

CONNECTING REFUGEES TO OPPORTUNITIES: From “*Economic Burden*” to “*Economic Asset*”

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Abstract

According to the United Nations, more people than ever before are currently displaced due to terrorism and conflicts. If refugees have a chance to learn and grow, then they will contribute economically to their receiving countries. It is time to acknowledge the courage and perseverance of refugees, and their contribution.

The primary goal of this paper is demonstrate the economic potential of urban refugees. What is the economic value of refugees? How to help refugees whose lives have been disrupted by absence of peace, to re-settle and prosper?

The uniqueness of this research paper comes from the methodological approach that is utilized. Here, in analyzing refugees’ economics potential, I have turned the well-known ‘*Conflict/Problem Tree*’ into an ‘*Opportunity Tree*.’ The paper displays refugees as ‘*economic asset*’ rather than ‘*economic burden*.’

The current paper specifically addresses the potential economic value of refugees. To the best of the author’ knowledge, this is the very first attempt that incorporates an ‘Opportunity Tree’ for refugees economic potential. The author hopes that the paper will generate discussion and interest among peace scholars. The author further anticipates that the findings of her research will provide some insight for the ongoing refugee crisis across the globe.

There are three conclusions that can be drawn:

Firstly, there are popular myths surrounding refugees: they are economically isolated; they are a burden on host states; they are economically homogenous; they are technologically illiterate; and they are dependent on humanitarian assistance. The economics of refugees provides convincing evidence that often the humanitarian aspect of welcoming refugees over shadows their long-run economic impact and their role as peace catalysts. Evidence shows that the economic impact of re-settled refugees can be positive and substantial.

Secondly, the long-run economic benefits can be assorted as a new potential labor source for aging population, increase in household spending and therefore stimulation of the local economy, refugee owned business, and potential tax revenue source.

Thirdly, refugees can also potentially play an important role in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction in their countries of origin.