Research Brief
Workshop 4

Participatory Approaches in research with population of refugee background

Introduction

With the growing geopolitical and environmental crisis, the number of people seeking protection and moving across the boarders is increasing. With migration remaining one of the key issues of public concern and political focus, there have been a growing interest in research in the field of refugee and migration studies. For these reasons, there has been a considerable growth in research about, and with populations of refugee and migration background. The fourth participatory workshop, as part of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) funded project 'Staying, Refugee Integration and Time', took place on 9th March 2023, and brought together scholars , practitioners and researchers specialised in research with population of refugee and migration background to discuss and share knowledge and experience on participatory methodologies and ethical considerations in research involving people of refugee background. The workshop was delivered in hybrid mode, with 18 participants registered to attend in person and 40 participants registered to attend online.

The workshop was divided into two parts. The first part included a short presentations from scholars and practitioners engaging in research and practice with population of refugee background. The second part involved discussion facilitated by the KETSO method on key ethical dilemmas and considerations in research with population of refugee background. The key themes from each part are summarised below.

Part 1: Presentations

The first presentation by **Dr Zoë O'Reilly** discussed considerations for ethical engagement in research with population of refugee background. The presentation was based on Zoë's existing work (further information available here) and outlined number of considerations: 1 – *Before* involving people of refugee background; 2 – *During* the data collection; 3 – *After* data collection. The full presentation can be found here.

The second presentation from **Pinar Aksu** focuses on ethical collaboration and engagement in research with refugee-sector practitioners and organisations. Pinar's presentation shared useful guidelines on the research engagement with third sector organisations.

The final presentation from **Leyla Kerlaff**, outlined diverse participatory methods in research involving refugee populations. Leyla's presentation described and discussed diverse participatory methods applied in research projects within the Migration, Integration and Social Connection research group at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. Leyla's full presentation can be found here.

The full recording of the workshop presentation is available here.

Part 2: Workshop discussion

The second part of the event was a workshop discussion to allow participants share their experiences and insights from research and practice in working with the population of refugee background. The discussion focused on addressing three questions:

1. How does your work, expertise or lived experience match up (or not) with what you have heard today? What was missing and why?

2. Based on your expertise or lived experience and today's presentation, what are the key ethical dilemmas you have encountered in your work? How did you address it?

3. Based on your expertise or lived experience and today's presentation, what should be the key principles of participatory research with refugee population?

The key themes from each question are summarised below.

Question 1:

Throughout the discussion, participants identified additional areas of research the process that require further attention and discussion:

• **The issue of power in the research process:** How can we involve people who have power but not necessary engage in the research?

• **Recognition of diversities within the refugee population:** How can we ensure that diversities within refugee population including age, gender, class, are recognised and ethically addressed in the research process?

• **Research funding:** Addressing the ethical concerns require time, thus how can we secure sufficient time in the research process to address ethical considerations in the light of tight funding deadlines and research schedule?

• **Practical examples and insights:** greater examples of good practices as well as bad practices (how and why things go wrong) in research is required. These could include practical guidelines on how to translate 'ethics of care' (Lawson, 2007) into research design and specific methodologies.

Question 2:

The second question was an invitation to discuss concrete ethical dilemmas in research with refugee population that require further attention and considerations. The following revealed key questions emerged from the discussion:

• **Power relation before/during/after data collection:** How not to re-enforce structural inequalities and marginalisation of minority voices in research process?

- **Research incentives:** How we can better understand and navigate how to acknowledge and reward equitably research participants for their contribution?

- **Addressing research constraints:** How we can navigate and address number of research constrains in relation to: terms and conditions of research funding, tight research timelines, and sharing participant 'voices' with diverse audiences.

Question 3:

The final point of the discussion focused on outlining key ethical principles for research involving vulnerable populations. As result of the discussion, the following principles in addition to the existing code of ethics were highlighted:

- **Sensibility and patience:** Engaging in research, including building relationship and trust require time.

- **Advocacy:** Ensuring that participants lived experiences are at the centre of the research focus. Such principle however requires 'deep listening' of participant voice during the research process.

- **Clarity** with the participants and partner organisations on what the research aims are and what they involve.

- **Meaningful recognition and acknowledgement of participant and partners** contribution to the research process and outputs.

- **Respect** of participants time, this includes ensuring that research explores new phenomenon and does not duplicate existing knowledge.

If you require further information about the project, please do not hesitate to contact us:
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