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Integration and Belonging Hub

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Fall 2022

## Academic Innovation Fund Progress Report

Integration and Belonging Hub

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### Recommended Citation

Integration and Belonging Hub, "Academic Innovation Fund Progress Report" (2022). *Vision, Mission, & Funding*. 1.

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1) **Project Title:** Integration and Belonging HUB

2) **Project Faculty and Roles (PI, co-PI, etc.):**

PI:	Anita Fábos, Professor, Associate Director, IDCE
co-PI:	Jude Fernando, Associate Professor
co-PI:	Sharon Hanna, Director of Career Development
Project Manager/Facilitator	Jozefina Lantz, Research Associate

3) **In 1-2 sentences, summarize the work planned under this grant and its expected impact for the Clark community. In terms of impact, this statement should address one or more of the following areas of impact:**

- a. **Academic and research excellence**
- b. **Interdisciplinary scholarly collaboration within Clark**
- c. **Outward scholarly engagement beyond Clark**
- d. **Undergraduate and/or graduate student experience and success**

The Integration and Belonging Hub builds collaboration around community-engaged work with refugees in Worcester, and develops programs to promote innovative research and praxis towards understanding multi-directional processes of migration and social cohesion.

4) **In a few sentences, describe the work undertaken thus far on the project. Please list concrete activities and milestones as they relate to #3 with expenditures to date.**

- a. Internship program – Ten students joined the summer session of the guided internship program, with six students achieving placements with Massachusetts agencies that work with or on behalf of refugees (ACE, Jewish Family Services, City Office of Human Rights, among others). We have established an on-going placement with the African Community Education (ACE) program, and have developed several other opportunities for future internship placements.
- b. The HUB facilitator organized four training and reflection meetings for the interns during their summer placements.
- c. The first day-long Worcester Inter-University Refugee Workshop for faculty and students will be held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The day-long Workshop is a collaboration between faculty members from Clark University, College of Holy Cross and Worcester State University, and features practitioners in refugee resettlement and other agencies, historians, refugee advocates, and local researchers partnered with refugee communities. The workshop focuses on the changing ideas of who is considered a refugee, current national policies, local practices of refugee settlement and integration, and ethics and methods of research and community engagement. This event is co-funded by the IDCE Department, Clark University.
- d. Speakers – One speaker has presented at the summer training sessions for interns, and three speakers are scheduled to present at the upcoming Inter-University Workshop.
- e. Visiting Scholars – The Dean of Research has approved the appointment of two visiting scholars with expertise in refugee resettlement in the US, comparative integration policy, and service provision to refugees and asylum seekers. In addition to pursuing their own research interests, these two scholars will participate in and contribute to developing a

network of scholars and students focusing on academic and research excellence in integration and belonging for immigrants and refugees.

**5) In a few sentences, describe the work that remains, provide a timeline for the completion of that work and plans for spending of any remaining grant funds.**

The HUB has recruited a second cohort of undergraduate and graduate students to participate in the guided internship program from September to December 2022. This program will include additional outside speakers. We will continue to build and strengthen relationships with community partners who serve refugees in Worcester, coordinating with Clark's community engagement initiatives. By December, we will have plans to formalize HUB relations with two university partners in other countries (Egypt, Greece) for Phase II of the project, which extends the internship program to include an exchange program.

For the project to be sustainable—that is, for the Hub to continue to provide collaborative activities and contribute to knowledge and best practices around integration and belonging for refugees, we need a concerted effort in the last three months of the grant to secure additional resources—both financial and human. We have held two meetings with OSPR but more follow-up is needed to identify funding priorities and support.