

Marcela Aguilar

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Business, Accounting** Aug, 2021- Present
Rice University Houston, TX
Ph.D. candidate *Advisor: Dr. K. Ramesh*
Committee: K. Ramesh, Shiva Sivaramakrishnan, Yael Hochberg, Xun Tang
- Master of Arts in Business Administration** Aug, 2021-Dic, 2025
Rice University Houston, TX
- Master of Science in Economics and Public Policy** Sep, 2017- Sep, 2018
University of York York, England
Graduated with distinction
Thesis: El Salvador: Fiscal impact of aging population and their health demands 2010-2050
- Bachelor in Economics** Feb, 2011-Nov, 2016
Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas La Libertad - El Salvador
Graduated with distinction
- Bachelor in Mathematics** Feb, 2013-Nov, 2016
National University of El Salvador San Salvador - El Salvador
Completed 40% of coursework

WORKING PAPERS

- AI Mentorship and the Language of Business: Building Financial Capability among Microenterprises in Developing Economies. Evidence from an RCT (Job Market Paper, accepted for the 2026 JAR Conference)
- Aguilar, M., Lind, G. and Ramesh, K. (2025). [The Role of Accounting in the Informal Economy](#) (Best Paper Award at the [2025 JAE Conference](#)).

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS

- What Do Informal Firms Value? A Choice Experiment (coauthored with K. Ramesh and Rimmy E. Tomy)
- AI Mentor for Access to Finance: Improving Entrepreneurs' Elevator Pitch (coauthored with K. Ramesh)

PRIOR NON-ACADEMIC RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

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

INVITED WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

- Harvard University (2026)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2026)
- Stanford University (2026)
- University of Chicago (2026)
- University of Miami (2026)

- Indiana University (2026)
- London Business School (2025)
- INSEAD Business School (2025)
- National University of Singapore (2025)
- University of Cyprus (2024)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

- Discussant at the Conference on Field Experiments in Accounting and Economics, Tokyo, Japan (2026)
- Presentation at the Conference on Accounting Information Frictions in Microenterprises, Rice University (2025)
- Presentation at FARS and HARC conferences (2025)
- Discussant at FARS (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

- [Advances with Field Experiments Conference \(2025\)](#)
- [Conference on Accounting Information Frictions in Microenterprises \(Sep 2025, co-organizer\)](#)
- 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

- Co-founder of the [Accounting Development Forum](#) 2026
- Best Paper Award at the 2025 JAE Conference 2025
- Co-founder of the [Accounting Finance Field Experiments Group](#) 2025
- Expanding Horizons Travel Grant by Rice University for research on local communities 2025
- Memorandum of Understanding for Academic Research Collaboration with the ILO 2025
- [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](#)
- Teaching Assistant - [BUSI 533](#) and [MGMT 641](#)

Summer 2024

Spring 2025

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Regional Project Manager for the Informal Economy

International Labour Organization, ILO

May, 2019 – May, 2021

Costa Rica, San José (remotely)

Research Assistant

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF

Nov, 2018 – May, 2019

Florence, Italy

Internship in the Sustainable Development Department

International Training Center of the ILO

Sep, 2018 – Nov, 2018

Turin, Italy

Consultant

International Labour Organization, ILO

Ago, 2017 – Apr, 2019

Costa Rica, San José (remotely)

Economic and Social Affairs Analyst

National Association of Private Enterprise, ANEP and Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Feb, 2015 – Jul, 2017

El Salvador