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# Mentors' Reflection Workshops Report

## I. General Information

- **Country and Institution:** Germany, City of Stuttgart
- **Title of the Event:** Mentors Reflection Workshop
- **Date of the Event:** 13.07.2024 (in cooperation with LAKA)
- **Location of the Event:** Ausbildungscampus, Jägerstraße 14, Stuttgart

## II. Participants

- **Number of Participants:**  
9 participants (12 registered for the meeting, 3 declined due to illness or other reasons but will join the project)
- **Country of Origin:** Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, Hong Kong
- **Duration in Germany:** Between 2 to 28 years
- **Official Status:** Asylum seekers, refugees, recognised refugees and one person with migration background
- **Age Range:** 16 to 28 years
- **Gender:** Female, male, diverse

## III. Summary of the exchanges during the event

The workshops revealed several key insights:

1. **Mentor Expectations:** The mentors are mostly members of the SupportGroup Stuttgart a network of refugees for refugees established in 2018. Some members are actively engaged in volunteer empowerment projects ranging from language support to labour access and counseling. They were interested in the project but had low expectations regarding the outcomes of the workshops. They were primarily driven by a strong desire to help and support their fellows. Their motivation stemmed from a genuine commitment to making a positive impact in their communities and providing guidance to those who may be navigating similar challenges they had experienced.

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- Integration and Language Proficiency:** All mentors are either working or studying in Germany, which has significantly contributed to their high proficiency in the German language. This linguistic capability not only facilitates effective communication but also helps in building trust and rapport with their mentees. Their ability to navigate both professional and academic environments in Germany demonstrates their successful integration into society.
  - Personal Experience:** All mentors shared their experiences in volunteering work especially as members of the SupportGroup Stuttgart with experience in mentoring. They expressed a strong desire to "give something back" to the community and the country, hoping to offer the same level of support and encouragement that they once received.
  - Willingness to Engage:** The mentors displayed a notable willingness to engage in mentoring relationships, particularly with non-native speakers. They showed a keen interest in meeting their mentees and forming tandems, understanding that such relationships can be mutually beneficial. This openness to cross-cultural interactions underscores their commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
  - Perception of Violence:** During the discussions, it became apparent that the definition and boundaries of violence varied significantly among the mentors. These differences highlighted the importance of having nuanced conversations about what constitutes violence and how it is perceived by different individuals. Understanding these diverse perspectives is crucial for providing sensitive and effective support.
  - Experiences with Prejudices:** Many mentors recounted personal experiences with prejudice, which has fueled their motivation to support others who may be facing similar challenges. Their firsthand encounters with discrimination have given them a unique perspective and a deep empathy for their mentees. This shared understanding can help in creating a safe and supportive environment for the mentees.
  - Gratitude for Integration:** There was a shared sense of gratitude among the mentors for being successfully integrated into German society. They expressed appreciation for the opportunities they have received and the acceptance they have felt. This gratitude drives their desire to share their experiences and to help others achieve a similar sense of belonging and acceptance.
  - Guideline Awareness:** While most mentors were already familiar with the information provided in the guidelines, they acknowledged that there is always something new to learn. This openness to continuous learning reflects their dedication to improving their mentoring skills and staying informed about best practices. The guidelines serve as a valuable resource for ensuring that mentors are well-prepared to support their mentees effectively.

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These insights collectively highlight the strengths and motivations of the mentors, as well as the challenges and opportunities they perceive in their roles. The workshops not only facilitated knowledge sharing but also fostered a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences and perspectives within the mentor community.

## IV. Workshop development

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

We successfully incorporated most of the planned activities from the agenda into the workshops. The primary focus was on explaining the guidelines for mentors, which served as a foundational support tool for their roles. Additionally, we covered topics related to resilience, highlighting the importance of mental and emotional strength in the mentoring process. Discussions also extended to personal interests and hobbies, providing a holistic approach to understanding and connecting with mentees. These conversations aimed to equip mentors with practical strategies and insights to foster meaningful relationships.

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

Stuttgart had planned the workshop between mid to end June. However, due to the European mastership held also in Stuttgart and personal and professional reasons of the target group, it was difficult to realize the workshops. This is why the project coordination together with the director of the Supportgroup Stuttgart decided to postpone the workshop and realize it on one day given the benefit to realize also the connction cafe in order to bring togehter the mentors with the mentees. As LAKA had difficulties to organize a separate workshop for the mentees we decided to cooperate and bring participants from Stuttgart and LAKA together.

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

Stuttgart as organizer of the workshop had also thanks to the SupportGroup Stuttgart no problem to find a location and organize equipment and catering. 12 persons had registered for the workshop, 9 persons joined and 3 had to decline due to illness and family obligations. The 3 persons will also have the opportunity to enjoy the workshop, this will be facilitated in the coming weeks.

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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.

As the participants didn't want to use a feedback form, instead to share their feedback in the group, we chose this option.

1. **Curiosity and Engagement:** Participants expressed a high level of curiosity and enthusiasm about the project. They showed a keen interest in the documents and materials provided, indicating a strong desire to continue their involvement in the mentoring program. This curiosity reflects their eagerness to deepen their understanding of the mentoring process and to effectively apply the guidelines and strategies discussed during the workshops.
2. **Commitment to Helping Others:** There was a unanimous commitment among participants to help others. The mentors demonstrated a strong sense of engagement and dedication to their roles, motivated by the desire to provide support and guidance to their mentees. This commitment is a testament to their altruistic values and their readiness to contribute positively to the community.
3. **Preference for In-Person Meetings:** While the flexibility of online meetings was appreciated, many participants expressed a preference for in-person interactions. They believe that face-to-face meetings foster stronger connections and more effective communication. The personal touch of meeting in person is seen as invaluable in building trust and rapport with mentees. Therefore, accommodating in-person meetings where possible will be essential to enhance the mentoring relationships.
4. **Importance of Setting Limits and Boundaries:** An important topic that participants highlighted was the need to discuss setting limits and boundaries in mentoring relationships. They recognized that establishing clear boundaries is crucial for maintaining healthy and professional interactions. Participants expressed a desire to delve deeper into this topic in future sessions, seeking guidance on how to set appropriate boundaries while providing effective support. This focus on boundaries will help ensure that both mentors and mentees have a clear understanding of their roles and expectations, promoting a respectful and productive mentoring environment.

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Overall, the feedback indicates a positive reception of the workshop, with participants eager to continue their involvement and enhance their mentoring skills. The emphasis on curiosity, commitment, and the need for clear boundaries underscores the importance of ongoing support and development for mentors. Addressing these areas in future workshops will be crucial for sustaining engagement and ensuring the success of the mentoring program.

Especially the connection cafe which brought together the participants from the mentors' workshop and mentees' workshop was highly appreciated.

The participants also appreciated that food and beverages were provided during the sessions.