

# Refugee Economies: Forced Displacement and Development

*Alexander Betts, Louise Bloom, Josiah Kaplan, Naohiko Omata*  
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## REFUGEE ECONOMIES

*Forced Displacement And Development*



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**Alexander Betts, Louise Bloom, Josiah Kaplan, Naohiko Omata : Refugee Economies: Forced Displacement and Development** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Refugee Economies: Forced Displacement and Development:

Refugees have rarely been studied by economists. Despite some pioneering research on the economic lives of

refugees, there remains a lack of theory and empirical data through which to understand, and build upon, refugees' own engagement with markets. Yet, understanding these economic systems may hold the key to rethinking our entire approach to refugee assistance. If we can improve our knowledge of the resource allocation systems that shape refugees' lives and opportunities, then we may be able to understand the mechanisms through which these market-based systems can be made to work better and turn humanitarian challenges into sustainable opportunities. This book adopts an inter-disciplinary approach, based on original qualitative and quantitative data on the economic life of refugees, in order to begin to build theory on the economic lives of refugees. It focuses on the case of Uganda because it represents a relatively positive case. Unlike other governments in the region, it has taken the positive step to allow refugees the right to work and a significant degree of freedom of movement through its so-called 'Self-Reliance Strategy'. This allows a unique opportunity to explore what is possible when refugees have basic economic freedoms. The book shows that refugees have complex and varied economic lives, often being highly entrepreneurial and connected to the global economy. The implications are simple but profound: far from being an inevitable burden, refugees have the capacity to help themselves and contribute to their host societies - if we let them

About the Author Alexander Betts is Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs and Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on the politics and economics of refugees. His books include *Protection by Persuasion: International Cooperation in the Refugee Regime* (Cornell University Press, 2009), *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Cornell University Press, 2013), and *Mobilising the Diaspora: How Refugees Challenge Authoritarianism* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). His writing has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*. He has worked for UNHCR and served as an advisor to the World Humanitarian Summit. He is the founder of the Humanitarian Innovation Project and a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader. Louise Bloom is Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. Her research focuses on the 'bottom-up' perspectives of humanitarian innovation, and she has carried out field-work in several countries across East Africa, and also in Jordan, South Africa, India, and the US. She has worked in the International Development and Humanitarian sector with International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs), including Save the Children UK and Oxfam, and in Myanmar and Haiti. Josiah Kaplan is Research Associate at the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. He is Senior Research advisor for ELRHA, and specialises in applied social research methods for aid and development. He has provided past research and programme support to organisations including Human Rights Watch, Medecins Sans Frontieres, UNICEF, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO) Best Practices Unit, and UNDP-Sierra Leone Peace and Development Unit. He completed his DPhil in International Relations and his MPhil in Development Studies at Oxford. Naohiko Omata is Senior Research Officer at the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. Prior to joining the RSC, Naohiko was Senior Teaching Fellow in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at University of London. Previously, he has worked as a practitioner and consultant for UNDP, UNHCR, and international and local NGOs in various Sub-Saharan African countries. Based on extensive research in West Africa, Naohiko has published widely on refugee livelihoods, rights and repatriation including articles in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* and *Forced Migration*. Naohiko received his PhD in Development Studies at SOAS, University of London.