

AN EXAMINATION OF REMOTE WORK FOR REFUGEES



Lorraine Charles

Lorraine Charles is currently Research Associate at the Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, Head of Research for Angela M Solomon Communications and Lead Policy Analysis for a project that aims at understanding the challenges of education globally and ways to address these. She has worked on issues related to the Syrian crisis since 2011. Her work currently focuses on livelihoods and education for refugees.

Introduction

The protracted refugee crisis in the Middle East, as well as further afield, has placed host governments under significant pressure to accommodate for the needs of individuals who have sought refuge in their countries. As financial pressures, shrinking economies and

rising unemployment plague many refugee-hosting countries, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, the presence of large refugee populations has created an additional burden.

As international attention has become focused on viable options for livelihoods for refugees and other displaced populations, struggling host economies and governments stretched

to provide employment for native populations have complicated solutions. There is a growing interest to find innovative and viable solutions for employment, not only for migrant and refugee populations, but also host communities. There is an urgent need for a scalable, sustainable and replicable model for job creation.

Technology has changed the way we communicate, live and learn, and it has also altered the way we work. Companies no longer need only to depend on talent available in their physical location. Employment that is no longer bound by geography, takes into account the opportunities offered by technology, and utilizes online management and payment systems, has created a new way for many individuals to work. The Internet has expanded the opportunities for companies to hire employees remotely, from their homes, working and communicating virtually.

While studies on remote work are not new, there is very little research that examines its viability for refugees. This research aims to fill that gap. It examines whether remote work can be a viable option, not only for refugees, but also for members of the host community. By examining the importance of livelihoods in protracted displacements, it shows that dignified livelihoods provide a semblance of stability and security for vulnerable populations. Through interviews with organizations that facilitate remote work, this research provides an overview of the current status of remote work among refugee populations, examining the specific challenges faced by refugee remote workers, how remote work needs to be tailored to their specific needs, accommodating for their lack of access to traditional financial services, lack of targeted education for employment initiatives and other bureaucratic obstacles they may face in their host countries.

While it is acknowledged that remote work can provide only part of the solution for employment in refugee hosting countries, it provides a practical solution in economies that struggle to create sufficient employment opportunities.

Remote work: Why a global trend?

The trend for remote work is growing globally. In the US, 24 percent of workers worked remotely in 2015¹ and by 2020, 40 percent of the US workforce is expected to be working remotely². A 2016 Gallup survey³ found that 43 percent of their responders had spent at least some time working remotely in 2015. A more recent study found that 70 percent of professionals work remotely at least once a week, while 53 percent at least half the week⁴. Gallup also found that the amount of time employees spent working remotely also increased, as has the range of sectors that this type of work is

1) <https://www.forbesmiddleeast.com/en/how-entrepreneurs-can-turn-failures-to-reach-success/>

2) https://http-download.intuit.com/http.intuit/CMO/intuit/futureofsmallbusiness/intuit_2020_report.pdf

3) <https://news.gallup.com/reports/199961/7.aspx>

4) <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/30/70-percent-of-people-globally-work-remotely-at-least-once-a-week-iwg-study.html>

occurring. The Middle East has also been experimenting with remote work for its employees. In Saudi Arabia, there are 500 companies in 70 cities that allow individuals to work remotely⁵. UAE-based dubizzle, a free classifieds website to buy, sell and find items, allows employees to work remotely and to choose their working hours⁶.

The benefits of remote work are substantial. Companies benefit from access to talent globally, improved productivity, agility, scalability, a reduced turnover, improved retention and increased profits. It has been estimated that companies can make substantial cost savings when employees are able to work remotely at least part of the time. Companies employing remote workplace strategies can save up to \$22,000 per remote worker, per year⁷. Not only are the cost savings significant, but there are also gains in employee engagement and productivity. Gallup⁸ reports that employees that spend between 60 percent and 80 percent of their time working remotely are more engaged than those who don't work remotely. Research has also shown that remote is correlated with increased productivity. One study reported higher productivity and fewer sick leave days and breaks when employees work from home part of the time⁹. Another study reported an improvement in task-based performance and organizational citizenship behavior (including one's contributions toward creating a positive, cooperative and friendly work environment¹⁰) when individuals work remotely. Moreover, remote work means that companies can hire talent globally, unrestricted by immigration controls and migration policies¹¹. The biggest benefit to the employee is the flexibility that remote work provides¹², allowing individuals to maintain a work-life balance.

The growing trends in remote work and acknowledgment of the benefits to both the employer and employee are promising. This has created an increasingly robust infrastructure around remote workers, not only in the

companies who employ individuals remotely and platforms to find remote work, but also in software, and to a limited extent education (though this requires more robust investment and expansion) that facilitate remote work. This infrastructure can be adapted and utilized in the refugee context.

Employment obstacles for refugees in host countries

Within their host communities, refugees are often marginalized, with very limited options for employment and often with restricted access to the labor market. Many refugee-hosting countries, particularly in the Middle East, enforce protectionist labor laws that restrict refugees from accessing the labor market. In Lebanon and Jordan, Syrian refugees only have the right to work and acquire work permits in limited sectors (for example agriculture and construction). In Turkey, while Syrian refugees are allowed to work in any sector, employment is restricted by a quota set by the government (one Syrian for every ten Turks). This has meant that many refugees are underemployed or work informally, prey to exploitative employers and often earning less than the minimum wage and in substandard working conditions.

Even in countries where refugees have the right to work, there are structural barriers that restrict integration into the labor force. In Europe refugees legally have the right to work once their claim to asylum has been processed. Yet, the point after arrival refugees where they can work varies by country. In Greece and Sweden, refugees are allowed to work almost immediately upon arrival. The right to work is granted after twelve months in Germany and France, and refugees are subject to a resident labor market test to ensure that the position could not be filled by an individual in the domestic labor force. In Ireland, asylum seekers are not allowed to work until they receive a decision on their refugee application¹³. These circumstances place many refugees in situations where they are forced to

5) <http://www.incarabia.com/build/more-more-saudi-companies-are-letting-employees-work-from-home/>

6) <https://www.cipd.ae/people-management/feature-articles/case-study-remote-working>

7) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/the-future-of-work-is-mobile/>

8) <https://news.gallup.com/reports/199961/7.aspx>

9) <https://people.stanford.edu/nbloom/sites/default/files/wfh.pdf>

10) <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/09/140918150940.htm>

11) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/the-future-of-work-is-mobile/>

12) <https://open.buffer.com/state-remote-work-2018/>

13) <https://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefing-paper/4.24>

14) http://www.eda.ac.ae/images/pdf/Livelihoods_for_Syrian_Refugees_EDA_Working_Paper_Full_Version.pdf

15) Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation "Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis Appeal 2016-2018". https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/JRP16_18_Document-final+draft.pdf

16) <https://insight.jbs.cam.ac.uk/assets/cbr-sharq-lebanon-livelihoods-report.pdf>

17) Forcibly Displaced: Towards Development Approach to Refugees, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25016>

18) Karen Jacobsen (2002) "Livelihoods in Conflict: The Pursuit of Livelihoods by Refugees and the Impact on the Human Security of Host Communities". International Migration. Vol. 40 (5).

work informally in order to survive.

In addition to these legal barriers to refugee employment, another major issue is the lack of available jobs in refugee host countries. The Syrian crisis has had a significant impact on the economies in the Middle East. The economies in Jordan¹⁴ and Lebanon have been negatively impacted by the crisis. In Jordan, according to a report by the Ministry of Planning and Interior, the country has overall witnessed a 30 percent increase in youth unemployment since the start of the Syrian crisis¹⁵. Likewise, in Lebanon¹⁶, there has also been an increase in unemployment, especially among the youth and low-skilled workers. The presence of refugees has also resulted in rising social tensions, particularly in areas where refugees are located. Lack of jobs and sluggish economies, as well as growing negative public sentiment, in refugee hosting countries lies at the core of the protectionist measures adopted by governments.

The delays in allowing refugees to work legally, along with protectionist labor market mechanisms, result in many resorting to informal and often precarious employment, making refugees vulnerable to exploitative and unscrupulous employers.

Local integration of refugees: The need for dignified livelihoods

With resettlement only an option for very few refugees and repatriation elusive due to protracted crises, local integration seems to be the only option for the majority refugees. Yet, host countries in the Middle East are reluctant to integrate refugees, viewing their presence as only temporary. Without the ability to work formally and have access to education and services, self-reliance is almost impossible for refugees.

From a socioeconomic perspective, local integration occurs when refugees are no

longer in physical danger and not at risk of *refoulement*. It also means that they have freedom of movement and not confined to camps and settlements. They have basic socioeconomic rights, meaning that they are allowed free access to the labor market so that they are able to sustain themselves and their families. Local integration also means access to education and other services, and being socially networked in the host community. In other words, local integration occurs when refugees "have overcome their specific vulnerabilities to the point that they and their hosts show little difference in access to opportunities"¹⁷.

Livelihood activities are perhaps the central component of local integration. They facilitate the creation and maintenance of social and economic interdependence within and between communities, and can thus restore functioning social networks, based on mutually beneficial exchange of labor, assets and food¹⁸. By providing refugees with the opportunity to have access to livelihoods, they are able to gain access to resources, have freedom of movement and can work beside their hosts to pursue productive lives. They will also be less dependent on aid and better able to overcome the sources of tension and conflict in their host communities, when not in direct competition with the host community.

Essentially, livelihoods provide the opportunity for refugees to become self-reliant. When refugees have access to livelihoods, it reduces the burden on host country by decreasing refugees' dependence on its assistance. This also contributes positively to the economy of the host community. More importantly, it enhances the well-being of refugees by boosting their dignity and confidence, and providing a sense of control over their lives. When refugees are allowed and encouraged to work, it allows them to retain their skills and develop new ones. This also helps refugees in the long term, improving their future prospects. In contrast, when refugees spend prolonged

periods without work, it makes it difficult for them to quickly become self-reliant once more.

Yet, many refugee-hosting countries have developed policies that prevent refugees from being able to pursue livelihoods. These policies include restrictions on freedom of movement and settlement, including encampment; restrictions on employment; poor standards of protection and physical security for refugees, including a non-guarantee of *refoulement*; and host governments' desire that the presence of refugees is temporary (no permanent residence)¹⁹. These policies have negative consequences for both refugee and host communities.

Countries that have provided refugees access to the labor market have seen increased economic growth, job creation and an overall positive impact on the local population, where both groups are able to access employment equally. In Uganda, where refugees have access to economy, they make a positive contribution. These contributions are exemplified by the significant exchange of services and goods between refugees and host community, and refugees' creation of employment opportunities for Ugandan nationals²⁰. Opportunities such as this, not only provide the opportunity for dignified livelihoods, and thus productive lives, but also promote social cohesion.

Local integration, with the provision of access to dignified livelihoods, generates benefits for refugees, who become self-reliant, and in turn this benefits the local economy and host population.

Remote work for refugees: A conceptualization

The urgent need for employment, and thus access to dignified livelihoods for refugees is apparent. With obstacles to employment in local labor markets evident, the idea of remote work for refugees provides a solution that could

have a significant impact on the lives of refugees and other vulnerable populations.

The idea of remote employment for refugees could be a formalized adaptation of existing systems and platforms, taking into consideration refugees' specific needs and circumstances. The system should be project-based to accommodate for further displacement, repatriation or resettlement. Payment needs to be made via a secure online system that accommodates for refugees' lack of financial formality, possibly using a solution that utilizes mobile applications, while adhering to international cyber security protocols. The system needs to have the ability to record and validate projects that individuals had worked on, including a rating system, building an individual's profile and credibility, and thereby creating a virtual curriculum vita. This would ensure potential employers that individuals they seek to hire have the required skills.

As a provider of employment, private sector commitment would be crucial. Engagement would be carefully negotiated, as for many companies, hiring refugees may be perceived as part of their corporate social responsibility activities. Yet, this may not be a strong incentive to hire refugees. Instead, a business case for hiring refugee remote workers would be made, as opposed to corporate responsibility from the perspective of the refugee crisis, as skill set and deliverables are what matter.

There would also be a built-in education component that links with the skills required by the private sector, both technical and soft. Targeted education that links to employment has been the subject of many development interventions. Yet, they have not had significant impact helping refugees access the labor market. This is one place that private sector partnership could be hugely beneficial. Cooperation between the private sector and education programs could be a feedback loop, with the private sector providing specific

19) Jacobsen, Karen (2002) "Livelihoods in Conflict: The Pursuit of Livelihoods by Refugees and the Impact on the Human Security of Host Communities." International Migration Vol. 40 (5)

20) Betts, Alexander; Bloom, Louise; Kaplan, Josiah; Omata, Naohiko (2014) Refugee Economies: Rethinking Popular Assumptions, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/refugee-economies-2014.pdf>

details of their employment requirements, and individuals trained according to these specifications, with the eventual guarantee of employment. Education interventions also need to equip refugees with the ability to access future learning independently in order to adapt for the changing needs of the economy. Most importantly, refugees need to learn how to be remote workers. This means teaching skills such as autonomy, time management and work etiquette, as well as how to use technological tools that support working remotely. Refugees need to understand how to work within a global workforce and maneuver the different work cultures they will encounter while working remotely. Skills such as managing finances and dealing with taxation are also necessary.

The challenges

While remote work for refugees holds great promise, obstacles to this initiative are many: political (legislative), social (mindset, environmental, skill-set) and financial (payment).

International remote work remains a grey area legislatively. The application of labor laws and social security for international remote workers remains unclear. Under which jurisdiction is the individual classified while working for a company headquartered in one country, while residing in another. This is even more complicated for refugees, many of whom lack the right to work in their country of residence. The legal employment status for refugees therefore requires careful consideration. While remote working aims to provide refugees access to a dignified livelihood, it should not push refugees further along a path of informality and place them in more precarious situations. Appropriate legal frameworks are required to formalize employment for refugees and guarantee adequate labor protection.

Remote working arrangements are not widespread, and for most refugees this is probably a new way of working. Not

accustomed to working remotely, individuals may struggle to adapt and may find it difficult to deliver. In parallel, the physical environments where refugees reside may not be conducive to working. Refugees reside in a variety of settings, camps as well as urban and rural areas. However, what is common is that these are often cramped, with large extended families or even multiple families sharing a common living space. There may also be inconsistent or no access to the Internet. In addition to work, females may also have additional domestic responsibilities, as it is widely recognized that women are usually the primary caregivers in homes. As the majority of remote workers work from home, these circumstances may not only lower productivity, but also provide a disincentive for refugees, and indeed employers to consider remote work a viable option. Refugees require a physical place that is conducive to work and supporting infrastructure (physical, technical and psychological) to facilitate remote work.

Many refugees have missed years of education and may not have been able to complete secondary or university education. Those who have completed their education also face significant obstacles. Many have no proof of their qualification and skills, their certificates lost and references not contactable. Much more significantly, most refugees (and this also applies for the host community), even those who have completed formal education, lack the skills that are required by the labor market. This creates an obstacle for those trying to seek employment, neither having proof of education nor the skills required for employment. Targeted education that prepares individuals for the skills required for employment is therefore necessary.

One result of refugees' informality in the labor force is their lack of access to financial institutions. A history of informal work has meant that many refugees, and this also applies to significant segments of host community

populations, are paid in cash. While this may not be problematic for individuals with informal employment in the places that they reside, this would be difficult for remote workers. While money exchanges offer the option to transfer funds, this is not without cost, and is often unmanageable on the small amounts that many refugees would earn. A secure online payment mechanism, perhaps linked to an established financial institution, which provides the ability to save and accessible as refugees cross borders, with low transaction fees, is needed.

Remote work for refugees: The status quo

For this research, five organizations that are engaged in remote work for refugees were interviewed: Algo²¹, Chatterbox²², Digital Opportunity Trust Lebanon²³, Re:Coded²⁴, and TaQadam²⁵ (See appendix 1 for descriptions of each organization).

Overcoming legal restrictions in the right to work

Refugees' right to work in host countries varies. Middle East refugee host countries, where most of the respondents target, have protectionist regulations in place that make it difficult for refugees to obtain work permits and work legally in the local economy. Remote work for refugees lie in a legislative grey area and legal requirements for freelancers is unclear.

In order to overcome legal employment restrictions for refugees in Lebanon, TaQadam has established an entity to form contracts with potential employers, and then in turn enter into a direct relationship with refugees as freelance remote workers. This means that refugees are not considered employed, but contracted, thereby not contravening the law that prevents refugees from being employed. In Turkey, although refugees are allowed to work in the local economy, work permits are difficult to obtain. As a result, Re:Coded encourage their

students to register as sole proprietors and work as a freelancers.

Chatterbox is based in the UK and hires refugees from around the world. They hire refugees as freelancers in order to overcome legal restrictions of the countries that tutors reside in. For the Chatterbox tutors who reside in the UK, being hired as freelancers is one way to protect the organization from individuals who may have misrepresented their legal status to work, a violation that incurs a large fine for organizations.

Employment

Opportunities for refugees to work remotely are mostly centered on the tech sector. The organizations interviewed reported that refugees work in e-commerce, programming, software and mobile app development, digital marketing, artificial intelligence, graphic design and data analysis. Refugees have also been employed remotely in non-technical sectors such as online tutoring and translation.

Employers that tend to hire refugees are typically SMEs and start-ups working in technology. They have also been recruited to work for UN organizations and NGOs. All respondents reported a general willingness of the private sector to hire refugees. This is particularly the case with companies that have an outward commitment to support refugees in general, and employing refugees is just an extension of this pledge. Relationships with companies who hire refugees, according to respondents, are established through networks and referrals. Companies that had worked with freelancers previously are easier to approach.

Payment

Two respondents reported that a payment system that is secure and does not incur huge fees is one of the challenges for refugees working remotely. While, respondents reported that payment is

21) <https://workalgo.com/>

22) <https://wearechatterbox.org/>

23) <https://lebanon.dotrust.org/>

24) <http://www.re-coded.com/>

25) <https://taqadam.io/>

26) DOT, Re:Coded and Chatterbox reported this method of payment.

27) Interview, Mursal Hedayat, Chatterbox, 24 June 2018.

28) Interview, Anna Merzi, Algo.

29) <https://www.omt.com.lb/en>

30) Interview, Karina Grosheva, TaQadam, 18 June 2018

made in cash, or via bank transfers or PayPal, these were not unproblematic. For example, PayPal²⁶, while used by Chatterbox as payment system, charges large fees and has poor conversion rates. This is particularly challenging due to the small amounts that are transferred for payment, meaning that refugees are disadvantaged. As a result, Chatterbox is actively seeking an alternative payment system²⁷. Another challenge is that most mainstream payment methods and financial institutions do not operate where refugees are located, and if they do, as in the case of PayPal and Western Union, fees are so high that they are unmanageable. Also, most refugees are unbanked, meaning that they carry cash on them, at all times, which can be a threat to their security. Lack of bank accounts, not only makes payments a challenge, but also makes storage and saving money impossible.

In order to address some of these challenges, two organizations have created their own payment systems. Algo has created a proprietary payment network based on the Western Union model for the freelancers who use their platform, and that can be used globally. However, with this system, Algo are able to control fees to make it fair and beneficial to the remote worker²⁸. The system not only allows refugees to withdraw money, but also to store cash, and even save. TaQadam has also developed its own payment system. Refugees will use TaQadam's mobile app, which is digitally integrated with the OMT–Western Union²⁹ database for easy cash withdrawal. This system will be deployed in November³⁰.

Education and skills development

Education programs that support employment for refugees have had variable results. Programs that link directly to private sector needs have higher returns in terms of post-training employment. The training that respondents provide varies from short on-boarding courses to immersive bootcamp training.

The technical training provided by respondents is linked directly to the employment that each facilitates. DOT Lebanon provides an extensive training program that covers a range of digital skills, app development, as well as specific on-the-job skills for individuals engaged in specific projects. This provides refugees with the skills required for digital careers. Re:Coded delivers a sixteen week immersive blended learning coding bootcamp for refugees to work as software developers. In the last eight weeks of the bootcamp, students are placed on an apprenticeship with a real client, working in teams to develop a prototype of a mobile application or website. This allows students to build a portfolio of projects that they can show prospective employers. Chatterbox, although hiring tutors who have a teaching background, also provide targeted preliminary training to deliver their services. Training will be eventually linked to UK National teacher qualifications, so that UK based tutors can access government teaching programs, providing long-term career prospects. TaQadam works with partner organizations that deliver training specifically aimed at livelihoods in the tech sector. They also provide their own specialized training courses, short on-boarding sessions and further re-training for more complex projects.

Working as a freelance remote worker not only requires technical skills, but also skills related directly to this type of work. DOT provides training in entrepreneurship, while Re:Coded run specific workshops on working as a freelancer and a standalone program on freelancing for those that already have technical skills. Chatterbox provides training in financial literacy for their UK based tutors, providing instruction on how to file correct taxes. Algo provides feedback to freelancers from clients to help improve their capabilities as remote workers.

Respondents reported that there were skills lacking among the refugee population that act as a barrier to

employment, not only as remote workers, but also in the local economy. Similar to the issues in global education systems, respondents felt that refugees lacked the 21st century skills of problem solving, critical thinking, communication, initiative and teamwork. Also, there was consensus that most lacked the mind-set for working independently. The refugees, in general, also lacked general workplace skills, such as appropriate email etiquette and the ability to manage their time effectively. Also, respondents stated that many refugees do not have an understanding of their rights and the legal requirements for freelance and remote work in their country of residence. One respondent commented that the cultural difference was also a challenge because of different expectations of what is considered professional rapport. This cultural difference also impacted the success of placing some refugees with design clients, as design is subjective, and a cultural barrier made it difficult to come to a consensus.

Conclusion

There is an opportunity for a much more extensive model of remote work for refugees. The global private sector, particularly large corporations, could provide jobs to refugee populations and also advise on the skills required for these jobs. By combining remote employment with education models such as “bootcamp learning”, either online or in partnership with established training initiatives, employers can be certain that refugees have the skills that they require.

This model has immense potential and provides a win-win solution. Refugees and host community nationals would be trained in marketable skills required in the global labor market and be gainfully employed. Host country economies would benefit from a productive labor force with disposable income and a decreased unemployment rate. Refugees would be employed so that they become self-reliant, and also gain skills and professional experience that are

transferrable when they cross borders, either by resettlement or repatriation. Companies would save money by having employees off-site, and be able to access global talent and improve staff retention.

Recommendations

For this initiative to be successful, some requirements need to be met by various stakeholders.

Governments

- An appropriate legal framework need to be achieved so that refugees are able to work formally and protected by labor laws.

Private Sector

- Innovative payment mechanisms and the right technical and human resource system needs to be established
- Cooperation between the private sector and education institutes and training programs need to be established to provide feedback on skills they need in potential employees

NGOs/INGOs/UN agencies

- A business case for companies to employ workers, and especially refugees, remotely needs to be made
- A physical space to facilitate remote working (co- working spaces) with appropriate infrastructure, and support for refugees
- Cooperation with the private sector and education institutes to facilitate this initiative is required

Education Institutions/Programming

- A range of training initiatives that accommodate companies' demand for specialist skills, especially in the soft skills that are required

Targeted training that focuses on the soft skills and skills to be a remote worker

31) <https://workalgo.com/>

32) <https://wearechatterbox.org/>

33) <https://lebanon.dotrust.org/>

34) <http://www.re-coded.com/>

35) <https://taqadam.io/>

Annex 1 Organizations Interviewed

Algo³¹ is an online freelancing platform connecting STEM-enabled refugees to tech and creative companies around the world. Algo provides refugees with remote, project-based work. Algo sources refugee exclusively through employment training organizations, most of which specialize in computer programming. Algo gives all freelancers constructive feedback on how they communicate with and present themselves to hiring companies and work with NGO partners to provide a feedback loop of the overall quality of training the freelancers have received, based on our clients' feedback.

Chatterbox³² is a platform that offers online and in-person language tutoring delivered by trained refugee tutors. Languages include Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, Persian Farsi and Dari and Turkish. Although most of the tutors hired by Chatterbox have teaching background, they provide preliminary training to deliver their services. All tutors are self-employed and work remotely, generating their own business.

Digital Opportunity Trust Lebanon (DOT)³³ has established project named "BOT": Lebanon's first socially responsible outsourcing platform providing both physical and remote digital work opportunities for youth with a focus on women of all nationalities and statuses (locals and refugees) from marginalized communities all over Lebanon. The mission is to ensure that women and youth have access to global and local digital freelance work placing them in the base of the working pyramid where they can work their way up while securing a source of income. BOT's services span over several data related work with the ability to cater to clients in three languages—Arabic, French and English—all over the MENA Region.

Re:Coded³⁴ works with refugees in Iraq and Istanbul, providing a 16 week intensive boot camp training in web and software development. In the last 8 weeks of the bootcamp, students are placed on an apprenticeship with a real client, working in teams to develop a prototype of a mobile application or website. Over 80 percent of Re:Coded's students find employment within two months of graduation. Re:Lance will be the offshoot remote working initiative for clients wishing to hire highly vetted and qualified youth remotely. It will also include premium features including Re:Lance Teambuilder, which will find the best talent for clients that need multiple people to work on one project. On the user side, Re:Lance would offer freelance training via webinars and online courses to ensure youth have the skills to create a compelling profile and market their skills in a competitive platform.

TaQadam³⁵ has established partnerships with the private sector to provide employment remotely for refugees in artificial intelligence and image annotation. This allows companies to support training for refugees in image data sets for artificial intelligence through optimized combination of computer and human cognition. Individuals are trained in the specific domain that the companies require. TaQadam also serves communities that are not fit for open freelancing (i.e. more vulnerable populations, especially women).

Annex 2

Interview Questions for NGOs

Education and Training

- Does your NGO/organization provide education/training for the jobs which are open to refugees in their host country, or remotely? If yes, what is the nature of the training?
- Does your NGO/organisation provide any specific training in how to be a remote worker? If yes, what is the nature of the training?
- If you do not give training, how and where did the refugees you are involved with acquire the skills to work?
- Are there any skill sets missing, which you would like to see in future refugee workers?

Employment

- In your experience, who are the employers that hire the refugees you work with? (Multinational, SMEs, NGO, etc.). Please provide examples if possible.
- How did your NGO/organization formulate these relationships or how did you gain this information about jobs for the refugees you work with?
- In your opinion, what is the willingness of the private sector to hire refugees?
- In what sectors are the work opportunities for refugees for remote work?
- Please give examples of some of the jobs and companies.
- Do any refugees work under the umbrella of your NGO/organization? (on a freelance or remote basis or both)
- Does your NGO/organization provide a physical space/co-working space for individuals to work remotely?
- How is payment made to the refugees?
- Are you facing any challenges with this payment method?

Formality of employment

- If refugees do not have the right to work in this specific occupation, how is your *NGO/organization* navigating the informal/formal work dynamic?
- Have you heard of incidents that have made it difficult or dangerous for refugees to work remotely? Please give details
- Did the refugees face any problems with regards to their legal status? What were these issues?

Your organization (these questions will help me in the analysis of the data)

- What is the business model of your organization/NGO? (e.g. do you rely on grants, do you receive a proportion of the earnings for the work that the refugees do?)
- What refugee populations do you work with? (e.g. locations, nationality)