SOCIAL CAPITAL INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH AMONG REFUGEES

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Overview

- Refugees experience trauma as a result of their political, social, religious status and individual experiences in oppressive circumstances such as war, forced migration, and resettlement (*among other factors*).

- Negative effects of these experiences permeate and cause adverse circumstances for individuals forced to migrate or voluntarily migrate in search of stabler ends.

- Strengthening social capital is believed to improve mental health outcomes among refugees, yet a more firm understanding is required to generate practical policy and intervention recommendations.
Overview
Vision, Goals and Objectives

Vision
To improve public health and identify social capital interventions and policies to enhance mental health outcomes among refugees.

Goals
To conduct a systematic review on social capital, mental health and refugees to identify trends and develop policy and intervention recommendations.

Objectives
- Identify and analyze 30+ articles that focus on social capital, mental health and refugees
- Prioritize most relevant articles to inform policy and intervention recommendations
- Compose a systematic review utilizing prioritized articles
- Develop policy brief to present to the United Nations
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td><strong>BEGAN SYSTEMATIC REVIEW</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Convened with Dr. Ester Villalonga Olives &amp; Dr. Daniel Aldrich</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Met with Librarian Roxanne Palmiter to discuss systematic review requirements</td>
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<td>● Finalized codes and methods</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td><strong>CONDUCTED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Met with Librarian Roxanne Palmiter to finalize systematic review requirements</td>
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<td>● Finalized search codes and methods</td>
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<td>● Searched for articles within Embase &amp; Pubmed (<em>abstracts</em>)</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td><strong>ANALYZED LITERATURE &amp; BEGAN WORKING ON DELIVERABLES</strong></td>
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<td>● Defined inclusion and exclusion criteria and selected studies for inclusion based on predefined criteria</td>
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<td>● Completed first run through articles (<em>full-text</em>), second run-through of articles to lead to 30 articles to review and third run through of articles that led to 8 articles to review</td>
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<td>● Drafted report and policy brief</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td><strong>COMPLETED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW &amp; FINALIZED DELIVERABLES</strong></td>
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<td>● Completed report through extraction of data from 8 included studies</td>
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<td>● Completed policy brief for UN</td>
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<td>● Completed final presentation</td>
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Research Questions
● How do refugees build social capital in their new community and how does this affect their mental health?
● How can understanding the relationship between refugees, social capital, and mental health help the United Nations design social capital interventions to promote better health?

Relevant Literature
Data Collection

A systematic review is a methodology used to collect qualitative and quantitative secondary data. This type of review requires a researcher to conduct the following steps:

1. Identify the research question
2. Define inclusion and exclusion criteria
3. Search for studies
4. Select studies for inclusion based on predefined criteria
5. Extract data from included studies
6. Present results
Articles identified through
Pubmed = 45
Embase = 75

Articles screened after abstract review
n = 30

Articles reviewed and included in the systematic review
n = 7

Articles excluded (language, abstract not available, lack of intervention, duplicates)
(n = 90)

Final Flowchart Of Review Process
Key Findings

Refugees
- North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Eastern Europe
- Bhutan
- Tanzania
- Syria
- The Caribbean

Mental Health
- Depression
- Mental illness
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Helplessness

Social Capital
- Communicating with locals
- Building friendships
- Talking to neighbors
- Understanding new culture
- Integration into social systems
- Building support systems
- Participating in groups
- Expanding networks
- Growing sense of community
- Strengthening social cohesion
- Sharing knowledge and access to resources (employment, housing, etc.)
Key Findings

Interventions

- Group therapy sessions
- Peer-led community health workshops
- Social support groups
- Community kitchens

Improved mental health outcomes

Increased social capital
While the interventions affected social capital and mental health, they also aimed to improve overall health and wellbeing by:

- Providing quality healthcare services
- Combating food insecurity
- Eliminating sexual stigma and discrimination
- Addressing the daily stressors of resettlement
- Developing healthy coping mechanisms
Limitations

Our research and key findings have some potential limitations including:

- Inclusion criteria
- Search terms and keywords
- Access to databases
- Access to articles
Intervention & Policy Recommendations:

- Community-Led Interventions
- Peer-Led Interventions
- NGO partnerships

Alternative Recommendations:

- Program evaluation of existing and future interventions
Next Steps

- Proceed with research alongside partners at the University of Maryland & Northeastern University
- Drs Villalonga Olives & Aldrich will present research to peers
- Transition research provided to broader paper on how the UN and other organizations should view social ties
- Present effective interventions and recommendations to the United Nations
Acknowledgments

Foremost, we would like to give our sincerest gratitude to our Professor, Dr. Theodore Landsmark, who instilled confidence in our team and imparted invaluable leadership and wisdom that will serve us in our careers and lifetime, a hundredfold.

Secondly, we thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Daniel Aldrich, for supporting our research and providing much-needed guidance. We deeply value your commitment and passion for this research.

Lastly, and certainly not least—we would like to thank our clients, Drs Ester Villalonga-Olives and Daniel Aldrich. Your impeccable intellect, passion, patience, and belief in our ability to support your change-making research is awe-inspiring.