



# UBC Centre for Migration Studies

## Spring 2021 Newsletter

[website] WWW.MIGRATION.UBC.CA

### UBC Centre for Migration Studies awarded two years of VPRI funding

The Centre for Migration Studies is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded two years of funding (2021 - 23) from the UBC Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI) as part of the 2021/22 Grants for Catalyzing Research Clusters Competition (GRCRC). We were one of 24 units awarded this year and are only one of 35 Research Excellence Clusters that received funding throughout the year. Research Excellence Clusters are interdisciplinary networks of researchers focused on solving key challenges facing society and are a key component of Strategy 6 of UBC's Strategic Plan in support of Research Excellence.

This was the fourth year in a row in which we were funded by VPRI through the GRCRC competition. We are extremely grateful for their continued support. The GRCRC was jointly created by VPRI and the Provost & Vice-President, Academic and is supported by UBC's Academic Excellence Funds.



### Two new research groups created: Research Creation & Political Behaviour

Two new Research Groups were recently added to the Centre for Migration Studies: Research Creation and Political Behaviour. Research Groups bring together researchers from across disciplines to study different aspects of migration and mobility. The newly created Political Behaviour and Research Creation groups join five research groups already established within the Centre: Borders, Community-University Partnerships, Migration and Indigeneity, Mobilities, and Narratives.

The Research Creation brings together researchers and artists at UBC and beyond to explore the intersection of the arts and scholarship in the study of migration. Group members are interested in the creative forms that research can and should take as we seek to understand the dynamics and implications of migration in a settler colonial state. Over the next year, the group will meet to discuss research creation as methodology, pedagogy, community engagement, and interdisciplinary Co-creation dialogue for the Research Creation group are Erin Goben Gawnille, Sessional Lecturer at the UBC Department of English Language and Literatures, and Anne Murphy, Associate Professor at the UBC Department of History.

The Political Behaviour group will aim to meet every four-to-six weeks during the academic year to discuss both their own members' research, as well as other current research on immigration as it connects to topics in political behaviour and political attitudes. This is broadly construed, so as to be inclusive of work that analyzes immigrants and minority members as an object of analysis as well as more mainstream public opinion work. Most of the research will tend towards the quantitative side. Matthew Wright, Assistant Professor at the UBC Department of Political Science, is the group's coordinator.

To learn more about each group as well as how to become involved, visit the 'research' tab on our website.

### Global Migration Podcast returns with second season, "Geographies of the Heart: Life-writing from Newcomers to Canada"

We are pleased to announce the release of season two of our Global Migration Podcast entitled *Geographies of the Heart: Life-writing from Newcomers to Canada*. Bringing together a diverse array of newcomer voices, each episode shares compelling, first-hand experiences of coming to and living in Canada. This season is born out of a year-long writing project with a group of newcomers who have been authoring their own stories of migration on topics such as love, loss, displacement, exile, belonging and disruption. Most importantly, this series creates a space in which newcomers can share their experiences and perspectives with policymakers, academics and the media.

The new season is hosted by Mohammed Alsalhe: an international speaker and award-winning advocate. After losing cousins to cancer, Mohammed decided to become a physician with a specialization in oncology. But during a final exam in medical school, he was arrested by Syrian state-security and was brutally tortured for the next 120 days. After surviving death in prison, he was forced to flee his home and made an extraordinary journey to Vancouver, BC, arriving in Canada as a refugee in late 2014. Today, he is an inspirational speaker that brings the voices of refugees to the international stage. He has been recognized by the likes of Canada's Justin Trudeau and Hollywood's George Takei, and in 2018, he received the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award for his refugee advocacy efforts. From Syria to Canada, his journey was famously featured in the documentary *Welcome to Canada*.

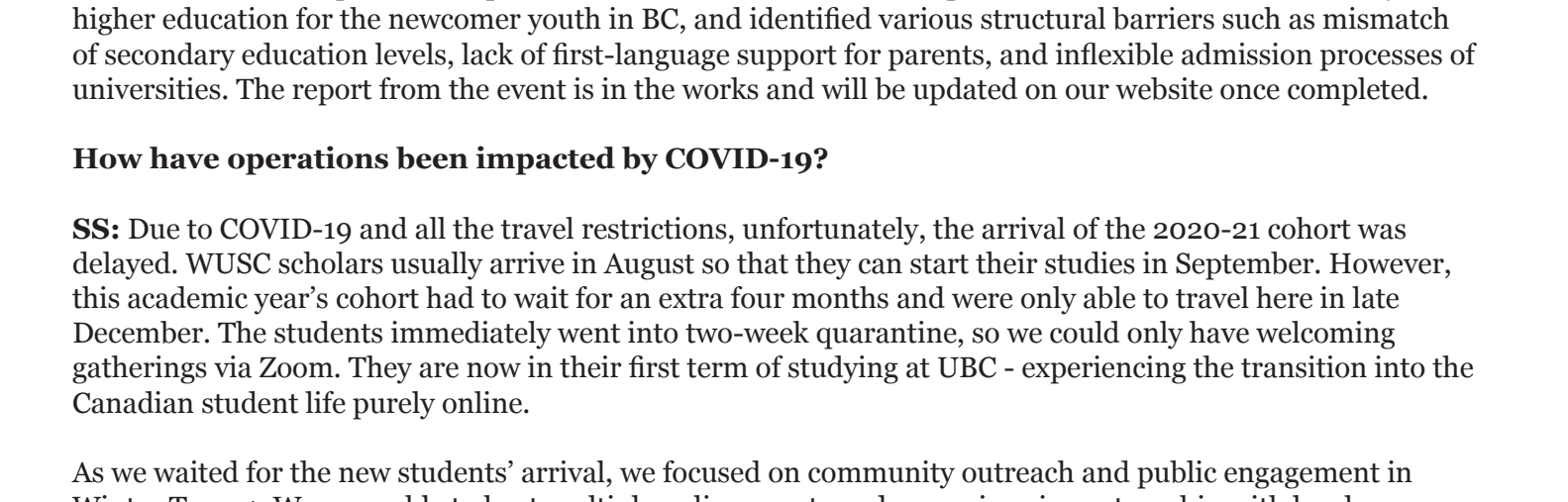
Season 2 of the podcast will run over the course of 8 episodes from January to April 2021. Episodes 1 - 6 are currently available. The episodes are available on our website, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Podbean, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Descriptions of the two most recent episodes which explore stories of disruption, belong and exclusion are provided below. Share with your friends, let us know what you think, and thanks for listening!

#### Episode 5 (March 9, 2021): Stories about Disruption

In the fifth episode of the Global Migration podcast "Geographies from the Heart: Life-writing from Newcomers to Canada," host Mohammed Alsalhe speaks to Malena Mukhovichova who shares her family's journey leaving Russia as asylum seekers. In 2012, Malena, with her mother and younger sister, stepped off a cruise ship temporarily docked in Quebec City and decided to claim asylum in Canada. They knew no one and spoke no English. However, the racially motivated attacks on the family's Jewish and Afghan heritage in Russia were becoming too dangerous. Malena speaks of their journey to Canada, experiences of settling, family separation, and starting over in this touching episode of one family's brave story.

#### Episode 6 (March 17, 2021): Stories about Belonging and Exclusion

In the sixth episode of the Global Migration podcast "Geographies from the Heart: Life-writing from Newcomers to Canada," host Mohammed Alsalhe speaks to Camille McMillan-Ramharat, from Trinidad and Tobago, who combines her unique Afro-Caribbean heritage with the stories learnt from her grandmother and father and her marriage to an internationally renowned Member of Parliament. Camille is a mother and has fought battles with racism here in Canada. She continues to stand tall and stand proud.



Sanya Soma (top left) and Jok Alier (top right) meet with others during a WUSC-UBC online event for International Women's Day, 31 March 8, 2021.

### STUDENT FEATURE

#### Q&A with World University Service of Canada - UBC WUSC-UBC President Sanya Soma & WUSC-UBC Student & Program Coordinator Jok Alier

Can you tell me a little more about the history of WUSC-UBC, and particularly the institutional uniqueness of UBC in the WUSC program?

**SS:** The World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is a Canadian non-profit organization that works to improve the education, employment, and empowerment opportunities for youth worldwide. Through its flagship program - the Student Refugee Program (SRP) - WUSC partners with over 95 post-secondary institutions across Canada to privately sponsor resettlement and education of youth from five refugee camps. Since its launch in 1978, more than 2,000 youth have come to Canada and accessed Canadian higher education. It is its only program of its kind in the world.

WUSC-UBC is the UBC Vancouver Campus branch, and it has been sponsoring the education and resettlement of youth living as refugees since 1981. The program is a unique partnership between the WUSC, the Alma Mater Society (AMS), and UBC. Through partnerships with the AMS, we collect a small student levy to fund the resettlement of SRP students to Vancouver. And in combination with support from UBC, WUSC-UBC covers the SRP students' tuition fees, partial housing costs, and living expenses. In 2016, at the height of the global refugee crisis, UBC students voted to increase the levy fee and doubled the number of students we sponsor per year from four to eight. Additionally, Vantage College has stepped forward and partnered-up with WUSC to sponsor a student every year. As a result, we currently sponsor up to nine students every year, making WUSC-UBC the largest SRP sponsoring institution in Canada!

One of the most unique things about WUSC-UBC's sponsorship is that we are both a student club and a scholarship program - we support the WUSC scholars (i.e. SRP students) financially, socially, and academically beyond the initial 12 month arrival, which is the government required period of private sponsorship. Instead we are an expanded award program that supports WUSC scholars for the duration of their degree so that they are empowered and equipped to complete their higher education, and prepare themselves to begin their professional careers in Canada.

How is WUSC-UBC organized? And what are some of the programming and outreach efforts that the organization designs and participates in?

**SS:** WUSC-UBC is organized as an AMS student club with an award program that is supported by UBC. So, we are first and foremost a student-led group that provides peer-to-peer support among the WUSC-UBC members and WUSC scholars. Our SRP Coordinator, Jok Alier who is also a UBC student, liaises with the AMS to facilitate the resettlement and scholarship program.

WUSC scholars also receive incredible and thorough support from UBC International Student Development throughout their journey at UBC. Particularly, our Program Advisor, Sarah Cameron and WUSC Scholar Peer Advisor, Rama Hamid provide day-to-day support for WUSC Scholars. They also organize a volunteer peer-mentorship program for WUSC scholars and WUSC-UBC members as well as a faculty mentorship program with professors in their fields of interests. These programs create a support community for the WUSC scholars while they begin building their Canadian academic and professional careers.

WUSC-UBC also engages in advocacy work to make our UBC campus a more welcoming community for all refugees and immigrants. We organize various outreach programs such as the "Welcome to Canada" campaign, which aims to educate the public about the experiences of refugees, immigrants, community organizers supporting newcomers, and migration expert scholars. For example, in December 2020, we partnered up with local NGOs to host an online panel discussion about accessibility of higher education for the newcomer youth in BC, and identified various structural barriers such as mismatch of secondary education levels, lack of first-language support for parents, and inflexible admission processes of universities. The report from the event is in the works and will be updated on our website once completed.

How have operations been impacted by COVID-19?

**SS:** Due to COVID-19 and all the travel restrictions, unfortunately, the arrival of the 2020-21 cohort was delayed. WUSC scholars usually arrive in August so that they can start their studies in September. However, this academic year's cohort had to wait for an extra four months and were only able to travel here in late December. The students immediately went into two-week quarantine, so we could only have welcoming gatherings via Zoom. They are now in their first term of studying at UBC - experiencing the transition into the Canadian student life purely online.

As we waited for the new students' arrival, we focused on community outreach and public engagement in Winter Term 1. We were able to host multiple online events and campaigns in partnership with local organizations - such as Kinbrace, PeaceGeeks, Ride for Refuge, etc. We also got to connect with other branches of WUSC, such as WUSC-SFU and committees in Ontario, as gathering via online platforms became normal. We tried to facilitate rich conversations with people outside of our campus on how to support newcomers in this difficult time. Perhaps this was a silver lining of this strange year.

Within the UBC community, we have been focusing on creating a supportive community online for the past year. And I cannot believe it's already been a year! For example, we hosted some online social events like Trivia Day to maintain the social circle of the incredible WUSC scholars and WUSC-UBC members. It's not the same as meeting up at the Global Lounge and chatting over slices of pizza, but it has been a great space for everyone to connect and share this strange academic year.

It seems that fundraising is vital for WUSC-UBC, for a range of purposes. Are there any partnerships that help facilitate this? How can one support your fundraising efforts?

**SS:** Fundraising is an important part of our operation. Living and studying in Vancouver can be very pricey. We would like to relieve the financial burdens as much as possible so that they can focus on their studies and career exploration and have an equitable start to their post-grade 12 lives in Canada. We are also looking to build more partnerships with university departments - like Vantage College - to increase the number of SRP students we can collaboratively sponsor per year. We also welcome, and are very grateful for, support from donors.

Information on how to support WUSC-UBC's program is on our website. We also have fundraising campaigns from time-to-time. Updates for these campaigns can be found on our Facebook and Instagram.

Lastly, how would you describe the significance of WUSC from a participant, organizational and campus-wide perspective?

**JAK:** As a beneficiary of the program, WUSC-UBC has provided me with an opportunity to achieve my dream of attaining higher education. WUSC's slogan "Education changes the world" empowers young people such as myself to seek personal development and learn everyday. I am proud to be associated with the leadership of WUSC-UBC in hopes of making sure more intelligent, hardworking refugee youth get access to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

**SS:** WUSC-UBC is unique in that we have a large number of intakes and we support the scholars throughout their entire UBC experience (as mentioned above). This means that, at any given time, there are about 35 - 40 WUSC scholars actively studying on UBC campus. We have one of the largest WUSC-communities in Canada here on UBC campus - including the scholars, other student members, support staff like Sarah and advisors across the campus, and many professors who have been incredibly supportive of WUSC efforts. I think this puts us in a uniquely empowered position to leverage this network and initiate advocacy operations around accessibility of education for refugees worldwide and support for newcomer youth in Canada. I hope for WUSC-UBC to continuously grow as the amplifier of newcomer students' voices on campus and make the university more accessible and welcoming for refugees and immigrants.



### MEXICO'S NEW SLAVERY: A Critique of Neo-Abolitionism to Combat Human Trafficking

DR. GRACE PEÑA DELGADO  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-SANTA CRUZ  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MARCH 29 Monday, March 29, 2021 12:30 - 2:00 pm

### FACULTY FEATURE

#### Book Q&A with Editors UBC School of Social Work Professor Min Chung Yu UBC Sociology Associate Professor Sean Lauer

### Neighbourhood Houses: Building Community in Vancouver UBC Press (2021)

What are the major themes and takeaways in *Neighbourhood Houses: Building Community in Vancouver*?

Globalization and migration are creating disconnected societies in modern urban cities and urban communities are at risk of becoming fragmented. Nonetheless, the local community is where most aspects of everyday life occur, where people establish their homes and pursue their ambitions. It offers a secure haven in an unpredictable, globalized world.



In our book, *Neighbourhood Houses* we suggest that place-based community organizations can provide an antidote to the fragmentation of urban places. Indeed, neighbourhood houses have been a longstanding but understudied civil society establishment serving the local communities in many countries for over a hundred years. This form of place-based organization is based on the settlement house movement that began in nineteenth-century England in response to the needs of rootless urban arrivals. As a locally governed multi-service organization, it has been an important "machinery of connection" between people and their communities. In the book, we draw on a five-year study to document and contextualize the neighbourhood house network in Vancouver. We outline the history of the Vancouver neighbourhood house model, its relationship with local government and other organizations in the region, the programs and activities offered, and the experiences of participants. Bringing neighbours and newcomers together, today's neighbourhood houses are hubs for community development programs and services such as public recreation, child care, health care, and adult literacy classes.

Where would you situate *Neighbourhood Houses* in the larger field of Migration Studies? How do you see it contributing to contemporary debates?

*Neighbourhood Houses* addresses two major issues in the contemporary debates in migration studies. In the literature and public discussion, the ideal of a welcoming community is considered a key attribute to the development of immigration policies. Meanwhile, ethno-racial diversity led by the influx of immigrants to the community has been seen by some as a detrimental factor causing community disintegration. Following the tradition of settlement house, most neighbourhood houses in Vancouver have been established in immigrant concentrated neighbourhoods. While serving the needs of local residents, they have also created a welcoming space for newcomers to the community. As we show in this book, its geographical proximity and friendly environment provide a space where newcomers can feel safe to explore and create connection with other people. In neighbourhood houses, newcomers are not only passive service recipients. Many have also become active volunteers and local leaders serving their own community in the most significant indication of social integration.

What was the editorial process like for *Neighbourhood Houses: Building Community in Vancouver*?

All the contributors of this volume were members of the research team of the five-year project. The decision of publishing an edited volume to report the findings of this study was collective. Thus, the editorial process is almost trouble free. However, through the editorial process, we had the opportunity to reflect on the key findings of the project which helped us appreciate even more the great works of neighbourhood houses.

When editing this book, we were grateful for the generosity of staff, volunteers and service users of neighbourhood houses who helped us along the way. As researchers, these many people provided us with useful "data" about their experiences with neighbourhood houses. We felt a strong responsibility to rigorously report what we found. We consider this a gift that researchers working to revitalize the territories in question, and of the forms of social work and activism aimed at welcoming exiles. Finally, it allows for the effects of such dispersion on the migratory routes of exiles to be taken into account. This special issue thus offers an analysis of how these dispersal policies, aligned as they are with policies calculated to revitalize territories facing major demographic and economic challenges, articulate processes of sheltering and ever-increasing control of exiled populations.

Flamant, A., Fourot, A.-C., Healy, A. & Schmoll, C. (eds.) (2020). L'accueil hors des grands centres. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 36(2-3).

This special issue of the *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* turns a critical eye to the reception of exiles outside cities and metropolises, in "small immigration localities." These "small localities" are places where humanitarian issues are by the increased involvement of elected city officials, notably deputy mayors. Finally (iii), it stresses the lack of collaboration with civil society actors in the context of a greater visibility and activity of the French national state regarding the integration of newcomers.

Fourot, A.-C. (2021). "Comparing ambiguities: Municipalities, francophone minority communities, and immigration in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*.

This article analyzes the implication of municipal governments and civil society actors in immigration through multilevel and deliberative governance arrangements. It argues that studying the roles of ambiguities is critical to understanding the activism of political entities with ill-defined status and mandates, such as municipalities and francophone minority communities (FMCs). This research adds to the literature on the "local turn" by highlighting that ambiguities are both a condition—that is, a driver that makes collaborative and multilevel arrangements work—and an outcome of collaboration practices, characterized by ambiguities regarding the balance of power, the aims of collaboration in a competitive sector and conflicting forms of "passivism." The article identifies three approaches that actors use to deal with these ambiguities in a context where resources are not equitably distributed and where the role of the federal government is critical. In this configuration, municipalities and FMCs develop adaptive, rather than transformative, approaches to ambiguities.

Lieberman, E. & Zhou, Y.-Y. (2021). "Self-efficacy and citizen engagement in development: Experimental evidence from Tanzania," *Journal of Experimental Political Science*.

Recent studies of efforts to increase citizen engagement in local governance through information campaigns report mixed results. We consider whether low levels of self-efficacy beliefs limit engagement, especially among poor citizens in poor countries. Citizens may be caught in an "efficacy trap" which limits their realization of better public goods provision. We describe results from a series of experimental studies conducted with over 2,000 citizens in rural Tanzania, in which we compare the effects of standard information campaigns with Validated Participation (VP), an intervention designed to socially validate citizens' participation. We conclude by discussing lessons from this research and directions for future investigation of the possible role of self-efficacy traps in development.

Michalovich, A. (2021). "Digital media production of refugee-background youth: A scoping review," *Journalism and Media*, 2(1).

Reviews of research have provided insights into the digital media production practices of youth in and out of school. Although such practices hold promise for the language and literacy education of refugee-background youth, no review has yet integrated findings across studies and different digital media production practices to explore this promise. This scoping review summarizes and discusses the key findings from research on varied types of digital media produced specifically by refugee-background youth in and out of school. It situates migration, and highlights its main themes from findings in 42 reviewed articles. Digital media production afforded refugee-background youth: (1) Ownership of representations across time and space; (2) opportunity to expand, strengthen, or maintain social networks; (3) identity work; (4) visibility and engagement with audiences; and (5) demonstration and embodied learning through multimodal literacies.

Yan, M.-C. & Lauer, S. R. (Eds.) (2021). *Neighbourhood Houses: Building Community in Vancouver*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

*Neighbourhood Houses* draws on a five-year study to document and contextualize the neighbourhood house network in Vancouver. Globalization and migration are creating disconnected societies in modern urban cities and urban communities are at risk of becoming fragmented. Nonetheless, the local community is where most aspects of everyday life occur, where people establish their homes and pursue their ambitions. It offers a secure haven in an unpredictable, globalized world. We explore the history of the Vancouver neighbourhood house model, its relationship with local government and other organizations in the region, the programs and activities offered, and the experiences of participants. Neighbourhood houses are based on the settlement house movement that began in nineteenth-century England in response to the needs of rootless urban arrivals—the idea of a locally governed multi-service organization to connect people within their communities is not new. Bringing neighbours and newcomers together, today's neighbourhood houses are hubs for community development programs and services such as public recreation, child care, health care, and adult literacy classes. *Neighbourhood Houses demonstrates* that place-based community organizations can provide an antidote.

Zimmermann, S. (2020). "Cultural artefacts and the 'migration crisis': Disruptive materialities works by David Kertmann and Max Oelbermann," *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture*, 11(2).

Amplified worldwide fragility and growing volatility have contributed to increased forced migration towards Europe. However, Europe's press focus on border protection has furthered the 'migrant crisis' which is very much a crisis of response. News about the 'migrant crisis' continues to dominate political discourse in Europe and elsewhere. The discussions typically focus on Europe's supposed solutions in the form of increased border security, new political agreements, and various forms of humanitarian aid. This article reviews four literary texts about Europe's responses to forced migration and proposes that the literary treatment of various cultural artefacts employed in these texts gestures towards Europe's current restrictions. Two speeches by David Kertmann, 'Towards Europe' and 'On the sixty-fifth Anniversary of the Proclamation of the German Constitution' and two novels by Max Oelbermann, 'Wann gefährliche Hunde lachen' (When dangerous dogs laugh) and 'Europas langer Sommer' (Europe's longest summer) make reference to several phenomenal objects and also to gestures. In and of themselves, these cultural artefacts such as books, blankets, buses, lipsticks, T-shirts, shoes, and even the gestures of kneeling and bowing, may not possess anything disruptive. However, there is an unruly quality to them that puts a spotlight on the precarity of survival migrants who cannot access the European asylum process.

### AUDIO / VISUAL

#### UBC Centre for Migration Studies. (2021). Global Migration Podcast Season 2: Geographies of the Heart: Life-writing from Newcomers to Canada.

This series brings you newcomer stories from around the province. The voices that have created this podcast are local BC-based newcomers, and their stories challenge us all to think differently and more deeply about the contemporary Canadian immigration landscape. Bringing together a diverse array of newcomer voices, each episode shares compelling, first-hand experiences of coming to and living in Canada. This season is born out of a year-long writing project, *Stories from Newcomers to Canada*, with a group of newcomers who have been authoring their own stories of migration on topics such as love, loss, displacement, exile, belonging and disruption. These stories capture the current complexity of journeying to and settling in Canada. Most importantly, this series creates a space in which newcomers can share their experiences and perspectives with policymakers, academics and the media.

Jacobs, A. & Zhou, Y.-Y. (2020). Scope Conditions Podcast.

Scope Conditions is a new podcast featuring cutting-edge research in comparative politics. Hosted by University of British Columbia political scientists Alan Jacobs and Yang-Yang Zhou, Scope Conditions ranges widely across themes and regions of the world. With the disappearance of many traditional platforms for scholarly exchange -- such as in-person talks, conferences, and workshops -- the podcast provides a virtual platform for showcasing recent advances in the field. In each episode, we talk with the author of a new or forthcoming book or paper, with a particular focus on innovative empirical research by emerging scholars. The conversations on Scope Conditions will speak to both substance and method: what these scholars have found and how they have found it.

### CALL FOR NEWS

We invite all members of the Centre for Migration Studies to send in news items for inclusion in our next newsletter. We look forward to receiving news about new publications, professional appointments, or other honors, conferences / workshops organized, and major grants received.

Please include "member news" in the subject line of your email. We look forward to hearing from you!

email to: admin.migration@ubc.ca

The UBC Centre for Migration Studies is generously supported by Excellence Funds from the Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation, the Faculty of Arts, the Departments of Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, and the Peter A. Baskerville Chair of Law.