



TENT  
—  
UK

# Tent UK Working Group

## Addressing Language Barriers

April 2024



## Recap: UK Coalition

Our coalition will:

- ✓ Provide tailored guidance to UK companies who want to hire refugees
- ✓ Share best practice and foster peer-to-peer learning among members
- ✓ Develop coordinated strategies to overcome structural challenges
- ✓ Establish constructive engagement with the UK government
- ✓ Provide communications guidance and amplify company efforts



# 70 companies committed to connecting refugees to work in the UK



## Update: January to March 2024

### Public launch of Tent UK

- ▲ Event with speakers from Pret, Hyatt, Adecco, ISS, Marriott
- ▲ Research by Ipsos on British attitudes to refugees and work
- ▲ London Stock Exchange market opening ceremony
- ▲ [Bloomberg TV](#) and ['In The City'](#) podcast, [CNBC Squawk Box Europe](#), regional and trade press

### Conduit Solutions Lab: Refugee Summit

- ▲ Tent UK panel on refugee hiring with speakers from Philips, Menzies Aviation, USPUK and Renaisi



## Commission on the Integration of Refugees: a comprehensive review of the UK refugee and asylum system

Supporting asylum seekers and refugees into work would create a net economic benefit of at least **£1.2bn in five years**.

Its survey of 700+ refugees and asylum seekers found:

- ▲ 33% said learning English was the biggest barrier to employment
- ▲ 22% had been unable to access English classes due to waiting lists
- ▲ 13% waited for more than a year to access an English class



Commission on the  
Integration of  
Refugees

# From Arrival to Integration:

Building Communities for  
Refugees and for Britain

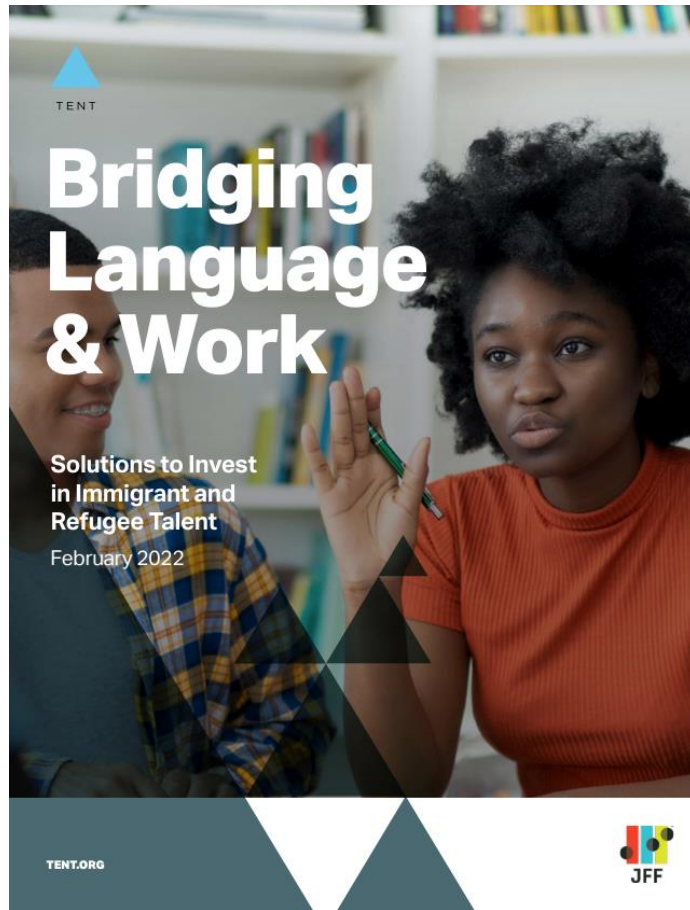
MARCH 2024





# ADDRESSING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

# Tent and JFF launched *Bridging Language and Work: Solutions to Invest in Immigrant and Refugee Talent*



*Bridging Language and Work: Solutions to Invest in Immigrant and Refugee Talent* is a guidebook for businesses with actionable advice on hiring and investing in workers who are local language learners.



Link available on Tent's Members' Hub:

[https://www.tent.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Tent\\_BridgingLanguageWork\\_2.7.22.pdf](https://www.tent.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Tent_BridgingLanguageWork_2.7.22.pdf)

United Kingdom>Training Materials (Hiring)>Addressing Barriers: Language

## By the end of this presentation, you will:

- ▲ Know why companies can **benefit** from hiring local language learners
- ▲ Find out what “**bridge solutions**” companies can put in place to support local language learners in the workforce
- ▲ Find out about existing **resources** that companies can tap into to support local language learners
- ▲ Learn how to **implement** best practices to hire and support workers that are also local language learners





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**WHO IS A LOCAL  
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LEARNER?**

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**WHY HIRE LOCAL  
LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS?**

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**3**

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**HOW TO INVEST IN  
LOCAL LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS**

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## Who is a local language learner?



In Europe, the [Common European Framework of Reference \(CEFR\)](#) indicates the various levels of language proficiency of users of a language.

We define local **language learners** as basic and independent users (levels A1, A2, B1).

Many refugees will be considered **local language learners** as they start accessing the labour market.

C2	<b>Proficient User</b>
C1	
B2	<b>Independent User</b>
B1	
A2	<b>Basic User</b>
A1	

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## Why should companies consider hiring local language learners?

- ✓ Gain competitive advantage by expanding talent pipelines to fill open roles.
- ✓ Increase language diversity within their workforces.
- ✓ Expand the markets they can serve.
- ✓ Create greater representation of customers and communities.
- ✓ Develop a more inclusive company culture.

## Challenges to hiring local language learners can be mitigated

Though companies stand to gain from hiring local language learners, some businesses hesitate to do so due to challenges like:

- Safety concerns
- Fewer career pathways
- Costs associated with lower language ability
- Difficulty validating skills and credentials

In the following slides, we will cover tactics companies can put in place to address these challenges across every stage of the talent management cycle.

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## Companies can adopt “bridge solutions” to support local language learners

**Bridge solutions** are ways that companies can get local language learners into jobs faster while they work toward greater language proficiency.

Bridge solutions should be implemented alongside language training. This means local language learners can improve their local language proficiency while allowing companies to develop their talent and create advancement opportunities for their workers.

- See p. 25 of the [guide](#) for best practices on language training programmes.



## Implementing bridge solutions across the talent management cycle

Companies can embed bridge solutions across business units (e.g. HR, operations, Corporate Citizenship, etc.) to create a stronger sense of engagement and accountability within the company.

Bridge solutions can be organised into 4 categories aligned with corporate talent strategy:



**Talent Acquisition**



**Total Rewards**



**Talent Development**



**Corporate Culture**



## Bridge solutions: Talent Acquisition



### 1

#### Diversify talent pipelines through partnerships

- Develop partnerships with organisations focused on securing employment for refugees (local partnerships) that help candidates apply for jobs, translate documents and prepare for interviews.

### 2

#### Make local language learners community ambassadors

- Encourage local language learners to become community ambassadors. By creating a financial incentive for these ambassadors to refer others from their community to open roles, companies can source diverse talent for the company. These referrals can also happen informally through word of mouth.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Acquisition



### 3

#### Showcase the company in creative ways

- Use visuals or videos as alternatives to written job descriptions to show local language learners what the company does, where they will work, and who their colleagues will be.
- Provide on-site workplace tours during the recruiting and hiring process, to allow candidates to become familiar with their potential work environment and the scope of responsibilities.

### 4

#### Evaluate and hire based on trial performance

- Use trial periods ranging from one week to 90 days to assess the candidate's suitability for the job.
- Local language learners should be compensated for their work during the trial period and supported with training and onboarding to maximise their ability to succeed.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Acquisition



5

### Provide important documents in multiple languages

- Translate essential documents, such as job applications, company policies, and other HR information into the most common languages in their communities.
- Try not to rely exclusively on translation services to support local language learners.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Acquisition



### Case study:

### *IKEA, Switzerland*

- IKEA's Skills for Employment refugee integration initiative aims to help refugees improve their employability and language skills\*.
- IKEA Switzerland utilises a **five-day trial period in lieu of formal interviews, reducing reliance on language** and providing a greater sense of the job to refugees, while assessing candidates based on their ability to perform job tasks.
- The candidate and line manager have regular meetings during the trial period to discuss the onboarding process and where the candidate can grow as well as clarify any miscommunications.
- After the trial period, line managers decide if the candidate should be hired and into which team.

\* Initial goal of 2,500 refugees by 2022 has been increase to an additional 3,000 refugees by end of 2027.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Development

**1**

### Provide mentorship through bilingual peers

- Pair local language learners with bilingual peers for “shoulder-to-shoulder” training to teach them the specific tasks associated with their shared role.
- Local language learners can turn to these mentors for support during the training and onboarding phase.

**2**

### Minimise the use of written materials

- Turn written training materials into visual and video-based training materials to illustrate job tasks.
- This solution is most effective for roles with repeated tasks (e.g., a food processing company that uses pictures in its training materials to break down process tasks).
- Use image-based signage around the work site to indicate e.g., exits, breakrooms, and bathrooms, which can reduce risk of accidents due to language barriers.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Development



### 3

#### Treat multilingualism as an asset, not a hindrance

- Prioritise advancing local language learners as they improve their technical and local language skills. They should be promoted based on mastery of skills and competencies, even if they are still learning the language.
- By offering the right support and training, companies can promote learners into leadership roles to manage and develop other local language learners who can benefit from shared experiences.

## Bridge solutions: Talent Development



### Case study: McDonalds, *Europe*

- To ensure consistent training across its workforce, McDonald's provides **flexible training through an online training platform** that employees can access at all times through tablets at the restaurants.
- Local language learners who want to learn a specific job task, such as how to make french fries or manage the drive-through, can access videos that show the task and see instructions in the most commonly spoken languages.
- The platform allows franchises to train a workforce that is representative of their local community and creates opportunities for employees to build or practice skills, regardless of their local language proficiency.

## Bridge solutions: Total Rewards



### 1

#### Make language learning accessible to everyone through technology

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- Provide access to common language learning apps (e.g, Duolingo) as a benefit for all workers, to increase workplace language learning.
- Work with app developers to create customised modules and vocabulary specific to the company and role.

### 2

#### Facilitate social connections

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- Create a buddy programme that pairs local language learners with colleagues who are fluent in the local language to help learners practice the local language at work.
- These programmes offer an opportunity for other workers to volunteer, engage with their colleagues, and build stronger social connections.



## Bridge solutions: Total Rewards



### 3

#### Promote adaptable, flexible scheduling

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- Promote flexible scheduling to accommodate the needs of refugees who may have more appointments than other workers as they participate in public or community integration programmes.
- Some companies use apps with translation capabilities that make it easier for workers to schedule or change their shifts.

## Bridge solutions: Total Rewards

**INDITEX**

**Case study:**  
*Inditex, Spain*

- Inditex is one of the largest fashion groups in the world, operating over 6,800 stores in 93 markets. The organisation has made a large commitment to connecting refugees with jobs in new countries.
- Inditex gives all Inditex employees access to the premium version of a language learning platform called Busuu and encourages them to use it to learn a new language.
- All employees can take initiative and build fluency in other languages that may create professional opportunities for them in other countries.

## Bridge solutions: Corporate Culture



### 1

#### Elevate the voices of local language learners through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

- Leverage worker-led groups to support local language learners.
- ERGs for refugee talent elevate their voices across the company and ensure that their needs are communicated to corporate leaders.

### 2

#### Recognise and celebrate different cultures

- Hold events like multicultural holiday celebrations, and family-oriented events to celebrate local language learners and create a welcoming community for their families.
- Events should be led and designed by people from those backgrounds and focus on authentically honoring that culture and educating others about it.

## Bridge solutions: Corporate Culture



### Case study: Deutsche Bahn, *Germany*

- Deutsche Bahn is the German railway company and has a vested interest in integrating refugees into the labour market and supporting local language learners as they build their German language proficiency.
- Deutsche Bahn helps refugees work on their German through regional language cafes. The language cafe is part of a programme on social and cultural integration that encourages language practice on site and facilitates social connections.
- Deutsche Bahn has developed language training based on the specific vocabulary needed to successfully finish vocational educational programmes.

## Bridge solutions: Health & Safety

**1**

### Create additional guidance on health & safety essentials

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- A training module focused on technical terms and company-specific language (e.g. language to operate a forklift) rather than everyday conversation.
- Training videos for safety procedures.
- Internal 'dictionaries' that translate essential words into other languages available to all employees.
- Translate health & safety guidance into multiple languages.

**2**

### Provide different language options for operating machinery

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- Have multiple language options available on machinery so the user can follow instructions in different languages e.g. Ukrainian or Arabic.

## Call to Action: How to start investing in local language learners

1. **Name your intention.** Establish why and how local language learners can **benefit your business**. What business needs could they help address?
2. **Identify key roles.** **Unpack assumptions** about which roles require language fluency and identify what local language learners can bring to key roles. Companies should focus on a small set of roles, worksites or regions to test new bridge solutions and then scale these practices across the organisation.
3. **Assess your hiring process.** Determine to what extent current application and interview processes screen out local language learners, and then rework these processes to be more inclusive. Create a pipeline of local language learner candidates by partnering with community-based organisations.

## How to start investing in local language learners

4. **Redesign the onboarding experience.** Implement bridge solutions to increase local language learners' familiarity with their role, their colleagues, and the working environment such as **peer-to-peer learning and interactive training**.
5. **Facilitate social connections.** Provide a **supportive network** that celebrates all workers and create formal and informal ways for workers to learn about each other.
6. **Invest in language training.** Help **all workers learn** and advance their language skills through accessible classes, tuition benefits, and practice opportunities.



# NEXT STEPS



## Next steps

### ▲ Next call:

6<sup>th</sup> June 14:00-15:00

### ▲ Looking ahead:

- ▲ Email with info requests
- ▲ World Refugee Day - 20<sup>th</sup> June
- ▲ In person meeting late Sept/  
early Oct



**Thank you!**

