How can we help Refugees Assimilate?
Lessons from Academic Literature

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April 20, 2016
Refugees and economic migrants differ

1. The two groups may have very different characteristics

- Refugees have some disadvantages
  - Older
  - Not prepared for move e.g. language
  - Worse networks in host country
  - Experienced trauma
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   ▶ Origin country will be main determinant of education
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Refugees struggle at first; final outcomes vary by origin country

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2. Compare labor market assimilation of refugee arrivals
   - 1986–1990 from Chile, Iran, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam
   - 1996–2000 from Iraq, Somalia
Employment rates of natives, refugees – men

Jennifer Hunt (Economics, Rutgers)
Employment rates of natives, refugees – women

Jennifer Hunt (Economics, Rutgers)
Lesson 1: Begin teaching language and culture at once

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   - Like Germany is doing with Syrians
Lesson 2: Help refugees search for a job early

1. Employers dislike long-term unemployed applicants
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2. Foreign experience has no value in developed countries
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   - Bar asylum seekers from working for only three months
Lesson 2: Help refugees search for a job early

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   ▶ Bar asylum seekers from working for only three months
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   ▶ Provide help getting credentials recognized
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   - Bar asylum seekers from working for only three months
   - Provide help with permanent job search
   - Provide help getting credentials recognized
   - Consider unpaid internships
Lesson 3: Make rapid asylum decisions

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2. So fund administration of applications so decisions quick
Lesson 4: Provide psychological counseling

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2. Develop cheaper program administered by non-psychologists?
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   - Evidence here is in crime-prevention in US