UNHCR publishes results of the work inclusion programme for 2025

The UNHCR Italy programme promoting the inclusion of refugees in the labour market has had a positive outcome, with over 1,300 logos awarded to companies promoting the employment of refugees and 69,000 career paths launched in eight editions since 2017. The year-over-year growth is the result of collaboration between institutions, businesses and civil society, which over time have transformed employment inclusion from a declared principle into a concrete, structured and increasingly widespread practice.

This trend is confirmed by data from the final report of the eighth edition. In 2025, 18,600 career paths were activated, an increase of approximately 15% over the previous year. 230 companies were awarded, three more than in 2024. Since the programme's launch, the number of applications received has nearly quadrupled, from 67 in 2017 to 258 in 2025. These results are not only indicators of growth, but also clear signs of a structural shift in companies' focus on refugee inclusion, a shift built over time through shared commitment and now called upon to further consolidate.

As shown in the final report of the eighth edition, employment contracts account for over 99% of all hirings (+1%). Among these, fixed-term contracts account for 92%, while permanent contracts account for 6%. The share of women hired remained stable, at around 17%. Among the reasons that drove companies to hire refugees, the desire to promote cultural change within and outside the company comes first (24%), followed by the desire to strengthen commitment to the community and disadvantaged people (22%). Recognition of the added value represented by the transversal skills of refugees also increased significantly compared to last year (10%). Regarding the sectors of the awarded companies, the accommodation and catering sector ranks first with 23%, followed by other services (20%) and manufacturing (17%).

As part of this eighth edition, UNHCR has also awarded the "We Welcome" logo to 60 cooperatives, non-profit organisations, foundations, trade associations, trade unions, employment services and local authorities that, in various capacities, have committed to promoting the employment of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

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Some of the awarded companies have hired refugees through the so-called Refugee Work Corridors—an opportunity introduced by Law 50/23 that allows refugees, often in difficult situations where their skills are not valued, to enter Italy safely and legally with a work visa. This innovative model combines protection, safe mobility, and skilled employment. Companies take an active role throughout the process, supported by a structured network of partners and institutions. The model is strengthened by seven approved projects in various sectors and a Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant national ministries—including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies.

Source(s)

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (18 June, 2026), INCLUSIONE RIFUGIATI, UNHCR: 69 mila inserimenti lavorativi con “Welcome” dal 2017 [Refugee inclusion, UNHCR: 69,000 job placements with "Welcome" since 2017], https://www.unhcr.org/it/notizie/comunicati-stampa/inclusione-rifugiati-unhcr-69-mila-inserimenti-lavorativi-con-welcome-dal

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