

LAB 4 – From Learning to Employment

Nexus 3.0 Input

1. Background

Higher education plays a key role in preparing students for **meaningful employment and economic participation**. However, students from crisis contexts often face significant barriers when transitioning from education to the labour market.

Even after completing their studies, many displaced learners lack:

- access to professional networks
- internship or first work experience opportunities
- employer recognition of their skills
- clear pathways linking education to employment.

At the same time, many companies face **persistent skills shortages**, particularly in sectors such as ICT, engineering, healthcare, logistics, hospitality and green industries.

This creates a paradox: **companies struggle to recruit talent while capable students remain excluded from employment pathways**.

2. Key Challenges

Several structural barriers limit the transition from education to employment:

- limited connections between universities and employers
- lack of structured internship opportunities
- uncertainty among employers regarding international or refugee qualifications
- insufficient incentives for companies to engage with diverse talent pools.

These gaps prevent universities, companies, and students from building **sustainable education-to-employment pathways**.

3. Possible Direction: Employer–University Talent Partnerships

One approach could be to strengthen **structured partnerships between higher education institutions and companies** that connect education directly to labour market needs.

Such partnerships could include:

- employer-sponsored higher education pathways
- internships and mentorship programmes
- employer participation in curriculum development
- diversity-focused recruitment initiatives.

These initiatives could help companies view refugee and displaced students not only as beneficiaries of support but as **valuable contributors to innovation, diversity and economic growth**.

4. Proposal for Discussion – TalentBridge Compact

Nexus 3.0 is currently exploring the **TalentBridge Compact**, a public–private initiative designed to align employer workforce needs with higher education pathways.

The model proposes that:

- **companies sponsor higher education or training for students**, including tuition and possibly stipends
- students complete their studies while benefiting from mentorship and industry exposure
- graduates commit to working for the sponsoring company for a defined period (e.g. 2–5 years).

The initiative aims to:

- address **skills shortages in key sectors**
- create **predictable talent pipelines for companies**
- expand access to higher education for **disadvantaged youth and displaced learners**
- strengthen collaboration between universities, employers, and government.

A pilot could focus on sectors with strong labour demand and include collaboration between **companies, universities, government actors, and philanthropic partners**.

Nexus 3.0 is interested in identifying partners interested in exploring models that connect education pathways, workforce needs, and inclusion of displaced talent within national labour market strategies.