FROM CIRA DIRECTORS

Hope the Fall 2022 semester has been going well. We are very excited to share some of the ongoing work of our affiliates and faculty within the center. Our affiliates have contributed significantly to CIRA and its mission through their work, which we will share below. Thank you all! At CIRA, our goal is to further immigration scholarship, teaching, and direct immigrant and refugee accompaniment through international and borderland field internships and community-engaged scholarship. Some of our main projects and focus areas are listed on our website which we invite you to peruse. In the next couple of months, we are working on two funded projects: a) building a trauma-Informed curriculum for student interns at the US-Mexico border and, b) exploring pathways of integration of incoming Afghan refugees into the US. We invite you to reach out to us for more information and collaboration opportunities. Follow our activities on the CIRA website.

Maria Vidal de Haymes
Abha Rai

ABOUT CIRA

The mission of the Center for Immigrant and Refugee Accompaniment (CIRA) is to support the formation of social work professionals that in solidarity can accompany migrants in the construction of a more inclusive local and global community; that affirms the human dignity of the person and in which immigrants and refugees realize their capabilities, exercise their rights, and transform their social condition and institutions. This formation is supported through collaborative research, advocacy, community engagement and direct accompaniment opportunities to listen, witness, and engage in critical inquiry and joint action.

CIRA IN THE NEWS

Social Work Students Respond to Highland Park Tragedy

On July 4, 2022 a mass shooter opened fire at the Highland Park Independence Day Parade, killing seven people and wounding dozens more. The community was naturally shaken and is still recovering from the events of that day.

Dozens of volunteers rallied in response to the tragedy, including three bilingual Loyola School of Social Work students. Edith Reynaga, Camille Morhun, and Nohemi Rosales all chose to volunteer their time and skills to assist Cary Rositas-Sheftel, Director of Latino Affairs for Catholic Charities, in the aftermath of the shooting. Reynaga just graduated with her MSW degree, and Morhun and Rosales each received
their BSW and will complete their MSW degree in 2023.

The students joined other interpreters to greet Spanish-speaking individuals and families, guide them through the different resources that were available at a family assistance center temporarily set up at Highland Park High School, and accompany the clients through FBI interviews. In some cases, the interpreters even assisted during counseling sessions to help clients process the recent events. Read more about support provided by students here.

Left to right: Edith Reynaga, Cary Rositas-Sheftel, Nohemi Rosales, and Camille Morhun

NEW PUBLICATION FROM CIRA FACULTY

A new publication South Asians in the United States – A Guide for Social Workers and Other Helping Professionals (S. Bhandari, ed) from NASW Press, includes a chapter on South Asian Immigrant Women in the Workplace: Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities, by Abha Rai, Vithya Murugan, and Leena Rijhwani

CURRICULAR INNOVATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The School of Social Work continues to offer a Migrations Studies Track in the MSW program. For more information on the track and its requirements please visit: Migration Studies. The track offers domestic and international fieldwork options in partnership with Jesuit Refugee Services USA and Mexico.

The School of Social Work will resume its migration-focused study abroad options this year after a two year pause due to public health travel restrictions. This spring break students from the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work and Medicine will partner with students from Boston College School of Social Work for an immersion course focused on migration and the social determinants of health on the San Diego-Tijuana border.

LOCAL/GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT DIRECT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ACCOMPANIMENT

LUC Students Step Up to Aid Migrants in Chicago

Few populations are as vulnerable at the moment as those of migrants who crossed the U.S.-Mexican border and then were transported by bus or plane to various sites across the country. To date, almost 4,000 migrants have been bussed to the Chicagoland area. There are many stepping up to assist these people, including volunteers from Loyola University Chicago’s School of Social Work. Camille Morhun, an MSW student who volunteered through Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and assisted with intake and other services. “Part of what I was doing was intake. A lot of these migrants had nothing with them, just some paperwork with a court date for ICE.” Part of the intake process is cataloguing possessions, identifying anyone in need of medical care, and finding out if migrants had an intended destination within the U.S. Morhun also said the bussing program has now made it
more difficult to contact or travel to family members in the U.S. Catholic Charities has been attempting to arrange travel for some migrants who are hoping to reunite with loved ones in the states. Visit Loyola’s website for additional information.

Loyola Students Support Highland Park Shooting Victims with Bilingual Social Services

Loyola Student volunteers became voice of some victims of Highland Park shooting, highlighting bilingual social services needs and increasing Latino population. Three bilingual students from Loyola’s School of Social Work responded to the urgent call. Edith Reynaga, Nohemi Rosales and Camille Morhun were among the volunteers that assisted victims and their families for more than a week after the shooting. Their service to the Highland Park community was chronicled in a recent Chicago Tribune article as well as Loyola’s website.

CIRA IN THE COMMUNITY

CIRA involved in UN Women Safer Cities Project

As part of an UN initiative to create safer public spaces for female-identified residents, Chicago joins 53 other cities from 32 countries in partnership with UN Women. Abha Rai is one of six researchers leading a scoping study to provide essential research to inform the City and other key stakeholders when designing a plan to address violence against women and girls in public spaces.

First Online Bystander Intervention Program for South Asian Community Developed

Abha Rai, Nathan Perkins and Susan Grossman have been developing an online bystander intervention called B.R.A.K.E. The Cycle to empower bystanders in the South Asian community to better support individuals experiencing violence. The team plans to launch the intervention nationally early next year. This is the first interactive online intervention for South Asian bystanders.

CIRA COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Grant: CIRA was awarded a grant from the Katherine Kendall Institute (2020-2023) for a project titled: A Curriculum and Internship Model for Socioemotional Care and Mental Health Services in Migration Crisis Situations. Under this grant, the Project Co-leaders, Dr. Maria Vidal de Haymes (Loyola) and Dr. Alejandro Olayo-Méndez, SJ (Boston College) along with CIRA students and faculty affiliates, Drs. Abha Rai and Diana Franco, will develop, pilot, evaluate, and disseminate a professional internship model and curriculum designed to prepare social work students for interprofessional practice in migration crisis situations. The project will serve asylum seekers confined to the U.S. Mexican border due to the Migrant Protection Protocol and Title 42 public health policy of the U.S. government. This project is being developed in collaboration with the Jesuit Migrant Services USA and Mexico project Caminar Contigo, and several Mexican Jesuit Universities: Universidad Iberoamericana-Mexico City and Puebla and ITESO (Guadalajara).

Maria Post, 2nd year Loyola University Chicago MSW student was the first student to participate in the field placement with JRS. Maria completed a summer block internship with the JRS Caminar Contigo program this summer. As an intern, Maria worked with JRS staff to support their
work to reduce suffering, improve mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of refugees, asylum seekers, and other displaced people in the Cd. Juarez & El Paso region. While providing direct relief, this interinstitutional binational project advances the educational mission of five Jesuit universities and the JRS mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU).

Maria Vidal serves on the Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees Task Force of the IAJU. This Task Force focuses on how Jesuit institutions of higher education, by committing together to solidarity with migrants and refugees and enhancing effort coordination, can respond more effectively and compassionately to their needs and situation. This Task Force addressed the 2022 Assembly of the IAJU at Boston College in August and presented two documents for consideration Principles of Engagement and A Proposal to the IAJU Assembly. Please click on this link to see an abbreviated version of the keynote panel presentation.

Migrant Women Mental Health: Loyola University Chicago CIRA affiliated Professor Emeritus Dr. Marta Lundy and Professor Maria Vidal and Dr. Graciela Polanco (Universidad Iberoamericana-CDMX) and Dr. Cary Rositas-Sheftel (former Director of Latino Services of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and current Associate Director of the Highland Park Public Library) recently published a guide and curriculum for migrant women mental health self-help groups that builds on the work of Jesuit Migrant Services -Mexico. This book provides a step-by-step guide for leading psychoeducational/emotional self-help groups for migrant women.

On October 15, 2022 35 women leaders from migrant-to-migrant ministry programs of the Pastoral Migratoria of the Archdiocese of Chicago and volunteers and staff from migrant serving community organizations, such as Bethany House of Hospitality and El Rincon attended a day-long training on the self-help program model. Participants have committed to ongoing training, leading self-help groups in their parishes and community organizations, and participating in a program pilot and evaluation. The pilot will include ongoing support from Dr. Polanco, Rositas-Sheftel, and Vidal.
COVID-19 And Challenges of Asian-American Children

CIRA affiliate Caleb Kim presented a keynote address on challenges of Asian American children during COVID-19 in the USA at the 2nd International Forum for Children’s Rights, held by the Korea National Center for the Rights of the Child in July 2021 in Seoul, Korea.

CIRA AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Maria Vidal de Haymes received the Loyola University Chicago Distinguished University Research Professor in the School of Social Work, July 1, 2022, in recognition of scholarship and intellectual achievements and is an honor bestowed by the University upon the recommendation of a Dean of a College or School.

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

We are thrilled to share all the wonderful accomplishments by CIRA affiliates. CIRA affiliates engaged in research and scholarship that included 5 funded grants, published over 40 papers/book chapters, and over 40 peer-reviewed presentations in 2021-22. In addition, 27 publications or presentations included students as co-authors, introducing them to research and scholarship in CIRA initiatives. CIRA faculty and affiliates address migration issues in Latino, Asian/South Asian, Middle East, and African populations globally (See figure).
Grants:


Kim, C. (Principal Investigator). (2017-2021). BRAVE (Building Resilience Against Violence Engagement) (CFDA 93.910, Grant No. YEPMP170101-01-00) [Grant]. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Minority Youth Violence Prevention II,),. Awarded: $1,700,000.


Publications (2021-2022):


https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00354-6


https://doi.org/10.1177%2F08862605211015262


Presentations (2021-2022):


Choi, K., Caleb K., J. Bae and S. Kim (2021, November 11). *Social work graduate students’ perceptions and attitudes toward aging, death, and dying across cultures* [Virtual conference session]. 54th Annual NYSSWEA Conference., Saratoga Spring, NY, United States.

Franco, D. (2022, April). Mitigating Trauma Symptoms in LGBTQIA+ Migrant Students by Fostering Structural Change [type of presentation]. Latino Social Workers Organization (LSWO), Chicago, IL, United States.


