

Mentoring Power in Integration



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Empowering the Future - Best Practices in Youth Mentoring for Migrants

Introduction

In an era of heightened global mobility and the undeniable intertwining of cultures, nations face both challenges and opportunities when it comes to integrating newly arrived immigrants. Every immigrant brings with them a tapestry of experiences, dreams, skills, and aspirations, all of which can enrich the social fabric of their adopted home. Yet, without effective avenues for integration, these vast potential contributions risk being overlooked or, worse, lost in the maze of obstacles that migration often presents.

Understanding this, European Union governments have implemented a myriad of formal programs that attempt to ease the integration process for immigrants. However, while well-intentioned, these initiatives often fall short of holistically addressing the complex interplay of economic, social, cultural, and political barriers that immigrants face. The gap between policy intentions and tangible outcomes is evident, leaving behind a pressing need for more individualized, human-centric interventions.

Enter the vibrant ecosystem of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and their army of motivated volunteers, who often find themselves on the frontlines, providing the essential supplementary support to migrants. Notably, young volunteers have emerged as beacons of hope, eager to bridge divides and connect with their migrant peers. The power of youth-driven initiatives lies not only in their energy but also in their unique ability to forge connections, break stereotypes, and pave the way for a more inclusive society.

This document, born from a comprehensive project spearheaded by dedicated organizations and individuals, seeks to harness and enhance the power of youth-driven mentoring. It presents the culmination of in-depth research, field experiences, and tested methodologies for mentoring young migrants. By tapping into accumulated best practices from across Europe and leveraging firsthand experiences from an extensive network of partner organizations, we have curated a robust training program and mentoring framework. The ultimate aim is to equip youth mentors with the tools, knowledge, and resilience required to assist young migrants in their journey towards social inclusion.

As you delve into this guide, you will discover insights into the core pillars of our training course, the successes and challenges faced, and invaluable practical advice. This is more than just a compilation of best practices; it's a testament to the power of collaborative effort, the importance of cultural exchange, and a blueprint for fostering understanding and unity in diverse communities.

Whether you represent an organization working with migrants, a passionate individual volunteer, or simply a curious reader, we hope this document offers both inspiration and tangible strategies. Together, let's pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.



»Mentoring, at its core, is a relationship-driven endeavour aimed at fostering personal and professional growth. As we journey through the ever-evolving landscape of integration, understanding, and communication, the methodologies we employ must also adapt. Our focus on workshops like "From Reflection to Action" and "Breaking Barriers with a Smile" highlights the need to address pressing challenges, such as discrimination and language barriers. Yet, there's always room for growth and refinement. Recognizing the dynamic nature of mentorship, especially in the context of these workshops, this article delves into actionable strategies to fine-tune our mentoring methods and skills. With a blend of continuous learning, self-reflection, and pragmatic insights, we aim to foster an environment where both mentors and mentees thrive.«
(Samar Zughool, 2023).



Povod

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Training Course for Mentors

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The poster features a cartoon illustration of a woman with dark hair wearing a pink shirt and headphones, sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and a microphone. The background is a textured grey wall. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with yellow and pink accents.

Breaking Barriers with a Smile: Harnessing Positive Emotions in Overcoming Language Hurdles

Language, in its essence, is more than just a collection of words and rules; it is a vehicle for human connection. It carries our thoughts, desires, feelings, and history. In an increasingly globalized world, language diversity is both a gift and a challenge. While it brings with it an enriching tapestry of cultures and perspectives, it also presents barriers that can lead to misunderstanding, frustration, and isolation.

However, amidst these challenges lies an often underutilized tool: our emotions, particularly the positive ones. Emotions are universal and can transcend language boundaries. A genuine smile, a hearty laugh, or a gesture of kindness can communicate more profoundly than words ever could.

Welcome to our workshop, »Breaking Barriers with a Smile.« This interactive session is designed to explore the powerful role positive emotions play in bridging language gaps. We will delve into strategies for harnessing these emotions, from body language and non-verbal cues to finding common emotional ground.



By the end of this workshop, participants will be equipped with techniques to build connections beyond words, fostering understanding and unity even when the spoken language fails. Whether you're a traveler, a professional in a multicultural environment, or someone eager to connect with others from different linguistic backgrounds, this workshop promises insights that will transform the way you approach language barriers.

So, let's embark on this journey of emotional discovery together, and remember that sometimes, a shared moment of joy or a simple nod of understanding can speak louder than a thousand words.

Workshop Methodologies: Exposing Positive Emotions to Overcome Language Barriers

Objective: To empower mentors in harnessing the power of positive emotions, thereby helping them bridge language barriers with their mentees.

1. ICEBREAKER: Emotion Charades

 **Duration:** 15 minutes

 **Method:**

- Each mentor picks an emotion (e.g., happiness, surprise, confusion) from a bowl.
- Without using words, they must act out the emotion.
- The rest try to guess the emotion. The activity demonstrates the universality of emotions.

2. REFLECTION: Personal Language Barrier Experiences

 **Duration:** 20 minutes

 **Method:**

- Mentors recall a time they faced a language barrier and describe the emotions they felt.
- They reflect on how emotions either helped or hindered the situation.
- Sharing these experiences in pairs can build empathy and context.

3. ACTIVITY: Non-verbal Storytelling

 **Duration:** 30 minutes

 **Method:**

- Pairs are given a simple story. One person acts out the story without words.
- The other interprets the story, focusing on understanding the emotions portrayed.
- This activity emphasizes the power of body language and emotions in communication.

4. ROLE PLAY: Emotion-First Communication

 Duration: 40 minutes

 Method:

- Prepare scenarios where language might be a barrier (e.g., asking for directions, buying groceries).
- Mentors role-play both sides: one as a local, the other as someone unfamiliar with the language.
- The focus is on conveying understanding and empathy using gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice.

5. ACTIVITY: Emotional Vocabulary Building

 Duration: 25 minutes

 Method:

- Mentors pair up and receive cards with common emotions written in the mentee's language.
- Without speaking, the mentor expresses the emotion non-verbally, while the mentee corrects or encourages using gestures.
- The mentor then practices pronouncing the emotion in the mentee's language, emphasizing the emotional connection.

6. EXERCISE: Music and Emotion

 Duration: 20 minutes

 Method:

- Play a song in a language unfamiliar to the mentors.
- Ask mentors to interpret the emotions and themes based solely on the melody, rhythm, and tone.
- Discuss the universality of music and its power in conveying emotions beyond words.

7. PRACTICAL SESSION: Shared Activities Beyond Language

 Duration: 30 minutes

 Method:

- Engage in activities that require minimal language: painting, dance, cooking a simple recipe.
- The mentor and mentee collaborate, relying on non-verbal cues and positive emotions to guide them.
- Reflect on the experience, focusing on how shared emotions facilitated understanding.

8. GROUP DISCUSSION: Emotional Challenges & Solutions

 Duration: 25 minutes

 Method:

- Mentors discuss challenges they anticipate in their mentoring relationship due to language barriers.
- As a group, brainstorm strategies to leverage positive emotions to overcome these challenges.

9. WRAP-UP: Personal Commitment Card

 Duration: 10 minutes

 Method:

- Each mentor writes down three strategies they commit to using in their mentoring sessions to harness positive emotions.
- These cards serve as personal reminders and can be revisited in future workshops.

10. FEEDBACK SESSION

 Duration: 10 minutes

 Method:

- Collect feedback from mentors about the workshop. What did they find most valuable? What would they want to delve deeper into in the future?

Note: Ensure that throughout the workshop, there's an emphasis on creating a safe, respectful, and open environment. This will facilitate genuine sharing and more profound learning for all participants.



Benefits of the Workshop

This workshop is meticulously designed to address the nuances of language barriers between mentors and migrants. One of the primary benefits is the enhancement of non-verbal communication skills. Through activities focused on body language, tone, and emotional expression, mentors are better equipped to convey understanding, empathy, and guidance even without the use of shared language.

Additionally, the workshop fosters a deeper cultural appreciation. As mentors engage in activities like music listening or shared tasks, they gain insight into the mentee's cultural background, facilitating a more profound connection. Moreover, by focusing on emotion-driven communication, mentors can form more genuine, heart-to-heart connections with their mentees, ensuring the mentoring relationship is based on trust and mutual respect.

Lastly, the workshop's emphasis on reflection and feedback means mentors are continually learning, adapting, and improving. They leave the workshop not just with new skills, but with a commitment to continued growth in their mentoring journey.



Challenges and Potential Pitfalls When Working with Migrants

Working with migrants, while immensely rewarding, can present its own set of challenges. Cultural differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. For instance, gestures or body language that are considered friendly or neutral in one culture might be perceived as rude or inappropriate in another.

Language, even with the tools provided in the workshop, will remain a significant hurdle. While emotions are universal, nuances in linguistic expression can sometimes lead to unintended offense or miscommunication. Mentors might face situations where they struggle to comprehend the depth of a migrant's experiences or emotions due to these language constraints.

Another challenge is the potential emotional baggage or trauma that some migrants may bring with them. Escaping from conflict zones, facing persecution, or simply the immense stress of adjusting to a new environment can impact their ability to engage fully in the workshop.

one's life can lead to deep-seated emotional and psychological scars. Mentors, while well-intentioned, might not always be equipped to handle such profound trauma, potentially leading to feelings of helplessness or inadequacy.



What Can Go Wrong

There's always a risk of unintended cultural insensitivity. Even with training, mentors might inadvertently say or do something that comes across as disrespectful or ignorant.

Additionally, there might be instances where a mentor, in their eagerness to help, becomes overly persistent, leading the migrant to feel overwhelmed or pressured. On the flip side, if a mentor becomes too passive due to fear of overstepping, it might make the migrant feel neglected or undervalued.

Emotional burnout is another concern. Dealing with heavy emotional stories and challenges can be draining. Without proper self-care or support systems in place, mentors might find themselves emotionally exhausted, leading to decreased efficacy in their roles.

Lastly, there is always the risk of external prejudice. While the mentor-mentee relationship might be strong, societal prejudices against migrants can impact the dynamic, with mentors potentially having to defend or justify their decision to support migrants.





Feedback on the Workshop from Partners

This feedback from each country emphasizes the need for a blend of universal methodologies with localized nuances. It is essential to maintain a balance to ensure the workshop's effectiveness across different cultural contexts.

Slovenia

Good Practices:

- Slovenian mentors appreciated the focus on non-verbal communication, stating that the emotional connect facilitated a more profound bond between them and the migrants.
- The music and emotion activity was particularly well-received, as Slovenian culture has a rich musical tradition that resonated well with the workshop's objectives.

Bad Practices:

- Some Slovenian participants felt the workshop could have delved deeper into the specific cultural nuances unique to Slovenia, ensuring a more tailored approach.
- The reflection activity was considered slightly lengthy and could be more structured to retain engagement.



Italy

Good Practices:

- Spanish mentors found the shared activities session, especially cooking, to be the highlight. Sharing Spanish culinary traditions helped in forging connections.
- The personal commitment card was well-regarded, as it served as a tangible reminder of their pledges.

Bad Practices:

- Some Spanish participants felt there was a need for more advanced linguistic tools or support, given the vast difference between Spanish and many migrant languages.
 - The initial icebreaker was felt to be a bit generic and could be replaced with something more culturally relevant.
-

France

Good Practices:

- The emphasis on emotional vocabulary building resonated well with French mentors. They appreciated the depth it added to their interactions.
- Role-playing activities were particularly effective, as they provided hands-on experience and immediate feedback.

Bad Practices:

- A few French mentors commented that there should be more focus on understanding and navigating the cultural differences specific to France.
 - The wrap-up session was felt to be a tad rushed and could be extended for more in-depth reflection.
-

Poland

Good Practices:

- Polish mentors found the non-verbal storytelling activity immensely useful, stating that it allowed them to better understand the migrants' perspectives.
- The group discussions were highlighted as a strength, fostering a sense of community among mentors.

Bad Practices:

- Some Polish participants felt that the workshop could benefit from more localized examples and case studies to make the content more relatable.
 - The feedback session needed clearer guidelines to ensure constructive criticism.
-

Greece

Good Practices:

- Greek mentors were particularly fond of the reflection activity, noting that it offered a safe space to share personal experiences and learn from one another.
- The practical session, especially dance, was a hit, tapping into the rich Greek dance culture.

Bad Practices:

- Greek participants suggested incorporating more regional-specific challenges faced by migrants in Greece to make the scenarios in role-play more realistic.
 - More time allocation for breaks in between activities was suggested for better pacing.
-

Turkey

Good Practices:

- Turkish mentors praised the emotional challenges and solutions segment. It offered concrete strategies to navigate the complexities of mentoring.
- The emotional vocabulary building activity was beneficial, particularly given the linguistic diversity in Turkey.

Bad Practices:

- Some Turkish mentors felt there was a need for additional post-workshop support, especially in addressing potential traumatic experiences of migrants.
 - The icebreaker activity needed to be more culturally sensitive to be effective in the Turkish context.
-

Estonia

Good Practices:

- Estonian mentors appreciated the focus on music and emotions, emphasizing the universality of emotional expression.
- The role-play sessions provided much-needed practical experience, allowing mentors to apply what they learned immediately.

Bad Practices:

- Estonian participants highlighted a need for more digital tools or apps to facilitate language learning and bridge communication gaps.
- More time for individual reflection and personal growth was a recurring suggestion.

Sweden

Good Practices:

- Swedish mentors were particularly impressed by the workshops that integrated outdoor activities, which aligned well with the Swedish emphasis on nature and outdoor living. This not only made the sessions more enjoyable but also facilitated informal learning and bonding.
- - The collaborative problem-solving tasks that mirrored Swedish work culture were effective in preparing migrants for professional environments in Sweden, emphasizing consensus and collective decision-making

Bad Practices:

- The cultural sensitivity training in Sweden could benefit from a more detailed exploration of local norms and etiquettes, such as the emphasis on personal space and privacy.
- The structure of some workshop sessions could be adjusted to better match the Swedish preference for efficiency and brevity, ensuring sustained engagement and effectiveness.

Malta

Good Practices:

- Maltese mentors highly valued the inclusion of storytelling sessions that focused on local legends and historical narratives, which resonate deeply within Maltese culture. This approach effectively engaged participants by connecting them with the rich heritage of Malta.
- The use of local settings and contexts in scenario-based activities was appreciated, as it helped migrants better understand and integrate into the Maltese community.

Bad Practices:

- In Malta, the linguistic diversity of the workshops could be expanded to better cater to the multilingual nature of incoming migrants, including a significant number who speak Arabic and Italian.
- Feedback in the sessions sometimes lacked specific, actionable advice tailored to individual needs, which could enhance the effectiveness of the workshops.



Feedback from Mentors on Their Experiences with Migrants Post-Workshop

These experiences, rich in emotion and learning, underscore the complexity and depth of mentoring relationships. Each story also serves as a testament to the value of the workshop in equipping mentors with the tools to navigate these challenging yet rewarding interactions.

1. Slovenian Mentor

Experience: *»While using non-verbal storytelling technique, I found it especially touching when my migrant mentee conveyed his journey to Slovenia through a series of drawings. It gave me a clear picture of his past, his resilience and his hopes.«*

Challenge: *»Despite our best efforts, there were moments of frustration. One day, he seemed distant, and it took a while to understand it was the anniversary of his departure from his homeland.«*

2. Italian Mentor

Experience: *»The shared cooking activity was a revelation. My mentee taught me a traditional dish from his country, and through the process, I understood the significance of family and communal bonds in his culture.«*

Challenge: *»Language posed problems initially. I tried explaining a Italian festival to him, but it took several attempts and the use of many props before he could grasp the essence.«*

3. French Mentor

Experience: *»We took to the streets of Paris, and through role-playing, he played the 'guide,' explaining places from his perspective. It was heartwarming to see him integrate his past with his present.«*

Challenge: *»We faced some resistance when discussing certain aspects of French culture. The notion of secularism, in particular, required delicate handling and multiple sessions.«*

4. Polish Mentor

Experience: *»Music became our bridge. I introduced him to Polish folk music, and in return, he showed me songs from his homeland. Through melodies, we communicated feelings that words couldn't convey.«*

Challenge: *»While visiting a Polish historical site, some inadvertent comments from onlookers upset my mentee. It was a challenging day, reminding us of the societal biases that still exist.«*



5. Greek Mentor

Experience: *»Our emotional vocabulary building activity bore fruit when my mentee managed to convey a complex emotion using a mix of Greek words and his native language, creating a unique blend that only we understood.«*

Challenge: *»During a dance session, he seemed withdrawn. I later learned that a similar dance in his country was associated with mourning, leading to unexpected memories.«*

6. Turkish Mentor

Experience: *»We frequently engaged in mutual storytelling. The tales he shared about his family gave me insights into his values, fears, and dreams.«*

Challenge: *»One day, he grew extremely anxious about an ongoing political situation in his homeland. It required a delicate balance to comfort him without delving deep into political discussions.«*

7. Estonian Mentor

Experience: *»We took to digital apps to bridge our language gap. Over time, we had our unique code, a blend of emojis, words, and gestures, which became our secret language.«*

Challenge: *»There were days when the weather in Estonia reminded him of his home, leading to bouts of homesickness. Those days required extra patience and understanding.«*

8. Maltese Mentor

Experience: *"In our sessions, we focused heavily on role-playing activities, which helped simulate real-life interactions and significantly improved the migrant's confidence in using the local*

Experience: "In our sessions, we focused heavily on role-playing activities, which helped simulate real-life interactions and significantly improved the migrant's confidence in using the local

9. Swedish Mentor

Experience: "During a group hike in the Swedish countryside, designed to mirror our workshop activities that combine learning with nature, one of my migrant mentees shared her story of leaving Syria. She related each landmark we passed to stages in her life, from peace to escape, and finally to seeking safety. This powerful metaphor helped me grasp the emotional landscape of her experience in a new and moving way."

Challenge: "While I felt better equipped to connect with my mentee after the workshop, navigating the nuances of Swedish societal norms still presented difficulties. She sometimes misinterpreted local customs, which led to moments of embarrassment and isolation for her. It's been a delicate balance guiding her through these subtle cultural cues without making her feel like an outsider."



»From Reflection to Action: Navigating Discrimination and Stereotypes in the Mentoring Landscape«

In an increasingly interconnected world, it's paramount to appreciate the richness of diversity while simultaneously confronting and dismantling the insidious roots of discrimination. Discriminatory practices, often deeply embedded within societal fabrics, need to be identified and addressed to foster inclusive environments. Through our series of workshops, we embarked on a profound journey, unearthing both individual and collective roles in causing, perpetuating, challenging, and, ultimately, preventing such prejudices.

This journey began with an introspective step into the future, where participants were tasked to visualize their day, two decades hence. Not only does this exercise serve as a beacon of hope and a boost to one's self-worth, but it also triggers reflections on one's aspirations and the societal structures they hope to inhabit or change. By laying bare these personal narratives, the participants set the stage for a broader discussion on their envisioned roles in this future, particularly in the Mentopr system. These individual revelations emphasized that the fight against discrimination begins with personal growth and optimism.

Next, in a duo-centric activity, the spotlight turned to the stereotypes that subtly, and sometimes not-so-subtly, pervade our daily lives. By employing language as a tool and creativity as the medium, pairs scrutinized these stereotypes, reinventing them into new, empowering role models. The creation of these role models not only provided a hands-on way to challenge societal norms but also underscored the potential power of cooperative ventures in reshaping our worldviews. This collaboration culminated in a discussion on the practical implications of these role models within the mentoring ecosystem.

Lastly, simulating the intricate dynamics of mentoring, participants donned dual hats - as mentors and mentees. This role reversal, pivoting around the complexities of language barriers, provided invaluable insights into the challenges and triumphs inherent to the mentoring process. As each person straddled both roles, empathy and understanding deepened, leading to a comprehensive discussion on the symbiotic relationship between mentors and mentees.

In essence, these workshops served as a mirror, reflecting the duality of our roles in perpetuating and combating discrimination. They underscored the value of introspection, collaboration, and practical application in our continuous journey towards an inclusive society and, more specifically, within the realm of mentoring. As you delve deeper into this article, we invite you to embark on this transformative journey with us, understanding that change is both an individual and collective responsibility.

Workshop Methodologies for »From Reflection to Action: Navigating Discrimination and Stereotypes in the Mentoring Landscape«

1. Introduction & Setting the Stage (15 minutes)

- Welcome participants, introduce the workshop's theme and objectives.
- Brief icebreaker activity: Pair up and share one surprising fact about each other.
- Highlight the importance of open-mindedness and active listening.

2. Future Visioning: A Glimpse into Tomorrow (30 minutes)

Materials: Blank paper, colored pens, markers.

a. Individual Reflection (15 minutes)

- Ask mentors and mentees to visualize and reflect on their lives 20 years from now.
- Instruct them to either draw or write a narrative capturing that vision on paper.

b. Pair Sharing (10 minutes)

- Mentors and mentees share their visions with each other, discussing hopes, challenges, and themes of discrimination they wish would change in the future.

c. Group Discussion (5 minutes)

- Engage the whole group in discussing common themes or aspirations.
- Emphasize the connection between their envisioned futures and the role of tackling stereotypes and discrimination.

3. Confronting Stereotypes: Creating New Narratives (45 minutes)

a. Awareness Discussion (15 minutes)

- Facilitate a group conversation around existing stereotypes in their societies.
- Use probing questions: »What are common stereotypes related to migrants?«, »How do these stereotypes manifest in daily conversations?«

b. Role Model Creation (20 minutes)

Materials: Magazines, scissors, glue, large paper sheets.

- In their pairs, participants will utilize magazines (or draw) to create a collage of a positive role model that challenges existing stereotypes.
- Encourage them to think about attributes, qualities, and symbols that counteract prejudices.

c. Pair Presentations (10 minutes)

- Pairs present their role models to the group, explaining the stereotypes they're challenging.

4. Simulating Mentorship: Language Barrier Navigation (1 hour)

a. Role Play Setup (10 minutes)

- Explain the simulation: Each pair will role-play mentoring scenarios twice, once with each person acting as the mentor.
- Provide a list of common situations where language barriers arise.

b. First Round of Role Play (15 minutes)

- In pairs, one plays the role of mentor, the other the mentee.
- Engage in a mentoring conversation, trying to navigate a given situation despite language barriers.

c. Swap Roles (5 minutes)

- Participants switch roles for the second round.

d. Second Round of Role Play (15 minutes)

- Pairs repeat the simulation, with roles reversed.

e. Group Debrief (15 minutes)

- Discuss the challenges and discoveries made during the role plays.
- Explore strategies that seemed effective in bridging communication gaps.

5. Conclusion & Action Points (15 minutes)

a. Reflection on Learning

- Participants reflect on their biggest takeaways from the workshop.
- Discussion on how to apply these insights into their real mentoring relationships.

b. Feedback Collection

- Distribute feedback forms or conduct a quick verbal feedback session for continuous improvement of the workshop.

c. Thanking Participants

- Thank everyone for their participation, insights, and commitment to challenging stereotypes and discrimination in their mentoring roles.



Benefits of the »From Reflection to Action« Workshop

1. Enhanced Self-awareness: The workshop allows mentors and mentees to introspect, visualize their aspirations, and acknowledge personal biases. This self-awareness is pivotal in recognizing and then confronting one's own prejudices.

2. Strengthened Mentor-Mentee Relationship: Through shared experiences, role-playing, and open discussions, the bond between the mentor and the migrant mentee deepens, fostering mutual trust and understanding.

3. Skill Development: The workshop provides practical strategies for mentors to navigate challenging scenarios, particularly those arising due to language barriers, enabling them to be more effective in their roles.

4. Challenging the Status Quo: By confronting and deconstructing prevalent stereotypes, the workshop promotes critical thinking. The creation of positive role models serves as a proactive step towards shifting societal narratives.

5. Empowerment: For migrants, the workshop can be an empowering space where they not only voice their concerns and challenges but also actively participate in shaping new, positive narratives about their community.



Challenges and Potential Pitfalls

- 1. Sensitive Topics:** The discussion around stereotypes and discrimination can be triggering for some participants, especially if they've faced severe prejudice or discrimination in the past.
- 2. Communication Gaps:** Given the emphasis on navigating language barriers, there's potential for miscommunication, which might lead to feelings of frustration or misunderstanding.
- 3. Varied Experiences:** Migrants come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some may have faced severe traumas or challenges, while others might not. Creating a universally applicable workshop can be a challenge given this diversity.
- 4. Potential for Unconscious Bias:** Despite the workshop's intent, there's always a risk that participants might inadvertently express or act on their biases, potentially alienating or offending others.
- 5. Overstepping Boundaries:** In their eagerness to help or empathize, some mentors might overstep personal boundaries, leading to discomfort or feelings of intrusion among the mentees.



What Can Go Wrong

- 1. Re-traumatization:** If not handled delicately, discussions around discrimination or past traumas can inadvertently re-traumatize migrant mentees, leading to emotional distress.
- 2. Dominance of Voices:** There's a possibility that louder or more assertive voices dominate the conversation, leaving quieter participants, often those with the most poignant stories, feeling sidelined.
- 3. Mentor Overwhelm:** Mentors, while trying to be supportive, might feel overwhelmed by the sheer depth and intensity of challenges faced by their mentees. Without adequate support or training, this can lead to burnout.
- 4. Over-generalization:** A potential risk is the unintentional perpetuation of stereotypes. For instance, if one migrant shares a particular experience, it might wrongly be assumed as a universal experience for all migrants.
- 5. Dependency Issues:** Instead of fostering self-reliance and empowerment, there's a risk that the mentor-mentee relationship becomes too dependent, with the mentee feeling unable to make decisions or take actions independently.

It's crucial to approach such workshops with utmost sensitivity, maintaining open communication, and ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all participants. Regular feedback and adaptability can help in navigating these challenges effectively.



Feedback on »From Reflection to Action« Workshop from Partner Countries:

Slovenia

Good Practices:

- Slovenian participants appreciated the focus on introspection and future visualization, stating that it felt culturally relevant and resonated well with their approach to mentorship.
- The workshop techniques allowed for meaningful discussions on the regional stereotypes prevalent in Slovenia.

Bad Practices:

- Some participants felt that the workshop might benefit from incorporating more local historical context on migration to better understand and address present stereotypes.

Italy

Good Practices:

- The role-play exercises were particularly well-received in Spain, where such interactive methods are often used in educational settings.
- Spanish mentors acknowledged the empowerment angle, as it gave voice to many migrants who've come to Spain from diverse backgrounds.

Bad Practices:

- A few participants felt the need for more post-workshop support mechanisms to handle the emotional aftermath of confronting deep-seated biases.
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France

Good Practices:

- French partners lauded the focus on confronting and deconstructing prevalent stereotypes, as France is home to a diverse migrant population with varied experiences.
- The creation of positive role models resonated strongly, aiding in shifting some of the mainstream narratives.

Bad Practices:

- Some mentors desired more strategies to tackle linguistic challenges, considering the centrality of the French language in integration efforts.
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Poland

Good Practices:

- Polish participants appreciated the practical strategies provided for navigating challenging scenarios, citing their direct applicability.
- The section on confronting stereotypes spurred profound reflections, given Poland's unique socio-political landscape regarding migration.

Bad Practices:

- A few participants felt the workshop could be extended in duration to allow deeper dives into certain topics.

Greece

Good Practices:

- Greek mentors found the simulation of mentoring cooperation extremely beneficial, given Greece's frontline status in European migration.
- The workshop's empowerment angle was praised for its potential to aid many refugees in Greece.

Bad Practices:

- Some feedback indicated a desire for more localized content, given the unique migration challenges Greece faces.
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Turkey

Good Practices:

- The workshop's focus on self-awareness and introspection was praised for resonating with Turkish cultural values.
- The activities that sought to challenge the status quo were found to be crucial given Turkey's diverse migrant and refugee populations.

Bad Practices:

- A few mentors expressed the need for further guidance on handling potential post-workshop emotional distress, especially given the intense personal stories some migrants shared.
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Estonia

Good Practices:

- Estonian participants found the role-playing exercises particularly beneficial, highlighting the importance of practical experience in mentorship training.
- The future visioning section was found to be innovative and insightful.

Bad Practices:

- Some feedback indicated a desire for a stronger focus on digital tools for mentorship, given Estonia's tech-forward approach.

It's evident from the feedback that while the core content of the workshop resonated universally, there are country-specific nuances that need attention. Tailoring sections of the workshop to address local challenges and contexts can enhance its effectiveness.



Feedback from Mentors Using »From Reflection to Action« Techniques with Migrants

1. Personal Introspection's Impact on Mentorship: Many mentors expressed that beginning with introspection allowed them to recognize their own biases. This self-awareness translated into more empathetic and nuanced interactions with migrants. By confronting their prejudices, they could better understand the challenges faced by their mentees.

2. Future Visualization as an Empowerment Tool: Mentors found that asking migrants to visualize and narrate a day in their life 20 years from now not only boosted their mentees' morale but also provided valuable insight into their aspirations. This, in turn, allowed mentors to tailor their guidance more effectively, focusing on the specific steps needed to achieve these long-term goals.

3. The Power of Role Play: By swapping roles in simulations, mentors experienced firsthand some of the challenges their mentees faced. They reported that these exercises significantly enhanced their empathy, making them more patient and understanding in real-life mentoring scenarios.

4. Encountering Deep-seated Stereotypes: Many mentors expressed surprise at the depth and variety of stereotypes their mentees confronted daily. These revelations often led to candid conversations, with migrants sharing personal stories of discrimination. While these discussions were sometimes emotionally charged, they fostered a deeper bond of trust between mentor and mentee.

5. The Journey from Reflection to Action: Mentors noted that as their mentees progressed through the workshop, there was a noticeable shift from reflection to proactive planning. By the end, many migrants had developed actionable strategies to navigate discrimination and were keen to implement them.

6. Challenges in Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Barriers: Despite the tools provided in the workshop, some mentors still found it challenging to bridge certain cultural and linguistic divides. While they could address blatant discrimination, more subtle, culturally ingrained biases proved trickier to navigate.

7. The Emotional Toll: A few mentors mentioned the emotional toll these sessions sometimes took. Listening to deeply personal stories of discrimination and hardship was often heart-wrenching. Mentors expressed a need for supplementary sessions on handling and processing these emotions constructively.

8. The Power of Positive Role Models: Mentors found that creating and discussing positive role models had a profound impact on their mentees. Many migrants, upon seeing successful individuals who had faced similar challenges, felt a renewed sense of hope and determination.

9. Post-workshop Continuation: Several mentors expressed a desire for an extended support system post-workshop. They felt that while the workshop provided valuable tools, continued support would be essential in ensuring the long-term success of their mentees.

Overall, mentors found the »From Reflection to Action« techniques transformative, both for themselves and their mentees. While the journey had its challenges, the rewards, in terms of personal growth and the tangible impact on migrants, were immeasurable.



Improving Mentoring Methods and Skills: Focusing on »From Reflection to Action« and »Breaking Barriers with a Smile« Workshops

In the dynamic landscape of mentorship, particularly within the realms of migrant support, the demand for evolving methodologies and enhanced skill sets is ever-present. The workshops "From Reflection to Action" and "Breaking Barriers with a Smile" stand at the forefront of this innovative journey, aiming to equip mentors with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of discrimination, stereotypes, and communication barriers. This document outlines a comprehensive strategy for mentor development, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning, cultural sensitivity, technological adoption, and psychological support. Through a series of targeted recommendations, from expanding resource materials to fostering collaborative networking opportunities, we seek to foster a mentoring environment that is both effective and empathetic. By embedding these practices into the fabric of our mentorship programs, we not only enhance the mentor-mentee relationship but also contribute to the broader narrative of social inclusion and support for migrants. The following sections detail a roadmap for mentors aspiring to refine their approach and impact, ensuring that every interaction is a step towards positive change.

1. Continuous Learning and Professional Development: Mentors should be encouraged to attend regular training sessions, including advanced courses that delve deeper into the intricacies of discrimination, stereotypes, and effective communication techniques.

2. Enhanced Cultural Sensitivity Training: Expand the cultural sensitivity component of the workshops to include more extensive country-specific information. This will provide mentors with a deeper understanding of their mentee's cultural background, thereby bridging potential misunderstandings more effectively.

3. Embrace Technology: Introduce language apps and online platforms that can assist both mentors and migrants in real-time translation, aiding in breaking down language barriers.

4. Psychological Support for Mentors: Recognizing the emotional toll mentoring can take, especially when dealing with challenging topics, there should be regular debriefing sessions and support groups where mentors can express their feelings, share experiences, and seek counsel.

5. Regular Feedback Mechanism: Implement a robust system where mentors can provide feedback on workshop content and methodologies, ensuring that the program stays dynamic and adapts to the changing needs of both mentors and mentees.

6. Simulation and Role-playing Enhancement: Expand the role-playing section in both workshops to cover a broader range of situations. This could include more complex scenarios that may arise in real-life mentoring.

7. Expand Resource Materials: Provide mentors with additional reading materials, videos, and case studies on overcoming discrimination, understanding stereotypes, and language barrier solutions. This can further equip them with diverse strategies.

8. Peer Mentoring Sessions: Organize sessions where experienced mentors share their successful strategies and pitfalls with newer members. Such peer-to-peer interactions often yield practical insights.

9. Multilingual Training: Considering the diverse backgrounds of migrants, introduce multilingual training sessions or provide translation aids. This would ensure that language does not become a hurdle during mentor training.

10. Focus on Actionable Strategies: After each session, mentors should be equipped with a set of actionable strategies they can immediately implement with their mentees. Having a clear action plan can make the transition from learning to implementation smoother.

11. Encourage Personal Reflection: Allocate specific times during the workshops for mentors to reflect on their learning, biases, and areas of improvement. Such introspective moments can be instrumental in personal growth.

12. Collaborative Networking Opportunities: Arrange for regular networking events where mentors from different backgrounds can share their experiences and strategies. This collaborative approach can lead to the development of innovative mentoring techniques.

In conclusion, the key to effective mentoring, especially in challenging areas like discrimination and language barriers, is a blend of continuous learning, self-reflection, and practical application. As mentors grow and evolve, they not only enhance their personal skills but significantly impact the lives of the migrants they support.

