمان الدولي King Salman International Airport

MAADEN | minerva foods | NEOM نيوم | NEW MURABBA | الأقامة المميزة Premium Residency | البحر الأحمر الدولية Red Sea Global | RIYADH AIR طيران الرياض | بنك الرياض Riyad Bank | مجموعة روشن ROSHN GROUP | الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA

سابك sabic | سنابل للاستثمار SANABIL INVESTMENTS | SCAI | SNB | SoftBank Vision Fund | standard chartered | stc | ثقة THIQAH | VISA | رؤية الاستثمار VISION INVEST