Amazing things happen when diverse communities work together to tackle world issues. When York University students apply their knowledge, they have the power to make things right. Join us in creating positive change. yorku.ca/rightthefuture

We recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been caretaken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peacefully share and care for the Great Lakes Region.
EUC at a Glance

York University’s new Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change is a call to action, responding to the most pressing challenges facing people and the planet.

- The Numbers
- Message from the Dean

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Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change Impact Report 2022-2023
Created and designed by: Andrea Abello
Editors: Alice J. Hovorka, Lily Piccone, Philip Nally
Contributors: Aren Sammy, Brittany Giglio, Joanne Huy, Rhoda Reyes, Rosanna Chowdhury, Thierry Sienche
Special thanks: Rachel Yang, Tricia Fuller-Davidson
WE BELIEVE THAT transitions to a just and sustainable future require our urgent and collective attention. As a community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and collaborators, we are united in a call to action responding to some of the most pressing challenges facing people and the planet.

Humanity is witnessing the consequences of environmental degradation and social inequities in stark and devastating ways. The climate crisis has plunged us into an era of unprecedented change resulting in rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and melting ice sheets. Nature’s capacity to provide adequate food, water, and air to our population is rapidly eroding. And our built environments — cities and hinterlands — increasingly expose socio-environmental inequities expressed as poverty, illness, hunger, homelessness, racism, and gender-based violence.

Addressing these challenges requires **BOLD IDEAS** and **BOLD ACTIONS**.

To this end, our Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change is producing and mobilizing knowledge for a just and sustainable future.

We are proud to share with you our inaugural **EUC Impact Report** that demonstrates the substantive and meaningful impact we have achieved in our first three years. We are **EMPOWERING CHANGE** through our academic programs, research excellence, and engagement activities.

Specifically, we are **enhancing student experiences** through hands-on learning via field course offerings and collaboration with community partners; and more students are taking advantage of our work placements both within our Faculty as well as industry, government, and not for profit sectors. We are **facilitating research excellence** of our world-renowned faculty and talented graduate students. We generate millions of dollars in research funding, ground-breaking publications, and collaborations with partners that apply insights and solutions to contemporary debates, planning, and policy realms. We are also **advancing the UNSDGs** through our innovative ‘living labs’ that serve as classrooms, research sites, and community hubs focused on themes of food security, conservation and livelihoods, ecological footprints, urban landscapes, and environmental arts and justice. And we are **championing equity and Black inclusion** by diversifying our faculty complement, supporting equity-deserving students, and encouraging anti-oppression pedagogy, scholarship, and practice.

Thank you for taking the time to read our inaugural **EUC Impact Report**!

We invite you all to join our efforts of empowering change and join our community of EUC Changemakers as we shape a more just and sustainable world.

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**The Numbers**

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<th>$15 Million in research funding in 2022</th>
<th>$500k in undergraduate student awards every year</th>
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<td>2023 QS Subject Rankings Canada Academic Reputation</td>
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<td>500+ community partners</td>
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Alice J. Hovorka
Dean & Professor

**EUC Impact Report**

yorku.ca/euc
EUC programs feature experiential education and work integrated learning as core elements shaping student career paths.

- Hands-on Learning Opportunities
- Career Pathways
- Student Leadership

**Enhancing Student Experiences**

**Hands-on Learning Opportunities**

**EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION** is a hands-on approach to learning where students participate in practical activities and leverage the concepts and theories learned in courses to create tangible solutions to real-world challenges. Through classroom engagements with expert lecturers, out into the community working with partners, or as interns working with a local or international organization, students deepen their understanding of complex issues and gain essential professional and life skills that will benefit their future success.
In the Faculty

**THIS PAST YEAR,** five EUC undergraduate students took part in the second installment of the Dean’s Changemaker Program. Offered for the first time in 2021, this program provides students the opportunity to learn skills from industry and research professionals. Students are hired as interns and work on a variety of ecological and sustainability initiatives led by EUC at York University.

Dean’s Changemakers have undertaken meaningful projects ranging from enhancing the public outreach of the Ecological Footprint Initiative to organizing the annual EcoArts Festival at EUC. Following completion of their work, each Dean’s Changemaker participates in a visionary exhibit, where they report on their internship experience, newly developed skills, and contributions to the Faculty through self-reflective visual displays. Changemakers receive an award based on their projects. They are selected by the Dean in consultation with participating industry and research partners.

EUC is grateful to the countless donors who have made financial contributions to our Annual Giving Fund - your generosity made the Dean’s Changemaker Program a reality!

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The Dean’s Changemaker Award inspires me to continue creating positive environmental change and to encourage others to do the same.

Kaitlin Pal, EUC undergraduate student

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**ANDIL GOSINE** designs his courses around topics related to social and environmental crises. He integrates opportunities for students to engage with art organizations and communities both locally and globally, including the Ford Foundation Gallery, the Niagara Artists Centre, and the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art in New York City. His goal is to allow his students to create impactful art pieces that bring forward consideration of the human condition in a moment of crisis.

**LAURA TAYLOR**’s classes always include activities and assignments that get students out of the classroom and into neighbourhoods in the Toronto area where change is taking place. Professional planners and city-builders visit her classes as guest speakers, lead field trips, participate in networking events, and collaborate with Professor Taylor to workshop assignments for her courses. Recently, she partnered with the Climate Risk Institute to have students help mount a training program on climate change for Ontario professional planners, including a module on environmental justice. Through a CEWIL grant, students were compensated for their time spent on the project. Feedback from guest speakers confirms their experience is rewarding too, as they not only pass along their insights, but learn from engaging with the students’ unique perspectives on current issues.

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Experiential learning opportunities allow students to engage with the world beyond the classroom.

Laura Taylor, Associate Professor
In the Workplace

ALL EUC UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS are encouraged to participate in experiential education opportunities in the workplace by completing an internship or placement while simultaneously earning credits towards their degree. Students enroll into our fourth year ENVS 4001: Field Placement Course, where they receive theoretical instruction in the classroom and hands-on practical experience in the workplace. Students are supported in finding their placements by our experiential education office and can undertake local, national, or international opportunities as part of this flexible work-for-credit opportunity.

STEVEN TUFTS engages students outside the classroom by leading a field course to Ontario’s Bruce Peninsula, funded by the York University Academic Innovation Fund and York University Geography Alumni Network (YUGAN). The Bruce Peninsula makes an excellent laboratory: it is a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve containing the largest continuous forest in southern Ontario, as well as beaches, Indigenous communities and small towns. The course explores the impact of COVID-19 on businesses within the community, and local community members are invited to speak to students about issues such as land claims and agriculture. The course operates alongside a course in physical geography, led by Emeritus Associate Professor Rick Bello, which offers hands-on experience working in the forest to determine if climate change is affecting its ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Throughout the course, students apply the environmental and geographic knowledge they have gained during their degree.

Top Areas of Field Placement* 
*Based on the information of 109 EUC undergraduate students enrolled in ENVS 4001.

The number of EUC students with work placements doubled in 2022.

Staff Spotlight

“My passion for experiential education stems from my lived experience as an undergraduate student who was differently abled; it was experiential education that helped me recognize my different learning ability.”

Rosanna Chowdhury
Experiential Education Coordinator

EUC works with partners that provide work placements to EUC undergraduate Students. EUC’s top three partnerships include:

- The City of Toronto
- Region of York
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)

Not for Profit (16.51%)
Arts (15.6%)
Education (15.6%)
Natural Resources (12.84%)
Business (10.09%)
Health and Social Sciences (9.17%)
Government (8.26%)
Planning (5.5%)
Marketing and Communications (2.75%)
Information Technology (1.8%)
Finance (0.92%)
Construction (0.92%)

Students enjoy the famed Grotto at Bruce Peninsula National Park
Image by Fabiola Torrejon Peredo

EMPOWERING CHANGE
Career Pathways

EUC ALUMNI play a vital role within our Faculty. Groups such as the MES @ York Planning Alumni Committee (MYPAC), the York University Geography Alumni Network (YUGAN), and the Las Nubes Alumni Network (LNAN) organize key events that bring together our community, while individual EUC alumni across Canada and around the globe serve as mentors and advisors to our current students.

In 2022, through the long-standing generosity of Anita McBride, the Annual Anita McBride Alumni Mentoring Luncheon brought together EUC alumni with current students to provide insights into what their career paths might look like after graduation. YUGAN brought together our EUC Geography community by hosting renowned Professor Katherine Gibson at the Annual YUGAN Lecture. Finally, MYPAC hosted the 16th Annual MYPAC Social and accepted York’s Alumni Network of the Year Award.

Alia Abbas

Alia Abbas assists local and foreign businesses with their expansion plans into the Toronto region. Alia’s academic accomplishments have enabled her to work on projects both in Canada and the US. She is passionate about supporting businesses to grow, expand, and embed within communities. Most recently, she has been recognized as the only Canadian to receive the Development Counsellors International (DCI) 40 Under 40 Award.

JC Elijah (Eli) M. Bawuah

Eli Bawuah is a practicing urban planner and public consultation coordinator with multi-disciplinary experience. He is the co-founder of the Mentoring Initiative for Indigenous and Planners of Colour (MIIPOC) which focuses on establishing a national network between experienced planners and emerging planners from marginalized communities. Eli was also featured in York’s 2022 Top 30 Alumni Under 30, which highlights individuals who are creating positive change.

Mike Layton

Mike Layton has been appointed York University’s first Chief Sustainability Officer to strengthen the institution’s impact in creating a more sustainable and just world. A former Toronto City Councillor, and long-time champion of sustainability, Layton brings two decades of professional experience in advancing positive change on behalf of people and the planet.

There has never been a more urgent time for us to take action on environmental, economic and social sustainability and I’m excited to join the York University community to advance our shared values and vision.

Mike Layton, Chief Sustainability Officer – York University
Peer Mentorship

THE PEER MENTOR PROGRAM has been designed to provide guidance to EUC students. Peer Mentors deliver programming and information sessions to help new undergraduate students transition to university. EUC has 21 Peer Mentors across all year levels and areas of study. They provide a positive influence on other students with sound advice and encouragement.

As a Peer Mentor, I’m happy to offer students the friendly support needed for navigating university life.

Ryan Faria-Wong, EUC undergraduate student and Peer Mentor

Staff Spotlight

“T’im passionate about getting students and partners involved in experiential education opportunities because experience speaks for itself, it’s how you can stand out as the best candidate in the pool.”

Aren Sammy
Experiential Education Coordinator
(External Relations)

Clubs & Student Associations

THERE ARE MORE THAN 300 clubs and student associations at York University that focus on diversity, creativity, and culture. These groups are an experiential opportunity for students to pilot change on campus, work with staff and faculty, and be involved in our community of changemakers.

The EUC Student Association (EUCSA) provides students with an opportunity to develop professional skills such as event planning, mentorship, project planning, budgeting, and contributing to EUC’s governance committees in areas such as equity, curriculum planning, and research. Chair of EUCSA, Summer Solmes is a fourth-year Sustainable Environmental Management Student and EUC Peer Mentor. She explains her reason for joining EUC as follows, “It bolsters my confidence in humanity that it is indeed possible to emancipate the natural environment from anthropogenic influence; to salvage and restore what we have harmed. It is teaching me how to become a changemaker.”
Together with EUC Assistant Professor Joshua Thienpont, Korosi studies permafrost as a defining feature of the Canadian landscape. “Rates of permafrost thaw have accelerated in recent decades – a trend that is expected to continue with future climate warming,” says Korosi. “The thawing of permafrost represents a major stressor on northern lakes that may negatively impact the provision of essential ecosystem services.” Her NSERC Discovery project aims to shed new light on how permafrost thaw is transforming the North, and what this means for northern freshwaters.

Korosi contributes to the Dehcho Collaborative on Permafrost – an initiative that brings together partners from the Dehcho First Nations, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and university researchers to co-develop new knowledge on permafrost thaw. She is a member of the newly established advisory committee for the Indigenous-led Scotty Creek Research Station, in which she will assist the Łı́ı̨lį́ Kų́ę́ First Nation in coordinating research at Scotty Creek.

Lake sediments provide a window into long-term environmental change across Canada

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CANADA IS HOME TO a fifth of the world’s freshwater resources, which are under increasing threat from climate change, land-use pressures, and other stressors. Lakes can act as sentinels of environmental change, integrating information about what is happening within the lake itself, as well as its watershed and airshed. This information is preserved in sediments deposited at the bottom of a lake, which provide a natural archive of environmental change over decades to millennia (the field of paleolimnology).

Jennifer Korosi’s research on Canadian lakes uses paleolimnological and other field-based methods to help understand threats to lakes by answering three simple questions: Where we are now? How did we get here? Where might we be heading? Although Korosi and her research group tackle a range of environmental challenges impacting freshwaters across Canada, a large focus of their research is on the impacts of climate warming on northern lakes.

The thawing of permafrost represents a major stressor on northern lakes that may negatively impact the provision of essential ecosystem services.

Jennifer Korosi, Associate Professor
Enhancing pollinator conservation efforts in agricultural systems

Canada is home to over 800 bee species, which vary in size, flight ranges, flower preferences, and nesting sites and materials. Each of these species holds an important ecological role, but declines have been documented for several bee species due to various factors including habitat loss and degradation, climate change, pesticide exposure, and negative interactions with managed species such as honeybees.

With several of the threats facing bees occurring in agricultural landscapes, a significant amount of research has aimed to better understand how we can conserve and promote bees in these lands. Yet, existing studies have mainly focused on a select few crops that are highly dependent on bees for their pollination services. Less research has been done in crops that are not pollinator-dependent despite research showing that certain agroecosystems better sustain wild bee abundance and diversity compared to others.

NSERC Scholarship Awardee Briann Dorin’s doctoral research is investigating the wine-grape (Vitis vinifera L.) and the vineyard practices that benefit pollinator populations and diversity. “My research aims to determine the impact of vineyard management practices and surrounding land-use variables on wild bee abundance and diversity in Niagara vineyards” explains Dorin.

The vineyard management practices being studied by Dorin include organic vs. certified sustainable vs. conventional farming and the type of between-row management that is used, such as tillage, cover-cropping, and mowing frequency. Dorin is also looking at the composition of landscapes surrounding vineyard sites including natural lands, various crop types, impervious surfaces, and water bodies. She aims to work with grape growers to better understand their concerns, motivations, and barriers regarding the implementation of pollinator-friendly vineyard management practices in the future.

Towards Urban Social Justice

Wheelchair users’ perspectives on transportation services hailed through Uber and Lyft applications

Mahtot Gebresselassie is an Assistant Professor at EUC. Her research focuses on transportation network companies, such as Uber Technologies Inc. and Lyft Inc., and issues of transportation equity in relation to people with disabilities and low-income earners. “The goal of my research work is to contribute towards solving urban transportation problems,” says Gebresselassie.

In a recent study on wheelchair users’ perspectives and preferences regarding Uber and Lyft, Gebresselassie expands our understanding of the transportation needs of such users. Currently, most of what is known on the topic is based on anecdotal accounts in media reports and legal filings. Gebresselassie’s work collects and analyzes survey data to generate insights based on empirical research. The research finds that wheelchair users are experiencing service denial and long wait times, but also some satisfaction in rides hailed through these apps. The study outlines policy recommendations for how companies, regulators, and policymakers can address the problems identified.

Gebresselassie also conducts research on extreme weather and other unusual events, and the ways in which they affect the usage rates of companies, like Uber and Lyft in low- and high-income neighbourhoods. This work shows that high-income passengers have a greater ability to switch to more comfortable modes of transport during heat waves, while low-income riders are more likely to endure extreme temperatures and humidity waiting at, and walking to and from, public transit stops. This work has brought recommendations to transportation planners that they should consider the possibility of extending special service offerings in low-income neighborhoods and those with less transit access during heat waves to alleviate transit disparity that exposes low-income earners to extreme weather.

More broadly, Gebresselassie’s work addresses issues of disabled accessibility in information and communication technologies, policy and governance around smart mobility and smart cities, accessibility in urban design and architecture, and the platform economy.

The goal of my research work is to contribute towards solving urban transportation problems.

Mahtot Gebresselassie, Assistant Professor
Exploring the experiences of racialized residents in two Toronto neighborhoods

PARK PERCEPTIONS AND RACIALIZED REALITIES is a community-based participatory research project that explores the experiences of racialized people in public greenspaces. The research, led by Vanier Canada Graduate Scholar Nadha Hassen and Professor Sarah Flicker, collaborated with the Greenchange, Jane/Finch Centre, and the St. James Town Community Co-operative.

Racialized residents in both neighbourhoods identified structural and systemic barriers to accessing, using, and navigating greenspaces. Discussions about greenspaces became an entry point to examining broader issues and barriers faced by racialized residents. Many of the experiences highlighted transcend the two neighbourhoods and are common to others living in underserved, marginalized, and racialized neighbourhoods across the Toronto region. The researchers and resident participants engaged in a process of collaborative “sensemaking” that used photographs and narratives to analyze key themes such as belonging and social connection, mental health and well-being, and access and accessibility.

The community report on Park Perceptions and Racialized Realities in Two Toronto Neighborhoods was co-written by a group of community residents from both Jane and Finch and St. James Town who participated in the project alongside EUC researchers. “We heard from residents that they need access to high quality greenspaces — benches that aren’t broken, basketball nets in good condition, having the amenities that you actually need, like clean drinking fountains — these are not too much to ask for,” Hassen explains.

Key recommendations include prioritizing equitable access to high-quality greenspaces in racialized neighbourhoods; ensuring the inclusion and maintenance of amenities; directing resources equitably; ensuring accountability by evaluating and tracking greenspace changes; winterizing outdoor public greenspaces and creating more free indoor community spaces; and improving safety for all, especially racialized women.

A travelling photo exhibit was curated to share residents’ photographs and stories and spark conversations. The community report, completed in 2022, was launched at community events in both neighbourhoods and has been shared with the City of Toronto for review and consideration.

We heard from residents that they need access to high quality greenspaces — benches that aren’t broken, basketball nets in good condition, having the amenities that you actually need, like clean drinking fountains — these are not too much to ask for.

Nadha Hassen, PhD Candidate Environmental Studies

“As a York University alum and former Geography student, I’m grateful to go back to my home faculty where I can combine my love for geography, education, and community building.”

Brittany Giglio (BA ’17, BEd ’19, MEd Candidate)
Recruitment & Liaison Officer

Staff Spotlight

Nadha Hassen
PhD Candidate,
Environmental Studies

EMPOWERING CHANGE

yorku.ca/euc

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Understanding environmental, climate change, and food justice

ANNE PERKINS’ research focuses on feminist ecological economics, climate justice, commons, and participatory governance. She has directed several large-scale research projects on community-based watershed organizing in Brazil and Canada and on climate justice and equity in watershed management with partners in Mozambique, South Africa, and Kenya. Her most recent international project with partners in Brazil, Chile, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, and Nigeria built a global network of participatory researchers on Climate Justice, Ecological Economics, and Commons Governance. The project strengthened global understanding of policies and grassroots actions that can address inequitable climate impacts.

A lead author of Chapter 5 in the new Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, Professor Perkins tackles socio-economic aspects of climate change mitigation. The IPCC is the United Nations body responsible for assessing climate change. The chapter, “Demand, Services, and Social Aspects of Mitigation,” examines the conclusions of nearly 100,000 peer-reviewed articles across a range of social science disciplines, including psychology, women’s studies, economics, urban studies, and history.

Interviewed on CBC Radio One and CTV News, Perkins notes that “explicit attention to equity is essential if we want policies that take on climate change to be effective and socially acceptable. Social equity in turn reinforces capacity to reduce emissions.” She also adds that “government, business, finance, consumers, technical, and cultural change are all part of the huge effort that’s urgently required to realize these reductions.”

Climate risks and household responses to food insecurity in northern Ghana

HISTORICAL MODELS SHOW that Ghana’s climatic patterns are getting increasingly drier. Subsistence production is the primary food source among a sizeable number (about 84%) of households in the northern savannah. The most commonly grown food staples are millet, maize, tomatoes, and groundnuts. About 90% of these food crops are produced under a rain-fed, labour-intensive, smallholder agricultural system. Most farmers harvest once a year because of the unimodal rain season. In addition to subsistence production, households rely on purchased foods and food aid. Food aid only becomes available in times of major disasters.

In light of these realities, Vanier scholar Balikisu Osman, conducts research on the climatic risks and household responses for sustainable food security in the northern savannah areas of Ghana. While the country has a climate change policy with a strategic focus on developing climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, a major challenge is the paucity of research identifying Indigenous knowledge and best practices to achieve the policy goals.

Further, while several studies have explored the link between climate change risks, household responses, and food security in the northern savannah, there is limited knowledge on how climate change is extending the length of the hungry months – the time when households have finished eating up food harvests and must rely on other sources.

“My research is premised on the principles of community participation, knowledge exchange, experience sharing, and communication through extensive partnerships and collaborations with smallholder farmers, local researchers, community-based organizations, and government and non-governmental agencies to facilitate the research transparency, credibility, and applicability,” says Osman.

In particular, “the research ensures maximum involvement of the communities and empowers the target smallholder farmers, especially women,” she adds. Osman’s research contributes to knowledge on how poor people use their creativity, rationality, and strengths to sustain their livelihood goals in times of shocks – specifically relating to improving food security and reducing vulnerability.

Osman’s work helps support the Government of Ghana, development organizations, and private sector investors in developing resilient and innovative solutions to climate change and food insecurity challenges.
Building Just and Sustainable Global Relations

Immigration, transnational connections and livelihoods in Africa

PROFESSOR JOSEPH MENSAH’s research addresses questions of African development, transnational migration, and racism and Black experiences in Canada.

Since the 1990s, analysts and policy-makers have touted the beneficial impacts that return migrants have on the development of their countries of origin, especially in Africa, where the “brain-drain” has been overwhelming. Still, few researchers have examined the factors that influence migrants’ return intentions, and fewer still have explored the interconnections between immigrant integration, transnationalism, and return intentions. Mensah’s recent SSHRC Insight project has examined the return intentions of African immigrants in Canada, drawing on the experiences of Ghanaians and Somalis living in Toronto and Vancouver. His work deepens our understanding of how conditions in countries of origin and places of settlement affect migrants’ return.

More recently, Mensah has partnered with the University of Ghana in an initiative supported by Canada’s International Development Research Centre, to develop action-oriented and gender-transformative research on how women’s health and work relate to trajectories of recovery from COVID-19. The project will address women’s livelihood challenges and opportunities – focusing especially on female bushmeat traders in Ghana. It will help to shape recovery strategies that are inclusive and gender-transformative. Mensah is also a key member of an ongoing SSHRC-Partnership project (based at the University of Alberta) that seeks to create viable strategies for African newcomers to amplify their resilience and ability to thrive in Canada.

Mensah has worked with the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) in Ghana and the UN’s International Organization for Migration (IOM) on questions of global migration, inequality and development.

Inclusion and exclusion in global production networks: Myanmar migrant seafood processing workers in Thailand

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has exposed the vulnerability of global production networks (GPNs). Throughout the pandemic, GPNs experienced disruptions as manufacturing facilities closed and consumers were placed under lockdown. The impacts of such disruption have led to the reduction in wages and unemployment of millions of factory workers across Southeast Asia, many of whom are migrants.

In Thailand, migrant workers were among the first to lose their jobs as companies sought to cut costs. Myanmar migrants in Thailand are not only contending with the impacts of the pandemic on their work and everyday lives, but also with the effects of political unrest in their country of origin. On February 1, 2021, the Myanmar military staged a coup based on the claim that there was electoral fraud during the November 2020 national election.

These events, the COVID-19 pandemic and 2021 Myanmar coup, raise questions around how pandemic and political crises intersect with GPNs to create new forms of inclusion and exclusion for migrant labour. It also raises questions around how migrant workers themselves are renegotiating the terms of their engagement with GPNs. SSHRC CGS Doctoral Awardee Carli Melo is exploring these questions through a case study of Myanmar migrants employed in seafood processing in Thailand.

“I am working to expand understandings of GPNs and labour agency by studying the ways in which workers’ agency is embedded in and conditioned by social and cultural relations and practices that are (re)produced at the scale of the household and community, and the more extensive transnational family geographies that GPNs involve,” says Melo.

Melo is collaborating with members of the Mekong Migration Network (MMN), a network of over 40 civil society organizations from across mainland Southeast Asia, to produce outputs that support their efforts to address inequities that leave millions of migrants and their families unprotected against pandemic and political crises. She is part of the Work at Sea project with Professors Peter Vandergeest and Philip Kelly.
Planning Sustainable Transitions

Addressing Climate Change and Community Energy Planning

ENERGY POLICY IS CENTRAL to the relationship between environmental sustainability and economic prosperity in Ontario, Canada, and around the world. EUC is a major centre for research and teaching on climate change and sustainable energy solutions, including the roles of energy conservation, and distributed and renewable energy sources. With its Sustainable Energy Initiative (SEI) led by co-chairs Professor Mark Winfield and Professor Jose Etcheverry, EUC takes this commitment further in assembling a group of experts specifically focused on supporting sustainable energy transitions.

“The challenges of climate change and the need to support sustainable energy, economies, and communities inspired the Faculty to establish the SEI. The initiative builds and strengthens research, education, and skills for students and professionals in energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy sources, and community energy planning,” says Winfield.

SEI provides analysis to advance policies, projects, and practices that support a transition to a sustainable energy economy and resilient communities. The initiative also supports the new EUC certificate program in Climate Solutions and Sustainable Energy, to educate and train a new generation of sustainable energy entrepreneurs, social innovators, policy-makers, and community activists. In addition, SEI builds and strengthens partnerships among educational institutions, government agencies, business, and non-governmental organizations through research, knowledge mobilization, and field experiences. SEI offers a series of professional development courses on community energy planning for local governments.

Rethinking housing market financing in the aftermath of COVID-19 and Affordable Housing Models in Toronto

THE HOUSING CRISIS in Toronto is now one of the leading problems that residents face in their everyday lives. There are many causes for the crisis, but Murat Ucoglu’s postdoctoral research with Professor Ute Lehrer, and Seyfi Tomar Realty Corporation as industry partner, focuses on the construction of more mid-rise buildings to create an affordable housing system in Toronto.

Specifically, the research project investigates how planning for neighbourhoods with more density would overcome the affordability crisis in Toronto. In recent years, there has been a call for intensifying predominantly single-family neighbourhoods and constructing more mid-rise buildings to overcome Toronto’s housing crisis.

In an in-depth analysis of the deepening housing crisis, Ucoglu, Lehrer and Tomar noted that Ontario must commit to affordable housing for all, rather than using weaker language around “affordable” housing. The research points out that “Canada’s current economic growth model is dependent on the conversion of housing from a human right into a financial investment tool, leading to an ever-worsening housing crisis”.

Staff Spotlight

“As a graduate of the Masters in Geography, I am passionate about education and learning. In my role, I support faculty in student-centric learning approaches to ensure high quality experiences and outcomes.”

Denise McLeod (BA ’02, MA ’19)
Faculty and Program Assistant
Mobilizing the Arts for Change

Materials and meaning in art and curatorial practices

LISA MYERS’ interdisciplinary research contributes significantly to the field of Indigenous curatorial practice, a burgeoning area of practice that intervenes in colonial conventions of art history and critical museum studies. One of her early curatorial projects collaborated with Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee artists and historians to consider treaty history between Indigenous nations. Recognized for her trans-disciplinary and collaborative methods of creating innovative programming and critical exhibitions as important contact zones between artists, audiences, and social justice issues, Myers has been invited to an exchange with other leading Indigenous curators from Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa (New Zealand). Myers is recognized globally as a leader in Indigenous curatorial practice.

“My curatorial research interests include museum conventions, contemporary Indigenous art, geography and ideas of value,” says Myers. Recent research considers the encoding and role of materials as signifying power relations and sense(s) of value. “I take these ideas in different directions in my curatorial projects to examine commodity chains, performance of materials, customary, and cosmological value focusing on Indigenous art in North America. I originally began this line of inquiry by considering food as a material in artwork by Indigenous artists,” she adds.

In her curatorial practice, Myers works with the artist(s) collaboratively to investigate the curatorial premise or thesis of an exhibition. It involves developing exhibitions, caring for artworks and artists, and creating new collections of stories related to filmmaking and media archives. Her research chair program expands and enriches her work in curatorial research on media artists, archives, and specifically on Mike MacDonald’s extensive documentary, media art and garden artworks.

Performing a repertoire of resistance, disruption, and inspiration

NATALIE WOOD is an award-winning Trinidadian-born, Tkaronto-based visual and media artist. Her multimedia artwork cohabits the areas of popular culture, education, and historical research and explores their fascination with counter-narratives, healing cultures, and icons that liberate Black and Queer communities. Natalie’s practice includes painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, video, and performance, and extends into her work as a curator, educator, and community-based queer activist. Wood is presently completing a research creation project for her PhD focused on Black Queer Resistance through Caribbean Carnivals.

“My artwork is politically engaged and identity based. I am concerned with essentially two things: one, issues of representation where I continue to interrogate representations of race, gender, sexuality within mass media, popular culture, and history; and two, ways to challenge hegemonic systems with the ultimate goal to change them through education, knowledge, and inspiration. I do this through appropriation, juxtaposition, counter-appropriation and I work at inserting black feminist, queer and diasporic identities into hegemonic historical narratives and aesthetic frameworks” she expounds. Wood is represented by Paul Petro Contemporary Art. Wood is also the founder of Blue Devil Posse, a group of artists, activists, queers, racialized, Black, non-racialized, and Caribbean-inspired folk who have a strong decolonial and social justice core.

Wood is part of the EUC Black Caucus, committed to addressing anti-Black racism and to facilitating an EUC culture and practice fully attentive to equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The approach is meant to be restorative, hopeful, and tangible in pursuit of systemic change. As Black Futures Coordinator at George Brown College, she has devised and implemented a Black Futures Jam methodology - a form of community action-based methodology that incorporates aspects of social innovation, arts, Afrofuturism, Diasporic, Black Atlantic, and Black Radical practices.

I work at inserting black feminist, queer and diasporic identities into hegemonic historical narratives and aesthetic frameworks.

Natalie Wood, PhD Environmental Studies
Advancing the UNSDGs

The UNSDGs are embedded in EUC’s teaching, research, and engagement activities.

- SDG #2: Zero Hunger
- SDG #6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities
- SDG #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- SDG #12: Responsible Production and Consumption
- SDG #14: Life Below Water
- SDG #15: Life on Land

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #2 ZERO HUNGER through its Maloca Garden. This long-standing (30 years!) ‘living lab’ serves as a classroom, research site, and community hub for organic agricultural production and food security and justice efforts. Maloca is featured in both in-situ and online summer courses on Urban Food Production & Security that together draw 100+ students. Plus, students can take on Maloca internships to help cultivate their career paths. Maloca also features in innovative research on Indigenous cultivation and pollinator gardens. Finally, Maloca serves as a place where we meet our neighbours: 30 community members tend individual plots, 60 students from Jane/Finch schools visit each summer, and SKETCH Queering Place has chosen Maloca as a gardening site to nurture healing among 2S, Queer, and Trans youth.
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

**EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION** through investigating issues in clean water supply, boil water advisories, and learning with Indigenous leaders in water governance. Professor Deborah McGregor is at the forefront of Indigenous environmental justice research in diverse contexts, including water justice and governance. Her most recent publication, “Zaagtoonaa Nibi (We Love the Water): Anishinaabe community-led research on water governance and protection”, supports Indigenous water governance, leadership, and security. Understanding our relationships with, and responsibilities to water are integral for more sustainable and just water systems.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

**EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES** through the EcoArts & Media Festival. This year’s festival – titled ‘MENDING’ – examined how art and art-making can be a means of repairing relationships and fostering a more sustainable and just approach to tackling the environmental crises, systemic challenges, and social inequity in our everyday lives. Organized by undergraduate student Thereza Eric with Environmental Arts & Justice Program Coordinator Sarah Flicker, the festival featured a hands-on collaborative mural, sustainable fashion workshops, and food-based storytelling to highlight the role of the arts in uniting and liberating people and the planet. It brought together students and faculty ‘creatives’ to pursue challenging and much needed conversations about equity. Creativity and equity abound at EUC!

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

**EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**. Quite simply; ‘URBAN’ is in our name! We boast one of Canada’s most prominent clusters of urban scholars whose work spans critical urban theory, in-depth field-based research, and policy-oriented practice. A prominent voice during the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Roger Keil has brought invaluable insights to public understanding of health and disease transmission around the world, notably in his recent book with colleague Harris Ali entitled Pandemic Urbanism.

Associate Professor Jennifer Foster and Professor Gail Fraser – together with student researchers and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority – explore pressing issues on Toronto’s Leslie Street Spit through a SSHRC Partnership Engage Grant (2019-21). Findings relate to park users’ activities, preferences and ideals and inform policies and designs to protect the ecological attributes of this celebrated ‘urban wilderness’.

Awarded a SSHRC Insight Grant (2022-26), Associate Professor Luisa Sotomayor and Assistant Professor Lina Brand Correa are investigating commodified social housing and its impact on urbanization, planning processes, and residents’ everyday lives. Grounded in an empirical study in Colombia, this interdisciplinary project addresses adequate and affordable housing as a fundamental component of societal wellbeing.
**SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption**

**EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #12 RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION** through the Ecological Footprint Initiative (EFI). This ‘living lab’ generates the National Ecological Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts - a database measuring the impact of human activities on nature. This database, which is made publicly available on their website, is produced by student researchers in the areas of ecological economics and footprint methodologies, under the guidance and instruction of EFI’s Director, Eric Miller. Further, EFI is actively producing ecological footprint accounting for stakeholders interested in assessing their impact relative to nature’s resource capacity. Miller and collaborator Katie Kish have recently worked with the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Institute, and the Ontario Biodiversity Council to help them understand their impact on the environment.

Associate Professor Dayna Scott documents the existential battle between one Indigenous community and the influence of mining companies operating on its land. For the past seven years, Scott has worked closely with the Neskantaga First Nation as they fight to preserve their homelands in the sensitive peat-lands of northern Ontario.

Associate Professor Anna Zalik’s research examines and critiques the political ecology and political economy of industrial extraction, with a focus on the merging of corporate security and social welfare interventions in strategic oil and gas exporters.

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**SDG 14: Life Below Water**

**EUC IS ADVANCING GOAL #14 LIFE BELOW WATER** through research working to promote the conservation and sustainable development of our oceans and coastlines by diving into the environmental and human factors affecting water in our changing climate. Assistant Professor Adeyemi Olusola is a river catchment scientist with a focus on rivers, dynamics, and human impacts on catchments. His research began by focusing on headwater streams and smaller catchments, but more recently, Olusola has been examining large rivers, such as the River Niger. His focus is on river dynamics and remote sensing to understand how interactions between process and form can be predicted using a combination of field-based measurements, earth observations, and machine learning algorithms.

Using very different methods, in a project that examines a dam conflict in the remote Aysén region of Chilean Patagonia, Associate Professor Carlota McAllister explores how gauchos living in river valleys threatened with damming draw on the histories of water use on this “last frontier” to build collective responses to dam proposals. The project uses archival and ethnographic methods to trace the emergence of vernaculars of private property in Aysén to show where and how they diverge from the practices for legitimating dispossession that have been deployed by HidroAysén, a proposed project for building five hydroelectric megadams on two of Aysén’s powerful wild rivers, as well as by private conservationists seeking to “rewild” the legendary Patagonian wilderness. McAllister examines the challenges to the global expansion of extractive capitalism that may also emerge from fractures within its own logics.

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**Staff Spotlight**

“I make sure that the day-to-day operational needs for our laboratories are met. We have a variety of labs such as the Water Quality lab, the Climatology Lab and the Hydraulics and Hydrology Lab.”

Patrick Mojdehi (BSc ’02, MSc ’11)
Laboratory Technician/Field Course Support

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**SDG 15: Life on Land**

**EUC is Advancing Goal #15 Life on Land** through the Las Nubes EcoCampus in southcentral Costa Rica. Situated on 414 hectares of land, including pristine rainforest and the unique Lillian Meighen Wright Centre, this ‘living lab’ offers students, faculty, and visitors a window on innovations related to biological conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

The 2022 Study Abroad program hosted over 120 students in 9 courses focusing on food sovereignty, Indigenous perspectives, the politics of water, protected area management, and ecosystem health. Students lived with Costa Rican households, and engaged with local farmers, entrepreneurs, and organizations as part of their hands-on learning experiences.

Las Nubes biological monitoring projects continue to gather valuable information on the rich biodiversity of the area – including ‘rediscovery’ of the (once believed extinct) Harlequin Toad. Las Nubes Director and EUC Associate Professor Felipe Montoya’s documentary film project *Grounded* illuminates the experiences of peasants, migrants, and Indigenous peoples whose histories, lives, and livelihoods are intimately interwoven with the biological corridor.

Ana María Martínez is the Associate Director of the Las Nubes EcoCampus. In her role, she has helped to develop and expand experiential education programs at Las Nubes since 2016 and facilitated the development of interdisciplinary and international research collaborations, including *Grounded*.

**Championing Equity and Black Inclusion**

EUC is committed to dismantling systemic racism and enabling equity and inclusivity for all.

- Black Inclusion Action Plan
- Scholarships for Black and Indigenous Students
- Black and Indigenous Alumni Successes
- Diversifying Faculty and Pedagogy
Black Inclusion Action Plan

THE EUC BLACK INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2020-25 reflects our commitment to addressing anti-Black racism and facilitating an EUC culture and practice fully attentive to equity, diversity, and inclusivity. The Plan is a living document informed by members of our EUC community, including the EUC Equity Committee, the student-led EUC Black Caucus, and the Dean’s Office, and supported by Melissa Theodore as EUC’s Senior Equity Diversity Inclusivity Advisor.

The Plan offers clear objectives, timelines, and accountability structures to ensure progress in thematic areas of: representation, safety, knowledge creation, mental health supports, community engagement, data collection, education, decision making, and accountability. Our collective and fulsome action-oriented approach is meant to be restorative, hopeful, and tangible in pursuit of systemic change. We are proud of the actions taken and strides made to date, some of which are detailed in this section of the EUC Impact Report.

Staff Spotlight

“What I love most about this role is that I get to work with people who are also passionate about dismantling systems of oppression.”

Melissa Theodore
Senior EDI Advisor

Scholarships for Black and Indigenous Students

IN ITS MISSION to create a just and sustainable world, EUC is committed to providing accessible education and opportunities to all students as changemakers. That is why we have numerous awards established by generous donors to support Black and Indigenous students accepted in any of our programs.

In 2022, Alectra Inc. established the Alectra Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Undergraduate Awards to provide scholarship opportunities for Black and Indigenous students. This unique award worth a minimum of $10,500 a year per student is the first undergraduate scholarship program specifically for racialized students that Alectra has sponsored.

Other awards such as the Rama Goel Memorial Scholarship and Rajiv Goel Memorial Scholarship were established to benefit Black and Indigenous students enrolled in the Faculty with grants of up to $1,000 for each recipient every year to support research and related scholarly and creative activities. EUC is grateful for the generosity of the individuals and organizations — including Alectra Inc. and the Goel Family — who are financially supporting students in their academic and career paths.

The Rajiv Goel Memorial Scholarship has motivated me to work harder and persevere through adversity in pursuit of my academic goals.

Kushi Ashmeade, EUC undergraduate student
Black and Indigenous Alumni Successes

**Camille Turner**


CAMILLE TURNER is a Canadian artist who explores themes related to race, space, home, and belonging. Her work combines Afrofuturism and historical research. Turner is a master’s and PhD graduate of York University’s Environmental Studies program, and received the Toronto Biennial’s Artist Prize for her contribution to the 2022 Toronto Biennial of Art exhibit, the second chapter of a two-part biennial – “What Water Knows, the Land Remembers.” Turner explains the reason she chose York University, “EUC was attractive to me because of how well connected our graduates are. I kept running into EUC alumni who spoke very fondly about their experiences. Secondly, I was looking for a supervisor who would support my work. Professor Honor Ford-Smith was instrumental in my journey at York. She had a huge impact on me and supported my visions.”

**Leora Gansworth**

Leora Gansworth (PhD in Geography ’22)

LEORA GANSWORTH holds a Provost’s Postdoctoral Fellowship for Black and Indigenous Scholars at York University’s Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Languages and Osgoode Hall Law School, where she works with Professor Deborah McGregor. Gansworth describes her postdoctoral work as follows: “My research investigates environmental health priorities as determined by Indigenous Peoples. I am especially interested in working with those who continue to seek mino-bimaadiziwin, a good way of life, in reciprocity with all our relations, and an emphasis on restoring kinship with migrating eels.”

**Diversifying Faculty and Pedagogy**

EUC HAS ACTIVELY pursued two key strategies focused on addressing anti-Black racism and embedding diverse approaches in curriculum and practice. First, we have diversified our faculty complement through a designated Black-hiring strategy. Over the past two years we have created and filled three full-time tenure track positions, demonstrating our commitment to increasing the representation of Black faculty members at York University.

Second, we have developed an EUC Toolkit for Black Inclusion in the Classroom & Curriculum. This Toolkit offers strategies related to course syllabi, course content, and classroom facilitation to guide instructors on how to effectively demonstrate commitment to anti-Black racism in their teaching practice, enhance content reflecting Black scholarship, and create classroom spaces that are inclusive and sensitive to race-based dynamics. In combination, these strategic efforts are helping us dismantle barriers of access and encourage fulsome inclusion of all in EUC’s scholarly endeavours.
EUC Call to Action

The Dean’s Award Winners and our aspirations for a more just and sustainable future.

- Dean’s Awards
- Join our EUC Community

Dean’s Awards

IN 2022, Dean Alice J. Hovorka presented the EUC Dean’s Awards to faculty and staff members nominated by their peers. These individuals serve as role models, embracing EUC’s call to action in shaping a more just and sustainable world.

The Dean’s Teaching Award was presented to Jin Haritaworn in recognition of their commitment to activist queer of colour scholarship and creating a sense of community and inclusivity within the classroom.

The Dean’s Service Award was presented to Luisa Sotomayor for her breadth of contributions to planning, renewal and research realms and for her thoughtful, respectful, and effective leadership.

The Dean’s Staff Recognition Award was presented to Rhoda Reyes in recognition of her skillful provision of research support and her invaluable role in celebrating and promoting EUC research excellence.

The Dean’s Research Excellence Award was presented to Linda Peake, for illuminating urbanization as a deeply gendered process and nurturing a global network of feminist scholars committed to action-oriented research.

The Dean’s Research Excellence Award was presented to Ilan Kapoor for his ground-breaking insights in critical development studies and enhancing the intellectual life of students and faculty.

These talented individuals offer their extraordinary expertise and skills to positively impact our EUC community and well beyond.

Alice J. Hovorka, Dean & Professor
Join our EUC Community

IT’S NOT ENOUGH to simply imagine a more just and sustainable future. We need to build it together. So join our EUC Community by becoming a Changemaker. Every contribution - financial, or in-kind with your time and expertise - to the Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change will have an impact. Your investment will help us empower change on behalf of people and the planet.

- Donate to EUC
- Attend an EUC event
- Become an EUC partner
- Follow @YorkUEUC

BOLD IDEAS. BOLD ACTION.
That is what is needed to shape a just and sustainable world.

Join our efforts to EMPOWER CHANGE on behalf of people and the planet.
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & URBAN CHANGE
Keele Campus, York University
Health, Nursing, and Environmental Studies (HNES) Building
4700 Keele Street
Toronto ON, Canada M3J 1P3

CONTACT US
[phone] (416) 736-5252
[web] yorku.ca/euc
[mail] EUCInfo@yorku.ca