



TALENT BEYOND
—BOUNDARIES—
مواهب بلا حدود

Global Evaluation

Labour Mobility Pathways Pilot 2016-2019

1 June 2020

talentbeyondboundaries.org





Talent Beyond Boundaries

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Global Evaluation Report

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Cover: Anas and Marah and their baby boy, at their new home in Niagara Falls where Anas is working as a Tool and Die Maker. Photo: Drew Sommerville, The Westbound Creative.

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Summary

Between 2016 and 2019 Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) conducted a series of pilot activities to test whether and under what conditions an employer-driven model of labour mobility can provide an additional and viable durable solution for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. This evaluation assesses the impact TBB has achieved through this pilot phase and lessons learned to date. The purpose of the evaluation is to help inform TBB's future programming as it looks to catalyze and scale labour mobility as a solution for tens of thousands of forcibly displaced people.

This evaluation draws on evidence collected via a range of qualitative and quantitative methods including surveys of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and employers in Australia, Canada and the UK; focus groups and surveys with TBB's alumni; internal reflections with TBB staff and volunteers; semi-structured interviews with a range of key stakeholders regarding their observations of the program impact; analysis of publicly available reporting and research of TBB's program; and analysis of other monitoring data gathered during the course of the pilot.

Findings and recommendations

Through its pilot TBB has demonstrated the viability of an employer-led labour mobility solution to displacement. The model designed by TBB has had a transformational impact on the lives of the refugees involved in the pilot phase and has also generated a range of complementary positive benefits for employers, destination country economies and refugees still living in displacement. This report outlines the results of TBB's pilot phase and recommendations for future programming.

Talent supply and candidate outreach

TBB has produced empirical evidence through its Talent Catalog database and employer feedback which, together with evidence of post-secondary education rates in refugee communities around the world, gives a high degree of confidence that the talent supply is sufficient in such communities to support a large-scale labour mobility solution to displacement. TBB can build on the successes of its pilot phase by expanding candidate outreach and seeking to enhance opportunities for talented refugee women, who are underrepresented on the Talent Catalog.

Recommendation 1: TBB should increase investment in social media and digital communications to drive candidate registrations on the Talent Catalog.

Recommendation 2: TBB should consider its capacity to expand support to displaced candidates living outside Jordan and Lebanon.

Recommendation 3: TBB should map women's occupations in the Talent Catalog against in-demand jobs in destination countries to conduct targeted employer outreach. TBB should also set a target for increasing the number of women on the Talent Catalog and conduct targeted social media outreach and women-only information sessions led by female facilitators to meet this goal.

Business demand and converting to recruitment

TBB identified strong employer demand for international refugee talent during the pilot phase. Forty-three percent of employers presented with the opportunity to recruit through TBB proceeded to reviewing candidate CVs. Just over 50% of employers surveyed for this evaluation felt that the candidates provided by TBB “exceeded their expectations” and 31% felt the candidates “met their expectations” in terms of skills and qualifications. Employers were primarily motivated to engage with TBB as a way of filling skills gaps, but also saw a range of other benefits from hiring refugees. TBB can better harness business demand to translate into successful job matches by implementing the following recommendations:

Recommendation 4: TBB should set an ambitious target for increasing entrants on the Talent Catalog, particularly in strategic and high-demand industries, and work with partners to achieve this target through extensive refugee candidate outreach.

Recommendation 5: As TBB expands into new destination locations, the organization and partners should continue to engage and attract business leaders to champion this program among their peers.

Recommendation 6: TBB should increase investment in communications and business marketing in strategic sectors to increase recruitment opportunities for candidates.

Recommendation 7: TBB should explore opportunities to work with partner employers and governments to facilitate more regular recruitment missions to refugee-hosting countries.

Recommendation 8: TBB should continue to develop place-based models of labour mobility, working with employers in strategic communities facing skills and population challenges. TBB should invest in monitoring and evaluating this place-based approach with a view to encouraging other communities to replicate the approach.

Recommendation 9: TBB should refocus employer outreach on industries and employers facing significant growth during the coronavirus pandemic and in the post-pandemic economy.

Proof of concept

Through the pilot phase TBB developed a robust recruitment and mobility model to facilitate international employment and mobility pathways for skilled refugees and their families. This model has delivered durable solutions, with refugee candidates in Jordan and Lebanon securing international job opportunities and relocating to build new lives in Australia, Canada and the UK during the pilot phase. TBB partner RefugePoint has also tested a version of the model, securing job opportunities in Canada for skilled refugees in Kenya. TBB has learned through the pilot the importance of securing systemic changes to economic immigration programs to enable refugees to access them. Having now secured official labour mobility programs with the governments of Australia and Canada, TBB is ready to scale this solution with partners.

Recommendation 10: TBB should clearly communicate with stakeholders the importance of pursuing systemic changes to address barriers to economic migration in order for refugees to move through these programs at scale.

Recommendation 11: TBB should work with partners to demonstrate the impact of this model by putting in place an agreed monitoring protocol to track solutions for refugees through labour mobility, including age and gender disaggregated data for primary applicants and family members.

Principles and eligibility considerations

Through the pilot phase TBB has refined core principles to guide the expansion of labour mobility pathways for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Linked to these principles, TBB holds the view that all displaced people who are “in need of international protection” ought to be eligible for labour mobility as complementary pathway. In order to preserve integrity of TBB’s model as it grows and is tested by others, TBB should consistently apply these principles and eligibility considerations:

Recommendation 12: TBB should be guided by the following principles as it works with governments and other actors to establish new labour mobility pathways:

Equitable access: Refugees and other forcibly displaced people seeking global work and labour mobility opportunities should have equitable access and be able to compete on a level playing field with applicants who are not living in displacement.

Protection: Refugees moving through labour mobility pathways should be protected against refoulement, discrimination and exploitation.

Autonomy and empowerment: Labour mobility puts displaced people in charge of decisions about where they want to live and work.

Additionality: Labour mobility opportunities should be additional and complementary to refugee resettlement.

Employer-led: Employers are the best judge of suitability for employment and should be responsible for sourcing talent.

Refugee-centered: Displaced people should be actively engaged in the design, monitoring and evaluation of skilled migration pilots to ensure their accessibility.

Recommendation 13: TBB should share its position on candidate eligibility for labour mobility with key stakeholders in order to help shape the broader policy debate about the role of labour mobility in complementing existing vulnerability-based resettlement programs.

Identify and overcome barriers

During the pilot phase TBB identified four broad categories of barriers which typically prevent refugees from accessing labour mobility pathways; (1) informational (2) policy, (3) operational and (4) financial barriers. In most cases TBB was able to overcome these barriers through strategic engagement with partner governments, providing finance mechanisms and other innovations, whereas in some cases barriers remain unresolved. To meet the scale potential of labour mobility as a solution for refugees TBB and partners will need to systematically break down these barriers:

Recommendation 14: TBB should explore working with embassies, UNHCR and other refugee-serving organizations to disseminate more and better-quality information about the labour mobility opportunities available to refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Recommendation 15: TBB should support more immigration advisory services to develop the capacity required to effectively serve refugees and other forcibly displaced candidates through labour mobility. TBB or other partners could also consider trialing in-house immigration legal expertise.

Recommendation 16: TBB should develop a displacement-based analysis tool for governments and other organizations to use in assessing barriers in skilled migration pathways and considering remedies to make skilled pathways more accessible to refugees and other forcibly displaced people. The tool should draw on lessons captured in this evaluation from the pilot phase as well as more expansive research in other jurisdictions.

Recommendation 17: TBB should work in collaboration with UNHCR and other key partners to advocate for governments to adjust their economic immigration programs to increase third country durable solutions and give refugees and other forcibly displaced people equitable access to these programs.

Building global momentum and partnerships

During the pilot phase TBB has contributed to a growing global consensus that employment pathways are a viable and desirable complementary solution for refugees and other forcibly displaced people, as encapsulated in the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration. In order to translate global momentum into practical action to facilitate refugee labour mobility at scale, it would need to engage partners to replicate or “graft” elements of the model onto their existing programs with refugees and/or employers. Evidence from the pilot and stakeholder feedback suggests there are a range of willing partners to adopt parts of TBB’s recruitment and mobility model, however they require resources and support:

Recommendation 18: TBB should explore establishing data-sharing partnerships with recruitment services, building on the experience with Refugee Talent, and considering the best technical options for ensuring refugee CV data is used in the most efficient and effective way possible to enable job matching.

Recommendation 19: When approaching new source and destination country partners TBB must at a minimum factor in how these partners will be funded in the early stages to adopt the model, and what ongoing support measures will be put in place to build the capacity and sustainable funding arrangements to maintain it over time. Wherever necessary TBB should work with partners to establish the financial mechanisms and funding sources they need to make the model work for them.

Recommendation 20: TBB should continue to work closely with UNHCR on candidate outreach and look to expand this collaboration into new refugee hosting countries. Future areas of partnership on outreach could extend to database collaboration to improve the skills-based data collection function of UNHCR.

Recommendation 21: TBB should continue to work with UNHCR on advocacy and government engagement where this is strategic. In particular, TBB should secure resources to support its

thematic leadership role on the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway, in close collaboration with UNHCR.

Recommendation 22: TBB should also apply the lessons learned from engagement with UNHCR when approaching other prospective multilateral partners, particularly the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Recommendation 23: TBB should develop and seek resources to support a partnerships strategy for its next scaling phase, including seed funding to support new partners to adapt parts of TBB's model into their existing programming.

Recommendation 24: TBB should use this evaluation as a starting point to produce a series of knowledge products to assist partners to replicate parts of TBB's recruitment and mobility model into their existing programs or service offerings.

Recommendation 25: TBB should also seek resources to support capacity building and training of partners at source and destination ends to replicate the recruitment and labour mobility model.

Enhancing benefits for candidates

TBB's pilot has had a demonstrably positive impact on candidates who have benefited from it, most profoundly those candidates who secured jobs and have moved with their families to Australia, Canada and the UK. Candidates who have not yet secured a migration solution through the program have also benefited, including through increased motivation and access to learning opportunities and support. A minority of candidates have expressed frustration that the program has not resulted in solutions to their displacement yet, underlining the importance of TBB managing candidate expectations. There are a number of strategies unearthed by the evaluation that could enhance the benefits of this program for candidates:

Recommendation 26: TBB should automate referral of all Talent Catalog registrants who list some English-speaking proficiency to reputable English language services and resources where they can hone their skills. TBB should also consider a motivational approach, whereby registrants who indicate their skills are at a beginner or intermediate level are automatically advised of the steps they need to take before they will be eligible for international roles in English-speaking countries.

Recommendation 27: TBB should seek additional resources and partnerships with reputable English language service providers to provide candidates facing financial hardship or other barriers with the means to access these services. TBB should prioritize those with the highest chances of success in securing employment and/or meeting visa requirements for these services.

Recommendation 28: TBB should continue to explore opportunities to increase candidate access to mock interview practice by working in collaboration with corporate partners like Accenture.

Recommendation 29: TBB should support the creation of a TBB Alumni Advisory Group, including ensuring the group has formal authority to input into TBB's decision-making processes. TBB should secure resources to support the functioning of this group and consider ways to engage the group in formally representing TBB in international forums such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR).

Researching the wider impacts of refugee labour mobility

While the evaluation found labour mobility clearly benefits refugees and their families as well as participating employers, there are also a range of secondary beneficiaries from this model that deserve further investigation. These include the flow on impacts of remittance flows back to refugee hosting countries, positive economic impacts in destination countries (in the form of increased spending, taxation and skills) as well as potential positive impacts for post-conflict societies. TBB is collecting data about all of these impacts which warrant scholarly attention.

Recommendation 30: TBB should explore and enter into partnerships with research institutions to expand the knowledge base about the practical impact and future potential of labour mobility as a complementary pathway for refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Background

Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) is the first organization in the world dedicated to supporting international labour mobility of refugees and other forcibly displaced people. The organization's vision is a world where forcibly displaced people have equitable access to labour mobility and can use their skills and talents to move to secure futures.

American attorneys, Mary Louise and Bruce Cohen, began exploring labour mobility as a solution for skilled refugees as 2014 Fellows with the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative. In 2015, the Cohens travelled to Beirut to meet with refugees, advocacy organizations and UN agencies, and returned convinced that the time was right to test this solution. They were strongly encouraged to embark on the ambitious project by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), who were at that time exploring ways to open up third country refugee solutions in light of the massive increase in global displacement. At about the same time, John Cameron, a successful tech entrepreneur and philanthropist, was organizing a taskforce of Australian experts to explore this same opportunity.

When they learned about each other, Mary Louise, Bruce and John came together to create Talent Beyond Boundaries as a global not-for-profit organization to help refugees transcend displacement by tapping into international employment and skilled migration opportunities.

TBB works with governments, policy makers and employers to overcome the barriers that often prevent refugees from accessing skilled migration pathways. TBB's goal is to complement existing humanitarian pathways, providing refugees with an additional safe and legal option to overcome displacement at scale.

The pilot phase

TBB's pilot phase ran from 2016 to 2019. Initial start-up funding was provided by philanthropy as well as an innovation grant from the Bureau of Populations, Refugees and Migration at the US State Department. The size and geographic scope of the pilot was designed in concert with the State Department.

During this period TBB sought to learn through testing and iteration how to create a scalable model of labour mobility for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. This involved proving the concept of labour mobility through demonstration, identifying the barriers that would need to be overcome in order to scale the solution, and proving through demonstration that these barriers could be overcome.

Through the pilot phase TBB has developed a remote recruitment and mobility model. The model brings together the two strands of supply (talented refugees and other forcibly displaced people) and demand (employers) and facilitates access of both parties to regular migration channels in order to secure a win-win: a new talented employee for an employer; and a durable solution for the refugee and their family. TBB now intends to bring this solution to scale by growing its own operations globally and by supporting other interested organizations to graft the model onto their existing programs.

Approach and methodology

This is an impact evaluation examining TBB's labour mobility pilot phase between 2016 and 2019. It is also an assessment of TBB's model based on evidence collected thus far. The evaluation report makes a number of recommendations building on these conclusions and lessons to guide TBB's scale strategy.

Evaluation team

This evaluation was led by a small team of staff based across TBB's global operations. TBB made a deliberate decision to conduct the evaluation in-house given the specialist skills and expertise of the team and perceived value of approaching this project as a collective learning opportunity at a critical juncture in our journey to scale. Aspects of TBB's pilot phase have previously been externally evaluated,¹ and findings from these external evaluations have been incorporated into

¹ Margaret Piper AM, Talent Beyond Boundaries Australia Pilot Evaluation, Summary Report, 27 November 2019, available from: <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/talent-catalog>; and IRCC evaluation of the Economic Mobility Pathways Project in Canada, forthcoming.

this more expansive evaluation. In order to preserve the objectivity of the evaluation findings the team has worked with external advisors to validate results wherever possible. Almost all key informant interviews were conducted by a team member who did not have a personal relationship with the interviewee in order to promote frank and honest responses.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation set out to answer the following key questions:

1. Were TBB's pilot phase objectives achieved?
2. Who were the pilot beneficiaries and what impact (positive and/or negative) did the program have on them?

Data collection

The evaluation draws on analysis of monitoring data collected by TBB since 2016 in accordance with the organization's monitoring, evaluation and learning process framework, which ensures impact and performance data is systematically collected and used to inform strategy, policy and program design (see Appendix 1). A significant amount of new qualitative and quantitative data was also collected to fill gaps in TBB's knowledge, including:

- **Candidate survey:** A survey of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon involved in TBB's program. The survey was sent out to 750 beneficiaries in May 2020, and 259 completed the survey, (response rate of 35%). Beneficiaries consulted included those who have received access to job readiness resources through TBB; as well as candidates who TBB has directly engaged with in relation to prospective recruitment opportunities.
- **Employer survey:** A survey of business leaders, recruitment staff and hiring managers about their experiences with TBB's program. This included employers who have recruited refugees through the program, those who were unable to find a suitable candidate and those who are in the process of recruiting but have not yet identified a successful candidate. The survey was sent out to 93 employer contacts in Australia, Canada and the UK in April 2020 and 38 people across 27 businesses responded (response rate of 41%).

- **Alumni focus groups:** 2 video focus groups with 11 TBB alumni who have secured jobs in Australia, Canada and UK during the pilot phase;
- **Key informant interviews:** 25 key stakeholders were interviewed about their observations of the program impact (list of interviewees and their biographies in Appendix 2). All key informants had deep knowledge of TBB and labour mobility. Interviewees represent a diverse range of perspectives, geographic locations and interactions with TBB.

Data analysis

The evaluation team divided up the data analysis process into 9 discrete analytical exercises which form the basis of this evaluation report:

1. **Coding of key informant interviews** to identify and analyze common themes.
2. **Employer demand analysis** - assessing all quantitative and qualitative data gathered by TBB and publicly available skills shortage data to draw conclusions regarding the level of employer demand for international recruitment of refugee talent.
3. **Talent supply data analysis** - analyzing all data gathered by TBB from candidates and employers to draw conclusions about the availability of suitable talent in refugee populations to support the model.
4. **Case studies to demonstrate proof of concept** - drawing on analysis of impact and lessons learned in Australia and Canada pilots.
5. **Barriers to mobility analysis** - examining data pointing to barriers displaced people face in accessing labour mobility solutions (informational barriers, policy barriers, operational barriers and financial barriers) and solutions proposed or trialed during the pilot phase.
6. **Beneficiary analysis** - examining data gathered from all respondents reported to have benefited from the program in some way (candidates, employers, those who have immigrated through the program as well as secondary beneficiaries) and assessing evidence of impact (both positive and negative) on them.
7. **Cost analysis** - analyzing the financial costs and benefits of the program to gain insights into the financial sustainability of the model

8. **A literature review** of TBB publications and publicly available reporting and research relating to TBB's contribution to global refugee system normative developments.
9. **Historical and contextual reflection** from TBB staff and volunteers involved at early stages of TBB's program to assess how the pilot unfolded and changes in TBB thinking.

Final report

A report of draft analysis and findings was shared with a range of key internal and external advisors to review and provide feedback on the accuracy, reliability and credibility of results. Feedback from the external reviewers was incorporated into the final draft.

Section 1: Results against objectives

TBB's objectives during the 2016 and 2019 pilot phase are articulated in a number of key planning documents and grant applications agreed during this time (see Appendix 3). In order to define the scope of this evaluation, these key documents were reviewed and the objectives condensed as follows:

1. Demonstrate the viability of a labour mobility solution for refugees by testing preconditions and establishing baseline data and knowledge for the international community, including answering the following core questions:
 - Talent supply: Do refugees have internationally in-demand skills?
 - Employer demand: Are there international employers willing to hire refugees from abroad?
 - Proof of concept: Can this labour mobility solution work in practice?
2. Identify and document barriers preventing refugees and other forcibly displaced people from accessing international labour mobility opportunities and identify solutions to overcome these barriers.

3. Contribute to creating a global consensus that labour mobility is a viable and desirable complementary solution for refugees and other forcibly displaced people, in order to create the enabling environment required for scaling the solution.
4. Identify and begin galvanizing other actors to support, replicate and build on TBB's work to help create a scalable labour mobility solution to displacement.

Objective 1: Demonstrate viability of labour mobility

In 2016 TBB set out to demonstrate the viability of a labour mobility solution for refugees by testing preconditions and establishing baseline data and knowledge for the international community. This action-oriented and applied learning approach varied fundamentally from preexisting explorations of labour mobility as a solution for refugees, which were much more theoretical.

In 2016 TBB began testing labour mobility by opening up offices in Jordan and Lebanon to assess the talent supply among refugees and other forcibly displaced individuals there. By 2017 TBB had established a presence in Australia and Canada and begun corporate outreach to test employer demand. By 2018, TBB had facilitated the first ten international job offers for displaced candidates. In 2019 TBB also began testing employer demand in the UK. Candidates began moving through TBB's program from Jordan and Lebanon to the three destination countries in 2019.

In November 2019 the TBB team held a global reflection with staff, volunteers and partner organization Refugee Talent to consider whether the talent supply, employer demand and proof of concept had been sufficiently established to scale TBB's program. Participants agreed the preconditions had been established through the pilot phase, whilst acknowledging a plethora of challenges encountered along the journey towards proof of concept.² This section will use the 2019 reflection as a starting point to build out an evidence-based picture of what TBB has learned about the viability of labour mobility as a complementary solution to displacement.

² TBB Global Reflection Outcome Report, 23 December 2019. Internal document, available on request.

Talent supply

Your calling me into this interview today made me feel like I'm a normal human being.

Nurse living as a refugee in Kenya, interview with TBB³

Being a refugee is a circumstance, it is not a person. There are many, many highly skilled people who for want of circumstances in their country could have been employer-sponsored migrants.

Cath Scarth, AMES Australia⁴

TBB's pilot phase sought to answer the question: are there enough refugees with internationally in-demand skills to make a labour mobility solution work? In the early stages of the pilot TBB consulted with dozens of existing organizations, including UNHCR and other local and international organizations based in Jordan and Lebanon, who confirmed anecdotally there were refugees with high levels of education and work experience. None of these organizations were systematically capturing detailed information about work histories and skills. Many individuals and groups consulted suggested if refugees did have internationally employable skills, these were isolated instances which would not lend themselves to a scalable solution.

TBB considered whether a partnership with an existing job-board or partner may be possible (e.g. LinkedIn, Dubarah, Monster.com) and engaged these groups in early discussions, but determined that a unique tool was needed given the sensitivity of refugees' data, the need to manage careful messaging around the nature of TBB's pilot project, and TBB's need to be able to sort, search, and manipulate the data for programmatic use precluded that possibility at this juncture.⁵

³ Nurse living displaced in Kenya, speaking to TBB staff in Nairobi, August 2018.

⁴ Key informant interview with Cath Scarth, AMES Australia, 23 April 2020.

⁵ Historical reflection from team involved in initial 2016 consultations.

Talent Catalog

Everybody likes to say refugees have skills, but it's very hard to actually get that information. To show it, to demonstrate it to others. Even though it's a narrative we all know, it's about proving it.

Michael Casasola, UNHCR Canada⁶

In 2016, TBB worked with Nazar Poladian, a product manager and Syrian refugee who had been resettled from Lebanon to Toronto, to build a world-first digital “Talent Catalog” of refugee talent. The Talent Catalog is a database (available in Arabic and English) to capture the detailed work experience, education and skills of refugees and others in refugee-like situations. For TBB, the Talent Catalog was a way of demonstrating the depth and breadth of talent available in refugee communities and providing this data to interested employers and governments. For registrants, the Talent Catalog offered a chance to be put forward by TBB to an employer abroad, and it automatically generated a downloadable CV.

Once the Talent Catalog was launched, TBB worked with a range of partners including UNHCR and several community based organizations and International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) to develop appropriate messaging and conduct outreach within refugee communities in Jordan and Lebanon and encourage candidates to register.⁷ Through outreach TBB communicated to participating refugees that TBB was testing the concept of labour mobility and that although the likelihood that participating refugees would obtain a job was very low, building a database of refugee skills was a critical starting point. TBB explained that the Talent Catalog was a practical tool for identifying job matches for a small number of people, as well as an advocacy tool to governments.⁸ Registrants were advised that the Talent Catalog is secure, and TBB would not

⁶ Key informant interview with Veronica Wilson, Roots Immigration Law. 29 April 2020.

⁷ For a full list of partners involved in outreach to build the Talent Catalog: TBB, Mapping Refugee Skills and Employability. September 2017. Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBB-Data-and-Analysis-Report-September-2017.pdf>

⁸ Original communications to candidates about signing up to the Talent Catalog asked them to “Help prove that people who are displaced by conflict can and should be hired for global jobs by sharing information about your skills and experience in this talent catalog. If you create a profile on the Talent Catalog, you will be able to download a CV.” Text provided by staff involved in 2016 pilot phase.

share their contact information with any third parties without their permission. With permission, TBB would approach interested employers abroad about their suitability for roles.

By June 2017 the Talent Catalog had 10,000 registrants. At this point TBB reduced proactive outreach significantly and focused more resources on outreach to employers. Instead, TBB has and continues to mainly promote the Talent Catalog through Facebook posts encouraging candidates to register if they fit the profile of a particular job opportunity being advertised (TBB's Facebook page has 13,638 followers).⁹ Registrants have continued to organically sign up. TBB registrants surveyed for this evaluation advise that they predominantly heard about TBB through social media (54%) - as well as word of mouth (27%), and in-person information sessions facilitated by partner organizations including UNHCR (12%).¹⁰ Such a high percentage of outreach coming from social media underscores the importance of TBB investing in more digital communications resources.

There are now 18,800 registrants on the Talent Catalog, representing more than 150 occupations.¹¹ Out of this sample, 13,365 registrants have provided sufficient data in their profiles to be considered for a particular job opportunity (eg. they have listed their profession and enough quality supporting information to turn up in a job search). The remaining registrants have not provided enough information on their profiles to enable TBB to analyze their skill profile.

Recommendation 1: TBB should increase investment in social media and digital communications to drive candidate registrations on the Talent Catalog.

Demographic profiles on the Talent Catalog

Anyone who looks at this talent pool can see how many skilled people are out there.

Veronica Wilson, Roots Immigration Law¹²

⁹ This is as of 14 May 2020, see: <https://www.facebook.com/TalentBeyondBoundaries>

¹⁰ Results from TBB candidate feedback survey, May 2020.

¹¹ As at 23 May 2020. The number of registrants was over 20,000 in December 2019 but after TBB decided to rewrite the Talent Catalog database and remove duplicate and incomplete entries this number has reduced.

¹² Key informant interview with Veronica Wilson, Roots Immigration Law. 29 April 2020.

The Talent Catalog is a rich database of information supplied by refugees and other forcibly displaced people about their skills, qualifications and competencies.

Nationalities: Eighty-three percent of the registrants on the Talent Catalog are Syrian, reflecting the significant proportion of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. The next most common nationalities are Palestinians (6%) followed by Iraqis (3%). There are also 295 Yemenis and 270 Sudanese. There are 33 stateless people registered.

Locations: While TBB has only promoted the Talent Catalog in Jordan and Lebanon, and registrants are advised TBB only works with candidates currently based in Jordan and Lebanon, the database is online and available to anyone in need of international protection to register, including refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons. Most of the registrants are based in Jordan and Lebanon, but a surprising number - over 5,326 registrants - have signed up organically from other countries, including 1,568 candidates in Syria, 1,386 candidates in Turkey and 496 candidates in Egypt. TBB is not currently working in these countries. The fact that such a large proportion of the Talent Catalog registrants are outside Jordan and Lebanon indicates the level of interest from candidates to access this solution and the potential scope for TBB to expand into other countries, for example Turkey.

Recommendation 2: TBB should consider its capacity to expand support to displaced candidates living displaced outside Jordan and Lebanon.

Education: Over a third of the registrants on the Talent Catalog have completed a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree. In addition, approximately 2,000 registrants (13%) advised TBB they had incomplete degrees, particularly Syrian men who deliberately did not complete their studies in order to avoid military service conscription.

Occupations: There are over 150 occupations represented on the Talent Catalog. There is significant overlap between the self-reported skills on the Talent Catalog and talent gaps around the world. For example, 7 of the top 10 occupations indicated in the Talent Catalog are

professions that are in-demand globally, according to Manpower’s global 2019 Talent Shortage Survey (see table below).¹³

Top 10 occupations indicated in the Talent Catalog *Professions in-demand globally according to ManPower data highlighted in blue		
#	Occupation	# of Registrants on TC
1	Skilled Industrial & Construction Tradesperson	2399
2	Educator (Teacher, Professor)	1405
3	Engineer (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Electronic, Petroleum, Biomedical, Chemical, Other)	1355
4	Information Technology Professional	934
5	Healthcare Professional (Pharmacists, Nurses, Medical Doctors, Dentists, Medical Assistants, Physical Therapists, Dentistry Professionals, Nutritionists, Other)	920
6	Business Professional (Business owner, HR professional, Administrative professional)	861
7	Sales & Marketing Professional	742
8	Accountant / Finance Professional	668
9	Cook or Baker	665
10	Driving and logistics	330

English language abilities: Eighty-four percent of registrants indicate they have an intermediate level or higher in English. A large number of these candidates, however, do not have the required English level to meet the strict English testing requirements for economic immigration to Australia, Canada or the UK (see policy barriers section below).¹⁴

¹³ Manpower Group, The Talent Shortage. 2019. Available from: <https://go.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage>

¹⁴ Eg. the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) testing requirement or equivalent

Gender: Eighty-four percent of the Talent Catalog registrants are men and 15% are women. One percent have not specified their gender.¹⁵ This reflects a range of factors that constrain the ability of refugee women in Jordan and Lebanon to seek work internationally, including discrimination and cultural factors such as women’s caring responsibilities. The proportion of women on the Talent Catalog is also roughly consistent with the labour force participation of women in Syria, according to UN Women.¹⁶

Interestingly there is a higher rate of women graduates in higher education than men registered on the Talent Catalog, with 40% of women having Bachelor’s degrees and 8% having Master’s degrees (29% and 4.5% respectively for men). One possible reason for this is the fact that women do not have the risk of military service following completion of their degrees and were not forced from their home country quite as abruptly as a result (a major issue for Syrian men).

Top occupations of women on the Talent Catalog include teachers and professors (460); healthcare professionals (273); administrative assistants (167); engineers (114); and social workers and humanitarian professionals (115). While healthcare and engineering are in high demand internationally, teaching is a complex area for labour mobility given regulatory requirements, and assistant and social work roles tend to be less in-demand internationally than male-dominated occupations like skilled trades.

TBB has policy of putting forward female candidates for any open role wherever possible. This is, however, sometimes not possible due to the current imbalance on the Talent Catalog.

Recommendation 3: TBB should map women's occupations in the Talent Catalog against in-demand jobs in destination countries to conduct targeted employer outreach. TBB should also set a target for increasing the number of women on the Talent Catalog and conduct targeted social media outreach and women-only information sessions led by female facilitators to meet this goal.

¹⁵ Talent Catalog analytics data extracted 15 May 2020. Note - 245 respondents were undefined.

¹⁶ UN Women, Spring Forward for Women <https://spring-forward.unwomen.org/en/countries/syria>

Limitations of the Talent Catalog

The Talent Catalog data is a reflection of a limited outreach effort in refugee populations across two countries - Lebanon and Jordan. Therefore, the data represents a small - yet promising - sampling of skills in the global refugee population. TBB has recently made improvements to the Talent Catalog to enable more sophisticated search capability and an improved CV generation tool. TBB will need to continue to make process improvements to the Talent Catalog to continue to serve the labour mobility model as it scales.

Validating skills

The Talent Catalog enables candidates to create their own searchable skills profile. The data is therefore self-reported and not immediately verified, as is the case with other digital skills platforms including LinkedIn. Some individuals within UNHCR have raised questions about the validity of the Talent Catalog data given this.¹⁷ While there are clearly limitations to self-reported data, TBB has not seen any major divergences in skills reported which would put the Talent Catalog's credibility into question. In contrast, there appears to be a high level of alignment between completed profiles and credible evidence of experience and qualifications. For example, 84% of candidates requested by TBB to provide evidence of their degrees were able to provide some form of documentation.¹⁸

The Talent Catalog allows TBB to search profiles listing certain professions, English language abilities and qualification levels, and searches can be further refined using keywords to match niche skills that align with particular job opportunities. Shortlisted candidates then go through an initial screening process with TBB to ensure they are credible and likely eligible for a visa pathway before being put forward to an employer. Throughout the pilot period TBB has assessed over 500 candidate profiles in this way and found in the vast majority of cases self-reported skill profiles are credible and accurate.¹⁹ Importantly though, the ultimate vetting or verification of the skills of candidates is done by the employer, not by TBB or the Talent Catalog.

¹⁷ Noted by Anna Gekht and David Manicom in key informant interviews for this evaluation.

¹⁸ Analysis of 204 intakes completed in Jordan and Lebanon; assessed by Grayson Wormser.

¹⁹ Anecdotal evidence from TBB Lebanon and Jordan country teams provided by TBB's Middle East Director.

Employer perspectives on quality of candidates

Just over 50% of the 38 employer representatives for this evaluation felt that the candidates provided by TBB “exceeded their expectations” and another 31% felt the candidates “met their expectations” in terms of skills and qualifications.²⁰ Only two respondents felt the candidates were below or far below their expectations and three respondents were unsure. Examples of feedback from employers:

All potential candidates were highly qualified and experienced nurses.

Strong responses and achieved our Codility coding tests²¹ that all applicants to our organization must complete.

66% of the candidates I would have hired.²²

Out of the 15 employers surveyed who have hired candidates through TBB’s program, eight hired candidates at their skill level with “full competency for the job”. Four employers hired candidates below their skill level on a “pathway” to the higher skill level once they have met licensing/ registration required to work in the field (eg. nurses, lawyer, etc). Another three employers employed candidates below their skill level so they would have time to adjust before needing to meet full job requirements.

Estimating scale of talent

Recognizing that the Talent Catalog is descriptive of a small subset of the refugee population and not predictive, in 2019 TBB conducted a more expansive analysis of the potential extent of talent in refugee populations around the world. This analysis was prepared ahead of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 in a report entitled *The Promise of Labour Mobility: How skills can be a passport out of displacement for refugees.*²³

²⁰ TBB Employer feedback survey, May 2020

²¹ Refers to coding tests to validate skills of computer programmers

²² Respondents to the TBB Employer feedback survey. May 2020.

²³ TBB, *The Promise of Labour Mobility: How skills can be a passport out of displacement for refugees.* December 2019. Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBBGRFReport2019.pdf>

Skills data is not systematically gathered by UNHCR, and there is no direct information on how many refugees globally have skills that would qualify them for an economic visa. As a proxy measure, TBB considered education rates among refugee populations. At the time of this analysis there were reportedly 12.7 million refugees of working age.²⁴ TBB found that applying a conservative rate of postsecondary education in the 10 leading refugee producing nations, yields more than 600,000 potential candidates eligible for a labour mobility solution, in addition to their family members. This total did not include any projection from the 4.5 million people displaced from Venezuela, where nearly 40% of the population over 25 has some tertiary education. It also did not include refugees who may be eligible for labour mobility into lower skilled sectors of the economy which do not require tertiary education.²⁵

The above estimates, combined with empirical evidence from TBB's Talent Catalog and employer feedback, gives TBB a high degree of confidence that the talent supply is sufficient in refugee communities around the world to support a large-scale labour mobility solution to displacement.

Employer demand

Establishing employer demand is fundamental to any successful labour mobility initiative. TBB determined at the outset of the pilot phase that without employer demand for refugees/displaced workers, this model would fail.

Evidence of skills shortages

Global skill shortages are well documented, and companies are regularly recruiting from abroad to fill these shortages.²⁶ There is also evidence the talent shortage gap is widening. For example, 54%

²⁴ There are 25.9 million refugees. See UNHCR Figures at a glance. Approximately 48% of refugees are children (12.4 million) and 3% are over the age of 60 (777,000 people). That leaves 12.7 million working age people. See UNHCR Trends in Forced Displacement 2018, UNHCR population statistics, Data, Demographics.

²⁵ TBB, *The Promise of Labour Mobility: How skills can be a passport out of displacement for refugees*. December 2019. Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBBGRFReport2019.pdf>

²⁶ Korn Ferry Institute, *Future of Work*, p. 4. Available from: <https://www.kornferry.com/challenges/future-of-work>; ManpowerGroup, *Solving the Talent Shortage*, 2018. Available from: [https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/TalentShortage%202018%20\(Global\)%20Assets/PDFs/MG_TalentShortage2018_lo%206_25_18_FINAL.pdf](https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/TalentShortage%202018%20(Global)%20Assets/PDFs/MG_TalentShortage2018_lo%206_25_18_FINAL.pdf)

of employers across 44 countries in 2020 report they struggle to find the talent they need, almost double what it was a decade ago.²⁷ In Canada and Australia 48 and 41% of employers respectively now have difficulty filling roles, with both countries struggling the most to attract workers in skilled trades.²⁸ Fifty-one percent of large firms in the UK (with employees above 250 workers) report hiring struggles.²⁹ These results point to strong incentives for businesses to attract talent from sources outside their local market. Skills shortages are also linked to demographic challenges such as ageing populations and urbanization, and the destination countries where TBB works maintain large immigration systems as an essential tool for economic and population growth.

According to TBB research, approximately two million economic visas or permits are issued each year in the 46 countries where UNHCR and its partners currently resettle refugees (countries that are committed to welcoming refugees and recognising their rights).³⁰ This shows the potential scale of impact if just a fraction of these visas are taken up by refugees. The scale is even greater when taking into consideration the number of migrants to non-resettlement countries. In 2017 alone there were 164 million labour migrants around the world.³¹

Evidence of demand in practice

At first we had to ask businesses to do something that hadn't been done before... we were asking people to do something that didn't exist, but believe in us! And we did, we convinced them to trust us. We all believed that we could make it happen.

Anna Robson, Refugee Talent³²

²⁷ ManpowerGroup, Talent Shortage 2020: Closing the skills gap, 2020. Available from: https://go.manpowergroup.com/hubfs/MPG_WhatWorkersWant_2020.pdf?hsLang=en

²⁸ ManpowerGroup, In demand roles by country, 2020. Available from: https://go.manpowergroup.com/talent-shortage?_hstc=239614751.e4d937578c3d7cce97b5f421a9be6d96.1589585233195.1589585233195.1589585233195.1&_hssc=239614751.1.1589585233195&_hsfp=1207677744

²⁹ ManpowerGroup, UK Talent Shortages Hit Twelve-Year High as Employers Struggle to Keep Up with Candidate Demands, 2020. Available from: <https://www.manpowergroup.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UK-Talent-Shortages-Hit-Twelve-Year-High-as-Employers-Struggle-to-Keep-Up-with-Candidate-Demands-WWW.pdf>

³⁰ TBB, *The Promise of Labour Mobility*, as above, p. 27.

³¹ Migration Data Portal, <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration>

³² Key informant interview with Anna Robson, Co-Founder and CEO of Refugee Talent. 22 April 2020.

While the above evidence shows empirically there is demand for international workers to fill employers' skill gaps, and sound theoretical logic that employers are open to refugees filling these gaps, this does not prove that employers would deliberately search for talent in refugee and displaced populations to meet this demand.³³ TBB decided early on to answer this question by conducting a practical trial in which employers would hire TBB candidates from Jordan and Lebanon.

TBB began outreach to employers in 2017. In Australia, TBB worked with its partner Refugee Talent. In Canada, TBB's earliest allies were the Construction Foundation of British Columbia and the Information and Communications Technology Council. By 2018, TBB started working with refugee-led organization, Jumpstart, which helped provide TBB leads and introductions in Canada. These competent and savvy local organizations with close business links and - in the case of Refugee Talent and Jumpstart - leaders with lived refugee experience, were valuable to the success of TBB's engagement with employers in Australia and Canada.

The first business to seriously pursue a recruitment process was Iress, a global financial software company headquartered in Australia. Iress hired the first TBB candidate - as Syrian software engineer - on 26 June 2017.³⁴ Since then, a total of 26 employers have made offers of employment to TBB's candidates in Australia, Canada and the UK, including 8 employers who have made offers to more than one candidate (ranging from 2 to 9 job offers per employer).³⁵ This has occurred in the form of "repeat hires" (after a successful hire, initiating another recruitment round) as well as "simultaneous hires" (making several offers at the same time to TBB candidates).

Employer motivations

Our labour shortages are critical and although we will always be hiring local, there are currently not enough qualified candidates now or in the foreseeable future to

³³ Extensive research has been done about employer willingness to hire refugees who are already "in-country". Eg. Tent, Refugee as Employees: Good Retention, Strong Recruitment. May 2018. Available from: https://www.tent.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/TENT_FPI-Refugees-as-Employees-Report.pdf

³⁴ TBB Recruitment Cycle Timing monitoring record, cited 1 May 2020.

³⁵ TBB monitoring protocol, cited 1 May 2020.

fill the positions we have open. We are working on parallel paths, local and global, to secure more qualified candidates.

Lisa M Smith, CEO, Glen Haven Manor³⁶

Being able to provide talented individuals like Nabil with the opportunity to move beyond circumstances that are out of their control is something that is very important to us here.

Mohamad Fakh, Paramount Fine Foods³⁷

As part of this evaluation TBB has surveyed 38 employer representatives from 27 businesses, including a mix of C-suite, hiring manager and HR/recruitment individuals.³⁸ Respondents to the survey were asked to cite all their motivations for hiring candidates through TBB's program. As outlined in Figure 1 below, the most common motivation highlighted was to "fill skills shortages that cannot be filled locally" (63% of employers). The next most commonly cited reason was to "fulfill corporate social responsibility and purpose goals" (47%), followed closely by "creating a talent pipeline to meet future skills needs" (44%) and "meeting diversity and inclusion goals" (34%). These answers indicate there is a clear business case driving employer participation in the program - rather than the program being seen as purely humanitarian. This is an important finding, given demand is more likely to scale where the business case for employer participation is clear.

Figure 1: Primary reasons for considering hiring refugees from abroad through Talent Beyond Boundaries

³⁶The Advocate, Glen Haven Committed to Parallel Paths of hiring local and global. February 2020. Available from: <https://pictouadvocate.com/2020/02/20/glen-haven-committed-to-parallel-paths-of-hiring-local-and-global/>

³⁷ UNHCR, Syrian chef savours new role in Paramount kitchen. September 2019. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.ca/news/syrian-chef-savours-new-role-paramount-kitchen>

³⁸ Surveyed businesses: EY, KPMG, Accenture, RBC, Clearpath Robotics, Cority, Ice River Springs, John Holland, Bonfire Interactive (respondent is now with Plot Technologies), Sonova, Maurice Blackburn, West Gate Tunnel Project, Minderoo, Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre, Microsoft, Propeller Aero, Cabrini Health, Closing the Gap Healthcare, Aligent Consulting, Albury Wodonga Health, VHA Home HealthCare, Iress, Davert Tools Inc, Heathcote Health as well as three undisclosed companies.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Filling skills shortage that cannot be filled locally	63%	24
Fulfilling corporate social responsibility and purpose goals	47%	18
Creating a talent pipeline to meet future skills needs	45%	17
Meeting diversity and inclusion goals	34%	13
A personal passion of yours	29%	11
Advancing regional economic development	13%	5
Other (please specify)	8%	3
Total Respondents: 38		

Ninety-seven percent of employers surveyed reported that they believe people who have refugee experiences can add “unique value” in their workplace. In addition to acknowledging the skills refugees possess, many employers also highlighted the resilience of people who have experienced displacement as an advantage. For example, one respondent explained: “Refugees’ different and often challenging life experience develops skills and character that complement their technical skills”. Another said: “Beyond the skillset/core competencies I feel refugees can bring diversity of thought, grit, tenacity, and perspective to the team”.

Ninety-three percent of employers surveyed said they were either “extremely likely” or “very likely” to recommend TBB’s program to other employers, with only 7% saying they were “somewhat likely” and no employers responded that they wouldn’t recommend the program. This indicates employer participation in the program is likely to fuel growth in employer demand for hiring in this way (including through repeat hiring as well as employer recommendations to other employers). Indeed, a number of participating businesses are actively promoting TBB hiring through industry media,³⁹ as well as building industry recruitment initiatives (see The Next Ten box below).

Case study 1: Bonfire and the “The Next Ten”

One of the first TBB hiring partners in Canada is procurement software firm and local startup Bonfire. The Bonfire team is leading an initiative to hire “The Next Ten” tech candidates from

³⁹ Andrew Walsh, Iress CEO, “Tackling skills shortages by changing lives”, *Australian Banking and Finance*, March 2020. Available from:

<https://www.rfigroup.com/australian-banking-and-finance/news/tackling-skills-shortages-changing-lives>

within refugee populations and has brought on board the industry group Communitech as a collaborator. Communitech is a public-private organization based in Waterloo Region with the mission to help technology companies “start, grow and succeed.” The ultimate vision of local partners is to see Waterloo Region become the world’s capital for hiring displaced tech talent. Bonfire and Communitech are responsible for outreach and engagement with tech companies, and TBB works with newly secured partners towards recruitment, mobility and settlement.

By the end of 2019, four companies including Bonfire were hiring partners in “The Next Ten” initiative, and talks were ongoing with several others.

Recruitment challenges in the tech industry may include inability to identify candidates for certain roles that require leading-edge knowledge or experience, as refugee candidates may be in more generalist tech roles in host countries to make a living; and tech companies are typically project-driven and many require short hiring timelines that aren’t compatible with processing timelines in Canada’s permanent immigration pathways.

It is anticipated that the community of willing employers will be restricted to medium-sized and fast-growing companies that can plan for longer timelines. Waterloo Region as a whole is an attractive destination for newcomers because of its urban character, relatively affordable cost of living compared to cities like Toronto, and its growing diversity. Refugee newcomers will have access to robust settlement services in this community and, entering the tech sector, higher incomes.

Testing end-to-end remote recruitment

Over the course of the pilot phase TBB worked with participating businesses to develop and iterate a complete end-to-end recruitment process enabling candidates on the Talent Catalog to access international employment opportunities. The process consists of four key stages:

1. **Pitching/corporate outreach** (a sales process whereby TBB explains the program to an employer and secures their commitment to initiate a recruitment process)
2. **Candidate selection/CV review** (where TBB provides a list of eligible candidates and employer shortlists from a list of CVs and/or one-way videos)
3. **Interview/skills validation** (where TBB facilitates the requirements of the employer and the employer selects the candidate/s they would like to hire)
4. **Job offer/acceptance** (where the employer issues the job offer, TBB conducts informed decision making with the candidate so they fully understand the offer, and candidate accepts (or rejects) the offer).

Recruitment process

At any stage in the recruitment process employers may decide not to proceed to the next stage. In fact, TBB actively encourages employers only to proceed through the recruitment process if they cannot fill roles locally, and are certain they have found the right candidate. This is because the TBB team believes the credibility and scalability of the model depends on employers hiring on merit and to fill skill gaps. In this way, TBB's approach mirrors a company's typical recruitment process.



Pitching to employers

TBB has engaged with 272 employers during the pilot period at the pitching/corporate outreach stage.⁴⁰ In order to reach out to employers TBB has utilised personal connections of its own team, as well as engaging a wide range of referring partners include organizations like Refugee Talent (Australia), Jumpstart (Canada), the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network (Pictou County, Canada) and the City of Greater Bendigo (regional Victoria, Australia).

Employers that reach candidate selection stage

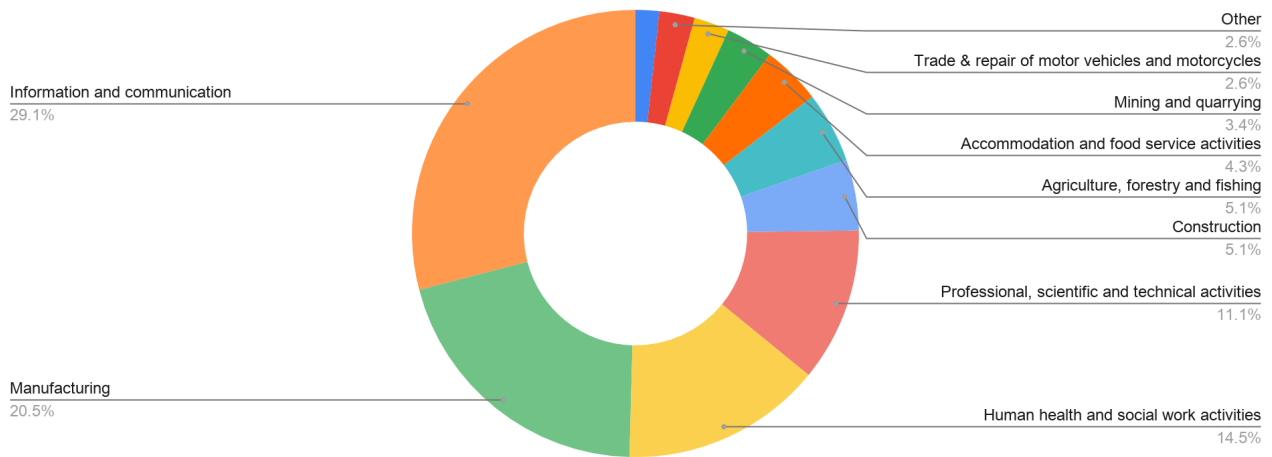
Of these employers, 117 have ended up moving to the candidate selection stage - meaning they have expressed an interest in the program, provided TBB with a job description they would like filled, and received CVs of prospective candidates identified by TBB who meet the job description. This translates to a conversion rate of 43% - eg. for every 100 employers presented with the opportunity to participate, 43 will take action to review candidates.⁴¹ This is a strong indicator of demand, particularly given the nascent stage of TBB's program during the pilot phase. TBB should be able to significantly improve this conversion rate as the program becomes more established.

⁴⁰ TBB Salesforce data, *Employer by stage report*. 1 May 2020

⁴¹ Based on analysis of TBB Salesforce data and Job Opportunity Intake forms created by TBB team members and TBB referring partners, namely RefugeeTalent. For this analysis, we codified data points that had been collected qualitatively or inconsistently to enable us to make stronger quantitative analyses.

Out of this group of 117 employers, 52 are based in Australia; 57 are in Canada. Four employers have also reached the CV review stage in the UK and one in New Zealand (representing expanding destinations) and the remaining employers were in countries where TBB decided not to pilot.⁴² Participating employers are from a wide range of industries, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Industry breakdown of 117 employers who moved to candidate selection⁴³



Approximately 40% of these employers are located in major metropolitan cities such as Toronto and Melbourne; and 40% are in small regional towns with less than 100,000 people such as Harvey (Australia) and Pictou County (Canada). The remaining 20% are located in mid-sized cities such as Winnipeg and Perth.

Interview stage

A key challenge during TBB’s pilot phase has been converting businesses from CV review stage to interview. As shown in Table 1 below, 64% of employers dropped out of the process after reviewing CVs and before interview. However, for the remaining employers who reach the interview stage, six out of ten proceed to issuing job offers. This is promising, as it suggests if an employer proceeds to actually meeting the candidate face to face (via video) they are more than

⁴² Egypt, Malaysia and UAE.

⁴³ Industry categories have been taken from the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, v4, published by UN DESA (Eg. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/seriesm_4rev4e.pdf)

likely to issue a job offer.

Table 1: Employer conversion rate through recruitment stages

Stage	# of employers	% of employers that move to the next stage
Total # of companies at the "pitching" stage	272	43%
Total # of companies at candidate selection stage	117	36%
Total # of companies moved to interview/skills validation stage	42	62%
Total # of companies moved from interview to job offer stage	26	

Improving conversion rates

The number of employers engaging with TBB at the CV review stage is a strong indicator of demand for this program. However, currently only one in five employers who reach the candidate selection/CV review stage ultimately issue a job offer to a candidate or candidates.⁴⁴ To some extent, this rate reflects industry-wide challenges. As one software firm noted, "We have difficulties filling our roles as well so your success rate is comparable to ours".⁴⁵ Still, increasing this conversation rate would help TBB to scale this solution to benefit larger numbers of refugees and businesses.

If TBB were able to increase the conversion rate from CV review to interview stages, this job offer rate would be much higher. For example, if the conversion rate from CV review to interview stage was increased from 36% to 60% and everything else remains the same, 44 employers would move to issuing job offers (up from 26). A priority for TBB's employer outreach going forward should be to increase the conversion of employers from CV review to interview stage.

Table 1 highlights the mix of reasons employers drop out at the CV review/candidate selection stages. Thirty-nine percent of businesses dropped out because of business-side reasons - either they couldn't get the buy-in required to proceed, because of budgetary considerations or because

⁴⁴ Employer demand analysis based on TBB Salesforce data.

⁴⁵ Employer feedback relayed to TBB Canada Director.

the timing wasn't suitable. TBB should be able to significantly reduce this dropout rate by refining the model and reducing the complexity and perceived risk in hiring refugees from abroad.

Table 2: Why employers don't proceed to the next stage in recruitment⁴⁶

Why didn't the employer move from candidate selection to interview?	#	%
Business reasons (bad timing, process takes too long, too expensive, lack of buy in)	31	39%
Employer became unresponsive	20	25%
Employer still shortlisting	14	17%
No suitable candidates	15	19%

As indicated in Table 2 above, TBB was not able to identify suitable candidates for 15 employers at the candidate selection stage. In many cases, these were very technical roles that required specific prior work experience or experience with particular cutting-edge technologies which TBB's candidates did not have. In some cases, TBB identified technically suitable candidates but they could not advance because they did not have sufficient English language skills. This underscores the importance of TBB building up the pool of available candidates on its Talent Catalog and supporting prospective candidates to develop their language skills to maximize the likelihood of being matched to a job opportunity.

Recommendation 4: TBB should set an ambitious target for increasing entrants on the Talent Catalog, particularly in strategic and high-demand industries, and work with partners to achieve this target through extensive refugee candidate outreach.

Data-driven strategies

Data collected during the pilot phase can also help guide TBB's approach to engaging employers to recruit through this model. Large enterprises (250-1000 employees) were the most likely to convert from CV review to job offer (40%) reflecting the fact that many of these businesses have highly standardized recruitment processes, regularly recruit internationally and potentially more "evergreen" roles - those needed on an ongoing basis and which can be held open for indeterminate periods of time. Twenty-one percent of very large enterprises (with more than 1000

⁴⁶ Analysis of TBB Salesforce data, *Employer by Stage* report

employees) proceeded to job offers - this lower conversion potentially reflecting the highly competitive nature of recruitment for these corporations (often these very large companies are able to attract the most competitive talent from large enterprises). Twenty-one percent of small businesses with between 10-49 employees and 18% of medium sized enterprises with less than 250 employees converted to job offer stage. This may indicate sensitivity to risk and budgetary pressures - barriers that should be easier to overcome as TBB's program becomes more established.

The data also suggests that the role of the highest-level contact TBB has within a company will have a significant impact on the likelihood of converting an employer from CV review to job offer. Of the companies where TBB has been in touch with either a C-Suite representative or an Owner/President, 30% that began recruitment ultimately moved forward to make an offer of employment. By contrast, only 12% of employers at which the hiring manager was the highest-level contact ultimately made an offer. Starkly, not a single company at which TBB's highest contact was an HR representative advanced to make an offer; and only one moved forward to interview. As TBB's model becomes more efficient and predictable, success notwithstanding C-Suite buy-in is likely to increase.

How an employer begins their engagement with TBB also correlated with conversion rates. For example, 29% of employers where TBB has had a personal connection through a staff member or board member have ultimately made an offer of employment; and 20% of employers engaged through a referring partner have also made an offer. In contrast, a mere 5% of companies approached through unsolicited outreach by TBB converted to an offer. Leveraging connections, particularly in the nascent stages of a piloting in a new destination country, is therefore a very important strategy to drive higher conversion rates. As TBB moves into new locations, the organization should continue to engage and attract business leaders to champion this program among their peers.

Overall, 20% of employers who came to TBB through outbound referral (TBB approached them) resulted in offers. TBB's outreach over the last three years has largely been driven by outbound outreach, directly by TBB, through personal connections, and through referral partnerships. TBB

began this process with no public-facing profile and has required concerted effort to get its message and service offering on the radar of hiring companies. When companies hear about TBB from a source other than TBB (media, social media, online search, word of mouth) and reach out proactively to TBB, this is considered an “inbound” referral mechanism. Inbound interest from media, social media, and word of mouth has begun to increase throughout the pilot phase and as a result TBB’s public profile has grown through early success stories and positive media coverage. Though a much smaller pool, an impressive 45% of companies who came to TBB through inbound referral (they approached TBB after seeing a post on social media or traditional media) and proceeded to CV review, ultimately moved to offer.

Recommendation 5: As TBB expands into new destination locations, the organization and partners should continue to engage and attract business leaders to champion this program among their peers.

Recommendation 6: TBB should increase investment in communications and business marketing in strategic sectors to increase recruitment opportunities for candidates.

International recruitment missions

International recruitment missions, whereby businesses send recruiters abroad to meet with prospective candidates, are standard practice for many employers in sectors and regions facing talent gaps. While TBB has developed a model of recruitment that can be conducted completely remotely, TBB’s experience with recruitment missions during the pilot phase have yielded very promising results.

TBB has facilitated separate recruitment missions by two employers to our offices in Jordan and Lebanon during the pilot phase. The first visit, by a small Canadian manufacturer, resulted in one job offer to a mechanical engineer, who is now living and working in Niagara Falls, Ontario, with his wife and young son. The second visit, by a larger manufacturer with facilities across Canada, resulted in 11 job offers to candidates with engineering, electrical and mechanical backgrounds. RefugePoint, who TBB is partnering with in Kenya, hosted another recruitment mission by a Canadian healthcare employer based in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, to interview sites in Kenya.

This employer extended 13 job offers to candidates with nursing backgrounds, all living as refugees in Kenya.

These examples demonstrate the willingness of employers to include displaced talent within their sourcing strategies, even in more costly international recruitment missions, as well as the significant pay-off when employers can meet candidates face-to-face. These innovative private sector approaches could be scaled through government or industry group support. For example, governments often invest in business development by funding or facilitating international recruitment missions to talent hotspots around the world.

Recommendation 7: TBB should explore opportunities to work with partner employers and governments to facilitate recruitment missions on a more regular basis to refugee hosting countries.

Evidence of demand from industry groups

TBB has engaged and partnered with a wide range of industry groups during the pilot phase including: Chambers of Commerce; national business representative associations (such as the Business Council of Australia, the Australian Industry Group, and the Business Council of Canada); specific industry groups (such as the Construction Foundation of British Columbia (CFBC); and place-based industry groups (such as the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network (PCREN) and the Niagara Industrial Association (NIA).

In Canada TBB has identified the significant value of local and smaller organizations that are more closely networked with employers, and therefore trusted and credible, and knowledgeable on their members' talent needs. TBB found these local organizations to be willing to invest in a collaboration with TBB and more willing to make direct connections to employers. The trade-off is that their networks are smaller and typically confined to one city or region, so TBB expends more time on relationships with multiple partners.

In Australia, TBB has maintained a very beneficial relationship with the larger national business associations. For example, TBB has been introduced to several C-suite level actors through a partnership with the Business Council of Australia (BCA). The Australian Industry Group (Ai Group)

has a regional distributed structure with representatives in different regions of Australia. TBB has worked particularly closely with the North East Victoria and Riverina Regional Manager of Ai Group who has facilitated dozens of business introductions to TBB in his local area. The reason this collaboration has been so fruitful is because it is mutually beneficial: labour market attraction and retention issues are acute for AiGroup members, and TBB is seen as a key offering in their tool kit to address these issues in regional Australia.⁴⁷ As in Canada, both the BCA and AI Group have also strongly supported TBB's advocacy with the Australian government.

The approach and focus of TBB's industry group engagement will of course vary within and between countries depending on the context, and there is no one size fits approach to partnering with these types of organizations. The level of active support and engagement TBB has secured from a diverse range of industry groups during the pilot period is indicative of the high value these organizations place on the displaced talent pool.

Evidence of demand at a community level

While business demand is clearly a key driver of the success of any labour mobility solution, businesses do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of communities, and often those communities have wider interests in attracting skilled people and their families. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in locations struggling with population stagnation or decline, such as regional and rural locations. Many of these communities see attraction of people with the right skills as an existential matter. For example, if a town cannot attract enough doctors to provide adequate healthcare, people cannot safely live there. If the small number of big businesses and essential services in town can't secure the critical workers required to enable ongoing core business operations and growth, the wider employment and economic activity generated by those business supporting the community is at risk.

In both Australia and Canada and around the world governments are grappling with this issue as cities grow and populations urbanize. Canada has designed and implemented a number of world-renowned place-based immigration programs designed to attract and retain newcomers in less

⁴⁷ Anecdotal feedback supplied by David Spear, TBB Regional Outreach Manager in Australia, 15 May 2020.

populous areas. These programs are projected to grow and replicate and provide opportunities for TBB to work in a number of strategic communities where these pathways are available, to utilize spots, capitalize on clusters of employer demand, and align with government priorities. See case study of TBB's experience in Pictou County below.

Case study 2: Pilot in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, Canada

Pictou County is located in the Atlantic Province of Nova Scotia a few hours outside the provincial capital of Halifax. The county consists of six municipal units, with a collective population of approximately 43,000. Pictou County is home to a cluster of head offices of large corporations including Sobeys, Crombie REIT, and Michelin. These large companies and many smaller businesses face major challenges finding and retaining talent. Atlantic Canada is facing demographic decline at an accelerated pace compared to the rest of the country as youth born in the region migrate out and as newcomers choose the larger Census Metropolitan Areas of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver to settle. Still, some newcomers are arriving in Pictou County. It is one of the over 300 Canadian communities engaged in private refugee sponsorship. The community welcomed 62 individuals as privately sponsored refugees from 2016-2018.

Pictou County is an ideal pilot location for a community-based approach to refugee labour mobility because of the presence of large and small businesses facing acute talent shortages in a range of occupations, at higher and lower skill levels. Combined with talent shortages, Pictou County has local experience in refugee resettlement and the broad public support that this participation develops.

TBB has partnered with the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network (PCREN) which is leading the local effort to implement refugee labour mobility and build a community of practice. PCREN is responsible for engaging employers and managing employer relationships; supporting employers and successful candidates to complete immigration applications; and coordinating settlement, which involves engaging settlement agencies as well as filling services gaps in partnership with employers and other community actors. Other important partners in this pilot include Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the Province of Nova Scotia, RefugePoint, Safe Harbour, and the Shapiro Foundation.

In August 2019, four businesses in Pictou County had begun recruitment processes with Talent Beyond Boundaries and RefugePoint. All aim to hire more than one candidate for open positions, and one employer, a large healthcare facility, has already made 15 job offers. The PCREN took a deliberately measured approach to beginning the pilot, aiming for a small group of early hiring partners and a hiring target of 20 principal applicants in the first year. This goal was not met in year one, but the interest and intent to recruit continue. External factors have absorbed time and focus in the community, including the closure of a large mill that left hundreds of people unemployed.

A smaller community will carry challenges for newcomers hired by local employers. Top anticipated challenges in Pictou County are public transportation (non-existent); the availability (but not affordability) of housing; the availability of essential services like childcare; and the availability of specialized services that may be needed by refugee newcomers such as mental health services.

The notable opportunities include a network of community champions who can creatively problem solve to fill gaps through pro bono, in-kind, or other contributions. Another opportunity is that a cohort of refugee newcomers can lead to identification of government resources for services which can only be funded at a certain scale. In Pictou County, not only are new government services likely to accompany a refugee talent pipeline, but new private sponsorships have emerged too because of the anticipated increase in capacity to welcome newcomers. Already, the community has embarked on two new private sponsorships which have been partly advanced by the community's engagement and preparation for refugee labour mobility, modeling a truly "complementary pathway" for refugees to this community.

TBB sees high potential for replicating elements of the Pictou County model in other smaller communities in Canada. For example, in the 11 communities selected by the federal Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP), and the 3 communities selected by the Province of Ontario's regional pilots program.

In Australia, in 2019 TBB pursued a similar regional pilot in partnership with Refugee Talent, the City of Greater Bendigo, Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services and local community groups in the greater Bendigo region on an initiative called the "Regional Ready Pilot Program".⁴⁸ This initiative aims to attract skilled refugees from other parts of Australia and from TBB's Talent Catalog to work and live in the Bendigo region. The initiative is designed to give employers confidence in the international hiring process by demonstrating a range of local actors are there to support newcomers to settle when they arrive. This pilot is funded by the Victorian Government and, if successful, may be replicated in other regional towns.

Recommendation 8: TBB should continue to develop place-based models of labour mobility, working with employers in strategic communities facing skills and population challenges. TBB should invest in monitoring and evaluating this place-based approach with a view to encouraging other communities to replicate the approach.

⁴⁸ City of Greater Bendigo, *Submission to Inquiry into Migration in Regional Australia*, 2019. Available from: <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=ae98a390-92ba-4ce2-a7ea-d3a952cd7129&subId=670198>

Impact of coronavirus

Several key informant interviews for this evaluation raised concerns about the coronavirus pandemic on TBB's program. Some informants raised the risks of rising xenophobia and pressures on businesses to retrain and hire unemployed workers impacted by the economic crisis may reduce employer demand for international workers.⁴⁹ The tech sector notably may see a permanent shift to more remote work, and potentially reduced international recruitment. Other informants highlighted that while the unprecedented global crisis has reduced employer demand for workers in a number of sectors, it has also increased demand in others (eg. healthcare, manufacturing), and as economies move into recovery that demand will grow. According to Stephen Cryne, President of the Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC):

Companies are going to need people. That's a fact. I believe covid will present a lot of new opportunities and new industries that we've not foreseen yet. So companies are going to need those people so I can see there will continue to be opportunities for the movement of international talent, which would include people in the TBB's talent pool.⁵⁰

Cryne also pointed to surveys conducted by his organization of employees across 20 countries globally, which show a growing reluctance among skilled workers to move internationally for work to fill talent gaps.⁵¹ Cryne believes that uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus pandemic is likely to increase this mobility reluctance.⁵² Intuitively this could suggest that refugees may have a comparative advantage over other workers in meeting employer demand, on account of their high motivation to relocate to a stable country where their legal status will be resolved. Although Cryne cautioned against any heroic assumptions: "Frankly, I don't know what that looks like going forward. It's really been turned on its head. But in the longer term, those opportunities will continue to exist in the future."⁵³

⁴⁹ Key informant interviews with Andrew and Renata Kaldor. 20 April 2020; Ronnie Goldberg interview; Gary Slaiman, Corporate Outreach Advisor. 23 April 2020; Veronica Wilson, Roots Immigration Law. 29 April 2020.

⁵⁰ Key informant interview with Anna Robson, Co-Founder and CEO of Refugee Talent. 22 April 2020.

⁵¹ CERC, Global Mobility Survey 2017, p. 9. 2017. Available from:

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.cerc.ca/resource/resmgr/research/Global_Mobility_Survey_2017_.pdf

⁵² Key informant interview with Stephen Cryne, President & CEO of CERC. 8 May 2020.

⁵³ Key informant interview with Stephen Cryne, President & CEO of CERC. 8 May 2020.

David Manicom, UNHCR Special Advisor, also noted how coronavirus has revealed a range of vital occupations that are reliant on international workers to fill - “not only on doctors, nurses, elder care workers - but also delivery drivers and cleaners etc”.⁵⁴ Manicom highlighted that in Europe there are 6.64 million migrants from outside the EU who are performing these essential roles, illustrating the scale of employer demand, even in a time of economic crisis.⁵⁵

Recommendation 9: TBB should refocus employer outreach on industries and employers facing significant growth during the coronavirus pandemic and in the post-pandemic economy.

Proof of concept

Just proving that it could be done is extraordinary and not giving people excuses to say ‘oh that’s an issue we don’t touch, we don’t contribute, we don’t try to push for change that way.’ I think TBB has really charted a new path on every front. That alone is an exceptional contribution.

Alexandra Chen⁵⁶

TBB took it from an idea and made it practical for jurisdictions, for employers like ours to be able to think about how you would scale up. Nobody else was really doing it in a comprehensive way until TBB came and did that. I think more people are thinking in that way now, but again I think that’s credit to TBB in a lot of ways.

Ben Rempel⁵⁷

In order to prove the preconditions for a labour mobility solution were met, TBB aimed to develop a model of labour mobility that could be replicated by other organizations. TBB aimed to test the model by assisting at least 10 candidates to secure international employment and relocate during the pilot period with their families. Over the course of the pilot phase TBB increased this target to

⁵⁴ Key informant interview with David Manicom, Special Advisor to UNHCR. 1 May 2020.

⁵⁵ Key informant interview with David Manicom, Special Advisor to UNHCR. 1 May 2020. Citing forthcoming analysis by European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs.

⁵⁶ Key informant interview with Alexandra Chen, expert in refugee mental health and TBB external advisor. 8 May 2020.

⁵⁷ Key informant interview with Ben Rempel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba Immigration Ministry. 24 April 2020.

25 job offers as a result of pilot programs initiated with the governments of Australia and Canada (10 in Australia and 15 in Canada).

TBB deliberately avoided large recruitment targets in the piloting phase because the team recognized it did not have sufficient information at the outset to understand all the barriers that might obstruct refugees' movement through labour mobility pathways, and that lessons learned from an initial small number of movements should inform its approach to helping greater numbers of people to move (see section on Objective 2 below). TBB also recognized the team would need time to develop an efficient and scalable recruitment and mobility model, and that in working with the private sector on an international recruitment solution there were inherent risks and challenges that required a considered and careful approach (preventing exploitation, ensuring protection of participants etc). Being a start-up with modest resources, TBB also lacked the staff and other resources required to scale during the pilot phase.

Feedback from some key informant interviews indicates that TBB perhaps did not articulate these considerations clearly enough to key stakeholders. According to David Manicom from UNHCR:

Inside UNHCR - the negative part of the positive story (and the story is positive, TBB is well regarded inside UNHCR) - is that the numbers are still small. Unless you're working directly on the project and understand how hard it is to scale up, you can appreciate that somebody who is responsible for getting sanitation to 500,000 people somewhere isn't really wowed that you've moved 64 people or whatever the exact numbers are.⁵⁸

This points to a key expectation challenge for TBB. Systems change takes time, and what TBB is doing is systems change, including policy engagement and innovation. The purpose of its pilot phase was to learn what TBB needed to learn through testing and iteration to create a scalable model of labour mobility for refugees which has never been done before. This was inevitably going to take time. Some stakeholders clearly understand this. For example, according to Stéphane Jacquemet from the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC):

⁵⁸ Key informant interview with David Manicom, UNHCR. 1 May 2020.

You've been progressing in a responsible manner, which means a step-by-step approach with a limited number and putting everything in place to be able to expand your program.⁵⁹

Given the scale of the global refugee crisis, however, stakeholders are understandably hungry for fast results, and TBB needs to proactively manage expectations about the pace of scaling labour mobility.

Recommendation 10: TBB should clearly communicate with stakeholders the importance of pursuing systemic changes to address barriers to economic migration in order for refugees to move through these programs at scale.

Recommendation 11: TBB should work with partners to demonstrate the impact of this model by putting in place an agreed monitoring protocol to track solutions for refugees through labour mobility, including age and gender disaggregated data for primary applicants and family members.

TBB recruitment and mobility model

The model designed by TBB brings together the two strands of supply (talented refugees and other forcibly displaced people) and demand (employers) and facilitates access of both parties to regular migration channels in order to bring about two outcomes: a new talented employee for an employer; and a durable solution for the refugee and their family. There are also flow on benefits for both host and destination countries which are canvassed further in Section 2.

⁵⁹ Partner scoping consultation interview with Stéphane Jacquemet, Director of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), 13 May 2020.

Figure 3: TBB recruitment and mobility model

Demand side	Supply side
<p>Pitching/corporate outreach</p> <p>A “sales” process whereby TBB or partner explains the program to an employer, costs involved (for visa fees etc) and timeframes, and secures commitment to initiate a recruitment process for a particular role/s.</p>	<p>Candidate outreach</p> <p>Process of outreach to encourage candidates to sign up to the Talent Catalog - using various communication, in-person and referral channels.</p>
<p>CV review</p> <p>The employer shortlists from a list of CVs provided by TBB.</p>	<p>Candidate selection</p> <p>TBB identifies suitable candidates from the Talent Catalog on the basis of a specific role, and interviews them to ensure program and visa eligibility and skill alignment before providing to employer.</p>
<p>Interview/skills validation</p> <p>The employer assesses and selects the candidate/s they would like to hire.</p>	<p>Interview preparation</p> <p>TBB assists shortlisted candidates to prepare for interviews or skills tests including providing them access to mock interviewers for soft skills or technical skills.</p>
<p>Job offer</p> <p>The employer issues the job offer. TBB or partner reviews against employment laws and clarifies the costs employer will contribute for relocation; TBB provides offer and information to the candidate.</p>	<p>Informed decision-making</p> <p>TBB conducts an informed decision-making session with the candidate and discusses arrangements for any costs the candidate may need to pay (eg. if candidate has no access to funds, a loan can be arranged by TBB or third party). Candidate accepts or rejects the offer.</p>
<p>Visa preparation and lodgment</p> <p>Employer and candidate are connected with an immigration advisor/lawyer and TBB supports both parties as they complete and lodge an application, with employer as sponsor. TBB liaises with government on refugee-specific mobility barriers as needed.</p>	
<p>Settlement planning</p> <p>TBB or destination settlement partner works with employer and candidate to plan arrangements for their relocation and settlement while waiting for visa decision.</p>	
<p>Visa decision</p> <p>Government authorities issue visa decision to immigration lawyer and decision is communicated to all parties.</p>	

Relocation arrangements Candidate, employer and community partners at the destination end coordinate with TBB's assistance to arrange flights, arrival and initial orientation.	
Welcome and onboarding Employer welcomes their new employee and family and initiates induction and onboarding process for new employee.	Arrival and orientation Candidate and family are collected from airport and taken to accommodation and given initial welcome/orientation support by local actors.
Post-placement monitoring TBB or local partners check in with employer and employee to ensure work is going well and put in place remedial measures if required.	Settlement monitoring TBB or local partners monitor how candidates and their family members are and put in place remedial measures if additional support is required.
Durable solution Candidate and their family have achieved permanent resident status and stability as a result of the program.	Employment success Employer has gained a valuable employee, who has passed probation.

Demand-driven rather than supply-driven

One key learning from TBB's pilot activities has been that recruitment happens from a demand-driven perspective, not a supply-driven one. This model more closely aligns with standard recruitment practices in the private sector. According to Menno Bart of the Adecco Group:

We always work demand driven. When you start with a supply focus (for example, we have a worker with a certain set of skills, how can we employ them...) that is a different approach that doesn't fit seamlessly in our business model.⁶⁰

TBB has also faced significant challenges in attempts to do "candidate-first", or "supply-driven" matching. During the pilot phase TBB experimented with identifying specific candidates likely to qualify for a visa pathway, and then seeking to find relevant job openings to match that candidate's unique qualifications. TBB attempted this model in collaboration with Immigration and Refugees

⁶⁰ Partner scoping consultation interview with Menno Bart, Public Affairs Manager at The Adecco Group, 19 May 2020.

and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) as well as in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs in Australia. These efforts resulted in no successful job matches.

Employers have a nuanced set of expectations and requirements that are often highly specialized and relate to culture fit in their particular workplace. Employers are the best placed to select the right employee for them, and TBB has learned its role is only to assist in that process by providing a shortlist of suitable candidates. TBB's model is therefore "demand-driven"; beginning with an open role identified by an employer and providing a range of candidates who may fit that role.

Results implementing the model

During the pilot phase 39 candidates have accepted job offers through TBB with employers in Australia (16), Canada (22), and the United Kingdom (1). Given candidates relocate with their families this equates to a migration solution for 127 people once all candidates have moved. In addition, 13 candidates have accepted job offers in Canada with support of TBB's partner RefugePoint.

Among the TBB supported candidates, 36 are men (92%) and 3 are women (8%). However, including families, the program is roughly gender balanced (providing a solution for 42 men and 23 boys; and 31 women and 31 girls - or 49% women and girls; 51% men and boys). Eleven of the candidates who have secured offers are or were based in Jordan and 28 in Lebanon. Thirty are Syrian, 5 are Palestinian, 3 are Iraqi, and 1 is a Stateless person. Table 3 below outlines the mix of occupations and hiring employers.

Table 3: Recruited candidates 2017-2019

Profession	Number of Offers	Hiring Companies
Nurse	6	Closing the Gap Healthcare (CA) Glen Haven Manor (CA) VHA Home HealthCare (CA)
Physiotherapist	2	Princes Court Homes (AU)
IT Professional / Software Engineer	6	Bonfire (CA) Deloitte (AU) IRESS (AU, UK) Minderoo (AU)
Chef	2	Paramount Fine Foods (CA) Wimmera Meats (AU)
Butcher	3	Harvey Beef (AU)
Civil Engineer	1	Deluxium (AU)
Mechanical Engineer	11	Ceramic Oxide Fabricators (AU) John Holland (AU) Ice River Springs (CA)
Executive Assistant	1	EY (AU)
Business Analyst	1	Accenture (AU)
Legal Assistant	1	Maurice Blackburn (AU)
Tool & Die Maker	1	Davert Tools (CA)
Client IT Support Analyst	2	Shopify (CA)
Carpenter	1	Emanuele Furniture Design (CA)

So far a total of 39 candidates with their family members have already relocated to their new country through this recruitment and mobility model, and 88 more are awaiting visas or travel approvals.

From theoretical assessment to practical application

TBB did not begin its pilot project with predetermined destination countries or immigration pathways selected. It looked to analyze existing labour mobility schemes within a range of countries that were signatories to the 1951 Refugee. This analysis took the form of desk research on the requirements of economic migration programs of dozens of diverse high-income and middle-income countries, including those that were not traditional refugee-receiving countries. TBB engaged pro-bono lawyers to examine the rules and processes for obtaining work visas in several countries and requested advice on how some requirements might be waived or adjusted in light of the refugee circumstances of candidates.

Though the research was high quality, these briefs proved to be of limited utility to TBB in determining potentially viable destinations. Information on the above questions was frequently difficult to identify or unavailable, particularly the questions around alternative proof of documentation or potential waivers of requirements. The resounding recommendation from these memos was:

...it appears there is no systematic provision... that would provide the ideal gateway for Syrian refugees to take advantage of existing skills gaps.⁶¹

In Australia, John Cameron (TBB Australia founder) similarly commissioned a lawyer to examine the practical barriers refugees might face attempting to secure a skilled visa into Australia. He concluded:

Whilst I agree the idea is a good one and warrants further exploration, the difficulties are likely to be practical in how you assess whether someone actually has the skills or experience they claim to have, when it is not really possible to have in-country checks, as occurs elsewhere. Whether the Government would be prepared to make the burdens less onerous for Syrian refugees or displaced people is a practical issue. I think further examination of what can be done in that area may be warranted.⁶²

⁶¹ Memo from Nixon Peabody to Talent Beyond Boundaries re: Syrian Refugees Business Migration, 22 June 2016.

⁶² Memo to John Cameron from D'Ambra Murphy Lawyers, 13 September 2016.

TBB determined that while potential issues could be identified through desk research, practical and actionable learning about potential solutions, and acceptable alternatives to standard practice would be best achieved through testing individual cases through existing systems, with appropriate safeguards. This testing approach required additional reliance on relationships and networks to identify willing first movers, and required TBB to identify, build, and follow momentum with stakeholders willing to take on uncertainty in partnership.

Australia and Canada emerged as promising potential destinations as they have among the world's largest economic migration programs, have highly regular and well-documented visa processes with multiple routes to citizenship, and pressing national skill gaps. TBB also identified early supporters across government, civil society, academia, and the private sector in both countries.

Immigration pathways tested

Through the pilot phase TBB deliberately tested a range of skilled visa pathways including both temporary and permanent skilled visas. The pros and cons identified during the pilot phase for each pathway are outlined in Table 4 below. Key learnings from the pilot include:

- Every destination country's immigration system is unique and undergoing constant evolution. It is important that immigration lawyers or registered migration agents are engaged in every case to advise employers and candidates on visa pathway options and barriers.
- There are a multitude of barriers that prevent refugees from accessing skilled visa pathways, but these can be overcome without undermining the integrity of economic programs where governments are willing to apply a flexible approach (see Objective 2: barriers – below).
- Government leadership is essential to achieving solutions to visa pathway barriers, conferring legitimacy and achieving necessary buy-in from sub-national governments and key community stakeholders to scale the model.

Table 4: Summary of pros and cons of skilled visa pathway types encountered during the pilot phase

Type of visa	Pros	Cons
Temporary skilled visas with pathways to permanent residence (Temporary Skills Shortage 482 visas in Australia; Tier 2 Visa in the UK; and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and International Mobility Program in Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fast visa processing ● Transparent eligibility requirements ● Pathway to permanence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No access to public funds in UK ● Very limited entitlements in Australia (no Medicare, no government schooling) ● No free English language classes in Australia ● No specialized refugee settlement support ● Expensive (a mix of legal fees, visa fees, payments and relocation costs + for the UK the NHS subsidy) ● Not immediately permanent
Provincial or territorial permanent economic immigration pathways (eg. the Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Programs in Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Permanent residence on arrival ● Access to range of basic entitlements ● Transparent eligibility requirements ● Flexible assessment of eligibility criteria (i.e. proof of funds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expensive (a mix of legal fees, visa fees, payments and relocation costs) ● Slow visa processing (1 year +)
Federal permanent economic immigration pathways (eg. Atlantic Immigration Pilot in Canada; Employer Nomination Scheme 186 - Direct Entry in Australia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Permanent residence on arrival ● Access to range of basic entitlements (although some with waiting periods in Australia) ● Transparent eligibility requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expensive (a mix of legal fees, visa fees, payments and relocation costs) ● Slow visa processing (1 year +) ● Inflexible skills assessment and/or eligibility criteria

Engagement with governments

During the pilot phase TBB developed relationships with and eventually formal pilot programs with the governments of Australia and Canada.

Australian experience

I was enamored with the model but at the same time knew the challenges of getting the model to fit into the Australia immigration framework which is highly legislated and regulated ... Success of programs like this rely on being at the right place, at the right time.

Senior official, Department of Home Affairs⁶³

In March 2016 businessman John Cameron began consulting with experts about the potential creation of a skilled pathway for refugees to Australia and other destinations where there were skill shortages. He had written a proposal for a “Refugee Jobs Marketplace” which was shown to a number of key groups in the refugee sector in Australia, including relevant government departments.⁶⁴ Encouraged by the positive feedback he received, he committed to funding a skilled pathway initiative through his philanthropic foundation, Cameron Foundation. This eventually led to the formation of the “Refugee Jobs Marketplace Leadership Forum”, which included a range of experts and supporting organizations.⁶⁵

This forum was instrumental to guiding the approach in Australia and ensuring that the model pursued would be accepted by refugee-serving organizations and government stakeholders. Later in 2016 John became aware of TBB in the US. After meeting with the US founders, John agreed that the Australian initiative would operate under the TBB banner and from 2017 it became known as TBB Australia, and John joined the global board of TBB.

In July 2017 John Cameron and Steph Cousins (then assisting pro bono with TBB), together with Anna Robson and Nirary Dacho from Refugee Talent met with the Minister for Home Affairs, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, to pitch a pilot labour mobility pilot. At the time, financial technology

⁶³ Key informant interview with senior official, Department of Home Affairs, Australian Government. 22 April 2020.

⁶⁴ John Cameron’s proposal for a “Jobs/Skills Marketplace for Refugees”, originally written in 24 March 2016 and updated to reflect engagement with TBB (last update 15 January 2018), available from: <https://cameronfoundation.org/JobMarketplace.pdf>

⁶⁵ Participating organisations included: Amnesty International Australia, AMES Australia, Andrew and Renata Kaldor and the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Red Cross, Business Council of Australia, Playfair Visa and Migration Services, Refugee Council of Australia, Refugee Talent, Save the Children, Settlement Services International, Thrive, Western MRC.

company Iress had just issued its first job offer to a Syrian software developer through TBB's model. This coupled with John Cameron's business credentials and reputation demonstrated strong corporate endorsement. The Minister approved a pilot on the spot and TBB began working with the Department of Home Affairs in 2018 on its implementation. Since its inception TBB has worked jointly with Refugee Talent on its Australia program.

Phase 1 pilot

During this phase TBB has worked with participating businesses to sponsor TBB candidates on Temporary Skills Shortage visas (subclass 482) wherever they were deemed eligible for this pathway. Australia did not provide flexibility or concessions to candidates coming through the skilled pathway. Because the Australian government was committed to help TBB test its labour mobility concept, where a TBB candidate had a job offer but could not meet the stringent criteria for a 482 (eg. relating to language test scores or work experience), the Australian government offered to support the use of a very limited number of Global Special Humanitarian Program (202) visas. The goal was bring a cohort of skilled refugees to Australia to demonstrate that they indeed had skills valued by Australian employers.

TBB notified the Department each time a visa application had been lodged so that a central point of contact in the Department could monitor implementation of the pilot. TBB has also maintained a close liaison with Australian missions in Jordan and Lebanon. So far 16 people have secured job offers in Australia and 8 have arrived with their families and are working (20 people in total including families - 10 women and girls; 10 men and boys).

In November 2019 the Australian pilot was independently evaluated by experienced consultant and former Executive Director of the Refugee Council of Australia, Margaret Piper AM.⁶⁶ The evaluation focused on the experiences of the first five candidates who had arrived in Australia in early 2019 and was conducted roughly six months after starting employment. The evaluation

⁶⁶ Margaret Piper AM, Talent Beyond Boundaries Australia Pilot Evaluation, Summary Report, p. 8, 27 November 2019,, p. 8, Available from: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10IX5GZxzYgS2KABLhHV-9UKlogierBGx/edit>

highlighted a range of positive benefits experienced by the employers and candidates and their family members, which are canvassed later in this evaluation report (see section 2 below). The evaluation also, however, raised questions about the adequacy of Temporary Skills Shortage visa for candidates with families:

Those who came on humanitarian visas were generally the most advantaged in terms of the level of support they received due to their eligibility for the Humanitarian Settlement Program, their permanent visa status and their eligibility for all of the complementary services available to refugees. The absence of this support for the single entrants did not seem to be a big issue as they received considerable support from their employers (including initial accommodation and a financial package). For the family on a temporary skilled visa, not having entitlement to Medicare, free government schooling, AMEP [Adult Migrant English Program], Centrelink [social safety net payments] and the full suite of humanitarian settlement services was a significant disadvantage.⁶⁷

Cath Scarth, CEO of refugee settlement agency and TBB partner AMES Australia, also highlighted the importance of not underestimating the support needs of individuals and families arriving through labour mobility. She highlighted the potential impacts of torture and trauma which can be difficult to predict and require a case by case approach and access to critical services (such as Medicare).⁶⁸

Displaced Talent Visa scheme proposal

Recognizing the limitations of existing visa streams, since early 2018 TBB has been advocating for a hybrid humanitarian/skilled visa program for refugees and humanitarian entrants.⁶⁹ In 2019 TBB further refined its thinking on this proposal, calling for what it now called a Displaced Talent Visa scheme. The concept was a skilled visa which combines key elements of the humanitarian program

⁶⁷ See above.

⁶⁸ Key informant interview with Cath Scarth, CEO AMES Australia, 23 April 2020.

⁶⁹ TBB, Australia's Humanitarian Program Submission to the Department of Home Affairs on the management and composition of the Humanitarian Program for 2018–19, p. 2. 23 May 2018, Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBBSubmissionAustraliaHumanitarianProgram.pdf>.

with regards to settlement support, access to English language classes and entitlements.⁷⁰ On 4 November 2019 TBB coordinated a joint meeting with business partners and the Minister for Immigration, the Hon David Coleman MP, to discuss the concept of a Displaced Talent Visa. TBB was then invited to work with the Department of Home Affairs on a possible phase 2 pilot, building on the Displaced Talent Visa concept.

Phase 2 - "Skilled Refugee Pilot"

In February 2020 the Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, The Hon Alan Tudge MP, announced Australia's decision to create a Skilled Refugee Pilot:

The Government is also rolling out a two-year Skilled Refugee Pilot to offer skilled employment in Australia to up to 100 skilled refugees, including in regional areas. We will be working with an experienced external provider [Talent Beyond Boundaries] to develop the pilot within our existing, permanent skilled visa framework.⁷¹

The program will enable visas for 100 skilled refugees in addition to their family members. TBB has been working with the Department of Home Affairs on the details of the scheme, which will be achieved through the creation of a Labour Agreement between Australia and TBB which gives businesses the ability to sponsor candidates identified by TBB for a number of skilled visas under more flexible arrangements that address some of the barriers encountered in the phase 1 pilot.

A Labour Agreement is a contract between the Australian Government (represented by the Department of Home Affairs) and sponsoring organizations.⁷² They enable approved organizations

⁷⁰ TBB, Displaced workers: An untapped talent source for Australian employers Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration inquiry into Migration in Regional Australia 20 September 2019. Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBBSubmissionMigrationRegionalAustralia.pdf>. See also Marina Brizar, "Increasing Migration and Retention in Regional Australia: Displaced Talent Visa", 1 October 2019.

⁷¹ Australian Government, Address to the Menzies Research Centre, Melbourne, 7 February 2020. Available from:

<https://minister.homeaffairs.gov.au/davidcoleman/Pages/address-menzies-research-centre-20200207.aspx>

⁷² Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, Labour Agreements, March 2020. Available from: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/employing-and-sponsoring-someone/sponsoring-workers/nominating-a-position/labour-agreements>

to sponsor skilled migrants when there is a demonstrated need that cannot be met in the Australian labour market and where standard temporary or permanent visa programs are not suitable. Put simply, this is an existing mechanism which can embed flexibility in skilled visa programs to increase equitable access to refugees and displaced people's needs.

While the details of the Labour Agreement are still subject to negotiation, TBB is confident based on current discussions with the Department of Home Affairs that it will result in practical concessions that level the playing field for refugee applicants and provide access to essential services such as Medicare. It is, however, unlikely that TBB will be able to secure access to the full suite of humanitarian settlement services highlighted by Margaret Piper's evaluation as important for candidates with families. This underscores the importance of TBB continuing to advocate for a Displaced Talent Visa with access to humanitarian settlement services.

TBB's experience in Australia has demonstrated the value of a pragmatic and phased approach designed to build trust with government and demonstrate the genuine mutual benefits of this program for employers, governments and the wider community. In applying this approach TBB has reached the point where the organization is now poised to assist several hundred refugees to relocate to Australia through labour mobility in the coming years. Success with the Skilled Refugee Pilot should position TBB well to advocate for its preferred model: the Displaced Talent Visa scheme.

Canadian experience

Working with governments can be a frustrating and long term exercise, but it pays off if you do it ... If we're going to be successful, you've got to get these [provincial] jurisdictions and the federal government on board. I think TBB did a very good job of that.

Ben Rempel⁷³

During the pilot phase TBB gained the support of the Government of Canada through the federal immigration department, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and became the

⁷³ Key informant interview with Ben Rempel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba. 24 April 2020.

lead implementing partner in Canada's first refugee labour mobility pilot. The Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) was launched in April 2018 and aimed to test and improve refugee access to Canada's economic immigration pathways. It was the first federal pilot of its kind globally. It has been shared by the Government of Canada as a good practice in international meetings.⁷⁴

Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP)

The EMPP involved five provincial and territorial governments (Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Yukon) as well as TBB, partner organization RefugePoint in Kenya and the UNHCR. The pilot aimed to support 10-15 displaced people and their families living in Jordan, Lebanon, or Kenya to secure jobs or provincial nominations and apply to immigrate to Canada using economic immigration pathways. So far, 35 people have secured jobs in Canada (22 from Jordan and Lebanon and 13 from Kenya) and 15 people have relocated to Canada (9 men and boys and 6 women and girls) from Jordan and Lebanon. The remaining immigration applications are either pending approval or in preparation.

The EMPP originated within the department but saw support and public announcements from two successive immigration ministers, most recently at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva when Marco Mendicino, Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced the launch of the second phase of the project.⁷⁵

For more than a year before the start of the EMPP, TBB had worked to engage federal and provincial governments, employers, and other industry and community groups across Canada to gain a foothold and implement refugee labour mobility. There were two notable drivers behind the creation of the EMPP which are instructive for TBB's future efforts to expand in destination countries.

⁷⁴ The Government of Canada has profiled the EMPP at the Global Refugee Forum (December 2019), the Global Forum on Migration and Development (January 2020), and meetings hosted by UNHCR of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (February 2020), among others.

⁷⁵ Global Affairs Canada, Canada reaffirms strong leadership role in refugee protection at Global Refugee Forum, December 2019. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/12/canada-reaffirms-strong-leadership-role-in-refugee-protection-at-global-refugee-forum.html>

First, TBB had an unsuccessful case that provided evidence to IRCC about the potential for skilled refugee mobility and the need for government intervention or flexibility to overcome mobility barriers. TBB had matched a candidate with an employer in British Columbia (BC), with the support of an industry group called the Construction Foundation of British Columbia (CFBC). This candidate, a carpenter by training, received a job offer as a roofer from Marine Roofing, a company facing severe talent gaps amidst a provincial construction boom. The pathway with the highest chance of success for the employer and candidate was a job-backed pathway in the British Columbia (BC) Provincial Nominee Program. The company and job offer met the employer requirements; and the candidate met the human capital requirements. However, two factors stymied the candidate's application:

1. An expired passport, as the provincial online application portal required a valid passport; and
2. A points score that fell below the typical cutoff for a provincial nomination, despite meeting human capital requirements, including language requirements.

TBB and the CFBC advocated with both the Province of BC to the level of the Assistant Deputy Minister as well as with IRCC to the level of Director General, seeking accommodations from BC. BC would not accommodate. TBB later learned from IRCC officials that this unsuccessful case provided the impetus for the creation of an official pilot that became the EMPP. Here, evidence even through failure moved the government to action.

Second, there was a high-level champion within IRCC who understood the potential of labour mobility and the need for deliberate government participation, and who drove the creation of the EMPP. Bruce Scoffield was a Director General of the Immigration Program Guidance (IPG) branch within IRCC. Scoffield had previously served as the Humanitarian Counsellor to the Canadian mission at the UN where he met TBB co-founders Mary Louise and Bruce Cohen, and encouraged them to work with the Canadian provinces. Scoffield and his team conceptualized the project and successfully applied for a departmental grant focused on research and policy innovation to partly fund it.

The project was led by Scoffield's team in IPG together with the Refugee Affairs branch - which brought together the economic and refugee silos of work. Prior to the EMPP, TBB had successfully secured a "working group" of mid-level officials led by a Director General in the Refugee Affairs branch, but it did not have a mandate for action. The later buy-in, vision, and economic program knowledge in a high-level champion within IRCC was critical to securing broader and formalized federal support.

Operationally, TBB also learned through the BC experience the importance of early partnerships with immigration lawyers who understand complex economic programs, in order to advise on eligibility considerations and avoid failed relocations. (The candidate who could not relocate to BC was later hired by an employer in Ontario and relocated there with his wife and young son in January 2020.)

Engaging with Provincial and Territorial (PT) governments

TBB determined early in its pilot efforts in Canada that provincial and territorial government partnerships would be instrumental. There are several reasons for this, notably the prevalence of provincial economic pathways; their focus on sectors and regions with talent gaps; and their lower or more flexible program criteria. Immigration is a shared jurisdiction in Canada with powers of selection devolved to PTs through agreements with the federal government. There are over 80 economic immigration pathways to Canada and many of those are Provincial Nominee Program pathways. In recent years, Canada has also developed pilot projects in collaboration with provinces to respond to regional economic development needs. All these "place-based programs" seek to respond to local economic and population growth needs. In general, the selection criteria can be lower in provincial and federal-provincial pilot pathways. One notable example is language: The Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) requires Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 7, while the federal-provincial Atlantic Immigration Pilot pathways require a CLB 4, and one high-skilled job pathway in the Ontario PNP has no language requirement and instead relies on employers to determine a suitable level.

Prior to the start of the EMPP, TBB had engaged directly with a few provinces - British Columbia and Manitoba - and struck a lasting partnership with an Assistant Deputy Minister in Manitoba's immigration ministry, Ben Rempel. Once the EMPP was created, it provided an important vehicle for TBB to engage directly with the five participating PTs of Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Yukon, towards shared objectives of testing and improving refugee access to their economic immigration pathways. Importantly, the federal pilot project gave PTs, which could opt into the pilot, the policy rationale they needed to dedicate human resources and to exercise flexibility where possible to facilitate processing of immigration applications. TBB has learned firsthand that PTs rely on direction from the federal immigration department, and the EMPP clearly laid out an area of federal interest and priority.

A diverse range of immigration pathways utilized

During the first phase of the EMPP ending September 2019, TBB supported candidates to prepare applications for four different economic immigration pathways under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program; the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIP); the Nova Scotia Nominee Program; and the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. A diversity in pathways enabled TBB alongside government and other partners to test and overcome different types of barriers.

Experience in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia

TBB supported successful recruitment processes with employers based in the three PTs of Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, and supported candidate applications through immigration pathways managed by these provinces. This is a majority of the five PTs in the EMPP. Recruitment was tried but not successful in the two remaining two PTs, Newfoundland and Labrador and Yukon. One reason behind TBB's inability to form close ties with employers in these areas is lack of networks. Recruitment partnerships are far easier to build through in-person relationships or referrals. TBB's network is strong in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia because staff are based in Ontario's economic center, Toronto, and TBB staff had travelled extensively in Ontario and had made key relationship-building trips to Manitoba and Nova Scotia. A second reason is that both Newfoundland and Labrador and Yukon are extremely remote areas, which presented additional complexities for some of the employers engaged by TBB. For example, some employers had

seasonal talent gaps only; others had difficult conditions for newcomers such as lack of public transit, available or affordable rental housing, and settlement services.

Engaging with PTs outside the EMPP

During this period, TBB engaged four PTs primarily through informational meetings and some direct advocacy efforts: British Columbia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island (PEI), and Quebec. The results were mixed. Overall, TBB achieved its objective of raising awareness about the potential of labour mobility, but was not successful in achieving meaningful partnerships with the majority of these provinces that might have led to relocation of candidates.

A notable exception is Prince Edward Island (PEI). Officials from the immigration ministry reached out to TBB after a case arose in the province from an employer who wanted to hire an agronomist living as a refugee in Pakistan. The employer had connected with the candidate through his brother, a resettled refugee now living and working in PEI with the same company. An immigration lawyer retained by the company reached the province with questions about mobility barriers, and the province approached TBB for answers. TBB provided guidance on solutions extended under the EMPP to the two foreseeable challenges of settlement funds and processing times and connected the province and lawyer with the federal EMPP team. The case is still ongoing. TBB had clearly gained a foothold among PT immigration departments as subject matter experts on labour mobility.

Moroccan experience

TBB had actively been considering expanding its pilot destination countries to explore the potential for non-traditional refugee-receiving destinations - countries without well-established resettlement programs - particularly middle-income countries, to engage in providing solutions for refugees. TBB selected Morocco for this initial exploration on the basis of Morocco's recent public efforts to undertake progressive migration policies; the severity of skill shortages faced in public and private sectors, including a particular shortage of Arabic-speaking public sector teachers; and its cultural, linguistic and religious proximity to the countries of origin of TBB's candidates. Significantly, in late 2016, contacts at the US State Department told TBB that the Moroccan

Government was interested in exploring whether Syrian refugees could help fill teacher talent shortages in Morocco.

Though markedly distinct in their politics, culture and geography, Australia and Canada are high-income, democratic, English-speaking countries with regularized and predictable economic immigration pathways. TBB sought to expand its learning about the potential versatility and applicability of a labour mobility solution for refugees.

As it had in both Australia and Canada, TBB hired an experienced representative in Morocco who determined that Moroccan employers were impressed with the strength of the candidates in the Talent Catalog and would be interested in recruiting with TBB. Beyond individual firms, TBB secured support from Morocco's National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills (ANAPEC), a national job-seeker and job-matching institute, who affirmed that even in the face of widespread unemployment in Morocco, persistent skills shortages existed that could be filled by foreign nationals. Director of Consular Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation was also supportive of working on a pilot with TBB.

In late 2017 TBB was advised that any program related to the entry of Syrian refugees would need to be approved by a representative of the King of Morocco. Despite high level assistance from a former US Ambassador to Morocco, TBB has not yet been able to obtain the required clearance.

TBB's experience in Morocco underscores TBB's imperative to align its programming with existing government priorities. Doing so in a highly centralized political system may be more difficult than one in which there are diverse political actors with different agendas to engage; similarly, it may be more difficult in contexts in which immigration is not a distinct department or branch of government, but rather sits under a single head of state with a greater range of competing priorities. However, those same factors might enable a government to move rapidly to implement a pilot if in fact there were alignment with its economic, social and political goals.

Principles to guide labour mobility

TBB's experience in the pilot phase has helped to define a set of core principles to guide future labour mobility schemes with governments.⁷⁶ TBB has begun to use these principles in advocacy and engagement with governments interested in pursuing labour mobility pilots:

1. **Equitable access:** Refugees and other forcibly displaced people seeking global work and labour mobility opportunities should have equitable access and be able to compete on a level playing field with applicants who are not living in displacement.
2. **Protection:** Refugees moving through labour mobility pathways should be protected against refoulement, discrimination and exploitation. They should have access to legal documentation, rights and essential services in destination countries. Labour mobility should provide a pathway to a durable solution.
3. **Autonomy and empowerment:** Labour mobility puts refugees in charge of decisions about where they want to live and work. Visa systems should empower refugees who have secured job offers in third countries to autonomously access labour mobility pathways to take up those opportunities.
4. **Additionality:** Labour mobility opportunities should be additional and complementary to refugee resettlement. Resettlement should continue to focus on assisting vulnerable refugees and not be based on human capital criteria.
5. **Employer-leadership:** Employers are the best judge of suitability for employment. Applying an employer-led approach will ensure that labour mobility schemes meet the exact requirements of those securing talent.
6. **Refugee-centered:** Displaced people should be actively engaged in the design, monitoring and evaluation of skilled migration pilots to ensure their accessibility. Governments should

⁷⁶ TBB, *Promise of Labour Mobility*, p. 25, December 2019. Available at: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/TBBGRFReport2019.pdf>; TBB, Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) Phase Two: Input by Talent Beyond Boundaries, 'Guiding Principles', June 2019; see also Marina Brizar, 'Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway to Humanitarian Protection', 29 November 2019, Churchill Fellow and TBB UK Director, accessible at: <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/detail/4372/Marina+Brizar>.

use communication methods to provide refugees with clear information about how to access labour mobility pathways.

Recommendation 12: These six principles should guide TBB’s advocacy and programmatic decision-making as it works to establish new labour mobility pathways, in order to preserve integrity of the model as it grows and is tested by other governments and partners.

Candidate eligibility and vulnerability

Throughout the pilot phase TBB has also refined its position on eligibility for labour mobility. TBB’s Talent Catalog is open to all “persons in need of international protection”, as defined by UNHCR and several international conventions as those who are “outside their own country and unable to return home because they would be at risk there, and their country is unable or unwilling to protect them.”⁷⁷ This includes refugees, people seeking asylum, people fleeing conflict and generalized violence and people who are stateless (for simplicity the term “refugees” is used interchangeably with “forcibly displaced people” throughout this evaluation to signify all groups).

Candidates of certain nationalities can be presumed to be in need of international protection given circumstances in their home country (eg. Syrians in Jordan and Lebanon), unless they otherwise indicate. Candidates registered with either UNHCR or the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are also presumed eligible, however TBB does not require registration as there are many valid reasons refugees are prevented from or opt not to register with the UN. TBB makes enquiries with candidates to ensure their eligibility before putting them forward for interview with employers. Candidates who are not in need of international protection, such as Jordanian or Lebanese nationals who have signed up to the Talent Catalog but have no grounds for protection, are not put forward to employers.

While UNHCR conducts vulnerability triage assessments since its humanitarian resettlement program is reserved for the most vulnerable, TBB instead focuses on assessing a refugee’s professional skills. This is because labour mobility as a complementary pathway to resettlement

⁷⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Persons in need of international protection”. June 2017. Available from: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/596787734.pdf>

hinges on candidate skills and capacities and their need for international protection, rather than their level of vulnerability. TBB's experience during the pilot has shown that all displaced people experience some level of vulnerability, and indeed several highly skilled candidates have been in extremely vulnerable situations prior to securing employment through the program (see case study below). But employers do not recruit on vulnerability grounds. They recruit for skills.

Case study 3: Sofia and a family reunited through labour mobility

Sofia was the first woman to secure an international job offer through Talent Beyond Boundaries' refugee labour mobility program. She now lives in Sydney with her husband and two children.

Sofia ran a successful boutique bookshop in Homs, Syria. As the war escalated, she and her husband decided they had to flee. They agreed Sofia and the children would go to Jordan, while her husband would try to get to Europe by boat. He took a dangerous journey to Germany and apply for asylum when he arrived. The plan was to bring Sofia and the children to reunite with him, but it wasn't to be. Germany started limiting family reunion places so Sofia's husband was stuck there, waiting for years, trying to scrape together any money he could to send back to his family in Jordan.

Sofia couldn't work in Jordan - because she was there illegally and because she had no one to look after the children. She had no savings, no security and no way of reuniting with her husband.

Sofia signed up to the Talent Catalog and TBB provided her with access to English language resources and assistance with job interview preparation. According to Sofia this preparation was key - because it gave her the confidence she needed to present her best qualities to prospective employers. TBB shared her CV with EY (Ernst and Young) and they interviewed her for a role in their business services area. After some further checks they offered her a job in Australia. Sofia's husband was able to join her visa application and the family were finally reunited in Australia in early 2019 after three years apart.

According to Sofia, "Refugees have the skills, they just need a chance".

As Mustafa Alio from Jumpstart points out, displaced people should also not have to wait until they are extremely vulnerable to secure a solution to their displacement:

*When people talk about protection it is based on vulnerability, but they miss three important letters: they are not most vulnerable “yet”. When we miss that yet, we’re not going to help those people TBB is trying to help because they are not “yet”.*⁷⁸

TBB’s experience during the pilot phase suggests that to restrict candidate selection to only the most vulnerable refugees, or to only refugees who meet the strict Refugee Convention definition,⁷⁹ would unnecessarily limit solutions available to people in need of international protection through this model.

Recommendation 13: TBB should continue to work with candidates who are “in need of international protection” and avoid applying vulnerability-based eligibility criteria on candidates for labour mobility. TBB should share its position on candidate eligibility with key stakeholders in order to help shape the broader policy debate about the role of labour mobility in complementing existing vulnerability-based resettlement programs.

Objective 2: Identify and overcome barriers

I applied to several opportunities in Australia and Canada but didn't get any response because they cannot help me with my visa and I should be there first.

Candidate survey respondent

I am really happy to see that they are making these accommodations. We’ve had a high success rate with approvals. I was skeptical at the beginning, but the pilot is working. There are a lot of accommodations that need to be made.

Veronica Wilson⁸⁰

Through the pilot phase TBB sought to identify the barriers preventing refugees and other forcibly displaced people from accessing international labour mobility opportunities and identify solutions to overcome these barriers.

⁷⁸ Key informant interview with Mustafa Alio, Jumpstart. 22 April 2020.

⁷⁹ See Article 1 of the Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/3b66c2aa10>. Note it is well accepted that refugee status is declaratory, meaning that a person is a refugee if they meet the definition of the Refugee Convention. As such, it is not necessary for refugee status to be determined by States or UNHCR.

⁸⁰ Key informant interview with Veronica Wilson, Roots Immigration. 29 April 2020.

As outlined above, TBB has proven through the pilot phase that some displaced people in refugee circumstances can access existing labour mobility pathways where they receive support through TBB's program.⁸¹ The pilot has also uncovered a number of mobility barriers that, if left unaddressed, will prevent wider uptake of this solution. During the pilot phase TBB and its partners were able to make some strides in overcoming these barriers, whereas others remain resolved. In all cases, TBB identified solutions that, if applied, would address these critical barriers.

These barriers range and vary across country contexts. They typically occur in both destination and source jurisdictions, which can complicate the development of solutions. They can broadly be categorized as (1) informational (2) policy, (3) operational, (4) financial barriers.

Informational barriers

Navigating economic programs and eligibility

When we piloted, surprisingly, only a few refugees had applied for skilled migration; they didn't even think of that. Most knew of resettlement and private sponsorship but not skilled migration. Their perception is that it is an overly complicated process... It is a very complicated process, which is true. The option to apply on their own is there but has not been contextualized for refugees. You cannot individually log in, you have to be very savvy. People need to be supported.

Janet Ouma, RefugePoint⁸²

Refugees often have low or no awareness that they could qualify for economic immigration. They also have limited ability to make direct employer connections or to evaluate and navigate economic immigration application processes. UNHCR and NGOs focused on traditional resettlement pathways also have limited knowledge about economic programs, their requirements, and application procedures. Government officials at embassies are important points of contact for

⁸¹ TBB has anecdotal evidence that a small number of refugees also move independently through labour mobility without TBB assistance. Data independent movement through labour mobility is, however, unreliable. UNHCR and OECD have started a process to collect and analyse data on the number of refugees moving through complementary pathways, including labour mobility. See UNHCR and OECD, *Safe pathways for refugees: OECD-UNHCR study on third country solutions for refugees*, 2019 update: <http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/safe-pathways-for-refugees-2019-update.pdf>.

⁸² Key informant interview with Janet Ouma, RefugePoint. 24 April 2020.

prospective economic immigrants but may not know or be authorized to refer economic program information to qualified refugees.

According to TBB pre-departure surveys, just 20% of candidates who have moved with TBB had attempted to apply for international employment prior to working with TBB.⁸³ Anecdotally, there is a general tendency among refugees to see resettlement or humanitarian visas as the primary avenue open to them. As Janet Ouma from RefugePoint emphasized, when it comes to exploring labour mobility opportunities, “people need to be supported.”

Recommendation 14: TBB should explore working with embassies, the UNHCR and other refugee-serving organizations to disseminate more and better-quality information about the labour mobility opportunities available to refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Identification of refugee skills

The database process, saying we’ve got thousands of people was a really important thing to say they do exist, that messaging made it real, they really do exist.

Kate O’Malley, UNHCR⁸⁴

Employers generally are also unaware of the talent present in refugee populations and have had limited ability to independently access it. There is a need to support the availability of data on refugee skills and qualifications and provide employers with the means to recruit from this talent pool on an ongoing basis. While TBB has developed such a database, other partners, which have traditionally focused on documenting refugee vulnerability for purposes of resettlement, have lacked essential information about skills. The Talent Catalog is a key tool for combating this awareness gap.

Policy barriers

Policy barriers encompass legislative and administrative requirements that disadvantage refugees and other forcibly displaced people on account of their circumstances. These barriers primarily

⁸³ Based on 15 pre-departure surveys conducted with TBB candidates prior to travelling to Australia, Canada and the UK.

⁸⁴ Key informant interview with Kate O’Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

require government leadership to overcome, however TBB has also shown innovative solutions can help to bridge the gaps by supporting candidates to overcome displacement-related policy barriers. TBB has relied on partnerships for many of these solutions and has deliberately developed approaches that can scale.

Work permit criteria

Applicants to economic programs can typically access temporary work permits as a swift route to arrival in order to begin work, and later become permanent residents. In some jurisdictions, refugees are not likely to be eligible for temporary work permits because they cannot demonstrate that they will return to their country of origin or host country at the end of the temporary visa. For example, in Canada regulatory requirements have been interpreted as an obstacle in the issuance of work permits to refugees as they may be unable to demonstrate ties to another country, including country of origin while it is still in conflict. One TBB candidate was, however, recently approved (a nurse deemed an essential worker during the covid-19 crisis, whose work permit was approved in May 2020) and two other applications are in processing. TBB has recommended Canada develop alternative criteria to provide refugee applicants with equitable access to temporary work permits.

Visa processing times

Lengthy visa processing times are problematic especially where temporary work permits are not yet an option. In the employer feedback survey for this evaluation employers universally highlighted timely visa processing and relocation of their new employee is a top priority, with several noting they had been frustrated by visa delays.

The immigration process was surprisingly long, it was a learning process for the uninitiated.

TBB staff have been terrific and responsive. The process is taking a long time and our need is great - so that is somewhat frustrating.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Respondents to TBB employer survey, May 2020 (Canada)

There was a delay in the Department of Immigration processing the visa, however TBB kept us updated on timeframes and regularly followed up with the Department in relation to the visa processing process⁸⁶

Under the EMPP Canada has extended "priority processing" for permanent residence applicants referred by TBB and its partner RefugePoint. The participating provinces in the EMPP also extended priority processing of provincial applications. While some permanent residence applications have been processed swiftly in 3 months, priority processing timelines remain highly unpredictable. Work permits can take between 2-7 weeks to process and would be highly advantageous.

Australia has also applied priority processing of permanent residence applications under the humanitarian stream, but processing times have also remained highly variable. TBB envisages visa processing times reducing significantly under the Skilled Refugee Pilot/Labour Agreement model, given the service standard for applications under Labour Agreement streams is far lower than for skilled visas normally or even the fastest humanitarian visa processing timeframes.

Work experience requirement

Many economic programs require applicants to have a minimum number of years of recent, paid, and related work experience. Meeting this requirement is a common barrier for refugees because many face work restrictions in their host country, in law or practice. As a result, they may work informally or in unrelated fields to make a living. Some take volunteer or internship positions, which are typically unpaid, in order to contribute their skills and stay current in their field. Even if employers are interested in candidates with older experience, or with recent unpaid experience, these candidates may be ineligible for the visa pathway.

According to feedback surveys nearly 55% of TBB candidates are currently unemployed, and of those working, nearly 60% are employed below their education or skill level (and the vast majority do not have work rights).⁸⁷ TBB's teams in Jordan and Lebanon have identified that women face

⁸⁶ Respondent to TBB employer survey, May 2020 (Australia)

⁸⁷ According to 2020 candidate survey with 253 respondents

higher unemployment rates than men - nearly double according to a 2019 analysis of 34 women engaged by TBB about their skills profile.

Analysis by TBB in Canada of 91 candidates in a data sample of shortlists for employers found that 24 candidates, or more than a quarter of those eligible for a job opportunity, did not have the work experience required by an immigration pathway. TBB has recommended Canada consider recognition of unpaid and internship experience as well as older experience, however this recommendation has not yet been adopted. In Australia, employer-sponsored visas require either 2 years' or 3 years' post qualification experience depending on the visa. To overcome this hurdle, TBB is pursuing a concession to work experience requirement (length and evidence) through Labour Agreement negotiations with the Australian government.

Formal skills assessment

Some economic programs require applicants to undertake a formal skills assessment to demonstrate that the applicant meets the requisite skills and qualification levels for the role. This is typically undertaken by a third party (that is not the government or employer). Assessments are lengthy, expensive and often not accessible in refugee-hosting countries.

Twenty-five percent of TBB candidates considered for open roles in Australia indicated they may have challenges providing complete documentation of their qualifications and professional registrations, putting them at a significant disadvantage when being assessed by third-party skills assessors. As with any normal recruitment process, employers working with TBB assess candidate skills through technical interviews, applying tests and using technology to validate skills.

TBB has explored working with skills assessing bodies to apply a more flexible approach to their skills assessments with TBB candidates. For example, TBB worked with the Australian Physiotherapy Council to assess eligibility of a Palestinian physiotherapist for licensing in Australia. Because of his Palestinian refugee status, the physiotherapist was not able to register with the Order of Physiotherapists in Lebanon, which would normally disqualify him from eligibility with the Australian Physiotherapy Council. The Council agreed, however, to accept a statutory declaration from the candidate that although their degree would normally allow them to join the Order of

Physiotherapists in Lebanon, he was not able to do so as a Palestinian refugee. On this basis the Australian Physiotherapy Council assessed the candidate as eligible, and also waived the assessment fee in light of the candidate's circumstances.

While this example shows this barrier can be overcome on a case by case basis, negotiating with skills assessing bodies for every candidate is not a scalable solution. In order to address this barrier, TBB is working with the Australian government on a solution in the Labour Agreement whereby employers take responsibility for assessing skill as part of the recruitment process.

Age

Some economic programs require applicants to be under a certain age at the time of application for either temporary and/or permanent visas. For example, in Australia applicants for the permanent Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) must be under the age of 45, unless they are paid above the Fair Work High Income Threshold (c. \$140k AUD). Registrants on the Talent Catalog are overwhelmingly under 45 years old. Fifty percent of registrants are between 18 and 30 years old, and 42% are between 31 and 45 years old. In some sectors however, particularly related to skill trades, it is common to find suitable candidates in their 50s. Many of these types of candidates are in high demand by employers around the world. TBB is currently negotiating a concession to lift the age requirement to 55 as part of its Labour Agreement with the Australian government.

Language ability requirement

Many economic programs require a minimum language test score. Many people living displaced have limited time and financial resources to dedicate to language acquisition. In addition, their work in informal jobs with local or national employers may make it more unlikely that refugees are working in English or other common business languages.

Many candidates who might otherwise qualify for jobs cannot be put forward because they won't meet the visa pathway's English language requirements. TBB assists candidates to improve their English skills so they have a better chance of passing language test requirements. For example,

one candidate - a nurse - was screened out from consideration by a Canadian employer in 2018, and when she later improved her English she was shortlisted and hired by Glen Haven Manor. While upskilling in displacement is a viable workaround in some instances, in many cases it is not the optimum solution. Candidates are much more likely to quickly develop their English skills in an English-speaking work environment, and anecdotally TBB has seen that often candidates are not at the immigration pathway standard of English, despite prospective employers being satisfied that they meet their English language requirements.

For example, in Australia employer sponsored and skilled visas require an academic IELTS of 5.0 or 6.0 for all test components - reading, writing, listening, speaking. Fourteen percent of TBB candidates put forward to Australian employers had “functional English” deemed by TBB and the respective employer to be suitable for the role but would not meet the IELTS 5 threshold. TBB is seeking to address this barrier through concessions to English language requirements, under negotiation for the Labour Agreement.

Valid passport requirement

Many economic programs require a valid (current) passport or another accepted travel document (such as a Laissez-Passer). A copy of the passport is to be included with the application and original presented upon landing. Refugees may have an expired passport or no passport, and they may be unable to renew or obtain a new one. The requirement could exclude refugees in these circumstances even if they have alternative means of identification.

Through the EMPP the Canadian federal and provincial governments have enabled candidates with expired passports to apply using alternative proof of identification, and the federal government allowed them to receive a Single Journey Travel Document as an alternative travel document. The Single Journey Travel Document can be issued by a Canadian Embassy in exceptional circumstances and at no cost to applicants for permanent residence. It is an existing solution, but one that required facilitation under the EMPP. So far in Canada 3 families have applied for visas under these flexible arrangements (3 applied with an expired passport; 2 traveled with SJTDs to date).

Valid passports are not only required for visa and mobility but also to register and undergo language examinations at international testing bodies like the British Council. TBB has had some success in negotiating with the British Council to allow candidates sitting English exams to do so using expired passports.

Documentary proof

Many economic programs require substantial documentary proof to complete an immigration application. A common challenge faced by TBB candidates is providing proof of work experience in situations where employment is in the informal market in a host country, or where employers are out of contact in a home country. Candidates who are currently working in Jordan and Lebanon in their fields but illegally may not be in a position to easily prove it, as employers often refuse to provide employment or experience letters out of fear that they might be penalized by the government of Jordan or Lebanon. Jordan's penalties for illegally hiring a non-Jordanian in a closed sector can start with 1000 JOD (around 1400 USD) and go up to the complete closure of business in case of repeated violation of closed sectors regulations.⁸⁸

Some candidates are also unable to provide traditional proof of marriage, which is linked in these cases to the challenges of marriage in displacement. Some discretion exists in immigration decision-making to ensure that these challenges are not a barrier to a successful application, however, candidates are likely to face challenges in adequately presenting this information without legal support.

All TBB candidates have had challenges collecting documentation of some kind. TBB has sought to overcome these barriers by ensuring all candidates have high quality legal advice and assistance on their immigration applications.

In Canada, TBB has also partnered with World Education Services (WES) towards no-cost Educational Credential Assessments (ECAs) to assist with documentation challenges. Under this

⁸⁸ Advice provided by Haitham Kukhun, former TBB Jordan Country Director and Independent Consultant, via email 25 May 2020.

partnership, TBB is a referral partner of the WES Gateway Program which provides alternative credential evaluations to refugees from certain countries, including Syria, who are missing traditional documentation of their education.

Settlement funds requirement

Many economic programs require applicants to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds to prove their ability to establish themselves on arrival. These funds typically must be “unencumbered” by debt. Given most refugees are unable to work in their professions or receive decent pay in their host countries, due to restrictions in law or practice based on their status, they have often exhausted their savings. These circumstances inhibit many refugees from having the savings to meet proof of settlement funds requirements. (In Canada, migrants can generally overcome this barrier by first accessing temporary work permits, which do not require proof of settlement funds, while building their savings - see section on temporary work permits above.) Compounding the challenge of meeting this requirement is the likelihood that refugees do not have a bank account, as bank statements are typically required as proof of savings.

To overcome this barrier, Canada has enabled TBB to provide one-time philanthropic grants in a new deposit-only bank account to candidates as an alternative means to meet the settlement funds threshold. One candidate required this assistance to date. While a philanthropic grant is not a scalable solution, TBB continues to work with the IRCC to explore other alternatives, and in some cases, provincial governments exercised discretion in evaluating candidate funds and accepted lower thresholds.

Exit fees and permits

Many source countries require refugees to pay exit permit fees that can be extremely costly and complicated to obtain. If not paid, the refugees are either prohibited from departing the host country or often banned from returning for a prolonged period of time, which can cause future logistical issues as well as complications when trying to obtain other visas for travel.

In Jordan, every refugee family member including newborn babies born in Jordan must pay 1.5 JOD (more than 2USD) per day of residing in Jordan after the expiration of their entry visa or their residency (774 USD per year per family member). Syrians in Jordan are legally exempted from these fees, so none of TBB's candidates in Jordan so far have paid exit fees, however TBB is currently assisting an Iraqi candidate with a job offer and visa for Canada who will likely have to pay exit fees for the two months and a half that he will have spent in Jordan after his student residency expired.

In Lebanon, candidates must pay exit fees of 200 USD per year of illegal residency per individual over the age of 14. One TBB candidate moving to Canada had to pay exit fees to the government in Lebanon amounting to \$1,318 CAD. For larger families who have been in the country for several years, this can often cost several thousand dollars.⁸⁹ TBB has also been building a relationship with the head of Lebanese General Security who has agreed to consider TBB candidate exit arrangements on a case by case basis. So far one candidate travelling to Australia was able to have his exit fees waived under this arrangement and discussions for a more formal exemption policy to include all TBB candidates are underway.

TBB has had positive experiences working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to navigate these exit fees and permit arrangements. For example, IOM has assisted some cases that have travelled to Australia. In those cases, the employer in Australia requests IOM Canberra to issue a quote, and once a deposit is paid IOM makes all the arrangements, including assisting at the airport and in transit to make sure that refugees travel safely to Australia. TBB is now routinely asking employers in Australia to use the IOM travel booking service for flights. TBB has not used this approach in Canada given the organization is currently working with Miles4Migrants to provide candidates access to free flights through donated air miles (see "offsetting candidate costs" section below).

⁸⁹ UNHCR advises some refugees have to pay up to US\$4,000 for their overstay fines. Key informant interview with Angela Murru, UNHCR. 29 April 2020.

Settlement, social and health services on arrival

Economic migration programs typically provide more limited government-funded services to newcomers than humanitarian programs. In some countries, on some visa pathways, this is more pronounced. In Canada, there are robust settlement and other public services provided to all newcomers, but there are some key differences between economic immigrants and resettled refugees, notably that resettled refugees receive direct financial assistance and more “wraparound” or specialized support. Refugees moving on economic pathways may therefore face initial challenges on account of having little or no savings, which makes covering living costs prior to receiving a first pay cheque difficult. Candidates on economic pathways also face wait times for health insurance in some provinces. Three candidates supported by TBB who arrived in Ontario in 2019 had a mandatory wait period of three months of residence before eligibility for provincial healthcare coverage. One family had to access pro bono, non-urgent medical assistance during this waiting period.

In Australia some temporary employer sponsored visas do not allow access to any publicly-funded services, including healthcare, primary and secondary education for dependents, English language classes or social security. Accordingly, candidates must pay for access to these services which are very costly. As noted previously, TBB’s independent evaluation by Margaret Piper highlighted this as a significant issue, particularly for candidates with families.⁹⁰ To resolve this issue, under Labour Agreement negotiations TBB is seeking to use economic visas that do allow access to essential social supports, particularly Medicare (healthcare), government schooling and formal arrangements for English language tuition, particularly for spouses and children.

TBB has also coordinated closely with employers and some local organizations in both Australia and Canada to fill key settlement gaps. Many of these supports align with what is typically provided by private sponsorship groups who support resettled refugees, and TBB believes many good practices from private sponsorship can be voluntarily replicated by employers of refugees moving on economic immigration pathways.

⁹⁰ Margaret Piper AM, Talent Beyond Boundaries Australia Pilot Evaluation, Summary Report, p. 8, 27 November 2019, p. 8, available from <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/talent-catalog>.

Employers have had different levels of involvement in settlement. A few have provided a lighter touch, with airport pick-up and orientation only. The majority have provided much more than that. Support provided by employers has included many of the following:

- 80% of candidates received free initial temporary accommodation of between 2 weeks and 2 months
- 80% of candidates received assistance with home search and arranging permanent accommodation (with some employers even leasing accommodation under their company name or co-signing/going guarantor on leases)
- 70% of candidates were provided orientation services (such as showing candidates the area and where to get things)
- 60% of candidates were provided with a cash allowance/transition payment
- A wide range of other supports, including: purchasing groceries upon arrival; provision of furniture; subsidized health insurance; free tax advice; subsidizing English language classes for spouse; rent subsidy and payment of electricity bills; transport and driving the employee and their family to appointments, and supporting applications for government services⁹¹

All TBB candidates surveyed six months after their arrival told TBB they were satisfied with the support provided by employers and 90% were “very satisfied”.⁹²

Moving forward, collecting good practices and conducting further awareness-raising with employers may help to increase their involvement. TBB is also increasingly supporting employers to prepare for the arrival of their new employee and their family and has provided a range of tips in its “Guide for Employers on Arrival and Settlement” (currently geared towards Canadian employers). TBB should continue to build on these resources and tailor them to other jurisdictions.

⁹¹ Data from TBB Alumni feedback survey at 6 month interval

⁹² As above, based on first 10 candidates who have reached 6-month mark

TBB could also consider asking for settlement commitments from employers as the terms of hiring partnerships, although a flexible approach is advised, given settlement support is not core business for employers. Developing employer or community support models is part of TBB's pipeline-building approach to efficiency and scale.

Operational barriers

Operational barriers encompass procedural issues and practical circumstances that put refugees and other displaced applicants at a disadvantage when applying for economic immigration. TBB has been working with governments, UNHCR and other NGOs to help to overcome these barriers.

Complexity of immigration applications

If you send people to the IRCC website you're wasting their time, people who are overqualified without any impediments can't navigate it.

Michael Casasola, UNHCR Canada⁹³

Applications to economic programs are typically highly complex and competitive, as evidenced by a global industry of immigration legal services. For example, in Australia an application for an employer sponsored visa is a 3-step process requiring sponsorship, nomination and visa applications to be completed by employers and visa applicants. The process is highly technical, and this is the same in Canada, UK and many other countries. Furthermore, these regulations are extremely variable between different countries, and frequently evolving within any given country.

Economic immigrants from all parts of the world rely on the services of immigration lawyers and agents to navigate program requirements and to successfully apply. Refugees typically do not have the resources or connections to retain immigration legal services to consult on their eligibility, to collect and translate the required documents, and to apply.

Added to this, many immigration legal specialists have not developed capacity to work with clients who potentially have very complex barriers. For example, according to Petra Playfair, CEO of

⁹³ Key informant interview with Michael Casasola, UNHCR Canada. 28 April 2020.

Playfair Visa and Migration Services, who provides immigration advice to TBB employers and candidates:

A corporate migration agent wouldn't know how to approach a client who doesn't have documents, who has limited English, or lack identity etc; secondly the training and personality of these professionals is to stick to the rules (liability) and inflexible... (won't work outside the box).⁹⁴

Throughout the pilot period TBB has built relationships with a range of trusted immigration specialists in Australia, Canada and the UK who have the capacity and commitment to work with refugee clients. Increasingly this includes large commercial firms like Ernst and Young (EY) and Fragomen, who are engaged on a commercial basis either by the employer, or by TBB with funds from the employer. Key to scaling this solution will be making the case to employers for investing in good legal advice, and TBB supporting more immigration advisory services to develop the capacity required to effectively serve TBB candidates.

Recommendation 15: TBB should support more immigration advisory services to develop the capacity required to effectively serve refugees and other forcibly displaced candidates through labour mobility. TBB or other partners could also consider trialing in-house immigration legal expertise.

Financial barriers

Financial barriers refer to the costs associated with migration and the barriers refugees face in accessing finance. TBB encountered the following kinds of cost barriers in facilitating labour mobility for candidates over the pilot period.

- **Legal services / migration agent fees** - professional service providers supported TBB's candidates to file successful visa applications.
- **Language testing fees** - some economic immigration routes required candidates to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in a relevant language. This was done through taking internationally recognized tests from certified providers.

⁹⁴ Key informant interview with Petra Playfair, Playfair Visa and Migration Services.

- **Educational assessment fees** - some economic immigration routes TBB candidates used in the pilot phase required candidates to have their educational documents (e.g. diplomas or transcripts) certified by a relevant national body.
- **Other documentation fees** - many applicants needed to obtain or renew documents such as passports, IDs, security clearances or police certificates to include with their applications.
- **Translation fees** - applications required substantive documentation of the applicant's personal and professional history, which frequently needed to be translated and/certified as part of the application process.
- **Visa application fees** - governments required a payment at the time of submission of a visa application. Some economic immigration programs required a multi-phase application (a sub-national government application followed by a national government application); each phase had an associated fee.
- **Medical screening and biometrics fees** - screenings carried out in the applicant's current country of residence prior to their immigration.
- **Transportation costs** - airfare and ground transit for the applicant and their family.
- **Exit fees** - as outlined above, some candidates were required to pay fees to the country of first asylum corresponding to the amount of time they had spent irregularly in the country.
- **Healthcare costs** - some economic immigration programs required employers to cover healthcare costs for an international worker for a set period of time.
- **Other immigration fees** - some economic immigration programs required employers who sought to hire from abroad to pay into specific funds.
- **Post-arrival expenses** - such as finding permanent accommodation and purchasing furniture.

These costs can significantly vary depending on multiple factors including: candidate's nationality; family composition; country of current residence; employer's country of operation (Australia, Canada or the UK); employer's city of operation (state, territory, province); employer's size (which influences visa fees payable); visa type or visa program and other unique candidate circumstances (such as health issues).

Typically an applicant for economic immigration to Canada may expect to pay, including immigration legal services, nearly \$14,000 CAD.⁹⁵ In Australia, a family of three applying for a temporary employer sponsored visa may expect to pay \$14,000 AUD (if they had to cover visa fees and flights).⁹⁶ For the UK, the cost of visa fees and compulsory NHS surcharge for a 4 year visa for a family of three is GBP 8,460. This does not include immigration lawyer fees.

Cost sharing and capacity to pay

TBB believes these costs can be shared among each of the beneficiaries of the labour mobility outcome - namely: the candidate themselves, their employer, and governments (both sending government, who may waive exit fees in order to benefit from having one less irregular non-citizen in their territory; and the receiving government who benefits from the workers' economic contribution and taxation revenue).

One aim of the pilot phase was therefore to understand the capacity and willingness to pay of different stakeholders who participate in or benefit from the labour migration of any individual refugee. TBB recognized that until a self-sustaining cost sharing arrangement is developed for the model, it would be essential to secure philanthropic funds to meet some direct costs, as well as to fund TBB's programmatic costs.⁹⁷

Employer willingness to pay

Costs relating to each individual recruitment during the pilot phase were highly variable. Some larger employers expended as much as US\$20,000 or more in visa and relocation costs for their candidates, commensurate with the relocation packages they normally provide to workers recruited from abroad. Whereas other employers committed as little as \$3,545 USD towards the cost of

⁹⁵ Canada Immigration Cost analysis by TBB

⁹⁶ TBB Sponsor Cost Calculator, 482 visa, four years duration, family of 3 (two adults, one child).

⁹⁷ For the purposes of this evaluation, TBB is looking only at those costs which are "programmatic," and directly support the movement of families. This excludes administrative or overhead costs, as well as the costs of global advocacy which creates an enabling environment.

international recruitment and relocation.⁹⁸ Under these circumstances the candidates and TBB (backed by philanthropy) bridged the gap in funding required.

Results from TBB's employer survey suggests that TBB's program is not perceived by employers on the whole to be more expensive than other forms of international recruitment.⁹⁹ Forty-one percent felt the costs were about the same and 14% of respondents felt TBB's program is actually less expensive than other international recruitment. Twelve respondents were unsure about this question, having not been involved in the financial side of the recruitment.

One employer noted that they had to commit more money towards the settlement of their nurse employee when she arrives than they would normally provide. "We don't do that for other nurses that we recruit from overseas. While some countries have costs associated with recruitment (the Philippines), most countries do not (China, Uganda, etc)".¹⁰⁰

Employers on the whole recognized that there would be potentially a range of non-financial costs involved in hiring a displaced person from abroad, particularly in relation to settlement. For example, a respondent in Australia said, "Time and effort needs to be given to help the person and their family settle into both the work environment and address personal issues as a result of individual circumstances".¹⁰¹ Another respondent in the UK said that "relocation costs are either on par or more expensive than other international recruitment" and "there are additional non-financial costs in terms of time to ensure that the individual is given the best support and guidance in settling into a new culture and environment ... however the impact is significantly higher in terms of company pride and social responsibility / supporting an inclusive and diverse workforce".¹⁰² Another respondent in Canada said: "I think the cost to get a person settled is not insignificant but not to go the extra way is unjust. If you want a good employee give them a good start".¹⁰³

⁹⁸ Costs documented by TBB based on expenses reported by employers and candidates.

⁹⁹ TBB employer survey, based on responses from 38 employer representatives.

¹⁰⁰ Respondent to TBB employer survey, May 2020.

¹⁰¹ As above.

¹⁰² Respondent to TBB employer survey, May 2020.

¹⁰³ As above.

These comments indicate that even though cost is a major consideration for many employers, many are already making a significant investment to hire talent from abroad and are willing to pay to attract highly talented refugees. Many are also willing to pay at the higher end of the spectrum in order to secure bespoke support and engage in the perceived larger benefits of the program.

Candidate capacity to pay

Normally in a skilled migration situation the migrant would pay any direct costs that are not covered by an employer in facilitating the relocation. Many refugees are unable to cover these costs because they have little or no savings nor a source of income. At the same time, many host countries restrict refugees from accessing bank credit and loans for a variety of reasons, including fear of prolonged stay in the country and security concerns (such as the risk of money laundering). Since many refugees are unable to provide proper identification and are often illegally in their host country, access to any form of banking is restricted. Some NGOs and microfinance institutions are trying to fill this void but usually for very small amounts of money at high interest rates. Most are also unwilling to provide loans in the host country that will then be repaid after the refugee has relocated abroad.

Offsetting candidate costs

As indicated in the case examples above, TBB has as a result been subsidizing the immigration costs for some candidates. TBB has also brokered in-kind support to alleviate the costs on candidates. For example, TBB partners with Miles4Migrants, a non-profit that uses donated frequent flyer miles to provide flights for refugees to relocate. To date, Miles4Migrants has flown 11 passengers referred by TBB to Canada, which represents 425,000 miles redeemed and a cash value of \$11,227 USD. The travel request process has been smooth and there have been few operational challenges for candidates in flight.

During the pilot period TBB has also experimented with pro bono legal support and determined that in order to scale the model it is critical that legal services are provided on a commercial basis. While several pro bono lawyers have made an enormous contribution to helping TBB prove its

concept, offering countless hours of free advice, relying on free advice on a timeline acceptable to corporate partners is not a scalable solution.

Advance payments and loans and candidate willingness to borrow

In the later stages of its pilot project, TBB has begun notifying candidates at the outset of their engagement with TBB that they will be responsible for covering any costs associated with their migration that are not covered by employers. When candidates have lacked sufficient funds to cover these costs, TBB has paid for expenses on the basis that candidates repay TBB once they arrive at their destination. TBB does not charge interest and has guaranteed that candidates will not be responsible for repaying these loans in the event of an unsuccessful visa application. Of the small number of candidates who have received loans from TBB and have been in their destination countries for over one year, all have repaid in full within the first six months.

TBB's core business is not microfinance or lending. As TBB's model scales, it will be important for the organization to bring in the right partners to ensure the provision and management of loans and their repayment is done in accordance with best lending practices and financial regulations.

One approach adopted by TBB has been to connect candidates with existing migration loan schemes, where these exist. The Immigration Loans Program (ILP) in Canada is one such scheme, which consists of four types of loans to support immigrants to Canada to cover the costs of their journey. These are the admissibility loan, assistance loan, Right of Permanent Residence Fee loan, and transportation loan. Currently, both resettled refugees and economic immigrants are eligible for all loans, with the exception of the admissibility loan, for which economic immigrants are not eligible. In practice, the overwhelming majority of loan recipients are resettled refugees who are assisted with loan applications by Canadian visa officers prior to departure. Working with TBB, Canada clarified that economic immigrants are eligible for some ILP loans and facilitated access to the assistance loan upon arrival for some TBB candidates. So far two families have accessed Canada's ILP for a basic assistance loan intended to cover the necessities of life; both families arrived with very low savings and required this assistance prior to a first pay cheque.

In 2019 TBB approached Windmill Microlending, a Canadian non-profit, to partner towards developing a loan product and raising the funds. This solution is currently in development. Windmill is an established loan services provider with a mandate to support inclusive prosperity for newcomers to Canada by supporting career advancement, and pairs lending with financial literacy and counseling. So far, Windmill has focused its loan products on clients who are already in Canada. TBB will become a new loan introducer to Windmill, and Windmill will serve as the loan funder and servicer to TBB candidates with job offers who need funds to immigrate to Canada.

TBB is also in discussions with Westpac Bank in Australia about an arrangement whereby once candidates arrive in Australia, if they are unable to repay TBB in a certain period of time, they can obtain a normal personal loan from Westpac which does not require an Australian credit history. This initiative is currently in early stages of design in collaboration with the Cameron Foundation.

Focus groups with successful candidates undertaken as part of this evaluation indicate candidates are willing to contribute to the costs of immigration either through savings or loans under appropriate conditions:

It's a good idea to get the candidate involved with the financial aspect. The employer might not be able to cover everything ... If the candidate already is earning an income, then the candidate can also give back to TBB.

Some people pay a lot of money, sometimes over \$10,000 to go illegally to Europe, so offering them a financial alternative to go legally can be a good idea.

It's a good approach. The concern is at what point the candidate is going to be expected to pay back, how much it is, and how long they would have to pay it back. It's a good idea that candidates can contribute back.¹⁰⁴

Overcoming the barriers

TBB's program has demonstrated the viability of a labour mobility solution for refugees by testing mobility barriers and proving that many of these can reasonably be overcome. TBB has developed

¹⁰⁴ Responses during TBB Alumni focus groups on 22 April 2020 and 26 April 2020.

innovative solutions in partnership with governments, NGOs, UNHCR, immigration legal services providers, and employers. But more can be done.

Economic programs were not built for refugees and therefore present unintended barriers to their participation in the global, mobile workforce. Through TBB's work, a body of knowledge now exists about the common barriers facing refugees in economic programs in Australia, Canada and the UK, and ways to overcome them. Governments can apply this knowledge to examine their own national programs and evaluate the impacts of policies and regulations on qualified applicants who are living displaced. The barriers outlined above are a good starting place to assess the impacts of economic program rules on refugees compared to other applicants, and to identify if any rules represent barriers that can be overcome to achieve more equitable access.

Recommendation 16: TBB should develop a displacement-based analysis tool for governments and other organizations to use in assessing barriers in skilled migration pathways and considering remedies to make skilled pathways more accessible to refugees and other forcibly displaced people. The tool should draw on lessons captured in this evaluation from the pilot phase as well as more expansive research in other jurisdictions.

Recommendation 17: TBB should work in collaboration with UNHCR and other key partners to advocate for governments to adjust their economic immigration programs to increase third country durable solutions and give refugees and other forcibly displaced people equitable access to these programs.

Objective 3: Build global consensus

The refugee world and the migration world are quite separate in Geneva.

Kate O'Malley, UNHCR¹⁰⁵

What is needed is new kinds of immigration, new ways for migration to happen. [One] answer to this conundrum, among the hundred different ones we need, is in the work of Talent Beyond Boundaries, which I have just admired for years. If you look superficially, it's a nice project helping out these people in conditions of displacement, helping them get jobs and improve their lives. It's much more fundamental than that. It's creating a new kind of migration. It's not traditional refugee resettlement ... It's directly facilitating job placement, finding this legal space within displacement, treating them as a resource rather than a burden. It's a kind of migration the world has never seen, and TBB is inventing that.

Michael Clemens, Center for Global Development¹⁰⁶

Since 2015, TBB has contributed to building significant momentum behind labour mobility as a viable and desirable complementary pathway for refugees and solution for forcibly displaced people - to the point that this solution is now accepted and enshrined in the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration. This shift has required change on two fronts: for actors in the global refugee system to accept a solution for refugees based on their skills rather than vulnerability; and for actors in the global migration system to embrace forcibly displaced people as legitimate beneficiaries of regular skilled migration.

Baseline understanding of labour mobility solution for refugees

To assess how far the concept of labour mobility has shifted we need a baseline to measure against. One of the first serious attempts to explore possibilities for refugees to access contemporary labour migration programs was made by the then Chair-in-Office of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), Ali Mansoor, an economist from Mauritius, who convened a workshop in Geneva with UNHCR and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in

¹⁰⁵ Key informant interview with Kate O'Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Clemens, Remarks Delivered at a Side Event of the Global Compact for Migration Adoption Conference, 9 December 2018. Available from: <https://talentbeyondboundaries.org/s/SideEventGlobalCompactOnMigrationAdoptionConference.pdf>

2012 to discuss the subject.¹⁰⁷ The workshop aimed to provide an opportunity for States, international organizations and academics to discuss whether and how labour mobility could increase employment opportunities and freedom of movement for refugees. Participants also considered whether labour mobility could facilitate durable solutions without undermining protection principles.

The first notable observation from this workshop is that there was no involvement of the private sector.¹⁰⁸ The workshop participants considered detailed proposal outlining considerations for the establishment of a temporary labour migration scheme for refugees and their families and even a “Draft model framework on temporary and permanent migration for employment of refugee workers”.¹⁰⁹ However labour mobility was conceived as a solution driven primarily by international organizations and States, informed by migration experts, but without the private sector (“end users”) in mind. The concept note for the workshop hinted at the perceived risks understood to be inherent in a labour mobility solution:

*...while labour mobility can be an important way to increase a refugee’s human development opportunities, it is not a solution as such and can, without appropriate protection safeguards, threaten fundamental refugee protection principles and result in refoulement.*¹¹⁰

A number of key questions posed to the participants during the workshop also demonstrate how conceptually groundbreaking the notion of labour mobility for refugees was at the time: When refugees become labour migrants, will they cease to be refugees? Can a person be a refugee and a labour migrant at the same time? Are there minimum safeguards which any migration framework

¹⁰⁷ Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba, Q&A: Economist seeks to boost refugees’ productivity through labour mobility, 15 November 2012. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/news/latest/2012/11/50a4ea1b9/qa-economist-seeks-boost-refugees-productivity-labour-mobility.html>

¹⁰⁸ Participant list: <https://www.unhcr.org/509a82979.html>

¹⁰⁹ The agreement was informed by the ILO Model Agreement on Temporary and Permanent Migration for Employment, including Migration of Refugees and Displaced Persons annexed to ILO Recommendation R 86 Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised) of 1949. See: <https://www.unhcr.org/509a82ef9.html>

¹¹⁰ UNHCR, Workshop on Refugees and Labour Mobility, Concept Note, September 2012. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/509a82749.html>.

for refugees has to include?¹¹¹ Can labour mobility be a permanent scheme leading to a durable solution?¹¹² It is also clear from the documentation of the workshop that the conceptualization of labour mobility was as a regional mobility solution (eg. where a nurse who is a refugee stuck in a country where they are not able to legally work is given a chance to move to a neighboring country where they desperately need more nurses).¹¹³ No examples of implementing organizations or active initiatives were cited in the workshop proceedings.

Labour mobility as a complementary pathway

UNHCR was trying to get its head around the complexities of what it meant to develop Complementary Pathways; there was a lot of institutional angst and policy tensions that exist when you're to look at these pathways. It was interesting to watch TBB on the outside trying to crack the nut.

Kate O'Malley, UNHCR¹¹⁴

TBB has been instrumental in raising the profile of labour mobility as a durable solution.

Durable Solutions Platform¹¹⁵

By the time TBB was being formed in 2015, the concept of a scalable labour mobility solution for refugees was still a very novel proposition. But the notion of “complementary pathways for admission” was starting to gain traction as the global refugee population rapidly grew, and the international community was looking for new solutions. Volker Türk, UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at the time, was a strong supporter of complementary pathways and the concept of employment-based solutions.¹¹⁶ According to Cath Scarth, CEO of AMES Australia:

¹¹¹ Safeguards were ultimately set out in 2016 in the ILO Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, 28 November 2016. Available from:

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/projects/WCMS_536440/lang--en/index.htm

¹¹² Anja Klug, Labour mobility for refugees – need for protection safeguards? September 2012. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/509a83a415.html>

¹¹³ Anja Klug, as above, p. 7.

¹¹⁴ Key informant interview with Kate O'Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

¹¹⁵ Access to Resettlement and Complementary Pathways for Syrian Refugees, The Durable Solutions Platform, June 2018, p. 20-21, <https://drc.ngo/media/4676369/dsp-resettlement2.pdf>

¹¹⁶ Volker Türk, 66th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme Agenda point 5(a), 8 October 2015. Available from: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5617734e4.html>

*About 5 years ago I was in Geneva meeting Volker Türk when UNHCR was thinking about opening up other pathways other than government sponsored processes. Over that time, TBB's efforts in ... demonstrating a viable complementary pathway are significant.*¹¹⁷

From its inception TBB saw the need to influence the global conceptual development of complementary pathways, to ensure labour mobility's acceptance by stakeholders as a legitimate and desirable solution, and to pave the way for these stakeholders to "crowd in" to scale the solution. TBB also recognized that international standards and agreements have long-term effects on international and state policy, funding programs, and civil society priorities.

TBB engaged actively in discussions leading up to the 2016 New York Declaration committing UN Member States to "consider the expansion of ... opportunities for labour mobility for refugees, including through private sector partnerships".¹¹⁸ TBB then continued its advocacy and participation in the consultative processes leading to Global Compact on Refugees, the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways and the Global Compact for Migration - all core normative documents which ultimately embraced labour mobility as legitimate solutions for refugees and displaced peoples.

Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)

TBB has also engaged actively with the Business Mechanism of the GFMD, the platform for businesses to engage with Governments and other stakeholders on migration issues and policies concerning the mass migration of people around the globe. Gary Slaiman, TBB's pro bono Corporate Outreach Advisor, is a corporate lawyer in Washington, D.C. who represents some of the world's largest companies. Gary joined the Business Mechanism discussions in 2016 and is currently serving a two-year term on the executive committee of the Business Advisory Group. Through Gary's work, TBB has become an influential voice within the Business Mechanism with expertise on labour mobility matters.

¹¹⁷ Key informant interview with Cath Scarth, AMES Australia, 23 April 2020.

¹¹⁸ United Nations, UNGA Resolution 71/1, "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants", Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1, 14[79].

Prior to 2016, refugees were generally considered out of scope of discussions on migration in the GFMD and were, instead, seen solely within the purview of UNHCR's protection mandate.¹¹⁹ TBB's contribution to the GFMD has been to promote the concept and reality that refugees, like other migrants, are fully capable of contributing to economic development and that skilled people among the displaced should be able to move through work visas.

Over time, important government and civil society stakeholders within the GFMD have grown to accept that mixed migration, including by those displaced by conflict, is an appropriate and even necessary topic for consideration at these forums. As one indicator of this, Gary was asked to chair one of four subcommittees formed by the Business Mechanism to share learning and develop policies for government consideration at regular forum meetings and GFMD summits. The subcommittee was initially called the "committee on innovations for migrant and refugee access to labour markets"; and later renamed the "committee on mixed migration: integration through skills development and *skills mobility pathways*".¹²⁰ This indicates the shift in thinking towards the notion of labour mobility for migrants and displaced people.

Although the topic is still controversial among some governments, the recognition of displaced people as relevant beneficiaries of global, regional and national policies on migration was confirmed in the Global Compact for Migration, adopted in Marrakech concurrent with the GFMD 2018 Summit. The impact of TBB's association with the Business Mechanism is best highlighted through significant events of the GFMD's Annual Summits.

TBB's role in the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration

The respective Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants and related documents emerging from these agreements provide the normative framework within which TBB can continue to build. Table 6 below highlights TBB's contributions to these agreements.

Table 5: TBB's contribution to the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration

¹¹⁹ Key informant interview with Gary Slaiman, Corporate Outreach Advisor. 23 April 2020.

¹²⁰ Business Advisory Group on Migration, Mixed Migration, November 2019. Available from: <https://gfmdbusinessmechanism.org/mixed-migration/>

Negotiations	TBB's Impact
Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)	
<p>The Global Compact on Refugees is the most significant inter-governmentally negotiated agreement at a global scale on the management of refugees in decades. The GCR has set the global agenda for addressing the challenge of displacement in the decades ahead.</p> <p>Signatory states are expected to align their refugee policies and programs with the principles stated in the Compact and pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.</p> <p>Prior to TBB's engagement in the drafting process, labour mobility was not highlighted as a priority solution to be pursued. TBB attended consultations in the drafting process of the GCR and provided text edits to the drafters, which were included in the final Compact.</p>	<p>TBB successfully advocated for the following language to be adopted as part of the GCR (see text in bold)</p> <p><i>Public-private partnerships will be explored,¹⁷ in full respect of the humanitarian principles, including: possible new institutional arrangements and methodologies for the creation of commercial business venture conditions and financial/business instruments; to support refugee and host community employment and labour mobility; and to enable greater opportunities for private sector investment...</i></p> <p>Other contributions in terms of complementary pathways could include humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors and other humanitarian admission programmes; educational opportunities for refugees (including women and girls) through grant of scholarships and student visas, including through partnerships between governments and academic institutions; and labour mobility opportunities for refugees, including through the identification of refugees with skills that are needed in third countries.¹²¹</p> <p>UNHCR has subsequently developed an indicator framework for implementation of the GCR which includes tracking the "number of refugees admitted through complementary pathways from the host country", which will include labour mobility.¹²²</p> <p>Canada also highlighted its work with TBB as an example of its leadership in implementing the GCR and recognized the work as affirming principles of the GCR.¹²³</p>

¹²¹ Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Part II, Global compact on refugees Global Compact on Refugees, A/73/12 (Part II), 19[95] available from: https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf

¹²² UNHCR, Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Framework, Outcome 3.2: Refugees have access to complementary pathways for admission to third countries; Indicator for 3.2.1 Number of refugees admitted through complementary pathways from the host country, p. 10. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/5cf907854.pdf>.

¹²³ Global Refugee Forum, Statement by the Government of Canada Delivered by the Honourable Marco E.L. Mendicino, December 2019. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5df9f3f94/statement-from-canada.html> <https://www.unhcr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/The-Economic-Mobility-Pathways-Project-Policy-Principles-and-Lessons-Learned-June-2019.pdf>.

Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways	
<p>The three-Year Strategy is both a roadmap for expansion over the next three years (2019-2021), and an ambitious blueprint for the further development of third country solutions over the next 10 years (2019-2028) to achieve the goals of the GCR.</p> <p>TBB attended several consultations and provided text edits to the strategy.</p> <p>There will be an annual yearly review of the strategy at the Global Refugee Forum, countries will be held accountable for their progress. Although non-binding, TBB expects the strategy to guide countries' funding and policy direction decisions.</p>	<p>The 3-year strategy commits to make complementary pathways for admission, including labour opportunities, "increasingly available to persons in need of international protection" and recommends Governments in receiving countries "open up existing or establish new protection sensitive family reunification, employment or education pathways for refugees, including through removing legal, administrative, and physical barriers limiting refugee access".¹²⁴</p> <p>TBB successfully advocated for the inclusion of a commitment to create "Tools to match refugee profiles and skills with existing complementary pathways opportunities", paving the way for the expanded use and uptake of TBB's Talent Catalog or similar data-based matching systems.</p> <p>The strategy includes this reference to TBB: In partnership with UNHCR, Talent Beyond Boundaries, a civil society initiative, has developed a talent catalog to facilitate employment of refugees in third countries through labour mobility schemes.</p>
Global Compact for Migration (GCM)	
<p>In 2017, TBB led one of the four subcommittees of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) Business Mechanism entitled, "Innovations for Migrant and Refugee Access to Labour Markets." Over the year, the Business Mechanism and GFMD suggested inputs to the GCM. TBB's key recommendations were included in the GFMD's input, and TBB was cited as a best practice example in a report prepared by the GFMD to guide</p>	<p>TBB advocated for the following language to be adopted as part of the GCM (see text in bold)</p> <p>Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration</p> <p>We commit to adapt options and pathways for regular migration in a manner that facilitates labour mobility and decent work reflecting demographic and labour market realities, optimizes education opportunities, upholds the right to family life, and responds to the needs of migrants in a situation of vulnerability, with a view to expanding and diversifying availability of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration.</p> <p>Develop or build on existing national and regional practices</p>

¹²⁴ UNHCR, The Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, p. 29, June 2019. Available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/5d15db254.pdf>

<p>GCM negotiations in 2017.¹²⁵ In May 2019, at a nongovernmental stakeholders consultation on the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) (the United Nations led review mechanism of GCM), UNHCR led a session entitled, “Providing Regular Pathways from Crisis to Safety,” and TBB’s work was cited as an example of a response that can serve vulnerable populations who may not qualify for refugee status, such as immigrants displaced by adverse effects of climate change.</p>	<p>for admission and stay of appropriate duration based on compassionate, humanitarian or other considerations for migrants compelled to leave their countries of origin, due to sudden-onset natural disasters and other precarious situations, such as by providing humanitarian visas, private sponsorships, access to education for children, and temporary work permits, while adaptation in or return to their country of origin is not possible.</p> <p>TBB’s efforts to secure concrete language in the GCM on displaced peoples’ access to labour mobility has created opportunities for partnerships to support implementation. As one indicator of this, the Government of Canada entered into a grant agreement with TBB in 2019 citing the goals of the GCM to strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.¹²⁶</p>
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These international compacts drive action at the national level as countries seek to align their policies with these endorsed agreements and are called upon at regular intervals to report to the international community the progress they have made towards fulfilling these common commitments. TBB’s contribution to bringing labour mobility into the mainstream discussion on complementary pathways is evidenced by TBB’s involvement in and contribution to these two historic Compacts.¹²⁷ While the Compacts are non-binding, TBB’s work in Australia and Canada suggest that these create powerful incentives for domestic politicians to support and pursue particular projects. By including language supportive of labour mobility for refugees within these formative agreements, TBB has increased the probability of additional countries pursuing this solution.

¹²⁵ GFMD, Thematic Recollection 2007 – 2017 prepared for the for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Geneva, 22 November 2017, p. 42. Available from: https://www.gfmd.org/files/documents/gfmd_thematic_recollection_2007_to_2017_-_contribution_to_the_gcm.pdf.

¹²⁶ Grant Agreement between Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Talent Beyond Boundaries dated 22 March 2019.

¹²⁷ Key informant interview with David Manicom, UNHCR. 1 May 2020.

Objective 4: Galvanize others to replicate the model

The reality is that the more people you move, the more people you will need on the ground. Partnerships and grafting is the approach you need to take now because it is the easiest way to industrialize.

Senior official, Australian government¹²⁸

Getting other institutions and organizations to work on labour mobility is not just possible but it is essential. I think expansion, scaling, means getting other institutions involved.

Sayre Nyce, Founding Executive Director of TBB¹²⁹

From the outset TBB's mission has been to serve as a catalyst for a new durable solution rather than a sole service-provider. TBB has hypothesized that partners replicating or "grafting" elements of TBB's labour mobility model onto their own refugee programs would be an essential strategy for reaching scale. These elements include TBB's processes, generated knowledge, and technology (in the form of the Talent Catalog). This approach reflects TBB's awareness that as a small organization in an ecosystem of many existing refugee-serving organizations, the most viable path to scale would be through replication as other organizations incorporate the model into their programming.

To put TBB's scale into perspective, TBB has grown from its position as a start-up in 2016 to a global team of 22 experts, 11 of whom are paid staff and the remainder are active pro bono team members, advisors and board members.¹³⁰ TBB has just four paid staff in the Middle East (Middle East Regional Director, Jordan Director and two program officers in Lebanon and Jordan). In contrast, the Union of Relief and Development Associations (URDA) - who helped TBB get set up in Lebanon and remains a close partner - has over 300 staff.¹³¹ TBB's resources seem even more modest when compared to multilateral organizations. For example, the International Organization

¹²⁸ Key informant interview with Senior Official in the Department of Home Affairs, Australian government. 22 April 2020.

¹²⁹ Key informant interview with Sayre Nyce, Founding Executive Director of TBB. 29 April 2020.

¹³⁰ See <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/our-team>

¹³¹ Key informant interview with Bassem Maher, Public Relations Manager at URDA. 24 April 2020.

of Migration (IOM) has 1,100 staff in Turkey alone.¹³² There are also a wide range of refugee-serving organizations in destination countries like Australia, Canada and the UK - many with hundreds of staff involved in the settlement of refugees into the local community. In addition, there is an extensive global mobility industry comprising immigration lawyers, international talent sourcing firms and travel and logistics companies - which could all be leveraged to scale TBB's model.

The opportunity for scale if TBB is able to galvanize these actors is enormous. Lessons from engaging with partners during the pilot phase should guide TBB's approach to establishing a viable partnerships and replication strategy.

Lessons from partnerships

In early May 2020 TBB staff held a global team workshop to share reflections of its experience working with partners at source and destination side, in order to guide development of future partnerships. The reflection focused on TBB's experience working with three key partners that are emblematic of the diverse types of organizations able to make a labour mobility model scale (see Table 7). TBB also conducted key informant interviews with a number of other partners for this evaluation, notably Jumpstart, Playfair Visa and Migration Services and Roots Immigration Law. Reflections from these interviews are incorporated into the analysis below.

¹³² TBB partnership scoping meeting with Phil Eades, IOM Turkey, 15 May 2020.

Table 6: Examples of partnerships TBB has entered into during pilot phase

Partner	Type of organization	Type of partnership	Scale of organization
Refugee Talent (RT)	Social enterprise supporting refugees into the Australian job market	Close collaboration in Australia supported by commercial arrangement (retainer paid to RT for recruitment services) and technology partnership	5 staff across Perth, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne
RefugePoint	Humanitarian NGO serving refugees	Partnering on the EMPP to bring skilled refugees from Kenya to Canada	90 staff members across 20 countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East ¹³³
UNHCR	Multilateral / UN agency	Cooperation agreement	16,803 staff members globally ¹³⁴

Destination country partnership: Refugee Talent

Refugee Talent is a social enterprise co-founded by Anna Robson and Nirary Dacho after they met at a Sydney Techfugee Hackathon in November 2015. Nirary Dacho is a Syrian software engineer with a Masters in Web Science and extensive experience in the IT sector and academia. He came to Australia through the humanitarian resettlement program but could not break into the job market, despite his high demand skills. When they met, Anna had just returned to Australia from Nauru where she was working for Save the Children with refugees and asylum seekers held on the island. She was devastated by witnessing the tragic consequences of people being unable to live their lives and follow their dreams.

They joined together to solve the problem of refugees struggling to get jobs that match their experience in their new country. Their solution, Refugee Talent, is an employment platform where companies can hire diverse talent across Australia. Refugee Talent is now working with a range of

¹³³ RefugePoint, *About: Careers*, available from: <https://www.refugepoint.org/about/careers/>

¹³⁴ UNHCR, *Meet our people*, available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/meet-unhcr-staff.html>.

partners across Australia including refugee settlement organizations and governments to help them improve employment outcomes for refugees using technology. The organization is also expanding into New Zealand.

Approach to partnering

I agree with this approach of partnering with those already existing refugee organizations in source countries and as well in destination countries. TBB has already done it with Refugee Talent ... and with the settlement organizations supporting candidates too. I think it makes sense to partner and be the connector - and provide whatever services are needed in the middle.

Anna Robson, Refugee Talent¹³⁵

From the outset Refugee Talent and TBB's partnership was enabled by technology. In late 2016 John Cameron and Nirary Dacho worked together to build a data bridge between the TBB Talent Catalog and Refugee Talent's employee job search platform (<https://refugeetalent.com/>), enabling Australian employers to search for refugee candidates in Jordan and Lebanon on the platform.

John Cameron's foundation, Cameron Foundation, had a funding relationship with Refugee Talent dating back to 2016. From 2018 TBB began an official funding relationship with Refugee Talent, providing the organization with a monthly retainer to conduct outreach to businesses about TBB's program and provide recruitment services (eg. assisting with shortlisting, HR liaison and scheduling interviews and mock interviews). When candidates started arriving in Australia in 2019 Refugee Talent began providing pre-arrival preparation support (eg. workplace expectations and culture orientation) as well as post-placement support (regular check-ins with employees and employers to address any concerns, if they arise).

TBB and Refugee Talent are a cohesive team in Australia, and indeed staff across TBB's global operations see Refugee Talent as part of the TBB team. Both organizations are regularly coordinating their strategies and staff feel like they are "on the journey together".¹³⁶ TBB has

¹³⁵ Key informant interview with Anna Robson, CEO of Refugee Talent. 22 April 2020.

¹³⁶ John Cameron, TBB partner reflection, 12 May 2020.

structured its Australia program and funding arrangements around a planned exit and full handover of all Australia activities to Refugee Talent and other local partners by 2024.

Key success factors

Refugee Talent and TBB's partnership has been a marriage of the minds and passions from the very beginning. The partnership has also been advanced by the fact that both organizations have shared purpose and aligned interests. Refugee Talent's mission is to remove the barriers that prevent refugees from accessing dignified work, and while they are an Australian organization, they have a globalist perspective and see the benefits of also being able to offer businesses additional international candidates with high demand skills.

TBB has added global visibility and profile to the work Refugee Talent does. TBB has also helped Refugee Talent build capacity to engage with refugees remotely and manage visa and relocation arrangements. It has not, however, been a one-way learning exercise. TBB and Refugee Talent have learned a great deal from each other about effective recruitment practices and corporate engagement strategies – given both organizations have deep experience and knowledge in this area.

For TBB, Refugee Talent has opened up opportunities for TBB candidates to access many of the 600 employers Refugee Talent is connected with. Given Refugee Talent's presence in multiple cities across Australia the partnership has enabled much more expansive corporate outreach than would have otherwise been possible. Importantly, Refugee Talent has recruitment and HR expertise and effective systems to manage post-placement support - which has meant TBB has not needed to develop these capabilities or systems in Australia. Refugee Talent also has deep relationships with the refugee sector and settlement organizations.

Key learnings

TBB's retainer has provided a stable source of income to complement Refugee Talent's other income streams (which are primarily recruitment fees and license fees for their technology). As a small social enterprise reliant on income from their commercial endeavors, Refugee Talent has experienced periods of financial strain during the pilot phase. During these times TBB's retainer

has been critical to enabling Refugee Talent to continue supporting international recruitments. Refugee Talent has already highlighted that in order to scale their recruitment and post-placement support in line with increased places they would need increased resources.

For some time TBB and Refugee Talent have discussed Refugee Talent charging recruitment fees to businesses involved in the TBB program - as they do for businesses that hire domestically. A recruitment fee model would provide a sustainable funding source to enable scaling, however both organizations agreed it was not the right time to test this option during the pilot phase, given businesses were already being asked to take a leap of faith and contribute significant funds in the form of visa and relocation costs. It is clear that Refugee Talent is committed to attracting and placing international refugee candidates with businesses in Australia as part of their operating model. Their ability to deliver on this mission, however, depends entirely on whether they can resource it.

One interesting dynamic has been the interface between Refugee Talent's domestic recruitment program and TBB's international program. In general, the ability to offer businesses both options - eg. refugee candidates already in Australia and candidates overseas - has been an advantage to both parties. For example, where Refugee Talent does not have suitable candidates domestically, they can offer TBB candidates instead. There have also been cases where employers have opted to recruit a candidate locally first, and later have opted to hire an international candidate. And on the flip side there have been several employers who started engaging with TBB's program, and have later gone on to hire local candidates through Refugee Talent. At times TBB and Refugee Talent have opted to make a strategic choice about whether to pitch the domestic or international program with a particular high-value employer - as it was felt to push both options would be detrimental to the prospects of success.

As TBB looks to take a step back from proactive business outreach and hand this completely over to Refugee Talent, both organizations will need to discuss how to maintain this balance and strategic approach. As the Australia program matures TBB and Refugee Talent should also carefully design and test a cost recovery model to replace Refugee Talent's retainer, drawing on businesses,

but also potentially drawing on other beneficiaries of the program (eg. governments and the refugees themselves).

Applying these lessons more broadly

The TBB and Refugee Talent partnership in Australia demonstrates the significant advantages that can be gained where TBB works closely with another organization to graft elements of TBB's model onto their normal operations (in Refugee Talent's case, adding international candidates to their domestic job search platform and service).

TBB's hypothesis throughout the pilot phase has been that not only could partners take on significant portions of this work, but that if TBB created the processes, knowledge, and critically, overcame essential systemic barriers, other actors would take over all of TBB's key functions. TBB would have reached its 'endgame' and could cease operations. In other words, TBB's strategy has been to 'catalyse and disappear'. The pilot sought to generate not only learnings that could be provided to partners, but also to test the strength of this hypothesis

The pilot demonstrates that crucial to this catalytic approach with partners is alignment of vision, mission and values. But values alone are not sufficient. There also needs to be mutual gain to sustain productive and transparent collaboration. The allocation by TBB of stable and multi-year funding has been crucial to enabling the partnership to succeed. This funding was only possible because of dedicated philanthropic donors in Australia who recognized Refugee Talent would need time to establish a sustainable cost recovery model.¹³⁷ TBB's "catalyze and disappear" strategy in Australia was very appealing to donors, and is a promising strategy to pursue with partners in other destination countries as well.

Finally, the partnership with Refugee Talent demonstrates the value of sharing data between TBB's Talent Catalog and partner organizations in order to automate the job matching process. In several cases Refugee Talent has been able to quickly search and provide de-identified CVs to interested

¹³⁷ The TBB/Refugee Talent partnership and retainer is funded until 2024 by Cameron Foundation and Bennelong Foundation, and until 2022 by Minderoo Foundation. Morris Family Foundation has also contributed to the partnership.

businesses in real time using their platform, which is bridged to the Talent Catalog (so that every time an English speaking candidate signs up to the Talent Catalog a de-identified version of their CV uploads to the Refugee Talent platform). Being able to show employers quickly and easily the array of talent on the Talent Catalog makes refugee skills more visible and real, breaking down any lingering skepticism.

Early in the pilot phase TBB had begun exploring setting up similar data sharing arrangements with other refugee job matching platforms, however none of these partnership discussions have so far progressed to the point of data sharing.¹³⁸ Now is a good time for TBB to revisit this question and consider the best approach to ensuring refugee CV data is used in the most efficient and effective way possible to enable job matching.

Recommendation 18: TBB should explore establishing data-sharing partnerships with recruitment services, building on the experience with Refugee Talent, and considering the best technical options for ensuring refugee CV data is used in the most efficient and effective way possible to enable job matching.

Source country partnership: RefugePoint

You have developed a lot of expertise on labour mobility - this is really new. It would be helpful to have TBB as a resource; advocate together with partners; have a strong role in developing strategy together. When TBB came on mission it was so helpful for RP in Nairobi. They helped with the screening process, identified in-demand occupations, explained CVs, and was able to break down things. Hold the hand of any agency you work with because TBB are experts.

Janet Ouma, RefugePoint¹³⁹

RefugePoint is a global refugee-serving organization headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with primary operations in Nairobi. RefugePoint has extensive experience in refugee resettlement, programs to advance refugee self-reliance and influencing policy and decision-makers to drive

¹³⁸ For example, TBB had early discussions with Jumpstart about integrating Talent Catalog data with Jumpstart's data, so that Jumpstart could have direct access to TBB candidates. Key informant interview with Mustafa Alio, Managing Director of Jumpstart, 22 April 2020.

¹³⁹ Key informant interview with Janet Ouma, RefugePoint. 24 April 2020.

large-scale change in the interests of refugee populations. Since 2005 RefugePoint has worked with refugees in 81 countries around the world.¹⁴⁰

TBB has had a relationship with RefugePoint since TBB's inception. When TBB co-founders Mary Louise and Bruce Cohen were first exploring the concept of labour mobility for refugees, RefugePoint's Executive Director Sasha Chanoff became an early advocate and advisor.

Approach to partnering

In 2018, the IRCC approached TBB about working on a formal labour mobility pilot, the EMPP, with Canadian provinces. Because the government also wanted to include refugees living in Africa, it had reached out to RefugePoint which was working in Kenya. Given TBB's unique expertise in labour mobility, TBB was designated lead partner, and the EMPP was widened to include TBB candidates in the Middle East.

TBB had the opportunity to mentor and consult with RefugePoint throughout the first phase of the EMPP, supporting the Cambridge and Nairobi teams to develop new labour mobility processes. This mentorship included two trips by TBB staff to Nairobi, and bi-weekly calls with the EMPP team over much of the project period.

The partnership was a significant success in terms of engaging a new source country organization in refugee labour mobility implementation and building an evidence base from a new region. It also provided a framework for TBB to develop future source country replication and expansion models.

Key learnings

Candidates said "You are looking at us as people." They felt so dignified when they were asked about their skills. "You see me as the person I used to be."

Janet Ouma¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ See <https://www.refugepoint.org/>

¹⁴¹ Key informant interview with Janet Ouma, RefugePoint. 24 April 2020.

Engagement with RefugePoint showed TBB that that that organizations working with refugees for other purposes may not have familiarity with the skills and qualifications, work history, or career ambitions of their clients. RefugePoint, like many refugee-serving organizations operating in large refugee-hosting countries, had primarily focused on providing the necessities of life and assessing clients on the basis of their vulnerability for resettlement, in addition to providing livelihood support such as small business training and grants. Prior to the EMPP, RefugePoint did not collect detailed skills data on its clients. After TBB staff led in-depth interviews and co-hosted a focus group with RefugePoint clients during a trip to Nairobi, the lead RefugePoint staff person reflected that she had known some of these clients for years but had not necessarily known about their skills or past careers. She said she hadn't considered how careers could be tied to protection, meaning the immense psychological impact on professionals of living without meaningful work or future opportunities.

TBB also learned that trust and credibility with clients is essential for an effective implementing partner. The RefugePoint team had existing relationships, trust and credibility with the refugee community in Nairobi in particular, which was evident to TBB staff throughout intake sessions, a focus group, and other client interactions; and which continued to be evident in downstream recruitment and mobility processes. Naturally, RefugePoint also had deep knowledge of Kenya's policy and operational environment and its impacts on the refugee community. These qualities made RefugePoint a strong source-country partner.

The collaboration with RefugePoint highlighted there is a steep learning curve for refugee-supporting organizations to establish labour mobility programming, but TBB can help partners to quickly climb it by providing direct consulting at an early stage of operations. TBB staff were able to provide key support in: Candidate selection based on in-demand occupations data; candidate data collection through an intake process; eligibility assessments based on immigration pathway criteria; and CV building. This support was likely more effective because it was not theoretical - TBB worked together with RefugePoint on real client data and walked through these processes in response to real demand.

Importantly, TBB learned there are many areas where source country partner organizations are best-suited to lead. One main area is communication and messaging. Those working with the population have a better sense of how a new labour mobility initiative will be perceived, what it will be comparable to, etc. They will better understand sensitivities and potential unintended consequences of sharing information. They also have a much clearer sense of what “transparency” with refugee candidates looks like in their context. For all these reasons, they are better equipped to determine when and how to share information about the initiative. For example, RefugePoint decided against asking family composition screening questions through a short phone intake because of the potential unintended consequences of circulating a rumour in the community about ideal family make-up. Other areas where source country partners can better lead are in conducting candidate outreach; assessing any security issues flagged by UNHCR, governments, or candidates; and documentation trouble-shooting, as those with local context will best understand what kind of documentation is typical, available or fraudulent.

Another lesson is that within an employer-led model, source and destination partners are indispensable. The EMPP originally relied on “referral packages” or candidate-led job-matching, and neither TBB nor RefugePoint had the resources or mandate to switch and focus on employer outreach in Canada for Kenya candidates beyond a narrow group of 24 referrals (noting RefugePoint does not have a presence on the ground in Canada). RefugePoint did not see success in job-matching until the engagement of an employer, Glen Haven Manor, through another destination partner, the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network (PCREN). The interest of Glen Haven Manor moved RefugePoint towards demand-driven candidate selection and, following an extraordinary international recruitment mission to Nairobi and Dadaab refugee camp in November 2019, resulted in 13 job offers. Since these offers were made, TBB and PCREN have worked together to navigate economic programs and overcome barriers facing Kenya candidates. Without destination country partners who can conduct employer outreach, identify real job positions to guide candidate selection, and navigate economic programs, it is difficult to see how source country operations can be effective.

Applying lessons more broadly

TBB's experience with RefugePoint, as well as destination partners such as Refugee Talent in Australia and Jumpstart in Canada,¹⁴² reinforce that labour mobility is resource-intensive, particularly in the start-up phase. Future partnerships ought to begin with clear expectations about staff resources and ways to resource the partnership if needed. Future partnerships can also be strengthened by applying a capacity building approach and facilitating exchanges of knowledge to share and leverage each other's unique technical expertise.

Recommendation 19: When approaching new source and destination country partners TBB must at a minimum factor in how these partners will be funded in the early stages to adopt the model, and what ongoing support measures TBB will put in place to build the capacity and sustainable funding arrangements to maintain it over time. Wherever necessary TBB should work with partners to establish the financial mechanisms and funding sources they need to make the model work for them.

Global partnership: UNHCR

The UNHCR has in many ways been an enabler, collaborator and champion since the inception of the TBB labour mobility model. Today, TBB partners through an ongoing cooperation agreement with UNHCR headquarters in Geneva which underlies partnerships in each country where TBB operates.

Approach to partnering

It was very helpful to have other actors [like Talent Beyond Boundaries] around, to bring resources, energy and creativity for things UNHCR had been talking about conceptually but quite frankly didn't have the capacity.

Kate O'Malley, UNHCR¹⁴³

TBB Co-founders Mary Louise and Bruce Cohen first began engaging with UNHCR in January 2015 during a scoping trip to Beirut to meet with professionals living displaced in Lebanon. UNHCR officials shared insights about skills reported by refugees in Lebanon and encouraged the Cohens

¹⁴² Key informant interview with Mustafa Alio, 22 April 2020.

¹⁴³ Key informant interview with Kate O'Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

to keep going and engage with UNHCR in Geneva. According to Mary Louise Cohen, “We got a call from Geneva: if you’re serious about labour mobility you should come meet us. So we did”.¹⁴⁴ From this initial trip the Cohens and UNHCR deepened their mutual understanding of TBB’s role as a catalyst in establishing a labour mobility complementary pathway.

Following a year of start-up operations, TBB and UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding in May 2016. This MOU with the world’s lead agency for refugee protection became a cornerstone of TBB operations: It established a formal collaboration, and it gave the TBB mission legitimacy and credibility in particular for funders, government partners and refugee candidates.

UNHCR became an early and willing partner of TBB’s efforts to open a new complementary pathway. It recognized that resettlement numbers globally were beginning to fall as some governments curbed their humanitarian programs, while at the same time global displacement was rising and so were the number of people undertaking tragic migration journeys. UNHCR also recognized it did not have the capacity or business-ties to implement this concept. TBB entered the scene with the determination, agility, seed money and an outsider’s perspective.¹⁴⁵

Areas of collaboration

UNHCR has championed the idea of labour mobility as a complementary pathway with governments and civil society, perhaps most effectively by working with TBB to secure labour mobility within a key international agreement like the Global Compact for Refugees. According to Sayre Nyce, TBB’s founding and former Executive Director: “That’s key to keeping this as a key solution for refugees moving forward. If it’s not written down somewhere it gets lost. You need it to get across to offices across the globe for this to truly scale”.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Mary Louise Cohen, TBB partnership reflection, 12 May 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Key informant interview with Kate O’Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

¹⁴⁶ Key informant interview with Sayre Nyce, former Executive Director of TBB. 29 April 2020.

Candidate outreach and information sharing

Yes, my confidence has grown because I feel supported by an organization linked to the United Nations and that can assist me.

TBB candidate¹⁴⁷

TBB worked closely with UNHCR in Jordan and Lebanon to conduct outreach to potential candidates to register on the Talent Catalog. UNHCR's deep understanding refugees' circumstances, constraints, and risk were a valuable resource and TBB consulted closely with UNHCR to develop effective and ethical outreach material and messaging. Outreach was conducted both jointly with UNHCR and by UNHCR independently of TBB, as explained by UNHCR Resettlement staff in Lebanon:

UNHCR was heavily involved with outreach. In Jordan, UNHCR and TBB organised outreach sessions together. In Lebanon we initially conducted targeted outreach sessions (refugees with certain profiles or skill sets were contacted and invited for an information session with TBB in specific locations), but eventually resorted to sharing information about TBB with the refugees, directed them towards the Talent Catalog and provided them with the website information and contact details.¹⁴⁸

Following this close partnership on initial outreach, TBB has engaged UNHCR for more targeted outreach to specific populations such as IT professionals or women. While UNHCR does not collect the detailed skills data that sets apart the Talent Catalog, its ProGres database does typically capture basic occupations.

This engagement with UNHCR on candidate outreach has been important in establishing TBB and the Talent Catalog as trustworthy, which is critical in a context where refugees regularly face scams and unscrupulous operators.¹⁴⁹ UNHCR is also now developing a complementary pathways online portal, in consultation with TBB and other stakeholders, which will give refugees access to verified

¹⁴⁷ Respondent to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

¹⁴⁸ Key informant interview with UNHCR Resettlement staff in Lebanon. 29 April 2020.

¹⁴⁹ TBB partnership reflection, 12 May 2020.

information about employment (and family reunification and student) pathways, and will recommend refugees to TBB.

In source countries, TBB consults with UNHCR on a regular basis about changes to the operating environment, policy and regulatory changes affecting candidates, and on challenging questions around protection. With candidate consent, TBB shares information with UNHCR, and notifies UNHCR of all departures from the region via labour mobility through TBB's program.

Recommendation 20: TBB should continue to work closely with UNHCR on candidate outreach and look to expand this collaboration into new refugee hosting countries. Future areas of partnership on outreach could extend to database collaboration to improve the skills-based data collection function of UNHCR.

Socializing the concept

At a national level, UNHCR has a strong communications presence and, in Canada, has played a role in telling the story of labour mobility to its large public network, which has raised awareness and prompted new employers to contact TBB. UNHCR's office in Australia has also been a supportive partner behind the scenes, connecting TBB to key stakeholders in Australia and New Zealand. UNHCR has also been instrumental in raising the profile of TBB's program and talented alumni.¹⁵⁰ UNHCR in the MENA region has hosted TBB to share about its work at various convenings, putting labour mobility as a complementary solution on the radar for UNHCR offices globally.

Advocacy with governments

UNHCR has official ties with all UN Member States and has cultivated particularly strong relationships with some national governments, with whom its positions can be highly influential. In Canada, TBB partnered closely with UNHCR in its advocacy discussions with politicians and policy makers, including by co-signing a letter to the federal immigration minister, attending meetings together, and collaborating on policy recommendations. More recently, UNHCR in Canada has

¹⁵⁰ ABC news, *He was born in Lebanon, but he's never been a citizen there*, October 2019. Available from: <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/sydney/programs/focus/stateless/11564290>

introduced expansion opportunities by engaging TBB with willing partners in Colombia. UNHCR in Australia was key to establishing TBB's connections with the New Zealand government.

TBB has a significant opportunity to deepen its advocacy collaboration with UNHCR going forward through collaboration on the "Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway for Admission to Third Countries". The Task Force, which is being facilitated by UNHCR, will be structured under the leadership of a presiding state or states, and the thematic leadership of TBB.¹⁵¹

Recommendation 21: TBB should continue to work with UNHCR on advocacy and government engagement where this is strategic. In particular, TBB should secure resources to support its thematic leadership role on the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway, in close collaboration with UNHCR.

Strategy consultation

TBB has consulted UNHCR before explorations into any source or destination country and drawn on its expertise at key junctures of project design and implementation. TBB consulted with UNHCR on data privacy and candidate confidentiality in the earliest phases of designing the Talent Catalog and before selecting Lebanon and Jordan as its pilot source countries. When exploring destination countries in the earliest phases of the pilot, TBB communicated with several UNHCR country offices. UNHCR was essential in encouraging TBB's investment in Canada and Australia as early pilot destination countries.

Distinctive but complementary approaches

We don't always agree on everything, but that's fine. It's still a partnership. We still agree to the same overarching goals and values.

Michael Casasola¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Draft concept note on the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway for Admission to Third Countries, to be established in late 2020 as the first of the Enabling Actions of the [3-year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#) under Goal 2 (Advance Complementary Pathways), which seeks to establish multi-stakeholder pathway-specific Task Forces under the auspices of ATCR.

¹⁵² Key informant interview with Michael Casasola, UNHCR Canada. 28 April 2020.

As discussed above under “Objective 1: Demonstrate viability of labour mobility” TBB does not require a refugee status determination by UNHCR, registration with UNHCR, or any other agency or government sanction. TBB has developed its own eligibility guidelines with a deliberately broad view of forcible displacement. Inclusive eligibility aligns with TBB’s theory of change that removing displacement-related barriers to mobility for anyone living displaced is a move towards equity for all. Necessarily, UNHCR has narrower eligibility criteria in order to serve the most vulnerable refugees through life-saving services including humanitarian resettlement. Early in the pilot phase many individuals across UNHCR raised concerns about TBB’s model potentially being so attractive to governments that it created competition with resettlement, as summarized by Kate O’Malley:

*At the start, this had the scope to be quite destructive. Others at UNHCR had this anxiety as well: how do you have this alongside resettlement? You’ve done it, but that was a risk at the beginning.*¹⁵³

Feedback from UNHCR and TBB key informants for this evaluation indicates these distinctive approaches can coexist with all areas of collaboration discussed above, as long as TBB’s pathway is understood to be additional to traditional, vulnerability-based resettlement.

Another notable distinction between TBB and UNHCR is that TBB applies a business-led approach to labour mobility, whereas UNHCR, as a multilateral organization, tends to be more state-centric. This is in part reflected by the attendees at UNHCR’s 2012 workshop on labour mobility discussed in the section above on “Objective 3: Build global consensus”, which were exclusively drawn from government, multilateral agencies and academia. This has created a healthy tension and opportunity for innovation. Labour mobility is by definition led by employer and skills demand, and the primacy of employers or proxy industry-focused programs in selection is therefore an essential ingredient of the TBB model. Employer-led processes require fluency in employer engagement, speed, and deference to business needs and choices. TBB has developed these capabilities and has been successful in implementing employer-led processes. As one UNHCR representative put it:

¹⁵³ Key informant interview with Kate O’Malley, UNHCR. 22 April 2020.

One of TBB's values has been the ability to talk HR. I've had to explain to people is that it's an HR discussion we don't know how to discuss. This is where TBB plays an essential role. UNHCR barely captures the information, let alone understands what employers are looking for, or what immigration programs need.¹⁵⁴

A third area of difference is around transparency, stemming from the nature of candidacy for resettlement compared to economic immigration. Immigration officials evaluate each applicant for skilled programs along transparent criteria, and each applicant receives a positive or negative decision typically within a standard time frame. This process requires a high level of transparency among applicants and their legal representatives, as well as TBB, and all the material facts are presented with the full knowledge of an applicant to government officials. Resettlement operates very differently, as governments rely on UNHCR referrals and information is shared bilaterally between governments and UNHCR. Operationally, this difference has led TBB to rely on candidates and their legal representatives for the presentation of material facts. TBB does not partner with UNHCR or any other body to communicate on candidates' behalf with governments without the express consent of candidates.

Lessons for future engagement

UNHCR is a critical partner for TBB and will continue to be critical for scaling labour mobility as a solution for thousands of refugees. There are significant opportunities for TBB to expand labour mobility by tapping into UNHCR's extensive network of offices and partner organizations.

Recommendation 22: TBB should also apply the lessons learned from engagement with UNHCR when approaching other prospective multilateral partners, particularly the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Partner selection

The next frontier for TBB will necessarily be ramping up its engagement with suitable organizations to support them to replicate parts of TBB's model within their existing programs with refugees - either at the source or destination end. TBB should also explore potential organizations who may

¹⁵⁴ Key informant interview with Michael Casasola, UNHCR Canada. 28 April 2020.

be in a position to completely replicate its end-to-end recruitment and mobility model. Lessons from engaging with partners through the pilot phase should inform these partnership discussions.

Recommendation 23: TBB should develop and seek resources to support a partnerships strategy for its next scaling phase, including seed funding to support new partners to adapt parts of TBB's model into their existing programming.

Recommendation 24: TBB should use this evaluation as a starting point to produce a series of knowledge products to assist partners to replicate parts of TBB's recruitment and mobility model into their existing programs or service offerings.

Recommendation 25: TBB should also seek resources to support capacity building and training of partners at source and destination ends to replicate the recruitment and labour mobility model.

Section 2: Observed impacts on beneficiaries

The purpose of this section is to examine the impact of TBB's program on the lives of those who have purportedly benefited from the program. This section is a critical complement to section 1, which examined the impact of TBB's program against its stated objectives, as it will provide insight into the wider impact (both positive and negative) this program will have if taken to scale.

There are four key types of beneficiaries of this model observed during the pilot phase. These are:

1. **Candidates** who are still living in first countries of asylum - who are impacted by their engagement with TBB and the Talent Catalog.
2. **Successful candidates (TBB Alumni) and their families** who were refugees or otherwise forcibly displaced, but have now secured jobs and migrated to their destination country with the support of TBB's program.
3. **Employers** who have hired through the program.
4. **Other beneficiaries** - including destination country economies which benefit from the skills, income and tax revenue contributions of the TBB Alumni and their family; and **first countries of asylum/countries of origin** - who gain development benefits from remittances and additional skills/knowledge gained by the TBB Alumni.

Candidates

In order to understand the impact of the program on candidates TBB designed a feedback survey which was sent out to 750 targeted registrants on the Talent Catalog based in Jordan and Lebanon in May 2020. Within five days TBB had received 259 responses, which met TBB's target response rate of 35%, indicating a high degree of confidence the results are representative of the sample.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ This equates to a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5% when applied to the population sample of 750 targeted registrants. TBB used Survey Monkey's sample size calculator (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/sample-size-calculator/>) and margin of error calculator (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/>) to determine confidence level and margin of error.

Candidates selected met one or more of the following categories:

- They have engaged directly with TBB through an employment opportunity (eg. they were shortlisted or participated in interviews);
- They have received job offers via TBB and are pending visa approvals; or
- They have accessed one or more resources referred by TBB, such as access to courses through Coursera, Really English or the British Council. While many of these registrants have not benefited from an international recruitment process through TBB, all are registered on the Talent Catalog with the intention of pursuing labour mobility as an option and therefore their feedback, particularly in terms of expectations of the program, are valuable.

Overview of Beneficiary Survey respondents

- Gender: 85% of respondents are male, 15% are female
- Age: Nearly 90% are between the ages of 18 to 44
- Nationality: 70% are of Syrian nationality, with the second 18% Palestinian. Remaining nationalities include Iraqi, Yemeni, Kurdish, Sudanese, and Stateless people.
- Location: Respondents are nearly equally currently located in Lebanon or Jordan. A small 4.5% that indicated "other" have likely moved to other countries since TBB was in touch with them.
- Income and Employment status: 35% indicate that they are currently unemployed and not earning income. Twenty-eight percent are working and earning between \$150-\$500 USD per month; 29% are earning above \$500 per month and 8% are earning less than \$150 USD per month. Among those employed, 80% either do not have a legal work permit or they have one, but it is not relevant to their field of work. Among 181 respondents who are currently employed, approximately 60% are not at all satisfied or extremely dissatisfied with their current work.
- Financial Status: Of those receiving financial assistance, top sources include family or NGO assistance.
- Professions: The top three professions of respondents include: 15% IT professionals/software developers, 12% mechanical engineers, and 9% nurses.

Motivations for engaging with TBB

When asked about their motivation for registering with TBB more than three quarters of respondents said because they do not have access to a durable solution in their host country (78%). The next highest response was creating a better life for their family members (69%); followed by finding employment that matches their skills (62%) and being able to work legally (59%). 58% of respondents want to be able to access another citizenship; and 43% are seeking international protection.

Snapshot of feedback for TBB

- 88% of respondents indicate that they feel TBB always or mostly listens to them, informs them, and is respectful to them. 8% answered “sometimes” to this question, 3% answered “rarely” and 2% answered “never”. This is broadly encouraging given TBB’s limited local staff size and the extensive enquiries received from registrants.
- 57% of respondents are either very or extremely optimistic that TBB will be able to assist them in finding employment abroad. This is positive but also indicates that TBB needs to be careful in raising expectations at its current stage.
- 74% of respondents indicate that they find TBB either extremely or very trustworthy (43% extremely and 31% very). 23% said TBB was “somewhat” trustworthy and only 3% said not very or not at all trustworthy. This is also promising, given the challenges inherent in earning the trust of refugees who are often subject to misinformation and exploitation.¹⁵⁶

Engagement with TBB Services

In addition to working with candidates in relation to specific job opportunities, TBB provides candidates with referrals to a range of services to help them improve their job readiness. The candidate survey sheds light on the perceived benefits of these services even for candidates who

¹⁵⁶ See eg. Anjali Katta , “Trust is still one of the biggest barriers for communicating with refugees”, UNHCR Innovation Service, available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/trust-is-still-one-of-the-biggest-barriers-for-communicating-with-refugees/>. See also Tricia Hynes, *The issue of ‘trust’ or ‘mistrust’ in research with refugees: choices, caveats and considerations for researchers*, UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, Working Paper No. 98, Appendix 1: A History of Mistrust – Why and who refugees mistrust, p. 19, November 2003, available from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/research/working/3fcb5cee1/issue-trust-mistrust-research-refugees-choices-caveats-considerations-researchers.html>.

have not (yet) secured a job through TBB's program. TBB Alumni who participated in focus groups for this evaluation also provided insights on their experiences engaging with TBB services.

English language services

*The main thing that I can give you an opinion about is to concentrate on English...
Any other thing in the job can be learned very quickly.*¹⁵⁷

TBB is not an English language training organization and does not envision taking on this role given there are many other capable English language services that are available in the Middle East and elsewhere. The importance of English language practice for international employment cannot, however, be understated. According to TBB's records, approximately 60% of candidates identified in initial shortlists who meet particular job opportunities are ultimately not put forward to employers as a result of English language constraints.¹⁵⁸ Over the pilot phase TBB has increased the English language support it provides to candidates, in response to consistent feedback from successful candidates that English language preparation was a critical success factor for them.

TBB now offers access to Coursera and Really English to all registrants that either directly request it (likely following a post on social media) or have completed an intake (where they have been assessed for suitability for a particular position). At this point, TBB does not provide these resources to all candidates who sign up on the Talent Catalog. Three quarters of the survey respondents had accessed Coursera and one fifth had accessed Really English. Those that are deemed highly employable but lacking English or in need of urgent International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation for visa purposes are also given access to a paid course via Paper Airplanes or the British Council (8.5% and 3% of respondents had accessed these respectively). TBB has also engaged on rare occasions with other providers.

The provision of these services appears to be having the desired effect. Eighty-two percent of beneficiaries noted that their engagement with TBB has motivated them to work harder on

¹⁵⁷ Focus group with TBB Alumni, 22 April 2020.

¹⁵⁸ Analysis of candidate sorts for open roles, supplied by TBB Middle East Director.

improving their English skills, with 64% of registrants using the online services at least once a week, 21% using them monthly and 15% not using them at all.

Half of the respondents noted that the services offered by TBB have been either very or extremely beneficial to improving their English language skills; 39% say they have been somewhat beneficial. Only 11% indicate that they have not been beneficial. A number of candidates who were successful in securing employment through TBB's program highlight how beneficial these programs were. For example, one candidate now living in Australia said:

*TBB helped with English (Paper [Air]Planes) and interview preparation - with thanks to this, my English is good. English education is vital.*¹⁵⁹

The most common reason for engaging with the services was to enhance English speaking skills (64%), followed by improving reading skills (38%) and IELTS preparation (34%). Thirty-eight percent of respondents were also using Coursera for non-English related courses - including improving their technical skill set.

Improving English language services

*I wish if you can provide us with websites & platforms for speaking and listening ... because I know a lot of vocabs but still find difficulties talking in English for not having someone to practice with and for not having a place/job where I can practice the language regularly. Thank you so much for everything you are doing for us.*¹⁶⁰

The most common request from respondents to the candidate survey was for TBB to provide in-person courses rather than only online options, via local language institutes. Many candidates also requested opportunities to practice English with native speakers, particularly native professionals in countries where they may apply for employment. TBB tested this with Paper Airplanes but was unable to expand the program due to monetary constraints. A large portion of candidates also requested assistance covering the costs of IELTS preparation materials and particularly

¹⁵⁹ TBB Alumni survey response. 8 May 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Respondent to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

scholarships/financial assistance to cover sitting the test. The average cost of a test is \$205 USD, which candidates struggle to pay. TBB could explore loans or grants with additional resources.

Some candidates noted that given financial constraints and the psychological impact that comes with being a refugee, it is often difficult to focus on learning new skills required for international employment, such as English, despite their desire to meet international recruitment requirements. This feedback is a useful reminder for TBB refer candidates in need of psycho-social support to partner organizations with expertise in this area.

One of the participants of TBB Alumni focus groups recommended TBB set up a more automated approach to engaging with candidates about their English capability.¹⁶¹ For example, if a candidate signs up to the Talent Catalog with low or intermediate English, they could be automatically sent a standard email connecting them to resources to improve their English before being considered for particular roles. As TBB looks to scale its model it should consider this idea. TBB also needs to proactively manage candidate expectations, given that mastery of English is not a guaranteed ticket to employment.

Recommendation 26: TBB should automate referral of all Talent Catalog registrants who list some English speaking proficiency to reputable English language services and resources (such as Coursera and Really English) so they can hone their skills. TBB should also consider a motivational approach, whereby registrants who indicate their skills are at a beginner or intermediate level are automatically advised of the steps they need to take before they will be eligible for international roles in English speaking countries.

Recommendation 27: TBB should seek additional resources and partnerships with reputable English language service providers to provide candidates facing financial hardship or other barriers with the means to access these services. TBB should prioritize those with the highest chances of success in securing employment and/or meeting visa requirements for these services.

Mock interview support

*The mock interview increased my confidence, and help me to understand what the employer was looking for.*¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ TBB Alumni focus group, 22 April 2020.

¹⁶² Respondent to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

TBB arranges mock interviews for all candidates in active recruitment processes, facilitated by 60 professional volunteers from diverse professional backgrounds across Australia, Canada, and the US. In 2018 TBB began working with McKinsey and Company to source volunteers, and in 2019 TBB began working jointly with Accenture to conduct mock interviews. This experience has been mutually beneficial for TBB candidates but also corporate partners, who see real value in their staff participating in socially responsible volunteering activities.¹⁶³ In cases where external mock interviewers cannot be arranged or a candidate needs extra help, TBB staff and partners (such as Refugee Talent) facilitate practice interview sessions themselves.

Eighty-six percent of respondents had participated in a mock interview - mostly soft skills interviews (57%) and technical mock interviews (20%). Twenty-three percent of respondents weren't sure whether they did a soft skills or technical interview. Candidates highlighted the following benefits from their mock interview experiences:

- 67% benefited from useful feedback on interview and communication style;
- 66% reported an awareness of what to expect in a real interview;
- 50% felt the interview was useful practice in articulating skills to international professionals;
- 49% expressed an increased awareness of what to work on to make yourself more employable internationally;
- 48% expressed increased confidence in professional skills and an ability to compete in the international job market; and
- 33% benefited from useful technical advice.

Sixty-three percent of beneficiaries have used feedback from the mock interviews to help make them more employable internationally. Twenty-eight percent were unsure, and 9% responded that they have not.

Recommendation 28: TBB should continue to explore opportunities to increase candidate access to mock interview practice by working in collaboration with corporate partners like Accenture.

¹⁶³ Anecdotal feedback from staff at Accenture to TBB.

Employer interviews

*It was positive and they emailed me and said that they will make contact for next steps soon, but this has not happened yet, and of course I am still waiting on them since months.*¹⁶⁴

Forty-seven beneficiaries responded that they have participated in a TBB facilitated interview with an employer. Thirty-seven participated in one interview, 10 in two interviews, and 5 in three or more. In promising results, 97% of respondents felt either very or extremely prepared for their interview thanks to preparation materials provided (including mock interview support). All respondents felt they were at least somewhat prepared. Overall, 75% found their employer interview very or extremely positive. Ten percent (5 respondents) found the experience not at all positive.

Fifty-eight percent reported that they received useful feedback from the employer but 39% did not (3.5% were unsure). During the pilot period TBB has noted that many employers do not provide specific feedback on who they choose to eliminate in a recruitment process which understandably frustrates some candidates.

Three quarters of respondents feel either extremely or very confident in participating in a similar job selection process in the future, with TBB or independently, and 21% are somewhat confident to do so. Only one beneficiary responded they were not confident at all. This indicates that the interview experience, which can be quite daunting for any job seeker, has not tended to demotivate unsuccessful candidates.

Improving interview support

Many candidates noted that they did not receive any form of feedback following their interviews with employers on the reasons they may have been rejected. In many cases, employers indicate who they would like to move forward in their process, but do not mention reasons for not choosing others. In a few cases, employers have interviewed candidates and then failed to provide a

¹⁶⁴ Respondent to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

response for several months, if at all, on the result of the interview. This causes frustration among candidates with the employer and doubt in TBB's processes. While it can be difficult to push employers, TBB should take all reasonable steps to ensure employers are aware of these concerns prior to recruitment and prepare candidates for this possible reality at the start of the recruitment process.

Positive impacts of engaging with TBB

The candidate survey identified a number of positive benefits of TBB's program on candidates who have not (yet) relocated or secured a job offer.

Hope

Many candidates spoke a renewed sense of hope and optimism in being able to have a secure and stable future through pursuing legal migration and/or legal employment.

I felt the care and the love of TBB team. My confidence increased, and they gave me a real reason to be optimistic and to prepare for a new amazing opportunity.

My participation with your organization gave me hope again to change my life for the better.

A light of hope in the darkness that we live in, and I felt that it was possible to achieve something that I deserve.

It restored hope for me after living in Jordan has become a matter of destroying my dreams, because I cannot complete my studies or achieve my dreams, nor even take the rights of a citizen such as a driving license which is one of the most trivial things and problems me and others face.

Optimism and hope for building a better future for me and my family in a country that respects human rights.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Respondents to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

Confidence and self-worth

Candidates noted increased confidence not only that they can compete and participate in international labour markets, but that they have the skills and preparation to compete, either with TBB's support or independently.

I now have much more confidence in myself in getting a job opportunity in Canada and Australia.

TBB gave me hope that I may be able to work abroad in a challenging environment. So, I have to keep my skills up to date.

My self-confidence has grown and I now believe that I can get an international work opportunity and develop professionally.

Absolutely positive, more hope, confidence and strength in going forward to get my goals.¹⁶⁶

Skills lift and motivation to maintain skills

Candidates noted their engagement with TBB has given them motivation to see the value of their skills and qualifications and that they are worth investing in and keeping up to date. Eighty-three percent of respondents are motivated to work harder to improve their English skills through their engagement with TBB and 77% feel an increased motivation to keep skills up to date or improve skills.

Since the first interview with TBB, I am working on my English more, studying Pharmaceuticals, improving my interview techniques regularly.

When I registered in the program I felt very motivated to improve my skills in the field of Mechatronics Engineering.

TBB has stimulated my efforts to further gain certification through enrollment in continuous training programs that fall in the domain of my work (welding industry and welding inspection). TBB has always explained the importance of international certification and continuous development to get better chances in working in first world countries.

¹⁶⁶ As above.

So my registration with TBB had a big moral push to start self-development with what is available so I started to work on my skills in English and then I continued to train in engineering programs related to my field as well in addition to MS Office, and of course I feel very optimistic and hopeful that I will have what I want by qualifying for a work opportunity through TBB.¹⁶⁷

Several TBB candidates have been rewarded for improving their skills over the course of their engagement with TBB. For example, Mohammed Hakmi, a software engineer who was the first candidate to secure a job through TBB in Canada, was unsuccessful in several interviews with tech firms before he was ultimately successful with Bonfire. That initial setback prompted Mohammed to deliberately upskill in an area he realized global tech firms would be looking at. This was one of the key skill areas that impressed Bonfire enough to offer Mohammed a job.

Perceived alternative to irregular migration

Candidates were asked if they had ever attempted or considered attempting irregular migration in order to build a new life in a stable country (eg. travelling to Europe by boat) and 36% said they had considered it, and 10% had already attempted it. Fifty-one percent said they would never consider this option, and the remaining 3% of respondents had a range of answers. When asked whether their engagement with TBB had influenced whether they would consider attempting an irregular migration journey, 48% said they were less likely to consider an irregular journey now, and 10% didn't know. Thirty-six percent were neutral on the question and 6% felt they were more likely to take an irregular migration journey now.

Participating with TBB has greatly impacted my life, as I had previously decided to travel illegally and decided to send my wife and children to Syria, but I changed my mind since registering with TBB.

I decided to migrate irregularly last December 2019 but have changed my mind when I received a call from TBB about accepting me for the first step in Canada.

I am fearful a lot to go. However, if the doors of countries still be closed, I will be obligated to go by these irregular migration journey.

I hope that TBB can help me and if not I'll still try any way to get out of Lebanon

¹⁶⁷ Respondents to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

*TBB organization gave me hope and motivation to reach my goals. So that I am less likely to consider an irregular migration journey now.*¹⁶⁸

Experience of candidates beyond Jordan and Lebanon

Through its collaboration with RefugePoint in Kenya, TBB has also developed a greater appreciation of the universality of labour mobility as a means to restore dignity and wellbeing. For many candidates interviewed by TBB staff in Kenya, hopelessness about the future was tied to an inability to grow in their field of training or passion and the attendant inability to provide for themselves or their families.

All candidates TBB interviewed in Kenya suggested that migrating for work as opposed to traditional resettlement would be preferable, as it would help them to ‘hit the ground running’ and give them confidence that they could provide for themselves in a new country. Many had friends and contacts who had moved as refugees and reportedly struggled to find employment thereafter. Candidates living as refugees in Kenya spoke about the role of work in their lives, the major challenges of not being able to access it, and their hopes for expanded opportunities in much the same terms as candidates in Jordan and Lebanon.

Feedback from candidates in Kenya, August 2018¹⁶⁹

“When you see that there are skills you can provide to the country that are needed but that you cannot provide on the basis of your being a refugee, it’s very discouraging.” - Focus group participant living as a refugee in Kenya

“You’re born in war, you grow up in this situation and you probably die in this situation. Getting a chance to go would definitely put a stop to this.” - Focus group participant living as a refugee in Kenya

¹⁶⁸ Respondents to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

¹⁶⁹ For further analysis, see “[EMPP Observations](#)” report by Dana Wagner and Madeline Holland after a trip to Nairobi in August 2018.

"We have skills, we have talent, we went to school, we studied." - Focus group participant living as a refugee in Kenya

Negative impacts of engaging with TBB

Candidates were asked about any negative impacts they have experienced as a result of TBB's program. While for the most part positive, feedback from survey respondents revealed two main unintended negative impacts on some beneficiaries in TBB's program.

Long process and loss of hope

Some respondents raised concerns about the length of time it takes to hear from TBB regarding opportunities, which can often lead to lack of trust and/or hope in the program. Beneficiaries who have been contacted at some point by TBB for opportunities that did not result in a job offer can have high expectations that TBB will quickly find them another opportunity that matches their skills. While TBB has tried to manage expectations by reinforcing with candidates the early stage of TBB's program, some candidates have expressed loss of hope in TBB after long waiting periods with little results.

In the beginning I was excited to upgrade my skills, but unfortunately, due to the long process and not finding job opportunities, my interest has decreased.

TBB called me twice so far just to ask me questions but because I admire you I'm telling you that a lot of other special people are now losing faith and trust in TBB because most of them are now registered for 4 years waiting for promises from TBB.

Nowadays, we have to be patient not just for wait interviews or improve our skills, but to face the unfair restrictions on us, and to keep that hope. This raises a question about how we can protect this hope in long term.

In the first months, the program had positive effects at the psychological and personal level, but on the long run and the interruption of communication for long periods, I began to feel disappointment and lack of optimism that I felt at the

*beginning, as if now I do not know the program or it was just an illusion that faded.*¹⁷⁰

Rejection

A few beneficiaries who were considered for international opportunities noted that the experience of being rejected by employers left them feeling doubtful of their capabilities. Lack of follow up from employers to provide feedback on the reason they were not selected was also notably frustrating. For most beneficiaries, interviews facilitated by TBB are their first interaction with international employers and in many cases, the first time they will need to articulate their skills in English. Given that opportunities in certain industries often also take a long time to come by in the program, many beneficiaries understand the reality that if they do not succeed in an interview, the chances of having the opportunity to do another are not always guaranteed.

[The impact] was negative because of frustration as a result of rejection I received due to my poor language skills, and if there was an interpreter I would have shown all my skills without showing off.

Yes, I was happy the first time they contacted me and I felt a ray of hope after all this struggle, and I went ahead and improved my skills and reviewed my experience and strengths, but my hopes were shattered time after time after every interview and the excuse of companies restructuring, this has made me close the door to the future and throw the keys far away.

*I was rejected in first interview and it hurt me a lot.*¹⁷¹

This feedback highlights the high stakes involved in interviewing with employers under TBB's program, and the care TBB must take in communicating with candidates who have not been successful.

Successful candidates: The TBB Alumni

When I was living in Jordan I was looking for any opportunity to get out from that situation that I lived in so I knocked many doors, suddenly I saw your advertisement

¹⁷⁰ Respondents to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

¹⁷¹ Respondents to TBB candidate survey, May 2020.

on Facebook and I hoped that it will be real. So I just applied ... and it worked, and you changed my life.

TBB Alumni focus group¹⁷²

Moving to Canada was the best thing that happened to my life. My rights, my duties, everything is perfect.

TBB Alumni survey respondent

The impact of TBB's program is most obviously felt by the candidates who are successful in securing jobs on their own merits and relocating with their families to rebuild their lives. TBB and its partners are in frequent contact with TBB's alumni after they relocate to a destination country and begin work, and also conduct surveys at regular intervals: two weeks prior to the candidate's departure from the host country, six months after arrival in the destination country, and one year after arrival at the destination country.

These "alumni surveys" were developed by consulting other longitudinal surveys of refugees and migrants by governments and the IOM and have been iterated over the course of the pilot. These surveys are conducted by TBB staff, either by phone or in person. So far pre-departure surveys have been conducted with 15 alumnus/alumna; ten have been conducted at the six-month post-arrival mark, and five have been conducted at the one-year mark.¹⁷³ As the sample of survey respondents increases over time, this survey instrument will become an extremely valuable method of determining the long-term impact of TBB's program.

Quality of life

*We are all together as a family. I'm not worried about paying for school. Also we have access to parks - spaces for kids everywhere and activities for kids. We can go everywhere - we feel safe. And able to move. We can afford the life here.*¹⁷⁴

Six months after arriving in their new destination country all alumni surveyed highlighted their quality of life is above their quality of life before, with 60% saying it is far above. All alumni also

¹⁷² TBB Alumni focus group, 26 April 2020.

¹⁷³ TBB alumni experience survey, results at 1 May 2020.

¹⁷⁴ TBB alumni experience survey respondent - 6 months

agreed with the statement "I feel welcome in my community" at the six-month mark, with 80% saying they "strongly agreed" with this statement. Many alumni were pleasantly surprised by the multicultural nature of their new communities:

All people here are friendly and the community is multicultural. You can choose whatever community you want to have friends within. People in general are so friendly.

*Everyone is friendly. No racial abuse or persecution of any kind.*¹⁷⁵

Two candidates in Australia have, however, experienced what they described as racial taunts, but they noted they were not traumatized. While in general candidates feel a sense of belonging and welcome, many also mentioned missing family and friends back home, particularly at the 6-month survey interval.

Being on my own without my family. That was a bit challenging. But it's also a good thing. But I miss them.

*Missing home and family has been challenging.*¹⁷⁶

This issue was also raised by Margaret Piper in her 2019 evaluation of TBB's Australia pilot. Margaret recommended that TBB prepare candidates for the emotional upheaval of relocation given this is a very common experience for refugees. She said:

*Most people are focused on 'getting away' and believe that once they 'arrive' everything will be fine but as one entrant said, "no one tells you about the crash. Now we are falling from the cliff, missing home. When I was in Jordan I didn't think about going back [to Syria] but here I do. But at least we have a life here. We are safe and secure."*¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ TBB alumni experience survey, results at 1 May 2020, 6-month responses.

¹⁷⁶ As above.

¹⁷⁷ Margaret Piper AM, Talent Beyond Boundaries Australia Pilot Evaluation, Summary Report, 27 November 2019. Available from: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10IX5GZxzYgS2KABLhHV-9UKlogierBGx/edit>

Safety and security

No alumni had experienced any incidences since arriving that made them feel unsafe.

Safer because it's a stable country. There is no war here.

I left my key outside the door and I came back and the key was still in the lock waiting for me! I can't imagine doing that in Jordan.

It's not only about feeling safe and it's not about only work - the most important thing for me is relaxed. Not stressed.¹⁷⁸

Khalaf, Software Engineer, Cheltenham UK

Khalaf was born and raised in Aleppo, Syria. He completed a Bachelor of Software Engineering at the University of Aleppo. Upon completion of his studies, Khalaf was faced with an impossible decision: stay in Syria knowing that he would be conscripted to serve in the Syrian army during the civil conflict; or leave his home, his family and his friends in search of safety and opportunity. Khalaf left Syria for Lebanon at the end of 2013.

In 2019, Khalaf was identified as a strong candidate for a Software Engineer position at Iress in Cheltenham, UK. He underwent a competitive recruitment process, completed a coding test (with distinction), and was extended an employment offer. According to Khalaf:

The day I learned that I got the offer...it's like someone is in a deep well, and you throw a rope for him.¹⁷⁹

Khalaf was granted a Tier 2 General Work Visa and migrated to the UK in August 2019 with his wife and two young daughters. Khalaf describes Cheltenham as a wonderful city which is very diverse and multicultural. His "number one priority" is to work towards citizenship for his family in the UK, although he would also consider rebuilding his life again in Syria once more "if there is life to live there".

At work he is loving working with a dynamic team and he is working towards career progression into a senior/technical lead role. He is passionate about his work as a Software Engineer, and thankful that his family lives in a place where they will have a secure future.

There is freedom and the law is applicable to everyone. The government do not set restrictions on certain groups. The UK is a good place.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ TBB alumni experience survey, results at 1 May 2020, 6-month and 1-year survey responses.

¹⁷⁹ Interview with Khalaf for TBB's *Promise of Labour Mobility* short film, December 2019. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjV8UW10Hw&t=86s>

¹⁸⁰ Six-month survey with Khalaf, 9 May 2020.

Employment experience

All candidates surveyed said they were satisfied with their employment experience, with 50% saying they were very satisfied at the 6-month mark. All were confident their jobs were secure, with 90% of candidates saying they were either very or extremely confident. Several alumni highlighted how they are enjoying their new roles and learning new things:

Working on site is my favorite thing. For me this is a great experience to see things in real life.

The client facing aspect. I enjoy being able to sit in workshops with the client and listen to their problems and try to figure out a solution.

My team is working on the latest technologies. That means my knowledge is updated regularly.¹⁸¹

Several candidates also highlighted the positive work culture and work/life balance they were enjoying:

The working culture - the way that we are splitting the tasks between the teammates and the structure, so everyone has the ability to share in decisions

Meeting new people from new countries, new cultures, everyone is friendly and tries to help you.

The most thing I enjoy is the management - they all smile once they see you. You don't feel stressed.¹⁸²

When asked to describe any challenges they may be facing at work at the 6-month survey mark, universally candidates highlighted the challenge of working in English, understanding new accents and colloquialisms. Promisingly, by the 1-year survey candidates appear to have significantly improved and are less worried about communication issues.

*English challenge is overcome! That's a very good change in the last six months.
Working in support is not easy - because you need to understand what people*

¹⁸¹ TBB alumni experience survey, results at 1 May 2020, 6-month responses.

¹⁸² TBB alumni survey respondent at 6-month mark.

*want and need ... I like the challenge though!*¹⁸³

*I'm more confident in terms of language, in my social life and at work. Right now I can deal with any issue.*¹⁸⁴

Alumni also highlighted the sense of security they had achieved by being able to work legally and without fear of being discovered working without a permit:

*One of the main things that you guys made possible is actually making us working in a legal way ... I'm actually able to work and be actually proud to say I'm from Syria.*¹⁸⁵

Financial situation

*All the charity organizations give you money and support you financially but none of them can support you forever. The only thing can support you forever is to having a way to earn money ... This one which TBB provides to their candidates.*¹⁸⁶

The income of alumni since relocating has increased by an average of 550% to an average annual salary of \$41,825.21 USD. For several candidates who had no source of income prior to relocation, the percent change in salary is more drastic, reaching up to 3901%. Salaries vary widely depending on industry and role. 90% of candidates working at the 6-month mark said their income is enough or more than enough for the daily necessities of life, but one candidate said his income was too low. Some remarked how excited they were to be saving.

*I am saving money - for the first time in my life I'm able to save money. I want to have enough money by the time I become [a] Permanent Resident that I may be able to purchase a house.*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ TBB alumni survey respondent at 1-year mark, Australia

¹⁸⁴ TBB alumni survey respondent at 1-year mark, Canada

¹⁸⁵ TBB alumni focus group, 22 April 2020.

¹⁸⁶ TBB Alumni focus group, 22 April 2020.

¹⁸⁷ TBB alumni survey respondent at 1-year mark

Building new lives

As TBB alumni have started to celebrate their one-year anniversaries survey results show how settled they have become. Many have had significant life events – one is now married to an Australian citizen, another has had a baby born an Australian citizen - and many feel a greater sense of confidence speaking English and mastery in their work. Candidates have taken up new hobbies like surfing, curling and video editing, and have embraced new foods and culture, arts and entertainment. These experiences show just how enormous the impact of this program is at an individual level for those involved.

*No obstacles now. Everything is good. I can do anything. I can address anything. I'm very comfortable with my new situation.*¹⁸⁸

Leadership

As the vanguards of this labour mobility solution, the TBB alumni who have relocated so far have taken on a range of leadership roles in advancing TBB's mission. Alumni have been the primary communicators of TBB's message through media and communications, using their own experiences powerfully to make the case for employers and governments to back this solution.¹⁸⁹ Alumni have also played formal roles in mentoring, conducting mock interviews and providing advice to other candidates in contention for international roles, as well as physically welcoming new arrivals at the airport and helping new families to settle into their new lives.

The TBB alumni and their spouses have their own #tbb-alumni Slack channel (collaboration and messaging platform used by TBB) and are regularly exchanging ideas, suggestions and feedback with each other and TBB through this channel. During the course of this evaluation the TBB alumni agreed they would like to formalize a TBB Alumni Advisory Group to step-up their involvement in TBB's strategic direction and scale plans.

Recommendation 29: TBB should support the creation of a TBB Alumni Advisory Group, including ensuring the group has formal authority to input into TBB's decision-making processes. TBB should

¹⁸⁸ TBB alumni survey respondent at 6-month mark

¹⁸⁹ See examples of TBB Alumni in press coverage: <https://www.talentbeyondboundaries.org/press>

secure resources to support the functioning of this group and consider ways to engage the group in formally representing TBB in international forums such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR).

Participating employers

TBB surveyed 38 representatives working for 27 businesses involved in hiring a refugee employee through TBB’s program. The survey gathered their feedback on the benefits and challenges of hiring through this initiative. As outlined in Figure 4 below, the most commonly cited benefits highlighted by employers were “greater diversity” and an “opportunity to achieve social impact and gain greater understanding of refugee issues” followed closely by the “addition of a new perspective/approach to the organization” and “morale boost to staff”). Respondents also highlighted “addition of new skills to the organization”.

When asked whether there have been any negative consequences as a result of hiring through TBB's program all respondents answered “no”.¹⁹⁰

Figure 4: What are the best things that have come out of hiring this employee (or employees) through TBB? Please select any that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Greater diversity	73.33% 11
Opportunity to achieve social impact and gain greater understanding of refugee issues	73.33% 11
Addition of a new perspective/approach to the organisation	60.00% 9
Morale boost to staff	60.00% 9
Testing a new talent sourcing strategy	53.33% 8
Public relations benefits	40.00% 6
Addition of new skills to the organisation	26.67% 4
Other	6.67% 1
Total Respondents: 15	

Most participating employers who have hired through TBB’s program have “gone public” in some way with their recruitment of a displaced person from abroad, indicating a strong willingness to be publicly associated with the program.

¹⁹⁰ TBB employer feedback survey, May 2020.

Our organization has supported TBB publications and some promotion activities although through TBB although not advertised outside of TBB run activities.

This is a good news story and one that many of our existing employees are very proud of. We already had refugees working on the same project and this provided another chance to show our commitment to assisting people to resettle in Australia with the economic security of employment.

Has been promoted internally and to our clients.¹⁹¹

Employer perspectives on work performance

Through the pilot program 15 employees have now started work in Australia, Canada and the UK and 6 employees have been working for more than one year. One employee was furloughed as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, but he managed to immediately secure work at another business in Canada and is currently working. All other employees are still employed and have received positive feedback/performance reviews from their managers. Examples of feedback on employee performance and contribution:

He has become one of our best employees, he is attentive, skilled, wants to do more, intelligent and learns quickly. He has a great attitude towards life in general.¹⁹²

The people that we're seeing coming through Talent Beyond Boundaries, who sometimes have had to work harder within constraints, actually have higher resilience; have higher creativity; have a really strong internal desire to succeed - which is highly, highly valued.¹⁹³

We've had two high-quality engineers to join us - and we absolutely celebrate when that happens. We have a real focus on making sure that we both attract and retain the best talent that we can get our hands on.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ TBB employer feedback survey, May 2020.

¹⁹² Respondent to TBB employer survey, Canada, May 2020.

¹⁹³ Jonathan Restarick, Managing Director, Accenture (Sydney, Australia), Employer of Fadi, a Management Consultant who is Stateless, cited in TBB, *The Promise of Labour Mobility: How skills can be a passport out of displacement for refugees*, as above, p. 20.

¹⁹⁴ Andrew Walsh, CEO of Iress, interviewed for TBB short film *Connecting skilled refugees with global employers*, 20 January 2019, available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLOv59A1BFY&t=3s>.

Fifty-nine percent of employers surveyed said they are either extremely or very likely to recruit again through TBB in future, and 35% were somewhat likely to recruit again. Only 1 respondent said they were not so likely to recruit again.¹⁹⁵ Repeat hiring is a strong indication of a positive outlook on the benefits of the program from an employer perspective.

Other beneficiaries

While labour mobility clearly benefits refugees and their families and employers, there are also a range of secondary beneficiaries from this model that should be highlighted.

Remittance flows to refugee hosting countries

According to candidate survey data 60% of TBB candidates are sending remittances to their families who live abroad in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria or elsewhere at the 6-month mark. At their current monthly rates, candidates who are remitting funds will send an average of \$1,820.5 USD in remittances over the course of their first year in destination countries. This is likely to be a significant under-estimation of their future annual rate, given candidates in the first year of their arrival in a new country face significant expenses relating to setting up new homes and potentially repaying loans.

Spending in destination country economies

As a collective, the 15 candidates who have relocated through TBB's program earn an approximate annual \$627,000 USD in salary. The average age of the candidates who have relocated to date is 31. Assuming an approximate retirement age of 65, if all work at a constant salary, the fifteen candidates will generate an approximate \$21.3 million USD to spend in destination country economies in their lifetimes. Of course, it is likely the candidates will earn much more than this due to wage rises, and household incomes will rise as spouses too enter the workforce.

¹⁹⁵ Employer respondent from Canada, who highlighted "Although the senior leadership team feels good about recruiting through TBB, it is a slower recruitment process". This feedback underscores the importance of addressing visa processing timelines identified as barriers in the pilot phase which TBB has designed solutions for. TBB employer feedback survey, May 2020.

Taxation to destination countries

All candidates are paying income tax in accordance with destination country regulations. On average, the 15 candidates who have moved through TBB's program are paying 25.15% income taxes to their destination countries. Candidates have paid or will pay on average \$11,372 USD in income taxes in their first full financial year in their destination countries. These calculations do not include other forms of taxation, such as sales taxes.

Skills lift effect

Many candidates have talked about how their engagement with TBB in general (including pre-departure) and their work experience (post-arrival) has helped motivate them and give them exposure to knowledge to improve their technical and soft skills (see candidate section above). While these skills are obviously of benefit to the candidates themselves, and to employers in destination countries, they are also a potential of benefit in rebuilding conflict-affected countries. Several TBB candidates have indicated an intention or preference to return to Syria when it is safe to do so. TBB is monitoring these intentions and actions through surveys in order to assess the flow on benefits of this labour mobility solution on economies and societies recovering from war.

Researching these wider impacts

TBB as an organization is committed to monitoring, evaluation and learning to drive program design. The data that TBB collects about its program has much wider potential benefits than this though. TBB is in a unique position having access to extensive and scalable refugee skills data through the Talent Catalog, but also longitudinal impact data through interval-based candidate surveys. To maximize the utility of this data and expand knowledge about labour mobility as a complementary pathway TBB needs to seriously explore research partnerships.

Recommendation 30: TBB should explore and enter into partnerships with research institutions to expand the knowledge base about the practical impact and future potential of labour mobility as a complementary pathway for refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

Appendices

Appendix 1: TBB’s monitoring, evaluation and learning process framework

Goal	Why	What	When	Who	How
Data collection on program outputs	Necessary for reporting to donors and for identifying programmatic bottlenecks	Quantitative measurements of program activities	Monthly updates from source and destination countries	TBB source countries TBB destination countries	Update Monitoring Protocol and Recruitment Cycle Timing spreadsheets
Monitoring for process improvement / “inclusive design”	Improve processes and partnerships for future candidates and employer partners; Troubleshoot immediate challenges and mitigate risks	Informal check-ins with candidate and employer (email, phone)	<i>Pre-departure</i> As needed after key interventions (e.g post-interview) <i>Post-arrival</i> Approximately bi-weekly, on an as needed basis	<i>Pre-departure</i> TBB source countries <i>Post-arrival</i> Aus: Refugee Talent Can: TBB	Update candidates’ slack channel + Salesforce record Use sample candidate, employer Discussion Templates (as required)
Data collection on impact	Collecting rigorous data on our impact on quality of life and outcomes for candidates and on companies/ communities	Formal guided surveys capturing both quantitative and qualitative impact data at set intervals	<i>Pre-departure</i> 2 weeks before departure to get baseline <i>Post-arrival</i> 6 months and then annually for 5 years	<i>Alumni Pre-departure</i> TBB source countries <i>Alumni Post-arrival</i> Aus: TBB (or potentially by an external reviewer) Can: TBB (or potentially by an external reviewer)	Talent Catalog Analytics Candidate intake assessment records Longitudinal alumni survey Cost + income metrics

Structured reflection	Ensure learning is integrated into our future processes and organizational development, avoid repeat mistakes, and improve quality of programming	Group reflections based on data and feedback coming from the monitoring so far and synthesis of steps forward to integrate learning	2 x per year	TBB Board, staff, volunteers and relevant partners	Review of monitoring data coupled with video focus group
Data collection on scoping new locations and partners	Ensure program expansion is based on sound data analysis and stakeholder consultation	Desk based assessment and field trips to prospective new locations	As needed	Depends	Source and destination country assessment matrix Reports of field trips
Evaluation to inform learning, influence policy and guide program interventions	Use evidence to effectively influence government policy to open up labour mobility pathways + prove impact in order to generate additional funding for TBB.	Point-in-time evaluations based on expert analysis of the monitoring and impact data TBB is collecting + collection of additional qual/quant data as required	At major transition moments (eg. moving from piloting to scaling phase)	Depends	Mix of internal and external evaluations
"Knowledge products" that advance our operational goals	Document our processes, evidence of what works, or barriers identified and overcome, so that partners or other stakeholders can replicate or	Toolkits, reports, or whitepapers with a defined audience and goal	As needed - driven by operational objectives	Depends	Targeted publications and comms materials

	enable our success				
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Appendix 2: Key informant interviews

Informant	Title and bio
Mustafa Alio	<p>Co-Founder and Managing Director of Jumpstart Refugee Talent</p> <p>Mustafa Alio was born in Latakia, Syria and came to Canada in 2007 for his studies. His own experiences of refuge, integration, and inclusion have been the foundation of his work and advocacy. He received his bachelor’s degree in business administration and completed a post-graduate degree in Marketing Management and Financial Services.</p> <p>Mustafa is the Co-Founder, and currently the Managing Director of Jumpstart Refugee Talent, a Co-Founder and active board member of the Syrian Canadian Foundation, and a member of the Network for Refugee Voices. In addition, he is an advisory committee member on (LERRN) seven-years research Local Engagement Refugee Research Network in (Lebanon, Turkey, Tanzania, and Kenya) about the role of civil society, local actors and refugee-led organizations in promoting protection and creating solutions. Mustafa has contributed a number of articles on refugees’ issues for board and international public audiences. Some of his articles can be read in the New York Times, Stanford Social Innovation Review, and The Apolitical.</p>
John Cameron	<p>TBB Founder and Board Director</p> <p>John is one of the pioneers of electronic trading. He was a member of the team that wrote one of the world's first fully automated trading systems (SEATS) for the Australian Stock Exchange, which ran for almost 20 years. John was elected to the board of FIX Trading in 2010 by members of the international FIX community where he served until 2013. He joined the board of international software company IRESS in 2010 where he still serves. He is founder and director of the Cameron Foundation which supports initiatives in the areas of health, education, human rights and disaster relief. In 2016 he started the Refugee Jobs Marketplace initiative and shortly after launched Talent Beyond Boundaries in Australia, funded by Cameron Foundation. He is a member of the Settlement Services Advisory Council which advises the</p>

	Australian Government on migrant settlement and social cohesion, including humanitarian settlement.
Michael Casasola	<p>Senior Resettlement Officer, UNHCR Canada</p> <p>Michael Casasola is a Senior Resettlement Officer with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ottawa. He has been working with UNHCR since 2002 and prior was the Director of the R.C. Diocese of London - Refugee Office for eleven years. He oversaw the completion of UNHCR's handbook, Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration. He has also written a number of articles on Canadian resettlement including "The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices" in Refuge and co-authoring "Canada's private sponsorship of refugees program: A practitioners perspective of its past and future" in the Journal of International Migration and Integration.</p>
Alexandra Chen	<p>Advisor on pilot project; expert in refugee mental health with focus on Middle East</p> <p>Alexandra Chen (A.B., A.M., Ed.M., PhD. Candidate, Harvard University) is a child protection and mental health specialist from Hong Kong working with refugees in conflict and post-conflict zones.</p> <p>Over the last decade, Alexandra has been working with vulnerable and displaced communities in and from Israel-Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, South Africa, Senegal, Myanmar, and most recently as advisor to UN agencies on the Syria crisis.</p> <p>She is currently serving Syrian and other refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Greece, focused on providing early childhood education and therapy for victims of sexual violence and torture. Alexandra is also completing her PhD at Harvard University, studying the impact of trauma and toxic stress on children's cognitive functioning and mental health. She speaks 10 languages, including Chinese, Arabic and French.</p>
Mary Louise Cohen and Bruce Cohen	<p>TBB Founders and Board Directors</p> <p>Mary Louise is a founding partner of Phillips & Cohen LLP and has represented whistleblowers for more than 25 years in lawsuits brought to remedy fraud against the United States. She also serves as Chair of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Board for UNICEF-USA. Mary Louise graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School. She co-founded two other successful non-profits - one that focuses on education for African girls and one that has established local capacity to treat pediatric cancer patients in Ethiopia.</p>

	<p>Bruce served as a top lawyer in the Senate for almost two decades working for Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont. As Chief Counsel and Staff Director for the Senate Judiciary Committee, he coordinated the Democratic staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee and worked with his Republican counterparts, Senate leadership, the House, and the administrations of Presidents Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama. Bruce graduated from Stanford University, and from the University of California Berkeley, school of law where he was editor-in-chief of The California Law Review.</p>
Stephen Cryne	<p>President and CEO of the Canadian Employee Relocation Council</p> <p>Stephen Cryne is the President and CEO of the Canadian Employee Relocation Council, CERC. Prior to joining CERC in September 2002, Stephen had his own consulting practice providing strategic planning and communication services. He has an extensive background in association management and government relations.</p> <p>Between 1995 and 2001 Stephen held senior management positions in the Ontario Government. He has 16 years' experience in the automotive industry, holding management positions in accounting and human resources. Stephen is a regular speaker at human resources management conferences and relocation industry meetings</p>
Anna Gekht	<p>Senior Resettlement Officer (Complementary Pathways) at UNHCR</p> <p>Anna has previously served as Regional Project Coordinator - Quality Initiative of Asylum Systems in Eastern Europe in Georgia, and prior to that as a Resettlement Officer for UNHCR in Russia. Anna is now one of TBB's main interlocutors at UNHCR headquarters, collaborating to promote complementary labour mobility pathways for refugees.</p>
Ronnie Goldberg	<p>Representative of the Business Advisory Council at the Global Forum for Migration and Development; former US Council for International Business</p> <p>Ronnie Goldberg advises USCIB's president and CEO on strategic matters and represents American business at several high-level forums.</p> <p>Goldberg served as USCIB's top policy executive for over 25 years, most recently as executive vice president and chief policy officer, overseeing the organization's wide-ranging activities on international trade, investment, economic and regulatory matters, and supervising a staff of policy professionals with expertise on a host of issues affecting American companies engaged in business abroad. In her earlier role, she also coordinated USCIB policies in relation to those of our international affiliates – the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Business and Industry Advisory Committee,</p>

	<p>(BIAC) and the International Organization of Employers (IOE) – and various other groups.</p> <p>She has also served as the U.S. employer representative on the International Labour Organization’s Governing Body, and chair of the BIAC Employment, Labor, and Social Affairs (ELSA) Committee.</p> <p>Ms. Goldberg is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.</p>
Andrew and Renata Kaldor	<p>Founders of Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law at UNSW Sydney</p> <p>Andrew Kaldor AM has been an independent businessman since starting his first company in 1980. He is now an investor. He holds a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) from the University of Sydney and an MBA (Dean’s Honours list) from Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was a teaching fellow. Mr Kaldor and his immediate family were accepted by Australia as refugees after the second world war. He and his wife, Renata Kaldor, founded the Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law in 2013 at UNSW Sydney.</p>
Bassem Maher	<p>Public Relations Manager, Union of Relief and Development Associations (URDA), Lebanon.</p> <p>URDA assisted TBB to set up its operations in Lebanon and the two organizations continue to partner.</p>
David Manicom	<p>Special Advisor, Resettlement and Complementary Pathways at UNHCR</p> <p>David Manicom serves as Special Advisor leading the implementation of UNHCR’s Three Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways. The Strategy, mandated by the Global Compact on Refugees affirmed by the UN General Assembly in 2018, serves as a key vehicle to expand protection for refugees via third-country solutions, with the goal of increasing the number of resettlement spaces, expanding the number of resettlement countries and improving the availability and predictability of complementary pathways for refugees.</p> <p>Prior to joining UNHCR in summer 2019, David served as a senior official in Canada’s Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, most recently as Assistant Deputy Minister for Settlement and Integration. He has held a number of senior assignments in the Canadian government in immigration policy and operations, in Ottawa, Moscow, Islamabad, Geneva, Beijing and New Delhi. He holds degrees from the University of Toronto (BA) and McGill University (MA, PhD).</p>

Sayre Nyce	<p>Founding Executive Director (former)</p> <p>Sayre has an extensive background working on refugee response with the UN and non-profit organizations, including the International Rescue Committee and Refugees International. She also served as the Regional Operations Officer for the UN Refugee Agency in Jordan and Lebanon during the Iraq and Syria refugee crises. In that role she launched the first UNHCR Data Analysis Group, an innovative approach to regional data analysis and reporting. Sayre has worked to improve refugee policy and operations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. She has a B.A. in Psychology and French from St. Olaf College and a Masters in International Affairs from Columbia University.</p>
Kate O'Malley	<p>Senior Protection Officer at UNHCR in Canberra.</p> <p>Kate has over 20 years' experience in the Australian government working in both migration and foreign affairs portfolios. Prior to her current role, Kate was Deputy Director Division of International Protection and Head of Resettlement 2015-17 in UNHCR Geneva and before that Minister-Counsellor Migration, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Her experience includes development and delivery of Australia's resettlement program, as well as family migration policy and programs. She was also active in the design and implementation of Australia's current legal framework for migration. She has engaged with TBB on the evolution of policy and practice in each of these roles since early 2015 when she attended one of the first UNHCR-TBB meetings held in Ghent, Belgium.</p>
Janet Ouma	<p>Program Coordinator for Resettlement, RefugePoint, Kenya</p> <p>Janet is part of a team which implements the RefugePoint – UNHCR Collaboration Project, which deploys staff to fill gaps in resettlement, child protection, status determination and community-based protection in UNHCR operations in Africa and beyond. Janet is also in charge of the resettlement unit in the RefugePoint Nairobi office, which submits vulnerable clients for resettlement consideration to the USA, Canada, and Australia. Prior to joining RefugePoint, Janet worked as a Resettlement Expert in Ethiopia on a deployment to UNHCR. She holds a bachelor's degree in law and a master's degree in international relations.</p>
Petra Playfair	<p>CEO of Playfair Visa and Migration Services</p> <p>With over 35 years' experience in migration and multicultural affairs, Petra has established and managed the PLAYFAIR Immigration practice since 1988. Since its inception, Petra's practice has grown from "sole practitioner" status to an international operation with over 70 staff and a national network of over 60 contracted migration agents. Throughout this period Petra has overseen the growth of the commercial and private client department of her practice</p>

	<p>and significantly, set up and developed PLAYFAIR’s humanitarian migration department.</p> <p>Petra served as a Board Director and NSW President of the Migration Institute of Australia (the MIA) from 2005 to 2009. During this period, Petra was also appointed a Board Director of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (the MARA), which had been established to regulate the Australian migration advice profession. The MARA was operated by the MIA under a Deed of Agreement with the department of Immigration. Petra currently serves as an independent director of the Migration Institute of Australia’s NSW branch.</p> <p>Prior to establishing PLAYFAIR, Petra was the senior social worker for International Social Service, a government funded United Nations affiliate. During this time Petra was involved with The Refugee Council of Australia, The New South Wales Committee on Adoption and the Austcare Board of Management.</p>
Ben Rempel	<p>Assistant Deputy Minister, Manitoba (Immigration Ministry)</p> <p>Ben Rempel is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism with lead responsibility for Manitoba’s “Growing Through Immigration Strategy”. He has held the position since 2007. The Department manages an integrated continuum of program and service delivery from the promotion & recruitment of skilled workers & entrepreneurs, immigrant selection through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, pre- and post-arrival economic integration supports through Manitoba START, coordination and support for a broad range of adult language training and integration services, and supports for the improved recognition of international qualifications through legislation and client navigation supports. The “Growing Through Immigration Strategy” has achieved record labour market growth in Manitoba, attracted investment in diverse new business ventures, and supported the successful integration of immigrant newcomers from all categories.</p> <p>Mr. Rempel has an Interdisciplinary Masters Degree from the University of Manitoba with a specialization in international migration issues.</p>
Anna Robson	<p>CEO of Refugee Talent</p> <p>Anna Robson met Nirary Dacho at the Sydney Techfugee Hackathon in November 2015. They joined together to solve the problem of refugees struggling to get jobs that match their experience in their new country. Their solution Refugee Talent – is an employment platform where companies can</p>

	<p>hire diverse talent across Australia and internationally. Anna Robson has a Bachelor in Sports Coaching/Bachelor in Sports Management. She previously worked in the Nauru detention centre for Save the Children and has worked for Queensland Police Service and the Canberra Raiders.</p>
Cath Scarth	<p>CEO of AMES Australia</p> <p>Cath Scarth was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) in 2011. Cath has over 20 years of experience designing, implementing and evaluating a wide range of innovative social programs and enterprises both in Australia and the UK.</p> <p>Prior to her appointment as CEO, Cath was General Manager of Community and Policy, driving innovation in partnerships with employers, government and the community sector to achieve positive employment and settlement outcomes for newly arrived migrants and refugees.</p> <p>Cath is also involved in the broader development of social enterprises through her role as a founding board member of Social Traders.</p>
Gary Slaiman	<p>Corporate Outreach Advisor, Executive Committee of the Business Advisory Committee of the Global Forum for Migration Development</p> <p>Gary is a Partner at Morgan Lewis. He works on legislative matters and represents clients subject to congressional oversight and investigations. Gary's practice is focused on the House and Senate Judiciary committees, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Senate Commerce Committee. Gary served as chief counsel and staff director for the US Senate Labour and Human Resources Subcommittee on Labor. He serves as the chair of the Subcommittee on Innovations for Migrant and Refugee Access to Labor Markets for the Business Mechanism of the Global Forum for Migration and Development. Gary works with Talent Beyond Boundaries on a pro bono basis.</p>
Veronica Wilson	<p>Immigration Lawyer and Founder of Roots Immigration Law</p> <p>Veronica is an immigration lawyer and the founder of Roots Immigration Law in Toronto, Ontario. She has extensive experience offering strategic legal advice and assistance to individuals, families and businesses in all areas of Canadian immigration law.</p> <p>Prior to completing her Juris Doctor at the University of Ottawa, she taught English and lived in South Korea for several years. Her volunteer work with North Korean refugees and human rights advocates inspired her to pursue a career in immigration law with a focus on social justice and inclusivity. Veronica has been the lawyer on file for early TBB candidates relocating to</p>

	Canada and through this work has pioneered the emerging legal practice on access to Canada's economic programs for applicants in displacement. She is currently a pro bono legal advisor to TBB.
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Several other key informants were interviewed but asked to remain anonymous for this report.

Appendix 3: Pilot phase core planning documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed to crystallize and condense the objectives of TBB's pilot phase for the purposes of refining the scope of this evaluation:

- TBB's 2016 grant agreement with the US State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
- TBB Operational Plan (2017-2018)
- 2017-2019 annual report to the Global Innovation Fund
- TBB Australia Strategic Plan to 2020 (dated August 2018)



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