Action for Peace
Short Guide about Working with Displaced Persons for Students and Lecturers

First Edition

ENOTHE
European Network
of Occupational Therapy
in Higher Education

Background and Objective

Currently, 89.3 million people are forced to flee their homes due to war, violence, disasters, and persecution (UNHCR, 2022). Our profession can make a significant contribution to strategically address occupational needs resulting from human displacement (WFOT, 2016).

The **ENOTHE Action for Peace initiative** produced this guide to assist occupational therapy students and lecturers interested in working with displaced people in their local context. To support the planning and implementation of initiatives in a responsible and ethical manner, this guide provides an accessible overview of core values and important guiding questions to consider. Links to helpful resources are also provided.

Core Values

Occupational therapy initiatives should be human rights driven, aim for social justice and follow high ethical standards (EC, 2020; Kraxner et al., 2018; Scheer et al., 2020; WFOT, 2016).

Core Values

Occupation as a Right

Non judgemental respect for autonomy

Individuals and communities have the right to identify their own best interests and to make their own decisions.

Sustainability

Recognise and address the complexity of intersecting social determinants influencing the realization of rights and work to address underlying inequities and oppression.
Create sustainable resources and consider first existing expertise and initiatives in your local community.

Do no harm

Minimise risk with awareness of the particular safeguards needed and the potential for interventions to cause harm or perpetuate inequities and adopt a trauma–informed approach.

Collaborative Partnership

Communicate and collaborate with openness, sensitivity, empathy, and respect for privacy and dignity.

Respect cultural diversity

Avoid homogenising groups and prejudices. Show respect and recognition for the diversity of identities individuals value.

Guiding Questions and Resources

Questions and resources to guide needs assessment, project design and implementation planning are outlined below as stages; these processes are not linear but interrelated, and consideration of all factors is required throughout the process.

Guiding Questions			Resources
Contextualization: It is important to complete a needs assessment of existing resources and services, supportive and restrictive factors, your own work related conditions and capacities, and a review of current literature (consider e.g. InterAct, WFOT Learning, OT Europe Interest Group). Assessment at population, community and organizational levels may be most appropriate when working in this context alongside consideration of individual needs.			*OT Europe Interest Group Displaced Persons Report and Call-to-Action*
Environment ⟷	**Person** ⟷	**Occupation**	*WFOT Resources and Learning Module: Working with Displaced Persons*

Identifying Needs (Assess/Evaluate)

Environment	Person	Occupation
What is already being done for and with refugees, where it is being done and who is doing it? Would a stakeholder analysis be helpful? • to develop awareness of the local context. • to identity relevant stake- and shareholders, projects and networks that already exist. • to identify services offered by formal organizations/groups and/or grassroots (unofficial or informal) organizations/groups. • to determine what is feasible within my university/community/other institutions and if there are already initiatives. If yes, is it open to join and explore opportunities of collaboration? • to ascertain possibilities within the curriculum. • to create affiliations with key entities (access to settings, contact with professionals with specializations in the field) and key persons and representatives from the refugee community. • to help with identifying initial gaps and potential joint initiatives.	Who are the people in need right now? Consider groups that may get limited attention or benefit from an occupaitonal therapy perspective e.g. people with disabilities, women, unaccompanied minors. Personal and collective occupational histories can support understanding of what people want/need/have to do. • Where are the people right now? How can I reach them? Talk with adults, children, service providers, community leaders, officials. • What are the strengths, their accessibility to resources and services? • What are the limitations/threats? (including legal status/political situation) • What are the ambitions? What are occupational potentials? (occupational narrative; past/present/future)	Which occupations do people (not) have access to? • Ensure safety needs, basic, physical and psychological safety and access to legal supports. • Which engagement in occupations/opportunities for participation are considered as deprived? • Consider survival occupations, do people have access to food, hygiene, accommodation, medical and communication needs. • What are the occupational challenges? • What are the sensory, social, emotional needs that influence participation? • What are the meaningful (long-term) occupational engagement needs?

InterAct: Educational Toolbox (e.g. Stakeholder Analysis Template) and Practice Guidelines

Local Guidelines (e.g. in AT/CH/DE: Ergotherapeutische Arbeit für und mit Menschen mit Fluchterfahrung)

UNHCR – The UN refugee agency (several handbooks)

UN International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

European Union Agency for Asylum System (EUAA)

World Health Organization (WHO) (e.g. Strengthening resilience: a priority shared by Health 2020 and the Sustainable Development Goals)

Who else do you need to collaborate with to provide better services?

Guiding Questions	**Resources**

Designing your Project

In a field where organizations have a long history of providing aid and protection services to populations in distress and in urgent need, reflect on how an occupational perspective can contribute. Occupational therapists work towards participation in occupations foregrounding the individuals own values and capabilities while also recognizing that individual and community occupational choices and opportunities are intersecting with political, social, and spatial dimensions. Embedding culturally relevant practices in the planning, monitoring and evaluation processes require reflexivity on our own biases and identities and also on how to become aware of existing assumptions and values using critical thinking to identify potential oppressive practices.

What is the framework of practice?
Consider each of the following and its impact on the design of your project:
- Philosophical framework: It is important to articulate the values underpinning and guiding the project and rationale for this e.g. rights-based, occupational justice, cultural and socio-economic integration, quality of life, resilience, wellbeing, self-reliance, inclusion, peace.
- Objectives of the project: What is the added value by bringing in an occupational therapy lens? What is the focus of your occupation focused intervention? e.g. skills advancement, access to occupations and/or resources, limiting contextual boundaries, enhancement of occupational performance.
- Ethical considerations: How will the project ensure informed consent, respect, privacy, confidentiality, practices that are meaningful and beneficial for participants.

Create a name, make a concrete idea/concrete proposal with an understandable objective.
A SWOT analysis may be helpful to identify what are the strengths?/weaknesses?/opportunities?/threats?
If you have the possibility consult and get feedback on your project from other teams working in the field of forced migration.

Identify practical issues:
- Which resources will you need (human, physical resources, or technology) and how will these be funded?
- Will cultural mediators/translators be needed for the implementation? Consider benefits and risks including "gatekeeping", safety and emergency response, privacy and alternatives including communicating through occupations such as art/play/cooking?
- Where will the project be implemented and is this considered safe place or not? How are safety aspects considered? (e.g. numbers of people, environmental considerations, signs for the professional role (card/jacket)
- Will transport be required to the project for participants and facilitators? Are bathroom facilities available?
- Are there specific times or days that the meeting can best be implemented or cannot be implemented?
- Will storage facilities be required, are their perishable resources or resources that require safe storage (e.g scissors, chemicals)?
- Who are your contacts in case of emergency and how will they support you?

Specific issues regarding university projects:
- University policies and rules: Are there restrictions or specific guidelines to work in line with an NGO, with other departments, with other students?
- Ensure cooperations by signing joint documents/memorandum of understanding?
- Are legal aspects and data protection clarified e.g. access, insurance, work policies, code of conduct, gifts, contact numbers, surveillance.
- Consider relevance to curriculum e.g. learning outcomes, fieldwork, emerging areas of practice, transferable skills.
- How are staff and students prepared for working in this field? Will induction and supervision be required and provided within or separate to the project?
- Who will be the responsible person?
- How will your students learn? (Community-based, participatory learning, experiential learning, interdisciplinary learning)

Resources

UNHCR guidelines & codes of conduct

Red Cross code of conduct

UNHCR Emergency Handbook

WHO Psychological First Aid guide

Toolkit on inclusion of refugees with disabiltiies

UNICEF Migrant and Displaced Children Handbooks on wellbeing, health, education employment, housing etc.

International Play association: Child Friendly Spaces

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Guiding Questions

How are you going to intervene in your project?
Intervention approaches and types in your project will depend on the potential of occupational therapy and occupation focused approaches to address the needs identified. Many occupation focused assessments (e.g. occupational profile) are useful and more specialized interdisciplinary tools may also be helpful to consider. Occupational therapy is a complex practice and can involve a variety of approaches at individual/community/population level, e.g. advocating at policy level, creating optimum environments, educating support persons and organisations, coaching for occupational participation, promoting occupation for health and wellbeing and enabling skills. A diversity of intervention strategies, methods and techniques can support the implementation of the initiative including creative, digital and context-based strategies (e.g. simulation, role-play, workshops, and presentations).

Consider:
- Whether an existing guideline is available outlining relevant approaches and intervention strategies (e.g child friendly spaces UNICEF).
- The participation of displaced persons in developing the joint venture, inclusion of the expertise/resources of the persons and communities in decision making, planning, and implementation with shared responsibilities.
- The need to be responsive to changes and how this can be identified and addressed during implementation.
- Social dimensions of interventions including therapeutic use of self, competencies and power relations including clarity of roles.
- How to ensure goal setting processes are meaningful, purposeful for participants & attainable in terms of time frame and resources.

Safety is a priority when considering, designing and implementing projects in this context which means not doing anything that puts the beneficiaries, students, people or projects in danger – DO NO HARM policies. It is imperative that a key person is identified as responsible for the project and guidelines are put in place to ensure monitoring at all times. This guidance requires consideration beyond existing policies to the context itself and the potential for risks to emerge e.g.:
- Who has the "eyes" on what is happening on the ground?
- Who will be the person responsible and how can they be accessed?
- Are the basic rules explicit and reviewed constantly to make sure they are followed?
- Availability and accessibility of the key person to everyone will be a key contributor to the success of the implemented project.

Be aware also of the potential for physical/social/sensory/emotional environmental triggers that can enable and also prohibit occupational engagement (e.g. victim protection through creation of safe spaces and collaboration with organisations/authorities).
Finally, the best interests of the persons are always at the core of interventions, and as interventions may occur at their safe places, adhering to core values is fundamental.

Access and communication:
- How, with whom, where and when do you communicate?
- Do you require referral pathways?
- Needs may emerge that cannot be handled by the project and knowledge of where and who to best refer to and how to do this is required.
- Strategies and language reaching out to participants include ads, announcements, social media, other entities, key persons of the refugee community, etc.)
- Identify personal & environmental factors that may be barriers to participation (e.g. personal: language barrier, environmental: employment policies -structural)
- Who is talking with whom? Is the information shared/spread, accurate and updated? Who will decide what, how, and if information will be shared?.
- Are their communication guidelines from service providers that need to be followed?

Supervision:
- Is there also a field supervisor?
- How will important information be gathered and by whom – how is the feedback-circle?
- How will you ensure psychosocial health for students?
- What opportunities will be available to students to negotiate tensions and role conflicts?

Implementing your Project

Guiding Questions

Sustainability:
- How is continuous reflexivity applied in the project?
- What are your expected outcomes (e.g. participation outcomes & outcome measures)?
- How can you ensure sustainability?
- For how long are these resources available?
- Is it still meaningful for the refugees?
- Is implementation still safe for all?
- How is the project taking care of partnerships?
- Evaluate the project (participants, students & collaborators feedback & reflections). How is the project going? What is working well? What is missing? What needs to be adapted?
- What is required as a next step? Consider reviewing the SWOT analysis.
- Set future goals and plan necessary changes.

Conclusion and Outlook

Working with displaced persons requires considerable reflection and this reasoning guide aims to draw attention to key considerations gathered from existing resources based on the knowledge and experience of occupational therapy colleagues working in this area of practice.

The **ENOTHE Action for Peace initiative** aligns with the values of ENOTHE to work together across organisations, countries and contexts to share and build our knowledge collaboratively and presents this guide in this spirit. If you would like to give any further recommendations to the author group or want to translate this guide into your native language please contact: info@enothe.eu.

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Resources

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