

Refugee Employment Alliance Accelerating Support for Refugee Employment

BRIEFING PAPER
JANUARY 2024



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Introduction

According to the United Nations, the number of refugees in the world reached 36.4 million by June 2023 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations. In many countries of asylum, these refugees and displaced populations are locked out of the local labour market. Language constraints and the emphasis on credentials in hiring processes can often add to the challenge in securing good work. While the cost of economic exclusion to refugees is self-evident, countries and businesses have an imperative to hire those displaced and invest in their employability.

The World Economic Forum's The Future of Jobs Report 2023 finds that 53% of companies cite the inability to attract talent as one of the main barriers to business transformation, with skills gaps in local labour markets accounting for 60% of the challenge. Despite these pressures to find talent, the employment gap between refugees and migrant groups – commonly referred to as the “refugee gap” – highlights that refugees remain a source of untapped potential for host countries and the global labour market more broadly.

In May 2022, the Forum launched the [Refugee Employment Alliance](#), co-chaired by the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) and [Ingka Group](#). The Alliance harnesses

the opportunity to learn from the rapid labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees in host countries to motivate progressive and equitable solutions for the economic integration of refugees globally. From May 2022 to January 2024, Alliance members convened to share learning and best practice on refugee hiring and employability while committing to deliver skills and hiring programmes for those displaced.

The Alliance's first briefing paper published in 2022 distilled four key lessons from the economic inclusion of Ukrainian refugees: ensure legal and timely access to local labour markets; prioritize skills-first approaches; proactively support job matching; and drive public-private partnerships that enable holistic support. These lessons are globally relevant.

This briefing paper consolidates the insight accumulated on the above pathways to inform and inspire ongoing action for refugee employment. Partners of the Alliance have hired over 54,000 refugees to date across the globe. By December 2027, they expect to hire an additional 125,000 refugees and support 33,000 with mentoring, skills training, and access to digital devices. The final section of this briefing discusses how these commitments link to the global ambition to support 1 million refugees by 2027.



Timely access to work



Skills-based hiring



Proactive job matching



Holistic integration support

1

Legal and timely access to work

Host countries have an imperative to provide legal and timely access to work to ensure wider social cohesion and strong national employment outcomes. Prolonged wait times for the right to work affect the mental health of refugees, their motivation to join the labour market and the likelihood of their relevant skills atrophying. Streamlining the procedures for refugees' access to work can support their ambitions for self-reliance while offering businesses a way forward on talent.

In response to the Ukraine crisis, the European Union enacted its 2001 Temporary Protection Directive, which provided the legal grounds for those fleeing to access socioeconomic support and employment. The legal clarity afforded to Ukrainian refugees helped motivate workforce solutions in the private sector.

Many employers considered the skills of Ukrainian refugees and adapted vacancies accordingly while also partnering with third-sector partners to meet the wider support needs of those fleeing. For example, Poland removed all requirements for a work permit for Ukrainian refugees and their partners and guaranteed access to the labour market. Employers in Poland were required to notify the local labour office upon hiring a refugee from Ukraine.

Colombia also provides a notable example of legal facilitation of labour market access for refugees. In February 2021, the Colombian government announced a 10-year Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for over 1.7 million Venezuelans already displaced in Colombia, as well as newcomers (OCHA, 2021). This landmark decision was taken to ensure refugee protection while safeguarding

the administrative systems in the host country and, uniquely, applied retrospectively.

In addition to emergency measures, policies that work in conjunction with a country's existing asylum system are an equally important area of focus to enable the economic inclusion of refugees in the long term. The second briefing paper of the World Economic Forum's Refugee Employment Alliance provides four case studies on strategies that enable legal and timely access to work for refugees while meeting the economic development objectives of host communities.

The first case study, Jordan, demonstrates how countries can crowd in international investment in the face of regional crises and stimulate jobs for both refugees and the local population. The study from Kenya illustrates how building the economic case for refugee employment can drive support for positive policy and legislation changes. The German example illustrates how governments can provide access to work and training while asylum decisions are still pending. And the example from the Global Task Force on Labour Mobility demonstrates how adapting traditional migration routes to give refugees access to labour mobility can offer a permanent solution to displacement while meeting local labour market needs.

The countries were selected based on their global relevance as host countries and to provide variation in terms of the type of refugee crises being responded to and the local labour market context within which inclusion occurs (i.e. in national income and unemployment). The case studies illustrate how countries can allow refugees access to work while addressing the needs of local economies simultaneously.

Germany

Income-level: **High***

Local unemployment rate: **3***

Refugee population: **2,075,445****

Nature of crisis: **Emergency**

Jordan

Income-level: **Lower-middle***

Local unemployment rate: **17.9***

Refugee population: **723,412****

Nature of crisis: **Multiple**

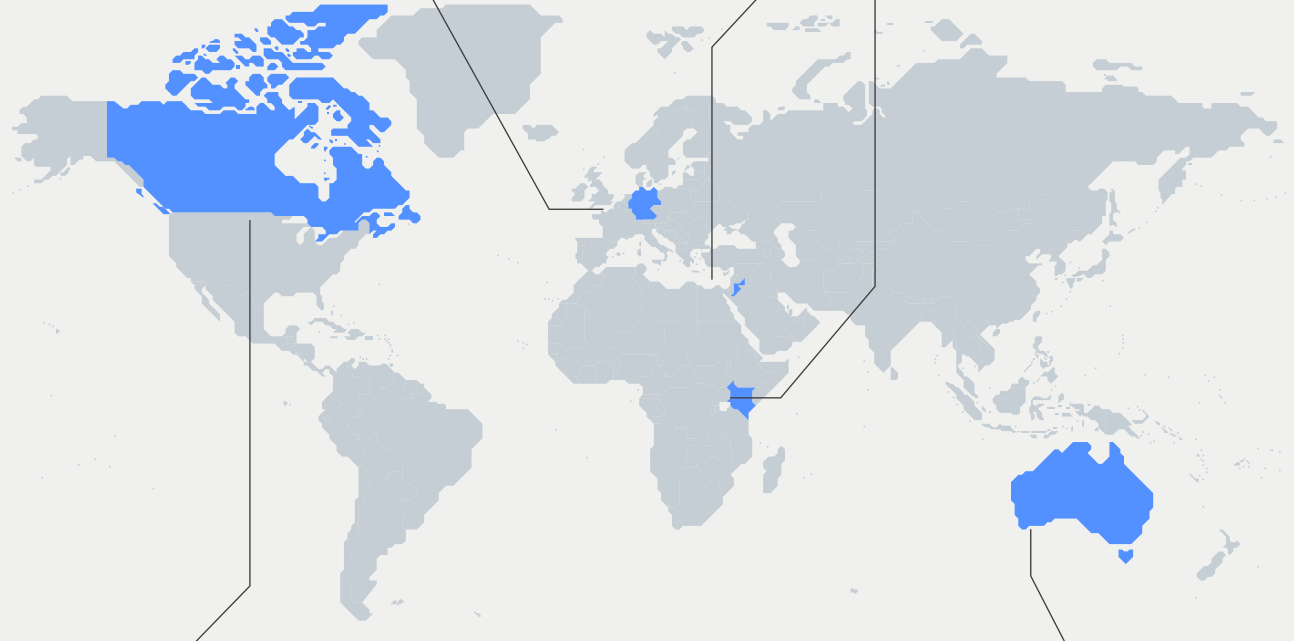
Kenya

Income-level: **Lower-middle***

Local unemployment rate: **5.5***

Refugee population: **612,413****

Nature of crisis: **Protracted**



Canada

Income-level: **High***

Local unemployment rate: **5.2***

Refugee population: **140,621****

Scenario: **Resettlement**

Australia

Income-level: **High***

Local unemployment rate: **3.7***

Refugee population: **54,430****

Scenario: **Resettlement**

* World Bank, 2022, **
UNHCR, 2022

Crowd-in investments that stimulate jobs for both refugees and the local population

Number of refugees impacted

Jordan has played a significant role in responding to the Syrian crisis since its onset in 2011. In 2012, the Za-atari camp was opened to meet the growing need, and at its peak [hosted approximately 120,000 refugees](#). In addition to those in camps (Za-Atari and elsewhere), the estimated number of refugees from Syria in Jordan stood at [670,637 in 2021](#).

Key laws and policies implemented

In 2016, influenced by economic estimates of the development opportunity associated with refugee inclusion (see for example, [Bretts and Collier, 2015](#)), the legal and policy landscape shifted in favour of refugees: the Jordanian government and international community signed the [Jordan Compact Agreement](#), which committed over \$2 billion in direct grants and preferential trade agreements with the European Union in return for Jordan's support for Syrian refugees.

As part of the compact:

- Work permit fees were waived and mobile work permit stations were established to ease refugees' access to administrative services.
- Social security and medical health requirements that employers had to complete for prospective Syrian hires were relaxed.
- Agricultural cooperatives and the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions were given the right to issue

non-employer specific work permits in various sectors (e.g. agriculture and construction), giving Syrian refugees flexibility to travel across the country in search of job opportunities in these sectors.

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) developed [Employment Intensive Investment Programmes](#) to stimulate job creation while expanding the availability of quality infrastructure, targeting both Syrian refugees and local Jordanians for newly created jobs.

Results

Between December 2015 and May 2021, [over 230,000 permits were issued](#). The labour force participation rate among Syrians in Jordan increased from 28% in 2014 to 33% in 2018, while unemployment rates fell from about 60% to 8% in the corresponding years. Workplace integration additionally offered a pathway to shift the narrative on Syrian refugees – [when surveyed in 2014](#), 90% of Jordanians believed that Syrians were pushing wage levels down compared to only 65% with the same belief in 2020. In 2014, 12% of Jordanians expressed trust in Syrian refugees compared to 48% in 2018. The Syrian refugee presence [heightened economic vs. "economy" activity](#) in the country with estimates of wholesale trade increasing by 47% between 2011-2016 and retail trade increasing by 38%. According to the Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), Syrian investments in Jordan totalled [42 million Jordanian dinars in 2012 and 49 million Jordanian dinars in 2013](#), contributing to an acceleration in real GDP growth.

Make the economic case for enabling refugee employment to drive support for policy and legislation

Number of refugees impacted

Kenya is home to [two of the world's five largest refugee camps](#): Kakuma and Dadaab, both of which were established in the early 1990s. The camps continue to host upward of 200,000 people each, primarily from the protracted displacement crises in Sudan and Somalia; [46% of refugees in Kenya are of working age, while 51% are under the age of 17](#), pointing to employment and access to education and skills as twin priorities.

Key laws and policies implemented

In 2015, [a World Bank study](#) illustrated the beneficial impact of refugees on Turkana's economy (the county in Kenya where Kakuma is located); gross regional product of the region increased by 3.4% while total employment increased by 2.9% as a result of the refugee presence. The study then modelled the economic impact of moving from refugee camps to community integration and hypothesized a 6% increase in per capita income in Kenya. While cash transfers played an important role in driving the positive effect of refugees on the local economy, the impact was sustained once transfers were phased out.

Results

The context-specific economic modelling focused the policy discussion and in 2017, Kenya signed on to the [Nairobi Declaration](#), acknowledging the need to align humanitarian assistance with local development policies and legislate for the rights of refugees as a result. The [Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan](#) in 2018 articulated a regional development plan for the benefit of refugees and the local population that, akin to the experience in Jordan, mobilized international finance. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) launched a \$25 million fund to support small and medium-sized enterprises and local entrepreneurs in Turkana with access to capital, effectively mobilizing job creation in the region. By affirming the complementarity of refugee protection and economic growth, Kenya was able to incrementally build support for refugees and in February 2022, the Refugees Act came into effect. The legislation gives refugees documentation to protect and formalize their access to services – a crucial step to ensure refugees can access education opportunities for continued skills development and bank accounts to access wider support and investment – both of which are critical factors to enabling the long-term employment and entrepreneurship of refugees.

Provide access to work and training while asylum decisions are pending

Number of refugees impacted

Germany has supported over 900,000 refugees from Ukraine and currently represents the largest refugee-hosting country in the European Union. But it was the 2015 migrant crisis in the Mediterranean that marked a turning point in Germany's role as a host country: approximately [2.4 million asylum seekers](#) sought refuge in the country.

Key laws and policies implemented

Recognizing the asylum processing system was unprepared to deal with the large influx, German policymakers [enacted a series of regulations to streamline procedures](#) via the Asylum Procedure Acceleration Act of 2015.

A core component of the act was the introduction of a [cluster approach](#), whereby cases were differentiated by likelihood of protection – certain countries have a higher likelihood of asylum applications being approved over others. Those originating from countries likely to be granted asylum were fast-tracked and given immediate access to integration services as well as professional training programmes, without the risk of deportation. For example, the “Refugee Integration Measures” programme created charitable jobs, designed to provide workplace exposure and professional skills to asylum

seekers awaiting formal decisions. Employers were additionally encouraged to offer professional training programmes. If a refugee did not pursue a career with the company that provided training, a further six-months to find new employment was allowed. For those who successfully secured employment, they had the right to a residence permit for two years. Through this, employers had an incentive to invest in the human capital development of those with pending decisions.

Results

By 2018, 72% of asylum seekers had been granted protection. By 2020, at least 50% were in work or paid training, illustrating progress but the persistence of unemployment despite high protection rates. In looking further, [studies](#) on the German response point to the role of local labour market matching; refugees who were assigned to counties with high unemployment rates were less likely to be in employment or education five years. Companies who did succeed in hiring refugees found that [refugee hires increased overall employee satisfaction](#) by contributing to a wider sense of purpose within the company and allowing non-refugee hires to meaningfully engage in wider social issues in a tangible way. Those surveyed additionally cited [gains in creativity, productivity and talent retention as direct benefits of refugee hiring](#).

Adapt traditional migration routes to give refugees access to global labour markets

Number of refugees impacted

[Canada, the United States and Australia are traditionally the top three resettlement countries](#), collectively welcoming a large share of global refugee resettlement. Resettlement allows high-income countries to share responsibility with low- and middle-income countries that welcome large numbers of asylum seekers. In 2022, 47,600 arrivals were registered in Canada and 17,300 in Australia.

In addition to traditional resettlement, Canada and Australia have also established pilots to make their skilled migration pathways more accessible for refugees.

Key laws and policies implemented

In 2022, a multistakeholder, coalition including the governments of Canada and Australia, launched the [Global Task Force on Refugee Mobility](#), responding to the call for additional legal pathways made at the [2018 Global Compact for Refugees \(GCR\)](#). Consistent with the GCR, Canada launched its [Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot \(EMPP\)](#) in 2018 while in 2021, Australia launched its pilot, the [Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Program](#). Both programmes combine economic migration with refugee protection, meaning refugees and other displaced persons with specified skills access an economic migration route that is adapted to account for their unique circumstances.

In its first iteration, the pilot program in Canada was open to help refugees access three existing economic immigration pathways; in Spring 2023, the pilot introduced a new standalone immigration pathway specific for refugees and displaced people which provided those with a job offer and, in a more limited scope, those without a job offer, the right to live and seek work in Canada. In recognition of the displacement-related barriers that many refugees and displaced people may face when applying for traditional economic immigration programs, the government introduced a number of facilitation measures such as allowing for “past work experience” to be evidenced in small increments over a longer period of time and allowing flexibility in education requirements.

While the relatively high degree of public support for migration and refugees in Canada allows for a consideration of alternative approaches, the persistence of [high vacancy rates across numerous sectors](#) further motivates a search for global talent. To this end, Canada has successfully recruited into the healthcare sector – specifically eldercare – recognizing the transferable skills associated with foreign credentials.

Refugees and displaced people sponsored under Australia’s Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot program can access several concessions to standard visa criteria aimed at removing barriers to employer-sponsored skilled migration pathways and making it easier for Australian employers to hire from this talent pool. For example, skills assessments, minimum work experience and labour market testing requirements are waived, and flexible arrangements are in place for police checks and travel documents. A minimum income threshold assists in mitigating the risk of the pilot being used to exploit migrant labour.

Both pilots are supported by a network of third sector partners: [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#), for example, plays a key advisory role in the design and implementation of the pilots, while additionally, facilitating employment matches via its Talent Catalogue. The [Talent Catalogue](#) collects comprehensive data on the professional backgrounds of thousands of refugees and displaced people. As at the end of August 2023, there were 70,300 displaced people registered in the Talent Catalogue.

Results

Since the Canadian pilot started in 2018, 164 total people (60 principal applicants and 104 dependants) have been admitted to Canada. Canada aims to further grow the program to welcome up to 2,000 skilled refugees and displaced people, as well as their families. As of August 2023, the Australian Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot’s has provided 57 primary applicants and 89 dependents permanent residence in Australia. Australia recently extended the pilot for a further two years (from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025) with an allocation of 500 primary places (plus members of the family unit)

2

A skills-first approach

By focusing directly on skills themselves rather than on how they have been acquired, a skills-first approach has the potential to democratize access to economic opportunities and pathways to good jobs for many more people than traditional approaches have done. Skills-first approaches can have a disproportionately positive impact on unlocking labour market access for refugees who are often forced to leave behind formal documentation on education and experience when fleeing.

Many fleeing Ukraine had to learn new working languages or apply them professionally for the first time, including Polish, German, Czech, Bulgarian, English, among others. Employers offered language support in response, often working in partnership with civil society organizations to deliver programming. For example, before the war in Ukraine, IKEA conducted interviews in the

candidate's preferred language in several countries. In responding to the crisis, the company leveraged this existing practice with IKEA Poland. At IKEA Switzerland, instead of a formal interview, job suitability is assessed over a five-day trial period. The trial period has allowed the company to hire into roles on the shop floor and within corporate functions, including specialist roles. For those who may not have the relevant skills, IKEA Switzerland offers internships and pre-apprenticeship opportunities across all its departments. Across these programmes, the workload is adapted to integrate learning and development opportunities, demonstrating an approach that provides workplace exposure to reinforce existing skills while proactively building on competency gaps. The company notes its retention rate for refugees across the Ingka group is often at par with or higher than regular hires.

↓ Image credit:
Halfpoint,
@GettyImages



Embracing skills-first hiring

The Ingka Group, operating 392 IKEA stores across 31 markets, has a longstanding commitment to inclusive growth, championed by senior leaders. The Group's values-driven approach is articulated in its People and Plant Positive Strategy and corresponding Neighbourhoods Framework – policy tools that orient the company's business and workforce strategy within broader social impact ambitions. In 2019, Ingka Group committed to support 2,500 refugees with language and job training by the end of 2023. This values-driven approach has created space for individual IKEA retail operations to adapt hiring and talent management strategies to local contexts and needs.

In the wake of the war in Ukraine in 2022, the company extended its commitment to refugees and forcibly displaced populations with its Hiring Displaced Talent Framework.⁴³ The framework is built upon the idea that candidates have existing skills and are ready to work, and facilitates a pathway to IKEA recruitment accordingly. In countries of operation, recruiters proactively look for candidates via talent pools and with the support of local non-profits. Hiring teams are trained to tailor conversations to potentially complex and emotionally charged contexts and are equipped to tailor the onboarding journey thereafter. A learning offer is typically crafted to reflect a candidate's new working environment and responsibilities. With millions of refugees from Ukraine fleeing to Poland,

IKEA Poland was one of the first Ingka Group countries to adopt the approach. The team “look for talent, not CVs” and consequently do not require formal documentation to prove work experience, relying more on an illustration of skills and a desire to work. To this end, while language remains a barrier in most of the locations where IKEA operates, IKEA Poland conducts interviews in the language of the refugee to give them a better chance of expressing their skills and competencies. Similarly, in IKEA Switzerland, job suitability is assessed over a five-day trial period, a hiring strategy that reduces the reliance on language fluency and focuses on the job-relevant skills of refugees.

The trial period has allowed the company to hire into roles on the shop floor and within corporate functions, including specialist roles. For those who may not have the relevant skills, IKEA Switzerland offers internships and pre-apprenticeship opportunities across all its departments. Across these programmes, the workload is adapted to integrate learning and development opportunities, demonstrating an approach that provides workplace exposure to reinforce existing skills while proactively building on competency gaps. To date, 41 people have been hired at IKEA Poland and 217 supported via the different employment pathways at IKEA Switzerland. The retention rate for refugees across the Ingka group is often at par with or higher than regular hires.

Spotlight on public-private cooperation: Skillsoft and iamtheCODE

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2023 projects that 44% of workers' skills will be disrupted in the next five years, emphasizing the urgency to build and diversify talent pipelines to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labour market. Skill development is key in this time of global change, given the growing skills gap and rising trend in global displacement. A scaled learning approach is vital in equipping displaced peoples with the future skills required to capture employment opportunities offered by the advancing economy.

In March 2022, Skillsoft launched a strategic partnership with iamtheCODE – an African-led global non-profit that is advancing access to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education. Together, Skillsoft and iamtheCODE launched a 12-week blended learning programme at the Kakuma refugee camp in the Spring of 2022. Hosted on Skillsoft Percipio, a platform for learning experiences, the curriculum covers four prioritized programming languages in demand by employers. Women and girls who participate in the programme can access the platform in both online and offline modes – a key provision considering the prevalent connectivity issues in refugee camps. Ultimately, they can earn certifications that are highly valued by employers.

Since its inception, the programme at the Kakuma Refugee camp has served more than 6,000 girls, exemplifying how online learning providers can partner with local providers to invest in skills development during times of displacement. This preparation is geared towards labour market entry and enabling refugees to create and access the jobs of the future.

In addition to language support, recognition for skills and qualifications plays an important role in ensuring displaced talent is recruited at the appropriate levels. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) was used to activate broad support for the recognition of Ukrainian credentials, with online training on Ukrainian credentials held for evaluators. Implemented in 2017 by the Council of Europe, the EQPR enables refugees to have their qualifications assessed and validated in the absence of full documentation. The global application of this effort to recognize displaced persons for their

existing skills and qualifications is reflected in the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants.

To globalize such efforts, both in refugee situations and more widely, the World Economic Forum's Global Skills Taxonomy enables industry convergence on a global skills dictionary. The taxonomy is accompanied by Putting Skills First: A Framework for Action that encourages industries and employers to focus directly on skills, recognizing skills-based credentials such as micro-credentials and professional certificates.

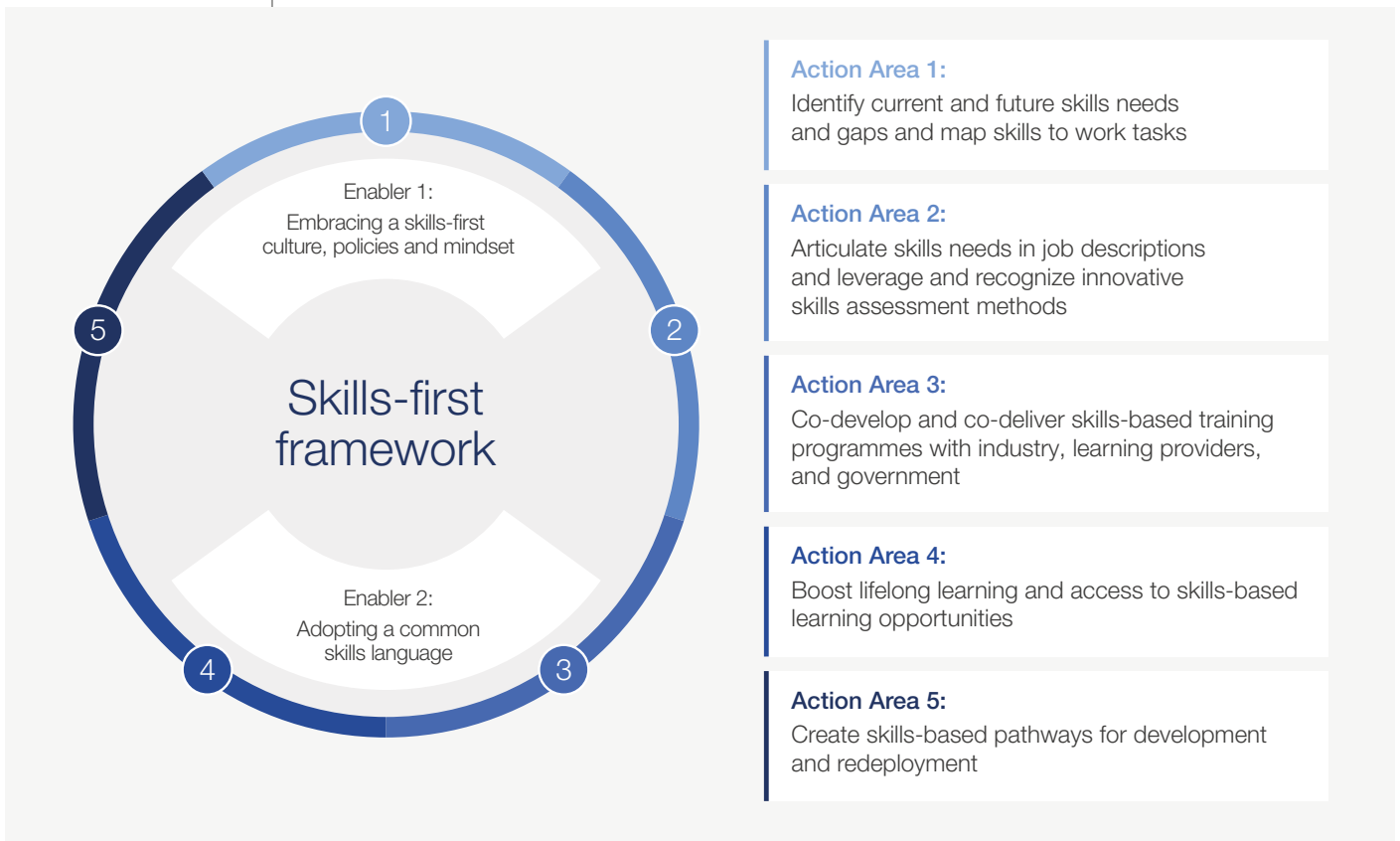
BOX 1 Putting Skills First: A Framework for Action delves into “skills-first”

Putting Skills First: A Framework for Action delves into “skills-first”, a term used to describe a new approach to talent management that emphasizes a person’s skills and competencies – rather than degrees, job histories, or job titles – with regard to attracting, hiring, developing and redeploying talent. By focusing directly on skills, rather than on how they have been acquired, a skills-first approach has the potential to democratize access to economic opportunities and pathways to good jobs for

many more people than traditional approaches have done.

Analysis of data from a geographically diverse range of 18 economies, estimates that in total, more than 100 million people in these countries could be added to the global talent pool through a skills-first approach. While of benefit to all, skills-first approaches have a disproportionate benefit for refugees who have foreign credentials and are forced to flee without documents.

FIGURE 1 Skills-First: A Framework for Action



Source:
World Economic Forum, 2023.

The Global Skills Taxonomy and accompanying framework work towards preferencing skills and acknowledging alternative forms of granting credentials to expand access to global labour markets. Although language is one of the most

important aspects of integration and dictates employment prospects to a large extent, a focus on skills can support employers in creatively navigating language constraints and unlocking mutually beneficial employment opportunities.

3

Job matching support

Platforms and HR processes that shift the responsibility from the refugee to the company by proactively matching vacancies to the disclosed skills and interests of refugees are an effective way of supporting refugee hiring as they can accelerate the rate of successful matches between refugees and prospective employers.

Across governments and the private sector, a recurring theme in the response to the Ukraine refugee crisis was creating visibility for vacancies. The Adecco Group's Jobs for Ukraine Platform

and the Portuguese government's Portugal for Ukraine Platform both centralized employment and employability opportunities. Nevertheless, as data from the Adecco Group's portal suggested, skills mismatches were a challenge. Many applicants on the portal had skills in administration, customer services, sales and trading and hospitality, while vacancies were concentrated in information and communication technologies, insurance and finance, legal and human resources and engineering. Such mismatches can be addressed in part through more proactive talent matching.

MANPOWERGROUP AND SKYHIVE

Identifying adjacent skills and opportunities

ManpowerGroup is a workforce solutions company that helps organizations transform in the fast-changing world of work. In 2022, ManpowerGroup launched a customized job postings platform, the Jobs Exchange40 via Welcome.US,41 to support refugees and forcibly displaced populations in accessing job opportunities. In collaboration with partners (e.g. Accenture and Pfizer) of Welcome.US, the Jobs Exchange aggregates employers in locations where they know refugees are settling and then invites local companies to identify vacancies to promote for refugee hires. Companies are asked to consider roles across seniority levels and to post targeted vacancies from a skills-first perspective: emphasising the essential skills required to do the job over formal qualifications.

The Jobs Exchange is one component of end-to-end support for refugee employment, with its success largely attributable to the human touchpoints that inform the journey. For many refugees, initial exposure to the platform comes via communitybased hiring fairs. Here, refugees are invited to complete a skills assessment created by SkyHive.42 The assessment allows self-reporting of skills and, through its AI, is capable of identifying additional skills the candidate may not have recognized in themselves. In so doing, it has proven effective in expanding the range of potentially suitable jobs and job matches. Crucially, the skills-assessment carries validity in the eyes of employers

to support the job-matching process. The skills-to-jobs journey is additionally complemented by the strength of a committed employment coalition. Refugees in particular encounter language barriers that preclude successful hiring. Yet, Welcome.US has been able to leverage the power of numbers to facilitate job-entry. For example, employers have hired refugees in groups, relying on the fluency of one to support the employment of a broader cohort. In addition to accelerating language acquisition, these approaches have successfully shifted the emphasis from language fluency to skills and demonstrated the ways in which the talent management cycle can be adapted to acknowledge local needs in a mutually beneficial manner.

As Manpower Group looks to scale its efforts, its focus is two-fold: expanding its network of employers who adapt jobs to focus on skills and hire accordingly, and honing in on the role of skills-based technologies in the process. Through integrating assessments into the Jobs Exchange digital journey and identifying additional touchpoints where skills-based technologies can be leveraged to support job matching (e.g. resettlement agencies), the group hopes to fulfil its commitments to refugee hiring while extending its impact to other non-traditional cohorts. In just one year, more than 100,000 jobs have been advertised by over 500 employers on the Jobs Exchange and thousands of refugees successfully matched.

The importance of a network of partners to facilitate job matches is further evident in the case of Randstad's collaboration with the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) and the Municipality of Almere. Together, they launched a jobs pilot for asylum seekers that strives to make productive use of the time spent waiting for protection decisions. The programme is open to asylum seekers as well as those refugees who have

received a residence permit. The programme begins with the COA inviting asylum seekers interested in finding work to register their interest. Randstad then interviews candidates to understand their skills and employment aspirations, subsequently matching asylum seekers to employers within the company's global network. To maximize the likelihood of success, Randstad offers intensive guidance up to and including the first six months of work.

Public-private partnerships

Partnerships that offer broad social support, including housing, food and childcare, can be combined with consideration for workplace opportunities to provide an entry point to the culture and context of new host communities. An end-to-end strategy for combined social and employment support can often be more effective in enabling effective integration.

Several companies took a holistic approach in responding to the crisis in Ukraine, mobilizing financial support and connecting with local community-based partners to support refugees in finding housing, navigating administrative processes and accessing psychological support.

BP, for example, complemented its \$20 million contribution to relief efforts by partnering with refugee-serving civil society organizations to create and pilot recruitment outreach events. The company further provided toolkits for hiring line managers and created tailored onboarding processes for refugees hired into the organization. Similarly, Agility works in partnership with UNHCR to support skills

development, job readiness, education and direct assistance in multiple countries. In Malaysia, the company supports a UNHCR-run community centre that brings together over 50 Malaysian community organizations to provide health, education and employability services, while in Jordan, it supports skills and job-matching programmes.

An integrated social and economic approach to support reflects the totality of one's circumstances and often proves more effective as a result.

The Swedish Establishment Programme, Etableringsprogrammet, is another example. The programme provides language support, access to internships and a civic orientation course over 24 months while providing financial support to meet the living costs of participants, in some cases including support for housing and childcare. The Limak Group's collaboration with the Atlantic Council in Turkey to produce a documentary on Syrian refugee women who established livelihoods as entrepreneurs in Turkey is one final illustration of how economic integration and social and cultural integration mutually reinforce each other.

Conclusion

The key takeaways highlighted in this paper are a starting point for business and government action on the economic integration of refugees. Ukrainian refugees primarily fled to neighbouring European countries, many of them advanced economies. However, according to the latest data from the UNHCR, it is low- and middle-income countries that host the largest proportion of the world's refugees. Global resource collaboration, such as the Global Concessional Financing Facility, which provides development support on concessional terms to middle-income countries impacted by refugee crises, is therefore critical.

A collaboration between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan to activate the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees provides an additional example of international political and financial collaboration across a region to support solutions at the country of origin in conjunction with host communities. Refugees' economic integration demands more than financing, political and legal mechanisms. Maintaining the skills and motivation of refugees in host countries is critical for future livelihoods. Multinational businesses and their subsidiaries can play an important role in supporting the employment and employability of those displaced for continued human capital development.

Irrespective of the length of crises or displacement, an investment in human capability is timeless and can generate value for host communities and countries of origin. The crisis in Ukraine invoked exemplary humanitarianism in the public and private sectors. The lessons derived point to strategies for refugee employment and employability that can and must be globally applied to provide support to the millions displaced globally.

Ongoing crises around the world continue to threaten a rise in global displacement. The World Economic Forum's Refugee Employment Alliance advocates for continued action both in support of durable solutions in countries of origin as well as sustained support in host communities.

Partners of the Alliance have hired over 54,000 refugees to date across the globe. By December 2027, they expect to hire an additional 125,000 refugees and support 33,000 with mentoring, skills training and access to digital devices. These commitments contribute to the global ambition of supporting 1 million refugees by 2027 – a pledge on economic inclusion made at the [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#).

To find this content and keep up to date on current affairs on refugee employment simultaneously, refer to the Alliance's Strategic Intelligence map: <https://intelligence.weforum.org/topics/a1G680000018gUnEAI>

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