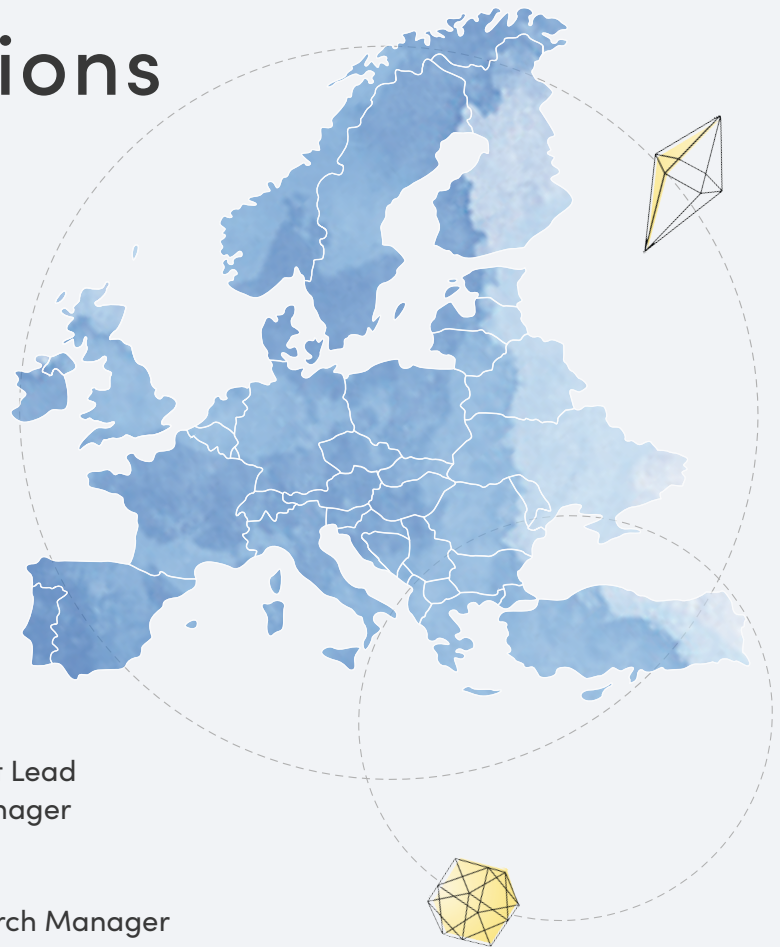


BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Fintech Solutions for Refugees

EUROPE FOCUS



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INTRODUCTION

There is so much exciting innovation around financial health coming out of Europe – but virtually none of it is serving the refugee population living inside Europe’s borders. Changing that will require a coordinated effort from investors, financial institutions and government leaders.

Between 2015 and 2017, three million people fled violence or persecution to seek refugee status in the European Union. As the conversation has shifted from crisis management to population integration, one of the most important questions has become how to integrate refugees into the formal financial systems of their new homes.

Many refugees living in Europe struggle to access basic financial services. A recent survey of European banks found that many believe they are not “equipped to deal with the specific needs of refugees”.¹ This makes it more difficult for refugee families to achieve basic steps toward integration, like receiving a paycheck, exchanging money with family overseas, or even buying groceries.

The coronavirus pandemic will only accelerate these challenges. Many businesses have recently gone “cashless” to protect the health of workers and customers, which locks out anyone without a credit card. Many banks are now easing lending requirements, which only widens the access gap for refugees who still lack an account.

There is a tremendous opportunity for fintech to help build solutions for the underbanked. The past few years has seen a wave of European fintech startups building tools around digital identity, remittances and alternative lending solutions. However, very few of those tools are currently reaching the refugee population in Europe.

For this report, we spoke with dozens of entrepreneurs and startup ecosystem leaders who identified three barriers that European fintechs face around working with refugee populations:

- ▶ **Difficulty forming partnerships with refugee outreach organizations**
- ▶ **Burdensome regulations and licensing requirements**
- ▶ **Access to capital**

These barriers have become exacerbated during the coronavirus pandemic and, as venture capital firms are easing up their investments and civil service organizations are overloaded with activity in response to immediate challenges.

As the world emerges from this crisis, it is more important than ever for us to support innovations that will create a more equitable world – and build economies that are more resilient to the next crisis. This report will lift up exciting innovation for displaced communities in Europe, and provide actionable recommendations for investors, financial institutions and government leaders to reduce these barriers to scale.




Allie Burns
CEO, Village Capital

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is based in part on learnings from Fintech Solutions for Refugees, a 2019 project by Village Capital and PayPal to identify promising fintech solutions for refugee communities in Europe.

We conducted interviews with more than 80 fintech founders, financial institutions, investors, NGOs, academics, mobile operators, and many others — including a focus group and roundtable discussion in Berlin in November 2019.

The report is structured around three questions that guided our research:

- 1 Why is the financial inclusion of refugees an issue?
- 2 How can startups play a role in integrating refugees into the formal financial system?
- 3 What can investors, financial institutions and government leaders do to break down barriers to scale?

We're so thankful for all the people who contributed to this report, and encourage anyone to reach out to learn more about this important topic.



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THE TERM 'REFUGEE'

For the purposes of this report we use the Refugee Investment Network definition of “refugees”, which is **“an inclusive group of people who are externally or internally forcibly displaced, whether through armed or political conflict, ethnic tension, systematic discrimination, climate change or natural disaster, or the displacement of indigenous communities.”**²

PART 1

THE PROBLEM

Financial Inclusion of Refugees

A number of people interviewed for this report expressed surprise at our focus on the financial exclusion of refugees in Europe.

One INGO leader told us that their organization closed operations in Europe in 2017 because “the state stepped up to cover refugee needs”. One investor expressed surprise that financial exclusion was even an issue: “Doesn’t European legislation mandate banks to open accounts for refugees?”

There is clearly a lack of consistent information, and in this section we will paint a picture of the scope of the problem.

1.1 Refugees around the world face financial inclusion challenges

Financial inclusion means that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs (transactions, payments, savings, credit, and insurance) and are delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.³

While financial inclusion is key to alleviating poverty for any underserved community, it is particularly important to successful refugee integration. More than 75% of refugees are outside of their host countries’ formal financial systems.⁴

A 2014 World Bank and Gates Foundation report argued that financial innovation is necessary to “provide the speed, security, transparency and cost efficiency needed to increase financial inclusion” for refugees.⁵

Figure 1: Refugee Displacement Phases and Financial Services Needs

Phase of Displacement	Indicative Needs for Financial Services
Phase 1 – Arrival	Survival cash for food, housing, and medical services as well as repayment of debt incurred during escape.
Phase 2 – Initial Displacement	Savings products, remittances, microcredit for consumption, health insurance.
Phase 3 – Stable/Protracted Displacement	Savings products, microcredit for consumption, and business mortgage/home improvement loans, transactional accounts for cross-border payments, remittances, health insurance
Phase 4 – Permanence	Savings products, microcredit for consumption and business, pension plans, insurance products. If return/resettlement is the ultimate goal: savings for journey, transferrable credit history, transferrable pension schemes.

Source: UNHCR⁶

Refugees need to access a range of financial products and services, from basic current accounts, remittance services and insurance to savings and credit products. These needs change over time, as refugees settle into their host country and move from short-term survival to integration. Moreover, refugees who receive social security in a secure and transparent manner and have access to a bank account can more easily enter the labor market and avoid being driven into informal illegal markets.

You need a lot of money to open the business and close the jobcentre immediately, because if you take steps to open the business and put money somewhere, the jobcentre will see that money, stop your payments and take you to court to get the money back from previous months.

- Pakistani refugee, male, age 28.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 2019:

70.8 MILLION PEOPLE

around the world have been displaced from their home.

NEARLY 25.9 M

of them are refugees.

MORE THAN HALF

of those refugees are under 18.

1.2. The financial exclusion of refugees in Europe

The recent refugee crisis in Europe and the integration process there is a case in point. Since 2014, more than 3.5 million people have submitted applications for asylum in EU countries, resulting in various forms of legal protection, including refugee status for over 1.8 million people.⁷ Data suggests that this population struggles to access financial services. For instance, according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, less than 2% of the roughly 700,000 refugees in Greece have tried to open a bank account.

It is true that some basic financial services are available to this population: in 2014 the EU passed a regulation requiring banks to offer basic payment accounts to all customers legally residing in EU countries, including asylum seekers and refugees.

However, this regulation has been unevenly applied. To date, only half of EU country regulators have issued formal guidelines on the financial integration of refugees. When financial services are available, they are often basic, difficult to access, or prohibitively expensive.

Banks are not concerned about refugee rights, they are concerned with banking regulations. From a business point of view they have incentives to open accounts for refugees in places like Greece as [there is] a large potential customer base, but the framework they work with is overly restrictive.

- Protection Officer, UN Agency

1.3. Two major financial integration challenges for refugees in Europe

I. Traditional financial institutions struggle to serve the refugee client base

Despite the EU's refugee-friendly banking laws, traditional financial institutions have struggled to accommodate refugees as a new and expanding customer base.

At the height of the refugee crisis, Mastercard released a study of European financial institutions, asking bank leaders how prepared they were to serve the refugee client base. The survey found that European banks “generally do not provide specialised products nor are they equipped to deal with the specific needs of refugees, and they show little interest in doing so.”⁸ On a practical level, this means that refugees and asylum seekers are turned away from banks, even when national legislation requires banks to open accounts.⁹

Emerging evidence suggests three reasons why this is the case: ¹⁰



LEGAL BARRIERS: Even when refugees have state-issued residency permits, most financial institutions still require a passport, and many do not accept passports from the top refugee-producing countries. This means that refugees cannot pass most banks' know your customer (KYC) regulations and access financial services.



REPUTATIONAL RISK: Societal fears and prejudices reflected in public policy and media cause financial service providers (FSPs) to worry about their reputation. The connection between refugee-producing countries and countries under sanctions or deemed high-risk due to money laundering and/or terrorist financing is often problematic.



MISINFORMATION: Lack of information on, contact with, or attention to refugees — or misinformation about them — fuel the perception of them as high-risk clients. “While legal and policy barriers remain, the biggest constraint to increased financial inclusion of refugees is a familiarity gap between refugees and FSPs, fuelled by ingrained stereotypes and preconceived ideas.”

“

In Syria we were good. I had three houses in Damascus, we had money. Not a lot, but enough. Now I have nothing. My houses have been taken by the government, the money is gone. Now we receive money from the [German] government. We are starting again

- Syrian refugee, female, age 40.

”

II. Refugees struggle to navigate the financial system

On the other side of the coin, a number of factors from the client side make it difficult for refugees to access financial services. These include:



LACK OF ASSETS OR CREDIT: Regardless of their situation back home, many refugees need to start building up their financial assets from scratch when they resettle. Their resources may have been depleted during their long journey to safety; physical assets (such as houses) may have been destroyed or become worthless; and the currency that they built their savings in may have lost value or become inaccessible.



COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES: Language is a consistent barrier to accessing relevant information on financial services. Refugees are often unable to comprehend the complicated financial terms described on bank websites, or communicate effectively with bank tellers.



PRIVACY CONCERNS: Many refugees have understandable concerns about privacy. Other behavioral factors can limit refugees' ability to make long-term financial decisions. Refugee clients' knowledge and ability to make decisions in the short, medium, or long term on usage of financial services may be further impeded than FSPs are used to among their national clients.¹⁵



FINANCIAL LITERACY: Some sectors of the refugee population may not be educated about the financial services available to them, and have wide-ranging levels of experience with cash management, digital technology, and banking.¹⁶

“

*Despite the supply side's lust for data, refugees, especially older ones, reject the notion of being traced. It's easy to see why. Some are fleeing such ruthless trackers as the Taliban, ISIS, or their home governments, and thus are protective of data that might expose even a whiff of their whereabouts. As a consequence, some reject debit cards, e-vouchers, or e-wallets for anything other than maximum withdrawal of cash as soon as a digital distribution is made.*¹⁴

– from The Digital Demands of the Displaced, by the Centre for Financial Inclusion

”

1.4. Spotlight on Germany

Germany is an interesting case study when it comes to the financial inclusion of refugees in Europe. The country was the largest single recipient of asylum seekers in the EU between 2014 and 2017, with approximately 1.5 million first-time asylum applications. There are 736,700 refugees in Germany, which is less than 1% of the population. The country is well positioned to handle this influx: it has a relatively conducive political environment and economic situation, enabling integration policies, opportunities for education and skills development, access to the labor market, and a strong migrant diaspora.¹⁷



When a family seeking refuge arrives in Germany, their first step is to register as asylum seekers at the border or inside the country.

The authorities then direct them to the closest reception facility, where an in-person interview is conducted, and country-specific resources and experts consulted.



Refugees are generally housed in reception facilities. It is estimated that it takes between five and seven months for refugee status to be approved.

Yet financial integration is still an issue for refugees in Germany. Despite regulations that make it easy for refugees to open basic bank accounts, these accounts are insufficient for all their client needs. Because of their limited function, and because they are monitored by the department issuing social security, refugees in Germany feel that they are left with little choice but to use informal and/or illegal alternatives to take loans, transfer money internationally, or make online purchases.

This is a problem for the German government, which is both missing out on banking revenue, and has increasing incidence of unregulated and illegal FSPs channeling money internationally, often into countries that are under international sanctions such as Syria or Iran.

“

It's our culture, in the Middle East...we don't save money in banks, we save it by our sides. But now I have this money by my side and it's too much and I want to put it in the bank. But I am scared to ask the bank people if I can put it in, because maybe if it's too much they will report me and ask me where the money came from. Even if it's from my savings from work I'm scared they will take it away.

- Iraqi refugee, age 35.

”

Banking regulations, in the form of KYC regulations, are the major barrier to financial inclusion. Licensed banks in Germany are mandated to use the 'Postbank' (postal service) to check that a potential client meets KYC requirements. The Postbank has a list of nationalities from whom it cannot process passports (including Syrians, Afghans, and Pakistanis, among others). This means that people from the top refugee-producing countries cannot access banking services with any licensed bank in Germany. Neo-banks such as N26 were able to use alternative document-checking services, which did not automatically blacklist these nationalities, before they were licensed. However, now that they have a license, they have to use the Postbank system, and therefore can no longer cater to the vast majority of refugee clients. This is seemingly a major barrier for digital solutions for refugees, as when they reach a certain level of maturity and get their full banking licence, they will no longer be legally able to provide services to people from countries blacklisted by the Postbank.

“

Whilst you are on 'jobcentre' [social security] it's easy to open a bank account, like 10 minutes. You open with Sparkasse. This is enough for our needs because the jobcentre watches all our transactions and if we spent money abroad or online they would question why. Whilst we are on the jobcentre we cannot use other banks because they are watching us. If you need to buy something online you ask someone else and give them cash.

- Syrian refugee, female, age 35.

”

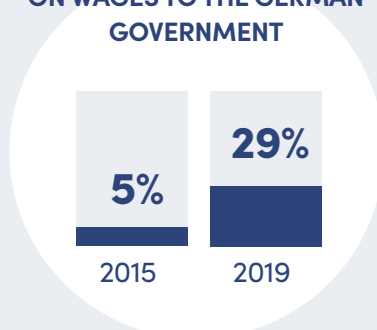
“

My son-in-law has a job and he uses N26. So sometimes I ask him to buy things online for me. But me I don't want N26, I don't want to use an online bank. I don't know how. I want to talk to a person

- Syrian refugee, female, age 40.

”

**REFUGEES PAYING TAXES
ON WAGES TO THE GERMAN
GOVERNMENT**



The more refugees become integrated into German society, through work or starting a business, the more they need access to financial services beyond the basic Sparkasse account issued upon arrival. In 2015, 5% of refugees were paying taxes on wages to the German government; this rose to 29% in 2019. If we consider that the majority of refugees arrived in Germany in 2015/16, and need 3-6 years to convert their qualification or start a business, this means that the number of employed refugees will rise considerably over the next few years, meaning that access to financial services will become a real issue for a large number of refugees in the country. Fintech solutions could fill the current gap, given that the traditional banking system is not built to accommodate them.

The fintech space in Germany is growing. As of 2017, there were seven licensed e-money institutions and 57 payment institutions, and there were approximately 300 fintechs. Three new private digital-only banks have also recently gained a banking license: solarisBank, Fidor Bank, and N26.¹⁸

PART 2

THE POTENTIAL

Fintech Impact Areas for Refugees

We have established that traditional financial institutions have struggled to accommodate refugees as a new and expanding customer base. In this section we will show that entrepreneurs are well positioned to fill this gap.

Fintech has been a disruptive force within traditional capital markets overall: in 2019, venture capital firms invested \$38B in upstart financial services firms.¹⁹

The fintech revolution has, in part, been helped by rapid technological advancement: smartphone penetration is near-universal; and 59% of people around the world report using mobile banking apps.

As a result, fintech companies have started to permeate all aspects of our lives. Investing has become easier thanks to startups such as Robinhood and Wealthfront, mortgages have become more attainable thanks, in part, to companies such as Redfin and Zillow, and paying employees has become seamless thanks to companies such as Gusto.

However, these technologies are not always built for everyone. Billions of people are still underserved by the financial industry. What is clear is that we are at an inflection point: the World Bank has set a goal of Universal Financial Access by 2020. That is this year!

Entrepreneurs are well positioned to help fill the void left in the financial system by large incumbents. We have worked with dozens of fintech entrepreneurs in Europe building tools to improve financial inclusion for displaced communities, including digital identity tools, remittances technology, and alternative lending solutions. In this section we will explore some of that innovation.

DIGITAL IDENTITY



DIGITAL BANKING PRODUCTS



ALTERNATIVE LENDING



2.1 Digital Identity

Many refugees in Europe are living without the basic identification needed for access to fundamental services. Digital identity solutions are particularly relevant to refugees, who often lack the requisite functional identification to access financial services.

Refugees stand to benefit from alternate technologies such as distributed ledger so that they carry their own financial history across borders, and hold and present their information at their choosing. Overall, digital identity tools have the potential to unlock new, underbanked customer bases and help economies thrive.

COMPANY PROFILE



Gravity helps individuals and small businesses leverage their digital footprint for better access to finance, employment, aid, and more. Users can bring together data from apps, their suppliers, the credit bureau, and more on a digital wallet. From there, they can share it with service providers, who can use it to serve their customers better.

The platform helps refugees improve their livelihood and employment prospects. Organizations submit data regarding vocational skills training, language programs, and biodata to a refugee's digital wallet. This allows the user to share this data with other organizations to help give them appropriate help customised to their profile.

Over time, that allows for targeted outreach by the hundreds of different organisations providing training without the need for a central database. It empowers every person with a record of trusted verifiable data, and an access point to add self-declared needs. In the longer run, refugees can share this data with potential employers wishing to assess their competencies.

2.2 Digital Banking Products

Banking technology has great potential to benefit refugees and refugee service providers. However, banks are restrained by what currencies they will work in and in which locations they will operate.

Digital banking products designed to serve the needs of refugees include banking and insurance products, as well as cross-border payments and remittance services. These services often need to be tailored to the refugee client segment because of specificities including the difficulty in producing the requisite identity documents for traditional banks' KYC regulations, ties with countries under international sanctions and embargoes, and the difficulty in accessing refugee clients individually, which often necessitated partnership with NGOs, UN agencies or community groups. The aid sector can also benefit from banking technology with faster, cheaper, and more transparent products to send and receive funds around the world.

COMPANY PROFILE



ARCADIA
BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGIES

Refugees arriving in many countries in Europe are denied access to basic financial services traditionally provided by banks due to their inability to provide official proof of residence or ID. With its software, Arcadia enables NGOs to provide peer-to-peer financial services to refugees without requiring partnerships with financial institutions or navigation of cumbersome regulatory landscapes.

Arcadia empowers NGOs to offer “identityless”, peer-to-peer cash transfer and other financial services to refugees. Arcadia’s impact goals are threefold: increase operational efficiency and revenue for NGOs; enable refugees and donors to connect with each other on a peer-to-peer level; and enable refugees to have free agency to start businesses, transfer and receive cash, and administer their money as they see fit.

These three goals support the vision of Arcadia: independence and self-agency for refugees, better integration with their host communities, and a welcoming society that embraces refugees as valued, equal contributors.

2.3 Alternative Lending

In recent years, alternative digital lending products have become more mainstream. These tools can reduce the cost of underwriting and increase the speed of loan approvals by using alternative data and processes, democratizing access to loans that were previously denied by traditional financial establishments.

Very few traditional banks offer credit or loan facilities to refugees, despite evidence that refugees repay “financial assistance as quickly and completely as the average global borrower.”²⁰ Indeed, the European Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee stressed that “micro-financing can act as a fundamental support for refugees and migrants entering the EU labour market.”²¹

Alternative lending tools can help refugees get over the hurdles around KYC requirements and lack of credit history or collateral.



Wajenzi is a crowd-investing platform that allows refugee and migrant entrepreneurs to submit investment opportunities to sell shares of their companies and access funding.

COMPANY PROFILE

A substantial number of refugees were self-employed in their home countries, and many see business creation as a way out of poverty in their host countries. Financial support for refugees, however, is lacking, with only 0.2% of business financing in Europe going towards refugee entrepreneurs. Wajenzi’s crowd-investing platform provides refugee and migrant business owners the opportunity to submit investment opportunities, and alternatively allows investors, primarily from diasporic communities, to contribute capital in exchange for company shares and dividends after a given amount of time.

The platform operates as a website, where companies post pictures and videos, descriptions, targets and offering. Wajenzi then performs due diligence on the companies and makes a decision within one week about whether or not to post the campaign to the site. From there, investors can log in to find investments.

THE CHALLENGES:

Barriers and Recommendations for Developing & Scaling Fintech Solutions

During this project we identified four key barriers that fintech startups developing solutions for refugees typically face: complex regulations, securing funding and investment, establishing working partnerships, and understanding the refugee client segment.

Allowing fintech to reach its potential to financially include refugees in Europe will take a concerted effort, by entrepreneurs, investors, government leaders, and NGOs. Here are our recommendations.

3.1. Barrier I: Regulations

Many of the entrepreneurs interviewed for this report, particularly those whose companies failed, cited regulations related to anti-money laundering and terrorism as particularly challenging to navigate. The customer due diligence process that financial institutions need to comply with is known as the KYC regulations. The KYC process includes collecting identification, verifying documents, and conducting background checks to ensure that clients are properly risk assessed.²²

They also cited difficulty obtaining licenses, particularly when operating across multiple geographies. As refugee researcher Kim Wilson said, “[Solving regulatory problems] is, of course, the problem, and if that were solved there would be a rush of fintech.”²³

Recommendations for government leaders:

- ▶ Specify how FSPs can tailor the due-diligence process for refugees. For example, by detailing exactly which identity documents refugees can use to open accounts.
- ▶ All EU countries should follow the Netherlands’ example and make use of the provision of the EU’s AML/CFT, which allows asylum seekers and refugees to use their host country ID as identification, rather than a passport.²⁴
- ▶ Initiatives such as regulatory sandboxes will allow fintech startups to innovate and develop and scale products for refugees.
- ▶ Research behavioral insights to better understand how refugees feel, what they want, and what influences their economic and financial choices, and use this data to build a national financial inclusion strategy which incorporates the banks, refugee outreach organizations, the private sector, and neo or digital financial products.

3.2. Barrier II: Partnerships

In order to successfully develop and scale solutions for refugees, startups need to partner with a range of institutions to develop their products, ensure regulatory compliance, and reach their target user groups.

Six main groups that fintech startups working on solutions for refugees need to partner with:

 GOVERNMENT Local, Regional, National, Multinational (eg. EU)	 SERVICE PROVIDERS Digital ID providers, legal services
 FUNDERS Individual investors, institutional donors, development banks (World Bank, IMF, African, Asian, Inter- American)	 FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS Banks, development banks currency exchange providers, mobile money providers, MFIs
 REFUGEE OUTREACH ORGANIZATIONS Banks, development banks currency exchange providers, mobile money providers, MFIs	 REFUGEES Community groups (formal and informal), diaspora

Startups we spoke with indicated that establishing these partnerships, either formal or informal, can be difficult, time consuming, and a barrier to scale. Startup teams struggle to connect with the right people at financial institutions, NGOs or government agencies, and often lack the expertise to speak the “professional language” of potential partners.

While we encourage these institutions to work more closely with startups, we think it is more practical to focus our advice on how startups can navigate these institutions.

Recommendations for startups:

- ▶ Startups can recruit people from the humanitarian and government sectors as advisors, consultants, or team members to help gain an understanding of how they work and gain access to key networks.
- ▶ Startups can work with humanitarian innovation labs: many major UN agencies and INGOs have innovation labs developing solutions for vulnerable populations. Many of these agencies have relationships with the relevant government bodies.
- ▶ Startups can work with accelerators such as the SDG-IA in Turkey, which is led by the United Nations Development Programme and the Turkish government, and includes field trips and relevant mentors. Research other accelerator programs which have experience with refugee-oriented startups (eg. Village Capital, Accion and Techstars) and are likely to have appropriate mentors in their networks.
- ▶ Startups can network with agencies that most frequently release requests for proposals (RFPs) to receive information of new RFPs directly.

3.3. Barrier III: Access to Capital

Entrepreneurs who access capital are 30% more likely to succeed. However, many startups we spoke with told us that they have trouble accessing capital from angel investors, family offices, VCs, or institutional donors. Investors are wary of financing refugee-focused ventures, perceiving them as high-risk and low-return investments.

We believe that this stems from a misperception among investors that refugees are a low-profit and high-risk customer segment.

“

We have faced the challenge that there is not a lot of capital available for early-stage ventures. Both the refugee and blockchain spaces are in a ‘hype cycle’ — people find it interesting but are reticent to get involved. Refugees do not fit into impact investors’ investment thesis.

- Interview with refugee-focused entrepreneur.

”

Recommendations for investors:

- ▶ The Refugee Investment Network (RIN) created Refugee Investment Lens to help investors evaluate different types of refugee-focused investment opportunities and consider which type of entity (refugee led, refugee focused etc.) they are interested in supporting.
- ▶ Coordination and representation bodies — such as the RIN, Haus of Fintech, or Techfugees — can help to raise the profile of refugee-focused ventures and assist investors identifying and de-risking such investments.
- ▶ Release of data on refugee investments can help to ease risk perceptions.

3.4. Barrier IV: Refugees As Clients

Many refugees are distrustful of using technology or new fintech products to store their money. Demand and uptake from the client side may take longer than startups with limited financial resources can afford.

All startups need to understand the needs and concerns of the client segment that they are targeting. When developing products targeting refugees, this is particularly critical both because the refugee user group may have different financial service priorities to other population groups (eg. ability to send money to third countries), or particular concerns such as traceability, security, and data privacy, and because refugees are a diverse group who are not necessarily easy to access.

Our research found that many refugee-focused startups are founded by entrepreneurs that are very well intentioned, but do not have experience working with vulnerable populations, leading to the development of products with little uptake.

Recommendations for startups:

- ▶ Fintech startups, as nimble players, can leverage youth and local tech-savvy champions as ambassadors or product trainers for their products. They could be given a free phone as an ambassador and a connectivity allowance as compensation if cash compensation is an issue in the host country.
 - ▶ Startups should recruit refugees as advisors, consultants or team members to help gain community understanding and gain access to key networks. First-time events may only draw a small crowd, but with time and continued network-building and leveraging of online social networks, the forums can grow and also provide opportunities for new refugees to get involved.
-

APPENDIX:

Fintech Solutions for Refugees – 2019 Cohort



ARCADIA

Arcadia (Switzerland) is a blockchain-based digital platform enables NGOs and Aid Organizations to offer cash transfer and other financial services to refugees and marginalized communities.



Bankenu (USA) is a blockchain-based remittance platform that will enable displaced or financially underserved small business owners and freelancers to make secure and transparent money transfers.



Bankey (Germany) is a blockchain-enabled digital wallet that provides unbanked individuals with access to financial services through a network of banked individuals and businesses known as “keys.”



Emerge (USA) is an award-winning humanitarian solutions development lab that uses emerging technologies to facilitate more transparent, more efficient and more humane movement of people, goods, and data around the world.



Gravity (France) provides a decentralized cloud storage platform that allows data subjects to own, control and share their personal data through a digital wallet.



Leaf (Lebanon) provides digital financial services to refugees so that they can store and transport assets across borders from a feature phone, avoiding cash.



MigPort (Turkey) is a mobile app that serves as a meeting point for refugees to anonymously convey their issues directly to decision makers.



Wajenzi (Netherlands) is a crowd-investing platform that allows refugee and migrant entrepreneurs to submit investment opportunities to sell shares of their companies and access funding.



ZAKA Group LTD. (United Kingdom) offers a high-assurance digital ID to help people prove who they are to service providers.

ENDNOTES

- 1 [Reconciling contradictory forces: financial inclusion of refugees and know-your-customer regulations](#), Journal of Banking Regulation
- 2 [The Refugee Lens: A framework to define and qualify refugee investments](#), Refugee Investment Network
- 3 [Impact of the Regulatory Environment on Refugees' and Asylum Seekers' Ability to Use Formal Remittance Channels](#), KNOMAD
- 4 [The Role of Financial Services in Humanitarian Crises](#), CGAP
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- 6 [Assessing the Needs of Refugees for Financial and Non-Financial Services – Jordan](#), UNHRC
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- 8 [Reconciling contradictory forces: financial inclusion of refugees and know-your-customer regulations](#)
- 9 [Can fintech help solve the refugee crisis?](#), Euromoney
- 10 [Serving Refugee Populations: The Next Financial Inclusion Frontier Guidelines for Financial Service Providers](#), UNHCR and Social Performance Taskforce
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- 12 [Impact of the Regulatory Environment on Refugees' and Asylum Seekers' Ability to Use Formal Remittance Channels](#), KNOMAD
- 13 [Finance for Refugees: the state of play](#), NpM Platform for Inclusive Finance
- 14 [The Digital Demands of the Displaced: Don't Track Me, Don't Expose Me, Don't Cut Me Off](#), Centre for Financial Inclusion
- 15 [Serving Refugee Populations: The Next Financial Inclusion Frontier Guidelines for Financial Service Providers](#), UNHCR and Social Performance Taskforce
- 16 [Financial Inclusion in Refugee Economies](#), Kim Wilson, Tufts University
- 17 [Financial Inclusion of Germany's Refugees: Current Situation and Road Ahead](#), European Microfinance Network
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- 19 [Banking services – Tech's raid on the banks](#), The Economist
- 20 [Kiva releases its first world refugee fund impact report](#), KIVA
- 21 [Reconciling contradictory forces: financial inclusion of refugees and know-your-customer regulations](#), Journal of Banking Regulation
- 22 [The challenge of fostering financial inclusion of refugees](#), Bruegel
- 23 [This App Helps Refugees Get Bank Accounts By Giving Them A Digital Identity](#), Fast Company
- 24 [Reconciling contradictory forces: financial inclusion of refugees and know-your-customer](#)

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