



York Centre for
Asian Research

Virtual Student Conference: March 4-6, 2022

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: Due January 10, 2021.

Conference Theme:

Support, Sanctuary, Solidarity: Moving Towards Migrant Justice and Resilience

Keynote Speakers: TBD

The Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS), in collaboration with York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR), invites abstract proposals for its 16th annual Student Conference on the theme of **“Support, Sanctuary, Solidarity: Moving Towards Migrant Justice and Resilience.”**

The increasing politicisation of im/migration has occurred alongside the rise of nativist populism and exclusionary articulations of nationalism driven by anti-immigrant sentiment, racism and xenophobia. This has been compounded by the disparities and discriminations wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. As forces of exclusion and precarisation gain ground, counter-movements of sanctuary, support and solidarity have offered opportunities to address the structural issues that contribute to migrant vulnerabilities at a local, national, regional and global scale (Bauder and Godoy, 2020). This has taken the form of access initiatives such as York University’s Access for Students With Precarious Immigration Status Program (Villegas and Aberman, 2019) and calls for expanding access to migrant-inclusive healthcare (Spitzer et. al, 2019; OCASI, 2020).

What policy and political possibilities can and have been mobilized to address these profound inequities? How do societies move towards alternative futures that do not simply allow the continued structural legacy of displacement and disempowerment? We have seen a growth in sanctuary and solidarity policies which work to affirm migrants' rights to inclusion, challenge the rhetoric of crimmigration and securitization, and resist immigration law enforcement and expulsion. Together with movements for racial justice, Indigenous sovereignty, labour rights, and environmental justice, these initiatives have sought to reframe cities and communities as spaces of belonging for migrants irrespective of legal status and sites of refuge for refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons. Sanctuary and solidarity principles have inflected scholarship, activism and policy-making, making the case for comprehensive supports and intersectional equity. These efforts have succeeded in expanding the “right to the city” to new migrant groups and increasing participation and protection of vulnerable groups.

Simultaneously, refugees/IDPs/asylum seekers often have their autonomy questioned as they experience these issues. How are refugees and migrants subverting these policies to assert their autonomy and fight for their own inclusion? How do these movements work together? How are

tensions mitigated? Perhaps we must discuss the juxtaposition of “sanctuary cities” and government policies against what precarious groups do to create sanctuary for themselves? How do migrant organizers experience, encounter and subvert the state, in the face of increasing governmental pushback? What are governmental institutions doing to prevent asylum seekers and refugees from accessing sanctuary, solidarity and support services?

In the midst of this increasing politicization of im/migration exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, public health measures have also contributed to inequities experienced by migrants/refugees. Vaccine rollout has been inequitable, limiting the ability of migrants to be mobile as some countries do not recognize all the vaccines. Movement has been restricted based on vaccine type and administration. What is the difference between support/solidarity in this context? What spaces are created for and by migrants/refugees and how do they negotiate these spaces?

The purpose of this conference is:

1. To open a virtual window which brings together students, researchers and advocates from diverse disciplinary, regional and international backgrounds. With this diverse view we can better analyze and understand the issues faced by im/migrants at the intersection of sanctuary and solidarity policies. We can understand how these policies work to affirm migrant’s rights to inclusion, challenge the rhetoric of crimmigration and securitization as well as whether or not these policies are even beneficial. We seek to understand how these groups also work to actively subvert these policies and negotiate solidarity on their own terms.
2. Recognizing that the struggles of im/migrant groups are not exclusive to the current pandemic, this conference seeks to bring to fruition meaningful discussions on a myriad migrant issues, calls to action, and potentials for liberation before, during, and after the pandemic.

Submission Criteria:

A wide-range of submissions will be considered, in addition to conventional academic paper formats, including: story-telling, spoken word, photos, virtual (dance) performances, poetry, media, art work, theatrical productions, and literary pieces reflecting on the following broad themes and topics:

- Sanctuary city policies; policies of exclusion, status and citizenship for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers
- Restrictive border closures and controls
- (In)Access to social services by migrants (healthcare, sanctuary educational programs)
- COVID-19, policies of inclusion/exclusion (vaccinations, privilege of choice)
- Environmental inequity
- Globalized migrant movements
- Community and solidarities between movements
- The role of counter-movements
- Gendered issues
- Migrant workers and human rights

We welcome you to submit proposals on other topics as well!

In addition to live conference panels hosted via Zoom, we will also publish a selection of pre-recorded and read-only presentations on the conference website.

Furthermore, in addition to English, submissions for presentations in French, [Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Mandarin] are also welcome and encouraged, and we will provide language interpretation/translation as needed. Applicants may indicate their preference for presentation format and requests for language interpretation along with their abstract submission.

Instructions for Abstract Submission:

Individuals, groups, or panels wishing to participate in the conference must submit a 250-word abstract to yorkcrscaucus@gmail.com by January 10, 2022. Submissions will be assessed and responded to by late January 2022.

Abstract submissions **MUST** be accompanied by the following:

- Name(s) of presenter(s)
- Key presenter email address
- Title of Abstract
- Three to five keywords
- A short personal profile (no more than 150 words)
- Indication of whether the presentation will be made by a panel or an individual
- Indication of the preferred presentation format (live talk, pre-recorded, or read-only)
- Indication of language interpretation and translation needs/requests, if applicable
- Indication of the time zone you are located in (panel time frames will be staggered to facilitate participation of presenters in various time zones)

For more information about presenting at the conference please contact:

yorkcrscaucus@gmail.com

Or visit:

<https://crscaucus.info.yorku.ca/crs-year-2022-conference/call-for-papers/>

References:

Bauder, H. (2017). Sanctuary cities: Policies and practices in international perspective. *International Migration*, 55(2), 174-187.

Bauder, H., & Godoy, M. (2020). *Upscaling Migrant Sanctuary and Solidarity Policies and Practices in Times of COVID-19*. International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Geneva.

Moffette, D., & Ridgley, J. (2018). Sanctuary city organizing in Canada: From hospitality to solidarity. *Migration and Society*, 1(1), 147-155.

Gardner, K. (2017). What's Happening to Sanctuary?. *Briarpatch*, May–June.
<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/whats-happening-to-sanctuary>

Villegas, P. E., & Aberman, T. (2019). A double punishment: The context of postsecondary access for racialized precarious status migrant students in Toronto, Canada. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees/Refuge: revue canadienne sur les réfugiés*, 35(1), 72-82.