

Dr. Solfrid Raknes

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SUMMARY

Norwegian Psychologists Specializing in Children Affected by War, Immigration, and Poverty

I am a PhD holder and Clinical Psychologist experienced in initiating, creating, implementing, evaluating, and leading social and behavioral protection and change programs for children and adolescents. I have a proven track record in delivering positive mental health and well-being outcomes in fragile contexts and across economic divides.

LANGUAGES

Excellent in English and Norwegian, and I find my way in Swahili (A2), French (B1), and Arabic (A2).

WORK EXPERIENCES

- 2022 – present *www.magicmitten.org*. The project aims to promote mental well-being, health, and learning and prevent mental health disorders by creating an easily accessible digital toolbox for children affected by war. It consists of a book and an app, first made for Ukrainian children aged 8 – 12 years, then translated into English, and the books are also in Norwegian, Hungarian, and Arabic. My role as an independent psychologist/researcher was to initiate, develop, evaluate, and facilitate the spreading of the material in collaboration with Dr. Hesna Al Ghaoui. UNESCO Hungary is promoting the Magic Mitten.
- 2023 - present *Uhuru Mama Collective*. A handcraft and advocacy project for 35 mothers of children with disabilities at Uhuru Mchanganyiko Primary School in Dar es Salaam. My role was to facilitate the collective, fundraise for what was needed the first year, and ensure its sustainability. Supported by Midsund Rotary Club, Norway.
- 2023 - 2024 *Children with Disabilities & UN Rights Convention*, a NOREC-funded staff and student exchange project between two colleges in Norway and Tanzania. I supervised staff and students, initiated research, and contributed to an Arusha conference.
- 2023 – 2024 *The Helping Hand for Ukrainian Adolescents*. Norwegian Church Aid and HEKS/EPER Ukraine and Romania implemented social and emotional training for Ukrainian adolescents in Ukraine and Romania during the war in Ukraine. My

- role was to overview the cultural adaptation, train the psychosocial staff, and assist in the evaluation of the program impact and feasibility.
- 2017 – 2024 *Happy Helping Hand in Lebanon and Jordan.* The Syrian American Medical Association (SAMS) implemented The Helping Hand, a blended learning psychosocial program for adolescents, in Lebanon, and then in Jordan. My role was to overview the cultural adaptation of the program, train the facilitators who implemented the program, develop a trainer of trainers' manual so that SAMS independently can upscale the program for Arabic adolescents.
- 2018 – 2022 *The Happy Helping Hand App.* This was a project focused on developing a digital game to prevent mental health disorders in adolescents, across economic divides. Funded by NORAD, via Innovation Norway. My role was to develop the content of the app, based on my previously developed cognitive behavior programs.
- 2018 – 2020 *Bærum barn tør!* The project reduced anxiety in children through an early intervention psychosocial group-based cognitive behavioral intervention. My role was to ensure grants, develop the program, train the facilitators, and evaluate the impact. The project was implemented by Bærum County in Norway, implemented in nine schools, and funded by The Norwegian Health Directory.
- 2017 – 2019 *The Helping Hand Program in Arabic.* This was a Lebanon-based project for psychosocial relief and social and emotional learning for children 8 – 12 years, initiated by Dar El Fatwa Relief, implemented by MultiAid Programs (MAPS) and SAMS. I was the project leader in developing and implementing the program, and then in lead of evaluating impact.
- 2011 – 2015 *The Psychological First Aid Kit in Children's House in Oslo.* The Children's Houses are institutions designed to provide a safe and child friendly for children who are victims of abuse or witnesses of crime. My role was to teach them how to use a psychosocial program I had developed and study the impact. Funded by The Norwegian Research Council and The Norwegian Health Directory.
- 2007 – 2010 *Psykologisk førstehjelp.* This project focused on developing a toolbox for children and adolescents' social and emotional learning, aiming to promote wellbeing, learning, and health, and prevent mental health disorders. It was funded by Bergen University Hospital and The Norwegian Cognitive Association.
- 2004 – 2020 *CBT training in Norway.* Developing and providing workshops and supervision for professionals in CBT training for the Norwegian Cognitive Association and Norwegian Psychology Association.
- 2000 – 2013 Clinical Psychologist, Voss Hospital, Norway.
- 1999 – 2000 Clinical Psychologist, Sør-Trøndelag Psychiatric Hospital, Norway.

EDUCATION AND FORMAL TRAINING

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| 2014 – 2018 | PhD Training, University of Bergen, and University of Michigan |
| 2000 – 2004 | Specialist Training for Clinical Psychologists, Norwegian Psychologist Association. |
| 2000 – 2004 | Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Training and Supervision, The Norwegian Association for Cognitive Therapy, Norway. |
| 1999 – 1992 | Clinical Study of Psychology, University of Tromsø, Norway. |

HONORS AND GRANTS

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| 2018 – 2022 | Grant from Innovation Norway and NORAD |
| 2022 | Winner of Youth Mental Health Challenge by Uplink - World Economic Forum, in collaboration with UNICEF |
| 2020 – 2022 | Grant from Great Canada Challenges, with SAMS |
| 2019 | Nominated to be Citizen of the Year in Bergen |
| 2018 – 2019 | Grant from The Norwegian Health Directory, with Bærum |
| 2016 – 2017 | Overseas Scholarship, The Norwegian Research Council |
| 2014 – 2017 | PhD grant, The Norwegian Research Council |
| 2014 – 2015 | Personal grant from Extrastiftelsen |
| 2014 | Personal grant from Kavlifondet |
| 2011 – 2013 | Grant from The Norwegian Health Directory, with NORCE |
| 2013 | The Norwegian Psychology Association's Aasa Gruda Skard's grant |
| 2012 | Bergen University Hospital's prize for Innovation |
| 2010 | Personal grant from The Norwegian Association for Cognitive Therapy |

POSITIONS, REPRESENTATION AND VOLUNTARY WORK

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| 2023 – now | Facilitating Uhuru Mama Collective, Tanzania |
| 2019 – 2023 | Representing Norway in EFPA, Board of Prevention and Promotion |
| 2020 – 2022 | Member of the board of Reaching Across Borders |
| 2019 – 2022 | Founding Crochet Community Collective |
| 2016 – 2017 | Member of the board of Association for Intercultural Psychology, The Norwegian Psychology Association |
| 2013 – 2018 | Representing Norway in Low intensity CBT in EABCT |
| 2004 – 2017 | Member of the board of The Norwegian Association for Cognitive Therapy |

10 LAST SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

1. Raknes S, Chorna T (2024). The Helping Hand in Ukraine: feasibility and potential impact. *Pilot Feasibility Stud* 10, 96. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40814-024-01520-5>

2. Wergeland GJH, Haaland AT, Fjermestad KW, Öst LG, Gjestad R, Bjaastad JF, Hoffart A, Husabo E, Raknes S & Haugland BSM (2023). Predictors of school-based cognitive behavior therapy outcome for youth with anxiety, *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 104400. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0005796723001481>
3. Schuler, B.R., & Raknes, S. (2022). Does group size and blending matter? Impact of a digital mental health game implemented with refugees in various settings. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 18, 83-94. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMHS-07-2021-0060>
4. Townsend, D., Raknes, S., & Hammoud, M. (2022). Psychosocial support for Syrian refugee youth: Comparing delivery modes of a digital mental health game. In S. Moeschberger & L. Miller-Graff (Eds.), *Psychological Research on Violence Against Children: Towards Building Cultures of Peace*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
5. Nordgreen, T., & Raknes, S. (2021). Veiledet selvhjelp og internettbehandling for barn og ungdom. In Martinsen & Hagen (Eds.), *Håndbok i kognitiv atferdsterapi i behandling av barn og unge* (kap. 17, s. 459-474). Oslo: Gyldendal.
6. Raknes, S. (2020). The Happy Helping Hand used by Syrian displaced adolescents in Lebanon: A Pilot Study of Feasibility, Usefulness and Impact. White paper.
7. Raknes, S., & Gjertsen, O.B. (2020). Kognitive tiltak - tilpasning til kultur og kontekst. In Berg & Holt (Eds.), *Kultur og kontekst i praktisk psykologarbeid* (kap. 12, s. 230-250). Oslo: Gyldendal.
8. Raknes, S., Marki, Å., Leborg, S., & Næss, J. (2020). Jeg tør! Utprøving av et kort Psykologisk førstehjelps-basert kurs for engstelige skolebarn. Retrieved from <http://www.forebygging.no/Artikler/2020/Jeg-tor/>
9. Haugland, B., Håland, Å., ... Wergeland, G. (2020). Effectiveness of brief and standard school-based cognitive behavioral interventions for adolescents with anxiety: A randomized non-inferiority study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*.
10. Raknes, S. (2018). *Anxious Adolescents: Prevalence, Correlates, and Preventive Cognitive Behavioural Interventions*. Dissertation for the degree of philosophiae doctor (Ph.D) at the University of Bergen, Norway.
11. Raknes, S., Pallesen, S., Himle, J., Bjaastad, J.F., Wergeland, G.J., Hoffart, A., ... Haugland, B.S.M. (2017). Quality of life in anxious adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 11(33), 1-11.

DIGITALIZED LEARNING PROGRAMS & SELECTED POPULAR SCIENCE PUBLICATIONS

Magic Mitten/ Den Magiske Votten <https://magicmitten.org>

Happy Helping Hand

https://webgl.attensi.com/prod/hjelpehanda_no_login/hjelpehanda/index.html

Grønne tanker i Salaby <https://skole.salaby.no/1-2/gronne-tanker-glade-barn>

Raknes S (2023). Folkehelse og livsmestring for flyktningbarn. [Forebygging.no](https://forebygging.no)

Raknes, S (2014). *Grønne tanker – glade barn*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.

Raknes, S (2014). *Sint og glad i barnehagen*. Oslo: Gyldendal.

Raknes, S. (2010a). *Psykologisk førstehjelp. Barn*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.

Raknes, S. (2010b). *Psykologisk førstehjelp. Ungdom*. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.

SELECTED LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

- 2009 – 2024** Lectured extensively in all parts of the health, support, and school system in Norway; more than 300 workshops for clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, GPs, school health nurses, psychiatric nurses, social workers, and teachers.
- 2017 - 2022** Lectured extensively in several NGOs in Lebanon, on The Helping Hands Program.
- 2023** Speech in the UNICEF Tanzania Speaker Series on Mental Health: “Young Tanzanians Gaming for Mental Health?”
- 2023** Training and supervising PSS workers to use the Helping Hand program in Romania and Ukraine.
- 2020 - 2023** Arranging and training community PSS workers in Norway in using the Helping Hand programs (digital training).
- 2022** Keynote speaker at Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, webinar, Stop War. *The Helping Hand for the Social and Emotional*, Washington DC.
- 2021** Keynote speaker at Universidade dos Valores, Portugal. Overcoming Exclusion and Trauma: Rooting learning activities in fundamental values.
- 2020** The Importance of Play for children in the times of crises. Bangkok International Children’s Theatre Fest.
- 2017** Lecture for The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. “Edutainment: Entertainment in education”
- 2017** Helping Hands – Happy Kids. Workshop, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, USA.
- 2011** Psychological First Aid Kit as prevention: Low-threshold cognitive self-help approach for children, adolescents, and families. EABCT congress in Reykjavik, Iceland.