

'Matching' refugees

In 2016, we published an article in *Forced Migration Review* called 'Choices, preferences and priorities in a matching system for refugees'¹ in which we argued that refugees to be resettled should be allocated to countries through a centralised matching system, using preferences of refugees and priorities of countries, similar to systems used around the world to allocate school places. The idea is now being discussed by the European Asylum Support Office as a possible approach in the search for solutions to the European refugee crisis.

We soon realised that an equally pressing problem is the allocation of refugees to local areas within a particular hosting country. There is a lot of empirical evidence that the initial location in which refugees are resettled matters a great deal in terms of how they succeed in areas such as education and employment. We have therefore suggested that matching systems should also be used at the local level. For example, two-sided matching could be used: by the United Kingdom to allocate 20,000 Syrians arriving

by 2020 under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme to specific locations; by any of the nine Voluntary Agencies that resettle refugees to the United States; by the Canadian government that has recently expanded its government-assisted refugee programme; or even by the Swedish Migration Board to allocate refugees who currently live in temporary accommodation to permanent housing across Sweden.

To this end, in September 2016 we launched a project called Refugees' Say (supported by the Skoll Centre for Entrepreneurship at Oxford) which aims to influence and reform public policy in the resettlement sphere. We welcome enquiries and hope to be able to design or redesign many effective matching systems for resettlement around the world.

Will Jones Royal Holloway, University of London
and **Alexander Teytelboym** University of Oxford
refugees.say@gmail.com www.refugees-say.com

1. www.fmreview.org/destination-europe/jones-teytelboym

