

# THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS TO REDUCE THE DEGRADATION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN MIGRANT AND REFUGEE POPULATION IN POST MIGRATION: THE CASE OF HORIZON ACADEMIC PARTICIPANTS IN UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

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**Introduction** migrants and refugees are the most vulnerable population and subject to degradation of mental health due to the life they encounter in recipient countries as well as their traumatic past before being migrants or refugees.

**Objective:** to study the contributing factors for degradation of mental health among horizon academic participants as migrants and refugees in university of Geneva and to see the program positive impacts to reduce the degradation of mental health of this group.

**Methodology:** 10 program participants representing four WHO working regions and 8 different nationalities, owning B2 level French skill and more than 18 years of age are selected. The 13 Interview questions consisting mental health, post migration life encounter and program impact on participant post migration life are being discussed. Another interview with four program facilitators are also conducted to strengthen the study perspective. Finally, GHQ-12 questionnaire to evaluate general mental health status of participants are being used. Scientific articles, annual reports and data's on mental health of migrants and refugees from WHO, UNHCR and IOM as well as horizon academic annual reports are being used.

**Result:** Four contributing factors for the degradation of mental health in program participants post migration life are being identified. Which are; Discrimination, waiting time to obtain asylum, language barrier and racism.

*Discrimination* highly contributes to the degradation of mental health in 80% of study participants in the form of organizational discrimination. Societal discrimination or discriminatory environment, racial discrimination, linguistic discrimination and Indirect discrimination.

*Waiting time to obtain asylum* also a factor experienced by 80% of participants 60% of them waited between 14 months to 3 years to be settled as a refugee while 20% of them still don't have refugee status and according to them it is a factor which mentally affected them in post migration life. These two factors are alarming and found to be major cause to the degradation of mental health in post migration

*Language barrier* is experienced by 50% of study participants in post migration life and being mentally affected in a different degree. And finally, *Racism* is experienced by 40% of study participants which contributes to the degraded mental health state of participants.

Results from GHQ-12 questionnaire also brings another findings that requires immediate attention to fight the problem. When viewed based on gender, The male participants response showed 30-50% of mental health risks to PTSD, depression and Insomnia. While the female participants result 60-90% risk of mental health risk to the three conditions which highlight the women vulnerability.

**Conclusion & Recommendations:** Aside from the above mentioned post migration challenges that contributed to the degradation of mental health in program participants, the program plays a crucial role for reducing this ongoing post migration challenges by being a place of comfort and a place that is free from discriminatory acts which in turn contributed to the betterment of mental health state of these population. To strengthen the program positive impact, building a work unit which offers culturally tailored psychosocial support to program participants will add a higher value to the reduction of mental health problem.

In the long run, Working in collaboration with psychology department of Geneva university and relevant stakeholders in mental health from international organization like WHO, UNHCR and IMO to develop evidence based mental health tool for the wellbeing and mental health of migrants and refugees.

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