Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference

a virtual conference for undocumented immigrants and our supporters
weekend 1 sept 24 & sept 25
weekend 2 oct 8 & oct 9

sign up
nysylc.org/iyecon
Weekend 1: Healing or Whatever

Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference

SATURDAY
09.24.22

12PM - 2:30PM

• Transforming Guilt Into Action: Navigating Work and Academic with Self-Compassion

• Undocu Artist: A Space to Discuss Being Undocumented and Creatives

SUNDAY
09.25.22

12PM - 2:30PM

• Collage Making and Immigrant Women Talk
Weekend 1: Healing or Whatever

Transforming Guilt into Action: Navigating Work and Academic with Self-Compassion
Sat Sept 24 from 12pm - 2:30pm EST

Cynthia Nayeli Carvajal, PhD
Interim CUNY Director of Immigrant Student Success

Cynthia Carvajal is a scholar and practitioner at the intersection of immigration and education. Originally from Zapopan, Mexico she immigrated to East Los Angeles, CA at the age of five where she navigated K-12 education as an undocumented immigrant. Her personal and professional goals are grounded in her experience as a formerly undocumented immigrant, student, and community member for twelve years of her life. She previously served as the inaugural director for two immigration focused spaces: John Jay’s Immigrant Student Success Center and the CUNY-Initiative on Immigration and Education. She currently serves as a board member for the New York State Youth Leadership Council. Her scholarly work explores educators’ roles while working alongside immigrant students to resist the dehumanizing effects of restrictive immigration policy in schools. Her work spans across California, New York, and Arizona, providing a comparative understanding the impact of policy and practice in politically varying states. Cynthia Carvajal earned her bachelor’s degree at UCLA, her master’s degree at Teachers College, Columbia University and her doctorate at the University of Arizona.

Guadalupe Ambrosio
Co-Director NYSYLC

Guadalupe Ambrosio is a longtime community organizer and educator, born in Mexico City and raised in the Bronx. Currently, she is the project lead and founder of Undocu-EDU at CUNY IIE and the Co-Executive Director of the New York State Youth Leadership Council, an undocumented youth lead organization in New York. In her free time you can find her reading or creating art.
Shaina Vallejos

Shaina was born in Choluteca, Honduras, and came to the U.S. when she was 4 years old. She is a recent graduate from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Studies. While at NYU she created her own major which explores colonial epistemologies, politics of belonging and representation, and the makings of vulnerable labor and survival particularly, looking at those humans that are made invisible through a lens of Film, Media, & T.V. production. As a passionate artist with four years of stage and film experience, she's been able to embrace all mediums of visual and performance art: Film, Theater, Dance, Creative and Screenwriting, Photography, Digital Art, and Filmmaking. At the YLC, Shaina is part of our media team. She looks forward to creating spaces for youth where they can navigate through their intersectional identities and she hopes to support and empower others to reach their own versions of success.

Metzli Nieves

Metzli Nieves was born in Morelos, Mexico and migrated to the United States at three-years-old. She recently graduated from Barnard College, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Education Policy. While at Barnard, Metzli focused on making Barnard a more inclusive space for undocumented folks on campus. Since she was a little girl, Metzli has used art as a way to express her most vulnerable feelings to the world. While her relationship with art has not been linear, it has transformed the way she navigates with grief and displacement.
Collage Making and Immigrant Women Talk with ODA  
Sun Sept 25 at 12pm - 2:30pm EST

Angy Rivera

Angy Rivera, is a Colombian immigrant. She believes art is a tool we can use to heal and is open to all. She works at the New York State Youth Leadership Council and graduated from John Jay College. Angy starred in the documentary film No Le Digas A Nadie (Don't Tell Anyone). The Peabody Award-winning documentary, which aired on PBS in 2015, navigates the difficult reality and double silence Rivera experiences as an undocumented immigrant and survivor of sexual assault.

Lorena Modesto

Lorena Modesto immigrated to the US from Mexico at five years old. She attends The City College of New York, double majoring in political science and sociology. She is the current President of the CCNY Dream Team, an undocumented student-led space on campus. Lorena is also an active member of the NYSYLC, volunteering her time to uplift undocumented immigrant people's voices, experiences, and rights. She loves collecting earrings, art prints, and caring for her plantitas.

Roxana Herrera

Roxana Herrera graduated from CCNY with a double major in psychology and political science. She was president of the Dream Team during her time there. She has been involved with the NYSYLC in various capacities including the dream team network, scholarship committee, and fundraising team.

Otros Dreams en Acción

Otros Dreams en Acción (ODA) is an organization by and for people that have been affected by the experiences of deportation and forced return. We advocate for translocal spaces, mobility for all and a dignified return through radical creativity, accompaniment, collective care and by centering the community.
Maggie Loredo. Director of Otros Dreams en Acción.

I am a forced returned woman that also identifies as pocha and chilanga. Sometimes I like to think that I am de aquí y de allá, but most of the time I feel more ni de aquí ni de allá. Homelessness defines me sometimes, but there is still hope of one day finding or creating roots. My own story pushed me to become an activist. I was born in San Luis Potosi, grew up undocumented in Texas/Georgia. In 2008 I was forced to make the decision to return to Mexico. I currently live in Mexico City. I contributed my story to the first edition of Los Otros Dreamers in 2014. I am cofounder of Otros Dreams en Acción. I am determined to continue to accompany, witness and walk side by side with my deported and returned community in Mexico. Together we will continue to fight for our families/communities, for our mobility and for our dignity. Our existence is resistance!

My name is Madai Zamora. I was born in Tlaxcala, and at the age of 3, I was taken to California, where I spent 10 years of my life. I then moved to North Carolina, where I lived until the age of 24. I have a degree in English and Spanish Literature from Johnson C. Smith University! I am currently the Social Justice Education Coordinator at ODA and enjoy traveling Mexico. I have a Youtube and Instagram account called Diary of a Native Foreigner documenting my return to Mexico. I currently reside in San Luis Potosí.

My name is Leni Alvarez, soy una Pocha y mujer retornada. Nací en Chiapas, was raised in Florida, retorne el 2009 a Veracruz, estudie en Xalapa, vivo en CDMX y me mudo a Veracruz de nuevo… La migración siempre ha sido parte de mi vida, me sumo a la lucha del reconocimiento de la movilidad como un derecho humano y que nuestras historias y testimonios sean contadas desde la dignidad.
Weekend 2: Securing the Diploma

Iyecon
Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference

SATURDAY
10.08.22

12PM - 2:30PM

• Financing College
• What to Do After High School?

SUNDAY
10.09.22

12PM - 2:30PM

• Undocu College Panel: Navigating College & After
• Undocu Entrepreneurship Panel
Weekend 2: Securing the Diploma
Financing College
Sat Oct 8 at 12pm - 2:30pm EST

Aldo Irving Robledo Garcia

My full name is Aldo Irving Robledo Garcia! I’m from Brooklyn, New York and am currently a rising senior at John Jay College and I’m from Tepalcingo, Morelos, Mexico. I came here when I was about a year old and lived in upstate Lockport, New York for 8 years until I moved down to NYC in 2009!! I love photography and enjoy learning about nature. I’ve been an education fellow and the Undocu Academy Coordinator at the New York State Youth Leadership Council since 2019!

Gabriela Aquije Quiroga

Gabriela Aquije Quiroga (she/her) is the Undocu Academy Coordinator at NYSYLC, where she helps undocumented students navigate the college process and life after high school. She recently graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Education Studies.
What to do after high school?
Sat Oct 8 from 12pm-2:30pm EST

Fernando Aguilar
Hey, my name is Fernando & I am an Education Fellow at the New York State Youth Leadership Council. I have been involved within the YLC since 2016. I got involved through the Youth Empowerment Program which opened me up to many different opportunities for my personal and career goals. I am currently in school majoring in Graphic Design & illustration and I hope to earn my Bachelor’s Degree someday. I am also currently a part of the Education Team at the YLC through which I previously had co-coordinated the Jr. Academy Program.

Maria Fernanda Vera
Maria was born in Puebla, Mexico and migrated to the United States in 2008. She is the Community Organizer at the New York State Youth Leadership Council, the first undocumented youth-led organization in New York. Maria was the first woman to be President of the BMCC Dream Team in 2017 and organized with the group for an entire academic year. She is also a first generation college student. Currently, she is a fourth year student at CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice majoring in Latin American & Latina/o Studies.
Undocucollege Panel: Navigating College and After
Sun Oct 9 from 12pm-2:30pm EST

Ximena Ospina is an undocutrans immigrant raised in New Jersey. She attended Union County College before transferring to and graduating from Columbia University. In 2021 she began her legal education at CUNY School of Law. She was an organizer for 5 years.

My name is Jose Mazariego, and I am studying Epidemiology and Biostatistics at CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. I was born in Metapan, El Salvador and immigrated to the US at the age of 12. After high school, I attended Rockland Community College (RCC) where I received an Associate of Science in Business Administration. Upon graduating, I transferred to Baruch College to complete my undergraduate studies and graduated in the spring of 2020 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Statistics and Quantitative Modeling with a minor in Mathematics. During my last year at Baruch, I was awarded the Levin-Goffe scholarship by the Stonewall Community Foundation. This scholarship recognized the personal and academic achievements of undocumented students who identified as part of the LGBTQ+ community. As an openly gay man and an undocumented immigrant, my work has centered around these two communities that are now under tremendous political attack. For the past two years, I’ve been involved in multiple projects to help immigrant and Latinx students navigate the college process. I was a mentor to a high school student through the NYSYLC mentorship program. I have worked closely with the Title V coordinator at RCC where I’ve participated in multiple panels, created presentations for immigrant and international students, and helped student budget for their education. I have also worked with local high school counselors where I’ve been privileged to help high school students plan for their education and provide accurate information about attending college as an undocumented student. As an epidemiologist, my goal is to work in research that will help marginalized communities combat the effects of social factors that can impact the health of individuals. Such factors include education, immigration, sexual identity, and others, most of these factors that have affected me as well.
Gabriela Aquije Quiroga (she/her) is the Undocu Academy Coordinator at NYSYLC, where she helps undocumented students navigate the college process and life after high school. She recently graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Education Studies.

My name is Enrique Maldonado from Tlahuapa, Guerrero, Mexico who has worked in the hospitality industry since high school. Working sometimes part to full time I was able to achieve paying off day to day expenses and also pay my way to a college degree. With hard work and dedication I accomplished to graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in finance. After college going into my field career was difficult it seemed there was no job opening for me. This did not discourage me, I gathered all my years of experience in the hospitality industry and took a risk to open my own business. This adventure of being a businessman would also create an opportunity for my family and I to join forces. The idea of opening a juice bar came to me when I realized that I personally always had to travel away from my neighborhood to find a healthier option. There were two famous juice bars where I'll visit at least twice a day. At the moment I noticed that people were becoming more health conscious and saw there was an opportunity. In late September 2014 I opened the doors to Fruces Juice Bar. A local juice bar in upper west side Harlem, with the aspirations of offering a healthy and economical option to the community with hopes to teach and spread health consciousness within the community.
Undocu Entrepreneurship Panel  
Sun Oct 9 from 12pm-2:30pm EST

**Shaina Vallejos**  
CEO Bespoke Creative

Shaina was born in Choluteca, Honduras, and came to the U.S. when she was 4 years old. She is a recent graduate from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Studies. While at NYU she created her own major which explores colonial epistemologies, politics of belonging and representation, and the makings of vulnerable labor and survival particularly, looking at those humans that are made invisible through a lens of Film, Media, & T.V. production. As a passionate artist with four years of stage and film experience, she's been able to embrace all mediums of visual and performance art: Film, Theater, Dance, Creative and Screenwriting, Photography, Digital Art, and Filmmaking. At the YLC, Shaina is part of our media team. She looks forward to creating spaces for youth where they can navigate through their intersectional identities and she hopes to support and empower others to reach their own versions of success.

**Jenny Bermudez**  
CEO Bespoke Creative

Jenny is the CEO & Co-Founder of Bespoke Creative. She drives the company’s business development and website strategy. Jenny has designed and developed websites in a range of industries including healthcare, financial services, hospitality, e-learning, entertainment and retail. Having graduated from The National Training Service (SENA) at her hometown, Armenia, Colombia, she received a degree in 3D Design & Animation, she is also versed in tech functions ranging from print & graphic design to web & email marketing. Her strategic, resourceful approach has been recognized with numerous awards including 'Site of the Day' on Adobe three times. Professionally, Jenny is most passionate about helping people unlock and embrace their online presence; personally nothing matters to her more than family, the people who have provided her with unconditional love and support through the years. She also enjoys biking and reading.

**Yennifer Soriano**  
Creator D.M Delicias

I graduated last year with a BA degree in Latin American and LatinX Studies and a double minor in Anthropology and LatinX Literature. I am considering getting my masters within the next few years. I started my small business during my last year in college in 2021. With the pandemic rising and everyone being indoors, I needed to distract my mind someway. I started to bake and learned how to make chocolate covered strawberries. Looking back, I feel like I have improved a lot. I learned how to make cookies, and although I have tried to make conchas, I can't quite master them. My business name is [d.m.delicias](https://www.dm.delicias)
Hey there! I am Roberto Cardona, I go by Rob, an undocumented hustler. I was brought to the states when I was 12 years old by my parents, as many of us were. I came to a country where I did not know anything about it. As an undocumented child, teen and adult, I faced many challenges. Language barrier was the first one I came across. Successfully learning the language and overcoming this barrier, the next one was college. I was fortunate enough that my mother’s boss at the time, paid for my 2-year college. It sure was a big help and relief from my parent’s burden of not being able to send me to college. This was the opening door that pushed me to keep moving forward and achieve my goals and dreams I had as a kid/teen. Fast forward to today, I can look back and say that all those challenges and barriers were necessary in order to be where I am and with the knowledge I have gained. I’m currently a graphic designer and photographer (as a hobby but I have done many paid shoots). I have been able to open a screen print and printing shop with the help of my family. We are now opening our third year in business and all I can say to myself is, why didn’t you start earlier. Being an immigrant business owner has been such an achievement and amazing experience. The challenges may be bigger, but nothing that I cannot overcome.