

EQUIPPING STUDENT LEADERS AS PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMANITARIAN ACTION



STUDENTS AS
PARTNERS
2023

MARCH 2023

Equipping Student Leaders as Partners for Sustainable Humanitarian Action



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that this conference at Wilfrid Laurier University is taking place upon Indigenous lands traditionally lived in and cared for by the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Neutral Peoples. Land acknowledgements are important because they spread awareness of Indigenous presence, contributions and land rights in everyday life, while recognizing the lasting harms done to Indigenous communities as a result of past and ongoing colonialism in Canada. In addition, land acknowledgements symbolize the need for Canada to work to address these harms and to foster healthier relationships with Indigenous peoples and the land.



WELCOME

It is our pleasure to welcome each person to Waterloo on behalf of Wilfrid Laurier University and International Students Overcoming War (ISOW). We recognize that you have traveled long distances to be here, and that you are dedicating valuable time and resources to participate in this conference.

In March 2020, ISOW hosted its third conference in which we asked the question: Do universities have a responsibility to respond to humanitarian emergencies? The answer was “yes.” Moreover, it was clear that students had a key role to play in that response. Today, sadly, there is more conflict around the world and humanitarian need is far greater. We cannot solve these enormous problems, but together we can make a difference. And so, we invite you to join us in asking: how can we best equip students to partner with their higher education institutions and to take the lead in shaping sustainable campus-based humanitarian action?

We ourselves are fortunate to have worked closely together for a number of years in a dynamic partnership that began when Oshish was a first-year student, and Gavin her professor. Our vision for the conference is ambitious, and we have learned a great deal through the countless hours necessary to reach the point that we are all able to join in this adventure together. Most important has been the value of collaboration with others to realize our vision. Our partnership with Manal Stulgaitis, Arash Bordbar and Samah Shda of the UNHCR’s Tertiary Education Office has been not only fruitful, but essential. The same must be said of the tremendous support we have received from the ISOW Student Leaders who have shaped the content of the conference through their thoughtful input, and who will be key to its success as they continue to invest their energy, skills and passion in the time we will spend together.

There is no doubt that we will work hard over the next three days, and we will be tired by the time we reach the end. However, we know that the outcomes will be worthwhile: relationships and visions formed through this conference will lead to important next steps that we have yet to imagine. We sincerely hope that you leave the conference inspired and hopeful about the possibilities that exist for real and meaningful humanitarian action through productive student-led partnerships.

We look forward to meeting each of you and are grateful for your participation.

Dr. Gavin Brockett & Oshish Ungras



CONFERENCE SYNOPSIS

We have been engaged in the intense process of shaping this conference since last May. Good partnerships are always challenging and inspiring, and the story behind this conference is worth sharing.

The idea emerged in December of 2021, in Dubai. Manal Stulgaitis and her team had invited ISOW to participate in an international higher education conference. Together we dreamed of a global, student-led movement for humanitarian action. Since we could open doors for students affected by conflict at Wilfrid Laurier University, surely more universities could be enticed to participate: higher education institutions are ideally positioned as civic leaders to facilitate this important work by cultivating passionate student leadership for humanitarian action. How could we bring more students and higher education institutions into the conversation to discuss the possibilities for real, global impact?

The following months were a time of intense activity for ISOW in the context of an ever-growing sense of international crisis and deepening humanitarian need. In January 2022, students across campus voted to double their financial contribution to the ISOW Scholarship program. At the same time, student leaders eloquently sought a greater commitment from Laurier, and then travelled to Ottawa to advocate for support from the Federal Government to expand ISOW to other universities in Canada. Reflecting on the conversations resulting from these efforts, we realized that crucial to the success of ISOW is the collaboration between students, faculty, staff within the university and the many partnerships we have with NGOs beyond our campus.

By the time we again met with Manal and her team in May at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference in Barcelona, we were ready to embark on planning an international conference to discuss how student leaders can be equipped to be the catalysts for youth-led humanitarian action. The emphasis had to be upon the importance of partnerships, beginning with our own commitment to bring ISOW and the UNHCR into collaboration. Ten months later we welcome you as participants to a crucial conversation at a time when student vision and student leadership have never been more important.

The first day of the conference sets the scene with the current context of unprecedented global displacement and the need for higher education institutions to be involved in finding solutions. Recognizing the invaluable expertise and perspectives of our delegates, we invite everyone to engage in deep reflection and voice their thoughts during the active learning workshops. There, we will explore how to make the case to one's higher education institution of the importance of humanitarian action, and how to do so ethically.

The second day provides delegates with tangible examples of sustainable student initiatives, and it explores how faculty and staff can equip students to do this work. We discuss what led to these examples of partnership, and how we can institutionalize them. In the afternoon, we use the Sustainable Development Goals as inspiration for Action Plans that students will formulate in consultation with higher education faculty, staff, and NGO representatives in the room. These Action Plans are intended to be blueprints for what students might do when they return to their institutions, better equipped to promote social action.

On the final day of the conference, we bring the conversation back to the big picture by contextualizing our efforts in the collective global commitment to humanitarian action. We will reflect on the progress made to increase refugee access to higher education thus far, and how our conference can contribute to pledges that will be made at the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2023. By reflecting on our own learning, we can prepare to take next steps together and to explore new paths, conversations, and, ideally, partnerships.

ISOW

Ten years ago, students in a first-year Arts seminar were moved by the story of a Palestinian doctor who had founded an organization to make education accessible for women from the Middle East. Concerned not only to learn about international conflict, but to respond to its impact, the students developed a preliminary proposal to partner with the Daughters for Life Foundation to provide scholarships. It was an academic assignment for which they received a grade, but one that has since led to a full-fledged student-run, primarily student-funded humanitarian scholarship program that has supported 30 undergraduate and graduate ISOW Scholars at Wilfrid Laurier University.

There was no blueprint for International Students Overcoming War. We have figured it out as we have taken risks and responded to opportunities each year: sadly, opportunities that have resulted from an increase in violence and conflict around the world. We have been open to learning together, to being accountable, and to engaging with the local community. Most importantly, we have been committed to genuine relationships with the ISOW Scholars we have sponsored, and to working closely with the university administration and NGO partners to make the initiative possible.

A commitment to learning and partnership to achieve meaningful outcomes is at the heart of ISOW. It has required the steady and thoughtful involvement of faculty members willing to invest long hours patiently nurturing successive cohorts of student leaders. As these students have gained knowledge about global conflict and humanitarian action, so too they have developed essential competencies through experiential learning. However, their primary motivation is to use their time at university to make a real impact on the world: every Laurier student contributes to the ISOW Scholarship no matter their own financial circumstances, and over 150 student leaders have devoted thousands of hours to realizing ISOW's vision to foster genuine intercultural learning and effective global citizenship by bringing together minds from around the world.

It is easy to become disillusioned when we study the complexities of the world today, but ISOW is proof that students are ready to invest themselves in opportunities for change, impact and innovation when they are offered. Student leaders are the catalyst for change. At times it has felt as though their creativity and commitment has generated innovation at a speed that not even they had anticipated. As the ISOW model gains national and international attention, we can see the remarkable potential that lies in a student-faculty partnership for meaningful learning and humanitarian action that is supported by the higher education institution itself.

ISOW is led by a team of dedicated undergraduate students that includes the sponsored Scholars. They work together throughout the year: they work between classes, exams and assignments, consistently demonstrating unwavering commitment to each other. They are supported by ISOW Interns who are recent graduates, paid by the university to support the initiative and nurture student leaders.

As ISOW and Wilfrid Laurier University continue to learn how best to strengthen and improve our holistic approach to humanitarian scholarships, we invite all delegates attending this conference to think of ways that you can challenge your own institutions of higher education to explore new, even unconventional, ways to push for solutions to the global challenges of today. Students are ready and waiting: empowered and equipped they will open up new possibilities for humanitarian action. As partners, students are the most valuable resource available to a university and college.

DAY 1 SETTING THE SCENE FOR TAKING ACTION

8:00–8:45 **Registration & Breakfast**

8:45–9:45 **Orientation for Delegates**

9:45–10:45 **Plenary #1**

The Global Context of Forced Displacement and Higher Education

Rema Jamous Imseis, UNHCR
Manal Stulgaitis, UNHCR

Rema Jamous Imseis will be interviewed by a former refugee. She will reflect on her lengthy experience in displacement and emergency settings, including the role that higher education has or should play in the humanitarian/development nexus. Emphasizing the need for humanitarian response to be aligned with national development objectives in hosting countries, she will frame our conversations about the various roles of student advocates, university leadership, and the humanitarian sector in tackling global issues.

10:45–11:00 **Break**

11:00–12:15 **Plenary #2**

Displacement, Higher Education, and Sustainable Development Goals

Moderator: Manal Stulgaitis, UNHCR
Dr. Mehvan Arif, University of Dohuk, Iraq
Ashley Collier, Mastercard Foundation
Dr. Mauna Chuma Belius, University of Iringa
Frederikke Veirum Høgsgaard, Global Student Forum
Erin Cannan, Bard College
Arash Bordbar, UNHCR

In this session we explore why the engagement of higher education institutions, systems, and students is essential to the fundamental transformations required to address young people's needs in situations of conflict and fragility. The panel looks at the variety of ways that investments in higher education in contexts of fragility and conflict can influence progress toward sustainable development goals and highlights different global structures for engagement that can affect change in national development and peace outcomes.

DAY 1 SETTING THE SCENE FOR TAKING ACTION

12:15-1:15

Lunch

1:15-3:00

Workshop #1

Making the Case for Higher Education Responses to Emergencies

The objective of the afternoon's working groups is to respond to the humanitarian challenges described in the morning, and to explore how each person can contribute to solutions through engagement with institutions of higher education. In the first workshop we will consider how universities and colleges already participate in humanitarian action and how to overcome the obstacles to greater involvement.

- How does a university or college benefit when it engages in humanitarian action?
- What unique resources and advantages does a university or college have that give it the capacity to respond to global humanitarian emergencies?
- What are the barriers or obstacles that make it difficult for a university or college to engage in humanitarian action?
- What are the challenges to asking students to take the lead in organizing campus-based humanitarian action? How can we support them in this?
- Can you provide an example of a student-led and sustainable social or humanitarian initiative that reflects an institutional commitment to going beyond research and teaching?

3:00-3:15

Break

3:15-4:00

Plenary #3

Universities and Social Action: A Contested Role?

Prior to taking action, we must acknowledge that universities and colleges struggle to overcome the inequities that result from the harmful colonial structures on which they were built. Institutional transformation is slow at best, and, more often than not, it comes in response to demands from students who lead the calls for justice. Campus-based humanitarian action anywhere in the world must take care to ensure that higher education institutions contribute to solutions rather than perpetuate existing problems.

Moderator: Bina Mehta, Wilfrid Laurier University
Dr. Barrington Walker, Wilfrid Laurier University
Dr. Darren Thomas, Wilfrid Laurier University

DAY 1 SETTING THE SCENE FOR TAKING ACTION

4:00–4:45

Workshop #2

Developing a Framework for Ethical Student-Led Humanitarian Action

The second workshop focuses on how best to respond to criticisms when making the case for higher education commitment to humanitarian action. The objective is to develop the outlines of an ethical framework that will guide delegates as they approach university and college leaders to make the case that it is imperative for them to respond to emergencies today.

- What ethical concerns might be raised about student-led humanitarian action?
- How do I measure the effectiveness of my efforts to help someone else?
- Can I describe a time when I tried to listen to someone I wanted to help and to give them agency before I offered help?
 - How easy was it?
 - What difficulties were associated with trying to incorporate their voice into plans to provide help?
- Helping others requires that we allow them to explain what they need. What steps should student leaders follow to ensure that any campus-based action is sensitive to the real needs of the people it seeks to help?
- How will I respond if someone argues that a university or college should focus only on the social problems in our own community before trying to respond to foreign humanitarian crises?
- What key points would I include in a framework to ensure that student-led campus-based action is ethical?

4:45–5:30

Plenary #4

Strengthening Higher Education through Social Action
Humanitarian action and the Sustainable Development Goals are integrally connected. At the same time, the SDGs resonate with students and staff in universities and colleges around the world. The result has been creative and meaningful campus-based action that provides a framework for future sustainable humanitarian action if institutions will invest in and empower student leadership.

Duncan Ross, Times Higher Education

7:45–9:00

An *iftar* meal in the Paul Martin Centre will be available to delegates observing Ramadan

DAY 2 BUILDING ACTION PLANS

8:00–8:45

Registration & Breakfast

8:45–9:30

Plenary #5

Afghanistan and the Imperative for Women's Education

The second day begins with a reminder of the global conditions that have led to this conference through a feature interview with Friiba Rezayee of Women Leaders of Tomorrow (WLOT). Higher education has never been more important and yet it is now denied to all Afghan women. WLOT exists to provide education to them, and the panel will explore how it has begun to partner with universities, students, and communities to raise money and to provide scholarships.

Saja Saymeh, President, International Students Overcoming War
Friiba Rezayee, Women Leaders of Tomorrow

9:30–10:45

Plenary #6

Students as Partners for Sustainable Humanitarian Action

This session will explore the possibility for sustainable campus-based humanitarian action if students are empowered to lead in partnership by discussing two examples. The first is the Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) that is committed to increasing refugee access to higher education through advocacy and entrepreneurial efforts. The second is International Students Overcoming War (ISOW) that is a student-run and primarily student-funded scholarship program rooted in experiential learning.

Moderator: Tom Lowe, University of Portsmouth
Oshish Ungras, ISOW/Wilfrid Laurier University
Justin Zekorn, ISOW/Wilfrid Laurier University
Sadiki Bamperineza, Tertiary Refugee Student Network
Amna Shah, Connecting & Equipping Refugees with Tertiary Education

10:45–11:00

Break

11:00–12:00

Plenary #7

Humanizing Higher Education through Civic Engagement

Institutional leaders will speak to the challenges associated with cultivating cultures that foster student leadership through experiential learning. They will also emphasize the remarkable opportunities that come with inviting them into meaningful partnership through both curricular and co-curricular programs.

Dr. Gavin Brockett, Wilfrid Laurier University
Dr. Kyle Farmbry, Guilford College
Erin Cannan, Bard College
David McMurray, Wilfrid Laurier University
Aki Takada, Japan ICU Foundation

DAY 2 BUILDING ACTION PLANS

12:00-1:15

Lunch

1:15-3:45

Workshop #3

What Next? Planning for Campus-Based Social Action

Student delegates will apply what they have learned through the first two days by working together to develop action plans that they might present to their college or university upon return home. Students will be paired with NGO representatives and higher education staff to design plans related to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Effective programs must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound. If student leadership can lead to sustainable social action in response to the SDGs, then there will be a solid foundation for more ambitious and broad ranging humanitarian action. The Action Plan Template is included after the schedule.

3:45-4:00

Break

4:00-5:00

Research Paper Presentations: Students as Partners

Paul Martin Centre and Senate and Board Chambers

In preparation for this conference, academics were asked to submit proposals for research papers related to the "students as partners" pedagogy that is gaining currency on various campuses around the world. We invite you to learn from our colleagues, to provide helpful feedback and to encourage further research that can inform effective partnerships for sustainable humanitarian action.

Group 1: Paul Martin Centre

Moderator: Ali Jasemi, Wilfrid Laurier University

- Tom Lowe, University of Portsmouth: "How can Students as Partners practice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning be adapted for Sustainable Humanitarian Action."
- Dr. Fatima Maatwk, Dr. Jennifer Fraser, & Kyra Araneta, University of Westminster: "Student Partnerships for Social Justice: storytelling and podcasting as means for decolonisation"
- Dara Drake, Syracuse University: "Students as Partners for Effective Change: Bring Students into the Center of Decision Making"

DAY 2 BUILDING ACTION PLANS

Group 2: Senate and Board Chambers

Moderator: Dr. Steve Sider, Wilfrid Laurier University

- Melissa Wilson, Carleton University: "Canadian Responses to Humanitarian Crisis: A case study of the responses of Government and Non-State Actors to the Syrian Refugee Crisis"
- Dr. Lisa Brunner, University of British Columbia & Dr. Takhmina Shokirova, University of Regina: "Towards a more ethical practice in higher education's support of displaced and forced migrant scholars/students"
- Dr. Sonalini Sapra, Dr. Cathryn Bennett, Dr. Christian Matheis, Jess Castaneda, Jack Fink & Lucy Selby (Guilford College): "What helps campuses dismantle nationalism and racism? Resettlement Campuses, Student-Community Research Partnerships, and the Future of Higher Education"
- Dr. Cathryn Bennett, Guilford College: "'With Education, I am Somebody'": Refugee Women and U.S. Higher Education"

7:00-9:00

Optional Event: Bowling Social and Dinner

DAY 3 BUILDING ACTION PLANS

9:00–9:30

Breakfast

9:30–10:00

Reflections on Equipping Student Leaders as Partners for Sustainable Humanitarian Action

10:00–11:30

Developing Pledges for the Global Refugee Forum 2023

The first Global Refugee Forum took place in December 2019 and was a true milestone in building solidarity with the world's refugees and the countries and communities that host them. Four years on, the 2023 Global Refugee Forum will provide an opportunity to build on progress made by governments and other stakeholders towards the implementation of pledges and initiatives lodged at the first GRF. It will also provide space for participants to announce new pledges, share good practices to inform and inspire further responsibility-sharing, and take stock of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Critically, the 2023 GRF must deliver on the global commitment to responsibility sharing with countries that host the vast majority of the world's refugees. Higher education must be part of and provide leadership for that response. This session will explain the processes behind the GRF and explore the need for and formulation of demand-driven, responsive and innovative pledges to amplify the role and impact of student mobilization, higher education institutions and global university-centred partnerships at the Global Refugee Forum.

11:30–12:45

A Conversation with Senator Ratna Omidvar

Internationally-Recognized Voice on Migration, Diversity, and Inclusion

Ratna Omidvar is an internationally recognized voice on migration, diversity and inclusion. She came to Canada from Iran in 1981 and her own experiences of displacement, integration and citizen engagement have been the foundation of her work. In April 2016, Ms. Omidvar was appointed to the Senate of Canada as an independent senator representing Ontario. Senator Omidvar is also the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and served as Deputy Chair of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector. She has been appointed to both the order of Ontario (2005) and the order of Canada (2015) for her advocacy work on behalf of immigrants and equality. She has won countless other awards for her advocacy work including being one of the Top 10 Diversity Champions worldwide in 2016 and a Lifetime Achievement award from CivicAction and the Canadian Urban Institute.

12:45–2:00

Lunch

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

As you think about your social action goal, consider both the:

OPPORTUNITIES

How can I creatively leverage obstacles to find solutions?

Identify the problem you want to address: What are you passionate about? What are you moved/frustrated by? Are there barriers to inclusion that inspire you to act? What is your problem statement?

Timeline: what are your short, medium, and long-term milestones?

How will you ensure ethical action? What type of governance, accountability, and feedback framework will you implement? What are the risks of your plan?

What will you gain from this work? Experiential learning, job skills, volunteer experience.

What are the resources at your disposal? Think about student clubs, campus/community services, policies, skills, networks.

STAKEHOLDERS

Who can support me, and who might this appeal to?

Who could be your Faculty/Staff Advisor? This will be context-specific but will ensure that you are presenting your idea to someone that can provide institutional and academic guidance.

How will you make the case to your university?

What commitments, policies, values, does your action seek to fulfill? Think institutional, regional, and global priorities and frameworks!

How will you facilitate a partnership between students and faculty/staff?

How are you including national and refugee students?

SUMMARIZE YOUR S.M.A.R.T. PLAN

- S**pecific: what do I want to accomplish?
- M**easurable: how will I know when it is accomplished?
- A**ttainable: how will I achieve this plan?
- R**elevant: how does this align with my long-term objectives?
- T**ime-bound: by when do I hope to achieve this plan?

PHAN THI KIM PHUC

Lessons of Life

featuring

Kim Phuc

Peace Activist

International Students Overcoming War (ISOW) is pleased to welcome Phan Thi Kim Phuc for our keynote event on March 29th, at 7pm. As a young girl, Kim was immortalized in a Pulitzer-Prize winning photograph capturing a napalm attack in 1972 in the midst of the Vietnam War.

Today, she is a world-renowned speaker who moves audiences by sharing her journey of forgiveness and hope. Her keynote speech will be followed by a reception featuring a book-signing and photo exhibit. This event will mark the start of a 3-day international conference at Laurier focusing on student leadership in humanitarian action.



SPEAKERS & RESEARCHERS



KYRA ARANETA

Having recently completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology at Westminster, Kyra has continued her studies for a Master's in International Relations. As a woman of mixed African-Asian descent, identity work has been a complex task for Kyra, but nevertheless a process that has also inspired her efforts towards creating decolonial and anti-racist tools and spaces in the academy. Approaching her final years in education, she hopes that her work on the project can help to transform the ways we think about and engage with pedagogy at Westminster.



SADIKI BAMPERINEZA

Sadiki is a Congolese refugee who lived in Rwanda for 26 years, during which time he served as a high school teacher and a refugee guidance counsellor at Kepler University. Currently, he serves as a Global Leader with the Tertiary Refugee Students Network (TRSN), where he works with other TRSN students to advocate for greater refugee access to higher education, a guide to institutions and students to promote quality academic experiences and increase awareness of and access to internships, scholarships, professional development and employment opportunities. Currently, Sadiki is working on a peer-to-peer advisory program to build refugee students' ability to advocate for challenges faced in accessing opportunities and to support fellow refugees in accessing scholarship information and resources to prepare them for successful admission to Ugandan universities.



DR. MAUNA CHUMA BELIUS

Mauna Chuma Belius is a Senior Admissions Officer at the University of Iringa in Tanzania where he is responsible for admitting students to the university at all levels of education, ranging from certificate programs to postgraduate studies. He has over 15 years experience working in higher education and working to foster student learning. He also has over 3 years' experience in youth empowerment at the Kilimanjaro Regional Office, and served as the President of the Tumaini University Student's Organization while pursuing his undergraduate degree in Information Technology.



CATHRYN B. BENNETT, PH.D.

Cathryn B. Bennett, Ph.D., engages the discipline of Higher Education across issues of equity and access with historically minoritized populations, including refugee/formerly resettled, first-generation, and Latina/o/x/e college students. Dr. Bennett is passionate about demystifying higher education access and success. Her work prioritizes community connections through engagements such as leading an Evaluation for Every Campus A Refuge and teaching in Guilford College's Community and Justice Studies major.



ARASH BORDBAR

Arash Bordbar is an associate education officer for the UNHCR. He has over 7 years of experience in refugee affairs, including his roles as the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) and the UNHCR Global Youth Advisory Council he co-founded. Arash is a 2016 Young People's Human Rights award winner for his advocacy surrounding refugee and asylum seekers, refugee education, and LGBTQ+ rights in Australia and the Asian-Pacific. His expertise is in policy and advocacy about refugee rights, focusing on accountability for affected populations. Arash also holds a Bachelor of Engineering from Western Sydney University.



GAVIN BROCKETT

Gavin Brockett is a Vice Dean of Arts at Wilfrid Laurier University and the Director of the student-led International Students Overcoming War (ISOW) program. In his role with ISOW, he fosters student leadership through experiential learning opportunities, supports student leadership in their decision-making capacities, liaises with global partners, and helps guide ISOW's future direction. His research interests include the history of modern Turkey, international Islam in the 20th century, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and active learning in the arts. He received a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago.



LISA BRUNNER

Dr. Lisa Brunner is a Sessional Lecturer in Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her Ph.D. dissertation focused on Canada's higher education-migration nexus. She is also a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant with 11 years of professional experience as an International Student Advisor. She serves on Canada's Pathways to Prosperity Standing Committee of Students and Junior Scholar Engagement and UBC's Scholars at Risk Advisory Committee.



ERIN CANNAN

Erin Cannan is the Vice President for Civic Engagement/Deputy Director of the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) at Bard College in Annandale and the Director for the Open Society University Network (OSUN). Erin co-teaches multiple courses on civic engagement and was a co-lead on Bard's successful Carnegie Engagement Classification process in 2020. Responsible for integrating civic engagement as a core value of OSUN's international partners, Erin strives to help institutions and the people in them develop the agency to be civic actors.



JESS CASTANEDA

Jess Castaneda (they/them) is a senior at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina majoring in Community and Justice Studies and a double minor in Psychology and Criminal Justice. Their experiences with homelessness, food insecurity, and poverty fueled their passion in social justice and advocacy, leading them to attend Guilford as a Bonner Scholar. As a Bonner Scholar, they commit to 140 hours of community service a semester. Jess is hoping to pursue a career in higher education.



ASHLEY COLLIER

Ashley Collier is the head of scholarships at the MasterCard Foundation where she has worked for over 7 years. The Mastercard Foundation works with visionary organizations to enable young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work, scholarships, and other professional development opportunities. She has 15 years of experience in working in NGOs in project management, education programming, and partnership management. Ashley holds a BA in Political Science and Government and a Master of Education in Leadership and Administration from Trent University.



DARA DRAKE

Dara is a Senior at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, majoring in Policy Studies. She is passionate about amplifying the voices of undergraduates and ensuring they are included in University-wide policy decisions. She is also a Remembrance Scholar and a Maxwell | Arts & Sciences Scholar, two of the most prestigious scholarships any undergraduate at Syracuse University can receive.



DR. JENNIFER FRASER

As a non-binary queer academic at the University of Westminster, Jennifer has spent the past 20 years in the UK teaching and researching at the intersections of literature, gender studies, queer theory and critical pedagogies. Their approaches to education are also shaped by experiences as a white settler migrant in Canada and by growing up between different linguistic and geographic spaces of 'home'. These both/and experiences of identity formation have taught them to centre building relationships and sharing stories to develop collaborative analyses. Formally, Jennifer is Principal Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences and University Director of Student Partnership in the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation. What Jennifer loves most about these roles is how they bring them into contact with other dreamers and co-conspirators for change.



KYLE FARMBRY

Kyle Farmbry, a lifelong academic leader and scholar of entrepreneurial development and global education, is the 10th President of Guilford College. He was a Professor of Public Administration at the School of Public Affairs and Administration and previously served as Dean of the Graduate School. A proven senior administrator, executive, thought leader and an author of several books, Kyle holds a bachelor's degree in International Affairs, a master's in Public Administration, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Public Administration from George Washington University. In 2013, he earned his Juris Doctorate from the Rutgers University School of Law.



BRITTANY FERGUSON

Brittany is a 4th-year undergraduate in the Global Studies Bachelor of Arts program at Laurier with a specialization in International Development. This year, she is serving as the Vice President and Director of Scholar support for International Students Overcoming War (ISOW), and ensures that the scholars have the support and resources they need while at Laurier. Brittany is graduating in June of 2023 and will be working before pursuing more education.



JACK FINK

Jack Fink is a senior at Guilford College and is majoring in Community and Justice Studies. He decided to become a Community and Justice Studies major after learning about the different ways injustices present themselves in the world and how people aim to combat them. He is currently interning at Triad Health Project in North Carolina.



ELLA ININHAZWE

Ella Ininahazwe is a Healthcare Management graduate and works as a Refugee College Guidance Counselor in Rwanda with Kepler – an organization that provides students in East Africa with access to higher education. Ella first advocated for refugee education while studying at Kepler herself. As a Guidance Counselor, Ella is responsible for managing Kepler's scholar preparation programs throughout Rwanda, developing the curriculum for teacher assistants, and supporting refugee students before, during, and after their studies. Ella is determined to increase the number of refugee youth who can access higher education, especially girls and young women. Originally from Burundi, Ella came to Rwanda in 2015.



REMA JAMOUS

Rema Jamous is the Canadian representative of the UNHCR. She holds an undergraduate degree in political science and history from McMaster University and a law degree from Dalhousie University. Rema joined the UN in 2003 with the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. She has worked with the UNHCR since 2017 as Deputy Director of the Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa. Rema has served as Head of the United Nations Regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Cairo and as Special Assistant to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in Jerusalem. Currently, she leads UNHCR Canada's work in refugee education, women's advocacy, and finding sustainable solutions for refugee resettlement.



ALI JASEMI

Ali Jasemi is a Ph.D. Candidate in Developmental Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario, Canada. His research is focused on bi/multilingualism, mental health, and cultural adjustment in migrants. Ali also teaches Abnormal Psychology as a contract faculty. Over the past decade, Ali Jasemi has held several frontline and managerial roles within the community in mental health and rehabilitation, focusing on patients with traumatic experiences. Being fluent in four languages and aligned with the Canadian mosaic values, Ali has been actively promoting equity and diversity in mental health practice within the community and academic research studies.



AMAN KHAN

Aman is a 4th year Political Science Student at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has been part of ISOW for 2 years and is currently Assistant Director of the Scholar Support team. ISOW is a big part of her life and has allowed her to meet so many, like-minded people who share the same passion for humanitarian aid.



TOM LOWE

Tom is a senior lecturer in Higher Education at the University of Portsmouth and Chair of the RAISE Network. His research includes student engagement in education development, embedding employability into the curriculum and supporting student belonging. Before Portsmouth, Tom was the Head of Student Engagement and Employability at the University of Winchester, where he led the University's student development & internationalization strategies.



DR FATIMA MAATWK

Fatima is an Egyptian-German, Muslim woman Lecturer in Student Partnership at the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation, University of Westminster. She completed her doctoral research at Westminster Business School and did her Bachelor and Master's in Economics and Business Administration, at Humboldt University to Berlin. Existing at the intersections of what is often socially perceived as contradictory identities – Arab-Western-Muslim-liberal – resulted in a constant process of having to culturally translate her 'self'. Fatima spent her life between Egypt and Germany and has been living in the UK for the past seven years, where she is continuing her academic professional path.



DAVID MCMURRAY

David McMurray now serving as a consultant in higher education, held the position of Vice President, Student Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON, Canada until June 30, 2020. An award winning and innovative student affairs professional, David successfully implemented multiple institutional and student focused strategies on the comprehensive education and development of the whole student. Engaging students in rich and meaningful leadership opportunities, David's experiential learning based approach formed the foundation for student learning, development and success at Laurier as well as at universities and colleges across Canada and abroad.



BINA MEHTA

Bina Mehta has been Contract Teaching Faculty since 1993 at Trent, Queen's and Wilfrid Laurier universities. She is a recipient of the Donald F. Morgenson Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching. She teaches in the Faculty of Arts at Laurier Global Studies and North American Studies. Her teaching interests relate to race and anti-racism, the internationalization of post-secondary education, Indigenizing/decolonizing curriculum, food and culture, and immigrant identities in Canada. Questions of home and what it means to be a Canadian have underpinned her teaching. These interests and concerns are derived from personal experience as a diasporic, Kenyan, Gujarati woman. Teaching and thinking about teaching are central to her practice as a post-secondary educator.



MANEL MIAADI

Manel Miaadi, a PhD Candidate in Global Governance at Wilfrid Laurier University, has extensive experience in education as an associate professor, principal, coordinator, and writing coach. She holds degrees in Applied Politics, Applied Linguistics, and English Language and Literature. Manel has worked with international organizations like IOM and NDI and contributed to refugee housing initiatives. A Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant, she launched MICS and supports ISOW's mission to help war-affected students study safely in Canada.



RATNA OMIDVAR

Ratna Omidvar is an internationally recognized voice on migration, diversity and inclusion. She came to Canada from Iran in 1981, and her own experiences of displacement, integration and citizen engagement have been the foundation of her work. In April 2016, Ms. Omidvar was appointed to the Senate of Canada as an independent senator representing Ontario. Senator Omidvar is also the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and served as Deputy Chair of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector. She has been appointed to the order of Ontario (2005) and Canada (2015) to advocate for immigrants and equality. She has won countless other awards for her advocacy work, including one of the Top 10 Diversity Champions worldwide in 2016 and a Lifetime Achievement award from CivicAction and the Canadian Urban Institute.



PHAN THI KIM PHUC

Kim Phuc is known worldwide as “the girl in the picture” and the “napalm girl” following a photo published in 1972 showing her running away from a Napalm attack as a child in Vietnam. The photo transformed her into a symbol of the living atrocities of war. In 1997, she was recognized as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, acknowledging her peace promotion activities and advocacy for tolerance and reconciliation. She is also the founder of the Kim Foundation International, through which she supports children who are war victims through medical and psychological support. She is also the recipient of the 2019 Dresden Peace Prize, given to recipients in recognition of their work promoting peace.



FRIBA REZAYEE

Friba Reyazee is the founder and Executive Director of Women Leaders of Tomorrow and its leadership in the sports project Girls of Afghanistan Lead (GOAL). Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, she made history at 18 by being Afghanistan’s first-ever female Olympic athlete in Judo. Her involvement brought Afghanistan back to the world stage in sports and encouraged hundreds of Afghan girls and women to participate in sports. In addition to her roles in Women Leaders of Tomorrow, Friba also serves as the manager of the Afghan Women’s Employment Program at the YWCA in Vancouver and holds certifications in self-defence Judo teaching from Judo Canada



DUNCAN ROSS

Duncan Ross is a Chief Data Officer with Times Higher Education, where he works with a team to generate university rankings and related data products using data analytics. In 2019, Duncan was responsible for launching the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, which serves as a measure to evaluate universities' commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Duncan specializes in data strategies, ethical data science, data-mining/advanced analytics, pre-sales expertise, and analytical solution creation and design. In 2022, he was named one of DatalQs 100 most influential people in data.



SONALINI SAPRA

Sonalini Sapra is an Associate Director at the Center for Principled Problem Solving and Excellence in Teaching at Guilford College. Before returning to graduate school, she worked at a non-governmental labour rights organization in New Delhi, researching and advocating the impact of trade liberalization on India’s informal workers.



SAJA SAYMEH

Saja is a 4th-year undergraduate at Laurier majoring in Global Studies with a Management Option. She is also the current president of ISOW, where she works alongside other aspiring team leaders to achieve ISOW's goals for the 2022-2023 academic year.



AMNA SHAH

Amna was born and raised in Pakistan, and has been living in Malaysia since 2014. She obtained a B.Sc (Hons) in Biomedical Science from the University of Nottingham. In addition to winning the Best Research Project & Best Research Proposal Pitch Award, she was honoured to be the Valedictorian of the class of 2020 of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Nottingham. An alumni of the CERTE (Connecting & Equipping Refugees with Tertiary Education) program, she now serves as the CERTE Program Coordinator and is a teacher at Dignity for Children Foundation. Amna also serves as the General Secretariat & the Refugee Coordinator (Women) of the Pakistani Ahmadiyya Community Malaysia.



SAMAH SHDA

Samah Shda is a Tertiary Student Engagement Expert at the UNHCR. She has nine years of experience in refugee protection, community development, and facilitating refugee access to education. She has worked on humanitarian and development projects in the MENA region, North America, Australia, and Europe. Samah has extensive experience in community development and organization, youth leadership and advocacy, capacity building, qualitative research, project management, design and implementation, and partnership cultivation. Her current work with the UNHCR focuses on tertiary refugee student engagement, mobilization, and support.



TAKHMINA SHOKIROVA

Dr. Shokirova is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Regina. Her research broadly focuses on the lived experiences of immigrant communities locally and globally. She explores how immigrant communities negotiate and re-negotiate gender relations of power amid (im)mobility. Takhmina also participates in research projects focused on the experiences of university students, including the settlement experiences of international students in Canada. Dr. Shokirova holds a Ph.D. in Social Work; an MA in Peace Studies; an MA in International Law and Human Rights; and a BA in International Relations. Takhmina also serves as a Co-Chair of the Pathways to Prosperity Standing Committee on Student and Junior Scholar Engagement.



STEVE SIDER

Steve Sider is associate dean and professor in the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. He teaches courses in international education, school leadership, and special education. He is the past president of Canada's Comparative and International Education Society and the current Director of the Centre for Leading Research in Education, a university research centre exploring interdisciplinary aspects of education. He is a Fellow at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and an Associate of Inclusive Education Canada and the Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education. Dr. Sider currently holds three Canadian national research grants examining the leadership practices of school principals in Canada, Haiti, and Ghana.



LUCY GRACE SELBY

Lucy-Grace Selby is a Senior at Guildford College. Lucy is a researcher presenting their research with Dr. Sonalini Sapra, Dr. Cathryn Bennet, Jack Fink and Jess Castaneda on "What helps campuses dismantle nationalism and racism? Resettlement Campuses, Student-Community Research Partnerships, and the Future of Higher Education."



MANAL STULGAITIS

Manal Stulgaitis works for the UNHCR as a complementary pathways expert. She has worked in humanitarian aid and development for over a decade and is an expert on complementary pathways for refugees at the UNHCR. Her expertise is in advocacy and building partnerships to ensure refugee youth have access to the means to integrate or resettle abroad through access to higher education locally. Along with supporting the Tertiary Refugee Student Network (TRSN) and its refugee student leaders, she works with organizations around the world to encourage the replication and implementation of programs that support access to higher education.



AKI TAKADA

Aki Takada is the Vice President of the Japan ICU Foundation (JICUF). JICUF is a nonprofit organization based in New York with the mission to "nurture global citizens who contribute to the wellbeing of humanity." Since its inception in 2017, Aki has played a key role in managing the Syrian Scholars Initiative, a scholarship program for Syrian refugees at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.



DARREN THOMAS

Darren Thomas is Laurier's Vice-President of Indigenous Initiatives. He advises academic and administrative departments in the university on creating a safe and inclusive environment for Indigenous stakeholders. He and his team support indigenous scholars and staff and develop strategies for Laurier's Indigenousization, decolonization, and reconciliation. Darren Thomas is the recipient of the 2020 Six Nations Community Treasure Award and the 2020 Donald F. Morgenson Early Career Excellence in Teaching Award.



OSHISH UNGRAS

Oshish Ungras is the Global Partnerships Coordinator for the International Students Overcoming War (ISOW) program. She is responsible for liaising with ISOW's global initiatives and partnerships, engaging with the Canadian government as a certified lobbyist, and planning and participating in the Students as Partners Conference. Oshish has over four years of experience working with newcomer and refugee populations and holds a bachelor's degree in Global Studies with a specialization in Peace and Conflict and a Master's degree in Global Governance from the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Her research interests include human rights, international migration, and increasing access to higher education globally.



BARRINGTON WALKER

Barrington Walker is the Associate Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Wilfrid Laurier University, where he and his team work to promote EDI initiatives on campus and in the greater community, as well as provide support, education, and spaces for students to find community and engage in EDI work. His research focuses on Black Canadian history, immigration and migration, and race and settler colonialism through multiple perspectives, archives, and lenses. In 2010, he was shortlisted for the Ontario Speaker's Book Award. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Toronto.



MELISSA WILSON

Melissa Wilson is an outgoing individual driven by her desire to see real and effective change for marginalized populations in Canada. Melissa holds an H. BMus from Wilfrid Laurier University, specializing in ethnomusicology and anthropology. During her undergraduate degree, she was Director of Development and Head of the Grant Writing Committee for International Students Overcoming War (ISOW).



JUSTIN ZEKORN

Justin is a 4th-year undergraduate in the Bachelor of Business Administration Program at Laurier. He serves as the Director of Public Affairs for International Students Overcoming War (ISOW), leading a team to produce content for ISOW's social media while respecting the organization's ethics and the ISOW scholars' privacy. Justin is an aspiring lawyer and has been accepted to a law program at the University of Toronto for the 2023-2024 school year.

CONFERENCE COORDINATORS

ISOW TEAM



DR. GAVIN
BROCKETT



OSHISH
UNGRAS



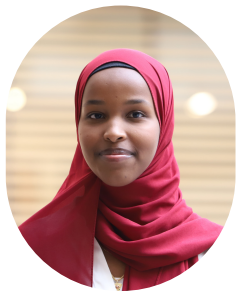
TARYN
TUFFORD



ALEXIA
PHILLIPS



JUSTIN
ZEKORN



MASBAL
OSMAN



AMAN
KHAN



ALMAS
MUQEEM



BRITTANY
FERGUSON



SAJA
SAYMEH



JOANNE
JOSEPH

UNHCR TEAM



MANAL
STULGAITIS



SAMAH
SHDA



ARASH
BORDBAR

PHOTO EXHIBIT OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We are excited to invite you to view our Photo Exhibit of Student Leadership launching at our opening night keynote event featuring Kim Phuc, on Wednesday, March 29th. The Photo Exhibit is a showcase of diverse perspectives and experiences of leadership amongst our global student delegates.

We asked our student delegates to answer one or more of the following questions in an accompanying mini essay:

- What are you leading and what is your vision?
- How did you come to the leadership opportunity represented in the image?
- How have you worked with others in partnership to achieve your goals?
- What have you learned?

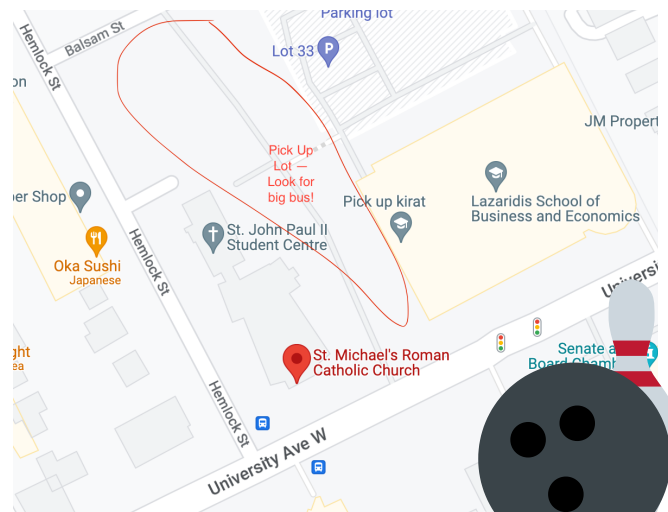
In addition to being featured at the conference, photos and mini essays are also featured on our website (www.studentsaspartners.com) in our photo gallery. With student delegates arriving from all around the world, we are excited to provide a platform for diverse discussions sparked by photos of student leadership. We encourage you to explore the Photo Exhibit of Student Leadership to learn more about their inspiring work within their communities.



BOWLING SOCIAL & DINNER

On Friday, March 31st at 6:30pm, join us for a fun evening social with a few rounds of bowling and dinner!

- Pickup is at 6:30pm off Balsam street beside the Lazaridis Building (St. Michael's church).
- Bowling will take place from 7pm-9pm.
- Dinner will include pizza, nachos, chicken wings, assorted appetizers, drinks, and desserts.
- Dietary restrictions can be accommodated, please confirm your dietary needs with Taryn Tufford.
- The return bus will pick up at 9pm and drop off at the original pickup location - seats on bus are first come, first serve.



THANK YOU



The United Nations Higher
Commissioner for Refugees



Dean of Arts,
Wilfrid Laurier University



Tertiary Refugee Student
Network (TRSN)

Research Services Office,
Wilfrid Laurier University



International Students
Overcoming War
(ISOW)

Centre for Leading Research in
Education,
Wilfrid Laurier University

Alumni Association,
Wilfrid Laurier University



Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

Office of the President,
Wilfrid Laurier University

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Office of the Provost and Vice-
President: Academic,
Dean of Students
Wilfrid Laurier University