

CENTRE FOR REFUGEE STUDIES

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Mandate

The Centre for Refugee Studies is engaged in research on refugee issues; it informs public discussion as well as policy development and practice innovation by international, governmental, advocacy and service organizations; and it supports teaching in refugee and migration studies. Refugee studies is conceived in broad terms, as being concerned with the displacement of populations and individuals across and within borders, for reasons of persecution, expulsion, violence, violation of fundamental human rights and loss of essential human security and livelihood. It covers not only accommodation, protection, and assistance for refugees through asylum, settlement, resettlement and reintegration, but also the prevention of displacement. Its approach is necessarily interdisciplinary and respects diversity in perspectives.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

The centre is managed by a Director, with the help of a full-time Coordinator. They report to an 8-person Executive Committee, which represents all the constituencies of the centre, namely faculty members and associates, visiting scholars and research associates, students, and staff. It reports to still more broadly representative Council of about 35 members, in which the ultimate decision-making authority of the centre is vested (within the rules of the university). Student members also belong to a formally recognized Student Caucus. Standing Rules govern the decision-making processes.

Peter Penz continued as Director, but his term is scheduled to end in the summer of 2004. He is supported by Michael Lanphier as Deputy Director and Lawrence Lam as Education Coordinator (with responsibility for the Diploma and Certificate programs). Prof. Sharryn Aiken, who joined the Faculty of Law at Queen's University in 2002, continued as Editor in Chief of the centre's journal *Refuge*. In the annual Summer Course on Refugee Issues, Peter Penz took over as Academic Director, while Florence Ocen was the Summer Course Coordinator.

Myron McShane continued as Coordinator of the Centre. The position of Resource Centre Coordinator, once filled by Donald Mitchell, remained empty due to budgetary constraints. CRS currently has 4 work-study students, two graduate assistants, and four research assistants on research projects. Shirley Fletcher has continued as Financial Officer.

York University Faculty Affiliated with the Centre (2003-2004)

The following are York Faculty Members associated with the Centre for Refugee Studies

Prof. Irving Abella (History),
Prof. Howard Adelman (Philosophy),
Prof. Vijay Agnew (Social Science, Women's Studies, History),
Prof. Sharryn Aiken (Law:Queen's University),
Prof. Anne-Marie Ambert (Sociology, Women's Studies),
Prof. Michael Creal (Humanities, Emeritus),
Prof. David Dewitt (Political Science),
Prof. J.P. Diamani (Political Science),
Prof. Wenona Giles (Social Science, Women's Studies),
Prof. Mark Goodman (Social Science, Atkinson),
Prof. Abbas Gnamo (Centre for International and Security Studies),
Prof. Luin Goldring (Sociology),
Prof. Femida Handy (Environmental Studies),
Prof. Mohammed Hassan (Environmental Studies),
Prof. Pablo Idahosa (African Studies, Political Science),
Prof. Lesley Jacobs (Philosophy),
Prof. Ilan Kapoor (Environmental Studies),
Prof. Larry Lam (Sociology),
Prof. Michael Lanphier (Sociology),

Prof. Paul Lovejoy (History),
Prof. David Lumsden (Anthropology),
Prof. Gertrude Mianda (Sociology, Women's Studies)
Prof. Susan McGrath (Social Work, Atkinson)
Prof. Haideh Moghissi (Social Science, Atkinson, Women's Studies),
Prof. Obiora Okafor (Law),
Prof. Peter Penz (Environmental Studies),
Prof. Valerie Preston (Geography, Women's Studies),
Prof. Fahim Quadir (International Development Studies, Social Science),
Prof. Saeed Rahnema (Social Science, Atkinson, Political Science),
Prof. Craig Scott (Law),
Prof. Alan Simmons (Sociology),
Prof. Lorne Sossin (Law, Political Science),
Prof. Penny Van Esterik (Anthropology),
Prof. Sandra Whitworth (Political Science, Women's Studies),
Prof. Daphne Winland (Anthropology),
Prof. Yuklin Renita Wong (School of Social Work, Atkinson)

Activities in 2003-2004

The centre successfully held a major international meeting of specialists on legal remedies for war crimes entitled **Searching For Justice: Comprehensive Action In The Face Of Atrocities**, organized by Prof. Sharryn Aiken. Experts from around the world gathered at York on Dec. 4-6, 2003. The conference had a budget of over \$200,000 from five Federal Government sponsors and the Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The regular "brown bag" seminars of CRS and other special events sponsored by CRS consisted of the following:

"Picking Up the Pieces: Women Healing the Wounds of War (Sierra Leone)" Guest Speakers: Theresa Benjamin, Gertrude Vakaba;
"U.K. Asylum Policies: New Developments" Guest Speaker: Anthony Richmond;

"Gendering Forced Displacement: Enhancing Refugee Women's Capacities And Decreasing Their Vulnerabilities" Guest Speaker: Shukria Dini;
"Golden Age? What Golden Age? A critical history of African asylum policy" Guest Speaker: James Milner;
"Emerging Issues for Refugees: A View from the Ground" Guest Speaker: Mary Jo Leddy;
"Palestinian Refugees and the Peace Process" Guest Speaker: Professor Howard Adelman;
"Global Perspective on the Refugee Crisis: The Case of the Kurds in Iraq" Guest Speaker: Professor Mohammed Hassan;
"Resettlement, Integration and the Meaning of Home for Refugees in London." Guest Speaker: Priya Kissoon;
"Transnational Politics Among Immigrants and Refugees", a panel discussion by associates of the Social Cohesion Project;
"Towards a Conceptual Framework" Guest Speaker: Sarah Wayland;
"Diaspora Networks and the Recognition of a Nation" Guest Speaker: R. Cheran;
"The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq" Guest Speaker: Professor Mohammed Hassan.

CRS' journal has continued publishing. Under the editorship of **Prof. Sharryn Aiken**, the journal **Refuge** saw a reduced format of two double issues per year. The following issues were produced in 2003-2004:

Volume 21.4: *Interdiction at the Expense of Human Rights* Guest Editors: Janet Dench and Francois Crépeau

Volume 22.1: *New Approaches to Asylum: Reconciling individual rights and state interests* Guest Editor: Judith Kumin

Refuge continues to seek to seek SSHRC funding in June of 2004 as well as searching for other funders. The subscriber base is healthy and will continue to grow.

In October, 2003, CRS Graduate students held a well-attended student symposium "Borders, Perspectives and Emerging Lives: Exploring Subjectivities in our Work". This event was so successful, the Student Caucus decided to hold a Graduate Conference in October 2004, and planning commenced quickly.

Teaching

The graduate Diploma program in Refugee and Migration Studies had 42 students registered at the end of the teaching year and the parallel undergraduate Certificate program had 34 students registered. In the 2003-2004 academic year, there were a total of 49 new enrollments in both programs.

During this period, a very successful Summer Course in Refugee Issues was held. There were fifty-eight participants from over 15 countries in addition to York University interns. Overall, satisfaction rates were high, with over 75% reporting being highly satisfied with their experiences.

Participants included practitioners in the area of refugee resettlement, people working in government refugee determination mechanisms, refugee lawyers, journalists, academics and

refugees. The summer course faculty includes academics from York and other institutions, refugee and immigration lawyers, representatives of UNHCR and non-governmental organizations.

Research

Four projects currently anchor the Centre. They are as follows.

Social cohesion and international migration in a globalizing era: transnational solidarities and newcomer incorporation in Canada. This three-year study, headed by Prof. Michael Lanphier, will continue until March 2005. Current emphasis is on research by its nation-wide co-investigators on the integration of refugees. It should be noted that Prof. Lanphier co-edited (with Professor Paul Anisef) *The World in a City* (University of Toronto Press, 2003).

Ethics of Development-Induced Displacement, headed by Prof. Peter Penz, has had its reporting time extended into the spring of 2004. During the 2003-2004 year the EDID Project engaged in a series of dissemination activities including sponsorship of numerous invited speakers at York University and presentation of research findings at scholarly conferences. In June 2001, the project received additional funding from CIDA to organize a workshop on "The Politics of Participation". Four EDID Researchers -- Keith Barney, Sharlene Mollett, Amani El-Jack, and Pablo Bose -- were awarded IDRC doctoral fellowships. Several book and journal publications are also forthcoming from the project.

Changing family dynamics in displaced communities of Islamic Origin: An Educational/Training Program, headed by Prof. Haideh Moghissi, funded by the Ford Foundation. The project will create an interactive educational program for front-line researchers (academic and practitioners) in the Palestinian Territories. The program includes (but is not confined to) researchers involved in a large comparative, cross-national Major Collaborative Research Initiative, MCRI project that was funded in 2001 by the Social Sciences and Humanities research Council of Canada (SSHRC),

The project includes the following objectives:

- 1) to create an inclusive, interactive Educational/Training Program to share and exchange knowledge and expertise in three related areas: a) gender and family relations in an Islamic context; b) research methodology and ethics in relation to the study of gender and Islam and c) policy development and intervention with regards to gender and family instability and family violence;
- 2) to create a democratic consultative/collaborative forum for disseminating of research findings and sharing the knowledge acquired in the process of the SSHRC-funded research (MCRI) regarding family relations. Together, the Educational/Training Program and the Consultative/Collaborative forum seek to build new knowledge and to explore collective means of influence and intervention in the existing power relations and social conditions of women's lives.

African Human Rights Defenders Project, received seed funding from IDRC, InterPares and Amnesty International. It studied the perils of human rights leaders and how they could communicate with their groups while under state threat or in exile. The Visiting Practitioner Scholars James Torh and Hassan Shire headed this project while receiving assistance from York Africanists as well as Prof. Peter Penz. A longer-term three-year project is in the

planning stages.

Research is central to the work of the Centre for Refugee Studies. The Centre's research has been characterized by its comprehensive approach to issues related to forced migration. Current faculty members involved in the Centre have determined the following research priorities.

The themes include:

- Canada's asylum policies and practices
- Global asylum needs, national practices, and international burden-sharing
- Refugee and diasporic communities and their internal, intranational and transnational relationships
- Peace implementation, return, reconciliation, reconstruction, and reintegration
- Globalization, development, environment, conflict, and displacement
- Sovereignty, civil conflict, and humanitarian intervention
- Refugee NGOs and IGOs: challenges and dilemmas

In addition, the following cross-cutting themes have been identified:

- Ethics, human rights, and public discourse
- Gender, women, and children
- Vulnerability and agency
- Emerging realities and potential futures

CRS faculty and students will focus on developing a number of proposals in the coming year based on these themes. These include a project on Refugee Education (working with Toronto area Boards of Education) and a proposal on Refugee Advocacy as well as upcoming initiatives including Refugee Health (with Nancy Johnston of the Faculty of Nursing) and Refugee Life Narratives (with the assistance of NGO Coordinator and Professor Emeritus, Michael Creal). Creating linkages and research partnerships with community-based refugee serving NGOs will also be a priority as will be developing working relationships with international research institutions and grassroots organizations.