

WILLA FRIEDMAN

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CURRENT POSITIONS

University of Houston Economics Department (2023-present), *Associate Professor* Houston, TX
Office of Evaluation Sciences (2023-present), *Fellow/Senior Evaluator*

EDUCATION

University of California, Berkeley • Economics • *PhD*, 2013 Berkeley, CA
Harvard College • Social Studies • *AB*, 2005 Cambridge, MA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND AFFILIATIONS

University of Houston Economics Department (2014-2023), *Assistant Professor* Houston, TX
Center for Global Development (2013-2014), *Post-Doctoral Research Fellow* Washington, DC
JPAL/ICS/IPA (2005-2007), *Evaluation Consultant* Busia, Kenya
JPAL Invited Researcher (2021-present),
Households in Conflict Network (2013-present),

PUBLISHED AND FORTHCOMING JOURNAL ARTICLES

- “When Information is Not Enough: Evidence from a Centralized School Choice System” (with Kehinde Ajayi and Adrienne Lucas), *Economic Journal*, (2025).
- “Reducing bias among health care providers: Experimental evidence from Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and Pakistan” (with Zachary Wagner, Corrina Moucheraud, Manisha Shah, Alexandra Wollum, and William Dow), *Economic Journal*, (2025).
- “Characterizing Provider Bias in Contraceptive Care in Tanzania and Burkina Faso: A Mixed-Methods Study” (with Alexandra Wollum, Corrina Moucheraud, Jessica D Gipson, Manisha Shah, and Zachary Wagner), *Social Science and Medicine*, 348 (2024): 116826.
- “A multi-component intervention to reduce bias during family planning visits: qualitative insights on implementation from Burkina Faso, Pakistan and Tanzania.” (with Moucheraud, Corrina, Alexandra Wollum, Muhammad Ali Awan, William H. Dow, Jean-Louis Koulidiati, Amon Sabasaba, Manisha Shah, and Zachary Wagner.) *Contraception and Reproductive Medicine* 9, no. 1 (2024): 34.”
- “Disruptions to Health Care Quality and Early Child Health Outcomes: Evidence from Health Worker Strikes in Kenya” (with Anthony Keats and Martin Kavao Mutua), *Journal of Health Economics* 86 (2022): 102694.
- “Can Nudging Overcome Procrastinating on Preventive Health Investments” (with Nicholas Wilson), *Economics and Human Biology*, 45 (2022): 101040.
- “Measuring Family Planning Provider Bias: A Discrete Choice Experiment Among Burkinabé, Pakistani, and Tanzanian Providers” (with Maria Dieci, William Dow, Manisha Shah, Jessica Vandermark, Sarah Burgess, Sandra McCoy, and Zachary Wagner), *Studies in Family Planning*, 52, no. 3 (2021): 299-320.
- “Antiretroviral Drug Access and Behavior Change” *Journal of Development Economics*, 135 (2018): 392-411.
- “Corruption and Averting AIDS Deaths,” *World Development*, 110 (2018): 13-25.
- “The Importance of Information Targeting for School Choice” (with Kehinde Ajayi and Adrienne Lucas), *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 107, no. 5 (2017): 638-43.
- “Advertising for Demand Creation for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision” (with Nicholas Wilson, Sasha Frade, and Dino Rech), *JAIDS* 72.Suppl 4 (2016): S293.
- “Education as Liberation?” (with Michael Kremer, Edward Miguel, Rebecca Thornton), *Economica* 83, no. 329 (2016): 1-30.

- “Can Mobile Phone Messages to Drug Sellers Improve Treatment of Childhood Diarrhea?: A Randomized Controlled Trial in Ghana” (with Minki Chatterji and Benjamin Woodman); *Health Policy and Planning*, 2015 30 (3): i82-i92 doi: 10.1093/heapol/czu122

BOOK CHAPTER

- “Economics of Genocide in Rwanda” *Economic Aspects of Genocides, Mass Atrocities, and Their Prevention*, ed Charles Anderton and Jurgen Brauer, Oxford University Press, (2016): 339-55.

WORKING PAPERS

- “Making Contact: Worker Assignment and National Unity,” (with Guthrie Gray-Lobe and Michael Kremer)
- “The Educational and Fertility Effects of Sibling Deaths” (with Marc Rockmore and Dhanu Thamarapani), revise and resubmit *Economic Development and Cultural Change*
- “Institutional Births and Early Child Health: Evidence from Ghana’s Free Delivery Policy” (with Anthony Keats)
- “Local Economic Conditions and Participation in the Rwandan Genocide” Households in Conflict Network working paper No 160

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- “What are the unintended consequences of the Texas Education Agency take-over of the Houston Independent School District?” (with Blake Heller and Toni Templeton)
- “Children’s Identities and Parents’ Attitudes,” (with Jean Boblawende Kabore)
- “Evolution of Cultural Attitudes and Sex of Children in West Africa,” (with Jean Boblawende Kabore)
- “Racial Bias in Forgiveness and Assessing Bad Behavior” (with Jean Boblawende Kabore)

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Early Reach Evaluation. Inter-local agreement between Harris County and UH to evaluate Early Reach Child Care Program, \$2.3 million, Co-Investigator, 2024-2026
- “Racial Bias in Forgiveness and Assessing Bad Behavior” University of Houston Small Grant to Enhance Research on Racism - \$9,994 (2020)
- “Evolution of Cultural beliefs and Children’s Gender,” University of Houston Small Grant - \$5,000 (2020)
- “Evolution of Cultural beliefs and Children’s Gender” University of Houston Provost’s 50-in-5 Initiative Grant - \$5,000 (2019)
- “Evolution of Cultural beliefs and Children’s Gender,” University of Houston Research Progress Grant - \$3,250 (2019)
- “Building State Capacity and National Unity with Market Design,” World Bank Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund (SIEF), with Guthrie Gray-Lobe and Michael Kremer \$100,000 (2018)
- “Building State Capacity and National Unity with Market Design,” JPAL Governance Initiative, with Guthrie Gray-Lobe and Michael Kremer \$230,031 (2018)
- “Building State Capacity and National Unity with Market Design,” International Growth Center (IGC), with Guthrie Gray-Lobe and Michael Kremer £55,074 (2018)
- “Teacher strikes and school attainment,” CLASS Research Progress Grant - University of Houston \$2,000 (2017)
- “Information Targeting, School Choice, and School Quality,” Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), with Kehinde Ajayi and Adrienne Lucas \$338,386 (2015) and \$98,437 (2017)
- “What Can We Learn from Babies Born During Health-worker Strikes,” New Faculty Research Grant - University of Houston \$6,000 (2015)

- “Advertising for Demand Creation for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision,” 3ie Thematic Window 3 - Demand Creation for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (funded by Gates Foundation), with Sasha Frade, Dino Rech, and Nicholas Wilson \$74,438 (2013)
- CEGA/BERI Exploratory Grant to study habit formation in condom use, with Homa Zarghamee (2013)
- Levin Family Seed Grant from the Center for Evaluation and Global Action (2012)
- John L. Simpson Memorial Research Fellowship in International and Comparative Studies (2012-2013)
- Weiss Family Fellowship from the Center for Evaluation and Global Action (2011)
- The Andrew and Mary Thompson Rocca Scholarship in Advanced African Studies (2011)
- IPUMS-International Research Award for best graduate student work using international census data (2010)
- Integrated Graduate Education Research and Training Program in Politics, Economics, Psychology and Public Policy Fellow (2009-2011)
- The Andrew and Mary Thompson Rocca Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, for research in Burkina Faso (2009)
- Thomas T Hoopes Prize for Outstanding Senior Thesis for “Language Policy in African Schools” (2005)

EXTERNAL SEMINARS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- **2025** *Midwest International Economic Development Conference (March), Texas Development Workshop (May)*
- **2024** *Montana State University - Bozeman Applied Economics Summer Conference (June), Georgia Tech (October)*
- **2023** *Southern Economics Association (November)*
- **2022** *Texas Camp Econometrics (February), CESifo Venice Summer Institute: Economics of Education and Equality of Opportunity (June), Southern Economics Association (November)*
- **2021** *American Economics Association (January), Development Impact Lab at the University of Chicago (March), CEPR/LEAP Workshop in Development Economics (May), University of Hawaii (October), Southern Economics Association (November)*
- **2020** *Southern Economics Association (November), IUSSP Research Conference on Population, Poverty and Inequality (December), cancelled for COVID19: Economic Demography Workshop (April)*
- **2019** *IFPRI (April), IUSSP Research Conference on Population, Poverty and Inequality (June), Southern Economics Association (November), Texas Health Economics Conference (December), University of Toronto Economics (December)*
- **2018** *Collegio Carlo Alberto (May), Nordic Conference on Development Economics (June), Busara Center (July), Colby (October)*
- **2017** *NBER Health (April), Population Association of America (April)*
- **2016** *Data Driven Development in Africa Conference at Penn State (February), Pacific Development Conference (March), University of South Florida (March), Midwest International Economic Development Conference (May), Western Economic Association (June), Tenth Annual Research Conference on Population, Reproductive Health, and Economic Development (September), University of British Columbia (October), Stata Texas Empirical Microeconomics Conference (October)*

- **2015** *Working Group on African Political Economy (January), Baylor Economics Department (February), Houston Global Health Collaborative: Impact 2015 (March); University of Texas School of Public Health (April), Midwest Political Science Association (April), Annual Meeting on the Economics of Risky Behaviors (May), PopPov Conference on Population, Reproductive Health, and Economic Development (June), International Health Economics Association (July)*
- **2014** *PopPov Conference on Population, Reproductive Health, and Economic Development (January), Center for the Study of African Economies (March), Pacific Development Conference (March), University of Oklahoma Economics Department (March), Middlebury College Economics Department (April), Population Association of America (May), Barcelona GSE Summer Forum (July), Cornell Institute for African Development (October), Midwest Working Group on African Political Economy (October), African Studies Association (November)*
- **2013** *Clark (January), University of Santa Clara (January), International Food Policy Research Institute (January), Center for Global Development (January), World Bank Development Research Group (January), Clemson (February), University of Houston (February), University of Chicago - Harris (February), Barnard (February), The Ohio State (February), Simon Fraser (February), Western Political Science Association (March), Center for the Study of African Economies (March), Pacific Development Conference (March), Population Association of America (April), Wesleyan University Economics Seminar (October), 9th Households in Conflict Network Workshop (November)*
- **2012** *University of Texas - Dallas Economics Department (October), University of San Francisco Economics Department (October), Northeast Universities Development Consortium (November), Working Group on African Political Economy (December), African Studies Association (December)*
- **2011** *American Economics Association (January), University of San Francisco Economics Department (February), American Political Science Association Meeting (September), Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation Northern California Symposium (November),*

TEACHING

FULL COURSES

University of Houston (2014-present), *Professor*

- Development Economics (PhD)
- Behavioral Economics (undergraduate)
- Intermediate Microeconomics (undergraduate)

IMPACT EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS

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| • Institute of Global Health at UCSF/PEPFAR (2014) | Dar es Salaam, Tanzania |
| • CEGA/JPAL (2012) | Nairobi, Kenya |
| • World Bank (2010) | Tunis, Tunisia |
| • World Bank (2010) | Kigali, Rwanda |

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

- KIPP Advance Team DEI presentation (2023)
- Global Scholars Academy (high school summer program) presentation (2023)
- Houston Bar Association - Alternative Dispute Resolution Conference: "Behavioral Economics and its Application to Disputes" (2021, 2022)

ADVISING

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

- 2021 - Jean Boblawende Kabore (Amazon)
- 2020 - Shreya Bhattacharya (Amazon)
- 2020 - Dhanushka Arunasiri Peru Durayalage (Berkshire Community College)
- 2018 - Sakshi Jain (co-chair) (Temple University post-doc)

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBER

- 2025 - Angelo Fernando Gozanga dos Santos (U Penn Post Doc)
- 2025 - Yabo Vidogbena (U Penn Post Doc)
- 2023 - Weonhyeok Chung (Korea Institute for International Economic Policy)
- 2023 - Hussain Hadah (Tulane University Post Doc)
- 2023 - Md Abdullah Al Mashrur (East West University, Bangladesh)
- 2019 - Aritri Banerjee (Analysis Group)

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS ADVISOR

- 2023 - Anika Arutla
- 2023 - Zosia Bulhak
- 2022 - Beatriz Rivera
- 2021 - Nicole Zeinner (second reader)
- 2019 - Michelle Tran (second reader)
- 2018 - Mindy Vu
- 2017 - Angela Losoya (second reader, psychology)

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ADVISING (SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AND PROVOST'S UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP)

- 2023 - Freddy Huang, PURS
- 2021 - Beatriz Rivera, PURS
- 2021 - Zosia Bulhak, SURF
- 2021 - Camila Pombo, SURF
- 2019 - Sameer Sidiq, PURS
- 2018 - Vishaal Kuruvanka, PURS
- 2018 - Mason Malone, SURF
- 2019 Shubhangi Singh, SURF

EXTERNAL ADVISING

- 2021 - Benjamin Chibuye, PhD University of Kiel, Germany, 2021 (WGAPE mentoring)
- 2021 - Tatenda Zinyemba, Reading Committee for PhD thesis at University of Maastricht
- 2020, 2021 - CSWEP "Successfully Navigating Your Economics PhD" Mentoring Workshop mentor

REFEREEING AND REVIEWING

- Referee: *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *American Economic Review: Insights*, *American Political Science Review*, *The Annals of Regional Science*, *BE Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy*, *Biomedical and Environmental Sciences*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *BMJ Global Health*, *Demography*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, *Economic Journal*, *Economica*, *Economics and Human Biology*, *Empirical Economics*, *GAMES*, *Health Affairs*, *Health Economics*, *Industrial Relations*, *Journal of African Economies*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Journal of African Economies*, *JAMA Network Open*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Demographic Economics*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *Journal of Development Studies*, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *Journal of Health Economics*, *Journal of Human Capital*, *Journal of Human Resources*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Political Economy*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *Review of Development Economics*, *Review of Economics of the Household*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *South African Journal of Economics*, *World Development*,
- Grant Reviewer: *Innovations for Poverty Action*, *USAID Development Impact Ventures*, *NSF*, *Swiss NSF*, *Global Innovation Fund*, *JPAL*

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ORGANIZING

- Texas Development Conference - co-organizer with Manuela Angelucci, Rossella Calvi, Raissa Fabregas, and Danila Serra (2025)
- Electronic Health Economics Consortium (online seminar) - co-organizer with Jason Bose, David Bradford, and Orgul Ozturk (2023-2025)
- Midwest International Economic Development Conference (University of Houston, 2023)
Co-organizer with Elaine Liu, Andrea Szabo, Gergely Ujhelyi, and Fan Wang
- Texas Stata Empirical Microeconomics Conference (University of Houston, 2019) - Co-organizer with Aimee Chin
- Population Health Sciences (Boston University 2016, 2017, 2018; University of Pennsylvania - 2019, 2020) Senior Advisory Committee with Jacob Bor and Atheendar Venkataramani
- University of Houston Political Economy Workshop (University of Houston, 2017) - Co-organizer with Francisco Cantu, Vikram Maheshri, and Gergely Ujhelyi
- Association for Mentoring and Inclusion in Economics (AMIE) Workshop Scientific Committee (2024)
- ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (2022) - Program Committee member
- Working Group on African Political Economy - Executive Committee member 2017-present
- Electronic Health Economics Colloquium - Organizing Committee member
- Behavioral Economics in Global Health Conference at CEHA/Berkeley (Berkeley, 2016) - Review Committee
- International Health Economics Association (Milan, 2015) - Scientific committee

LANGUAGES

- French (fluent), Spanish (proficient), Swahili (advanced), Luganda (basic conversation: ACTFL score: Intermediate high), Italian (trying)