
Syrian refugee helping study refugee experiences for federal government

New U of A study to examine outcomes in Edmonton, Lethbridge.

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Syrian refugees Aref and twin brother Bassel are both thriving members of Edmonton and now Aref will help study the refugee experience in Alberta.

Aref Sayegh is helping those who share his experience as a Syrian refugee in Canada by helping the University of Alberta study them.

"I'm just happy to help the research," Sayegh said, of his role joining a groundbreaking new study for the federal government of the settlement experience of refugees who have recently come to Alberta. "I think it will be a big deal for the Syrian families and also for the university."

Sandeep Agrawal, an urban planning professor at the university, is about to study the settlement process of Syrian refugees by focusing on those who have settled in Edmonton and Lethbridge.

Agrawal has added Sayegh to the project as an intern to help with cultural and language support.

Around 1,500 Syrian refugees in Edmonton and 200 in Lethbridge are either government-assisted, privately-sponsored or matched with private sponsors by the the United Nations.

"We believe there are differences [in challenges and experiences] in each of these entry categories and also differences based on the size of the cities they settle in," said Agrawal.

For his part, Sayegh – who is bilingual in Arabic and English, as well as a graduate student at the U of A – will interview 120 Syrian refugees and their service providers.

"Being a part of the the research team is my opportunity to give something back to the university and my community," he said.

The study will run from November until next summer, when the researchers will submit their findings to the federal government.

"The idea is that hopefully [the federal government] will act upon our recommendations and make certain policy changes and delivery of services in the future," said Agrawal.

Source: **Metro**

URL: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/11/01/syrian-refugee-helping-study-refugee-experiences-for-feds.html>