

Transitions Engineering and Architecture Peer Support workshop Wednesday 12th December 2018

Welcome

Presentations by Transitions and 2 candidates. Please see slides.

Key points in presentations re finding work in the UK:

Refugee Water Engineer (SAK)

- There are good supplies of vacancies and engineers in the UK can transfer across Engineering fields more easily than in some other countries
- Be flexible in the roles you look for - carefully check Job descriptions to see how your profile fits
- Key importance of professional networking in the UK in order to find a job
- Networking can be assisted by using a coach from organisations like Transitions
- Professional bodies are good places to increase networks – can go with a coach to free events
- Finding paid work experience to use your core skills and gain local orientation is crucial. Use networks to source one and organisations like Transitions
- Stay positive - by collecting information and creating a professional network around you.
- Make your own strategy, based on that information and networking

Refugee Project Engineer (OI):

- In the UK, having local relevant professional work experience is key to finding a suitable job
- A local qualification, such as a Prince 2 vocational course or University courses are valuable, but having local work experience is crucial.
- Work experience provides a local reference, familiarity with using British Standards and knowing how they relate to your own experience of standards overseas, familiarity with local business culture including management culture. It also evidences to employers that you are hireable.
- A work placement also provides a place to use and develop business English, including preparing reports, taking minutes and interacting in team meetings effectively. Teams often use flat hierarchies, where each team member is expected to offer suggestions and ideas.
- Important to join a Professional body as soon as possible and start building up a portfolio in order to register as an Incorporated then Chartered Engineer

Notes small group discussions of 5 themes

Theme 1-English Language:

-Do you need to follow language courses before applying for a job?

-Is the language a barrier in finding a job?

- The key is to be able to express yourself
- Exposure to using Business English is most important, for example during an Internship and/or on a course.
- Catch 22 - how to gain exposure?
- There are free online forums where you can exchange language support assistance

- It isn't crucial to be 100% fluent - it's about communication
- The UK market is very international
- Some jobs require a higher level of written English skills, for example Marketing
- If making spoken presentations, it's important to have good spoken English
- Use online resources and Job descriptions to be familiar with common terms in your profession including acronyms !
- Jobcentre could help more with language support, especially at higher levels

Theme 2 – University study and short Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses:

- *What are the pros/cons of doing short Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses?*
- *Do you think you need a Degree/Masters from the UK?*
- *What Software can you learn to boost your chances in finding a job?*

- 2 plus years' experience from home country is worth more to UK employers than a UK degree and no overseas or UK experience
- Prioritise which short courses to do. Use your network and use Job Descriptions to see where your skills strengths and gaps may be in the UK market
- Good to get professional level CSCS card. Jobcentres often assist with this.
- Paying for them: There are some trust funds who loan refugees money for professional development courses. Eg Refuaid and Restart. Contact Transitions for details.
- Software: eg Revit useful for Architecture/Design, Rhino (3D modelling), 3DMax (highly valued in market).
- Don't have to have a UK Degree or Masters to find a professional job
- Can be an advantage to have a Degree from a University (Overseas or UK) known to a specific employer.
- Can give confidence in up to date knowledge of software and methodologies
- Naric will provide a free informal telephone opinion of the academic equivalence. Transitions can assist with that. Can go on CV> Few employers know what Naric is though. It is universities and professional bodies who mostly use it. Employer understand Professional body membership more than Naric.
- Refugees can access student loans. Increasing numbers of UK Universities are offering bursaries to refugees.

Theme 3 – Work Experience/Internships (role of Government in that)

- *The role of Government and what help you can get from them as a refugee job-seeker?*
- *If you got an internship/work experience placement, what can you do to increase your chance of getting a permanent job?*

- Jobcentre Plus is very weak on this and often unhelpful – pressurising refugees to look for unskilled work and leave their profession behind
- Jobcentre needs to have connections with professional specialisations
- Universal Jobmatch is not helpful
- Getting information is really hard. There needs to be a website with clear information
- For example, need to know about all the training options including apprenticeships, graduate schemes, internships.
- Why doesn't the Home Office finish the process of settlement by providing quality employment services? Great there are no camps in the UK, but there are a lot of unemployed/underemployed refugees.
- Why aren't Professional Bodies better educated about this and more actively helpful?

- If you get work experience: record your activities and successes in a logbook/journal
- Be a good team member - supporting others and offering ideas and solutions
- Make sure colleagues see your value to the team
- Keep updating your CV during the work placement
- Keep updating your LinkedIn profile
- Network network network

Theme 4 – Professional bodies:

-Is it important to join professional bodies?

-What are the professional bodies you can/need to join and when?

- Yes. Employers understand that membership indicates a level of competency
- Engineering Council register all the Engineering Professional Bodies. Contact Transitions for details and assistance
- Registration (eg Eng Technician, Incorporated, Chartered) is not a priority until you have a professional job. But Graduate membership is really important.
- Some will reduce the membership fee if you are on a low income. If they wont, there are trust funds who provide interest free loans.
- Architecture: ARB Registration very expensive and very challenging. Not necessary in order to find a job. Can get work experience without it. The initial priority is to find relevant work experience. CIAT membership can be an option, to get on CV while Jobsearching/looking for work experience.

Theme 5– Work:

- Is there a single most appropriate and effective way to apply for work?

- How to reflect your existing skills and experience and tailor your C.V around each and every job you applying for (Key words)?

-what are the formal processes and stages for interviews? And how to present yourself in an interview?

- No. There are a lot of ways not to do it though. Avoid clicking and applying for dozens of jobs – not likely to get interviews.
- Focus on gaining UK experience and on networking (see above sections)
- Go through requirements for each job role and check CV matches
- Use Key words from the job description - recruitment software often checks that
- Use LinkedIn - use key words on there
- Be **specific** for each job application.
- See yourself as a brand – showcase your strengths
- Don't apply for jobs that have been advertised for a long time
- Be flexible and see your skills as transferable to related jobs, not exactly the ones you have done
- Create a portfolio which demonstrates your skills and achievements. Eg Key highlights of success and University projects.

AOB

Transitions should keep approaching media outlets such as the Guardian to highlight the lack of services for refugee jobseekers.