



ISSUE 34

SOPH NEWS



School of
Public Health

SPRING EDITION

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Welcome to the 34th Edition of SoPH News



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the Spring edition of SoPH News - The School of Public Health (SoPH) e-newsletter. As the season changes, we find ourselves amid new opportunities to celebrate our collective achievements in teaching, research, and community engagement.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all SoPH staff for your unwavering commitment, progress, and contributions over the past months. Your support has been instrumental in their success, and I applaud your ongoing commitment to fostering excellence in education and research. Special thanks to all of you for your valuable input and commitment into the School's Periodic Quality Review, which I hugely appreciate.

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Tomás Tyner

I extend my gratitude to our valued colleagues in the NSRF, CRF-UCC, and HSE Public Health for their collaborative spirit and invaluable contributions to various initiatives within the School. Together, we continue to advance the field of Public Health and make meaningful steps forward.

I would like to take a moment to recognise the exceptional efforts in teaching delivery and guidance provided to our students. Your dedication continues to shape our academic landscape and drives positive change within our community.

In this 34th Issue of SoPH News, we are pleased to introduce new members of our esteemed faculty, and highlight a diverse array of recent events and accomplishments, and participation in national and international conferences. This impressive display underscores our collective commitment to research excellence and innovation, representing a continuum of experience levels from early career to senior leadership.

In addition to all the academic and professional achievements, it was great to discover the many artistic talents of colleagues.

Thank you for your continued dedication and contributions to the SoPH community, I hope you enjoy this Spring 2024 edition of our Newsletter.

Best wishes,
Professor Ella Arensman

TEACHING NEWS

SoPH Spring Conferring

In the 2023 Spring Conferring Ceremonies, 287 students graduated from the College of Medicine and Health with Degrees, Masters and PhDs from the School of Medicine, School of Nursing & Midwifery, School of Pharmacy, School of Public Health and Dental School and Hospital. Among them, 60 graduates were conferred with the Master of Public Health (33 from the MPH online and 27 from the Campus based MPH). From the MSc in Infection Control and Prevention, 7 students graduated and from the MSc in Occupational Health programme, 1 student graduated.



Comhghairdeas
le rang 2024!

Thank you to each and everyone of the graduates, their family members and to all the staff who contributed to this excellent achievement!

SCHOOL NEWS

SoPH Artists: Creative for a Cause

As we embrace May, designated as Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month, an inspiring exhibition has launched at the Jennings Gallery in UCC's Brookfield Health Sciences Complex.

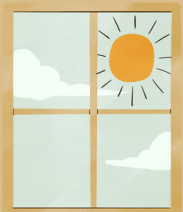
On Wednesday 17th April, the collection of over 30 pieces was opened to the public under the title "Breathe... Catching Images for Health". The exhibition was ideated and curated by Colette Cunningham from the School of Public Health, in loving memory of her sister Betty McDonald. In addition to her own remarkable artwork, the collection features marvelous works from Jules Versluis and Christine Allan.

Each of the one-of-a-kind pieces on display can be purchased as a fundraiser for the Adult CF Unit in CUH Cork. Through the power of art, the exhibition strives to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals battling cystic fibrosis, embodying the spirit of solidarity and community that defines the School of Public Health.



THE EXHIBITION RUNS UNTIL THE END OF JUNE IN THE JENNINGS GALLERY IN UCC'S BROOKFIELD HEALTH SCIENCES COMPLEX.

So(PH) Social



Mark your calendar!

The newly-formed SoPH Social Committee has taken feedback collected in the staff survey and announced the first two social events of the season!

GALLERY VISIT COFFEE BREAK

On Thursday 16th of May, staff enjoyed the Committee's first-ever event: a stroll to the Jennings Gallery to visit and celebrate our colleagues' exhibition!

QUIZ NIGHT AT FRANCISCAN WELL

To mark the end of the semester, So(PH) Social will be organising a staff quiz night out in June! Details will be shared soon.



Julia's Journey

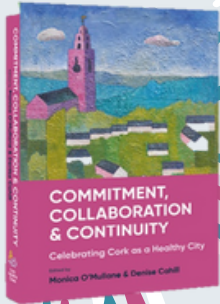
Among the Spring Graduates, we wish to spotlight the achievement of Julia Banasiak, who joined the School of Public Health as a research assistant earlier this year. On her graduation day Julia also celebrated another milestone - being three years cancer-free. In October 2020, Julia received a diagnosis of chondrosarcoma (a form of bone cancer) and subsequently underwent three invasive operations. Despite the disruption to her life and education, she soon resumed her studies, getting a BSc Oral Health Studies, and continued her time at UCC, obtaining a Masters in Dental Public Health this March. Julia is passionate about raising awareness of rare diseases in youth, and atypical presentations. Her motto, very relevant to our field, is "When you hear hoofbeats, think horse, not zebra, but sometimes it is a zebra". Congratulations on your achievement Julia!

Baby News!

In April 2024, Dr Kate O'Neill and her family welcomed baby Hugh!



SCHOOL NEWS



Commitment, Collaboration & Continuity: Celebrating Cork as a Healthy City

Inspired by the call of de Leeuw et al. (2021) for action to be dedicated to the assessment of work carried out across all Healthy Cities, a book has been published in response. *Commitment, Collaboration and Continuity: Celebrating Cork as a Healthy City* (ISBN: 978-1-9163790-8-4) is our response to the need for an assessment of work and reflexive examination of the processes, challenges, and successes for future development.

BOOK PUBLISHED!



Chapters in the book share in a reflexive way the hard-earned experience and insight, lessons learned, and challenges faced and overcame, on projects led and/or partnered with Cork City, a WHO designated Healthy City since 2012. Such projects include Green Spaces for Health (chapter 11), PSYCHED – a mental health promotion initiative (chapter 8), establishing Ireland's first sexual health network (chapter 9), transforming the city through a playful approach (chapter 10), creating a food policy council in Cork (chapter 7), and community and voluntary sectoral partnership (chapter 6). Chapters are also included in the book on the future of public health and Cork Healthy Cities (chapter 2), public health history in Cork (chapter 3), Healthy Cities – a global movement working locally in Cork (chapter 4), the process of creating the Cork City Health Profile (chapter 5), and reflections on health in the climate emergency (chapter 12). The book was funded by Cork City Council, Cork Healthy Cities and ISS21 in UCC, and published by Cork City Libraries.



This book has been edited by Monica O'Mullane and Denise Cahill. Chapter co-authors include Prof Ivan Perry, John Sheehan, Kieran McCarthy, Jim O'Donovan, Joan Devlin, Tony Fitzgerald, Dr Aodh Quinlivan, Judy Cronin, Lorcan Griffin, Mary Cronin, Katherine Harford, Colin Sage, Daniel Flynn, Justina Hurley, Muire O'Farrell, Olivia Teahan, Martin Davoren, Martha Halbert, Maria Young, Michelle Syron, Janas Harrington and Christie Godsmark.

The book is available in the UCC bookshop and Waterstones Cork City, and is available to borrow from UCC Brookfield library, and all Cork city public libraries.

DE LEEUW, E., HARRIS, P., KIM, J. & YASHADHANA, A. 2021. A health political science for health promotion. *Global health promotion*, 28, 17-25.

[LINK TO ARTICLE ABOUT THE EVENT](#)

MEET

Stefan Schandelmaier



Dr Stefan Schandelmaier is a research methodologist and lecturer in Clinical Trials at the School of Public Health. He holds degrees in Medicine (MD) and Music (MA) from the University of Freiburg in Germany and a PhD in Health Research Methodology from McMaster University in Canada. He worked as a researcher and lecturer in Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Basel in Switzerland. Stefan's expertise is in clinical trials, meta-research, systematic reviews, and methodological research with a particular interest in subgroup analysis. He developed the Instrument to assess the Credibility of Effect Modification Analyses (ICEMAN, www.ICEMAN.help). Stefan is leading international research projects to systematically improve the implementation of methods in clinical research including the Library of Guidance for Health Scientists (LIGHTS, www.lights.science).

Ana Akhtar

Ana Akhtar is a PhD scholar in the MHAINTAIN Doctoral Project 2, with a diverse background that spans dental surgery, gerontology, and research. She holds a Bachelor's in Dental Surgery and a Master's from Sorbonne University in Gerontology, focusing on aging studies and research methods. Her professional experience includes research roles aimed at improving geriatric healthcare, notably at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the Centre for Gerontology and Rehabilitation at UCC, and the Health Psychology Department at RCSI, Dublin, where she focused on depression management among cancer patients. Now part of the MHAINTAIN training program, she researches self-harm and suicide prevention strategies, seeking to impact policy and enhance support for those affected by mental health challenges.



LAUNCH OF NEW RESEARCH PROGRAMMES



ERASMUS+ SENSITISE Kick-off meeting in Cork, Ireland



On February 20th and 21st, December Dr Frances Shiely hosted the kick-off meeting for the SENSITISE project. Partners from ECRIN (European Clinical Research Infrastructure) France, Masaryk University, Czech Republic and University of Aberdeen, UK attended. SENSITISE – Inclusive Clinical Trials: Training and Education to increase involvement of underserved groups commits to developing training and education via workshops and a MOOC.



FOODPATH-Europe launched in April in Utrecht, Netherlands

The FOOD systems and policy PATHways for equal population nutrition in Europe (FOODPATH-Europe) research programme was launched on 18th/19th April in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The overarching aim of FOODPATH is to identify and understand the societal, commercial and political determinants and mechanisms of food-related inequalities, and to provide solutions which have the potential to break through the cycles maintaining unhealthy dietary behaviours and foodrelated inequalities in Europe. It will take a broad perspective to investigate the factors which influence dietary behaviours among disadvantaged communities providing an understanding of how food policy, social policy and commercial interests could impact socioeconomic inequalities in diet. FOODPATH is a 3 year programme of work being led by Dr Janas Harrington, School of Public Health. It has partners in The Netherlands, Belgium, Poland Italy and Türkiye. It is funded under the ERA4Health (HealthEquity) Partnership.

AWARDS

SFI-IRC Pathway Programme 2024 Awardee



Dr Anvar Sadath

We are pleased to share that Dr Anvar Sadath was awarded an SFI-IRC Pathway grant for the research project: Long-Term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-harm, suicide, and health care utilisation among people with high-risk Self-Harm and comorbidities: an interdisciplinary research programme [TREAT-SH], €452,139 over four years and including the allocation for one PhD Scholar.



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn



Fondúireacht Eolaíochta Éireann
Dá bhfuil romhainn
Science Foundation Ireland
For what's next

Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in a wide range of mental health distress and risk factors for suicidal behaviour, the long-term effects on self-harm and suicide are yet to be researched. TREAT-SH will address this via three work packages (WPs). WP1 will examine the 3-year impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-harm. WP2 will examine individual and system-related barriers influencing treatment and follow-ups. WP3 will investigate the long-term risk factors for suicide. By identifying the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on self-harm, TREAT-SH will enhance the assessment and treatment of self-harm, helping prevent suicide.



This grant has been awarded under the NSRF-UCC Memorandum of Collaboration.



UPDATES FROM THE NSRF

Launch of 2021 Registry Report

On February 13th, the National Self-Harm Registry Ireland published its most recent report covering the year 2021.

The National Self-Harm Registry Ireland reports:

- 12,661 self-harm presentations to hospital by 9,533 individuals in 2021
- A rate of 196 per 100,000 individuals presenting to hospital following self-harm in 2021, similar to the rate of 200 per 100,000 reported in 2020

Findings from the Annual Report 2021 showed:

- No increase in hospital-presenting self-harm during the 2nd year of the pandemic

The 2021 Report is available to download [HERE](#).



NSRF Strategic Away Day

On February 22nd, the NSRF hosted a Team Away Day in Nano Nagle Place focusing on:

- Our new Strategic Plan
- Strengths of our research and strategies for implementation, impact and expansion
- Opportunities for team and self-development

A big thank you also to our external speakers Dr Claire Hickey from the House of the Oireachtas and Mary Horgan from University College Cork for their insightful and informative presentations on:

- Impacting policy and practice
- Training and Career Development



MENTBEST Kick Off Meeting



On April 9th the NSRF hosted a MENTBEST project Kick Off meeting in the Hub in University College Cork.

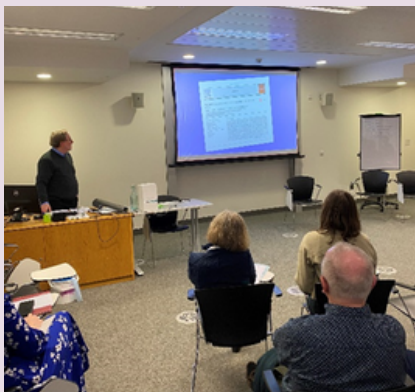
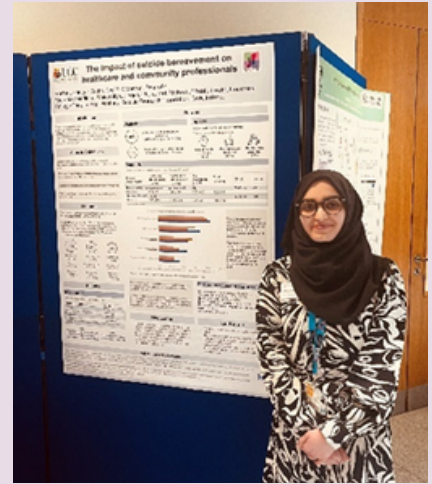
Thank you to all stakeholders for their feedback and input on the European Alliance Against Depression community-based interventions.

For more information, visit : <https://mentbest.com>

Poster award at the Medical Research and Technology Society's Student Research Conference

Congratulations to Haniya Roshan on her poster award at the Medical Research and Technology Society's Student Research Conference in March!

Haniya presented on the 'Impact of Suicide Bereavement on healthcare and community professionals' using data from the Irish Suicide Bereavement Survey.



Prof Alan E. Fruzzetti lecture

The NSRF were delighted to host Prof Alan E. Fruzzetti from Harvard Medical School on April 11th as part of the School of Public Health Seminar Series.

Huge thanks to Prof Fruzzetti for a very engaging presentation on the Social and Family Context of Emotion Dysregulation: Applications and Outcomes in Dialectical Behavioural Therapy.

World TB Day- 24th March

Tuberculosis (TB) – a neglected disease, is still one of the world's deadliest diseases. World TB Day, 24 March 2024, is an opportunity to renew commitment, inspire and take action to end TB. This year, the WHO campaign theme is 'Yes! We can end TB!'

Two recent publications were published by colleagues in SPH to coincide with the World TB Day, 2024. The first study was published in the journal Vaccine. In collaboration with Trinity College Dublin, Dr Zubair Kabir of UCC and his PhD student Ms Sarah Jackson of HPSC Ireland, argued the need for selective BCG vaccination in Ireland since the cessation of universal BCG vaccination in 2015. They emphasized the need for timely surveillance of paediatric TB cases to monitor for the emergence of increasing trends or emergent risk groups in the identified mainly unvaccinated population.

In another global study, published in the Lancet Infectious Disease, Dr Kabir – a co-author on this paper – reported that the world did not attain the first interim milestones of the WHO End TB Strategy in 2020, despite accelerated progress in reducing the global burden of TB in the past decade. The study also indicated that countries must refine their national TB programs and recalibrate to achieve the 2035 TB targets for equal access across all age-groups.



CONFERENCES & SEMINARS



The European Burden of Disease Conference in Trieste, Italy

On 14-15 March 2024, the European Burden of Disease Network held its second international burden of disease conference in Trieste, Italy. Dr Zubair Kabir is the lead researcher on this EU COST Action Network from Ireland, who attended this conference, along with two of his recent graduates. Megan Tumulty – an MPH graduate (Class 2022-2023) had an oral presentation on her MPH Dissertation entitled “A systematic review of the methodological considerations in Campylobacter burden of disease studies” – a UCC study in collaboration with Sciensano, Brussels.



Image 1: Megan Tumulty; Image 2: Brian Curtin and Dr Zubair Kabir

Brian Curtin, a recent BSc Medical and Health Sciences graduate had a poster presentation on his final year project “Towards Healthy Ageing: Assessing the impact of health care access, quality, and universal coverage in EU and in the UK, 2019”.

20th Annual Psychology, Health and Medicine Conference

Psychology Health and Medicine Conference 2024

The 20th Psychology Health and Medicine Conference will be hosted in University College Cork on the 31st May, 2024. The Psychology Health and Medicine Conference is the flagship conference of the Division of Health Psychology, of which Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar is Chair. This year, the conference will be chaired by Dr. Samantha Dockray and Dr. Sarah Foley of the School of Applied Psychology. The chairs, on behalf of the local organising committee, look forward to welcoming delegates from the fields of psychology, health and medicine in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and internationally. The theme of this years conference is 'From Foundations to Futures', which encourages delegates to reflect on the foundational knowledge of the discipline of health psychology in shaping the future of the field. This years keynote speakers are Professor Frank Doyle (Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin) and Professor Anna Whittaker (University of Stirling).

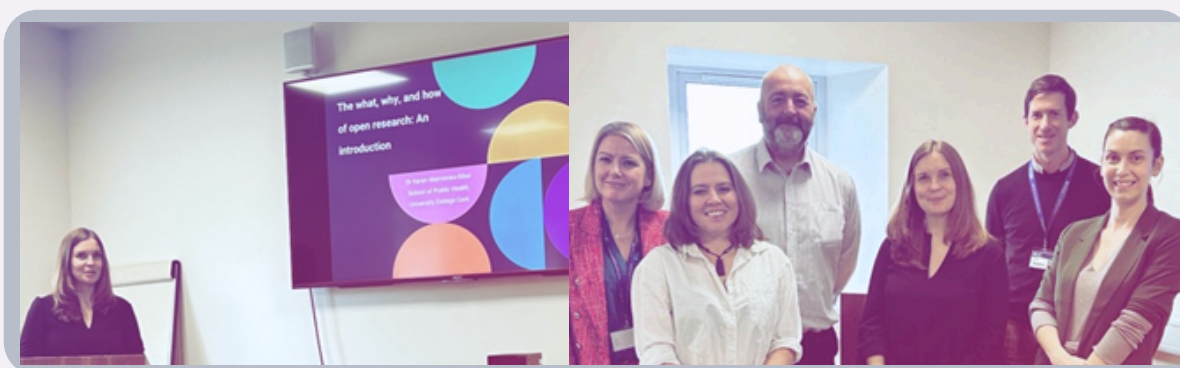
The official website: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/phm/>

CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

“An Introduction to Open Research and tools that cannot support teaching and learning of Open Research” **IN LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY, UK**



Dr Karen Matvienko-Sikar recently delivered two invited talks on Open Research. The first talk was organised by the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences in Loughborough University UK (February 2024), was entitled “An Introduction to Open Research and tools that cannot support teaching and learning of Open Research”.



The second talk was organised by the Department of Psychology and the Research & Graduate School in Mary Immaculate College in Limerick (March 2024), and was entitled “The what, why, and how of open research: An introduction”.

In both talks Karen introduced what open research is, why it is important, and how to engage in open research practices. The Principles and Practices of Open Research (PaPOR TRAIL) course was also introduced and discussed. The PaPOR TRAIL course is a freely available open educational resource that provides an introduction to what open research is and how to do it. For more information and to access the course please [CLICK HERE](#).

SoPH IN THE PRESS

A higher body mass index is significantly associated with worse mental health, a new SoPH study finds



Recent research conducted by Dr Caoimhe Lonergan, Dr Seán Millar and Dr Zubair Kabir from the UCC School of Public Health examined relationships between adiposity, defined using body mass index (BMI) and waist-height ratio, and depressive symptoms, assessed using the validated 20-item Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, in a random sample of 1,821 middle to older-aged adults from the Mitchelstown Cohort Study.

The research has been published in the journal PLOS One, showing significant linear relationships between increased adiposity and a greater number of depressive symptoms after adjustment for demographic characteristics, lifestyle factors and disease conditions. This relationship was more pronounced in females compared to males.

Several biological mechanisms are plausible linking increased adiposity with depression. However, the study authors note that increased weight may exacerbate depression through social means, such as prejudice, discrimination, and self and societal stigma. The chronic pain that is directly caused by obesity, such as joint pain, back pain and fibromyalgia, is also known to result in depression. This was a cross-sectional study, and it is possible that increased adiposity is a consequence of depressive symptoms, rather than a cause. Nevertheless, the authors suggest that targeted interventions for reducing depression should include better population-level weight management measures.

Commenting, Dr Seán Millar said “Although our research suggests that the relationship between adiposity and depressive symptoms is independent of potential confounders such smoking, alcohol use, low-level physical activity, poor diet and chronic conditions, future studies using prospective data, in diverse populations, are needed to confirm these findings. In addition, further research is required to identify the mechanisms which link overweight and obesity with depression.”

The study has received considerable media attention and was also discussed on ABC news in the United States ([LINK](#)).

Details of additional media interest – [Irish Examiner](#), [MedicalXpress](#), [News Medical](#), [McKnight's](#), [Med India](#), [The Science Times](#), [Healio](#), [Nutrition Insight](#), [Medical News Today](#) – can be found [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

The **SPHeRE Summer Seminar** is on Friday 24th May 2024, 2 pm – 3 pm, in-person at the Regent House, Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

The seminar topic will be 'Re-thinking Service Design for Groups on the Margin' with Dr Sharon Lambert, a Senior Lecturer in the School of Applied Psychology, UCC.

[CLICK HERE for Registration Link:](#)



SPHeRE Network Summer Seminar

Re-thinking service design for groups on the margin

Friday 24 May | 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (IST)

[REGISTER NOW](#)

sphereprogramme@gmail.com www.sphereprogramme.ie

Dr Sharon Lambert
Senior Lecturer
School of Applied Psychology
UCC

Implementation Science Networking Event '24



Bringing Best Practices from Implementation Science to Implementation Practice

Implementation Science Networking Seminar

With guest speaker:
Dr Rinad Beidas, Northwestern University

Dr Beidas is Chair and Ralph Seal Paffenbarger Professor of Medical Social Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. She is a leading expert in implementation science, with over 300 peer-reviewed publications in journals such as JAMA, NEJM Catalyst, and Implementation Science.

02 July, 2024 | 4PM-6PM | Aula Maxima, UCC

Register for this free event on Eventbrite (see QR code)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE EVENT](#)

UCC School of Public Health HIRB Health Implementation Research Hub

Hosted by Health Implementation Research Hub, School of Public Health, UCC

The Health Implementation Research Hub (HIRH) led by Dr Sheena McHugh is hosting a networking event on the afternoon of the 2nd of July 2024. The theme of the event is bringing best practices from implementation science to implementation practice. The event will bring together people involved in generating, adopting and implementing evidence in health settings.

We will be joined by guest speaker Dr Rinad Beidas, Chair and Ralph Seal Paffenbarger Professor of Medical Social Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. Dr Beidas is an international leader in implementation science with over 300 peer-reviewed publications in journals such as JAMA, NEJM Catalyst, and Implementation Science. Her research leverages insights from implementation science and behavioral economics to make it easier for clinicians, leaders, and organizations to use best practices to improve the quality and equity of care and enhance health outcomes. The event aims to foster discussion on the potential role of implementation science and to encourage collaborations. Researchers as well as healthcare professionals and organisational leaders are welcome – as are those who are new to the field of implementation science and those with prior knowledge and experience. This free event will coincide with the Implementation Science Training Institute (ISTI) at the School of Public Health. The networking event will be held in the Aula Maxima on 2nd July (time TBC).

Limited spaces are available to book on Eventbrite. We hope to see you there!

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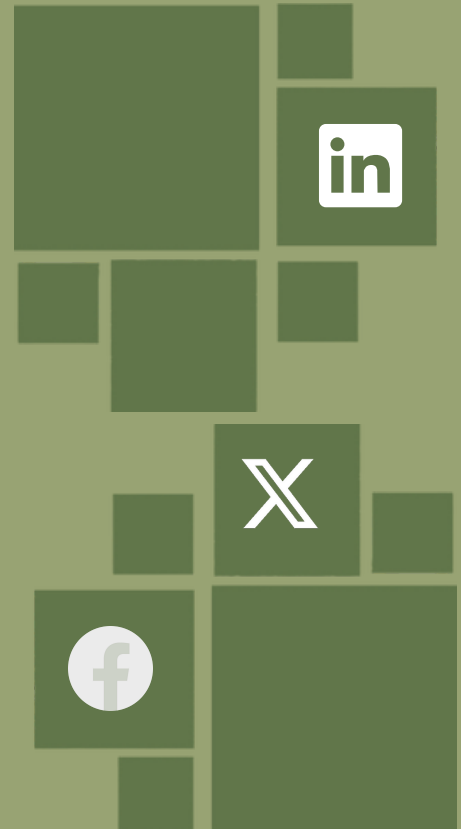
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WE WELCOME
SUBMISSIONS