

# Can Maths be used to make the world better?

BY

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# Harvard Professor Alvin Roth just does that

- He gave a Congressional Briefing titled “Better Living through Economics: How Fundamental Economic Research Improves People’s Lives”
  - March 15, 2010, 12:00-1:30 B338 Rayburn House Office Building
- His idea- Pioneering branch of economics known as “Market design.”
- Central concept:
  - Markets are not only for commodities. They are also for opportunities.

- View the presentation here:

[Alvin Roth -changing the world with Maths/http://pkfindia.in/value%20adds/Congressional.pdf](http://pkfindia.in/value%20adds/Congressional.pdf)

# Some examples of how he is changing the world

- New York city's high school match
  - Algorithm to find the right match between 80,000 eighth graders and 700 high school programs
  - Result: Participation rate jumped from 66% to 93%
- Placing medical school graduates with residency programs
  - Accommodates doctor couples who want residencies in same place
- Matching incompatible kidney donor pairs and lone altruistic donors with other donors and recipients.
  - Already 1000 kidneys have been transplanted in 2009 using Roth's system- potential is promising

It is interesting to note...

- Roth went to Van Buren High School where he dropped out in his junior year
- His decision was due to boredom
- “I think I was under-stimulated” he says
- It is generally the school/ college drop outs who change the world!

## Sources

- Forbes India, Aug 13, 2010
- Roth's website
  - <http://kuznets.harvard.edu/~aroth/alroth.html>