

**York University  
Syria Response and Refugee Initiative (SRRI)**

**Final Report**

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Note: This lightly edited version of the project's final report is being made available as a public resource in light of renewed interest in refugee sponsorship and engagement, especially within universities in September, 2021. The author wishes to thank Professor Jennifer Hyndman for her additional feedback and the Centre for Refugee Studies for agreeing to publish this report.



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## Executive Summary

From Fall 2015 until the end of April, 2019, the [York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative \(SRRI\)](#) led York's participation in the Pan-GTA [Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge](#) to sponsor Syrian refugees and helped educate, mobilize and work with York students to promote awareness and become engaged in refugee issues on campus and with the wider community.

Through its collaboration with the Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge **ten York teams** (Appendix 1a) will ultimately sponsor and welcome **42 refugees** through 13 sponsorships (three teams took on secondary sponsorships) to our community.

The project benefitted immensely from and supported significant student volunteer and experiential education efforts. Overall it **engaged at least 20 different student groups through its activities** (Appendix 2a), several of whom are [profiled on the project's website](#) for their regular work on refugee issues.

While York has a long history of engagement in refugee issues, the SRRI project began in the context of [increased global displacement](#) and the Syrian refugee crisis. The latter, and the images of deceased Syrian refugee child Alan Kurdi on a Turkish beach led to growing attention being paid to refugee issues both on campus and in the wider community in the Fall of 2015, when York agreed to collaborate in the RULSC and intensified several other efforts in this field. The project's origins are outlined below.

The project was hosted and strongly supported by the [Centre for Refugee Studies \(CRS\)](#) and its staff since its inception, with financial support from the Provost's Office and Osgoode Hall Law School. Both the Osgoode and CRS communities generously shared their time, facilities, knowledge and resources with the SRRI's staff and project participants.

Along with their Ryerson colleagues, York project staff recruited and supported ten refugee sponsorship teams from across York's Keele and Glendon campuses. Each sponsor team has included the participation of a mix of faculty, staff, students, York alumni and allies that raised funds and have helped carry out the responsibilities of sponsorship of an individual or family for a minimum of one year.

These efforts were supported by two fundraising teams (Appendix 1b) who raised money to support Osgoode's sponsorships, as well as donations to the overall York effort. All surplus funds from Osgoode's efforts and those from the York general fund were allocated to support high needs sponsorships undertaken by other York teams.

**As of the end of June 2019, 29 Syrian refugees sponsored by York teams have arrived and been supported for a full 12 months. 6 Eritrean refugees arrived on May 30, 2019 and will see their year of support concludes May 29, 2020. 7 Syrian refugees being sponsored by one team are expected to arrive imminently and will be supported for one year.**

In addition to these sponsorship efforts, **the SRRI also recruited volunteers and worked with student groups on a highly active Refugees Welcome Here! campaign and collaborated**

**with the University's WUSC committees in the context of increased student refugee sponsorship on York's campus.** Through those efforts the project engaged in meaningful programming including hosting local and national events for newcomer and refugee youth, trainings on refugee advocacy and support as well as fundraising, winter clothing drives and Refugee Awareness Weeks (Project Activities Section 2).

The project was **greatly strengthened by and made meaningful contributions to the work of local and national collaborators**, including Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) and its National Youth Network, the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program and the Toronto Refugee Rights Month Planning Committee. Project participants also delivered presentations in national fora, including the CCR, Amnesty Canada and the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) (Appendices 3c and 4).

**The project formally ended April 30, 2019 and publicly marked its end with an event on Refugee Rights Day, April 4, 2019.** More than 70 participants came out to the day's activities, including faculty, students, sponsor team and WUSC committee members as well as community partners. **Participants and collaborators in the project also received several significant forms of recognition for their efforts over the life of the project** (Appendix 6).

While the absence of an employee and focal point such as a project for such efforts makes the task more difficult, **this report provides several recommendations as to how some student engagement supports that had taken place under the project's umbrella might continue at relatively low cost in the absence of a designated staff position to lead and support them.**

## Project Origins and Background

Beginning in Fall 2015, and ending in April, 2019, the [York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative \(SRRI\)](#) led York's participation in the Pan-GTA [Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge](#) to sponsor Syrian refugees and helped educate, mobilize and work with York students to promote awareness of refugee issues amongst themselves and the wider community.

The [SRRI](#) Project began in the context of [increased global displacement](#) and the Syrian refugee crisis, and growing attention paid to refugee issues both on campus and in the wider community in the Fall of 2015. Long a leader in the field of refugee and forced migration studies and education, the university's leadership expressed a desire to take a coordinated, multifaceted approach to respond to these needs and interests.

While the University's efforts have been many and over a long period of time in this field, key developments in Fall 2015 leading to this project's founding included the following:

- A September 20, 2015 announcement **that York, along with three other Toronto area universities were joining forces to partner with the Lifeline Syria Challenge to facilitate private sponsorships, a major project to raise funds and engage volunteers in a coordinated effort to assist Syrian refugees. The [Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge](#) had begun in Summer 2015, and invited fellow GTA universities to participate.** This participation was a primary catalyst for the SRRI.
- Increased sponsorship commitments through **York's student chapters of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC)**. Effective in 2016, the University was making available five four-year tuition waivers for WUSC-sponsored refugee students at the regular tuition rate, and put into place five first-year waivers to assist with costs for residence fees and meal plans. This was an admirable and rapid increase from prior sponsorship levels of 1 to 2 sponsorships per year.
- **Osgoode Hall Law School at York University joined the University of Ottawa's Refugee Support Program** to match law students with immigration and refugee lawyers in an experiential education initiative that would see the students provide pro-bono assistance to asylum seekers.

As expressed in an October 25, 2015 [Y-file story announcing new or intensified efforts in this field](#), "[t]hrough these and other initiatives, York University students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors are rallying their efforts to support refugees and their families, pursue social justice and advance the University's mission through proactive, positive community engagement." This project was representative of York committing resources to these efforts. Stemming from York's commitment to its partners in the RULSC, Osgoode Hall Law School Dean Lorne Sossin, then special adviser to the President on community engagement was initially tasked by then University President Mamdouh Shoukri to launch York's early engagement in the project.

In the initial phase of the project it was agreed that the project would engage in both Syrian refugee sponsorship as well as student engagement and education efforts. Thus the program was

both the “Syria Response” and “Refugee Initiative,” a shortening of the overall title from the lengthy “Syria Response and Refugee Awareness Initiative.” This was reflective of the long term vision taken of the importance of education and youth engagement in refugee issues.

The project has been hosted by and strongly supported by the [Centre for Refugee Studies](#) and its staff since its inception, with financial support from the Provost’s Office and supplementary support from Osgoode Hall Law School.

Dean Sossin was a strong supporter of the project and was its first executive lead, from Fall 2015 through Spring 2016. Osgoode also provided a website for the project during its first three years of operation and a Project Co-Lead in Pierre-Andre Theriault for the first year of the project. Beginning in summer, 2016 oversight of the project was fully transferred to the Centre for Refugee Studies. Anita Hermann, Osgoode’s Director of External Relations & Communications provided invaluable communications support for the first three years of the project even after the project was fully transferred to the CRS.

Since the project’s launch in 2015 Project Lead and CRS Graduate Research Fellow and Politics Doctoral Candidate John Carlaw oversaw the project, reporting first to former Dean Sossin and Acting CRS Director Christina Clark-Kazak, and then to CRS Director Jennifer Hyndman, beginning in Summer 2016. Directors Clark-Kazak and Hyndman and Dean Sossin provided crucial advice, mentorship and support to project staff, including in making connections and helping to facilitate project supports throughout York’s campuses. They also encouraged and supported staff professional development which helped strengthen the project’s civil society ties.

CRS Coordinator Michele Millard provided valuable advice and administrative and communications support. Y-File Editor Jenny Pitt-Clark was a frequent and generous collaborator in amplifying the impact and messages of the project to the York community (Appendix 5b).

As will be seen in the section on student engagement, the project has benefitted immensely from student volunteer efforts, particularly those of Global Health Student Humaima Ashfaq, who served as volunteer Project Student Ambassador from the Winter 2016 semester until the project’s conclusion. Overall the project engaged at least twenty different student groups and many departments throughout the university through its activities.

Former support staff in the first months of the project included then-recently graduated York students Mariam Hamaoui, who had founded the student group [RefugeAid](#) and specialized in student engagement, as well as Ban Kattan, who supported interpretation and sponsor team engagement before both moved into full time employment elsewhere by summer 2016.

The project formally ended April 30, 2019 and publicly marked its end with an event on Refugee Rights Day, April 4, 2019. More than 70 participants came out to the day’s activities, including faculty, students, sponsor team and WUSC committee members as well as community partners.

# Project Activities

## 1) Syrian Refugee Sponsorship and Support

Through a mix of early efforts by Dean Sossin, presentations on campus by the Project Lead and positive word of mouth, the SRRI ultimately recruited ten Syrian refugee sponsorship teams from a diverse set of faculties from across the York campus to participate in the project as part of the wider Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge.

Each team was composed of at least one, but usually several faculty or staff and a minimum of one student team member and community members. Except for one of the very first teams formed, teams were required to have a faculty or staff member in order to ensure accountability to and engagement with the university community.

A list of York's teams and short descriptions they provided of themselves can be found in Appendix 1a). Fundraising teams are listed in Appendix 1b).

One of the key objectives of the project was experiential learning for York students, and each York team was required to have at least one York and one Ryerson student on their team. Student members of teams performed valuable roles, including leading the Osgoode Team (a doctoral student), and, more typically, fundraising, interpretation and a wide range sponsorship support activities.

Working collaboratively with their highly dedicated and knowledgeable Ryerson counterparts - who worked effectively with all sponsor teams in the project - York project staff actively helped teams navigate the delays and ups and downs of this process through events, program structures and individual support. Programming offered by Ryerson and York were open to teams throughout the program and sometimes to the wider public. A list of most of this programming offered by York's SRRI is provided in Appendix 1c).

These support activities included greeting those newly arriving at Pearson Airport and ensuring they receive necessary health and other documents, participating in "check-in" calls with most teams at the pre-arrival, three month, six month and transitioning out of sponsorship periods. They also included individual advice and support. Some of the challenges addressed included coping with delays in arrival, settlement support, and how best to support families and connect them to services, as well as facilitating access to volunteer interpreters.

At the outset of the program the SRRI held information sessions with invited staff from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) on both the Glendon and Keele campuses to educate potential sponsors about the responsibilities and ethics of sponsorship before accepting teams into the program as well as during the program.

The project's January 2016 formal launch included the participation of the Loly Rico, then-President of the Canadian Council for Refugees and CRS alumna Melissa Scott from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program, both of whom were very generous with their time in support of the overall project.



Given its complexity and significance, and the different needs of sponsors and refugees at each phase of the process (pre-arrival, arrival, establishment and adaptation, transition to post-sponsorship) the need for sponsor education and support was ongoing.

Events on Managing Expectations and Sponsorship Ethics, as well as Transitions to Post-Sponsorship were held as part of the Centre for Refugee Studies' seminar series, and were attended by York sponsor teams, sponsors from the overall RULSC project, members of York's WUSC committees and members of the wider community.

Sessions held for RULSC teams only included events on Syrian culture and employment. These events were made possible by establishing strong relationships with both the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) and the Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT), both of which were greatly boosted by regular project-funded participation of project staff in the consultation meetings of the Canadian Council for Refugees.

The project also facilitated a partnership with York's housing office where, subject to availability, York sponsorship teams had access to short term housing for sponsored refugees upon their arrival in Canada.

Through its collaboration with the Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge **York's 10 teams** will ultimately sponsor and welcome **42 refugees** through 13 sets of sponsorship (three teams took on secondary sponsorships) to our community.

Due to slower than expected government processing, York teams did not welcome [the first sponsored family](#) until July of 2016 and several sponsorships witnessed delays in arriving well beyond initial expectations generated by the Federal government's early enthusiasm for Syrian refugee sponsorship. That initial enthusiasm was [followed by quick and uneven policy changes](#). Several York teams and those they sponsored benefitted from the all-night efforts of Ryerson staff to submit cases before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, [when given one day's notice](#) at a town-hall meeting by then Immigration Minister John McCallum that such cases would be speedily processed, contrary to earlier announced changes. Cases submitted after that date faced longer wait times and more challenging sponsorship structures, such as more complex "Group of 5" applications when compared to less onerous applications that could be submitted with a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). Early arrangements by Ryerson staff and Lifeline Syria facilitating sponsorship in partnership with SAHs were possible due to SAH willingness to collaborate as the government had temporarily lifted government caps on refugee sponsorship which dictate how many refugees a SAH can sponsor in a given year. Once caps were re-imposed SAHs understandably prioritized their existing cases. These dynamics, as well as one sponsorship case being rejected by the government meant later than expected arrivals in several cases and that some refugees had not arrived by the formal end of the SRRI.

**More than three and a half years after the start of the project, at the end of June 2019, 29 Syrian refugees sponsored by York teams had arrived and been supported for a full 12 months. 6 Eritrean refugees arrived on May 30, 2019 and will see their one year of support through the Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) program conclude May 29, 2020. 7**

**Syrian refugees being sponsored by another team are expected to arrive imminently and will be supported for one year.**

In its [May 15 2019 newsletter](#), Ryerson RULSC staff noted that “The vast majority of RULSC-sponsored individuals and families have arrived to Canada, however there remain a few who have yet to arrive and Ryerson will continue to work with those teams and families.” The two York teams still engaged in sponsorships are supporting their second set of sponsored refugees.

The SRRI’s perspective on refugee sponsorship was sought out by multiple researchers visiting Canada, as well as an Amnesty International delegation composed of representatives from several countries that visited Canada to learn about private sponsorship so they could be effective civil society advocates for private sponsorship when they returned to their home countries, in May 2017. The project also received positive feedback on its approach from trainers from the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program.

## **Fundraising Teams and Support**

While each sponsorship team was required to raise funds for the sponsorships they undertake, the SRRI also facilitated the transfer of funds raised through donations to York and Osgoode sponsorship fundraising efforts to some of the highest needs sponsorships. There was a high variation in the amount of support needed by those sponsored through the program, which is not uncommon in refugee sponsorship.

Wider student efforts also lent support to fundraising efforts, as discussed further below in the student engagement section. Support for teams by university departments, such as that by the [Scott Library for the Sociologists and Friends team](#) was also very valuable both financially and in terms of raising wider awareness.

More information on York’s formal fundraising teams is provided in Appendix 1b), while some outreach and fundraising activities conducted by sponsor teams are included in Appendix 1d).

## **Refugee Sponsorship Support Program and Osgoode Hall Law School**

In Winter Semester, 2016, sixteen Osgoode law students provided legal support to sponsors of Syrian refugees.

Through regular legal clinics organized by Lifeline Syria and the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (RSSP), the students were matched with Toronto-based pro bono lawyers and helped to complete the refugee applications of over 200 Syrian refugees. Many of these refugees were sponsored through the Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge.

Then-Osgoode SRRI Project Lead, Pierre-André Thériault, a Toronto-based lawyer, PhD student and co-instructor of the Refugee Sponsorship Support Seminar at Osgoode, was the recipient of a prestigious [Robert Tiffin Student Leadership Award](#) in June of 2018, in part for his efforts on the SRRI project. Information on this section is primarily drawn from a [April 13 2016 Yfile article](#).

## Lessons Learned Concerning Refugee Sponsorship in the University Context

### a) **It can be done. But resources are required.**

To pay respect to York's motto, *Tentanda Via* - the way must be tried, the Ryerson Lifeline Syria Challenge and York's Syria Response and Refugee Initiative demonstrated that refugee sponsorship by university-based sponsor groups is both possible and effective if financial and human resources are made available to undertake the effort.

Universities have a significant population of social-justice minded community members and students that can support and learn from such efforts. York's students come from and have heritages from all over the world, which leave many of them disposed to engaging in such forms of learning and with the language and cross-cultural skills to support it.

However ongoing financial investments are required in terms of supporting teams, making sure they are aware of the responsibilities involved and equipping them to do so effectively.

All teams in the overall project benefitted from Ryerson University offering charitable tax receipts for donations, which was a significant incentive for teams to join the universities' programs. Ryerson also invested in human resources to administer such a system. This commitment was undoubtedly boosted by university support at the highest level, particularly by former Vice President Wendy Cukier. Ryerson also employed multiple staff on a full time basis for the first three years of the project to support all sponsor teams in the project. For most of the project York employed one staff person part time, although in the first year there were multiple part time staff as the program got up and running.

### b) **Civil society connections matter**

The York project benefitted greatly from its staff and the Centre for Refugees' ties to civil society organizations in the refugee-serving and awareness-raising community. Those ties were drawn upon for nearly every event undertaken by the project and also provided opportunities for community engagement by York students. These were strengthened by the project investing in the attendance of project staff at CCR consultations and meetings.

### c) **The usual challenges of sponsorship apply, and there are some additional considerations.**

Challenges faced by sponsor teams in the university context included those of sponsorship delays and unpredictable arrivals, which are experienced by many refugee sponsors. Such delays and unpredictability can lead to reduced cohesion of sponsor teams, including the need to replace and recruit new members to the original group that sought to engage in sponsorship initially.

Some of these lessons and those unique to groups formed in the university context were included in a document published by the Centre for Refugee studies based on [reflections from a June 2017 SRRI-organized event](#), *Next Steps and Reflections from Refugee Sponsors and Resettlement Professionals*.

One important theme in refugee sponsorship is that of power imbalances between those being sponsored and sponsor groups and how to navigate them. In that event Sociology and Friends team lead Lesley Wood extended the discussion of power imbalances to those within a sponsor team itself, due to the fact that many of the sponsor teams in the Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge are university based.

In the context of university-based teams some members are professors and university staff, while others are students. In such a context there may be a relationship of professor to student or committee member to doctoral student, for example. These relationships also require reflection and care to manage in an ethical way.

More typically, Wood noted that it can be challenging to keep all members of a sponsor group involved and invested in the process over the course of a year, while the language abilities of some group members may result in them taking on a disproportionate amount of the support a family or individual may need. It can also be challenging to maintain a cohesive group with a relatively equitable division of support.

The availability of student volunteer interpreters and sponsor team volunteers may also vary by time of year, though sponsorship is an excellent experiential learning opportunity concerning cross-cultural communication and support, as well as refugee issues more broadly.

**d) Other significant avenues to refugee sponsorship continue to exist on York's campus and at/by some other universities**

As noted above and below, at the same time it launched the SRRI project York invested in additional sponsorship of refugee students through its WUSC committees. Comparatively, one of the benefits of WUSC refugee student sponsorship is that generally offers more predictable arrivals of refugee students to Canadian campuses, though there are sometimes exceptions. It also foregrounds student leadership and experiential learning. WUSC offers a permanent committee structure, though committees experience turnover in their membership on a yearly basis as students graduate from these committees. While the committee generally does provide opportunities for faculty to support the committee as advisors, it does not offer the same level of direct engagement for non-students, a valuable resource for positive social change. In the context of provincial government changes to the collection and distribution of student levies York's WUSC students are likely to require additional support, while the need for support to the committee for recruitment of members and mentorship is ongoing.

In addition to WUSC, on other campuses, the University of Ottawa's Refugee Hub is engaged in promoting refugee sponsorship through the Federal Government's Blended Visa Office Referral (BVOR) Program for which it also [engaged in fundraising and the allocation of funds](#). Wilfrid Laurier University's [ISOW- International Students Overcoming War](#) – supports resettlement of refugees through the international student pathway.

## **2) Student Engagement and Leadership Activities**

### **The Project's Vision for Student Engagement**

As explained in the origins and background section, the education of students and their hands-on engagement in refugee issues through educational and experiential learning opportunities was a priority for the project. It was felt that in addition to direct refugee sponsorship this was one of the most meaningful contributions that could be made as it would help to prepare and encourage students to engage in these issues in the longer term.

This work was organized to a major degree around the project's student-led Refugees Welcome Here! campaign, discussed further below, but was rooted in the project's origins in sponsorship on campus as discussed in the next two sub-sections.

### **Syrian Refugee Sponsorship and Student Engagement**

The sponsorship of Syrian refugees was an excellent catalyst for student engagement and educational work in refugee issues as there was a great deal of interest in the Syrian refugee crisis at the time the project began in late 2015. Structurally, each team was required to have York students on their team. These students filled a variety of individual roles, including fundraising, interpretation, and social supports. This sparked interest in refugee displacement more broadly, as many students became engaged in other educational aspects of the project or saw ways to connect with it after entering the project as sponsor team members.

The project provided a mechanism for student groups to become engaged in activities such as fundraising through events. Students linked to Team Health, for example, participated in a student-organized talent show to raise funds to pay off refugee transportation loans, while students linked to the Glendon Collective were supported by the Muslim Students Association fundraising for their efforts at weekly prayers.

As mentioned above, there were also educational activities organized by the York Library, entitled [4 Days 4 Syria](#) which witnessed an art sale to support the Sociology and Friends sponsorship team and general refugee sponsorship efforts.

Overall university support and engagement were an excellent spark towards three and a half years of intensified efforts with students in this realm.

### **WUSC Committee(s): Keele and Glendon Campuses**

Since the outset of the project it was a priority to help raise the profile of York's WUSC committees, [their increased sponsorship commitments](#) and university support for them referred to above, and to assist them in the recruitment of new members.

This was done through the project's website (a section on WUSC Refugee Sponsorship), joint activities, profiling collaborative efforts in Y-file, inclusion of these efforts in project pamphlets and encouraging collaboration of other student groups with these committees. Due to the part time nature of the project and campus geographies those efforts were most intensive, though not exclusively connected to the Keele Campus WUSC committee.

Some of the ways this was accomplished was high-profile inclusion of members of the WUSC committee(s) in Refugee Rights Day activities (see below), a campaign to abolish and fundraise for refugee transportation loans executed with the support of other student groups, and collaborations with other student and campus such as an annual winter clothing drive for a local refugee centre (discussed below).

WUSC committee members were also invited and proactively encouraged to attend events to educate refugee sponsors, and their efforts were acknowledged at two receptions to honour and promote engagement with York's refugee sponsors, in Fall 2017 and April 2019 (the project's closing event). It had been planned for a reception to be part of April 2018 Refugee Rights Day activities which were cancelled due to the strike.

WUSC Keele committee chairs were also invited to participate on academic panels at two national conferences (Appendix 4) while representatives from both WUSC committees spoke on a [2018 Refugee Awareness Week panel](#) that highlighted several York's efforts to promote access to education for refugees and undocumented persons locally and globally.

As will be discussed further below, the SRRI project also collaborated with the WUSC Keele committee in hosting the June 2018 Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network's Annual Youth Action Gathering.

Indicative of the amazing work York the Keele committee was doing, WUSC Keele Committee Chair Robert Hanlon was awarded one of [two Liberal Arts and Professional Studies Outstanding Student Volunteer Awards](#) in part for his work on that committee and participation in these joint activities in Spring 2018. The SRRI was one of his nominators for the award.

At the national level, in early 2019 the Keele WUSC committee was awarded the [National Committee of the Year Award](#) by WUSC National for their 2018 efforts. Many of the joint initiatives undertaken in collaboration with the SRRI were cited in the speech granting them the award and are discussed below.

## **Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign: Working with and Recognizing York's "Human Rights Heroes"**

Parallel to and reinforcing its efforts on the sponsorship front, the SRRI project engaged students and student groups in a Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign, inspired by a joint [Canadian Council for Refugees and Amnesty International Canada](#) initiative. That campaign's themes fit exceptionally well with the themes of the project in that it sought 1) "More refugees" - to see more refugees admitted to Canada; 2) "more fairness for refugees," broadly conceived, but could



apply to the refugee determination system within Canada and equity in treatment of different refugee populations; and 3) “more welcoming communities.” These themes offered a strong basis for education, discussion and action concerning refugee rights and their promotion.

Supported by this project and co-chaired by student volunteers Omaira Massood (Schulich) and Humaira Ashfaq (Faculty of Health) in 2016-2017, and then Amina Khan and Humaira in 2017-2018, the goals of this campaign were to educate York students and the wider community about refugee issues and encourage students to work together to address them.

The campaign grew out of and was launched by a [February 2016 Refugees Welcome Here! advocacy training session](#) held by the project at Osgoode Hall Law School with Amnesty International Canada’s campaign lead which also welcomed more than 50 participants from throughout the GTA. This training was the first undertaken with the campaign’s materials nationally. SRRJ Project Staff and York students had helped to strengthen the materials in focus groups.

The program engaged at least 20 student groups (Appendix 2a) in programming related to sponsorship and/or awareness-raising of refugee issues.

These activities ranged from a photo campaign of York community members holding welcoming messages for refugees to conducting a winter clothing drive for a local refugee centre to fundraising for sponsor teams helping to pay off WUSC Keele student transportation loans. The project and partner student groups carried out exciting and well-attended Refugee Awareness, Advocacy and [Refugees Welcome Here! weeks](#) each year that included leaders in law and advocacy in this field. A list of some of the major activities related to the campaign can be seen in Appendix 2b).

Employing the networks of its Project Lead and leveraging funds committed to professional development, the project was able to support York students in reaching out to and making meaningful connections to local and national communities of refugee and newcomer youth.

York student efforts gained wider recognition. In [a piece on our students in November 2017](#) that highlighted several initiatives, for example, Gloria Nafziger of Amnesty International Toronto [had this to say about York students engaged in the program](#):

“York students are demonstrating their commitment to refugees by standing up for refugee rights, creating welcoming communities, supporting local shelters and providing direct support. They are all champions who will continue to be human rights heroes.”

SRRJ Project Lead John Carlaw was invited by Amnesty Canada to be profiled as a “[Refugee Champion](#)” in 2016, while the overall campaign received [similar recognition in 2018](#).

As a result of these connections and her own initiative, [Student Project Ambassador Humaira Ashfaq](#) became a prominent Youth Leader with the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network.

The quality of York’s advocacy training led Amnesty Canada’s Human Rights Law & Policy Campaigner Justin Mohammed to invited SSRI Project Lead John Carlaw and Amnesty at York students to lead a workshop on “Changing the Conversation on Refugee Rights” at that organization’s national Annual General Meeting in June, 2019.

The campaign hosted both local and national events and designed and delivered workshops in national settings for Amnesty and the CCR (Appendices 3b and 3c), as described below.

### **Supporting Refugee Awareness, Advocacy and Welcome Here! Weeks**

Originally established in January 2014, Refugee Awareness Week grew out of an [educational activity led by RefugeAid](#) that drew interest and solidarity from several other student groups and departments from across campus. As [2018-2019 club President Zohra Shafiqi notes](#), the week “is close to our hearts at our club because it was started up by the same people who founded RefugeAid. We love that it’s an opportunity to collaborate with other clubs on campus that exist for a similar cause so that we can pool our energies and resources into one beautiful week of educational events and activities.”

The SSRI helped to significantly boost the profile of the week and supported it from 2016 to 2019. The week features collaborations between most of the undergraduate student groups engaged in refugee issues each year. The project offered communications, logistical and organization support for it and similar weeks of activities, and helped plan events with significant national and local guest speakers and trainings on refugee support and advocacy as well as connecting the week to other refugee related events held by research units. Appendix 2b) provides links to these weeks of activities and a list of some of the events organized by the SSRI. These included refugee awareness and engagement fairs and panels to highlight York’s engagement in refugee issues.

According to then Amnesty International at York Chapter President Rhoshni Khemraj in 2018, “Refugee Awareness Week is one of our most anticipated weeks of the year. The energy of clubs and organizations coming together for a shared purpose is incredibly empowering and humbling for everyone involved.”

### **Refugee Rights Day Events on Campus**

Refugee Rights Day highlights the 1985 Supreme Court Singh decision, which found that anyone on Canadian soil – including refugees - are covered by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *Bill of Rights*. This paved the way for all refugee claimants in Canada to have the right to an oral hearing of their case and the establishment of Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).

As part of its educational efforts, from the project’s first year it sought to contribute to and boost the profile of Refugee Rights Day on campus and in the wider community while promoting and increasing the quality and profile of student participation in such days. As will be explained further below, these events were also linked to community efforts to promote April as Refugee Rights Month each year in Toronto.



In 2016, the project worked with McLaughlin College to facilitate the participation of students in the event, which was highlighted by well-known community speakers on the theme of Refugee Rights. WUSC Keele Committee [Co-Chair Reem Alhaj](#) and student spoken words artists were featured participants in [that year's panel](#) , which also included Executive Director Debbie Douglas of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Rana Khan of the UNHCR, and York Emeritus Professor and Chair of the Southwestern Ontario Sanctuary Movement Michael Creal.

In 2017 with the support of the Centre for Refugee Studies, York's SSRI planned and hosted a ["Refugees Welcome or Excluded Here?"](#) April 4<sup>th</sup> [Refugee Rights Day panel discussion](#) on York's Keele campus featuring campus-based and community experts on refugee issues as well as SSRI Student Project Ambassador Humaima Ashfaque. Humaima profiled the efforts of York's Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign. Additional speakers included York professors Jennifer Hyndman (then CRS Director) and Sean Rehaag, in addition to FCJ Refugee Centre Co-Director Francisco Rico. Members of the York and wider community actively working on refugee issues enjoyed lunch and engaged with each other over this lunch-time event.

In 2018 the project recruited Ryerson's Idil Atak, a well-respected scholar who has written widely on the exclusion of refugees to deliver a keynote lecture on the effects of contemporary changes to Canada's refugee determination system, which would have been delivered at Osgoode Hall's Moot Court. However that event had to be cancelled due to that year's strike. The project was able to redirect her participation to that month's community [Refugee Rights Day panel held downtown](#), where students had the opportunity to interact with the Mayor, Toronto City Councilors and civil society actors in this field.

In 2019, in addition to partnering in [Refugee Rights Month](#) the SSRI, the Centre for Refugee Studies and McLaughlin College partnered to host a [Refugee Rights Day panel](#) and [project closing event on campus](#) April 4. This project-closing event was attended by more than seventy members of the campus and wider community. The panelists for the event featured two students- Humaima Ashfaque and Edwar Dommar- who reflected in their significant engagement in the project as well as WUSC and York's Amnesty International Chapter. Other panelists included community refugee lawyer and Osgoode instructor Geraldine Sadoway and SSRI Project Lead John Carlaw in a discussion chaired by Professor Michaela Hynie of the Centre for Refugee Studies. The project's and WUSC's refugee sponsors were thanked and recognized for their efforts while an art exhibit of Professor Nergis Canefe was also featured.

These days of activities offered an annual opportunity for students, faculty, refugee sponsors and community members to discuss the state of refugee rights and York's engagement in this field.

### [Annual Clothing Drives for FCJ Refugee Centre](#)

Due to a request of the centre to help meet an identified need, and to help draw attention that there are refugees and undocumented people in the Toronto and GTA community that do not arrive via refugee resettlement pathways, the project and student groups collaborated in Winter Clothing Drives for clients of the FCJ Refugee Centre.

Begun in Fall of 2016, the activity grew in reach each year in 2017 and 2018, with collaborators across the York campus. WUSC Keele actively led the 2018 efforts, which also extended to Seneca at York.

As noted in a [2017 Yfile story](#) on these efforts, Sajeth Paskaran, student president of McLaughlin College, whose organization helped lead the drive in its second year summarized the college council's motivations for participating as an effort to foster a community of open, critical, positive, and engaging discourses. "With our current political environment and the negative discourses surrounding refugee rights, it is that much more vital for various organizations and the younger generation to engage in supportive collaborations that bridges people rather than further dividing them," said Paskaran.

FCJ Refugee Centre Co-Director and prominent refugee advocate Francisco Rico-Martinez, who came to Canada in 1990 with his family as refugees from El Salvador was heartened by these students' efforts. "It is beautiful to see York students acting in solidarity with humanity from the earliest years of their postsecondary education," said Rico-Martinez at that time.

In a [Yfile early in 2019](#) Rico-Martinez expressed gratitude to the project and York University community for their contributions, "as the SRRI project at the CRS and York students have been so supportive of our centre's work. Our centre's workload has grown tremendously in the last couple of years, but so has student engagement with our centre. Without the volunteer efforts of dedicated students, especially those from York and Osgoode, we would not be able to manage the caseloads we are currently witnessing, which have nearly doubled in the last year." Some students engaged in the project have gone on to do volunteer placements at the centre.

### **Transportation Loan Education and Fundraising**

In 2016-2017 in particular, student coalition members worked actively to make their fellow students aware of the activities of their local WUSC Committee, and raising awareness of the burden of [refugee transportation loans](#) charged by the Federal government to resettled refugees that sponsored York U students and other refugees in our community face.

The project helped in educating students about the loans, which affected nearly all York sponsored refugees, connecting them to civil society research on the issue and providing a space for students to collaborate in those efforts.

In a Y-file article [March 5, 2017](#), Robert Hanlon, then WUSC-Keele committee chair and second-year bachelor of business administration student who worked with York sponsored students explained that "Maintaining studies, working long hours, integrating into a completely new culture, and repaying a loan is too much to coordinate and puts the York students in an extremely stressful and vulnerable position."

That year, in efforts begun by UNICEF at York in February 2017 during a Refugees Welcome Here! Week of activities, York students raised enough to pay off the transportation loans of at least two students sponsored by the WUSC Keele Committee through bake sales, collections at events and generous staff and faculty support.

Civil society ties helped lead the Canadian Council for Refugees to send students post-cards they could use in their campaign, while their efforts were applauded by their then-President Loly Rico, as she came to campus to be part of the week of activities. “I am more than happy to be at York for this important Refugees Welcome Here! Week in which the focus will be on human rights and refugee policy,” said Rico. “It is more important than ever to see student leaders addressing issues and concerns like [transportation loans](#).”

“It is wonderful to see the full week of activities that they have put together for their community. I hope their events will be well attended and their hard work rewarded with progressive policy changes,” she added.

### **Psychology Graduate Students Refugee Initiative**

The SRRI project also worked with graduate students in psychology to found and promote a [Psychology Graduate Students Refugee Education Initiative](#), led by student volunteer Jala Rizeq (Psychology) which saw those graduate students provide workshops designed around the theme of refugee empowerment to sponsor teams, York’s WUSC sponsorship committees and a more general orientation to students interested in working with refugees.

Coming from similar academic backgrounds and having extensive experiences in community settings serving children, youth and families, this group of students created the initiative, which was also supported by the Psychology Graduate Student Association.

Rizeq saw a need for educational seminars to complement the training of sponsorship teams and volunteers, and to ensure a community that is well-equipped to host and integrate newcomers, said, one of the students leading the initiative.

As a result, the team developed educational presentations based on research and practice in developmental psychology. In these presentations, they introduced a model that explains the multiple factors, influencing refugees in Canada, and highlight those factors that contribute to their integration and well-being.

Their presentations stressed the importance key points, including: the complex and diverse nature of refugees’ experiences; the strength and resilience of refugees; integration into Canadian society; and cultural sensitivity (awareness, responsibility and respect of other cultures). They emphasized the importance of empowering those working with refugees, through building a healthy, safe and welcoming environment for those arriving to our community.

Their initiative was very well received by sponsor teams, including a classroom presentation to the ‘Students for Syrian Refugees’ group, work with the Keele campus’ local World University of Canada (WUSC) committee and was been made available to teams across the wider Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge (RULSC) program as well.

The team also provided brochures with a comprehensive list of community resources and services in the GTA that serve refugees, as well as educational and mental health resources available for volunteers and sponsorship teams. These resources were shared with sponsorship teams at York University, Ryerson University and the University of Toronto.

Information on this section is partly drawn from a [2016 Yfile article](#).

### **3) Community Engagement: Connecting Students and the University to the Refugee-Serving, Human Rights and Settlement Sector**

#### **Canadian Council for Refugees and Its Youth Network**

Support from the project helped maintain and strengthen the ties of the Project Lead to the Canadian Council for Refugees, which helped lead to significant community engagement opportunities for York students.

The project's successful application for a Newcomer Youth Civic Engagement grant in 2016 from the Canadian Council for Refugees provided the opportunity for the project's volunteer Student Ambassador Humaima Ashfaque to become a Youth Leader with the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network, which included her being funded to attend the CCR's Fall 2016 Consultations in Montreal. There she and SRRI Project Lead John Carlaw helped to plan and lead a Refugees Welcome Here! workshop (Appendix 3c). Humaima was also funded by the CCR and CRS to attend and help plan the CCR Youth Network's [April 2017 national Youth Action Gathering](#) in Winnipeg. These led to opportunities for York students to host or assist in the hosting of events of local, national and international significance on the York campus.

#### *From Adversity to Action Day-Long Workshop: January 2017*

Though a Newcomer Civic Youth Engagement Grant obtained from the Canadian Council for Refugees, the SRRI supported a student-led ["From Adversity to Action" day of activities](#) for newcomer youth and allies at York's campus on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

This event, given national profile by the CCR, included more than 70 participants and was run by a team of 11 York student organizers and facilitators of the event who produced [resource kits](#) on several themes. Youth participants discussed and strategized around five themes of interest with experts on hand to assist them, whose support was facilitated by the project. The afternoon portion of the event provided the opportunity to engage in extended discussions with then-Canadian Council for Refugees President Loly Rico and City of Toronto Councillor and Newcomer Advocate Joe Mihevc who heard the student and newcomer youth's civic engagement action plans and provided feedback and advice on how youth could make their voices heard.

More detailed information on this event is included in Appendix 3b.

Hosting this event helped to build the capacity amongst York students working with the project to host the following year's national CCR Youth Action Gathering.

#### *National Youth Action Gathering: June 2018*

SRRI Student Project Ambassador and global health student Humaima Ashfaque and a highly dedicated student local organizing team co-hosted the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth

Network's annual national [Youth Action Gathering \(YAG\)](#) at Founders and McLaughlin Colleges on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

The official hosting organizations of the event were the CRS, the WUSC Keele Campus Committee and Amnesty International at York, reflecting the student leadership involved in that effort.

Mentored by SRRI Project Lead John Carlaw, core York student team members Cory Clarkson, Cassandra DeFreitas, Edwar Dommar, Robert Hanlon, Sahar Jafrani, Roshni Khemraj, Shaelen MacPherson, Aisha Saleem and Jaitra Sathy as well as Humaima met regularly to plan the local logistics and fundraise for the event and oversaw a team of 20 more student volunteers to execute this day long event for approximately 100 newcomer and refugee youth from across Canada.

A longer description of the event is included in Appendix 3b, the program of which the Centre for Refugee Studies has on file. This event was attached to the CCR's 2018 International Conference, hosted by the Centre for Refugee Studies.

### *Canadian Council for Refugees International Conference: June 2018*

Also in June 2018, the Centre for Refugee Studies hosted the three day [International Refugee Rights Conference of the Canadian Council for Refugees](#) from June 7-9.

In addition to CRS Director Jennifer Hyndman and Coordinator Michele Millard, who were deeply involved in the conference's organization, from the SRRI York University students Humaima Ashfaq, Cass De Freitas, Roshni Khemraj and Shae MacPherson, as well as Project Lead John Carlaw served on the International Conference's local organizing committee, collaborating with 18 other local team members from prominent refugee and immigrant-serving organizations across the City of Toronto.

These relationships on the local organizing committee were strong in part due to prior collaborations with many of the organizations involved in Refugee Rights Month activities each year (discussed in the next section). York students made valuable contributions to the committee, including in planning social events.

The conference hosted more than 650 participants from 36 countries who participated in more than 50 sessions. This opportunity for students to be engaged in this international event was made possible by the Centre for Refugee Studies hosting the overall conference and the collaborations that had been established previously with York student groups.

### **Toronto Refugee Rights Month Planning Committee**

Represented by the SRRI, within Toronto, the York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative (SRRI), the Centre for Refugee Studies, Osgoode Hall Law School and Amnesty International at York University have annually been active members of the Refugee Rights Month Planning Committee from 2016-2019, a city-wide group organizing and highlighting a

month-long series of events to highlight the importance of refugee rights in Canada. York's Refugee Rights Day panels, discussed above, were part of the calendar of events each year.

Each year at the committee's request the City of Toronto recognizes April as Refugee Rights Awareness Month and the Mayor and City Council Newcomer Advocates typically appear as guest speakers alongside a community panel of refugees and activists.

York student [Maseh Hadaf](#) (Faculty of Health) was a featured spoken word artist at the month's April 20<sup>th</sup> keynote panel in 2016.

In 2017 York's SSRI supported the [month's keynote panel](#)- the Singh Decision Matters in 2017. York student photographer Amina Khan of UNICEF@York captured York's Refugee Rights Day panel and the [month's launch at City Hall](#) .

In [2018](#) York contributed by helping to organize the month's keynote panel and promoted the month's calendar of events each year. Amidst the strike this committee provided a positive form of community engagement for York students.

The SSRI continued to participate in supporting the month in 2019. In summer 2019 York student Habbiba Ahmed, who had volunteered to support the month's activities, was hired as a Policy Team Assistant by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), one of the month's lead organizations.

Links to the month's calendar of activities and keynote events each year as well as a list of participating organizations in Refugee Rights Month are provided in Appendix 3a).

## **Lessons Learned and Reminders Concerning Student Engagement**

These lessons are drawn from conversations with students engaged in the project, as well as two joint conference presentations at annual CARFMS conferences in 2018 and 2019 which invited reflection on the question of lessons learned during the project.

While having a staff person available to answer questions, serve as a mentor and identifiable access were valuable to students, not all forms of support involve intensive use of financial resources. Modest resources leveraged well can help accomplish a great deal. This could be seen in many examples, such as the PGS refugee initiative, or in smaller things such as helping with room bookings and to spread the word of events.

Some of the **benefits of the project/these types of initiatives from students' perspectives included:**

- An uncommon opportunity to be engaged with university faculty, staff and research centres in collective projects
- The experience gained- planning and publicizing events and panels, fundraising and public speaking- at university, local and national scales

- Mentorship opportunities: staff and faculty to students, senior students to junior students
- The opportunity to work with refugees and newcomer youth and in the area of forced migration
- Learning opportunities- knowledge of refugee, forced migration and precarious status issues and policies at local, national and global levels
- Contacts made & networking opportunities
- Civil society & community engagement

The following are some of the further lessons learned:

### ***Having an Open Door is Important and Door Opening Makes a Significant Difference***

York can be a complex space to navigate, and at times be intimidating for students. Having an access point where students can get advice on how to go about achieving their goals in a meaningful field is an important resource. Students often have excellent ideas but need some assistance in harnessing them or strengthening their organizational efforts. Knowledgeable support persons can speed the rate at which students are connected to those that can help or support them, such as connecting students with colleges to book space to hold the National Youth Action Gathering, for example, or to faculty experts on a given topic.

### ***Outreach Efforts are Necessary to Effectively Conduct Such Work***

Early each academic year of the project the Project Lead and engaged students reached out to students and student groups engaged in refugee issues as well as college councils (for example stopping by campus club days and introducing themselves), and also spoke by invitation at clubs' events and in classrooms. This outreach and contact with students helped formed much of the common basis through which activities throughout the year could take place. While having an open door matters, students need to know where that door can be found and what types of efforts are taking place.

### ***Recognizing Student Efforts is Important***

Students take great pride in seeing their efforts recognized. Positive feedback, both individually and collectively (such as including their club names and voices in events and conferences they help to organize, or profiling their efforts in Yfile pieces) contributes to positive motivation and maintaining momentum in their efforts. It also creates a positive profile for the university.

### ***Civil Society Ties and Networks Make a Significant Difference in Quality of Programming***

Leveraging the Centre for Refugee Studies and the Project Leads' civil society connections made a major positive difference in the quality of programming offered during the project, including in recruiting speakers who could share novel insights and perspectives, or to encourage York's students to connect to the wider community both locally and nationally. Employing these contacts and resources significantly increased students' enthusiasm for and engagement in refugee issues.



### ***There are Many Institutional Benefits to Student Leadership & Engagement***

From an institutional perspective, the following were some of the institutional benefits to working closely with students:

- They are a source of tremendous energies and enthusiasm
- Students can make many tangible contributions to educational programming and sponsorship, such as support for sponsor teams as well as support and leadership in conference and event organizing
- Students have important, novel and timely ideas. These including creating Refugee Awareness Week and organizing the first campus event related to the [Rohingya refugee crisis](#), for example.
- They engage in positive community leadership and receive recognition for those efforts that help connect the university the community (e.g. efforts to host the Youth Action Gathering and help lead the clothing drive for FCJ Refugee Centre were recognized in WUSC Keele winning the national committee of the year award)
- Student efforts provide a positive profile for the University, including several stories that could be featured prominently by the university

### ***There are Some Challenges Associated with Student Engagement***

The challenges of working with students are similar to those of working with any other group of people, but included the following:

- The turnover of students and of engagement of individual student groups can be a challenge. Turnover can have negative effects on initiatives. It requires effort to maintain momentum on particular initiatives and connect with participants and clubs yearly.
- It can be a challenge to coordinate/meet with students due to their academic, employment and other commitments. (They are busy like the rest of us!)
- Students may have well-intentioned ideas, but may not be aware of or know how to avoid potential pitfalls or problems in a complex field. Support and close attention are required.
- Philosophical differences amongst different groups need to be navigated (like any other coalition)
- Meaningful support and mentorship of students can be very labour intensive



## Post-Project Recommendations and Suggestions

The following recommendations and suggestions are provided in the spirit that student engagement in refugee issues is worth promoting and that the Centre for Refugee Studies and University see an important role for this work within their mandates. **To the extent that such activities could be supported by funding or staff from the University, they would be greatly strengthened.**

Recommendations are provided below that do not presume such support, but provide some ideas to consider to help continue some of the student and community engagement produced through the project. The general idea is that some prior supports could be dispersed between more hands at relatively low cost or done in a different way but with potentially meaningful results.

The following general recommendations and more specific suggestions are provided:

### *1) Continue and strengthen engagement with and support of Keele Campus and Glendon WUSC committees.*

It is encouraged that the university remain strongly committed to and engaged with its WUSC committees, including financially.

WUSC refugee sponsorship both pre-dated (since 1988) and will most likely outlive situation-specific sponsorship efforts. The Centre for Refugee Studies presently offers a home, faculty advisors and other supports to the Keele Campus committee that long predates and ran parallel to the SRRI project.

**The following are SRRI-linked supports the Centre for Refugee Studies and where possible the university as a whole (e.g. through Yfiles) are encouraged to continue, including to:**

- 1. Promote engagement in the University's WUSC Committees, including by**
  - a. Adding a section on the CRS website promoting engagement with York's WUSC Committees**, potentially including a sign-up/mechanism to collect names of students interested in joining the committees that could be shared with or administered by representatives of the Keele and Glendon committees (e.g. link to a google document collecting contact information or perhaps interacting with YU Connect pages). Such a page is a useful recruiting and information tool for the committees.
  - b. Encouraging faculty and staff associated with the centre and others to regularly and actively promote the committees**, including on social media and through CRS News and the student lists early in and periodically throughout the year. A representative or representatives of the committee(s) could also be invited to give updates to the CRS executive or at the annual CRS general meeting.

- c. **Hosting an annual event and/or linked seminar geared towards education of and reflection by refugee sponsors that also invites and recognizes the members of York's WUSC committees for their work.** This was done on multiple occasions during the SSRI project and could be continued in another form.
2. **Continue to encourage WUSC Committee members and sponsored students to participate in reflections on their work in campus, local and national fora** (Examples include York-based seminars and events such as those on Refugee Rights Day, the Student Caucus Annual Conference, CARFMS when it is close to Toronto) and when possible provide funding to help with registration. Several examples of such collaboration are included in this report.

## *2) Support education and engagement by York students in refugee issues more broadly*

In the absence of a staff position, some of the following measures could be considered in the spirit of providing low-cost but meaningful ways to continue engaging undergraduate and other students in the life of the centre. Such engagement might also help promote the Centre's educational programming and help increase attendance at events. If some sources of funding could be identified some of these efforts could be further institutionalized or strengthened.

- a) **Provide a list of student clubs engaged in refugee issues on the CRS website to encourage student engagement in such issues** (could be adapted from the SSRI project website list- [www.yorku.ca/refugees](http://www.yorku.ca/refugees) ). This would likely require updating on at least an annual basis. Efforts to update such information might also be an opportunity to share knowledge of the centre with incoming student leaders of clubs with affinities to the Centre's work.
- b) **The Centre could consider including an executive position or sub-committee for student engagement and outreach.** Having a point person students can approach to discuss ideas with or seek advice from was cited as a very important resource by student leaders in their own and collaborative endeavors. There could be an annual meeting of person(s) designated such a role with student club leaders working in this field (if not with the Director).
- c) **Creating the role or roles of CRS student ambassadors** who would engage in and help promote the centre's activities and collaboration with student groups. Such a role might be filled through work study positions, an internship or recognition of hours of service through the CRS diploma program. Such a person or persons could report to a designated faculty person (see suggestion "b" immediately above).
- d) **Including student-centred events in the CRS seminar series or developing a "Student Engagement" event or sub-series of events.** These might include:
  - i. Continuing "Refugees 101 and Advocacy Training" event(s) on an annual basis. This could continue by collaborating with Amnesty International on

campus and locally/nationally, the Canadian Council for Refugees or local organizations (one of the 2019 speakers was co-director of FCJ Refugee Centre, for example). Such an event might serve as one of the Centre's primary contributions to Refugee Awareness Weeks.

**e) Continuing forms of Refugee Awareness Week Participation/Support**

- i. During the project there were supports in the form of an event page for Refugee Awareness Week each year, room bookings support (Research room bookings), an annual Yfile piece, inclusion on the CRS calendar and co-organizing one or more events with select student clubs and participating in Vari Hall refugee awareness and engagement fairs. Generally the CRS seminar operating concurrently to the week was included in the week's programming. The CRS had some prior engagements with Refugee Awareness Week prior to the SRRJ project, including in its first year.

While all of these forms of support may not be possible, making some contribution(s) to the week would be a valuable way to maintain ties with student groups in these fields. While doing so the centre should be highly attentive to the dynamics of any events it co-sponsors or has attached to its name.

**f) Concerning community engagement**

- i. **Continue to support Winter Clothing Drives for FCJ Refugee Centre.** This has been a meaningful and growing activity serving an identified community need and form of community engagement that involved several clubs and departments on campus. In 2018 it was led most prominently by WUSC Keele. It could still be led by student groups such as WUSC, Amnesty at York, and some of the other past collaborators.

The centre could continue to host a drop-off spot primarily for Kaneff Tower participants and share news of the initiative on CRS social media, the website, and its listservs.

- ii. **Participate in and/or facilitate student participation in Refugee Rights Month Toronto activities each April.** This could, at the lowest level of engagement, be done by making graduate or undergraduate students aware of the opportunity to participate in the planning of Refugee Rights Month Activities each year. Alternatively, such participation might be more structured by being done by an intern or for diploma participation requirements by a doctoral student well-connected to centre that could support stronger links with the organizations planning the month.

Such participation has been well-received by the civil society organizers of the month, and led to employment for one graduating student in Summer 2019 and interviews for positions in other years. A key lead

organization on the Month's Activities has been the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), with planning for the month beginning with meetings beginning in February and events being held in April. York's Refugee Rights Day events have also been part of the month's events since 2016.

- iii. **Another engagement opportunity, not yet explored** might be with the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network and its regional chapters initiative if the Centre sees any opportunities here. At the moment the Toronto Chapter is being hosted at the FCJ Refugee Centre. York Amnesty chapter students were connected to the centre at this year's Amnesty AGM where they collaborated together on a workshop. The CCR Youth Network was also connected to CARMFS from the SRRI-organized panel in May, 2019 and from there seemed to be discussing potential forms of collaboration (Appendices 3c and 4).

# Appendices

The appendices below offer further information on the project, including lists and descriptions of sponsorship and fundraising teams, communications about the project and activities undertaken, and honours and recognitions received during the project.

## Appendix Set 1: Refugee Sponsorship

Appendix set 1 includes more information about sponsorship (1a) and fundraising teams (1b), as well as support activities held by the SRRI for sponsor teams (1c).

### Appendix 1a) Sponsor Team Descriptions

To help in fundraising efforts each team was asked to provide a short paragraph about their team early in the process. These are the descriptions York teams provided in Fall 2015/Winter 2016 for publicity and fundraising purposes, in the order in which teams were established. Websites are provided for teams that had one.

#### Team Osgoode

Osgoode Hall Law School is committed to the pursuit of justice through law. This commitment has led to a long tradition of education, scholarship, community engagement and activism in the refugee context, both in Canada and globally. The Osgoode community (faculty, students, staff, and alumni) is embarking on the Lifeline Syria Challenge in order to make a positive difference in the Global Refugee Crisis, and as part of a broader effort to support refugee communities, and the families fleeing conflict and chaos and seeking a new beginning in Canada.

#### York University Sociologists and Friends

York University Sociologists and Friends are frustrated with how wars, profiteering and political posturing are forcing people from their homes, and how our immigration system is stopping them from getting to safety. We say, "refugees are welcome in our communities."

#### Project Connect

The unprecedented humanitarian crisis has prompted us, as Canadians and the descendants of immigrants ourselves, to take action and connect with global citizens in need. We embrace the opportunity to introduce a Syrian family to a welcoming Toronto. Through team leader Jeff Galway, a graduate of Osgoode Hall, our group of ten friends and many more supporters is able to partner with York and access the university's resources and expertise. Team Members: Joe and Marilyn Calderone, Jeff and Holly Galway, Betty and Gavin Ivory, Norah and Paul Oulahen, Mary and Mark Shea

#### AMPD for Syria

The creative thinkers, makers, innovators, and advocates in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design are passionate about social justice. Now, during this time of humanitarian crisis stemming from civil war in Syria, twelve million people – half of the country's population – are displaced and homeless. Four million of those live in exile beyond Syria's borders.

AMPD for Syria is a powerful opportunity to give hope to a family that has been uprooted from their existence. Through the Lifeline Syria Challenge we will bring a family of four to the GTA. As the circumstances for Syrians continue to deteriorate, together we can provide an opportunity for hope and resilience to flourish

## Faculty of Health

The Faculty of Health is committed to keeping people healthier, longer, and for Syrian refugees that starts with a new home, safe from conflict. That is why we are pleased to join the efforts of our colleagues across York University and at Ryerson, University of Toronto and OCAD, in establishing a 'Team Health' to raise funds and support a family of Syrian refugees.

We are committed to providing not only financial support but also the talents of faculty, students and staff who volunteer to join Team Health to ease the transition of a family to a new and healthy life in Canada. This crisis underscores our important focus on Global Health and commitment to social justice. Team Health is proud to offer our support and invite you to join us.

Team Website: <http://health.info.yorku.ca/about-us/lifeline-syria/>

## York University Music and Friends

The faculty, staff and students of the Music Department at York University, along with our families and many friends, are committed to welcoming a Syrian family to Toronto, and helping them to thrive. Like so many other Canadians, we are compelled by the plight of Syrians forced to leave their homes, jobs, schools, and friends, through no fault of their own. Our group is small, but diverse and dedicated, and drawn together by a need to respond to fellow mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers - in crisis.

## The Glendon Collective

We are a group of scholars and activists committed to justice and to fostering welcoming environments for intercultural contact and collaboration. Individually and as a group we welcome the opportunity to participate in helping a family settle in Toronto and join our community. We have come together to support them as they make this city their home. Team Lead: María Constanza Guzmán

Team website: <https://www.glendon.yorku.ca/yorkrefugeeinitiative-glendoncollective/>

## Team Math and Stats

We are a group of friends with connections to the Mathematics and Statistics department at York University. Many of us are immigrants to Canada ourselves and feel especially grateful for the quality of life that we have here. The urgency of this crisis has encouraged us to act to sponsor a family. Team lead: Mike Zabrocki

Team website: <http://mathstats.info.yorku.ca/lifeline-syria-challenge-team-math-stats/>

## Students for Syrian Refugees

We are Social Science students at York University, assisted by faculty and community members, seeking your help to sponsor a Syrian refugee family. As is common at York, most of us are recent immigrants ourselves. Our third-year experiential education course, Work for a Change, is designed to teach us strategic organizing, research and communications skills.

We want to use our new skills to help others find safety and security in Canada. Please help us help a family suffering from war and chronic insecurity.

## Project Gratitude

We are grateful for the opportunity and privilege to offer refuge and safe haven for a Syrian family. In undertaking this project we are motivated by the urgency and injustice of this human disaster and reminded of our own families' and friends' histories of sacrifice and oppression. As a group of over 15 Torontonians, with support from the Faculty of Environmental Studies, through Prof. Sarah Flicker and students, we are ready for this transformational experience of sponsoring a refugee family and committed to supporting their settlement process. Please consider joining us and making a donation. Team lead: Sarah Flicker

## Appendix 1b) Fundraising Team Descriptions

The following two fundraising teams were formed by Osgoode alumni to support sponsorships undertaken by Team Osgoode while surplus funds from that effort went to other high needs teams at York.

### Ontario Labour Arbitrators

We are a group of labour arbitrators, professional neutrals, resolving disputes between employers and unions throughout Ontario and Canada. Like all Canadians, we were moved by the plight of Syrian refugees and resolved to do what we could to help. We chose the Osgoode Hall Law School - York University Lifeline Syria Challenge because it is ready – with sponsorship teams ready to go – to use the money we raised to fund the resettlement of one or more Syrian refugee families, and to allow individual donors, if they wish, to become personally involved and work with Osgoode faculty and students.

### Greenspan Humphrey Lavine

This team did not provide a description in addition to the name of its firm.



## Appendix 1c) Sponsorship Events and Trainings

Please note: some of these events have more detailed descriptions in Yfile stories (Appendix 5b). Hyperlinks are to the event pages.

*Events for Refugee Sponsors Engaged in the Project Organized by Project Staff (hyperlinked in electronic version)*

- [April 4 2019: Refugee Rights Day 2019 Panel, Project Reception and Art Exhibit Launch](#)
- [October 17 2017: Workshop and Discussion- Transitioning to Month 13 and “Post-Sponsorship”- with the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program \(RSTP\)](#)
  - Post Event Reception: 2:30-3:30 (Reception for RULSC and York based refugee sponsors, including local WUSC committees)
- [June 12, 2017: Next Steps and Reflections from Refugee Sponsors and Resettlement Professionals](#)
- [October 20 2016: Refugee Sponsorship Training Session: Managing Expectations and Sponsorship Ethics](#)
- [September 29 2016: RU Lifeline Syria Challenge Meet & Greet at York University: Employment with Arab Community Centre of Toronto \(ACCT\)](#)
- [April 26 2016: RULSC Sponsor Teams Meet and Greet at York University- Syrian Culture](#)
- [February 10 2016: Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Information Session and Glendon SRRI Project Launch / Session d’information sur le parrainage des réfugiés syriens et lancement du programme Glendon](#)
- [January 18 2016: Program Launch and Reception for the York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative](#)
- [January 18 2016: Ryerson Lifeline Syria Challenge at York Refugee Sponsorship Information Session](#)

*Events by sponsor teams promoted through the project*

- [February 5 2017: York's Glendon Collective Sponsorship Team Hosting Community Gathering to Support a Syrian Family](#)
- [December 1 2016: Meet and Greet- Team Health Refugee Sponsorship Team](#)
- [March 5 2016: A Night of Music & Dance of Iran: Fundraising Concert by the York Music & Friends Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Team](#)

## Appendix Set 2: Student Engagement Activities

Appendix set 2 provides more information on student engagement activities, including a list of student groups collaborated with (2a) and some of the key activities conducted for and with York students (2b and 2c).

### Appendix 2a): List of Student Clubs and Organizations Engaged through Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign and Project Activities

- Agents of Change! York University
- Amnesty International at York
- Canadian Arab Institute Student Ambassador Program
- Canadian Association for Refugee Lawyers (CARL) at Osgoode Hall Law School
- Centre for Refugee Studies Student Caucus
- International Legal Partnership at Osgoode
- Islamic Relief at York University
- McLaughlin College Council
- Middle Eastern Law Students Association- Osgoode Hall Law School
- Middle Eastern Student Association (MESA)
- Mosaic Institute Fellows- York University
- Psychology Graduate Students Refugee Education Initiative
- RefugeAid
- Refugee Health Outreach
- Student Council of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (SCOLAPS)
- Undergraduates of Disaster and Emergency Management (UDEM)
- UNICEF at York
- World University Service of Canada – Glendon Campus
- World University Service of Canada- Keele Campuses
- York University Muslim Students Association

### Appendix 2b) Refugee Awareness Weeks and Select Associated Activities

The links provided here are to pages on the weeks of activities organized in collaboration with various student and other campus groups each year, with subheadings of events organized or co-organized by the project. Stories on these weeks and events are included in the yfile stories on the project, below in Appendix 5b. In 2017 Refugee Awareness Week was called Refugees Welcome Here! week in honour of that campaign. In 2016 the project held an additional week of activities, Refugee Advocacy Week in partnership with Osgoode's International Legal Partnership:

- [January 28-February 1 2019: Refugee Awareness Week 2019](#)
  - [February 1 2019: "Refugees 101 and Advocacy Training" with Amnesty International Canada and FCJ Refugee Centre](#)

- [February 5-9 2018: Refugee Awareness Week at York University 2018 \(and facebook page\)](#)
  - [February 6 2018: Training on Working in Solidarity with Refugees with the Psychology Graduate Students Refugee Initiative\)](#)
  - [February 8 2018: Creating Pathways and Crossing Borders- Access to Higher Education for Refugees and Precarious Migrants](#)
- [March 6-10 2017: Refugees Welcome Here! Week at York University](#)
- [February 29-March 5 2016: Refugee Advocacy Week in partnership with Osgoode's International Legal Partnership \(ILP\)](#)
  - [February 29 2016: Refugees Welcome Here! Advocacy Training with the Canadian Council for Refugees/Amnesty International Canada](#)
  - [March 2 2016: Refugee Advocacy, Education and Engagement Fair](#)
- [January 18-21 2016: Refugee Awareness Week led by York student groups](#)
  - [January 20 2016: Syria Response and Refugee Initiative Volunteer Session](#)

#### **Appendix 2c) Select Additional Student Engagement and Training Activities**

- [November- December 5 2017: Refugees Welcome Here! Winter Coat and Clothing Collection](#)
- [November 14 2017: WE STAND WITH REFUGEES Panel Discussion: Canadian Policies, Myanmar Displacement & Student Engagement](#)
- [October 16 2017: First 2017-2018 Meeting of Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign- All Students Invited!](#)
- [January 17 2017: York University Refugees Welcome Here! Volunteer & Campaign Orientation](#)
- [November-December 2016: Refugees Welcome Here! Winter Coat Drive for the FCJ Refugee Centre in collaboration with the York U Muslim Students Association](#)

## Appendix Set 3: Community Engagement Activities and Workshops Delivered

Appendix set 3 provides more information and links concerning the project's engagements with community partners, including the Toronto Refugee Rights Planning Committee (3a), the Canadian Council for Refugees and its Youth Network (3b and c) and Amnesty International Canada (3a and c).

### Appendix 3a) Refugee Rights Month Toronto Planning Committee Organizations and Keynote Events

Toronto Refugee Rights Planning Committee Organizations 2016-2019 (minimum one year of participation)

[Amnesty International](#) | [Amnesty International at York University](#) |

[Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services](#) | [Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture](#) |

[Canadian Friends Service Committee](#) | [Centre for Refugee Studies, York University](#) |

[COSTI](#) | [CultureLink](#) | [FCJ Refugee Centre](#) | [Matthew House](#) |

[OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants](#) | [Osgoode Hall Law School](#) |

[Quaker Committee for Refugees](#) | [Romero House](#) | [Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge](#) |

[Salvadorean Canadian Association](#) | [Sojourn House](#) |

[Syria Response and Refugee Initiative, York University](#) |

[TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization](#) | [Turtle House Art/Play Centre](#)

Refugee Rights Month Calendars and Keynote Collaborative Events (links):

- [April 4 to April 27 2019: Refugee Rights Month Events In the City of Toronto](#)
  - [April 4, 2019: Refugee Rights Month 2019 Launch at Toronto City Hall](#)
- [April 2018: Refugee Rights Month Events In Toronto](#)
  - [April 4 2018: "Finding Home in Toronto: 33 Years of Defending Refugee Rights" ; Mayor's Proclamation of Refugee Rights Month and Panel Discussion](#)
- [April 2017: Refugee Rights Month Activities in the City of Toronto](#)
  - [April 3 2017: Refugee Rights Month Launch and Proclamation at City Hall](#)
  - [April 20 2017: The Singh Decision Matters in 2017: Refugee Rights Month 2017 Panel Discussion](#)
- [March-April 2016: Refugee Rights Day and Month Activities in the City of Toronto](#)
  - [April 4 2016: Forum on Refugee Rights in 2016 hosted by Refugee Rights Day 2016 Planning Committee](#)

## Appendix 3b) Events Organized with/for the Canadian Council for Refugees and its Youth Network (More detailed descriptions)

### *Adversity to Action: A Day of Civic Engagement and Leadership Training for Newcomer Youth (January 28, 2017)*

*This description of the event was adopted from <https://ccrweb.ca/en/youth/adversity-action>, which was written by Student Project Ambassador Humaima Ashfaque for the CCR.*

On January 28th, Adversity to Action: A Day of Civic Engagement and Leadership Training for Newcomer Youth was held with the support of York University's Centre for Refugee Studies (CRS). York University's Refugees Welcome Here! Campaign and the U of Mosaic Fellows at York hosted a day of collaboration, discussion, education and leadership training for newcomer youth and allies to mobilize for social change.

The core organizing team for the event was composed of SRRI Project Ambassador Humaima Ashfaque, Jala Rizek, Omaira Masood, Mariam El Zeiny, Joseph Benjamin, Cassandra Des Freitas, and fellows of Mosaic Institute York University (Ben Shachar, Reem Alhaj, Nabil Bhatia, Kanchi Uttamchandani, and Arfi Hagiyusuf)

More than 70 participants - Refugees, Immigrants, International students, and Marginalized populations - came together at York University to identify the issues, problems and concerns that youths have faced during their time in Canada. This was a collective way for youths who went through similar problems and issues to voice out their concerns. Many different issues came up and were discussed between each group divided within the following themes:

1. Refugee Policy and Advocacy
2. Education and Language
3. Employment
4. Health Care and Social Service
5. Race, Racism and Culture

In the first half of the day, participants discussed these themes and their concerns related to them.

The second half of the day was focused on giving advocacy tools for Youth, so that they can lobby their MP, create campaigns and brainstorm ideas. John Carlaw, Project Lead of York University's Syria Response and Refugee Initiative spoke to participants about how to employ the versatile advocacy resources of the Canadian Council for Refugees' [Refugees Welcome Here campaign](#), including how to lobby decision makers. He also invited those in attendance to get involved in York University's branch of the campaign. John was the York Staff person providing mentorship and support to the youth involved in the organizing of the event.

The afternoon allowed students to share their concerns, civic action plans and solutions to City of Toronto Councilor and Newcomer Advocate Joe Mihevc as well as Loly Rico, President of the Canadian Council for Refugees & Co-Director of the FCJ Refugee Centre who generously took their time to participate in this event. Both gave highly inspiring talks on civic engagement to the assembled youth.

Each of the youth group divided in the five themes came up with [resources packages](#) which contains information to help understand the problems and advocate for a policy change or improvement. The resource also allows students to connect with communities by being involved in different organizations.

Such a tool is a direct call to action, and York youth team has been very clear on the importance of acting now in order for change to happen!

See a photo album of the event at:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/yurefugees/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=1128292737279079](https://www.facebook.com/pg/yurefugees/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1128292737279079) .

### *Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Action Gathering, June 6, 2018*

The CCR Youth Network hosted its sixth national Youth Action Gathering (YAG) in partnership with the [Centre for Refugee Studies \(CRS\)](#) at York U, [Amnesty International at York](#) and [WUSC](#) Keele committee at York on June

The theme of the YAG was *The power of being you: liberating our intersecting identities.*

A [YAG](#) is a space created for and by youth that allows newcomer youth, including young refugees, immigrants to come together from across Canada to discuss common challenges facing newcomer youth and to equip themselves with the necessary tools to address these challenges. The event is a mix of workshops, plenaries, informal discussions and social events.

The YAG was a one day event, albeit one that greeted participants with dinner and welcome activities the evening before.

With the CCR [International Refugee Rights Conference](#) following on June 7-9, they decided to bridge both events and have a more international YAG as well. We will be inviting youth networks from around the world to join us during the YAG and meet with our Youth Network during the International Conference.

Workshop themes included:

“Black Is Back,” “The Paradox of Canadian Muslim Identity,” “Breaking the Chains of Colonization,” “Lean to Code & Make an App,” “The Umbrella Under the T (advocacy work being done by the LGBTQ2s community),” “Mental Health in Ethno Cultural Communities,” “Building a Culture of Consent,” “Regional and Local Engagement,” “Let’s Dance! Dreaming With Your Feet,” “Music Empowers the Human Soul,” and “Be Your Best.”

Recruited and organized by Project Ambassador Humaima Ashfaque and mentored by SRRI Project Lead John Carlaw, core York student team members Cory Clarkson, Cassandra DeFreitas, Edwar Dommar, Robert Hanlon, Sahar Jafrani, Roshni Khemraj, Shaelen MacPherson, Aisha Saleem and Jaitra Sathy and the SRRI team met regularly to plan the local logistics and fundraise for the event and oversaw a team of 20 more student volunteers to execute this day long event for approximately 100 newcomer and refugee youth from across Canada.

The students who compromised the local organizing committee effectively organized themselves into five sub-committees to organize volunteer recruitment and coordination, social events, participation and registration, media work as well as fundraising and budgets. Students on the committee fundraised more than \$6000 to help with the expenses of hosting the event.

Please see some footage from the 2018 YAG in the promotional video for the 2019 YAG at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNLTsyxRRZY&feature=youtu.be> . The video includes footage of York students and other youth sharing the meaning of the YAG to them.

### Appendix 3c): Workshops Organized for Non-Governmental Organizations

For Amnesty International Canada:

2019: “Shifting the Narrative on Refugee Rights and Foregrounding Refugee Voices,” at the 2019 Annual General Meeting of Amnesty International Canada, Toronto, June 1

John Carlaw, SRRI Project Lead and Amnesty at York University Members Humaima Ashfaque, Edwar Dommar and Yasmine Hawz and Sara Hummad & Dennis Njoki of the FCJ Refugee Centre Youth Network

For the Canadian Council for Refugees:

2016: “Refugees Welcome Here!/Bienvenue aux réfugiés Campaign Workshop,” at the “*Welcoming diversity: at the heart of what we do*” Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) Fall Consultations, Montreal, Quebec, November 25.

Humaima Ashfaque, SRRI Student Project Ambassador & John Carlaw SRRI Project Lead along with Jihane El Atifi (CCR Staff) and Aditya Rao, University of Ottawa Law School.

The workshop was also supported with a Welcoming Refugees: *Shifting public discourse and successful campaigning* [Annotated Bibliography](#) prepared by William Payne, Dina Taha, and Billy Ilunga Kalenga of the Refugee Research Network (Centre for Refugee Studies) with advice from John Carlaw.

## Appendix 4: Academic Conference Panels and Presentations

Appendix set 4 provides information on the project's participation in academic conferences, including presentations by York students and project staff.

### a) Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) 2019

2019, "Promoting Youth, Newcomer and Refugee Led Integration and Advocacy in Community and University Contexts," at the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) Annual Conference, York University, Toronto, May 14-16.

Staff and York Student Presentations:

"Building a Welcoming Campus and Engaging the Community on Refugee and Newcomer Issues at York University," - John Carlaw (Project Lead) and Edwar Dommar (Youth Leader)

"Mobilizing York University to Foster Integration through Increased Awareness and Financial Support for Higher Learning for Refugees," - Amna Masood, York University  
Keele Campus WUSC Committee Chair

"The Newcomer Youth Civic Engagement Project: Activating Local Youth Network Branches of the Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network," - Rosa Solorzano, CCR Youth Network Core Group Co-chair & York University Student and Denis Njoki, Toronto Branch Leader

Other panelist:

Kerith Paul, Senior Project Coordinator, Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge

### b) CARFMS 2018

2018, "**Student and Youth Engagement in Refugee and Newcomer Issues on Campuses and in Canadian Communities,**" at the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies (CARFMS) Annual Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa ON, May 25.

Staff and Student Presentations within:

**"Refugees Welcome Here! Student Engagement in the York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative,"** - John Carlaw, Project Lead & Humaima Ashfaque, Project Ambassador & Student, York University Syria Response and Refugee Initiative

**"Mobilizing Campuses: Winning Volunteer and Financial Support for Refugee Sponsorship at Canadian Universities,"** - Robert Hanlon, York University Keele Campus WUSC Committee Chair presented jointly with Carolyn McKee, Program Officer, Campus Engagement and the Student Refugee Program at World University Service of Canada (WUSC - EUMC)

Other Organizations Represented on the Panel:

Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network, Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge



c) National Metropolis Conference 2016

2016, “**Social Innovation in the Global Refugee Crisis: The Lifeline Syria Challenge at Toronto’s Universities,**” at the 18th National Metropolis Conference: Getting Results- Migration, Opportunities and Good Governance, Toronto, March 5.

Staff and Student Presentations:

“Tentanda Via- The way must be tried: Innovation and Collaboration in the Lifeline Syria Challenge at York University,” - John Carlaw, Project Lead

“Legal Education, Teaching and Service: The Refugee Sponsorship Support Program & the Lifeline Syria Challenge,” - Pierre-André Thériault Barrister & Solicitor PhD Student, Refugee Sponsorship Support Program Coordinator – Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Other Panelists:

Wendy Cukier Vice-President, Research & Innovation – Ryerson University; Founder, Ryerson Lifeline Syria Challenge and Samantha Jackson, Ryerson Lifeline Syria Challenge, PhD Candidate

## Appendix Set 5: Project Communications

Appendix set 5 provides links to the project's primary communications platforms and communications about the project. Most of these communications produced are from collaborations with Yfile staff, though others include links to other communications formats produced through the project, by other media or project collaborators.

### Appendix 5a) Website and Social Media Pages

Website: [www.yorku.ca/refugees](http://www.yorku.ca/refugees)

Facebook Account (777 page likes/804 follows): <https://www.facebook.com/yurefugees/>

Twitter Account (862 followers): <https://twitter.com/yurefugees>

Instagram Account (least used- 366 followers): <http://www.instagram.com/yurefugees>

### Appendix 5b): Y-File and other News Stories and Media related to the Syria Response and Refugee Initiative

The following are Y-file stories unless otherwise indicated.

- [April 3 2019: York University to mark Refugee Rights Day, April 4](#)
- [March 17 2019: National recognition given to York student group supporting refugees](#)
- [January 24 2019: Sixth annual student-led Refugee Awareness Week runs Jan. 28-Feb 1 at the Keele Campus](#)
- [July 18 2018: Two prominent conferences on refugee rights and newcomer youth held at Keele Campus](#)
- [June 20 2018: Pierre-André Thériault receives Robert Tiffin Student Leadership Award](#) (LinkedIn Announcement)
- [May 25, 2018: Canadian Refugee Champion: York University Refugees Welcome Here!](#) (Amnesty International Canada Website)
- [May 14 2018: WUSC Keele Campus Chair Robert Hanlon Earns Liberal Arts and Professional Studies Outstanding Student Volunteer Award](#) (LAPS website)
- [April 1 2018: York marks Refugee Rights Day with events in April](#)
- [January 31 2018: York University students organize events for Refugee Awareness Week](#)
- [January 15 2018: Event Summary- Next Steps and Reflections from Refugee Sponsors and Resettlement Professionals](#) (Centre for Refugee Studies Website)
- [November 22 2017: York U's Human Rights Student Heroes Working Hard to Ensure Refugees Feel Welcome](#)
- [November 14 2017 We Stand with Refugees Panel Event Photo Album](#) (Facebook album)
- [October 3 2017: SRRI Project Lead John Carlaw is Amnesty International Toronto's #RefugeeChampion of the Week](#) (Amnesty International Toronto Twitter)

- [June 20 2017: York U Sponsors welcome Syrian refugees to Canada on World Refugee Day, June 20](#)
- [March 28 2017: April 4 Refugee Rights Day Panel at York's Keele Campus to Explore Refugee Policy in Canada](#)
- [March 17 2017: York U Students "Adversity to Action" Newcomer Youth Project Profiled by Canadian Council for Refugees \(Canadian Council for Refugees Website\) and photo album](#)
- [March 17 2017: Leading by Example- York U Student Humaima Ashfaque says "Refugees Welcome Here!" \(RULSC Newsletter\)](#)
- [March 5 2017: York Students Lead the Way during "Refugees Welcome Here!" Week at the Keele Campus](#)
- [October 5 2016: York U Welcomes its first sponsored Syrian refugee family](#)
- [July 2016: Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge 2016 Year in Review \(RULSC Report\)](#)
- [July 4 2016: Psychology grad students collaborate to assist refugees](#)
- [April 13 2016: Osgoode Hall Law School Students Providing Legal Support to Refugees](#)
- [April 1 2016: Toronto Refugee Rights Coalition Issues Statement and Invites Canadians to Commemorate Refugee Rights Month 2016, April 1, 2016 \(Media Release\)](#)
- [March 29 2016: York University Community to mark Refugee Rights Day and Month](#)
- [March 21 2016: York U Syria Response and Refugee Initiative Project Lead John Carlaw Invited to be Listed as a "Canadian Refugee Champion" by Amnesty International Canada \(Amnesty International Canada\)](#)
- [March 14 2016: Global Refugee Crisis is the Talk of the Town at Refugee Advocacy and Training Event, March 14, 2016 \(Excalibur\)](#)
- [February 23 2016: York University hosts Refugee Advocacy Week, Feb. 29 to March 5 at the Keele Campus](#)
- [February 8 2016: From camps to campuses: Students changing students' lives through WUSC](#)
- [February 2 2016: University Libraries host four day event to benefit Syrian refugees, February 2 2015](#)
- [January 20 2016: Humanitarian groups on Campus band together and focus on refugee crisis \(Excalibur\)](#)
- [January 25 2016: Launching York University's Syria Response and Refugee Initiative](#)
- [January 12 2016: York U launching Syria Response and Refugee Initiative Project with a special event on Jan. 18](#)
- [November 11 2015: York Steps Up to respond to Global Refugee Crisis \(Dean's Blog\)](#)
- [October 28 2015: Universities step up to aid Syrian refugees \(University Affairs\)](#)
- [October 27 2015: These Groups Have An Idea To Help Syrian Refugees: Let People Sponsor Them \(Huffington Post\)](#)
- [October 26 2015: York U Extends Support to Syrian refugees, joining three other Toronto universities \(Council of Ontario Universities\)](#)
- [October 26 2015: Osgoode's Response to the Global Refugee Crisis \(Dean Sossin's Blog\)](#)
- [October 25 2015: York University broadens its support of refugees globally](#)
- [September 20 2015: York U collaborates with Ryerson, UofT and OCADU to coordinate efforts to bring Syrian refugee families to Canada](#)

## Appendix 6: Recognitions Received by Project Participants

- Humaima Ashfaque (Project Student Ambassador), National Youth Leader, Canadian Council for Refugees Youth Network (2016-present), [profiled in Ryerson University Lifeline Syria Challenge Newsletter](#) , March 17, 2017
- John Carlaw (Project Lead), profiled as a [“Refugee Champion” by Amnesty International Canada](#) in March 2016, Amnesty International Toronto’s [“Refugee Champion of the Week](#), Oct 3 2017
- Robert Hanlon (Project Participant, former WUSC Keele Campus Chapter Chair), [Liberal Arts and Professional Studies Outstanding Student Volunteer Award](#), May 2018
- Pierre-André Thériault (former Project Co-Lead, Osgoode), [Robert Tiffin Student Leadership Award](#), June 2018
- World University Service of Canada Keele Campus Committee (Project Collaborators), [WUSC National Committee of the Year](#), 2018
- York University Refugees Welcome Here! Team (Project Initiative), [Profiled as Refugee Champions by Amnesty International Canada](#), May 25, 2018