



STARTUP REFUGEES:
ACTION REPORT
2024



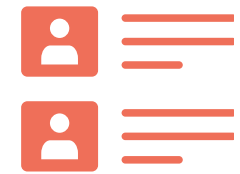


2024

IN NUMBERS



156 employed to the open job market



2310 professional profiles collected to the Match database



300 growth in network members



873 business advice sessions on entrepreneurship

25 participants in mentoring program with Tietoevry and Netlight

18 companies registered

207

participants altogether in **7** entrepreneurship courses in **3** languages

1592

participation times in different trainings

5243

personal advice given on employment and skills development

891

Interview skills training provided for job seekers to boost confidence in interviews.





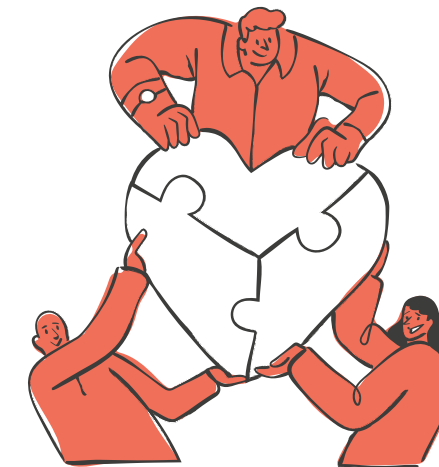
MISSION

Our mission is to accelerate the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants through employment, entrepreneurship and skills development.
We walk the talk.



VISION

Our vision is an inclusive society where refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have fast and equal access to a meaningful professional life.



VALUES

- Hands on
- Based on need
- No false promises
- Everything is possible
- Together



CONTENT

Introduction.....	1	Supporting new entrepreneurship.....	15
Communication & Advocacy work.....	2	Business Grant Winner 2024.....	16
Key messages.....	3	Market validation events.....	17
Match Made in Startup Refugees.....	4	Feedback from Entrepreneurship Course.....	18
Making job opportunities happen.....	5	Partnership.....	19
Success stories from South.....	6-7	Finance & people.....	20-21
Employment North.....	8-11	On-going projects & funding.....	22
Strengthening skills.....	12	Board members.....	23
Feedback from Spouse Program.....	13	Startup Refugees international.....	24-25
Feedback from Mentoring Program.....	14	Glimpse to the future.....	26

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Startup Refugees, where we're passionate about making a real difference in the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. **We don't just talk the talk; we walk the walk** by providing real support and opportunities that help individuals kick-off their professional journeys! Through tailored mentorships, entrepreneurship training and unlocking doors to employment, we are making an impact on Finnish society.

Our main focus is supporting those who are navigating the challenging transition to a new life, especially asylum seekers and refugees. Providing opportunities to our customers would not be possible without our network members and partners who give their time and resources to support our work in many different ways and who find talents through our Match Made in Startup Refugees platform.

Our network grew with 300 new members last year bringing the total to over 5000 organizations, ministries, individuals, municipalities and other NGO's.

This report is a recap of 2024 and a reflection of our journey. As you explore these pages, you'll discover what makes us who we are. We have dealt with many rejections and failures from negative decisions on funding applications, budget cuts, failed recruitments to some people dropping out of our courses and trainings; everything doesn't always work out but we keep it pushing!



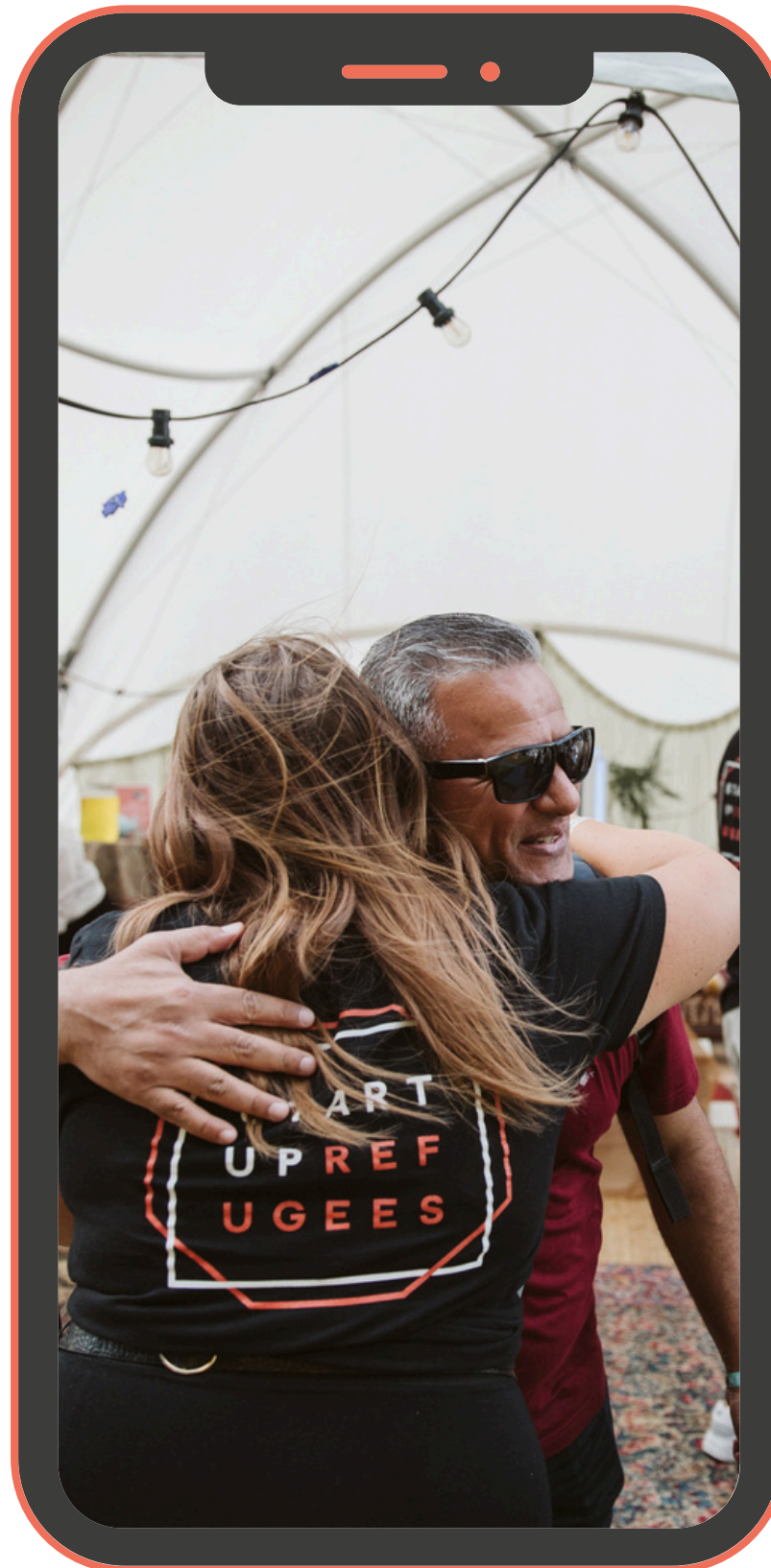
**Now join us as we
look back!**

COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY WORK

Startup Refugees' social media channels (two Facebook pages, Instagram and LinkedIn) had a total of 18 708 followers. Follower numbers in the different channels grew 10 percent from the previous year. The different social media channels reached a total of 63 000 people in 2024. Startup Refugees was also featured on different media platforms including [YLE](#), [Helsingin Sanomat](#) and [InfoMigrants](#).

Our quarterly newsletter reached 1,846 recipients with an open rate of 43.07%. This exceeds newsletter averages, where typical open rates for nonprofit and social impact newsletters range from 25-30%, and general newsletters average 20-30%.

On the advocacy side, we have been deeply worried about the new immigration policies proposed and set forth by the government and the consequences for the immigrants and the international community in Finland.



In 2024 the organization took part in protests that were directly linked to the employment and entrepreneurship opportunities of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants living in Finland.

We also published opinion pieces against the planned policy of preventing asylum seekers from applying for work based residence permits and wrote statements to the government regarding income level requirements for a work based residency. The main message sent was that differential treatment of social security and benefits will only lead to more segregation and poor wellbeing. In short, paying the same taxes should equal the same benefits.

In addition to advocating on social media and participating in protests and events, we took part in direct advocacy work throughout the year and met with members of parliament and municipal decision makers. The meetings discussed refugees and the participation of asylum seekers in Finnish working life and measures to improve inclusion. Social media channels were used as the main channel for communication but in addition we actively participated in writing opinion pieces on the aforementioned topics and contacting different medias to spread the message.

KEY MESSAGES



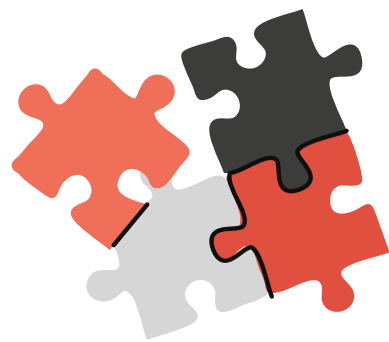
- Reduction in the refugee quota in a world with more refugees than ever and complicating the already complicated asylum seeking process are counterproductive measures.



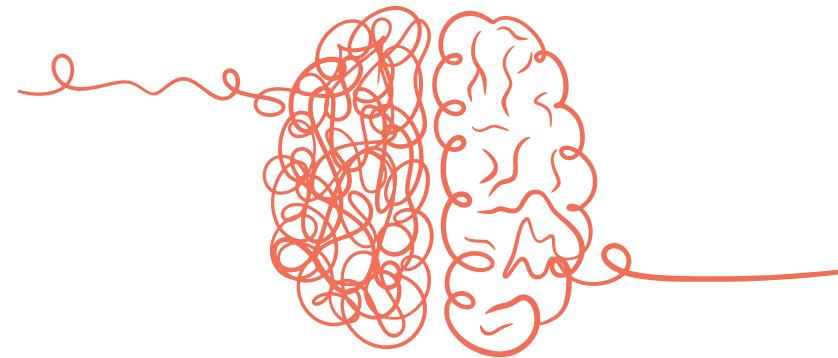
- Preventing asylum seekers to apply for work based residence permits hinders their chances for employment.



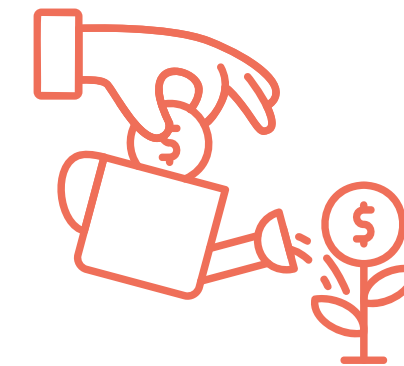
- Increasing the requirements for a permanent residency permit and Finnish citizenship are moves that scream "You are not welcome here!"



- Integration and inclusion happen through education, employment and entrepreneurship: the focus should be on making all three even more accessible and not the other way around.



- Immigration should be seen as brain gain, no matter what the reason behind it.



- Recognizing the need of NGOs in integration should not lead to cutting their funding but better targeting the funds instead.

MATCH MADE IN STARTUP REFUGEES

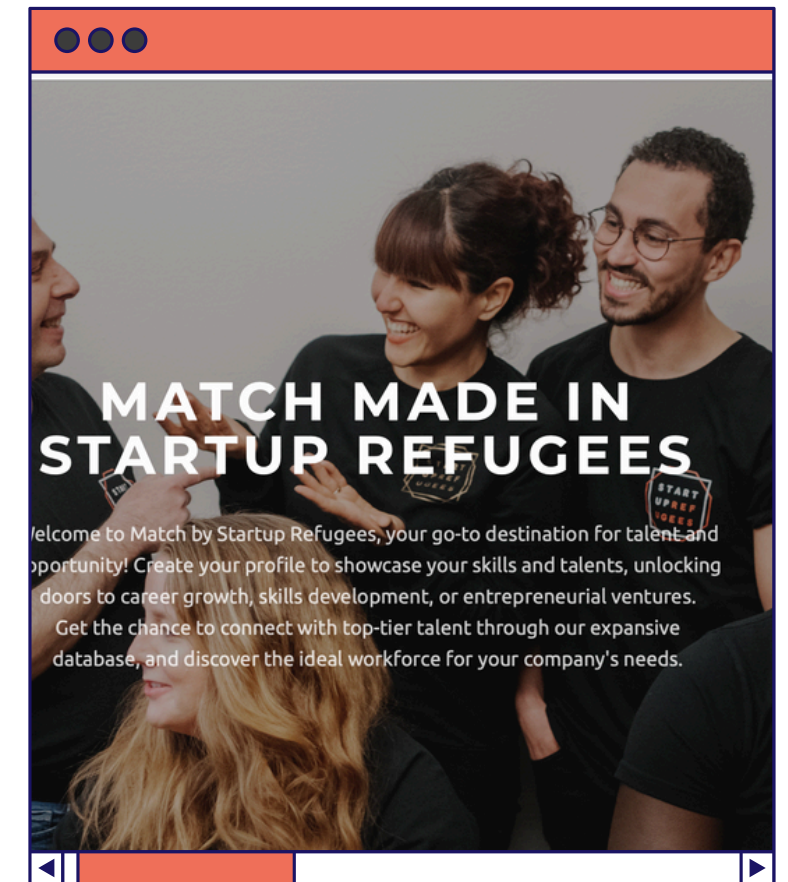
Startup Refugees reached 2310 new clients whose profiles it collected to the Match platform in 2024, bringing the total number of professional profiles collected over the years to more than **10 000**.

The Match platform was developed by Startup Refugees with the support of Futurice in 2017 and it has been fundamental to the organization's operations and success. As time has passed, it has become clear that the platform's technical features need constant updating to keep up with the time. Recognizing the importance of these updates, prioritizing the platform's development was essential last year and we transitioned to an entirely new system in order to not have to constantly work on technical updates and developments but have more time for the actual work of matching people with opportunities instead.

A **new Match platform**, powered by Jobful, was introduced in June of 2024 and we managed to collect 1726 profiles in the first six months of using the new platform!

On the platform, jobseekers can share information about their education, work history, and skills, making it easier for us to match them with suitable job opportunities. Future development plans include adding more educational content and automated messages, etc. Our goal is that Match will be the bridge to a future where career opportunities are accessible to all refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Finland, driven by impactful data insights and inclusive solutions.

Match is still a work in progress but the current version is user friendly and agile, just like we like it!



MAKING JOB OPPORTUNITIES HAPPEN

The job market in Finland faced significant challenges in 2024, marked by economic uncertainty, layoffs, and shifts in employer hiring priorities. Despite these difficulties, there was continued demand for labor in specific industries, particularly in sectors like hospitality, logistics, construction, and renewable energy. The need for skilled and semi-skilled workers remained evident, but many employers struggled with talent shortages, particularly in regions outside major urban centers. At the same time, immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees faced persistent barriers such as language requirements, lack of professional networks, and difficulties in skill recognition.

Despite a challenging job market, both Recruitment Teams did amazingly well in supporting jobseekers and employers alike. In accordance with the Action plan for 2024, the Recruitment Teams developed the national recruitment model and supported jobseekers and employers throughout Finland in addition to regular office locations in the North and South.

Employment Program provided a pop-up service at International House Tampere year-round with the Business Program, expanded Match clinics to new locations, and supported employer interviews in Kuopio, Raisio, and Tampere. We participated in procurements, boosted service sales in employment and career support, and strengthened team collaboration. This included joint interviews across locations and testing new jobseeker support models, like facilitated group application sessions.

Our goal is to create lasting change and impact beyond immediate placements. Sometimes, all it takes is one opportunity for someone to prove themselves. A few of our clients, initially hired on short-term contracts with our support, have now secured permanent positions, earning the trust of their employers and finding workplaces where they truly feel valued. For instance, one of them shared how, for the first time, they feel a sense of belonging.

We hosted four Business Breakfast events, engaging companies in discussions on diversity, leadership, and recruitment. Our team also played a key role in developing the Match platform, investing time and resources to maximize its impact.

RECRUITMENT SOUTH

- 2000+ career counseling sessions
- 328 newcomers assisted through Match Clinics
- 15+ recruitment event participations
- 98 recruitments completed
- 67 matched migrants' skills to jobs
- 64 migrants secured employment through us

KEY FACTORS SOUTH

- **Tech & IT:** Developers, IT & SAP Specialists
- **Business & Finance:** Accountants, Revenue Cycle Experts
- **Healthcare & Education:** Bioanalysts, Educators
- **Industry & Food:** Process Operators, Butchers, Chefs, Baristas, Carpenters

SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE SOUTH

“ Startup Refugees has given me an incredible opportunity to work at my dream company. The team at Startup Refugees has been consistently supportive, kind, and helpful, making the entire experience both fulfilling and inspiring. I truly appreciate this opportunity and would like to express my sincere gratitude. ”

– Revenue Cycle Specialist

“ I must thank the very good, professional, and friendly team at Startup Refugees [...] for helping me find a job closely aligned with my profession. ”

– Craftsman, Carpenter and Metal worker





GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Secured a long-term contract, calling it a perfect match for their skills and passions. Grateful for the opportunity, they even expressed interest in giving back.



FULL-STACK DEVELOPER

Landed a permanent role, calling it a career-defining moment. Grateful for the chance to fully apply their expertise and grow.



PASTRY CHEF

Renewed their short-term contract twice with a top employer. Thrilled to continue working in their trained profession and passion.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE NORTH

At Startup Refugees in the North of Finland, our mission has been to bridge the gap of need for skilled labour and the challenges international jobseekers face in finding employment by providing targeted recruitment support, employment matching, and skills development programs for immigrants across Finland. Our work in Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia has been particularly impactful, as we focused on connecting job seekers with industries in need of labor, facilitating long-term integration, and ensuring that diversity becomes an asset rather than a challenge for employers.

Despite a volatile job market, we successfully facilitated employment for 23 job seekers in the installation of solar electricity plants in Northern Finland. Many of them were asylum seekers living in reception centers, and our team provided end-to-end support, from CV creation, interview preparation, and work-life orientation to onboarding and relocation. The renewable energy sector continues to grow in Finland, and this initiative demonstrated that, with the right support, immigrants can play a key role in filling labor gaps in emerging industries.

In addition, even in a year when many companies were cautious about hiring, we were able to secure 13 permanent job contracts for our clients in the North, reinforcing the importance of structured recruitment support. This success was achieved through close collaboration with recruitment agencies, employers, and integration support organizations, ensuring that job seekers were not just placed but properly prepared for sustainable employment.

Additionally, one of our Community Leaders, along with two other clients, successfully secured jobs in their preferred field (the restaurant industry in Lapland covering both summer and winter seasons). Based on their feedback, they are highly satisfied with their roles, highlighting the importance of securing not just any job, but one that aligns with a job seekers' skills and aspirations. These cases exemplify how our work extends beyond simple job placements; it ensures that candidates find employment where they can thrive and build careers.



RISE PROGRAM



Our **RISE Peer Support Program (Resilience, Inclusion, Support, Empowerment)** continued to be a transformative initiative, providing highly educated immigrants with job search skills, networking opportunities, and confidence-building support. Over two months, participants engaged in interactive workshops, employer meetings, and career coaching, leading to tangible results such as improved CVs, expanded professional networks, and increased job applications. Many participants reported feeling less isolated in their job search and more confident in navigating the Finnish labor market, a crucial factor in long-term integration.

ARCTIC MENTORS



Another key achievement of the year in the North was the launch of the **Arctic Mentors 2024 project**, which brought together key stakeholders to develop strategies for improving immigrant employment and fostering diversity competence among employers in Lapland. The project focused on addressing persistent challenges such as low employer engagement, skill mismatches, and limited networking opportunities for foreign-language job seekers. By creating a structured mentoring program and recruitment initiatives, we strengthened the pathways for employment while simultaneously equipping companies with tools to better integrate international talent.

Throughout the year, we worked closely with recruiters in Lapland and Northern Ostrobothnia, encouraging them to embrace international hiring. A particularly impactful initiative was our work with young Somali women, who previously felt excluded from the labor market and struggled to find employers willing to give them a chance. By actively advocating for diversity hiring and supporting both employers and candidates through the recruitment process, we saw these women successfully secure employment, marking a significant milestone in our mission to create equal opportunities for all.

Overcoming language barriers was another key focus of our recruitment efforts. One of the most inspiring success stories of the year involved Ukrainian twins who, despite minimal Finnish skills, secured a summer cleaning job contract at Radisson Hotel. With our ongoing support, they transitioned into full-time employment, proving that attitude, persistence, and employer flexibility are crucial factors in overcoming linguistic challenges. Their success serves as a testament to the power of tailored support and employer collaboration in facilitating long-term immigrant employment.

Our team also demonstrated exceptional agility in responding to urgent recruitment needs, particularly in the hospitality sector. One such case was our collaboration with Pikku Syöte Hotel, which required urgent staffing during the peak Christmas season. Through fast and efficient matchmaking, we ensured that employers had the workforce they needed while immigrant job seekers gained valuable employment opportunities. This kind of rapid-response recruitment is a key strength of Startup Refugees, ensuring that both job seekers and employers receive timely and effective support.

Additionally, we participated in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment's training day, Talent Boost Network Day, Suuri osaja- ja rekrypäivä, the Finnish Academic Mobility Network meeting, the Integration Forum, and Imatran Kipinä's 10-year anniversary, promoting workplace inclusion and international recruitment. Through these, we reached hundreds of employment professionals and organizations, driving change in the Finnish job market and society.



RECRUITMENT NORTH

- **573** migrants assisted in private and public match clinics
- **31** event participations



KEY FACTORS NORTH

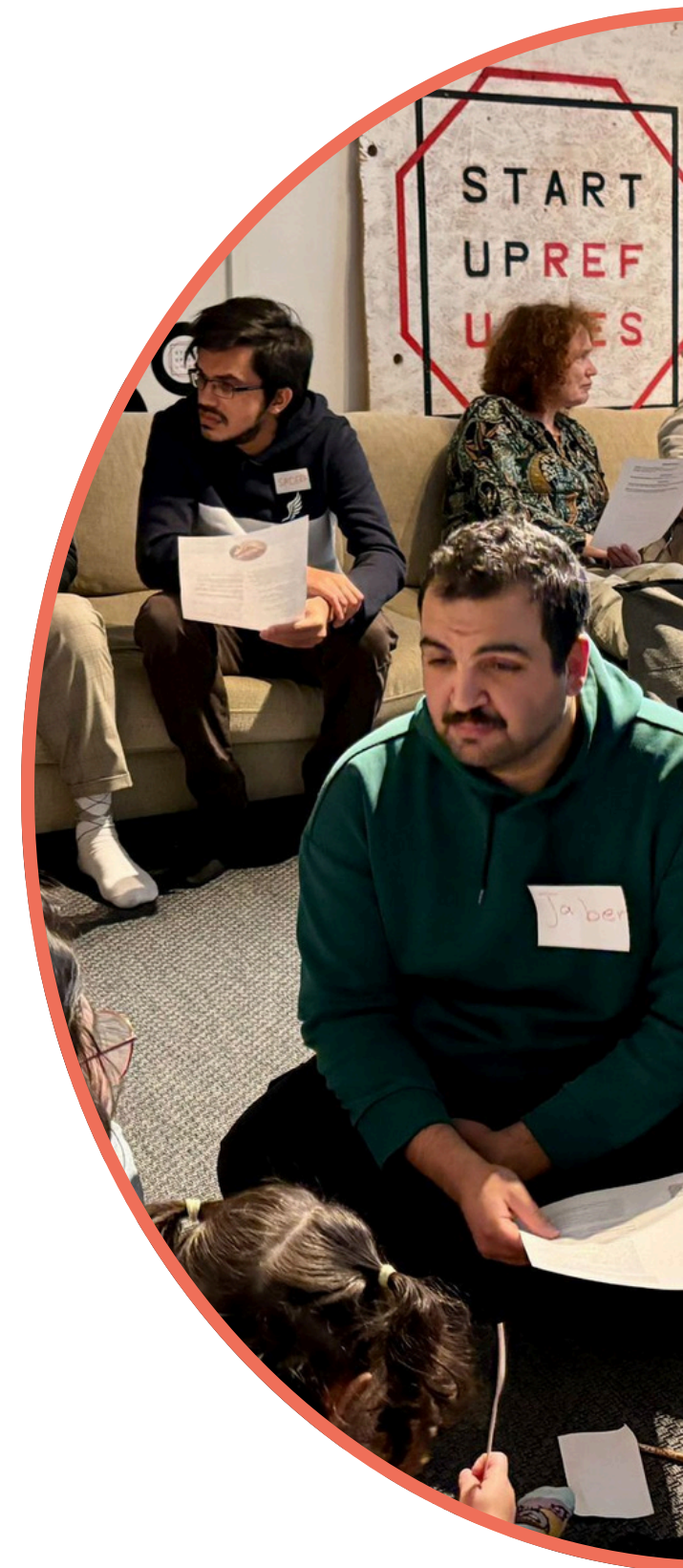
- **Tech & IT:** Developers, IT & SAP Specialists
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- **Healthcare & Education:** Bioanalysts, Educators
- **Industry & Food:** Process Operators, Butchers, Chefs, Baristas, Carpenters

In 2024, we also participated in international collaboration projects with colleagues from other countries in order to foster exchange of knowledge and best practices, peer learning, innovation, etc. in order to best support our clients. For example, a collaboration project on knowledge exchange on labour market access modalities for refugees together with the Estonian Refugee Council and Shelter Safe House Latvia, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, brought Estonian and Latvian colleagues to Helsinki to visit Startup Refugees, and offered four of our staff members the opportunity to travel to Tallinn and Riga to visit the other organisations and participate in international conferences and meetings with other organisations.

The work is connected to our ongoing projects ([ESR+ Arctic Mentors](#), [ESR+ Diverse Talents](#), [ESR+ Work Force](#), and [STEA](#)) where we collaborate with cities and other organisations in the South and North of Finland. We can be proud to say that in general we are exceeding all goals set in the project plans, supporting more individual recruitment cases, offering more individual counselling and networking opportunities, and connecting with more companies than originally planned.

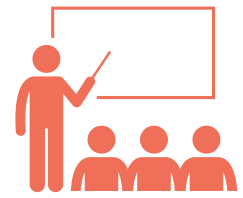
We also continually increase our outreach and attract a wider network of jobseekers, partners, and supporters. Looking ahead, we remain committed to fostering meaningful employment opportunities, expanding our networks, and advocating for a more inclusive job market. Finland's job market will continue to evolve, with increasing demand for workers in certain industries despite economic challenges. Our work remains crucial in ensuring that immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees have access to fair employment opportunities and that employers recognize the value of international talent.

By focusing on skills development, targeted recruitment support, and employer engagement, we will continue to drive positive change in Finland's labor market and support the long-term integration of diverse job seekers into the workforce.



STRENGTHENING SKILLS

Our Skills Development Team has been dedicated to enhancing our customers' skills and upskilling and reskilling migrants to thrive in the Finnish job market for three years now. In 2024, we provided:



175 participants received nationwide training on Finnish working life, culture, and interview techniques, offered in multiple languages.



56 trained Ukrainian migrants under temporary protection in the logistics field, which included:

- Logistics training
- Logitri: Visits to warehouse
- Visits to Red Cross (Emergency logistics)



50 participants (**25** mentors & **25** mentees) joined a mentoring program with Netlight & Tietoevry for highly educated immigrants in ICT & business.



108 participants attended CV & cover letter training in Ukrainian, tailored for the Finnish job market.



600+ individuals received personalized coaching in Arabic, English, Finnish, Ukrainian, and Dari.



107 international spouses joined the Spouse Program Helsinki, which included:

- Career counseling and job searching strategies trainings
- Mock Interview trainings
- Professional networking in Finland training



93 highly educated migrants completed specialized trainings Industrial fields (TT Säätiö:)

- Scrum Master training with Reaktor for AI professionals
- HIVE training & company visits, with hands-on Scratch programming
- Industry insights & mentoring from Siemens Energy, Supercell, IKEA, Sharetribe, and TechClass

FEEDBACK FROM SPOUSE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- “ Very informative programme. It is helpful to keep up positive mind. ”
- “ Very useful programme for new commers to Finland. ”
- “ I'm really impressed by this. The presentation and the presenters are seriously great. Thank you ”
- “ The organization is amazing. At a time when people like to criticize immigration, your work is important and appreciated. Thank you!! ”
- “ Thank you very much for organising this event, makes one feel more positive about job prospects. ”



MENTORING PROGRAM MENTEES FEEDBACK

- “ It is good opportunity to learn about Finnish culture and Job hunt skills. ”
- “ The companies that collaborated were good one's. During my discussions with my mentor, we identified a few areas that I could possibly upskill myself. ”
- “ Appreciated the program's focus on CV, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile. It significantly helped me refine my professional presentation and better understand the job market, boosting both my skills and confidence. ”



SUPPORTING NEW ENTREPRENEURS

2024 was a year of growth in services for the Business Program. Six long entrepreneurship courses and three short ones were organized in English, Arabic and Ukrainian, half of which as a service provider to the public sector. These had a total of **234** participants. Business advisory services were given on offline and online meetings, by email, phone, Whatsapp and Telegram **873** times, which was 23 % less than the year before. Business services were given all together **1094** times (1 448 in 2023) with **5 163** customer contacts (5 058 in 2023). Volunteers and organizational partners collaborated with Startup Refugees **109** times in organizing entrepreneurship services e.g. as mentors, workshop speakers, event organizers and so forth.

In 2024 Business Program team put effort in developing their business advisory services and business idea testing training. We started collecting feedback from business advisory meetings and researched NPS of **73,91**, which tells about very satisfied customers.

Besides leading the first international project for the first time (see International cooperation section) another exciting new endeavour was Boost to the Creatives project that provided migrant and Finnish creative professionals and students with practical information, training and encouragement for income generation and entrepreneurship, role models and network events organised in Helsinki and Oulu. Also two showcase events were organised in Helsinki City Museum and Oulu Art Museum for them to be able to show, test, and sell their products and services to customers. In related this was organised also a portfolio review with professionals from marketing agencies and other entities, who gave feedback to the participants on their portfolios and how to improve them.

In November Startup Refugees Fund gave grants for the third time to early stage entrepreneurs to support their business development. The criteria for giving the grants were the feasibility of the project plan, sustainability of the business idea (ESG), growth opportunities, but also the diversity of the winners. A total of 11 000 euros were given as business grants thanks to Relex Foundation and Tietoevry's sponsorship. The grantees were chosen by a jury composed of entrepreneur and mentor Mehdi Yarmohammadi, angel investor Mikko Nurminen and the Head of Business Program Kati Lievonen.



STARTUP REFUGEES BUSINESS GRANT WINNERS 2024



Mesopotamia
HKI oy by
Saifullah Ezzat
Albaranzanchi



Itookäsi by
Natsuki Hosio



Helsinki Dreamday_
Tours by
Zana Balikci



Artamy palvelut by:
Anthony Musajj'awaza
Mulyanti

MARKET VALIDATION EVENTS

Startup Refugees organized five market validation events in 2024 including Qahwa Corner at Flow Festival, Summer market at Oulu market place and the very first pop-up in Tampere before Christmas (Tullintori shopping centre and Platform6 startup house).

A total of 65 entrepreneurs took part in the events and the preceding coaching to learn how to sell to Finnish customers, present their products, market and learn from customer feedback to use it for further product development.



FEEDBACK FROM ENTREPRENEUR COURSE PARTICIPANTS

- “ Generally important for any one hoping to start up a business. ”
- “ Very useful programme for new commers to Finland. ”
- “ I had my business advisory which was very helpful and insightful, made my next step more clear.”

- “ Thank you so much for choosing me to be part of this amazing course and also helping other migrants in Finland. I love what you guys do for people like us. I truly appreciate it and hopefully in the future I would also like to help other immigrants in Finland. I am now helping a friend with entrepreneurship with whatever knowledge I got from you guys. ”



PARTNERSHIP

In the beginning of 2024, Startup Refugees launched new partnership packages for companies and organizations in order to “**secure the bag**”, according to its updated strategy. From April 2024 onwards it was the responsibility of the new part-time Head of Partnerships to promote these packages and other forms of partnerships to companies and organizations in and outside of the network. The goal was to get 1-3 Platinum Partners and 3-5 Gold Partners during 2024. The numeric goal was to get **30 000** euros through paid partnerships in 2024.

Startup Refugees reached the goals by getting two Platinum Partners and one Gold Partner in 2024 with packages worth a total of **28 000** euros. In addition, Startup Refugees got two sponsored business network memberships in 2024 worth approximately **1 000** euros and continued its partnership with Flow Festival with a pro bono partnership worth at least **10 000** euros. At the end of 2024, Startup Refugees started to plan and find sponsors and partners for its 10 year anniversary campaign and events.

Besides the paying partners and sponsors, Startup Refugees continued to work with its network of **5000** members offering recruitment services, partnering on organising events and training and gaining new voluntary speakers and mentors. In addition, Startup Refugees partnered with many different organisations, companies, municipalities and cities in its different projects. The network of Startup Refugees grew by **300** members in 2024.

Partnerships with companies and organisations are important for Startup Refugees not only because they provide funding for its actions but also because they are the backbone of its operations. Without the network’s support, the organisation could not do what it does and offer services to its customers. By partnering with Startup Refugees companies, organisations and individuals are directly contributing to the empowerment of a marginalized community and to the creation of a more inclusive, responsible and sustainable society. By doing this, the partners are also making concrete efforts to reach their own social responsibility, sustainability, and diversity targets.



**28 000 €
secured**



**2 platinum
& 1 gold
partner**



**2 sponsored
business
network
memberships**

FINANCE & PEOPLE

In 2024, Startup Refugees' funding was a blend of private (10 %) and public (60 %) sources, complemented by a record share from fundraising and service sales (20%). Our strategic goal for service sales was 50 000 euros for 2024 and we managed to sell more than 300 000 euros worth of services to cities, municipalities and the Service Center for Continuous Learning and Employment (JOTPA).

The activities of 2024 were also supported by a few totally new funders such as TT foundation and Relex foundation. The employment program and activities supporting the professional skills of asylum seekers were primarily financed by grants from STEA, the European Social Fund (ESF), TT foundation, and the Employment Office.

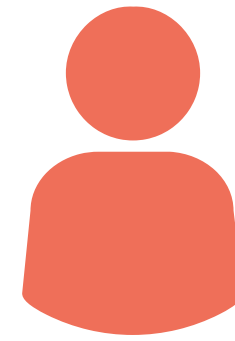
One new ESR funded project started in Lapland, following the previous Employment Office funding. The business program received its largest grants from the Private Entrepreneurs Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Culture. For the organizational development, Startup Refugees got a grant from the Relex foundation, a part of it allocated to the Startup Refugees Fund supporting newcomer founders from the business program courses.

Additionally, the year saw some donations and other small-scale grants. Support for clients who have fled the war in Ukraine, was sustained through smaller grants from various foundations.

One strategic goal in the new strategy for 2024-2026 was to develop staff skills and know-how to provide better service. In 2024, the staff development was supported throughout the year by various training and learning opportunities. Staff members doing direct customer service participated in regular work supervision with an outside facilitator. The whole staff received training in organizational citizenship, AI, public speaking, PR, LTbQIA+ rights, first aid, occupational safety and health and equality planning. In addition, the team leaders received training in leadership skills in general and manager's rights and obligations. One way of supporting staff development was peer learning organized within teams in various subjects supporting each team's work.



32 of the regular staff were employed on various terms in Helsinki, Oulu, and Rovaniemi throughout the year, including 4 interns.



18 hourly employees, called Community Leaders, assisted occasionally in employment program activities, such as at events and in workplace orientation.



1 new leader, Kirsi Korhonen, stepped in to lead the Employment Program.



3 people were on full or part-time study leave



1 completely new role, part-time Head of partnerships was launched in April when the previous Head of the Employment Program, Maiju Mitrunen, moved into that role.



As in previous years, personnel expenses accounted for the largest portion of operating expenses

LIST OF ONGOING PROJECTS AND FUNDING 2024

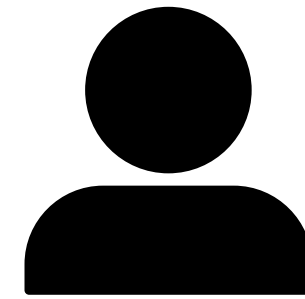
Project / Funder	
Startup Refugees Academy / Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA)	4/2021 - 4/2024
Working life participation of immigrants / Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA)	1/2024 - 12/2026
Business services for young immigrants / Ministry of Education and Culture	1/2024 - 12/2024
Business program / Yksityisyrittäjien säätiö	1/2023 - 12/2024
Work Force (North Ostrobothnia) / ESF+ (EU)	1/2023 - 6/2025
Diverse Talents (capital region) / ESF+ (EU)	10/2023 - 3/2026
Arctic Mentors (Lapland) / ESF+ (EU)	07/2024 - 6/2026
SISU Business / Central Finland ELY Centre	1/2024 - 12/2025
AMBITIOUS / Erasmus+ (EU)	12/2023 - 12/2025

Developing fast integration model / TAH foundation	10/2023 - 3/2024
Teollisuuden tienraivaajat / TT-säätiö	1/2024 - 12/2024
UPBEAT / Interreg (EU)	8/2024 - 2/2026
Boosting business skills of creative professionals / Alfred Kordelin Foundation	1/2024 - 12/2024
Startup Refugees Lappi / Lapland TE Office	1/2024 - 6/2024
Organizational development / RELEX Foundation	6/2024 - 12/2027

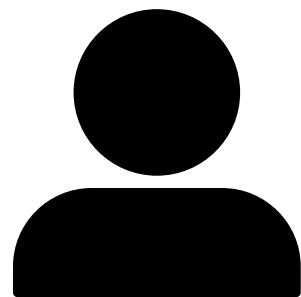
STARTUP REFUGEES BOARD

The board of the organization had six meetings in 2024. The chair of the board was Tom Miller until 2.10.2024. He stepped down from the position for personal reasons, and Elisa Vepsäläinen was selected unanimously as the new chair. The other board members were Antti Innanen, Tommo Koivusalo, Reetta Rätty and Camilla Weurlander.

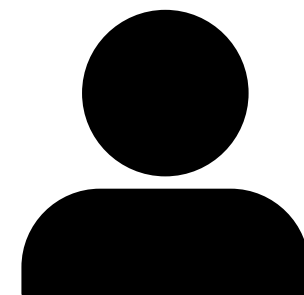
The auditor for the year 2024 was Christian Klemetti from Tilintarkastamo Klemetti Oy and the vice auditor was Lotta Kauppila from Tilintarkastusrengas Oy.



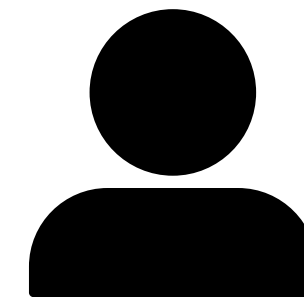
Elisa Vepsäläinen



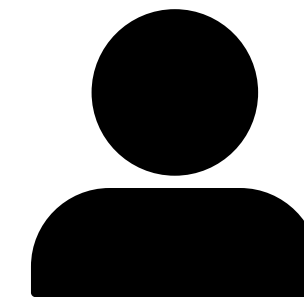
Antti Innanen



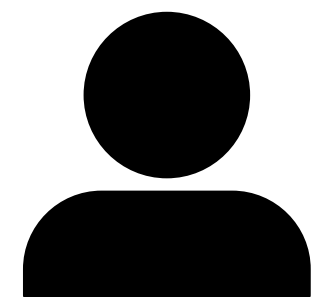
Tommo Koivusalo



Reetta Rätty



Camilla Weurlander



Tom Miller

STARTUP REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

2024 was again an international year for us. In April, our CEO and Skills Program Manager had the privilege of being invited by HERO Norway to Oslo, where they presented Startup Refugees at an integration seminar attended by over 300 participants. The event welcomed visitors from Denmark, Sweden, the UK, Australia, and Italy, providing an incredible platform to share our work and insights on refugee integration.

The Employment Program participated in international collaboration projects with colleagues from other countries in order to foster exchange of knowledge and best practices, peer learning, innovation, etc. in order to best support our clients.

For example, a collaboration project on knowledge exchange on labour market access modalities for refugees together with the Estonian Refugee Council and Shelter Safe House Latvia, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, brought Estonian and Latvian colleagues to Helsinki to visit Startup Refugees, and offered four of our staff members the opportunity to travel to Tallinn and Riga to visit the other organisations and participate in international conferences and meetings with other organisations.

In addition to showcasing our work, we engaged in many thought-provoking discussions with colleagues around the world in the Estonian Refugee Council's International Humanitarian Assistance Conference, for instance. Furthermore, the Head of Employment Program showcased our work for UNHCR's network in an online NGO dialogue meeting featuring refugee employment platforms. The Match Made in Startup Refugees platform continues to raise interest among our colleagues as a genuinely useful tool in supporting employment.



Our Business Coach joined a seminar on entrepreneurship training to Ukrainians organised by DKIV, Danish Entrepreneurs in Copenhagen, Denmark in January. He acted also as a mentor to one Ukrainian entrepreneur as part of the seminar programme. Startup Refugees leads a 2-year Erasmus+ funded project AMBITIOUS (Aiding Migrants through Business Idea Testing, Innovation and Online Understanding and Skills), where activities went to operational stage after official start in Dec 2023. The project induces experience exchange, skills development for staff, entrepreneurship training to migrants, publishing manuals for practitioners.

As part of the project activities, Startup Refugees hosted the partners PLACE network (France) and Forward Inc (The Netherlands) in Helsinki and showed them how it looks like in practice when we organise market validation events at Qahwa Corner at Flow Festival. The Head of Business Program also coached the Refugee Council of Lithuania in building their first curriculum and training program in entrepreneurship and organised them a study visit to Helsinki. This was organised as a part of Capacity Building and Partnerships between Baltic and Nordic countries project funded by Nordic Council of Ministers.

Later in the year, our CEO was invited to Cairo, Egypt, by the Union for the Mediterranean to showcase Startup Refugees' Business Program at a two-day seminar. The gathering brought together like-minded organisations from Palestine, Iraq, France, Syria, Lebanon, Italy, and the Netherlands to discuss strategies for supporting refugee entrepreneurship. The exchange of ideas and shared experiences highlighted the importance of collective efforts to empower refugee communities globally.



WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2025 we celebrate our 10 year anniversary, launch our impact model, host a fundraiser with a surprise partner, plan and execute a big birthday party, develop new partnerships, take care of each other and our network and focus on the heart of Startup Refugees: supporting our customers toward entrepreneurship, employment and skills development with the help of our awesome network!



**Thank you for
joining the ride.
Now, let's rock 2025!**

yours truly,
Startup Refugees



START
UPREF
UGEES

10

YEARS OF IMPACT