

# Solidarity, Displacement & the University

## A Workshop in Two Parts

### Call for Contributions

Part One: Discussing  
October 2022 13-14 - Berlin

Part Two: Building  
April 2023 location TBC

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**Bard College Berlin**  
A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY



## **Concept**

Universities are often thought of as places of learning and places of research, but less often as places of solidarity. We believe that access programmes for displaced learners create spaces of solidarity and community from which to think about opening up the university.

This two-part workshop explores what solidarity with those who have experienced displacement, including asylum seekers and refugees, might mean for teaching, research and the university generally. It does so from the level of the student, teacher, and institution (as well as the interlinkages between the three). Focusing on solidarity naturally entails thinking beyond the borders of the university, to communities, organisations and grassroots initiatives, and how those, in turn, feed back onto institution, teacher and student experiences.

We ask, in what ways does solidarity flow in and through the classroom? How do teachers understand the intersections of pedagogy and solidarity? What kind of solidarity can we expect universities to offer (especially in hostile contexts)?

## **Format**

During the first part of the workshop held in October, participants will come together to discuss their experiences, research, and ideas. In the final session of the workshop we will collectively decide on what type of intervention we wish to make using the proceedings of the workshop, and which form we would like to work with (e.g. a series of academic papers, a collectively written book, a podcast series, a multi-modal website, a conference, policy papers, etc).

In the time between the first and second parts of the workshop, participants will work on their and others' work, meeting online if needed.

In the second part of the workshop we will meet to finalise and collectively produce the intervention.

## Call for Contributions

The workshop is divided into three streams, reflecting the levels through which we would like to think about solidarity at the university. Below we include short descriptions on each stream and suggested questions.

The Student Experience and Teacher Experience streams are open to receive suggestions for contributions. The Institutional Experience stream is by invitation.

**Please send 500 word descriptions of your suggested contribution indicating which stream you think it applies to by September 18th 2022 to [olive@ceu.edu](mailto:olive@ceu.edu)**

Please note limited funding is available to pay for travel and accommodation. Priority will be given to students and scholars of displaced backgrounds and, if possible, precarious scholars.

### **Stream One: Student Experience**

#### Solidarity in and from the classroom

How does student experience affect teaching, and visa-versa? How do displaced students who've become teachers reflect on being on the other side of the classroom? What types of peer learning takes place within the classroom? How do students support one another through their learning? How can we build learning communities based on cooperation not competition? How do friendships form in the classroom and how do these friendships create support systems? What relationships do students in access programmes have with the wider student body, how does this foster solidarity or not?

#### Solidarity with those in 'non-standard' learning contexts

How does the general living conditions of displaced students affect their learning? How does having an interrupted learning trajectory affect learning when enrolled in full time education? How do external pressures, including troubling situations in students' home countries, affect displaced students' ability to flourish when enrolled in education programmes?

#### Solidarity and the alumni experience

What are the medium and long term effects of being in education programmes for displaced learners? How have they affected education and career possibilities? What type of other skills or competencies have been derived? What do 'refugee education programmes' in Europe miss? To what extent can the medium and long term effects of education programmes for displaced learners be 'measured'? Practically speaking, how can alumni be connected through social media, mailing lists, in-person events, etc.?

*We welcome experienced-based and research derived presentations.*

For more information or questions please contact the stream organisers:

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### **Stream Two: Teacher Experience**

Learner-centred approaches have been important in opening academic work to OLIVE students. These approaches recognize where students are coming from and seek to grant autonomy in the learning process from the start. They can thus be seen as modes of creating solidarity at a number of levels, as students become active agents of learning responsible for their own work.

While LCA is a general trend in higher education, OLIVE offers new opportunities and challenges around the method as it works with displaced students. From this basis, this panel seeks to explore the following questions: To what extent the LCA is different in the OLIVE context?

To what extent can the methodological tools can be transmuted into the OLIVE context and back out?

One of the aims of the panel is to understand the teaching methods used within the OLIVE framework. The question at stake is: to what extent OLIVE classes should reinvent the main learner-centred approaches? We are interested in understanding how pedagogues and mentors need to create specific methods that work only within their OLIVE classes.

Another aim of the panel is to contextualise the methods. What can be brought from OLIVE to the larger teaching public? Would the methods, syllabi, or contents work in different educational contexts?

Since Aristotle and Erasmus, the topics of focus, internal motivation do not have a unique solution. That is why practical issues must also be tackled. What are the different ways to include the personal narratives vs. personal dimensions of learning? How to approach the text materials and create a differentiated level of work? To what extent can students assign the syllabus? Including assignments? How can this be implemented in practical terms?

We welcome papers on this topic and also non-traditional presentations that involve the participants of the conference.

For questions or clarifications please contact the stream organisers:

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### **Stream Three: Institution Experience**

This panel focuses on two inter-related topics:

1. External social or political pressures that impact on universities' capacity to demonstrate solidarity towards people who have been displaced, and
2. What are the administrative barriers that exist at universities that impede solidarity in providing access to students who have experienced displacement.

#### *External social and political pressures impacting on university solidarity to displaced peoples*

The first topic examines the increasing hostility in Europe and elsewhere to displaced people, and also takes note of the differences between this embedded hostility and the readiness in some sectors to include Ukrainian displaced people in recent years. A number of people working on fostering solidarity with people displaced from Ukraine have argued that this could be a template for extending solidarity with people displaced from other regions. What can be learned from current practices of opening up the university for people displaced from Ukraine? Can it be a template for the future for all displaced peoples?

Faced with hostile environments often supported by national governments, those fostering solidarity for displaced people in universities have turned to grassroots migrant rights actors. What can be learnt about solidarity within and outside the educational arena by connecting to migrant rights actors in civil society? How easy or difficult is it to create and maintain these links? How do HE institutions engage with broader issues?

In this part of the panel, we will start with a roundtable discussion followed by a roundtable design session, the latter intended to foster solutions to the problems identified.

#### *University administrative barriers that impede solidarity with displaced people*

Despite its best efforts, universities have come to be attached to well-worn processes of assessing previous learning, registering students and supporting their admissions. There are important blindspots at universities in terms of recognising how social and economic backgrounds impact access to and success in universities. In other panels in this conference we look at this issue from the perspective of students and teachers and how to make university classrooms more welcoming environments. Classrooms are embedded in a broader institution, and the institution's administrative practices can foster and welcome diversity or can impinge on the diversity that students bring.

A related aspect is how programs designed to foster access are conceived or placed within the university. Access programs are often seen as tangential parts of the university, part of civic engagement, rather than a key academic program that brings diversity to the student body.

In this part of the panel we will focus on a roundtable discussion consisting of university administrators with responses from individuals who have both experience of working in access programs and in university administration. This session will be followed up by a closed working session consisting of university administrators and access program staff to address these issues.

The panel speakers will be selected by invitation. For further information please contact the stream organisers:

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