



Mentees' Reflection Workshops Report

I. General Information

Country and Institution: Germany, LAKA Baden-Württemberg

Title of the Event: Mentee's Workshops

Date of the Event:

- 29.06.2024 (online via Zoom)
- 13.07.2024 (in cooperation with Stadt Stuttgart, in-person at Jägerstraße 14, Stuttgart)

Location of the Event: Online (Zoom) and in-person at Jägerstraße 14, Stuttgart

II. Participants

- **Number of Participants:**
 - 29.06.2024: 5 participants online (9 participants registered)
 - 13.07.2024: 5 participants in-person
- **Country of Origin:**
 - 29.06.2024: Afghanistan, Ukraine
 - 13.07.2024: Syria, Ukraine
- **Duration in Germany:** Approximately 2 years
- **Official Status:** Asylum seekers in process and refugees, most with good prospects to stay in Germany
- **Age Range:**
 - 29.06.2024: Average age 40 years
 - 13.07.2024: Average age 20 years
- **Gender:** Female, male, diverse

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.

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.

Mentees Reflection Workshops

Registration and Attendance: Nine individuals registered for the online workshop, having been invited multiple times via email and phone. Ultimately, five participants attended the workshop. Reminders by calls helped for more engagement. For the workshop in person seven individuals registered and five participated. For this reason there might be another Mentees Workshop.

Participants' Backgrounds: The participants represented diverse regions across Baden-Württemberg, including Radolfzell, Rheinfelden, Pforzheim, and cities close to Stuttgart and Münster. This geographic diversity enriched the discussions, providing varied perspectives on the experiences of mentees in different locations.

Language Proficiency and Engagement: The mentees varied in their proficiency in German. While some spoke German quite well and were actively attending integration and German language courses, others were at a more basic A1-/A2- level. Despite these differences, all participants demonstrated a high level of engagement and a strong desire to improve their language skills. They explicitly expressed their wish to speak more German, highlighting the importance of language practice in their integration process. The workshop was characterized by active participation, with mentees contributing knowledge, asking questions, and showing curiosity about the topics discussed.

Content Adjustment: Initially, the presentation proved to be somewhat complicated for some participants. Recognizing this, we adjusted the content during the workshop to ensure it was more accessible and easier to understand. This flexibility allowed all participants to engage more fully and benefit from the session.

Interactive Elements: The workshops were highly interactive. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences. This approach helped create a more inclusive environment where everyone felt comfortable participating. Through these exchanges, we aimed to get to know each person better and tailor our support to their specific needs.

Challenges Identified:

- **Employment and Residency:**

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.

Participants from smaller towns reported significant challenges in finding jobs that matched their professional experience. Additionally, the residency requirement posed a problem, as moving to another city without the consent of immigration authorities was not possible.

- **Healthcare Access:**

A major issue highlighted was the lack of pediatricians, with some areas having no pediatric specialists for over two years. This shortage of "permanent" specialists complicates access to necessary healthcare.

- **Children's Integration:**

Integrating children into the educational system proved to be challenging. Adults were learning German in language courses, but children had few German friends and received extra German lessons alongside their regular subject classes. This dual burden was exhausting for the children, often resulting in them not understanding the subject matter and being overly tired in the evenings. Parents also found this situation burdensome. Notably, 90% of the children in one class were from foreign backgrounds, and one child had to repeat the 4th grade due to these integration difficulties.

- **Educational Pathways:**

School certificates from participants' home countries were often insufficient for university admission in Germany. This means an additional year at a "Studienkolleg," a preparatory college. Some participants expressed a need for guidance throughout this process to navigate the German educational system effectively.

Needs and requests:

- **Document Verification:**

Participants sought assistance in having their diplomas checked for recognition, including qualifications for professions such as psychotherapist, university professor, and hotel manager.

- **Language Practice:**

There was a strong desire for opportunities to practice German, as many participants lacked private contacts to help them improve their language skills.

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.



- **Residency Flexibility:**

Support was requested in navigating the restrictions related to residency obligations and exploring possibilities for moving to other cities.

- **Healthcare and Integration Support:**

Participants needed help finding doctors and generating ideas for better integrating their children into the local community.

- **University System Guidance:**

Assistance was sought in understanding and navigating the German university system, particularly for those needing to attend a Studienkolleg.

Interests:

- **Cultural Activities:**

Participants showed an interest in cultural activities, such as free admission to museums in Basel once a month.

- **Nature and Recreation:**

Interests included nature and swimming in the Rhine, sports like golfing and yoga, which one participant had organized herself for a year.

- **Social and Family Connections:**

Social activities, including a Clean-Up project, family gatherings, and meeting friends, were important to the participants.

- **Art and Education:**

Interest in attending art school and engaging in educational pursuits was also expressed.

Strengths:

- **Educational Background:**

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.



Some participants had strong educational backgrounds, including a former professor of sociology.

- **Personal Qualities:**

The mentees demonstrated a willingness to learn, reliability, responsibility, patience to listen, and an open-minded attitude.

IV. Workshop development

The workshops were designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the participants. While we included most of the planned activities, we made several adaptations to better suit the attendees' requirements and language proficiency levels. After the initial opening, we conducted an introduction round, allowing all participants to share their backgrounds and personal stories. This was followed by in-depth discussions on the difficulties they face, their specific needs, and their personal situations. We also explored their interests and hobbies to build a more comprehensive understanding of each mentee.

Throughout the workshops, we aimed to simplify the work tasks. Despite the participants speaking German relatively well, some tasks initially appeared too complex. By adjusting the content and presentation style on the fly, we ensured that everyone could follow along and benefit from the workshop.

2. Issues Arising During the Workshop

Several issues were identified from the participants' point of view:

- **Attendance:** Not all registered participants attended the workshop. Despite multiple reminders through email and phone calls, some did not show up. This impacted the dynamic of the workshop, as the group was smaller than anticipated.
- **Adaptation of Content:** During the workshops, we had to continually adapt the content to meet the varied needs and language proficiency levels of the participants. While this ensured everyone could participate, it required significant flexibility and on-the-spot adjustments from the facilitators.

3. Challenges Faced by the Organizers

As organizers, we encountered several challenges:

- **Non-attendance:** The primary issue was the non-attendance of some registered participants. Despite our efforts to remind and contact them, a few participants did not join the workshops, which was disappointing and needed a reconfiguration of the planned activities.

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.



- **Communication:** Reaching all participants by phone proved challenging. Some were not reachable, which hindered our ability to ensure full participation and smooth communication leading up to the workshops.

Overall, these challenges highlighted the need for more robust engagement strategies and perhaps more flexible scheduling or alternative reminder systems to ensure higher attendance and smoother communication in future workshops.

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.

The participants did not want to do it in written form but they were open to give us feedback directly:

Feedback:

1. *Desire for Mutual Acquaintance and Social Interaction*

Participants expressed a strong wish for opportunities to become better acquainted with one another. They found the workshop to be helpful and interesting, appreciating the chance to connect with others in similar situations. The ability to speak and practice German during the sessions was particularly valued, as it provided a practical and supportive environment for language improvement.

2. *Comfort and Recognition*

Many participants reported feeling comfortable throughout the workshop. They felt heard and seen, which is crucial for fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. This sense of recognition and validation helped build trust and encouraged more open and honest exchanges among the group.

3. *Positive Surprise and Anticipation*

The project itself came as a pleasant surprise to many participants. They were not only pleased with the initiative but also expressed eagerness to see how it would develop over time. Their curiosity about the future stages of the project indicates a high level of engagement and interest in its outcomes.

4. *Interest in Multiplying the Project*

Several participants showed a keen interest in becoming multipliers, meaning they were enthusiastic about the idea of replicating the project within their own cities or communities. This indicates a strong commitment to the project's goals and a desire to extend its benefits to a broader audience. By acting as multipliers, they can help foster similar support networks and initiatives in other areas, enhancing the project's overall impact.

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.



5. Preference for In-Person Meetings

While the online format was appreciated, there was a clear preference among participants for meeting in person whenever possible. They believe that face-to-face interactions would further enhance the quality of their connections and the effectiveness of the support provided. Meeting in person allows for richer, more nuanced communication and helps build stronger, more personal relationships.

In summary, the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the workshop's success in fostering a supportive environment, facilitating meaningful connections, and promoting language practice. The expressed desires for mutual acquaintance, in-person meetings, and participation as project multipliers underscore the importance of continuing and expanding such initiatives to benefit more people in need of similar support.

> Please note that the participants' lists of the workshops are attached. Unfortunately some of the participants did not sign correctly. Ali and Leah participated in the mentor's workshop in Stuttgart, Victoria participated in the Online-Workshop in June.

Due to the interactive nature of the workshop and its flexibility in adapting to the needs of the group, participants preferred to provide verbal feedback about the workshop, which we have described in detail above.

"Friends We Share – Wellbeing Programme for Refugees with Role Models and Mentors ", Erasmus + project nr 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000150729.