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Sustainable health for successful integration into the Swedish society through nature-based rehabilitation in Alnarp Rehabilitation Garden

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The global refugee crisis calls for attention to comprehend the psychological consequences of forced migration and displacement. Immigrants' mental health has been at risk because of the exposure to trauma and violence before migration. Moreover, post-migration experiences e.g. having been exposed to mortal danger during flight, stress of adaption, discrimination etc. The aim of this study is to investigate if a ten weeks nature-based rehabilitation program can contribute to improved health and well-being among newly arrived refugees in Sweden during participation in a two-year integration program, managed by the Swedish Public Employment Service. The rehabilitation is performed at Alnarp Rehabilitation Garden and was scheduled for three days a week, each day lasting for four hours. The rehabilitation program is carried out in group of five to ten individuals and was managed by an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist and two horticulturists. The aim of the program is to enhance a salutogenic curative process for better wellness through sensory impressions, activities and rest. The evaluation is conducted as participant observation study, along with in-depth interviews at the end of the program, and with a register follow-up after one year. The work is conducted in a joint effort with the Swedish Public Employment Service and the healthcare authorities in Scania County in order to find means for sustainable integration of refugees into Swedish society. The study will run until March 2016 and is approved by regional ethic committee.

Biography

Azadeh Shahrad has obtained her Master degree in Landscape Planning in 2013. Presently, she is working as a Research Assistant at Department of Work Science, Business Economics and Environmental Psychology.

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