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Neighbours at the Gate: Occupational Exploration of Alternative Approaches to Refugee Resettlement and Integration in the Netherlands

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Introduction: In the Netherlands and Europe, there exist approaches to refugee (re)settlement where asylum seekers face long waiting periods, in large-scale centres, with little-to-no opportunity to participate in society. Work in occupational science (OS), has shown the occupational injustice and deprivation that occurs in situations such as this. Parallel to standard approaches, are alternative approaches to refugee resettlement and integration, facilitated by charities and citizens. Alternatives focus on safe passages, for vulnerable populations, with inclusion in society and shortened waiting times. These alternatives claim to address the issues in standard procedures, which contribute to the occupational injustice, which we as a profession concern ourselves with.

Objectives: This research aims to explore these alternatives, through an occupational lens, to explore the alternative occupational experiences, compared to standard procedures, and how these experiences translate to identity and inclusion.

Approach: Using narrative approaches, the perspectives of refugees entering or living in the Netherlands within alternative systems are explored through an occupational perspective, and aligned with experiences of refugees existing in standard procedures.

Practice Implications: The implications of this research will aid in informing the approaches to refugee (re)settlement and inclusion. Additionally, it will establish a position for OT within alternatives, aiding in defining the role for the profession within this field.

Conclusions: Alternative refugee settlement and integration approach which indirectly claim to address multiple issues contributing to occupational injustice must be followed from the perspectives of the refugee's themselves in order to better understand them for policy development and for the OT profession.