

Target population: Refugees, volunteers and employees of refugee aid agencies in Hamburg.

Mission: CORESZON develops and delivers affordable, accessible and scalable mental health interventions by collaborating with community members to build capacities for community-based mental health.

Project partners: Founded at University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE) Centre for Psychosocial Medicine and partnered with the Peter Möhrle Foundation. Cooperation with several local/international refugee aid organizations, agencies and initiatives.

Funding: The Peter Möhrle Foundation is CORESZON's primary funding partner during its foundational phase, based on a 5-year start-up plan which includes both fundraising and income goals.



CORESZON's goal is to self-sustain local activities within 5 years by partnering with private corporations who fund social-sector activities in exchange for corporate health management support.

CONTEXT

Germany is one of the countries leading in asylum seeking applicants. In 2015, Hamburg alone received nearly 41.000 refugees and is currently sheltering over 50.000 individuals who have from war and persecution (ZFK Hamburg, 2017).

While this human crisis has placed a tremendous burden on the host countries, the refugees are most affected. The prevalence of PTSD, anxiety and major depression is significantly higher in refugees than in the general population, with evidence of much psychiatric comorbidity. Simultaneously, refugee aid workers and volunteers also describe high levels of stress, feelings of overwhelm, helplessness and/or futility. And on a societal level, current trends of racism and xenophobia are indicative of a growing need for reassurance that while change can be perceived as threatening, opportunities for mutual benefit and development also await.

CORESZON promotes mental health within a resilience-focused, community-based prevention framework that can have valuable long-term effects in various fields, e.g. education, employment and public services costs.

What the initiative is about

CORESZON's overarching objective is to reduce mental health disparity by taking the following steps:

1. Teach action-oriented mental health skills and literacy with a peer-to-peer intervention: The Garden Method for Community Wellbeing.
2. Build community-based mental health capacities by training Garden Method Teachers and community mental health workers for various settings (e.g. refugee camps, neighbourhoods, corporations).
3. Promote bilateral communication between service providers and users regarding existing resources and mental health care needs by introducing a common language for mental health
4. Translate and share research results and lessons learned as a source of information for stakeholders at both community and agency levels to facilitate collaboration and promote community engagement in care delivery and decision-making

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

CORESZON is currently in its second, foundational year. Foundational activities are implemented **from the bottom up**, informing CORESZON's development via constant feedback from the field. Based on lessons learned and relationships built in years 1 & 2, an advisory council is recruited from relevant stakeholder groups to steer upscaling.



Integrated Community Care Approach & Lessons Learned

CORESZON connects people across cultural and economic barriers for better mental health. Our interdisciplinary, intercultural team links scientific, clinical and refugee stakeholder expertise to gather, develop and share knowledge & skills to improve individual and community wellbeing.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Allocate sufficient time to building relationships - trust = sustainability!
- Negotiate resources with stakeholder partners (allocated time/manpower = sustainability!)
- Identify and negotiate structural and idealistic support for innovation with stakeholders
- ...and the list goes on.

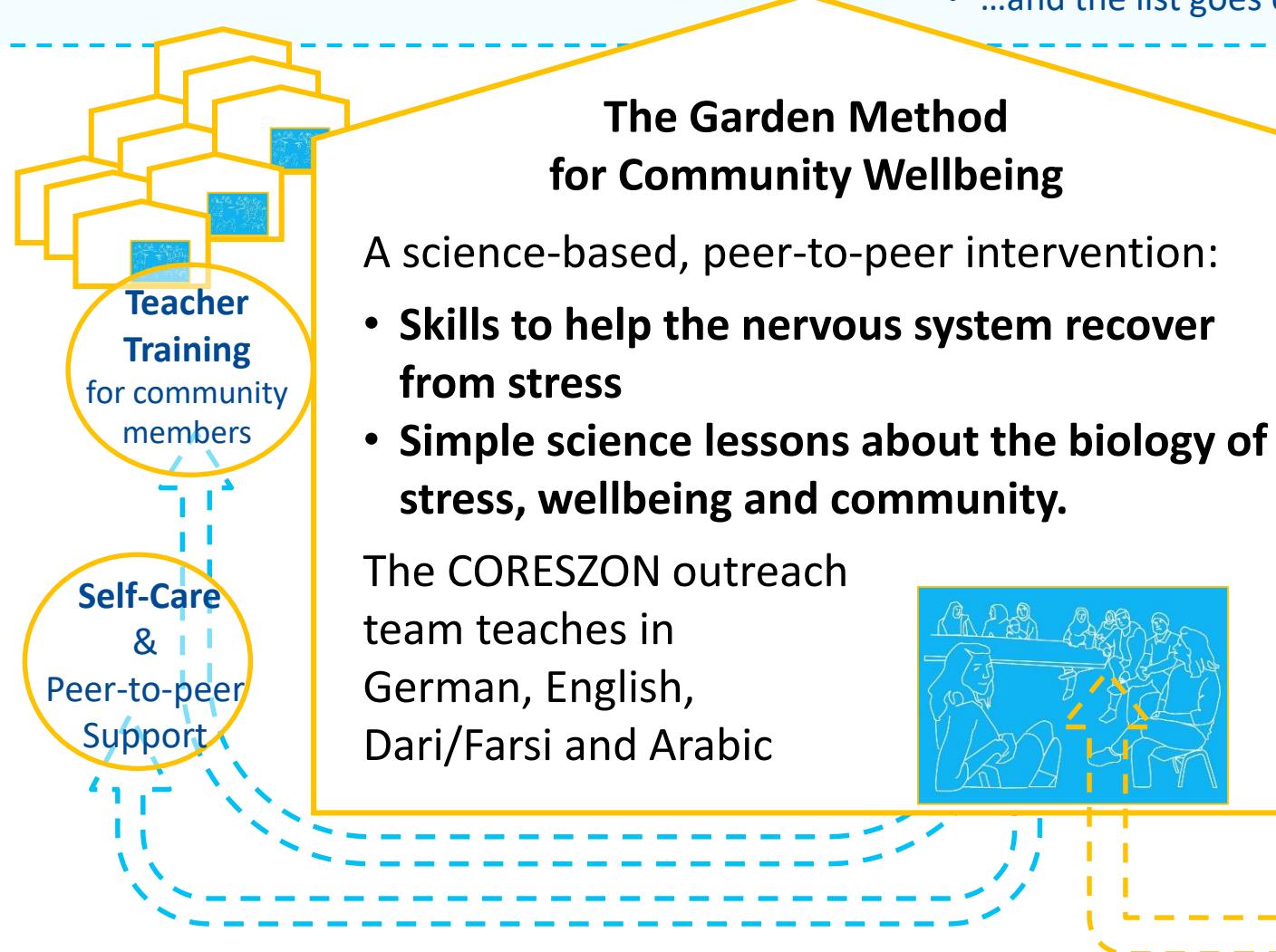
IMPACT: Research and development are an integral part of our activities. The Garden Method is based on a set of well-established stress management skills.

Quantitative: effectiveness and efficacy (questionnaire evaluation)

Qualitative: acceptance, appropriateness and scalability (interviews, focus groups, KPI monitoring & analysis)

Target Outcomes:

- Improved individual stress regulation, mental wellbeing and resilience (*tertiary/secondary prevention*)
- Improved social support in distressed communities (*primary prevention*)
- Improved community resilience in terms of action-oriented mental health skills and literacy (*environmental prevention*)



The future

Scale up in Europe (general population). Contribute to closing the mental health gap by replicating CORESZON's approach in low-resource humanitarian settings.