

Debunking myths to end xenophobia



NGO Committee on
MIGRATION

Subcommittee on Xenophobia, Racism and Social Inclusion

REFUGEES

People who are forced to flee their country because of persecution and violence and have a well-founded fear of persecution

MIGRANTS

People who move within a country or across borders for various reasons, e.g. employment, education, family reunion

WHAT IS XENOPHOBIA?

XENOS = STRANGER

PHOBOS = FEAR

Fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners. The term "strangers" usually refers to migrants or refugees entering a host country

WHAT IS RACISM?

Any exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, ethnicity and/or religious beliefs, which compromises the right of people to self-determination, or which limits the inalienable human rights that every individual and group is entitled to.

IS RACISM DIFFERENT FROM XENOPHOBIA?

While similar, it is possible to be both xenophobic and racist:



"I fear foreigners and also feel racially superior to them" (xenophobia and racism)

"I resent and fear the foreigners coming into my country, but do not feel I am racially superior" (xenophobia)

"I feel racially superior towards another ethnic group but do not feel afraid of them" (racism)

WHAT IS A MYTH?

**CHECK YOUR
FACTS**

A myth is a widely held, but FALSE idea or belief. Spreading myths contributes to xenophobia and racism.

MYTH

"Migrants are taking jobs away from citizens who need them"

According to the World Bank, international migration helps to increase world GDP, as it allows workers to move to where they are most needed and most productive
([The World Bank, 2017](#))

A study conducted in April 2020 looks at the economic impact of migration on recipient countries and finds that migration generally improves economic growth and productivity in host countries.
([International Monetary Fund, 2020](#))



Research shows that 77% of U.S. adults believe that undocumented immigrants fill jobs U.S. citizens do not want, and 64% of U.S. adults said legal immigrants fill jobs U.S. citizens do not want
([Pew Research Center, 2020](#))

MYTH

"Migrants are hurting my country's economy"

Almost half of the most recent cohorts of immigrants are college graduates, an increase from earlier arriving groups. As a result, the fiscal benefit of recently arrived immigrants is much higher
([Migration Policy Institute, 2017](#))

Undocumented immigrants pay \$11.7 billion in state and local taxes. If they had a pathway to secure legal status, their tax contributions would increase by an estimated \$2.2 billion
([National Immigration Forum, 2018](#))

Migrants use less Supplemental Security Income, Medicare, and Social security compared to native-born citizens
([Cato Institute, 2018](#))

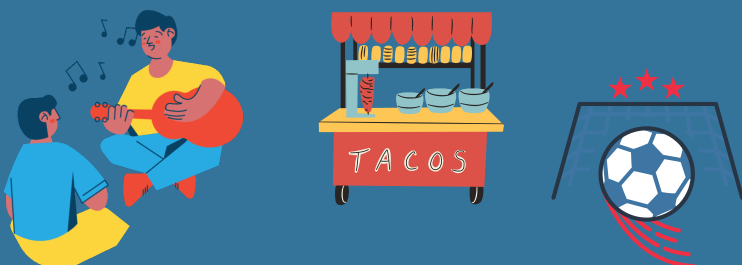
The average value of welfare benefits per immigrant was about \$3,718 in 2016, which is nearly 39 percent less than the \$6,081 average value of welfare benefits per native-born
([Cato Institute, 2018](#))

MYTH

"With all these migrants coming in, my culture is going to disappear"

Evidence from cosmopolitan cities like New York City, London, or Sidney shows that the diverse ethnic groups that make up these cities continue to maintain their distinct cultural diversity while enriching the larger community with their cultural heritage.

Migrants contribute to their host communities' sociocultural dimensions through sharing food and culinary traditions, arts, and sports. For example:
A **Honduran** migrant opened a restaurant, bringing cuisine from his country of origin to the **Mexican** culinary scene. A **Venezuelan** migrant established an orchestra in the **Dominican Republic** to share his music with the youth of his community. A **Nigerian** football player signed a contract with a **Costa Rican** football club.
([International Organization for Migration](#))



MYTH

"Keeping migrants away will ensure safety in my community"

Did you know that in the U.S., non-citizens account for only 7% of the prison population and in England and Wales, they account for 12%?

(U.S. Department of Justice, 2019;
Ministry of Justice, 2020)

The chance of a person dying in a terrorist attack committed by a foreigner on U.S. soil over the period of 1975-2017 is 1 in 3.8 million per year.

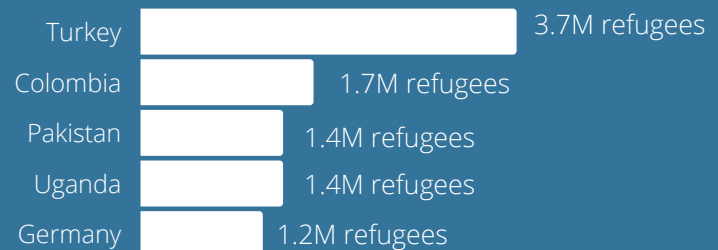
Foreign-born individuals are less likely than native-born individuals to have engaged in violent or non-violent antisocial behaviors in their lifetimes, including harassment, assault, and traffic violations (Sentencing Project, 2017)

MYTH

"There are too many foreigners [refugees] in my country"

86% of the 26.4 million refugees globally, half of them being children, are being hosted in developing countries. The Least Developed Countries provide asylum to 27 percent of the total number of refugees globally.
(UNHCR 2021).

Major hosting countries of refugees

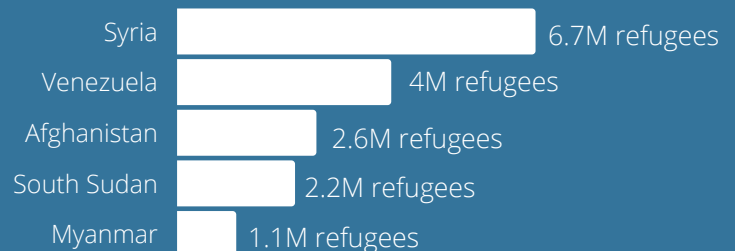


MYTH

"They should go back to where they came from"

Refugees are forced to flee their home country due to violence, war, persecution, human rights violations, and/or climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters. Forcible return to a persistently negative situation could be life-threatening and is against international law.
(UNHCR 2021).

68% of refugees originate from just 5 countries:



MYTH

"Migrants are bringing viruses into my country"

Diseases originate from all over the world - Asia, Africa, Australia, the Americas, and Europe, including one's own country. Though Africa, Asia and South America are often scapegoated for originating disease, it is important to know that Leprosy originated in Europe, Cholera in Russia, and Europeans have passed the flu, smallpox, measles, and the bubonic plague into island and indigenous communities globally. Many countries, including Mexico, closed their borders to the United States during COVID-19 because of high transmission rates and lack of containment in the US.
(Pandemics that Changed History)

Immigrants have been vital in the U.S. healthcare system, accounting for nearly 18 percent of the 14.7 million people in the United States working in a healthcare occupation in 2018. Specifically, 40% of essential healthcare workers are from Asia.
(Immigrant Healthcare Workers in the United States)