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Steering Committee Notes [April 4th, 2022 through September 7th, 2022]

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Steering committee meetings

First meeting: April 14th, at 2:15.

Next meeting: May 12, 2:30 pm

Present: Adam, Anita, Amer, Jude, Jozefina

Decisions made:

1. Committee will meet monthly
2. Next meeting May 12, at 2:30 pm
3. Will try to add additional members, a professor from the Holy Cross. Invitation to join the committee to be sent.
4. The date of the conference narrowed down to Thursday, September 22nd or possibly Friday, September 23rd.
5. Conference will be a day long or close to that.

Discussion focused on conference objectives:

- the goal of the conference,
- shared work and networking,
- local community connections and inclusion in the conference
- what would be make-up for the speaker/presenters for the panel
- how to attract participants, and specifically students

Second meeting: May 12, 2:30 pm

Next meeting: June 16th, 11 am est (placeholder)

Present: Sarah, Noa, Adam, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

Introductions

Agenda:

1. Summary of the last meeting
2. Name: conference or workshop
3. Our goals
4. presenters / speakers / panel
5. Target audience
6. Invitations

Discussion topics:

- A. Problems within the field
- B. Original motivation
- C. Our goals
- D. Criteria for facilitators
- E. Topics for workshop/panel
- F. Possible model
- G. Target audience
- H. Invitations

A. Problems within the field:

- Lack of collaboration in research from different schools
- Volunteers, nonprofessionals, (and some professionals) do not adhere to some codes of ethics
- Lack of understanding of the culture and community
- Different identities marginalized by funders

B. Original motivation: The want for collaboration between different schools engaging in similar research.

C. Our goals :

- Implement a collaborative approach/framework for those who study and work in the field
- Focus on ethics and best practices when working with communities and agencies
- Invite and incentivize academics to learn and challenge their practices
- Educate students / Create an informed and ethical student body that partakes in civic engagement

D. Criteria for facilitators

- Someone who is an academic and practitioner (experience is a must)
- Someone who is a refugee/ forced migrant and an academic

Whenever possible find people with backgrounds of the very community we are trying to understand

E. Topics:

- The history of refugee settlement and forced migration in central MA and Worcester
- Pedagogy and methods of learning in the field
- (Research?) and ethical approaches
- Networking and mapping
- How to supervise civic engagement

F. Possible Model:

Phase 1: String of Workshops

Phase 2: Focus on Ethics

Phase 3: End with Displaced Kitchens

G. Target audience: Students and academics

Members of refugee or forced migration communities need to have been included from the beginning to have them as an audience.

H. Possible speakers:

- Shahrazad Mojab (U of Toronto): works with displaced Kurdish women
- Peter Kiang (UMass): focuses on pedagogy, identity, immigrant and refugee youth
- Devin Atallah (UMass): Psychology professor with Racial/Cultural focus
- Julie Dahlstrom (BU): directs BU Law's Immigrants' Rights & Human Trafficking Program

Decisions made:

1. Leaning towards a workshop.
2. Intermediate step in finding facilitators: designing activities that insights collaboration and learning to find appropriate facilitator(s).
3. Target audience is students and academics.
4. Next steering committee meeting: June 16th at 11 am est (current placeholder)

Third meeting: June 16th at 11am est (6/16/2022)

Next meeting: July 6th at 11am est (7/6/2022)

Present: Sarah, Noa, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

Discussion topics:

- A. Program Aim
- B. Goals of the conference
- C. Different sections of the conference
- D. Other: Things to be aware of/to consider
- E. Invitations
- F. Meeting Links
- G. Potential time and space for conference
- H. Decisions Made

A. Program Aim: Create Worcester as a hub of knowledge building and connecting with refugee communities!

B. Conference/workshop goals discussed:

- Speak on issues now found in current discourse and practices
- Create a body of academics, practitioners, activists & students to promote/work on the goals
- Reframe popular discourse
- Bridge the different approaches in refugee work while being practical and pragmatic, with a critical eye
- Invite conference speakers that would focus on reframing and educating over the individual research papers presentations
- Familiarize participants with other ways of thinking

C: Different sections of the conference; structure:

1. Framing - panel
2. History - Worcester & Central Mass
3. Legalities of the immigration process
4. "Mapping and Counter-Mapping"
5. Invite someone from MORI or ORR - for a federal & state perspective
6. Ethics - devote a session of the workshop to the discussing ethics in refugee work as well as research
7. Include first-person stories of individual refugees is a possibility; testimonials
8. Displaced Kitchens - for the food at the end of the day, possibly at Holy Cross, with a buses transporting participants from Clark to HC and back - Sarah to check into this option
9. Lunch provided by a local refugee-owned catering - Jozefina to check into this

C1. Framing and re-narrating:

- The broad sociological and political context of refugees and the different immigration categories
- Pushing back on American integration narratives in literature - what are the options
- Critical & feminist theory: thinking of the intersections at play

C2. Historical background of central MA and Worcester:

- History of refugee settlement - Worcester settlement house, now Friendly House Inc. in Worcester
- Histories of refugee communities, of settler colonialism
- The intersection of anti-blackness & being a refugee
- Interaction between settler colonialism & anti-blackness in the creation of immigration labels/categories
- Thomas Doughton from HC could provide a broad focus on intersecting histories and how it takes part in legal labels, to be invited as one of the speakers/panelists.

C3. Immigration process and legal issues:

- Immigration processes & the discourse it has created
- Politics and agenda of refugee categories & its effects.
- The tension between legal, settlement, compliance, etc.
- The resettlement system being a subset of a larger refugee movement

- Formal resettlement programs

C4 & C5: “Mapping and Counter-Mapping”

- Possibility of MORI or ORR staff person interview - for a federal and state perspective
- Mapping refugee communities and their networks
- Discrepancies in which forced migrant persons receives government protective status & support
- Discourse of integration
- Politics guiding policies of being labeled as a refugee
- What is governmental official standing? Who has government protective status? How does it affect families? What happened to different groups? Why are some successful in receiving protective status and benefits and others not?
- Sociological terms and experiences
- Concept of being a refugee
- End with a reflection in small groups

C6. Ethics

- Panel with academics & practitioners
- Present different scenarios & experiences
- Cultural competence versus cultural humility
- Not stereotyping a refugee into a cultural role
- Breakout rooms: What is ethical? What is not ethical? What is an ethical approach?

C7. Stories of individuals

- Conclude with various refugee & forced migration stories

D. Other: Things to be aware of, to consider, to discuss:

- Difference between refugees & forcefully displaced vs. voluntary migration !
- Laws & rules play a political role and play to certain agendas
- Refugees seen as representation of nations
- Refugee story subsumed under the migration story in US and other places

E. Invitations:

Mixed panel: an academic, practitioner & activist

- Thomas Doughton (Holy Cross): Specialized in the Holocaust, comparative genocide, Native American studies, local history, and African American history. Held seminars on “Global African Diaspora” and “African Experience in Europe.” Graduate Dissertation at the University of Paris on the relationship between philosophy of Sartre and the emergence of post-colonial discourse in Black Africa.
- Susan Rodgers (Holy Cross): Ph.D. in cultural anthropology at UChicago, established an anthropology program at Holy Cross. Did fieldwork in Sumatra, Indonesia and focused on ethnic

identity construction, ritual oratory, indigenous print literatures and literacies & minority/state relations - a suggestion

- Craig Mortley: Refugee practitioner & colonial critic
- Julie Dahlstrom : Practitioner in asylum and migrant services and human trafficking locally and abroad and is a professor - a suggestion
- A historian, with knowledge of Worcester's migration history
- Need to consider Inviting someone from another university, such as WPI, Quinsigamond, UMass,..

F. Links:

- Worcester Historical Museum:

<https://www.worcesterhistory.org/>

- The Thomas P. Joyce '59 Contemplative Center

<https://www.holycross.edu/faith-service/facilities/joyce-contemplative-center>

- Thomas Doughton:

<https://www.smithsonianjourneys.org/experts/thomas-doughton/>

- Susan Rodgers:

<https://www.holycross.edu/academics/programs/sociology-and-anthropology/faculty/susan-rodgers>

- Julie Dohlstrom:

<https://www.bu.edu/law/profile/julie-a-dahlstrom/>

G. Potential time and space for conference:

- September 22nd, space reserved
- @ Thomas P. Joyce '59 Contemplative Center

H. Decisions Made:

1. Next meeting: Wednesday the 6th at 11 am
2. Send invitations out in 2 or 3 waves
3. Look for resources to fund program
4. We don't need a keynote speaker if using workshop model
5. Conference will be held on September 22nd at Tilton Hall (updated)

Fourth meeting: July 6th at 11am est

Next meeting: Wednesday July 27th at 11am est

Present: Sarah, Amer, Noa, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

Agenda:

1. 3rd SCM Minutes
2. Funding
3. Conference layout
4. Substantive to the conference

Discussion Topics:

- A. Draft of Conference
- B. To do
- C. To be aware of
- D. Plans Considered
- E. Invitations

A. Draft of Conference:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iHY6KQE9QByo3E_-ZHewxM6ASJfsQeXE9ppuqloVFZE/edit

B. To do:

- Write a brief description of the conference -Anita

[DRAFT Description--Worcester Refugee Workshop - Google Docs](#)

- Find catering prices
- Look for funding ideas
- Create Budget - transportation - Jozefina
- Decide on panelists
- Pin down speakers from non-academia
- Displaced Kitchens - Sarah

C. To be aware of:

- Consider dynamic of refugee story being extrapolated for consumption

D. Plans Considered :

- Academic or practitioner with refugee background leads a session and trains
- Find faculty with refugee experience to speak on the intersection of being a refugee and being a historian, academic, practitioner, etc. - do in the beginning?
- Build IBH into the community through recognition from political entity - recognition from city, state, government officials
 - Invite the governor?

E. Invitations:

- Thomas E. Conroy (Worcester state) Associate Professor of Urban Studies

<https://www.worcester.edu/faculty/thomas-e-conroy/>

- Sabaa Alk -

Decisions made:

- Make decisions regarding speakers at 5th SCM
- Next meeting : Wednesday July 27th at 11am est

Fifth Meeting : July 27th at 11 am est

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 17th at 11 est

Present: Adam, Noa, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

Discussion Topics:

A. Objectives for the Conference:

B. Ideas

C. Overview of Presenters

D. To do

E. Questions

F. Meeting Links

A. Objectives for the Conference:

- Think broadly of forced migration/Bridge broad ideas
- Help academics understand the perspective of practitioners and activists - paint an intellectual picture
- Create connections among Universities
- Present overview of Worcester (including early days of settlement and refugee) and longer-term histories of the city that include the Burundians, and Ethiopians
- Connect the sociology of forced migration with the legal system and complexities of forced migration
- Facilitate questions and conversations

B. Ideas for Conference:

- Importance of good press
- Invite MIRA
- Steering Committee can create an outline of future events to advertise at the Conference (Future participation of Devin Atallah)
- Send out readings (from presenters and others)

C. Overview of presenters at Conference:

- C1. Workshop Opening:

Find plan B to McGovern : Thu Nguyen, Jermoh Kamara, Etel Haxhijaj, Sebastián Royo,

- C2. Session I :

Waiting for a reply from Thomas Doughton - Noa

Contact Thomas Conroy - Adam

Anita Fabos networks through radio colleagues

- C3. Session II :

First choice: Julie A. Dahlstrom

Jozefina looks for other speakers - Kaska Yawo ; Anvou

Have a presenter from MORI as a political move

Speak on LGBTQ+ asylum seekers

- C4. Networking Lunch Break :

Members of the same school should be separated—mix audience.

Allow for a scheduled time for connection and reflection.

- C5. Session III :

Presenters: Craig Mortley and Adam Saltsman

Plan B: Devin Atallah

D. To do:

- Make flyers
- Send out invitations

E. Questions:

- Can other things be done to build connections among universities and allies?
- Are we inviting copacetic administrators?
- Should IBH use Joyce Center as a continual meeting place post-conference?

F. Meeting Links :

- [About — Worcester Together Refugee Response \(wtrefugee.org\)](http://wtrefugee.org)
- [Core Faculty – Certificate Program for Native American and Indigenous Studies \(umass.edu\)](http://umass.edu)
- [NMCCESI – Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative](http://nmccesi.org)
- <https://miracoalition.org/>

- [Devin G. Atallah - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://umb.edu)

Decisions made:

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 17th at 11 est

Sixth Meeting : Wednesday, August 17th at 11 est

Next Meeting: August 31st at 11 est

Present: Noa, Amer, Sarah, Adam, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

Opening of Conference:

- Nipmuc Tribal Council - Sarah
- City Councilor with refugee background - Anita

Speakers - History of Central, broad Ma:

- Charlotte and Aldo - Adam
- Mindy - Noa

Food/ Catering:

- Shawarma, Bahnan'

Humus, pita, salad, sandwich

\$450 for 50 people

- Ethnic pastries instead of dinner

To do:

- Provide budget numbers of Conference for Anita
- Decide on methods— Flip Charts, etc.
- Send information to confirmed speakers— (Honorarium?), agenda of the conference, parking, etc.
- Axelle find parking spaces
- Be aware of dietary restrictions - make it a part of the RSVP?
- Update Conference Invitation
- send an email to IT about RSVP - this is what we need, all of it can go to the email,

Links:

- <https://www.nipmucnation.org/>

Decisions made :

- Next meeting: August 31st at 11 est

- Conference starts at 8.30 and ends at 4.45
 - Noa and Sarah are Facilitators
 - Next meeting: Speak on substance of conference
-

Seventh Meeting: Wednesday, September 7th at 1 est

Next meeting: Thursday September 15th at 8.30 am

Present: Adam, Sarah, Anita, Jozefina, Axelle

- A. Draft Workshop Notes
- B. Eventbrite link

A. Draft Workshop Notes:

- Coffee, tea, water : ?
- 2nd greeter: Seria

Session II and Session III uses same outline :

- Small group reflection transitions with conclusion together
- Size of small groups: decide in the moment
- Put together a facilitator guide -> for IBH/participant facilitators
- Use the same facilitators SII And SIII

Session III

- Craig replacement : Ayman Abdelgadir ?
- Leave 15 min to allow participants to ask questions to presentations
- After the workshop: follow up with resources for interuniversity crowdsourcing
- Chaplains to take part in Final reflections?

B. Eventbrite link : <https://WorcesterUniversitiesRefugeeWorkshop.eventbrite.co.uk>