

SHORT TAKE

## A new home at work

An employer's guide to fostering inclusion for refugees in the workplace

WITH BUSINESSES AROUND the globe facing tight labor markets and aging demographics, as well as a desire to drive corporate social responsibility and social impact initiatives, many leaders are looking to the world's 25.4 million refugees as potential employees. In addition to supporting a vulnerable population, hiring refugees offers employers a new pool of talent from which to draw new perspectives and drive positive business outcomes.

But integrating refugee employees sometimes requires a different approach than do nonrefugees. As research conducted by Deloitte in collaboration with Tent Partnership for Refugees highlights, successfully employing refugees goes far beyond an initial hiring decision and pointing new workers in the direction of an orientation session. Leaders need to foster a culture of inclusion aimed at unlocking the potential of refugee workers once they hit the ground. See our full-length report, *A new home at work*, for information on how employers can foster inclusion for refugees in the workplace.

## Unlocking the value of refugee employees

Research—both from this project and from other publications—shows that many organizations find value in hiring refugees—so long as they successfully foster inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Those benefits have included higher rates of retention and recruitment,<sup>2</sup> building a potentially valuable recruitment pipeline, increased productivity and innovation across the entire organization,<sup>3</sup> stronger overall team performance and team collaboration,<sup>4</sup> and a positive public reputation.

*Inclusion* is the key to realizing that value. While many employers and refugee employees report positive experiences overall, they report challenges as well, especially in the first few months, which are critical for both employer and employee. For example, cultural differences, mismatched roles

for the refugees' skill sets, or simply a different understanding of how day-to-day work gets done can impede successful workplace inclusion.

Employers, then, should consider designing and implementing post-hiring workplace inclusion initiatives that support refugee employees. Defining these inclusion initiatives typically requires an investment up front, in the first few months of a refugee's employment, which can yield significant long-term benefits for the employer, the new refugee employee, other employees, and the broader organization.

## Inclusion initiatives

HR executives are no doubt familiar with strategies aimed at creating a workplace culture in which *every* employee feels as though they connect, belong, and can grow within the organization. But bringing aboard refugee employees can sometimes require a unique approach tied to broader inclusion efforts.

Our report recommends inclusion initiatives focused in six areas:

**Preboarding and onboarding.** By adapting existing preboarding and onboarding programs, an organization can work to build an inclusive culture and provide refugee employees with tailored information needed to succeed. A comprehensive program, including breakout sessions specifically for refugee employees, can help include and acclimate new employees from different cultures—and even help refugee and nonrefugee employees form genuine connections.

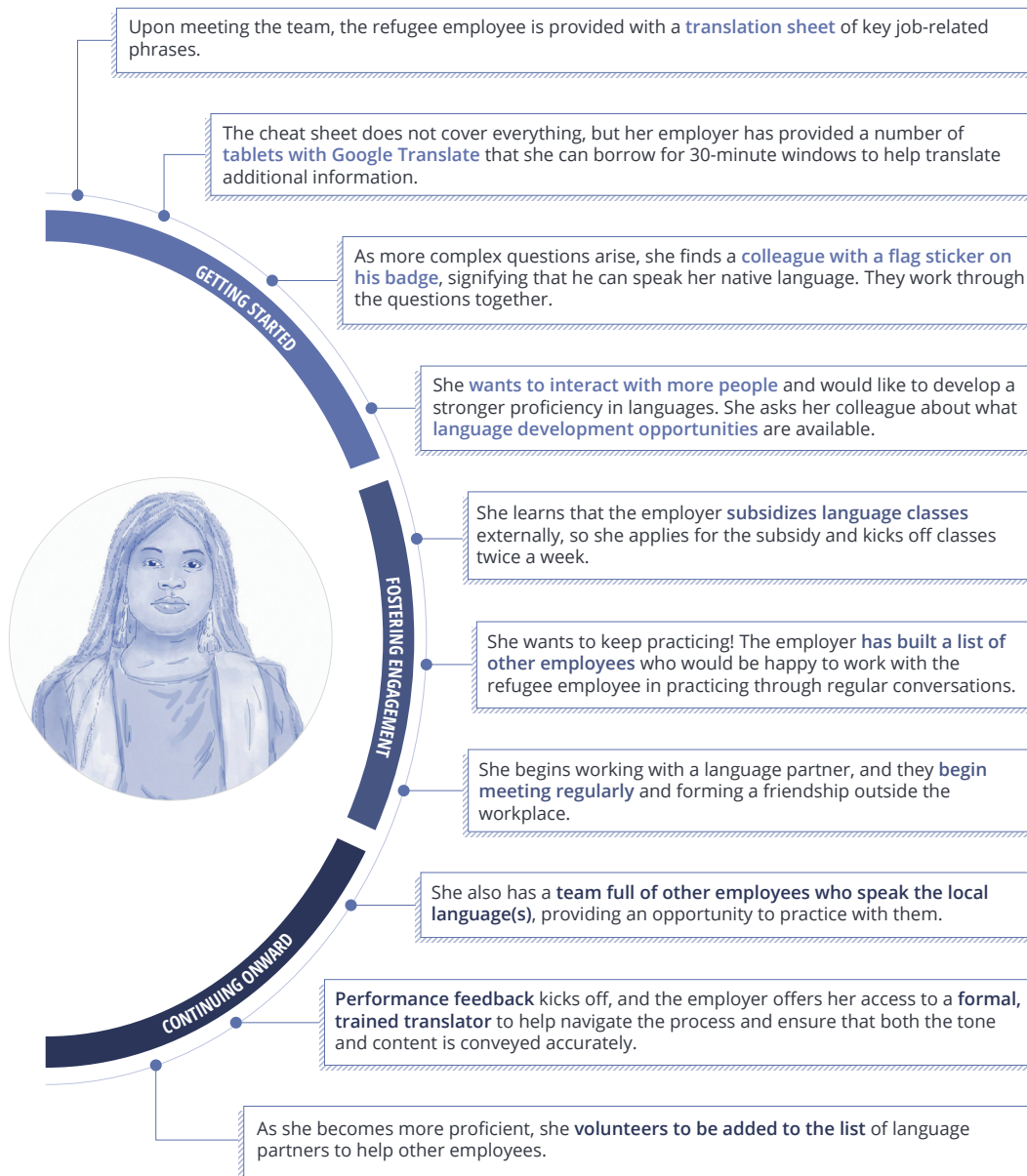
**Employee and team readiness.** Organizations can benefit from helping employees and teams build an understanding of their refugee colleagues' backgrounds and what is expected from them when working with refugee employees. Providing employees with the necessary resources to both understand and support their colleagues can help drive cross-cultural interactions and increased engagement across employee groups.

**Language translation and development.** Employers can offer language translation and development resources to refugee employees, thereby supporting them in navigating the workplace,

engaging with colleagues, growing within the organization, and feeling comfortable in their new home (figure 1).

FIGURE 1

### Illustrative language translation and development initiatives across a refugee employee's journey



Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

**Learning and growth.** Organizations can help refugee employees grow by providing access to skill development and certification opportunities, helping them develop new skills, or reinforce existing skills that have become rusty, possibly due to a break from work during resettlement. Investing in professional development is particularly important for refugee employees who often find themselves serving in roles below their skill level. Organizations can also encourage professional growth by exposing refugee employees to opportunities for professional growth, and by connecting them to supportive colleagues and potential mentors.

**Community-building.** Creating and promoting initiatives focused on building an inclusive culture at the individual and organizational level can increase employee engagement across refugee and nonrefugee employee populations and increase retention. Buddy programs, organizational communities, and broader programming can help refugee employees connect with their colleagues, feel more at home, and begin to overcome the feeling of displacement.

**Flexibility and well-being.** Designing effective flexibility and well-being solutions—or providing access to those made available by local nonprofits or resettlement agencies—can foster a deeper sense of loyalty to the organization, increasing refugee employee retention rates and driving them to recruit others. For example, flexible work schedules and time-off policies can be enormously helpful for refugee employees who often face exceptional scheduling challenges like immigration appointments.

## Welcomed into the workplace

Even the smallest steps can make meaningful impacts on refugee employees and their employers. By developing an understanding of employees' backgrounds and recognizing their skills and goals, employers can truly help refugee employees feel welcomed into—and thrive within—the workplace. While refugee employees come from diverse backgrounds and may require unique support to get their footing in new countries and new work environments, they share many of their colleagues' aspirations, such as the desire to succeed, grow, and build better lives for their families. Employers that recognize this fact and focus on fostering inclusion for their refugee employees will likely improve the experiences of their entire workforce and build a stronger and more connected organization.

Our report aims to help companies bridge the gap between intention and action by offering guiding principles, inclusion initiatives, action steps, case studies, and anecdotes based on research and interviews with refugees, employers, and other experts. By deploying these initiatives, employers have a unique opportunity to improve the lives of refugees while also bettering the businesses in which they work.

For more information, download our full report, *A new home at work: An employer's guidebook to fostering inclusion for refugee employees*.

## Endnotes

1. The Tent Foundation & Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, *U.S. employers' guide to hiring refugees*, January 2018; The Tent Foundation, "Refugees work: A humanitarian investment that yields economic dividends," May 2016; and Philippe Legrain, *Step up: How to get refugees into work quickly*, Tent Partnership for Refugees, August 2017.
2. David Dyssegaard and Cyierra Roldan, *Refugees as employees: Good retention, strong recruitment*, Tent Partnership for Refugees & Fiscal Policy Institute, May 2018.
3. Deborah L. DeHaas, Brent Bachus, and Eliza Horn, *Unleashing the power of inclusion*, Deloitte, 2017; Juliet Bourke and Bernadette Dillon, "The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths," *Deloitte Review* 22, January 22, 2018; Erik Larson, "New research: Diversity + inclusion = better decision making at work," *Forbes*, September 21, 2017.
4. Bourke and Dillon, "The diversity and inclusion revolution."

## About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

Tent is mobilizing the private sector to improve the lives and livelihoods of the more than 25 million men, women, and children who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries. As traditional actors struggle to cope with the global refugee crisis—with ever-increasing numbers of refugees, displaced for longer periods of time—it is clear that businesses have a more important role than ever before. Tent works closely with businesses to help them identify and understand opportunities to help refugees. Learn more at [tent.org](http://tent.org).

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# A new home at work

An employer's guidebook to fostering inclusion for refugee employees

## About the Tent Partnership for Refugees

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Deloitte Consulting LLP's Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) services, as well as its Refugee Community of Interest, support clients in tackling some of the biggest challenges in our changing world and workforce. Deloitte's D&I consulting practice serves clients through cutting-edge solutions that engage diverse talent; build inclusive leaders; and foster innovative, courageous, and equitable cultures. The Refugee Community of Interest, based out of the Government & Public Sector practice, aims to provide smart migration solutions across the refugee resettlement process to governments, NGOs, and companies. Read more about Deloitte's [D&I Services](#) and [GPS Practice](#) on Deloitte.com.



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# Introduction

AS ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDER the workforce of the future and the talent required to win in an increasingly diverse, global, and socially conscious marketplace, some have looked toward refugees<sup>†</sup> as a new source of talent. The addition of the refugee population provides an opportunity to both drive positive business outcomes and help with one of the world's more pressing problems: the global refugee crisis.

Forced displacement levels are surging to their highest levels ever; there are currently 25.4 million refugees around the world.<sup>1</sup> With tight labor markets and aging demographics in many countries, many businesses see refugees as a way to meet labor shortages. This focus also has a clear social impact: According to a report by the Tent Partnership for Refugees, after initial settlement into a host society, “getting refugees promptly into work is a top priority, for it fast-tracks their ‘integration’ [and] helps neutralize the claim that they are a burden.”<sup>2</sup>

Research conducted by Deloitte in collaboration with Tent—including dozens of interviews with employers, refugee employees, and experts—has highlighted that successfully employing refugees demands more than a hiring decision. It is important to foster a culture of inclusion that unlocks the potential of refugee employees once they hit the ground. While many employers and refugee employees report positive experiences overall, they report challenges as well, especially in the first few months. Cultural differences, mismatched roles

for the refugees' skill sets, or simply different understandings of how day-to-day work gets done can impede successful workplace inclusion. While hiring is an important first step, employers should consider developing effective post-hiring workplace inclusion strategies that support refugee employees. Defining these inclusion strategies typically requires an investment up front, in the first few months of a refugee's employment, which can yield significant benefits for the employer in the long run—by creating a culture in which all individuals feel as though they connect, belong, and can grow within the organization, benefiting the business overall.

This guide, based on this joint research, aims to help companies bridge the gap between intention and action. The following sections offer a range of initiatives that employers of refugees can use to foster inclusion for refugee employees in their workplaces, striking a balance between broader inclusion efforts and those that specifically focus on refugee employees. Due to the focused research for this article, most of the guiding principles, inclusion initiatives, action steps, examples, and anecdotes are refugee-specific—however, employers may find that some of these initiatives seem familiar and can simultaneously help drive inclusion across all employee groups. By identifying and deploying these initiatives, employers can help build an inclusive environment that ultimately benefits the entire workforce and helps to drive positive business outcomes.

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<sup>†</sup>Under international law, a refugee is an individual who is “unable to return to his or her home country due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group.” Refugees are being resettled from a “number of conflicts around the world—protracted conflicts throughout central Africa, the civil war in Syria, and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma,” to name a few. See Tent Partnership for Refugees, “U.S. employers' guide to hiring refugees,” January 2018.

# Understanding refugee workplace inclusion

**T**HIS GUIDE DRAWS on extensive primary, ethnographic research and established leading practices across diversity and inclusion (D&I) and employee experience. It offers an approach to support employers in fostering inclusion for refugee employees and is composed of inclusion initiatives in six key areas:

- Preboarding and onboarding;
- Employee and team readiness;
- Language translation and development;
- Learning and growth;
- Community-building; and
- Flexibility and well-being.

## THE VALUE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations have found value in hiring refugees, Tent studies show.<sup>3</sup> Those that successfully foster inclusion for refugee employees can realize increased overall benefits, including:

**Increased retention and recruitment.** Building an inclusive environment improves employee satisfaction with their roles. Research indicates that refugee employees, in particular, have as much as a 15 percent higher retention rate than their nonrefugee counterparts—for example, in the manufacturing sector, refugee employees have a 4 percent annual turnover rate compared with the 11 percent industry average.<sup>4</sup> Job satisfaction can also encourage refugee employees to recruit family, friends, and other community members into the organization, creating a valuable pipeline. As one HR leader stated, “Once refugees found a great place to work and a great life, word spread, and they’d share it with family and friends; a local refugee resettlement



agency would then identify [our company] as an employer of choice.”

**Increased productivity and innovation.** Research shows employees of inclusive organizations to be generally more productive than those elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> With respect to the refugee population, investments in upskilling can help unlock those employees’ potential, leading to increased productivity and value in the long run. Similarly, encouraging them to speak up and participate in the workplace, such as by sharing unique perspectives and providing day-to-day feedback, can result in more inclusive decision-making and innovation. Research has shown inclusive teams seeing a 20 percent increase in innovation and making better business decisions 87 percent of the time.<sup>6</sup>

**Employee engagement and growth.** Encouraging nonrefugee employees to help build an inclusive environment by fostering a sense of community that includes their refugee colleagues can help improve engagement and job satisfaction, boosting team performance and team collaboration across an organization.<sup>7</sup> According to the CEO of a manufacturing company, “As you get deeper into the refugee community, and figure out what they need, you find out what other employees need, too.” As leaders gain compassion for one group of employees, they realize that across an entire workforce

“there are things going on in their lives you might not have noticed before.”

**Enhanced brand and reputation.** Building a more inclusive environment that includes refugee employees helps strengthen current employee engagement and future employee recruitment. These steps demonstrate an organization’s commitment to social impact and can help promote a positive public reputation. When companies take steps to support refugees, a Tent study found, some “consumers tend to be more likely to purchase their products than they would be if the brands and organizations were not taking these actions.”<sup>8</sup>

#### THE VALUE FOR REFUGEE EMPLOYEES

Refugee employees in an inclusive workplace generally feel welcomed and have an equal opportunity to connect, belong, and grow. They share equal access to all resources, benefits, and opportunities that are available to nonrefugee employees—including training, mentorship programs, and support networks—to help advance their skills and careers.

Of equal importance, an inclusive organization is one that enables, refugees, like all employees, to

bring their “authentic” selves to work. Research shows that when an employee “covers”—that is, intentionally or unintentionally hides or downplays a part of their identity—they are less likely to take risks, share opinions, and genuinely connect with others.<sup>9</sup> Employers have an opportunity to actively create space for employees to avoid “covering”—when safe and when appropriate for the workplace—the many facets of who they are in pursuit of better business outcomes. Giving permission, either explicitly or implicitly, for employees to openly share and express, for example, status as a refugee or one’s country of origin, empowers employees to work hard, speak up, and contribute to an organization in meaningful ways.<sup>10</sup> This, in turn, can help them find a greater purpose at work through the organization’s mission and navigate a successful career.

Helping refugee employees in the workplace can also aid their broader integration into society. Tent research shows that refugees “want to start rebuilding their lives and become self-reliant again. In addition to providing an income, work makes refugees feel valued and proud that they are giving something back.”<sup>11</sup>

# Components of the guide

**D**ELOITTE AND TENT'S research focused solely on refugee employees and was based on nearly 100 interviews with refugee employees, employers, and other experts across multiple industries, including at nonprofit organizations. It is important to note that although the research had a specific scope, many of the findings are intended to be applicable to all employees. These conversations and supporting independent research helped identify a key set of leading practices, organized into the following sections:

**Guiding principles** serve as a foundation for employers when developing the inclusion initiatives. The principles include interview insights that reflect workplace inclusion needs and successful programs at other organizations that have been shown to have benefited refugee employees.

**Inclusion initiatives** are leading practices that employers can use to help design their inclusion strategies. While the guiding principles serve as a foundation for effective inclusion, the inclusion initiatives are tactical steps that employers can take to address the needs of refugee employees. The benefits of any initiatives need not be limited to refugees—employers can choose to expand the scope of the initiatives to support all employee populations.

It is important to note that the inclusion initiatives are not an exhaustive list of what organizations can—or need to—do to foster inclusion for refugee employees. Rather, they are a menu from which

employers can choose steps that best address their organization's needs.

**Taking action** provides considerations for employers when designing and delivering inclusion initiatives, especially how to build the initiatives into existing talent strategies, including:

- *Employment dimensions.* These serve as a lens through which employers can determine which initiatives to choose and how to implement them based on organizational needs. Employers should identify the characteristics that best define their organization and consider the implications of the inclusion initiatives they may implement.
- *Talent life cycle integration.* Employers should think about how specific initiatives fit within the context of their talent life cycle—hiring, performance management, leadership development, exiting an organization, and everything in between. This section includes illustrative *programs* in action to highlight how initiatives fit into existing programs and processes.
- *Stakeholder engagement.* The inclusion initiatives in this guide require support from across the organization. This section highlights the stakeholders needed to help build, scale, and sustain inclusion initiatives.
- *Measurement.* This section articulates different approaches to defining and measuring the success of inclusion initiatives.

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## IDENTIFYING SECTOR-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

During the research process, Deloitte and Tent spoke with employers and refugee employees in the consumer products, consumer services, hospitality, technology, telecom, financial services, and real estate sectors. Throughout this guide, the icons in figure 1 will help employers identify sector-specific information. Note that the findings in this guide are still relevant to organizations that fall outside the listed sectors.

FIGURE 1

### Sector icons



Source: Deloitte analysis.

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# Guiding principles

**B**ASED ON THE research and interviews conducted, seven common inclusion principles were identified that can support organizations in designing and implementing inclusion initiatives for refugee employees.

## Identity

Many refugee employees would prefer to not adopt the label of refugee as a primary identifier. As one refugee employee remarked, “*Refugee* is a legal status, not a human status.” Because refugees, like all employees, come from different backgrounds and have multiple intersecting identities, organizations should be mindful of treating them as a homogenous group. This one-size-fits-all approach can be a “common pitfall” for organizations who are otherwise thinking in the right way about refugee workplace inclusion, according to one prominent talent-matching organization.<sup>12</sup>

Some refugee employees seek to maintain their refugee identity; others hope to shed it over time. Inclusion in the workplace should therefore accommodate a variety of refugee identities, and organizations may want to avoid clearly “calling out” refugees because of their assigned legal status. After all, in many countries refugees can eventually gain full citizenship.

## Access

Workplace inclusion does not always center on building or deploying new, customized services. Refugee employees are often entering unfamiliar working environments and may have natural knowledge gaps. Employers can provide them support to gain an understanding of—and access to—existing

programs, initiatives, and services that already serve other employees.

For example, one financial services leader found that some refugees had relevant skills but didn't understand the importance of banking regulations; to reinforce this message, she simply provided them access to additional trainings. Another manager realized that “some people from certain cultural backgrounds were less comfortable saying when they didn't understand” and therefore never asked for support or clarification.<sup>13</sup> Proactively working to mitigate these gaps in access and understanding helps build a culture in which all employees can benefit from what employers offer, helping them become more valuable—and valued—members of the workforce.

## Shared impact

Some inclusion initiatives designed specifically for refugee employees may also help deliver other foundational diversity and inclusion outcomes. This can improve the overall employee experience, strengthen organizational culture, and support business outcomes. One CEO noticed that hiring and including refugees “inspires and engages the staff and makes them feel like this is a great place to work.” In addition, thinking about how to foster inclusion for refugees may help create a more welcoming and productive environment for all employees.

## Growth

Refugee employees, like other employees, want to grow personally and professionally, and employers can encourage growth by assigning roles

that both fit business needs and employees' skill sets, strengths, and interests. This can yield multiple long-term benefits, including accelerating personal growth and helping people find a sense of purpose.

Prioritizing personal and professional growth for refugee employees can sometimes be difficult. As one recruiter at a bank admitted, "Even if someone was a CFO in their home country, it may be challenging to match them up here" in the same type of role.<sup>14</sup> This challenge is compounded by the fact that refugee employees' professional backgrounds are often misunderstood in their new workplaces. This is exacerbated when refugees lack formal documentation of education, certifications, or work experience.

Nonetheless, it is important for organizations to consider how to best encourage growth for refugee employees, the first step of which is for organizations to decide who will drive refugee inclusion efforts. If owned solely as a corporate social responsibility or social impact-related initiative, inclusion is likely to be handled as a more philanthropic effort than a business-driven one. Refugee inclusion is instead better viewed as a business decision and investment, which can accelerate talent development and organizational value.

## Communication

Effective, rational, and clear communication—both from leadership and among employees, managers, and colleagues—creates a positive and transparent culture that is critical to successful inclusion. This may involve tailoring communication styles for refugee employees when necessary. For example, refugee employees expressed that regular and positive reinforcement was critical in helping them build confidence within their first few weeks, especially in new and unfamiliar working environments. In addition, since some refugee employees from certain cultures "don't question their boss"—as

a leading talent-matching organization put it—managers need to "encourage that kind of challenging of philosophies or ideas," for the benefit of both the employee and the organization.

An inclusive environment recognizes that various communication styles may be most effective in different places within an organization. One facet of inclusion is ensuring that employees can work well with people whose work styles or personality types are different from their own. Sometimes challenges arise when communications are either unclear and unfamiliar. In fact, according to one employer, some refugee employees can feel overwhelmed by bureaucracy and may feel more comfortable receiving formal, direct communications to help them clearly understand what is required. When creating an inclusive environment, organizations should facilitate clear and open communications to and among colleagues.

**Effective, rational, and clear communication—both from leadership and among employees, managers, and colleagues—creates a positive and transparent culture that is critical to successful inclusion.**

## Collaboration

Refugee employee inclusion is a collective effort. Employers can and should activate managers, colleagues, and leaders to help create an inclusive environment and support in delivering the inclusion initiatives. For example, colleagues with similar backgrounds as refugee employees could serve as mentors for their refugee employees. In addition, employers may benefit from involving existing refugee employees in the design and delivery of inclusion initiatives. As one refugee employee



stated, “Refugees are more than stakeholders—we are partners and should be included in the design of programs for us.”

Looking externally, building partnerships with external ecosystem players, such as nonprofits and governmental agencies, can often help to generate essential support and guidance throughout the process. “It is critical to find a partner organization,” one respondent said, adding that agencies can provide organizations with specialized support and coaching that they may struggle to offer on their own.

## Empathy

Refugee employees often face uniquely challenging circumstances, even after they have resettled. As a result, employers will find it helpful to build a culture of empathy across the organization. In this type of environment, refugee and nonrefugee employees can better connect and work together when

they can empathize with other colleagues, regardless of their background.

Fostering empathy involves managers and colleagues trusting that refugee employees want to work together, grow, and succeed, even though their journeys to do so may differ from other employees. For example, refugee employees often come from very different job markets and may need additional support to understand their new societies and workplaces. This is especially true when it comes to cultural norms, workplace expectations, and other similar components of a new job.

To build an understanding of others' experiences, it is important that organizations provide opportunities for all employees—refugees and non-refugees—to authentically share personal stories in judgment-free and nonevaluative spaces designed for the exchange of perspectives and ideas. One refugee employee stated, “What I experienced is unique. There are emotional shocks, and admitting these things is the way to get over it.”

# Inclusion initiatives

THE FOLLOWING SECTION offers some leading practices for organizations to consider when designing inclusion initiatives for refugee employees, both in the critical first months, as they adjust to their new roles, and longer-term. The inclusion initiatives outlined here are not an exhaustive list of what organizations can—or need to—do to foster inclusion for refugee employees. Rather, they comprise a menu from which employers can choose steps that best address their organization’s needs. Employers should first assess their own needs, those of their employees, examine their existing inclusion initiatives, and then pick and choose from the following menu of initiatives, which are organized into six thematic focus areas.

Designing and implementing inclusion initiatives for the first time, especially since many are focused on the early stages of a refugee employee’s journey in an organization, may require organizations to invest time and resource investments upfront. Over time, organizations can utilize the initiatives to support every additional cohort of refugee employees hired. In addition, these investments can be made to benefit nonrefugee employees as well—employers can choose to expand the scope of the targeted initiatives to apply them to all employees.



## Preboarding and onboarding

Adapting existing preboarding and onboarding programs can help build an inclusive culture and provide refugee employees with the information needed to succeed at the organization. One refugee employee stated, “The first six months are critical in terms of providing the proper level of company support.” In fact, most employers interviewed face the highest refugee employee attrition in the first month and an effective and tailored preboarding and onboarding program can increase retention rates.

**Preboarding program.** Adapting existing preboarding programs can help create a comfortable environment for refugee employees. It is important to remember that an employee’s journey with a company begins before the first day on the job. As such, an adapted preboarding program designed to help the employee feel a sense of belonging is important to support acclimation into to an unfamiliar working environment.

A simple but powerful tool is a clear *offer communication* sent to refugee employees before their first day. This could include typical administrative paperwork as well as a *leadership communication* that welcomes refugee employees on their first day. If

possible, it can be particularly powerful to deliver these communications in both the primary local language and the employee’s native language. Simple *meet-and-greets* before the first day, including a short tour and an introduction to managers and colleagues, can also help accelerate onboarding by creating early opportunities to build new connections.

**Organizationwide onboarding program.** Organizations can also adapt a

standard onboarding program to focus more intentionally on building an inclusive environment. By including refugee employees in a modified version of the onboarding program, those workers can feel a sense of belonging within the broader organization while also bonding with nonrefugee employees, helping create connections across all employee populations. This can be accomplished through minimal modifications—the goals of which are to help refugee employees feel an immediate sense of community, legitimacy, and achievement.

A simple *curriculum review*, at minimum, can help organizations identify activities within initial training programs that need to be modified or explained differently. In addition, providing hard copies of standard *onboarding materials* (with organizational background, values, policies, etc.) can help refugee employees and others understand the nuances of working in a new workplace culture. Finally, providing *uniforms and badges* early, where applicable, can often help refugee employees feel an immediate sense of connection, belonging, and pride within their new workplace.

Employers with more developed inclusion practices may also want to focus the first few weeks on helping refugee and nonrefugee employees form genuine connections. This can be accomplished by creating time for *open dialogue* between all employee groups, such as small group discussions about backgrounds. In addition, published *overviews of employees' home countries or cultures* (via email, an internal website, or printed, for example), of both refugee and nonrefugee employees, can introduce everyone to the organization's diversity.

**Refugee employee onboarding program.** Beyond standard employee onboarding programs, organizations can consider developing a refugee-specific onboarding program, through which refugee employees may access specifically relevant information, ask clarifying questions, and meet other refugee employees in a comfortable environment.

There are several refugee-specific initiatives that organizations can consider. A *Q&A session with*

*a translator*, for example, can help answer new refugee employee questions and provide a setting to educate refugee employees about resources offered by the organization, such as language development training, skills training/recertification programs, or transportation programs. In addition, since refugee employees are often in a new cultural environment, *workplace culture training* may be important to assist employees with workplace processes and etiquette. Finally, employers may choose to take additional steps to support employees in acclimating to their new community. This can include offering supplemental *cultural training*, providing refugee employees and others with *local resources*, such as a guide to navigating and experiencing the new community in which they live, or a *welcome box* with items representing the local culture.

### ✓ KEEP IN MIND

- The suggested initiatives can be incorporated into the organization's existing onboarding approach (for example, a program can be concentrated in a few days or dispersed over several weeks) and can be delivered either in-person or virtually.
- Companies can determine whether the refugee employee-specific sessions should replace a portion of or supplement the broader employee onboarding.
- In refugee employee-specific onboarding, language needs may be a key consideration based on the skills of the group.
- Where possible, consider continued engagement with nonprofit or placement agencies that connected the employee with the employer throughout the onboarding process, so that the employee has contact with familiar individuals while getting acclimated.
- Provided that refugee employees are comfortable, expand the refugee employee onboarding initiatives to nonrefugee employees who are interested in learning more about, and with, their new refugee colleagues.

## CASE STUDIES: PREBOARDING AND ONBOARDING



### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

At a US-based food manufacturer, leaders realized that while many refugee employees had the skills to succeed, they lacked the foundational principles of operating within a new work environment. The company expanded its standard welcome program to a weeklong set of trainings on how its products are made, health and safety, enrolling in benefits, and company history, culture, and values. Signs and handbooks were translated, and a translator was made available when needed—especially important given that some new employees were illiterate in their own language. Crafting a tailored onboarding program for refugee employees led to a more effective and inclusive onboarding program for everyone.

A Canadian-based manufacturer focused on the importance of the first 90 days, developing a flagship inclusion program that aimed to provide refugees with the skill set needed to operate effectively at work. The program involved developing skills tailored to a new, Canadian work environment (for example, punctuality, business communication, and how to speak about skills), and job coaches to help build community and language skills. This 90-day window set expectations for refugee employees to get up to speed within this time frame, at which point expectations and responsibilities would mirror those of any other employee.



### CONSUMER SERVICES

A Danish employer provided key trainings—such as technical health, safety, and job skill topics—in the refugees' native languages, while they took Danish classes after work. The employer also focused on expanding its onboarding program to focus more broadly on organizational culture, core values, and other important elements of Danish workplaces. The company also provided local mentors for refugee employees to help them navigate things such as public transit and immigration appointments.



### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A German company utilized a six-month internship program which focused on providing refugee employees with language and cultural skills that could help them thrive in their new roles. The company partnered with multiple local NGOs to help provide these trainings and customized them based on what types of internship roles each refugee employee had. Leaders used this temporary approach to build in time for refugee employees and managers alike to help determine whether certain teams were a good fit. This program proved valuable for the company: Many refugee employees have stayed on, and some have become the employer's first Arabic-speaking customer services representatives.



### FINANCIAL SERVICES

A European bank built an introductory banking program delivered across four two-day modules, with homework between each session. The program exposed refugees to local work culture, the financial sector, and how to launch a career in the banking sector. Trainers focused on giving higher-skilled refugees the tools and understanding that they need to succeed in financial services organizations and provided the employer with a pipeline for potential hiring. This included learning about cultural norms and values and the rules of the banking industry.

## Employee and team readiness

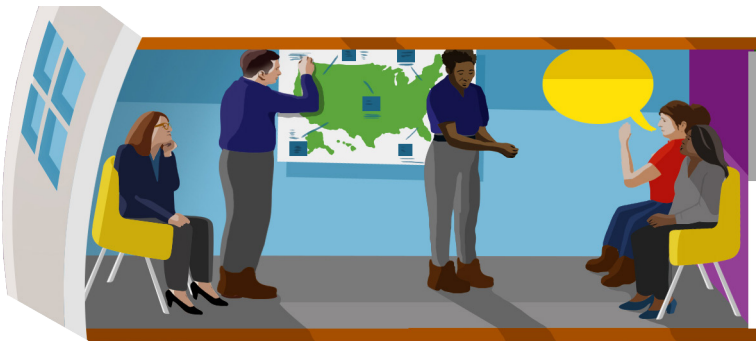
Organizations can prepare employees and teams to work with new refugee colleagues and provide them with resources to support themselves and refugee employees in creating an inclusive environment.

**Building understanding.** Organizations can benefit from helping employees and teams build an understanding of their refugee colleagues' backgrounds and what is expected from them when working with refugee employees. Early and regular *leadership communications* are key to empowering managers and colleagues, especially in helping to explain the value that refugees can bring to the organization. These can also help set *expectations and awareness* around what to expect when working with refugee employees. To help build comfort, it is also important that managers help teams *understand the backgrounds*, skill levels, cultures, and unique circumstances of their refugee colleagues. For example, many refugee employees have experienced unforeseen challenges during their journey, including long spans without a job; these obstacles, and related employment gaps, sometimes lower refugees' self-confidence and make it more difficult for them to adjust to a new workplace. Additionally, organizations with more established inclusion practices can develop formal *inclusion trainings* to train managers and colleagues on leading diversity and inclusion practices to sufficiently equip them to work and manage diverse teams.

**Supporting refugee colleagues.** Organizations can provide managers and colleagues of refugee employees with helpful tools and information, given that this will likely be a new experience for them as well. This can ease the inclusion process and simultaneously develop them into stronger leaders by enabling them to work alongside employees from diverse backgrounds.

Simple support tools are an important place to start: A *checklist* helps provide guidance about how managers can engage with refugee employees, especially soon after hiring. Providing employees with the same list of *local resources* provided to refugees can help them answer questions that refugee employees may pose, such as how to open a bank account or take the bus. Finally, *support structures* and resources can be provided to managers and colleagues to help address needs that arise. For example, when working with refugee employees, a dedicated point of contact within HR may be beneficial to answer manager questions. Where resources are available, employers can also establish an online platform to house a central repository of FAQs and discuss and share leading practices.

**Structuring the team.** Structuring a balanced employee team encourages cross-cultural interactions, driving increased engagement across employee groups. When *distributing a cohort*, employers should therefore aim to design balanced teams that include both refugee and nonrefugee employees; these teams would ideally include at least two refugee employees, to create a point of reference for each other's growth. Alternatively, in the early stages, employers may choose to design teams that solely comprise refugee employees to mitigate communication and cultural barriers. When doing so, employers need to proactively define clear lines of communication and connection points between refugee employees and nonrefugees, across teams, to continue creating opportunities for cross-cultural interaction.



## ✓ KEEP IN MIND

- Organizations with more mature inclusion practices may have existing training programs. These organizations should utilize and adapt them to include considerations around refugee inclusion.
- While balancing the distribution of employees into teams, organizations should always maintain a business-first perspective. As such, employees, including refugee employees, are best hired and placed on teams based on where they will add the most value to the organization.
- Employers should routinely check in with managers and colleagues and the refugee employees themselves, especially in the early stages, to understand their experiences and collect any lessons that can be learned. Creating an open forum for managers and colleagues, as well as refugee employees, can be beneficial in understanding challenges and ways of improving.
- Where possible, companies may want to consider engaging with nonprofit or placement agencies focused on preparing teams to work with refugee employees—for example, organizations that can provide information about the backgrounds of refugees who have settled in the region.

### CASE STUDIES: EMPLOYEE AND TEAM READINESS



#### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

A Europe-based food manufacturer focused on diversity and inclusion training for its staff. This was important given that many employees had been there for more than 20 years without such a significant change in hiring practices, and many were skeptical of how refugee colleagues would fit in. Hiring and fostering inclusion for refugees gave managers a new and unique opportunity to develop cross-cultural teams, ultimately strengthening the company through enhanced collaboration to solve other business challenges.



#### CONSUMER SERVICES

A European facilities management company prepared managers with detailed backgrounds—specifically, education and skills—of new refugee employees so that managers could help assign relevant tasks or projects. This also helped enlighten managers to the diverse backgrounds of refugee employees, many of whom arrived with broad work experience and educational achievements. To combat those who were more private about their qualifications, this employer encouraged refugees to share their skills and experiences—and to seek out opportunities to grow at the company.



#### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A telecommunications company provided managers with several tools to prepare for the hiring and inclusion of refugee employees. Initially through an informational call, the program team offered managers information on the refugee crisis, what it means to be a refugee, challenges the new employees might be facing, and background on cultural differences. The employer also set up an informational webpage and hotline for managers to address urgent questions or provide advice on how to deal with an unfamiliar situation. These tools were key in helping mitigate potential biases and misunderstandings around the refugee journey to their company and prepare managers to more effectively and quickly bring new refugee employees onto their teams.

## Language translation and development

Employers may look to offer language translation and development resources to refugee employees who do not speak the local language within the organization. This can help support refugees in navigating the workplace, engage with their colleagues, grow within the organization, and feel comfortable in their new home.

**Translation resources.** Refugees can benefit significantly from translation resources in the early stages of their employment, especially as they begin acclimating to the workplace and their new society. These resources can enable the employees, who may lack proficiency in the local language(s), to execute their job responsibilities early in their tenure and to interact with others in the workplace more smoothly and more often.

There are several areas in which organizations can provide support when it comes to translation. At a minimum, organizations can simply build *resource awareness* by publicizing existing day-to-day language translation resources. In addition, organizations can develop *translation sheets* that translate key job-related phrases and vocabulary. Similarly, employers can consider developing *translated signage*, or *visual signage* with pictures and icons, to ensure that important pieces of information, such as safety signage, can be easily understood by everyone.

Finally, employers may look to leverage the services of two different types of translators—first, employee translators who speak both languages could be asked to serve as informal translation support for their colleagues. Second, for organizations with available resources, formal translators could be hired to support the employer and employees and to navigate more complex conversations (for example, performance reviews and other HR conversations). If constraints make using translators difficult, call-in translation services can be useful for some types of meetings.

**Language development opportunities.** In addition to translation support, companies can help

refugee employees access language development opportunities designed to develop proficiency in the local language(s).

To foster language development, it is important to design inclusive environments where language development is accelerated. When *structuring teams*, it is important to strike a balance between those who speak the local language and those who do not. Organizations should aim to include both local language speakers, to encourage refugee employees to practice the local language(s), and multilingual employees, where possible, to create a comfortable environment for refugee employees to converse in their native language. This balance will help those who have a challenge with the local language feel more comfortable while challenging them to build the skills they need to be successful in the long term. In addition, employers can consider developing *immersion environments* in which refugee employees who are not native to the local language are incentivized to spend more regular time exclusively speaking the local language. “No matter how much ESL [English as a second language] training somebody has, they will learn better on the job,” said one manager.

Outside the team environment, *language exchanges* can help connect refugee employees looking to learn the local language(s) with colleagues looking to learn the refugees' language, creating opportunities for language development as well as community-building. For employers with available resources, *formal language development* classes and language certification programs, either developed internally or subsidized externally, have proven successful.



## ✓ KEEP IN MIND

- Organizations without current employees who speak the same language as the refugee employees may have to rely more on formal in-house translators, external third-party support, and/or outside translation tools.
- Refugee employees hired into roles with a high degree of customer and colleague interaction may require more immediate and intensive language development.
- Companies can consider providing compensation, either monetary or through recognition (for example, an “Organization Translator” sticker or badge), to employees who support language development efforts.
- In select regions, governments and NGOs may support initial language development (pre-employment) for refugee employees. Employers can take these efforts into consideration as they design their own programs.
- As refugee employees develop their own language skills, they can also serve as translators and trainers to support their new refugee and other colleagues.

## CASE STUDIES: LANGUAGE TRANSLATION AND DEVELOPMENT



### CONSUMER SERVICES

A multinational European employer recognized that not understanding the local language was impeding refugee employees’ growth within the organization. Since these individuals lacked the time to take formal language classes outside of work, the company teamed up with a technology firm to build an app that pushed language lessons to refugee employees’ phones, focusing on relevant business vocabulary specific to their jobs. This helped refugees take ownership over their language acquisition, aiding their integration into the workplace.



### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

A Canadian company, concerned about workplace safety, focused on rapid language acquisition for refugee employees, assigning long-term English coaches and pairing refugee employees with other colleagues for language practice over lunch. These skills helped give refugee employees the confidence to grow quickly and seek out new projects at work and helped them expand their networks more quickly with other colleagues across the company.



## Learning and growth

Ongoing learning and growth opportunities are critical in helping refugee employees continue to grow and add value to the organization.

**Skill development and certifications.** Organizations can help refugee employees grow by providing access to skill development and certification opportunities, helping them develop new skills, or reinforce existing skills that have become rusty, possibly due to a break from work during resettlement. In addition, refugee employees who developed skills in their home countries often face the challenge of having new managers and co-workers not understand their qualifications, due to cultural or language barriers. Certification opportunities help them formalize their skills, benefiting both the employees and the organization.

It is important that the organization provide role-specific *initial training* to support refugee employees in building the basic skills needed to succeed in their new roles. Courses can be tailored to fit refugee employee backgrounds; individuals may even require basic training—in, for example, mathematics—if the employee has received little or no formal education in the past. Once onboarded, organizations can continue to provide access to *ongoing learning and development* opportunities, including *certification opportunities*, to support refugee employees in their careers—either for the type of work they did before they were displaced or for the new jobs they are seeking. If possible, class and study time can be carved out from employees' workweek schedule, further demonstrating organizational commitment to inclusion and employee growth. To make the investment in a certification course worthwhile for refugee employees, employers may choose to ask these employees to commit to working for the organization for a specified amount of time after completing the course, similar to how some firms subsidize employees' graduate degrees in return for a commitment of a few years of work.

**Exposure to growth opportunities.** Organizations can encourage professional growth by exposing refugee employees to new opportunities,



and by connecting them to colleagues and leaders who can help them develop the skills to succeed. Regardless of background, refugee employees are often placed in unskilled roles at the start of their employment, and exposing them to growth opportunities within the organization will help drive engagement and build loyalty.

Employers can find it beneficial to explain to refugee employees—especially to those high-skilled workers hired for low-skilled roles—the *value of the role* beyond the paycheck, such as gaining access to opportunities for language development, advancement, and overall growth. One Danish employer explains to refugee employees that “American and European students have part-time jobs waiting tables and cleaning, and that it is normal to start off somewhere;” refugee employees “are then more willing to start somewhere.” Of course, even after refugee employees accept entry-level positions, employers can help steer them down *personalized growth paths*, beginning with a skills assessment as early as possible after onboarding, and then help guide refugee employees, who may be unfulfilled in their current roles, to future opportunities.

Once refugee employees advance in their careers, employers can *showcase and build on other employees' successes* to highlight that growth is possible within the organization. To multiply the impact of employee success, organizations can establish a formal *mentorship program*, in which mentors offer guidance and answer growth-related questions. Additionally, *leadership introductions* can be vital to advancement; employers can facilitate introductions between refugee employees and leaders in their areas of interest to help showcase

available growth opportunities and help them expand their networks.

**Leadership opportunities.** Providing employees with access to leadership opportunities can help employees find a sense of purpose and provide organizations with fresh, diverse perspectives. One way to provide such opportunities to refugees is for organizations to ask tenured refugee employees to serve as *mentors or trainers* for both new refugee and nonrefugee employees. Organizations can also create a simple way for refugee employees to offer recommendations on areas where *improvements may be needed* and give them the opportunity to start *special projects* to help facilitate change within the organization. For example, many refugee employees may have entrepreneurial qualities that can help teams grow and succeed, and they may be interested in seeking out projects or initiatives to showcase their skills and abilities to work beyond their current roles.

**Communication and feedback.** Emphasizing a culture of open and positive communication and feedback is highly valuable for employees, especially for refugee employees who may come from environments in which such behavior is not commonplace. Employers can help by conveying that it is *acceptable to speak up* and ask clarifying questions, reinforcing the message through posted signs and facilitating regular conversations with

managers and mentors. Doing so will encourage refugee employees to offer up unique and innovative ideas. In addition, organizations can tailor the *performance feedback* process by including more frequent check-ins to reinforce positive growth.

 **KEEP IN MIND**

- Employers can allocate time during the workday, if possible, for learning and development (for example, break times) for employees who may have external constraints that prevent them from staying extra hours.
- Organizations can provide compensation, either monetary or through recognition, to employees who support their colleagues' learning and growth.
- Digital platforms can be a powerful enabler, and organizations can use a variety of digital trainings and virtual mentors to spur learning and growth.
- In select regions, governments and NGOs may support pre-employment training for refugee employees. Employers should consider these programs as they work to build their own initiatives.
- Employers should consider placing new employees in roles where leadership support and colleague mentorship is available.

## CASE STUDIES: LEARNING AND GROWTH



### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

A European-based food manufacturer realized that not only did refugee employees lack local language skills—some had not completed secondary education in their home countries, impairing their ability to grow within the organization. Leaders set up informal math classes to help bring certain refugees up to speed with basic skills critical for workplace success, giving the employees a quick path to growth and increasing their productivity.

A Canadian company aimed to quickly bring in refugee employees, assigning them to positions that most closely matched their skills and previous experiences and offering basic safety training in their native language. Managers were encouraged to form trusting relationships with the refugees as quickly as possible by checking in with their teams, empowering the new employees to own problems and solutions, and giving positive but honest feedback.



### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

At one company, leaders realized that placing a refugee employee on a team purely because it seemed like a good cultural fit often resulted in the new employee having few responsibilities and being treated differently than nonrefugee co-workers. To mitigate this, leaders encouraged growth opportunities by ensuring that the roles refugee employees were taking on were filling actual business needs, challenging the employees to take on more difficult projects and roles to encourage learning. Since the employer made sure to place interns and full-time refugee employees in demanding parts of the business, those employees were able to take on projects, learn, and integrate quickly into the workplace.



### TECHNOLOGY

A US-based company set up a mentorship initiative to help refugee employees revamp their résumés. The employer also offered coding courses and built a rotational program, as well as a job shadowing program, in which refugee employees could temporarily take on new roles to help determine their next best move. This helped employees grow in the organization and find it an empowering place to work.

## Community-building

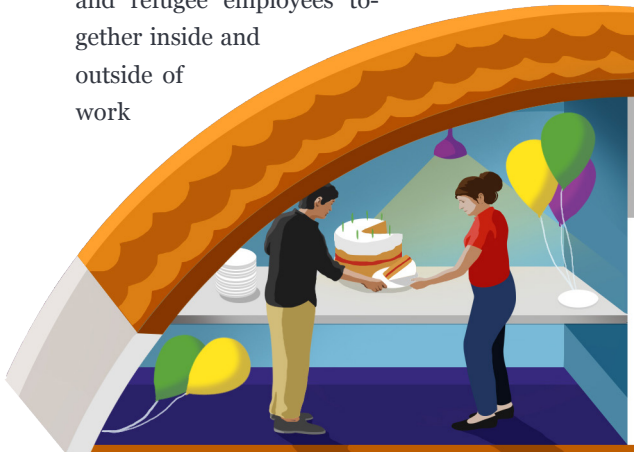
Community within the organization is an important factor in making refugee employees feel comfortable in their new workplace. “If the refugee feels like they are part of the family, all of the other stuff can be dealt with,” said one refugee employee’s co-worker. Creating and promoting initiatives focused on building an inclusive culture at the individual and organizational level can increase employee engagement across refugee and nonrefugee employee populations and increase retention.

**Buddy programs.** Employers can develop buddy programs that connect employees with both *refugee and nonrefugee buddies* who are already part of the local community. This can help to enable refugee employees to more quickly understand and acclimate to the local culture. In addition, introducing new employees to a buddy—such as new refugee employees with established refugee employees or even others from the diaspora—can help them navigate their new workplace by exposing them to perspectives from people who have similar backgrounds and experiences. Employers can help

arrange *regular buddy activities* for new employees, including regular lunches and excursions around the community—and allocate resources, where available, to encourage buddy pairs to meet inside and outside the workplace.

**Organizational communities.** Employers can develop organizational communities where employees can connect with each other. These communities can provide employees with a “home” outside their teams—in effect, a more formalized environment in which refugee and nonrefugee employees can build meaningful connections.

Research indicated that employers can help refugee employees build awareness of formal *professional and identity-based communities* where they may connect with other colleagues with similar interests or from a similar background. In addition, organizations may consider developing a *refugee employee identity community* (or affinity group, sometimes known as an employee or business resource group) to provide a space for new workers to connect with each other as well as a forum in which they can provide feedback to leadership on improvements for their community. Similarly, companies can create a *refugee volunteer group*—a community of both nonrefugee employees and refugee employees who may wish to volunteer their time to support their newly arrived co-workers. This can help interested colleagues identify support opportunities and help connect those who are already supporting refugee employees. Finally, organizations can create more *informal social groups* to bring nonrefugee and refugee employees together inside and outside of work



(for example, sports leagues or music groups) and foster a sense of community.

**Broader programming.** Additional programming may be important at the organization and team levels, as it can serve to bring people together and provide visibility to those who are unaware of—or who are not actively involved with—inclusion-related activities.

Employers can hold regular *team events* and socialization activities at which everyone can come together for events such as shared lunches, dinners, both local holidays and holidays observed by its employees, and birthday celebrations. An important part of this programming is refugee and nonrefugee employees *sharing stories about* their lives to help build cross-cultural understanding at the organizational level. These stories can also be shared with a wider audience through other means, including newsletters, seminars, podcasts, and short films. *Family programming* can encourage employees to bring their families together for special events, such as potluck dinners featuring dishes from native countries. Organizations can also host *offsite retreats* for employees and others from the broader refugee support community to encourage open conversations and new connections.

✓ KEEP IN MIND

- Community-building initiatives can be defined centrally, but most execution will likely fall to managers and colleagues.
- In any programming focused on sharing stories and discussing current events related to the employee personal experiences, including refugee employees, employers should remain mindful about sensitivities around these topics. In addition, organizers should set parameters for the conversation to ensure that discussion topics are appropriate for the workplace.
- Organizations can create community service opportunities for employees to support refugees in society, giving refugee and nonrefugee employees a unique, purpose-driven opportunity that also connects back to business priorities.

## CASE STUDIES: COMMUNITY-BUILDING



### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

At a Canada-based manufacturing company, one manager took his team out for a monthly lunch, each time to a different type of cuisine so they could experience a new culture together. This was meant to encourage more cultural awareness for colleagues as their workplace grew more diverse. The employer was also intentional about decisions such as seating arrangements on the team, since bringing refugee employees closer to English-speaking colleagues helped with language skills and team-building. These types of efforts inspired managers and other employees to be more inclusive throughout their day-to-day interactions with all colleagues.



### HOSPITALITY

A French food-services employer recognized the importance of leveraging its diverse workforce to support refugee employees. The company helped pair nonrefugee workers from Arabic-speaking countries with recently hired Syrian refugees to help foster a culture of belonging and mentorship. This program has helped the company build on its already-diverse workforce to create a more inclusive workplace.



### CONSUMER SERVICES

Taking an innovative approach to team-building, a Danish company hired young Danish people without education or work experiences into the same cohorts as refugee employees. The initiative proved to be a powerful way to bring together people from various backgrounds to learn hard skills, soft skills, and languages in a cross-cultural environment that fostered rapid growth and inclusion for everyone involved. The program also helped combat stereotypes and biases about refugees and younger unemployed locals—and generated an increase in productivity.



### FINANCIAL SERVICES

One German bank, using a module-based program to source and train potential refugee recruits, helped build a sense of community before their first day on the job, expediting the inclusion journeys for some new employees. When several participants began full-time roles, they were well prepared to succeed at work, in part because of the community and social skills they developed during the introductory program.



### REAL ESTATE

To foster community for refugee employees, a real-estate management firm organized welcome lunches and mentorship events and set aside a space for Muslim employees to break their fast during Ramadan. This also helped introduce other colleagues to unfamiliar traditions and cultures and increased cross-cultural collaboration and communication.

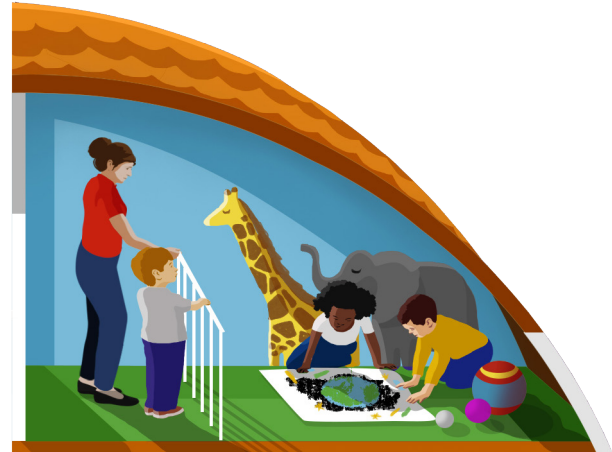
## Flexibility and well-being

Fostering inclusion for employees is about more than just providing them with good jobs and the training they need to be successful. It's also about designing and implementing initiatives that support them both in and out of the workplace, and for refugee employees considering the unique circumstances they face as forcibly displaced people. Designing effective flexibility and well-being solutions—or providing access to those made available by local nonprofits or resettlement agencies—can foster a deeper sense of loyalty to the organization, increasing refugee employee retention rates and driving them to recruit others.

**Flexible schedules.** Employers can create flexible work schedules and time-off policies designed to meet employees' needs, in particular the specific circumstances faced by refugee employees who often must deal with unique scheduling challenges. Building flexible schedules can make the day-to-day lives of refugee employees easier, ameliorate any fears they may have about asking for time off for important immigration appointments, and create transparency for managers in planning team schedules. All employees might find such policies valuable, but they are especially relevant to refugees who are simultaneously dealing with other aspects of resettlement.

## Fostering inclusion for employees is about more than just providing them with good jobs and the training they need to be successful.

Our research shows that *work schedule flexibility* may be an important need for refugee employees, helping them address their specific constraints, such as living farther from home without a driver's license or convenient public transport. Managers may choose to proactively engage refugee employees about the challenges they face and demonstrate an



understanding of their issues by designing a work schedule optimized to meet their specific needs. Such initiatives should, of course, strive to avoid compromising new employees' ability to perform, and organizations should consider extending such work schedule flexibility to nonrefugee colleagues. Employers can also build scheduled time off into refugee employee contracts for *immigration appointments*, allowing them to attend mandatory appointments for themselves and their families.

**Supplemental services.** Refugee employees often also face other external issues that can hamper their ability to meet a standard work schedule. Employers can work with refugee employees to identify potential challenges and provide access to supplemental services—leveraging the support of external resettlement agencies or nonprofits—that can help them acclimate to the workplace as they integrate into society.

Employers can arrange for *transportation support* for those employees who may lack access to their own transportation. Organizing community carpools can be enormously helpful, and employers with additional resources can provide transportation subsidies for public transport or transport vans. In addition, *childcare resources* are of interest to refugee and nonrefugee employees alike. If they aren't already doing so, employers can consider offering resources such as in-house day care or subsidies for external

care for all employees. This is relevant for refugee employees who might have arrived without a spouse and have no community support to help care for their children.

Employers can also provide or encourage access to *mental health services*, either on- or off-site, to support workers who may want to discuss the challenges they face. Where possible, employers should help refugee employees connect with a diverse network of mental health providers who can speak with employees in their native languages.

When considering designing these initiatives, employers can leverage, or at least partner with, the local refugee support ecosystem (including non-profits and/or resettlement agencies) to identify what services may already be available. If desired services are not externally available, employers may choose to design these in-house, provided they have the necessary resources, and can choose to provide access to all employee populations.

**Work environment.** Organizations can consider adapting the work environment to ensure it is inclusive of employee needs. Many refugee employees do not have previous experience in a western work environment and may be in a different type of workplace than they have previously experienced (for example, from an office to a plant). Adapting aspects of their new work environment to fit needs and communicating these differences effectively will help support their inclusion into the organization.

For refugee employees, employers may need to explicitly reinforce a basic understanding of key *workplace processes* (for example, booking meeting rooms in an office) that may be unique to the new society and/or workplace. Employers

should take into consideration *cultural and religious practices*, especially regarding restrictions that may make people uncomfortable—for instance, handling alcohol or certain types of food. In addition, *communal spaces*, such as break rooms, may be utilized to create welcoming environment for refugee employees. For example, a break room can have dedicated time slots blocked for prayer services. When it comes to *dress code*, organizations can consider taking a more flexible approach to account for cultural differences among refugee populations, providing items of clothing where needed—for example, inexpensive, plastic head covers for women in hijabs who are working in factory settings.<sup>15</sup>

### ✓ KEEP IN MIND

- It is important to standardize flexibility and well-being solutions designed for refugee employees to help ensure that employees do not need to ask for flexibility on a regular basis.
- Employers should communicate the initiatives and their needs to both refugee employees and the broader ecosystem to reduce any perceived concerns that refugee employees may have about asking for flexibility as well as any misconceptions about “work ethic” that other employees may have about their refugee colleagues.
- As refugee employees acclimate to their work environment and society, these accommodations may become less important for those individuals. An employer should take a refugee employee’s tenure and experience into consideration as it estimates demand and utilization rates for flexibility programs.

## CASE STUDIES: FLEXIBILITY AND WELL-BEING



### CONSUMER PRODUCTS

A US-based manufacturing company focused on building in flexibility for refugee employees. Many refugees expressed the need to visit their home countries—which would require a significant amount of time away from work—so the employer provided information about combining paid and unpaid time off. Due to these initiatives, and the workers' generally positive experience, refugee employees recruited many of their friends and family members to join the organization.

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At a US-based food manufacturer, some refugee employees wanted to return to school, so managers provided them the flexibility to take a day off to study for admissions exams. Others wanted more responsibilities and pay, so managers offered the flexibility of allowing job-shadowing shifts to show the result of a typical promotion. Refugee employees were provided the flexibility to make their job work for their unique situations, which, in turn, also helped the company. Leaders realized that while the refugee employees were grateful for the positions they had, many were curious about growth possibilities; offering the flexibility to help them meet these goals aimed to increase recruitment and retention in the long run.



### TECHNOLOGY

At a German company, HR representatives prepared managers by reminding them that while refugee employees usually have all the necessary skills to succeed, they still have undergone a unique and often difficult journey. Leaders encouraged managers to be mindful of what others may be going through and other commitments they have as they integrate into the workplace and the broader society. This was important, given that many refugee employees would not expect an employer to offer mental health or other types of mentorship services, and it was critical for managers to be vigilant about providing information about these resources to their new team members.



# Taking action

**W**HILE THE PREVIOUS section offers a menu of initiatives that an organization might take to foster inclusion, the following sections lay out a series of considerations for employers to use in identifying the initiatives that best fit their organizations and determining how to implement them effectively.

tactically about fostering inclusion for refugee employees (figure 2). This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and these considerations can be adapted and applied to the broader employee base. Each organization needs to consider the unique contexts of its own workplace and its employee base, and tailor its inclusion programs accordingly.

## Employment dimensions

Organizational differences such as size, structure, type of roles, and location affect how inclusion initiatives are designed and deployed. The implications outlined below are intended to help talent leaders—such as those who manage onboarding, learning and development, organizational effectiveness, or performance management programs—understand what their organizations can do to deliver inclusion initiatives based on their unique contexts. For instance, hiring dozens of lower-skilled refugee employees for a rural manufacturing facility will demand a different approach than hiring IT specialists at an urban technology campus.

The following dimensions, detailed further in the Appendix, can help organizations think more

**Each organization needs to consider the unique contexts of its own workplace and its employee base, and tailor its inclusion programs accordingly.**

## Talent life cycle integration

Employers should think about how specific initiatives fit within the context of their talent life cycle—from hiring, to performance management and leadership development, to exiting an organization, and everything in between. These initiatives are not meant to be a complete overhaul of employers' existing talent programs—they are intended to fit into existing programs, policies, and processes.

The following section includes an illustrative program that highlights how organizations might implement different initiatives across the talent life cycle (figure 3). The life cycle has been divided into three stages: *getting started* (the first few weeks),

*fostering engagement* (the first few months), and *continuing onward*. Please see the Appendix for the illustrative programs in action for the other focus areas.

FIGURE 2

## Employment dimensions

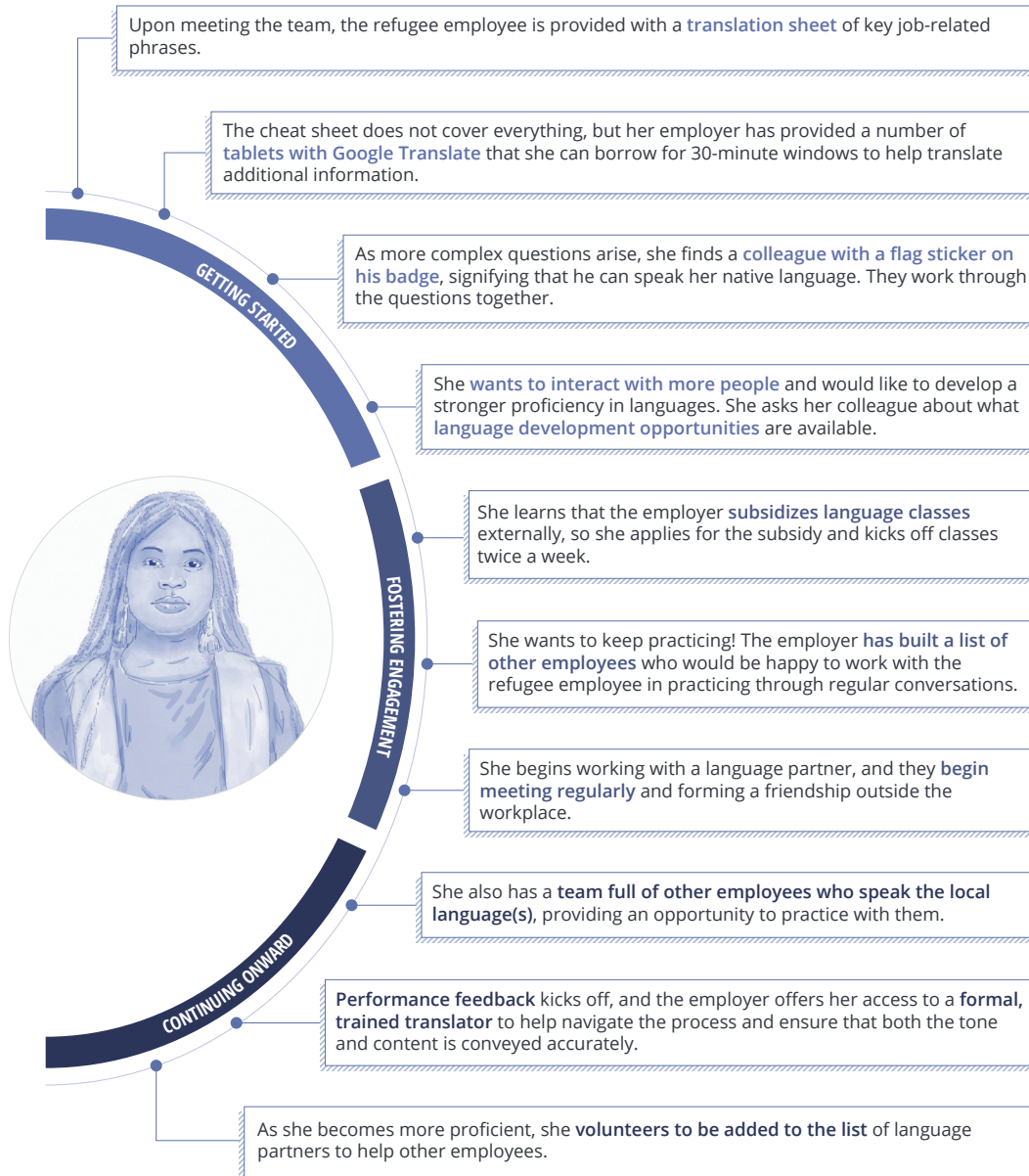
Please reference the Appendix for additional detail.



Source: Deloitte analysis.

FIGURE 3

## A sample program for onboarding refugee employees: Language translation and development



Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

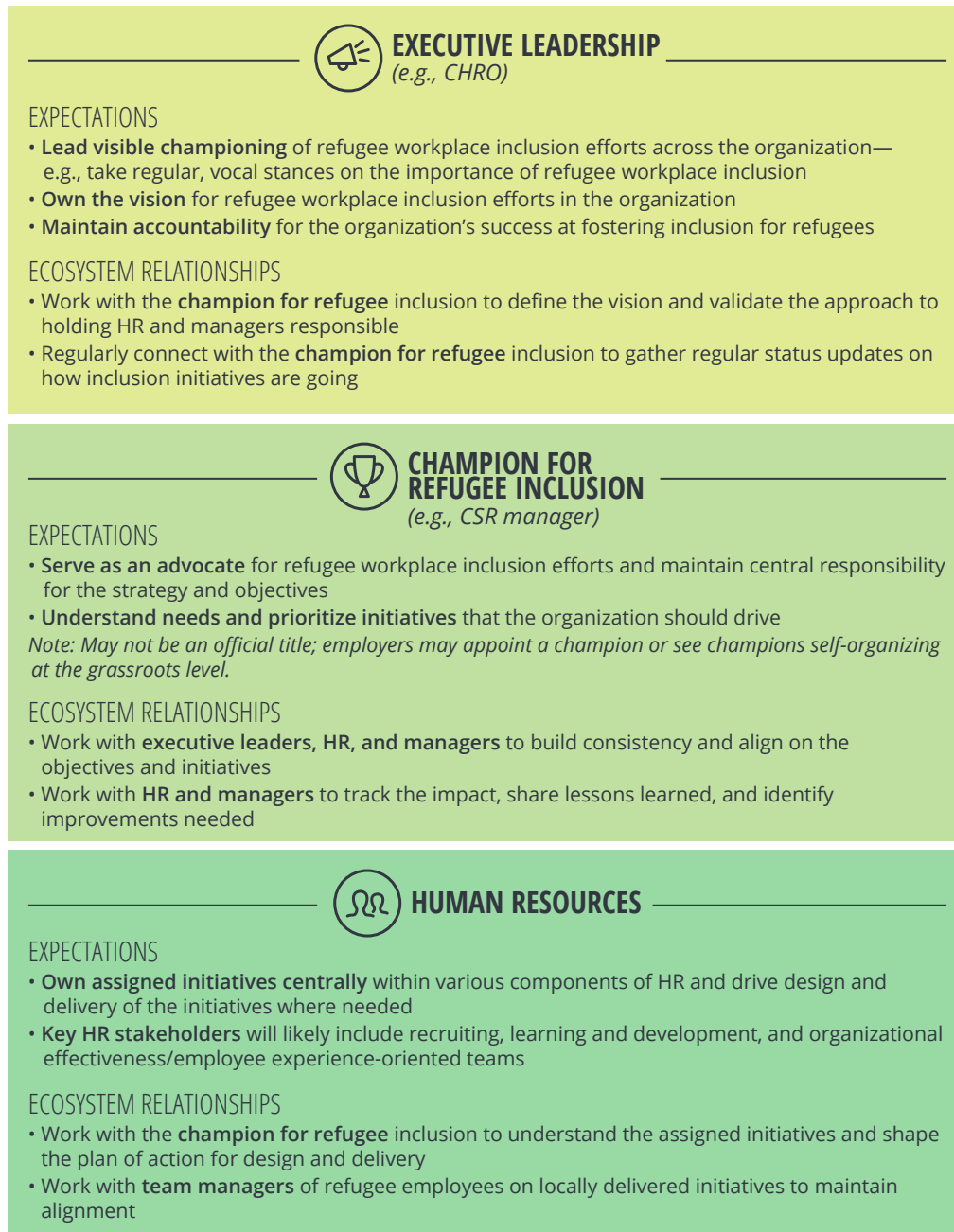
## Stakeholder engagement

These inclusion initiatives cannot be delivered alone—they require the support of the full organi-

zational ecosystem. This section highlights the set of stakeholders needed to help build, scale, and sustain the initiatives (figure 4).

FIGURE 4

### Stakeholders needed to help build, scale, and sustain initiatives to bring aboard refugee employees





## MANAGERS

### EXPECTATIONS

- **Own locally assigned initiatives** within individual teams, and drive design and delivery of initiatives where needed
- **Share best practices** with other managers hiring refugee employees onto their teams

### ECOSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

- Work with the **champion for refugee inclusion** to understand the assigned initiatives and shape the plan of action for design and delivery
- Work with **HR** on locally delivered initiatives to maintain alignment



## PROGRAM MANAGER

### EXPECTATIONS

- **Manage the initiatives** across both design and delivery efforts; this includes building timelines, gathering status updates, and communicating the program status to leadership

*Note: This role can be either part-time or full-time; role will become increasingly important as employers begin to implement initiatives at scale.*

### ECOSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

- Work with **HR and managers** to gather regular status updates
- Work with the **champion for refugee inclusion** to discuss potential improvements to the overall program and processes



## REFUGEE EMPLOYEES

### EXPECTATIONS

- **Provide perspectives** when asked about their inclusion needs during the design phase
- **Provide feedback** on their experiences with the inclusion initiatives, how they might be improved, and what new initiatives are needed

*Note: Refugee employees should only be involved in inclusion efforts if desired. Organizations should be careful about "tokenizing" refugee employees.*

### ECOSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

- Work with the **champion for refugee inclusion** to provide perspectives on needs and feedback, when required
- Regularly communicate how things are going to **HR and managers**

Source: Deloitte analysis.

## Measurement

As with any initiative, organizations need to define success and then measure the success of their inclusion efforts, aiming to help refine their efforts by revealing areas for improvement. Success can be measured through:

**Surveys.** Employers can use surveys to gather regular feedback from employees and their colleagues and managers. Surveys can reveal data on

everything from an employee's views of the inclusion initiatives (including areas for improvement) to the current comfort level within the organization, such as proficiency with processes and tools required to complete work.

**Metric tracking.** Setting and tracking metrics can help determine the impact of onboarding and growth programs for the organization and for refugee employees. It is important to note that many companies do not track refugee status and

may need to develop special mechanisms to effectively track metrics. Some examples include:

- Tracking attendance and participation rates of refugee employees in programs and activities;
- Retention, promotion, and attrition rates of refugee employees versus nonrefugee employees, and the trends over time;
- Performance ratings of refugee versus nonrefugee employees, and the trends over time;

- The number of refugee employees who join the organization through referrals; and
- Talent engagement/satisfaction data of refugee employees versus nonrefugee employees.

**Assessments.** Businesses can benefit from constantly assessing the performance of their refugee and other employee initiatives as well as the progress that those employees are making within the organization. For example, organizations can analyze their post-training and certification program assessments to determine overall skill growth for refugee employees.

# Conclusion

**E**VEN THE SMALLEST steps can make meaningful impacts on refugee employees and their employers. The initiatives described above serve as a foundation to help employers take steps to foster inclusion for refugee employees in the workplace. By developing an understanding of their employees' backgrounds and recognizing their skills and goals, employers can truly help refugee employees feel welcomed into—and thrive within—the workplace.

While refugee employees come from diverse backgrounds and may require unique support to get their footing in new countries and new work environments, they share many of their nonrefugee counterparts' aspirations, such as the desire to succeed, grow, and build better lives for their families. Employers that recognize this fact and implement inclusion initiatives to help refugee employees will likely improve the overall strength of their organizations and the experiences of all employees across the board.

The findings in this guide can serve as an important starting point. To take the next step forward, employers that have hired or are planning to hire refugees should consider the following three-step approach:

**Understand.** Bring together existing refugee employees, managers, colleagues, and leadership to understand workplace inclusion needs and any leading practices to date.

**Identify.** Use the menu of inclusion initiatives to identify the steps that are effectively suited to address the workplace inclusion needs at the organization.

**Implement.** Implement the appropriate inclusion initiatives, routinely measure the impact of the solutions, and adjust as needed.

Inclusion is an investment—yet with the right strategy and a focus on the early stages of the employee experience, employers have a unique opportunity to improve the lives of refugees while bettering the businesses in which they work.

# Overview of suggested resources

## PREBOARDING & ONBOARDING/EMPLOYEE & TEAM READINESS

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- 1 Onboarding checklists**  
These checklists—one for refugee employees and one for managers—are easy, printable resources to help both parties navigate onboarding effectively

## LEARNING & GROWTH

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- 2 Performance feedback focus areas for managers**  
When providing feedback to new refugee employees, managers should focus on certain topics to enable an inclusive and productive working relationship for the refugee employee and their team
- 3 Certification opportunities**  
Provide refugee employees with opportunities to secure professional certifications in areas relevant to the employer, either for what they used to do or are looking to do

## LANGUAGE TRANSLATION & DEVELOPMENT

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- 4 Language resources**  
This resource lists some of the many existing online and mobile resources that can help employees practice new languages to help them acquire critical communication skills for both workplace conversations and other social interactions

## FLEXIBILITY & WELL-BEING

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- 5 Mental health services**  
There are existing free and low-cost mobile apps that could be used by refugee employees who may need help working through mental health issues; these resources should not replace professional medical care but can be worthwhile as supplemental services

## EMPLOYEE & TEAM READINESS

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- 6 Understanding refugee backgrounds**  
Successfully fostering refugee workplace inclusion begins with organizations having a foundational understanding of the refugee crisis and refugee stories; these resources can serve as a starting point
- 7 Tips for talking to refugee employees**  
Successfully fostering refugee inclusion involves colleagues, managers, and everyone within an organization understanding how to speak with refugees about their experiences
- 8 Refugee hiring resources**  
While this guide is focused on how to foster inclusion for refugees in an organization, this resource provides information on how to source and hire refugees into your organization
- 9 Diversity & inclusion resources**  
A sample of Deloitte's existing research on diversity & inclusion
- 10 Visualizing a refugee inclusion portal**  
A sample mockup of a portal that organizations can choose to design to support managers in working with refugee employees

*Disclaimer: Suggested resources and external links are meant as representative and should not be construed as an endorsement of the product, services, views, or policies contained therein.*



## Refugee employee onboarding checklist

*The following items may be helpful in preparing for your first day at work.*

### What activities do I need to complete?

- Complete the necessary organizational administrative paperwork—e.g., emergency information forms and financial information
- Locate and gather all necessary employment and identification documents, including your visa documentation, photo IDs, and job certifications
- Review and understand your role and expected duties
- Understand the organization’s policies and processes, including working times, language requirements, dress code, food, and transportation requirements
- Connect with an assigned point of contact to ask any questions, convey any concerns, and receive directions
- Meet with your team members and other colleagues to learn about their backgrounds; share your own background when you feel comfortable
- Understand what resources are available at the organization for you

### What questions should I ask my manager?

- What paperwork, documents, and/or supplies am I expected to bring?
- Where should I show up and at what time?
- What is the schedule for my first day?
- What is the normal routine for my role?
- What is the proper attire for the workplace?
- Who can I expect to meet on the first day?
- What resources are available for me?
- Is there anything else I should know?

## Preparing managers for refugee employees

*The following items may be helpful in preparing for a refugee employee's first day at work.*

### What activities do I need to complete?

- Connect with the HR department to understand the backgrounds of the refugee employees, how to best welcome them, and what resources are available to me
- Prepare my team to make sure they are ready to welcome refugee employees and are aware of their backgrounds, cultural considerations, and language barriers
- Help the team in understanding what resources are available to support them in working with refugee employees
- Design teaming events that are focused on welcoming refugee employees and integrating them within the team and society more broadly—e.g., monthly lunches with a different cuisine
- Set up regular touchpoints with refugee employees to understand how they are doing and what may make their experience more comfortable
- Provide refugee employees with the necessary resources that will support them in both navigating the workplace and acclimating to society
- Provide refugee employees with contacts in the organization who can help them answer different types of questions

### What questions should I ask refugee employees?

- How is the onboarding process going?
- Is there anything I can do to make the transition easier for you?
- Do you understand your job/role? Do you have any further questions?
- Do you have everything you need to complete your tasks?
- Were you able to meet everyone you would like to meet so far? Can we help you meet any others?
- Aside from your onboarding adviser, do you know who to reach out to for certain questions?

## Performance feedback focus for managers

*When providing feedback to new refugee employees, managers should focus on the following topics to foster an inclusive and productive working relationship for the refugee employee and their team.*

### Topics for performance management



#### Skill level and match with role

Do you feel that your skill level matches your role? What skills would you rather use more often or differently?



#### Career paths

Do you have a clear idea of how to grow in this role? What is clear and unclear about this process?



#### Unique impediments to success

Are there other factors—such as language barriers, technical terminology differences, or cultural practices—that are impeding your ability to use your skills?



#### Management support

Are there adjustments that we as a management team and organization can make to support your everyday comfort and performance? What about your learning and growth?



#### Frequency and quality of feedback

Do you feel that you are getting adequate feedback on your performance, and at an adequate frequency?



#### Social network expansion

Is there anyone else at our organization with whom you would like to speak to learn more about their career or role? Could I put you in touch?



#### Growth ambition

Are there any other areas and/or programs, aside from your normal role, that you would like to explore?



#### Concerns or issues

Do you have any concerns or issues with your role or with anyone on the team? If so, how can I help fix these?

## Certification opportunities

*Provide refugee employees with opportunities to secure professional certifications in areas relevant to the employer, either for what they used to do or are looking to do.*

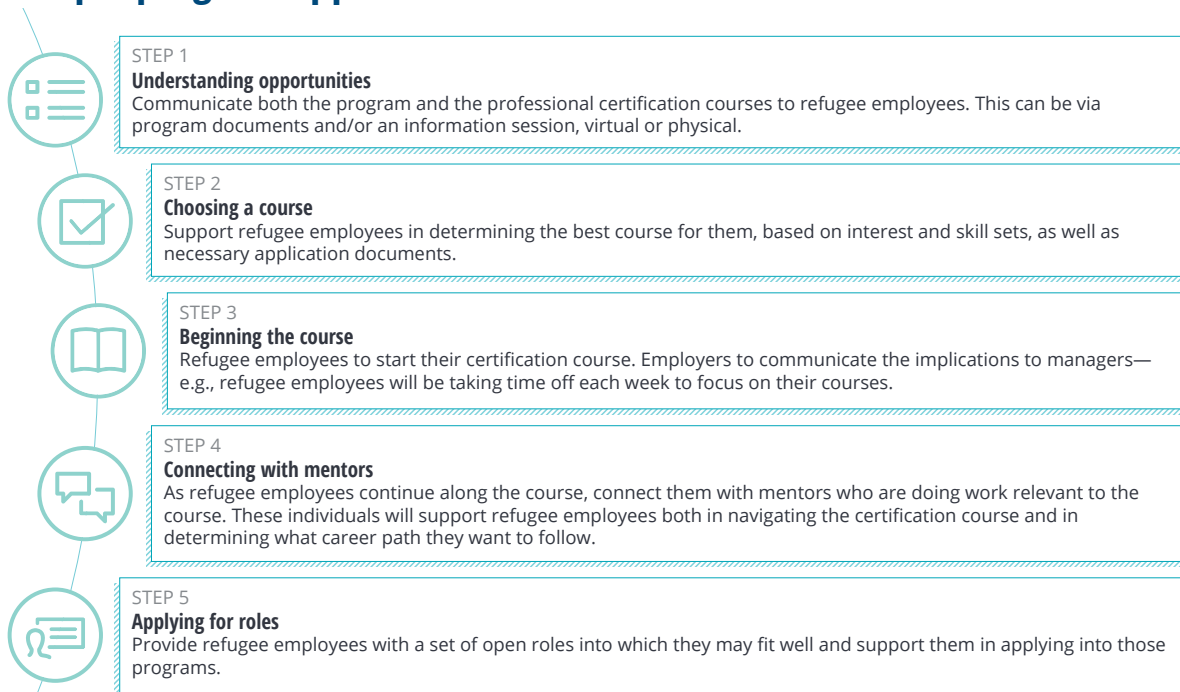
### Components of the initiative

- A Professional certification course:** Refugee employees to undergo a part-time formal training, either in-house or through an external partner, to secure a professional certification
- B Career path guidance:** Support refugee employees in both connecting with individuals at the organization who are doing relevant work and securing a role afterward

### Things to keep in mind

- A Employee commitment:** In order to make the investment in the certification course worthwhile for employers, they may ask refugee employees to commit to working with the organization for a set amount of time after the course is completed, similar to consulting firms paying for their employees' MBAs
- B During working hours:** Aim to have the training course during the refugee employee's working hours, where possible—many have constraints to deal with outside of work and may find it difficult to commit additional hours
- C Government support:** Some countries offer certification programs and/or subsidies; employers may choose to make use of these in order to keep costs down

### Sample program approach



## Language translation and development

*There are many existing resources that can help employees practice new languages to help them more rapidly acquire critical communication skills for workplace and other social interactions; this list is representative but hardly exhaustive.*

### Language learning resources

#### DUOLINGO

Simple, free mobile app that helps learners from dozens of languages learn new languages through small, accessible mobile lessons

#### APPSFORREFUGEES.COM

A robust repository of information on apps and other online resources for refugees navigating Europe and European languages

### Translation resources

#### GOOGLE TRANSLATE

Straightforward and powerful translation app with the ability to “live” translate images and texts via camera function

#### TARJIMLY

While primarily built for humanitarian purposes, Tarjimly connects refugees with translators for 16 languages and can be used for immigration appointments or other important situations with complex language requirements

### Online language exchanges

#### NATAKALLAM

Connects refugees to remote work opportunities in the language sector, providing them economic empowerment, honing their marketable skills, and fostering friendships

#### KINDI

A mobile application helping refugee learners improve their English through live reading sessions with native speakers from around the world

## Mental health resources

*Existing free and low-cost mobile apps may help refugee employees work through any mental health issues. These resources should not replace professional medical care but can be used to supplement other services. Some may demand higher English proficiency.*

### DBT DIARY CARD AND SKILLS COACH

This app works as a daily mood and thought diary but also has a coaching module offering tips on sticky emotional situations, such as how to ask for what you need without drama or how to successfully resolve conflict.

### MINDSHIFT

This straightforward stress management tool helps users rethink what's stressing them out through a variety of on-screen prompts. At the same time, the app encourages new ways to take charge of anxiety and tune into body signals.

### ACT COACH

ACT Coach teaches users how to tolerate negative thoughts and feelings by virtually guiding them through awareness exercises and giving tips on how to ditch self-doubt. With an extra focus on mindfulness, this app also provides a log to track progress.

### PTSD COACH

This app provides education about PTSD, information about professional care, a self-assessment for PTSD, opportunities to find support, and tools that can help manage the stresses of daily life with PTSD. Tools range from relaxation skills and positive self-talk to anger management and other common self-help strategies.

### SELF-HELP FOR ANXIETY MANAGEMENT

This app works as a daily mood and thought diary. It also has a coaching module that gives tips on sticky emotional situations, such as how to ask for what you need without drama or how to successfully resolve conflict.

### STRESS AND ANXIETY COMPANION

This app can help make the process of releasing negative thoughts, practicing relaxation techniques, and engaging in mindful awareness easier by guiding the user through proven techniques to reduce off-kilter thoughts and emotions while cultivating a much more present mindset.

## Understanding refugee backgrounds

*Successfully fostering refugee workplace inclusion begins with organizations having a foundational understanding of the refugee crisis and refugee stories; these publicly available resources can serve as a starting point (please click on the links).*

[Refugee crisis figures at a glance](#)

[What is a refugee?](#)

[The world's five biggest refugee crises](#)

[Eight educational resources to better understand the refugee crisis](#)

## Talking to refugees about their experiences

*Successfully fostering refugee inclusion involves colleagues, managers, and everyone within an organization understanding how to speak with refugees about complicated topics that are foreign to most people in host societies. Here are some general things to keep in mind.*

### 1 **Begin with a simple conversation**

It's always good to start with a simple conversation. Then, if it feels appropriate, you could ask refugee employees more about their background and experiences if the topic comes up naturally.

### 2 **Respect privacy**

Approach questions with sensitivity, especially if there is a language barrier. For example, asking refugees if they plan to stay in the country could make them uncomfortable.

### 3 **Don't make assumptions**

Decide what is appropriate to ask refugees while respecting their challenging situation. Avoid making assumptions about legal status, educational experience, professional skills, intelligence, or language abilities.

### 4 **Think about how to best ask questions**

Instead of:

You could focus on a topic like this

When did you graduate college? —————> Did you attend school? What did you study?

Are you planning to stay here for a while? —> When did you arrive here? How has it been?

Why did you leave your home country? —> Have you been able to settle in here?

What was the worst thing you ever saw? —> Is there anything I can do to help you?

What is your opinion on the [conflict/war]? —> What has been the biggest surprise here?



## Refugee hiring resources

*While this guide is focused on how to foster inclusion for refugees in an organization, these resources provide additional information on how to source and hire refugees into your organization as well as the value case around refugee hiring (click on the links).*



### U.S. EMPLOYERS' GUIDE TO HIRING REFUGEES

This guidebook, developed by the Tent Partnership in collaboration with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, outlines essential information on the logistics, benefits, challenges, and solutions related to refugee recruitment and employment retention in the United States. More country-specific resources are located on [Tent.org](http://Tent.org).



### THE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

This white paper, conducted in partnership with researchers from the Reallabor Asyl, an initiative of the Heidelberg University of Education, the Heidelberg University, and the Centre for European Economic Research, assesses the challenges for refugee labor market integration and makes recommendations to both policymakers and employers.



### TALENT DISPLACED: THE ECONOMIC LIVES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN EUROPE

This Deloitte report offers insight into the challenges that refugees face as they seek work in their host countries, and also examines how businesses in these countries view the hiring of refugees. The report aims to provide practical guidance to private actors on how to support refugees' economic participation across Europe through employment.

## Value case for hiring refugees



### REFUGEES AS EMPLOYEES: GOOD RETENTION, STRONG RECRUITMENT

Employers who hire refugees do so because it works for their businesses. Hiring refugees also turns out to lower turnover rates and improve at least one source of future recruitment. This report, developed by the Tent Partnership for Refugees and the Fiscal Policy Institute, explains these business benefits.

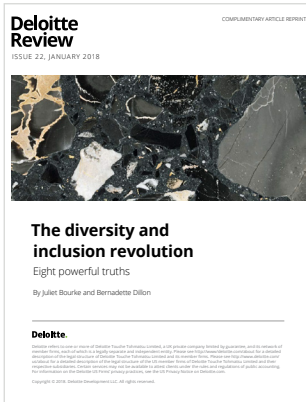


### STEP UP: HOW TO GET REFUGEES INTO WORK QUICKLY

Getting refugees into work is a top priority. It fast-tracks their integration into their new communities and is valuable to employers. This report, developed by the Tent Partnership in conjunction with the Open Political Economy Network, outlines 16 recommendations for governments, NGOs, and businesses to facilitate refugee employment, and highlights best practices and promising new approaches.

## Diversity and inclusion resources

*While this guide is focused on how to foster inclusion for refugees in an organization, these resources provide additional information on Deloitte's perspective on diversity, inclusion, and how organizations can foster a welcoming workplace for all (click on the links).*



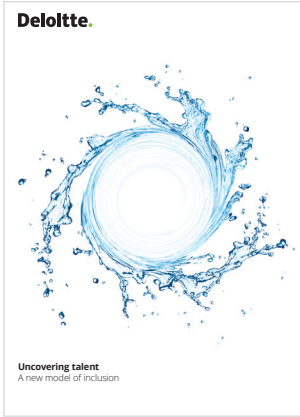
### THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REVOLUTION: EIGHT POWERFUL TRUTHS

While most business leaders see having a diverse and inclusive culture as critical to performance, they don't always know how to achieve that goal. Here are eight powerful truths that can help turn aspirations into reality by explaining the transformative forces of diversity and inclusion.



### THE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: THE MILLENNIAL INFLUENCE

The Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative and Deloitte have joined forces to identify the issues impacting today's diverse workforce. This study examines generational views of diversity and inclusion and their impact on innovation, engagement, creativity, and other business outcomes.



## UNCOVERING TALENT: A NEW MODEL OF INCLUSION

This study hypothesizes that a model of inclusion analyzing that pressure might be beneficial to historically underrepresented groups. Indeed, given that everyone has an authentic self, a culture of greater authenticity might benefit all individuals, including groups that have traditionally been left out of the inclusion paradigm. To test this theory, this research draws on the concept of “covering.”

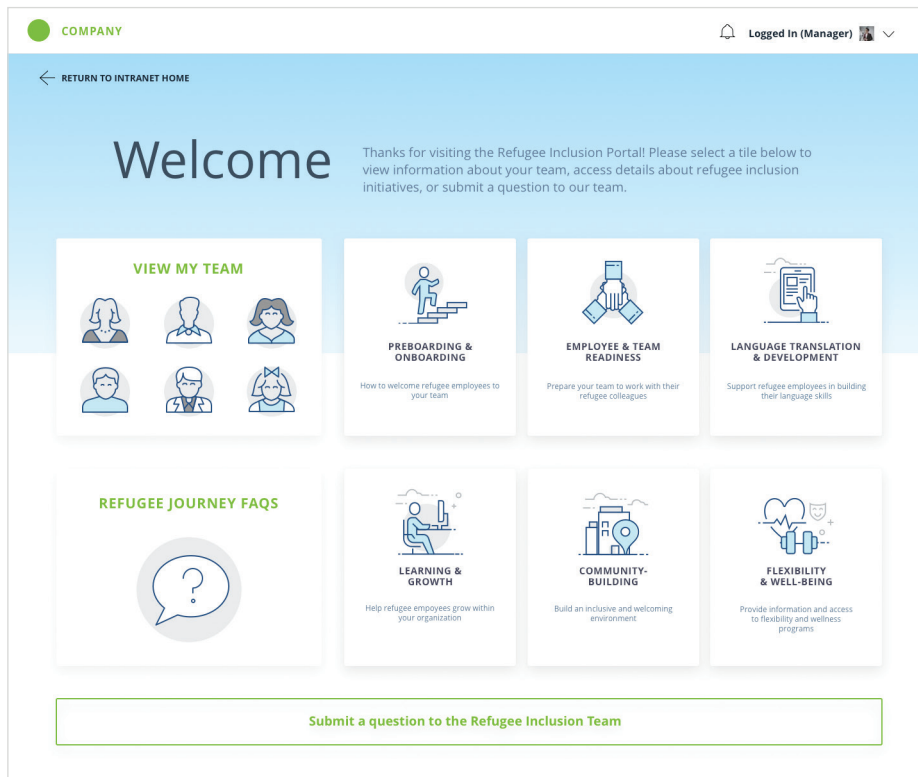


## UNLEASHING THE POWER OF INCLUSION: ATTRACTING AND ENGAGING THE EVOLVING WORKFORCE

This paper explores how definitions of diversity and inclusion as well as expectations for organizational culture are evolving. Based on the results of a recent survey of more than 1,300 full-time employees from a range of organizations and industries across the United States, it explores what today’s workforce considers when choosing an organization and what influences their career choices.

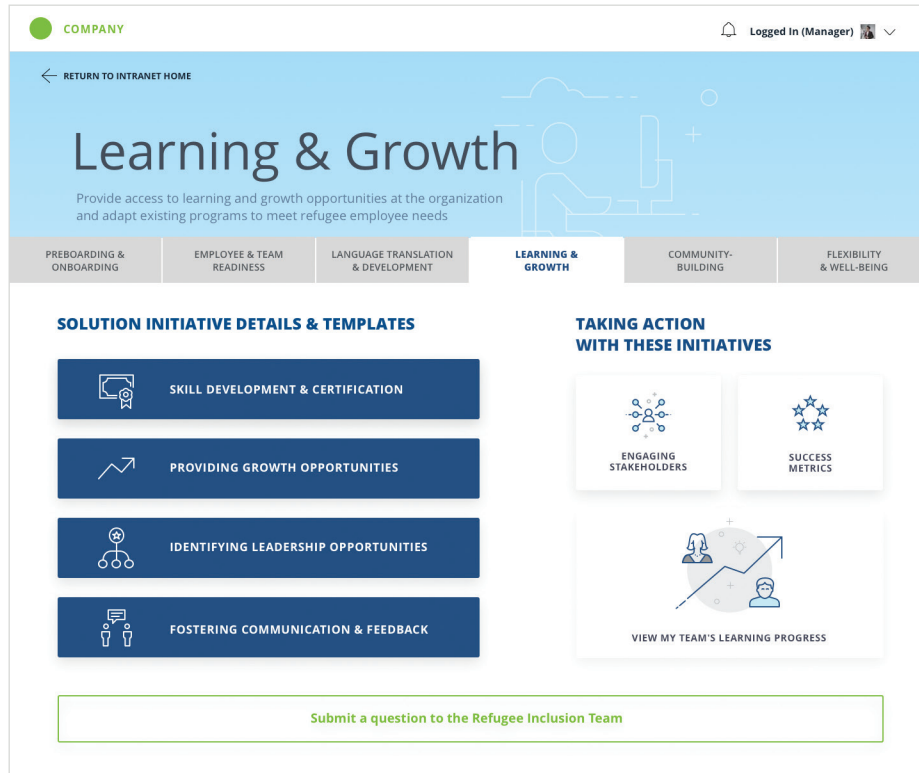
## Visualizing a refugee inclusion portal

To effectively help stakeholders understand, design, and implement inclusion solutions, employers can **use a portal**—either an extension of an existing intranet or a new one—as the primary **repository of refugee workplace inclusion information**. A manager’s sample landing page, as seen here, would allow them to access information on their team, review refugee employee FAQs, submit a question to the program team, or dive deeper into the different **focus areas of refugee workplace inclusion**. A similar portal interface could exist for refugee employees, nonmanager colleagues, and other stakeholders.



## Visualizing a refugee inclusion portal

Seen here is a page dedicated to **learning and growth** for refugee employees, accessed via tile from the landing page. A manager has access to **specific details, materials, templates, stakeholder information, and metrics**. For instance, through this page, a manager could find resources to help refugee employees get recertified in a certain skill or profession.



# Detailed employment dimensions

**E**MPLOYERS, USING THE dimension details below, can identify the characteristics that best define their organization and consider the implications of the inclusion solutions they choose to implement.

- **Operating structure centralization.** An organization's level of centralization will affect the design, implementation, and channels through which employers may want to implement solutions. In a less centralized organization where employees and working locations are dispersed, such as a restaurant franchise, individual locations and managers may be more responsible for designing and delivering the inclusion initiatives. These managers would likely rely more heavily on digital tools and external vendors and partners to deliver the initiatives, rather than in-person resources. This allows for greater flexibility to customize initiatives to meet existing needs, and the different locations can serve as unique opportunities to run pilots and gather findings. On the other end of the spectrum, more centralized organizations have an opportunity to embed their identified initiatives into unified talent processes and deliver the initiatives centrally. This will enable greater uniformity, access to central resources, and the ability to deliver using in-person resources—for example, physical trainers instead of virtual tools.
- **Customer interaction level.** The level of customer interactions will affect the language and cultural skills required to succeed in a role, as well as the type of investment needed by the employer to help the refugee employee succeed. For roles with fewer customer interactions, employers can prioritize helping refugee employees who have a limited understanding of the local languages to develop an understanding of the necessities to function in their roles—for instance, core HR processes or safety training. Simultaneously, employers can place these refugee employees onto teams where they are interacting with nonrefugee employees to support language development and cultural immersion. For roles with more customer interactions, employers can prioritize helping refugee employees—who likely have a better understanding of the local languages already—to build the cultural and business knowledge needed to work with customers. Simultaneously, employers should recognize that although a refugee employee may have superior language and customer interaction skills, this does not mean that the individual has an intimate understanding of the particulars of the organization or local culture.
- **Number of refugee employees in the workplace.** The number of refugees in the workplace will directly affect the colleagues with whom refugee employees interact. In organizations with fewer refugee employees, those workers may not naturally have opportunities to interact with other refugee employees on their teams. Employers can therefore emphasize regular touchpoints to bring refugee employees together to create comradery. In addition, there may be fewer employees from the same backgrounds as refugee employees, resulting in fewer individuals to

serve as resources for the employer—for example, as informal translators. In organizations with more refugees in the workplace, employers may find that refugee employees choose to interact mostly or even exclusively with other refugees, for the sake of comfort. In this case, organizations may want to focus on designing regular touchpoints to bring refugee employees together with others to help develop further inclusion opportunities within the workplace.

- **Inclusion maturity.** The level of inclusion maturity will affect how well-equipped the organization is to effectively incorporate refugee employees. In organizations with less-mature inclusion practices, investments may be necessary to develop broader inclusion practices across the organization—for example, additional efforts may be required to train managers and colleagues about inclusion as a whole. In addition, employers may find that investments made for refugee employees improve overall inclusion outcomes across employee populations. In organizations with more mature inclusion practices, there is an opportunity to leverage existing practices and resources to support refugee employees. In addition, managers and colleagues may already be prepared to work with new, diverse talent pools, requiring less formal training and support up front on foundational inclusion principles. There should also be a balance between a broader inclusion effort and a specific focus on refugee employees.
- **Team size.** A team's size affects the social connections that members can make with colleagues and the individual attention fo-

cused on refugee employees. When refugees are placed into smaller teams, they may receive greater individualized attention and support from their managers and colleagues. Employers may therefore want to focus on broader community-building activities outside the team to help refugee employees create bonds with other refugee and nonrefugee employees across the organization. When refugee employees are placed into larger teams, they may receive less individualized attention and support, so it is important that employers prioritize more intimate or focused support initiatives. For example, in large teams with little consistent communication among a core group of colleagues, employers can set up smaller groups for refugee employees to facilitate connections.

- **Skill match with role.** The match between employees' skills and the roles they serve will affect their growth paths. When a higher-skill employee is placed in a lower-skill role, employers can conduct a skills assessment early on to recognize if the individual is in the role best suited to the skill level. Refugee employees may not feel fulfilled working in the organization, and employers may want to prioritize positioning these individuals in more appropriate roles over time and invest in the necessary skills and training—for instance, certification courses—to help them get there. In addition, employers can allow such employees the freedom to explore side projects. Creating a match between the refugee employee's talents and the role can improve job satisfaction and maximize the value they provide to the organization. Of course, a close match of skill to role is also important for nonrefugee employees.



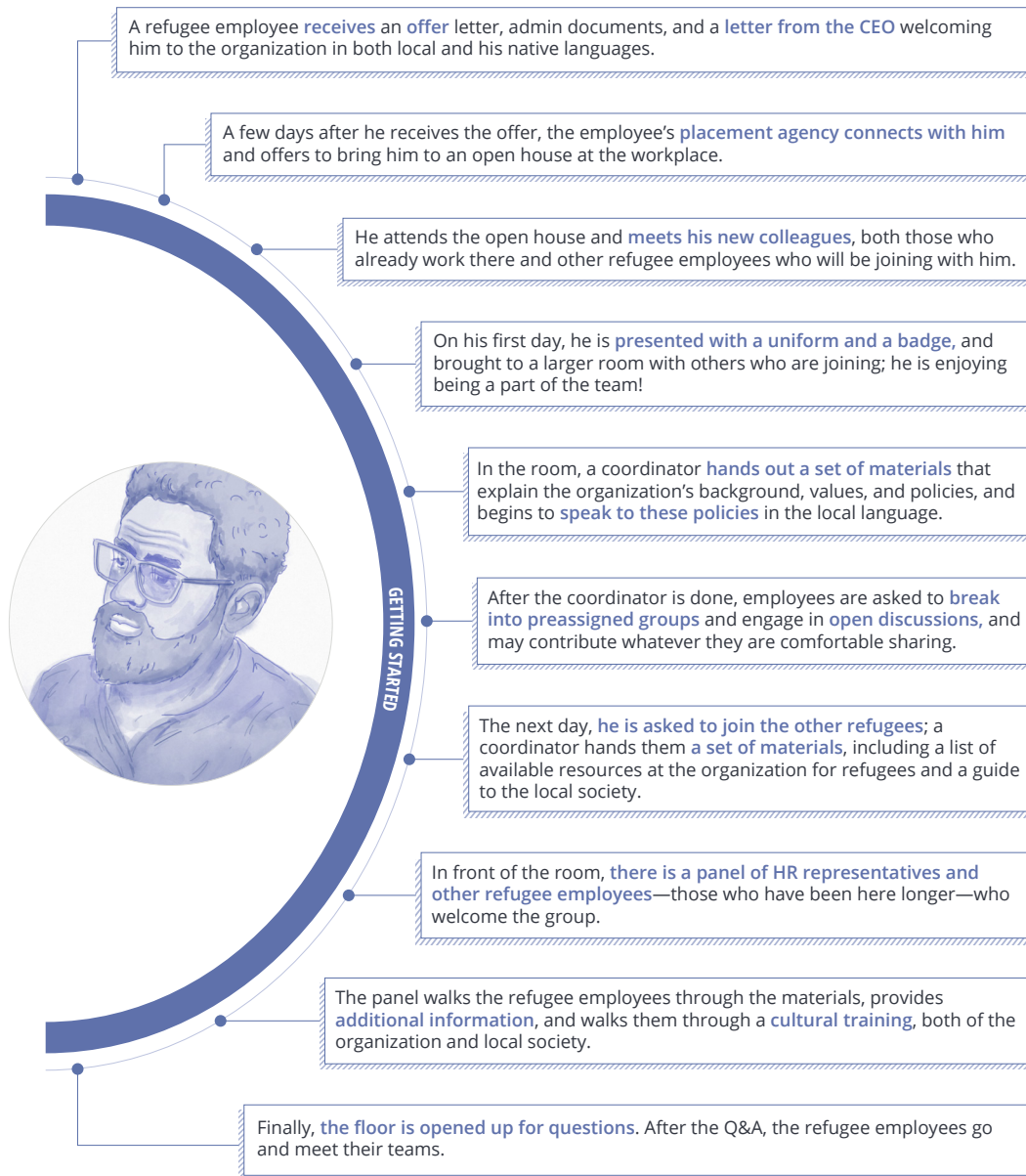
- **Level of governmental/NGO support.** The level of external support for refugee employees will often affect an organization's inclusion investments. With less available support, organizations may find that refugee hires may initially have had little or no training in language, culture, or workplace processes, so employers may choose to focus early efforts on building

these basic foundations. With a higher level of external support, refugee employees may receive basic external training, meaning that employers can focus less on basic onboarding and prioritize development and growth. Additionally, employers can regularly access external support across initiatives to lessen the burden of building some inclusion initiatives internally.

# Illustrative programs in action

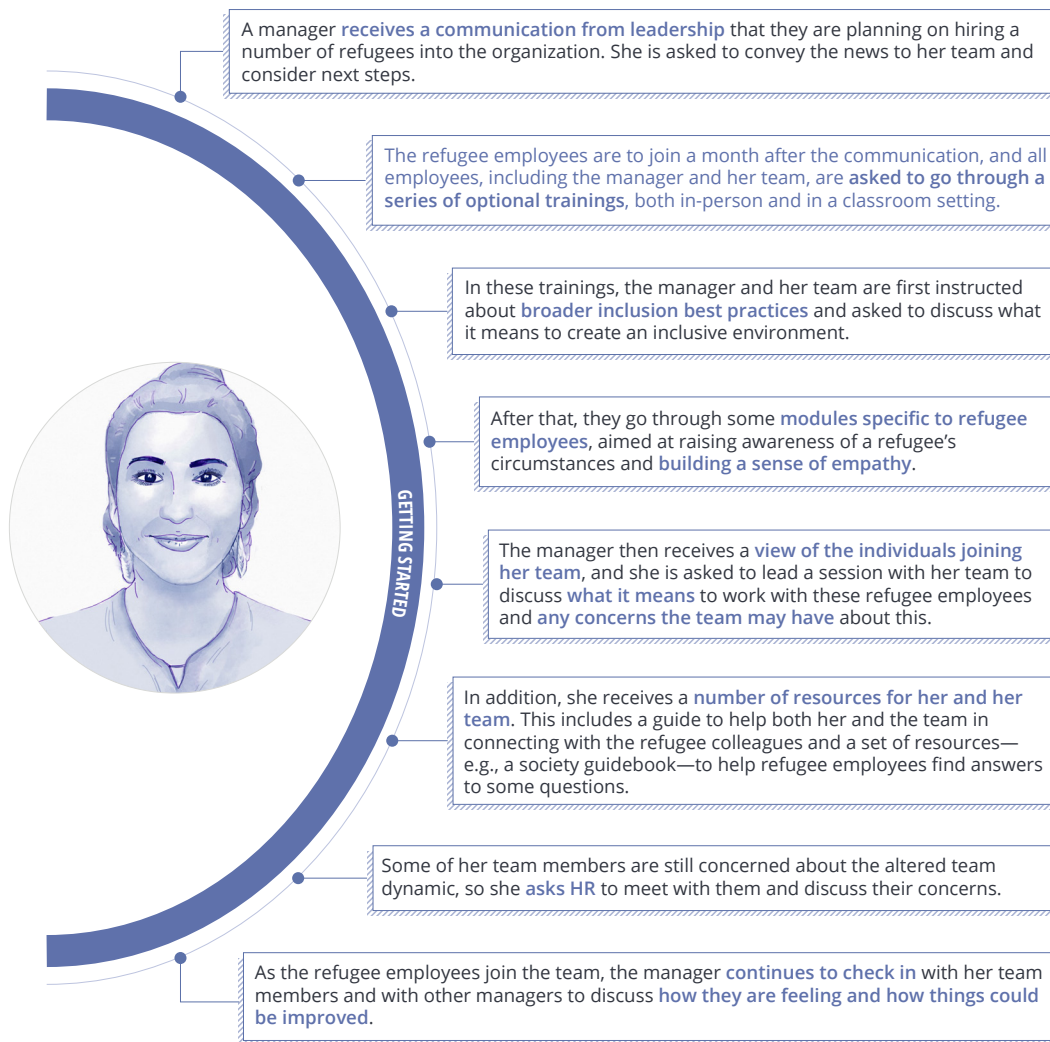
*These programs are for informational purposes only. They can help organizations visualize what a collection of refugee workplace inclusion initiatives could look like based on research conducted for this guide. In reality, these will look different across organizations and refugee employee populations.*

## Preboarding and onboarding



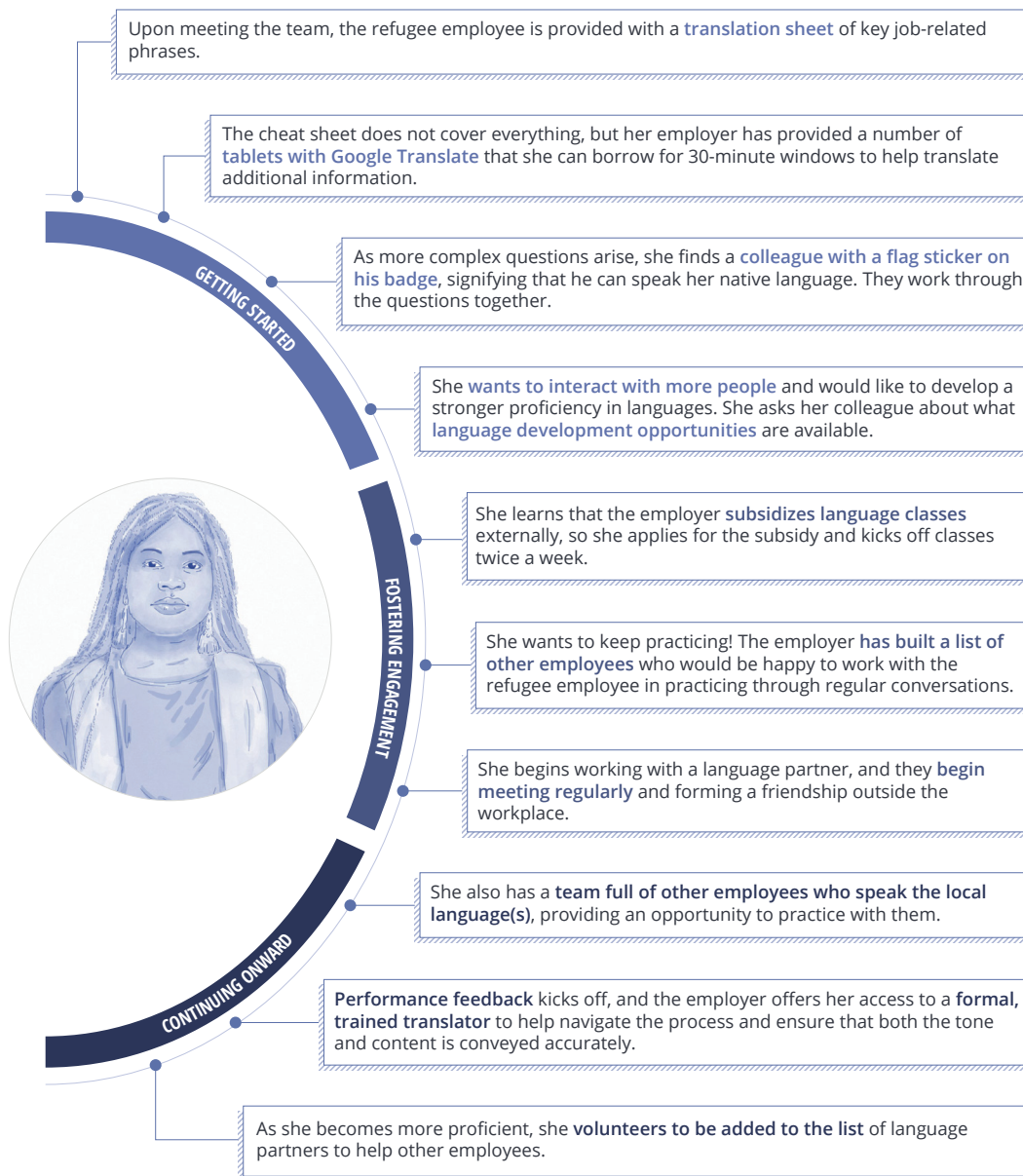
Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

## Employee and team readiness



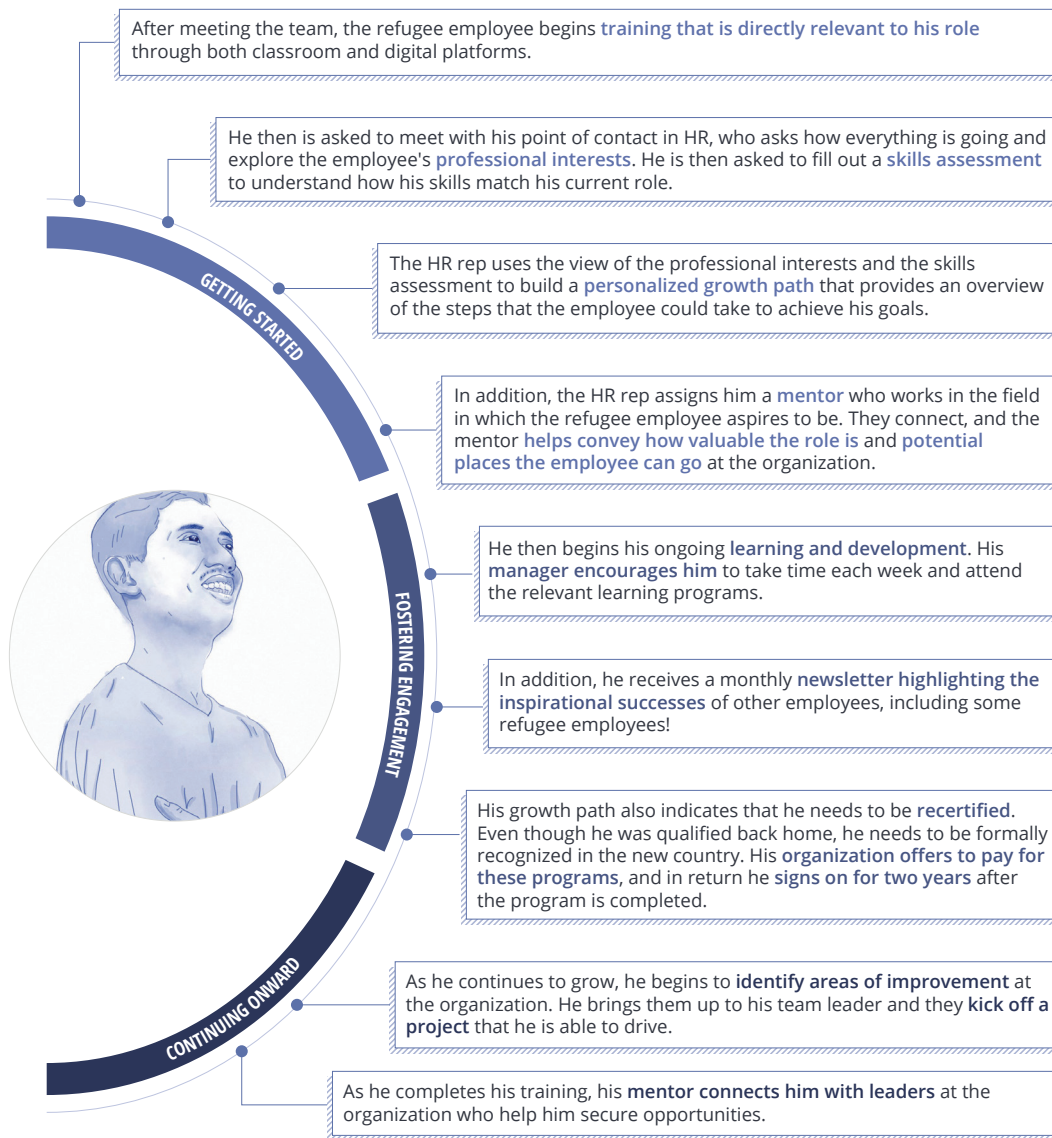
Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

## Language translation and development



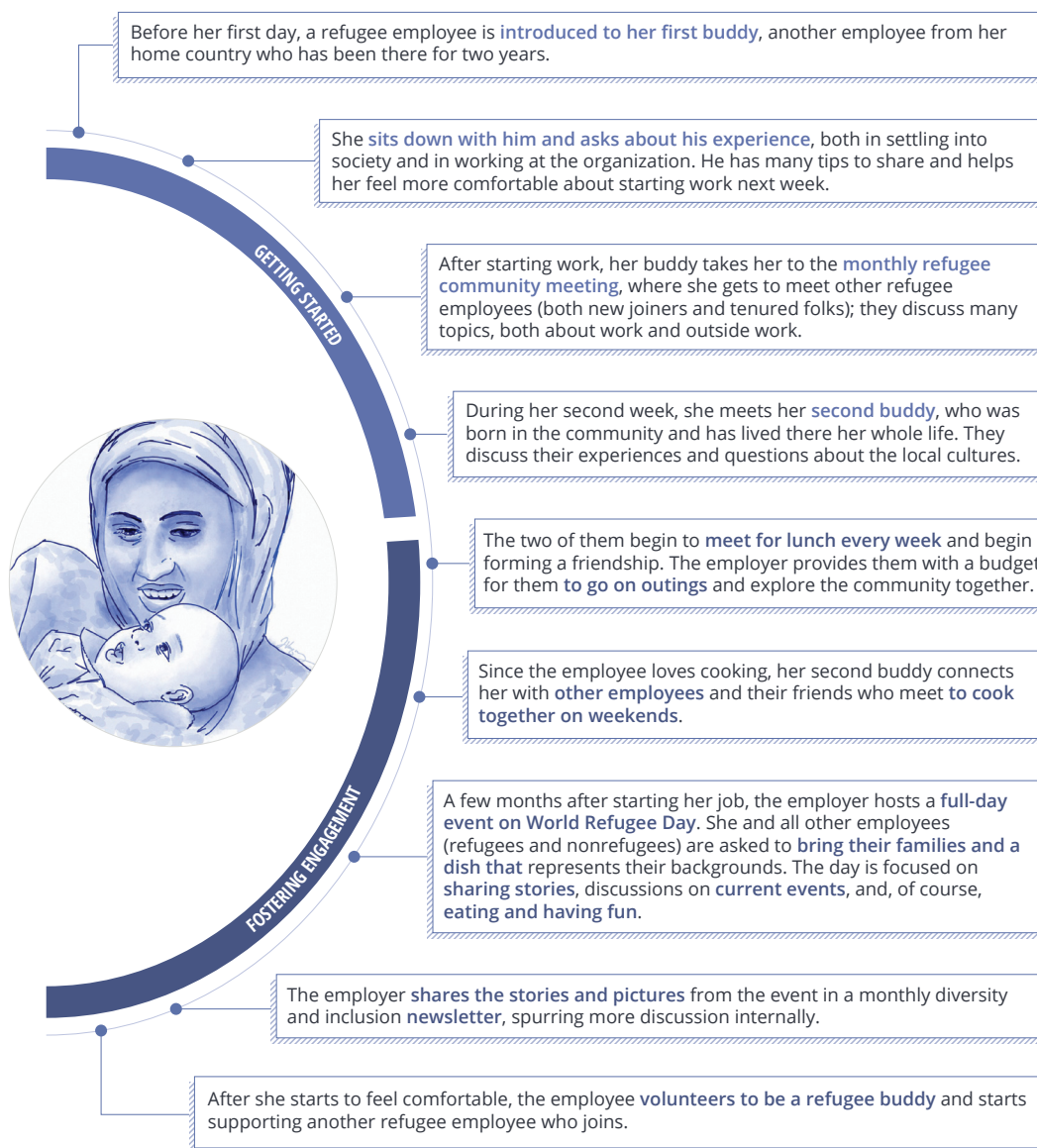
Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

## Learning and growth



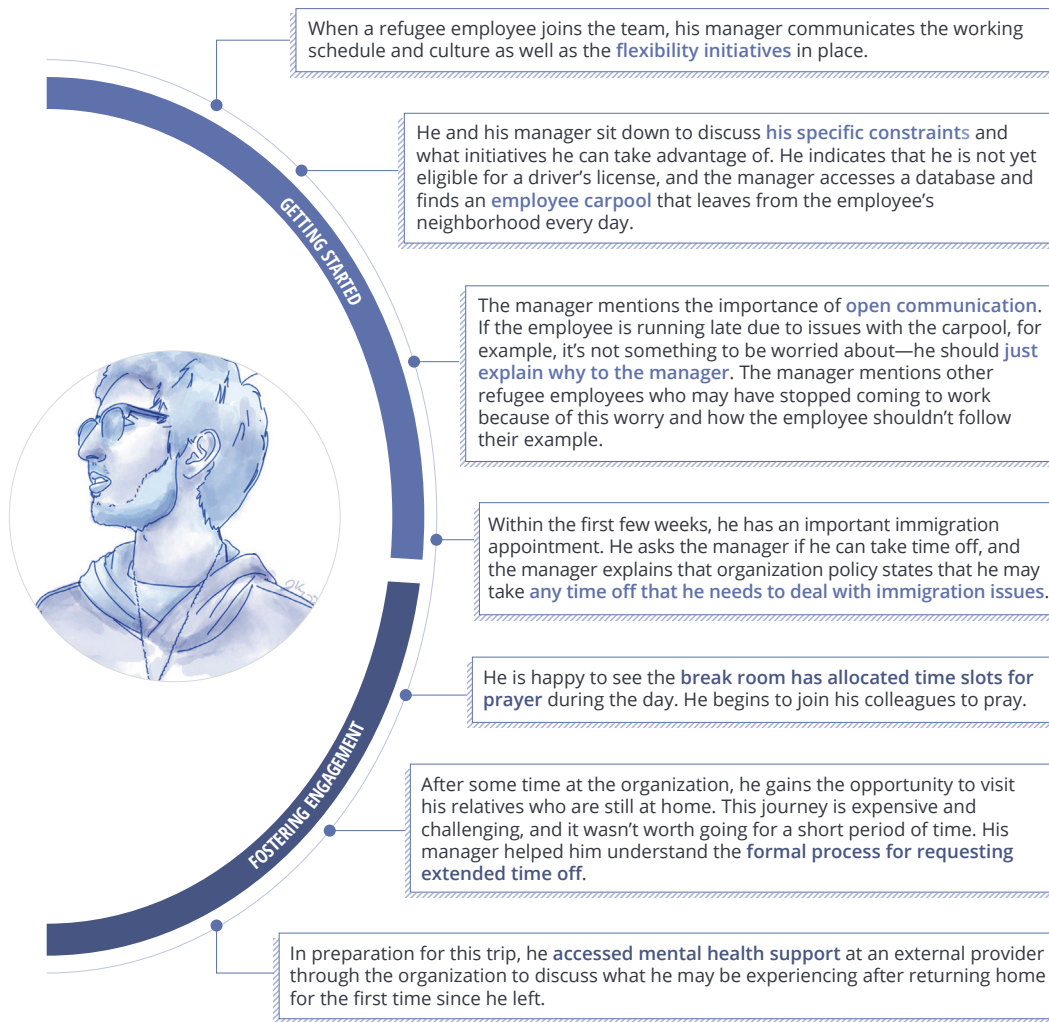
Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

## Community-building



Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

**Flexibility and well-being**



Source: Deloitte analysis. Image by Joe Vasquez at <http://www.joevasquez.com/>.

## Methodology

**T**HIS GUIDE WAS developed using a human-centered design approach. This innovative approach enabled the team to put employers and refugee employees at the center by listening to firsthand accounts of needs in order to design the inclusion initiatives.

Accordingly, the team primarily leveraged ethnographic interviews to gather a broad range of insights about inclusion of refugees in the workplace. This style of interview provided a deeper level of understanding by focusing on the experiences of both employers and refugee employees in order to uncover both challenges to and opportunities for successful inclusion. In addition, some interviews were conducted with traditional experts in the field with a focus on understanding leading practices, common challenges, and other advice on developing the inclusion initiatives.

A total of 90 interviews were conducted for this guide. The interviewees:

- Included refugee employees, managers, and colleagues of refugee employees, business leaders, and leaders from nonprofit organizations (talent-matchers and resettlement agencies).
  - Refugee employees interviewed worked in a wide range of roles, such as fast-food line cooks and strategic communications managers.
  - Nonrefugee employees interviewed served as executive leadership (e.g., CEOs and chief diversity officers), executive program leaders (e.g., senior HR leaders and corporate social responsibility managers), and program managers (refugee program recruiters and managers).

- Nonprofit staff from the refugee hiring space included executive leadership (CEOs and executive directors), case managers/program officers, and other core staff.

- Were based in 10 countries across North America, Europe, and Australia, representing companies that have operations in approximately 20 countries delivering products and services in over 100 countries.
- Represented a range of industries such as technology, manufacturing, consumer products, hospitality, real estate, facilities management, private staffing firms, and an array of nonprofit organizations.
- Worked within companies of different sizes, including four with more than 100,000 employees, a number of mid-size companies, and approximately five smaller private employers with between 20 employees and 5,000 employees.
- Worked within companies with revenues reaching up to US\$40 billion.

While the experiences of employers and refugee employees formed the primary input to this research, secondary research was also conducted, which included reviewing company and nonprofit guidebooks regarding their approaches to refugee-related programs. Additionally, many refugee employment materials, such as those produced by the Tent Partnership for Refugees and other nonprofit organizations across the North America, Europe, and Australia, were researched to inform the current state of refugee workplace inclusion leading practices.



## Endnotes

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Figures at a glance," accessed February 19, 2019.
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## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank **Maia Bix** of the Tent Partnership for Refugees, **Lori Scialabba** of Deloitte Consulting LLP, **Dalia Katan**, and **Gregg Geller** for their contributions to the research and development of this article. This project would also not have been possible without the dedication of dozens of interviewees and Deloitte practitioners who volunteered their time and perspectives to make this research a success. The authors are very grateful to all those who have expressed interest in and supported this work since its initial inception.

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