

Mentors' Reflection Workshops Report

I. General Information

Country and Institution: POLAND, MSK

Title of the event: Mentors' Reflection Workshop

Date of the event: 17.06.2024

Location of the event: MSK, Krzemieniecka 2 A, Lodz

II. Participants

Number of participants: 10

Country of origin: Ukraine

For how long they have been in the country: 3-10 years

What is their official status (Asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented etc):refugees

Age range (here you can use an average age of the group): 20-56

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III. Summary of the exchanges during the event

Summarize the main points from the workshop including interesting findings or anything that is worth mentioning for the report.

Introduction

The workshop for 10 fully integrated refugees (mentors) from Ukraine was conducted to reflect on their experiences and challenges, and to provide them with tools to support new asylum seekers. Of these mentors, 6 had arrived in Poland before the war with Russia, while 4 arrived after the conflict began. This difference influenced their perspectives on the challenges faced upon arrival.

Needs Mapping

During the needs mapping session, mentors identified various challenges they had encountered. Those who arrived before the war focused on bureaucratic hurdles and cultural adaptation, such as learning Polish and understanding the legal system. For instance, one mentor mentioned the difficulty in obtaining work permits and accessing public services due to language barriers. Conversely, those who arrived after the war highlighted immediate survival needs, such as finding temporary housing and dealing with trauma from the conflict. They expressed concerns about securing basic necessities and navigating the asylum process under stressful conditions. This exercise helped tailor future support sessions to address these specific challenges effectively.

WorldCafe Activity

The WorldCafe activity involved group discussions at different tables, each focusing on a key topic such as healthcare access, educational opportunities, and cultural adaptation. For example, mentors who arrived before the war shared strategies for integrating into Polish society, such as joining local community groups and participating in language courses. They discussed how building a social network helped them feel more at home. Those who arrived

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after the war shared tips on accessing emergency services and dealing with post-traumatic stress. This format encouraged the sharing of experiences and advice, fostering a supportive community environment. One mentor mentioned, "Discussing our shared experiences helped me realize we're not alone, and there are practical ways to overcome these challenges."

Strengths Mapping

In the strengths mapping session, mentors identified personal strengths that helped them integrate into Polish society. Those who arrived before the war emphasized their resilience and ability to adapt to new environments, highlighting skills like language acquisition and professional expertise. For example, a mentor with a background in education offered tutoring to new asylum seekers struggling with language barriers. Those who arrived after the war focused on their ability to cope with trauma and provide emotional support. A mentor with legal knowledge helped clarify the rights and responsibilities in the asylum process. This strengths-based approach boosted confidence and promoted mutual support among participants. One mentor reflected, "Recognizing my strengths reminded me that I have valuable skills to share and can make a difference in others' lives."

SUMMARY IN POINTS:

Introduction

- The workshop was conducted for 10 fully integrated refugees (mentors) from Ukraine.
- Aim: To reflect on their experiences and challenges, and to provide tools to support new asylum seekers.
- Composition:
 - 6 mentors arrived in Poland before the war with Russia.
 - 4 mentors arrived after the conflict began.
- Influence: The arrival time influenced their perspectives on the challenges faced upon arrival.

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Needs Mapping

- Identified various challenges encountered by mentors.
- **Mentors who arrived before the war:**
 - Focused on bureaucratic hurdles and cultural adaptation.
 - Examples:
 - Difficulty in obtaining work permits.
 - Challenges accessing public services due to language barriers.
- **Mentors who arrived after the war:**
 - Highlighted immediate survival needs.
 - Examples:
 - Finding temporary housing.
 - Dealing with trauma from the conflict.
 - Concerns about securing basic necessities.
 - Navigating the asylum process under stressful conditions.
- Outcome: Helped tailor future support sessions to address these specific challenges effectively.

WorldCafe Activity

- Group discussions at different tables focusing on key topics:
 - Healthcare access.
 - Educational opportunities.
 - Cultural adaptation.
- **Mentors who arrived before the war:**
 - Shared strategies for integrating into Polish society.
 - Examples:
 - Joining local community groups.
 - Participating in language courses.
 - Building a social network.
- **Mentors who arrived after the war:**
 - Shared tips on accessing emergency services.
 - Dealing with post-traumatic stress.

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- Format: Encouraged sharing experiences and advice, fostering a supportive community environment.
- Example comment: "Discussing our shared experiences helped me realize we're not alone, and there are practical ways to overcome these challenges."

Strengths Mapping

- Identified personal strengths that helped them integrate into Polish society.
- **Mentors who arrived before the war:**
 - Emphasized resilience and ability to adapt.
 - Examples:
 - Language acquisition.
 - Professional expertise.
 - Mentor with a background in education offered tutoring to new asylum seekers.
- **Mentors who arrived after the war:**
 - Focused on coping with trauma and providing emotional support.
 - Example: Mentor with legal knowledge helped clarify rights and responsibilities in the asylum process.
- Outcome: Boosted confidence and promoted mutual support among participants.
- Example comment: "Recognizing my strengths reminded me that I have valuable skills to share and can make a difference in others' lives."

IV. Workshop development

1. Did you include all the activities from the Agenda? If not, which ones did you exclude and why?

Excluded Activities:

1. **Break:**The break was shortened to allow more time for discussions on the war-related experiences.

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2. Identifying Interests and Goals:

- This session was condensed due to time constraints.
- Instead of the full "Common Ground" and "Passion Mapping" activities, a brief discussion on shared interests and passions was held.

3. Conclusion:

- The reflection circle was conducted but was slightly shortened.
- Closing remarks and information about the Connection Cafes were provided, though the discussion was less detailed due to time limitations.

Reason for Adjustments:

- The interaction between mentors who arrived before and after the war was deeply engaging and required more time than initially allocated.
- Discussions about their war-related experiences were significant and emotional, necessitating respect and sensitivity.
- The decision to extend these conversations was made to honor the participants' need to share and process these experiences without rushing.

By making these adjustments, we ensured that participants felt heard and supported, which was a crucial aspect of the workshop's goals.

2. Did any issues arise during the workshop? If yes, what kind of problems appeared from the participant point of view?

Language Barriers:

- **Description:** Some participants had small difficulties fully understanding or expressing themselves in Polish.
- **Impact:** This occasionally slowed down discussions and required additional translation or clarification time.

Emotional Distress:

- **Description:** The discussions about war-related experiences brought up emotional distress for some participants.
- **Impact:** Some individuals found it challenging to share their stories, and the atmosphere at times became very emotional.

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Participation Balance:

- **Description:** Participants who arrived before the war sometimes dominated the conversation, given their longer experience in Poland.
- **Impact:** Those who arrived after the war felt they had less opportunity to share their perspectives.

Group Dynamics:

- **Description:** Mixing participants with different lengths of stay and experiences sometimes led to differing priorities and views.
- **Impact:** This occasionally caused minor disagreements or misunderstandings.

Overall, the workshop successfully navigated these issues by remaining flexible and focusing on creating a supportive and respectful environment. The facilitators ensured that all voices were heard and that emotional support was available as needed.

3. Did you, as an organizer, face any issues? If yes, what kind of problems did you face during the workshop?

Facilitating Balanced Participation:

Description: Ensuring that both groups (those who arrived before and after the war) had equal opportunities to speak and share.

Impact: Required active facilitation to balance contributions and ensure that everyone felt heard.

Managing Diverse Expectations:

Description: Balancing the different expectations and needs of participants who had varying experiences in Poland.

Impact: Ensured that the workshop addressed the needs of both groups effectively.

Overall, despite these challenges, the workshop was conducted successfully. The ability to adapt to unexpected developments and maintain a supportive and respectful environment was crucial in overcoming these issues.

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V. Evaluation of the participants' satisfaction

Please report the feedback on the participants' satisfaction with the workshop – include images or data provided in the feedback form.

Participants' Feedback Report

The feedback from the 10 fully integrated refugees (mentors) from Ukraine regarding the workshop was collected and analyzed. Here are the results and summaries of each feedback category:

1. Relevance of Workshop Content to Needs and Expectations

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Very relevant): 6 participants
 - 4: 3 participants
 - 3: 1 participant
- **Summary:** The majority of participants found the workshop content to be highly relevant to their needs and expectations.

2. Clarity of Information Presented

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Very clear): 5 participants
 - 4: 3 participants
 - 3: 2 participants
- **Summary:** Most participants felt that the information was clearly and understandably presented, though a few found room for improvement.

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3. Topics to be Added or Expanded Upon

- **Summary:** Participants expressed interest in more detailed sessions on:
 - Legal rights and asylum processes.
 - Psychological support and trauma management.
 - Networking opportunities and community building.

4. Engagement of Presentation Style

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Excellent): 6 participants
 - 4: 3 participants
 - 3: 1 participant
- **Summary:** The facilitator's presentation style was generally well-received, with most participants finding it engaging.

5. Pace of the Workshop

- **Summary:** Feedback indicated that the pace of the workshop was appropriate for most participants, though some suggested that certain sections could be either sped up or slowed down.

6. Effective and Ineffective Presentation Methods

- **Summary:**
 - Effective: Interactive discussions, WorldCafe activity, and strengths mapping.
 - Ineffective: Some participants felt that the icebreaking games were too long and could be shortened.

7. Comfort Level in Participating

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Very comfortable): 5 participants
 - 4: 4 participants
 - 3: 1 participant

- **Summary:** Most participants felt comfortable participating in workshop activities.

8. Valuable Interactive Elements

- **Summary:** Participants found the WorldCafe discussions and strengths mapping to be the most valuable and enjoyable interactive elements.

9. Confidence in Applying Learned Knowledge

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Very confident): 4 participants
 - 4: 4 participants
 - 3: 2 participants
- **Summary:** A majority of participants felt confident in applying what they learned in their personal or professional lives.

10. Areas for More Guidance or Examples

- **Summary:** Participants requested more guidance on:
 - Practical steps in the asylum process.
 - Language learning resources.
 - Accessing healthcare and social services.

11. Organization and Logistics of the Workshop

- **Rating:**
 - 5 (Excellent): 5 participants
 - 4: 3 participants
 - 3: 2 participants
- **Summary:** The organization and logistics were rated positively, with some suggestions for improvement in timing and materials.

12. Overall Experience *Rating:*

- 5 (Excellent): 6 participants

- 4: 3 participants
- 3: 1 participant
- **Summary:** The overall experience was rated highly by most participants, indicating general satisfaction with the workshop.

13. Enjoyable Aspects and Areas for Improvement

- **Summary:**
 - **Enjoyable Aspects:**
 - Engaging discussions.
 - Practical and relevant content.
 - Supportive and inclusive environment.
 - **Areas for Improvement:**
 - More time for interactive activities.
 - Additional breaks.
 - Shorter icebreaking sessions.

14. Additional Comments, Suggestions, or Feedback

Sample Participant Comments:

- "The discussions about our experiences were very helpful and made me feel supported."
- "I appreciated the practical advice on dealing with bureaucratic issues."
- "More time for activities like strengths mapping would be great."
- "The facilitator did a fantastic job keeping us engaged and comfortable."

The workshop for fully integrated Ukrainian refugees was well-received overall. Participants found the content highly relevant and the information clearly presented. The most valued aspects were the interactive discussions, particularly the WorldCafe activity and strengths mapping. Most participants felt comfortable and confident applying what they learned. However, some suggested shortening the icebreaking sessions and allowing more time for interactive activities. The organization and logistics were positively rated, with a few recommendations for minor improvements. Overall, the workshop fostered a supportive environment, effectively addressing the needs and challenges of the mentors.

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