

Marcela Aguilar

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Business, Accounting

Rice University
Ph.D. candidate

Aug, 2021- Present
Houston, TX
Advisor: Dr. K. Ramesh

Master of Science in Economics and Public Policy

University of York
Graduated with distinction

Sep, 2017- Sep, 2018
York, England

Thesis: El Salvador: Fiscal impact of aging population and their health demands 2010-2050

Bachelor in Economics

Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas
Graduated with distinction

Feb, 2011-Nov, 2016
La Libertad - El Salvador

Thesis: Education and Demographic Dividend: A Window of Opportunity for the Development of El Salvador

Completed 40% of coursework for Bachelor in Mathematics

National University of El Salvador

Feb, 2013-Nov, 2016
San Salvador - El Salvador

WORKING PAPER

- Aguilar, M., Lind, G. and Ramesh, K. (2025). [The Role of Accounting in the Informal Economy](#) (second-round submission to Journal of Accounting and Economics).

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

- Aguilar, M. (In Progress). Financial Acumen at Scale: Bridging Knowledge Gaps for Microenterprise Success. Evidence from an AI-Based Mentorship Program (**Job-Market Paper**)

PRIOR NON-ACADEMIC RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

- Chavez, C., Aguilar, M. (2021) [The Impact of Community Violence on Educational Outcomes: A review of the literature.](#)
- ILO (2020) [Analysis of the Potential Impact on the Salvadoran Youth Labor Market Resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (research coordinator).
- ILO (2020) [Survey of Micro-Businesses in the Informal Economy in the Northern Countries of Central America](#) (primary researcher).
- ILO (2020) [Diagnostic of the Informal Economy](#) (primary researcher).
- ILO (2018) [New forms of child labor](#) (primary researcher).

PRESENTATIONS

- Presentation at FARS and HARC conferences (2025)
- Discussant at FARS and presentation at the University of Cyprus (2024)
- Understanding the Informal Economy Forum, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (2024)
- Global Knowledge Sharing Forum on Informal Economy, Turin, Italy (2019)
- Global Youth Employment Forum (informal economy), Abuja, Nigeria (2019)

CONFERENCE AND EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION

- [Conference on Accounting Information Frictions in Microenterprises](#) (Scheduled for Sep 2025, co-organizer)
- AAA/Deloitte Foundation/J. Michael Cook Doctoral Consortium (2025)
- Experimental and Behavioral Economics Summer School, by the European Economic Review (2024)
- Survey Design Experimental Methods Workshop, Michigan State University (2024)
- Lone Star Accounting Conference (2024, 2025)
- Financial Accounting and Reporting Section, FARS (2023-2025)
- American Accounting Association, AAA (2023)
- Machine Learning Boot Camp, Rice University (2023)
- Machine Learning and Causal Inference, Mixtape Sessions (2023, online)
- Accounting Theory Summer School, Duke University (2022)
- Academy on the transition to formal economy. International Labour Organization, Turin, Italy (2018)
- Course in Quantitative Methods, STATA and Matlab. Alberto Hurtado University, Chile (2017)
- Diploma in National Employment Policy. International Labour Organization, Turin, Italy (2015)

GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Expanding Horizons Travel Grant by Rice University for research on local communities 2025
- Memorandum of Understanding for Academic Research Collaboration with the ILO In Progress
- [Deloitte Foundation Doctoral Fellowship](#) 2024
- Creative Ventures Grant for a conference (co-organized with K. Ramesh) 2024
- Academic Consultant for ILO (Dominican Republic, Central America and Mexico) 2021-Present

AWARDS AND HONORS

- [AAA Midyear Meeting Outstanding Discussant Award](#) 2024
- York Award Gold by the University of York for Academic Excellent 2018
- Chevening Program Scholar by the British Government 2017
- Central American Women Chess Champion 2011
- [National Women Chess Champion of El Salvador](#) 2010
- Member of the National Women Chess Team of El Salvador 2009-2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Rice University

- Instructor of Financial Accounting - [BUSI 305](#) Summer 2024
- Teaching Assistant - [BUSI 533](#) and [MGMT 641](#) Spring 2025

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Regional Project Manager for the Informal Economy May, 2019 – May, 2021
International Labour Organization, ILO Costa Rica, San José (remotely)

Research Assistant Nov, 2018 – May, 2019
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF Florence, Italy

Internship in the Sustainable Development Department Sep, 2018 – Nov, 2018
International Training Center of the ILO Turin, Italy

Consultant Ago, 2017 – Apr, 2019
International Labour Organization, ILO Costa Rica, San José (remotely)

Economic and Social Affairs Analyst Jul, 2015 – Jul, 2017
National Association of Private Enterprise, ANEP San Salvador, El Salvador

Economic Analyst Feb, 2015 – Jul, 2015
Chamber of Commerce and Industry San Salvador, El Salvador