

Mainstreaming Global Mental Health: Is there Potential to Embed Psychosocial Wellbeing Impact in all Global Challenges Research?

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Abstract

We explore if there is potential to embed psychosocial wellbeing impact in global challenges research where the primary aims are not mental-health-related. We are interested in the use of material practices to deliver impact through routine project activities of working with concrete things together. The UKRI gateway-to-research was searched for information on Global Challenges Research Fund grants from 2015 to May 2020. Analysis shows that only 3% of projects self-categorise as engaging with mental health. Thirty-six non-mental-health GCRF grants were purposefully sampled for diversity and each coded independently by two researchers for relevant information. Findings suggest that: 50-70% of non-mental-health GCRF projects already engage implicitly, but non-strategically, with psychosocial wellbeing impact; opportunities for psychosocial wellbeing impact, from most to least frequent are community mobilisation, community-building, skills development, positive sense of self, positive emotions, and sociocultural identity; presence of material practice from most to least frequent are: (i) interactions between or enactments upon people, (ii) written materials or images, and (iii) objects; when a material practice was present, it was usually considered usable as a focus to enhance psychosocial wellbeing. Our study provides evidence that there are low hanging fruit opportunities to impact psychosocial wellbeing across SDG through routine project activities.