

HBKU Thematic Research Grant 1st Cycle– Project Highlight

Project Title: Forced Migration, Digital Technology and Health



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Executive Summary

This project proposes an interdisciplinary, innovative and ethnographically rich study of Syrian refugees in Italy and Greece. Combining ethnographic fieldwork with digital data collection, we examine the crucial, but often neglected, links between health and digital technology in the context of forced migration and displacement.

Syrians have faced severe health challenges in Italy and Greece. Faced with poor service provision, inadequate reception facilities, lack of benefits, employment difficulties and insecure legal status, the COVID-19 health pandemic further increased their precariousness. The digital realm is crucial in this context: refugees rely on digital technology in their migration and health strategies, and service providers, too, use digital communication methods.

Recognizing the central position that health and digital technology occupy in refugees' lived experiences of migration, we ask: What is the status and context of health provision to Syrian refugees in Italy and Greece? How does the biopolitical nexus of health and technology shape refugees' experiences and strategies of migration and well-being? How can health services for refugees be improved?

Beyond advancing academic knowledge on the topic, our project's findings will contribute to policy, humanitarian and developmental praxis by advancing the debate on health inequalities and social justice for refugees and migrants.

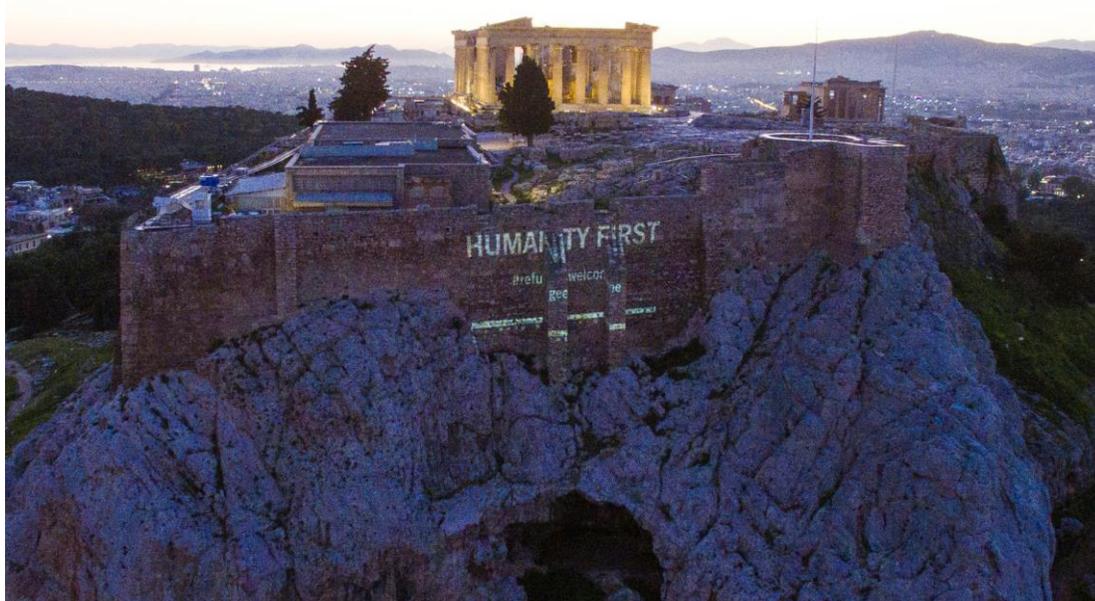
Expected Outcome

The project will produce the following policy-oriented and academic outcomes:

- **Workshop in Doha (or online)** on migration, digital technology and health with invited scholars, policy-makers and humanitarian/development practitioners.
- **Interactive Data Visualization** showing the spatial distribution of Syrian refugees and migrants across different locations.
- **Multilingual Twitter Corpus** on refugees and health (in English, Arabic, Italian and Greek).
- **Single-authored and co-authored academic papers** on (a) interdisciplinarity and mixed methods in migration studies and (b) refugee health in Greece and Italy.

Collaborating HBKU entities: Qatar Computing Research Institute

Photos:



<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/20/activists-project-refugees-welcome-on-acropolis-to-show-crisis-not-over>