



# Refugee Talent and the Digital Economy

**A Private Sector Conversation**



# THE REFUGEE TALENT INTEGRATION PROJECT

This paper is an output of “**Refugee Talent Integration in the Digital Economy**”, a collaborative applied research project convening private sector actors to exchange insights in support of refugee employment. Conducted in partnership with the [International Trade Centre \(ITC\)](#), and its [Refugees and Trade Programme](#), this project focuses on opportunities for collaboration and scale in digital employment initiatives for refugees and displaced persons.

This paper captures insights from **16** organisations through in-depth interviews, complemented by two peer discussions hosted in partnership with ITC, engaging a total of **32** voices from across the digital economy ecosystem between October – December 2024.

The Refugee Talent Integration in the Digital Economy project is made possible by the generous support of Visa Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of Visa Foundation.

## ABOUT ITC



The [International Trade Centre \(ITC\)](#) is a joint agency of the UN and the WTO that advances the trade and development agenda, including through the sustainable and inclusive growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

ITC’s Refugees and Trade Programme works with public and private sector actors to facilitate better participation in trade for refugee entrepreneurs and refugee-led businesses, including in the digital service sector. The programme is active in key refugee-hosting countries, including Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Ukraine, and Pakistan.

## ABOUT THE TASC PLATFORM



Supported by the Swiss Confederation and hosted by the [Geneva Graduate Institute](#), [Thinking Ahead on Societal Change \(TASC\)](#) is an open platform supporting constructive dialogue and cooperation in the midst of change and transitions.

The TASC Platform encourages a global community of policymakers, businesses, labour, researchers, and civil society to engage beyond their comfort zones, explore new connections, and expand toolkits and mindsets to support peaceful, human-centred change – including the digital transformation of employment and the digital integration of migrants and refugees into labour markets.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Two converging shifts: Displacement and digital transformation**

The exponential scale of global displacement underscores the urgency of reimagining and rapidly implementing innovative employment pathways for refugees. At the same time, the world of work is undergoing a profound transformation. Accelerated by the COVID-19 global pandemic of 2020, remote work, digital freelancing, and platform-based employment have become mainstream by shifting traditional labour models and opening new opportunities for global talent mobility, including displaced populations.

These two universal trends are converging in a period of seismic shifts in technology and AI capabilities in the digital economy that are leading to the emergence of acute skills gaps across industries such as cybersecurity, data analysis, and AI development.

This paper brings forward private sector perspectives on integrating refugee talent into the digital economy, highlighting how corporate approaches are evolving.

As the digital economy exposes skills shortages that many companies are struggling to fill, refugee inclusion is gaining traction as a potentially practical response.

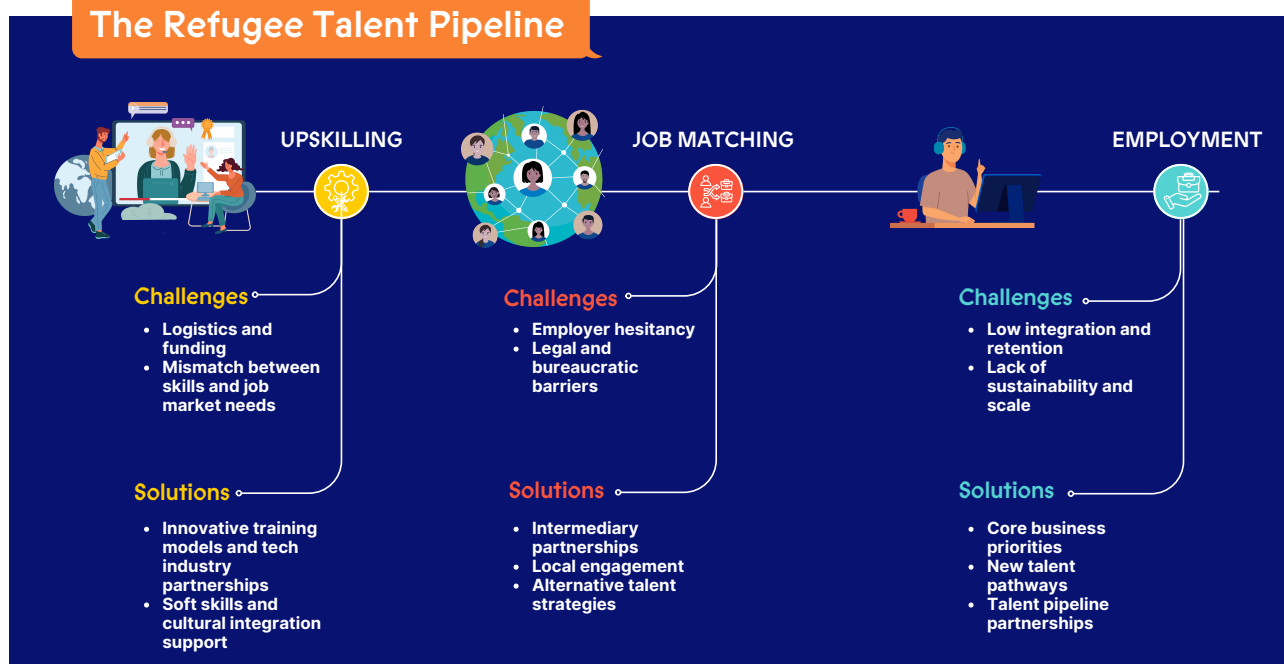
Companies are beginning to recognise refugee talent integration not only as a social imperative but as a strategic solution, particularly in roles suited to flexible, skills-based hiring.

Beyond this, it is becoming a testing ground for workforce mobility solutions for both physical and virtual pathways to work across borders – a critical area of innovation for talent strategy.

### **Strengthening talent pipelines and pathways**

Through a series of conversations with private sector representatives in the digital economy, we explore regulatory, operational and cultural barriers faced along the refugee talent pipeline, and identify solutions that are enabling companies to scale up skills, employment, and livelihood opportunities for refugees.

## The Refugee Talent Pipeline



In upskilling, companies are capitalizing on the industry's openness to skills-first hiring with the introduction of **innovative training models** involving **tech industry partnerships**, alongside the provision of **soft skills support**.

In job matching, companies are working with **specialized intermediaries** as sourcing and hiring partners, seeking out **local expertise and support**, and testing **new models** for harnessing refugee skills and talent.

As employers, companies who are making refugee hiring work are shifting their mindsets to focus on **core business priorities**, invest in **new physical and virtual talent pathways**, and strengthen their collective capabilities through **talent pipeline partnerships**.

In most organisations, refugee hiring remains exploratory, dependent on mission-driven leadership, intermediary support, or exceptional conditions. The examples in this paper show what becomes possible when refugee talent strategies are integrated into broader workforce planning, from addressing digital skills gaps to diversifying recruitment pathways. The response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis offers a glimpse of what is

achievable when legal access, digital readiness, and employer mobilisation align at scale.

Advancing this work will demand ongoing creativity, conversation and concerted action. In particular, companies have highlighted the need for ongoing exchange on advancing best practice:

- **exchanging experiences** - to collaborate on solutions to shared challenges,
- **building protection** – to ensure employment provides avenues for empowerment and dignity to refugees that are safe and legal,
- **informing policy** – to improve the enabling environment for corporate action, and
- **consolidating partnerships** throughout the emerging ecosystem of actors supporting refugee employment in the digital economy and beyond.

By building on global initiatives<sup>1</sup>, and aligning with multi-sector recommendations, this conversation contributes to the broader effort of leveraging both technology and migration to shape a future where technology empowers and migration enriches the world of work.

# 1. PROTRACTED CONFLICTS AND THE URGENCY FOR ALTERNATIVE LABOUR PATHWAYS

“Accenture has had a long-term commitment to helping welcome refugees, along with their courage, strength and talent into the communities where we live and work. What started supporting short-term needs has become a more structured initiative, supporting the long-term economic inclusion and self-sufficiency of refugees. As multiple refugee crises have unfolded, including Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, many companies have had to rethink how they hire and to work out how to integrate refugee talent beyond crisis mode.”



**Lucy Murdoch**, Managing Director –  
Global Corporate Citizenship,  
**Accenture**

The global displacement crises has reached unprecedented levels, with **139.3 million** people projected to be forcibly displaced or stateless by the end of 2025.<sup>2</sup> This figure includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and stateless populations.

As of mid-2024, the total refugee populations – those who have crossed international borders seeking protection – stood at approximately **43.7 million**. This includes:

- **32 million** refugees under UNHCR's mandate,
- **6 million** Palestine refugees under UNRWA, and
- **5.8 million** other individuals in need of international protection.

Among them, over **2.9 million**, or 6.6% of refugees will require resettlement by the end of 2025, marking a 20% increase of over 500,000 more people from 2024<sup>3</sup>.

**This means the remaining 93% will continue to rely on host countries, often in protracted and precarious situations.**

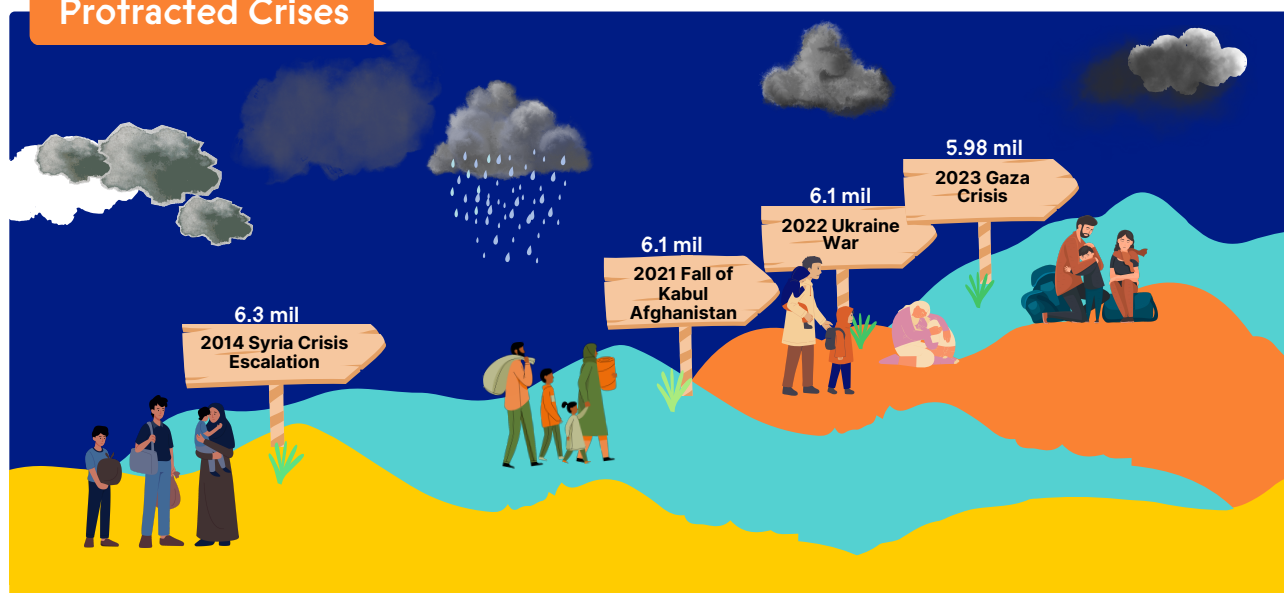
## Regional disparities in displacement

The demand for durable solutions is global, but has acute regional implications. The UNHCR's projections for 2025 show significant disparities in resettlement needs across regions:

- **Sub-Saharan Africa** – 663,000+
- **Middle East and North Africa** – 645,000+
- **Europe (including Türkiye)** – 152,000+
- **Asia and the Pacific** – 105,000+
- **The Americas** – 35,000+



## Protracted Crises



### From conflict zones to host nations: A global imbalance

Driven by the protraction of modern conflicts, which increasingly span over decades rather than years, global displacement alarmingly continues to escalate. While there are currently more than 120 active armed conflicts worldwide<sup>4</sup>, some conflicts and crises stood out as markers of an urgent shift towards sustainable employment solutions, underscoring the need for long-term economic integration rather than temporary relief.

The Syrian war (2014) remains one of the largest drivers of displacement globally, with over 6.3 million Syrians currently living as refugees. The fall of Kabul in 2021 displaced over 6.1 million Afghans, while the war in Ukraine (2022) pushed another 6.1 million people — particularly women, children, and qualified professionals — across European borders, triggering rapid but uneven labour market responses. The ongoing war in Gaza (2024 onwards) adds another layer of urgency, with an estimated 5.98 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate, as displacement reaches catastrophic levels. Similarly, the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes host over 5 million refugees and asylum seekers, due to long-standing fragility in the region.

Each of these crises has set off massive waves of forced migration, compelling governments and international organisations to fundamentally rethink how refugees access livelihoods, not as a short-term solution, but as part of a long-term economic inclusion strategy.

Despite the urgency, access to formal employment remains a major challenge for refugees, with fewer than one in five securing jobs in host countries.<sup>5</sup> Those who do are often forced into labour market downgrading, informal work, or exploitative conditions, limiting their ability to rebuild stable lives.

### The future of climate migration

Despite their current ineligibility for refugee status, the number of climate migrants is sure to increase in the near future. The World Bank projects a worst-case scenario of 216 million people internally displaced by 2050 due to climate crises, while IEP, an international think tank, predicts that 1.2 billion people could be globally displaced due to climate change and natural disasters. The most susceptible areas to ecological threats are Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

## 2. CORPORATE ACTION FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION

In recent years, businesses have made public commitments to hire, train, and integrate refugees into their workforce, recognizing both the moral imperative and economic potential of refugee talent. Many of these pledges, and their related efforts, have been made in coordination with international and multistakeholder initiatives such as the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which aims to enhance responsibility-sharing and sustainable solutions for displaced populations as it “represents the political will and ambition of the international community as a whole for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected and host countries”.<sup>6</sup>

In June 2023, the **Tent Partnership for Refugees European Business Summit** in Paris saw over 40 companies commit to hiring and training 250,000 refugees across Europe.

This was followed by the **Global Refugee Forum** in December 2023, where businesses, governments, and NGOs pledged over USD 2.2 billion in new funding for refugee support programmes. In June 2024, the **MIT Migration Summit** highlighted the role of digital work in expanding employment pathways for displaced talent, reinforcing the private sector’s role in shaping sustainable refugee workforce solutions.

### Tent Partnership pledges by companies interviewed

**Accenture** pledged to upskill 16,000+ refugees, including Ukrainian women, in Europe (2023-2026).

**Adecco** committed to integrate 2,000 – 3,000 refugees per year in Italy over three years.

However, despite initial momentum, corporate engagement in refugee hiring has slowed. Early enthusiasm in 2022 and 2023 led to large-scale hiring commitments, but by 2024, economic pressure and shifting priorities caused many firms to delay action.

“ Even now (in 2025), we are seeing major tech companies reaching out to launch new refugee hiring programmes. When big players take action, other follow. But compared to 2023, urgency has faded, and businesses need stronger incentives to keep hiring refugees on the agenda. ”



**Filipa Matos**, VP of Special Operations, **Remote**.



# 3. BRIDGING TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY: THE DIGITAL ECONOMY POTENTIAL

The global digital economy is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by AI adoption, remote work, and shifting labour demands. New pathways to work are emerging, reshaping the way talent is identified, trained and deployed. As a result, digital employment represents a promising, yet largely unexplored opportunity for both refugee talent and potential employers.<sup>7</sup>

## The Digital Economy

ILO defines the digital economy as “all economic activities using the Internet as a platform and digital information and knowledge as key inputs for the process of producing, marketing and distributing goods and services”.<sup>8</sup>

This includes any economic activities that rely on digital technologies, including online platforms, data, and telecommunications infrastructure. It encompasses businesses, workers, and processes that are fundamentally shaped by digitalization, enabling new models of work, including remote and platform-based employment.<sup>9</sup>

## Digital Labour

Digital Labour refers to all work that uses or is made possible by information and communications technologies (ICTs). It includes careers within the ICT industry and jobs outside of it that rely on digital skills and utilize digital technologies, spanning ICT-intensive, ICT-dependent, and ICT-enhanced roles across various sectors.<sup>10</sup>

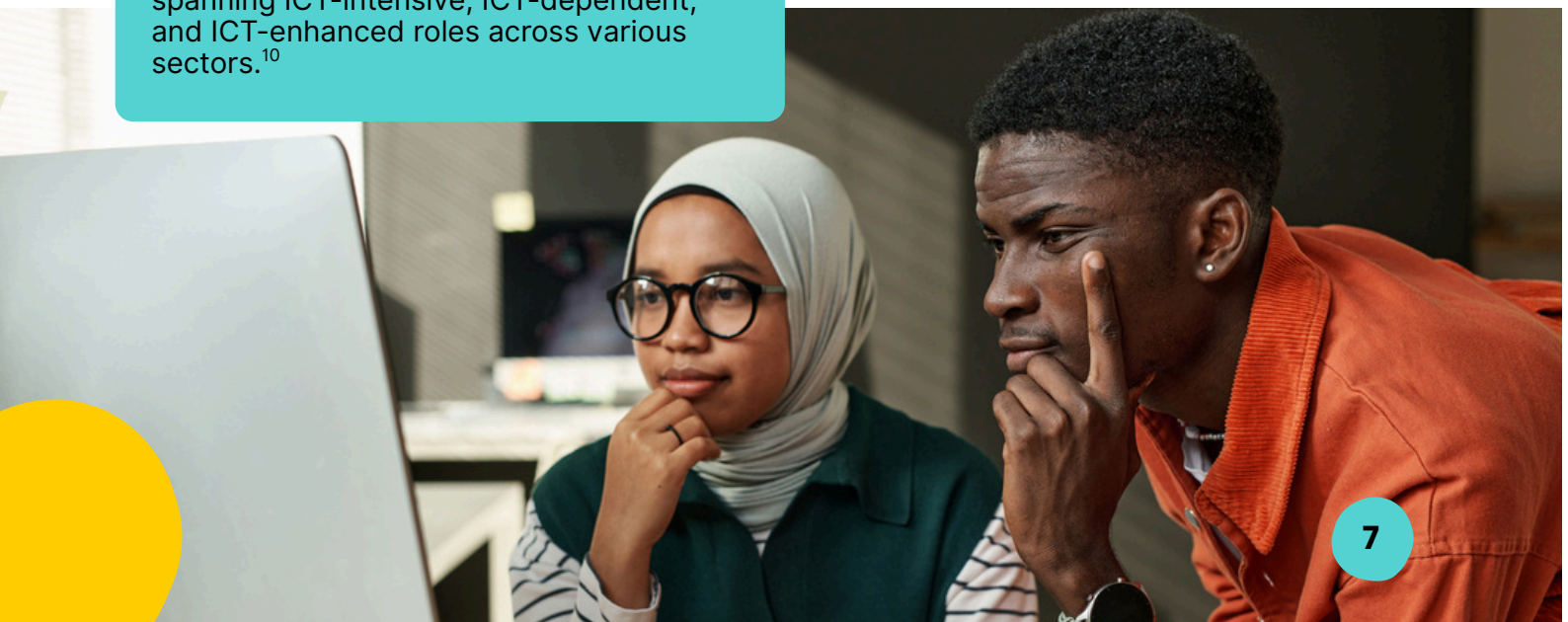
## 3.1 Digital Talent Gaps and Skills-First Hiring

AI is predicted to impact 90% of jobs within the next decade, with 94% of global business leaders identifying it as critical to organizational success over the next five years<sup>12</sup>. These digital advancements are reshaping skill demands at an unprecedented pace, driving growing labour market gaps.<sup>13</sup> For instance, the cybersecurity sector already faces a four million-worker shortage, while the global talent shortfall is projected to reach a staggering 85 million by 2030.<sup>14</sup>



“Not just at Logitech, but globally, technologies have been evolving extremely rapidly. We’ve seen the explosion of artificial intelligence, hybrid work, cloud, mobility—all of which bring new security challenges. Unfortunately, the talent pool in cybersecurity has not grown at the same speed. That’s a big challenge for our industry.”

**Tana Dubel**, Chief Information Security Officer, **Logitech**



Digital advancements are also creating new employment opportunities that require adaptability and digital fluency, particularly in high-demand sectors like cybersecurity, software development, and data analysis. This global challenge is mirrored at the national level.

“**Projections show that Switzerland will have a shortage of up to 38,700 ICT professionals by 2030. At the same time, there are refugees who are highly skilled and motivated to work in IT, but who face huge barriers to entering the job market.**

**Susanne König**, Head of Training and Talent Development, **Powercoders**

The tech sector has long prioritized skills-first hiring, historically allowing professionals to enter the industry without formal degrees. Unlike other industries that require degree recognition, licensing, or host-country certifications, IT and digital professions have remained more accessible to career changers and self-taught professionals. This flexibility presents a unique opportunity for refugees, many of whom face barriers to formal education, documentation, or credential recognition in their host countries.

“**When we started (in 2017), IT was still an open field where you didn’t need a bachelor’s or master’s degree – many career changers found opportunities just by proving their skills. While this seems to be shifting with more structured qualification programs, IT remains one of the few industries where hands-on experience and problem-solving abilities outweigh traditional credentials.**

**Susanne König**, Head of Training & Talent Development, **Powercoders**

### 3.2 Remote Work and Telemigration

As remote work models become increasingly mainstream, the concept of telemigration<sup>15</sup> – where talent works remotely across borders – has gained traction. Accelerated by the pandemic, this trend has the potential to reshape how businesses access global talent. Companies are increasingly sourcing digital talent at its location of origin, rather than relying on traditional immigration pathways.

“**Most businesses are reviewing their cost bases and strategic talent locations. This may not mean new headquarters, but novel ways of setting up connections with new locations. We have seen innovative ideas from governments and private sector players on learning partnerships with exchanges between, for example, tech companies in Germany and skills hubs in Africa. These include some mobility between the locations, but largely focus on digital skills exchange pathways.**

**Seema Farazi**, Partner, Global Government Affairs and Financial Services Immigration Leaders, **EY**

The shift is particularly relevant for refugee talent, as digital employment offers a viable alternative for those facing legal, financial, or geographical constraints to traditional employment.<sup>16</sup> There are several models of digital work that are emerging as viable pipelines for refugee livelihoods. These include:

- Hybrid or remote employment: Structured, full-time roles with the possibility of remote work
- Digital freelancing: Flexible, project-based opportunities, often enabled by intermediary platforms
- Digital entrepreneurship: Provision of digital services through refugee-owned businesses

## Crises as Catalysts of Change: Ukrainian Refugees and Remote Work Opportunities

The Ukrainian crisis has underscored the potential of cross-border remote work and digital freelancing as a viable employment model for displaced populations. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 triggered one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. As of early 2025, approximately **6.8 million Ukrainian** refugees have been recorded globally, with **6.3 million in Europe**.<sup>18</sup>

This included a significant proportion of highly skilled knowledge workers. In addition, the response towards hosting this population has been unprecedented, for example, to facilitate swift integration, Switzerland activated the **S Permit** for the first time since its creation in 1998. This special protection status grants Ukrainian refugees temporary residence, allowing them to work immediately upon arrival, access education, and benefit from public services without undergoing the traditional asylum process. While this expedited pathway has been crucial for integration, it also carries an inherent expectation of return.<sup>19</sup>

In this context, many Ukrainian refugees have leveraged digital skills and telework opportunities. For instance, **19%** of employed Ukrainian refugees in the Czech Republic were working remotely for Ukrainian firms, and **24%** of registered Ukrainian refugees in Warsaw were engaged in remote employment.

These pathways still face the challenges inherent in new models of digital work, including supporting cultural integration, ensuring decent pay and working standards, and facilitating opportunities with appropriate regulations and infrastructure<sup>20</sup>. However, by aligning refugee talent with the digital economy's evolving demands, there is nascent potential to unlock transformative opportunities for both refugees and global labour markets, paving the way for a more inclusive and innovative future of work and societies.



### 3.3 An Emerging Digital Employment Ecosystem

Private sector action is proving to be critical in unlocking refugee talent integration within the digital economy. Our conversations with executives across Europe, Africa, and global operations have illustrated the emergence of a promising community of private sector actors supporting the journey of refugees from upskilling and job matching to employment. Their motivations extend beyond CSR to human resource (HR), core business and innovation strategies.

Individually, each of these organizations are harnessing their own capabilities, business drivers and innovative capacity to deliver practical, tangible solutions to specific issues faced by refugees in entering the labour market. Viewed collectively, they demonstrate the potential of a private sector ecosystem to enable efficiency, alignment, collaboration and scale in refugee talent integration.

#### Drivers of the Private Sector Action

- 1. CSR commitments:** Companies engage in refugee hiring and upskilling as part of their corporate responsibility strategies.
- 2. HR strategy:** Companies incorporate refugee hiring as part of a strategic approach to strengthening their talent pipeline, workforce resilience, digital transformation, and global talent mobility.
- 3. Core business and business expansion:** Enterprises leverage their HR expertise, staffing services, and digital employment platforms to match refugees with job opportunities as their core business or as an extension of their core business.
- 4. Future business and innovation:** Organisations invest in building long-term talent pipelines, supporting entrepreneurship, and establishing new digital work models.

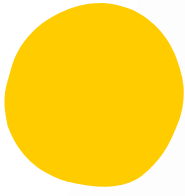


## Overview of Private Sector Initiatives

Organisations marked with an [\*] are not private sector actors but have private sector ties

	Talent Pipeline Stages:	Business Drivers:	Scope:	Pledge/ Initiatives Timeline:	Details:
ACCENTURE (GLOBAL)	Upskilling Employment	CSR Commitments HR Strategy	Global	Ongoing	Pledged to upskill over 16,000 refugees in Europe over three years, 2023-2025. In fiscal 2024, programs supported by Accenture's Skills to Succeed initiative reported that approximately 5 million people worldwide benefited from this initiative. Among them were more than 36,000 refugees and migrants, strengthening the talent pools and supporting economic growth in their host countries. More than 4,000 Accenture volunteers have actively participated in programs supporting refugees in the 12 months between World Refugee Day 2024 and 2025.
ERNST & YOUNG (EY GLOBAL)	Upskilling	HR Strategy	Global	2021 - ongoing	<b>Refugee Employee Network:</b> Pledged to dedicate 6,000 volunteer hours to assist refugees in securing meaningful employment in partnership. <b>Tent Partnership:</b> Inclusion in mentorship programme supporting refugee women across Europe.
ERNST & YOUNG (ITALY)	Upskilling Job Matching	CSR Commitments HR Strategy	National - Italy		Delivers training and mentorship to support refugee employment. Works through the EY Foundation Ente Filantropico ETS to mobilize employee volunteering. Collaborates with partners like <b>Fondazione Italiana Accenture</b> to support refugee pathways into tech jobs.
FONDAZIONE ITALIANA ACCENTURE	Upskilling Job Matching	CSR Commitments HR Strategy	National - Italy	2021 - ongoing	<b>Ready for IT : Refugees &amp; Migrant</b> programme is a platform of partners that supports refugee integration through training in tech, soft skills, and Italian language, followed by job placement. Supported 500+ refugees in Italy to date. <b>ReadyforIT: Labour pathways for refugees</b> is the first labour pathway in collaboration with UNHCR, the government, and the private sector enabling 20 refugees from Uganda to relocate to Italy as Java programmers.
LOGITECH	Upskilling Employment	CSR Commitments Future Business and Innovation	Regional- Europe	2021 – ongoing	Partnered with <b>Purpl Unicorn</b> to upskill women, including refugees, in cybersecurity. Actively integrating refugee talent into digital roles.
*NA'AMAL	Upskilling	Core Business & Business Expansion Future Business and Innovation	Regional- Africa, MENA and Europe	2021 – ongoing	Provides direct digital upskilling initiatives for refugees in Africa and the MENA region.
*POWERCODERS	Upskilling	Core Business & Business Expansion Future Business and Innovation	National, Switzerland	2016 – ongoing	Runs tech bootcamps to train and directly place refugees in digital roles. Not limited to upskilling programmes dedicated to coding bootcamps but also provides job integration programmes.

	Talent Pipeline Stages:	Business Drivers:	Scope:	Pledge/ Initiatives Timeline:	Details:
PURPL UNICORN	Upskilling	Core Business and Business Expansion Future Business and Innovation	Regional- Europe	2021 - ongoing	Supports refugee women upskilling programmes in cybersecurity specifically.
ADECCO ITALY	Job Matching	CSR Commitments Core Business	National – Italy	2021 – 2024	Integrated 2,000 to 2,300 refugees annually into the Italian labour market. Developed national-level refugee hiring strategy post-Ukraine crisis. Created specialized support mechanisms for language and vocational training. However NOT specialised into remote or digital work, yet.
ADECCO GROUP	Upskilling Job Matching	CSR Commitments Core Business	Global	2023 – 2027	In 2023, Adecco pledged to find jobs for 50,000 refugees globally and train 10,000 by 2025. All national branches joined respective Tent Alliances, emphasizing global collaboration in refugee empowerment. In 2024, Adecco extended its commitment to enabling refugees by pledging to find jobs for 85,000 refugees globally and to train 17,000 refugees by 2027.
*NA'AMAL AGENCY	Job Matching	Core Business and Business Expansion	Regional-Africa, MENA and Europe	2024 - ongoing	Provides direct remote job matching support for refugees in Africa and the MENA region.
*REFUGEES @WORK	Job Matching	Core Business and Business Expansion	National - Switzerland		Provides direct job matching support for refugees in Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland.
*EQUALREACH	Job Matching Employment	Core Business and Business Expansion	Global	2023 - ongoing	A B2B freelancing marketplace to connect agencies / collectives of displaced and local talent to dignified remote work opportunities. As an impact-driven alternative to mainstream freelancing marketplaces, EqualReach is built to overcome the barriers that often limit access to the digital economy, through its vetted team and project-based model.
REMOTE	Employment	Core Business and Business Expansion Future Business and Innovation	Global	2019 – ongoing	Supports remote work arrangements tailored to displaced professionals. Advocates for inclusion of refugee talent in global hiring frameworks.
*AMAHORO COALITION	Entrepreneurship	Core Business & Business Expansion	Regional- Africa	2019 – ongoing	Mobilizes governments and the private sector to invest in refugee talent.
*STARTUPS WITHOUT BORDERS	Entrepreneurship Upskilling	Core Business & Business Expansion Future Business and Innovation	Regional- MENA & Europe	2018 - ongoing	Mobilizes the private sector and international organisations to support refugee entrepreneurship. Training & capacity building.



## Inside the conversation: A peer group on refugee talent integration

On 7 November 2024, TASC and ITC convened a peer discussion with private sector actors and social enterprise leaders working at the intersection of refugee employment and the digital economy to explore a shared question: how to move from promising but scattered wins to reliable, scalable systems.

What emerged first was a reality check on just how complex the journey remains, even when intentions are aligned.

**Daisy Bartlett**, Lead for Private Partnerships at the Amahoro Coalition, spoke to the day-to-day challenges of digital inclusion. Even if opportunities exist, access to infrastructure is uneven and inclusion hinges more on employer approach than candidate preparation. As she put it: “If the right mindset isn’t there, the first hiccup becomes a reason to say no. And it’s not always about capacity, it’s about comfort with uncertainty.”

**Aaron Foley**, Recruitment Lead at Accenture UK, pointed to “almost two separate issues.” One is finding job-ready refugees: “There are amazing people who already have those skills, but how do you find them?”

The other is building programmes that do not just upskill, but lead to real employment. “Right now, it still feels too serendipitous,” he said. Picking up on that tension, Na’amal’s founder, **Lorraine Charles**, added: “We’re building the infrastructure, but it only works if someone’s there on the other side.”

These examples show how conditional refugee talent integration remains, where context, legal frameworks, and employer action continue to determine what is possible. “Programmes like these exist because of coalitions,” said **Ludovica Ghizzoni**, Advisor at the International Trade Centre. “You need government frameworks, and local actors, working together to make it possible”.

This discussion helped shift the lens: from digital opportunity to digital infrastructure as a structural enabler. It is not just about remote job access, but about removing the legal, technical, and organisational barriers blocking inclusion. Until then, as Milena Barra, Founder of Be Your Change put it, “It has to be a 360-degree approach, from language to certification leading to integration into the team. Otherwise, even after hiring, the inclusion does not hold.”

# 4. SOLUTIONS FOR SCALE ALONG THE REFUGEE DIGITAL TALENT PIPELINE

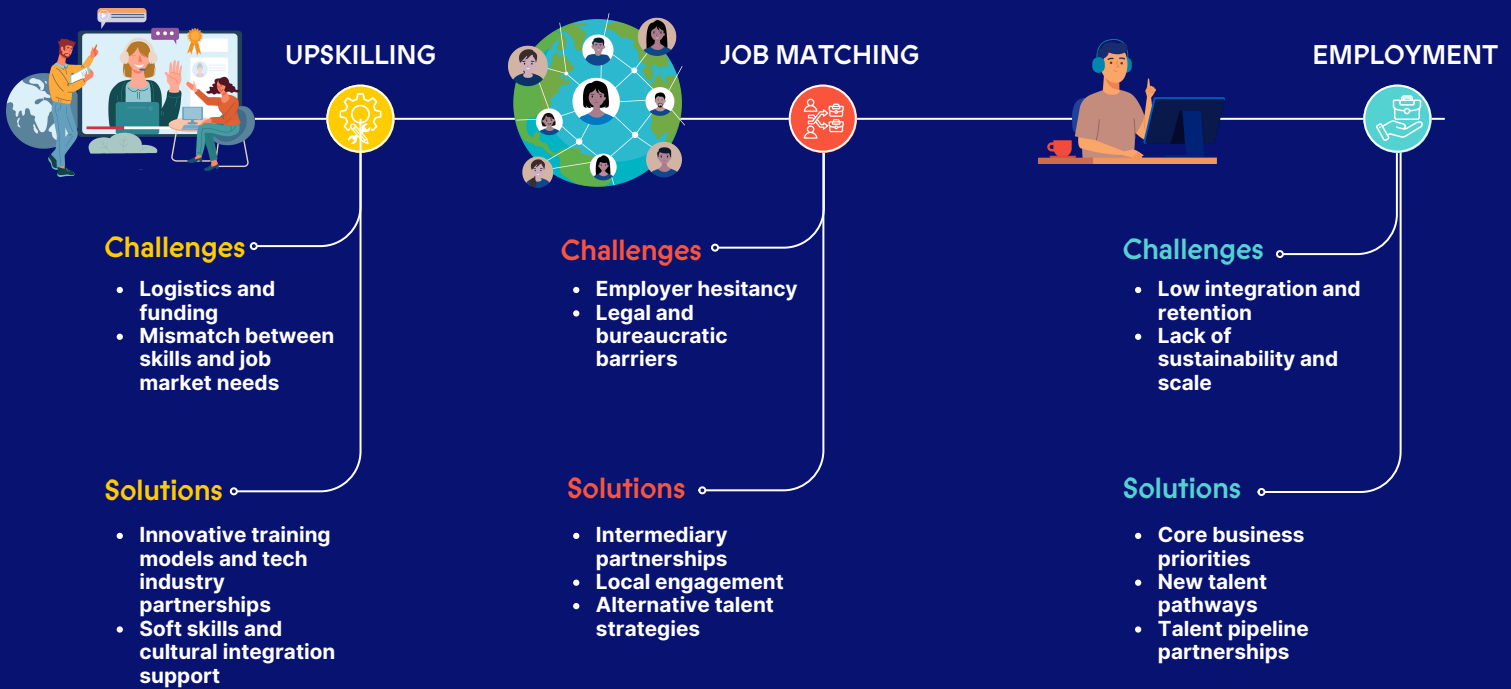
Potential employers currently face a set of shared challenges throughout the journey of upskilling, sourcing, hiring and onboarding refugees.

These include addressing logistics, funding and skills-matching challenges in the upskilling phase, as well as risk aversion, legal and bureaucratic barriers in job matching and placement, difficulty in integration, and retention and scalability in employment.

The organisations featured in this paper are building powerful, proven solutions to these challenges, with some approaches intentionally rooted in the digital economy.

In combination, these solutions have the potential to strengthen the sector, scale to other sectors, and connect refugees to the promised opportunities of technology transformation.

## The Refugee Talent Pipeline



## 4.1 Upskilling

Upskilling and reskilling is a fundamental hurdle in the refugee employment journey. Refugees often enter a new labour market with a mismatch between their existing experience and qualifications and the skills in local demand. In addition, digital poverty, a lack of study spaces, scarce training funds, and cultural barriers make it more difficult to upskill and connect to opportunities.

Employers can be hesitant to take a leap in the face of skill and cultural misalignments. Even when professional training programmes are available, many do not align with high-demand sectors, leading to frustration on the part of both newly skilled refugees and potential employers.

Within the digital economy, companies are capitalizing on the industry's openness to skills-first hiring with the introduction of innovative training models involving tech industry partnerships, alongside the provision of soft skills support.



## a) Innovative training models and tech industry partnerships

Companies and organizations are investing in alternative training models such as coding bootcamps, online courses, and employer-led certification pathways. These programmes provide refugees with industry-relevant skills.

They are also designed with built-in connections to hiring employers. They bypass bureaucratic barriers like credential recognition and reduce employer hesitancy by establishing trust and confidence through the partnership and training process.

### Training Models for Refugee Digital Employment

Training Model	Example Organizations	Why It Works	Interview Insights
<b>CODING BOOTCAMPS</b>	<b>Powercoders</b>	No formal degree required, hands-on, holistic training, and direct job placements.	<p><i>"We realised many refugees struggle not just with technical skills but also with soft skills such as collaboration and peer-to-peer learning. That is why all of our programmes focus on holistic integration based on the three pillars of tech skills, soft skills and language skills."</i></p> <p>— <b>Susanne König</b>, Head of Training and Talent Development Powercoders</p>
<b>ONLINE DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING</b>	<b>Na'amal</b> <b>Startups Without Borders</b>	Flexible learning, connected to remote work and the platform and gig economies.	<p><i>"Beyond the limitations of traditional networking, online platforms open avenues for building connections and accessing employment opportunities based on merit and experience."</i></p> <p>— <b>Lorraine Charles</b>, Founder of Na'amal: Remote work for refugees</p>
<b>EMPLOYER-LED CERTIFICATION PATHWAYS</b>	<b>Ready for IT by Fondazione Italiana Accenture</b>	Employers shape relevant training, endorse certifications, and support placements.	<p><i>"The multi-phase structure of Ready for IT starts from selection and continues all the way to real inclusion. Even months after their graduation, participants still come back to us—for help relocating, for help understanding how to navigate the workplace."</i></p> <p>— <b>Paola Martino</b>, Accenture</p>



## Powercoders: Empowering refugees for tech careers

Powercoders is a Swiss-based tech academy and job integration program dedicated to transforming the lives of refugees and migrants by preparing them for successful careers in the IT job market. For nearly a decade, this non-profit organisation has forged a powerful path, connecting underrepresented talent with long-term tech employment through a comprehensive approach. This commitment has resulted in an impressive 70% placement rate within Switzerland's digital economy.

At its core, Powercoders offers a range of hands-on bootcamps, personalised mentoring, and strategic employer partnerships. These programmes are meticulously designed to equip participants not only with technical proficiency but also with crucial soft skills, ensuring they thrive in agile, high-performance tech environments.

One initiative demonstrating Powercoders' adaptive and targeted approach is the **Piscine Prep** module, a pilot created in partnership with École 42 Lausanne. Powercoders developed this structured training recognising that success in École 42's unique, peer-led coding environment (like its intensive four-week "Piscine" entry

phase) demands more than just technical skill - it requires adaptability, communication, and confidence. The training specifically equips refugee participants with essential skills for self-management environments, focusing on feedback literacy, teamwork, and the ability to ask for help in fast-paced settings.

Powercoders continues to develop various pilots and initiatives to address specific needs and bridge diverse learning culture gaps, consistently aligning with its overarching mission: to close the opportunity gap and empower individuals through technology education and employment.

"Refugees often come with strong technical backgrounds, but what is missing is confidence, teamwork, and the ability to ask for help in a fast-paced setting. That's why all of our programmes, and also our new pilot, aim to close that gap and make sure they can actually thrive in environments, which are demanding but full of opportunity."

**Susanne König**, Head of Training & Talent Development, **Powercoders**

## b) Soft skills and cultural integration support

While technical training is essential, successful refugee talent integration does not stop at hard skills development. Many companies have found that soft skills training, focusing on workplace expectations, cultural adaptation and communication, is equally critical for long-term retention and success.

 accenture

**Accenture:  
Integrating refugee  
talent through strategic  
partnerships**



“**Soft skills training is just as critical as technical training – knowing how to network, write a CV, answer questions in an interview and operate in a different cultural environment. Without this, even the most technically skilled individuals may struggle to integrate the workforce.**”

**Lucy Murdoch**, Managing Director,  
Global Corporate Citizenship,  
**Accenture**

Accenture supports refugee’s economic inclusion by partnering with local and global organisations to help refugees around the world gain meaningful employment and start businesses.

Accenture is helping **PeaceGeeks** serve newcomers to Canada, including those who have been forcibly displaced around the world. Using human-centered technology and digital tools, PeaceGeeks assists refugees and newcomers with settlement and development of employment skills, helping them reach personal and economic success in their new homeland. Accenture has been working with PeaceGeeks since 2022 to

scale the 'Welcome to Canada' app and provide users the Virtual Career Coach Experience. This programme aims to support nearly 6,000 refugees into employment or formal education by August 2026.

Accenture has been partnering with Upwardly Global in Poland since 2022 to support refugees into skill-aligned jobs across industries such as business logistics, marketing, finance, accounting, IT and legal. In fiscal 2024, the initiative has skilled more than 1,000 refugees and is working towards a goal of supporting 500 refugees into employment by June 2025.

Since 2022, Accenture has helped YMCA Europe establish community hubs in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Slovakia to help internally displaced people and refugees connect with local communities and resources, including access to skill development and support. Starting in April 2025, the program continues in Romania and Slovakia, adding Germany, focusing on comprehensive support by institutionalizing community hubs, strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation, and mobilizing resources. In fiscal 2024, it has provided more than 14,000 Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced people with holistic support, skills and know-how.

In 2023, Youth Business International and Accenture partnered to launch the Seeking Economic Empowerment and Resilience for Refugees and Migrants (SEER) program. Through November 2024, it helped equip more than 1,700 young people, including migrants and refugees (aged 18-35 years) in Germany, Ireland, Italy and Sweden with the skills, confidence, and connections to pursue entrepreneurship or secure employment. Building on the success of the program’s first year, it was extended in 2025 to help over 1,000 more young refugees and migrants in Germany, France, Sweden and Ireland to integrate into the economies of their host countries, fostering economic resilience and social inclusion.

Equally important is the training of existing teams that integrate refugees into their workforce. Companies leading in refugee employment emphasize that HR teams, managers, and colleagues need cultural sensitivity training to foster inclusive environments.



**Na'amal:**  
**Bridging upskilling and  
job matching for refugees**

**Na'amal**, founded in 2019, is a non-profit social enterprise that equips refugees and underrepresented communities with digital and soft skills for remote employment. Its model combines flexible online training, mentorship, and workplace readiness to prepare learners for globally distributed work environments.



**It's not just about matching refugees with jobs. Many need additional support to understand workplace norms, team dynamics, and career progression pathways in their new countries.**



**Lorraine Charles**, Founder of  
**Na'amal: Remote Work for  
Refugees**



Since 2022, Na'amal has co-organized the **Migration Summit** in partnership with the **MIT Emerging Talent**, and the **Karam Foundation**. The 2024 edition explored the theme *"Unlocking and Engaging Talent: Pathways for Dignified Work,"* and led to the publication of the **Migration Summit Impact Report**, which includes a quickstart guide to inclusive hiring.

The initiative highlights that full integration depends not only on preparing refugee professionals, but also on equipping private sector teams to successfully include them.

## 4.2 Job matching

Employer hesitancy and legal barriers play a major role in slowing refugee workforce integration. Concerns over work permits, bureaucratic hurdles, and local hiring regulations deter many companies from following through on hiring commitments. As newer employment models, digital and remote work face additional challenges including employer concerns about trust, credentials, and remote work authorisation across borders.

In highly regulated industries, additional documentation requirements and regulatory inconsistencies across countries further complicate refugee hiring. Some industries, such as cybersecurity, require extensive background checks that are often impossible for refugees to fulfil due to documentation limitations.

“For example, in the Netherlands, to work within cybersecurity, you need at least seven years of background checks. But for displaced migrants and refugees this is nearly impossible because we don’t even have documentation from seven years ago. Every country has different barriers, and it’s a matter of navigating them.”



**Dina Viyapuri**, Founder & CEO,  
**Purpl Unicorn**

Hiring companies in the digital economy are sharing these burdens by working with specialised intermediaries as sourcing and hiring partners, seeking out local expertise and support, and testing new models for harnessing refugee skills and talent.





## Intermediaries at work: Enabling labour mobility and local integration

More than employer intent, new labour pathways require infrastructure connecting policy, recruitment, and talent. Intermediary organizations such as the Amahoro Coalition and Refugees@Work are making alternative employment models a reality by bridging the legal and logistical divides that often prevent refugees from being hired, even where demand exists.

In East Africa, the Amahoro Coalition works across Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda to facilitate refugee employment by engaging with both governments and the private sector. Their approach includes advocating for enabling legislation, simplifying work permit processes, and aligning refugee hiring with regional workforce needs. Amahoro supports cross-border mobility by building confidence and capacity on both sides of the hiring equation.

In Switzerland, Refugees@Work focuses on integrating refugee professionals into the national labour market. Operating primarily in French-speaking regions, they partner with employers to navigate local regulations, identify job-ready talent, and reduce hesitation around hiring. Their work exemplifies how targeted matchmaking and employer engagement can overcome regulatory inertia.

### a) Intermediary partners

The range of intermediary partners available to companies in this space is expanding. Large scale recruitment agencies such as Adecco are extending their services to support refugee hiring, as are more niche agencies focusing on remote work, such as Remote. In parallel, social enterprises are emerging which provide tailored recruitment support rooted in local expertise, whether in the host or hiring country. Depending on their needs, companies can seek out specialist support more efficiently than extending the responsibilities of their own human resource or hiring departments.

”

**There's a gap between companies being open and them actually taking the step. Our role is to reduce the friction—helping employers understand what's needed, and showing them that hiring refugees is possible and already happening here.**



**Hugo Houbart**, Coordinator,  
**Refugees@Work**

## b) Local engagement

Seeking out location-specific insights and hands-on experience is essential to help companies navigate the risks and challenges of engaging with the unique situations refugees find themselves in. The local labour market, regulatory and cultural contexts - as well as whether refugees are placed in camps, asylum centers, or integrated into towns and cities – all significantly influence successful strategies and tactics for engagement, empowerment and sustainable employment.

### Adecco: From local roots to global reach in refugee hiring

Adecco's engagement with refugee employment began in 2008, when it supported its first refugee job placements in Italy, marking the starting point for what would grow into a global effort. In 2022, Adecco launched a dedicated Jobs for Ukraine portal, connecting Ukrainian jobseekers to verified employers in host countries alongside its Jobs for Refugees platform, which offers skills-based matching and multilingual tools for displaced candidates worldwide.

In Italy, Adecco has a localised approach integrating 2,000 to 3,000 refugees annually since 2021. The programme prioritises placements in sectors with acute labour shortages, such as logistics, construction, and hospitality, while engaging local legal experts and community partners to navigate complex regulations.

Adecco



In 2024, Adecco launched an AI-powered multilingual CV maker, which allows refugees to present their qualifications before completing language integration, which is a key step towards inclusive hiring.

“  
**Despite the increasing focus on digital livelihoods, most refugees still work in traditional sectors. While we have integrated some highly skilled professionals into digital roles, these remain exceptions. The challenge lies in bridging skill gaps and addressing systemic access barriers to expand opportunities in the digital economy.**  
”



**Claudio Soldà**, CSR & Public Affairs Director, **Adecco Italy**



### c) Alternative talent strategies

Outsourcing, internship and entrepreneurship models can provide lighter-touch or lower risk alternatives to direct, full-time employment. Applying these options can allow tentative employers to build experience and trust when bringing on refugee talent. They can serve as pathways to full-time employment contracts, or avenues towards

strengthening the availability of outsourced services, entrepreneurial capabilities and investment opportunities.

For refugees, working with organizations who facilitate these employment models in a structured way can provide support and security alongside independence and flexibility as they enter and gain experience in new geographies and industries.

### Alternative talent strategies for refugee digital employment

Strategy	Example Organizations	Why It Works
Outsourcing	<b>Na'amal: Remote Work for Refugees</b>	A ready pool of plug and play resources, with a trusted intermediary as relationship manager.
Paid Internships	<b>Purple Unicorn</b>	Time-bound opportunities for on-the-job learning and relationship building to test new ground.
Entrepreneurship	<b>Startups Without Borders</b>	Supporting purpose-driven innovation can strengthen business ecosystems and create quality employment and investment opportunities.

## Making it work: Na'amal remote work for refugees

Since 2019, Na'amal has been one of the leading NGOs training refugees in the skills for remote work, in an effort to bypass the tendency for informal and precarious employment in host countries.

Recognising that training alone was not sufficient, Na'amal launched the new Na'amal Agency in 2024, after receiving feedback from the private sector on the potential for outsourcing projects, rather than direct hiring. The agency functions as a trusted intermediary and places the burden of labour, bureaucracy, and risk on the third-party agency instead of the company, providing a greater incentive for private sector buy-in.

## Logitech & Purpl Unicorn: Bridging the cybersecurity talent gap with paid internships

Facing a global shortage of cybersecurity professionals, Logitech partnered with Purpl Unicorn, a social enterprise that trains refugee and migrant women in cybersecurity during their asylum waiting period in Ireland. The collaboration began in 2021, with Purpl Unicorn identifying talent and Logitech offering paid internships as a path to employment. The internships serve as a two-way trial. Refugee candidates gain experience, income, and workplace integration, and employers are able to test a new source of talent.

For Logitech, the model reduces onboarding risks. Purpl Unicorn acts as a sourcing and onboarding partner, bridging HR gaps and ensuring refugee candidates are technically and culturally prepared. This hands-on support is critical in cybersecurity, where hiring is often constrained by rigid documentation and background check requirements, contributing to the field's lack of diversity.





## Startups Without Borders: Entrepreneurship as a path to integration

**Startups Without Borders (SWB)** is one of the world's leading support organisation for refugee entrepreneurship, having trained and impacted over 15,000 people, including refugees, migrants and host communities. Founded in 2018 to support refugee and migrant entrepreneurs across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, SWB has developed a successful innovative model that supports marginalized communities of migrants and refugees in becoming entrepreneurs, through the involvement of the private sector. By partnering with over 400 world-class corporations, international organisations and academia, including UNHCR, Meta, Google and UNDP, Startups Without Borders has built an transnational ecosystem which is at the heart of its impact and scale. Unlike traditional aid-driven models, SWB is a for-profit company—designed for long-term sustainability and engagement with the private sector.

SWB delivers entrepreneurship training, business mentorship, and tech-focused upskilling—emphasizing AI, digital tools, and startup readiness. Its hybrid format combines online and offline events to link refugee founders with investors, mentors, and corporate partners.

Rather than focusing on direct job placement, SWB works to cultivate refugee-led businesses—creating a ripple effect of employment and economic inclusion. This approach bridges displacement and opportunity by embedding refugee talent into local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

“We believe that training and supporting refugee entrepreneurs means not only providing tools for job creation; it means enabling them to take control of their future – and their narrative.”



**Valentina Primo**, Founder,  
**Startups Without Borders**

Since 2019, the organization also convenes the annual Startups Without Borders Summit, the largest global gathering of refugee and migrant entrepreneurs. The summit has become a key event in the entrepreneurship calendar across MENA and Europe, drawing over 5,500 participants and convening founders, investors, and global thought leaders. With honorary speakers such as Prince Constantijn Van Orange of the Netherlands, it places refugee innovation at the centre of international entrepreneurship dialogue.

SWB's experience highlights how entrepreneurship can complement more traditional hiring efforts—especially in contexts where legal, linguistic, or documentation barriers make full-time employment difficult to access.

### 4.3 Employment

Once refugees are engaged within an organization, employers still face challenges with low integration and retention levels, in combination with a lack of sustainability and scalability of refugee employment programmes. Housing, language barriers, and adaptation to the workplace and working culture make retention difficult. At the same time, due to the intensive and extensive efforts required beyond business as usual, refugee hiring is often a one-time or targeted initiative rather than a long-term workforce strategy.

Integrating and scaling refugee talent will require a series of mindset shifts that hold the potential to steer companies and the labour market towards a new business as usual. Companies' motivations are evolving from corporate responsibility to **core business priorities**, investing in **new physical and virtual talent pathways**, and strengthening their collective capabilities through **talent pipeline partnerships**.

#### a) Core business priorities

Companies who are making it work are shifting their mindsets towards refugee engagement activities from crisis response to systems change, and from meeting CSR objectives to building sustainable talent and skills pipelines.

Refugee hiring is not just a response to crisis – it is becoming a testing ground for innovation in agile talent acquisition, development and mobility. The shift extends beyond CSR and DEI initiatives, positioning refugees within dynamic hiring models that are critical for workforce resilience, digital transformation and supporting global talent mobility.

Logitech attributes the success of refugee integration to their prioritization of diversity, inclusion, and flexible work into the organization itself. The true indicator of success, they say, is an inclusive workplace that not only values, but actively fosters psychological safety, DEI, and diversity initiatives.

“Employers often struggle to move beyond traditional hiring checklists. Many of my peers assume that hiring refugee talent means compromising on qualifications. But in reality we need to shift our mindset—these individuals bring diverse experiences and problem-solving skills that are invaluable, especially in cybersecurity, where threats evolve constantly”

**Tana Dubel**, Chief Information Security Officer, **Logitech**



## b) New talent mobility pathways

In response to this growing crisis, alternative physical and digital labour pathways—such as remote work, digital employment, and structured labour mobility programs—are emerging as pragmatic talent solutions. These approaches directly address geographic, legal, and economic barriers, allowing displaced populations to enter global labour markets rather than being confined to local host economies that may already be overstretched. As traditional models of refugee integration struggle to meet demand, investing in cross-border digital work and talent mobility programs is becoming not just an option, but a necessity.

### Fondazione Italiana Accenture: Building bridges to employment for refugees through relocation

Launched in 2021, **ReadyForIT** by **Fondazione Italiana Accenture** is a multi-phase program aimed at integrating refugees and migrants into Italy's digital workforce. In collaboration with the **Human Safety Net** (Foundation of Generali), **UNHCR Italy**, and Accenture, training academies (e.g. Academy Rapido and Develop) and other foundations and corporates (including EY Italy) the initiative offers comprehensive training in IT support, cybersecurity, and web development, coupled with soft skills coaching and job placement support.

In 2024, the program expanded through the **Labor Pathways for Refugees** pilot, facilitating the relocation of 22 refugees hosted in Uganda to Italy via employment contracts in the IT sector. This initiative, supported by UNHCR, Talents Beyond Boundaries (TBB) and other partners, including the International Trade Centre, includes pre-departure training, language courses, and post-arrival support to ensure smooth integration.<sup>21</sup>



Recognizing that successful integration extends beyond technical training, the ReadyforIT program also prepares host companies. As Tiziana dell'Orto of EY Foundation Italy notes:



“The difficult phase, according to what our HR colleagues told us, is not just hiring refugees but ensuring hiring managers and teams understand the cultural, emotional, and logistical complexities. You cannot just take someone with a difficult background and place them in a team without preparation and expect smooth integration.”

**Tiziana dell'Orto, Director**, Director, EY Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability and Secretary General, **EY Foundation Italy**



## Remote: Enabling borderless hiring for refugee talents

Launched in August 2021 in response to the refugee crises in Afghanistan and Syria, Remote for Refugees is an initiative by the company Remote that offers free global employment services for refugees residing in countries where Remote has an entity. The programme is designed to eliminate legal and administrative barriers that often deter companies from hiring refugee talent across borders.

Remote's core service is acting as an Employer of Record Service (EOR) – legally employing workers on behalf of companies. This allows businesses to onboard remote refugee professionals without needing to establish a legal entity, navigate local labour laws, or manage international payroll compliance.

“**Companies hesitate because of the systemic challenges: work permits, legal compliance and payroll. What we have seen in 2023 is that the conversation is evolving from ‘should we hire refugees?’ to ‘how do we make it work?’**”

**Filipa Matos**, VP of Special Operations, **Remote**

In addition to legal employment, Remote supports multi-currency payroll, benefit administration, and employment verification, addressing documentation gaps common amongst displaced population. The company also partners with NGOs and hiring initiatives to validate skills and streamline hiring decisions.



### c) Talent Pipeline Partnerships

Meaningful, mission-oriented employer engagement has been highlighted as a key success factor in each of the solutions identified throughout the talent pipeline. Instead of stretching beyond an employer's expertise or role, building smart partnerships helps to strengthen the employment pipeline as a whole. Insights from our conversations show how this unfolds: Accenture's collaboration with Upwardly Global links job readiness training with real hiring pathways in Poland. Logitech's partnership with Purpl Unicorn helps integrate refugee women into cybersecurity roles through a structured internship model. In Italy, the Ready for IT programme, led by Accenture Foundation, leveraged collaborations with EY Foundation and other organisations to prepare both refugee candidates and receiving teams for workplace integration.

Organizations have learned that these partnerships must be rooted in business imperatives, local contexts and relevant labour markets, building a bridge between industry, talent and geographical needs. With the right conditions, both private sector and cross-sector partnerships are powerful avenues for building trust, and lay solid foundations for expanding refugee opportunities. They are critical for long-term, scalable hiring solutions.

## 5. THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

Scaling refugee hiring requires more than just commitments—it demands ongoing creativity, conversation and concerted action. Specific areas highlighted for ongoing exploration include advancing practices, building protections, informing policy and consolidating partnerships.

### 5.1 Advancing practices

Across our discussions, companies emphasized the need for trusted, neutral spaces where they can exchange solutions, troubleshoot challenges, and share insights efficiently and in real time. This includes collaborating on solutions to shared challenges such as:

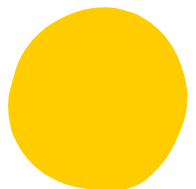
- Overcoming logistical barriers to employment including payments, housing, transport, childcare and access to the internet or devices.
- Reporting on refugee employment, which requires employees to self-identify as a refugee/former refugee; and keeping in touch with participants to track progress and results once a training programme is over.
- Ensuring internal buy-in within an organization, including maintaining momentum after initial crises, ensuring engagement through leadership changes, or weathering shifting priorities on CSR and DEI.
- Developing funding models as cross-sector partnerships are often sustained by individual champions relying on personal networks and time-limited project funding. Without more robust, cross-silo financing mechanisms, many promising models remain stuck in pilot mode.

### 5.2 Building protections

While remote work holds the potential to empower and provide greater dignity for refugees, it carries challenges inherent in any new pathway to employment, including a lack of insight into working standards and a high rate of informal work. Joining forces along digital supply chains and with partners in civil society and academia will be essential to shed light on potential exploitation within this industry, and to ensure that practice and policy responds.

“The future of work is borderless, but for that to be a reality for refugees, we need companies to know there are safe and legal ways to do it.”

Filipa Matos, VP Special Operations,  
Remote



### 5.3 Informing policy

While the private sector is leading the way in this space, solutions will not be able to scale without an enabling environment that opens up safe and legal employment pathways for refugees – whether physical or digital.

Private sector engagement will be instrumental in providing insight and impetus to a well informed policy discussion on enabling labour mobility for refugees, as well as for wider workers who will be required to fill the talent gap in this emerging and fast-growing sector.

Facilitating constructive exchanges between private sector leaders, policymakers, and service providers will also be important to ensure that solutions keep evolving with workforce and policy changes. In addition, refugee perspectives must be integrated by involving refugee professionals directly, not only as beneficiaries, but as designers, mentors, and strategic advisors to build a more inclusive system.

### 5.4 Consolidating partnerships

Whether through hiring, training, entrepreneurship, or remote work, the most impactful business models are rooted in partnerships - where skills meet demand, systems meet ambition, and the private sector engages with purpose. New alliances are shifting stand-alone efforts into ecosystem-building initiatives, which have the potential to scale.

The efforts highlighted in this paper demonstrate a collective shift in mindsets. Remote work is being reimagined as a right, not a privilege - unlocking borderless employment for those previously left out. Entrepreneurship is emerging as a route not only to self-reliance, but to job creation and systemic transformation. Trust, local networks, and flexible entry points are proving just as vital as technical skills or funding.

This is why the digital economy offers a rare chance to rewire inclusion from the ground up. With the right protections, partnerships and policy frameworks, this moment can become more than a private sector response to crises. These new innovations can provide a blueprint and establish infrastructure and ecosystems for a fairer, more resilient future of work that can be built together.



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