

5 THINGS BUSINESSES CAN DO TO WELCOME REFUGEES

INVESTING IN REFUGEES CAN BE GOOD FOR BUSINESS, AND BRING STAFF TOGETHER BY MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OTHERS.

1 Become a refugee-friendly employer: Research any existing government advice about employing refugees. Could you partner with organisations helping refugees to find work? Find examples of best practice from other companies in your area who are already doing this or preparing to do so. Draw up a plan for how your company could encourage refugees to join your workforce and how you will get them the right support to thrive. In return, your business could benefit from the range of skills and experiences that newcomers can bring.

2 Enable your employees: If your staff is open to supporting refugees, create opportunities to make it happen. You could set up a corporate volunteering scheme for staff to join during working hours. Or brainstorm fundraising ideas, such as donating a day's pay. If community sponsorship is available in your country, offer your staff the space, resources and support to form a sponsorship group.

3 Use your company's purpose to create social impact: Many businesses are using their resources and business model to help tackle the challenges refugees face. For example, a social networking giant could partner with non-profits to improve access to jobs; an internet provider could expand coverage to refugee camps or a local bakery offer trainee programmes. Connect with local refugee organisations in your area to find out how your specific expertise can fill gaps and make a difference.

4 Create opportunities: Many refugees have a high level of education and skills, but can often struggle to access jobs because of government policy, discrimination, etc. Employers can also face challenges in recruiting refugees because of the documentation needed, costs, etc. Companies could potentially push for changes in laws and policies to make it easier to employ refugees. Good employers will provide fair and decent work for any refugees they hire, including paying the minimum wage and safe working conditions and making sure their hiring practices don't discriminate against anyone.

5 Help refugees reach their potential: Training and a decent job often come top of refugees' wishlists in a new country. By offering people work experience, placements, training and workshops, your company could help ignite someone's career by strengthening their CV and helping them gain new skills and qualifications. You could also look for opportunities to invest in refugees' own business ventures by offering start-up advice, loans and grants, mentoring and networking opportunities.

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