

Skilled Worker Visas for Refugees

An Evaluation of the UK's Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP)

An independent evaluation report prepared by:

Nour Moussa, University of Oxford

Olivier Sterck, University of Oxford and University of Antwerp

The views expressed in this independent report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect the views of the UK Home Office, TBB, and other stakeholders involved in the DTMP.



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Executive Summary

According to UNHCR (2023a), a record 108.4 million people lived in forced displacement by the end of 2022. This includes 62.5 million internally displaced people, 35.3 million refugees, and 5.4 million asylum seekers. Around 76% are hosted in low- and middle-income countries where access to decent work is often restricted. In addition to constrained access to local labour markets, displaced people in the Global South face restricted access to labour migration routes to access job markets elsewhere in countries where their skills may be demanded.

In this context, there has been growing policy interest in labour mobility as a complementary solution for refugees as called for by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The first organisation dedicated to refugee labour mobility as a complementary solution to traditional humanitarian resettlement is Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB). Established in 2016, the organisation matches skilled people living in displacement in the Global South with employers in the Global North in need of their skills and then works with employers, governments, and civil society to facilitate displaced people's movement to these countries.

In collaboration with the UK Home Office, TBB set up a programme to pilot labour mobility to the UK for displaced people named the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP). Announced in July 2021, this pilot initially aimed to move 50 - 100 displaced persons and their family members to the UK as skilled migrants by the end of October 2023.

This programme intends to serve as a 'proof of concept' to inform further efforts to enable skilled refugees and other displaced people to work in the UK.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the achievements, impact, and sustainability of this pilot programme. The evaluation primarily employs a qualitative approach for data collection and analysis which included interviews with individuals who arrived in the UK through the pilot, individuals at employing organisations, TBB, the Home Office, and other practitioners at partner organisations; observations at TBB hosted events; and an analysis of secondary data. The report analyses the pilot until 01 September 2023. An afterword on page 65 describes changes that occurred between then and the publication date, March 2024. The analysis is subject to several limitations including the limited sample size and focus on short-term perceived impacts by stakeholders.

The evaluation finds that the pilot achieved most of its stated objectives (e.g. number of employers expressing interest and number of sectors recruiting displaced talent) but fell short of meeting the expected numbers of displaced people relocated. While the pilot intended to move 50 - 100 people to the UK via a Skilled Worker visa, with at least 30 relocated by March 2022, only 17 were offered job offers as of 01 September 2023, out of which only 12 had indeed moved to the UK. These numbers are relatively low compared to the 230 individuals who moved to the UK through a parallel programme piloted by TBB for nurses between 2020 and 2022.

The evaluation attributes shortcomings in these numbers, in large part, to demand-side barriers and challenges in engaging employers. Several factors contribute to the limited commitment from employers, including the significant cost of recruiting internationally and specifically through this programme and the economic and political environment.

The evaluation identifies several factors restricting the supply of 'displaced talent' able to move to the UK through the pilot, including geographical requirements imposed by the pilot and, for some job opportunities, candidates' limited English language proficiency.

The analysis finds strong positive impacts and perceptions associated with the programme. Most notably, individuals who move to the UK report a transformative effect on their livelihoods, safety, and wellbeing. Employers similarly report high levels of satisfaction with the recruitment and find that new hires are performing well at work and bring wider benefits to the office through their prior experiences and backgrounds.

However, the evaluation also identified challenges for some spouses and family members in integrating in the UK due to language barriers and difficulties accessing specific services. For candidates who move alone, several challenges related to family separation are noted.

Regarding sustainability, the research finds that labour mobility induces a sustainable impact on displaced people's livelihoods and

also serves as a sustainable solution for some employers. In terms of the sustainability of the model itself, the programme at present entails a high commitment from TBB with areas of work that are time and labour-intensive. Stakeholders also report that the involvement of the Home Office has been significant in operating this pathway. As such, the analysis suggests that to sustain this labour mobility pathway for displaced people in the near future, the know-how of TBB and the commitment of the Home Office are needed.

Overall, the report recommends that the DTMP pilot continues as it offers displaced people a much-needed avenue to migrate to the UK and entails a life-changing transformation for them and their families. Extending the implementation period and the geographical scope of the programme will allow TBB and partners to continue to address challenges that have emerged, in particular around building demand for recruitment, and eventually, this can make this pathway more self-reinforcing.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

ACRS	Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DT4E	Displaced Talent for Europe
DTMP	Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GPP	Gateway Protection Programme
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
IDM	Informed Decision Making
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHS	Immigration Health Surcharge
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHS	National Health Service
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
TBB	Talent Beyond Boundaries
TC	Talent Catalog
UK	United Kingdom
UKRS	United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VCRS	Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme
VPRS	Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

Definitions & Terminology

Alumni A term used by TBB to refer to displaced people who have moved through TBB's programme. For the purpose of this report, once a person arrives in the UK, they are considered an 'alum'.

Candidate In this report, 'candidate' or 'primary candidates' refers to an individual who has created a profile on TBB's Talent Catalog and is in the process of moving through a TBB programme such as the DTMP.

Destination Countries The countries where displaced people relocate to (such as Australia, Canada, and the UK) after securing a job through TBB.

Displaced Talent A term used by TBB in reference to displaced people registered on their Talent Catalog. In this report, it is used to describe the audience of this programme and refers to individuals registered on TBB's Talent Catalog.

Labour Mobility for Displaced Persons While there is no exact definition of 'labour mobility', this report focuses on the movement of people with a displacement background across international borders for work opportunities as 'labour migrants' and uses the terms 'labour migration' and 'labour mobility' interchangeably.

Replicating Partner An independent organizational entity from TBB that TBB engages in an agreement with to advance its mission.

Source Countries The host countries where displaced people are based before securing a migration solution through TBB's programmes.

Talent Catalog (TC) The online database platform used by TBB where displaced people register their skills, work, and education experiences for international employment opportunities. The TC is described in more detail in Chapter 5.

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Introduction

By the end of 2022, a record 108.4 million people lived in forced displacement, according to UNHCR estimates. This includes 62.5 million internally displaced people, 35.3 million refugees, and 5.4 million asylum seekers. The majority, or 76%, are hosted in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2023a). Although refugees' right to work is enshrined in global and regional agreements including the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 2018 Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), people living in forced displacement face restrictive legal provisions that constrain access to employment. For example, in Jordan, UNHCR notes that only Syrian refugees are legally allowed to work. Those from other countries, including Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia, are not able to apply for permits (UNHCR, 2022). Even where access to work is unrestricted in law, displaced populations often face non-legal barriers, with research finding that at least 55 percent of refugees live in countries that significantly restrict work rights in practice (Ginn et al, 2022). This means that displaced populations often engage in the informal sector, working in jobs that are often exploitative, underpaid, and that do not utilise their skill sets and potential (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016).

There is a growing literature on the economic outcomes of forcibly displaced people that finds that displacement is associated with lower employment rates, wages, and working conditions as compared to local populations and other migrant groups (Schuettler and Caron, 2020). In a study on refugees' employment in six refugee-hosting countries including Lebanon and Jordan, Kabir and Klugman (2019) highlight the employment and pay gaps that exist between

refugees and hosts and emphasise that these gaps are larger for refugee women. Fallah et al (2019) highlight that Syrians that do work in Jordan are much more likely to work informally than working Jordanians. Similar disparities are noted for those who are internally displaced. For example, Torosyan et al (2018) finds that IDPs in Georgia are 11.2 percentage points less likely to be in the labour force compared to local residents.

Evidence on the barriers behind these gaps show that displaced populations may face multiple barriers simultaneously and that these frictions span both the demand and supply side of labor markets (Schuettler and Caron, 2020). In Uganda, Loiacono and Silva-Vargas (2019) suggest that discrimination towards displaced people, and incomplete information around refugees legal status are amongst the main barriers. Caria et al (2021) present evidence that suggests that liquidity constraints are a key labour market barrier for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Along with limited access to local labour markets, people in displacement also lack opportunities to move through regular channels to access labour markets elsewhere. Mobility regimes have traditionally been quite distinct with an 'economic migration' and 'displacement' split inherent in policy. The three durable solutions for refugees -- voluntary returns, local integration, and resettlement -- have been accused of having a sedentary bias (Scalettaris, 2007), with the international community slow to incorporate mobility into forced migration responses (Long and Crisp, 2010).

However, in recent years there has been a considerable shift in thinking with increasing recognition of labour mobility as a solution for refugees. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) adopted in 2018 calls for labour mobility opportunities for skilled refugees. This comes at a time of growing policy interest to target migration towards talent and skills shortages. However, refugees and other forcibly displaced people face a number of barriers when applying to these migration pathways, including lack of financial means, missing or unattainable certificates or travel documents, and lack of awareness of opportunities amongst other barriers (Long, 2015).

It is in this context that the charity Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) was established in 2016, out of the simple idea that displaced people do not need to be a burden for host societies. Instead, they are people with skills and talents who can positively contribute to companies and communities globally when barriers to their mobility are removed. Underpinning this solution is the 'Talent Catalog', a database and software platform built by TBB for displaced people to upload their profiles, qualifications, skills, and experiences. As of 01 September 2023, over 76,000 individuals have registered to this platform. TBB uses the Talent Catalog to match skilled people in displacement with public-service providers or private companies in need of their skills, and then works with employers, governments, and civil society to facilitate displaced people's migration.

This report evaluates the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP), a pilot programme that was set up by the UK Home Office and TBB to

facilitate skilled migration pathways to the UK for displaced people. Initially, between October 2021 and October 2023, this pilot aimed to move 50 - 100 displaced persons and their family members to the UK as skilled migrants. This programme intends to serve as a 'proof of concept' and findings will inform consideration of further efforts to enable skilled refugees and other displaced people to work in the UK.

The main purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the DTMP serves as a viable pathway that should be extended and, if so, how it should be adjusted or expanded. For this purpose, through a series of stakeholder interviews, this evaluation identifies challenges, opportunities, and learnings that emerged during the DTMP until 01 September 2023. Based on the findings, recommendations are put forward to the UK Home Office, TBB, and other stakeholders for any future phases, beyond the pilot. The initial phase of the pilot programme came to an end in October 2023 making this an important time to evaluate the programme and reflect on its future direction. This evaluation also provides useful learnings to TBB and other organisations seeking to facilitate skilled migration pathways for refugees and displaced people, in the UK or elsewhere.

In the rest of this report, we examine the (1) the **achievements** of the DTMP; (2) its **impacts** - on displaced people, employers, and other stakeholders; and (3) its **sustainability** - identifying good practices, challenges, and potential for scale up. **Table 1** presents the full research criteria and questions.

The report is structured as follows. First, Chapters 2 to 4 set the scene, by describing the context of the evaluation and its methodology.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of labour mobility for displaced people globally and background on the mobility pathways to the UK for displaced people.

Chapter 3 outlines the different pilot programmes implemented by TBB, including the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot, which the report focuses on.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology and data collection tools employed in this evaluation.

The rest of the report presents the core findings of the evaluation. It is structured along the recruitment and migration journey of displaced people as skilled migrants, from their registration to TBB's database to their integration in the UK.

Chapter 5 analyses how the programme identifies and grows the supply of displaced talent.

Chapter 6 examines the process of identifying and recruiting employers to create the demand for displaced talent.

Chapter 7 evaluates how the demand and supply of displaced talent are connected to arrive at recruitments.

Chapter 8 details the displaced talent's experiences of moving to the UK.

Chapter 9 explores the displaced talent's experiences working and integrating once in the UK and the views of participating employers.

The last chapter - **Chapter 10** - concludes the report with recommendations for decision making around the programme, and for similar interventions in the future and elsewhere.

Finally, the **Afterword** reflects key changes that occurred between the writing of the report in September 2023 and its publication in March 2024.

TABLE 1: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Achievements

A. To what extent did the programme achieve its stated objectives and its results?

To examine the effectiveness of the pilot, we explore to what extent the programme was able to achieve its intended goals drawing on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) stated in programme documents. These were scheduled to be delivered by the end of March 2022 and include:

- At least 4 sectors recruit displaced talent.
- At least 10 employers commit to or express interest to consider displaced talent in their recruitment practices.
- At least 3 UK delivery partners are committed to support the recruitment, relocation and integration of displaced talent into the UK.
- At least 50 candidates are interviewed.
- At least 30 candidates are relocated.

And by October 2023, between 50-100 candidates are relocated to the UK via a Skilled Worker visa.

Recognising that the KPIs were agreed in 2021 in a different national and international context, we also examine why certain objectives were not met and identify other significant milestones and achievements made through the programme.

2. Impacts

B. What impacts has this programme had on displaced people?

To examine the impacts of the pilot on displaced people, we explore the perceived micro-level effects of the programme, assessing the experiences of displaced people moving to the UK as skilled migrants with an emphasis on their livelihoods and welfare and whether the programme responds to their needs and priorities

C. What impacts has this programme had on participating employers?

To examine the impact of the pilot on employing organisations in the UK, we explore the perspective of employers on how the alumni talent have filled skill gaps, how they are performing in their role, and how they are contributing to the workplace.

D. What are the indirect, secondary and potential future consequences of this programme?

We explore whether the pilot has any wider effects, in terms of reported impacts on families and broader awareness of this programme by other stakeholders.

3. Sustainability

E. To what extent does the programme model deliver results in an economical and timely manner?

To explore how self-sustaining and efficient this programme is, we detail different costs and resources dedicated to implementation, explore the effects (including financial) of the programme and attempt to identify potential cost-efficiency gains to achieve any further results.

F. To what extent are the impacts of the programme likely to continue in the future and what is its potential for scaling up?

The evaluation explores whether the impacts of the programme are likely to remain in the future and what factors might help sustain any positive effects for employers and for the displaced talent. The evaluation will explore the enablers and obstacles that will affect the scaling up of the programme.

G. How sustainable is this pilot programme without the current financial and operational support?

As this programme serves as a proof of concept to explore and inform future efforts to enable displaced people to work in the UK, this evaluation asks if and how this programme can be further sustained in the long term and under what circumstances. The evaluation explores questions around the scale up of the programme in the future and examines the sustainability of the current model, including the partnerships and stakeholders involved.

H. What are the main lessons learned and good practices emerging from this programme?

Throughout, we identify and synthesise the main challenges and bottlenecks associated with the pilot and the lessons learned and good practices to address these.

2. Labour Mobility for Displaced People

Global History of Labour Mobility for Displaced People

Policy circles tend to treat migrants and refugees separately (Apostolova, 2015), as evident through the divergence of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) (Kainz et al., 2020). Tracing policy-makers' interest in labour mobility over time, Long (2013) argues that this distinction in policy between 'refugees' and 'migrants' is a recent phenomenon. Indeed, in the 1920s- 1930s, the refugee regime was focused on facilitating refugees' entry into existing labour migration channels. This preceded the separation of refugees and migrants in the 1950s, which Long (2013) argues prevents refugees from finding durable solutions that depend on securing livelihoods and not just receiving humanitarian assistance, calling for a reversal of this separation.

Consideration of mobility as a solution for displaced people re-emerged only after 2007 (Long and Crisp, 2010). While labour mobility for refugees has been on the agenda for over a decade (Crisp, 2022), and is emphasised in both global compacts, implementation in the Global North has received little traction, apart from the few pilot programmes driven by TBB (Vankova, 2022). To address this implementation gap, TBB and other stakeholders are proposing to put forward the pledge to 'achieve the goal of 200,000 refugees arriving on labour mobility pathways in 5 years' time' in the upcoming GRF in 2023 (UNHCR, 2023b).

Mobility Pathways for Displaced People in the UK

This chapter explores what necessitates the DTMP by outlining the mobility pathways accessible to displaced people in the absence of this pilot. While mostly descriptive, this chapter illustrates the distinctiveness of mobility regimes in the UK context, which we argue makes it arduous for 'skilled' refugees to pursue employment in the UK as migrants without external assistance.

Labour Migration to the UK

The year 2021 saw the rollout of the UK's new immigration system: the "Points-Based Immigration System" which applies equally to EU citizens and non-EU citizens following the end of the UK's participation in EU freedom of movement (Walsh, 2021). Under the new system, the main migration long-term work route is the 'Skilled Worker' route which replaced the Tier 2 (General) work visa. The Skilled Worker visa follows an employer-led system whereby applicants require a job offer and must do the specific job for which they are sponsored to do. To qualify for a Skilled Worker visa, applicants must meet certain criteria and salary thresholds. In particular, at the time of the study (01 September 2023), applicants are required to earn a minimum salary of £26,200 per year or earn the 'going rate' for the occupation that the migrant will do, which is set at the 25th percentile of earnings in that occupation (UK Home Office, n.d.a).

However, under certain conditions, applicants can qualify on lower salaries. These conditions include taking up a job that is on the Shortage Occupation List, holding a PhD or working in one of 24 public service occupations, such as doctors or nurses, amongst others (UK Home Office, n.d.b). Nevertheless, every applicant needs to receive a salary of at least £20,960 per year.

There is currently no cap on the number of skilled workers who can migrate to the UK, and employers no longer have to demonstrate that their jobs could not be done by residents (Walsh, 2021). Moreover, a skilled worker can apply for indefinite leave to remain after working in the UK for five years. Thereafter, they no longer require an employer to sponsor them.

The government provides a [list](#) of the occupations that are eligible and ineligible for the Skilled Worker route, and their going rates (Walsh, 2021). Eligible jobs are classed by the Government's 'Regulated Qualifications Framework' as being at least middle-skilled – RQF3 or above. This is typically equivalent to at least A-level education. Additionally, applicants must prove they can read, write, speak, and understand English to at least level B1 (UK Home Office, n.d.c).

Healthcare professionals looking to work in the UK health or adult social care sector can apply for the Health and Care Worker visa under the Skilled Worker visa. It is designed for health sector occupations and offers benefits such as lower visa application fees and exemption from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) (UK Home Office, n.d.d).

Interviews with key informants in immigration services in the UK find that in theory, refugees and other displaced persons are eligible to apply for a Skilled Worker visa. However, in practice, many barriers exist that hinder their access to this route. One prominent factor is the high cost of applying for the visa and other costs needed to migrate which displaced people in the Global South may not have the financial means for, as they face restrictions accessing livelihoods. Bureaucratic and administrative hurdles can also block prospective applicants. For example, certain roles require applicants to submit a criminal record certificate for all countries where they have lived (as adults) for a year or more in the 10 years before the date of application (UK Home Office, n.d.e). For applicants that fled their home countries within this timeframe, this may not be feasible. Prospective applicants may also be unable to access travel documents or certifications due to displacement. Finally, displaced people may face difficulties identifying relevant job opportunities from overseas and employers may not readily consider displaced as potential candidates for jobs.

Cost of Skilled Worker Visa and Long-term Perspectives

Both employers and applicants face non-negligible costs. Employers cover the costs of securing sponsorship to employ individuals from outside the UK and the immigration skills charges for sponsored skilled workers. Applicants are responsible for covering the initial visa application fees and the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) (although, these costs are sometimes covered by employers).

In October 2023, the UK government announced an increase in UK visa application fees by 15% for work visas and a planned increase to the IHS (UK Home Office, 2023). This makes labour migration to the UK one of the most expensive pathways across the world. For comparison, [Table 2](#) compares skilled migration visa costs for primary candidates across several countries where a displaced talent pathway has been piloted by TBB. This does not take into account additional costs migrants may incur such as visas for their dependents.

TABLE 2: SKILLED MIGRATION COSTS ACROSS COUNTRIES

Source: Information compiled and shared by Fragomen UK.

COUNTRY	PERMIT / VISA TYPE	ESTIMATED GOVERNMENT FEES AND VALIDITY
		Fees and approximate value in GBP calculated in August 2023. <i>Note: each scheme for displaced talent employs different visas with different characteristics and entitlements and may not be directly comparable to the UK's route.</i>
AUSTRALIA	Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot Program	It costs approximately AUD 8,180 or <u>GBP4,250</u> to obtain an '186' Permanent Residence visa which is offered on arrival. The breakdown of fees is as follows – Visa Application Fee: AUD 4,640 Nomination Fee: AUD 540 Skilling Australians Levy: AUD 3,000
	Highly Skilled Permit	It costs approximately EUR 318 Or <u>GBP 272</u> to obtain a Highly Skilled Permit. The Permit is valid for three years and can be extended. The foreign national can apply for permanent residence after five years. The breakdown of fees is as follows – Single Permit Fee: EUR 138 D Visa Fee: EUR 180 Permanent residency costs EUR 184 or approximately GBP 160.

TABLE 2 continued ...

CANADA	Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot	It costs approximately CAD 515 or <u>GBP 300</u> to obtain Permanent Residence under this route. Residence under this route which is offered on arrival.
IRELAND	Critical Skills Permit	It costs approximately EUR 1,860 or <u>GBP 1,580</u> to obtain Permanent Residence under this route. The breakdown of fees is as follows – Critical Skills Filing Fee: EUR 1,000 IRP Card Application Fee: EUR 300 Entry visa application fee: EUR 60 (visa nationals only) The foreign national can apply for permanent residence after five years which costs EUR 500 or approximately GBP 437.
PORTUGAL	Highly Qualified Staff/Local Hires	It costs approximately EUR 350 or <u>GBP 300</u> to obtain Highly Qualified Staff/Local Hires status. The visa is initially issued for 120 days. A temporary residence permit is then obtained in country, valid for two years and renewable in three-year increments, based on continuing contract validity. The foreign national may apply for permanent residence after five years which costs EUR 222 or approximately GBP 194.
UNITED KINGDOM	Skilled Worker	It costs an estimated <u>GBP £5,600</u> to obtain Skilled Worker Visa status for three years. The Permit can be extended for a further two years. The foreign national can apply for permanent residence after five years. Once eligible, indefinite leave to remain costs £2,404 for each person applying. The breakdown of fees is as follows – Visa Application Fee: GBP 719 Certificate of Sponsorship: GBP 239 Immigration Health Surcharge: GBP 1,035 per year of visa validity Immigration Skills Surcharge: GBP 1,000 per year of visa validity

Asylum and Resettlement in the UK

The other routes that refugees can use to seek protection in the UK are to claim asylum or be selected for a UK resettlement scheme. While these pathways are different from (and complementary to) the Skilled Worker visa route, it is still useful to describe them to understand the context in which TBB and the Home Office are operating.

To claim asylum in the UK, a person must be physically present within the UK's jurisdiction (UNHCR UK, n.d). It is not possible to apply from outside of the country, and no asylum visas exist to enable people to travel to the UK legally to apply or to apply through a third country. Therefore, for citizens who do not have visa free travel to the UK, to claim asylum in the UK, they must enter either irregularly or on a visa for some other purpose, such as tourism or study. While their claim is being considered, asylum seekers are not generally permitted to work in the UK. If they are destitute, they can apply for free accommodation, as well as asylum support, which is set at £40.85 a week, equivalent to £5.84 per day (Walsh, 2022). The Home Office may grant an asylum applicant permission to work only if both their asylum claim has been outstanding for more than 12 months through no fault of the applicant, and the job is on the Shortage Occupation List (which includes a selection of skilled jobs) (UK Home Office, 2023.b).

In contrast to the asylum process, it is not possible to apply for refugee resettlement in the UK or at any UK consulate. Instead, refugees are referred by the UNHCR for resettlement. They are then

transferred to the UK with the agreement of the Home Office, where they receive refugee or humanitarian protection status upon arrival (UK Home Office, 2021.a). Prior to 2021, the UK operated four resettlement schemes (Walsh, 2022). The largest of these was the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), which began in 2014 and aimed to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020. This scheme was later expanded to people of any nationality fleeing the Syrian conflict and resettled 20,319 individuals by 2021 (UK Home Office, 2021.b). The Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) aimed to resettle 3,000 children from the Middle East and North Africa by 2020. Two further schemes, the Mandate Scheme and Gateway Protection Programme (GPP), are for refugees from anywhere in the world, with the former for those who have a close family member in the UK who is willing to accommodate them. The government has since combined the VPRS, VCRS, and GPP into the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), which opened in Q1 2021, along with the Community Sponsorship Scheme launched in 2016. January 2022 also saw the commencement of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Therefore, since early 2021, four refugee resettlement schemes have been in operation: the UKRS, Mandate Scheme, Community Sponsorship Scheme, and ACRS.

Refugees arriving through one of the UK's refugee resettlement schemes have the right to work and also have recourse to public funds. They receive reception and integration support to facilitate their access to the labour market. This includes support through local authorities, NGOs, and community sponsorship groups to facilitate English language learning and support with finding employment (UNHCR, 2021).

3. The Missing Link between Mobility Regimes – Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot

This chapter provides an overview of Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) globally and the different programmes offered in the UK. It then turns to the programme of focus for the evaluation - the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP) - to outline its objectives and the main stakeholders involved.

Talent Beyond Boundaries - History and Objectives Globally

TBB is a global non-profit organisation that works directly with governments to design skilled migration pathways that are accessible to refugees and other displaced people. At the same time, they connect displaced people with companies in need of their skills and work with partners to help facilitate recruitment, access to skilled Worker visas, migration, and settlement.

TBB's vision is to build a world where displaced people can safely migrate for work, using their skills to rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose. TBB is the first organization in the world to focus on refugee labour mobility as a complementary solution to traditional humanitarian resettlement. The term “complementary” underpins TBB's principle that Skilled Worker visas are not meant to replace other pathways such as asylum applications and resettlement. Instead, a Skilled Worker visa serves as an additional pathway for skilled refugees to address labour market shortages in destination countries.

TBB was founded in 2016 by lawyers Mary-Louise Cohen, Bruce Cohen, and philanthropist John Cameron. Its first programmes to help refugees access skilled pathways began in Australia the same year. It then expanded to Canada in 2018 and the UK in 2020.

There are over 76,000 individuals globally registered on the Talent Catalog (TC) as of 01 September 2023. The TC is the database and software programme TBB has built to enable displaced people to upload their profiles and match with businesses. Co-founder John Cameron and a Syrian refugee computer programmer built the TC. By registering on the TC, displaced talent can add their qualifications, skills, update their profiles, and generate CVs. When an employer seeks to hire through TBB, TBB uses the TC database to find suitable candidates.

As of 01 September 2023, TBB has offices in four destination countries (countries they help displaced people to move to): the UK, Canada, Australia, and the US. TBB also has destination teams supporting to build pilot programmes in Belgium, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, and New Zealand. There are TBB offices in two source countries (countries hosting refugees or displaced people): Lebanon and Jordan. TBB also has source team members based in East Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

Due to the online reach of the TC, any displaced person anywhere in the world can register to join the database and access TBB's programmes. TBB are working with a number of partner organisations in both source and destination countries to support this endeavour.

TBB's 5 Year Global Strategy

[TBB's Global Strategy \(2023-2027\)](#) sets out a number of goals to achieve over the next five years. A key aim is to support over 15,000 displaced people to migrate on labour mobility pathways to at least 27 countries by 2027 (TBB, 2022). Expanding refugees' access to third-country solutions such as resettlement and other pathways features as one of the four central aims of the Global Compact on Refugees (UN, 2018). In response, TBB and other stakeholders are proposing to put forward a pledge to 'achieve the goal of 200,000 refugees arriving on labour mobility pathways in five years' time' in the upcoming GRF in 2023. These plans underscore the importance of understanding TBB's role in facilitating complementary pathways and how such programmes operate and can potentially scale up in the future.

BOX 1: TBB'S APPROACH AND VALUES

TBB's Approach and Values

TBB describes its values as follows in their official communications:

- **Additionality & complementarity** - Our reason for being is to help more people, overall, move to safety and security. Skilled labour pathways should always be in addition to (not a replacement for) humanitarian pathways.
- **Independence** - We're an independent, philanthropically-funded charity, separate from governments and business interests.
- **Collaboration** - We work in partnership with others because it is the fastest and best route to a more equitable system.
- **Equitable access** - No person should be excluded from life's opportunities simply because they are displaced.
- **Autonomy & empowerment** - Refugees should be able to decide - and access - what's best for themselves and their families.
- **Protection** - Displaced people must have access to protection safeguards until they find a durable solution.
- **Employer-led** - Business demand is key to the long-term sustainability of refugee labour mobility. We work with the private sector to advocate for the changes we seek.
- **Refugee-centred** - Refugees are the best experts on their own experience. We centre refugee voices and leadership at every level

Additionally, TBB uses technology to sustain its programmes and solutions.

The criteria of **additionality** and **complementarity** is presented as a "red line" by TBB. TBB does not want to replace but rather complement other pathways for refugees, including asylum and resettlement. This red line is made clear to governments in any destination country and TBB claims it would have no choice but to withdraw from a destination country if they feel the red line is crossed.

TBB's Programmes in Australia and Canada

In Australia, TBB works with the Australian Government to deliver the Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot programme. After an initial test pilot of 20 posts, the programme was launched in July 2021 for 100 places over a year, and was extended for a second phase in 2022. The initial targets were achieved in April 2023, and in July 2023 the Australian government extended for a further two years, with an additional 500 visa places available to primary candidates between 01 July 2023 and 30 June 2025. The Australian programme has now expanded further, with 125 offers secured in total. TBB alumni are currently working in engineering, healthcare, and technology sectors.

In Canada, TBB is a trusted partner under the Government of Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), Canada's model for refugee labour mobility. They work in collaboration with Jumpstart Refugee Talent, a national refugee-led organisation, and other implementing partners to facilitate job-matching between Canadian employers and displaced job seekers. The pilot initially aimed to welcome 500 skilled refugees, but was expanded in 2021 to welcome 2,000 refugees in high demand sectors.

TBB's Programmes in the UK

Partnerships with UK Healthcare Providers

TBB's first pilot programme in the UK began in 2020 and focused on healthcare, with the aim to support displaced nurses to work in the National Health Service (NHS) and private hospitals. TBB partnered with NHS England, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

and private healthcare providers to bring over 230 nurses to the UK between 2020 and 2022. In total, over 450 displaced people, including dependants, have accessed TBB's healthcare pilot. The pilot aimed to explore new pools of talent to fill the UK's shortage of nurses. Many international NHS nurses come from Global South countries, causing nurses to leave healthcare systems in their home country. Concerns of this 'brain drain' of healthcare professionals are often raised. Therefore, TBB's pathway may serve as a more ethical recruitment source, as displaced nurses are often either not allowed to work in their host country, are restricted in the level they can work at, or are paid lower wages without access to the same benefits as citizens of their host country. The Home Office determined the Health and Care visas for nurses coming through these programmes. TBB are working with the NHS recruitment agency 'NHS Professionals' to make hiring displaced nurses from the TC 'business as usual'.

To scale efforts and make this programme sustainable, TBB has worked closely with the UK's nursing regulator, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) to rethink processes for refugee and displaced nurses. In 2023, the NMC launched a [new policy for displaced nurses](#), to support refugee nurses to access the process to become registered nurses in the UK. As displaced nurses may not be able to provide required documents due to their displacement, the policy aims to help them find alternative evidence while upholding the high standards of the NMC.

The policy draws on case studies provided by TBB and other partners, to codify alternative arrangements for registration by candidates who have migrated to the UK through the Healthcare Displaced Talent Programme.

The Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot

In October 2021, the UK Government launched the DTMP in partnership with TBB. By 31 March 2022, TBB aimed to move 30 candidates to the UK working in non-healthcare sector roles. These are opportunities which are guaranteed to be in addition to existing humanitarian intake commitments. Dependent family members (spouses and children) are also able to relocate with the primary candidate through the Skilled Worker route.

When the pilot was announced in July 2021, only displaced people living in Jordan and Lebanon were eligible. In January 2022, eligibility was expanded to include Afghan nationals displaced anywhere, enabling TBB to match up to 200 people with UK employment opportunities. They must have a job offer for a non-healthcare sector role in the UK.

To support the pilot, the Home Office offered:

- £70,000 over two years (this includes £20,000 to carry out the present evaluation) to fund TBB to carry out the pilot.
- Free priority processing for primary candidates' visa applications. Visas are approved within five days of the biometric appointment, compared to three weeks for standard visa processing.
- A dedicated contact point at the Home Office to support visa applications.
- Support if candidates do not have required documents due to their displacement, for example, issuing travel documents for candidates who do not have a passport and cannot apply for one.

The full list of KPIs agreed upon by TBB and the Home Office in 2021

are described in Appendix 1. **Table 3** below describes achievements for KPIs that were set to be achieved by 31 March 2022 (others were to be achieved pre-launch and therefore fall outside the evaluation period).

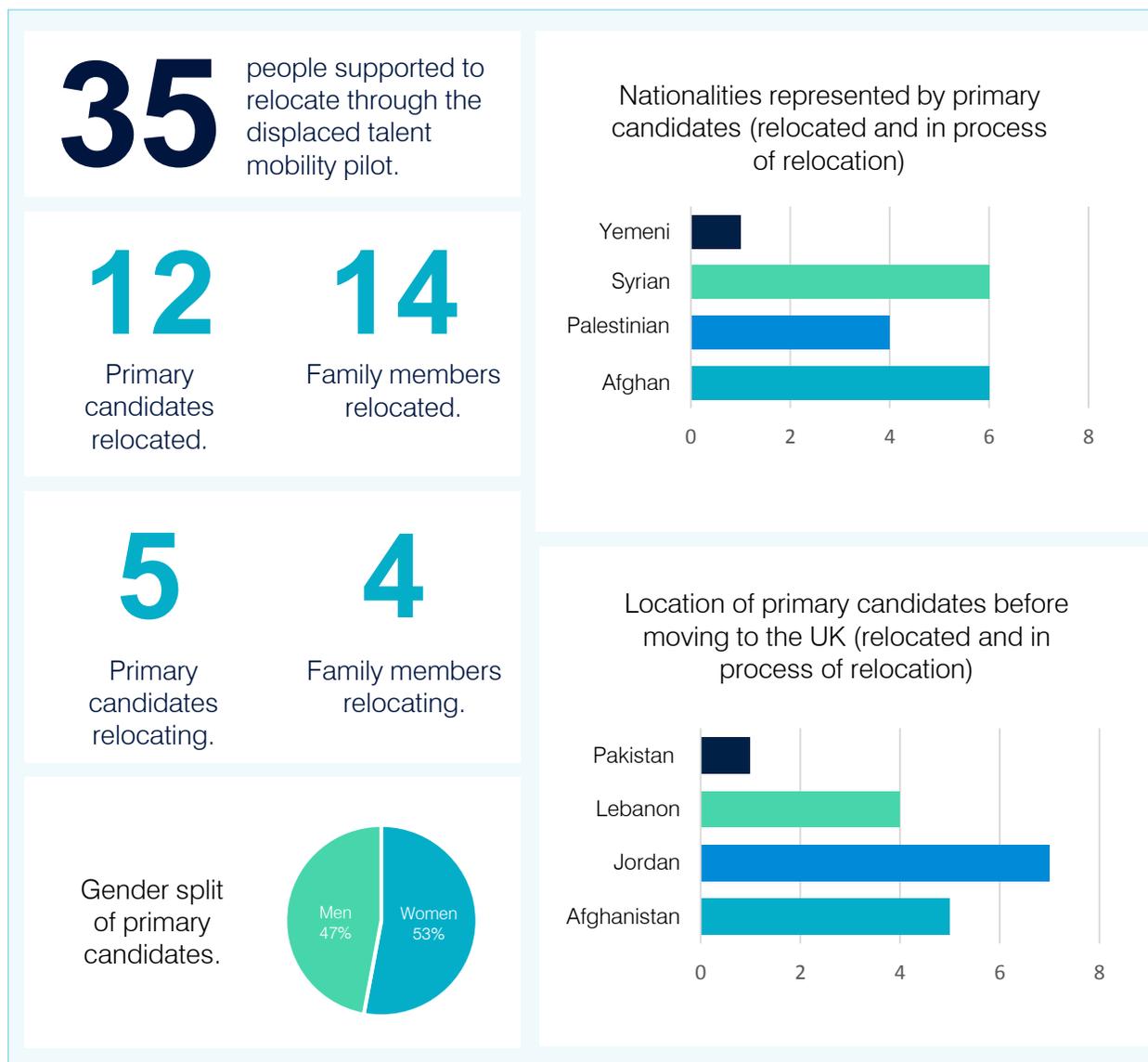
Four KPIs were fully achieved and two KPIs were partially achieved. In line with the KPIs, TBB has built partnerships with 6+ partners that support the recruitment, relocation, and integration of displaced talent into the UK. 58 candidates were interviewed for 23 roles, 10 employers extended job offers, and recruitment occurred in six sectors. However, as of September 2023, only 12 primary candidates and 14 family members have relocated to the UK through the pilot, which is lower than envisaged in the KPIs. Five other candidates have job offers and are in the process of relocating to the UK along with four family members. Therefore, as of 01 September 2023, in total, 35 displaced people were supported to migrate through the pilot. Primary candidates have secured job roles including software development, graphic design, paralegal, and risk across sectors in technology, media, legal, and construction. There was one additional candidate who was offered a job during the pilot as a network engineer, however he was unable to be evacuated from Afghanistan, so the job offer was put on hold. See **Box 4** for more information.

Some primary candidates successfully relocated to the UK but fell outside of the pilot's scope because of the requirement for candidates to be residing in Lebanon or Jordan. TBB supported three primary candidates who were displaced in Turkey and Iraq into non-healthcare roles along with their five family members. They were all supported by TBB to access the UK's Skilled Worker visa, but they could not be considered as part of the pilot given its geographical requirements detailed above.

TABLE 3: PROGRAMME KPIS

One objective of this report is to explain why some KPIs were achieved while others were only partially achieved. Other metrics and areas of success or failures are also explored.

OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENT
At least 4 sectors having recruited displaced talent	<p>As of 31 March 2022: 3 sectors hiring. These were gaming/tech, education and construction.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: 6 sectors hiring including engineering, media, talent gaming, consultancy, legal and construction.</p>
Securing interest and/or commitment of at least 10 employers considering displaced talent in their recruitment practices	<p>As of 31 March 2022: 6 employers considered displaced talent. 3 of which had given job offer, 1 was conducting interviews and 2 employers began the recruitment process.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: 10 employers extended job offers.</p>
Ongoing commitments secured from at least 3 UK delivery partners to support the recruitment, relocation and integration of displaced talent into the UK	<p>As of 31 March 2022: 3 partners. These were PSR, Fragomen and IOM.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: 6+ partners committed including: Fragomen, IOM, PSR, a prepaid card provider, two accommodation providers, and three relocation service providers. These are detailed in Box 2.</p>
50-100 primary candidates supported into employment in the UK via a Skilled Worker visa over the two-year lifecycle of the pilot and at least 30 candidates relocated by end of funding period, 31 st of March 2022	<p>As of 31 March 2022: 4 primary candidates arrived to the UK through the pilot and an additional 5 with job offers.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: 12 primary candidates arrived to the UK through the pilot and an additional 5 with job.</p>
At least 50 candidates interviewed	<p>As of 31 March 2022: 8 candidates interviewed.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: 58 candidates interviewed.</p>
Candidates and corresponding sponsors supported throughout the recruitment, relocation and integration process; with many others in progress	<p>As of 31 March 2022: Achieved.</p> <p>As of 30 September 2023: Achieved – candidates and sponsors thoroughly supported by TBB as analysed through evaluation.</p>
Detailed written interim report	Completed through this evaluation.

FIGURE 1: SNAPSHOT OF DTMP PROGRESS


BOX 2: KEY PARTNERS DURING THE PILOT

Fragomen - supports TBB's global operations and have supported TBB UK in a number of ways:

- Funding to support TBB operations in the UK and globally. Fragomen also contributed funding and logistical support for the Global Labour Mobility Summit in March 2023.
- Reduced immigration fees and ad-hoc immigration support for TBB candidates.
- Funding TBB UK's Partnerships Lead through the Fragomen Fellowship, whose role involves outreach and pitching to employers for the DTMP.
- Hiring two paralegal candidates in the UK and funding their evacuation from Afghanistan.
- Promoting and raising awareness of the DTMP with their clients and setting up introductory calls.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) - provides support for candidates and employer during the mobility and settlement stages:

- They provide cultural awareness sessions for both employers and candidates. The employer sessions focus on understanding the context of migration and the causes of displacement, as well as differences in workplace culture. Candidate sessions focus on important information such as taxes, laws in the UK, and life and work culture in the UK.
- Partner with TBB to book flights for candidates. Often candidates need visas to transit through different countries, so IOM's support ensures they will be able to transit and they are supported throughout travel. They also support candidates with less than six months validity on their passports to board flights and avoid issues with airlines.
- Support candidates with pre-departure checks including health checks and answering questions.
- Additionally, IOM leads on the EU-funded Displaced Talent for Europe pilot (DT4E). The programme is implemented in collaboration with Fragomen and TBB to open labour mobility pathways for refugees into Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.
- The support detailed above is offered to candidates coming through the DT4E (those based in Jordan and Lebanon) rather than all DTMP candidates.

PSR Solutions - a specialist construction recruitment agency who have a Displaced Talent stream as part of their agency.

- PSR themselves hired a Syrian recruiter from the Talent Catalog to lead their Displaced Talent recruitment.
- They raise awareness of displaced talent to their clients, and one candidate has been offered a job with a PSR client through the DTMP.

Relocation and Integration Partners

Pre-paid cards

TBB partners with a financial technology company that provides pre-paid cards. Candidates often struggle to open a bank account straight away when they arrive, as they require proof of UK residency and their BRPs (Biometric Residence Permit) usually arrive within 7 to 10 days but can be delayed. The pre-paid card is set up by their employer who can load funds in advance to enable candidates to access funds from the time of their arrival to cover initial expenses.

Accommodation

TBB works with a number of relocation and temporary accommodation providers to support employers and the candidates they hire to secure temporary accommodation prior to their arrival, as well as providing support in finding rental accommodation once in the UK. These services are covered by the employer and are often included as part of the company's standard relocation allowance or package.

Third sector organisations

TBB has also formed partnerships with regional third sector organisations who provide guidance to candidates and TBB on what services and support groups they can access in their local area to improve integration outcomes.

4. Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation provides an extensive review of the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot (DTMP) facilitated by Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) from the emergence of the pilot until 01 September 2023.

To collect adequate data for the evaluation, various participatory methods were used to gather insights from all stakeholders involved. The preliminary findings were shared in discussion meetings in May 2023 and September 2023 before the drafting and finalisation of this report respectively. Approaches draw on both primary and secondary sources. This chapter explains the rationale for the methods selected and acknowledges their merits and shortcomings.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data collection, which entails qualitative methods, took place between May and August 2023. This consisted of:

- **A series of semi-structured interviews with programme stakeholders** - namely individuals who arrived in the UK via the DTMP; individuals at their employing organisations; TBB staff in the UK, Lebanon, and Jordan; staff at the UK Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and staff at partner organisations, including Fragomen and IOM. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow participants to articulate their experiences and shape the direction of the research through a dialogue. Questions only served as an indicative reference of themes to cover during the interviews. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and covered their perceptions of and

experiences with the pilot. They took place in person for TBB staff in the UK and Jordan, and online with other participants.

- **Observations** at TBB hosted events such as a virtual pitch to employers.

Secondary data collection spanned the entire pilot period, from the start of the pilot in 2021, drawing on:

- **Programme documents** - this includes publicly available documents such as TBB's annual reports. This also includes interim documents which are not intended for public access such as their monthly updates to the Home Office between November 2022 and May 2023 and their slide deck to pitch displaced talent to employers.
- **Existing Interview data** - additional interviews for monitoring and evaluation purposes were conducted by TBB's Monitoring and Evaluation Lead. The transcripts were analysed to complement the primary interviews conducted by the research team. The topics covered in these interviews were similar to the primary interviews. Unlike the primary interviews, some interviews were conducted pre-departure to understand candidates' expectations. Other interviews were conducted with non-DTMP (healthcare) candidates. These interviews were analysed for insights on whether the experiences of DTMP candidates were unique and did not influence the study's findings on the DTMP.

- **Existing survey data** - TBB shared data from surveys they have been conducting for monitoring and evaluation purposes to gain a better understanding of the candidates and their experiences with TBB. This evaluation draws on the surveys filled out pre-departure and 6-months post arrival.
- **Platform data** - this evaluation also draws on data extracted from TBB's recruitment platforms, Salesforce and the TC, for summary statistics on the individuals and employers registered.
- **Desk review** - In addition, the evaluation explored literature on the economic livelihoods of refugees with an emphasis on labour mobility including evaluations of other programmes conducted by TBB.

In order to access this information, the Oxford research team submitted a data sharing agreement (DSA) to TBB. The DSA provided a list of all documents and data that the team identified as necessary for conducting an evaluation of the pilot. The Oxford research team also signed TBB's data confidentiality agreement.

The research was facilitated through a strong collaboration between the Oxford research team and the Talent Beyond Boundaries team in the UK. The Monitoring and Evaluation Lead at TBB, Sarah Walder, shared relevant data and assisted in the facilitation of interviews by identifying and recruiting participants and ensuring all stakeholders involved were able to contribute to the research. The research analysis and write up was independently conducted by the Oxford research team, with TBB colleagues verifying factual accuracy and

integrating key data points. Research activities concluded in September 2023. Therefore, the evaluation does not capture changes in policy or the programme's operations that occurred after that period.

TABLE 4: STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED FOR THE EVALUATION

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NUMBER OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS
Individuals who migrated to the UK through the DTMP	11 individuals
Employers	8 individuals across 5 employers
TBB Staff	9 individuals
Partner organisations	2 individuals across 2 organisations (note some partner organisations also serve as employers and are counted under that category)
UK Government – Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care	6 individuals

Limitations

We note several limitations to the scope of the study.

- **Potential bias** - One source of bias arises as respondents were identified and recruited through TBB, which may have influenced their responses. To minimise that, the evaluators conducted interviews independently and TBB staff only joined some interviews for monitoring and evaluation purposes. While there were no noticeable differences in responses with the presence of TBB staff, we maintain that given the interviewees' ongoing relationship with TBB, they might be concerned with expressing viewpoints that could potentially jeopardise this relationship. Similarly, the surveys were run by TBB which may result in potential bias.
- **Temporal scope** - Given the timeframe of this research and that the data was collected concurrently as the pilot was conducted, the evaluation focuses on the short-term impacts of the programme and overlooks potential long-term effects.
- **Spatial scope** - The study primarily focuses on the perspectives of stakeholders in the UK, which can dismiss the experiences and practices of stakeholders in source countries such as Lebanon or Jordan. For instance, the data does not reflect the views of (potential) migrants who registered on the TC but have not secured employment through the DTMP or other programmes. This is critical as, as of 01 September 2023, there were over 76,000 candidates registered in the TC, out of which 1,058 individuals have found jobs globally through TBB. Focusing on the views of those in the UK, the study does not capture the experiences of individuals rejected during the process.
- **Focus on direct impacts** - While the evaluation focuses on the direct impacts of the programme on a range of stakeholders, secondary effects are not analysed. This includes the potential impact of displaced talent's spending (including remittances), brain drain and brain gain effects, and broader impacts on perceptions in local and wider communities.
- **Focus on perceived impacts** - In addition, the focus of the evaluation is on impacts as perceived by stakeholders and expressed through qualitative methods. Future work could evaluate the impact of similar programmes using quantitative impact evaluation methods. Indeed, to build on this study, the evaluators (along with a wider research team) are working with TBB to strengthen their data collection systems. As part of [The World Bank's Innovation Challenge on Jobs and Migration \(IC\)](#), this forthcoming research will allow for rigorous estimates on the returns of skilled migration for refugees and their families. This will be done by comparing the outcomes of refugees who move through TBB's programmes with the outcomes of refugees who are part of the same recruitment process but are not successful. Outcomes for both groups will be analysed over time to isolate the impacts of this solution.
- **Participant selection** - Due to ethical and time constraints, the primary data collected does not capture the views and experiences of other family members, for example children or family members who remain in countries of asylum. The evaluation also does not include the perspectives of employers who were approached by TBB but decided not to proceed with recruitment. In retrospect, as the analysis shows key barriers in engaging employers these are critical voices to incorporate.

The research team reached out to several employers but was not able to successfully recruit any participants to interview.

- **Small sample** - While the sample represents an almost complete enumeration of the pilot, the small size (n=11) means the relocated individuals were interviewed at different stages of their relocation. One respondent had only been in the UK for one month, whereas another had been in the UK for nearly two years. While these differences could allow for interesting comparisons in experiences, it proved difficult to make conclusive statements with limited data.
- **Limited literature** - While the evaluation aims to draw on wider literature, there is nascent academic literature on labour mobility solutions for displaced people towards the Global North given the novelty of such programmes. Exceptions include an academic study evaluating TBB in Australia (Higgins et al., 2023) and several evaluations conducted by TBB of other programmes (TBB, 2019; 2020).
- **Logistical constraints** - The majority of interviews were conducted remotely. This meant that interviews allowed for less personal interaction which may have impacted the depth and authenticity of the information shared.

Structure of the Analysis

The evaluation covers the range of activities and actions undertaken by TBB and partners when running the pilot. We categorise these into five steps (**Figure 2**). First, TBB maintains and promotes the Talent

Catalog to grow the pool of displaced talent available for matchmaking. Second, TBB identifies interested employers, pitches their programme, and encourages employers to recruit displaced talent through their programme. Third, TBB coordinates the matching and recruitment process. Fourth, TBB and its partners facilitate visa applications and the migration of selected candidates. Finally, TBB and its partners support the integration of the alumni and their families, both at work and in the host society.

Our report follows this structure. For each step, we describe the activities implemented by TBB and partners, highlight the positive impacts of the activities, and identify challenges and areas for improvements, reflecting on what these mean with regards to our research criteria of *'achievements'*, *'impacts'* and *'sustainability'*. We conclude the report by proposing a series of recommendations for any future phases of the programme.

While the report mostly focuses on the DTMP, relevant experiences and lessons learned from other TBB programmes have also been incorporated.

FIGURE 2: PHASES OF THE PROGRAMME

5. Identifying and Fostering the Supply of Displaced Talent

Identifying and recognising the skills, interests, and experiences of displaced people is a critical first step that TBB undertakes to connect displaced people with employment opportunities and build a labour mobility pathway. This chapter begins by describing the steps taken by TBB and then presents the good practices and challenges faced in this area of work.

To identify the pool of displaced talent, TBB created the TC, a database and software platform developed in 2016 in collaboration with refugees. This platform allows displaced people to register their skills, qualifications, and work experience. The TC comprises two portals, the candidate-facing portal and an admin portal. The candidate-facing portal is accessible in 11 languages including English, Arabic, Pashto, Dari, Spanish, French, and Turkish.

As of 01 September 2023, over 76,000 individuals are registered on the TC. Given that registration on the TC is free and open to the public, it is worth noting that some of these profiles are ineligible based on both TBB's programme criteria and the criteria set forth by governments. Based on TBB estimates, over 300 accounts are ineligible or have withdrawn and over 3,000 accounts are incomplete. As **Figure 3** illustrates, the average age for registrants is 34 years. Men make up the majority of the registrants, with women comprising only 17% of the talent pool. However, the gender split of primary applicants who get a job offer sits at 35% women and 65% men. Including family members, the gender split of those who access TBB's programmes is almost equal, 45% women and 55% men. For

the DTMP, the gender split of primary candidates who arrived in the UK is: 47% of primary applicants are women and 53% are men.

Access to the TC is free for displaced people and is digitally mediated through the internet. In 2019 the original TC was rewritten and placed into open source at the beginning of 2020; the source code is freely available to others to use and improve as a common resource, making the TC a shared global resource used by TBB and partners.

Applicants can apply on the TC website or mobile phone application. The profile requires personal information such as full name, birthdate, current location, contact information, occupation, education backgrounds, previous experiences, language skills, and certifications. Applicants can also upload a copy of their CV. Information can be updated or deleted on their profiles at any time.

Any displaced person can register in the TC and UNHCR registration is not required to access the majority of TBB's pathways. In the case that an individual is not registered with UNHCR, TBB conducts its own assessments to conclude if the individual meets their criteria as a displaced person and that the individual does not have access to a durable solution. It is worth noting that TBB's process for identifying talent is entirely merit-based. This means that TBB does not rely on circumstantial data or data to gauge vulnerability for selecting candidates but only to assess their eligibility and to understand how to facilitate their movement and any support they may need.

To aid with registration, TBB offers guidance resources including webinars disseminated through their website and social media presence. As an additional avenue to identify talents, TBB often publishes job posts where displaced talent can apply directly to the posting.

To grow this talent pool, the source teams, predominantly based in Lebanon and Jordan, but now expanding globally, conduct outreach to raise awareness of TBB and the TC with displaced populations. This is mainly done through Facebook adverts and WhatsApp groups, referrals from local partners, as well as occasional in-person community outreach events. Partner organisations, detailed in **Table 5**, point people to the TC, especially in countries where TBB has no presence. These replicating partners play a key role in expanding the talent pool.

In addition to identifying talent and potential migrants through the TC, TBB also supports 'autonomous access' where UK employers identify displaced job seekers independently. TBB then supports both parties with the migration and relocation process. Under the DTMP, this was the case for three candidates.

The collection, storage, and usage of personal data is guided by TBB's Privacy & Data Protection Policy which stipulates that personal information on the Catalog is used to identify employment opportunities for registrants only. Access to data on the TC is currently restricted to TBB, with country-specific data accessible to replicating partners in that country (e.g. Bosco in India, FCA in Uganda, HIAS in Peru, RefugePoint in Kenya, and SHARP in

Pakistan). TBB is currently working on a 'Recruiter Portal' with an aim to allow employers and other stakeholders to search the TC to browse the skills and talents registered (with candidates' names and personal information hidden).

Once registered on the TC, applicants are considered for any relevant labour mobility opportunity across the world. In other words, the TC is not restricted to the DTMP or UK programmes.

To advance their skills, displaced persons registered on the TC have access to resources provided by TBB and partners on their webpage, which includes language courses to learn English and prepare for language tests. Compared to other areas of TBB's operations, resources dedicated to capacity building and skills development are limited; only one staff member is dedicated to capacity building globally as TBB's strategy for advancing capacity building is through collaboration with external partners. For example, TBB has partnered with Coursera to offer registered individuals a range of learning opportunities to help make them more competitive in the labour market.

FIGURE 3: SNAPSHOT OF TALENT CATALOG

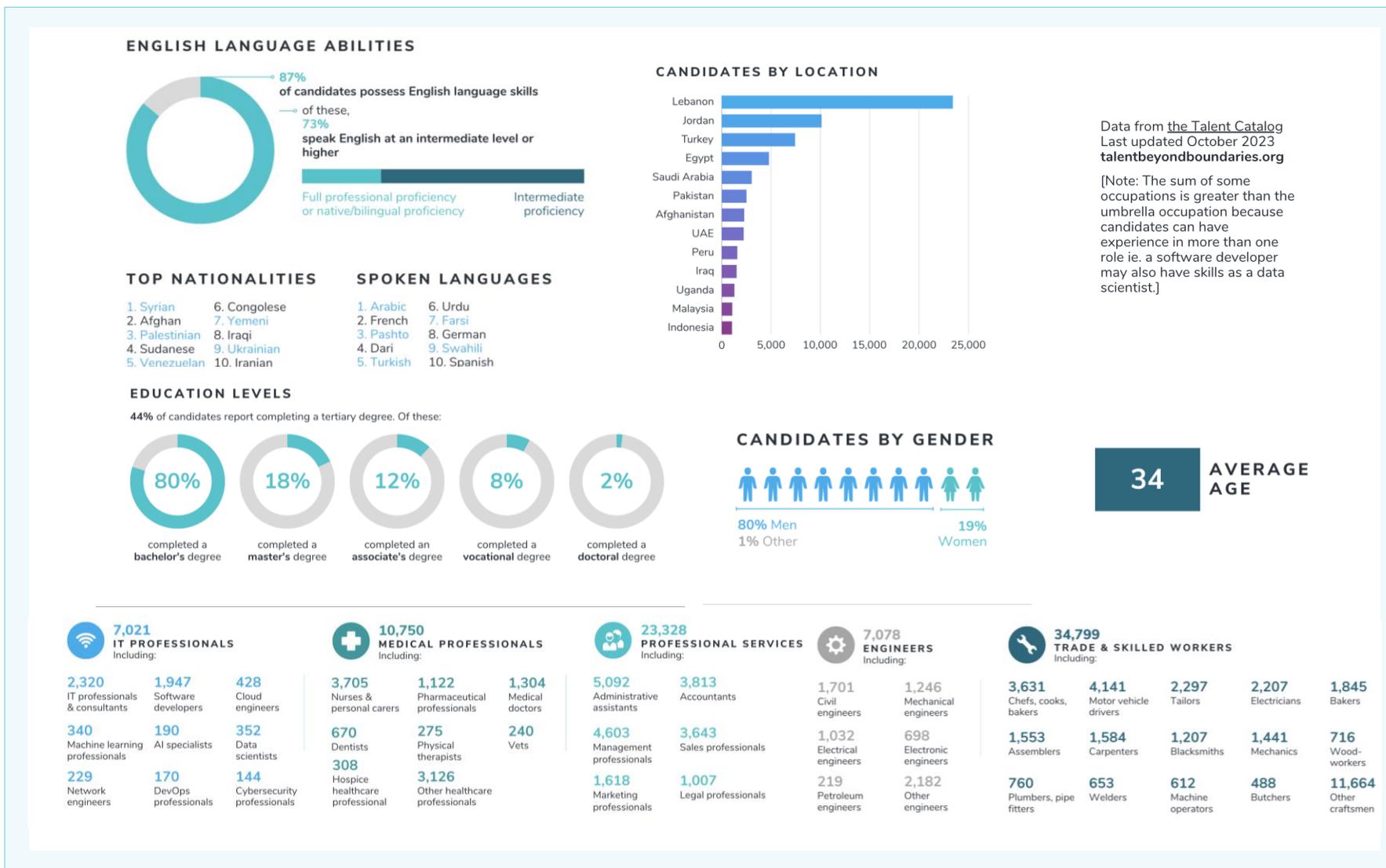


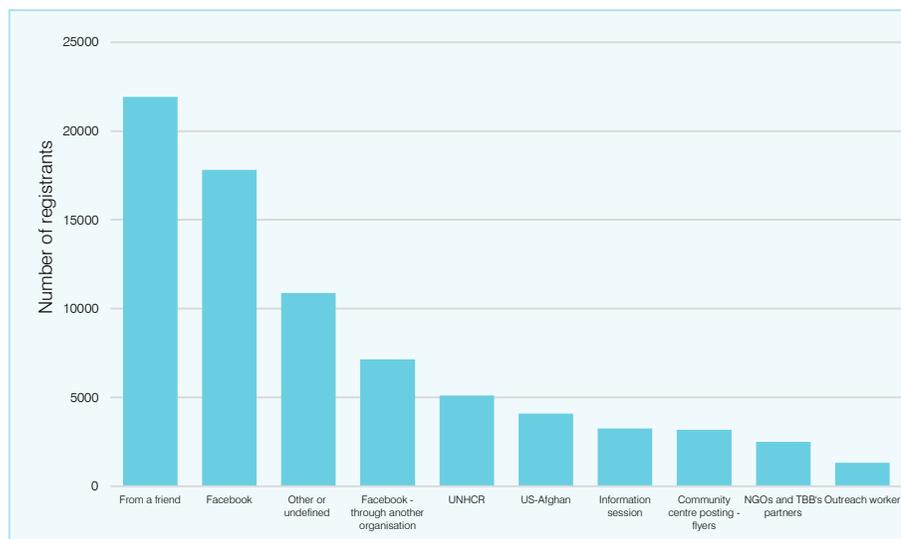
TABLE 5: PARTNER ORGANISATIONS ACROSS COUNTRIES

ORGANISATION	SOURCE COUNTRY
TBB	Global
Bosco Organization for Social Concern and Operation (BOSCO) Delhi	India
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Indonesia
Finn Church Aid (FCA) Uganda	Uganda
HIAS	Peru
RefugePoint	Kenya
Society for Human Rights and Prisoners Aid (SHARP) Pakistan	Pakistan
UNHCR	Jordan and other countries

Identifying and nurturing the displaced talent pool is a strength of TBB's programmes and a niche area within the displacement sector. The following good practices stood out:

- **Ease of registration** - Many participants in the research highlight the ease of the initial registration and emphasised the simplicity and clarity of the process.
- **Strong word of mouth and network effects** - The TC provides a strong foundation for future sustainability and a strong pipeline of displaced talent. The majority of individuals who arrived in the UK report learning about TBB through their networks. 97% also report referring their networks to TBB. Most registrants find out about TBB through a friend, followed by Facebook (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: HOW REGISTRANTS HEAR ABOUT THE TC



“One time my mom came home when I was in Lebanon and she was like - my friend's son applied to this thing called TBB and he went to the UK and she was like apply for it- and I'm like OK and she sent it to me and my siblings and we all applied” (Interview with DTMP alum).

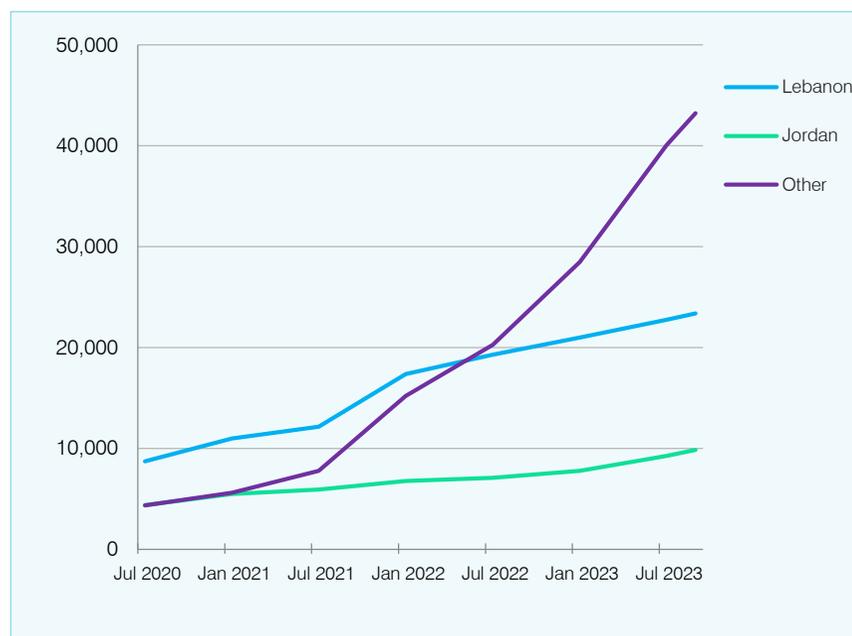
Despite the wide reach, there are some notable challenges and lessons:

- **Building awareness of this pathway across different groups of displaced people** - While the number of registrants on the talent pool has gone up drastically since inception, awareness of this pathway and registration remains underrepresented by certain groups of displaced people, such as women and displaced people in different locations. We note that the gender gap in the TC partly reflects the gender gap in labour markets in the MENA region, which is shaped by wider structural factors. While there are no nationality restrictions and anyone can register, data reveals that **locality matters**. Lebanon received the highest number of registrants, followed by Jordan. This is result of TBB's initial country presence. This indicates that, despite the deterritorialized, remote, and digital nature of TBBs operations, physical presence in a specific locality still matters. For example, as one survey respondent outlines:

“TBB is active in Lebanon and Jordan. When I was living in Iraq, so many people wanted to participate. So many of them were thinking of travelling to Lebanon or Jordan to participate” (TBB pre-departure survey respondent).

We note that the importance of locality has diminished over time as TBB's recruitment team has transitioned to become more global. The role of replicating partners has also expanded in scale and scope as illustrated in the growth in registration across locations outside Jordan and Lebanon (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5: GROWTH IN TALENT CATALOG REGISTRANTS ACROSS LOCATIONS



- **Keeping the talent pool relevant and up to date** - The simplicity and ease of registration limits the accuracy and timeliness of the data. Data entered during registration is not immediately and systematically verified, for example, with diplomas, tests, or peer-certifications. While displaced talent are

able to access their profiles to update their information, at present the data entered does not expire and registrants remain on the portal. While this means that an individual's chance for relocation does not diminish over time, it can also mean that an individual's data becomes outdated, or they may no longer be eligible nor interested in an opportunity that later arises. Because these limitations affect the quantity and quality of data in the TC, TBB conducts relatively lengthy 'intake' phone interviews with potential candidates for each job opportunity, to verify their existing data, gather more information on their skills, and assess interest. As detailed in chapter 7, this verification process is quite time-consuming and costly. To address this, TBB sends emails to remind individuals to update their data and introduces new features on their platform to retain attention to the TC.

- **Demystifying TBB's pathways and building trust** - A common misconception (potential) candidates have about TBB is the idea that their programme could possibly be a "scam". These perceptions arise as there are many fake brokers and trafficking networks in transit countries and limited pathway options. Outreach efforts by TBB and partners, legitimation by large international organisations (e.g. UNHCR) and employers, and increasing numbers of success stories spreading through networks should progressively address this issue over time.

Overall, building a pool of candidates through the TC is working well and appears to be a sustainable and self-reinforcing model that can expand further globally through the support of partners. TBB is aware of and actively addressing the identified challenges.

6. Driving the Demand for Displaced Talent

One of the main areas of work under the pilot revolves around driving employers' demand for recruiting displaced talent. To do so, TBB conducts outreach with employers to make them aware of the pool of talent, foster their interest, and assist them in recruiting. While the number of displaced talent registered in the TC has gone up drastically since 2016, the number of employers has slugged in comparison, with significant challenges and learnings identified in fostering demand amongst employers. In contrast to the health-care programme, recruiting employers in the DTMP has been more challenging. **Figure 6** presents a snapshot of the 10 employers hiring through the DTMP as of September 2023.

Several factors contribute to the high level of hesitancy from employers and emphasise the critical role TBB plays in driving demand under the current modality and the high level of resources, energy, and time this entails. This chapter details the process, outlines the , enablers, and identifies the bottlenecks.

FIGURE 6: SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT EMPLOYERS



Employer Engagement Process

To begin, TBB actively identifies employers and offers organisations a pitch. To identify employers, TBB has an online expression of interest form where employers can signal their interest. Additionally, TBB relies on their networks and, more recently, consortiums or sectoral associations (e.g. the Displaced Legal Talent Initiative, in partnership with legal firm DLA Piper and a number of other legal firms, and the Displaced Journalists Initiative in partnership with Doughty Street Chambers). As of 01 September 2023, 64 employers were identified and offered an initial pitch. TBB data from these employers indicates that 15, or 23%, heard about the programme through TBB's website. Another 15 were identified through TBB's partners, 10 through initiatives and industry groups, six who engaged with TBB in another destination country, six through the Scottish government, four through an event or webinar, three through personal contacts, three were autonomous access, and two through the media.

While there are no restrictions on industries, TBB prioritises sectors based on the government's shortage occupation list. This list, which provides relaxed eligibility criteria for sponsoring migrants, is premised on the idea that migration should be targeted towards areas of need in the labour market (Sumption, 2022). The list is constantly updated and comprises jobs across different occupations that are predominantly 'high-skilled', including jobs such as scientists, engineers, and IT occupations, among others (UK Home Office, 2023.c). In that vein, in Scotland for example, TBB and the Scottish Government identified energy, construction, fintech, and hospitality as sectors to prioritise for outreach (TBB staff interview). Other industries

prioritised by TBB include construction, engineering, legal, consultancy, and technology.

While TBB does not preclude any specific firm or organisation types, the focus tends to be on medium sized to larger firms with a history of recruiting internationally. Within these organisations, TBB has targeted staff with different roles and varying seniority levels.

In addition, several of TBB's partners work on driving demand in their industries. For instance, Fragomen, who are themselves recruiters of displaced talent, work to promote this recruitment pathway in the legal sector. Similarly, PSR, a recruitment agency within the construction industry, engages in 'social-mobility initiatives across the UK'. In this capacity, they also serve as one of TBB's partners, helping promote the programme in the construction field. To fulfil this, they hired a Displaced Talent Ambassador through TBB's TC.

TBB pitches their solution to employers, tailoring their approach each time. In the pitch, TBB employs various marketing messages. They state that hiring displaced talent is the 'smart thing to do' as it offers employers 'access to an untapped source of talent', 'resilient and determined candidates', and 'strong loyalty and high retention'. This is also framed as the 'right thing to do' as it 'lifts a person/family out of displacement', 'achieves diversity goals with high calibre candidates' and 'builds wider staff morale and positive association with the company brand' which TBB refers to as the 'triple win'.

One critical insight from attending a pitching activity is the high cost, time, and effort required throughout the process. During the programme from October 2021 to September 2023, TBB pitched to 64 employers which led to 23 roles being identified for recruitment. Out of these, 17 employers asked for CVs to be submitted to them. Others dropped out for various reasons detailed below. As explored further in chapter 7, TBB submitted 199 candidate CVs to those who agreed to participate. 12 employers proceeded to interview 58 candidates. This then materialised into 10 employers offering jobs to 17 candidates. This prompts an exploration of the main enablers and barriers in recruiting employers across different steps and how more employers can be engaged in the medium run.

Enablers and opportunities include:

- Growing awareness and trust** - Interviews with TBB staff indicate that awareness of the programme as a legitimate recruitment modality is growing as the pilot is maturing. This is due to demonstrated results with employers and other outreach and communications efforts. More references to the pilot as a recruitment strategy in the media and in publications are also a testament to this. For example, a recent Overseas Development Institute (ODI) report that explores labour shortages and skills gaps in the construction sector to meet low carbon heating and energy efficiency includes a recommendation on how the DTMP can be used in this context (Kumar et al., 2023). Additionally, since 2020, TBB has been featured and mentioned in 25 publications from outlets such as the [Financial Times](#), [The Times](#), [Yahoo News](#), and [The Scottish Herald](#), among others. Growing awareness and trust mean that TBB is better able to approach more and larger employers. Interviews
- Word of mouth** - Related to the above point, all employers interviewed indicate that they would recommend TBB to other employers and clients they engage with. Additionally, TBB has hosted and taken part in a number of events across the UK and European countries, including hosting an event for Scottish employers in Edinburgh, events to launch the Displaced Legal Talent Initiative and Displaced Journalists Initiative, and hosting Alumni events in London, Reading, Sheffield, and Cambridge.
- High prospects in future growth** - A trend of TBB's programmes globally is that from the announcement of a pilot, it takes time for programmes and numbers of job offers to build as illustrated through [Figure 7](#). At the beginning of the pilot, there was a steady and slow growth in placements, before numbers increased further. TBB's understanding is that the growth has expanded due to initial placements being successful in terms of candidates' performance, integration, and retention rate. This demonstrates to employers that the programme is feasible, which increases interest and reduces risk for employers. Globally, 49 employers have hired through TBB repeatedly, i.e. in separate recruitment cycles. We note that four companies have committed to hiring through the DTMP in the near future. One of these companies is a large global consultancy who has committed to hiring 750 displaced people into technology roles globally over the next five years.

Another financial company has committed to hiring 15 candidates in the UK and 15 in the US, with the first cohort due to arrive at the end of 2024. An engineering company and a technology company committed to hiring several candidates each. Additionally, there are two initiatives aiming to hire candidates into specific sectors; firstly the Displaced Talent Legal Initiative, where TBB partnered with law firm DLA Piper and brought together a consortium of law firms. The initiative aims to place 10 refugees into the legal sector. The second initiative is the Displaced Journalists Initiative, which aims to place five displaced journalists into media roles in the UK. The initiative was set up by TBB and barristers Doughty Street Chambers in response to eight Afghan former BBC World journalists. Due to their work with Western media, they are in danger from repercussions from the Taliban and are currently based in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

The analysis identified several prominent barriers that prevent employers from proceeding further:

- **High financial cost** - One of the main barriers faced by recruiting employers is the high financial costs required, especially when compared to a local recruitment. The cost that employers face to recruit one primary candidate (excluding any dependents) through TBB ranges from £9,700 to £20,300 (Table 6). This includes visa and sponsorship, flights, temporary accommodation, integration costs, and a charitable donation to TBB. Interviews with employers reveal that these costs would stop them from repeating this recruitment. More so, interviews reveal that TBB constantly debates at which point to reveal these costs to employers.

“If you look at the overall cost, the more that is added on to the employers, the less likely that they're going to do this for dozens of people to recruit. So if you disentangle all the different costs without peaking on any particular one, it's just the aggregate of all those costs adds up to quite a lot like flight accommodation, immigration, advance of pay. You know it, it just adds up to quite a lot.” (Interview with DTMP employer)

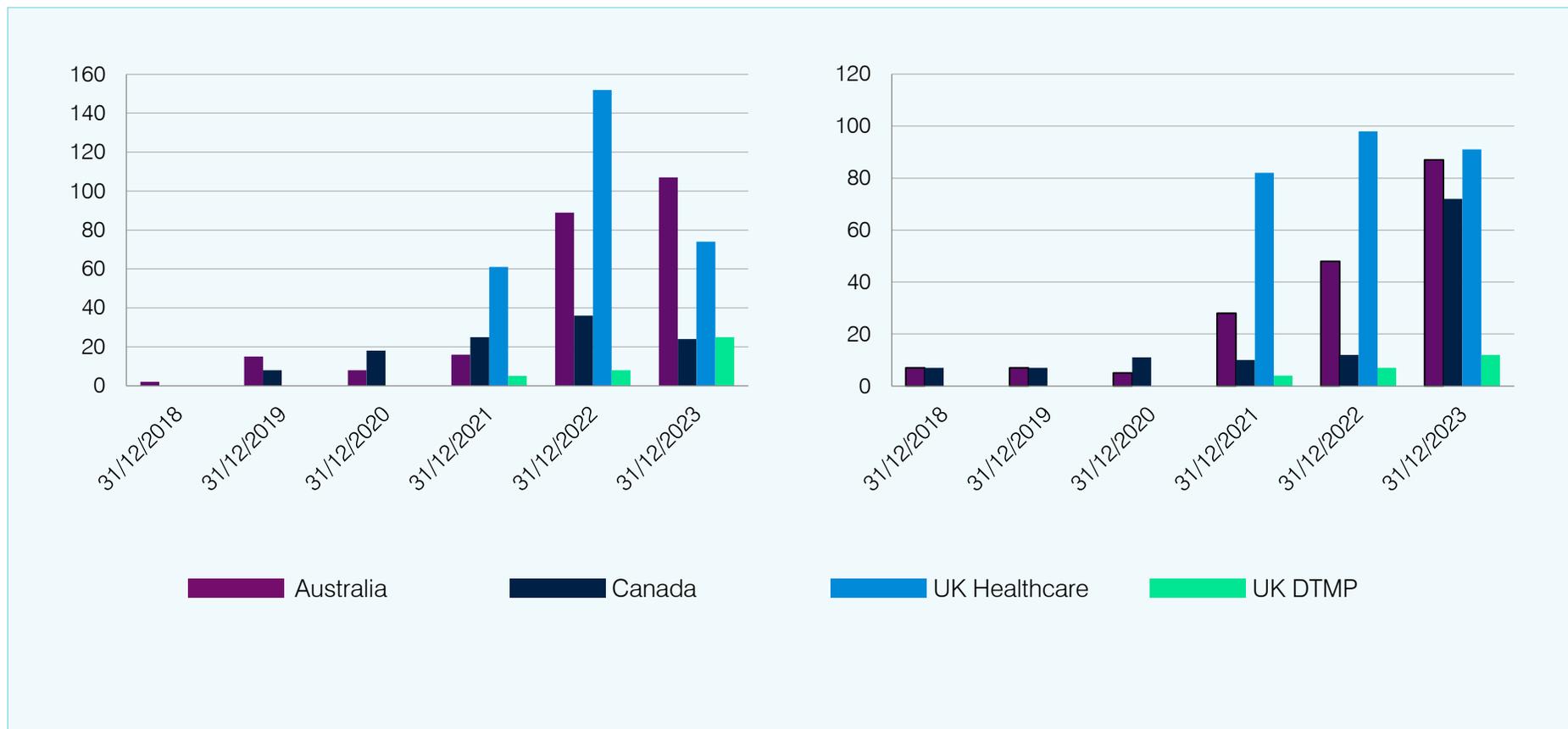
FIGURE 7: MOVES OVER TIME (LEFT) AND NEW JOB OFFERS (RIGHT)

TABLE 6: RECRUITMENT COST ESTIMATE

ITEM GROUP	DETAILS	COST ESTIMATE
Travel (flight costs)	One way flight from Jordan / Lebanon to UK (London/ Manchester)	£200 - £300
Visa Costs	Displaced Talent Mobility candidates sponsored for a Skilled Worker Visa. Costs depend on the number of dependents, length of initial sponsorship (3 years or 5 years) and whether the employer already has a sponsorship license.	£5,000 - £10,000
Accommodation	TBB recommends 1-month temporary accommodation and support for a deposit or 3 months of temporary accommodation without support for a deposit.	£3,000
Integration	TBB recommends employers think about what support they may give to their recruits on integration into their new life in the UK. They partner with organisations such as IOM and Reset to provide services as described below in sections 8 and 9. Costs vary depending on the package and level of support.	£500 - £1,500
Relocation	TBB suggests that employers consider a relocation lump sum allowance, signing bonus, or a salary advance as candidates may not be able to open bank accounts for a number of weeks and may have considerable upfront costs	£500 - £3,000
TBB donation	TBB is a registered charity in the UK and are philanthropically funded therefore and do not charge for their services. However, to maintain the sustainability of the organisation and to advance charitable purposes, they accept donations from employment partners (in lieu of any recruitment fees).	£500 - £2,500
Total		£9,700 - £20,300

- **Economic environment** - Dependent on labour markets, TBB is highly susceptible to economic conditions. For instance, hiring freezes and the economic slowdown, especially in the tech industry, have stalled demand for hiring, including through displaced talent mobility (TBB staff interview).

BOX 3: ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN IN THE TECH SECTOR

One employer TBB had approached in the consulting industry had indicated interest to hire 750 candidates in tech roles over 5 years using a train-to-hire model, whereby cohorts of displaced talents are to be trained in the source country and be offered skilled worker visas after successfully completing the training. The employer started engaging with a first cohort of 20 candidates in summer 2023. However, the project stalled due to a reduction in project demands at the company, leading to a hiring freeze. There have also recently been hundreds of job cuts across the organisation. Despite this hiring freeze and job cuts, the employer is now proceeding with the recruitment of four candidates. The company still plans to scale up hiring displaced talent when the economic environment will be more conducive to growth.

Similarly, two other large-scale employers - in the finance and tech sectors - began recruitment processes through TBB in the summer 2022 but ultimately dropped out due to hiring freezes. One firm was aiming to hire 12 candidates, the other was aiming to hire 4 candidates.

- **Stereotypes and limited awareness of displaced talent** - Another challenge and key area of work for TBB relates to the narrow perceptions employers have of displaced people or difficulties in hiring displaced people, which might be reinforced by how refugees and asylum-seekers are represented in media and the political discourse around immigration. Employers are considered to have a *“pre-judgement of what a refugee is”* (TBB Staff Interview). For some employers, the CVs presented do not match their requirements which displaced people may not be able to fulfil, having worked in a different context and often informally. On the flipside, for other employers, candidates exceed their expectations and do not fit their stereotype of a refugee. As TBB highlight, it is perceived that some employers *“want someone who’s really qualified for the job, but they want to pay them like a refugee”* (TBB staff interview). In both cases TBB works to challenge these moulds to arrive at feasible placements. TBB also undertakes extensive communication work to *“change the narrative”*.
- **Administrative barriers and buy-in within the organisation** - In many cases, the recruitment of displaced talent through TBB is a *“personal passion project”* taken on by specific staff members at potential employers (TBB Staff Interview). Although motivated, these staff members may be unable to get buy-in from relevant people at the company (e.g., manager, more senior people, HR, etc.) or run into internal processes that stop them from hiring through this route.

As one respondent explains, getting staff onboard for their recruitment was easy because:

“It came right from the top. Our CEO said to me, I want to do this. I want to make a change. I want to support a family to come over here. He bought into it and his wife got involved. They picked her [displaced talent] up from the airport” (Interview with employer).

For some employers, it may be difficult to get buy-in from senior management or, on the contrary, HR may have strict procedures and protocol to follow with new hires. Contractual arrangements between TBB and employers are also complex to set up with certain businesses, given TBB's charity status.

- **Identifying the right role** - for employers, it can be difficult to identify a role that is suitable for this type of placement. Findings suggest there is a 'sweet spot' in terms of the seniority level of a job post. For jobs that are too junior, it can be difficult to justify the costs. Conversely, more senior posts typically require certain soft skills or managerial experience in the UK that can be difficult to identify through this placement. To mitigate this and expand the number of feasible roles, TBB is trialling a 'train to hire' model to train candidates in their country of asylum with specific skills and certifications, before they are offered a job.

“Internally there was a once or twice a question raised whether the expense is commensurate to hiring a junior level resource, because once you put all the cost of immigration it is actually quite expensive. It adds up to quite a bit of money that is more than we

would normally spend on a new hire, but because it's worked out so well, I think retrospectively, nobody is having an issue with that any longer. It does make it more difficult to do this again because people are like, how can we make this slightly cheaper the next time round?” (Interview with DTMP employer)

In conclusion, employers' demand has been harder to stimulate than expected, primarily because of the high cost of recruiting internationally and the challenging economic context. However, TBB's work over the past two years shows that the concept works, and this proof-of-concept might convince more risk-averse employers to recruit through the DTMP once economic conditions become more favourable. Several employers are in discussion with TBB to recruit cohorts of candidates, suggesting that numbers might increase at a higher rate in the medium run.

7. Connecting the Demand and Supply

When a prospective employer confirms their willingness to recruit displaced talent, TBB and the employer agree on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU typically includes a commitment to recruit a certain number of displaced talents, the respective responsibilities of TBB and the employer, a description of costs for the employer, and a commitment to make a donation to TBB to contribute to TBB's costs. Once signed by both parties, TBB connects this employer with a suitable match.

This chapter describes how the displaced talent and employers connect under the pilot and the good practices and lessons learnt associated with this matching process.

To facilitate a recruitment, TBB's destination team shares a job description with the source team, who then shortlist candidates to proceed with the next step of recruitment, typically an interview by the employer.

To shortlist candidates, the source teams conduct a scan of the TC using keywords for skills or experiences sought by the employer. The recruitment team currently consists of 10 employees working across different job area specializations with a team dedicated to healthcare, a team dedicated to the tech sector, a team dedicated to skilled trades, and a team for general roles beyond these sectors.

The source team conducts intake interviews to determine candidates' eligibility for an opportunity. The intake interview, which typically lasts

between 20 minutes to an hour, explores a candidate's displacement background to check if this person needs international protection and does not have access to a durable solution, work experience to gauge suitability for the specified role, initial indication of interest, and language proficiency.

The source team supports suitable candidates to revise their CV. The list of shortlisted candidates is then shared with employers (often anonymised or with contextual information removed). Employers then typically conduct remote interviews or tests with candidates, with TBB's logistical support and support with interview preparations.

Under the healthcare programmes recruitment is typically done in cohorts of around five to 10 candidates per employer with between 20 - 65 candidates arriving to the UK at once. However, with the DTMP, recruitment is mainly individual, with the exception of recruitments with three employers, who recruited two to three candidates each. This reduces possible economies of scale. However, several pending discussions with large scale employers are in progress, with possible commitments from employers to recruit hundreds of employees in cohorts.

Alongside this, as another avenue to connect employers with candidates, TBB hosted the 'Global Refugee Labour Mobility Summit' in Amman in March 2023, where employers could meet and exchange with displaced talent directly.

Through this Summit, TBB also hosted a job fair, which resulted in expressions of interest and job offers to at least 75 candidates across TBB's programmes in Canada and Australia (TBB, n.d).

Stakeholders emphasise a number of merits with TBB's approach to connecting the candidates with employers. In particular, successful employers note the following enablers:

- **Clear communication and responsiveness** - As a recruitment process that is different to other local recruitments, employers appreciate the constant communication from TBB to enable them to proceed with recruitment.
- **Effective recruitment and selection process** - Despite the challenges often associated with remote recruitment, employers generally indicate that the recruitment process was well-suited to assess the suitability of candidates and identify who to recruit.
- **Strong talent pool** - Employers underscore the high calibre presented by candidates, especially with regards to hard skills, and are impressed by the shortlisted candidates. For the 23 vacancies identified for recruitment, 19, or 83%, materialised into job offers. For one employer, it was difficult to decide between two shortlisted candidates for one job opportunity, and they decided to proceed with hiring the two candidates.
- **Candidates also feel supported throughout the process** - Candidates appreciate the interview preparations facilitated by TBB.

“They [TBB] even gave us a mock interview which gave me a lot of advice. For example, in the mock interview I was moving around a lot. So, she told me everything you're doing is great, you're expressing yourself in a good way but if I'm interviewing you virtually I will not like that you're moving a lot in front of the camera. So, she helped me.” (Interview with DTMP alum)

However, compared to other processes conducted by TBB, this match-making phase involves high labour costs, with three staff members dedicated to recruitment in the UK, and 10 staff members globally, working on matching candidates with jobs in the UK and other destination countries. The challenges and lessons learned include:

- **Restricted pool given employers' stringent requirements and geographical conditions imposed by the pilot** - While the TC encompasses more than 76,000 potential candidates, finding suitable candidates can be difficult when employers send a *“2-page job description for a niche role”*, which displaced talent may not be able to fulfil, having worked in a different context and often informally. At the same time, the geographical restrictions imposed by the initial pilot (only refugees in Lebanon and Jordan or Afghans based anywhere in the world including Afghanistan) also restrict the talent pool, meaning that finding a suitable match can be more difficult. This is especially true as TBB's talent pool has grown beyond Jordan and Lebanon with more global operations in recent months. TBB still facilitated the placement of a few candidates who fall outside the geographical restrictions imposed by the pilot.

- **Intake interviews** - As chapter 5 explains, the data in the TC is self-reported and is hindered by limitations which means it can be outdated and needs validation. As such, TBB conducts lengthy "intake" phone interviews with potential candidates for each job opportunity to verify their data, gather more information about their skills, and assess their interest. This verification process, managed by the source teams, is time-consuming and costly. TBB is exploring options to streamline this, including using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or working with partners to carry out intake interviews in bulk. TBB, UNHCR, and a social research firm will pilot this latter idea in Jordan with 3,000 registered candidates.
- **English language skills** - Around 60,000 candidates in the TC self-report possessing English language skills. Candidates only need an IELTS of 4.5 (on a scale of 0 to 9) for the Skilled Worker visa. In practice, however, language skills can still act as a barrier; employers may require a higher level of English to adequately perform the job. Accessing testing facilities can also be a challenge in some countries. As such, TBB is working on a partnership with the app Duolingo to facilitate access to language testing and certifications. Additionally, TBB works with the British Council to facilitate tests for candidates if there is no testing centre in the country they are displaced, or if they are missing documents required to sit the test.
- **Fulfilling paperwork and the transference of certificates** - As a programme aiming to overcome displaced people's barriers to international employment, TBB advocates for candidates and encourages employers to be as flexible as possible with evidence regarding qualifications and past experiences. Nevertheless, for certain professions, such as in the architecture field, it can be

difficult to provide certifications or evidence of certain skills which means that the recruitment takes place on a lower role with a lower salary while candidates undertake the necessary accreditation or qualification *"to bring them up to the UK standards"* once in the UK (employer interview).

Overall, this phase of the process works relatively smoothly, but entails significant time and uncertainty. Fast-moving labour markets and high competition in the face of recruitment require TBB to be agile. However, the complex nature of recruitment and the various checks the source team must conduct slow down the process. One of the interviews with TBB's partner/employer emphasises that TBB needs to *"work like recruiters here in the UK if they want to compete with other recruitment companies here."* This entails faster and more streamlined processes which can be difficult as TBB navigates intricate and complex situations with candidates. Likewise, for candidates, the process of finding a job through TBB is long with some candidates interviewed waiting several years for an opportunity to arise.

Managing the expectations of candidates is crucial and can be challenging as opportunities are difficult to come by and employers often interviewing multiple candidates and only recruiting one. In response, TBB aims to share feedback with candidates who were unsuccessful and offer advice on how they can improve in the future while keeping candidates in the database for future opportunities.

"Uhm, no, I didn't dislike anything. The only thing I would say is I wish it happened sooner, but then again, that's not in control of anyone" (Interview with DTMP alum).

8. Moving to the UK as Highly Skilled Migrants

Once an employer makes a job offer to a candidate, TBB proceeds with steps to relocate the candidate to the UK (Figure 8). The exact steps taken and time involved varies by case. The quickest time a candidate could move in theory is around one month but, on average, once a job offer is received, it takes around three to four months for candidates to relocate under the DTMP (Figure 9). This includes some candidates who were evacuated from Afghanistan, and a candidate whose application submission took longer than expected due to their lawyers' confusion and unfamiliarity with the process, taking over 7 months.

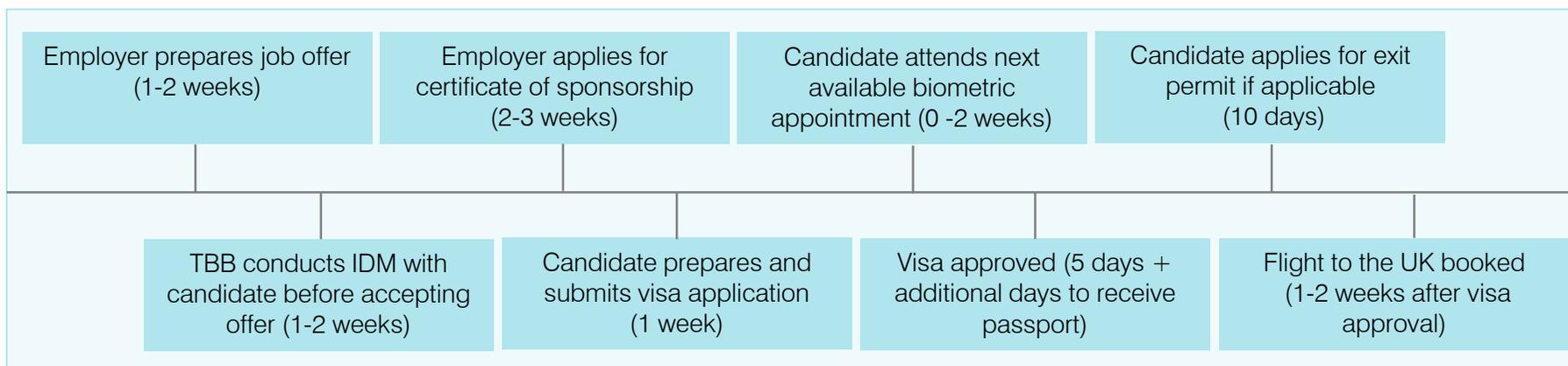
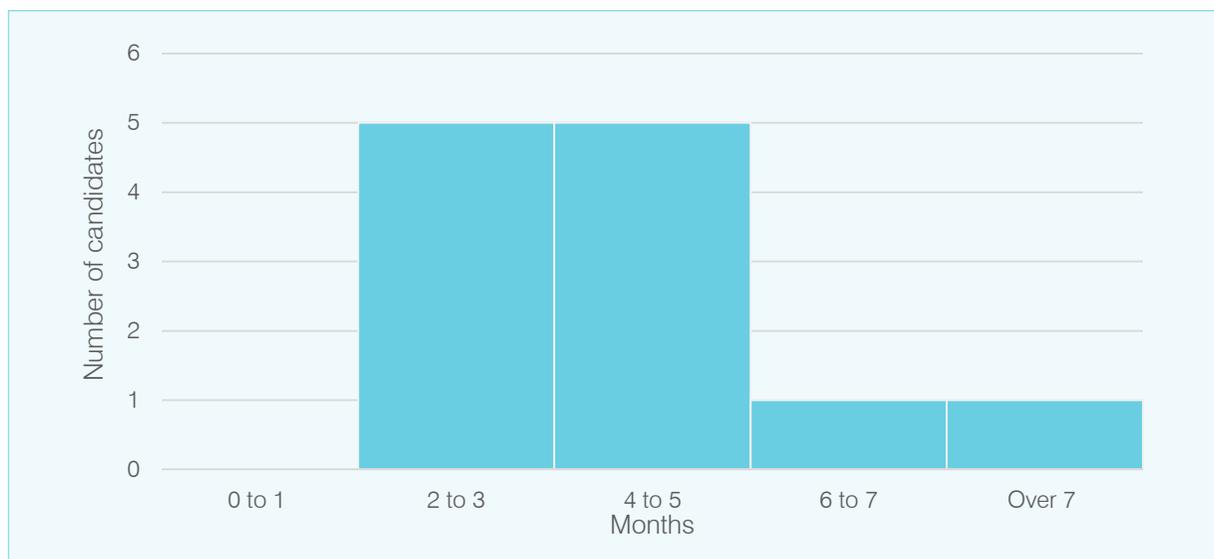
To begin, TBB conducts an informed decision meeting (IDM) with candidates to go over the job offer, relocation, and next steps. It is pertinent that the candidate has received the full information before deciding whether or not this is an opportunity they would like to pursue and accept. Consequently, TBB attempts to share all relevant information about the job and life in the UK (including daily living costs, taxes, culture etc.) and what this opportunity means in terms of a candidate's access to a durable solution and the visa pathway. TBB highlights that one candidate rejected the job offer as she felt it did not fit with her career progression. Once agreed, TBB proceeds with the candidate's visa application. On average, the processing of a typical Skilled Worker visa takes three weeks (UK Home Office, 2023.d). Under the pilot, the Home Office is supporting TBB by providing a single point of contact in the Visa and Citizenship Special Handling team and has offered free priority processing for all TBB

applicants, where possible, which would typically cost per applicant £500. Processing the DTMP applications within five days increases the 'speed' of this mobility pathway which may otherwise be slow in response to labour market demands.

Additionally, this relationship with the Home Office allows for support where individuals have evidential difficulties due to their displacement.

This phase involves two other partners. The first is Fragomen, an immigration services firm that provides pro-bono advice to TBB. The second is IOM. IOM facilitates the relocation of candidates and family members by booking their flights and escorting them through airports by designated staff. They have assisted five of the 12 DTMP candidates to move to the UK so far. Additionally, they have supported over 100 healthcare candidates with their move to the UK.

Before relocating, TBB guides and supports candidates in obtaining exit permits when necessary. The procedures vary depending on where the candidate is based, their nationality, and how they entered the country of asylum. This is another area of work in which in-country presence is critical for navigating government procedures.

FIGURE 8: TIMELINE OF STEPS TO RELOCATE**FIGURE 9: TIME BETWEEN JOB OFFER AND RELOCATION**

For candidates based in Afghanistan, TBB also works with partners for the evacuation of candidates to Pakistan or Iran where they are then able to apply for their visas to relocate to the UK.

As an additional resource to draw on before moving, candidates have access to Pathway Club, a “self-sustaining, refugee-led initiative whereby the talents can receive a small amount of money in the form of an unconditional, pay-it-forward grant for any pre-departure steps necessary for them and their families to move”. The candidates can then pay this forward as a donation once settled to support others in accessing this pathway.

Prior to their arrival, TBB also supports employers to prepare for the arrival of their new hires. For example, they can arrange accommodation and provide guidance on best practices when it comes to welcoming a newly arrived candidate. Upon arrival in the UK, candidates are welcomed by TBB and employers at the airport and offered support to settle in.

Findings suggest the relocation process is working well and indicate several good practices that improve the candidates’ experience with the move.

- **Well-informed and assisted throughout** - Candidates feel well-informed about the UK, with sufficient knowledge about the decision to move, what to expect and how best to prepare. The wealth of practical information shared by TBB and practical support (including financial) with travel procedures is something candidates highly appreciate. For many candidates, this was their

first time visiting the UK or flying internationally and they indicate that TBB and partners' support in facilitating the travel was crucial.

“So I don't know anything about airports and what to do there and TBB helped me with every single detail. In Heathrow airport, they showed us which terminal we should take and how to do this and how to do that. Like everything. They even had a meeting with us before we came to Belfast to tell us about Belfast. What the accent is like and they showed us a lot of things like if we want to rent property or if we want to buy a phone number or if we want to buy Halal groceries. They showed us everything. When I came to Belfast, I knew everything about Belfast because of the meetings they conducted with us.” (Interview with DTMP alum)

- **Smooth visa processing** - Different stakeholders highlight the importance of the Home Office’s contribution through free priority processing and a dedicated point of contact to offer support for visa applications. For example, for candidates who do not possess a travel document such as a passport, moving to the UK entails additional hurdles. For instance, the Syrian embassy in Jordan recently announced that they are no longer issuing passports. In such cases, the support of the Home Office makes the process of obtaining a travel document smoother and less stressful for candidates, employers, and TBB. The Home Office reports that it would be easy to scale up the DTMP based on the applications they have seen to date, as the number of Skilled Worker visas processed as part of the partnership with TBB represents a small fraction of the total number of demands the Home Office processes daily.

- **Staggered family movement** - Some candidates directly move to the UK with their immediate family, while others settle in the UK alone first, and are later joined by certain family members (partner and children) who travel on dependent visas. The analysis reveals candidates appreciate this flexibility as families have different needs and preferences and may require time to determine whether the move is appropriate for family members.

“Relocating from one country to another one, it's always hard. And when you're alone and you, you haven't done this before, there is always pressure and nervousness. I was happy about the support of the TBB team. They were always trying to find a way to help us.” (Interview with DTMP alum)

While positive overall, a few challenges also arise during this phase:

- **Dangerous evacuations from Afghanistan** - Most notably, for those based in Afghanistan, the process to move has been described as quite challenging and long, with exposure to various protection risks. These challenges arise due to limited safe and regular pathways to cross international borders from Afghanistan. This process involves additional costs for the employers, which may make them reluctant to recruit candidates based in Afghanistan. Finding new partners is also difficult given the context. As TBB is currently reviewing their entire processes for candidates based in Afghanistan and partners involved, we refrain from making recommendations on this area.

BOX 4: EVACUATIONS FROM AFGHANISTAN

There is a candidate in Afghanistan who was an autonomous access case, and had a job offer through an employer as a Network Engineer. This candidate did not have a valid passport and needed to apply for a new one. However, after the Taliban takeover, applying for a new passport and attempting to leave the country became increasingly difficult. The candidate was also targeted by the Taliban for their ethnicity and previous work with Western companies. Therefore, after 18 months of attempting to obtain a passport with the support of evacuation organisations, his evacuation has been called off for the time being. This highlights the difficult circumstances and lack of safe routes for candidates to be evacuated from Afghanistan, even when there is a supportive and patient employer who is willing to give them a job offer.

- **Financial obstacles incurred by candidates** - Some candidates face significant financial barriers due to the costs associated with exit permits and English language testing, among others. While Pathway Club offers an innovative solution for refugees to borrow funds to move, displaced people sometimes face restrictions on receiving funds through transfer service providers.
- **Family separation** - Some candidates move without their family members. Four candidates of the DTMP moved alone, two sisters moved together (both working similar roles in the same organisation), and six moved with immediate family members (partners and children).

Findings indicate feelings of stress associated with movement and, in one case, feelings of betrayal. For one candidate, leaving his family members behind in Afghanistan as the breadwinner and guardian came with a huge emotional toll. As the Taliban imposed more restrictions on women, the candidate felt his female family members were unsafe without him and decided to move back after being in the UK for six months. Similarly, with the healthcare programme, six candidates (out of 237) moved back to Lebanon to be with sick family members who were not able to move to the UK on dependent visas as non-immediate family members. TBB has included more information about this in the IDM and ensures there are frequent follow-up discussions with candidates before a decision is made on moving back.

- **Contractual procedures to engage with partners supporting relocation** - IOM has assisted five DTMP candidates and many health pilot candidates by offering support such as fit-to-fly tests, flight tickets, and transit facilitation. While this support is usually seen as important, establishing partnerships between IOM and employers is often hindered by administrative and contractual procedures.

9. Integrating and Working in the UK

Moving to the UK as migrants entails considerable changes to the lives of displaced talent. Besides the change in place across international borders, this move is also associated with a move across policy categories from 'displaced people' to 'skilled migrants' or, in TBB's eyes, from 'candidates' to 'alumni' of the programme. This chapter presents insights on how to navigate this move to catalyse opportunities and overcome associated barriers. Generally, as migrants in the UK, the alumni and their family members do not have access to much-needed resources and services that asylum seekers or refugees in the UK are typically able to access, such as English Language classes. This creates a void that employers, TBB, and partners such as IOM, Fragomen, and Reset have been filling through the pilot. This chapter also reflects on the experiences of employers as their new employees settle in at work.

Integration Support by TBB, Employers and Partners

To aid with integration in the UK, TBB has two staff members dedicated to integration and alumni relations who proactively lead integration initiatives and connect alumni to establish a sense of community. As part of their integration support, TBB:

- Shares integration guides with information on topics including costs of living, registering with a GP, finding accommodation, and information to such as where to find Halal food.

- Facilitates communication with TBB alumni through a dedicated Slack channel where alumni can ask questions or share news or ideas. TBB uses this platform to share a 'Friday Fix' every week. 'Friday Fixes' include practical tips and advice, such as how to secure rental accommodation or make friends in a new city. 'Friday Fixes' are often created in collaboration with alumni, building on their lived experience of navigating integration barriers.
- Hosts several social meetup events throughout the year in various cities in the UK. For example, to celebrate Eid in London, TBB alumni and staff members met up in a Lebanese ice cream store in London. Other events hosted over the year include bowling events and a visit to the Botanical Garden in Cambridge.
- Established an alumni advisory committee composed of five alumni.

In addition, TBB identifies and builds partnerships to support the talents integration in their new community. To support this, TBB offers an integration package that is catered to individuals who move under different schemes.

TBB has partnered with IOM to offer pre-departure and post-arrival orientation training for both employers and the talents respectively. For employers, the training takes place with the HR team and staff members working most closely with the new hires.

The training aims to build colleagues' cultural sensitivity, promote an understanding of displacement, highlight considerations for individuals moving to the UK, and introduce expectations as new hires adjust to their new office environment and country. For the alumni, the training covers information around settling in the UK, adjusting to the workplace, and familiarising themselves with their rights and responsibilities at work and while living in the UK.

On arrival, employers are encouraged to also offer additional support to settle in through 'buddy systems' and orientation activities.

Another source of support offered to talent coming through the healthcare scheme was the programme Neighbours for Newcomers (N4N), a pilot programme run by Reset, the UK's leading Community Sponsorship charity. N4N brought community volunteers together to provide support for nurses for six months after arrival. The volunteers aimed to support alumni to integrate by helping them open bank accounts, helping them find accommodation, and being a friendly face to meet with. An evaluation of the programme revealed mixed feedback; some nurses received a lot of support from volunteers with practicalities and felt positive about the experience. However, only 50% of the nurses surveyed felt that the programme helped them. A number of nurses felt that the volunteers did not proactively reach out to support them, and the nurses felt uncomfortable reaching out themselves. The programme was also relatively expensive, as the cost was based on support per individual. The programme has since been updated and Reset now runs a 'Train the Trainer' model where they train the colleagues of nurses and hospital volunteers to support them.

As of 01 September 2023, TBB alumni of the DTMP have a combined pre-tax income of over £400,000 per year. As the base tax rate in the UK is 20%, a back-of-the-envelope calculation by TBB estimates that alumni contribute almost £90,000 in taxes per year. Additionally, dependents on the Skilled Worker visa have full work rights. This means they are able to apply for jobs and work in the UK. Four spouses of primary candidates have secured jobs in retail, construction, and non-profit sectors, and are contributing to UK taxes and the economy. Across all TBB programmes in the UK, TBB alumni contribute almost £1,000,000 in taxes per year approximately (Home Office, 2023.f).

Experiences of Alumni

All in all, alumni report very high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Out of the 12 talents who moved to the UK as part of the DTMP, 11 have remained and integrated in the UK. **Figure 10** illustrates how long alumni have been in the UK for thus far. Moving to the UK is generally perceived as highly impactful and *"life-changing"* for alumni with many opportunities presented:

- **New career and life aspirations** - For many alumni, the move entails a move across occupations and re-routing their career trajectory. This is generally something they enjoy, with several proclaiming that this move has allowed them to realise their interest in new careers, and work jobs that exceed their expectations. One individual reports that his job, although thought to be challenging, is allowing him to learn new skills rather than ones that are becoming obsolete amidst technological changes.

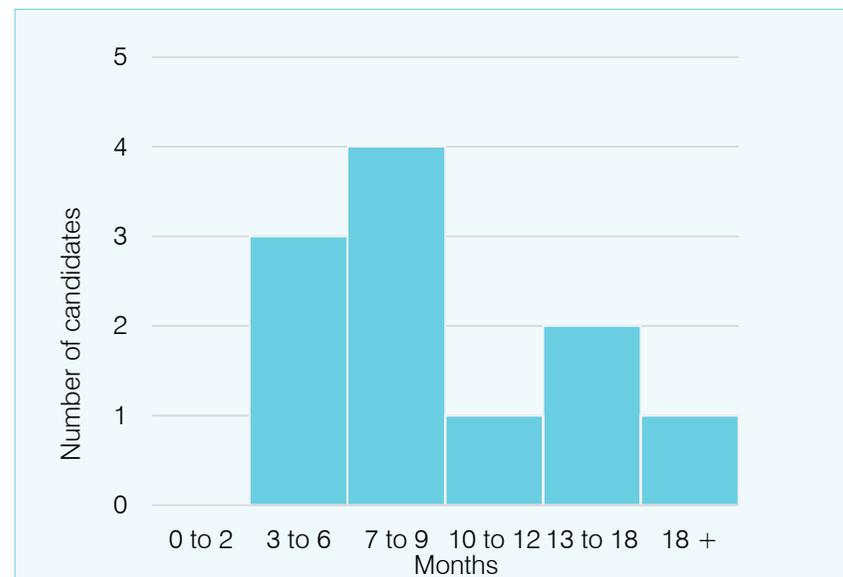
- **Safety, well-being, and freedom** - Alumni express feelings of safety and security, and greatly appreciate being able to live freely and with dignity in the UK. Alumni especially note a sense of tolerance and acceptance in the UK, with feelings of belonging. They say they no longer feel like a 'burden' or discriminated against.

"The highlight of my experience is just having mainly basic human rights. So here I feel like I'm human rather than someone who is unwanted like in Lebanon. Someone who's a burden. I don't feel like I'm a burden anymore. I don't feel like I have to hide my identity anymore. You know, I'm proud to say yes, I'm Syrian. Yes, I've come on a Skilled Worker visa. Yes, I'm working here. I have the right to work just like anybody else. And the other is that my children can go to school, which is a huge highlight for me. You know, they have an education, a secured education for them and we can dream again. we have dreams now. You know advancing in our careers, maybe my husband opens up his own office, for example in the long-term. We have the ability to dream again, which is very important. And we don't feel like we're discriminated anymore. You just feel like you can live freely again" (Interview with DTMP alum).

- **Strong support system** - Alumni appreciate the extensive support offered from their employers and the constant follow ups from TBB; their relationship with the organisation does not end when they move to the UK. Generally, interviewees feel that they are able to reach out to others for support or to discuss any issues. While alumni value different support mechanisms, having 'buddies' assigned at work stands out as a valuable way to integrate.

- **Growing alumni network and sense of community** - Alumni convey a great sense of gratitude for the opportunity and are eager to keep engaged with the TBB community and give back. 90% of the alumni who responded to TBB's survey six months after moving to the UK expressed interest in becoming mentors for new candidates and some are involved in an alumni advisory board. This strong sense of community and leadership is something TBB seeks to leverage to aid with integration having noticed that alumni engagement events are more effective when led by the alumni themselves.

FIGURE 10: ALUMNI'S LENGTH OF TIME IN THE UK



Challenges alumni raise vary but are primarily related to finances and their family members' integration.

- **Access to services** - Alumni report issues with access to specific services, for instance, opening a bank account or finding suitable accommodation. For example, some report difficulties in finding rental properties as they had not been in the UK for long, or they did not have sufficient credit history, which is required by landlords or real estate agencies. In these instances, TBB and its partners facilitate their access, for example through arranging temporary accommodation, advocating for advance payments of salaries, acting as guarantors, and suggesting banks that do not require as much documentation.
- **Family members' integration** - For some spouses moving to the UK as dependents of Skilled Workers, the move has been challenging. Many report that their spouses struggle to find jobs as their qualifications are not recognised or they do not possess strong English language skills. An alum details:

"I can't get access to child benefit for my children and as well for education programmes, especially for my husband. When people are coming [to the UK] through other process, like [refugees] they have opportunities to go and study and continue work. [There's support] to find a job for them. But for us, we need to do this on our own. I tried to look for free education courses for my husband. There's a lot of courses but still it's all paid. The language courses should be free for people coming on the dependent visa because they're not taking the IELTS test and some of them don't have the ability to go and study by themselves" (Interview with a DTMP alum).

alum).

Interviews with TBB staff reveal that they have tried to connect the alumni and their spouses with ESOL English classes but since these programmes are earmarked for 'refugees', they are often not able to access them. More generally, alumni report that their spouses face difficulties integrating particularly if they are home alone during the day and are dependent on their partner for learning how to navigate new systems. For instance:

"For my wife it's difficult. She has never been away from her family in Afghanistan. It's her first time travelling outside and it's a culture shock for her and in terms of language limitations because she doesn't know English. So, it's difficult for her because she's just staying at home and cannot go outside" (Interview with a DTMP alum).

- **While children have been able to integrate well and access school, insights from TBB call attention to difficulties they may have in accessing university** - Although eligible to apply to university, with no recourse to public funds, the students would not be eligible for student loans and have to pay high international student fees.

- **Managing finances amidst competing priorities and the high cost of living** - Several individuals note challenges associated with the rising cost of living and difficulties this causes with managing incomes. For one person, this meant going back to his country of asylum as he was worried that, when joined by his spouse and children, he would not be able to support them financially. It is worth noting that alumni may also have financial obligations towards family members back home. Indeed, 95% of all TBB alumni in the UK report sending remittances to family abroad after being in the UK for one year.
- **Feeling tied to an employer for five years** - A few alumni express the feeling of being tied to their employer for five years, and thereby being “*stuck*” again. One interviewee expresses that other destination countries are more favourable because the process of becoming a permanent resident is (perceived to be) simpler and shorter. However, it is worth mentioning that participation in the programme would not negatively impact an individual’s credibility if they later went on to claim asylum. The asylum application would be considered on merit in accordance with immigration rules. This offers alumni and employers a sense of assurance or a contingency plan in case of any issues. Once relocated to the UK, alumni are allowed to find and apply for a new job with a different employer. However, their new employer must be willing to pay to take over their sponsorship costs from their previous employer. The alumni also needs to be mindful of any clawbacks in their employment contract, for example, for flights and relocation costs. TBB also does not help alumni find a new job once already in the UK, as this is out of TBB’s remit.

Experiences of Employers

In terms of integration at work, employers generally report that their new employees are performing well and meeting their expectations. Employers generally interviewed report satisfaction with the programme and willingness to repeat the experience. For employers, highlights of the experience are:

- **A true embodiment of diversity, equity, and inclusion** - Employers take pride in this initiative as a way to truly embed and embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion into their operations. They see this opportunity as one way to demonstrate their commitment not just in words but in action. For staff members this is an opportunity to better understand the challenges with displacement and an opportunity to promote cultural awareness in the organisation.
- **New ideas and experiences** - Employers report that the alumni bring diverse and new perspectives to their organisations through their previous experiences working in different jobs and environments, which equipped them with various transferable skills.

“As a firm, we're really, really committed to diversity, inclusion and learning and understanding that more. About, you know, different people from different backgrounds, different cultures, things like that. And in that respect, it [the recruitment] seems lovely to have. I think for people to learn about and understand a bit about different lives and different career paths and different life paths. It's all part of life's rich tapestry, as they say, and it's very interesting and good for people's own development to do that. And he [the candidate] brings with him great experience from other similar roles.” (Interview with DTMP employer).

- **Loyalty and successful recruitments** - Employers perceive alumni to be extremely loyal at work and a good fit for the role. They see this recruitment as an investment with long-term rewards as the alumni are committed to their employer and are motivated to excel at work. Not enough time has passed to calculate the one year retention rate for those arriving on the DTMP pilot. However, for all UK alumni and global alumni, the retention rate one year after arrival is 96% and 93% respectively .

“I think the benefit as a company is we found two great new starters and they're both doing well, which is 100% success rate which if you think of general hiring, not 100% of candidates are successful. Usually you enter with some people that are not quite what you were hoping for. So that's really good.” (Interview with DTMP employer).

- **Transformative initiative** - Employers take pride in knowing this opportunity has transformed an individual's and their family members' lives and has helped lift them out of displacement,

giving them a sense of stability and economic empowerment.

While integration at work is generally positive, employers also report a couple of challenges:

- **Adapting to work culture and communication styles** - Employers note that differences in communication styles and norms can play out, especially with jobs that require certain technical language proficiency. For example, one employer notes how the email writing culture in the UK can be quite different to elsewhere, which can lead to misunderstandings. To navigate this, the supervisor is mentoring the talent with discussions around communication preferences and expectations.
- **Business impact is not immediate** - Employers recognise that this recruitment modality may not offer immediate or quick impact for business needs. Unlike other forms of recruitment, the new hires may need time to adjust to life in the UK and the office environment, which means that most immediately the impacts of the hire may not be met. Instead, teams view this type of recruitment as a long-term investment. As one of TBB's partners/ employers reveals on recruitments, it:

“...breeds loyalty, because these candidates are so loyal to their companies, like [Amira] is to us because we've changed their lives and we've taken them out a dire situation, given a better quality of life and they are so loyal. So, you know that investment will pay off. They will stay with you for a minimum of five years.”*

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents a summary of the report's findings and provides recommendations. In line with the overall aims of the evaluation, this conclusion first takes stock of the (1) Achievements, (2) Impacts, and (3) Sustainability of the DTMP and then discusses if and how the DTMP should be extended in time and scope.

1. Achievements

The programme performed well on a majority of KPIs, including the number of sectors recruited through, the number of interested employers, the number of candidates interviewed, and the number of partners engaged ([Table 3](#)).

Despite these achievements, the programme falls short of meeting the KPIs related to the number of Skilled Worker visas issued and displaced people relocated. While the pilot initially intended to move 50 - 100 individuals to the UK via a Skilled Worker visa by October 2023, with at least 30 candidates relocated by the 31 March 2022, only 17 had received job offers as of 01 September 2023. Out of these, 12 have already moved to the UK, and five are currently in the process of relocating. Furthermore, 18 family members have either already relocated or are in the process of doing so. There was an additional candidate who was given a job offer but attempts to evacuate him from Afghanistan were unsuccessful, which meant that this job offer was retracted. A number of bottlenecks and lessons learnt are identified for the programme to achieve its intended objectives and suggest how the programme should continue in the future.

The analysis underscores demand-side challenges, with a relatively low number of employers successfully engaged in the DTMP despite TBB's proactive strategies to stimulate employers' interest. The pilot was advertised through multiple channels, including TBB's website and various recruitment events, with pitches made to 64 employers as of 01 September 2023. Yet, only 10 employers relocated candidates through the DTMP, out of which two are TBB's partners in executing the pilot (Fragomen and PSR), and three are autonomous access cases, meaning the employer had already identified displaced candidates to recruit and only needed TBB's support to facilitate their migration. This leaves six employers who were engaged through TBB's and partners' efforts. The analysis identified three main obstacles to getting employers on board.

- The cost of recruiting through the DTMP is a significant barrier limiting demand from employers. Although we did not conduct research with employers who were initially interested but did not proceed with recruitment, employers who did recruit and implementation partners report that this is a barrier. Compared to other destination countries, employers in the UK face much higher fees in order to proceed with an international hire, with these costs increasing further. One characteristic of TBB's programme is that candidates are not charged for their recruitment. This is important as many candidates would not afford these fees upfront. When employers cover the costs, this prompts stronger buy-in and ownership of the experience. This approach might also overcome any exploitation in the UK, which could arise if candidates feel obligated to stay with an employer to pay-off fees.

However, the recruitment cost, which ranges from £9,700 to £20,300 and falls entirely on the employer. This appears to be a significant barrier to the programme, especially for smaller firms or firms that do not typically hire internationally. This limits the types of occupations that this type of recruitment is suitable for.

- Low employer demand is driven by structural economic and political conditions that refrain employers from expanding their workforces. Pessimism related to the UK's economic outlook and fears of recession have led several employers to impose hiring freezes and retract the posting as TBB suggests. Negative narratives around immigration in the UK might also hamper a culture of hiring displaced talent, with employers perceiving higher risks and difficulties associated with the process.
- The evaluation emphasises the importance of interpersonal relationships with demand predominantly driven by good-willed individuals who see this programme as a 'personal passion project' as well as TBB's close partners. This enthusiasm is often hampered by organisational barriers and recruitment policies which are more difficult to change.

Building momentum and awareness requires time and resources. Across the different programmes that TBB is leading in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US, numbers slowly increase during the first years, before growing further. Launching new programmes takes time, as processes are set up and the above obstacles are identified and addressed. As the pilot demonstrates success and more trust in TBB is attained, risk-averse employers may become more willing to engage.

Overall, the analysis suggests that to foster exponential growth, future efforts should overcome barriers to employer engagement.

2. Impacts

The analysis finds strong positive impacts and perceptions of the pilot programme, despite some challenges.

Most notably, the analysis reveals that individuals who relocate through the pilot report high levels of satisfaction with their move to the UK and a highly transformative effect on their livelihoods, safety, and wellbeing. Primary candidates usually indicate perceived positive impacts on their family members and, in particular, on their children growing up in the UK, especially with regards to their education.

Participants also report a range of positive spillover and network effects that can positively impact displaced populations in countries of asylum, such as learning and skill development opportunities available via the TC, wider benefits through the receipt of remittances, and strong word of mouth and referral to TBB. Primary candidates contribute to the UK society by undertaking jobs that are in shortage. Beyond visa and relocation fees, the current 12 DTMP alumni are paying taxes of approximately £90,000 per annum.

However, the evaluation also identifies challenges for some spouses and family members. Some spouses report difficulties integrating in the UK due to language barriers, which limits their access to work. Candidates also expressed a sense of separation from family members who have not relocated to the UK, many of whom are still living in displacement or difficult circumstances.

Participating employers similarly report high levels of satisfaction with the recruitment. Employers find this programme highly relevant to fill skill shortages in their companies and find that their new hires are performing well at work bringing wider benefits to the office through their prior experiences and backgrounds.

Overall, the analysis finds promising evidence of positive impacts but, as discussed above, the pilot has not yet demonstrated 'impact at scale' with more insights needed on how this model can reach a greater proportion of the eligible population while retaining this strong impact.

3. Sustainability

The analysis provides insights on both the sustainability of the impacts for those reached through the programme and on the sustainability of the model itself.

Sustainability of the programme's impacts - The analysis finds that the effects of the programme on the relocated candidates and employers are likely to be sustained over time without TBB's direct involvement. While TBB is actively involved in all phases of recruitment, the resources and support required post-intervention (after migration) are minimal and diminish over time as the candidate settles in the UK. This indicates the sustainability of the programme in transforming an individual's livelihood. Similarly, employers report strong loyalty from candidates, which also indicates the longevity of this solution for employers. Labour mobility as an intervention offers a

strong and durable impact and appears to be a sustainable livelihood solution for displacement-affected populations.

Sustainability of the model itself and how it can be maintained in the future - Currently TBB drives the pilot and offers a well-rounded and quality programme, as noted by several key informants. The candidates, employers, and various partners praise TBB's commitment to provide an attentive service that spans the entire process and overcomes many practical barriers. There appears to be good working relationships between different stakeholders working on the pilot and strong connections between TBB's offices.

The analysis also emphasises the importance of the Home Office's contribution in terms of credibility. The dedicated contact point at the Home Office is key for fast support for visa applications and to troubleshoot when any issues arise, for example, when candidates do not have access to required documents due to their displacement. The free priority processing for primary candidates' visas also speeds up the process, reducing the time between candidate selection and migration. Overall, the partnership between the Home Office and TBB seems successful, with both sides expressing positive feedback about work and communication throughout the pilot. The execution of the pilot would be much more difficult without this commitment from the Home Office. The Home Office also reports that, based on applications seen to date, scaling up these activities would be relatively easy on their end, as the number of Skilled Worker visas processed as part of the partnership with TBB represents only a tiny fraction of the number of demands they process daily.

Another key strength of the pilot appears to be TBB's responsiveness to challenges with monitoring and evaluation at the core of its operations. TBB demonstrates a flexible and adaptive approach throughout the pilot with challenges and lessons learnt well documented through data to aid future programming. TBB UK has also grown tremendously over the duration of the pilot, from one staff member and one volunteer in 2020 to 10 staff members as of 01 September 2023. This growth comes with growing subject matter expertise in facilitating TBB's solution. With scale, TBB and other stakeholders would be able to identify recurrent issues and barriers that can be addressed at scale through policy changes as with the Displaced Talent policy introduced for Nurses.

The analysis also finds a growing awareness and recognition of the programme in policy circles and strong network effects as all interviewed employers would recommend this pathway to others. Similarly, displaced talents say they would refer their networks to the TC. While beyond the scope of this pilot, the growing recognition of labour mobility by the international refugee regime, and TBB's growth in Europe, presents an opportunity for the sustainability of this programme. TBB can leverage their presence to transfer knowledge and learnings on what works across contexts.

On the other hand, another key consideration in terms of sustainability and scale-up is that the programme is currently quite demanding in terms of human resources invested by TBB at each stage of the recruitment process. This is not necessarily abnormal or negative, as the programme is still in its infancy and it allows TBB to

provide a high-quality service, crucial for demonstrating success and building trust.

Two activities seem particularly intensive: (1) the identification of employers and pitching of the idea, and (2) once a job description is available, the identification of suitable candidates in TC and updating of their data. TBB's approach towards these activities might have to be streamlined for the programme to be scaled-up effectively. However, this poses the risk of diminishing the pilot's strengths in terms of quality of the programme offered. When scaling-up, TBB will have to find a good balance between quantity and quality.

Another factor reducing the cost-effectiveness of the DTMP is the fact that, compared to other programmes implemented by TBB, recruitments through the DTMP have predominantly been 'individual hires', as opposed to cohort hires. This comes at a higher time and resource cost per recruitment, both for employers and for TBB. In comparison, recruitments in the health sector are often done in cohorts, with five to 10 positions open at the same time. Recruitment in cohorts allows for economies of scale and scope, reducing costs for all stakeholders involved.

Overall, the analysis suggests that DTMP in the UK still requires the know-how of TBB and the commitment of the Home Office to operate and grow. As it stands, activities could not function independently of TBB and the Home Office. Trends from other destination countries where TBB operates suggest that the programme may need more years to reach maturity, as more buy-in from employers is sustained.

Recommendations

The identified challenges lead us to formulate a series of actions for the scale-up of DTMP in the UK, which we structure along the five key phases of the programme.

1) Identifying and Fostering the Supply of Talents

- **Remove geographical requirements so more displaced people have access to this pathway** - The pilot's geographical requirements (candidates based in Jordan or Lebanon, or Afghan nationals) appear to be restricting many groups of displaced people from pursuing this pathway. While the restrictions of the DTMP may have been due to TBB's initial country presence, these do not seem necessary now given TBB's increased global presence. Removing these restrictions can expand the programme's reach and would be in line with TBB's equitable access approach. This may prompt more matches if further interest from employers and demand side barriers are overcome.
- **Capacitate and work with more partners for improved outreach** - Given that locality is a salient factor that shapes who can access the TC and who moves, expanding presence in other source countries is needed to reach more individuals. TBB's current strategy to expand geographically relies on partnership building, with partners taking over the important role that TBB offices in Jordan and Lebanon are currently doing. Diversifying partners and building their capacities is needed to ensure geographical expansion does not undermine the quality of TBB's programmes and more displaced people are able to access labour mobility.
- **Strengthen capacity building efforts to equip displaced people with resources and knowledge to build their skills and employability** - TBB and partners need to continue their efforts to build talents' capacity in source countries, including support with tailoring CVs, language support, and soft skills training for performance in job interviews. TBB staff expressed the view that interview preparation is valuable for candidates to better demonstrate their skills. Strengthening this line of work to ensure that all job openings lead to a match can take different forms. For example, TBB can develop a mentorship programme with DTMP alumni volunteers or integrate nudges and reminders on their platform to incentivise registrants to learn new skills. For long-run scale-up, TBB could utilise the wealth of information it gathers through working with employers to forecast skills in demand and develop capacity building programmes specifically to advance these skills for displaced people.

2) Driving the Demand for Displaced Talent

- **Strengthen TBB's organisational capacity to engage more employers** - While TBB is aware that driving the demand for recruitment is one of their main challenges, we note that only two of TBB's employees in the UK were dedicated to employer outreach for the majority of the pilot's duration. Identifying potential employers and pitching the idea is a time-consuming activity which requires more resources by TBB and the involvement of staff with sectoral expertise. As the proof-of-concept of the DTMP shows that the pathway is a viable solution for employers, TBB should now dedicate capacity to advocate with more organisations and in particular larger sized ones larger to recruit greater numbers.
- **Strategise approach to engaging employers by trialling the 'train-to-hire' model** - TBB should work with highly motivated employers to develop a proof-of-concept for the train-to-hire model. This model has the potential to suit large employers that are looking to hire individuals with specific skills in bulk and are willing to invest in skill development.
- **Involve more stakeholders (including the government) to engage employers and build further awareness of this programme** - The Home Office and other UK Departments could support TBB's effort in driving employers' demand for displaced talent by directly engaging employers and spreading awareness of this programme further, for example, through multimedia campaigns addressing misperceptions that recruiting displaced talent is difficult.
- **Incentivise employers to overcome financial barriers** - Although the evidence collected is limited, the evaluation finds that costs are a significant barrier. Addressing these financial barriers by lowering application fees and surcharges for displaced candidates would be an effective way of increasing employers' demand for displaced talent. Recognising that reducing fees and surcharges might not be on the agenda, (part of) the fees and surcharges could be directly reinvested in the programme to indirectly lower costs for employers, for example, by supporting TBB's work or (co-)investing in integration programmes for candidates and their families. For candidates with wages above a certain threshold, TBB could explore whether candidates could co-finance part of the cost (possibly with the help of loans).
- **Generate more data and evidence on employer engagement** - As an area with prominent challenges to the success of the model, further research on engaging employers can help overcome principal barriers in working with the private sector and would support TBB with strategizing engagements. Further research can address gaps in knowledge on the experiences of employers, quantify any direct and indirect benefits they experience, and identify practical measures to undertake to engage more employers – for example, developing templates and guidance documents for employers to revise HR policy to allow for recruitment through the DTMP.

3) Connecting the Demand and Supply

- **Streamline intake interviews to improve the speed and efficiency of the recruitment process** - Carrying out intake interviews is an important but time-consuming task that TBB needs to do to identify suitable candidates for job opportunities, update candidate's data, and assess candidate's interest. This process will have to be streamlined if the programme is to be scaled up. This can mean making the interviews shorter and collecting more information through written form.
- **Develop more flexible recruitment and assessment modalities to better identify talented individuals** - While TBB's approach is entirely merit-based, recruitment currently places emphasis on candidates' past performance rather than potential by focusing on their previous job and education experiences. Candidates with the most barriers to their livelihoods may not be able to signal their potential through past qualifications or job experiences. To reach and support displaced people facing the most barriers to their livelihoods, TBB and employers can adopt more flexible approaches to recruitment and assessment that do not rely entirely on CV and performance at an interview. For example, employers can assess candidates' skills by asking them to solve problems similar to those faced in the workplace or use emerging tools that aim to capture candidates' competency, behavioural traits and technical skills.

4) Moving to the UK

- **Continue the Home Office-TBB partnership to maintain support to displaced people's visas and migration process** - Obtaining the Skilled Worker visas for displaced individuals appears to be working well thanks to the partnership between the Home Office and TBB. This partnership appears to bring high benefits at little costs. For TBB, this partnership offers two main benefits: (1) the single-point of contact at the Home Office allows to solve complex cases relatively smoothly and (2) the free priority processing for visa applications reduces the time to obtain visas from 15 days to five days. The cost to the Home Office appears to be small given the relatively low number of visas processed for TBB. In general, Home Office staff interviewed report they could easily expand the programme on the basis of the applications seen to date.
- **Simplify contractual processes for employers to engage with partners supporting relocation** - As identified through interviews, administrative procedures can sometimes stop employers from setting up subcontracts with stakeholders facilitating candidates' migration. For example, the administrative process to set up partnerships between IOM and employers has proven difficult. In these instances, TBB should explore solutions to streamline partnerships, for example, by setting up a contract between TBB and IOM through which employers could piggyback on.

5) Integrating and Working in the UK

- **Leverage existing support networks and resources to provide additional support for family members** - Talents' integration in the UK is generally quite successful, thanks to the support provided by TBB, partners, and employers. For children, integration through schooling is working well and alumni note the transformative effect growing up in the UK can have on their futures. On the flipside, insights suggest alumni's children may have difficulties accessing university as 'international students' with no access to loans. Similarly, for other adults such as accompanying spouses - integration can be difficult because access to English courses and other activities is limited by their visa type. Further, they have no recourse to public funds: as they accompany a skilled worker, they often cannot access language courses and integration programmes that are typically restricted to refugees. For most of these families, paying the full tuition for university or fees for language courses and other activities on a single income is extremely challenging. This limits the livelihoods and self-reliance of accompanying spouses and their children in the long term. As such, existing support networks and resources offered to displaced populations should be considered as avenues for additional support where needed.

Overall, we posit that the DTMP pilot should be extended. The programme induces a life-changing transformation for displaced people and their families, which is generally perceived as very positive. Amidst bifurcated mobility regimes and a refugee-migrant dichotomy, this programme fills a wide void and offers a much-needed avenue for displaced people to access labour migration. For the Home Office, operating the pilot carries minimal costs. For the UK society, the pilot appears to be successful, with candidates filling skill shortages and contributing to the UK through their work, taxes, and fees. Relocating more displaced people in the future through this pathway will only reinforce this conclusion, especially if further measures are put in place to facilitate the socioeconomic integration of dependents. For a variety of reasons – including the challenging economic and political environment – the number of individuals relocated through the DTMP is lower than initially expected. Yet, several large employers are currently engaged in discussions with TBB to recruit more candidates, with promising advancements throughout the evaluation period. To ensure this demand is met, TBB will have to expand partnerships in other source countries and explore opportunities to advance displaced people's skills in areas of demand. Scaling up the programme will also require adjustments to activities that are most time and resource demanding, including identifying employers, pitching, and carrying out intake interviews.

Afterword

The purpose of this afterword is to reflect four important changes that occurred between the writing of the report in September 2023 and its publication in March 2024. The general conclusions of the report remain the same.

Firstly, we would like to highlight two welcome programmatic developments to the DTMP, both of which featured as recommendations in the evaluation. In November 2023, the UK Home Office and TBB announced that the DTMP has been extended for a further year (UK Home Office, 2023.f). Moreover, the geographical restrictions of the pilot have now been removed. Initially, the pilot announced in July 2021 targeted candidates living in Jordan and Lebanon (of any nationality), and as of January 2022, included Afghan nationals displaced anywhere. Now refugees and displaced people of any nationality or location are eligible to benefit from the pilot provided they satisfy the requirements of a Skilled Worker visa. The extended pilot aims to achieve the previously set objectives of moving 50 - 100 primary candidates through employment opportunities in the UK, and moving up to 200 individuals in total (including family members); candidates and family members can be of any nationality or location.

Secondly, more displaced talents were supported through the DTPM. As of March 2023, a total of 20 primary candidates have relocated through the DTMP along with 19 of their family members. Furthermore, 3 candidates and 6 family members are in the process of relocating. This brings the total of number of individuals supported to move by TBB through the pilot to 48 as of 13 March 2024.

Thirdly, there have also been notable updates on the policy front. In the UK, the Home Secretary announced a series of changes to immigration rules designed to reduce migration levels. This includes an increase in the salary threshold for the Skilled Worker route (UK Home Office, 2024).

Finally, at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that took place in Geneva in December 2023, TBB and partners formally announced a multistakeholder pledge, in which they commit to achieve three critical goals: (1) “Establish skilled immigration pathways for refugees and forcibly displaced individuals in at least 27 countries by 2027”, (2) “Assist over 15,000 displaced individuals in migrating through these labour mobility pathways”, and (3) “Train a minimum of 24 partner organizations to match refugees with job opportunities in countries where they can safely migrate [...]” (Talent Beyond Boundaries, 2023). Also at the forum, various governments re-affirmed their commitment to sustain labour mobility solutions for refugees, including the UK which pledged to continue the provision of work routes for skilled displaced people (GCR, n.d.), and Canada which pledged to make the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot a permanent programme by 2025 (Talent Beyond Boundaries, 2023).

It is beyond the scope of this report to analyse the possible impacts of these four updates on the DTMP. We encourage interested readers to visit the websites of the UK Home Office and TBB for more information on these developments.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Full List of Programme KPIs

Outcomes and Impacts	Planned activities (inputs and outputs)	KPIs and Timescales	Evidence
<p>1. Outreach and Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility of the Displaced Talent pilot amongst employers and UK delivery partners through organising and running information sessions. Lead work to encourage and enable organisations and employers to participate in the pilot, and to replicate TBB's work in the UK beyond the pilot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of information sessions to increase awareness and secure interest from key stakeholders, including dedicated sessions at regulatory body and employer events such as the Refugee Employment Network. Regular meetings with organisations and companies to encourage and support growth in the recruitment of displaced talent. Establish clear systems and processes for attracting, onboarding, and supporting partners to replicate TBB's approach to displaced talent mobility in the UK. Guidance and resources tailored to the UK marketplace to support sponsors with the recruitment, visa sponsorship, and integration process. 	<p>By end of funding period (31 March 2022):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least four sectors having recruited displaced talent. Securing interest and/or commitment of at least 10 employers considering displaced talent in their recruitment practices. Ongoing commitments secured from at least three UK delivery partners to support the recruitment, relocation, and integration of displaced talent into the UK. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies of displaced talent candidates having arrived in the UK via the pilot. Data evidencing growth in interest from employers and delivery partners. Documents outlining systems and processes for building capacity in the sector. Open source guidance and other resources available for potential sponsors.

Appendix 1 – Full List of Programme KPIs continued...

Outcomes and Impacts	Planned activities (inputs and outputs)	KPIs and Timescales	Evidence
<p>2. Project Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build internal TBB capacity to manage the administration of the pilot – acting as a direct liaison between sponsoring organisations, applicants, and the UKVI visa processing team. Establish TBB systems and processes for supporting the recruitment process, including the relocation and integration of candidates and their families. This should be tailored to the UK context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dedicated UK Project Manager in place and a good working relationship established with delivery partners, the Home Office, and other relevant stakeholders. Activities to ensure a sufficient pipeline of displaced talent candidates and to generate suitable employment opportunities in a range of sectors. Support for candidates and sponsors throughout the recruitment, relocation, and integration process. Includes working with the individuals, employers, the Home Office, and other delivery partners to troubleshoot any issues that emerge. Pre-departure information sessions for applicants and their families developed to support their move to the UK. Sessions delivered ahead of arrival to support with their early integration. <p>Support with the early post arrival integration of candidates and their families.</p>	<p>Before pilot launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roles and responsibilities the visa application process agreed between TBB and the Home Office. <p>Before candidate arrival:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-departure information sessions developed. By November 2021: UK Project Manager in place. <p>By end of funding period (31 March 2022):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50 candidates interviewed and at least 30 candidates relocated. Candidates and corresponding sponsors supported throughout the recruitment, relocation, and integration process; with many others in progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents to support the delivery of pre-departure information sessions. Regular contact between Project Manager and the Home Office. Data on the candidates having arrived in the UK, including demographics, skills profiles, family members etc. Data on the sponsors and roles, including both successful and unsuccessful placements. Data on candidates, sponsors, and vacancies in the pipeline. A selection of case studies to provide more detail on the process.

Appendix 1 – Full List of Programme KPIs continued...

Outcomes and Impacts	Planned activities (inputs and outputs)	KPIs and Timescales	Evidence
<p>3. Monitoring and Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans and build capacity to evaluate the pilot for a better understanding of what works and why. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both process and impact evaluation design completed to enable future identification of accessibility barriers and good practice to inform future policy development. Data collection in progress. Advisory committee, including scope of responsibility and meeting schedule, established ahead of project launch to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation throughout the pilot. Lead on engagement with the advisory committee with support from Home Office policy officials and analysts. Process established to review the applicants, employers, roles, and process in an agile way after every 25 placements; includes a plan for coordinating with the Home Office and UK partners to adjust practices if necessary. A written interim report on key data, including emerging findings and recommendations to facilitate scaling. 	<p>Before pilot launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and evaluation plan agreed with Home Office detailing scope, methodology, roles/ responsibilities, milestones and timeframes, and data sharing arrangements (if used). Advisory committee in place and schedule circulated. Process for monitoring and evaluation in place. <p>By end of funding period (31 March 2022):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written interim report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Evaluation plan. Advisory committee details. Monitoring and evaluation process. Written interim evaluation report.
<p>4. Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reporting to summarise progress, challenges and opportunities. Written interim report at end of funding period (31 March 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key deliverables and milestones for tracking agreed with the Home Office. Monthly overview provided to the Home Office summarising progress towards key deliverables, upcoming milestones, outreach/capacity- building, and evaluation activities. Detailed written interim report. 	<p>Before pilot launch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting schedule detailing key deliverables and milestones agreed. <p>Throughout funding period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written monthly overview to summarise progress and ensure ongoing ad hoc communication as required. <p>By end of funding period (31 March 2022):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed written interim report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting schedule. Written monthly overview and interim reports.

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Refugee Studies Centre

Oxford Department of International Development University of Oxford, 3 Mansfield Road
Oxford, OX1 3TB, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1865 281720

Email: rsc@geh.ox.ac.uk

Web: www.rsc.ox.ac.uk

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