

MIGRATION, OLDER REFUGEES AND SOCIAL WORK

The recent “refugee crisis” is due to global inequalities, wars and conflicts, political and social instabilities which have led to deterioration in the living conditions of many people in non-Western countries; resulting in displacement of millions of people on a global scale. A “substantial number” of people who flee to European countries are older refugees who lose their social networks in times of crises and large-scale emigration. Given the lack of job opportunities for older people they become socioeconomically and culturally marginalised in the host countries. Older refugees and their living conditions have been overlooked in global social problems such as forced migration and rarely addressed by social work programs or professionals, although social workers play a key role in supporting the rapidly ageing world. This presentation critically examines the hindrances and opportunities for the inclusion of older persons in the host society. The preliminary results of the study show the structural hindrances such as the pension system and the advanced labour market but also possibilities of receiving a relatively good health care and public economic support. It is argued that social work should actively be engaged in structural reforms to improve the living conditions of older refugees.