



Project: Refugee Women Turn Trash Into Treasure

Submitted by Refugee Artisan Initiative

Problem For manufacturers, discarding waste materials goes against ESG goals. But managing waste Re-X is not part of most manufacturers' core business. And many waste streams are difficult to Re-X.

Solution A third-party solution provider that takes the Re-X work off manufacturers' hands while providing significant community benefits. This provider:

- a. Partners with manufacturers to develop viable and scalable circular-economy solutions for their waste streams; and
- b. Provides new, skilled jobs to marginalized communities to remanufacture and repurpose the waste streams into marketable products.

Innovation Refugee Artisan Initiative (RAI) has already developed and demonstrated this model:

- We're partnering with some of Seattle's largest manufacturers and retailers - including Amazon, Starbucks, and Tommy Bahama - as well as dozens of smaller companies.
- In our first seven years, we've produced over 150,000 Re-Xed items and diverted 60,000 lbs. of partners' waste from landfill.
- We employ 32 refugee women, the demographic group with the highest jobless rate in the US.
- Our artisans have collectively earned over \$1 million through their RAI work.

Next step "Refine as we scale": Build a systematized, sustainable, and zero-waste business model going forward, while developing marketable products to drive growth.