

Invitation

STRENGTHS symposium in Amsterdam

Scaling up psychological interventions with Syrian refugees

Friday, 10 June 2022

Dear colleague,

We are pleased to invite you to attend the STRENGTHS research symposium in Amsterdam, at the Vrije Universiteit, on **Friday, 10 June 2022, at 09:00 (GMT +2)**. [The STRENGTHS project](#) (Scaling up psychological interventions with Syrian refugees) trained Syrian refugees to provide scalable psychological programmes developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), targeting symptoms of common mental disorders.

STRENGTHS evaluated the implementation, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of these scalable programmes for Syrian adult and child refugees across Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland.

The symposium will integrate the most important and novel research findings from all partners and provide information about the training and next steps in implementation. The programme is provided on the next page.

Location & registration

This event will be organised as a hybrid event. The in-person part of the symposium will take place at the [Vrije Universiteit \(VU\)](#). The event will take place in the **Auditorium**, on the 1st floor of the main building of the VU at **De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam**. You can find information about how to reach the campus [here](#).

There are limited spots available for attendees at the VU and those wishing to attend in person in Amsterdam must register ahead of time. In-person attendees are also asked for a reservation fee of 20€. The money from the registration fees will be donated to the UNHCR. Attending the event online is free, but attendees should also register ahead of time to be able to access the online event platform. ***You can register as an in-person attendee [here](#) or as an online attendee [here](#).***

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions. We are looking forward to your attendance.

Warmest regards, on behalf of the STRENGTHS consortium,

prof.dr. Marit Sijbrandij
STRENGTHS Principal Investigator
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Programme of the day

- 09:00 – 09:30 **Registration & coffee**
- 09:30 – 09:40 **Welcome** (Sahar Shirzad; prof.dr. Marit Sijbrandij, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
- 09:40 – 09:45 **The development of scalable interventions** (dr. Mark van Ommeren, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland)
- 09:45 – 10:15 **Group Problem Management Plus (PM+) in a Jordan refugee camp** (prof.dr. Richard Bryant, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia)
Implementing EASE (Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions) in Lebanon (prof.dr. Mark Jordans, War Child Holland and University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; dr. Felicity Brown, War Child Holland)
- 10:15 – 10:45 **Coffee break**
- 10:45 – 11:30 **Problem Management Plus (PM+) delivered by peer-refugees in the Netherlands** (Anne de Graaff, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands), **Turkey** (dr. Ceren Acartürk, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey) **and Switzerland** (dr. Naser Morina, University Hospital Zürich, Switzerland).
- 11:30 – 12:00 **Step-by-Step: a smartphone-delivered scalable intervention for adults: results from Egypt, Germany and Sweden** (prof.dr. Christine Knaevelsrud, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)
- 12:00 – 13:00 **Lunch**
- 13:00 – 14:00 **Improving responsiveness of health systems using the scalable WHO programmes: effects on the larger systems** (prof.dr. Bayard Roberts, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK; dr. David McDaid, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, UK; dr. Peter Ventevogel, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland; dr. Pernille Hansen, Danish Red Cross / Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, Copenhagen, Denmark)
- 14:00 – 15:00 **Panel discussion with young STRENGTHS researchers:** Aemal Akhtar, Aniek Woodward, Anne de Graaff, Frederik Steen, Gülşah Kurt, Jonas Hessling, Julia Spaaij, Nikolai Kiselev and Zeynep Ilkkursun. Moderator: Sahar Shirzad.
- 15:00 – 15:15 **Closing remarks** (Sahar Shirzad, dr. Peter Ventevogel)
- 15:15 – 15:45 **Coffee break**

Followed by the public Inaugural Lecture of prof.dr. Marit Sijbrandij, the Principal Investigator of STRENGTHS. All attendees are invited to the lecture, which takes place in the Aula of the Vrije Universiteit. Please note the inaugural lecture begins promptly at exactly 15:45.

STRENGTHS consortium members



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VUVERENIGING The event is co-funded by VU Vereniging.