

Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

Abstract

A poster series remixing Western paintings to shine a light on urgent needs within refugee health.

Artist

Heba Mohamed (2022)


Caption

Amidst existing challenges—and the rise of many more humanitarian crises and refugee populations around the world—refugee health in the United States has been put on the backburner in recent years. The Trump administration diverted millions of dollars away from refugee health programming. Ever since, there has not been significant initiative taken to address shortages in this area. Thus, I believe that more action should be taken to address the lack of support for refugee health access. Improved refugee health policy results can be achieved by establishing communication between policymakers, frontline providers of refugee medical care, and refugees. More importantly, ensuring that refugees receive ongoing, complete assessments of their mental and physical health, health promotion materials in their own language, and access to professional services is crucial. This can be achieved by inspiring a change in general sentiments towards refugees and incentivizing policymakers and stakeholders to realize the urgency of such responses.

Artist Lens

The three posters on display tackle the failures of the international community’s response to refugee health needs, especially for those who have already been resettled into a new country. Refugees’ lack of access to housing, employment, and specialized healthcare services leaves them with lower health outcomes than the general population. This project aims to envisage the refugee experience by provoking familiarity. I use three infamous—and familiar—Western paintings to re-envision the refugee context and show how those ostensibly great figures would appear if they were in the shoes of masses of displaced and besieged populations. This juxtaposition hopes to elicit emotion from the audience and encourage policymakers to execute laws that prioritize refugee health needs in terms of financial allocation towards specialized, targeted health programs.

(1) The first poster uses the Mona Lisa to invoke familiarity and embodies the pain of the Afghan refugee girl (Sharbat Gula) through her eyes and apexed background.



(2) The second poster uses the infamous 1520 painting by Titian, "Man with a Glove," with an additional layer of a heart plagued by war, displacement, trauma, pain, and ill health.

(3) The third poster uses the infamous "Snap the Whip" (1872) by Winslow Homer to depict the mental health realities of refugee children who've lived through traumas of war and displacement.

[Watch Heba Mohamed Reflection](#)

Media

Digital





