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REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT PLATFORM MANUAL



The Entry Point for Refugee Employment

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What we want to achieve

Create a brand for a Refugee Employment Platform, distinctive for bringing together an array of traditional and non-traditional stakeholders at the national, regional, and global level involved specifically in refugee socio-economic inclusion to provide job matching, wraparound services, information, and guidance, while producing data to identify gaps, challenges, and potential for enhancing refugees' effective access to decent work.

Given the significant growth in the number of companies willing to hire refugees, the platform serves as a digital tool to connect companies with refugee job seekers. Its functions streamline the job placement process itself, while simultaneously linking refugees and employers with employment support, skills training, and wraparound services essential to maximizing job prospects, preparing

refugees for the labor market in their host countries and supporting companies in creating sustainable employment.

The benefits are manifold: Securing timely and decent employment for refugees who have a strong desire to succeed in the labor market, apply their skills and contribute to their host society can fill existing labor gaps, bring innovation to the company, and open new market opportunities. It can strengthen the company's competitiveness due to lower turnover, more diversity, committed staff and a stronger brand, increase the demand for services and products, and create new tax-contributing residents and citizens. Swift access to employment and upskilling opportunities also enhances long-term integration prospects, enabling refugees to thrive and host societies to fully benefit from their talents.

Photo: Binta is a young refugee from Guinea, a mother and a caregiver. After experiencing back problems, she reached out to an NGO called 'DUO for a JOB' to change her career orientation. That is how she met Georgine, a kind-hearted retiree. An encounter which resulted in a trust-based and friendly mentoring relationship. ; With its public information campaign #BuddiesWithRefugees, UNHCR showcases 'buddy' programmes in Belgium, underlines how they support successful integration, and encourages more citizens to take part in them. UNHCR/Marion Evrad



Concept

BUILD ON WHAT IS ALREADY WORKING



Photo: UNHCR/Josselin Brémaud

The platform builds on existing country experiences, seeking to further their existing potential or scope in matching refugee talent with employer needs, while supporting refugees' long-term socio-economic inclusion.

CENTRAL SWITCHBOARD FOR COOPERATION



Photo: UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis

Brings together all actors across sectors engaged in refugee socio-economic inclusion, offering significant potential for synergies and diverse collaborations at local, national and regional level.

ADDED VALUE FOR EMPLOYERS



Photo: UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis

The REP provides employers with a one-stop shop for successfully hiring refugees, helping them navigate the administrative framework, providing access to talents, guidance, good practices, resources, networks and data.

TAILORED TO REFUGEES' EXPERIENCE & NEEDS



Photo: UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis

The REP offers comprehensive resource pages with up-to-date content on available training and upskilling and other practical tools and services tailored to refugee needs, all focused on maximizing their swift labour market insertion.

COMPLEMENTARITY, NOT DUPLICATION



Photo: UNHCR/Josselin Brémaud

Embedded in existing initiatives and services at the country level & designed to complement the features of regional-level initiatives, such as the EU Talent Pool.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS



Photo: UNHCR

Ongoing involvement of a diverse cross-section of the refugee population and employers in the development and evolution of the platform.

Essential minimum criteria

There is no one-size-fits-all model, however the REP has several core features/ functionalities:

ACCESSIBLE TO REFUGEES OF ALL NATIONALITIES



Ensures employment opportunities for refugees of all nationalities, education levels and skill profiles. Also includes asylum seekers and stateless persons with the right to work.

IN-COUNTRY JOB MATCHING



Enabling decent work and long-term employability requires a mix of on- and offline support measures, which is why the platform includes only national vacancies.

COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ON KEY SERVICES & PARTNERS



Lack of access to key services and rights hinders refugees' ability to secure and retain work. The platform thus includes resource and information pages on programs and services that can support the socio-economic inclusion of refugees. As a minimum, REPs will be bilingual, i.e., English and the local language. Progressively, other key languages spoken by refugees are expected to be incorporated. As well as enhancing access to opportunities for refugees, it strengthens cooperation and potential for new partnerships between public, private and/or civil society actors that offer support services, including Refugee-Led Organizations.

GUIDANCE ON ACCESS TO SKILLS ASSESSMENT, RECOGNITION, TRAINING & UPSKILLING



Refugees are likely to arrive with skills less adapted to the receiving country's labour market than other foreigners and/or may be in need of skills recognition. Through the platform, they are assisted to access specific, technical, **language and vocational training** and upskilling **courses**, skills assessment and recognition procedures, as well as **apprenticeship and internship opportunities** to help them acquire work experience.

INFORMATION ON LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK



As the national reference point for refugee employment, each REP contains up-to-date information on the legal framework regarding refugee employment, along with any other relevant legal, policy or documentation information that employers of refugees may require as part of the hiring and recruitment process.

DATA PRODUCTION

The platform is designed to systematize anonymized data of certain key categories from refugees' resumes and employer profiles. With this, reports can be produced to analyze diverse information on skills gaps and mismatches, socio-economic profiles, main sectors and labor market gaps, among others. See example: [Candidates | HelpRefugeesWork](#)

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Availability of accessible and safe channels for providing feedback (anonymous or otherwise) on the platform's services and staff, as well as for reporting fraud, misconduct or sexual abuse.

TERMS OF USE & PRIVACY POLICY

Dedicated page(s) that clearly details(s) privacy policy, data-handling practices, and terms of use for job matching and other support services provided. **Sample policies are included as annexes at the end of this manual.**

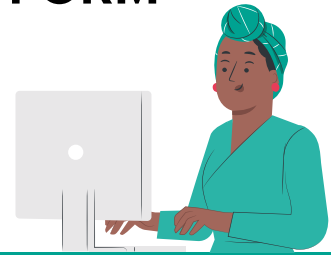
Photo: After spending the first days of the war living between their home and bomb shelters, Ekaterina fled Ukraine to take their young son to reach safety. Once in Romania, UNHCR supported Ekaterina with cash assistance, which helped her cover essentials when they first arrived. She has since found work at this bookshop-shared working space in Bucharest. UNHCR/Loana Epure



REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT PLATFORM

The entry point for refugee employment

A digital tool that connects companies with refugee job seekers. This job matching platform provides what employers need to hire refugees and brings together all that refugees require to find decent work.



FOR EMPLOYERS

JOB MATCHING

FOR REFUGEES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access to pools of candidates | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access to vacancies, apprenticeships, internships and mentorships |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guidance & good practices on hiring refugees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified online/language learning courses |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guidance & support for employers post-hiring | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skills assessment tools |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear guidance on refugees' right to work | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Templates (e.g. letters of reference, CV) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Network of like-minded partners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resource information |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment-enabling support and services |

Guidance on and access to skills assessment & recognition, training, and upskilling

OTHER SITE FEATURES



Resource information

- Job fairs & networking opportunities
- Opening a bank account and other financial services
- Social services (childcare, housing)
- Integration/inclusion programmes
- Good practices underway in the country



Employment-enabling support and services

- Personal skills assessment
- CV-building support
- Application assistance
- Cultural orientation
- Post-hiring support



Essential site properties

- Data & analytics
- Privacy policy
- Feedback mechanisms

National platforms: pilot countries

The REP concept has been developed and continually refined based on the below country experiences, which have their own unique features, while retaining the abovementioned core essential minimum criteria:

HELP REFUGEES WORK



Cyprus: Born out of an initiative of the UNHCR country office in collaboration with Cyprus Refugee Council to support refugee integration through work. The platform caters to refugees, employers, institutions running vocational education and training (VET) programmes, and individuals and organizations committed to promoting social participation, inclusion, and diversity. [HelpRefugeesWork | We bring together job-seeking refugees with employers & training provider](#)

JOBS 4 UKR



Romania: Aims to improve livelihoods for people forced to flee Ukraine to Romania and other countries, through easy access to jobs and learning opportunities. The platform also has a strong focus on remote work opportunities. For its remarkable success, Jobs4UKR is collaborating with UNHCR to expand to become a national employment platform in Romania for refugees of all nationalities. [Jobs for Ukraine](#)

BUSINESSES THAT HELP



Spain: An initiative of the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organizations ([Fundación CEOE](#)), the platform represents one of the most impressive private sector-led attempts to support job matching in times of crisis, starting with the COVID response, followed by a Ukraine-specific initiative. The platform is now being deployed to support the overall refugee population in Spain to access decent employment. [Empresas por Ucrania](#)

ADAMA JOB CENTER



Greece: Developed by Catholic Relief Services in partnership with UNHCR, the platform supports the work of The Adama Center, which provides in-person and remote employability and social services to asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece. [Adama Job Center](#)

WELCOME-IN-ONE-CLICK



Italy: A digital platform built on the innovative and successful '[Welcome - Working for Refugee Integration](#)', which will ensure broad dissemination of job/vocational training opportunities and strengthen cooperation with civil society organizations belonging to [WelcomeNET](#).

REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK



United Kingdom: REN's mission in the UK is to ensure that refugees can access appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment. [Refugee Employment Network](#)

Refugee-welcoming employer



Photo: UNHCR/Alessandro Penso

For companies that believe in refugee talent and go the extra mile in facilitating refugees' access to decent work.

Dedicated companies sign a pledge and commit to certain mandatory and recommended practices to improve refugees' economic inclusion. Potential commitments may include:

- Offer job placements and internship/apprenticeship opportunities (preferably if these do not require fluency in the host language).
- Offer mentoring programs in which refugees are coached in what is required to acquire and retain employment in the host country.
- Offer certified training opportunities, such as language courses, IT training or soft skills or on-the-job training that combines some of these elements.
- Train their Human Resources personnel to make fair decisions regarding applicants with refugee backgrounds and use reliable means to check their status and ensure accuracy, such as with the support of NGOs that case manage refugees.
- Offer letters of recommendation and act as referees to refugee employees/mentees who go on to continue their careers in other organizations.
- Adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, exploitation, and abuse (by ensuring a code of conduct is signed and complaints/reporting mechanisms are in place).
- Provide testimonials of refugee employees and managerial staff to promote this practice and serve as an example for other businesses (e.g., via social media platforms).
- Support with childcare and flexible working hours, especially for refugee women.
- Support refugees in Mental Health & Psychosocial Support
- Contribute to Cultural Orientation and Administrative Inclusion

Regional employment platform



Photo: UNHCR/Gordon Welters, UNHCR/Alessandro Penso, UNHCR/Josselin Brénaud

Coming 2023

The Regional Platform will provide an overview of the initiative, link to the different national refugee employment platforms, offer resources for employers, refugees and other stakeholders on hiring refugees, skills recognition and upskilling and enable a direct exchange of practices among the wider business community through a website, such as virtual and in-person events. The platform itself will facilitate the exchange of guidance, lessons learned, and national good practices for consideration to replicate in other countries. Other key functions:

- Enhance engagement of the private sector at the regional level.
- Provide general guidance to the private sector, refugees and other actors involved in refugee employment.
- Inform about skills assessment and skills recognition tools, guidance and practices.
- Enable employers and training institutions to offer their regionally/globally available market-based upskilling opportunities and refugees to access these.
- Present information and an application form on the Refugee-welcoming Employer Pledge.

Creating a platform

Based on the 6 experiences that UNHCR has directly supported and/or collaborated with, we've identified 4 essential budget categories involved when it comes to getting the REP of the ground, gaining traction, and making it work in the long run. The 4 categories and main (non-exhaustive) sub-categories are:

Start-up/Development Costs (Initial)

- Site Building & Development
- In-country legal assessment
- Creation and translation of key written and audiovisual informative materials

Annual project and site-related upkeep and quality control costs (Ongoing)

- Hosting, Maintenance, Fixes, Upgrades
- Personnel dedicated specifically to pipeline processing and non-automated functions of recruitment/job matching components of platform (e.g. Eligibility verification, Shortlisting, Review of onboarding pre-assessments, Response to Feedback/Complaints)
- Personnel dedicated to data analysis/reporting and periodic consultations with users (refugees, employers, trainers) to ensure maintenance of participatory design and ongoing optimization.

External Engagement costs (Initial & Ongoing)

- Personnel to lead Private Sector Outreach and partnership relations/expansion

- Periodic job fairs / open days
- Social Media strategy guaranteeing broad outreach to refugee communities with up-to-date translated information on platform parameters, labour rights, documentation requirements, etc.

Supplementary support costs specific to refugee needs (Ongoing)

The platform by its very nature is meant to link actors that can provide such support and therefore not only minimize costs but maintain a whole-of-society approach to refugee socio-economic inclusion. However, lessons learned, and insights gained indicate that it would be wise to allocate resources for:

- Staff for on and off-site job counselling, CV-building, digital literacy, employability skills support, support identifying upskilling opportunities in accordance with the skills and proficiency levels necessary for desired vacancies.
- Staff to conduct general intake, follow-up, and retention support interviews.

Scale will depend on size of refugee population, territorial scope, and capacity of UNHCR's country operation, its partners, national and local government, and other key stakeholders to offer complementary support.

Implementation Roadmap

01 PRE-VIABILITY ANALYSIS

- Scout existing country platforms and carry out consultations with refugees to determine:
- Is there a need for more comprehensive solutions?
 - Is there a need to centralize a lot of disperse, ad hoc job matching initiatives in a single platform?
 - Is there a need to create a central "switchboard" for coordination between stakeholders engaged in refugee employment/socio economic inclusion?

No

02 IS THERE AN EXISTING LOCAL SOLUTION TO BUILD ON?

- Examples would include:
- Existence of national platforms that resemble the REP model
 - NGOs engaged in socioeconomic inclusion through a market based approach and with support ecosystems tailored to refugee needs

Yes






03.A PARTNER WITH EXISTING LOCAL INITIATIVE

Yes

<p>Engage partner organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present REP concept • Confirm interest/ willingness of organization to adapt/ align with concept 	<p>Preliminary agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define parameters of UNHCR's support • Define platform adaptations in line with REP criteria 	<p>Consultations (Refugees, Gvt, Private Sector, NGOs)</p> <p>Identify issues & gaps linked with recruitment of refugees + employment support needs refugees etc.</p>	<p>Adaptation/ alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential external support • Additional technical, design & development work
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03.B ESTABLISH NEW PLATFORM

No

<p>Launch partner selection process</p> 	<p>Select partner</p> 	<p>Consultations (Refugees, Gvt, Private Sector, NGOs)</p> 	<p>Ecosystem & process mapping</p> 	<p>Build platform</p> 
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04 PRE-LAUNCH

 <p>Reporting & analytics set-up</p>	 <p>User testing</p>	 <p>Initial employer engagement & outreach</p>	 <p>Data protection/ privacy review</p>	
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05 POST-LAUNCH

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring • Consultations • Outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content added, updated & maintained • Employer engagement • Feedback mechanism |
|---|--|

Launch

Scale-up

Checklist for Platform Content

CHECKLIST REP FEATURES

Essential

- Accessible To Refugees of All Nationalities
- In-Country Job Matching
- Information on Legal Framework & Documentation
- Information On Training & Upskilling
- Feedback Mechanisms
- Information: Refugee Welcoming Employer
- Information Hub on Key Services & Partners

Recommended links/resources for Information Hub

- Pre-employment training
- Guidance on Hiring Refugees
- Major integration/inclusion programmes in place, including contact details
- General information on stakeholders working on refugees' economic inclusion
- Training webinars in multiple languages on labor rights, job hunting tips, cultural awareness, CV building/employability skills
- Financial services
- Skills Assessment Tools
- Skills Recognition Information
- Links to language classes/language training opportunities
- Mentoring/Coaching opportunities
- Counselling Services
- Regular publication of information on job fairs
- Country-level good practices
- Training and guidance for employers
- UNHCR's help platform (where available)

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The entry point for
refugee employment

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