

Presentation

D *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals* (DACA) was a decision of migratory policy of the American government in view of benefitting certain undocumented migrants who arrived as children in the U.S. and who have certain schooling level, in particular they have been called Dreamers. Deferred action is carried out by the *U.S. Department of Homeland Security* (DHS).

This executive measure was announced in the morning of June 15th, 2012, by Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, and then restated in a press conference on the same day by President Barack Obama. Such program was created through an executive action that back then President Obama signed in August 2012, however, the current American president has announced its possible termination within six months.

This means that almost 790 thousand unauthorized migrant youths who have received work permits and protection from deportation through this federal programs, since its creation by President Obama, according to the last available data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), are at risk of being deported and have their dreams cut short.¹

DACA provides unauthorized migrants who arrived to the US before 16 years of age with the opportunity to remain in the country to study or work as long as they meet certain conditions such as being enrolled in secondary school, having finished secondary or hold GED or equivalent and not having a grave criminal sentence. Those eligible for the program receive a work permit and protection from deportation for two years, and these benefits can be renewed.

As of 2012, around 800 thousand renovations have been issued. Such petitions have significantly increased each quarter ever since it was implemented, for example, in the third quarter of fiscal year 2016, there were 16 thousand and for the second quarter of fiscal year 2017 the figure reached 122 thousand, which means that a growing number of dreamers have been able to renew their benefits for two more years to such an extent that by

¹ See “DACA has shielded nearly 790,000 young unauthorized immigrants from deportation” available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/01/unauthorized-immigrants-covered-by-daca-face-uncertain-future/>

the middle of fiscal year 2017, more than 200 thousand unauthorized immigrants had renewed the benefits provided by DACA.²

According to an estimation by Pew Research Center in 2014,³ in total about 1.1 million unauthorized immigrants were eligible and in 2016, 1.9 million people were in this situation, of which about 78 percent were potentially eligible (of which 1.2 million were Mexicans).⁴ This total reflects the number of applications over the program's life, not the number of applications approved or the immigrants who receive that benefit at present. For example, for the case of Mexican dreamers, from the start of the program up to the end of fiscal year 2016, 546 253 initial applications y 342 479 renovations were approved.⁵ The American Immigration Council states that when the program started 71 percent pf the potential beneficiaries were Mexicans, distributed across the country, and in 2017, they increased to 78 percent. The largest number of potential beneficiaries from Mexico in 2012 was in California (437 662), Texas (259 880), Illinois (71 619), Arizona (66 301), Georgia (35 723) and Florida, (31 879).⁶ By 2016, such figures were: California, 439 thousand; Texas, 230 thousand; Illinois, 77 thousand; Arizona, 48 thousand; Georgia, 48 thousand; and, Florida, 35 thousand.⁷

President Donald Trump with his restrictive policy puts them at risk,⁸ on September 5th, 2017, he decided to terminate DACA, a decision that produced broad political consequences as it forced the American congress to deal with the topic, even though the suspension will take six months for the congress to look for an alternative and this way make good on a campaign promise to undo all executive measures taken by President Obama.⁹ DACA is a bill supported by a group of Democrat and Republican senators, which offers protection against deportation and a work permit for those eligible for the benefits offered by the program. A number of Ame-

² Last government data include the two first quarters of fiscal year 2017.

³ See "DACA has shielded nearly 790,000 young unauthorized immigrants from deportation" available at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/01/unauthorized-immigrants-covered-by-daca-face-uncertain-future/>

⁴ See "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools" available at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>

⁵ See "Situación Migración México 1er semestre de 2016", available at <https://www.fundacionbbvabancomer.org/imagenes/docs/SitMig-2016-1er-semestre.pdf>

⁶ Who and Where the DREAMers Are, Revised Estimates, available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/who-and-where-dreamers-are-revised-estimates>

⁷ See "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools", available at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>

⁸ As DACA subventions will expire in two years' time that will end in September 2019. See What Will Happen If Trump Kills DACA: A Timeline of Expiration, available at <https://www.cato.org/blog/what-will-happen-trump-kills-daca-timeline-expiration>

⁹ See "Trump provoca rechazo tras cancelación del daca" available at <http://expansion.mx/economia/2017/09/06/trump-provoca-rechazo-tras-cancelacion-del-daca>

rican senators who endorse the bill represent states with some of the highest DACA recipients, including California, Illinois and Arizona, in which three quarters of the beneficiaries are Mexican, according to the latest data from USCIS.¹⁰

These figures force a question for the Mexican government: what will become of the 622 thousand dreamers who will come back from the US. As these will add to the considerable amount of deportations and voluntary returns from this country. Do dreamers pose a risk or opportunity for Mexico? How to support an English-speaking population, accustomed to higher incomes (as 91 percent of them work),¹¹ to another lifestyle and culture? How to adapt to ours? Which programs or policies or social insertion or reinsertion are needed for those who return? Are we prepared? Which facilities to give them to study and work, to access medical services and social programs?

Some experts speak of focusing the program, but not how. Since challenges are multidimensional, beginning with the economic that needs to use their schooling acquired in the US to power local and regional development. Detecting such labor niches such as the so called call centers has started to hire bilingual and deported people and detecting economic activities (trades and professions) that are kindred to their acquired abilities and capabilities. In social terms, the Secretariat of Public Education and its local offices will have to include reforms to validate studies and, the civil register, the apostille of their birth certificates. Instrument housing programs for the deported and their parents by means to help them build a house or other to facilitate their local and regional social insertion. In political terms, their participation in the political arena has to be facilitated, as it allows bonding with the origin and destination places; all of this framed in transnationalism, as this situation of our fellow countrymen deserves.

In terms of scientific research, there are great challenges to understand it in the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary logic that allow putting forward research lines articulated to the social incorporation policy in our country in the case of mass deportation.

These and other topics are sociodemographic realities that are dealt with in *Papeles de Población*, which this time includes the challenges of

¹⁰ See <https://www.uscis.gov/es>

¹¹ See “9 facts that explain DACA, the immigration program Trump is threatening to end” available at <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/8/31/16226934/daca-trump-dreamers-immigration>. Y en “DACA Recipients’ Economic and Educational Gains Continue to Grow”, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/08/28/437956/daca-recipients-economic-educational-gains-continue-grow/>

aging for the social protection of the elderly and causes related to quality of life. There are also topics on migration and its dimension of mobility by means of education, the Spanish migratory policy and the processes of social exclusion and integration of which they are object.

In like manner, it is argued that *Papeles de Población* is attentive to the new demographic topics or themes such as the ones that are exposed in the perception of socio-environmental risks in Valparaíso, Chile, the availability of food in Mexico: production and projection for 2050 and the labor discrimination and exclusion of the LGBT community in Colombia that we expect to be revised and discussed in philosophical and empirical terms in line with population studies.

Juan Gabino González Becerril
Director