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# Mentees' Reflection Workshops Report

## I. General Information

- **Country and Institution:** Germany, City of Stuttgart
- **Title of the Event:** Mentees' 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:**  
5 participants (8 registered for the meeting, 3 declined due to illness or family reasons but will join the project)
- **Country of Origin:** Syria, Ukraine (the other mentees who could not join come from Labanon, Pakistan and Ghana)
- **Duration in Germany:** Between 1 to 3 years
- **Official Status:** Asylum seekers and refugees
- **Age Range:** 16 to 30 years
- **Gender:** Female, male, diverse

## 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 report.

**Registration and Attendance:** 8 registered for the meeting, 3 declined due to illness or family reasons but will join the project. 5 attended the workshop.

**Participants' Backgrounds:** The participants live in Stuttgart, both in refugee camps or private housing. All have suffered from war in Syria and Ukraine.

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**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. The discussion was facilitated by using English for better communication.

**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 workshop was 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:**

- **Housing and Residency**  
Participants reported the difficult housing situation in refugee camps (no privacy, many communities, trauma) and asylum procedure. Also the access to authorities due to staff shortage in Stuttgart especially the foreigners's office.
- **Healthcare Access**  
A major issue highlighted was the need for interpreters especially in hospitals, however, social care provides support in this issue.
- **Educational Pathways:**  
School certificates from participants' home countries were often insufficient for university admission in Germany. This necessitated 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.

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### Needs and requests:

- **Document Verification:**  
Participants sought assistance in having their diplomas checked for recognition, including qualifications for professions such as teachers, university staff, and hospitality branch.
- **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.
- **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, Sports, art and education programmes**

### Strengths:

- **Educational Background:**  
Some participants had academic backgrounds, such as a teacher and engineer.
- **Personal Qualities:**  
The mentees demonstrated a willingness to learn, reliability, responsibility, patience to listen, and an open-minded attitude.

## IV. Workshop development

The workshop was 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 workshop, we aimed to simplify the work tasks. Despite the participants speaking German relatively well (also using English), 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.

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## 2. Issues Arising During the Workshop

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

- **Attendance:** Not all registered participants attended the workshop. This impacted the dynamic of the workshop, as the group was smaller than anticipated.
- **Adaptation of Content:** During the workshop, 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 non-attendance of some registered participants was disappointing as some just informed us shortly before the beginning of the workshop.

# 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.

### 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.

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## *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.

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.

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.