



## Thought Leadership Corner – August 2018

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[About the Author](#)

*“The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation.”*

*– Nelson Mandela*

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## The Ideal Candidate

One afternoon in the height of summer 2016, I am in the middle of my normal weekly classes in Clarkston teaching Digital Literacy to a group of adult immigrants and refugees who have little-to-no computer skills when I hear a knock on the door. All of my students turn to see who is interrupting their session. I excuse myself and open the door.

It is a woman seeking to learn to use the computer to apply for a job at a grocery store. She tells me that she is a refugee from South Sudan and has been referred to me after she was asked to fill out an online job application at the store, but she couldn't because she had never used a computer before. She says she felt so embarrassed. I ask her to register for my classes and I help her with the application the following day. When I tell the students about the situation, they are pleased.

Over the years in my journey giving back and offering myself to help others, I have focused on disadvantaged individuals and communities both locally and internationally. I find joy in helping people like this woman find answers to challenging situations.

We are all trying to be the best of ourselves regardless of where we all originated from, racially or regionally. The forces of the universe and works of mankind have greatly influenced and contributed to the current state of the world – global warming, hate and racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, closing borders to people fleeing for their lives and many other terrible things. All of this has destabilized the well-being of humankind around the globe.

Families are spread all over the world as refugees or immigrants. Displaced people may be skilled or unskilled – either way, they have the will and ability to contribute to the workforce in their new country of resettlement.

“Education is the key!” This message has been repeatedly iterated in families across the board – both locally and all over the world. For individuals specifically in countries that are greatly affected by civil wars, torture and persecution, they don’t get to ripen the fruits of their education and, as immigrants they find themselves being treated as though they are uneducated and worthless.

It’s unfortunate that the skills of these people have been underutilized, which means that the economy is not benefitting from having skilled workers in jobs where they can contribute to their specialty. Here in the U.S., companies are slowly learning to hire immigrants and refugees in more advanced positions, realizing that they, too, can be the ideal candidate for a job.

For immigrants and refugees with highly specialized skills and graduate-level credentials in fields such as engineering, medicine and teaching, New AP’s Career Services department connects them to skill-building opportunities to ensure that refugees build on their individual skills to help them realize their American dream.

I joined New AP with a desire to continue my service of helping disadvantaged or low-income individuals and families. And as the new Vocational Counselor, it’s been very rewarding to be able to help individuals seeking to further their careers in a variety of fields. This responsibility is generously shared with both New AP staff and other supporting organizations, individuals and companies hiring or mentoring the respective clients.

I invite you to join me in the effort to help Georgia's refugees and immigrants achieve their professional goals and dreams. Open your doors to an immigrant or refugee and offer to support one to use his or her skills to better serve the country and his or her family.