
RETHINKING REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: A PROPOSAL FOR GLOBAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIPS (GSP)

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The refugee crisis is intensifying, with more than 65 million people forcibly displaced worldwide. Currently, more than 22 million people living in refugee camps are seeking resettlement to a third country. The United States is also undergoing a political transformation that seeks to destroy the established system of refugee resettlement from both the bottom up and top down. The Trump administration has decreased the refugee intake cap by over 75% in just two years with the refugee cap decreased so suddenly, resettlement organizations and refugee-focused non-profits are unable to cope with the dramatic decrease in funding, forcing them to close their doors.



Scene from the world's largest refugee camp, in Dadaab, Kenya

A refugee resettlement support network that took decades to build was almost destroyed by one administration in just two years. The current refugee resettlement program should be re-designed to create a resilient solution for refugee resettlement in the United States. Incorporating global skills partnerships (GSPs) could be a key part of refugee resettlement reform. GSP programs would train refugees in skills that are needed in the country of resettlement **prior to departure** to ensure their **quality of life** and **assimilation** into the local community.

OVERVIEW

This policy brief will explore the promising alternative of GSPs that are designed to aid in the creation of a more sustainable refugee resettlement process and will outline the existing policies and practices of GSPs. Finally, this brief will make recommendations for future GSP programs in the United States resettlement system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Create global skills partnerships for the United States refugee resettlement program.
- Create a partnership model that includes local organizations within the resettlement city.
- Integrate English language, cultural assimilation and psychological coping methods into program design.

WHAT IS A GLOBAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIP?

A bilateral agreement through which the country of destination gets directly involved in creating human capital among potential migrants in the country of origin (or refugee camp) prior to departure. (Clemons, 2015)

I. INTRODUCTION:

The wealthiest countries show increasing demand for certain skilled services such as basic health care. This is in part due to populations in wealthy countries aging faster than the populations of skilled workers, creating a deficit in basic health care providers. Simultaneously, the global refugee crisis is also growing at an extremely fast pace, where millions of eligible workers are stuck in protracted situations. Creating GSPs could be a possible solution to both issues, benefiting refugees and countries of destination. GSPs focus on certain skills that are in high demand in advanced economies.

Prospective migrants are trained in their country of origin for these skills. In the case of resettlement, refugees would be trained in camps prior to departure to the country of destination. Although there is an upfront cost for education and training, there are many models that explore flexible and adaptable pathways of repayment. *An alternative is needed. Now that the refugee resource infrastructure in the United States has been collapsed, communities will not be able to cope with higher refugee admittances in the future.*

ANALYSIS: DESIGNING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE SKILLED MIGRATION

GSP offer a great potential for strengthening refugee resettlement. Integrating refugees that already have basic language and technical skills fosters an assimilation process that could be *refocused* on providing access to other important resettlement components such as social networks and advanced education.

Global Skills Partnerships should create human capital to bridge refugee resettlement by including the following key aspects:

- **A framework structured on resilience:**
Global skills partnerships employ a long-term theory of change. Instead of training people once they arrive in the destination country, stakeholders invest in education and training in the country of origin before they depart for the destination country.
- **Focus on global learning:**
To prevent “brain drain,” GSPs target both migrants and non-migrants, training both people who are to be resettled to a third country and those who are not. The education would be subsidized for the nonimmigrants, while the migrants would repay their education over a set period.
- **Development benefits:**
The global skills partnership offers benefits for refugees whether they are selected for resettlement or not, strengthening human capital overall and easing the global burden of generational poverty and inequality.

HOW IT WORKS: A MODEL OF A GLOBAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIPS

Zahra and Manal are two young Syrians who train as Registered Nurses in Diyarbakır, Turkey. Zahra plans to work in Germany, Manal plans to work at first in Diyarbakır, and possibly later in Syria. Training each of them costs \$7,000, and neither can afford it. A private hospital group in Germany finances all of Zahra’s training and almost half of Manal’s, for a total of \$10,000. In return, Zahra commits to work within its hospital network for at least four years. With just 10 percent of Zahra’s earnings over that period, she pays back the entire \$10,000¹

Excerpted from: Clemons (2015)

IV. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

- A. Identify job opportunities within destination countries
- B. Investigate targeted sectors in countries of origin
- C. Create and maintain equitable distribution
- D. Equally train refugees in destination countries and refugees upon return to home to prevent brain drain.
- E. Create and maintain equitable distribution

TABLE 1: HOW SKILLED MIGRATION OFFERS A SUSTAINABLE TRACK TO RESETTLEMENT

Actor	Benefit
Destination country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers for labor shortages • Lower public training expenses
Designation employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced training expenses • Custom- trained workers
Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional employment • Large raise in earnings • Access for people of all backgrounds
Origin Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidized professional training for “home-track” refugees • Remittances from “away track” graduates • No fiscal drain from graduates’ migration

Adapted from Table 1 in Clemons (2015)

VI: CONCLUSION: LESSONS FOR FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS: LINKING SKILLS WITH ASSIMILATION

In an increasing global refugee crisis, GSPs offer a promising path for increasing human capital for refugees. As the refugee crisis grows, young people eager to work and obtain education are being continually stuck in protracted situations. GSPs create a systematic approach to strengthening human capital within the refugee resettlement process while training people with valuable skills. As we have seen in recent times, the current refugee resettlement program is unsustainable and vulnerable to federal politics. By reforming the process and creating a pathway for human development

throughout the entirety of the refugee system, both **destination countries**, **refugees**, and **the world** can benefit from the outcomes of the partnerships.



A Rohingya mother with her child.

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