

REFUGEES IN TOWNS



PROGRAM

Conference &
Arts Festival 2022

ABOUT RIT

The Refugees in Towns project (RIT) promotes understanding of the migrant/refugee integration experience by drawing on the knowledge and perspectives of refugees themselves as well as local hosts. The project was conceived and is led by Karen Jacobsen. It is funded by the Henry J. Leir Foundation.



Dr. Karen Jacobsen

**Principal Investigator,
Feinstein International Center**

Karen Jacobsen founded the RIT Project in 2017 in response to rising anti-immigrant rhetoric in the U.S. and abroad. Her goal was to understand urban integration through the perspectives of refugees, returnees, IDPs other migrants, and their hosts by asking them to write about their own experiences in the towns where they lived. Her idea was that these local perspectives could give a “ground-up” view of what enables and inhibits integration in towns around the world. Prof. Jacobsen has written, taught and conducted research about migration and displacement for 25 years. She is the Henry J. Leir Professor of Global Migration at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. She was head of the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) in Geneva from 2013-2014, and as Director of The Alchemy Project from 2000-2005. Prof. Jacobsen received her B.A. from the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, her M.A. from Northeastern University, and her PhD in Political Science from MIT.

MANY THANKS TO OUR ORGANIZING TEAM

Marina Lazetic, RIT Program Manager; Fletcher Ph.D. student
Antti Toivanen, RIT Senior Research Assistant; Fletcher Ph.D. student
Jacob Ewing, RIT Senior Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Anna Cloud, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Sara Lodgen, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Heather Odell, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Maggie McGlynn, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Annis Roberts, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Allison Dalton, RIT Research Assistant; Fletcher MALD student
Allison Larmann, Zoom Manager; Fletcher MALD student
Stéphanie Khoury, Ph.D., Lecturer, Music Department, Tufts University

March 4

11:00–11:05 PM

Opening Remarks

11:05 AM–12:05 PM

Race, Identity, &
Mental Health

12:05–12:15 PM

Remarks: Dean Rachel Kyte

12:15–12:30 PM

Spotlight: Exploring Psych-
edelic-Assisted Treatments

12:30–1:30 PM

One Health: Humans,
Animals, & the Environment

1:30–2:30 PM

Lunch & Networking

2:30–2:45 PM

Spotlight: Supporting Youth
—Trauma Systems Therapy

2:45–3:45 PM

Border Spaces &
Perpetual Waiting

3:45–4:00 PM

Spotlight: Culturally-
Competent Mental Healthcare

4:30–6:30 PM

Reception & Keynote:
Martín Espada

March 5

10:45–11:45 AM

Opening Remarks

11:00AM–12:30 PM

Refugee Stories on Stage:
Finding Meaning through
Storytelling

12:30–12:45 PM

Coffee & Networking

12:45–2:15 PM

Representation and
Filmmaking with Refugees

2:15–3:00 PM

Lunch & Networking

3:00–4:30 PM

Art, Activism, and
Integration

4:30–5:30 PM

Tying it Together: Coffee
Hour with RIT Team

OPENING REMARKS



Dean Rachel Kyte

The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Prior to joining Fletcher, Dean Kyte served as special representative of the UN secretary-general and chief executive officer of Sustainable Energy for All. She previously was the World Bank Group vice president and special envoy for climate change, leading the run-up to the Paris Agreement. Kyte is a member of the U.N. secretary-general's high-level advisory group on climate action and an advisor to the UK presidency of the UN climate talks.

RACE, IDENTITY, & MENTAL HEALTH



Joseph Zorokong

Country Registration Specialist, FHI 360;
Fletcher School alumnus & RIT Case
Researcher: Lowell, MA

Joseph Zorokong is an international development professional at FHI 360, where he manages registrations for the East Africa portfolio. Prior to FHI 360, Joseph spent 4+ years at MIDIOR Consulting. Joseph holds a master's degree in International Development from the Fletcher School at Tufts University and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell.



Sarah Morehouse

MA in Law & Diplomacy Candidate & RIT
Case Researcher: Utica, NY

Sarah Morehouse is a second-year master's candidate at The Fletcher School focusing on human security, migration, and gender/intersectional analysis. Prior to coming to Fletcher, she spent two years working in Myanmar's conflict areas, documenting war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide by state forces against ethnic civilians. Sarah is currently a RIT Case Researcher examining the nexus between marginalization and gang conscription amongst at-risk refugee youth in her hometown Utica, New York.



Dr. Joelle Taos Taknint

**Clinical Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow,
Boston Center for Refugee Health &
Human Rights**

Dr. Joelle Taos Taknint is a clinical psychologist with clinical and research interests focused in immigrant and refugee mental health. Her research has largely focused on the experiences of immigrant and refugee individuals across the lifespan—particularly how experiences of discrimination impact identity development and psychological well being. Clinically, she is interested in decolonial practice, cultural responsiveness in psychotherapy, and cultural validity in psychological testing and assessment. She is grateful for the formative experience of growing up with an immigrant parent in a multi-ethnic family, which piqued her interest in the psychological experiences of migration.



Rachel Vinciguerra

National Program Manager, Hello Neighbor

Rachel (she/her) leads the Hello Neighbor Network, a coalition of grassroots organizations working with refugees and immigrants across the U.S. convened by Hello Neighbor. She has worked with nonprofit and international organizations for the past eight years focused on gender equity, social inclusion, and program design and evaluation. She has lived and worked in multiple countries including Haiti, Thailand, and India. And worked with organizations including the UN Development Programme, Strong Women, Strong Girls, and The FISA Foundation. Rachel has a Master of International Development and Master of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh. A Boston native, Rachel has made Pittsburgh her home and was named one of Pittsburgh's 30 Under 30.



Tabo Bo

Creative Director, Nomadic Voices

Tabo is a Karen refugee that immigrated to America when he was four years old. His experiences growing up in Utica, NY molded him into the person he is today. He is currently a senior at Utica College. Tabo started exploring poetry and spoken word during the COVID-19 quarantine. He founded Nomadic Voices in 2020 – an open mic platform bringing together young area talent and creators to share their gifts in a public space. He has held over a dozen open mics, most recently at Bank of Utica's New Years' Eve event.

SPOTLIGHT: Exploring Psychedelic-Assisted Treatments



Dr. David P. Roberson

Co-Founder, Cacti Therapeutics

David Roberson, PhD, is a neuroscientist and drug developer. He completed his doctoral and postdoctoral training at Harvard Medical School where he developed non-addictive therapies for pain and co-taught courses in the neurobiology of behavior and drug addiction. As Instructor of Neurology, Dr Roberson invented new AI/ML-driven technologies for high-throughput preclinical screening of analgesics and psychedelics. He is co-founder of three ongoing biotech companies, Nocion Therapeutics, Blue Therapeutics, and Blackbox Bio, and is launching a fourth—Cacti Therapeutics—utilizing mescaline-derivatives for treatment of trauma-related conditions. Dr Roberson is also founding co-editor of the Psychedelics Research Forum, an online professional community and research hub for scientists and clinicians.

ONE HEALTH: HUMANS, ANIMALS, & THE ENVIRONMENT



Dr. Benjamin Thomas White

Senior Lecturer of History, Department of Humanities, University of Glasgow

Benjamin Thomas White teaches history at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. A Middle East historian by background, he now works on refugee history in the world at large. His current research focuses on the history of the refugee camp, and other recent publications include work on the history of humanitarian evacuations and the relationship between humans and animals in displacement. He is one of the editors of RefugeeHistory.org.



Meg Daley Olmert

Science Advisor, The Big Fix Uganda's Comfort Dog Project

Meg Daley Olmert is an expert on the neurobiology of the human-animal bond and its therapeutic effects. In 2009, her groundbreaking book, *Made for Each Other: The Biology of the*

Human-Animal Bond, was published, making the case that human civilization and animal domestication are an evolutionary coincidence of our shared neurobiological heritage. It is this shared primal brain network that creates the sense of calm and attraction in which social bonds among and between species can flourish. This affiliative mind/body state is also essential to the wellbeing of all social mammals. For the last decade Meg has served as the Director of Research for Warrior Canine Connection. In 2015 she became the scientific advisor to The Comfort Dog Project in Uganda, the first animal-assisted trauma therapy in central Africa.



Dr. Clare Rishbeth

Senior Lecturer, Department of Landscape Architecture, The University of Sheffield

Dr. Clare Rishbeth is a senior lecturer in the Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Sheffield. Her primary research area is migration and place, encompassing themes of belonging, (un)familiarity, experience of racism, recreation and nature connections. She led the research project ‘#refugeeswelcome in parks’ including fieldwork in the UK and Germany, which instigated cross-sector learning between the greenspace and refugee support sectors, developing ideas to support improved wellbeing and inclusion for refugees using urban greenspace. She is focused on profiles of marginalization—shaped by intersections of ethnicity, class and gender—and their importance of these in informing the planning, design and management of public space.



Dr. Muhammad Zaman

Founding Faculty, Boston University Initiative on Forced Displacement

Dr. Zaman is an HHMI professor of Biomedical Engineering at Boston University and Director of the Partnership for Global Health Technologies at BU. In addition to over 130 peer-reviewed research articles, Professor Zaman has written extensively on innovation, refugee and global health in newspapers around the world. His newspaper columns have appeared in over 30 countries and have been translated into eight languages. He has won numerous awards for his work, the most recent being Guggenheim Fellowship for his work on antibiotic resistance in refugee camps. In 2019, he established Initiative on Forced Displacement at Boston University, dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration on issues related to forced displacement.

SPOTLIGHT: Supporting Youth Refugees— Trauma Systems Therapy



Dr. Heidi Ellis

Director, Boston Children’s Hospital Trauma and Community Resilience Center

B. Heidi Ellis, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in Psychology and Psychiatry at Harvard Medical and Boston Children’s Hospital, and a licensed clinical psychologist. She is also the Director of the Trauma and Community Resilience Center at Boston Children’s Hospital. Dr. Ellis focuses on understanding and promoting youth mental health and wellbeing, especially how trauma exposure, violence, and social context impact developmental trajectories. Dr. Ellis is co-developer of the trauma treatment model Trauma Systems Therapy, along with its adaptation for refugees, and is the lead author of the book *Mental Health Practice with Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Socio-ecological Framework*.

BORDER SPACES & PERPETUAL WAITING



Dr. Katrina Burgess

Director, Henry J. Leir Institute; Associate Professor, Political Economy, The Fletcher School

Katrina Burgess is Director of the Henry J. Leir Institute and Associate Professor of Political Economy at The Fletcher School. She is the author of *Courting Migrants: How States Make Diasporas and Diasporas Make States* (2020) and *Parties and Unions in the New Global Economy* (2004). In 2019, she wrote and produced *Waylaid in Tijuana*, a documentary about Haitian and Central American migrants whose journeys to the United States are disrupted by shifts in U.S. policy. Dr. Burgess received her Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University.

Akram

RIT Case Researcher: Beirut

Akram lived in Beirut for several years, working with NGOs, community LGBTQI+ advocacy and support organizations, and teaching English to refugees. He holds a college degree from Syria, and is interested in sharing the experiences of Syrian refugees struggling with integration in

Lebanon's capital city. Since writing RIT's Beirut report, Akram has been resettled from Lebanon to Europe and continues to support LGBTQI+ and refugee wellbeing.



Teodora Jovanović

Research Assistant, Institute of Ethnography SASA; RIT Case Researcher: Belgrade

Teodora Jovanović is a research assistant at the Institute of Ethnography of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Belgrade, where she studies the anthropology of forced migration. For her doctoral thesis, she conducted ethnographic fieldwork in reception centers for asylum seekers in Serbia. In 2016, she joined RIT as a case study researcher. Currently, she participates in two research projects: "The European Irregularized Migration Regime at the Periphery of the EU: from Ethnography to Keywords," led by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, and "The Lines We Draw: US-Mexico and EU-Serbia Borderlands", led by BU's Initiative on Forced Displacement.



Cassie Stewart

President, Rio Valley Relief Project

Cassie Stewart is a licensed social worker and mother of 4. She is passionate about the social welfare of all people, including immigrants and refugees. Cassie is the founder of Rio Valley Relief Project, a non profit that serves asylum seekers and refugees at the U.S. / Mexico border and in Dallas and Austin, Texas. She has actively helped her husband, a Dallas immigration attorney, advocate for immigrant rights.



Barnabas Ticha Muvhiti

Assistant Researcher, UCT's Centre for Curating the Archive; RIT Case Researcher: Cape Town

Barnabas is a Ph.D. student at Rhodes University, and was previously a Curator and Assistant Researcher at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Curating the Archive. He is a Zimbabwean who moved to Cape Town in November 2008, and has since studied, worked, and lived with fellow migrants from Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Somalia, and Rwanda, among

other countries of origin. He is interested in the experiences and treatment of migrants by hosts communities and immigration authorities. Barnabas studied at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe, the University of Cape Town, and the University of Stellenbosch.

SPOTLIGHT: Culturally-Competent Mental Healthcare

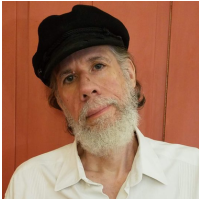


Sarah Bansen, APRN

Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center

Sarah Bansen has been a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC) in Boston since early 2020. She started her career as a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner in 1990 and was additionally certified as a PMHNP in 2019. She works with RIAC as a prescriber with a population of refugees largely from Somalia and Iraq, helping clients manage symptoms of depression, PTSD and anxiety. She also works at Cambridge Health Alliance in OB/GYN with many immigrant patients. Opportunities for growth, humility and joy in human connection abound in the work Sarah does both at RIAC and CHA.

KEYNOTE

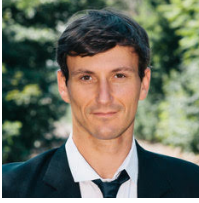


Martín Espada

Poet, National Book Award Winner

Martín Espada has published more than twenty books as a poet, editor, essayist, and translator. His latest book of poems, *Floaters*, won the 2021 National Book Award. He is the editor of *What Saves Us: Poems of Empathy and Outrage in the Age of Trump* (2019). He has received the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Shelley Memorial Award, the Robert Creeley Award, an Academy of American Poets Fellowship, the PEN/Revson Fellowship, a Letras Boricuas Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. *The Republic of Poetry* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. The title poem of his collection, *Alabanza*, about 9/11, has been widely anthologized and performed. His book of essays and poems, *Zapata's Disciple* (1998), was banned in Tucson as part of the Mexican-American Studies Program outlawed by the state of Arizona. A former tenant lawyer in Greater Boston, Espada is a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

KEYNOTE RECEPTION MUSICIANS



Milos Bjelica

Clarinetist & Teaching Artist

A native of Serbia, Milos Bjelica is a Boston based clarinetist and educator. His work as a soloist, chamber musician, and the orchestral player has taken him to many cities across Europe and the US. In 2013, he formed Synergy, a chamber orchestra based in Serbia, which brings together young professional musicians who desire to perform classical music for children. Now in Boston, Milos works with children with disabilities and plays in hospitals as part of the Music as a Healing Art Program at the Longy School of Music at Bard College. Milos holds an Artist Diploma and Masters from the Longy School of Music, as well as a BA from the University of Belgrade, and is currently pursuing his DMA at Boston University.



Gagi Heinrich

Guitarist & Composer

Gagi Heinrich is an eclectic and versatile guitarist and composer, born and raised in Belgrade, Serbia. After winning scholarships for renowned music schools in the US, Gagi is now based in Boston where he's pursuing Jazz Composition Graduate Studies at Longy School of Music. He was also a scholarship holder at Berklee College of Music where he spent 2 year being mentored by legendary guitarists David Fiuczynski, Tim Miller and David Gilmour. He is currently working on his first EP recorded with the absolute best arsenal of young jazz musicians from Serbia.



Marija Draskic Brancazio

Vocalist & Artist

Born in the last years of Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, Marija spent most of her early twenties living the ebb and flow of Belgrade's urban life, learning the struggles of a transitioning postwar society. Leaving her home country in 2015 to find opportunities of growth eventually brought her to the US, where she received a sponsorship to continue her design education at Washington University in St. Louis. She now lives in Cambridge, making music with her band Sapatnik, and telling stories of her traditions and a rich journey, painted with colors, symbols and sounds.

OPENING REMARKS



Dr. Katrina Burgess

Director, Henry J. Leir Institute; Associate Professor, Political Economy, The Fletcher School

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REFUGEE STORIES ON STAGE: Finding Meaning Through Storytelling



Cheryl Hamilton

Founder & Executive Director, Stellar Story Company

Cheryl Hamilton has devoted her career to advancing more inclusive communities and storytelling. She brings more than 20 years of experience directing local and national nonprofit programs, including as the national coordinator for RefugeeWorks where she advised companies on how to welcome immigrants into their workforces. More recently, she was the creator and director of Suitcase Stories, a program that featured stories of refugee and immigrant life. As Founder and Executive Director of Stellar Story Company, she manages the curation and coaching for Stories from the Stage, a national media program produced by WORLDChannel in partnership with GBH events. Cheryl has coached over 400 people from 80 countries.



Biar Kon

Storyteller & Sudanese Refugee

In 1993, when Biar was just three months old, his family fled their home in civil war-torn Sudan for Kenya. Biar spent the first two decades of his life in the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps with his mother and four siblings. Everything changed for his family in 2015, when they were granted refugee resettlement to Lowell, MA. Biar has given back to the refugee community by working as an interpreter, intern, and ambassador for the International Institute of New England. In 2019, he was named one of the “Lowell 100” by the IINE, which honored “the most influential advocates, trailblazers, and leaders” from the city’s immigrant community. Biar graduated in 2021 from UMass Lowell, and is currently working to establish his own business.

REPRESENTATION AND FILMMAKING WITH REFUGEES



Loch Phillips

Director & Founder, Off Ramp Films

Founder of Off Ramp Films, Loch has been making films for 30 years. He began working on documentaries as the primary editor for UNICEF (New York). His work for international organizations has been televised from China to Brazil and on CNN International. More recently, Loch has been working with the multiple Emmy-winning production company Hock Films, directing films for ESPN, Fox Sports, and Major League Soccer. He was the main director for Hock’s series *MLS Insider*, which was nominated for an Emmy. He is currently co-directing a short film in western Pennsylvania with a recently arrived Burmese refugee, Hong Sar Mhan, and collaborating with the Rockefeller Institute to produce a series of short films on refugee resettlement in upstate New York.



Tatjana Kulalic

Coordinator for Immigration and Citizenship, The Center

Tatjana was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result of the conflict that engulfed former Yugoslavia in 1992, she fled with her family to neighboring Croatia. She was granted

refugee status and arrived in the United States with her family in 1998. Originally resettled in Columbia, MD, the family moved to Utica in upstate NY in 2000, where she found employment with The Center, formerly known as the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. There she works as the Coordinator for Immigration and Citizenship, helping refugees navigate residence issues and the citizenship process.

ART, ACTIVISM, & INTEGRATION



Anthony Romero

Boston Artist-in-Residence

Anthony Romero is a Boston-based artist, writer, and organizer committed to documenting and supporting artists and communities of color. Recent projects and performances have been featured at the Blue Star Contemporary (San Antonio), The Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston) and the Mountain Standard Time Performative Art Biennial (Calgary, Canada). Publications include *Lastgaspism: Art and Survival in the Age of Pandemic*, coauthored with Daniel Tucker and Dan Wang, *The Social Practice That Is Race*, coauthored with Dan S. Wang, and the exhibition catalogue *Organize Your Own: The Politics and Poetics of Self-Determination Movements*, of which he was the editor. He is a cofounder of the Latinx Artist Visibility Award, a national scholarship for Latinx artists produced in collaboration with artist J. Soto and OxBow School of Art. Romero is a Professor of the Practice at the School of The Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University.

SPOKEN WORD POETRY

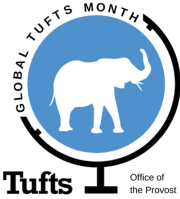


Tabo Bo

Creative Director, Nomadic Voices

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