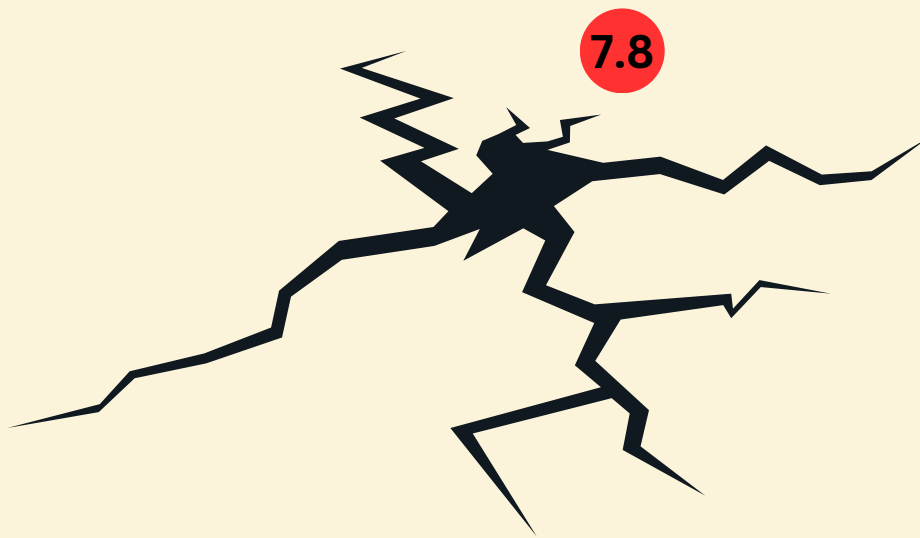




PROJECT REPORT

Post-Earthquake Psychological Support and Solidarity Project



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ABOUT US

The RWCA is a charitable organization based in North London, dedicated to serving the Turkish-speaking communities in London, Haringey. Established in 1991, the RWCA aims to address the social, cultural, and educational needs of the Turkish community in the city. Over the years, RWCA has effectively served its target communities, gaining recognition as one of the prominent charitable organizations known for its wide range of activities and services.

Introduction

This report delves into the profound impact and transformative outcomes achieved by the PostEarthquake Psychological Support and Solidarity Project. The work supported by Haringey Public Health, was developed as a responsive and compassionate initiative, the project aimed to provide essential post-earthquake psychological support to individuals affected by the seismic events, both within the London Borough of Haringey and surrounding boroughs. The project was carried out online and had participation from those impacted around the world as well.

Natural disasters like earthquakes can leave lasting emotional scars, transcending geographical boundaries. Recognizing the universality of trauma, the project's core objective was to offer a beacon of hope and healing through expert guidance, communal sharing, and empathetic connection. By fostering an environment of understanding and solidarity, the project not only aimed to address immediate emotional needs but also to initiate a journey of resilience and post-traumatic growth.





ABOUT OUR PROJECT

The devastating earthquakes that struck the Southeastern provinces of Turkey on 6 February 2023, with magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5, had a profound impact on the region. The affected provinces included Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Malatya, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, and Adana. These provinces are home to nearly 14 million people, including around 2 million Syrian refugees¹. The scale of the disaster was immense, resulting in significant loss of life and widespread displacement.

According to the latest statement from the Ministry of Interior, the earthquake claimed the lives of **50,783** people, with **7,302** of them being refugees. Additionally, the number of injuries reached up to 107,000. **The earthquake's impact extended to a staggering 9.1 million people** who were affected by the disaster, and among them, **3 million individuals were displaced from their homes.**



This report explores the project's objectives, content, challenges, and remarkable outcomes, all of which were influenced by the unique context of the earthquake's impact on individuals and communities.

The project stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity, demonstrating that compassion, understanding, and shared experiences can transcend physical borders and mend the wounds of even the most profound adversities.

The seismic impact of the devastating earthquakes on 6 February 2023 reverberated far beyond the physical tremors, leaving deep emotional imprints on the affected individuals and all community. In the wake of this catastrophe, this project was designed with a dual purpose: to address the urgent psychological needs of those directly impacted by the earthquakes and to foster a sense of unity among participants from diverse backgrounds and nations.

The project's primary objective was to provide a safe space for individuals to navigate the complex emotional terrain that follows such a traumatic event. Recognizing that trauma can extend its reach across cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries, the project aimed to create an environment where participants could share their experiences, express their emotions, and find solace in the commonality of their struggles.

The earthquakes not only impacted those in Turkey but also resonated with individuals who had faced similar circumstances elsewhere. By encouraging mutual support and empathy, the project aimed to foster a global network of survivors, united by their resilience and determination.



PROJECT CONTENT & STRUCTURE



1. Understanding Trauma and Resilience
2. Anxiety and Fear Management
3. Processing Grief and Loss
4. Building Social Support
5. Coping with Guilt and Shame
6. Coping with Anger and Frustration
7. Discovering Post-Traumatic Growth
8. Finding Meaning and Purpose
9. Coping with Empathy Fatigue

Each week's theme was carefully chosen to address different dimensions of the trauma recovery process, ensuring a holistic approach that encompassed various emotional responses and coping mechanisms. Through expert-guided sessions, interactive discussions, and practical strategies, participants embarked on a journey of understanding, empathy, and resilience.





IMPLEMENTATION & INTERACTION

A dedicated team executed the project through online sessions, creating a safe space for participants to share emotional moments. Moreover, individuals with firsthand experience of prior earthquakes provided valuable insights, offering support and highlighting the human aspect of such tragic events.

The presence of individuals who had lived through previous earthquakes brought a unique dimension to the project. Their insights and firsthand accounts served as a source of inspiration, demonstrating resilience and imparting valuable lessons to those currently facing trauma's aftermath.

CHALLENGES

Navigating the intricate landscape of trauma recovery within the project revealed a spectrum of challenges that ultimately enriched the project's impact. As the initiative aimed to address the complex emotional responses to trauma, it encountered obstacles that provided valuable opportunities for growth and adaptation.

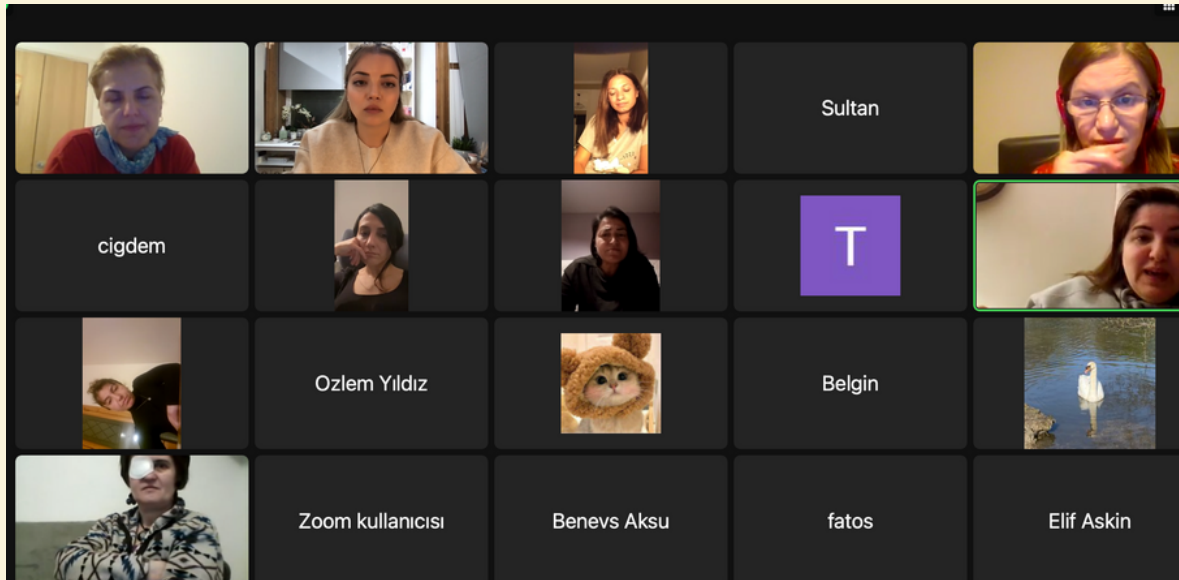
One substantial challenge involved addressing collective emotions such as anger and frustration stemming from the seismic events. Participants grappled with a sense of injustice and loss, compounded by feelings of neglect. The project recognized the importance of providing a platform for participants to voice their emotions and channel their anger constructively. This challenge underscored the necessity of fostering healthy communication and coping strategies in the face of overwhelming emotions.



OUTCOMES

As participants engaged in discussions, shared experiences, and learned coping strategies, they began to forge a sense of connection that transcended the geographical boundaries that once separated them. **Bonds were formed not only through shared trauma but through the shared journey of healing and growth.** The impact of this communal support was evident as participants reported feeling a sense of validation, understood, and less isolated in their struggles.

Furthermore, the concept of post-traumatic growth introduced in week seven left an enduring imprint. Participants emerged with a newfound sense of agency, recognizing their capacity to overcome adversity and emerge stronger. **The project's holistic approach ensured that participants not only addressed their immediate emotional needs but also acquired lifelong tools for coping, self-reflection, and fostering meaningful connections.** As a result, the project left an indelible legacy, fostering a community of survivors who had not only weathered the storm of trauma but had emerged as beacons of strength, empathy, and post-traumatic growth.



FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES

One crucial recommendation is the integration of long-term support mechanisms. While the nine-week project provided participants with essential tools and insights, the journey of healing is ongoing. **Offering follow-up sessions, support groups, or access to online resources can ensure that participants continue to receive the necessary guidance as they navigate the challenges that arise in the aftermath of trauma.** Additionally, collaborating with local mental health professionals and organizations can establish a broader network of support, extending the project's reach and impact.

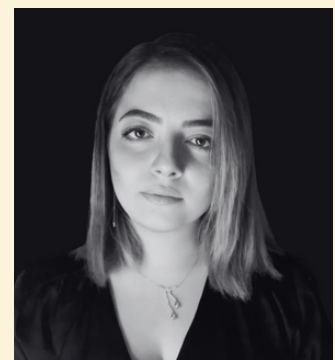
Moreover, future projects should consider tailoring content to address the unique needs of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The success of the project demonstrated that cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are key to establishing trust and rapport among participants. By incorporating a variety of perspectives, approaches, and resources, future initiatives can ensure that individuals from different backgrounds feel seen, heard, and understood.

In essence, the recommendations for the future center around sustainability and adaptability. Building upon the foundation of this project's success, future endeavors can offer ongoing support, embrace cultural diversity, and continue to promote healing, growth, and resilience for individuals navigating the challenging terrain of trauma recovery.

COLLABORATION WITH PROFESSIONALS

Throughout the project's duration, the guidance of psychologist Yasemin Hatipoglu and the expertise of a group of trained psychotherapists infused the project understanding of trauma-focused psychosocial support.

Their contributions went beyond facilitation, reflecting a deeply empathetic approach that was sensitive to the emotional needs of participants. The involvement of professionals with specialized training ensured that the content and interactions were grounded in evidence-based practices, enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of the project.



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