

## New report: childhood refugees grow up to contribute significantly to economy of adopted country – when offered correct support

*A new IZA World of Labor [report](#) released today (26 January 2022), highlights the unique social and economic trajectories of refugee children. Despite many children of forced migration facing psychological, social, and economic hardships, evidence shows notable levels of resilience, and when welcomed by their adopted country, many go on to have earnings on par, and sometimes above, immigrant peers.*

In the past decade, the global refugee population has more than doubled. The UN has predicted that in 2022 more than [1.4 million](#) people – roughly the population of Estonia – will need resettlement. [Half](#) of them will be children. Until now most research has focused on the paths of adult immigrants and refugees, yet it's never been more important to understand the social and economic trajectory of refugee children and young people, many of whom become permanent residents in their adopted homelands.

[A new report](#) (26 January 2022) by Dr Yoko Yoshida of Western University Canada, and Jonathan Amoyaw and Rachel Mclay from Dalhousie University, reveals that despite unique challenges faced by many refugee children – such as extreme stress experienced in their home countries, and traumatic experiences in refugee camps in transit – when offered comprehensive resources and support, many go on to thrive in their adopted country and communities.

The report points to a Canadian study showing half of refugee children enrolled in classes preparing for post-secondary study, and a separate study that reveals many refugee children have higher university completion rates than other categories of childhood immigrants.

Evidence also indicates some refugee children have an economic trajectory on par with those of other immigrant children, and in some cases, shows their earnings increasing and surpassing other immigrant categories as they get older, suggesting the impact of refugee status can become transient in adulthood.

In their findings, the authors are clear to underscore that refugees are not a homogenous group. Research reveals factors such as country of origin, and a person's social and economic status significantly impact their inclusion into their adopted communities, and the level of support they receive on arrival.

The report highlights how refugee children have unique needs separate to other newcomers (such as economic immigrants), underlining the importance of a tailored approach to resources that support them financially, psychologically, and practically. Dr Yoshida recommends in addition to refugee-specific support, children of forced migration also benefit from broader social and economic policies aimed at all immigrants: *“the level of community support, and the social and economic contexts that [refugees] arrive in, affect how successfully they navigate the*

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*rest of their lives. In addition, broader and more generalised programs and policies that promote equity and inclusion for all newcomers, especially racialised immigrants, is beneficial for refugee children's success in the long run".*

While resettling refugees is a fundamentally moral and human responsibility, these findings dispel the misconceived notion that refugees are an economic burden on their adopted societies. Instead, when resettlement countries invest in tailored support for refugee children and youth, it can provide fertile ground for a diverse, inclusive, and thriving economy and community.

Full report available: <https://wol.iza.org/articles/refugee-childrens-earnings-in-adulthood>  
The authors are available for interview.

### **Notes for editors**

IZA World of Labor (<http://wol.iza.org>) is a global, freely available online resource that provides policy makers, academics, journalists, and researchers, with clear, concise and evidence-based knowledge on labor economics issues worldwide. The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.

Established in 1998, the Institute of Labor Economics ([www.iza.org](http://www.iza.org)) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labor markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,500 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.

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