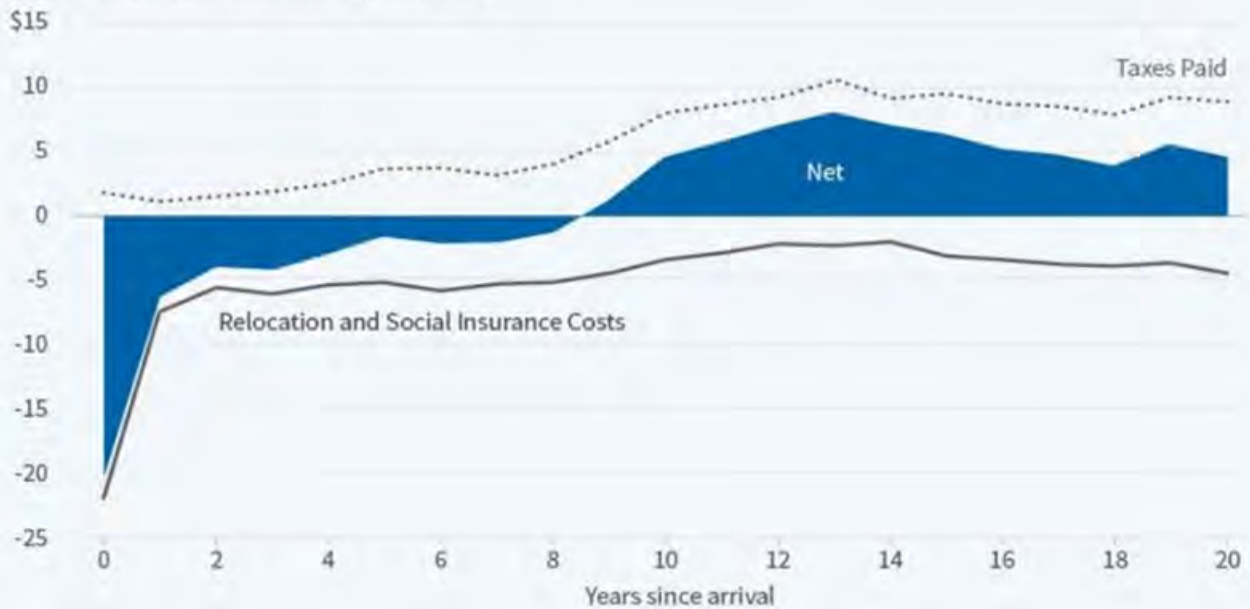


What Happens When Refugees Come to the United States

Fiscal Costs of Refugees Aged 18-45

Annual costs in constant dollars (thousands)



Source: Researchers' calculations using data from the American Community Survey, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, NBER's TAXSIM and other federal and state databases

Over the first 20 years in the U.S., the average adult refugee pays taxes that exceed relocation costs and social benefits.

Are refugees a burden on the taxpayer? New evidence suggests that, with a long enough perspective, the answer is no. William N. Evans and Daniel Fitzgerald, in *The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS* (NBER Working Paper No. 23498), find that over their first 20 years in the United States, refugees who arrived as adults aged 18-45 contributed more in taxes than they received in relocation benefits and other public assistance. They also find that the younger the refugees were when they resettled in America, the more likely they were to catch up with their native-born peers educationally and economically.

The researchers calculate on average, the U.S. spends \$15,148 in relocation costs and \$92,217 in social benefits over an adult refugee's first 20 years in the country. Over that same time period, the average adult refugee pays \$128,689 in taxes — \$21,324 more than the benefits received.

The researchers constructed lifecycle profiles for refugees by extrapolating data from the 2010-14 American Community Survey. They separated refugees from other immigrants using Department of State data, and created a sample of 20,000 refugees who entered the country in 1990-2014. Their sample represents a third of refugees who arrived during the period. The researchers found that refugees who arrived before the age of 14 had, by ages 19-24, graduated from high school at the same rates as their U.S.-born counterparts. At ages 23-28, those refugees displayed the same college graduation rates as natives.

Refugees who arrived as older teens took longer to obtain their high school diplomas than their U.S.-born peers. The researchers attribute this largely to language difficulties and the fact that many in this demographic arrived as unaccompanied minors.

Initial disadvantages are offset by refugees' appetite for education, the researchers find, noting that "refugees who arrived as children of any age have much higher school enrollment rates than U.S.-born respondents of the same age." The gap in high school graduation rates observed between refugees and natives aged 19-24 disappears within a decade, and the gap in college graduation rates is halved over this period. Controlling for educational attainment, the researchers found "no difference in economic outcomes between refugees who arrived as children and U.S.-born survey respondents."

The researchers then turn to refugees who arrived as adults ages 18-45. On average, these individuals were less educated and less fluent in English than their U.S.-born counterparts. After six years in the United States, however, these individuals had higher labor-force participation and employment rates than similarly aged U.S. natives. Given their lower educational and language levels, their earnings were lower and their use of welfare and food assistance higher than the U.S.-born group. Education and language ability accounted for 60 percent of the earnings difference. Controlling for those factors, the researchers found that after a decade, public assistance rates were the same for refugees and the native born. — Steve Maas The Digest is not copyrighted and may be reproduced freely with appropriate attribution of source.

<https://www.nber.org/digest/aug17/w23498.shtml>

The Economic and Social Outcomes of Refugees in the United States: Evidence from the ACS

[Kino border Initiative](#)

Joanna Williams



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Joanna Williams, as the Director of Education and Advocacy, is the primary coordinator of the educational and advocacy programs offered by the KBI in the United States, which includes the development and delivery of curricula that is attentive to both the Catholic social tradition and the contemporary realities of border and migration policies, as well as the development and realization of an advocacy policy and plan.

Welcome to Buffalo: why many Cities in decline welcome immigrants?

Utica Chobani NGO

www.tent.org/our-work/hiring-supply-chain/

Women's World Banking Entrepreneurs in Central America

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/05/central-america-s-besieged-women/>

How supporting entrepreneurs can improve the lives of Central American women

The ability to earn a decent income and live safely within one's own community is vital not just for one's own wellbeing, but also for economic development and political stability. That is why initiatives that seek to promote economic growth in Central America – or anywhere, for that matter – must address head-on the needs of women entrepreneurs.

Across Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, women who seek to escape poverty by launching small businesses often find that success brings more suffering – and not just for them, but also for their children. Beyond having to contend with a culture of machismo, weak protection by the state leaves successful women entrepreneurs vulnerable to armed gangs and militias. As the owner of a small cosmetics company put it, “I feel like it's better that my business doesn't progress, because if it grows, I'll suffer extortion.”

Recent research confirms these fears. Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE), a United States-based initiative to reduce legal, economic, and policy barriers to female entrepreneurship in poor countries, recently held 27 focus groups across Honduras and El Salvador. Many of the barriers to women's economic empowerment that were identified – such as limited access to credit, lack of business and financial education, unequal property rights, and lack of connection to social networks and markets – are globally pervasive.

But women in Central America face added threats from gang violence and organized criminal activity. Rates of femicide – the murder of a woman or girl for gender-related reasons – have reached [epidemic levels](#). In Honduras, there were 5.8 femicides per 100,000 women in 2016. In El Salvador, the rate is an appalling 10.2 per 100,000. Gangs also force children to join and subject girls to sexual abuse.

For entrepreneurs, the threat of physical harm is compounded by gangs' demands for bribes or “taxes.” To avoid attracting the attention of these groups, women forego storefronts or signage, operating quietly from inside their homes and delivering products directly to clients. They travel to faraway cities – often in the dead of night – to sell their wares, which increases business risk and transportation costs. All of this limits their businesses' growth potential.

But simply giving up on one's business is not a good option, either. Small entrepreneurship remains one of the few available paths out of poverty in Central America, especially for women, who face [unemployment rates](#) that are 50% higher than those of men, owing partly to cultural norms that impede working outside the home. As one Salvadoran woman told WAGE, “My husband doesn't like that I work. If I don't obey him, I run the risk that he will abuse me.”

When your only option for escaping poverty means placing a target on you and your family's backs, the future looks bleak. Unsurprisingly, many desperate Central American women have fled their homes – often on foot, children in tow – seeking safety and opportunity in the United States. But for every woman who leaves, many more stay behind, either in their hometown or in new towns within their country, where they can only hope that their newfound anonymity will offer some security.

The ability to earn a decent income and live safely within one's own community is vital not just for one's own wellbeing, but also for economic development and political stability. That is why initiatives that seek to promote economic growth in Central America – or anywhere, for that matter – must address head-on the needs of women entrepreneurs.

While there are no simple solutions, promising steps can be taken. At the center of any strategy for improving conditions for women entrepreneurs in Central America should be local microfinance institutions.

Women rely on MFIs for much more than start-up business funding. According to WAGE research, they also seek financial education and help with emergency planning, to facilitate a quick departure if needed – all delivered discretely.

Have you read?

- [The hidden problem of internal displacement in Central America](#)
- [What is driving migration in Central America?](#)
- [Women teaming up as work wives are transforming the nature of work](#)

MFIs should pay attention to the needs of women entrepreneurs and tailor their services accordingly. For example, they should provide financial products that enable women to save in secret, hidden from the prying eyes of their husbands, their spouses' associates, or gang members. Loan products that offer lower interest rates or advance specific goals, such as savings for health emergencies, including physical attacks, would also help.

Global consumers also have a role to play in improving the economic prospects of women in Central America. Some 300 international companies operate in Honduras alone, in sectors ranging from textiles to electronics. Buyers of their products, in the US and elsewhere, should be leveraging their wallets to persuade those companies to drive change in the communities where they operate.

Whether pressured by their customers or not, international companies operating in Central America should use their clout to demand that local and national governments root out impunity-enabling corruption and enforce laws that protect women and children. At the same time, they should establish partnerships with MFIs and civil-society organizations to develop and carry out corporate social responsibility initiatives that directly support local communities, especially women.

Foreign governments, beginning with the US, should support progress in the region, including through continued aid delivery. Researchers have [shown](#) that, amid severe economic shocks, foreign aid can contribute significantly to conflict prevention. Given the powerful effect this would have on migrant flows, the US should be motivated to strengthen its efforts to help reduce poverty and violence in Central America.

As it stands now, women in the region face an impossible choice between escaping poverty and staying safe; in many cases, they achieve neither. They have the drive to build small businesses, improve their families' wellbeing, fuel local economic growth, and strengthen regional stability. But they need support. We must give it to them.

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