

## Startup WorkAround brings jobs and dignity to Refugees

We are living in a world in which [65.6 million](#) people have been forcibly displaced due to war, conflict and violence. As of 2016, [12 million](#) of these people were Syrians. Wafaa Arbash, a Syrian herself, felt compelled to do something about the growing crisis. Many of her friends were stranded in limbo, not knowing if or when they may be able to return, or where they would be sent to next. They have difficulty finding jobs in host countries and are at risk of joining the conflict or being drawn into human and drug trafficking and other forms of violence. Ensuring peace, not just in areas of conflict, but in areas of resettlement, requires new and creative approaches.

[WorkAround](#), Wafaa's company, is providing one of these creative solutions. WorkAround, a collaboration between four women from four different parts of the world, provides online jobs for refugees. These jobs are "micro-tasks" that can be completed in 5-20 min with an internet connection and a mobile phone or laptop. The flexibility of these short jobs allows refugees to work, even if appointments with UNHCR and other limitations might prevent them from working regular hours. In addition, they can continue to work even if they are relocated or move to a new place. These jobs restore dignity by increasing the sense of usefulness among refugees, and providing them with opportunities for further training and free education through WorkArounds partnerships with online universities.



From left to right: Shadi Sheikhsaraf, Director of Partnerships; Jennie Kelly, Director of Operations and Finance; Wafaa Abrash, CEO & Founder; and Shai Dinnar, Director of Marketing. Photo Credit: Halley Saul.

### WorkAround

WorkAround, offers skilled refugees online, flexible and temporary work to help them bridge the gap between waiting and resettlement, restoring dignity and providing economic empowerment.

### WorkAround's Services

WorkAround's services include translation, transcription, data entry and image tagging, and can perform other tasks by request and are happy to customize solutions for any organization. WorkAround is especially interested in working with organizations and institutions that share their concern for refugees, social justice, and a more peaceful world.

### WorkAround's Team

WorkAround's team is internationally diverse with members from Syria, Iran, Israel, and the United States. They also bring a diverse set of skills and backgrounds.

Wafaa Abrash, the founder of WorkAround, is from Syria and recently graduated from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University with dual masters degrees in Coexistence and Conflict Resolution and Sustainable International Development. As a Syrian, she is committed to finding a way to help her fellow Syrians, but realized quickly that traditional solutions weren't working. "Aid is not a sustainable solution for anyone to move forward" says Arbash, "what people need are jobs that will help them sustain themselves and restore their dignity." Wafaa Arbash is joined by Shadi Sheikhsaraf, who has over 8 years of international experiences and has worked with different United Nations agencies including UNHCR, Shai Dinnar who has worked in the technology startup setting and has conducted international business development strategies and partnership building in the US, and Jennie Kelly who has an MBA and private sector experience. Together, the four have won multiple startup competitions and were recently named as finalists to the 2017 MassChallenge accelerator program where only 8% of applicants were accepted.

In addition to winning contests, WorkAround is also bringing value to its clients. The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life at Brandeis University recently hired WorkAround to translate the executive summary of "A Vision of Aleppo," a report on a design lab, into Arabic to share with Arabic speaking stakeholders.

To learn what WorkAround can do for your organization or institution, contact [info@workaroundonline.com](mailto:info@workaroundonline.com).

Visit their website to learn more: [WorkAroundOnline.com](http://WorkAroundOnline.com)