

# Business Behind Refugees

## About Breaking Barriers

Breaking Barriers was founded in 2015 in response to the lack of effective and comprehensive employment support for refugees.

Our mission is to empower people of refugee background in the UK to acquire the knowledge, confidence and experience they need to secure stable, fulfilling employment.

We give a central role to businesses in the UK, working together to find employment solutions and providing support that gets refugees into work.

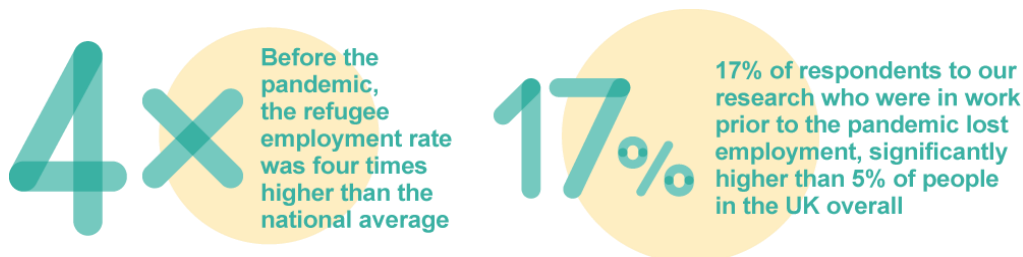
## What is Business Behind Refugees?

Launched in response to the humanitarian refugee crisis in Afghanistan and the recently exacerbated war in Ukraine, Breaking Barriers is calling on 100 businesses to get behind refugees in the UK. We need businesses to commit to supporting and hiring refugees in the UK over the next 12 months so we can work together and meet the urgent and growing need for sustainable refugee employment.

## The current challenge

Since Russia's invasion on February 24<sup>th</sup>, approximately 2,316,002 people have fled Ukraine (as of 10 March 2022). The UNHCR originally predicted that up to four million Ukrainians could end up fleeing the country, at the current rate this could prove to be a vast under-estimation.

The UK is home to over 374,000 people from a refugee background. Refugees bring a diverse range of skills, experience, and aspirations. However, whilst in the UK, they can face significant barriers to employment, these have been intensified by Covid-19.



We know that refugees make valuable contributions to UK society – and that finding a job is a crucial step in rebuilding their lives. **And that's where you come in.**

## What is Breaking Barriers' response?

Since 2015 Breaking Barriers has worked collaboratively with business to help secure stable and fulfilling employment for the refugee community.

During this time, Breaking Barriers has built a community of 30+ like-minded businesses who support and hire refugees and, through our **Fuse business network**, take collective action to achieve more for refugees through employment.

Our Fuse network is backing the call for 100 businesses to support and hire refugees in the UK over the next 12 months. The recent and ongoing crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine show that there has never been a greater need for genuine collaboration across the business community to ensure refugees can rebuild their lives once here in the UK. .

# Fuse

Working together to unlock the potential of refugees

Join Business Behind Refugees and your support will provide more fulfilling job opportunities for refugees and enable us to scale up our employment and education programmes, so that we can meet the urgent and growing need, heightened by the refugee humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine.

## Get your Business Behind Refugees – what you can do

We know businesses want to step-up and play their part, but we also recognise that navigating the support and hiring of refugees can be complex – so we're here to help. The team at Breaking Barriers will work with you to identify the right opportunities, but here's where to start to get your Business Behind Refugees

- **Donate** - invest in our work so we can scale up, respond, and expand our employment and education programmes. This will enable us to support the incoming refugee community, as well as address the growing needs and challenges refugees in the UK face.
- **Hire refugees** - offer recruitment pathways and job opportunities to unlock refugee potential. You can join our refugee work placement programme and access our diverse talent pool. We have a recruitment Action Plan [you can download](#) to help guide you through this.
- **Volunteer** – we are actively seeking to increase the number of Arabic and Farsi speaking volunteers who support our work, as well as those who can offer their skills and expertise to skills and sector-based volunteers.

*“Many of us cannot help but be moved by the challenging circumstances that unfolded in Afghanistan. Grant Thornton values diversity through everyday inclusion and, alongside Breaking Barriers, we are determined to address this humanitarian crisis together. We will continue to hire refugee talent and encourage other companies to do the same.”*

**Head of Sustainability, Karen Higgins at Grant Thornton UK LLP**

## Your impact

Breaking Barriers has supported over 1,300 refugees from over 70 countries – people who have fled from conflict, violence, and persecution.

We are committed to offer all people of a refugee background, the welcome and support they deserve, but we need to scale up our work to meet this need.



### **By showing your support and donating to Breaking Barriers you will ensure we can:**

- Scale up our employment and education programmes where our refugee clients receive 1:1 advice and guidance from trained employment and integration advisors.
- Empower refugees to address some of the most common barriers to employment; CV writing, interview practice, identifying job opportunities, English language, IT and digital skills.
- Enable people of a refugee background to gain access to opportunities that get them into work, training and education so they can rebuild their lives.

### **By committing to hire refugees in the next 12 months you will provide transformational opportunities to Breaking Barriers refugee clients like, Awais:**

*“When my case worker at Breaking Barriers recommended I apply for a refugee placement at Grant Thornton, it was too good an opportunity to miss. I wanted a role where I could apply my ACCA qualification and build on six months' experience as an accountant. Gradually, I built enough confidence to speak up more, take extra responsibility and greater risks. My efforts and contribution were noticed, which led to an offer of a role with the firm's Global Mobility Solutions team, and my life changed forever. Grant Thornton embraces talent from diverse backgrounds. And with more refugees due to arrive in the UK over the next few years I want to encourage other businesses to look beyond the usual approach to recruitment.”*

**Awais Ahmad, Tax Assistant, Grant Thornton LLP UK and Breaking Barriers client.**

**Join Business Behind Refugees today, you'll become part of the biggest business community supporting refugees into employment.**

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## Contact

For more information and to get involved contact:

 [partnerships@breaking-barriers.co.uk](mailto:partnerships@breaking-barriers.co.uk)

 [breaking-barriers.co.uk](http://breaking-barriers.co.uk)

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