

# Digital Work and Migration

## Workshop Programme

University of Edinburgh  
Social Anthropology  
School of Social and Political Science

Convened by Andreas Hackl



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Edinburgh Futures Institute



Economic and Social Research Council  
Shaping Society



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
School of Social and  
Political Science

## The workshop venue

9:00 – 18:00

School of Social and Political Science

Violet Laidlaw Room (6.02)

Chrystal Macmillan Building

15a George Square

Edinburgh EH8 9LD



## The dinner venue

20:15 – 22:00

Howies Restaurant

10-14 Victoria Street

Restaurant website: <https://www.howies.uk.com/venues/howies-victoria-street/>



# Getting to the venue

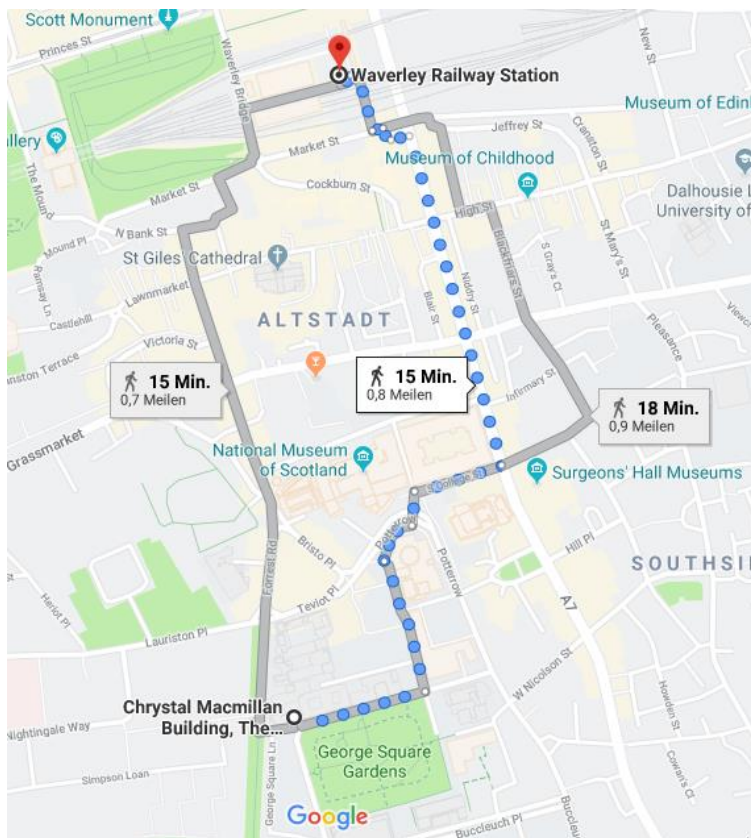
## From the airport

Both Airlink Bus 100 and the Edinburgh Tram take you into Edinburgh city centre (Stop Princess Street for the Tram/Waverley Station for the Bus). From there it is a 15-minute walk up through old town, towards 15a George Square.

Alternatives from the airport are taxi and Uber, which can cost somewhere between £18 and £25.

## From the train station

The Waverley Station is within easy walking distance from the workshop venue on George Square (around 15 minutes).



## Workshop programme

8:30 – 9:00 **Arrival:** School of Social and Political Science, Violet Laidlaw Room (sixth floor, 6.02), Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15a George Square, EH8 9LD

9:00– 9:15 Welcome and introductions

### Session 1: Migration and digital work – an emerging relationship

9:15 – 9:25 **Andreas Hackl:** Digital work and migration: unpacking a complex relationship

9:25 – 9:35 **Meredith Byrne (remotely):** Digital platforms and decent work for refugees

9:35 – 9:50 **Irene Omondi:** Information enabled community engagement and refugee empowerment in the digital world

9:50 – 10:15 **Group work 1:** Defining the key challenges for digital refugee livelihoods and education in the future of digital work

*Group 1: Digital skills and remote education. Moderator: Jean-Benoit Falisse*

*Group 2: Digital work and digital entrepreneurship. Moderator: Jyotsna Khara*

---

10:15 – 10:30 **Coffee break**

### Session 2: From learning to earning: skills training and remote education

10:30 – 10:45 **Sarah Kouzi (remotely):** Digital skills training against marginalization? Insights and lessons from Lebanon

10:45 – 11:00 **Robert Gelb and Havva Arslan:** Coding New Lives & Careers for Refugees

11:00 – 11:15 **Grace Atkinson:** From remote learning to remote work? The experience of Kiron and Jusoor, in supporting refugees to success in the digital era

*15 minutes for questions and discussion*

11:30 – 12:00 **Group work 2:** Building on key lessons: what is needed to turn remote learning into livelihoods and real careers?

*Group 1: Higher education. Moderator: Grace Atkinson*

*Group 2: Coding and digital skills. Moderators: Robert Gelb and Havva Arslan*

---

12:00 – 12:45 **Catered lunch**

### Session 3: Digital refugee livelihoods in comparison

12:45 – 13:00 **Jyotsna Khara**: Towards Decent Digital Work? Syrian Refugees in Jordan and The Online Gig Economy

13:00 – 13:15 **Ann-Christin Wagner**: Gendered freedoms – How Syrian refugee women in Jordan navigate the digital world

13:15 – 13:30 **Benjamin Hounsell**: Digital work and remittances: Discussing access and payment in comparison, with Kenya as a case study

13:30 – 13:45 **Faheem Hussain** (remotely): Livelihoods, innovation, and access to information among Rohingya refugees

*15 minutes for questions and discussion*

14:00 – 14:30 **Group work 3**: Identifying the key lessons: What is needed to improve access and create decent livelihoods and sustainable solutions?

*Group 1: Digital livelihoods in urban settings. Moderator: Ann-Christin Wagner*

*Group 2: Digital livelihoods in refugee camps. Moderator: Irene Omondi*

---

14:30 – 14:45 **Coffee break**

### Session 4: Social enterprise, microwork, and the role of the private sector

14:45 – 15:00 **Karina Grosheva**: Social enterprise beyond boundaries? Building remote work opportunities for Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese in a restrictive context

15:00 – 15:15 **Lorraine Charles**: Perceptions of the private sector on remote work for refugees

15:15 – 15:30 **Kirstin Lardy**: Platform Protocol: Adapting platforms for low-income migrant populations

*15 minutes for questions and discussion*

15:45- 16:00 **Nisreen Fansa and Ghaith Alhallak**: Natakallam: Building digital work through remote language training with a start-up mindset

16:00 – 16:15 **Giselle Gonzales (remotely)**: The role of microwork in forced displacement: lessons from Iraq and Palestine

16:15 – 16:30 **Charbel Trad (remotely)**: Bridge, Outsource, Transform (BOT): Building a remote work platform for marginalized communities in Lebanon

*15 minutes for questions and discussion*

---

16:45 – 17:00 **Break**

17:00 – 17:30 **Group work 4:** identifying key lessons: connecting refugees to microwork platforms and the private sector (A stepping stone to the future, or a race to the bottom?)

*Group 1: How can refugee work on platforms become sustainable despite obstacles? Moderator: Karina Grosheva*

*Group 2: How can refugees and the private sector be brought closer together, to produce fair and decent jobs? Moderator: Lorraine Charles*

## Final session

17:30– 17:50 **Final brainstorm:** Turning insights into impact and concrete outputs

The workshop is designed to inspire **concrete written outputs and follow-up projects** that harness the knowledge and insights we have gained during this exchange. Interactively, in this last short session, we will try to condense the key insights and lessons learned from the workshop into a brainstorm about concrete practical steps we can take to move forward.

Some of these questions may be a starting point: *What are the most important insights we gained? What are the major challenges that have yet to be overcome? How can we overcome them? What are key approaches, innovations, and solutions that have worked? How can we collaborate better to pool knowledge and share experience, as researchers and as experts in our field?*

18:00 **Departure:** we will have to leave the room by 6pm

## Time for leisure and recovery!

---

19:00 **Optional pre-dinner drink at a pub:** Bow Baw, 80 West Bow (on Victoria Street)

20:15 **Dinner:** Howies Restaurant, 10-14 Victoria Street

Restaurant website: <https://www.howies.uk.com/venues/howies-victoria-street/>

# Abstracts of presentations

## Session 1

### **Digital work and migration: unpacking a complex relationship**

Andreas Hackl

At a time when the mobility of migrants and refugees is severely restricted, digital economies seem to reach almost everywhere on the planet where internet is available. Today the mobility of work often outruns the mobility of workers, meaning that remote digital livelihoods become particularly useful in a humanitarian context of immobility and legal restrictions. Yet, it is clear that money without rights does not lead to sustainable development and decent work. How can the immediate need for livelihood be balanced with the principles and rights that make up fair and decent work? What opportunities do digital economies offer migrants and refugees? And what vulnerabilities do they exploit and exacerbate? In this brief introduction to the workshop, I will highlight some of the key ideas behind this event and its objectives.

### **Digital platforms and decent work for refugees**

Meredith Byrne

Digitization is an inevitable aspect of the future of work. Crowd-sourcing sites, e-commerce platforms and other digital applications are part of the technological transformation shaping the future of work. While digitization can help open opportunities for segments of the population that otherwise find themselves outside the labour market, it is not without challenges. Oftentimes online work reflects, or even magnifies, the same decent work deficits workers encounter offline. Digital work can mean unstable income and working hours, a lack of social protection and social isolation. For refugees, access to the formal labour market in their host communities can yield similarly indecent working conditions. While digital work can be an appealing alternative, it is not necessarily a source of easily accessible, sustainable and decent work for most refugees. Digital work can play a role in helping equalize labour market outcomes for some refugee workers, but not without institutional and social structures that recognize and support the economic contributions of all workers.

### **Information enabled community engagement and refugee empowerment in the digital world**

Irene Omondi

The increasing digitalization has significant implications for refugees and displaced persons in relation to policies and regulation, funding, and support to them. It is of critical importance that governments, companies, communities, and global citizens embrace the spirit of collaboration and

international cooperation in order to have communities that are well informed and empowered to drive the rapid growing digital technologies. In this presentation, I will share examples from Zaatari camp (Jordan) that reflect emerging best practices. A community asset mapping in 2016 showed that almost all camp residents were holders of phones and most frequented places were community centres for internet connection. As the demand on connectivity and digital literacy has been on the rise, this led to the RefuGIS project and the establishment of learning hubs, ICT trainings including in coding, as well as blended and online learning.

The RefuGIS project is funded by UNHCR innovation and adapts existing tools (commercial and open source GIS software) and best practices (GIS curriculum) to empower refugees as actors through digital mapping and storytelling. Moreover, many refugees' education is interrupted at basic and tertiary levels. The use of e-learning at all levels has proven to provide the accessibility needed. Programs such as TIGER (These Inspiring Girls Enjoy Reading), which facilitate learning through tablets, have demonstrated the effectiveness of community-based approaches to support adolescent girls through learning, innovation, teamwork, and community-building. This shows the important link between digital solutions and protection. Five learning hubs sponsored by Google are now operating in the camp. An innovation lab that will be working with communities in adopting digital solutions and learning has been finalized.

Refugees continue to enterprise and adapt themselves in various businesses, and the digital economy opens up opportunities for refugees and host communities around the world despite limited access to foreign markets. For example, a UNHCR-AI Bayt University-CHAMS collaboration has looked at a remote work model. This included a strong collaboration with government on policy, taxes, and with national digital providers. An online platform for selling items is one example and refugees will be working in goods distribution.

## Session 2

### **Digital Skills Training: Empowering Marginalized Young Adults in Lebanon**

Sarah Kouzi

American University of Beirut's Digital Skills Training (DST) program is a modular curriculum which spans 12 weeks and equips low-income youth with transferable digital skills, English, soft skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset. The curriculum covers basic to advanced digital skills, English language in face-to-face and online formats, and soft skills for career readiness, freelancing, and entrepreneurship. AUB Computer Science faculty members design and update the curriculum in line with new practices and labor market needs. The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service at AUB has meticulously crafted the Digital Skills Training Program to empower marginalized young adults on three fronts: providing transferable skills for enhanced employability and lifelong learning; building resilience through increased self-confidence and motivation; and facilitating social cohesion among refugees and host communities. Following graduation, dedicated staff connect program participants to opportunities for further education and training, internships, and employment.

Since 2016, we have reached more than 2000 trainees in Bekaa, North, South and Mount Lebanon. We work in partnership with local NGOs active in the areas we cover: Kayany Foundation in Mount Lebanon and Bekaa, Lebanese League for Women in Business in the South and Ruwwad al Tanmeya in the North. The program is funded by the German federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by UN-World Food Program (WFP).

### **Coding New Lives & Careers for Refugees**

Robert Gelb and Havva Arslan

Over the course of 4 months, students with little to no previous experience learn how to code. The only difference is the students are refugees, asylum seekers and others from underprivileged backgrounds, and the teachers are volunteer professional computer programmers who work in the industry. CodeYourFuture Scotland is in its third year, and still going strong with our community of mentors, volunteers, and dedicated students.

In this session, student Havva Arslan will speak about her experience learning to code with CodeYourFuture and what the programme means to her and her future career. CYF Scotland co-founder Robert Gelb will then share the lessons learned and challenges that the students and the organisation still face.

### **From remote learning to remote work? The experience of Kiron and Jusoor, in supporting refugees to success in the digital era**

Grace Atkinson

Refugees face many challenges in adapting to their life in a new country, and one of the key hurdles is access to education and decent labor market opportunities. The majority of refugees find shelter in countries which already have expensive tuition fees at substandard universities and high levels of unemployment, where governments have restrictions on how and where refugees can work. Yet in this new digital paradigm, there is the possibility of both gaining internationally accredited qualifications solely via the internet, and also access to work online where they cannot only support themselves, but their broader families through working remotely. This workshop, will take a look into the challenges and opportunities faced by refugee working and studying remotely, and how the international community can support this group with great potential to change the situation of the beneficiaries, their families and empower the next generation.

## Session 3

### Towards Decent Digital Work? Syrian Refugees in Jordan and The Online Gig Economy

Jyotsna Khara

As the future of humanitarianism in the current digital age has been garnering attention amongst policymakers and organizations alike, humanitarian actors recognize this shift and are cognizant of their own ability and responsibility to invest in longer-term solutions. One such effort was commissioned to the ILO Migrant Branch in Jordan to conduct a deep-dive analysis on digital interventions and current digital initiatives that centered on entrepreneurship and livelihoods. This project was initiated with an objective to develop a new framework that will distinguish the role of organizations, stakeholders, and other various players in this new digital era. To further explore this phenomenon, qualitative interviews were conducted with refugees currently engaging in online work in Amman. Altogether, this research investigated the prospect, barriers, and the potential future the online gig economy can have in the lives of refugees in Jordan from the perspectives of various organizational actors and refugees themselves.

### Gendered freedoms – How Syrian refugee women in Jordan navigate the digital world

Ann-Christin Wagner

The proposed paper advances our understanding of digital livelihoods for Syrian refugees in the Middle East by introducing a gender and class perspective. It draws on long-term fieldwork with non-camp based Syrian women from rural backgrounds who have sought refuge at various urban and rural locations in northern Jordan. The paper argues that since 2011, young, but also older Syrian women have begun to use social media and online services – but this has rarely translated into sustainable livelihoods.

First, access to income-generating activities online is hampered by women's lack of digital literacy and low educational levels. Second, greater *digital* freedom of movement contrasts with traditional gender norms in the offline world, refugee household dynamics and women's own aspirations of "good lives" that limit their economic agency. Hence, the proposed paper adds to contemporary critiques of refugee empowerment programmes with a narrow focus on increasing the economic self-reliance of displaced individuals. Instead of turning refugee women into digital "micro-entrepreneurs", my paper suggests shifting the focus - and humanitarian support – to what poor female Syrians already use the Internet for: keeping afloat female refugee networks that allow women to circulate information about aid and job opportunities in exile, maintaining family ties with relatives across borders and informal banking and remittance-sending.

## **Digital work and remittances: Discussing access and payment in comparison, with Kenya as a case study**

Benjamin Hounsell

The majority of refugees hosted in Kenya are unable to work outside the country's designated camps limiting opportunities for work and resulting in income instability. Furthermore, due to security concerns at the regional level, refugees typically have limited access to formal financial services such as payment, credit and savings, which limits financial inclusion and increases the risk of financial shocks.

Online work can provide refugees with access to jobs beyond refugee camps, enabling them to enter a global marketplace with the potential of earning sustainable incomes over the long-term. By combining money received through digital work with digital remittances, refugees may have the opportunity to access a wider range of formal financial services through remittance service providers (RSPs) and the wider banking sector.

This presentation will, for the first time, discuss linkages with digital livelihood initiatives for refugees in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, with methods of payment for work undertaken and how money earned alongside remittances can be leveraged to provide better financial inclusion through RSPs.

## **Discussing access and payment in comparison, with Kenya as a case study**

Faheem Hussain

How can you communicate and connect when the language you use do not have any alphabets? How can you actively use the social media when internet connection in your vicinity is very poor to non-existent? How can you as a women use phone in the workplace when the patriarchy forbids you not to? This talk will address these questions and along the way will highlight the aspirations and innovations among the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in the digital space. In the camps of Bangladesh, access to mobile telephony is illegal for Rohingyas. The use of Internet is also very rare in humanitarian interventions. Amid such challenges, we observed the rapid proliferation of mobile charging and repairing shops, managed by the refugees. These shops are functioning as the hubs of localized information collection and commercial dissemination. We furthermore found the innovative offline use of social media platform to support their livelihoods. In this talk, I will share stories and trends of key technology innovations the Rohingyas (both men and women) are coming up with to ensure better living and for their future. Key challenges faced by them will be discussed as well.

## Session 4

### **Social enterprise beyond boundaries? Building remote work opportunities for Syrians, Palestinians, and Lebanese in a restrictive context**

Karina Grosheva

Karina will share her story of evolution of business model from the social enterprise to inclusive business, with the specific feedback on business model challenges in restrictive legal context of Lebanon. She will share how business mindset that they cultivate in Taqadam can unite different teams together - including Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi and Kurdish - in the pursuit to deliver good results and leverage learned skills and talents within the digital work.

### **Perceptions of the private sector on remote work for refugees**

Lorraine Charles

Refugee employment has long presented a challenge to the development community and to refugee host countries. Issues such as education, skills and work ethic have been cited as barriers to employment. These concerns are amplified for remote work, which comes with its own challenges. While remote work for refugees presents a promising solution to the provision of employment, implementation can present many complications. Among them is the willingness of the private sector to hire refugees as remote workers. As the private sector is perhaps the most important actor in the paradigm of digital livelihoods for refugees, it is important to gauge their perceptions. From the perspective of the private sector, who are profit-driven, the rationale and incentive to hire refugees needs to be investigated. While there have been studies about companies hiring refugees in their offices, there is no research on the perceptions of the private sector to hire refugees as remote workers. This discussion is based on preliminary qualitative research of companies that operate either partially or fully remote. It aims to present their perspective on hiring refugees as remote workers, focusing particularly on what they perceive to be the main obstacles.

### **Platform Protocol: Adapting platforms for low-income migrant populations**

Kirstin Lardy

With mobile phone ownership and internet access on the rise around the world, digital labour platforms have the potential to provide new social and economic opportunities for marginalized, low-income populations. Yet, the rise of digital technology does not account for the obduracy of local perceptions and constraints on digital interventions. This presentation will provide insights on the barriers to digital platform uptake in low-income migrant populations and provide potential guidelines for future digital platform development. Our protocol necessitates looking at values of trust, social perceptions, and local digital infrastructure among users as vital elements in developing solutions for low-income users. The research is based on ethnographic fieldwork in

South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, as well as experience working in a social enterprise on product development and traction.

### **Natakallam: Building digital work through remote language training with a start-up mindset**

Nisreen Fansa and Ghaith Alhallak

NaTakallam -- ('we speak' in Arabic) -- is a social enterprise that connects refugees and displaced people to remote work opportunities in the language sector. To date, more than 150 displaced persons have self-generated \$600,000 through translation jobs or by connecting with over 5,000 unique users, who sign up as individuals or through school and university partnerships. Since NaTakallam's launch there are some lessons learned in how a Start-up mind-set can contribute to a global humanitarian issue. Some of these I will address include: 1) The ability to start small and take risks, 2) Demonstrating that the market can provide sustainable solutions, 3) Seeing refugees as customers, not beneficiaries, 4) Leveraging technology for work that transcends borders. Our Conversation partner, Ghaith, will speak remotely about his experience as a displaced person and someone who works for NaTakallam

### **The role of microwork in forced displacement: lessons from Iraq and Palestine**

Giselle Gonzales

If forcibly displaced people are to be active participants in the betterment of their future, yet face protracted exile in camps or host communities that severely or entirely limit their ability to participate in the local workforce, what solutions are available for them to generate a sustainable livelihood? Enter microwork; an emerging digital work phenomenon that breaks down larger digital projects into small, entry-level tasks that can be outsourced to a global workforce. Microwork is not a panacea, but rather one noteworthy emerging solution that enables access to autonomous income generation for refugees and other vulnerable populations. This talk will discuss the microwork ecosystem, consider microwork's place as a tool for sustainable human development among displaced populations, and reveal some of the key practices and challenges faced by the ecosystem's stakeholders through two case studies in Iraq and Palestine.

### **Building a remote work platform for marginalized communities in Lebanon**

Charbel Trad

B.O.T (Bridge. Outsource. Transform) is an impact sourcing platform that provides high quality digital services executed by Skilled Freelancers from marginalized communities in Lebanon. Through DOT Lebanon's digital and entrepreneurship youth training program given as part of the Generation of Innovation Leaders (GIL) Program by UNICEF, we were able to find a considerable pool of youth from marginalized communities that are equipped with medium to advanced digital skills, which are adapted to the current market needs.

## Workshop participants

### Andreas Hackl

Andreas is Lecturer in the Anthropology of Development at the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh. He currently leads a two-year research project on digital refugee livelihoods and digital labour: *refugeework.net*. Andreas has previously worked intensively in Israel/Palestine, both as an anthropologist and as a journalist. His anthropological research in the Middle East included work on cross-border solidarity activists in civil resistance struggles; on labour mobility and economic dispossession; on Palestinian citizenship and urban inclusion in Israel; on displacement and exile; on settler colonialism; and on the role of social mobility and migration in the global sustainable development agenda. As a journalist based in the Middle East Andreas wrote regularly for The New Humanitarian (formerly IRIN) and served as Jerusalem-based correspondent for Austrian, Swiss and German newspapers.

### Meredith Byrne

Meredith Byrne is a Technical Officer at the International Labour Organization, based in Amman, Jordan. In her current position, she contributes to programming under the ILO's Syria Response in both Jordan and Iraq. Prior to her work in Jordan, Meredith worked at the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland where she supported work on crisis migration. Meredith has published work on climate-induced migration, refugee livelihoods and labour market issues. She received her MPhil in Development Studies from Oxford University and Bachelors of Arts from Connecticut College.

### Irene Omondi

Irene Joined UNHCR Jordan in August 2013. She has been working both at field and national level in camp management, community-based protection and education. Her work has mostly been at Zaatari camp for over 5 years responding to the Syria emergency. Since 2018, she has been serving as Head of Sub Office Mafraq – Jordan. Her expertise covers camp management and coordination, community-based protection, education and conflict management. Ms. Omondi's experience in UNHCR covers over 8 years, including serving in Yemen where she was field/protection officer with a focus on mixed migration. She has also been engaged in humanitarian work with other UN agencies in Afghanistan, Liberia, and Egypt in peace keeping and emergency response. She holds a Master in Business Administration from University of Liverpool. She has also studied Development and Human rights as well as International Humanitarian law.

### Sarah Kouzi

Sarah is Project Manager at the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service, AUB. She has more than twenty years of experience in the development field and worked in a wide spectrum of bodies such as the UN, public sector, private sector, and Non-Governmental Organizations both locally and internationally. She has extensive experience in the development sector as well as the relief and recovery sectors. Her experience ranges from establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation

unit to developing Community Accountability and Reporting Mechanisms to rolling out gender minimum standards. In her current role as Digital Skills Training Project Manager at the American University of Beirut, she is responsible for economically empowering vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian youth through the digital economy. Kouzi holds a Master of Public Health degree from AUB.

### **Havva Arslan**

Havva is a current student with CodeYourFuture in Glasgow. Originally a teacher from Nigeria, she came to Glasgow as an asylum seeker, and found it difficult to find a role in her new country as a newcomer. Then she started studying with CodeYourFuture and started learning new skills that not only impacted her prospects, but also led to a more engaged life in Glasgow. What started as something to keep her busy turned into a strong motivator to develop skills and think about a new career. During difficult times, coding has been her best friend, and she's looking forward to what's next in her career.

### **Robert Gelb**

Rob is a co-founder of CodeYourFuture in Scotland (and cohort 1's cook!). He's the CEO of tech startups Kindaba (private social network for families) and HeySummit (virtual summit platform) in Edinburgh. Rob first became involved with CYF through meeting the founder Mozafar Haider and focused on the recruitment and career-planning elements of the programme. Rob used to work for the Careers Centre at the University of St Andrews, and has a deep interest in bringing down the barriers to education and employment, with both of his companies being entirely remote-positive.

### **Grace Atkinson**

Grace is the Executive Director of Jusoor and has extensive experience in the education and development sector, having worked on projects in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, France and the Netherlands. She previously focused on utilizing digital technology to help the underprivileged to access university by co-founding the two country offices of Kiron Open Higher Education, where her most recent role was MENA Regional Director. Grace has a Master degree in International Relations from Sciences Po Paris and a Bachelor degree from Leiden University. In her current position as Executive Director, Grace has oversight of the different programs run by Jusoor, including; scholarships worldwide, education in emergencies, career development and entrepreneurship programs, all empowering Syrian youth for a brighter tomorrow.

### **Jyotsna Khara**

Joy is pursuing a Master's Degree in International Development from the University of Edinburgh. Her research focusses on digital refugee livelihoods, specifically in the Middle East. This has brought her to the ILO in Amman where she assisted the Migrant Branch on a project with the World Economic Forum's Global Council on the Humanitarian System. With the ILO's standards of 'decent work' in mind, she worked with organizations to measure the scope and impact of their digital interventions for refugees.

## **Ann-Christin Wagner**

Ann-Christin is a lecturer in Anthropology of Development at the University of Edinburgh. For her doctoral studies, Ann did fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork with Syrian refugees in northern Jordan in 2016/17. In 2019, she conducted research with Syrian and Congolese youth in Uganda and Jordan as part of a pilot study on adolescent refugees' reproductive health, together with Dr George Palattiyil (University of Edinburgh). Before her PhD, she worked with the International Organization for Migration in Geneva.

## **Benjamin Hounsell**

Ben is a Research Associate at the University of Strathmore in Kenya and Head of Implementation Research at Samuel Hall, where he specialises in the role of technology, entrepreneurship and innovation to find sustainable solutions that address some of the most pressing issues currently faced in the Global South. Ben has authored numerous articles and technical papers on the role of technology and development, which has helped inform innovation strategies for a range of humanitarian and development organisations. This has led to the development of real-world solutions, such as improving access to remittances using mobile phones in partnership with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

As Chairman of the charity *Techfugees* in Kenya, Ben encourages collaboration between NGOs, multilaterals, academics and entrepreneurs to develop digital services that better serve refugees and low-income communities. Ben holds a PhD in Information Engineering from the University of Edinburgh and a cum laude Masters in Development Practice from Sciences Po Paris.

## **Faheem Hussain**

Faheem is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society (SFIS) at Arizona State University (ASU). Faheem holds a Ph.D. and an M.S. degree in Engineering and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. His research interests include: Development for Displaced Population, ICT for Sustainable Development, Digital Afterlife, Digital Rights, and Women Empowerment using STEM. Faheem has also been involved as a Technology Policy Expert in different research projects with a number of United Nations organizations (e.g., UN-APCICT, UNDP), international development agencies (e.g., IDRC, DFID, Ford and Rockefeller Foundation), and international think tanks (e.g., Freedom House, LIRNEasia, Ideacorps) in the fields of Technology, Public Policy, and Development. For the last 2 years, Faheem is working on issues related to access to information and communication, and fake news network among the displaced Rohingya population from Myanmar.

## **Karina Grosheva**

Karina is an impact tech entrepreneur focused on AI innovation in aerial imagery and youth employment in conflict-affected countries. She founded TaQadam using a human-centered design

approach to identify and understand the root causes of youth unemployment in Lebanon and Iraq and recognize the innovative digital solutions in workforce development. She holds a Masters of Public Administration from NYU, and shares her time between New York and the Middle East.

### **Lorraine Charles**

Lorraine is a Research Associate at the Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge and co-founder of Na'amal, which aims to provide education for remote work for refugees and then link them to the private sector. She is also currently a research consultant for an Abu Dhabi government entity. She has worked as a consultant with NGOs and INGOs, as well as in academia and the private sector. She has been working on issues surrounding the Syrian crisis since 2011, conducting research, building strategic partnerships and implementing projects. Her research interests are refugee education and employment, with a particular interest in remote work.

### **Kirstin Lardy**

Kirstin is an independent researcher focused on digital freelance labour, the gig-economy and tech use in low-income migrant populations. She currently works at a social impact start-up based out of Dubai called Smart Labour, where she explores mobile phone usage of low-income migrant workers in the UAE. She has participated in multiple projects in South Africa exploring gig-work and tech uptake in low-income informal settlement communities in Johannesburg. Kirstin graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a Master's in International Development and received the SSPS Student Prize for Best Dissertation in International Development for her work entitled "Digital Freelance Labour: An exploration of the localities of global digital work in Egypt."

### **Nisreen Fansa**

Nisreen is British- Syrian and based in the UK, where she works as part NaTakallam's UK outreach team to expand their services to UK universities, schools, the charity sector, and to businesses. With a background in Linguistics she has always been interested in learning languages and her first experience with NaTakallam was as an early customer. Moreover, Nisreen works in healthcare as a speech and language therapist. NaTakallam offers language learning programs delivered by refugees, for all levels of Arabic, French, Persian and Spanish, as well as professional translation services to individuals and organizations worldwide.

### **Ghaith Alhallak**

Ghaith has been working with Natakallam as a conversation partner and a translator for 4 years. I also study international relations in Padua University, Italy. and write as a freelance journalist in many Arab, British, and Italian websites. Ghaith had to leave Syria in 2013 to avoid being forced into military service. He crossed the borders to Lebanon where he stayed for 3 years working as a journalist. This is where he began working with Natakallam, which helped him to work online at home while he was unable to obtain a job permit as a refugee. In 2016, he was accepted to be

resettled in Italy. Here is an article about Ghaith's story of exile, titled 'Why I deserted the Syrian army': <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/why-i-deserted-syrian-army>

### **Giselle Gonzales**

Giselle is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh's Business School and holds a Master of Science degree in Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Having spent the last five years traveling the world working with National Geographic, Disney, and TCS World Travel as an expedition leader and human-interest writer, she is driven to discover and influence how market-driven solutions can be utilized for the benefit of the world's most marginalized. Her interest in the lives of displaced people began when she travelled Europe's refugee route as a writer and photographer, documenting the stories of refugees, locals, and volunteers from Greece to Germany during the 2015/16 mass migration from the Middle East into Europe. This interest has continued with her recent research on the emergence of digital work as a tool for sustainable human development among forcibly displaced people.

### **Charbel Trad**

Charbel is digital platform programme manager at DOT, the Digital Opportunity Trust. He brings has extensive experience managing projects in the technology sector. Prior to joining DOT, Charbel was Venture Development Manager at Valour Ventures, and he has worked extensively in the telecom and mobile industry as a software engineer and product lead. Charbel is the co-founder of Instaconsult, a mobile consultancy platform that helps people get on-demand information from top specialists, consultants, influencers, clinics and businesses. He holds a Masters in Computer Software Engineering from Antonine University.

### **Mursal Hedayat**

Mursal is co-founder and CEO of Chatterbox, Learn Languages with Refugees. Chatterbox is a Multi-award winning language learning service employing refugees to teach their skills to people who want to learn. We deliver language lessons online and in-person, to individuals as well as organisations. And while our clients learn, our refugee tutors earn a living and improve their employability. Mursal has contributed analysis to Forbes, on topics such as 'why the private sector must help refugees'. She was on the '30 under 30' Forbes list of social entrepreneurs in 2018.

### **Jamie Cross**

Jamie is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Associate Dean for Knowledge Exchange and Impact at the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. He is a social anthropologist of 'development' particularly interested in infrastructures, low carbon energy futures, corporations and social enterprises, work, labour and global supply chains. Before joining the University of Edinburgh in 2011, Jamie worked for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Dutch Centre for Research on Multinationals (SOMO).

### **Jean-Benoit Falisse**

Jean-Benoit is Lecturer in Africa and International Development at the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh. His main research interests are in the provision of basic social services (health-care, education, justice) in so-called 'fragile' contexts and refugee livelihoods. In the last few years, his work has been on the community governance of primary health care centres in Burundi and South Kivu in the DR Congo. He is now augmenting this research agenda with projects on the livelihood of the Burundian refugees in Tanzania, access to justice in Burundi, the 'indigent' label in the Congolese health system, and social accountability in education in Eastern DR Congo. Prior to joining the university, Jean-Benoit was working for the United Nations and international NGOs in the African Great Lakes region. He has continued advising international and local organisations since.

### **Wifak Gueddana**

Wifak is a Research Associate at King's College, London and the lead investigator on a pilot project funded by 'EPSRC NETWORK+: Social Justice through the Digital Economy', and titled 'Platforms, Forums and Hidden Labour'. Previously, she worked in the University of Edinburgh, in ISIG, London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE) and in Microsoft Research, Cambridge, UK. Her work, building on her PhD (LSE 2013) focuses on the development of digital methods to study online participation, digital platforms and real work in the virtual world; She has experimented with large-datasets (20,000 emails over five years) and combined computational methods with qualitative research (interviews and longitudinal montage). After that she continued to work and develop her methodology, by running analysis on online educational networks and more recently in relation to a funding bid on platform work and inequality. Over the past two years, she has presented her work in many conferences and has participated in organising two workshops on the use of forum data on gig workers and the use of topic modelling and visualisations as exploratory tools.