



Upwardly Global

Relaunching Careers Through a Digital Service Model



iQ | GOOD PRACTICE to the point

Target Group:

Local, national, and international policy makers, project coordinators

Summary:

Upwardly Global (UpGlo) offers soft skills training and advises on licensing and credentials to help immigrants and refugees re-establish careers in the welcoming country

Organiser:

Aillie Levinsky, VP of Products & Partnerships / Paige Korbakes, Central Region Programme Director



USA

Population in the U.S. in 2017:
325 million

Immigrant population
13.5% of overall population

1.9 million foreign trained
immigrants and refugees are
unemployed or underemployed.

Starting position/challenge

Often with relevant skills and education from their home countries, millions of immigrants and refugees are unemployed or underemployed in subsistence level jobs, despite being in their prime working age. This results in costly brain-waste for the US economy, adding up to \$39.4 billion/32,5 billion Euros in forgone wages and \$10.2 billion/8,2 billion Euros in unrealised tax payments annually. Cultural norms and nuances of the welcoming economy often become permanent barriers to career entry, including lack of a professional network, complexity of licensing and credentialing, limited resources available to develop professional level English, and unfamiliarity with U.S.-style networking and interviewing.

Implementation of the Model

Upwardly Global (UpGlo) was founded by a programme director in the U.S. refugee resettlement system who saw no system in place to support with long-term economic integration. Upwardly Global grew from a local to a national organisation that since 2013 has digitised many aspects of its service delivery to allow for remote services across the entire United States.

UpGlo's services include a hybrid model of in-person and virtual resources. It includes 1:1 career coaching, where a coach is designated to work with a specific client for the duration of their job search journey. Corporate volunteer events with UpGlo partners build skills through face-to-face mock interviews and speed networking sessions and facilitate direct interaction between refugee job seekers and UpGlo's employer partners. Clients also have access to acculturation training modules and virtual English language education through a partnership with the largest provider of online English education in the world. Through this partnership, best-in-class ESL software expands access to professional level English education that fills existing gaps in the market. Additionally, Upwardly Global's reskilling program provides information and ad-



vice to connect newcomers with technical training (aligned with job opportunities). UpGlo's focus is not just on supply but also on labour market demand. As such, UpGlo educates and engages a national employer network of 300+ businesses and organisations about this uniquely qualified, but untapped talent pool of refugees. UpGlo helps these employers to implement globally inclusive hiring environments because, with millions of refugees worldwide, this is a critical component of any smart talent development strategy.

Summary

Upwardly Global successfully injects digital innovation and close cooperation with the private sector into the integration mix. It is not only a cost-efficient programme, but also a highly efficient one. Over the past 17 years, with a limited budget, UpGlo has served over 10,000 job seekers from 105 countries, placed over 5,000 immigrants and refugees in professional jobs, partnered with over 300 employers, and advised national workforce and immigration policy. About 55-60% of the programme participants find jobs in STEM and health-care, helping to fill critical skills gaps in the U.S. economy.

A Digital Path of Hope

Taoufik and Robin Boggs, US Corporate Citizenship Lead at Accenture

Upwardly Global has managed to partner both with immigrants/refugees and private sector organisations and bring both groups together for a mutually beneficial professional connection. How do both stakeholder groups evaluate Upwardly Global's work? Robin Boggs, US Corporate Citizenship Lead from the company Accenture, is well-placed to do so. Her company has not only hired skilled professionals with a refugee background (20 so far) it also actively supported Upwardly Global building its online job training platform. Providing strategy consulting, as well as "encouraging our people to volunteer," says Boggs. Upwardly Global's unique usage of "digital technology to scale job search skilling and employment services for immigrants and refugees" is also highlighted by Boggs as one of the major innovative

traits of the organisation. Taoufik (editor's note: full name and function are not disclosed on request of the person concerned) was one of those supported by Upwardly Global to



successfully restart his career at Accenture. He particularly emphasises the importance of the "free access to Upwardly Global's online portal" and for providing him "with different tools to improve my resume, interview skills, phone coaching sessions." Taoufik lauds the organisation for starting to work with him in such as speedy fashion. "Since day one after I contacted Upwardly Global, they started coaching me on how to progress effectively in my job search in the U.S." With hindsight, Upwardly Global's support meant a lot. "As a new immigrant to the U.S, UpGlo showed me how to enhance my skills, and helped me be more efficient in my job search and career expectations in the US jobs market." He adds: "It showed me the 'path of hope' and to never give up in my job search in America."

Three questions for Allie Levinsky, VP of Product & Partnerships at Upwardly Global

Enabling Newcomers to Work on the Adequate Job Level



What is the innovative part of your format?

Upwardly Global is innovative because we challenge an old narrative about refugees: that newcomers must sacrifice so that the next generation can reach their full potential. UpGlo sees these newcomers as opportunities, not as burdens. Our programme model has led to 5,000 job placements that prove, with the right system of support, refugees can be rapidly integrated into profes-

sional life to the benefit of their families, their communities, and to the local economy. Our programme is a simple but elegant solution that has filled a long-standing existing gap. What is also innovative about us is that we leverage the best of technology to scale access and can get the most out of the human component

of our work by building soft skills and returning confidence and hope – critical success factors in the employment process.

Is it possible to introduce the format in other countries?

Yes. We partner with myriads of U.S.-based organisations and government entities including refugee resettlement agencies, city and state economic development initiatives and state workforce systems to deliver robust online training and resources for vulnerable newcomers with great potential. We have honed these resources over the last 17 years to respond to immigrant and refugee needs. With modest investment in market-specific content, the model is completely replicable outside of the U.S. and the digital solution presents an opportunity to transform the service landscape to address needs at scale.

What can the format achieve in the long term?

By creating a reliable system of embedded, institutionalised support for career navigation, we can create a future where regardless of where they arrive, all immigrants and refugees have the opportunity to achieve economic prosperity. With over 60 million displaced people worldwide, this vision represents enormous economic potential.

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Network IQ

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