

GUIDELINES FOR CLOSER COOPERATION IN LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES



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Towards a more integrated migration
policy, made possible by the AMIF

fedasil **ETCC**
FEDERAL AGENCY FOR THE
RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS
EMPLOYER
TAILORRED
CHAIN
COOPERATION

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Introduction

Background information

All European countries are facing major challenges regarding the integration of asylum seekers and refugees.¹ While obstacles in the integration process can vary slightly from one host country to another depending on the national socio-economic context and policies, most challenges are common to all and require a coherent approach from all involved stakeholders to overcome them. Furthermore, the challenges are all closely related. Employment represents one of the major obstacles to overcome in order to begin solving others such as housing, healthcare, language, family reunification or establishing social networks (OECD & UNHCR, 2018; Labour-Int, 2017).

Hostcountries have a lot to win by facilitating the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, as they represent significant workforce and bring many skills and competences to fill employment gaps that European countries are currently facing due to

recent demographic changes (OECD & UNHCR, 2018; EMN, 2019). These countries have to deal with the major challenge of an ageing population, accompanied by different socio and economic impacts; higher social security costs, higher dependency on a lower proportion of the younger generations and labour shortages particularly in sectors concerned by the ageing population (healthcare) or technological advances. Between 1985 and 2015, the median age in Europe went up from 34 to 43, with a 60% increase of citizens aged 65+ (Spielvogel & Meghnagi, 2018). As EU countries are currently approaching near-zero rates of "natural" population increase, refugees and asylum seekers represent an interesting potential for finding solutions to current economic challenges (Spielvogel & Meghnagi, 2018), especially as this group is on average younger than the EU population.

Official statistics for our specific target group of refugees and asylum seekers are still rare, but many studies have proven that huge unemployment gaps persist between nationals and migrant populations. Asylum applications may have decreased since 2015, but numbers are still significant and well-managed integration policies are urgently needed in order to counter challenges such as discrimination, racism, social exclusion, poverty and exploitation (EMN, 2019).

While national and regional authorities are responsible to implement the appropriate policies to facilitate integration, a closer collaboration between all stakeholders is often advocated as the way to ensure long-term integration. Cooperation between public employment services, private employment agencies, reception actors, civil society organisations, employer associations and employers themselves is considered necessary



and must be encouraged by national, regional and local authorities and policies (OECD & UNHCR, 2018; Labour-Int, 2017).

The Employer Tailored Chain Cooperation project therefore addresses the integration of asylum seekers and refugees from the chain cooperation perspective. It is widely believed that chain cooperation is crucial for asylum seekers and refugees integration management, in which competences with regards to reception, integration and employment are often dispersed over several administrations. Chain cooperation starts with an efficient screening: identifying competences and determining the professional potential of the asylum seeker/refugee on one side, and investigating the labour market's shortages and needs of employers on the other. Following the screening is gap bridging, which comes down to education and training on both the refugees' and asylum seekers' side as well as the employers' side. Further along the chain comes matching, to connect employers with asylum seekers/refugees searching for a job. Finally, ensuring a sustainable employment and possibilities to grow professionally is also a crucial factor for long-term integration.

The goal of these guidelines is to present widespread national measures in the framework of European policies and facilitate practical actions for closer cooperation between partners acting at different stages along the chain of labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees.



Methodology

In order to present these guidelines, input and data was needed from the variety of stakeholders involved across different EU Member States. Gathering this input was necessary to gain a broad overview of the existing actions and highlight the shortages and gaps along the chain. Two phases of data collection were implemented, a mapping phase and a testing phase.

Mapping phase

The mapping phase consisted of multiple interviews carried out by four project partners in order to gather reliable data on the chain components, regarding gaps and shortages as well as the existing best practices. For this purpose, a total of 22 different stakeholders were chosen, representing a wide panel of actors all playing a role in the employment of refugees and asylum seekers (NGOs, government agencies, employment services and agencies, employers ...). This cross section of stakeholders enables us to study both sides of the question, on the one hand the refugees' and asylum seekers' side, and on the other hand the employers' side.



Testing phase

Based on the results of the mapping phase, different tools were developed and tested during 8 months. These tools all focused on different components of the chain, as follows:

- Screening tool: a digital screening tool aimed to help detect and highlight competences, skills and professional potential
- Gap Bridging tools:
 - A training module on the national working culture/entrepreneurship
 - A guide for employers with information on administrative and legal requirements
- Matching tool: A career fair connecting employers with asylum seekers and refugees
- Sustainability tool: A support web-platform for asylum seekers, refugees and employers with information and post-recruitment guidance

These guidelines start with a general introduction on refugees and asylum seekers in the European labour market including a short chapter on the impact of Covid-19. Then the chapters focusing on the four different chain components present existing practices in each component, followed by the shortages in the component and finally the guidelines and suggestions with best practice examples all over Europe and the results of our own testing phase. Finally, the conclusions of our research summarize the most important findings and suggestions for action.



Refugees and asylum seekers on the European labour market

Facts and figures

European framework for labour market integration

Labour market for refugees and asylum seekers in times of Covid-19

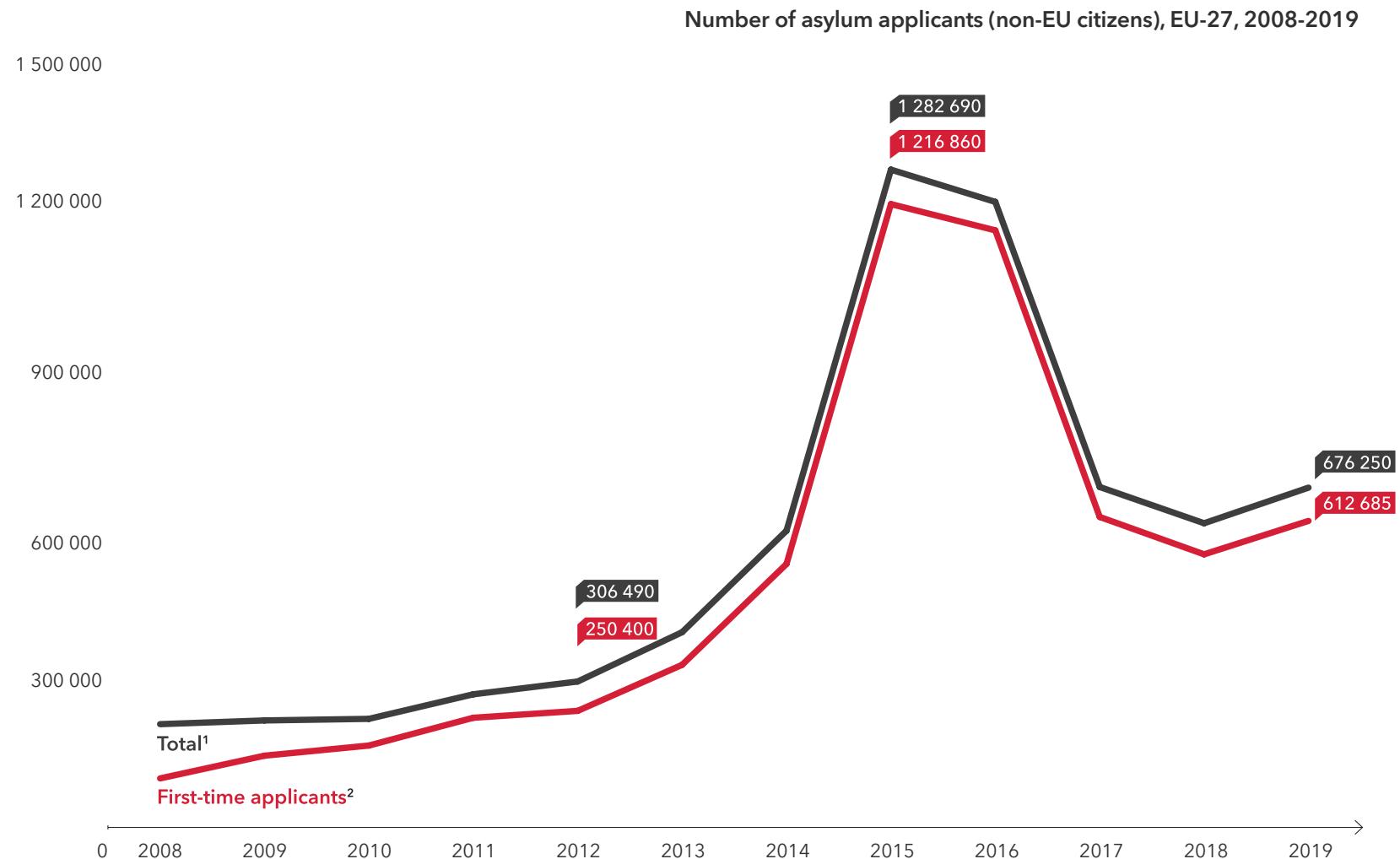
Chain cooperation

Facts and figures

General facts and figures

There are currently over 22.5 million refugees across the world and an estimated 6 million in G20 and OECD countries (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). In 2015 and 2016 alone, about 2.7 million asylum seekers made their way to Europe, representing the most important mass population movement in our regions since World War II (Joyce, 2018).

From the following graph, it becomes clear that we have dealt with a huge increase in asylum applications in the past few years. Numbers may seem to be declining, but they remain significant and a lot higher than they were in 2008. Whether or not this trend will continue is uncertain, however many indications, among others the effects of the climate change, point to a similar situation in the years to come. Either way, a large portion of the asylum seekers who have already arrived will settle in Europe for the long term. Their labour market access is a determining factor in their social and economic integration, and indirectly on their impact on their host countries' economies.



Retrieved from Eurostat:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics, 08/06/2020

¹ 2008-2014: Croatia not available.

² 2008: Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and Finland not available. 2009: Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Slovakia and Finland not available. 2010: Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Romania and Finland not available. 2011: Croatia, Hungary, Austria and Finland not available. 2012: Croatia, Hungary and Austria not available. 2013: Austria not available.

Not only has the amount of applications increased, but the amount of positive outcomes of the procedures has also risen considerably. This is due to differences in the nationalities of people applying for the refugee status over these past few years, with a larger proportion coming from countries with intensified and prolonged war. This highlights even more the urgent need to work on professional integration as soon as possible. Furthermore, once they have settled in, these refugees often undergo a process of family reunification, which also accounts for a large portion of newcomers in European countries.

According to Eurostat, Germany, France, Spain, Greece and Italy are the main countries of destination of asylum seekers. In 2019, Germany accounted for 23.3% of first-time asylum seekers, France for 19.6%, Spain 18.8%, Greece 12.2% and Italy 5.7% (Eurostat, 2019). As for their countries of origin, the top three are Syria, Afghanistan and Venezuela (12.1%, 8.6% and 7.3% respectively in 2018).

In terms of age, more than three quarters of the asylum seekers are younger than 35, meaning that they still have many years of professional activity ahead of them. 47% of asylum seekers are between 18 and 34 years old, and roughly a third is younger than 18 (Eurostat, 2020). These striking numbers highlight once again how important it is to implement policies and actions to facilitate their access to the labour market, as this young generation is likely to settle down for the long-term in the different EU countries.



Statistics concerning employment rates of third-country nationals are compelling. In 2017, there was a 15.4 percent gap in employment rates of national populations compared to third-country nationals (EMN, 2019). Furthermore, while 19% of EU nationals are overqualified for their jobs, this applies to 46% of non-EU citizens. Refugees and asylum seekers represent one of the most vulnerable sub-groups of third-country nationals, especially when it comes to labour market integration (Labour-Int, 2017). Their low employment rates are even

more alarming compared to other categories of immigrant populations due to various challenges specific to this group linked to their recent arrival in the country and difficult journey, such as less knowledge of hostcountry languages, the lack of documents needed for official recognition of their qualifications and mental or physical health problems (Voka, 2018). Furthermore, this specific sub-group could be less likely to think in the long-term due to the stress related to the uncertainty of their asylum procedure or the hope to return to their country of origin once the political situation has stabilised. Highlighting these findings, in 2014 56% of refugees were employed, compared to 65% of native-born populations and 71% of immigrants that arrived for educational or professional reasons. (European Commission, 2016). Data suggests that it takes up to 20 years for a refugee to have a similar employment rate as national populations (Dumont, Liebig, Peschner, Tanay, & Xenogiani, 2016).

Data on education and professional experience of asylum seekers and refugees remain rare and unreliable, but evidence suggests that roughly 15% have followed higher-education, 50% reached secondary school level and 30% to 40% either only went to primary school or are illiterate (Martin et al., 2016).



Data from Sweden indicates that the individual educational level will highly determine the time needed to enter the labour market. Refugees with low education need at least twice more time than medium-educated refugees to find a job (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).

Much evidence highlights a few main obstacles that are common across countries for this specific target group, mainly the lack of language skills, difficulties with recognition of their qualifications and discrimination during recruitment processes (EMN, 2019). Highlighting these challenges, the 2014 EU Labour Force Survey concluded that refugees in Europe who have only basic knowledge of national languages reach a 30% employment rate, compared to 60% for those with more language skills (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).



Gender related facts and figures

Within the group of refugees and asylum seekers, there is one important particularly vulnerable sub-group: women. The proportion of female asylum seekers has increased from 27.4 % in 2015 to 38.4 % in 2018. With almost four out of ten asylum seekers being women, they must be considered a strong minority whose needs cannot be ignored.



Evidence suggests that the impacts of migration are strongly gendered, since women and men are exposed to different types of vulnerability during the different stages of migration. On the run, women refugees are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV). The latter is one of the most pervasive threats to women and girls using 'irregular' routes into and through Europe, especially those travelling alone. It includes rape, genital mutilation and forced early marriage, domestic violence, coerced 'survival sex', human trafficking as well as sexual harassment in transit camps and reception centres.

Refugee women and men are often confronted with similar problems when it comes to their integration into the labour market. Both suffer from institutional framework conditions that are not adapted to the

needs of refugees, and a more or less open reservation, if not discrimination, from the domestic population. But refugee women and girls tend to face even higher exclusion risk, because of a triple discrimination caused by gender, race and class. If they are girls, young women or above 50 years of age, age is a fourth discrimination factor. 'In the case of women refugees, the segregation that the female population suffers in the labour market is exacerbated by the discrimination they suffer as newly arrived. In many cases this is made more difficult by barriers that are often imposed by their own families seeing as how in some cultures it is not acceptable for women to work if the man of the family has a job' (Castella, 2017).

Refugee women are underrepresented in the labour market in all European Union countries. In 2014, the employment rate for refugee women was on average 45%, or 17 percentage points lower than that of refugee men (Dumont, Liebig, Peschner, Tanay, & Xenogiani, 2016). As underlined in a study of the European Parliament, asylum-seeking women in general show a huge professional and socio-economic gap in their status between

their pre-exile and post-exile situations. This is mainly due to their childcare obligations, a reduced access to training and language courses and the lack of recognition of their qualifications. Refugees are more likely to be employed in the secondary labour market whose main features are precarious jobs, low wages, less support by trade unions, limited career opportunities, and difficult working conditions. Women among them mainly have access to jobs within the domestic services sector, i.e. childcare, care for the old people, and household cleaning. In most cases, they are employed at a level which is far below their qualifications and skills (European Parliament, 2016a).

Eurostat data suggest that many immigrant women in the EU have especially low educational backgrounds: In 2017, 37.4% of extra EU28 born female population's educational attainment was 'less than primary, primary or lower secondary' (ISCED 2011 levels 0-2). This educational background only applies to 24.1% of women born in countries of the European Union for which data is available (Eurostat, 2019). However, one sub-group among refugee women possesses completely different preconditions than those



outlined above. In some cases newly arrived women (and men) are highly skilled. Studies on brain drain suggest that skilled women tend to migrate more than men do, especially when they come from countries where gender equality or civil rights are not respected. In Europe, highly skilled migrant women are concentrated in the education and health sectors. Despite being part of the most disadvantaged group with reference to employment outcomes, when female refugees are highly qualified, their employment rate is higher than that of equivalent refugee men and that of other highly educated foreign-born women from non-EU countries (Dumont, Liebig, Peschner, Tanay, & Xenogiani, 2016).



European policies and framework for labour market integration

General framework

As the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers is a common challenge faced by all member states, the EU has recently developed policies aiming to support national countries and to enhance socio-professional inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers. As stated by the European Migration Network: "While integration is a joint objective between the Member States and the EU, immigrant integration policies are the responsibility of each individual Member State, with the EU playing a supporting role" (EMN, 2019: 6).

In 2004, the EU published the "Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU", outlining common principles for integration, and assisting national countries with their policies. In 2009, the EU launched the European Website on Integration with many examples of best practices for inspiration. In 2016, the EU adopted the Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, which developed a common policy framework to support the member states. Recent developments have targeted specific challenges, such as the EU Skills Profile Tool for Third-Country Nationals to improve the screening of skills and competences. The EU has also focused on encouraging and supporting employers in the recruitment of Third-Country Nationals, through the 2017 Employers Together for Integration initiative and the signature of the Partnership on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees (EMN, 2019).



With the EU playing a supportive role, Member States are responsible for implementing concrete policies and actions to lead refugees and asylum seekers to the labour market. EU countries tend to combine mainstream measures, available to all citizens seeking a job, and specific measures targeting vulnerable groups such as refugees and asylum seekers (EMN, 2019). These targeted measures are highly needed to overcome the specific challenges faced by the above-mentioned sub-group.

Generally, public sector measures aim at leading refugees and asylum seekers to the labour market before they access employment, by providing education and training, improving the recognition of their qualifications and countering discrimination by informing and raising awareness on the employers' side. On the other hand, private sector measures tend to concentrate more on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in their workplace, once they have been employed. This consists, among others, of specific job-related training, buddy programmes and inter-

nal workshops on cultural differences (EMN, 2019).

An important aspect to keep in mind is that not all European countries grant the right to work to asylum seekers who are still in their procedure. For these countries, policies and measures focus only on recognized refugees who have already received their status. Nevertheless, most countries have a legal framework allowing asylum seekers to work, often a few months after applying for asylum, whilst waiting for the outcome. As procedures sometimes take months, or even years, it is important that this time is not wasted and that steps are already taken to facilitate the long-term integration of those who will receive positive outcomes. According to EASO, 72% of asylum seekers stay more than 6 months in a reception centre whilst waiting for their procedure outcome, and 52% even stay more than 12 months.

Gender related framework

The specific experiences and needs of women refugees threaten the effectiveness of integration efforts made at various levels. The author of a study commissioned by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament concludes: "Policies aimed at guaranteeing refugees' rights and wellbeing cannot be gender-neutral, otherwise they are destined to fail. Gender is not a neutral element that can be neglected, but constitutes one of the main dimensions of discrimination and violence female refugees have to cope with in their life path." (European Parliament, 2016a). In their report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU, the European Parliament calls "on the Member States to develop and implement specific measures to facilitate labour market participation of women refugees and asylum seekers, including language classes, literacy programmes, lifelong learning and training" (European Parliament, 2016b).



In a study on gender-sensitive measures through education for the integration of newly-arrived third country nationals, the European Institute for Gender Equality hints to the neglect of distinct experiences, needs, roles, aspirations and constraints of migrant women and men. These aspects influence every aspect in the migration and integration process, starting with the decision to migrate, to their journey, expectations and everyday realities in the destination country. "Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women and girls must be acknowledged as leaders in integration because of their strength, resilience and resourcefulness in the migration and integration process" (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2018). At European level in general, a strong commitment in pursuing gender equality in general and for refugee women in particular can be observed.²



Labour market for refugees and asylum seekers in times of Covid-19

General framework

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented and unexpected impact on the economies of EU member states. As was pointed out at an OECD Webinar, the impact has been very variable between localities and regions and between sectors. It has had direct effects on the economy and labour markets through people being sick or taking precautions in case of illness and indirect effects from the control measures imposed in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus.

Although the situation does vary between member states in terms of impact and mitigating measures enforced, there have also been common patterns. These include restrictions on external movement and also on a local and regional basis. 'Lockdowns' through which individuals are encouraged or enforced to remain at home most or all of the time. Closure of a wide range of businesses included manufacturing, personal services, non essential retail, transport, and leisure, hospitality and tourism.

At the same time, some areas of the economy and labour market have expanded with enhanced demand for, for example, health and social care and home delivery and distribution. In the Netherlands, for example, growth was expected in relation to health and welfare, public services and postal and distribution services. There are also major regional variations, for example between urban and more rural areas. In the Netherlands, Amsterdam has been severely affected but areas in the north much less so. These changes have led to rapid layoffs of staff including redundancies and layoffs or furloughs. Those on non-standard employment contracts, self-employed and in precarious work have been especially badly hit. In general, workers in professional services and elements of public

services have been able to make the transition to working at home far easier than those whose work is more physical or directly customer-facing. Of course, professional workers in some sectors, especially health care, were required to maintain a strong element of direct contact.

It seems likely that the virus and continuous mitigating actions will have an impact on all elements of the ETCC process including screening, matching, gap bridging and sustainability.



Short term impact on employment for refugees and asylum seekers

Although there are variations between member states and regions, there are a number of common factors about how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on employment for refugees and asylum seekers in the short term. Firstly, many people in these communities work in sectors that are worst hit by the lockdown process implemented in most countries, for example transport, taxi driving, leisure and hospitality. Furthermore, many are in precarious work with short term contracts, self-employed with little protection, hence vulnerable to being laid off or made redundant with little or no access to state support in many cases. The Cyprus Refugee Council reported an unprecedented level of labour related requests from people losing jobs due to

Covid-19 including those who had been in stable work for many years.

Also, refugees and asylum seekers are often in jobs which are physical (agriculture / warehouse work) or require direct interaction with customers (taxi driving, social care) and cannot be done from home or remotely. And, even if remote work is possible, in many cases they may lack the equipment, facilities and know-how to work in that way. At the same time, people from refugee backgrounds

have been prominent in certain areas which have been in the front line of the Covid-19 crisis including health and also social care. Also in limited areas new opportunities have opened, for example in Belgium, where asylum seekers were given the right to work in the agricultural sector even before receiving their working permit (which is given 4 months after the start of their asylum procedure) to replace migrant workers from Eastern European member states unable to travel due to the restrictions. This may

also lead to longer term possibilities for refugees and asylum seekers.

However, the overall consequence of these factors has been to increase levels of unemployment and reduce new opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, these communities are more exposed to contracting the virus due to the nature of their work, and refugee / migrant / BAME communities have disproportionately contracted and died from the virus. This has been identified as a key issue in the UK and may well be a factor in other member states and beyond (Kurby, 2020).

Refugees are also active in setting up and running a wide range of small businesses which are a vital provider of goods and services and a driver of innovation. Many have suffered from the impact of Covid-19 due to reduced demand and trading restrictions. Many have lacked resources, capital and social networks to adapt to huge changes in markets which have taken place. This has led to cash flow problems, reduced profit, ceased trading and in some cases

bankruptcy. Again opportunities for refugees within the labour market have suffered a major short term hit.

In the case of asylum seekers, the legal situation regarding employment varies between member states. In some countries no work is legally allowed, in others only in limited sectors (e.g. agriculture) or after a certain period, and in still others on a more open basis. Where restrictions are in place, individuals may become involved in illegal work, for example aspects of personal service or construction. Of course, some refugees may also work illegally especially where legal work is hard to come by. It is difficult to know the likely impact of the pandemic on illegal working but it may well increase as employers try to reduce costs and individuals find legal work more difficult to access.





Long term impact on sustainable work for refugees and asylum seekers

Whilst the short term impacts on access to employment for our target group is fairly clear, the longer term impact is far less certain at macro and micro level. At macro level it is difficult to predict how quickly economies and labour markets will recover and to what extent lack of consumer confidence, changes in consumer behaviour and spikes in infection levels from the virus will hamper this. It is far easier to develop work opportunities, especially in sustainable jobs in a tight and competitive labour market where employers are competing for staff. Also in many member states there have been temporary employment subsidies and assistance for small enterprises during the lockdown period. These schemes vary but often come to an end as lockdown eases. It is uncertain how employers will respond, and redundancies and closures have already started on a significant scale. In some cas-

es these trends related to Covid-19 coincide with wider changes in government policy towards refugees and migration, including in Cyprus and in the UK where major changes in policy are proposed in the context of Brexit (OECD, 2020).

In general, it would seem likely that the medium and long term impact of the Covid-19 crisis will be that more refugees and asylum seekers will lose their jobs, others will find it more difficult to enter the labour market in the first place, and more will be stuck in entry level and insecure work with reduced chance of progression.

However, while the above drivers will have a negative impact on opportunities for our target group, there are some countervailing factors to consider too.

Though refugees and asylum seekers do work in segments of the labour market badly hit by Covid-19, others are also significantly represented in some areas of the labour market where the crisis has increased demand and also the recognition of value of the contribution to society, for example in health care (including doctors, nursing staff, as well as in ancillary roles) and in social care.

The crisis may serve to further emphasise trends already in place in the context of rapid changes in the labour market which reduce the relevance of skills in a traditional sense in favour of qualities such as reliability, flexibility and commitment as well as soft skills such as human interaction or digital competence. It has been pointed out that the supply and demand for labour are not independent entities but interrelated and socially constructed and also highly gendered. Skills is a term frequently used by policy makers and researchers but is both empirically and conceptually an imprecise and vague term. Refugees and asylum seekers are often very strong in relation to these factors of values and qualities. So we may need to challenge the concept of skills. We need to work with individuals to allow them to recognize and promote other attributes and with employers rethinking their approach away from skills, so as to identify the importance of other factors in how to use them for recruitment and selection (Ruhs & Anderson, 2010).



Impact of Covid crisis on delivery of support to access sustainable work

The Covid-19 crisis has had several direct impacts on the provision of support for refugees and asylum seekers in obtaining work in most member states and regions. Firstly, many from the target group have experienced reduced motivation to obtain employment, as safety and health become more important and have reduced access to take part in support activities such as transport, education and child care. Secondly, support providers have found it difficult or impossible to deliver some services which require face-to-face contact (such as counselling). Some providers, especially in the NGO sector and at community level may experience cash flow problems, reductions in income and funding which may threaten their long term viability and future operations.

On the other hand, the crisis has led in several locations to a more rapid development in online and digital delivery of activities such as training and mentoring. In some instances, the number of individuals assisted has dropped in-



initially with a switch from face-to-face to online delivery with numbers recovering over time. In Belgium, for example, regional offices have for the first time worked exclusively remotely, and in the UK, a project in Coventry run by ACH has switched successfully from face-to-face to virtual delivery via Whatsapp. Also some communities have found accessing online support easier with greater flexibility over times and dates, no need for transport and more accommodating for caring roles for children and others. However, support is needed in the design and delivery of online support as many refugees and asylum seekers may lack expertise or equipment - such as laptops or tablets - to take part. More complex and specialised online meeting platforms, such as Zoom or Gotomeeting, may also be a barrier. Instead phone based delivery using popular, generic tools, such as Whatsapp, may be more appropriate for this target group.

Implications for activities for long term chain cooperation employment support

The Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of mitigating actions are likely to have a significant impact on all elements of the ETCC chain cooperation approach including screening, bridging gaps, matching and sustainability. Indeed the Covid-19 crisis underlines the importance of stakeholder cooperation; working as a silo method is even less likely to be effective now. However, the exact long term impact is difficult to assess at this point and will vary between member states and regions. These regional and local variations would suggest a strong role for that level of policy and delivery rather than national level approaches so that activities can be relevant to local circumstances.

In Italy, it is observed, with reference to the specific chain cooperation process, that employers will be less affected since they are more used to digital tools. Screening of candidates could be carried out via distance meetings and implications for modality and methodology used in gap bridging especially when targeting training for asylum seekers and refugees will be possible.



The screening of individuals needs to ensure the use of accessible digital and online tools as much as possible and may need to more strongly emphasise the importance of labour market access in a safe environment. There will be a need to ensure that work takes place with employers in sectors which still have skills and recruitment gaps and where remote and home working is possible. It will be even more important that refugees are not channelled only to fill vacancies in entry level and marginal jobs unless pathways for progression are in place. In the medium term, following Covid-19, it will be important to further understand how the

labour market functions in matching supply and demand and to interact with employers to critique the concept of "skills" in relation to recruitment, reward and progression. Furthermore, the business case for the employment of our target group needs to be emphasised with a focus on decent work through strengthening protection and security for those currently engaged via flexible and precarious arrangements. Failure to do so may not only have negative implications for economic recovery but also undermine integration and create isolation and alienation.

Chain cooperation

Definition and functions

Chain cooperation is a concept often used in the business world, generally in the context of supply chains, when two or more firms work together to create mutual added value and benefits. However, this concept can be used in many sectors, private and public, to describe close partnerships of stakeholders all working together but at different parts of the "chain" to achieve the same goal.

Many definitions of chain cooperation exist in literature, each of them focusing on different characteristics:

- Chain cooperation is the management of activities aimed at the coordination of different links in the chain, with the objective of optimizing the entire chain as if it were one unit (one joint organization). This is in contrast to the situation where each party in the chain focuses on optimizing his own individual performance (prof. dr. Jack van der Veen, University professor Supply Chain Optimization, University of Amsterdam).
- Chain cooperation is the optimal distribution of roles, activities, responsibilities and powers between the participants in the chain, in order to be sure that all parties involved do their utmost to optimize the performance of the entire chain (Schonberger, 1990).





- Chain cooperation is a partnership in which parties work together, share information, capacity and risks and make joint choices to achieve better collective performance (Bowersox et al., 2003).
- Chain cooperation is a long-term partnership in which partners with a common goal work closely together to realize a joint benefit that is greater than what can be achieved individually (Cao et al., 2010).

Leading refugees and asylum seekers to the labour market is a challenge that requires joint efforts from a wide range of different parties. However, for the moment, most or all member states have implemented a decentralised model with little or no coordination between stakeholders (EMN, 2019).

Cooperation needs to happen between all actors playing a role along the line of the labour market integration of refugees and asylum seekers, including:

- Migrant and refugee communities
- The national or regional stakeholder responsible for the reception of asylum seekers, once they have started their procedure (often responsible for housing and material assistance)
- Supportive organisations offering all sorts of programmes focusing on their well-being: socio-professional integration, psychological and medical help, housing, etc. These organisations can be non-profit, NGOs, or any other civic organisation
- Regional and national authorities, responsible for implementing policies concerning the integration of refugees and asylum seekers
- Public services, such as public employment agencies, national labour organisations, that play a role in employment support to all citizens legally allowed to work; their services are therefore also provided to refugees and asylum seekers holding work permits

- Private employment agencies, that also provide support in job searching, and whose services are also available to refugees and asylum seekers holding work permits
- Any employer, or employers' association, whether in the public or private sector

In order for this cooperation to happen, national and regional authorities play a key role. It is the government's responsibility to encourage all stakeholders to implement policies and activities to lead refugees and asylum seekers to the labour market. Defining clear legal obligations and implementing incentive policies are of enormous importance, but unfortunately insufficient to this day.

Furthermore, while it is widely recognized that more collaboration is needed between all parties involved, a clear lack of engagement on the employers' side persists. In a report of the European Migration Network only 15% of their sample of initiatives were developed and implemented by employers or employers' associations. This statistic is striking when we consider the importance of their role in the professional integration of refugees and asylum seekers (EMN, 2019).



Each of these stakeholders plays a role at a different moment of the professional integration path, some at the very beginning, others further along the line when the refugee or asylum seeker is ready to work after different trainings for example. In order to develop the most efficient integration paths, it is essential that the roles of each partner are well defined to avoid overlaps and duplication of efforts, as often happens today. If information is shared correctly between relevant actors, they can each concentrate on their specific competences and increase the quality of their work.

Best practice examples:

Portugal - One stop shops

National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAI) have been in operation since 2004. These centres were initiated by the Portuguese High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI), and currently exist in Lisbon, Porto and Faro, with smaller local offices existing throughout the country. A wide panel of stakeholders, all offering different support and integration services to refugees and asylum seekers, are present in these centres. This includes the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Immigration and Borders Service and the Labour Inspectorate. Legal and employment services are also provided by a specialised agency. This close collaboration has allowed the streamlining of integration services, and more cooperation between the different competent authorities.

Further information: <https://www.acm.gov.pt/-/cnai-centro-nacional-de-apoio-ao-imigrante>



Belgium - @Level2Work project: One stop shop

The @Level2Work project launched by the public employment services VDAB and Actiris together with the integration agency Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering. This project aimed to lead highly-educated newcomers to the labour market with the help of a 'one stop shop'. This information desk was destined to accompany newcomers in their jobsearch, regrouping all relevant partners behind one desk, such as public employment services, integration agencies, supportive organisations etc.



Screening and recognition of competences

Current situation

- Screening on refugees' and applicants' side
- Screening on employers' side

Shortages and guidelines

- Lack of a coordinated screening process
- Diversity of the applied screening tools
- Obstacles in the recognition of qualifications and degrees
- Identifying market needs and skills shortages

Conclusions on screening and recognition of competences

The first step of the chain of labour market integration is screening, both on the asylum seekers' and refugees' as well as on the employer's sides. Firstly, screening aims at identifying the knowledge level and goals of the asylum seeker or refugee by scanning and recording experiences, competences (hard and soft skills) and future aspirations. Secondly, it is also important to screen the current needs and labour shortages that employers face in order to be able to lead asylum seekers and refugees to these sectors and increase their chances of sustainable employment.



Current situation

Screening on the asylum seekers' and refugees' side

Screening is often carried out by various stakeholders: reception centers, employment agencies, municipalities, civic organizations and employers. It appears that it is currently mainly done by interviews and informal conversations targeting language skills, educational level and previous work experiences. Screening methods are usually less focused on technical skills, rarely using tools with photos of work environments and professional gestures, and rarely focusing on required techniques, machines, tools, sounds, odours, rules, etc. These methods have, however, been proven successful for a person to realistically imagine what a certain job would be like, and know if s/he has the skills needed and is suited for it.

A promising measure that is being implemented in some countries is the creation of educational and professional profiles for asylum seekers and refugees which are then used to determine the area in which the asylum seeker or refugee has the best chance of finding a job based on his or her competences, and therefore in which region the asylum seeker or refugee should be housed. This is often carried out by the reception centre upon arrival of the asylum seeker. A screening interview or questionnaire is filled in to gather the professional experiences, educational degrees and future aspirations of the asylum seeker. The reception centre will then match their profile to a region with a high number of job opportunities accessible to the asylum seeker. Attention is of course also paid to the so-called 'soft placement criteria', which is sometimes even prioritized: the existence of a (social) network and ambitions for the future in the host country.

Screening procedures are usually considered gender-neutral. There is, however, indication that specific skills and competences of refugee women may be overlooked if all parties involved are not explicitly made aware of them. This applies especially to soft skills, which are, among others, generated from caring for children and other family members or being in charge of a household.

Screening on the employers' side

Attracting third-country nationals to meet the labour market demands in certain sectors was part of the political debate in a couple of countries, particularly in some of the newer Member States. Some of them were facing or anticipating a shortage of the workforce in some sectors and at different levels from low-skilled to highly-skilled workers (EMN 2019).

Leading asylum seekers and refugees to the sectors in need of workforce could therefore lead to higher chances for them to find a long-term sustainable job. A screening of these jobs could help all relevant stakeholders to focus the professional integration paths on these employments, by providing appropriate training and education and matching the employers in need of workforce with our target groups.

With this in mind, it is important to be aware of the local labour market needs and shortages. Unfortunately, measures aiming to do this seem to remain extremely rare to this day, highlighting a clear gap in the chain of professional integration of refugees and asylum seekers.



Shortages and guidelines

A closer look at widespread methods in screening the competences of asylum seekers and refugees reveals a number of shortages on different levels. In general, the screening process is lacking coordination and shared quality standards. All stakeholders involved carry out screening to the best of their abilities, but without a coordinated process in which all actors cooperate, the results are not optimal. For the moment, screening is usually done informally during interviews and conversations, or based on the CV. As the results are often used only by the stakeholder who carried out the screening, they are repeated by the other actors. With each organization setting up their own screening process, efforts are duplicated and results not comparable.

Technical competences, soft skills and professional potential are equally important as language skills and educational background but more complex and therefore rarely analysed. Furthermore, employers are usually not acquainted with the economic and business environments of countries where refugees come from. Hence, there is only a limited understanding of previously gained professional experiences and educational degrees. Furthermore, the formal procedures for the recognition of credentials still need to be facilitated in many European countries.

There is a clear need for reliable and adaptable screening tools, which reduce misconceptions and biases due to language barriers in oral interviews, lack of confidence of the asylum seeker or refugee leading to a too modest or exaggerated self-assessment of competences and/or lack of knowledge of the labour market of the host country. This all results in wrong conceptions of skills needed for a job, and uncertainty on the side of employers regarding the validity of formerly gained qualifications and credentials of the asylum seeker.



Lack of a coordinated screening process

Guideline 1: Ensuring collaboration along the screening process

Close collaboration between different stakeholders along the professional integration path is necessary to avoid duplication of work and to efficiently share the screening results.

The screening should happen as soon as possible, for instance by a reception centre or public employment agency at the beginning of the asylum procedure. It is considered essential that screening is carried out as soon as an asylum seeker enters the asylum procedure and that the results of the screening are shared with all other relevant stakeholders along the chain.

Step by step implementation:

1. The screening can be split into two steps: a factual screening (experience, education, language knowledge, ...) carried out during the intake of the asylum seeker at the start of their procedure, and later on a second screening focusing more on future professional aspirations. In order to talk about the future, the asylum seeker first needs to gain basic knowledge on the country and the job opportunities that exist. A basic level of trust with the counselor in charge of the screening is also necessary. The reception centre is responsible for both screenings with help of a reliable tool (see guideline n°2). This tool ensures that the same process is followed for each asylum seeker and that standardized results are obtained which can be shared with all other relevant stakeholders.

Ideally, the tool makes it possible to print out the answers of the screening in the form of a CV. This early screening and printed CV helps the asylum seeker to show his or her competences and skills to any other actor s/he will meet along the professional integration path.

2. Regular platform meetings (guideline n°4) should be organized in order to have a clear view of the current labour shortages and regions in need of workforce with certain skills.
3. Both results can then be used by the reception centre to place the asylum seeker in a region where s/he has the most chances of finding a job according to her or his previous experience or qualifications. For this, it is important that the reception actor is knowledgeable in the field of labour market needs (through regular trainings with updates) or is advised by regional or national actors specialized in job market needs, for example public employment agencies.
4. The results can be shared in advance with the public employment service, so that they can prepare their future meeting with the asylum seeker and consider trainings or job opportunities.
5. The screening outcomes can also be shared with organisations responsible for the recognition of qualifications and equivalences. This will enable them to start their research on the qualifications acquired by the asylum seeker, and accelerate the whole process.



Of course, special attention must be paid to the General Data Protection Regulation all along the process. This regulation establishes and implements rules relating to the protection of personal data.

Attention must also be paid to the possibility that this might be the first time anyone asks the asylum seeker a question about her or his professional future, as there were possibly no or very few opportunities in the country of origin due to economic, cultural or political reasons. It is also important to regularly check back during the procedure to verify if the asylum seeker has changed his or her mind about the professional future, for example due to a better view of the opportunities in the host country or more knowledge about specific job contents.

Best practice examples:

Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Coordinated mapping process - Denmark

In Denmark, a coordinated mapping of competences and skills takes places as early as possible by the reception agency. They also take into account the professional aspirations and qualifications to choose which reception centre the asylum seeker will go to, according to the local labour market demands. A hotline was set up by the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education, answering and informing all relevant actors who are screening refugees and asylum seekers. It is a very quick process, taking only a few days. The Danish Ministry of Education developed an online tool called "My Competence Portfolio" where refugees and asylum seekers can fill in themselves their degrees and professional experience.

By informing all relevant screening actors and answering their questions, cooperation between these actors becomes easier since they all receive the same information.

However, although the developed online tool "My Competence Portfolio" seems very valuable, it might prove to be difficult to asylum seekers or refugees who are not yet sufficiently familiar with filling in an online tool, or who do not yet have a sufficient knowledge of the language.

Further information: <https://www.minkompetencemappe.dk/>

Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Data-driven Algorithm - USA and Switzerland

Some countries are starting to explore the possibility of using algorithms to place refugees across the country in order to improve their professional integration. The algorithm aims to find synergies between the possible placement areas and the skills and aspirations of asylum seekers. According to a study making use of data from Switzerland and the USA, this method can lead to a 70% increase in employment outcomes compared to the current approaches.

Further information: Bansak, K., J. Ferwerda, J. Hainmueller, A. Dillon, D. Hangartner, D. Lawrence & J. Weinstein, 2018, Improving refugee integration through data-driven algorithmic assignment, *Science*, Vol. 359: 325-329.



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Screening for best placement by COA - Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the reception actor COA conducts screening interviews and creates profiles for each asylum seeker. Attention is paid to the 'hard placement criteria': first-degree family in the Netherlands, family reunification, medical treatment and an employment contract or enrolment at an educational institution. COA also pays attention to the 'soft placement criteria': work experience, followed courses, presence of a (social) network in the Netherlands and ambitions for the future. In the placing of refugees in appropriate regions, all the aspects that can promote integration are taken into account. If an asylum seeker receives a residence permit at the end of his asylum procedure, COA uses the screening results to transfer the refugee to a region where s/he will have the best opportunities to get a paid job. This improves the integration of asylum seekers.

Further information: <https://www.coa.nl/en/early-integration-and-participation>



Diversity of the applied screening tools

In many European countries, screening tools with different approaches are available, but they still have room for improvement. Besides common features like language skills, education and work experience, also soft skills, talents and professional aspirations could and should be taken into account. In order to encourage its use across all stakeholders concerned, a wide panel of stakeholders from the public and private sectors should be involved in the process of upscaling and improving existing screening tools, or developing new ones.

Guideline 2: Upscale screening tools

A digital screening tool

Digital tools that can be used and linked with different organisations along the chain are not only easy to share among all parties concerned, but also ensure that the screening results can be shared with employers looking for candidates. They even give the opportunity to match existing skills and competences with labour market needs in specific sectors or regions.

Their benefits for asylum seekers and refugees are numerous, starting with language barriers that could be overcome by providing many translations in different languages. If a refugee or an asylum seeker has no or little literacy skills, visual aids (photos and videos) are equally important. These aids also help to solve the issues of cultural differences and different conceptions of jobs and competences. Videos can be used to show exactly what a specific job entails, what the tasks will be and therefore which competences are necessary.

Ideally, the tool should also address the professional potential aside from previous experiences and education, in order to highlight soft skills and the capacity to learn. Regular feedback loops between the users and developers will continuously improve the screening tool.



Ensure the dissemination of the screening tool

In order to encourage a broad implementation of the tool, a variety of dissemination methods should be used to reach actors at all levels. This starts with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the design of the screening tool or the improvement and merging of existing tools. If their specific interests are met, organisations will advertise it among their members and encourage their use. Those in charge of screening should also receive training to ensure its correct application.

The joint development of a tool will foster close future cooperation in other chain components.

Step by step implementation:

1. A mapping of the existing screening tools is necessary to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the tools. This mapping should be done jointly by different stakeholders (supportive organisations, reception actors and employment services and agencies).
2. A stakeholder (for example the public employment service) should then be responsible for the upscaling and further development of the tools to end up with a reliable tool that can be shared with all or as many as possible (taking into account GDPR issues). It is important that the tool can be adapted to the specific needs of the actors using it, but the results should be comparable and understandable by all.
 - a. The tool should focus on specific competences and skills acquired through previous experiences and education.
 - b. It should also highlight professional potential and soft skills, that can sometimes also be acquired through hobbies, a certain lifestyle or previous experiences
 - c. Another important aspect to cover is the aspirations and goals of the asylum seekers.

d. Furthermore, the screening tool can also be used to give asylum seekers a clear idea of what exactly certain jobs entail in the host country, and which competences are required for the different jobs available. This can decrease misconceptions of certain jobs that are carried out very differently in their countries of origin.

3. The tool should be shared with all relevant stakeholders, and training should be provided for people using the tool in order to gain comparable results and avoid biases.

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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MYSKILLS tool - Germany

The German public employment service has developed a digital screening tool for the assessment of refugees' and asylum seekers' informal skills. The participants answer complex questions on the computer which relate to everyday situations in one of 30 occupations. The questions are supplemented by pictures and videos. Answering the questions takes about 4 hours and is carried out exclusively in the employment agencies in special test rooms.

At the end of the test, the placement specialist will give the participant an overview of the results. This includes a summary of the assessment of technical knowledge in the different "fields of ac-

tion". The overview supports the placement specialist in the search for suitable job offers as well as advisable trainings and education. Depending on the sector of work, the results consists of estimates in 5 to 7 fields of action. For the profession of "salesperson" such fields of action are for example "cashier" or "carry out promotional measures".

Circular symbols quickly reveal how much knowledge is available in the respective field of action when looking at the results. Through this method, MYSKILLS makes professional skills visible, regardless of whether it was acquired through formal education or practical work.

Further information: <https://www.myskills.de/en/>



Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals - Europe

This tool was developed by the European Commission to help identify the skills and competences of citizens of non EU-countries. It is free and available for everyone, and was intended for use by any supportive organisations working with this target group. It is available in all EU languages, and 7 other languages such as Arabic, Farsi and Pashto. The tool is intended for use in an interview context and helps to screen specific skills, previous qualifications and work experiences. The objective of the tool is to support the advisor in giving recommendations and guidance for the user. An important advantage of this tool is that it is adaptable according to the user's specific needs and a CVform can be printed out for the asylum seeker.

Further information: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1412&langId=en>

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Explorama tool used by CAI Namur - Belgium

This tool aims to invite the person using it to imagine, create and expand his or her horizons by discovering new career opportunities. It uses photos of work environments and photos of professional gestures and focuses on required techniques, machines, tools, sounds, odours, rules, etc. This way, a person can truly imagine what the job would be like, and if s/he is suited and has the skills needed for the job. It also gives an idea of the wide offer of jobs available in the host country and helps a person to discover new occupations and choose a career plan.

Further information: <http://www.cainamur.be/explorama>





ETCC tool: digital screening tool "ETCC skills"

Description

ETCC Skills is a web application for users to self-assess their technical skills and competences related to specific job profiles. Users can repeat the self-assessment over time to monitor progress and learning. The application works on any device and is available in Italian and English.

Refugees and asylum seekers can use this application to identify their knowledge level and competences for jobs available in the host country. It provides the user with information on typical jobs in the country and gives an idea of specific labour market opportunities.

The tool allows previous work experience to be valorized.

Upon finishing the self-assessment for a specific job, the results are displayed in a final report. This is a summary of the user's technical skills related to the job profile. Completed reports can be stored in a personal area on the application. The user can also print a report or send it via e-mail. The administration area of the application is accessible to relevant actors such as job advisors or trainers.

The user first selects one of the identified professional areas and then chooses a specific job profile in that area:

1. **AGRICULTURE** → Farmer, Farm worker, Food packaging or Gardener
2. **TRADE, LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT** → Generic sales worker, Driver/Courier, Warehouse worker, Ecological operator, Mover or Security
3. **CONSTRUCTION** → Electrician, Metal worker, Carpenter, Plumber, Painter, Bricklayer, General worker, Tiler or Welder
4. **FOOD** → Cook, Butcher, Baker, Confectioner, Fish Salesman or Pizza Maker

5. **OFFICE** → Accountant, Cultural Mediator, Call Center Operator, Receptionist, Hardware Technician, Software Technician or Translator
6. **CULINARY/TOURISM** → Entertainer, Waiter/Barman, Tourist Guide, Cleaning/Industrial or Cleaning/Dishwashing
7. **HEALTH/CARE** → Medical Assistant, Care Giver, Nurses, Teacher or Hairdresser

The user answers questions related to the selected job profile. The questions come with associated pictures and can be listened to by using the audio feature. All questions display a range of multiple choice answers. The range refers to how frequently the user performed a task related to the job (0 times, 1-10 times etc.).

After completing all the questions, the results are displayed in a final report. It shows to what extent the technical skills of the user meet the knowledge and skills needed for that job.



Strengths and opportunities

Adds value for different purposes and stakeholders

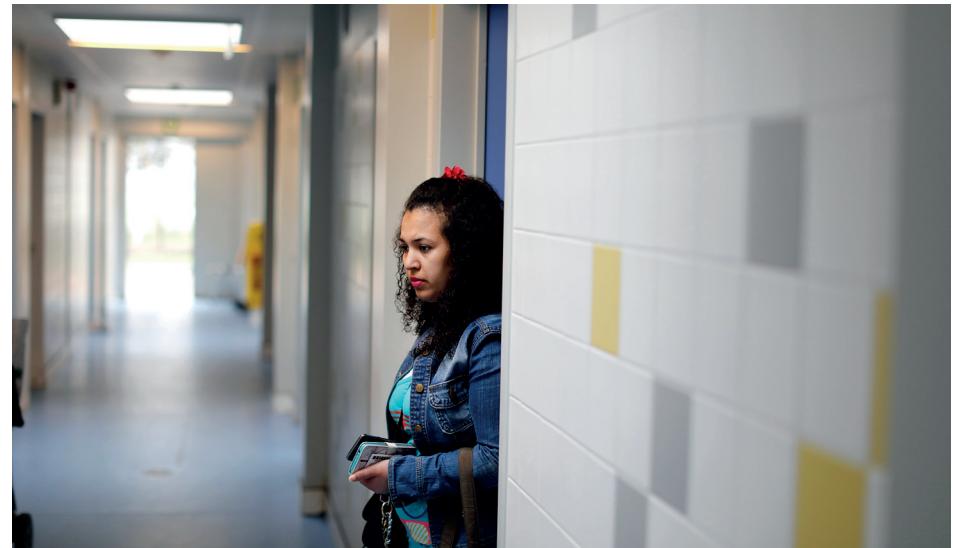
ETCC Skills is a useful tool for refugees and asylum seekers to screen their technical skills in the context of jobs in the host country. Users get an overview of common jobs on the labour market and as well as an impression of what jobs meet their previous experience. The output can also be used when drafting a Curriculum Vitae and the tool can help with preparing for a job interview. The tool is also beneficial for job advisors and employers. The results can be used in trainings, interviews, individual guidance etc.

Self-assessment as effective method

The method used in ETCC Skills is self-assessment. This stimulates the progressive construction, not only of expected results (such as skills), but also of one's identity as a person engaged in the learning process. The ETCC software, through the repetition of the test, is a first step towards the monitoring of this progress and the programming of the next steps, both in terms of recovery and in terms of development of professionalism, possibly with the assistance of a training consultant and guidance.

Easy accessible

The tool is equipped with pictures and audio to limit the risk of misunderstanding or lack of understanding by users that may not be fluent in reading the language of the host country.



Tips

Modify to different contexts and users

The application can be further enriched with areas, profiles and questions related to job roles related to specific contexts and target groups. The software has been developed so that each partner can import the software and then translate and modify the content.

Give guidance for interpreting the final report

The understanding of the final report by the user has more impact when facilitated by an advisor.

Stimulate shared use by chain partners

The tool and especially the final output can also serve other parties in the chain such as advisors and employers.



Obstacles in the recognition of qualifications and degrees

Formal certificates from educational achievements and previous work experience play a key role in career paths in European societies. However, many asylum seekers either have no proof regarding their qualifications or lost them during their journey. Therefore, they generally end up in the host country with no documents. In the rare cases where they did manage to conserve them, previously acquired qualifications may not be recognised in the host country. It seems essential to overcome this issue in order to give asylum seekers and refugees access to higher-level jobs, and avoid low-skilled unsecure employment.

Guideline 3: Facilitate the recognition of qualifications and degrees

To facilitate the recognition of credentials, multiple connected actions can be put in place. It is necessary to not only increase the equivalences and conversion programmes but to also focus on informing all parties about the process and cost of these activities. It seems clear that the relevant stakeholders will have to work hand in hand for this, as the expertise of different actors is needed.

On the one hand, it is up to the national or regional competent authorities to define the framework and legal requirements for these conversions. This should be done in accordance with international organisations in education who are knowledgeable in the field and can objectively compare different education experiences from one country to another. Furthermore, it is important to include employer associations in this action as they should also have easy access to these comparisons between countries. They could also help to detect differences in how certain jobs are carried out in the countries of origin of refugees or asylum seekers.

To make the recognition of experience and degrees as accurate as possible, it is important that:

- Authorities, employer associations and (international) supportive organisations continuously work closely together to update the comparison of degrees, as well as the differences and similarities between certain jobs in different countries;
- The legal and administrative framework facilitates the process of equivalences and degree recognition. It is important that the competent authority removes all unnecessary costly and time-consuming steps and obstacles.

Step by step implementation:

1. The roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders need to be clearly defined, with an international organisation in education possibly taking the lead.
2. The creation of a digital platform containing information on the different education systems and levels in different countries is recommended, with a special focus on the most common countries of origin of asylum seekers and refugees. The tool should also provide clear information on the processes and costs of degree equivalences and conversion courses, translated in multiple languages. This platform should be realised by an organisation specialised in education, with the help of, for example, The Education Quality Accreditation Commission, which has already acquired a lot of knowledge in the field.

Employers and employer associations should be included in the development, to help the developers understand which type of information is most useful. Supportive organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers should also give their input. The platform should be made available to any relevant stakeholder, who can then assess whether the asylum seekers' or refugees' qualifications match those in the host country. Employers can use the tool to make sure refugee or asylum seeker job seekers have the necessary competences for the job.

3. Increase degree conversion opportunities at low cost or free of charge for certain target groups. These conversion courses could be organised by local education institutions such as universities and colleges, and should be made as quick and accessible as possible. Public employment services should also be made aware of these opportunities to be able to redirect refugees and asylum seekers into these programmes.
4. Supportive organisations and public employment services could work together in providing workshops on how to write job offers by employers. Very often, employers focus on acquired degrees and qualifications, which are sometimes difficult to prove for refugees and asylum seekers. However, if job offers focus on acquired skills and competences (through professional experience or education), this would allow a much larger panel of refugees and asylum seekers to apply for the job.

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Online portal for degree recognition - Germany

The government has set up an online portal with a guide for refugees and asylum seekers with all necessary information and the steps in the process for the recognition of foreign qualifications. It is available in nine languages. The "recognition finder" can be used to check whether recognition in a specific case is necessary or helpful. With just a few clicks, users can find out where they can apply for recognition of their professional degree. In addition, the results page summarizes all the important information needed to apply for a formal recognition. If the normally required documents cannot, or only in part, be presented, a formal qualification analysis can be carried out instead to support the recognition procedure.

Further information: <https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/>



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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CV passport schemes - Europe

At an international level, the EU and Council of Europe have developed schemes to streamline the process and introduced a CV passport. This passport is one of the five "Europass" documents that have been developed to make competences and qualifications easily recognisable all over Europe. These documents are accessible and adaptable online, as well as three documents developed with education and training authorities, through which users can benefit from fast track recognition of their qualifications and access to the labour market at the level of sustainable work.

For further information: <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/about-europass>

Screening

Gap bridging

Matching

Sustaining

A fast-track evaluation - Norway

This was developed for employers allowing them to quickly check the educational credentials of asylum seekers. Employers are asked to fill in an online form, detailing candidates' educational background. Within five working days feedback is provided by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) on whether qualifications are accredited and equivalent to a Norwegian degree.

Further information: https://www.netzwerk-iq.de/.../IQ_GP_Int_2017_TurboEvaluation...

Screening

Gap bridging

Matching

Sustaining

Certification of Skills - Consortium of Certification of Skills, Belgium

Anyone over the age of 18 with professional experience but no diploma can have their skills in some professions officially validated free of charge.

After having passed a skills validation (job placement) test in an accredited centre, people can obtain a qualification, issued on behalf of the regional authority. With this official document, asylum seekers and refugees (as anyone) can prove their skills and competencies to an employer, continue a training they had previously started in their country of origin or even enter a profession.

Further information: <http://www.cvdc.be/>



Identifying markets' needs and skills shortages

Another important aspect of screening is the labour market's needs and shortages, which will of course differ from one country to another according to the local socio-economic contexts. This part of the screening is often left aside as most existing measures of screening for the moment focus on the asylum seekers' or refugees' side. Certain countries are facing important shortages of workforce in specific sectors and are in need for skills that are sometimes difficult to find. Connecting both sides by leading refugees and asylum seekers to the sectors in need of labour would substantially increase their employability.

Guideline 4: Platform meeting to identify the market's needs

To identify the market's needs, it is necessary to gather different stakeholders who have knowledge and expertise in this matter. Furthermore, to help connect both sides of the question of refugee employability, it is important that reception actors and supportive organisations are also aware of the current labour market's situation. This could help these stakeholders to guide refugees and asylum seekers to the jobs in need of workforce.

A platform meeting between these partners could be a good place to start the screening and identification of the job market's shortages. Key partners are:

- Refugee and asylum seeker reception organisations for their detailed knowledge of the target group
- NGOs led by or close to refugee and asylum seeker communities
- Public employment service and private employment agencies for their knowledge of local labour markets, skills shortages etc.
- Employers' organisations and employers, also for their expertise of the socio-economic context
- Universities - with expertise in relation to refugees and integration and also economic development and the labour market
- Local and regional governments to gather all partners

The step by step implementation could be based on Guideline n°2 in the sustainability chapter.



Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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VDAB profession cards - Belgium

The public employment service in Flanders, VDAB, developed 'profession cards'. These cards give an overview of the situation in different sectors and specific professions: how many job vacancies were open the last year, how many are still open, how many people are searching for a job in that sector, and many detailed statistics on the jobseekers and vacancies. These cards provide a detailed view of the labour market situation in the different professional sectors, and therefore enable jobseekers to be directed to sectors where many vacancies are open.

Further information: <https://www.vdab.be/trendsdoc/beroepen/>



Conclusions on screening and recognition of competences

In conclusion, some actions are essential to improve the screening process. It is especially important to enhance the close collaboration between partners, and enable information sharing between all relevant stakeholders working around screening.

Key suggestions are to:

- Establish a coordinated screening process involving all relevant actors, to ensure the sharing of the screening results and the acceleration of processes such as recognition of qualifications and the guidance with the public employment service.
- Develop and apply a reliable, adaptable, digital screening tool to ensure comparable results and decrease misconceptions and biases in the screening of competences and skills. It is also important that this tool can highlight social skills and professional potential, which could highly increase the employability of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Facilitate the recognition of acquired qualifications and skills, through the increase of conversion and equivalence opportunities, and a digital platform summarising relevant information to help employers in this process.
- Organise regular platform meetings bringing together a wide panel of different parties, to highlight labour market needs and shortages and specific jobs in need of workforce.



Gap Bridging

Current situation

Gap bridging on refugees' and asylum seekers' side

Gap bridging on employers' side

Shortages and guidelines

Lack of awareness and knowledge on refugees' and asylum seekers' side

Lack of knowledge on employers' side

Conclusions on gap bridging

The second component of the labourmarket integration chain is gap bridging.

Gap bridging consists in developing actions to close the gap, after identifying shortages in the chain of organisations playing a role in the professional integration of asylum seekers and refugees. These actions will mainly concern education and training for professional competences and working culture on the asylum seekers' and refugees' side, and informing employers about legal and administrative aspects as well as encouraging them to recruit this specific group. It is clear that many gaps currently exist on both sides. In order to encourage employment of asylum seekers and refugees, it has been proven essential to bridge these gaps: provide necessary training on both sides, focusing on core competences but also on cultural differences and raising awareness of how national labour markets work.



Current situation

Gap bridging on the asylum seekers' and refugees' side

Many organisations have taken the initiative to set up trainings, some focusing on cultural differences, others on upscaling skills and competences for asylum seekers and refugees. These trainings are often provided by small NGOs and are sometimes supported by national programmes provided by authorities.

Some European countries already have mandatory integration paths including trainings on the culture of the host countries and language classes. However, it is equally necessary to increase the offer of trainings and workshops on the employers' side too.

Gap bridging on the employers' side

Some organisations, mostly local NGOs and small-scale projects, provide information sessions on the working rights and obligations of refugees and asylum seekers and the administrative legal requirements that employers should take into account. Apart from big companies who generally have a structured HR department and raise awareness on diversity and cultural differences in the workplace, most of the smaller businesses are not aware of information sessions or training offers.

A key action seems to be raising awareness and knowledge among employers and offering workshops and trainings in the workplace to all employees about cultural differences, and how to work in teams with people from various cultural backgrounds.



Shortages & Guidelines

The main common obstacles for asylum seekers and refugees concern language barriers, the lack of knowledge of the national labour culture, recognition of their qualifications and a lack of social networks. In some countries, different areas of legislation can also cause issues.

Many language trainings exist, but they are often delivered in a classroom based format and focus on general contents, which is not an optimal solution for refugees searching for jobs. From the very beginning, the integration and practice of vocation-specific terms should be part of the curriculum. Further, the lack of awareness on how the labour market functions, how to search for

jobs, how to write a CV and motivation letters and prepare for interviews is a common challenge for asylum seekers and refugees. Without this knowledge, the working cultural differences will cause problems very early on in the recruitment phase, causing (unconscious) biases and discrimination on the employer's side. Finally, many jobs are filled by informal contact thanks to a person's social network. For an asylum seeker or refugee, building a social network is next to impossible in the first few years due to language barriers and the lack of opportunities to meet local communities.

On the employers' side, the complexity of the legal framework around the asylum procedure clearly causes a lot of resistance. This is mainly due to a lack of knowledge, as they often imagine far more legal and bureaucratic constraints than it is the case in reality. A second considerable obstacle are cultural differences, which may cause concerns among employees if no cultural awareness raising has taken place. Furthermore, the lack of language knowledge and the difficulties to recognize qualifications also represent important barriers, preventing employers from hiring refugees and asylum seekers.



Lack of awareness and knowledge on the refugees' and asylum seekers' side

It is clear that on both sides the biggest gaps are caused by a lack of knowledge and awareness. There are many misconceptions that deter asylum seekers and refugees from applying on the one hand, and employers from recruiting them on the other hand. These gaps exist on different levels: cultural, bureaucratic and competence-related. More opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to learn more about the local working culture are clearly needed.

Furthermore, many trainings and volunteering opportunities are available to refugees and asylum seekers, whether they focus on acquiring the national language, working cultures or specific technical skills. These programmes are often developed by different types of actors, such as public employment services, supportive organisations and educational institutions. A lack of coordination can result in a lack of transparency of the available opportunities.

Guideline 1: Reception centres as a central point of contact

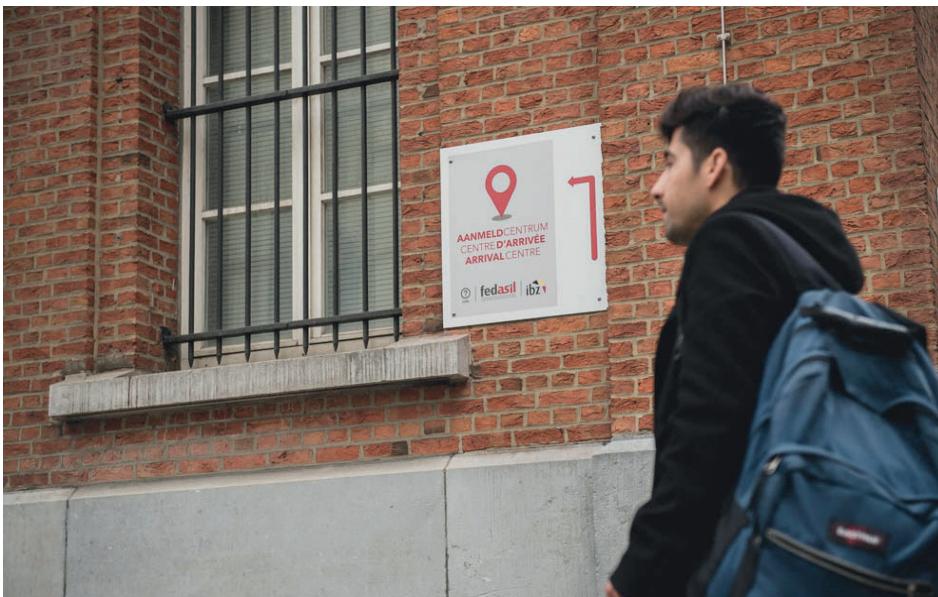
"Think global, act local". Reception centres could be a privileged place to meet the various actors involved in gap bridging trainings and to coordinate actions around asylum seekers and refugees, as they are often the first point of contact of asylum seekers and refugees.

Step by step implementation:

1. Establish a socio-professional integration point of contact and department in each reception centre. Its role would be to provide all necessary information and local contacts on training opportunities to asylum seekers.
2. The point of contact should create links with local training institutions and schools, as well as supportive organisations working on the professional integration of refugees and asylum seekers, and organisations in need of volunteers. This could highly facilitate the access to these programmes for asylum seekers and refugees, who often have difficulties finding the right information and coming in contact with trainings, volunteering opportunities and programmes on offer.
3. Compile the local training opportunities in a guide, with all necessary information (start dates, price, conditions, duration etc.). This could be done jointly by the public employment service and reception agency. The guide could be translated into different languages and be made available at different places (collective

housing structures, supportive organisations, public employment service, schools and universities...). Targeted language training with job-specific vocabulary should be encouraged.

4. Reception centres should host classes, trainings and workshops organised or supported by local non-profit organisations. To be able to start accompanying actions as soon as possible, basic trainings and workshops could be given within the centres. Language, citizenship or intercultural communication modules can be offered as permanently as possible. This would enable all residents to participate, even those who have other constraints, such as single mothers and medically vulnerable residents.



Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Access2University - UCL Louvain, Belgium

The Access2University is a University preparation programme for asylum seekers and refugees who plan to engage in academic studies. They need to have a minimum level in the national language. They will follow activities of three types:

- Academic French courses (classroom, online courses and conversation tables);
- At least one course in the field of study;
- Orientation assistance to refine the study project, individualized support in the administrative procedures for admission to a bachelor or master programme, and support for the integration into student life.

Further information: <https://uclouvain.be/en/discover/programme-access2university.htm>



Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Agentschap Integratie & Inburgering - Belgium

The Agency for Integration and Civic Integration (Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering, AgII) was created in 2015 as a merger of various services and organisations active in the fields of language courses as well as social and civic integration.

The agency organises the Flemish integration course in Brussels and Flanders. The programme includes a course on living and working in Belgium, and information on leisure activities. In addition, they offer support in the search for Dutch language courses and accompany newcomers in their integration in Belgium.

Further information: <https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/>

Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Confidence building as pathway into employment - United Kingdom

The borough of Tower Hamlets had England's second highest proportion of people with poor or no fluency in English in 2011. This adds up to other obstacles such as low skills, poor health, low aspirations and inability to afford childcare. Consequently, Tower Hamlets had the UK's second highest proportion of economically inactive women in 2012 and the highest levels of child poverty in 2013.

To create progression pathways into employment, CGWP provides several courses, trainings and drop-in sessions for women, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes and literacy, maths and ICT literacy classes at various levels, vocational courses in childcare, business administration and customer service, employability workshops on how to write a CV, how to prepare for a job interview, etc. In addition, CGWP offers free on-site childcare and offers apprenticeship opportunities to the local women.

Gateway City is a charity whose activities are financed by the UK Government Skills Funding Agency, public and private foundations, corporate sponsors and individual donations.

Further information: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/city-gateway-womens-programmes---confidence-building-as-pathway-to-employment>

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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House in order, Social and professional integration of migrant women in the area of domestic services - Portugal

The 2-month training was implemented due to the high number of migrant women who try to find work in the areas of domestic service, and the fact that the office of Jesuit Refugee Service is contacted on a daily basis by employers looking for employees with this job profile.

The training contributes to the self-esteem of each trainee and to the acquisition of strategies to overcome possible constraints along their life project. More than 80% of the women are integrated in the labour market in the different areas of their training. They provide care to ageing people, work in domestic services or as kitchen helpers and take care of children. The fact that the trainees have a diploma and two months of training facilitates their integration into the labour market.

The project is run by the Jesuit Refugee Service in Lisbon, Portugal, and financially supported by the Lisbon City Council.

Further information: <http://www.jrsportugal.pt/en/about-us/>

<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/house-in-order-social-and-professional-integration-of-migrant-women-in-the-area-of-domestic-services>

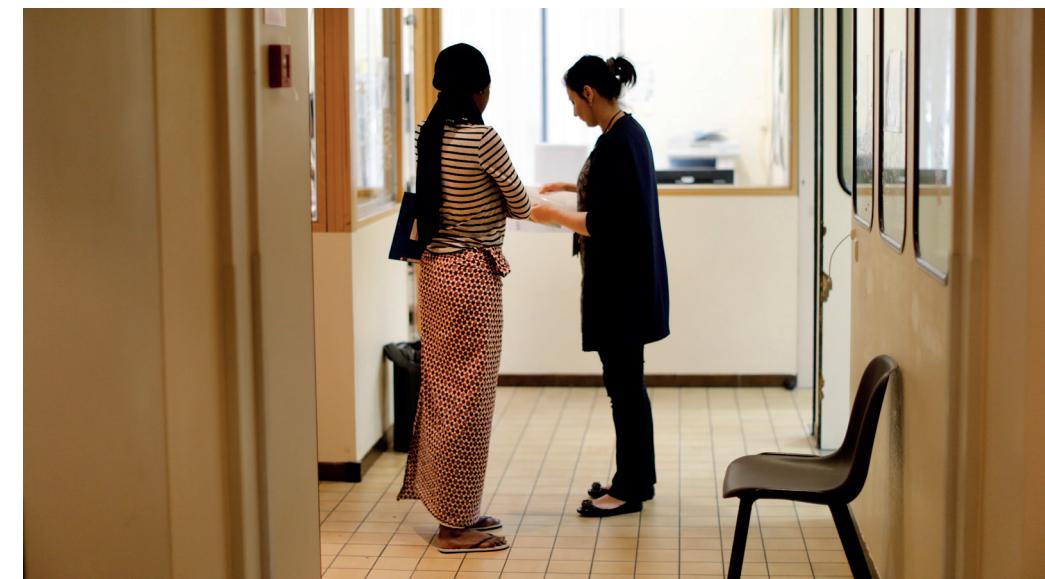
Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Refugee women turn founders (Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen) - Germany

The pilot project addresses refugee women, makes them aware of their own entrepreneurial potential and introduces them to self-employment. The accompanying programme includes individual mentoring, workshops, cooperation in support teams, internships in small and medium-sized enterprises and networking. Mentors support the process over two years.

The project is carried out by Frauenbetriebe e.V., Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and funded by the Federal Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth Affairs.

For further information: <https://www.frauenmitfluchterfahrunggruenden.de/new-home-en/>



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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ARCADA - Belgium

The ARCADA project was initiated in 2005 by the CIRE association. It offers trainings and workshops in accordance with the reality of migrants living in Belgium. It focuses on the creativity of each person and invites people to truly think about their professional aspirations, to identify all necessary competences and qualities for their future careers. The project offers internships and trainings to asylum seekers who want to be professionally active, in order to expand their network and move forward with their careers in spite of their uncertain situation.

For further information: <https://www.cire.be/tag/arcada/>



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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The Refugee Team - Faster and better integration through volunteering at sporting events

Every year around 600 sports events are organized in the Netherlands. Organizers often have difficulty finding enough motivated volunteers. At the same time, many communities are trying to activate refugees and guide them through the regular path to work. By working at sporting events, the team members learn useful skills and come into contact with fellow citizens and the Dutch work mentality. Before and during an event, the Refugee Team cooperates in the volunteer team of the organization. As extra helping hands they do all kinds of activities from catering to award ceremony. Afterwards, the team members are linked to the company network that is connected to the event as a sponsor or supplier, for example. Every team has a coach who helps team members to find a course, internship or workplace. After placement, the coach remains involved for 6 months to properly guide both the employer and team member and ensure that every placement remains successful.

The project is carried out by Move2Win, a non-profit organization that has organized sports events since 2010 to engage people of all walks of life and all ages. In 2018, Move2Win set up the Refugee Team to speed up the integration of refugees through activation and participation. The Refugee Team project was named the winner of the IGNITE Award 2018. The annual award for starting social entrepreneurs offers an investment of € 100,000.

For further information: <https://refugeeteam.nl/over-ons>



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Unlocking potential - language support in the West Midlands - UK

Appropriate and targeted language training is essential as part of the employment pathway. A working group comprising the skills delivery team of the West of England Combined Authority, further education colleges and training providers, public employment service and NGOs reviewed how ESOL (language training) is delivered and identified a number of shortcomings which were undermining the likelihood of refugees accessing sustainable work. Its report was launched in June 2019.

Currently, delivery is very classroom based and has general content. Better intelligence was needed in relation to the inflow of newcomers to the region to inform delivery. This needed to be more employment oriented with an ESOL for an employers' offer to be developed for key sectors of the regional economy. A new commitment has already been made to fund language provision for those in need of it within work as well as for those who are unemployed. A stronger partnership approach connected with the region's inclusive growth strategy is recommended and the setting up of an ESOL Hub to re-focus the approach is also included.

For further information: <https://www.fircroft.ac.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?ID-MF=5f2f3f05-cb59-4116-9f11-7b78cd1367d1>

Guideline 2: Offer mentoring programmes during the job search

Mentoring by someone with years of professional experience can help the asylum seeker or refugee to learn more about the working culture, how to search for a job, how to apply, prepare for interviews etc. This can be done by pairing up a job seeker with somebody who is already employed. The mentor can be anybody interested in devoting some of their time to the mentee in their job search. S/he does not need any specific professional experience and can work in any sector. Certain programmes focus on different types of mentors, for example mentors over 50 years old.

Often, such mentoring programmes end up working both ways as the two sides have a lot to learn, such as dealing with cultural differences, learning more about different working values and norms, discovering new languages, expanding their social networks, learning soft skills, etc.

Step by step implementation:

1. Supportive organisations or governmental institutions responsible for integration measures can play a key role in the initial development and implementation of mentoring programmes. They could for example set up a steering committee composed of key actors who can support this kind of project.
 2. During the steering committee, the stakeholders can exchange knowledge on the socio-economic context and labour market of the targeted territory and check the appropriateness of implementing a mentoring programme.

3. A mentoring programme should be defined, including:

- The acquisition of technical skills (know-how) and personal skills (know-how-to) to search for and find employment, but also indirect objectives such as learning the national language and expanding social networks;
- The length of the programme as well as the day-to-day implementation with the frequency of the meetings between mentee and mentor, the supervision and intervention of the organisation developing the programme, the organisation of training workshops for mentors to help them with their tasks, activities to be carried out such as company visits, help with the drafting of CVs and motivation letters, etc.;
- Procedures for assessing the achievement of objectives (criteria, schedules, persons involved).

4. Create materials to communicate the global context of the action and origins, including the overall context of the project, the objectives and benefits (for mentor, mentee and the region).

5. Start the search and profiling of mentees and mentors:

- The search for mentees should ideally be carried out within and by the reception centres, regional integration centres, supportive organisations or the public employment service.
- Mentors can be reached through companies, employer associations, regional authorities, supportive organisations etc.

6. Match mentors and mentees according to their professional experience and aspirations, personalities, age, etc.

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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DuoForAJob - Belgium

DUO for a JOB matches young job seekers with an immigrant background with people over 50 years who have professional experience in related fields and who can accompany and support them in their job search. The goal is for the mentee and mentor to meet at least 2 hours a week during six months. 3 out of 4 mentees find a job, internship or training after the six-month period, and the organisation has accompanied more than 2700 mentees since the start of their project in 2003.

Further information: <https://www.duoforajob.be/en/home/>



Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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KVINFO Mentor network - Denmark

The Danish Centre for Gender, Equality and Ethnicity (KVINFO) has created a network of mentors and focuses on women from refugee families and other migrant groups. Their mentorship programme has a clear focus on employment. Mentors are women who provide advice regarding job applications, job interviews, workplace culture, and employment potential. They are also willing to open up their social networks.

Since 2002 the network has involved more than 7,000 participants. 2,600 women established in the Danish workforce have functioned as mentors, and 3,500 women from over 140 different countries have signed up as mentees. At present, almost 400 mentor couples are matched based on similar educational or occupational profiles.

The Mentor Network is financed by the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs.

Further information: <https://mentor.kvinfo.dk/en/frontpage/>



Guideline 3: Offer trainings on the local working culture

Aside from more practical experiences such as traineeships and mentoring, trainings and workshops on the local working culture are also useful to facilitate the understanding of professional norms and ethics in the host country. Non-profit organisations and governmental institutions responsible for integration measures could work together to set up such workshops and make them accessible to asylum seekers and refugees. These trainings could possibly be part of a wider integration program consisting of different courses on the local language, local norms and values. Such programmes already exist in many areas and are even mandatory in some countries.



ETCC tool: Training to enforce refugees' employability - "VOORwerk"

Description

During the testing phase of this project, COA (The Netherlands) tested and evaluated their own training program to enforce refugee's employability. The main objectives of this tool consisted in recognizing the importance of soft skills, supporting refugees in developing soft skills and lowering thresholds for entering the labour market.

The training focuses on the recognition and development of soft skills which are considered important to find and keep a job in the Netherlands. These soft skills focus on communication skills, taking initiative,

organizational skills and taking responsibility. Information on cultural differences, and on how to apply for a job are also included in the training.

The training consists of three parts which are divided into five modules.

At the beginning of the training the participants take part in a group session aimed at how to recognize and further develop their soft skills. In the second part they receive individual guidance regarding their integration and access to the local (Dutch) labour market. The third part of the training consists of gaining work experience through unpaid apprenticeships, and by establishing a local network of organizations and companies to bridge the gap between refugees and employers.

The five modules are the following: 1. Introduction to the training and soft skills, 2. Seeking a job: communication skills and how to apply, 3. Communication and Organisational skills in the workplace, 4. Work ethics, 5. Evaluation and follow up.

The training has been developed for refugees and is carried out at the reception centres by COA trainers. The 18-hour training is spread out over 3 days. Preferably the training will be given in the participants' native language, or in English. However, interpreters are present throughout the training.

Strengths and Opportunities

The results from the evaluation show that the absolute majority of the participants stated that the training will contribute to their future and they feel more confident about searching for a job in the host country. Confidence is important when searching for a job and this may help them to take initiative, be more active in the job search and helps them to be better able to convince an employer that s/he is the right fit for the job. This may increase the willingness of an employer to hire them. However, less than half of the participants agree with the statement that their knowledge of the local labour market increased. Given the relevance of this topic to be successful in finding a job, further improvements are planned in the future.

The tool provides insight into the soft skills considered to be most important by the participants. This improved self-knowledge can help someone to look for a job that matches someone's own skills and those valued in the local workplace.



Tips

Except for lowering the barrier for entering the labour market which needs a follow-up, recognizing the importance of soft skills and supporting refugees in developing soft skills are clearly strong parts of the approach. However, it might be helpful to present the training materials visually as much as possible. This could bridge language barriers.

In order to determine the level of training, which was considered too high by 121 participants, an entry test is recommended. The criteria for such a test may be drawn up by the trainers and other employees who know the refugees who might be eligible to follow the training. Proposing different levels can be another alternative. Although more difficult to operationalize, this allows to refuse no one and gives everyone a chance.

It would also be an asset to be able to collect the answers of the evaluation by men and women separately in order to get a clear view of the differences and similarities of their answers and adjust the training to gender mainstreaming principles.

Finally, the training provides refugees with a better starting position in the labour market by providing the participants with information and tools to help them develop key soft skills. The training also helps the refugees to recognize and present their other skills which will enhance their job prospects.



Lack of knowledge of the employers on asylum seekers' and refugees' situation and legal requirements

Misconceptions, misunderstanding and prejudices can be roots of fear and discrimination. A key action is to raise awareness and knowledge amongst employers by promoting the asylum seeker and refugee issue in the labour market and offering information and workshops to managers and employees about cultural differences and how to work in teams with people from various cultural backgrounds.

Communication with employers is a major key factor in the labour market integration of asylum seekers and refugees. It can raise awareness and help to understand and change the mindsets. To encourage and to engage businesses in this issue, communication must be positive and proactive. It should be made clear that employing this specific target group is a win-win situation, and not just a charitable action.

Guideline 4: Launch awareness-raising actions

Awareness-raising actions can take a variety of forms and focus on different contents. They can be poster campaigns, radio/TV spots, informative websites or even demonstrations. They can address the issue of refugee employment in a light or serious way, consensual or offensive, classic or original. They will have a greater or lesser range of influence depending on who carries them out: authorities, NGOs or non-profits.

Testimonies of success stories can have a considerable impact. Often, asylum seekers and refugees are tired of applying as they see no results. Highlighting people from the same origin or background with a successful career path can inspire and motivate others. Most importantly, it can also help reduce discrimination and fear on the side of employers.

This can be done by an independent organisation that launches a media campaign in cooperation with social workers who are in regular contact with the asylum seekers and refugees. Nowadays, videos are easy to make and seem to have the biggest impact. It can also be compiled on a digital platform, for example like this:

Video: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-TrrRaqFa91baFk0vp_WQbm0uljlw6Cg

Website: <https://accueil-migration.croix-rouge.be/sensibiliser/>

Best practice examples:

Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Success DiverStory - Belgium

In order to break stereotypes and denounce racism, Success DiverStory launched an awareness campaign to fight stereotypes by presenting new role models in society. It brought together 18 personalities, each with a different background and different career path, who achieved great intellectual and professional successes. These 18 profiles inspire and give hope in making dreams come true despite the challenges linked to discrimination and racism that unfortunately still persist in our society.

Further information: <https://www.sdstory.org/index.php>

Screening Gap bridging Matching Sustaining

Working for Refugee Integration - Italy



UNHCR Italy can award the "working for refugee integration" label to employers and companies that have set up different projects and programmes to encourage professional integration of refugees and offer support in their integration path. Companies often use the label in their communications, it offers an additional incentive for employers to recruit refugees and asylum seekers.

Further information: <https://www.unhcr.it/sostieni-i-rifugiati/aziende-e-fondazioni/aziende/welcome-working-for-refugee-integration>

Guideline 5: Provide information sessions for employers

Information sessions on the working rights and obligations of refugees and asylum seekers, and the administrative legal requirements that employers should be aware of, can be given by different stakeholders at different locations. They can be provided by and in the organisations responsible for local or regional integration (often public bodies, depending on the country), by the public employment services, by non-profit organisations, within companies or by employers' associations. The aim is to increase the visibility and availability of information on legal rights and obligations.

The communication of these information sessions should preferably use the most dynamic and direct channels such as social and professional networks or targeted telephone prospecting.

The following key elements should be addressed during the session for employers (Fédération des Entreprises de Belgique, 2017):

- Context of migration in Europe
- Procedure for registration and reception of asylum seekers
- Situation in the host country: who are the asylum seekers and refugees?
- Possibilities and advantages of hiring a refugee or asylum seeker: recruitment of qualified staff; recruitment of motivated newcomers to the labour market; active integration; attractiveness and competitiveness; strengthening local communities, etc.

- As an employer, what do I need to know if I want to recruit a refugee/asylum seeker? What are the differences between asylum seekers and refugees?
- Success factors: knowledge of the language, selection of candidates, preparation of staff and culture of open dialogue, intercultural training, collaboration with partners, etc.
- Raising-awareness on gender-sensitivity;
- Where can I find more information?

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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C.A.I. - Belgium

The C.A.I. proposes a focus on intercultural awareness. The objective is to enable social and political actors, the wider population and newcomers to better understand the issues of multiculturality and integration through training, information sessions and resources, and educational tools.

Further information: <http://www.cainamur.be/information.html>



Guideline 6: Offer workshops to staff of employers

Employee workshops and training on cultural differences, and on how to work in teams with people from various cultural backgrounds, may take different forms depending on the local context. They can focus on general information or can be given in specific thematic modules. They can address managers, specific groups or all staff. In-house training may be preferred to public events. Their design, also in terms of duration and frequency, should therefore be based on a needs analysis.

Regional authorities responsible for integration or employers' associations seem to be the most suitable actors in the chain to identify the needs in their regions. Thanks to their central roles, they would seem to be in the best position to compile the existing training content and upscale it.

The communication of such trainings should preferably use the most dynamic and direct channels such as social and professional networks or targeted telephone prospecting.

Trainings for managers could cover, for example, how to successfully manage team diversity. The human resources department and the middle management are directly confronted with the reactions of staff to a diversity policy. They should be able to define the diversity policy, ensure non-discrimination and promote equal opportunities and treatment, refer to the legal framework and create a framework that respects this diversity, and identify resources to access it.

Trainings for employees could cover, for example, how to work with a diversified team. The objective of such a training is to equip teams, whatever their

qualifications and status, so that "working in diversity" becomes a reality and gradually replaces discrimination. The following questions could be tackled: What is my identity, its unique and cultural characteristics? What are my reactions to differences? What are the ways for everyone to contribute to a good working atmosphere? What are the ways to take advantage of diversity? How to work as respectfully as possible in a team? What attitudes and behaviours to adopt? How to resolve intercultural, hierarchical, professional or private misunderstandings? (CRIPEL, Belgium, 2019)



Guideline 7: Develop an updated information guide for employers

Many contents and tools already exist at the initiative of different stakeholders. Often this information is widely spread and not compiled in one place. Access to the right information at the right time is essential in chain cooperation. Gathering this information in a single guide can significantly reduce knowledge gaps for employers and increase their willingness to recruit asylum seekers and refugees.

This guide could include chapters written by different stakeholders (increasing once again their close cooperation):

- "Legal and administrative requirements when recruiting asylum seekers and refugees" can be written by the public employment agency, clearly summarising all legal aspects and clarifying the difference between asylum seekers and refugees. It is important that this information is written in the most simple way possible, for it to be easily understandable by a wide panel of readers;
- "Hiring asylum seekers or refugees" may be drafted by an employers' association, gathering testimonies and success stories, as well as providing more visibility for the employers who have already recruited asylum seekers and refugees
- "How to implement a diversity policy in your organization" can be published by an integration centre or supportive organisation, giving tools and advice concerning different cultures in the workplace, and providing contacts of organisations specialised in this subject

Regional authorities for integration are often at the cross-roads of information. They could therefore be able to gather, organize and update the guide when needed, and share it with all relevant actors.

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Guide for employers - Canada

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with many supportive organisations, developed guidelines for employers with all necessary information when recruiting refugees and asylum seekers. It focuses mainly on Syrian refugees, describing the socio-economic context of their country and their education system. The guide also presents financial benefits for employers who recruit refugees, and the available support.

For further information: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/employer-roadmap-en.pdf>





ETCC tool: Guide for employers

Description

During the testing phase of this project, COA (The Netherlands) built and tested a handbook for employers.

The main objectives of this handbook are:

1. Increasing the willingness of employers to employ asylum seekers and refugees;
2. Outlining practical information for employers about hiring asylum seekers and refugees;
3. Outlining measures and actions to be taken for a successful and sustainable employment of refugees and asylum seekers;
4. Listing relevant organisations and initiatives that can help employers to hire asylum seekers and refugees.

The 20-page guide is offered to employers answering questions like: Why should I employ an asylum seeker? What do I need to know about their employment? How can I deal with the situation successfully? How can I get in touch with an asylum seeker? Four employers, from big and small companies and from the public and private sectors, were involved in the consultation process, and ten associated partners from municipalities, NGOs, an employers' association and from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment supported the handbook development.

Strengths and Opportunities

The strengths of this approach are:

- An overview of practical information for employers: rules and regulations;
- Best practices and inspiration;
- Information about options for employers to work together with the partner (COA);
- Contact details of other relevant partners.

Future opportunities can result from these strengths. At COA they are able to inform and advise employers in a structural and uniform manner about hiring asylum seekers and refugees. COA is better recognised as a partner to work together with for improving the labour participation of asylum seekers and refugees, thus contributing to chain cooperation.

Tips

- Inform and involve chain partners and experts in the development of the tool. It is important that employers are informed in a consistent way by various chain partners.
- Make sure to ask for input and feedback from the target group (employers).
- Reach employers with the tool and work together with employers' organisations, municipalities, ministries, NGOs etc., so that you can distribute the tool through their networks.





Conclusions on gap bridging

It seems important to look at gaps from the perspectives:

- The asylum seekers and refugees' perspective
- The employers' perspective
- The perspective of chain cooperation

The biggest gaps are caused by a lack of knowledge and awareness of each other. Direct contacts seem to be a privileged way to build bridges. Mentoring programmes therefore present many benefits, on both sides, which could enable refugees and asylum seekers to gain social and technical skills, but also reduce discrimination and fear.

It is also essential to work on the knowledge gaps of employers, by providing information sessions, trainings and informative guides. Larger awareness raising campaigns can also help to fight against stereotypes and the fear of employers, as well as the wider public.

Finally, reception centres could play a co-ordination role with regards to the different trainings, coordinating the efforts of schools, supportive organisations, public employment services, local communities etc.



Matching

Current situation

Shortages and guidelines

Lack of systematic contact between employers and refugees/applicants

Difficulties for refugees and applicants to enter the labour market

Conclusions on matching

Following up on the previous chapters on screening and gap bridging, this chapter focuses on improving the standards of matching supply and demand to increase the chance of employment for asylum seekers and refugees and decrease skills shortages for employers. It focuses on the third component of the Cooperation Chain: Matching, meant as the connection between employers and asylum seekers or refugees in a safe setting.

Matching is critical for the job seekers and employers facing skills shortages both at sector and skill level. Nevertheless, job matching, a challenge even in normal circumstances, is more complicated in the recruitment of refugees and asylum seekers for a number of reasons: "First, refugees often lack

relevant social capital and networks. Second, officers in public or private employment services responsible for job placement may be unfamiliar with the specific situation of refugees, notably in countries with traditionally limited or lower numbers of arrivals. Third, and directly linked to this, recruitment specialists may therefore not have the experience or knowledge to suitably identify refugees with relevant profiles. Fourth, refugees themselves may not be aware of the channels via which vacancies are advertised and filled in their field of specialisation. Finally, refugees may be geographically too far removed from the jobs that would match with their skills." (OECD & UNHCR, 2018: 16)



Current situation

Matching measures exist and are usually implemented individually. But again, without a coordinated matching process with all actors working together, the results will not be optimal. Measures initiated and developed to match the supply and demand side are:

1. Information sessions at reception centres premises held by companies

Some reception centres have taken initiatives to create partnerships with companies nearby. These companies are invited to give information sessions in the reception centres, to meet the residents and do some direct solicitations.

2. Job fairs

Certain supportive organisations or local and regional authorities organise job fairs specifically for refugees and asylum seekers. Different employers are invited to be present to meet potential candidates, and sometimes solicitations even happen on the spot.

3. Other Gap Bridging measures: Mentoring programmes, internships, volunteering

Many gap bridging measures also play a role in matching, such as mentoring programmes, internships and volunteering opportunities. These three actions facilitate employers and job seekers to come into contact. Especially thanks to internships and volunteering, employers and future-employees can get to know one another.

er and assess if there is a match of skills and competences.

The above-mentioned measures are generally considered gender-neutral, implemented locally and not mainstreamed or coordinated at national levels. Moreover, they are not implemented in the context of a cooperation process. Examples of cooperation between different stakeholders trying to initiate a cooperative approach can be found in pilot projects funded at EU level.

To achieve the goal of swift integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the labour market, it is necessary to increase the process efficiency: In addition

to the improvement and further development of the existing measures mentioned above, the creation of a cooperation model with employers is the key element.

Employers should in fact not only be involved but also, above all, engaged in the topic, since they still face difficulties in finding the right skills for their companies. Moreover, a more integrated approach allowing employers and asylum seekers or refugees to get to know each other in a work environment is deemed interesting.



Shortages & Guidelines

Many obstacles arise in the matching of refugees and asylum seekers searching for a job and employers in need of workforce. Measures to bring both sides into contact are not widespread, and many employers do not know how to engage with this specific target group. The shortage of initiatives on the side of employers may not be due to discrimination or lack of cultural awareness, but rather to the very few links that connect both sides:

- The lack of visibility of asylum seekers' and refugees' profiles
- The lack of visibility of companies and sectors in need of workforce for asylum seekers and refugees
- The lack of visibility of jobs open to asylum seekers and refugees

Clearly, a systematic and comprehensive interaction is missing between public authorities and NGOs supporting refugees, employment agencies and employers. An efficient matching between refugees or asylum seekers and employers will happen only if first the aspects of gap bridging are covered, especially offering support and information for both sides. Employers must be sure that the recruitment of asylum seekers or refugees will not be an additional burden, and they should receive legal certainties that hiring a refugee will not be a loss of finances or time. This can be facilitated by an increase of trainings and workshops to raise cultural awareness amongst companies and share success stories to encourage employers to proactively search for their workforce amongst refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, it is important to inform both sides about their rights and obligations to avoid any resistance due to a perception of too many legal barriers, as well as informing refugees and asylum seekers on the risks of illegal work.



Lack of systematic contact between employers and refugees/asylum seekers

There is currently a clear lack of cooperation between companies and employer associations on one side and reception actors and employment services on the other. However, putting them into contact and establishing more collaboration would enable employment services and supportive organisations to understand the demands and needs of the labour market and accordingly guide refugees and asylum seekers into the adequate trainings to acquire the required skills. For the moment, the responsibilities of each stakeholder are clearly defined and separated, with no overlap between them, especially when it comes to employment services and reception centres. This leads to very little collaboration between the different organisations and difficult referral of asylum seekers to employment services.



Furthermore, even if employers are willing to recruit refugees and asylum seekers, they are having difficulties in understanding how exactly to get into contact with them. The communication channels and opportunities to meet are rare, as refugees and asylum seekers are often not aware of the regular job seeking channels.

Guideline 1: Job fairs and job days

In order to create a systematic and sustainable contact between refugees, asylum seekers, businesses and authorities, all parties must be able to identify an immediate positive benefit from the connection. It is important to underline that while job fair events for employers and refugees and asylum seekers can lead to on the spot match-making and the creation of actual jobs for the target group, there are other positive side effects. The overall objective is the creation of systematic and sustainable networks. A job fair serves as a practical event giving the different partners the opportunity to interact and work together, creating a sustainable network and cooperation.

Job fairs can either be organised by a supportive organisation or public employment service that invites employers as well as refugees and asylum seekers with the

help of reception actors. The precondition for companies to participate in the job fair is that they are able to propose vacant positions or traineeships and are willing to hire or offer an interview to suitable candidates. Employers in need of workforce can participate and welcome the visitors at their stand. A transport service for refugees or asylum seekers could be organised by supportive organisations or reception centres.

The success and the turnout will be closely related to the narrow cooperation between different stakeholders: chambers of commerce or employment agencies and services can take care of all contacts with employers and informing the media, while supporting organisations and reception centres are essential in communicating the event and getting refugees and asylum seekers involved.

Significant media coverage in national television, radio and newspapers can help to send a clear message:

1. Refugees/asylum seekers want to work and represent an asset for society at all levels;
2. Companies value the talents of refugees/asylum seekers and their work ethics and want to employ them.

Furthermore, dialogue and cooperation between different integration stakeholders, civil society, public and private bodies is enhanced.

In addition or parallel to the career fair, job days can be organised either in reception centres or by local organisations to bring in contact employers and refugees and asylum seekers living in the same region. These job days could increase the visibility on both sides: job seekers' profiles and job opening or sectors in need of workforce. Moreover, reception centres and other collective housing structures should create partnerships with local employers and invite them to come and meet the residents. During such meetings employers could give regular information sessions on jobs available in their companies. Also, organising on-site discovery days with visits to factories, companies and other organisations in their regions would be a great way to inform refugees and asylum seekers about the different job opportunities nearby, as well as the necessary competences needed, and it would be a first point of contact between both sides.

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Job Fair - Austria

An NGO called "Chancenreich" initiated the first Austrian Job Fair for refugees and asylum seekers in Vienna in 2016. It was organised in close collaboration with the public employment service. Being the first event of its kind, it offered refugees and asylum seekers the chance to speak to potential employers and find out about further education.

90 employers were present, giving information on more than 1,000 job and training opportunities to 3,500 refugees and asylum seekers. 900 interviews took place on the spot, and more than 200 job contracts were signed. Businesses involved included large brands like Spar, T-Mobile and Rewe as well as many others from the trade, technology, tourism and charity sectors. A Spar personnel manager told she was "enthusiastic" about several of the interviewees, and that the company needed to take on 400 new employees by the end of the year after market changes due to the bankruptcy of a supermarket chain.

Stands on asylum law were also present, informing employers about their rights and obligations. Also on offer were workshops on the working culture in Austria, advice on job applications, a free photo booth and opportunities to talk with refugees in gainful employment.

Previously, a job platform for refugees, Refugees Work, had been launched. 140 companies and 1,000 refugees signed up in just the first few days, and one of the founders said: "Employers want to hire new people and they know that many refugees are trained and were even heading up companies in their home countries." Refugees Work matches asylum seekers who have not yet completed the process with volunteer opportunities and those with a refugee status with work suitable to their experience.

Further information: <http://www.yeu-international.org/en/publications/newsmail/between-the-lines/chancenre-ich-first-career-fair-for-refugees-in-austria>

<http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/allcontent/Cities-welcome-refugees-Refugee-job-fair-in-Vienna-WSPO-ABRJ2H>





ETCC tool: The alternative Career Fair in Cyprus

Description

The Career Fair took place in early December 2019, and was the first of its kind in Cyprus. The responsibility for the organisation and realisation laid with the Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC). It was held under the auspices of the UNHCR Cyprus office and the Municipality of Nicosia.

It involved 576 international protection holders and asylum seekers, 26 employers, 5 educational institutions, 9 supporters and 2 media sponsors. 120 persons received information and training to enhance their employability.

The organisation of the job fair required significant efforts: In order to maximise the impact of the event, CyRC contacted all related stakeholders, and as a result, the job fair was held under the auspices of the UNHCR Cyprus office and the Municipality of Nicosia. It was supported by 9 additional organisations, including human resources organisations, youth organisations and organisations for the support of women. An online registration form was disseminated in refugee communities through social media, direct email and NGOs working in the field and community liaisons. The information gathered served to identify employers that matched with the qualifications and skills of the interested participants. Therefore, apart from logistical Information (transportation, need for childcare during the event, etc.), the form also included questions on the educational background and professional experience of the candidates. For an adequate preparation of candidates, CyRC reached out to their network of training providers. A series of trainings, workshops and individual sessions - oriented towards the identified needs of the candidates - were organised. They included information sessions on the job fair, CV writing seminars, sessions with HR professionals, interview skills workshops, women empowerment groups and individual counselling with members of the CyRC team and volunteers.

Strengths and Opportunities

One of the most valuable results has been the opportunity for candidates and employers alike to interact directly and communicate fruitfully.

Further relevant stemming results have been:

Candidates enhanced their employability as well as their understanding of the local labour market and of the work culture of Cyprus. They increased their knowledge of rights to employment and online tools in the search for jobs, language and employability skills (CV building, soft skills, interview skills, networking skills), and gained experience in representing themselves before employers and educational institutions.

Employers and other labour market stakeholders increased their knowledge of procedures to employ persons with refugee background, their familiarity with candidates' skills and wide range of their backgrounds, widened the collaboration with civil society organisations and increased their awareness about added value for inclusion. Employers gained access to a diversity of candidates seeking job opportunities, creating a CV bank to be utilised for present and future hiring needs of their companies.

Organisers and supporters increased their knowledge of the range of skills of persons with refugee background in Cyprus, enhanced their collaboration with labour market stakeholders and media thus adding to their outreach, and they are now prepared for organising future similar events.



Communication as key success feature

Parallel to the organisation of the job fair, CyRC launched an awareness raising campaign to inform employers, professional associations, other labour market stakeholders and the general public. This included an information package on rights of refugees in accessing the labour market, publicity on the employability of refugees, and the cooperation with media sponsors who promoted the event in their printed journals and online websites with web banners, through radio spots and discussions. CyRC utilised their network of contacts with companies and profes-

al associations to inform a wide range of employers about the upcoming activities. Employers with a particular profile identified as important for the event were contacted through email, phone calls, and personal addressing of HR managers. The local refugee communities were informed by CyRC and their cooperation partners, e.g. Caritas, the Refugee Support Centre, MiHub, Oasis Project, UNHCR and EASO, as well as by social media. The Refugees@Work Career Fair took place in early December 2019, and it was the first of its type in Cyprus.

The communication plan thus contributed to the promotion of a positive image of asylum seekers and international protection holders in media and public opinion. This promoted a positive shift in employers' attitude towards refugee employability, eventually contributing to a culture of inclusion in the business industry.

Addressing employers' concerns and queries regarding the employment of persons with a refugee background and highlighting the benefits arising from employing a person with a refugee background were important milestones along the process.

Lastly, discussions with employers, and labour-related associations before and after the events offered opportunity to highlight the importance of linking their experiences with refugees with CSR activities, in order to underline the mutual benefits which contribute to achieving social cohesion and growth.



Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
1. Language.	The organisation used French, Arabic and Somali interpreters and cultural mediators in order to facilitate the communication with the asylum seekers.
2. Candidates' unfamiliarity with the concept of Career Fair.	CyRC organised a series of info sessions where the concept of the Career Fair was explained. In addition, an info pack with all the information about the event was prepared and disseminated in the community. Also, staff and volunteers provided additional information and clarifications through phone calls, messages and social media communications in order to facilitate the participation of more candidates.
3. Instabilities in the lives of candidates and employers due to the COVID-19 extraordinary measures.	CyRC facilitated the dissemination of translated information regarding COVID-19 preventive measures and other guidelines (in French, Arabic, English, Somali, Sorani) in order to keep refugee communities well informed and up to date.

Tips

- Ideal for the aim of organising a Career Fair is a pre-established web Platform - underpinning the event and remaining alive after that - where employers can register their vacancies and look for candidates.
- Meticulous preparation and planning includes a relevant promotional campaign, capable of reaching as many employers and candidates as possible and conveying correct information about the aims of the event.
- Adequate logistics - size of the venue, transport, child care - must be in place.
- As regards the adequate scope of the event, the local level - city level - can ease transport subject and especially limit issues linked to residence for matching/sustainability purposes.
- A self-assessment and participants appraisal of the event should be ensured afterwards
- A follow-up and exploitation of the event is recommended to enforce relationships and reciprocal trust between involved parties.





Difficulties for refugees and asylum seekers to enter the labour market

Among the possible modalities to facilitate job placements, traineeship is a tool for young and unemployed people to enter the labour market. The traineeship does not exclude any form of other work contracts for a subsequent period in the enterprise. However, a European common law on internships still needs to be defined: rules, conditions and even definitions are not the same in all EU member states.³

There is evidence for links between the quality of the traineeship and the employment outcome. The value of traineeships in easing the transition to employment depends on their quality in terms of learning content and working conditions. Quality traineeships bring direct productivity benefits, improve labour market matching and promote mobility, notably by decreasing search and matching costs for both enterprises and trainees. It is the implementation of regulations and the robust monitoring of the entire process which plays a key role in ensuring quality traineeships.

Traineeships can be useful to allow a refugee to get acquainted with new communities, to establish new relationships and to approach the local professional environment (working hours, relationships with colleagues and

employers and employment services). It is also a way to increase respect and solidarity between colleagues, and is believed to stimulate employees' motivation. Careful coaching is essential for the successful implementation and positive outcomes of the experience. Also, the traineeship programme should be agreed in detail beforehand and its implementation monitored.

To foster the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the local context, it is necessary to build and maintain close relationships with companies by creating partnerships and activating training paths based on specific needs expressed by companies themselves.

Guideline 2: Boosting Traineeship Programmes

The concrete steps for the implementation of this guideline are as follows:

1. A national or regional authority organises workshops to raise cultural awareness amongst companies. They can focus, for example, on how a responsible approach on diversity, equality and inclusion issues allows to gain a vital competitive edge and build confidence in its clients, investors, local communities and consumers. It can also offer information about legal and administrative requirements to break down the stereotype that recruitment from the target group will be time-consuming.
2. A private or public employment service performs a needs analysis by means of computerized, phone marketing, profile scouting, meetings with individual businesses or with specific stakeholders from their own networks identified as functional for the traineeship programme to succeed.
3. Whenever an employer issues a traineeship opening, the private or public employment service sends to such business the curricula of people meeting the relevant personal and professional requirements (identified in cooperation with reception actors). Subsequent to CV sending or a visit to the companies, the business invites the candidates to selection interviews.

4. After an informal agreement between the two parties has been achieved, it should be formally included in a written traineeship programme (prepared in cooperation with the reception actor) signed before the effective beginning of the traineeship. The agreement is signed by the trainee, the traineeship provider and the organisation in charge of the matching (public or private employment agency, supportive organisations).

It is important that the traineeship provider and the organisation in charge of the matching agree on a "code of ethics". Elements assuring a responsible approach should be the following:

- A commitment that the traineeship will not be used to substitute paid work
- Reimbursement to the trainee for an amount depending on the distance between their home and workplace, transport costs, etc.
- Appointment of experienced enterprise and training tutors
- On the employers' side: commitment to respect the training project; delivery of a certificate of acquired competences
- Presence of a Scientific Committee made of experts of the job market, labour law, and quality standards validating the professional profiles for each trainee at the end of the traineeship

Moreover, traineeship agreements should indicate the training objectives, the working conditions, whether an allowance or compensation is provided to the trainee by the employer, the rights and obligations of the parties under applicable EU and national law, the identification of tutors and their role, the duration of the traineeship as well as what the trainee can expect from his or her coach.

According to the European framework, a reasonable duration of traineeships should be ensured. In principle, it should not exceed six months, except in cases where a longer duration is justified taking into account national practices. Also, it should be clarified what the circumstances and conditions are under which a traineeship may be extended or renewed after the initial traineeship agreement expires or terminated ahead of time.

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Apprenticeships policy - Germany

Germany developed a programme that allows asylum seekers to follow an apprenticeship. Programme participants are, usually for three years, allowed to stay in Germany even if their procedure outcome is negative. Afterwards, if they find a job, they are granted the right to stay in the country for another two years. This policy is a strong incentive for employers to recruit asylum seekers as it offers a solution to the uncertainty and risk of employing an asylum seeker.

Further information: <https://www.jobstarter.de/de/voraussetzungen-fuer-den-einstieg-von-gefluechteten-in-ausbildung.html>

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Diageo internships - Ireland

Diageo, a multinational company in the food and hospitality sector, set up an internship programme for asylum seekers and refugees. They offer 8 weeks of intensive training in the sector (job-specific competences as well as soft skills), followed by a 12-week placement in a hotel, restaurant or bar for 12 weeks.

Further information: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/news/stories/2018/6/5b224d7b4/home-of-guinness-gives-new-chance-to-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-ireland.html>





Conclusions on matching

In conclusion, the main challenges identified in the matching phase - despite being also rooted in the previous phases of screening and gap bridging - mainly concern the lack of visibility, awareness and knowledge. Firstly, of the professional potential of asylum seekers/refugees, but also of the sectors and companies in need of workforce and willing to hire this target group.

The main idea to overcome such gaps is the creation of strong partnerships between government, employers and intermediary organisations for the effective and enduring bond between the communities of businesses and unemployed people, and

the increase of direct exchanges (in a safe setting). Employer federations and public employment services in particular are important mechanisms to match sector demand for skills training provision, anticipate future labour market and skill needs, and so to create the foundations for recruitment.

In order to counter these challenges, it is important to increase opportunities for both sides to meet and interact. In practice, suggestions to enhance this would be to organise a career fair, inviting employers who are open to hiring this specific target group, or implement traineeships so that employers can meet and evaluate the professional potential of refugees and asylum seekers at the same time. Initiatives of the sort already exist, but a better cooperation should be used in their implementation.



A



Sustainability

Current situation

Shortages and guidelines

Lack of pathways to employment

Lack of refugee employment partnerships

Conclusions on sustainability

The overall purpose of this chapter is to focus on sustainability, building on the earlier chains. For the purposes of the ETCC project, sustainability has two separate but interrelated aspects. Firstly, the importance of creating sustainable employment or economic opportunity for individual asylum seekers and refugees; secondly, the sustainability of an overall model through which these individuals can be channelled into work.

In relation to sustainable employment for individuals, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of decent work is relevant which "includes opportunities for work that is productive and offers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection as well as prospects for personal devel-

opment and social integration". It also emphasises equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Sustainable work is not only about conditions provided by the employer but also the complementary support offered by the state for example in relation to social protection. For the moment, many refugees and asylum seekers end up in entry level, insecure, poorly paid work such as distribution, security, low level agricultural work whilst others will remain unemployed or may even work illegally.

Recent research from the University of Oxford shows that refugees are less likely to be in work than other groups, and if in work more likely to be in insecure work than most other population groups and rarely progress into better quality work. Failure to access sustainable work also inhibits wider integration into society and leads to social exclusion and impoverishment as well as alienation and isolation (Kone, Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2019).

In relation to a sustainable overall model or process to get refugees and asylum seekers into work, the evidence so far would suggest this is sadly lacking. Whilst there are clearly some examples of good practice, especially at local and regional levels, there is a lack of a coherent approach. Instead, the use of ad hoc and fragmented yet significant amounts of public expenditure (from EU, national and local or regional source) is a major feature. There is a shortage of meaningful partnership or cooperation structures to facilitate a sustainable model. An especially serious challenge is to build ongoing co-operation partnerships with employers and with those responsible for economic development



and labour market policy. Here the important feature which would help develop a sustainable approach is to make the business case for investing in employment and retention of refugee workers, especially in growth sectors, rather than rely on corporate social responsibility or humanitarian help. Work by Eurocities has shown how a cross-sectoral, integrated and partnership approach at city or regional level can be effective in delivering labour market integration (Eurocities, 2017).

The overall model also needs to make sure that the needs of female asylum seekers and refugees are met

by embedding and mainstreaming gender equality. Sustainable employment along traditional lines may be more difficult for women but changes to the labour market which include self-employment, flexible working, home working etc. may open up new opportunities. The Swiss Agency for Development suggests that women migrants and refugees may in fact be able to access opportunities, including for better work, through newly found autonomy on the one hand but also at greater risk of exploitation on the other. Many highly skilled female refugees are working in jobs well below their capability (O'Neil, Fleury & Foresti, 2016).



Current situation

There is a range of interesting and innovative measures which aim to ensure greater sustainability, albeit that they tend to be currently fragmented.

Firstly, there are measures which offer help in aspects of the longer and ongoing support for asylum seekers and refugees in relation to the needed pathway to employment. This includes raising of awareness as well as vocational training and in work support after recruitment, for example via a buddy. In addition, career advice such as preparing CVs, interview techniques and job search are also happening. Further examples of existing measures include the provision of individualized, tailored

support for example through dedicated job coaches, the creation of databases, and other matching techniques to connect employers with job seekers.

Language training is a further existing measure as a barrier to sustainable work but which is often general and classroom based. However, there are examples of good practice measures where language and communication are more applied and employment focused, for example for customer engagement or for technical language.

In relation to gender equality, there are few examples of existing measures aimed at this, despite identified issues which prevent sustainable employment. There are examples of targeted help for refugee women in business through advice, financing, help with business models etc.

In conclusion, there are many individual examples of measures which aim to promote sustainable and decent work for asylum seekers and refugees. Many of these actions are delivered by NGOs or refugee organisations with few examples of an integrated, chain cooperation approach with wider but important stakeholders such as public employment services, local and regional government and

employers and employer organisations. At individual level, the need is to develop employment pathways starting with aspiration and motivation, including soft skills and applied language, as well as in-work support after recruitment. However, to attain this, a coherent and comprehensive chain cooperation process is needed bringing together refugee organisations and NGOs with public employment services, employers and local and regional government. This should align refugee and asylum seeker support with the local labour market and recruitment or skills shortages thereby highlighting the business case for sustainable and decent work.



Shortages and guidelines

It appears that there are two overall areas of shortages when it comes to sustainability. These guidelines suggest ideas to address these shortages. The first is the shortage of pathways to employment and the second is a shortage of refugee employment partnerships.



Lack of pathways to employment

The process of ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers are able to access sustainable work is a long-term and in many cases step by step process. It requires an individually tailored pathway involving a range of actors and not ad hoc and fragmented actions as is mostly the case at present.

In some localities, refugees and asylum seekers work in the black

economy illegally often on a casual and low paid basis rather than gain sustainable work. This issue overlaps with problems of trafficking and exploitation which are a major feature of some sectors (for example in nail bars and car washes in the UK).

In other cases refugees and asylum seekers may be unemployed and dependent on benefit or in short-term, low paid entry level work. Highly

skilled or qualified individuals may be unemployed or in low level work (for example a Vietnamese mathematics professor picking strawberries and a leading Syrian eye surgeon working in a supermarket). Even where they do gain decent and sustainable work, they often face additional barriers to sustainable job retention. ACH estimate that around 40% of refugees are distant from the labour market for a variety of reasons around confidence, isolation, mental and physical health problems and other barriers. The importance of social capital and access to wider social networks in accessing sustainable work was demonstrated some years ago for the UK home office and is vital for the overall process of integration and that access to economic opportunity is both a catalyst for this process and a result of it (Ager & Strang, 2004).

The lack of adequate support infrastructure represents another barrier in accessing sustainable work. Refugees and asylum seekers are often housed in short-term rented properties with relatively high rents and insecure tenure. This can lead to the need to move on a regular basis, disrupting life and sometimes making access to public transport difficult. Others are housed in resettlement centres far away from transport routes. Also access to medical care (physical and mental health) as well as affordable and accessible childcare often prevents sustainable work with a specific impact on women refugees and asylum seekers.



The above requires the creation of pathways to employment which are:

- Focused on individual needs and circumstances reflecting previous experience, aspiration, confidence, gender, cultural issues and personal responsibilities;
- A long-term and multi-step process over a period of six months to two years.

As indicated in the summary of the current situation, there are many schemes to assist in aspects of employment support which address elements of what is needed to create sustainable work. But there is a shortage of employment pathways which both integrate and individualize provision over time. This guideline suggests how this shortage might be addressed.

Guideline 1: Pathways to employment

The key aspect of this approach is to bring together existing employment support actions, identify and address gaps and ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers who are legally available for work have access to a comprehensive employment pathway from the time their employment status is confirmed through individual steps into work as needed and to cover the first six months in employment. This will in principle involve reception actors, public employment services, supportive organisations, especially those led by or focused on refugee and asylum seeker communities, employers and employer organisations.

Once eligible for work, as identified by reception actors, individuals should undergo career advice and assessment by experts (either from the public employment service or contracted from specialist

NGOs) to produce an individual action plan for each person.

As mentioned in the matching chapter, public employment service and/or NGO staff should work interactively with employers in sectors in need of workforce or growth sectors to identify future skills requirements and unnecessary barriers which may prevent recruitment and retention of refugees and asylum seekers. Access to small business support should also be offered.

Individuals will then be able to access a series of support measures as required which together will form a pathway to sustainable employment and offer support also for the first six months in work. Existing platforms and information services should be expanded to incorporate the immediate post recruitment period to further ensure sustainability.

Intended achievements by the target group include soft skills, social capital and social networks, understanding of job search and application techniques, acquisition of applied language capability, technical and vocational skills, longterm, sustainable, decent employment and a wider integration within the community.

Guideline 1.1: Develop a coordinated pathway to employment

The pathway commences when an individual asylum seeker or refugee becomes eligible for work and ends six months after attainment of a long term decent job. Usually this would be envisaged over a 2 year period.

Step by step implementation:

1. A mapping exercise to identify current measures to support refugees and asylum seekers into sustainable work including identification of gaps will be performed as a preparatory measure.
2. Roles and responsibilities between stakeholders in relation to management, design and delivery will be agreed upon. The delivery will primarily be the responsibility of mixed teams from public employment service, specialist NGOs and community level trainers and mentors and individual employers.
3. A cohort of individual employers are approached and sign up to participate in the employment pathway by offering interviews to relevant candidates from target groups and offering post-recruitment support via buddies and access to language training.



4. The preparation of individual plans following career interviews with eligible individuals opens up access to elements of the employment pathway outlined below as needed.
5. Soft integration support which will allow the acquisition of social capital and access to social networks is provided, including awareness of the labour market and job search and application methods at community level, by community mentors and/or NGOs.
6. Applied work-related language training is offered with flexible methods of provision (for example intensive courses, evenings, daytimes, women only) to reflect individual needs. This provision continues for six months after recruitment if needed.

7. Technical and/or vocational training in conjunction with employers as appropriate for individuals is delivered.
8. Access to small business support (in relation to business model, rules and regulations, market development, financing, premises etc.) is given which many of the target group, including female participants, may see as an attractive opportunity.
9. Ongoing advice and support from career advisors in relation to job search and application methods, CVs, interviews etc. is provided.
10. In-work support with the provision of buddies and access to language support for at least six months from recruitment is given.
11. An "in work" support plan (see guideline 1.2) on individual basis for post-recruitment retention and development for at least six months after gaining employment is elaborated.
12. Platforms (see guideline 1.3) are developed offering post recruitment advice and information for both employers and employees including legal rights, taxation, health and safety, contractual issues and career development. These platforms could be built on existing websites or tools that have already gained attention of the target group (for example websites with job offers or information on working rights and obligations).

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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First Bus - UK

Pathways to employment need to be built around business through long term schemes. First Bus are a privately owned provider of bus services to Bristol and the surrounding sub-region. They employ around 1.600 staff at several locations. They have recently faced shortages of staff, especially drivers, in face of growing demand for public transport and recruitment problems. Bus drivers are generally well paid and have good terms and conditions.

ACH / Himilo are an NGO working with refugees and migrants and have entered a long-term relationship to offer a pipeline of potential drivers for the company. ACH undertakes the initial identification and appraisal of possible workers and provides initial language and awareness training. First Bus offers further vocational and technical training and all who complete this are considered for employment. Language and communication skills are central as the average bus driver will encounter more than 600 people per day and must deal with a wide range of interactions. The company also offers new recruits a buddy system through which long standing staff members offer support to new employees.

Further information: <http://www.bristol-business.net/bus-operator-and-social-enterprise-in-drive-to-help-refugees-get-jobs-on-the-bus>

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Cooperativa di Abramo - Italy

Implements support programmes for employers, providing them with three reference people: a social and work-related operator, an in-house operator and a mediator who meets with the company representatives once a month. The mediator regularly holds follow-up conversations with both the employee and the employer and acts as intermediary and facilitator in case any actions should be taken to continuously enable the employee to develop amongst the company.

It accompanies companies during the recruitment process, and offers support during 6 months once the new employee is recruited.



Guideline 1.2: Develop a post-recruitment support plan

A serious constraint on sustainable employment for refugees and asylum seekers is the lack of post-recruitment support. There is a wide range of schemes which aim to secure work for the target group but most consider that the task is completed once the individual enters employment. The weakness of this approach is that it undermines retention and does not attempt to tackle immediate problems that may be encountered in

the working environment and does not consider job or career progression whether within the initial employer or beyond. It is important to see labour market integration as a process over time and not a point in time. Of course, it must be acknowledged that this approach would have resource implications but it should be regarded as an investment by both employers and by support organisations.

An individual post-recruitment plan can be prepared for each refugee and asylum seeker following successful job selection. The plan would have three main aims:

1. To prevent immediate post-recruitment drop-out because of obstacles faced by the individual in performing work tasks. This could include external factors such as transport to work, childcare and internal factors such as lack of understanding of tasks, communication issues or cultural factors
2. To ensure that the individual is able to develop and progress in the performance of their role within the organisation and is fully aware of his/her rights and obligations at work. This can include access to internal training and personal development, informal and formal feedback and advice, access to a work buddy undertaking similar roles but with greater experience.
3. To provide a framework for longer term career development including examination of aspirations, possible training or study needs, personal development etc.

The post-recruitment plan must be prepared and agreed by the individual, a careers specialist from the support organisation (possibly public employment service, NGO etc) and an HR or other manager from the employing organisation. The document should be short, prepared easily and regarded as a process not a blueprint. Where possible, the HR managers should be provided with short, intense training by a specialist to arrive at a better understanding of the perspective of refugees and asylum seekers.

The outline of the plan can be prepared at the commencement of the employment. The internal manager should initially meet the individual every week during the first month and then monthly after that. These encounters will primarily focus on short term and internal issues and problems. The external careers specialist should meet with the individual after the first week, after the first month and then every three months with a major focus on longer term development and on any serious problems that cannot be resolved internally or where the causes of the problems are external, such as transport to work or child care.

Guideline 1.3: Develop a support platform

Both individual employers and employees often feel that there is a lack of access to up to date and real time information which can deter recruitment of refugees and asylum seekers and also undermine their retention after employment. There exist many information platforms, but a specific platform giving both direct information and links to needed information is important. Many employers feel that a lack of understanding and complexity will place too many demands on managers who are

already under pressure and individuals will feel isolated.

The platform should be easy to find and navigate and made widely known and accessible via social media, media, social networks and other mechanisms.

It should provide a section for individual employees so that they can access information in relation to issues such as: their rights to work as refugees and asylum seekers and any restrictions faced, general rights at



work and how to know and enforce them including contracts of employment, minimum wage, sickness leave, holidays, health and safety etc, role of trades unions. It should also offer access to understandable information concerning public transport, health care, childcare and other infrastructure needs as well as entitlement and availability for education and training, including language training, technical training, IT etc.

The employers' section should offer access to information and feedback about the legal framework for the employment of refugees and asylum seekers, support available from specialist organisations (NGOs, Public employment service etc.) as well as their legal rights in relation to employment. Further, access to information that would enhance the understanding of cultural and social contexts is useful. The information can be based on the content included in the employers' guide developed by COA, a gap bridging tool (gap bridging guideline 6)

In addition to the informative goal focusing especially on legal and administrative aspects, the platform can also be used to share all sorts of information, such as:

- Agendas and content of awareness campaigns and their physical or digital media
- Calendars and content of information sessions for employers
- Training agendas and content for refugees and asylum seekers
- Offers for employment, volunteering, internships, etc.
- Asylum seeker profiles
- Calendars of events
- Practical tools such as guidelines, screening tools, national language positioning tests, etc.
- Success stories
- Links to useful websites

Best practice examples:

Screening	Gap bridging	Matching	Sustaining
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Digital platform "Diversity in Wallonia" - Belgium

This platform brings together a wide range of information and tools to support the management of diversity in human resources and in the labour market.

The "Diversity in Wallonia" platform is used to present the objectives to be achieved in the management of diversity in human resources and to make known the partners involved in the project. Employers, workers and others can find information brochures, reference books, videos, legislation, etc. The platform also offers training and events, as well as consulting services for professionals who need help.

Further information: <http://www.diversitewallonie.be/>



ETCC tool - post-recruitment support platform (CCI)

Description

In the context of the ETCC project, multiple tools were tested which aim to create a stronger mechanisms to build links between the needs of employers and the skills and experience of refugees and asylum seekers. These links appear to be central to creating both sustainable work for individuals and an overall sustainable model. One of these tools was a post-recruitment support web platform: <https://fedoras.cciwapi.be/>

This platform aims to bring together the capabilities of refugees and asylum seekers with the specific needs of employers. It is clear from the assessment above that sustainable employment and access to long term decent work for individuals as well as the creation of an overall sustainable model requires mechanisms which develop closer relations between employers, the target group and other stakeholders. Digital tools such as web platforms are highly relevant for creating this ongoing interaction, especially in the context of the re-

strictions related to the Covid-19 crisis. One of the objectives of this tool was to increase communication and collaboration between relevant stakeholders and this is clearly an important element of a sustainable model. A further aim was to lower the barrier for refugees to enter the labour market and to enhance the willingness of employers to hire them. Changing business practice is also essential for sustainability.

This platform includes testimonies and professional success stories of asylum seekers, refugees and employers, legal advice on hiring a refugee or asylum seeker, relevant events in the region, relevant organisations or initiatives in the area etc.

Strengths & Opportunities

The platform creates links between employers and refugees and asylum seekers. It helps to build the business case of hiring this target group, especially thanks to testimonies and legal advice. It also increases awareness of the potential of employment of this specific target group.

Over recent months, especially in the context of the the Corona lockdown, the importance of digital tools such as web platforms has been demonstrated. However, an important consideration is the technical access to the platform as many refugees do not have laptops or computers. Access via smartphone apps, such as Whatsapp, would be more suitable.

This type of platform also brings together a wide panel of stakeholders in a certain region, all working at different stages along the cooperation chain. This aspect of the platform is also very important, as it helps build strong links between many different actors, who do not have many opportunities to interact.

The importance of soft skills, among others social capital, cultural awareness and social skills as well as aspiration and confidence is highlighted

in the platform as trainings of this kind are suggested. The acquisition of soft skills is important for sustainable work and especially for career progression and previously under-emphasised in comparison with technical and vocational skills and generic language training.





Tips

Special attention could be paid to employers in growth sectors or in sectors in need of workforce. For example, their testimonies can be highlighted and the platform shared widely between them.

Furthermore, working closely with organisations who know the refugee community well, or are even part of the community, would also enhance the visibility of the platform and increase its utility as the content would focus on what the community finds interesting and useful.

Lack of pathways to employment

In terms of the wider need for a sustainable model, there is a shortage of refugee employment partnerships. Refugee support is often regarded as a humanitarian activity linked in the case of business to corporate social responsibility. Such partnerships are badly needed to assemble and mobilise the business case and to align refugee support with known skills shortages, recruitment needs and wider economic development priorities. This will streamline delivery, reduce duplication and in the longer term dependence on public spending. Reports by Eurocities and by the Migration Policy Institute Europe have stressed the important role cities can play in integrating refugees into work, the need for clarity of roles of levels of government and other stakeholders as well as the need for access to EU funding. NGOs which are led by refugees or have close connections with the community should be seen as central to forming policy, designing delivery and undertaking support in collaboration with other key partners. The need for evidence, evaluation and monitoring to inform policy is also stressed and is often lacking leading to anecdotal policy changes sometimes based on short term political drivers (Hooper, Desiderio & Salant, 2017).



In elaborating pathways to employment, it is important to stress that for many refugees and asylum seekers, the process will require several steps whilst for others it will be more straightforward and a matter of acquiring practical skills. Within key partnership organisations there is a lack of dedicated expertise - including specific problems and opportunities relating to female refugees and asylum seekers - in relation to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers such as employers, employer organisations, public employment services and local and regional government. Refugee related NGOs can play a major role here.

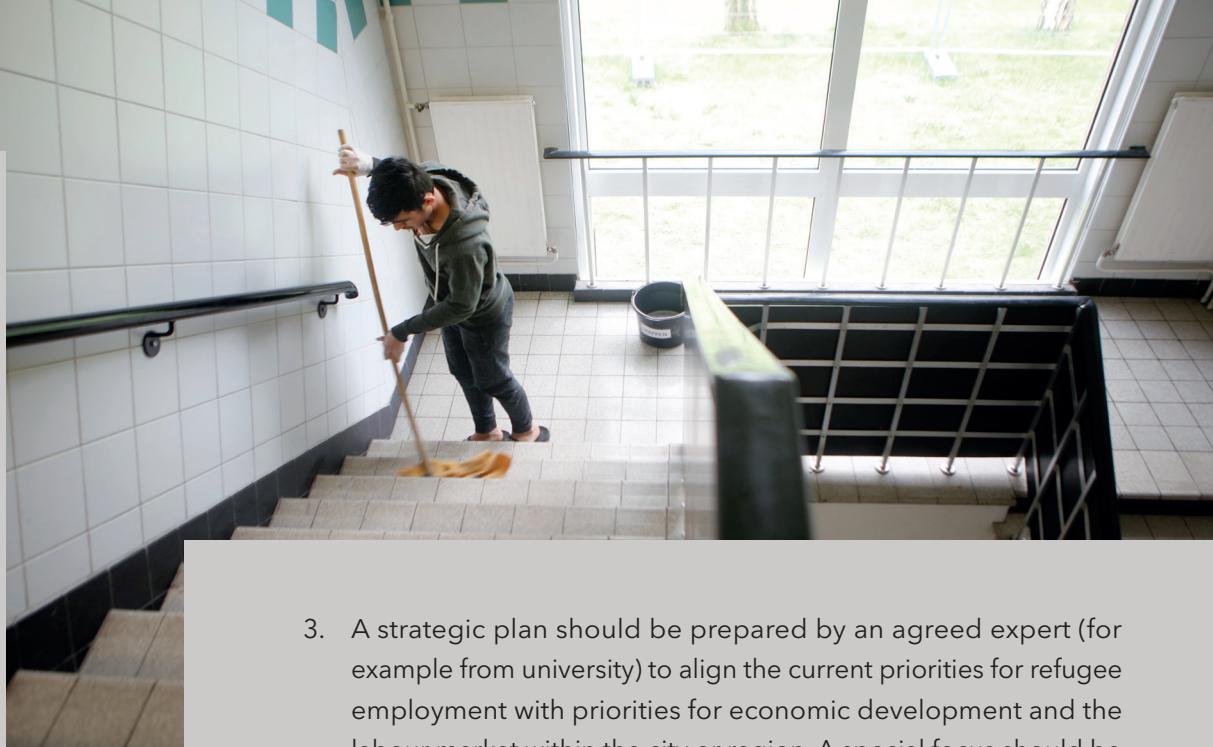
Guideline 2: Develop refugee employment partnerships

In order to provide an overall model to get the target group into sustainable work, there is a need to align the delivery of support for this group with wider aims concerning the labour market, skills shortages and economic development objectives and activities. The integration of refugees into the labour market should be seen as a mainstream element of economic development and not only as a social or humanitarian activity. Through this approach the business case for investment can be made, public spending support can be better targeted and reduced. Also duplication of effort and gaps in provision can be identified and resolved.

The approach would be undertaken at either city or regional level as appropriate. It would involve the identification and commitment of a range of relevant stakeholders through which chain cooperation can be undertaken. The partners would then align behind an evidence-based strategy. The purpose would not be to prepare a lengthy time consuming blueprint strategy but simply a short exercise to align the aims of support for our target group with wider labour market and economic development activities and priorities.

The establishment of the refugee employment partnership should take place over a one year period but should then operate on an ongoing basis.

1. Key partners for refugee employment are identified for their expertise and knowledge, including:
 - Refugee and asylum seeker reception organisations
 - NGOs and civic organisations
 - Local and regional governments or development agencies
 - Public employment service and private employment agencies
 - Employers' organisations
 - Universities
2. Based on the platform meeting developed in the screening chapter, an initial round table meeting of key partners is organised, for example by the city or regional authority. The overall aim of the refugee employment partnership (to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers who are eligible to work are able to contribute to the economy through appropriate sustainable employment building on cost effective intervention and support) is agreed upon.



3. A strategic plan should be prepared by an agreed expert (for example from university) to align the current priorities for refugee employment with priorities for economic development and the labour market within the city or region. A special focus should be put on skills shortages, recruitment problems and other trends in key growth sectors.
4. From the strategic plan roles, responsibilities and gaps and actions needed in relation to the aims of the partnership are identified.
5. Regular meetings and follow ups take place; after one year a city or regional forum with wider participation on the aims of the partnership is organised.
6. Feedback into wider public service provision and infrastructure development is also a task as it has been identified that issues such as lack of affordable housing, child care or public transport can undermine attempts to ensure sustainable work.



Conclusions on sustainability

Sustainable models require employers and employer organisations who are committed to improving competitiveness and productivity of employers via diversity and added value in the labour market. Their implementation requires a flexible and long term time horizon and with adequate capacity to respond to unexpected changes and problems and to overcome barriers and problems. A sustainable approach must be well resourced (money, skills and information).

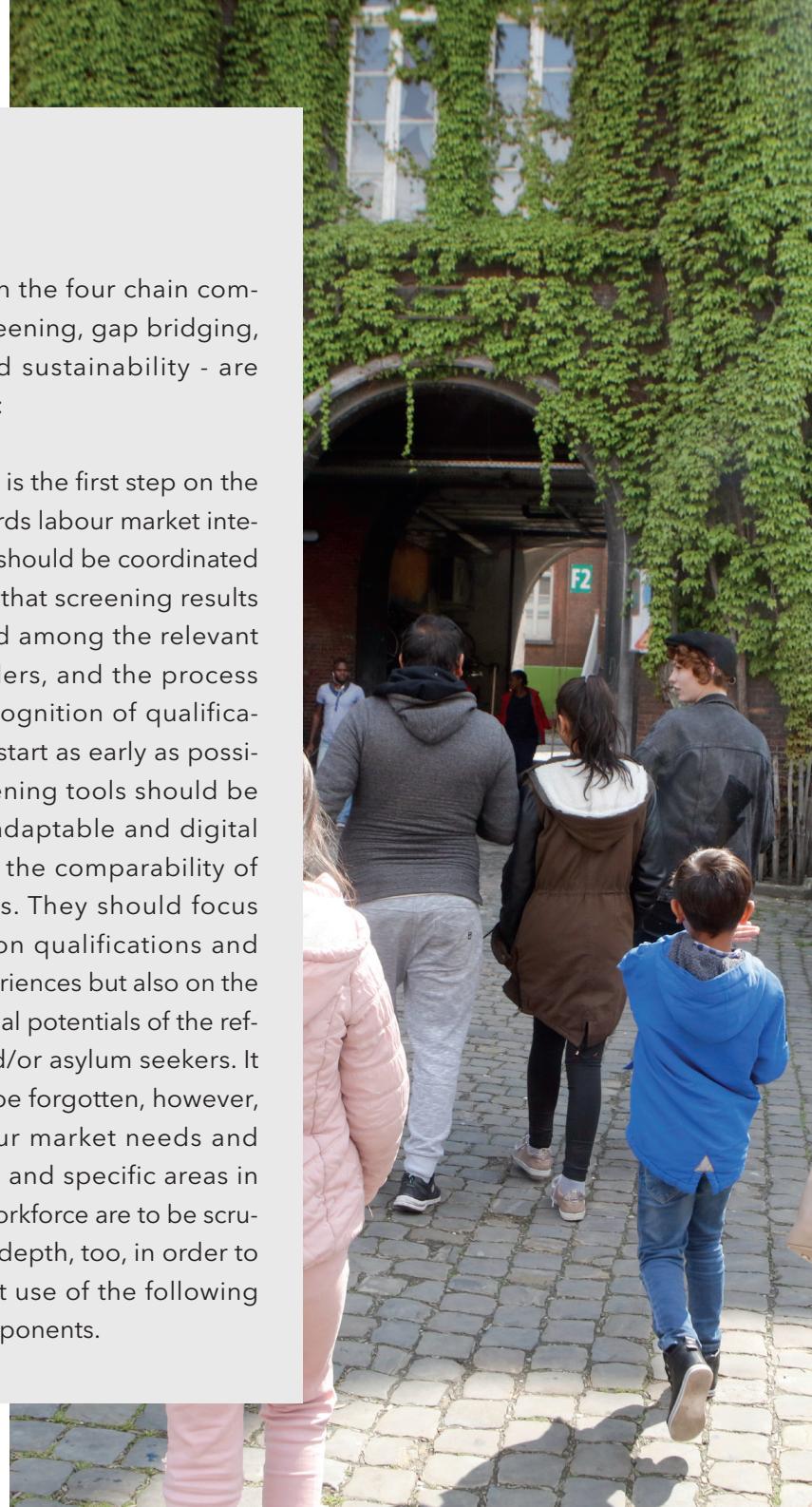
For access to long term decent sustainable work to be achieved, it is vital that employers from growth sectors (e.g. technology, art and culture) are involved and not only those offering precarious entry level jobs.

For some, entry level work may be essential for initial participation in the labour market but the creation of pathways for career progression is important for longer term integration.

An evidence-based approach is essential for sustainability. The collection and use of data on firms, on good practice, on individual clients is a key element of sustainability as it allows for continual improvement of the approach and a focus that reflects the needs and circumstances of individual clients and employers via monitoring and evaluation at project and programme level in relation to both overall design and delivery.

Over recent months, especially in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown, the importance of digital tools such as web platforms has been demonstrated. They can also be used in demonstrating the value of a business case approach to meet employers' recruitment and productivity needs, and to publish success stories of migrants and asylum seekers who mastered the long path into labour market integration.

To attain a considerable participation rate, a high level of connection with both the refugee community on the one hand and employers on the other is suggested.



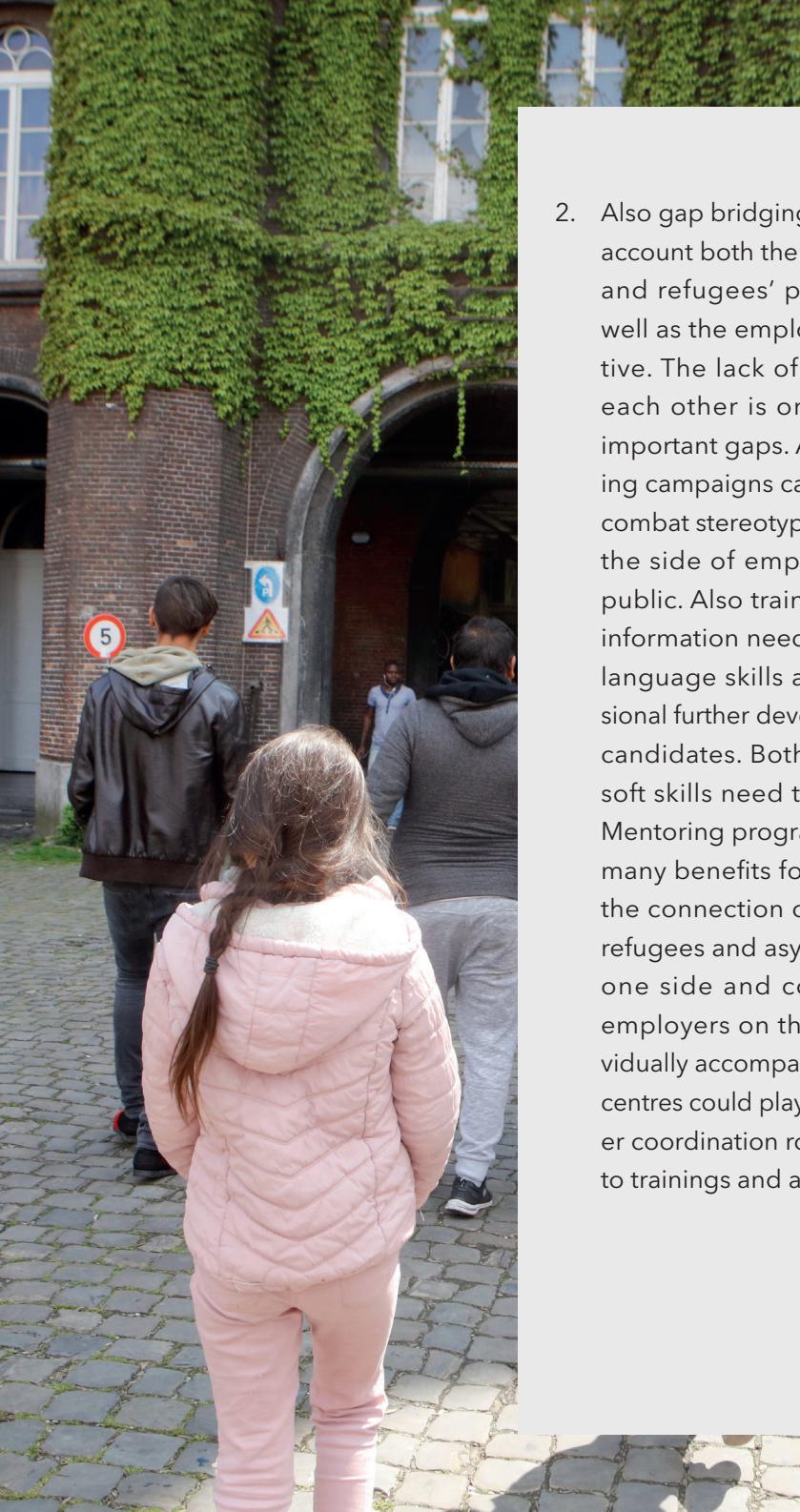
Summary and overall conclusions

Over the last couple of years, an unprecedented number of refugees and asylum seekers have made their way into the European Union, forming the biggest mass population movement since World War II. Their integration is challenging in many ways; however, host countries have also a lot to gain. Given the demographic changes that result in ageing societies, refugees and asylum seekers represent, on the average, a comparably young workforce compensating for shortages of manpower due to the demographic change. Many refugees and asylum seekers are well qualified, others are ready to acquire professional knowledge and work in areas with a high demand for labour, including the health and care sectors. Nevertheless, their potentials need to be detected and developed. Right now, much remains to be done.

The Employer Tailored Chain Cooperation project aimed at providing a strategic approach to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are channelled to sustainable decent work and that the skills and recruitment needs of employers are met. These guidelines focus on practical actions for a closer cooperation between stakeholders along different stages of the professional integration path of refugees and/or asylum seekers. After thorough research and practical testing, it appears that many initiatives already exist but are mostly fragmented and implemented by one actor alone, without or with little cooperation amongst the relevant organisations.

Links between the four chain components - screening, gap bridging, matching and sustainability - are much needed:

1. Screening is the first step on the path towards labour market integration. It should be coordinated to ensure that screening results are shared among the relevant stakeholders, and the process of the recognition of qualifications can start as early as possible. Screening tools should be reliable, adaptable and digital to ensure the comparability of the results. They should focus not only on qualifications and work experiences but also on the professional potentials of the refugees and/or asylum seekers. It must not be forgotten, however, that labour market needs and shortages and specific areas in need of workforce are to be scrutinised in-depth, too, in order to make best use of the following chain components.



2. Also gap bridging must take into account both the asylum seekers and refugees' perspectives as well as the employers' perspective. The lack of knowledge of each other is one of the most important gaps. Awareness raising campaigns can contribute to combat stereotypes and fears on the side of employers and the public. Also trainings can cover information needs and facilitate language skills and the professional further development of the candidates. Both technical and soft skills need to be acquired. Mentoring programmes present many benefits for both sides as the connection of ties between refugees and asylum seekers on one side and companies and employers on the other is individually accompanied. Reception centres could play a much stronger coordination role with regards to trainings and actions.
3. A successful matching process depends on visibility, awareness and knowledge of the professional potential of asylum seekers and refugees, but also of the sectors and companies in need of workforce and willing to hire this target group. Opportunities must be created for all parties involved to get to know each other and to interact. Career fairs, job days and traineeships are tested and proven solutions that work even better, if coordinated by strong partnerships between government, employers, communities of refugees and asylum seekers as well as intermediary organisations.
4. Sustainability needs to be a more central element of all interventions. It should be seen as a cross-cutting theme across all elements of the process and embedded in both design and delivery. If sustainability is not central, ongoing high levels of public spending and support of individuals in an ad-hoc way will be needed. Also, if screening, gap bridging and matching are to be done in the best possible way, measures must be taken to facilitate the integration of newcomers into an unknown work environment for at least six months. Digital tools like web platforms can help all parties involved to fulfil their information needs and build business cases. Sustainability in a holistic sense is supported when employers and employer organisations are committed to improving competitiveness and productivity through the promotion of diversity in their workforce and corporate social responsibility.

Refugee women and men are often facing similar problems when it comes to their social and labour market integration. Nevertheless, women are not only confronted with discrimination caused by race and class, but also by gender. Age as a fourth discrimination factor may negatively impact on them if they are girls or older women. However, one sub-group among refugee women is highly skilled, having left their country of origin due to a lack of gender equality or civil rights. Many refugee women intend to participate in the labour market. Their varied preconditions must be recognised as a transversal theme in all chain components, also if at first glance the measures taken appear to be gender neutral.

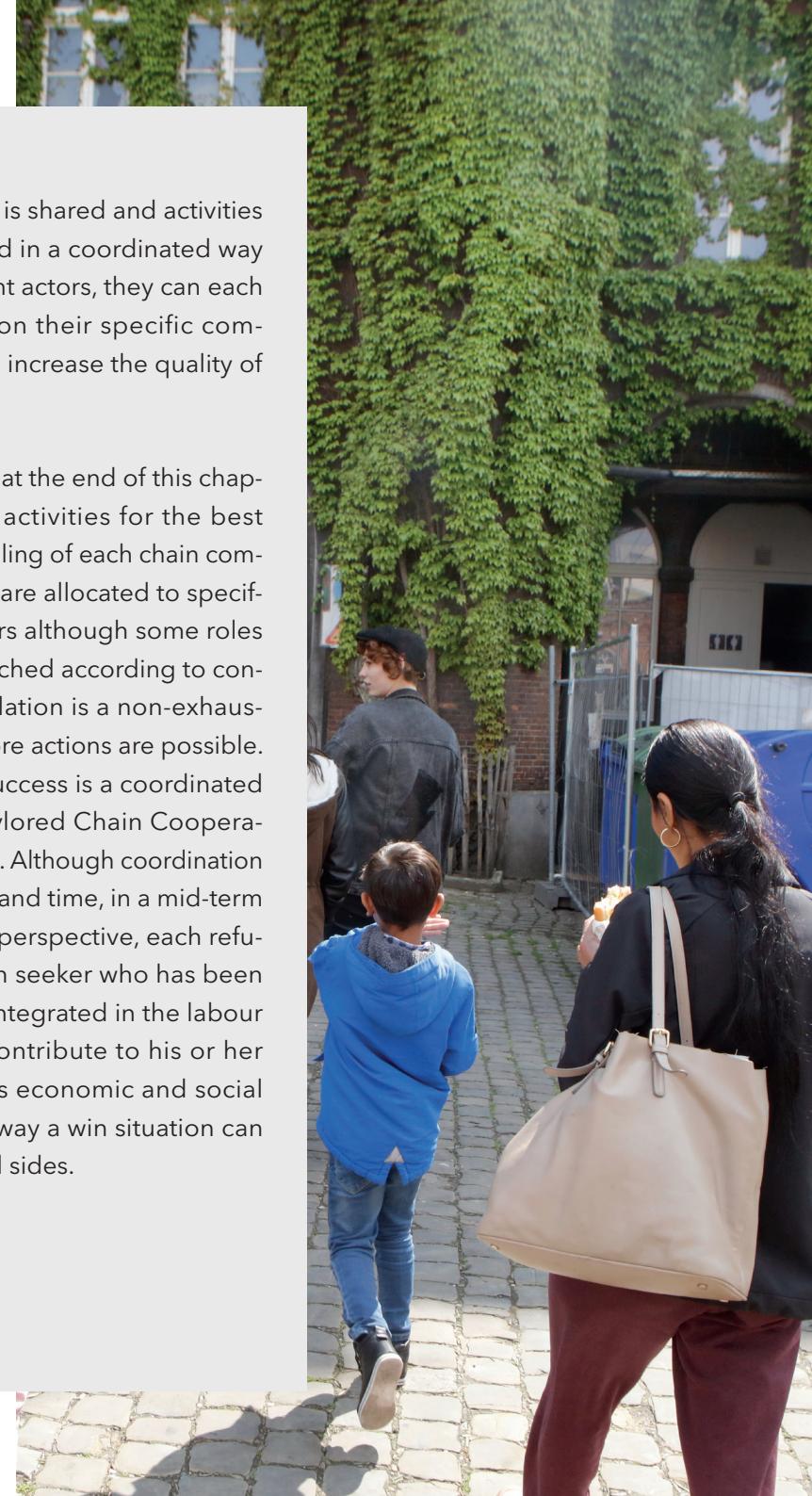
Key stakeholders in applying the Employer Taylored Chain Cooperation process are:

- Institutions responsible for the reception of refugees and asylum seekers
- Supporting organisations for refugees and asylum seekers, often NGOs or civic initiatives
- Authorities responsible for implementing policies concerning the integration of refugees and asylum seekers
- Public and private employment services
- Employer associations and employers
- Refugee associations and communities

These stakeholders may play a role at a different moment of the professional integration path, but usually the activities of more than one stakeholders take place increasing the potential for synergies in each chain component. In order to develop the most efficient integration paths, it is essential that the roles of each partner are well defined to avoid overlaps and duplication of efforts, as often happens today.

If information is shared and activities are performed in a coordinated way by the relevant actors, they can each concentrate on their specific competences and increase the quality of their work.

The synthesis at the end of this chapter suggests activities for the best possible handling of each chain component. They are allocated to specific stakeholders although some roles might be switched according to contexts. The collation is a non-exhaustive, many more actions are possible. The key for success is a coordinated Employer Taylored Chain Cooperation approach. Although coordination needs efforts and time, in a mid-term or long-term perspective, each refugee or asylum seeker who has been successfully integrated in the labour market will contribute to his or her host country's economic and social welfare. This way a win situation can emerge for all sides.



	SCREENING	GAP BRIDGING	MATCHING	SUSTAINABILITY
Reception centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply adequate and jointly agreed screening tools • Ensure screening immediately upon arrival and continuous screening during procedure • Share screening results with other relevant stakeholders • Participate in efforts to identify sectors and regions with labour shortage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a socio-professional point of contact • Create links with supporting organisations • Provide information on training opportunities to asylum seekers • Compile information in one guide • Host classes, trainings and workshops • Support mentorships • Contribute to the information guide for employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create partnerships with employers • Enable personal contact between employers and refugees/asylum seekers • Support job fairs and job days • Communicate traineeship opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support individual pathways to employment • Communicate post-recruitment advice opportunities • Support refugee employment partnerships
Supporting organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider screening results in the design of support measures • Offer affordable degree conversion opportunities • Inform about education systems and levels in refugees/asylum seekers' countries of origin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer vocation-related language training • Offer training on technical and soft skills as well as the local working culture • Consider timing, location and access in the outreach to women and single parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host visits of refugees/asylum seekers • Support job fairs and job days • Prepare refugees/asylum seekers for traineeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support individual pathways to employment • Run a platform offering post-recruitment advice and information to employers and employees • Support refugee employment partnerships

	SCREENING	GAP BRIDGING	MATCHING	SUSTAINABILITY
Supporting organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform about the recognition of foreign credentials • Inform about the assessment of undocumented skills • Help refugees/asylum seekers in preparing their CVs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mentorships • Offer trainings on diversity in companies, intercultural communication and different workplace cultures • Contribute to a guide for employers 		
Responsible authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define framework for the recognition of competences • Consider screening results in the procedure for recognition of competences • Gather relevant stakeholder in identifying market needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a steering committee for a mentorship programme • Raise awareness for professional potentials of refugees/asylum seekers • Support training on the local working culture • Support training on diversity in companies, intercultural communication and different workplace cultures • Support information sessions to employers • Coordinate the development of a guide for employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness among employers on opportunities of traineeship programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop indicators and measure refugees/asylum seekers' contribution to the economy • Identify measures to support refugees and asylum seekers into sustainable work • Support refugee employment partnerships

	SCREENING	GAP BRIDGING	MATCHING	SUSTAINABILITY
Employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply adequate and jointly agreed screening tools • Participate in efforts to identify sectors and regions with labour shortage • Inform about the recognition of foreign credentials • Inform about the assessment of undocumented skills • Address barriers in the adequate assessment of skills of refugee women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify barriers and constraints in client engagement • Advise supporting organisations on job market needs • Support awareness-raising on professional potentials of refugees/asylum seekers • Contribute to the guide for employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate employment service staff in recognising special needs of refugees/asylum seekers • Organise job fairs • Ensure the involvement of sectors with decent work vacancies for women • Perform needs analyses on traineeship offers for refugees/asylum seekers • Set up curricula and framework conditions for traineeships • Support employers to participate in traineeship programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate refugee employment partnerships • Coordinate the development of pathways to employment • Ensure involvement of growth sectors in the placement of refugees/asylum seekers • Support individual pathways to employment • Ensure career progression through continuous training and upskilling
Employer associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in defining a framework for the recognition of competences • Inform about education systems and levels in refugees/asylum seekers' countries of origin • Identify sectors and regions with labour shortage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mentorships • Offer information sessions to employers • Offer trainings on diversity in companies, intercultural communication and different workplace cultures • Contribute to the guide for employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify inappropriate recruitment practices • Support job fairs and job days • Support employers to participate in traineeship programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify inappropriate employment practices • Demonstrate that hiring refugees/asylum seekers is a business case • Showcase positive examples, including new market opportunities • Support refugee employment partnerships

	SCREENING	GAP BRIDGING	MATCHING	SUSTAINABILITY
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not expect documents on skills and experience being complete • Make use of the screening results provided • Participate in efforts to identify sectors and regions with labour shortages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in mentoring programmes • Participate in information sessions • Offer trainings on diversity in companies, intercultural communication and different workplace cultures to staff • Promote a respectful, non-discriminatory workplace culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give information on job opportunities at reception centres or supporting organisations • Participate in job fairs and job days • Host visits of refugees/asylum seekers • Offer traineeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide "buddy" schemes and clear information on the working environment • Develop individual in-work support plans for post-recruitment development • Give in-work support for at least 6 months after recruitment • Engage in refugee employment partnerships
Refugee communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in data collection and situation analysis • Communicate areas with labour shortage to community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate mentoring programmes to members • Participate in awareness-raising on professional potentials of refugees/asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support job fairs and job days • Communicate traineeship opportunities to members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate post-recruitment advice opportunities • Ensure and monitor participation of both women and men
Refugees and asylum seekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in the screening process • Report on professional developments and potentially changed perspectives • Prepare CV with supporting organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in classes, trainings and workshops • Participate in mentorships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in organised visits of companies and supporting organisations • Visit job fairs and job days • Participate in traineeship programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of in-work support offers for post-recruitment development • Take post-recruitment advice from information platforms
More details:	Screening Guidelines 1-4	Gap bridging Guidelines 1-7	Matching Guidelines 1-2	Sustainability Guidelines 1-2

Footnotes

1. In this text, the term refugee refers to a person who has refugee status, which is a legal status endowed upon them by a government.

2. Examples are, among others, the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 of DG Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, also as regards female labour market participation and reducing gender pay; Directive 2013/32/EU calling for gender-sensitive application procedures in asylum seeking; Directive 2013/33/EU including women in vulnerable groups for international protection and requiring specific attention and measures in reception; The Action Plan for Integration, calling for targeted measures for migrant women in education, labour, basic services and social inclusion.

3. The European Commission has published a report about legislative improvements that could be made, and a non-binding motion has been voted at the European parliament in 2014. The Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships in particular calls on Member States to ensure that national law or practice respects the principles set out in the guidelines, and to adapt their legislation where necessary (wage, working hours, type of contract,...).