Jusoor’s Fifth Annual Global Conference
#RefugeesWelcome
Canada’s Response to the Syrian Crisis and the Road Ahead

University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management
October 14, 2017
Welcome Letter

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us at Jusoor’s Fifth Annual Global Conference, #RefugeesWelcome: Canada’s Response to the Refugee Crisis and the Road Ahead. We are proud to keep up the tradition of holding our annual conferences in a different city every year. By doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to establishing a global Syrian community that is focused on helping Syria, while also building bridges of understanding and hope to different communities around the world. Over the last five years our network has grown to over 130,000 individuals in 45 countries.

We are proud to be here in Toronto for our Fifth Annual Global Conference. While isolationism and populism have soared over the last few years, Canada has remained a steady beacon of hope for the international community and has shown incredible leadership in the refugee crisis. Since November 2015, Canada has resettled over 46,000 Syrian refugees through its refugee protection programs. In 2016, the UNHCR applauded Canada for being the first country to allow private groups to take on the costs and obligations associated with refugee resettlement. The tone of the Canadian government has helped legitimize the cause of refugees and spurred Canadian citizens to play a direct role in the resettlement effort. Today, many are looking to Canada to learn about best practices of refugee resettlement.

Today we want participants to learn more about what is being done in Canada and how we as a global community can continue our commitment to helping Syrian refugees around the world. Our goal for this conference is that each individual leaves with:

- A renewed sense of responsibility to the future of refugees around the world
- Connections and ideas that can spur your own community to further the work that we are trying to do here at Jusoor
- New ideas, solutions and inspirational stories to help us individually contribute to the future of displaced Syrian youth
- A deeper understanding of the challenges facing Syrian youth in the areas of education and employment; and an even deeper resolve to help.

The teamwork that went into making our Fifth Annual Conference and Gala Dinner possible was inspiring. We would like to thank our Conference and Charity Dinner planning committee, led by Rania Younes, for their extraordinary efforts to make this gathering a success. We would also like to thank our partners for their contributions to today’s event: Rotman School of Management, DMZ, Next Canada, WelcomeHomeTO, Startup Canada, Launch Academy and ConferenceCloud Inc. Jusoor’s hope is that we continue to build on this momentum year after year.

Jusoor believes that youth in Syria should have access to profoundly better opportunities. In particular, we hope for a nation that embraces democracy, respects human rights and rule of law and encourages free speech and the exchange of ideas. We hope for a country that offers its people high standards of living underpinned by a strong education system. And we hope for a country that promotes opportunity, in which every young woman and man grows up with hope and dreams for the future and finds opportunities within the country’s borders.

We are looking forward to a very inspiring conference and Gala dinner. A heartfelt thanks to each of you for joining us today and for your commitment to Syria.

Sincerely,

Jusoor Leadership Team
About the Conference

As the Syrian conflict enters its seventh year, thousands of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes for refuge in other countries. Since November 2015, Canada has resettled 40,000 Syrian refugees. Jusoor’s Fifth Annual Global Conference focuses on Canada’s response to the Syrian crisis.

Our aim is to provide a space to share and cultivate ideas and to engage corporations, non-profit organizations, community organizers, and established Syrian communities in North America and around the world so that we can collectively learn from challenges, scale successes and mobilize support.

The conference focuses on the following themes:

Social Integration and Inclusion Through Higher Education Opportunities
Integration through the educational system is vital for any refugee. In Canada, the chance to partake in the educational system helps newcomers get a more holistic understanding of the Canadian system, and provides a solid basis upon which refugees acquire local experience and knowledge. School-aged refugees adapt more easily into their new homes because their school experience plays a huge part in their integration. However, access to higher education opportunities in Canada is proving to be a difficult endeavor. Many young, ambitious Syrians who were once studying in their home country now find themselves on new shores, facing a new and daunting set of challenges.

Keeping these challenges in mind, we will bring together higher education providers, private organizations and the Syrian refugee community in a conversation about how to realize the academic success of refugees. By doing so, we will highlight the progress that has been made in helping Syrian refugees access higher education opportunities, while also exploring new ideas and initiatives to improve their integration and inclusion in society.

Opportunities and Challenges to Economic Integration
Canada admits Syrian refugees on the basis of compassion rather than economic class. It is safe to say that economic integration is difficult for many immigrants to Canada, let alone refugees who have been forced to leave behind their country and homes with very little. The speedy economic integration of Syrians into the workforce is often affected by such things as a lack of language skills and networks, the difficulty of transferring job qualifications across borders, legal constraints, and a lack of how job searches work in other countries. The conference will address these issues and will look at innovative measures currently being used to overcome these challenges.

Opportunities and Challenges to Economic Integration
By harnessing the power of partnerships and the diversity of Canadian society, we are tackling one of the most pressing issues of our time—how to help a generation of youth affected by war—by creating a space to share and cultivate ideas, engage stakeholders, and mobilize a response. This series of workshops will use real case studies to discuss and further develop ideas related to Youth Led Initiatives in Supporting Higher Education, Private Sponsorship Models and the Best Practices in Social Integration. By looking at the real-life stories of students, academics, corporations, non-profit organizations, community organizers, innovators, and members of civil society as they address the crisis of refugee integration, we hope to create more effective alliances and to find new ways to empower new generations of Syrian youth for a brighter tomorrow—for refugees in Canada and around the world.
### Conference Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 - 9:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:10</td>
<td>Welcome Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:10 - 9:20</td>
<td>Keynote Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 - 11:00</td>
<td>Panel on Social Integration and Inclusion through Higher Education Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 - 9:55</td>
<td>Coffee &amp; Networking Break</td>
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<td>11:15 - 12:00</td>
<td>Workshop Series:</td>
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<td>Experiencing Transformation - hosted by International Students Overcoming War (ISOW)</td>
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<td>Creative Use of Education Technology in Social Integration - hosted by QED and Panel Guests from the Ryerson University, Faculty of Community Services</td>
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<td>Rethinking Traditional Models of Engagement: How Art, Culture and Music Can Play a Role in Social Integration</td>
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<td>11:00 - 11:15</td>
<td>Coffee &amp; Networking Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>Networking Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:00 - 14:30</td>
<td>Panel on Opportunities and Challenges to Economic Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30 - 14:45</td>
<td>Coffee &amp; Networking Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45 - 16:00</td>
<td>Disruptor Labs Presentations and Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00 - 16:10</td>
<td>Conference Close</td>
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### Keynote Speaker

**John Troy**  
*65th Mayor of Toronto*

Born and raised in Toronto, Mayor Troy has spent his career giving back to the city. He began his career practicing law in Toronto, and he was later elected as a managing partner of one of Canada’s biggest law firms. In the 1980s he served as Principal Secretary to Premier Bill Davis and as Associate Secretary of the Ontario Cabinet. He has served as Commissioner of the Canadian Football League and as CEO of Rogers, one of the country’s largest cable companies. His time in politics dates back to 2004 when he was chosen to lead the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, later serving as Leader of the Official Opposition at Queen’s Park. Since being elected to office in 2014, Troy has worked to make the city government more modern and effective, to deliver better services at a more competitive price, and to be more open and accountable to the public.

### Master of Ceremonies

**Lara Setrakian**  
*CEO, Syrian Deeply*

Lara is an award-winning journalist, strategist and entrepreneur. She spent five years in the Middle East reporting for ABC News, Bloomberg Television, the International Herald Tribune, Business Insider and Monocle magazine. Her 2009 coverage of Iran’s election protests and the Arab Awakening of 2011 garnered industry praise. Lara is a Young Global Leader with the World Economic Forum and a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She graduated magna cum laude from Harvard University, with a degree in government.

### Welcome Address Speaker

**Leen Al Zaibak**  
*Senior Policy Advisor - Asia, Middle East, and North Africa, Ontario Cabinet Office; Jusoor Board Member*

Leen is a Senior Policy Advisor for Policy Planning and Coordination at the Office of International Relations and Protocol for the province of Ontario. Previously, she served as a Policy Advisor to the Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services. Leen holds an Honors Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto, Trinity College and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Manchester. She is a leader in issues surrounding the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada, and directs Jusoor’s partnerships and programs in Canada.
Social Integration and Inclusion Through Higher Education Opportunities

This panel will discuss the following questions:

- How does higher education facilitate the social and cultural integration for newcomers?
- How are Canada’s higher education providers dealing with the influx of student refugees? What are the opportunities for growth in terms of current initiatives or new initiatives?
- How can we help student refugees access higher education opportunities? Are there any possible ideas or initiatives to facilitate access?
- How can NGO and not-for-profit organizations and institutes of higher education improve their collaboration to better help student refugees?

Moderator

Dr. Nadia Abu-Zahra

Associate Professor, University of Ottawa

Dr. Nadia Abu-Zahra is Associate Professor of International Development and Global Studies and a member of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on social movements, human rights, ethics, international development, and particularly mobility: immigration, refugees, family class immigration, youth and community resilience. Dr. Abu-Zahra co-facilitates the University of Ottawa’s Distance-Learning Certificate Program in Community Mobilisation in Crisis, which will be offered in Lebanon to students adversely affected by the conflict in Syria. She has also worked in the nongovernmental sector in education and environmental health and has served as a consultant to the Senate, RCMP (for international development and human rights promotion), and as an expert advisor to the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board.

Panelists

Gavin Brockett

Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Learning, and Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University

Dr. Gavin Brockett is Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Learning and Associate Professor of Middle East and Islamic History at Wilfrid Laurier University. Dr. Brockett received his doctoral training as a historian in the interdisciplinary Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Prior to that, he studied at Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria. He is the faculty advisor for ISOW, a unique student-led humanitarian initiative that originated in the classroom in 2013, with a vision to foster genuine intercultural learning and effective global citizenship by bringing together minds from around the world. With a mission to promote active student engagement through the study of the human realities of international conflict today as well as to provide scholarships to international students affected by conflict, Dr. Brockett is closely familiar with the challenges and opportunities that stoke, and the value of social integration via education.

Katherine Miller

Global Education in Emergencies Specialist, Institute of International Education

Katherine Miller is the Global Education in Emergencies Specialist for the Institute of International Education’s PEER (Platform for Education in Emergencies Response) program. A graduate of Tufts University with a bachelor’s degree in English, Katherine went on to complete a master’s degree in social work at the University of Southern Maine. There she specialized in clinical social work with a focus on trauma therapy with refugees. Katherine began work at IIE as a finance and operations manager in 2014 before transitioning into her current position.

Massa Mutfi-Hamwi

Co-Founder and Chair, Sonbola

Over the past 22 years, Massa Mutfi has accumulated a substantive depth of diversified knowledge and experience in the field of education and learning across educational institutions in the US, Lebanon, and Syria. She is highly engaged in Syrian civil society and in supporting Syrian refugees in the field of Education. Massa is the Co-founder and Chair of Sonbola Group for Education & Development (SONBOLA), an NGO that provides educational support for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. She is also a consultant at ESCWA on Education for Syria and has been involved in various consultancy projects related to education management and reform as well as in research projects that address Emergency Education, NFE, Interactive and Museum-based Learning, and Citizenship Education. Massa is a certified trainer in Education in Emergencies-INEE. She holds a Master’s Degree in French Literature from Catholic University in Washington DC and Master’s in Education Policies and Leadership from the American University of Beirut.

Roua Alkadi

Biochemical Engineering Student, Jusoor Canada Student - Ryerson University

Roua was born in Sweida and raised in Damascus, Syria. Her undergraduate studies in Syria were interrupted when the conflict worsened and made it impossible for her to stay in the country. Upon fleeing to the U.S. with a visitor’s visa, she was faced with university fees that her family could not afford to pay. Desperate for a new beginning, she left for Canada, where she was granted permanent residence. Roua received a Jusoor scholarship in 2016 to pursue undergraduate studies at Ryerson University in Biochemical Engineering.
Panels

Opportunities and Challenges to Economic Integration

This panel will address the following questions:

- What are the primary challenges that need to be addressed to facilitate the economic integration of newcomers?
- What innovative measures can we implement to speed the process of refugee economic empowerment?
- What routes can Syrians use to achieve self-sufficiency? What is the most efficient strategy for Syrians to transition into the workforce?
- How can we assist newcomers with entrepreneurial mindsets to establish profitable businesses? How can we make economic resources more accessible to Syrians?

Moderator

Karim Bardeesy
Distinguished Visiting Professor, Special Adviser to the President, Ryerson University

Karim is a public service leader who has worked at the intersection of public policy, politics, journalism and academia for the last 15 years. He is a Distinguished Visiting Professor and Special Adviser to the President at Ryerson University in Toronto, where he is launching the new Ryerson Leadership Institute. He was previously Deputy Principal Secretary for the Premier of Ontario, the Hon. Kathleen Wynne, and served as Executive Director of Policy for Premiers Wynne and Dalton McGuinty. Karim was a DiverseCity fellow with the Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance. He has a B.A. from McGill University, and an M.P.P. from Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Panelists

Dana Wagner
Canada Partnerships Advisor, Talent Beyond Boundaries

Dana Wagner is a Canada Partnerships Advisor with Talent Beyond Boundaries, which works to open new pathways to international employment for refugees. She previously worked with independent senator Ratna Omidvar, the Global Diversity Exchange and Maytree. She is a coauthor of Flight and Freedom: Stories of Escape to Canada; a board member of the Refugee Career Jumpstart Project; and Co-founder of the non-partisan, political fact-checker FactsCan. She has worked in Toronto, Ottawa, Hanoi, and Nairobi.

Jim Estill, CEO
Danby Appliances

Jim Estill, CEO of Danby Appliances is a Canadian technology entrepreneur, executive, and philanthropist. Jim started a computer distribution business from the trunk of his car while in university. That modest business grew into a company that did $350 million in sales before selling to SYNNEX in 2004. Jim then became CEO of SYNNEX Canada and grew sales from $800 million to $2 billion over five years Jim has invested in, mentored and advised many technology companies including Blackberry. He joined their board before they went public, and served on their board for 13 years. In 2016 & 2017 Jim Estill made news for his work resettling 58 Syrian refugee families. The Financial Times, BBC News, The Guardian, and Toronto Life all covered his story. Jim was awarded the Order of Ontario, the province’s highest honour, in 2017. He is a multiple nominee of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Lori Wilkinson
Professor, University of Manitoba

Lori Wilkinson is a professor of Sociology at the University of Manitoba, Dean of St John’s College, editor of the Journal of International Migration and Integration, and Director of Immigration Research West. She specializes in the study of racism, settlement, and health among refugees and immigrants. Her current work examines the resettlement experiences of refugees, the health and wellbeing of refugee children and their families, and the experiences of indigenous students in post-secondary education. In 2017, she won the Teaching Excellence Award from the University of Manitoba and the Fellow of the Year for St John’s College in recognition of her teaching and research work.

Orlando Ferro
Executive Director, Quinte Immigration Services

With over 15 years working in the nonprofit sector as an NGO administrator, Orlando has an extensive knowledge of government programs and mandates. He has advocated for legislation on refugee-related issues in Canada and has consulted on the annual budget for province of Ontario, as well as for the federal government, in areas representing regional immigration. Orlando has also played an important role in developing policy and advocating on issues related to the labour market and economic development trends, employment insurance, social assistance, pensions, education, healthcare, housing, taxation, regional economic development, equity, diversity, human rights, law and immigration. Presently Orlando is developing and implementing an agricultural pilot project under Quinte United Immigration Services, with funds from the Canadian Red Cross, to train and help Syrian refugees access the agricultural labour market in Ontario.
Workshops

Creative Use of Education Technology in Social Integration - hosted by QED and Panel Guests from the Ryerson University, Faculty of Community Services
Room: RT 151

Most people in the NGO world agree that need always exceeds the resources available. When serving disadvantaged communities, QED turns to creative education technology to fill gaps, address resource shortages and increase accessibility of resources to the most vulnerable members of society such as refugees who arrive from war torn countries with mental and physical trauma and little or no education and language skills. QED uses e-learning and hybrid learning delivery methods to forge new pathway in serving these communities and in collaborating with their service providers to improve outcome for all. QED will be engaging panels guests from the Ryerson University Faculty of Community Services in the conversation topic, based on the most recent findings from their projects titled: Online Informational and Social Supports for Promoting Health of Syrian Refugee Women in Ontario.

Workshop Facilitators:

Khaled Al-Qazzaz
Education Consultant at Cloudypedia Canada and the Co-founder and President of QED. Khaled has a Masters of Applied Sciences in Mechanical and Industrial Engineering from the University of Toronto, a Bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering from the American University in Cairo, and is pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration at Walden University. In 2005 he established an international school in Egypt, and, in 2016, he co-founded QED, where he channels his passion for serving disadvantaged communities using creative education technology to improve accessibility and delivery of services and resources.

Bayan Khatib
Communications Director of QED. Bayan is also the co-founder of the Syrian Canadian Foundation, which supports the successful integration of Syrian newcomers in Canada and the annual Syria Film Festival in Toronto, which aims to give voice to the struggles and hopes of the Syrian people. She serves as an advisor and consultant for various non-profits across Canada. Bayan graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in English and Professional Writing and Communications and has a Masters in Cultural Studies and Critical Theory from McMaster University.

Workshop guests:

Dr. Sepali Guruge
Associate Professor in the School of Nursing at Ryerson University, and Director of the Centre for Global Health and Health Equity at Ryerson. Dr. Guruge’s doctoral dissertation in Nursing at the University of Toronto focused on the influence of gender, racial, social, and economic inequalities on the production of intimate male partner violence in the post-migration context. Her post-doctoral work at the University of Western Ontario examined the effects of intimate partner violence on women’s health. Both her doctoral and postdoctoral studies were supported by Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Fellowships. Dr. Guruge co-leads the Nursing Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at Ryerson University.

Mia Hershkowitz
Mia is currently completing an MA in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University. She has a B.A., in Criminal Justice from Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning and is a Registered Social Services Worker.

Experiencing Transformation - hosted by International Students Overcoming War (ISOW)
Room: RT 157

Engage with a team of student leaders who have transformed a small campus-wide levy into a powerful initiative that partners with both the administration and external partners to sponsor a dozen international students on full scholarship at Wilfrid Laurier University. They themselves have been transformed through experiential learning while providing a life-changing opportunity to peers whose lives have been impacted deeply by war.

International Students Overcoming War (ISOW)

ISOW is a unique student-led humanitarian initiative that originated in the classroom in 2013. Today it brings students, faculty and staff together to realize Laurier’s commitment to inspiring lives of leadership and purpose. Their vision is to foster genuine intercultural learning and effective global citizenship by bringing together minds from around the world. Their mission is to promote active student engagement through the study of the human realities of international conflict today as well as to provide scholarships to international students affected by conflict.
Workshops

The Role of Volunteer Initiatives in Settlement and Social Integration - hosted by Together Project and Panels Guests from the NMC Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative and the Newcomers’ Centre at ACSA
Room: RT 142
Together Project will discuss findings and policy suggestions from their most recent report: “Filling the gap: Volunteer & Settlement Sector Interactions In Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis.” The Together Project will engage in conversation with panel guests from the NMC Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative, and the Newcomers’ Centre at ACSA to frame the findings around their experiences working with Syrian newcomers.

Workshop Facilitators:

Craig Damian Smith, PhD
Co-founder and Research Director of Together Project, a Toronto-based charity that matches volunteers with newly-arrived Government-Assisted Refugees to foster social networks and improve integration outcomes. He is also the Associate Director of the Global Migration Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs, and an Affiliated Researcher at the Refugee Studies Centre at York. Craig researches and teaches on migration governance, forced and irregular migration dynamics, refugee integration, and European politics.

Workshop guests:

Rasha Elendari, PhD Candidate
Rasha is doing her PhD on Mesopotamian archaeology at the University of Toronto. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology from Damascus University and a Masters of Arts from the Anthropology Department at the University of Arkansas. Since 2002, she has been actively engaged in several archaeological field projects at sites in Syria. Rasha is the cofounder and director of NMC – Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative.

Mounir Nasri
Social entrepreneur and advisor in the field of community development. Mounir’s multicultural background and his widespread organizational network have helped him build several refugee settlement programs in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq prior to his arrival to Canada under the Syrian refugee sponsorship program. Alongside his role with ACSA – Newcomers’ Centre as a Program Specialist, he works as a Settlement Consultant for organizations and local communities in Canada. He was invited by Luminato Festival organizers to participate in designing an inclusive program for refugees. Mounir strives to create the bridge that will bring hope and positive change to many of the displaced in the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

Sarah Beam-Borg
Senior Exhibitions Manager at the Aga Khan Museum. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Anthropology, a Bachelor of Education, and is a certified Project Management Professional. With a postgraduate certificate in Museum Management and Curatorship, her professional experience in museums over the past 19 years has included roles as Collection Manager, Assistant Curator, Project Manager and Exhibition Manager. At the Aga Khan Museum, Sarah has been part of the dynamic team that has planned and implemented the permanent and temporary exhibitions since before the Museum’s opening in 2014.

Workshop Facilitators:

Amirali Alibhai
Head of Performing Arts at the Aga Khan Museum. Amirali has been actively making and exhibiting visual, performance, and community-based arts for more than 25 years. His professional experience includes roles as a curator, educator, publisher, and administrator. He helped establish the Roundhouse Community Arts Centre in Vancouver, and was the Executive Director of the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture. He has previously served on the Board of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Board of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, and the Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee of the National Cultural Human Resource Council. Amirali currently serves on the Program Advisory Committee of the Arts Management program at Centennial College, and on the Music Committee of the Toronto Arts Council.

Omar Najjar
An engineer with a career in civil engineering, woodworking sales and business management. Omar decided to hang his hat and follow his passion and delve into the world of Music. Building on his experience spanning nearly 30 years, Omar brings to the CAO a wealth of knowledge and expertise in planning, sales and management. His diverse cultural education coupled with his life long passion for performing, music, social justice and community service, all blend well with CAO’s mission and vision. Omar is an avid volunteer who believes in giving back to the community and advancing intercultural dialogue and understanding.

Leen Hamo
Visual communications graduate from the University of Aleppo. Leen had to move to Turkey after graduation where she lived for two years before coming to Canada with the help of a Canadian group of private sponsors. At an early age, she started taking courses in The Arabic Institute of Music in Aleppo where she studied music theory, took violin lessons and became a member of the Institute’s choir. Graduating at the age of 14, she continued to sing with different music groups. Leen joined the Canadian Arabic Choir and continues to develop her art and live her passion in her new home.

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Workshop guests:

Omar

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Disruptor Labs

Through the conference Disruptor Labs, we will look at innovative solutions to the challenges facing refugees (in Canada and internationally) by inviting entrepreneurs, developers and innovators to share their innovative solutions to social problems.

Disruptor Lab presentations at the conference will be addressing two main categories, Education and Learning, and Career and Economic Development. Come witness their pitch presentations and engaging feedback and Q&A session between participants and our expert judge panel for the day.

Education and Learning
A generation of youth is bound to be lost forever as they slip into an education gap. Children have been denied the right to primary school and teens the opportunity to attend university. Education is the surest way to economic prosperity, dignity, and long term wellbeing. This is not about increasing funding or capacity for existing methods or programs. This is about examining existing methods, their flaws and inefficiencies, and then disrupting them. What disruptive minds out there are tackling this issue and what have they come up with?

Career and Economic Development
Career success is the key to empowering both an individual and an entire family and community that often rely on that individual. When people are displaced from their homes and countries, whether in refugee camps or in another country, they quickly find themselves in danger of slipping into deep poverty. We know there are government programs and community initiatives that help displaced people try to get back on their feet. What’s being done and what more can be done? Who is thinking outside the box?

Thank you to our Disruptor Lab Partners

Innovation Partner

Disruptor Labs Jury Members

Ami Shah
Co-Founder and CEO
Peekapak

Tariq Fancy
Founder and CEO,
The Rumie Initiative

Hussam Ayyad
Director of Startup Services
DMZ

Aisha Bukhari
Co-Founder
Attollo Social Enterprise

Rama Chakaki
Co-Founder
VIP.fund

Ramzi Jaber
Co-Founder
Visualizing Impact

Supporting and Outreach Partners
Conference Partners

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our conference partners.

Conference partners

Conference Committee and Volunteers

Thank you to all the volunteers and committee members who dedicated expertise, time and effort to make this event possible.

Jusoor Organizing Committee
Leen Al Zaibak, Jusoor Board Director
Rania Succar, Jusoor Board Director
Dania Ismail, Jusoor Board Director
Maya Alkateb-Chami, Director
Rhonda Roumani, Marketing Manager
Saeed Kendakji, Social Media Coordinator
Haya Al Habal, Bookkeeper

Thanks to the support provided by all members of Jusoor’s Board of Directors.

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Nouhaila Chekkhau, Research and Development and Disruptor Lab Team Lead
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May Massijeh, Marketing, PR and Logistics
May Tartoussy, Marketing, PR and Logistics

Disruptor Lab Coordinators and Review Committee
Farah Mokhtar, Hadi Aladdin, Mariam Wala. Mariam Hamaoui

A special thanks to all volunteers and supporters along the way
About Jusoor

Jusoor began in 2011 with a simple premise that youth in Syria should have access to profoundly better opportunities. As a group of Syrian expatriates, we also believed we could help build bridges to those possibilities. We at Jusoor believe in a Syria that will one day embrace democracy and respect human rights and the rule of law. We believe in a Syria that encourages free speech and the free exchange of ideas; in a country that will offer its peoples the highest standard of living and a strong education system. And we believe in a country that will provide new opportunities, where every young woman and man can realize their dreams either inside or outside their country’s borders. In short, we came together as expatriates who believe in Syria’s youth and the possibility of a better future. Over the years, we have developed programs aimed at helping Syrian youth access better educational opportunities, build their skills and careers, and connect to a wider global community.

Jusoor is a US 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Jusoor is a non-political organization with no ties to any political entity, and is also registered as a charity in Canada under the name Jusoor Canada, and in the UK under the name Jusoor UK.

Jusoor has achieved several notable milestones since its establishment. We have:

- Engaged a network of 130,000 people across more than 45 countries
- Supported 173 students with university scholarships and enabled 317 students to access a university education through our partnership with IIE
- Worked with over 3,500 children in our refugee education program in three learning centers in Lebanon
- Built a network of over 1,000 Syrians interested in Entrepreneurship
- Provided mentorship to over 800 individuals seeking academic advice

At Jusoor, our goal is to:

- Support Syrian children to continue their education outside of Syria
- Help Syrian students looking to complete their studies abroad attain academic scholarships at top universities across the US, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East
- Provide study abroad mentorship to help students in their university application processes
- Help Syrians further develop their careers and skills with workshops on resume writing, job interviews, and improving their career portfolios
- Help young Syrian entrepreneurs enhance their leadership skills and secure their start-up funding through mentorship, incubators, and competitions
- Connect the global Syrian community so that these youth can achieve the abovementioned goals

Our Key Programs

Refugee Education Program
Jusoor has been working with Syrian refugees in Lebanon since June 2013, with the goal of helping Syrian refugees in Lebanon access a holistic, well-rounded primary school education. Jusoor’s program aims to reintegrate Syrian students living in Lebanon into the formal schooling system whenever possible, introduce contextual and relevant curricula and teaching methods to deliver informal education, and provide a strong psycho-social support within the framework of community engagement and rehabilitation.

Jusoor’s refugee education program in Lebanon supports about 1,300 children annually in three educational centers, where we provide remedial education to children so that they can eventually succeed public schools. This program includes a structured summer volunteer subprogram, where youth from North America, Europe, and the Middle East volunteer at our centres for 3 weeks in the summer and get first-hand learning about the refugee crisis. We also focus on teacher-training, where we hold in-service training workshops for our teachers, as well as for educators from other organizations in Lebanon and across the region.

Jusoor Scholarship Program
We have supported close to 500 students to date enroll in universities in North America, Europe, and the Middle East. This happens through different types of partnerships, including ones that we fund directly, and other partnerships where we facilitate recruitment and/or selections. Our key partnerships have been with the Institute of International Education, Illinois Institute of Technology, Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, London School of Economics, EducationUSA, OPEC Fund for International Development, and Wilfrid Laurier University. We also fund students to continue their education at universities in Lebanon and Jordan.

We recently launched two new scholarship programs. The 100 Syrian Women, 10,000 Syrian Lives Scholarship Program aims to address the gender gap facing Syrian youth so that Syrian women have better access to higher education opportunities. Our second scholarship program, The Jusoor Hardship Fund, provides much needed financial assistance to students who are already enrolled in universities outside Syria, but are at risk of dropping out due to financial need. This program has been designed to award loans, where the non-interest repaid funds will in turn be used to support new students in the future.

Entrepreneurship Program
The Entrepreneurship Program aims to create a strong collaborative community of Syrian entrepreneurs who can learn from successful businesses, peers and role models. It highlights the challenges facing startups and helps guide entrepreneurs through their business development. This program is composed of training bootcamps in entrepreneurship, an entrepreneurship competition whose winners get seed-funding for their projects, and online sessions for entrepreneurs.

Now in its third year, our entrepreneurship program has significantly grown in size in terms of participants and partner organizations and companies, including Boeing, ArabNet, StartupNext, Beirut Digital District, MIT Enterprise Forum, the Asfari Foundation, and Step Conference. Young professionals interested in getting Jusoor’s training and financial support can compete in our entrepreneurship competition’s startup and social tracks.

Academic and Career Mentorship Programs
Jusoor offers academic advice to students through the Academic Mentorship Program. In this program, we help students through the university application process and we help students broaden their academic choices by making sure they have all the information available to them to study abroad. The program connects expatriate Syrians and other volunteers with highly ambitious students in Syria. Mentees and Mentors are matched based on the country or region that the student is interested in applying to, the field of study, or interest in a specific university.

Jusoor’s Career Development program was launched to help Syrian youth find work opportunities outside of Syria that align with their talent and skills. It provides mentorship through public information sessions held in different cities, CV writing workshops and other professional development skills, as well as skill building sessions. Recent partnerships include those with Talent Beyond Boundaries, SINGA, and Make School.

Annual Global Conference
The conference brings together primarily Syrians but also other communities from around the world to exchange and cultivate ideas and build partnerships to help Syria and Syrian communities around the world through education. Previous conferences have taken place in New York, London, Los Angeles, and Berlin. For the fifth edition of this conference, we chose Canada as the host country after recognizing the importance and leadership of Canada’s political administration, and equally its civil society and local communities, in supporting the Syrian people.
Jusoor Leadership Team

Aziza Osman
Board Member
Aziza is a social entrepreneur and startup advisor. She started a social enterprise in health and wellbeing across Dubai and holds idea cultivation workshops for startups in the region. Prior to pursuing entrepreneurship, she worked in marketing intelligence and strategy for Philips Middle East. At Jusoor, she runs the Career Development Program and works closely with the Entrepreneurship Program, mentoring social startups on scaling, and measuring impact in Syria.

Dania Ismail
Board Member
Dania is the co-founder of Third Eye Agency, a performing arts-focused company based in Dubai. Prior to starting her own company, she held the position of Strategy and Business Development Manager at MBC Group for ten years. Dania is passionate about working with Syrian communities on projects that accelerate the growth and realize the potential of the country. She directs Jusoor’s Entrepreneurship Program.

Fadi Salem
Board Member
Fadi is a PhD in Public Policy candidate at the University of Oxford. Previously, he was the Director of the Governance and Innovation Program at the Dubai School of Government, Associate with the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School and Fellow with the I+I Policy Research Centre at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore. He is a graduate from the London School of Economics and Aleppo University. His areas of expertise include digital transformation and contemporary governance as well as technology policy and new models of government-citizen interactions in the digital age.

Iyad Duwaji
Board Member
Iyad is a business entrepreneur and managing partner of different investments vehicles. Prior to that, he was the CEO of SHUAA Capital, a publicly listed company in Dubai that won many distinctions. Iyad holds an MBA in Finance from the University of Texas at Arlington and has served as a director of different public and private companies in Europe and the UAE. He is a passionate supporter of community activities, education, and self-help initiatives.

JP Chilazi
Board Member
JP is an MBA Candidate at Harvard Business School. Prior to that, he worked as a Private Equity Associate at Bain Capital in Boston and as a Business Analyst at McKinsey & Company in the New Jersey and Dubai offices. JP holds an A.B. in Economics from Harvard College. At Jusoor, he oversees the organization’s financial operations.

Leen Al Zaibak
Board Member
Leen is a Senior Policy Advisor for Policy Planning and Coordination at the Office of International Relations and Protocol for the province of Ontario. Previously, she served as a Policy Advisor to the Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services. Leen holds an Honors Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto, Trinity College and a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Manchester. She is a leader in supporting Syrian refugees resettled in Canada to succeed, and directs Jusoor’s partnerships and programs in Canada.
Jusoor Leadership Team

Rami Zayat  
*Board Member*
Rami is a Senior Legal Consultant in the Abu Dhabi office of DLA Piper. He represents a broad range of clients from startups to mature publicly traded companies, IT companies, investment companies and private equity firms. Rami has a broad practice and has extensive experience advising clients across a range of industries in connection with local and cross-border commercial, general IT and services contracts, intellectual property, data protection and corporate matters. Rami is passionate about preserving Syrian cultural traditions while developing an educational system and economic forum that provides the structural basis for the development of youth.

Rania Succar  
*Board Member*
Rania recently joined Intuit to lead QuickBooks Financing. Prior to that, she held several roles at Google over the course of five years, most recently serving as the Director of Brand Solutions for North America at Google. Before joining Google, Rania worked with McKinsey & Company in the US and Dubai. Now based in San Francisco, Rania co-founded the Harvard Arab Alumni Association in 2001 and served as President until 2008. She received an MBA from the Harvard Business School, an MPA in International Development from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and an BA in economics from Harvard College.

Maya Alkateb-Chami  
*Director*
Prior to joining Jusoor, Maya ran Al Makan Art Association, a cultural nonprofit in Syria, co-founded and led the UWC scholarship program for Syrian adolescents, and later joined UWC-USA as Director of Admissions. Prior to that, she served as a consultant and trainer for Maastricht School of Management and UNRWA in the areas of NGO capacity building and youth engagement. Maya has an MSc in Education from Indiana University Bloomington and a BA in Political Science from Damascus University. Author of several books on cultural heritage, her Fulbright Scholarship-supported research focused on youth empowerment through the arts.

Notes

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