Reviewer 3

This qualitative study evaluates the impact of an eight-month horticultural vocational program on refugee labour market integration in Denmark. Applying an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) method to the total of 22 interviews, authors find that the program itself, as well as the respectful attitudes from the staff, successfully contributed to post-traumatic recovery among refugees. In particular, news skills were achieved and feelings of isolation diminished among the participants.

Response: Thank you for this positive reply.

Comments:

Abstract (lines 18-19): "Methods, This qualitative single-case study focuses on this group of vulnerable refugees […]" The wording is vague here. Could the authors be more specific about which group of refugees they are referring to?

Response: This has been addressed by adding a more specific term: "This qualitative single-case study focuses on a group of war-stricken refugees".

We hope this will suffice.

Abstract (line 22): "A total of 22 interviews were conducted […]" However, in lines 226-227, authors state: "In total, this yielded 20 individual interviews and 9 focus group interviews." Can authors clarify/correct this discrepancy?

Response: Thank you for pointing out this discrepancy. It has now been corrected in the text.

Lines 32-33: "[…] counting 82 million people, followed by Northern America with 59 million people." This is wrong. According to the source authors cite here, these numbers pertain to international migrants overall, not just the refugees.

Response: We have been unclear in this matter. We have corrected the text and added new references for the total number of refugees in 2019.

Lines 40-42: Since the paper focuses on refugees, it would be helpful if authors could provide the average employment rate of working-age refugees, not just the employment rate of non-EU migrants in general.

Response: Excellent suggestion. We have added this information in the paper with a new reference(4): "In 2011 it was estimated, that the employment rate for refugees is related to educational level where well-educated have higher employment rate (70%) versus lower education level about 45%). And even lower for those with poor language skills (27%)."

Line 123: Chechnya is not a country. It is a federal subject of the Russian Federation.

Response: Thank you for this clarification. It has been added to the text.

Table 1: Authors interviewed 9 participants (at four different occasions). Why these nine? Why not interview all 28 individuals who completed the program? What was the specific constraint preventing authors from interviewing everybody who completed the program? Nine is indeed a very low number for any meaningful analysis (even a qualitative one). In addition, I worry about selection, since the 9 interviewees might not be representative of the entire group of participants.

Response: Thank you for this interesting point of view. We agree that is was not clearly described in the paper. Actually, all participants contributed to data in that they took part in individual or focus group interviews. In the analysis process, only nine of the participants were cited (table 1. The interviewees represent diversity in age, gender, profession, education level, home-country and social background and in that way, we cover a range of aspects of lived experience (described in table 1).

Due to the phenomenological approach we take in this study, we have focused less on causal relationships, and instead focused on how people perceive their daily life.

Figure 2: At each of the four occasions in the first intervention group interviews, the figure indicates that N=5. However, on lines 220-221, authors state that "interviews included four participants (two men and two women) at four occasions." Why is there a discrepancy?

Response: Thank you for pointing out this discrepancy. It has now been corrected in the text.

Also, were these participants always the same four individuals?

Response: Yes, they were the same individuals.

Moreover, in the second intervention group, there were 17 participants in total (although some were absent on the second and third occasion). However, Figure 1 suggests that only 9 individuals were interviewed overall. I'm very confused by this. Authors need to clearly and consistently state how many individuals they interviewed in total, and which of these individuals were interviewed just once, which were interviewed twice, and so on.

Response: *We agree that this could be confusing. In table 1, we list all individuals* ***cited*** *in the text. In the text, we have clarified this:*

" Data consisted of face-to face interviews both individually and in groups of four to six persons with the objective of gathering both sensitive and personal experiences and feelings, as well of obtaining reflections and considerations that could be brought up in a focus group interview. All interviews were conducted by the first author who trancribed the recorded interviews. The individual, open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted with five participants (three men and two women) at four occasions. In total, twenty individual interviews were conducted. The focus group interviews were conducted at three occasions (see fig. 2). Each occasion included three separate groups. At the first occasion, 17 individuals participated, and at the second and third occasions, 12 and 13 individuals participated, respectively. In total, nine focus group interviews were conducted. This means a total of 29 interviews were conducted."

Line 353: There is a typo. It should read "pressured" not "pressurised"

Response: This has been corrected in the text.

Scope of the study: At the beginning, it is suggested that the study examines the impact of the horticultural program on the labor market integration of the participating refugees. However, from the results section, it is clear that very little is known about the actual impact of the program on its participants' labor market outcomes (how likely they were to get and retain a job afterwards, what kinds of jobs they got, what was the impact on their social and economic status, etc.). Thus, authors need to be careful not to oversell their contribution.

Response: Thank you for this viewpoint. We totally agree. We have now adjusted the aim according to this. As stated on page 3, this paper is a part of a larger mixed method study. This means that the aim of the overall study became too dominant in relation to what was the focus for this paper. To address this, we have highlighted the last part of the aim, and the original manuscript.

“The aim of the present study was to examine how refugees experience an eight-month horticultural vocational programme intervention with respect to their mental, social and physical resources. Furthermore the aim was to investigate which aspects they deemed as important factors with regard to bringing them closer to education and employment.”