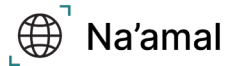


GUIDE ON REDESIGNING THE TECH HIRING PROCESS TO INCLUDE DISPLACED TALENT



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A collaboration by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Refugee Action Hub, Na'amal, TalentLift, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and World Education Services

Acknowledgements

A number of talented tech candidates living in refugee circumstances shared their personal experiences and ideas. The following teams shared their pioneering work and insights on recruiting displaced tech talent worldwide. We thank them for their time, vision, and commitment to growing opportunities for others.

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PURPOSE

This is a guide of ideas to make hiring onto tech teams work better for talented candidates living in displaced circumstances worldwide. It's a resource for teams in Canada and beyond, for decision-makers and anyone who participates in recruitment. The goal is to enable displaced candidates to lift to their potential and enrich the companies and communities where they land.

In this guide, "displaced talent" refers to someone currently living in a place that is not their home, that may not be safe, and where they do not have a secure future. While the ideas shared in this guide are focused on this unique international talent pool, it's likely that many design ideas will position teams to better include local talent from diverse and resettlement backgrounds too.

BACKGROUND ON THIS GUIDE

The tech sector needs talent, and people living and working in tech within refugee populations need livelihood opportunities. This guide of practical ideas aims to help teams design their hiring process to more successfully recruit displaced talent.

The talent gap across the tech industry and other industries recruiting for tech is significant. As a Forbes writer quipped, "the pandemic transformed nearly every organization into a tech company." Canadian companies face a shortage of 200,000 software developers. Nearly 80% of CEOs in the United States are concerned about filling tech roles, and it's projected to get worse.

Meanwhile, there are immensely talented people working or trying to work in tech, who are living in refugee and displaced populations around the world, searching for international jobs. They keenly want a place in the talent pipeline.

Work conditions can be extremely difficult in the countries where they live. Many work for lower pay and longer hours than their non-refugee peers, without job security, and without work rights and other legal protection to rely on. Life at home can be highly stressful because of low incomes and fearing for the safety, health or future prospects of loved ones. Despite all this, people find ways to grow their skills, continue learning,

undertake passion projects, and look for new opportunities. Their accomplishments in these circumstances show remarkable perseverance, ingenuity, creativity, and drive.

Pioneering companies are sourcing displaced tech talent as part of their talent acquisition strategies, in recognition of the human potential and the transformative impact of extending a job opportunity in Canada or beyond to someone who's living displaced. The Tech Talent Welcome Council network of companies across Canada is one example of this growing community.

As more teams explore this underleveraged talent pool, they may find a design opportunity: Recruitment processes can be adjusted to recognize and overcome some of the challenges facing qualified candidates that are unique to their displaced circumstances. For example, candidates may be unfamiliar with interview formats, and can face cultural differences in representing their experience or their interest in the company. Employers can be unfamiliar with how domestic interviewing norms differ from international ones, lack the flexibility to accommodate scheduling and connectivity challenges, and screen for particular skills that are uncommon in other markets such as software testing automation.

This guide presents some of the challenges experienced by teams and candidates during the hiring process, and ideas to overcome them. The ideas range from smaller tweaks to larger redesigns towards a more inclusive hiring process.

The insights and ideas are drawn from a co-design workshop series in September 2021. The workshop convened six tech hiring teams across Canada, candidates who are currently living displaced, and supporting non-profit or training organizations with a goal to explore practical ways to better bridge job and relocation opportunities and the unique circumstances of displaced job seekers.

1. English, Larry, 2021, Forbes, "The Tech Talent War Has No End In Sight. Here's What You Need To Know."

2. Randstad, 2019, "Canada's Tech Industry is Growing Up: Where We're Headed Next."

3. PwC, 2019, "Talent Trends 2019: Upskilling for a Digital World"; CodinGame, 2021, "CodinGame Developer Survey 2021."

BACKGROUND ON DISPLACEMENT

Conflict or persecution has forced millions of people to leave their homes in search of a safe place for them and their families.

Humanitarian crises are complex and there's no single, common profile of someone who's living in refugee or displaced circumstances. Some people are born into their displacement situation, because conflicts in some parts of the world span generations. Others have experienced the shock of a society collapsing around them astoundingly fast, going from a 'normal' life to a rushed and sometimes dangerous journey across an international border only to restart at the bottom of the social ladder.

The majority of people living in displaced circumstances are still living in the countries or regions bordering their former homes. Many make their way into cities where work and other prospects can be better, while others stay in designated, often isolated, camp areas. With some exceptions, countries hosting displaced populations typically grant people temporary stay with heavy restrictions on work and other rights. Host countries may be under-resourced and have high local unemployment without adequate public services, so it can be politically sensitive to extend rights and entitlements to newcomers. A low-income environment without basic rights creates extremely difficult living conditions. Many people are forced to work in the informal economy to make a living, usually at low pay and without job security or legal protection. They might face restricted access to public healthcare, public education for kids, domestic travel, a bank account, and a driver's license. Many face discrimination, corruption, threats, and sometimes violence because of their nationality and their migrant status.

There remain very limited options for people living displaced to transcend these conditions and get somewhere safe where they can have a shot at rebuilding their career and livelihood while planning for their futures. Traditional humanitarian resettlement to countries like Canada or the United States is a vital route for vulnerable families in refugee circumstances but space is so limited that less than 1% of those in need of international protection are resettled in a given year.

Skilled immigration through an international job offer is an emerging opportunity for those who can and want to use their professional skills to relocate. Governments in

Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Europe are expanding or exploring skilled visa pathways for displaced talent in recognition of the gains for companies and individuals. This is an additional, complementary pathway to humanitarian and resettlement options. One that is win-win for companies in need of skills, and for candidates eager to rebuild their careers in a safe new home for them and their families.

Companies offering relocation opportunities to candidates in these conditions are engaging their teams in something extraordinary. They're able to gain in-demand skills and have a meaningful role in transforming the lives of their new colleagues and their families.

Companies offering remote work also make significant impacts on income, security, upskilling, and career advancement, while unlocking opportunities for relocation.



WHY HIRE DISPLACED TECH TALENT?

- Access an underleveraged candidate pool with in-demand tech skills and high potential
- Gain knowledge and experience of different cultures, regions, and socio-economic circumstances that will expand diversity of thought on the team
- Gain creative, agile problem-solvers who have remarkable perseverance and determination
- Engage your team in a transformative change for peers in refugee or displaced circumstances, and in enriching community-building when new hires can relocate alongside their families from displacement



Meet Nasser, Jessy and Blein



Credit: Will O'Hare Photography

Nasser

**Intermediate Full Stack Engineer,
Thinkific**

From: Syria

Living in: Turkey

Relocating to: Canada

Skills summary: Problem-solving, mentoring, focus on Ruby on Rails, ReactJs, graphql

What do you enjoy about your work? I love to come every day and meet with the awesome people I work with. Although we are in different time zones, we were able to meet daily, build friendships, work and learn from each other.

How fast did you learn Turkish? I started learning Turkish two years before I moved here, but it was not as fast as when I came here and practiced it a lot with local people. Practicing Turkish in my daily life and English at work helps get my language to the next level. The harmony in the Turkish language is amazing, the structure of the sentence sounds like a poem, and this is a big reason why I like Turkish songs, also it has 6000 words in common with Arabic (my native).



Jessy

KOLIBRI Assistant Project Coordinator

From: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Living in: Kenya

Skills summary: Educational technology integration specialist, frontend developer, data management with Python, ICT bootcamp design (3D modeling, blog design, web design), human-centered design, communication, interpersonal/intercultural skills

What do you enjoy about your work? I enjoy putting in place practical tech solutions that support education in an emergency setup to assist the many people who have been deprived of quality education. I enjoy when I get challenged to implement a solution and collaborate with various people to make that solution live and real.

What do you see as the promise of tech?

Tech is among the great innovations humankind has ever accomplished, and seeing it forged its incredible foundation in all fields: education, health, economy, security, to name a few. Technology is the future of almost everything to come and humanity will be able to survive great threats if used wisely. That's why I support the integration of technology in education since education is the foundation of societies and tech needs to be embraced at a young age and all levels for no one to be left out in the years to come.



Blein

**Network Admin, IT Support Technician,
and Python Developer**

From: Eritrea

Living in: Ethiopia

Skills summary: Experienced in Python and R programming, technical support Tier Lv2 & Lv3, network switching & routing, network configuration (TCP/IP)

What do you most enjoy about your work?

Currently I am freelancing as a web content manager, it is a new role that I have never explored before. I love that I get to learn and work at the same time in the new era of remote working.

How did you approach and overcome the language barrier (Amharic language)?

The best way to learn any language is to immerse yourself with the local culture, to befriend locals, and to avoid using the international language "English" to communicate or express your thoughts, rather it's best first to develop your listening and understanding skills of the foreign language and from there you can build up your vocabulary. After that, you can work on your speaking skills.

THE HIRING PROCESS IN TECH

There is no single hiring process across tech, but there are some common elements used to identify the mix of technical and other skills needed by the team. The steps in a tech hiring process might include:

Stage: Equity, diversity and inclusion goals

Provide direction to hiring teams on diversity dimensions that are a priority for the team. May include methods for reaching these goals.

Stage: Job posting

Write a description of the responsibilities for the role and summary of qualifications required that will attract a diverse slate of candidates.

Stage: Resume screen

Make a preliminary assessment of whether skills and experience align with the team's talent needs.

Stage: Phone screen

Make a preliminary assessment or verification of the skills and other information outlined in a resume, and confirm interest in the position. Can be used to assess verbal communication skills.

Stage: Technical test

Assess technical and problem-solving skills. Depending on the test style, may also assess behavioural or soft skills such as teamwork and communication.

Stage: In-depth interview

Assess behavioural or soft skills, further assess technical skills, and possibly get acquainted with a manager or broader members of a team.



A QUESTION OF PHILOSOPHY

Teams that aim to hire displaced talent may face a tough question: Do we assess displaced candidates based on the same criteria used for local candidates, or do we adapt?

The answer to that question will influence which ideas will work for each team.

Some teams may adhere closely to the same criteria for all candidates, local and international, displaced or not. This may be the preference for smaller teams hiring for highly specialized roles.

Some teams may be able to adapt and develop alternative criteria, which could account for differences in culture and environment that shape the skills, methodologies, and norms a displaced candidate is likely to know. Teams that take this approach may focus on assessing aptitude and potential instead of current knowledge and experience.

The philosophy behind an adapted approach is that a stronger team can be built by accounting for the differences in candidate starting places — and by placing less emphasis on where someone is at, and more emphasis on where they can go. This is a form of equity.

There's no right approach across all teams, but an adapted approach is likely to result in more displaced candidates selected for interviews and for jobs. We recommend thinking afresh and redesigning the hiring process if a team has the flexibility to do it.

DESIGN IDEAS BY HIRING STAGE

Cross-cutting

Prepare recruiters and interviewers

Provide context on displacement backgrounds for the team members involved in recruitment and interviewing where possible. If candidates or talent partners disclose displacement backgrounds, everyone involved should be briefed on potential displacement-related differences that can appear during recruitment. This enables teams to be aware, sensitive, and flexible if needed to help candidates put their best foot forward. If resume reviewers or interviewers are not properly briefed, then differences as immovable as interrupted education or work history, or internet connectivity issues, that have nothing to do with talent and potential, may become a setback for candidates. This guide is one great source of background material for teams. Other options are asking talent partners to provide a one-pager or a lunch 'n' learn style learning event.

Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates

Following a resume review or an interview, provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates so they know how they can keep improving. Candidates may not have many opportunities to hear feedback from the workplaces they hope to join because of fewer personal ties internationally, and may not be accustomed to asking proactively for feedback. Taking a few minutes to provide brief, constructive feedback can make a big impact for someone who's keen to grow. A feedback step could be built into recruitment at each stage, tasked to the team member doing review or interviews. It could also be informative to collect optional feedback from candidates on their recruitment experience.

Measure impact

Develop internal tracking and reporting for the number of displaced candidates who advance to each hiring stage. Survey candidates to learn from their experiences and ideas on what worked well and not so well for them during the process. These steps can be helped by including optional self-disclosure or by tracking referrals by dedicated talent partners like TalentLift and Na'amal.

Stage: Equity, diversity and inclusion goals

Set targets

If your team already has equity, diversity and inclusion goals with concrete targets around diversity dimensions, include displaced talent alongside other priorities. Set a goal. Candidates who are living in refugee circumstances come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and are typically living with severe economic and social disadvantages. These differences limit the job opportunities that are available to them locally and internationally, despite their skills, aptitude and potential. Displaced candidates may be overlooked because of these differences unless there's a deliberate strategy to include them in recruitment efforts and ultimately on teams. Setting targets that are approved by leadership can give the direction and flexibility that hiring teams need to be creative and inclusive in recruitment. And it's true: What gets measured gets done.

Find talent partners

Partner with talent agencies that are dedicated to supporting companies to connect with displaced talent. Organizations like TalentLift (for relocation) and Na'amal (for remote work) offer expertise and access to diverse talent pools. Ideal partners are familiar with displacement circumstances and can be a supportive intermediary between the hiring team and candidates, helping to contextualize, explain or problem-solve. They can also support administrative next steps whether it's navigating the visa process or remote work logistics. There are usually workarounds for challenges, for example, the World Education Services Gateway Program assesses credentials of displaced candidates with limited proof of academic achievements to produce an evaluation report for employers or other institutions. Working with these partners can form part of an equity-based talent sourcing strategy.

Raise team awareness

Offer learning and training opportunities internally to raise awareness across the team about displacement circumstances and the company's response. It can be helpful and energizing for the team to be aware of any company commitments or initiatives to recruit displaced talent. And it can be a professional growth opportunity to learn about displacement circumstances, including the policy and systems challenges involved, around the world. Working with talent partners to deliver these learning sessions may be possible.

Stage: Job posting

Use inclusive language

Clarify “must-haves” from the “nice-to-haves” to ensure those who may not have had the same access to opportunities as others are not excluded. Consider removing years of experience, non-essential educational requirements, and any other “nice-to-haves”, particularly those that can be learned. Omit acronyms and jargon and replace them with simpler language.

Raise candidate awareness

Specify on job postings that the company is keen to include displaced talent, i.e. “candidates living in refugee circumstances are encouraged to apply.” A direct invitation can make a difference to candidates who have encountered insurmountable barriers in international recruitment. It may truly encourage them to apply.

Stage: Resume screen

Invite optional disclosure of displacement circumstances

At the point of application, invite optional disclosure of displacement circumstances. You can also invite requests for flexibility or accommodation at any point during the recruitment process. It may be important to communicate why this matters, so candidates know it’s about extending an equitable hiring process that responds to and invites differences — it’s not about lowering the bar. Consider asking about whether someone is in “refugee circumstances” or “displacement circumstances” instead of asking people to identify as a “refugee.” It’s a subtle but important distinction so candidates know their circumstances are part of the picture but don’t define them. This idea should be used carefully and within teams more well-versed in equitable hiring.

Rewrite screening rules

The screening rules that work locally may not fairly assess displaced candidates. There are a number of traditionally held candidate ‘weaknesses’ that don’t add up in a displacement context. For example, short and multiple work periods are typically considered a bad thing: Why can’t this person hold a job? But displaced candidates have valid reasons for an atypical work history as they are often the most precariously

employed people in a local economy. Many are forced to work under the table without contracts or decent pay. They can be fired on a whim. Withheld pay by employers is common in some areas where economic downturns combine with weak work rights, and people usually don’t have any recourse but to find a new job.

Some screening rules to consider:

- Consider candidates with non-traditional work experience like shorter jobs, concurrent jobs, and gaps between jobs. Consider the upside of this experience like agility and perseverance.
- Consider candidates with work experience beyond similar positions. While positions in another area sometimes signals a lack of alignment in interests, candidates may not have had opportunities available in areas of interest. In some cases, they may have taken non-tech roles if no tech roles were available to them.
- Consider candidates with lower English language proficiency. Recognize the other languages they know, how quickly they might have learned both English and a new local language in the country where they’re living, and their potential to learn and gain further fluency through immersion at your company.
- Consider candidates with incomplete or interrupted education. Consider the value on learning and upskilling held by candidates who have lost their education due to conflict. Some may have nontraditional education too like online learning, certifications, and degrees from unfamiliar universities and colleges (which can be assessed for equivalence by World Education Services), which demonstrate this drive to learn.
- Focus on content rather than style of the resume. What’s included on a resume and the way it’s communicated varies widely across cultures and regions.

Stage: Phone screen

No surprises

Take a no-surprises approach with the idea of sharing as much as possible about the interview process, including specific questions and the measures candidates

are assessed against. Interviewing in tech in a certain county or region can be a niche skill set honed by exposure, whether as interviewee or interviewer. There's an insider advantage that is more pronounced if the process is obscure. Obscurity combined with high pressure also doesn't replicate many real workplace conditions so it's not exactly testing what the team really needs. A no-surprises approach also acknowledges the candidate's unique circumstances and helps to alleviate the enormous pressure they may be facing. Sharing what to expect can be done before the first phone screen interview (or even at the time of application).

Offer language support

For those who learned English as an additional language, it may be helpful to have the option of verbal and written communication. Use video conferencing tools that have a closed captioning or subtitle feature and ask the candidate if they would prefer you to turn it on.

Stage: Technical test

Offer prep time with recruiters

Build in time for recruiters to meet one-on-one with displaced candidates at the start of a technical recruitment process. A recruiter could be tasked with preparing candidates for the interview with specific guidance, i.e. 'Set aside 3-4 hours to prepare in these ways for these topics.' This little bit of notice to practice preferred programming languages and to understand what will be asked could have a disproportionately positive effect on interview performance.

Test problem-solving, not cultural context

Remove specific experiential questions or measures that wouldn't be known to someone outside the domestic or local talent pool. Current examples within tech interviews are test automation and algorithms, which have a high cultural value in North America, especially in larger companies. Shift to testing problem-solving and other aptitudes. Try to give candidates a test that comes close to the kind of problem-solving they would do on the job but doesn't require a narrow cultural or company context. Teasing out cultural and experiential assumptions can help drill down to the core skills and aptitude needed most.

Offer take-home tests

Enable candidates to work on a reasonably scoped project at home. Take-home tests should be sensitive to time expectations (it's a good idea to specify the number of hours expected). They should also be granted a generous timeline: displaced candidates can face enormous pressures on their time from long work hours, several jobs, family obligations, power outages, and other stressors, and likely won't have the same capacity as other candidates to complete assignments in a short time frame. One company that trialled take-home tests scheduled two meetings, the first for candidates to ask whatever they wanted to know to solve the project, and the second to talk through what they had done. A concrete personal project removes some of the superficiality of interviews and problem-solving under live assessment and high pressure, and can better set up candidates to showcase their strengths and how they perform in ways that more closely resemble the day-to-day work of the position.

Offer choice of programming language

Enable candidates to write tests in their programming language of choice and familiarity. This can help to better test for aptitude and potential instead of experience and specialization. This approach can be used in any test type whether synchronous or take-home.

Offer to choose your own adventure

Give options for the format of testing to enable candidates to select the interview process that will let them shine. The options could be the company's traditional technical test, a take-home test, or a self-led project within defined parameters. It's especially important to offer candidates a choice of synchronous versus asynchronous challenges, as live testing is an unfamiliar experience in many parts of the world and connectivity issues are common. With this approach, it would be important to set clear, comparable evaluation criteria.

Stage: In-depth interview

Offer to interview in a native (spoken) language

If it's possible on your team, offer in-depth interviews in a candidate's native language through multilingual team members. Candidates may meet the language level you need in the role, but their level may be below what's needed to express oneself really

well in a far-reaching and more nuanced conversation that is also high-pressure. Offering interviews in a native language will help ease stress and let candidates focus on substance instead of translation and syntax. Communication styles also differ dramatically across cultures and languages, but can change and adapt quickly once someone's immersed in a new team or community. Multilingual interviews won't solve all communication differences but are a great step towards balance.

Offer to include a trusted partner in the interview

If a candidate has been referred by a talent agency or other champion, consider offering candidates the option of inviting someone trusted to join the interview. Communication styles and the stress of a live or panel interview can obscure a candidate's aptitude and potential. A trusted partner could participate as an observer and provide feedback afterwards, to both parties, or jump in if/where necessary. This participation might break the ice, put everyone more at ease, and help to translate or surface certain qualities known about the candidate. This option may work well in panel interviews where there's already a group dynamic versus one-on-one interviews.

Be explicit about culture values

A lot of workplaces value specific work and communication styles. Interviewers can be explicit about these values and intentionally invite candidates into them during (or before) the interview. For example, if challenging the status quo is a value to your company, rather than watching to see if the candidate does so (which might not be common in their culture), the interviewer could share an invitation or encouragement to challenge the company's processes or approach. Other examples are inviting active questions and comments during the conversation, and inviting humility if someone doesn't know an answer or needs help solving a problem.

BIG DESIGN IDEAS

If you could dismantle your team's hiring process and create a new way to assess displaced candidates, what would you build? Where is the field of displaced talent hiring going? These blue-sky ideas are ideal for hiring teams that have the space and flexibility to design, test and iterate.

Double the time spent with candidates

Encourage doubling the amount of time committed by the hiring team to each recruitment stage with candidates in displacement. This approach can help to account for differences in communication style, reduce the stressful and high-pressure nature of time-bound interviews, and in general provide time for interviewer and interviewee to have an exchange on what the team needs and what the candidate offers.

Create a recruitment lead for displaced talent

Identify (or hire) a team member with knowledge and passion for supporting candidates in displacement to lead and be accountable for displaced talent recruitment. This idea borrows from one company's experience having a team member based in Turkey, which hosts a large refugee population, who was working on tech training initiatives with displaced candidates. This team member was able to get to know the talent, refer a candidate to the team and facilitate an adapted recruitment process.

Create a candidate success team

Dedicate the time and energy of a special team within the company responsible for maximizing success of displaced candidates in recruitment. They would be a team of facilitators and champions who spend time with candidates sharing upskilling and preparation advice. They could also be responsible for preparing interviewers by sharing insights on refugee circumstances that can impact the recruitment experience. A dedicated team — with talent on different levels working, debriefing, and iterating to get people hired — can unlock creativity and develop wisdom on equity-based hiring from within this talent pool.

Pilot a separate, adapted hiring process

Step outside the current process and create a new one. Integrate the ideas in this guide that work for your team. One company used this approach: the team identified

early that the standard recruitment process wouldn't give them the flexibility to test new ideas to set candidates up for success. They designed and piloted a unique hiring stream with flexibilities to account for displacement circumstances, for example, flexibility on English language and a dedicated recruitment team briefed on the pilot goals and unique context.

Offer apprenticeships

This idea is about replicating what works in internships or co-op placements but targeting a different candidate profile rather than students. This idea may be for teams meeting candidates who don't currently match their usual criteria, likely due to a lack of similar specializations, but who demonstrate the right aptitude to grow. Offering apprenticeships respects and leverages both apprentices and their teams. Candidates for these (paid) apprenticeships can be selected for high potential with an expectation to progress into the full role. Education providers like MIT ReACT can offer parallel learning and advising during internship and apprenticeship periods, enabling further support to candidates and companies.

Offer a playbook and resources to get trained and hired

Develop a 'how to get hired' guide and make it public. This can help bridge the discrepancy between local candidates who can be highly specialized in what the team needs, i.e. deep into React or Java, and displaced candidates who don't have the same opportunities to specialize and may be more generalist. An extension of this idea, especially for companies hiring for highly specialized skills, is to have an active role in preparing candidates for the depth they need. This could include partnering with education providers serving displaced talent, grants or in-kind methods of skills training like workshops and tutorials.

Encourage peer-to-peer mentoring

Encourage team members to engage in longer-term mentoring with displaced candidates. This approach could build on existing internal mentoring set-ups and initiatives supporting community engagement and volunteerism. Advantages of this targeted mentoring are helping to build a direct talent pipeline for the company, building sensitivity and awareness within the team, as well as social capital and guidance for candidates towards their career goals.



INSIGHTS FROM CANDIDATES

Time as an available resource, or a scarce one

A candidate explained that one resource he does have is time. He explained that having more time to demonstrate his skills, for example on a take-home test, or even dive into learning for a particular role or company is possible for him. The availability of time for some candidates should be balanced with understanding that time can be a scarce resource for others, like those with long work hours or family caregiving roles. A 'choose your own adventure' style of interviewing may help assess regardless of the time availability or pressures candidates are facing.

Three ways to describe the hiring process? "Exhausting, scrutinizing, not highly optimized."

This summary is from a candidate who shared his experience with indirect and direct forms of bias and discrimination during recruitment. In one experience, a company decided not to proceed after learning about his refugee circumstances because they assumed there would be administrative hurdles involved in hiring him. It's daunting to repeatedly face these barriers, he said, despite having competitive skills.

Diverse communication styles

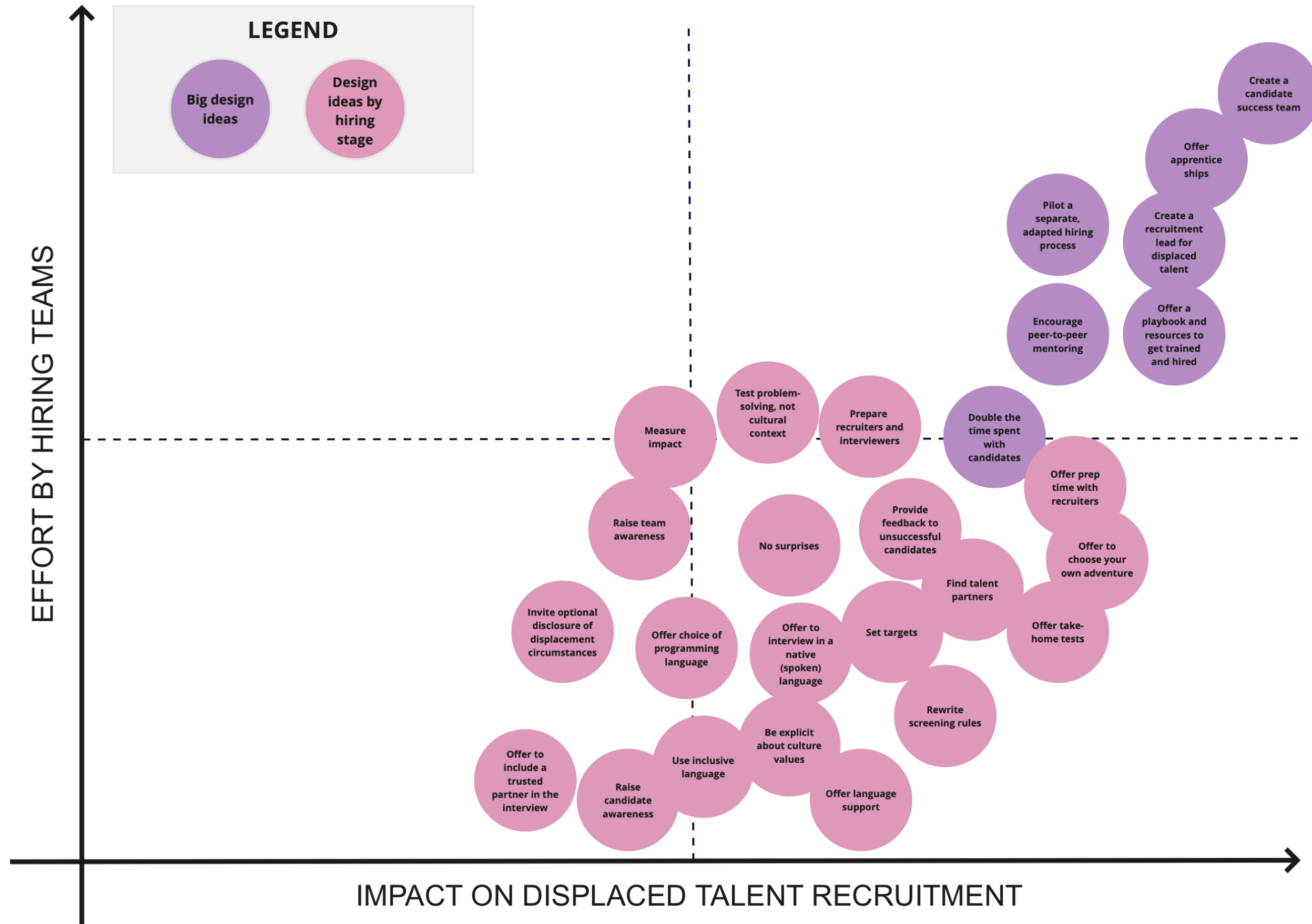
A candidate shared that culturally divergent communication styles can be disconcerting during an interview. She is used to more expressive and sometimes indirect ways of explaining herself and struggled to give direct and brief answers. She thinks she's a good communicator but her skills didn't come across because of cultural differences in communication style. Another candidate heard she wasn't moving forward in an interview because of weak communication even though she was a strong technical fit, but she didn't receive any other details on what this weakness meant or how she could improve.

Affiliation matters

A candidate shared his experience that affiliation or personal references have a big impact on job prospects, but these connections are difficult to come by for someone who's outside the country and not as networked because of their more limited opportunities. A referral from a trusted partner like TalentLift or Na'amal can help here. A dedicated recruitment lead for displaced talent on the company team, who can curate relationships with prospective applicants, can also overcome networking differences.



INDEX OF DESIGN IDEAS BY EFFORT AND IMPACT



TALENT SOURCING RESOURCES

Hiring for relocation

[TalentLift](#) is a non-profit talent agency supporting Canadian employers to recruit and relocate talent from within refugee populations worldwide. TalentLift candidates are living in displacement in the Middle East, Latin America, East and North Africa, and beyond. TalentLift's global talent sourcing partners include [HIAS](#) and [Talent Beyond Boundaries](#).

Hiring for remote work

[Na'amal](#) is a social enterprise supporting placement, education and training for displaced candidates in collaboration with educational institutions like the [MIT Refugee Action Hub](#) and service providers like [Remote](#).

Joining communities of practice

The [Tech Talent Welcome Council](#) is a peer group of hiring teams across Canada committed to offering life-changing relocations for global colleagues in tech who have lost their homes and livelihoods due to conflict and disaster.

The [Tent Partnership for Refugees](#) supports a global coalition of over 200 major companies committed to including refugees around the world.

Learning more

[World Education Services](#) is a non-profit social enterprise supporting employers across North America to recruit and retain newcomers. WES offers resources for employers on screening international academic credentials and building inclusive workplaces, among others. Resources for candidates include the [WES Gateway Program](#).

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Thank you for exploring
this talent pool.