# Mentes Migrantes

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS IN MIGRATION PSYCHOLOGY

# FINAL REPORT









Co-funded by the European Union

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## **1. CONTEXT**

Mentes Migrantes is a project co-funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ program. It was developed between May 1, 2022, and July 31, 2023, by three entities from Spain, Italy, and Germany.

The project emerged to address two contradictory realities: while there is a migrant population demanding professionals capable of addressing their mental health circumstances, the psychology of migration is an underexplored field compared to other areas, and there are insufficient professionals to meet the demand, both in the public and private sectors.

During the implementation of Mentes Migrantes, we have created and delivered training in migration psychology aimed at psychologists and professionals who assist migrants in their day-to-day lives, helping them understand the complexity of the migration process and enabling them to respond to migrants' needs.

It has been an inclusive project that involved specialized psychologists in migration, migrants themselves, social workers, and three entities contributing their experience from three different and complementary perspectives.

This document summarizes the work carried out, evaluates the participants and involved entities, and presents the conclusions obtained in order to showcase the results and continue the work undertaken during the project's execution.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES, PARTICIPATING ENTITIES AND ACTIVITIES

At this point, we include a detailed overview of the objectives, the entities that have developed the project, and the activities carried out to provide a broader context for Mentes Migrantes. This information is also available and expanded on the project's website <u>https://mentesmigrantes.eu</u>.

# 2.1. OBJECTIVES

- Create a scientific-technical knowledge base regarding migration psychology.
- Enhance the capabilities of psychology professionals in the field of migration psychology.
- Improve the social integration of migrant communities.

• Raise awareness about the importance of mental health care at the European level.

# **2.2. PARTICIPATING ENTITIES**

Mentes Migrantes has been developed by three entities from three different countries:

- **Volvemos**: A private organization in Spain working to facilitate the return of Spanish emigrants through public return initiatives and the provision of services to the Spanish diaspora (psychological support, guidance for job search and entrepreneurship, and bureaucratic advice). It served as the project lead entity.
- **SDI Munich International University**: A private university in Germany specialized in intercultural communication. With a strong international character, it annually welcomes students from various parts of the world.
- **Babele ODV**: A non-profit association in Italy dedicated to the reception and integration of foreign families in the region. Among other activities, it supports minors in their school integration and builds service networks to enhance the socio-cultural integration of families.



The alliance of these three entities has enriched the project in two fundamental aspects:

• **Based on the nature of each entity:** We combined the academic experience of the University with the migration expertise of Volvemos and Babele. This combination allowed us to understand the dimensions of the target group while developing educational materials according to academic quality standards. The collaboration of entities with different natures (private,

educational, non-profit) has facilitated the project's enrichment and provided each entity with insights into new organizational and operational approaches.

Based on the audience of each entity: Initially driven by Volvemos as the leading entity, the project's approach to migration considered the audience Volvemos works with. However, with the involvement of SDI and Babele, we broadened the migration concept and organized training that addressed different realities: in Spain, we provided training for psychologists working with emigrants and returnees; in Italy, the focus was on social workers aiding migrant community integration; and in Germany, the training targeted professionals assisting international students.

# **2.3. ACTIVITIES**

During the project's implementation, we conducted the following actions:

# **2.3.1.** Research of existing literature in migration psychology and professionals' experiences

At the project's outset, we dedicated time to researching existing literature and gaining insights from specialized psychologists experienced in migration psychology. We held a group workshop on September 30, 2022, with five psychologists, setting the foundation for our journey and defining the basis for the training. This work was documented in a report accessible for reference online.

#### **2.3.2.** Creation of documentation based on research results

With the completed research, we compiled documentation that incorporated the considerations for delivering the training. We identified and developed topics to cover and established a training structure, including student engagement dynamics. This material was authored by one of the participating psychologists in the research phase, who shaped the training orientation. This material is available in Spanish, German, and Italian.

#### **2.3.3.** Development of teaching units suitable for instruction

We then created the actual training content. Each entity, considering its target audience, tailored the training based on common theoretical content and the structure defined in earlier phases. The resulting material, referred to as teaching units, is accessible in Spanish, German, and Italian. These units form the foundation for future trainings, allowing for adaptation based on the audience, training characteristics, etc.

In addition to teaching units, an initial practical exercise was designed for participants who underwent the training. This online and individual exercise served to contextualize the training and address initial queries and concerns among students. This initial activity was available on the Mentes Migrantes website's forum.

#### 2.3.4. In-person training in Italy, Spain, and Germany

The time came to deliver the training. We initiated a registration process in each country and organized the course. With considerable flexibility, we experimented with one or two-day in-person formats based on the country, working with diverse profiles such as psychologists, social workers, educational professionals, etc. This approach was enlightening in identifying strengths and weaknesses, significantly enriching the project.

The training had a practical orientation, incorporating various individual and group work dynamics. These were well-received, receiving an overall rating of 9.16 out of 10. The training occurred between April and May 2023, held in Madrid (Spain), Pavia (Italy), and Munich (Germany). Each country had 30 available slots for the course, and interested individuals were required to complete an enrollment form.

Further details on the conclusions of this training and other activities are detailed on the following pages. Information about training activities can be found in the corresponding document.







#### 2.3.5. Training Follow-up

In addition to in-person training, the course was complemented with online follow-up sessions held in each country. During these sessions, specific cases were discussed and doubts related to the training were addressed. Students in each country were also tasked with creating a group exercise, a "decalogue" on migration psychology:

• Decalogue in Spanish

- <u>Decalogue in German</u>
- <u>Decalogue in Italian</u>

These decalogues were crafted by the students themselves using the received training materials and can be utilized by other professionals interested in this field of psychology or those working with migrants on a daily basis. As part of this follow-up effort, a space for questions and discussions was established in the project's forum, allowing students to share their thoughts.

For further details on the training activities, information can be referenced in the appropriate document.

#### 2.3.6. Workshops with different migrant groups in Italy, Spain, and Germany

Complementing the training, we conducted workshops in each country with the primary beneficiaries of the training: migrants themselves. Given the mentioned diversity, we organized workshops for different audiences. In Italy, it was aimed at immigrant families; in Germany, international students participated; and in Spain, individuals who had returned after a migratory experience were involved.

During these workshops, we presented to the participants what we had covered during the training and the topics we had addressed, in order to gain their perspectives. It was also intriguing to understand their approach to therapy and how their migratory experiences had influenced them.

Through this process, we were able to witness different perspectives regarding migration psychology, which in turn provided us with a more comprehensive understanding. For more details about these workshops, please refer to the corresponding document.

#### 2.3.7. Communication and project dissemination

A fundamental aspect of the project has been the dissemination efforts carried out by the three entities. This dissemination is crucial not only because it's a cornerstone of Mentes Migrantes, aiming to reach as many people as possible, but also because communication was essential for attracting participants to the training and workshops.

Dissemination was achieved through each entity's respective channels, media outlets, existing contact networks, and more. These communication activities have been documented in the relevant report.

#### 2.3.8. Website: <u>https://mentesmigrantes.eu</u>

We've also developed a website that compiles all the relevant information about Mentes Migrantes. This website serves as a space where visitors can learn about the project and our accomplishments, but it also functions as a practical tool that we've used during the training.

We've created a private space on the website, featuring a forum where training participants have engaged. We've made all the educational materials used during the training accessible within this space. It's been a private hub for them to express their thoughts and questions over these months.

Further information about the website and the forum's operation is available in a dedicated document.

#### **2.3.9.** Results presentation event

To conclude Mentes Migrantes, we organized a results presentation event on July 7, 2023, in Madrid. This event brought together representatives from the three participating entities, students who attended the training, psychologists who were part of the research, and members of the media.

During the event, we showcased the project and its activities, and we hosted a roundtable discussion involving the three entities to discuss their individual conclusions and propose future actions.

This event has been recorded and is available on <u>YouTube</u>. The presentation used during the event can also be accessed either <u>here</u> or through the provided link.

### Mentes Migrantes (1st Edition 2023): Closing ceremony and conclusions

#### Mentes Migrantes - Presentation used during the event

### **3. PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION**

The activities related to the training and workshops were evaluated by the attendees of each session. This evaluation was carried out using various assessment methods.

# **3.1. TRAINING EVALUATION**

At the end of the training session, the students were asked to complete a oneminute paper exercise. In this activity, a blank sheet of paper is provided to the attendees and they are asked to respond to a question within a minute. In this case, the question was "**Highlight the two most valuable learnings you have gained from the course**."

This evaluation was anonymous, and the aspects highlighted by the attendees included the learning of new concepts such as reverse culture shock or migration grief, and the importance of moving away from existing prejudices related to migration.

Furthermore, after the follow-up and online group session, the participants were also asked to complete the following evaluation form to assess the training as a whole:

• Evaluation form in Spanish:

#### Mentes Migrantes - Training Assessment

• Evaluation form in Italian:

<u>Mentes Migrantes - Valutazione della formazione</u>

• Evaluation form in German:

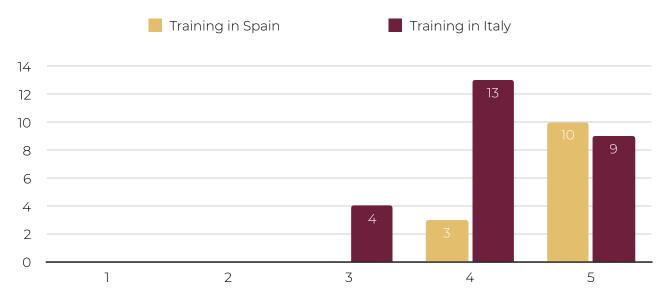
Mentes Migrantes - Bewertung der Weiterbildung

Next, we present an analysis of the information collected from the responses provided by the students in the forms mentioned above. It's important to note that the data corresponds to some of the students who participated in the training in Spain (13 students) and Italy (26 students), and these numbers do not represent the total number of attendees, as some did not complete this questionnaire.

In the case of Germany, the survey was delivered in printed format, so the data has not been digitized.

**NOTE**: The following graphs are evaluated on a scale of values from 1 to 5, where 1 represents a low level of satisfaction and 5 indicates a very high level of satisfaction.

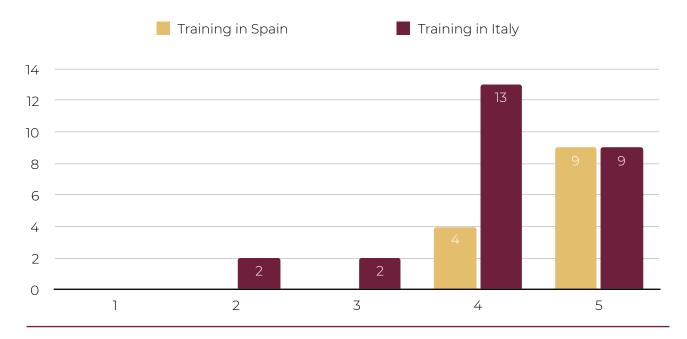
#### 3.1.1. Relevance of this training for general ptofessional practice



The majority of the respondents assigned scores of 4 and 5 on the evaluation scale, indicating that the training has been highly relevant in terms of its applicability in the professional environment.

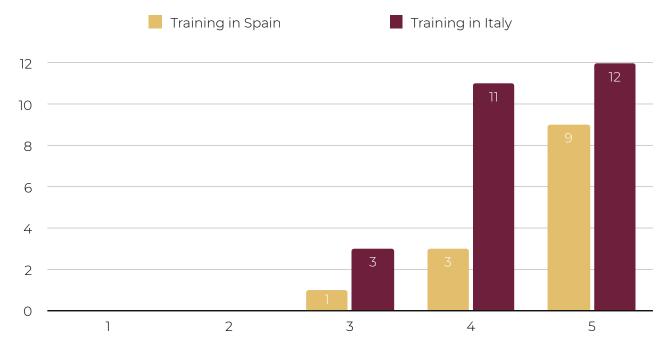
#### **3.1.2.** Balance between theory and practical cases

Most students gave scores ranging from 4 to 5 on the scale, indicating that they consider the training to offer an appropriate combination of theoretical concepts and practical examples. Responses that fall below these scores highlight the importance of continued improvement in the training dynamics for the future.



#### 3.1.3. Selection of topics covered during the course

The graph reflects a positive perception of the presented content, as it has covered different types of migration and associated issues.



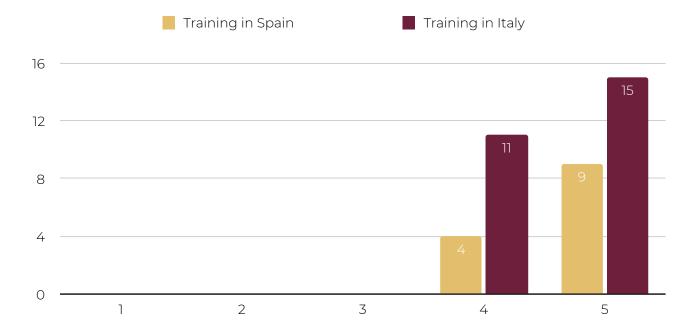
#### **3.1.4.** Instructor's ability to address questions and clarify doubts

These scores suggest that an effective learning environment was created during the sessions, where students felt supported and comfortable expressing themselves.



#### 3.1.5. Overall satisfaction with the course

These higher scores reflect a high degree of overall satisfaction among the students. This positive perception is supported by the quality of the course content, the teaching methods employed, and the dynamics of the training sessions in general.



Additionally, participants were asked about their willingness to participate again in a similar training, as well as about the aspects they most appreciated. Almost 100% of the students expressed their interest in repeating this training experience and would recommend it to other colleagues in the profession. Among the most praised aspects of the training, the application of theoretical concepts to real situations stands out, as well as the breadth and depth of the covered curriculum. The following are some direct quotations:

"I would recommend the training without any doubt. The curriculum has been very comprehensive, covering many facets and alternatives within migration. I also particularly liked the inclusion of returnees as migrants back."

Student from the training in Spain

"The balance between group work and theory made the training very enriching and dynamic, and also allowed attendees to get to know each other a bit more. The documents provided to us were also very useful in practice."

Student from the training in Spain

"It has been very dynamic; we were able to address this topic in an unusual way, for example, discussing reverse migration. I also really enjoyed being able to meet people from the psychology field with such different stories. And, for the most part, I loved understanding better how I felt when migrating and returning myself."

Student from the training in Spain

"I wholeheartedly recommend this training. As a student still and not having worked in the field yet, the opportunity to discuss real cases was very stimulating."

Student from the training in Italy (translated)

"What I liked the most was the continuous exchange of opinions with other participants and the group exercises."

Student from the training in Italy (translated)

"I highlight the competence of the speaker and the organization of the group exercises. The training has allowed me to systematize concepts that I already had but were not organized in my mind."

Student from the training in Italy (translated)

# **3.2. WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

Similarly, we also conducted a questionnaire with participants of the workshop for migrants to assess this activity. This questionnaire was distributed in paper format at the end of the session and included the following questions: MENTES MIGRANTES: FORMACIÓN PARA PROFESIONALES EN PSICOLOGÍA DE LA MIGRACIÓN

# Valoración del taller con migrantes

Este cuestionario tiene como objetivo recopilar tus comentarios y valoraciones sobre diversos aspectos del taller, desde la organización general hasta la relevancia de los temas abordados y el nivel de apoyo recibido.

Tu opinión nos ayudará a evaluar en qué medida el taller ha cumplido tus expectativas y necesidades como migrante, así como identificar áreas en las que podemos mejorar. Las respuestas serán confidenciales (y de obligado cumplimiento) y no se utilizarán para ningún otro propósito que no sea la evaluación del taller.

Puntúa del 1 al 10 tu satisfacción general con el taller

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¿Qué aspectos del taller	crees que se p	odrían n	nejorar?		
¿Recomendarías partic psicólogos/as? ¿Por qué	ipar en est ?	e tipo	de taller	es a c	otros migrantes y/o

In addition to the evaluation of the activities in these questionnaires, we have also collected testimonials from attendees of the training and from the psychologist responsible for developing the instructional content and conducting the training in Spain. These can be viewed on YouTube using the following links:

Testimonial from the individual responsible for developing the instructional content:

• Adrian Jędrzejczak, instructor of the training in Spain.

Testimonials from participants in the training:

- Ane Artaetxebarria, psychologist and student in the training in Spain.
- Belén Navío, psychology student and student in the training in Spain.
- · Ignacio Gath, psychologist and student in the training in Spain.
- Regina Royuela, psychologist and student in the training in Spain.
- Marta Arroyo, psychologist and student in the training in Spain.
- · Jacqueline Assimontti, psychologist and student in the training in Spain.
- María José Rivas, volunteer and student in the training in Italy.
- Vasilka Tontorova, student in the training in Germany.
- Alexandra Andrikopoulou, social pedagogue and student in the training in <u>Germany.</u>

To express gratitude for the participants' involvement in the training, a certificate of completion was created and provided to them. Some of these individuals also shared the certificate on their social media platforms:



### 4. ENTITIES' EVALUATION

In addition to the feedback received from the participants, each of the entities collected data about their activities and their own evaluations of those activities in a document. These documents are attached at the end of this report for detailed reference. However, here is a summarized overview of each entity's activities, along with statements from the responsible individuals:

# 4.1. VOLVEMOS

#### 4.1.A. In-person training

Volvemos conducted the in-person training on April 21, 2023, with a participation of 28 individuals, including participants, instructors, and organization representatives. During this training, the didactic units were presented and worked on through various interactive exercises, both individual and groupbased. The participants consisted of psychology professionals who shared a common training but hailed from different countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, and Spain. This diversity enriched the training experience, providing a valuable multicultural perspective to understand various migration scenarios. This diverse background helped participants put their own migration experiences into perspective and eliminate biases.

Several key insights emerged from Volvemos' activities:

- Pre-selecting participants based on their relevance, experience, and qualifications in the field allowed for the formation of a highly engaged and cohesive group.
- The presence of predominantly female participants, which is a common occurrence in the organization's activities.
- The training structure was deemed appropriate, although condensing theoretical content into a single day could be overwhelming for participants. Group-based dynamics, particularly, garnered great interest.
- New perspectives on the course topics emerged, such as exploring the concept of mourning for the place of reception when an individual returns to their place of origin.

#### 4.1.B. Online session

The follow-up session took place on May 6, 2023, with a participation of 27 individuals. This session was conducted online and aimed to solidify knowledge, address questions, and prepare for a practical final exercise that resulted in the creation of the "Decálogo de psicología de la migración" (Psychology of Migration Decalogue).

For Volvemos, this session once again highlighted the significant interest generated, evident from the high number of participants and their active engagement. The exercise involving the creation of the Decalogue proved to be highly engaging, with active participation from all attendees.

#### **4.1.C.** Workshop with migrants

The workshop took place on June 22, 2023, and had a participation of 7 individuals, including migrants and psychologists. The goal of this workshop was to present the completed course to migrants and gather their opinions on it.

Additionally, the organizers aimed to learn about their experiences with therapy – whether they had undergone therapy, and if so, why.

The participants expressed their gratitude for having a space where they could openly discuss their migration experiences with others who understand and share their journey. While Volvemos would have preferred a higher participation rate, the overall feedback is positive, as the workshop allowed them to test the training provided within the project.

#### Testimonial from Diego Ruiz del Árbol, Director of Volvemos.org

# **4.2. BABELE ONLUS**

#### 4.2.A. In-person training

On April 15, 2023, Babele conducted the in-person training with a total of 34 participants. The profile of these participants consisted of social workers and volunteers who work daily with immigrants in the territory.

For Babele, this training has exceeded all expectations, both in terms of the number of participants and their engagement. The participants noted that it was a very extensive day and that there was limited time to fully engage in some of the activities, suggesting that more hours of training or splitting the training into multiple sessions would have been beneficial.

#### 4.2.B. Online session

The follow-up session took place on April 22, 2023, and had the participation of 23 individuals. Unlike Volvemos and what was initially proposed, this session was conducted in-person, responding to the explicit request of the participants. This was done while maintaining all the other characteristics of the session.

The various sessions have demonstrated the interest in this type of training, and the participants have recognized the tangible utility of applying this knowledge in their day-to-day work.

#### **4.2.C.** Workshop with migrants

The workshop took place on April 22, 2023, and had the participation of 28 individuals. Among them, 10 were students of the course who volunteered to

participate, 7 were migrant mothers, and 11 were children aged between 3 and 12 years old. The workshop focused on exploring migration from the perspective of motherhood and families, and it was divided into separate sessions for mothers and children.

The mothers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to come together, share their ideas and feelings, and find solutions and assistance for their challenges.

<u>Testimonial of Elisabetta della Vigna, coordinator at Babele Onlus</u> (min 1:15)

## 4.3. SDI MUNICH INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

#### 4.3.A. In-person training

In the case of Germany, the in-person training session was divided into two days, on June 5th and 6th, 2023. It had the same theoretical content and hours as the others, but this allowed us to experiment with different formats. The number of participants was 24, including educators and professionals from various fields of German society who work with migrants.

SDI observed the participants' interest and found the diversity of the group with shared objectives to be quite intriguing. The use of different dynamics for the training is also appreciated, and there is a positive view towards conducting additional courses on migration that delve even deeper and complement this one.

#### **4.3.B.** Online session

The online session took place on June 16, 2023, with the participation of 16 individuals. It maintained the same structure and objectives as in the other countries. In this case, SDI does not provide any specific evaluation, but shares similar sentiments with Volvemos and Babele.

#### **4.3.C.** Taller con migrantes

Finally, the workshop took place on June 22, 2023, with the participation of 6 individuals who were students from different countries enrolled at the University.

For SDI, the workshop facilitated the exchange of information and experiences among the students in a relaxed environment. It was beneficial for the organization to have a moderator who was also a migrant and had previously been a student at the University. This helped establish a strong connection among all participants.

> <u>Testimonial of Pilar Salamanca, Vice Rector at the International</u> <u>University SDI Munich (at 3:53)</u>

### 5. CONCLUSIONS, LEARNINGS, AND NEXT STEPS

After completing the project, the three entities have conducted a comprehensive assessment of Mentes Migrantes with the aim of drawing project conclusions, highlighting the learnings gained by each entity, and providing recommendations for the project's continuation.

## **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

- The interest of psychologists and other professionals in the initiative has demonstrated the need for a project like this. The project has received a great response, exceeding all our expectations. As of the project's end date (July 31, 2023), we have received 222 applications for participation in the course.
- Participants in the training sessions have rated them with an average score of 9.16 out of 10 and have expressed their overall satisfaction, indicating their willingness to attend similar training sessions and their intention to recommend the training to other professionals.
- The alliance between the three entities that formed the consortium has been a double success for the following reasons:
  - Firstly, the different nature of each organization (an NGO, a university, and a private initiative) has provided diverse and complementary perspectives to the project.
  - Secondly, when forming the consortium, we considered that each of the three entities worked with different types of migration. Thus, the generated

results are applicable to various migratory situations (e.g., economic migrants, forced migrants, refugees, and returnees).

We conclude that the migratory process is a differentiating factor when addressing therapy. Therefore, a professional who works with migrants must be knowledgeable about the circumstances associated with the migration process. The experience has confirmed the importance of specifically addressing mental health in migratory processes.

We have also identified **areas for improvement**:

- We were unable to accommodate all the requests received, especially from Latin America, due to the in-person nature of the training sessions.
- The training content turned out to be more extensive than expected, resulting in theoretical training days that were denser than recommended. Nonetheless, participants have expressed their desire for even more comprehensive training to further expand their knowledge.
- The decision to test two in-person formats, one in a single day and the other spread over two days, allowed us to determine that the two-day format is better, despite the challenge of coordinating schedules for those who attended the training.

### **5.2. LEARNINGS**

Each of the entities has been able to enrich itself through the others, thanks to their distinct orientations. A private entity, a university, and a non-profit organization represent three very different realities and needs, which have allowed us to broaden our horizons.

In line with the above, working with different profiles of migrants and training participants has also been valuable. This has enabled us to understand other realities and uncover new areas to explore.

The staff of each entity has had the opportunity to discover other forms of organization and work. The team had experience in similar projects, but always tailored to their own circumstances. Sharing spaces and common objectives has helped us uncover new ways of working.

# **5.3. NEXT STEPS**

Mentes Migrantes has come to an end, but there are many reasons that lead us to continue with the work we have initiated, among others:

- The training has been warmly received, surpassing our expectations. We initially planned for a capacity of 30 participants per country, but we received over 200 applications in total.
- Many individuals have shown interest in the training but couldn't attend in person, particularly those from Latin America. This drives us to consider offering online training to reach a broader audience.
- Likewise, we are considering expanding the training to other countries by incorporating new partners.
- The feedback from participants has helped us identify new topics to address or delve deeper into in future training sessions.

The three entities are very pleased with the work accomplished and have expressed our intention to move forward. To achieve this, we are considering the possibility of entering into a cooperation agreement. Additionally, we are exploring the potential of submitting new projects related to Mentes Migrantes"to the European Commission in order to continue the work that has been done.

"The Mentes Migrantes project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union. The content of this document is the sole responsibility of Volvemos.org, University SDI Munich, and Babele Onlus, and neither the European Commission nor the Spanish Service for the Internationalization of Education (SEPIE) are responsible for the use that may be made of the information disseminated here."

VOLVEMOS.ORG







Co-funded by the European Union