

Mind-Spring

Migration und Flüchtlinge

1st International Mind-Spring Conference

June 27th 2019

Group-oriented health prevention project from refugees for refugees

“Mind-Spring empowers refugees and gives them a stronger sense of identity in their new country”

Paul Sterk, Founder of Mind-Spring

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Programme
1st International Mind-Spring Conference –
Group-oriented health prevention project
by refugees for refugees

June 27th 2019

09.00 – 18:00

- 8:30h Registration with coffee
- 9:00h **Welcome address** Roland Bernhard, District Administrator
- 9:05h **Opening and Welcome speech** Katharina Pfister, Head of the Office for Migration and Refugees
- 9:15h **Why does Europe need Mind-Spring?** Paul Sterk explains why Mind-Spring's group-oriented, Peer-to-Peer psycho-educational approach as health prevention for refugees is so successful.
- 9:45h **Best-Practice: Experiences, Approaches and Results from the Netherlands and Denmark.** Moderation: Cristina Visiers-Würth
Netherlands: Miranda Dabboubi-Broersen; Willeke de Jong; Bet-El Teklemariam
Denmark: Anna Mathilde Jensen; Tove Madsen; Rana Agha
- 10.30 Questions' session open to the public
- 10:45h Coffee break
- 11:00h **Best-Practice: Experiences, Approaches and Results from Belgium and Germany.** Moderation: Cristina Visiers-Würth
Belgium: Desiree Derksen; Maryam Tawfiq Marwan; Mahmoud Jaber
Germany: Dr. Janine Benson-Martin; Mariam Hijazi; Nazanin Lakamari
- 11.45h Questions' session open to the public
- 12:00h Lunch break and informal exchange
- 13:00h **Podium discussion** with representatives of 4 countries: Aspirations for the Future. Moderation: Cristina Visiers-Würth
- 13:40h **Closing remarks** Katharina Pfister
- 13:45h End of public session

Experts' exchange for Trainers and Co-Trainers

15:00	Workshops Subjects: Recruiting (Moderation: Belgium/Germany), Evaluation (Moderation: Denmark/Germany) Training (Moderation: Netherlands/Germany)
16.30	Presentation of workshop results and suggestions
17.30	Prospects and informal exchange with coffee
18.00	End of event

Conference languages are German and English. There will be whispered interpreting in English and in German available.

Welcome address from the District Administrator, Roland Bernhard



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

20 year ago, Paul Sterk, the founder of Mind-Spring, identified an important need and developed and implemented a significant approach to healthcare for refugees. People who had to flee their country often suffer from challenging psychological strains. To face these particular issues, there is a need for low-threshold group-oriented approaches that could be put into practice independently of the existent psychological and psychiatric assistance options available.

Such approaches should help refugees identify and activate their inner and outer resources. They need a protected space, where they can receive professional competent support in their own mother tongue and talk about themselves and their burdens, as well as about their identity, the freedom and possibilities that are still available to them, and how they can deal with all these issues.

As we were looking for preventive, low-threshold, tested programmes for our district to help people understand their situation better and motivate them to meet the challenges they encounter in their effort to build a new life in Germany, we were happy to come across Mind-Spring and to bring it to Germany together with the neighbouring Enzkreis district.

Mind-Spring is a group-oriented psycho-educative preventive project that Paul Sterk developed in the Netherlands. The programme consists of eight sessions that are carried out in the participants' mother tongue by a trainer who comes originally from the same country and/or culture as the participants and who is supported in this task by a professional co-trainer member of our staff.

The aim of the project is to increase the psychological well-being of the participants and to provide them with concrete assistance to identify and activate their own capacities, which can help them to face everyday problems they encounter in their life in a foreign country.

Mind-Spring is a project that inspires. It inspires everyone who takes part in it and promotes cooperation and networking, which, in their turn, contribute to its further development. Dr. Benson-Martin from Enzkreis district was introduced to the project initially by its founder; she brought it to Germany and took us, the Office for Migration and Refugees, also on board. The districts of Konstanz, Rastatt, Ost-Alb-Kreis and Ludwigsburg have since also joined in.

As our experience up until now has shown, Mind-Spring provokes a lot of interest and delivers positive results. Now is the moment to think together where this boat will lead us, and how we can further establish and develop Mind-spring in Germany. Böblingen district takes gladly

the role of pioneer and host for such meaningful projects, which promote the feeling of well-being for all its inhabitants. All of you who have come here today are a solid proof of this.

Today's international meeting with the representatives of Mind-Spring from The Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium aims primarily at sharing experiences and exchanging ideas on the further development of the project.

In this first international conference we have invited experts from these three countries, who have been implementing Mind-Spring for many years, so that we can learn from their experience and discuss with them their results, challenges and solutions in different contexts. Today's focus will thus be on the Mind-Spring protagonists, the organisation teams, and the trainers and co-trainers, who will share their first hand experiences with us.

Our own first Mind-Spring seminars have already yielded positive results. Our participants report that they feel empowered to continue their path with renewed courage. We expect to have both medium and long term success with the project in the future, given that its concept has been internationally tested and is already successfully implemented not only in the Netherlands, but also in other countries.

In Böblingen, Mind-Spring does not only combine integration with wellbeing, it also brings different parties together, i.e. disseminators who promote and advertise this group-oriented approach. We therefore see this conference also as a dissemination day. All of you, integration managers, social workers, representatives of language courses, schools, social insurances, mediators of the national employment agency and the Job Center, as well as representatives of social and psychological institutions, undertake the role of disseminators. Your participation and your interest strengthens us in our opinion that Mind-Spring is both a good choice and a necessary and sustainable approach.

The conference documentation that you have in your hands contains all conference presentations as well as the results of the closed workshops lead by experts in the second half of the day. It gives you a glimpse at how we will move forward in the future with our implementation strategies.

Thank you very much for your support, your participation and for our future exchanges.

Roland Bernhard

District Administrator

In memory of Paul Sterk



“To live is not to breathe but to act.” –
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*

In November 2019 we received the sad news that Paul Sterk had died. This documentation of the 1st International “Mind-Spring” conference is honouring his work, but we would also like to express our sentiments in honour and remembrance of his person and beliefs.

Dr. Janine Benson-Martin was the first who established contact with Paul Sterk. In her search for a health-preventive approach for refugees where the needs of the target group would be taken into consideration and the people concerned could be actively involved in the improvement of their own psychological wellbeing, she came across “Mind-Spring”.

Her desire to bring Paul Sterk’s preventive educational approach to Germany delighted him. Although he had already serious health problems, he conducted in autumn 2017 the first Mind-Spring training in Pforzheim. Our colleagues from the Office for Migration and Refugees of Böblingen took also part in this training. In January 2019, Paul Sterk presented a plan for the further development and long-term establishment of the project in Germany at the district administration of Böblingen. Despite his health condition, he followed the planning of our international conference with great joy and commitment, and was very happy to attend.

Paul Sterk bequeaths us a message; we are the ones to carry on and further develop his tested concept, to run and evaluate the project in collaboration with our international partners, so as to achieve a work with significant outreach.

Paul Sterk impressed us all with his commitment, his humility, his humour and his humanity. Through the implementation of Mind-Spring we carry his thoughts forward. We are thankful to have gotten to know him in action.

Carolina Monfort Montero

Head of Integration, Office for Migration and Refugees

Opening and Welcome speech from Katharina Pfister, Head of Office for Migration and Refugees

I would like to cordially welcome you and open our conference with the parable “They knew how to listen” from *Children of the Days* by the Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano.

In 1973 professors Gudrun and Karl Lenkersdorf arrive in Mexico. There they entered into the world of the Mayas in a Tojolabal community and they introduced themselves by saying, “We have come to learn.” The Indians remained silent.

After a while, one of them explained that silence: “This is the first time anyone has told us that.”

And there they remained, Gudrun and Carlos, learning year after year.

From the Mayan language they learned that no hierarchy separates subject from object, because I drink the water that drinks me and I am watched by all that I watch. And they learned to greet people in the Maya way: “I’m another you.” “You’re another me.”¹

This story can inspire us in many respects. We are also gathered here today to learn. We are here not only to talk about refugees, but also to learn from their experiences and to listen to them.

Because humility is one of the most important competences in transcultural work with refugees and migrants.

We come from different countries, where different languages are spoken and different world views are predominant; nonetheless we want to learn from one another.

And our common aim for this day is, among other things, to understand that “I’m another you, and you another me”; that is, that the human element that binds us is more essential than our cultural differences.

I therefore cordially welcome all of you who come from our district, Böblingen, and all of you who come from the other districts. I would also like to warmly welcome Ms Joggerst, head of the public health department in Enzkreis, who works with us together for the implementation and the further development of Mind-Spring.

I also address a warm welcome to our international guests from the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Island, who made this international exchange possible today. And a very special thank you to Paul Sterk, whose presence is an invaluable addition to our day.

I would also like to thank Dr. Janine Benson-Martin, who discovered Mind-Spring and brought the project to Germany.

Also a special thank you to the conference organization team and the many helpers from our Office for Migration and Refugees, especially the Mind-Spring coordination team for our district: Ms. Hijazi, Dr. Anastasaki and Ms. Visiers Würth.

As the newest members of the Mind-Spring community, we have invited experienced Mind-Springers from other countries here in Germany and asked them to share their knowledge

¹ Eduardo Galeano, *Children of the Days. A Calendar of Human History*, translated by Mark Fried, Bold Type Books, New York, 2013.

with us, and to think with us together of optimal ways to establish and develop Mind-Spring in Germany. We are extremely happy that the programme has raised so much interest from other districts and that you have come in numbers to participate, with us and our guest experts, at this first international Mind-Spring conference.

The protagonists of today are the Mind-Springers. I would therefore like to ask all trainers and co-trainers to stand up. You are the protagonists; without you the implementation of Mind-Spring would not be possible. You came today, from far and near, to share with us your experience and to work together to find answers to the challenges you face. I would thus ask the audience for a generous applause.

There is a number of central questions that are in focus today, on which we would like to shed light and discuss with you. What are the benefits, the “added value” that Mind-Spring brings to the individual? What common and different experiences have been made by the trainers and co-trainers? How can we embed the project’s empirical data as a preventive approach in the public health system? How can we guarantee a long-term financial support for Mind-Spring? How can we improve the training of the trainers? Which other groups or cooperation partners can be won for the Mind-Spring concept? How can we evaluate empirical data and results and consider them transnationally? You see that we have undertaken a lot of tasks and have in view to make an extensive use of today’s exchange, where so many experts are present.

Today’s conference is characterized by its international aspect and therefore our exchange will take place in different languages. For this we have ensured the help of interpreters. This can be slightly time consuming and requires often patience. On the other side, one has more time to think, the information has more time to sink in, and this can help us in better understanding context and in seizing different perspectives.

It is common practice in international conferences that issues are debated in different languages – today we have brought this international aspect in our district. This means that we have the opportunity to experience a special intercultural experience without having to travel. For this we thank our international guests, who will all speak in English so that we have a common language of communication.

I wish us all a great exchange, the consolidation of old and the gain of new knowledge, and a great success!

Thank you.

Introduction “What is Mind-Spring?”

Rationale

The Leopoldina - National Academy of Sciences in Leipzig recommended in its statement in April 2018 “the peer-advising approach for the support of traumatised refugees. The described measures should be integrated in the already existent integration and support options offered by the land, the federal states and the communities, who should also be provided with the corresponding financial means”.

[...] the focus lies on the psycho-social support of refugees in the form of successive interventions with emphasis on the support and promotion of existing resources, the training of refugees and their empowerment through mutual aid. In the line of salutogenetic approaches, these interventions should bring to the participants, as well as to their environment, the means to strengthen their existent skills and competences to deal with challenges in their new life situation, as well as help reduce difficulties in understanding, facilitate access to the public health system and ensure a care provision oriented towards the needs of the people concerned².

The Mind-Spring Project in the Böblingen district

Mind-Spring is embedded in the Office for Migration and Refugees since 2018 and addresses primarily refugees housed in short-term collective accommodation and in subsequent accommodation in the communities, but also all migrants of the district. Mind-Spring is a preventive group-oriented health programme for refugees and by refugees, which aims to support them in their new life situation that is often strained and impairing their social life. Originally, the programme was conceived by the psychologist Paul Sterk, who developed it as part of his work in war zones. Since then, Mind-Spring has developed as a method and adjusted to the destination counties that receive refugees. In the Netherlands the project has been implemented for 20 years now; it has also been adapted and implemented in Belgium and Denmark. In the Netherlands the project is financed by the public health care system, and has been established as a preventive health programme. In Germany, the districts of Enzkreis and Böblingen are the first two districts to implement the project.

The project aims to give to the participants a better understanding of their situation and the stress factors that are connected with it, through a programme of psycho-education. At the same time, the participants’ own resources are strengthened through communication of further knowledge on the subject, resulting to empowerment in relation to wellbeing and coping mechanisms. Emphasis is given to the psycho-social support of refugees, the promotion of existent resources and the empowerment and training of refugees in mutual help.

The programme is implemented in group sessions led by specially trained refugees. These (the trainers) are supported by professionals (co-trainers) during, as well as before and after, the

² A. Heinz und F. Schneider, „Psychiatrische und psychotherapeutische Versorgung geflüchteter Personen. Herausforderungen und Perspektiven“. *Nervenarzt* 2017 · 88:1–2. Published online: 19. Dezember 2016.

sessions. Of central importance to the project is that the group sessions take place in the mother tongue of the participants, so that all can be reached independently of their knowledge of German. Within the group sessions, the trainers give information on subjects such as stress, stress reduction, position determination (“how are you today?”), mourning and grieving, trauma, identity and changed identity, addiction and drug consumption, healthcare, energy and power sources, rational-emotional training (RET), etc.

The trainers conduct the sessions in their own mother tongue. The co-trainers offer their support concerning issues (i.e. group dynamic) and intervene with their professional competences when and if required. The trainers consult the co-trainers after every session. There are also exchange and supervision meetings available for both trainers and co-trainers.

The project’s implementation gestaltet sich wie folgt:

In autumn 2017, three employees of the Office for Migration and Refugees were trained by Paul Sterk, the Mind-Spring founder, in the context of a training for disseminators of the project. These members of staff trained, in their turn, welfare workers, school social workers and integration managers as Mind-spring co-trainers in December 2017-January 2018, June 2018 and October-November 2019. In total 22 co-trainers were trained, of which 19 are currently (end 2019) available to support groups.

All social workers and integration managers can recommend refugees suitable to be trained as trainers. The requirements are that they speak one of the target languages and that their knowledge of German is sufficient for the training (reading, speaking and communication competences). Ideally, they should also have experience or have studied in the fields of medicine, social sciences or pedagogic, be older than 25 years old, stable and stress-resistant, open, discrete and interested. The training comprises 49 teaching hours.

In our training sessions we trained people who have the following languages as their mother tongue: Persian, Kurdish-Kurmanji, English, French, Russian, Albanian, Turkish and Arabic. The trainers were paid for their training and received a certificate.

After the training, Mind-Spring groups were organised in refugee accommodations as well as in adult education centres (language courses) in the district. The trainers, co-trainers and other employees of the Office for Migration and Refugees advertised the project with multilingual information material.

The groups are separated according to language and comprise maximum 12 participants. The trainers and co-trainers conduct 8-9 sessions. The participants must be present to all sessions since the one builds upon the other.

The project’s evaluation comprises the following elements: evaluation form after each session, report after each session and final report, attendance list, and WHO-5 evaluation questionnaire.

WHO-5 is an international questionnaire validated and recognized by the World Health Organisation. On the one hand, it serves to evaluate the programme by allowing to compare the results from the workshops in the Böblingen and Enzkreis districts with those that take place in other countries in Europe. On the other hand, it gives the participants the chance to reflect upon their situation and to see to what extent those sessions have an effect on their wellbeing.

Project coordination Mind-Spring Germany

Project coordination in the Böblingen district:

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Project coordination in the Enzkreis district:

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Paul Sterk: “Why does Europe need Mind-spring?”



Paul Sterk, Cristina Visiers Würth

Paul Sterk (Msc)

Paul Sterk is the founder of Mind-Spring and senior expert on mental health education for asylum seekers, refugees and returnees. He was a mental health psychologist and orthopedagogue. He worked many years in different post-conflict countries (a.o. Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Burundi) for organisations such as Doctors without Borders, War Child and Healthnet TPO. After his official retirement, he continued to work as a consultant and senior trainer and he advised and trained professionals and intermediaries on diverse aspects of the mental health of asylum seekers and refugees.

Abstract

Paul Sterk describes the conception and genesis, as well as the history of the Mind-spring project. This is a psycho-educative programme consisting of a low-threshold, thematically structured series of 8 modules. These modules are conducted within groups of 8-12 participants in their own mother tongue. Paul Sterk has developed instruction manuals for adults, children from 8 to 13 years old, and teenagers and their parents (“co-parenting” programme), as well as a manual for unaccompanied underage refugees. Their aim is to inform the participants about the symptoms of psychological strain in situations that have to do with flight, to achieve their empowerment and to activate a resource-oriented approach through “peer education”. It is important to help refugees get out of their victim role, so that they can take their lives back in their own hands.

The project’s evaluation has shown that the participants who have followed the Mind-Spring programme exhibit less psychosomatic symptoms, sleep better, feel better equipped to deal with conflicts and have overall acquired a higher self-confidence.

The trainers, who also have a flight history, function as role models and give courage and hope to the newcomers.

The “co-parenting” programme helps especially with culture-related upbringing problems. Important subjects are here upbringing methods (i.e. active listening), communication strategies, talking about problems and worries within the family, identity issues, etc. It is often difficult to find a balance between two cultures. Many pre-existing fears become the source of problems in family relations. The Mind-Spring approach can help work on these fears and eventually dispel them.

Mind-Spring Junior focuses on the children’s strengths and resources, on their feelings and on how they can express them better, on their relation with their parents, their role models (heroes and heroines), their resilience factor and their identity construction.

The image shows the cover of a brochure for the Mind-Spring program. The title "Mind-Spring" is written in a large, blue, stylized font. Below it, the text "A program by and for refugees and asylum seekers" is written in a bold, black font. Underneath that, it says "In association with Mental Health professionals". The location "Germany Böblingen" and the year "2019" are listed in blue. The name "Paul Sterk Msc." and his title "Mental health Psychologist" are also in blue. In the top left corner, there is a logo for "arq Psychotrauma Expert Group" with three red curved lines above the text. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "rivm National Institute for Public Health and the Environment" with the text "Theoretically well developed" below it.

arq
Psychotrauma
Expert Group

Mind-Spring

A program by and for refugees and asylum seekers

In association with Mental Health professionals

Germany Böblingen
2019

Paul Sterk Msc.
Mental health Psychologist

rivm
National Institute
for Public Health and
the Environment

"Theoretically well developed"

Overview presentation

- General information about the Mind-Spring concepts
- An overview of the content of:
 - Psycho education
 - Mind-Spring parenting support
 - Mind-Spring Junior groups
 - Mind-Spring for intermediaries
 - International

Why Mind-Spring

- Creating awareness about migration and refugees.
- Creating self awareness about effects of the forced migration.
- Preparing “mind-set” for integration, by psycho education.
- Prevention first, is the key. (treatment only when needed)

Mind-Spring

What is in a name?

Mind

Looking after
Observing
Spirit

Intellect / cognition

Spring

the season of renewal

A spring where water wells naturally to start a river
Refers to the power of people to adapt to a new situation

A mechanism to release tension or energy or absorb energy (like a shock absorber).
Recoiling



Mind-Spring methodology

Psycho education for

- Asylum seekers
- Refugees (status)
- Migrants

Parenting support

- Asylum seekers
- Refugees (status)

MS-International

- Belgium (2011)
- Demark (2013)
- Germany (2017)
- ??????????

"Returnees"

- Sierra Leone (2009)
- Burundi (2010)
- Undocumented in NI.

Mind-Spring Junior

- * 8 – 13 years
- * 13 plus
- * Unaccompanied Minors

Training for intermediaries working with those groups

- COA; IOM; Refugee counsel
- Voluntaries MSF; M.du.M. Red Cross



Mind-Spring methodology

- Psycho **education**
- Parenting **support**
- **Cognition** (CBT – R.E.T.)
- **Empowerment** (learn to help yourself)
- **Knowledge by experience** (from trainers)
- **Peer education**
- **Culture specific**
- **Deal with daily hassles**

how

- Training of Trainers
- Training of intermediary
- Countrywide coordination



Mind-Spring regio's

Languages:

Sierra-Leone
Afghanistan!!!
Iran!!!!
Rwanda
Burma
Burundi
Somalië!!!
Russia
Eritrea
Iraq!!!!!!
Liberia
Congo
Soedan

Syria!!
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Armenia!
Turkey

65 reception centers
48 groups
120 trained / 33 active
Belgium many groups
Denmark many groups



Mind-Spring a *preventive* intervention

Psycho-education, psychosocial and parenting support for refugees and asylum seekers **in their own language and culture (peer support/education)**

Carried out by a **trainer with a refugee** background and a **professional** from within the mental health care system.



Meet some of our trainers
Over 160 trained

Objectives of Mind-Spring

Training and learning (empowerment)

- Sharing of experiences, but also sharing feelings of sorrow, anger and frustration
- Coping with problems and their consequences
- Rediscovering one's own strengths and defining areas of control
- Learning to be responsible for one's **own** well-being. Not depending on others, not getting absorbed in **victim role**
- Developing positive self (identity)
- Participants learn how to recognize their own problems and how to ask for further help
- When necessary, participants can be referred to professional help by the trainers

ACCES	Tools of Mind-Spring
A awareness	Making sense of mental processes in trauma, recognizing, diagnosing, causes, feelings of guilt, as refugees and loss level education and identity (the loss recovery)
C coping	Learning coping methods and techniques to deal with diverse mental problems
C counselling	Giving individuals or couples and families a second perspective in the specific situations of an asylum seeker
E empowerment	Learning coping skills and techniques to find one's own strengths to be in more control than them again
S speaking	Referring to professional help if needed
S support	Offering psycho-social support

Mind-Spring

content Psycho-education groups

1. Psycho education "the normal reaction on abnormal situation"
2. Stress and handling stress.
3. How are you today (really?)
4. Identity and changing identity
5. RET / Cognitive Behaviour training (CBT)
6. Loss and grief
7. Addiction (optional)
8. Evaluation and future learning



Mind-Spring

“effects”



Evaluation

- Less somatic complains
- Sleeping better
- Less conflicts
- Less irritated or aggression
- acceptance of (in-)possibilities
- More positive self esteem
- More initiatives in centers
- more trust in others
- Feeling more “at ease”
- More effective referral if needed
- More trust in Mental Health Service.



Effects of the Mind-Spring program

Some quotes from participants

"I experienced the training as being a personal support, I learned a lot."

"I consider the subjects in the training as very relevant to the situation that I am in right now."

"I notice I do not get as agitated as I did before the course. Whenever someone got angry at me, I reacted furiously. I do not do this anymore and also have less problems sleeping."

"We now have become our own doctors".

"Mind-Spring is like a community" (facilitates trust and recognition)

"It helped me to learn that I am not the only one having problems."

"I now have more understanding of mental problems."

"I sleep better now"

Spin off, for the Mind-Spring trainers

- Useful work experience, chance to prove qualities
- Internship for studies (social work/psychology)
- Practicing (Dutch) language in field of profession
- Integration
- Helpful for one's own personal problems
- Meaningful way to spend time
- Improved self-esteem
- Helpful for one's own personal problems
- Peer educators are accepted and much appreciated in NI

Trainers as role models

Active role of refugee trainer is important factor for success

They went through the same process

They know the language / culture History.

Can act as a role model.

Participants ask information how to become a trainer themselves



Content of parenting support

1. Culture specific parenting, between two cultures
2. Role as a parent
3. Parenting tools and active listening
4. Parental worries
5. Parents identity (in new situation)
6. See only problems
7. Runners, pushers and lover boys/girls &
8. Addiction (alcohol, drugs en gambling)

Parenting support

Supporting the parenting role



**Awareness building,
making choices & self-evaluation**

- Raising children between two cultures and in times of stress.
- Which choices do you make and do you recognise why you make that choice?
- What basic assumptions do you have? (fear, anxiety)
- Are you aware of hidden fears and motives that influence your parenting style ?

Mind-Spring
Junior®



Our sponsor !! ↘

Mogelijk gemaakt door:



KINDERPOSTZEGELS
voor kinderen door kinderen
25

* Mind-Spring Junior

- * For children 8 – 13 in reception center and schools
- * The making of a HeroBook



Mind-Spring Junior



The power of children: recognition, re-finding power and how to use in new situation?

regaining self confidence

Learn to speak about emotions
Recognise your own strength.
Finding support



How are you today?



27



Effects ? Evaluation

- Contact between parent and child better and speaking about "real life"
- Children give examples about stress solving. (swimming, etc)
- Children learn about their own role in conflicts
- Children feel taken seriously
- Children learn that you can ask support, even if adults have own difficulties.
- Children learn that you as a child may take time to learn. It is not making mistakes, you have to learn more!
- Children are proud on their Certificate and HeroBook.

There is much bullying we have to find ways to stop that.



* Mind-Spring Junior 13 plus

- * Youngsters 13 – 17
- * Including unaccompanied minors (18-23)



KINDERPOSTZEGELS
voor kinderen, door kinderen

30

Mind-Spring Junior 13plus



The resilience of children; recognition, explore, re-finding (power) and learn to use those qualities.

Objectives of 13 Plus:

- Learn coping strategies
- Rebuilding Self esteem, recognition of own qualities
- Learn to recognise stressful situations
- Re-finding a positive identity!!!!
- Finding support
- Learn to use supporting factors and network.



Delivered RPT (30)
 Program: ...
 ...

Story boards

32

Mind-Spring for Intermediaries

- Train the intermediaries and raise awareness



International

- Learn from each other
- Protecting the mind-spring concepts.
- Share findings and tools.
- International exchange.
- Sustainability and joint fund raising (EU)
- Shared efforts to spread the mind-spring message and methodology.



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Podium discussion: Good-Practice from The Netherlands and Denmark – Approaches, Experiences, Results

The Netherlands: Bet-El Teklemariam and Willeke de Jong



From left to right: Anna Mathilde Jensen, Tove Madsen, Willeke de Jong and Bet-El Teklemariam in the first Podium discussion.

Bet-El Teklemariam (BA)

Bet-El was born in Eritrea and fled to Germany at a young age in the early 1980s. She graduated as a social pedagogue from the University of Bochum in 1998. After graduation, Bet-El provided care and support for children and young persons in the context of the Youth Welfare Office, and accompanied migrants in psychiatry in Germany.

Since moving to the Netherlands in 2000, Bet-El has been helping Eritrean refugees and status holders to find their way in society through intensive counseling. Her main focus lays on vulnerable groups (such as women and children) in distressing situations (such as domestic violence and institutional neglect). Bet-El is a trained Mind-Spring trainer and assists and advises Dutch municipalities, the Dutch Refugee Council, the Dutch Guardian organization Nidos, GGD, Arq/Centrum 45 and other organisations.

Willeke de Jong (Systemic Therapist)

Willeke de Jong works at *Jeugd ggz*, part of the *Dimence groep*, a mental health care centre in the Netherlands, as Project manager for Programmes concerning refugees. She also works in the coordination and implementation of Mind-Spring for Adults, Mind-Spring Junior 8-12 and Mind-spring 13 +, as a family therapist, social psychiatric nurse and team coach.

Summary

Mind-Spring's special feature is that the workshops are being held in the participants' mother tongue, thus allowing a "quick" and emotionally-related access to refugees.

Bet-El Teklemariam supports the Mind-spring approach, stressing how important it is to run the groups in the refugees' language and within their known cultural context. She highlights that Mind-Spring is not about one-sided help and compassion towards refugees, but rather about the group supporting each other and strengthening their (existent) resources.

Ms Teklemariam adds that a trust-basis in any given group is not self-evident – one has to first build that trust. Part of this process are also trivial things such as small talk or little snacks.

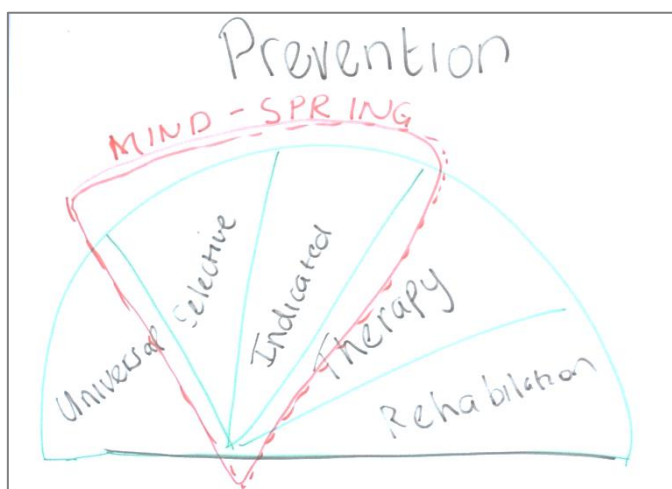
The trainers must have a clear picture of their role and distance themselves, for instance, from the role of the interpreter.

The success of the project in the first arrival centres in The Netherlands is higher because of the limited activities available for refugees, who then have a lot of time available. Later on, i.e. in their subsequent accommodation in the communities, it is more difficult to motivate people to take part in the Mind-Spring programme. The reasons vary, it is for instance often the case that, after leaving their collective accommodation, refugees fall into a depressive state, because they suddenly feel alone.

Willeke de Jong talks about her experience with Mind-Spring Junior groups: the young people are not tired after the sessions, but full of energy, despite the long day (first school and then Mind-Spring). She also talks about the feelings that they experience in the group sessions (i.e. there is a lot of crying and laughter during the sessions).

Paul Sterk reminds everyone that Mind-Spring falls into the category of selective and indicated prevention.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO)³ the definitions of prevention in relation to psychological illnesses are the following:



³ https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/Prevention_of_Mental_Disorders.pdf. Accessed on 19.08.2019

- Universal prevention: it addresses the general population,
- Selective prevention: it is thought for individuals or groups who belong to a group of higher risk factor in terms of psychological disorders in comparison with the general population,
- Indicated or indicative prevention: is thought for individuals who belong to the high-risk category and who show minimal but discernable signals or symptoms that indicate psychological disorders but do not fulfil the criteria for a diagnosis.

Denmark: Anna Mathilde Jensen, Tove Madsen

Anna Mathilde Jensen (MA)

Anna Mathilde Jensen, holds a cand.mag. (Candidus magisterii) in Psychology and Cultural Encounters. She is coordinator and consultant at the Mind-Spring Competency Centre that is part of the Danish Refugee Council. She has been working with Mind-Spring since 2012.

Tove Madsen (M.Sc.)

Tove Madsen holds a cand.scient. (Candidus scientiarum) in Sociology. She is coordinator and consultant at the Mind-Spring Competency Centre, part of the Danish Refugee Council, since 2017.

Abstract

In Denmark Mind-spring has been implemented in the context of integration since 2010 and has been funded by private and public means. Since 2011 they offer also Mind-Spring for parents, and since 2014 Mind-Spring for children from 9 to 14 years old. The subjects treated in the workshops are cultural norms, identity changes, stress, trauma and other issues related to the specific groups.

The programme aims to prevent or alleviate psycho-social problems that can arise within the circumstances of life in exile through “targeted” awareness and empowerment. The project has a participation and completion rate of 86% (continual participation, almost no dropout). Mind-Spring trainers and co-trainers from all over Denmark meet to exchange their experiences twice a year and organise together a yearly event.

The biggest challenge for the coordination team is that Mind-Spring is centrally organised for the entire country. Recruitment of participants and trainers, as well as long-term financing, are the areas where most difficulties are faced. The project’s evaluation is conducted in Denmark by different institutions (See presentation in chapter “Workshop Group 2 – Evaluation”).

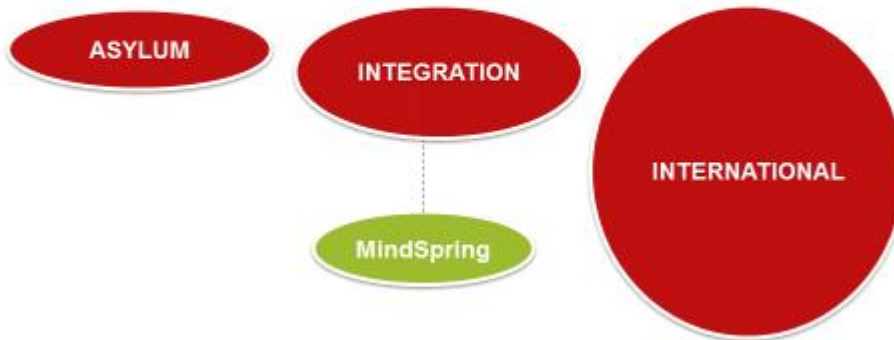


Mind
Spring

MindSpring in Denmark

Anna Mathilde Jensen, Tove Madsen and
Rana Agha
Böblingen Germany – June 27th 2019

Danish Refugee Council



History

Implemented in Denmark 2010 with state and private funding

Target groups are:

- Parents (since 2011)
- Youngsters (since 2013)
- Children 9-14 years old (since 2017)

Topics:

- Culture and norms
- Identity change
- Stress and trauma
- + target group specific themes



Main purpose

To **prevent** social and psychological problems related to life in exile and refugee experiences...

...through increased **awareness** and **empowerment**.

Output?

86 % completion

Participants are very satisfied, empowered and feel more capable handling problems related to life in exile. Also they create their social network.

Supporting activities

- 2 yearly 7-day training of trainers
- 2 yearly meetings to exchange experiences
- One Annual Assembly for all MindSpring-trainers and co-trainers

Challenges

- Logistics – language and geography
- Recruiting hosts and trainers
- Implementation and economy

Evaluating and developing MindSpring

Evaluation and research:

- 6 qualitative evaluations (to be unfolded in the workshop)
- 1 research project (2016- ca. 2022): to investigate the preventive effects
- Children's MindSpring by a SDQ research questionnaire

New target groups and settings

- New-MindSpring (from 2017)
- Rejected asylumseekers (2019)
- Young people born in DK by refugee parents (2019)
- Greenlanders in Denmark (maybe 2019)

Export

- Interest from Iceland and Finland

Thank you!

Contact us:

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Facebook.com/MindSpringkompetencecenter

www.mindspring-grupper.dk



Interview with Mind-Spring Trainer Rana Agha

Rana Agha was a pediatrician in Syria. In Denmark she has been working as a Mind-Spring trainer for children and parents since 2018. Due to regulations on residence conditions, Ms Agha could not travel to attend the conference. Ms Madsen and Ms Jensen have thus read for the conference audience the interview they held with her in Denmark.

How did you get in contact with Mind-Spring?

I had a friend, who was a Mind-Spring trainer and he called me.... I also saw the information on the internet.

How did you become interested in it?

I already had some experience. I wanted to help to bring about good changes. I already had experience with group interventions in Turkey.

Why did you choose to be a Mind-Spring trainer?

When I came to Denmark, I realized that there was a separation going on between Danes and foreigners, and I wanted to prevent that separation and stop the process. I wanted to bring about a change of mindset, make a bridge and connection between the local population and the newcomers.

I find this important in order to secure the life and future for us and our children – to guide the children to find their own solutions and strengths and reach their own goals.

How has Mind-Spring affected you?

I have changed personally – I am calmer and have more patience now – I use the exercises we practice in Mind-Spring in my private life.

My relation to my children has also become better – I understand them better and have changed my way of addressing them.

I also gained a social network through the training course – I feel that I have friends I can rely on now.

When I got to know Mind-Spring, I felt that I finally met the Denmark that I had expected – the democratic and free society that I did not meet elsewhere in the integration process.

And then I have put Mind-Spring on my CV, it is a new competence within a field that is valuable for me.

How can the participants benefit from Mind-Spring?

For children: I think Mind-Spring helps them handle the clash between society's and school's expectations and norms and those of their family and home country.

I think they now take life in Denmark more seriously – and do not see it as a temporary stay.

They now have keys to open doors into different communities, opportunities and dreams – the feeling that “Maybe I CAN make it!” – this is an important issue on which we work using the exercise of “the Life Tree” (i.e. an exercise adapted to the Mind-Spring project).

For parents: To begin with, there was a great deal of resistance within the group regarding the topics and the method, but then we began to see some change.

One man told me: “Now I can say that I will count to ten before I say no to my children.”

And a woman told me: “I have now the courage to be proud of my personal change that happened when I came to Denmark.”

A mother with a teenager son said: “Now I can understand my boy better than before”

I think Mind-Spring is the first step to change.

What importance can Mind-Spring have for newly arrived refugees in Denmark?

I think it's important to understand why you need to integrate... Let all refugees go through a Mind-Spring course.

The participants have learned something very essential to a democratic society; they have learned, that it is okay not to agree with other people, and that we can have a dialogue even though we disagree. It works as a preparation to deal with challenges and prevent some mistakes.

However, the issue of the temporal status of refugees in integration politics in Denmark remains a challenge. Mind-Spring brings no solution to this, but is rather a strategic device to teach people to discover their own resources and help themselves.

Discussion Summary

In Denmark Mind-Spring has a different structure than in the Netherlands. It has been implemented since 2010. The courses take place in schools and in the Mind-Spring Competence Centre. The Danish Mind-Spring coordination works together with volunteers in the implementation of the project because there is a shortage in suitable staff either among locals or native speakers of the target languages. The Mind-Spring sessions are then conducted by one member of staff and one volunteer, who can reach a big number of refugees. They are flexible and have very little cost. In the workshops, the focus lies on exercises concerning identity, upbringing, and questions on rules. Breathing exercises and other exercises such as “the Life Tree” (see the presentation) are also being carried out. The participants' feedback is very positive.

Since 2011, Denmark offers Mind-Spring groups also for parents. Groups for teenagers were also introduced in 2013. Primary goals of the project in Denmark are also the prevention of social and psychological problems, the empowerment of parents (strengthening their competences in dealing with various problems) and the increase of self-confidence in teenagers. This last point was particularly successful according to the participants' reports after the exchange between the parents' and the children's Mind-Spring groups. Both groups felt they understood each other and their experiences better. Since 2019 there is a Mind-Spring offer also for teenagers who were born in Denmark, in families of refugees, as well as for Mind-Spring groups for asylum applicants whose application has been rejected.

The participants experience Mind-Spring mostly as a first step of a changing process.

A big part of the costs is covered by health insurance funds. The rest of the costs are covered by governmental grants.

Podium discussion: Good-Practice from Belgium and Germany: Approaches, Experiences, Results



From left to right: Heiko Römmele, Laila Wahab, Janine Benson-Martin, Mariam Hijazi, Nazanin Lakamari, Mahmoud Jaber und Maryam Tawfiq Marwan during the second Podium discussion.

Belgium: Mahmoud Jaber, Maryam Tawfiq Marwan.

Maryam Tawfiq Marwan (BA)

Maryam Tawfiq Marwan has a Bachelor's Degree in Oriental Studies and Culture. She is currently working for CAW, the Central of General Wellbeing in the City of Ghent, Belgium, as project-supporter for Mind-Spring: organizing groups in the City of Ghent, coaching trainers and co-trainers, working as a trainer and co-trainer and informing people and organisations about Mind-Spring. She has been involved in Mind-Spring since 2017. First as interpreter for Arabic, then as a trainer for the regular Mind-Spring groups, and subsequently as a trainer for Mind-Spring Junior 14-18 and for Mind-Spring Junior 8-13. She is also active as a co-trainer.

Mahmoud Jaber (BA)

Mahmoud Jaber has studied English Language and Literature and Eastern Cultural Studies. He has worked as a teacher and translator, first in Syria and Kuwait, then in Belgium. Since 2004 he has been working for the Flemish Agency for Integration and Citizenship as a teacher of social orientation for newcomers (in Arabic, Dutch and English). He is also teaching languages and undertaking sworn translations in English, Arabic and Dutch. He has been involved with Mind-Spring since 2013, first as interpreter and translator then as a co-trainer and trainer.

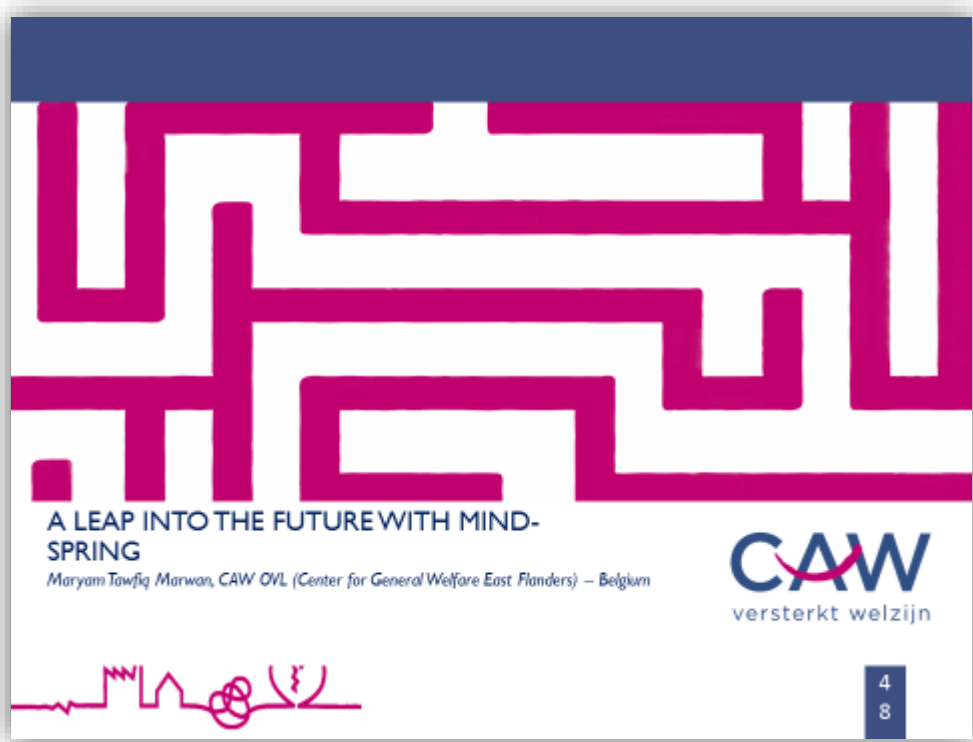
Abstract

Belgium started the implementation of Mind-Spring, in cooperation with Paul Sterk and the Agency of Integration and Citizenship, in 2010. Since 2011, they also offer Mind-Spring Junior. In 2016 CAW OVL, the Centre for General Welfare East Flanders, came also on board. Through this collaboration, the offer for the support of children and parents was further expanded. CAW OVL is responsible for quality control and for organising trainings, intervention, workshops

etc. They work in collaboration with cities, communities and schools that offer integration classes.

In Belgium Mind-Spring is offered in the following languages: Arabic, English, French, Russian, Chechen, Georgian, Mongolian, Urdu and Dutch. The target groups are asylum applicants, refugees with recognised status or with subsidiary protection and persons with a migration background. In 2018, 62 groups were conducted and a total of 600 people participated in them.

The biggest challenges are: the organisation and establishment of optimal collaboration between trainers, co-trainers and interpreters, the participants' motivation so that they stay involved in the long-term, and the aspect of aftercare. Moreover the issue of long-term and stable financing remains a constant subject to be addressed; looking for possibilities for a long-term financing remains a challenge.



Mind-Spring – Belgium



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How did Mind-Spring start?

- Agency of Integration and Citizenship in collaboration with Paul Sterk:
 - 2010: Mind-Spring +18
 - 2011-2012: Mind-Spring Junior 14-18 years old
- CAW OVL (Center for General Welfare East Flanders) in collaboration with Paul Sterk 2016
 - Mind-Spring Junior 8-13 years old
 - Mind-Spring Parents Support in upbringing their children (ouderkracht)



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Mind-Spring Flanders

CAW OVL is responsible for quality control (certification, copyright, ...) and organizes:

- Training to become a Mind-Spring trainer and co-supervisor
- Intervisions for Mind-Spring trainer and co-supervisor and interpreters
- Workshops, trainings, study days, ...



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MIND-SPRING

- Mind-Spring groups organized in cooperation with cities, municipal authorities, OCMW's (Public center for Social Welfare), OKAN schools (Reception class for non-native speakers)
- Infosession, 6 sessions of 2 hours, return session
- 8-15 participants
- Final evaluation with participants and with applicant



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2

Languages & Relaxation exercises

- Languages: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Pashto, Tigrinya, Somali, Kurdish, Turkish, Albanian, English, French, Russian, Chechen, Georgian, Mongolian, Urdu, Dutch...
- Relaxation exercises in 10 languages on the website of Sarah Strauven: www.care4refugees.org



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3

Target Group

- Asylum seekers
- Recognized refugees, subsidiary protection, family reunification
- Migration background



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Supervision

- Mind-Spring trainer
 - Refugee background
 - Expert
 - Trained to be Mind-Spring trainer
- Mind-Spring co-supervisor
 - Professional from the social, medical, educational sector
 - Trained to be Mind-Spring co-supervisor
- Interpreter



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Mind-Spring in Flanders

Center for General Welfare East Flanders organizes Mind-Spring courses in East Flanders since march 2016

- 2016 – 42 Mind-Spring groups, 16 trainers & 26 co-supervisors trained
- 2017 – 35 Mind-Spring groups, 34 co-supervisors trained
- 2018 – 62 groups, approximately 600 participants



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Impression Trainer/Co-supervisor

- "I was an accountant in my homeland, but thanks to Mind-Spring I know my calling now: helping and supporting people who are struggling." (M-S - trainer)
- "I wish I could have followed a Mind-Spring course when I arrived in Belgium." (M-S - trainer)
- "Mind-Spring offers me as a social worker a structured way to work with refugees." (M-S - co-supervisor)
- "Being employed as a co-supervisor meant a deepening of my own coaching as a counselor." (M-S - co-supervisor)



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Impression Participants

- I greatly appreciate that the Belgian authorities offer these sessions in my own language. I appreciate that they not only think about material issues, but also about the feeling of well-being of refugees and this is even more important.
- I am not alone, other refugees also have the same problems and questions.
- I learned how to convert my negative thoughts into positive ones.
- I finally have hope. I no longer see my future as gloomy as before the Mind-Spring sessions.
- I can sleep better and I am less dependent on medication.
- I now know more about Belgian culture.
- I no longer think with clichés.
- I am no longer lonely. I made friends here.
- I am reborn. I stayed in bed at the refugee reception center until noon and didn't want to go outside. Now I have breakfast with my daughter and I have a purpose.



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Challenges

Organizational:

- Collaboration Trainer-Co-supervisor-Interpreter
- Motivation & Reference of the target group by the partners
- Announcement well-being partners
- Aftercare: the possibilities to refer participants to external partners in the context of aftercare depends on region
- Planning groups is a puzzle



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Challenges

Financial:

- Remains a project story
- CAW helps with the organization, provides training for the trainers and co-supervisors
- The applicant must provide approximately 1500 euros to pay trainer, co-supervisor & interpreter
- Biggest challenge in long term: Structural solution



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Questions?

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<https://www.caw.be/hoe-wij-helpen/preventie/mind-spring/>



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Discussion Summary

Mind-Spring is well anchored in Belgium. For many years now, a network of teachers, collaborations with schools, counselling services and school psychologists have been put into place. Furthermore, there is a good connection with the public health service, so that those who need professional help can be directed to the right people and an appointment can be quickly arranged or a therapy assured.

The parent groups have also been a success in Belgium. Questions that preoccupy parents in connection to the upbringing of their children in a foreign country arise especially after the session on identity. That is why groups for parents and children are often conducted in parallel. Belgium also uses a wide range of social media, i.e. videos on YouTube explaining Mind-Spring. Moreover, quality control is regularly conducted, so that the implementation of the project does not deviate too much from the original concept. That is why, in order to be allowed to continue to animate Mind-Spring groups, the trainers have to renew their certificate every three years. The programme in Belgium is not only thought for refugees, it is open to all migrants.

Germany: Dr. Janine Benson-Martin, Mariam Hijazi, Nazanin Lakkamari

Dr. Janine Benson-Martin (Dr. Med.)

Dr. Janine Benson-Martin is a South African psychiatrist who has worked in the fields of psychiatry, mental health, and women's health. After completing her medical degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2000, she went on to work in hospitals in South Africa (SA). After leaving South Africa, she worked initially in the UK, and later went on to complete her Dr. of Medicine (Dr. med.) at the University of Zürich, Switzerland. She works in close cooperation with Universities such as the University of Heidelberg in Germany. She is a public health officer at the Public Health Department in Pforzheim/Enzkreis. Her work focuses on public health care in connection with refugees. She brought Mind-Spring to Germany.

Mariam Hijazi

Mariam Hijazi has been working since 2013 as a social worker for refugees and late repatriates at the Böblingen District. She is a member of the "Cristian-Muslim Dialogue" and has also completed a training in Logotherapy and Existential Analysis. Since 2017 she is part of the coordination team for Mind-Spring (she received her training in Pforzheim by Paul Sterk).

Nazanin Lakamari

Nazanin Lakamari fled Iran with her family 4,5 years ago. She has studied English and is a member of our team as a Mind-Spring trainer in Böblingen ever since she took part at the project, as a trainer, in 2018. She has already successfully conducted Mind-Spring groups. After having worked as a volunteer interpreter for three years, she is now also a member of the interpreter network in Böblingen.

Abstract

In Germany, it is common to have long waiting lists for the use of the possibilities offered in psychological support. This structural problem, in combination with administration and language problems, makes it even harder for refugees to get help in psychological support. The resources of the German public health system for traumatised refugees are therefore very limited. The most commonly referred problems that can lead to psychological strains are: no access to German language courses, loud noise in the camps, prejudiced treatment and discrimination in administration, confrontation with racist statements, lack of possibilities for self-realisation and work, and conditions of despair. The use of Mind-Spring psycho-social prevention programme can partially alleviate the psychological strains caused by those problems. Pforzheim's Mind-Spring team was trained by Paul Sterk in 2017. The "Tapping"⁴ method was subsequently introduced in the Mind-Spring programme with great success.

⁴ Trauma Tapping is a form of sensory treatment. Gunilla Hamne, the initiator of the "Trauma Tapping Technique" (TTT), has founded, in collaboration with the hypnotherapist and musician Ulf Sandström, the organisation „Peaceful Heart“ (<https://peacefulheart.se/>), which uses TTT in treatment and instruction of survivors of civil war and genocide. The method stimulates the senses and can be used to reduce all kinds of emotional stress. It enables people to help themselves and others and thereby to gain back a small part of control over their own lives. (Source: Enzkreis, *Pressemitteilung* 72/2017)



Shutterstock

TABLE 3.2 WHO PROJECTIONS OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN ADULT POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY EMERGENCIES¹

	Before the emergency: 12-month prevalence (median across countries and across level of exposure to adversity) ²	After the emergency: 12-month prevalence (median across countries and across level of exposure to adversity)
Severe disorder (for example, psychosis, severe depression, severely disabling form of anxiety disorder)	2% to 3%	3% to 4% ³
Mild or moderate mental disorder (for example, mild and moderate forms of depression and anxiety disorders, including mild and moderate PTSD)	10%	15% to 20% ⁴
Normal distress / other psychological reactions (no disorder)	No estimate	Large percentage

- Notes: Adapted from WHO (2003). PTSD indicates post-traumatic stress disorder.
Observed rates vary with setting (for example, time since the emergency, socio-cultural factors in coping and community social support, previous and current disaster exposure) and the assessment method.
- 1. The assumed baseline rates are the median rates across countries as observed in the World Mental Health Survey (2000).
 - 2. This is a best guess based on the assumption that traumatic events and loss may contribute to a release in previously stable mental disorders, and also may cause severely disabling forms of mood and anxiety disorders.
 - 3. It is established that traumatic events and loss increase the risk of depression and anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2007). IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings



Enzkreis

Numerous Barriers in both LMIC & HIC

- EBI (CBT; NET; EMDR) –delivered by highly trained specialists (psychologists, psychiatrists)
-shortage of specialists to cover refugees with psych.stress
- In Europe 80-90% refugees with psych problems **do not** visit specialized MH Services
- Language Barriers & lack of native language speaking psychologists & psychiatrists
- Physical Distance to specialized MHC

- Long waiting lists to get into therapy (in DE. This is also a problem for the general population!)
- Use of professional interpreters are expensive
- AND use of family for interpretation real problem
 - Parentalization refugee children in De.
- Lack of Information about current services
- Distrust of MH Pract., shame, stigma (fear of being labelled ,mad' or ,crazy')

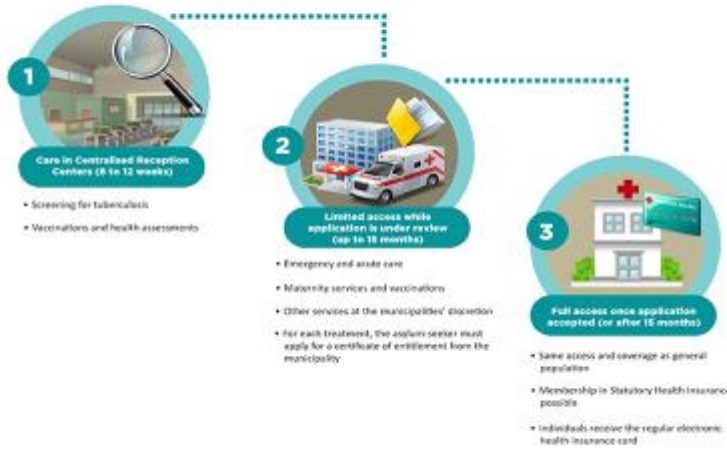
MY BIGGEST CRITICISM....

- Almost all types of ,Psychological Challenges' are put into one category.
- **Medical Insurance & ICD-10 code based**
- And ALL are referred for ,Therapy'

- We know that Health Systems are challenged by Conflicts & Disasters esp. refugees
- Ideally- Health Systems should be able to react
 - Quickly
 - Ability to identify and adequately respond to the Needs of a large ,new' vulnerable population
- Reality...has shown the opposite
- And to deliver EBI to Displaced Persons- fundamentally lack human resources



REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKERS HEALTH CARE IN GERMANY



<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2015/10/22/the-public-health-dimension-of-germanys-refugee-crisis/>

Mental Health Services in Germany.....

- Differ with respect to the degree of access to healthcare
- Depends on their Status
 - Undocumented Migrant vs
 - Asylum seeker vs
 - Recognised Refugee Status
- **Strict Gatekeeping Mechanisms-** only get access to secondary care services via referral from GP so...
- **Access to Care**
 - is therefore largely dependant on the **level of training of primary care professional** in both mental health & refugee health
 - Dependant on **Level of Cultural Competence**
 - Level of Language Competencies/ **Interpreter Services**

The German Chamber of Psychotherapists have estimated that at least 50% of refugees have psychological problems, of which 40% is related to trauma

Bundespsychotherapeutenkammer, 'Mindestens Die Hälfte Der Flüchtlinge Ist Psychisch Krank' (2015) <<http://www.bptk.de/aktuell/einzelseite/artikel/mindestens-d.html>> [Accessed 16/10 2015].

The German Health System is not, as yet, geared towards the multi-complex treatment of traumatized refugees

Position Paper: Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Psychiatrie und Psychotherapie Psychosomatik und Nervenheilkunde, 'Psychosoziale Versorgung Von Fluechtlingen Verbessern', 2016.

Landesaerztekammer Baden-Wuerttemberg, and Landespsychotherapeutenkammer Baden-Wuerttemberg, '2.Versorgungsbericht. Ambulante Medizinische, Psychosoziale Und Psychotherapeutische Versorgung Von Traumatisierten Migrantinnen in Baden-Wuerttemberg', (Baden-Wuerttemberg, 2016).

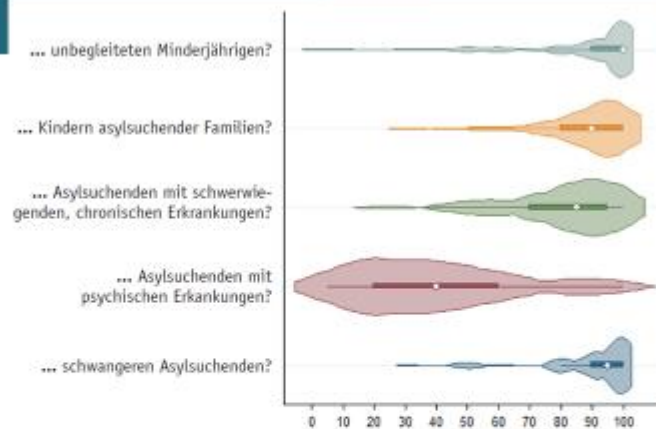
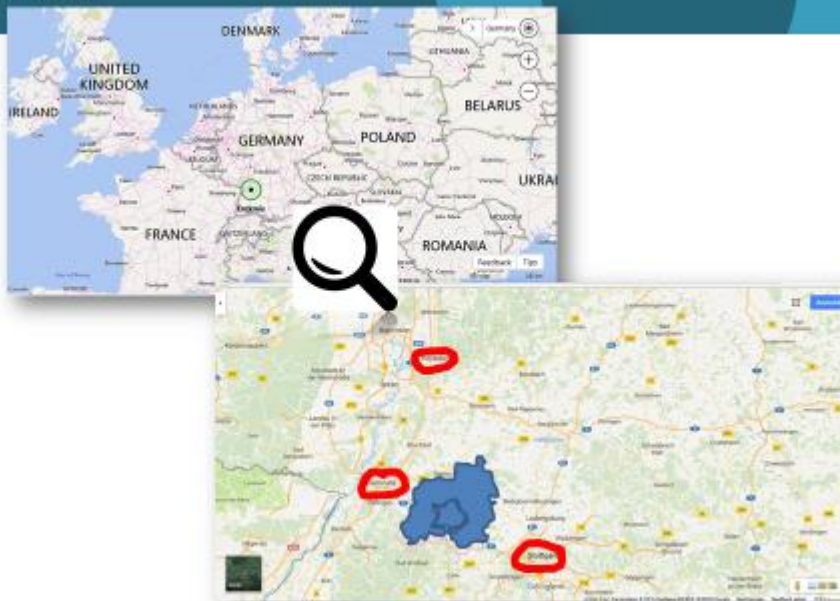


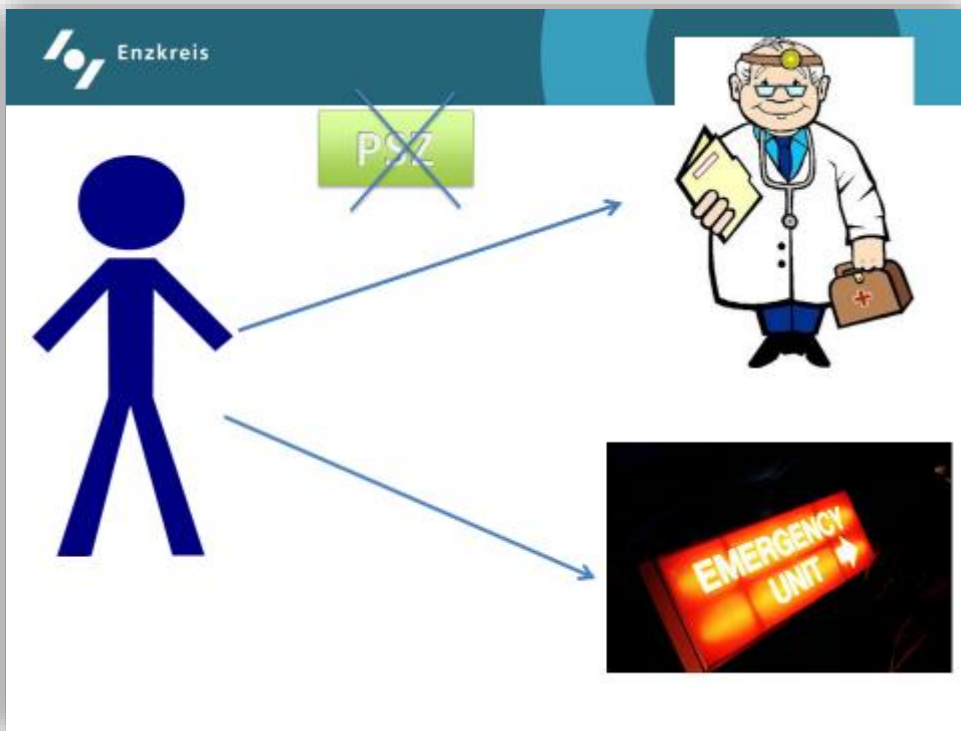
Abb.1: Beurteilung des Ausmaßes der Sicherstellung der Gesundheitsversorgung durch teilnehmende Amtsleiter. Die Frage lautete: „[...] Alles in allem betrachtet; in welchem Ausmaß ist aus Ihrer Sicht die lokale Gesundheitsversorgung folgender Gruppen gewährleistet?“ Antwortoptionen: Rating von 0-100%. Violinplot mit Kernel-Dichtefunktion der Verteilung der Werte. Weiße Raute: Median, Balken: Interquartil-Abstand bzw. der Bereich, in dem 50% der Antworten liegen. Unterschiedlicher Nenner, N=90-94 Gesundheitsämter je nach Antwortmöglichkeit.

Bozorgmehr K, Noest S, Thaiss MH, Razum D: [Health care provisions for asylum-seekers: a nationwide survey of public health authorities in Germany]. Bundesgesundheitsblatt 2016. 1-11.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CENTRES (PSZ) FOR REFUGEE MENTAL HEALTH IN GERMANY

- Psychosoziale Zentren für Flüchtlinge und Folteropfer (BAFF):
- „Insgesamt standen in den 32 Zentren während eines durchschnittlichen Monats fast 1700 Menschen auf der Warteliste“ (2016)
 - **Countrywide there are 32 Centres- On average in 2016 there was amonthy average of 1700 persons on the waiting list**
- Stuttgart („Refugio“), Ulm, Lörrach, Villingen-Schwenning
- My Health District (Enzkreis & PF)- none available







Concept of Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

„Any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder“

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2007). IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.

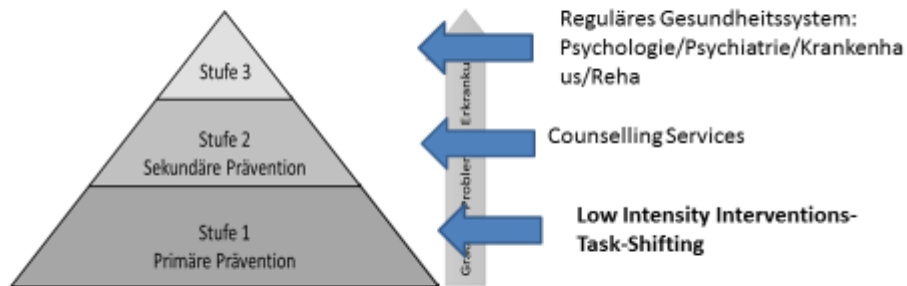
Gesundheitsförderung bedeutet: **Aktivitäten und Unterstützung** um alle **potenziell veränderbaren Bestimmungsfaktoren von Gesundheit zu adressieren.**

Dazu gehören sowohl **Maßnahmen**, mit denen Menschen ihre Gesundheit **selber erhalten** können, als auch Maßnahmen, die gesunde Lebensbedingungen und Settings unterstützen.

The **promotion of protective factors** such as **Resilience** and the **reduction in risk factors** that could lead to mental health problems

Den **Aufbau von Schutzfaktoren/ Belastbarkeit (Resilienz)** und die **Verringerung von Risikofaktoren für psychische Probleme** unter der Flüchtlingsbevölkerung





Modified: from <https://www.nice.org.uk>



Method: Needs Assessment using Persons with a Migration Background / ,Deutsche mit Migrationshintergrund': Aug/Sept 2016

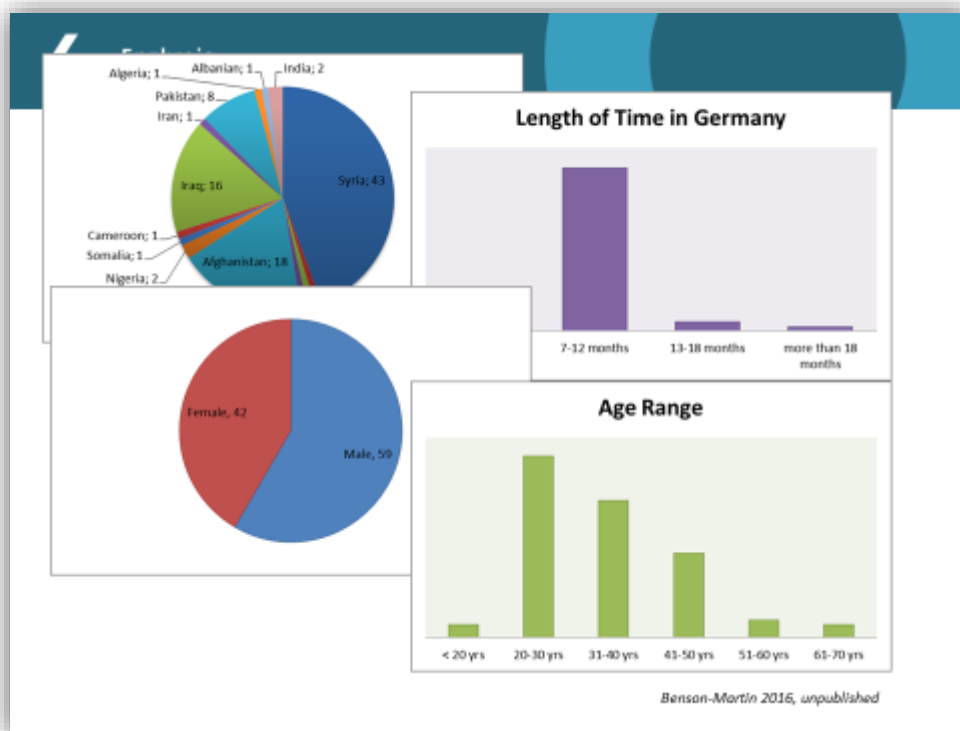
- Participatory assessment: participation by community members
- Local perspective of problems and coping
- Free-Listing (Bolton 2004)
- Stratified purposive sampling according to language
- Students from local University
- 15 days, 3 hours/day, 3 interviewers (Farsi, Arabic translator, Urdu, Kurdish), supervised
- Total duration of interviews approximately 135 hours
- Semi-structured interviews
- Diffuse sample- sometimes individual, sometime groups of people



Why chose this method ?

- Needs Assessment: Rapid Ethnographic Assessment
- Why chose this method:
 - Emic/Etic dichotomy considered
 - ‚practice-based evidence‘ ([Bolton & Tang, 2004](#))
 - Rapid results needed
 - Time and resource-limited







Enzkreis

HÄUFIGSTE ZITIERTEN PROBLEME (2016)

- Fehlende Zugang zu Deutschkursen / Poor access to language courses
- Lärm in den Camps / Noise in the Camps
- Voreingenommene Behandlung von der Seite der Verwaltung, die auf ethnischer Herkunft basieren/ Differential management by administration based on Country of Origin

HÄUFIGSTE ZWISCHENMENSCHLICHE UND INTRAPERSONALE PROBLEME
ZITIERT:

- **Vorurteile / Rassismus** bei Flüchtlingen/ Racism amongst refugees
- allgemeines Unglück mit dem Leben im Camp/Unhappiness in Camp
- **Mangel an Selbstverwirklichung** wegen **mangelnder Arbeit** und **Sorgen um Familie** in ihrem Herkunftsland /Lack of Confidence and worry about the family
- **Verzweiflung /Worry**
- *Informell geteilt im 2017: Abschiebung; Familie Nachzug /Deportation and Family not receiving asylum*



WAS TUN MENSCHEN/SOLLTEN MENSCHEN TUN, UM
PROBLEME ZU BEWÄLTIGEN?

- regelmäßige Deutschkurse/ regular language courses
- ‚zusammensetzen‘/ um Rat Fragen /‘sit together and talk‘
- Integration- Deutschkurse anbieten und Arbeit anbieten/ Intergration & Work
- Religion/zu Beten- gibt Hoffnung und Kraft & 'Religion hilft bei Stark bleiben,‘/ Religion helps to remain strong



- Psychosocial Distress related to **Post-Migratory factors** – currently less focus on past
- Other than Language & Integration, MHPPS should be
 - Group-based & Language-based
 - Focus on strengthening innate/present coping mechanisms
 - Information –transfer including Psychoeducation
- Noted: Psychological problems such as flashbacks, poor sleep, anxiety not identified as „problems“ per se
- *however **stigma & local explanatory models** of „illness“/distress must be considered in results.*

- Psychosoziale Belastung im Zusammenhang mit **Post-Migratorischen Faktoren** – derzeit weniger Fokus auf Vergangenheit
- Anders als Sprach- & Integrationskurs sollte **psychosoziale Primärprävention:**
 - **Gruppenbasiert (geeignete Gruppe!) & sprachbasiert sein**
 - Sich auf die **Stärkung der angeborenen Bewältigungsmechanismen konzentrieren**
 - **Informationsvermittlung**

DIENTSTLEISTER: HÄUFIGSTE ZITIERTE PROBLEME(N=13)

- **Vorurteile** zwischen Gruppe. *Racism/prejudice between groups*
- **Sprachproblematik** / *Language problems*
- berichtete **Schlafprobleme**/ *Sleep Problems reported*
- Lärmpegel im Camp/ *Noise in Camp*
- **Kulturelle Unterschiede**/ *Cultural differences*
,Andere Mentalität‘

HÄUFIGSTE VORSCHLÄGE VOM DIENTSTLEISTER

- ‚Trauma‘ anders zu begegnen
- Dolmetscher/ Übersetzungsdienste

Most frequent problems cited (total number of Interviews n=101)	n
Not having opportunity to learn German language or to learn more German	32
Tension	25
Racism/prejudice amongst refugees	20
Too much noise in Camp	20
Unfair treatment/ nicht Gleichgerechicht: Other asylum-seekers from other nationalities have more advantages	14
Heimweh: misses family in CO	18
General unhappiness with living in camp	18
Camp dirty/Hygiene (eg shower not working,kitchen dirty, the camp is dirty)	17
Nothing to do/boredom in Camp	16
Worry: e.g. about the family in CO, and along the refugee route eg Greece	13
Physically ill, feels not getting the help they should be/ or should not be in Camp because of illness/ or being in Camp has worsened their illness	13
Lack clear information and/or struggle to understand the Asylum Process/Keine Information	14
"PAPERS" asylum documents not in order	11
The living space is too small (with little storage space)	10
Everything takes so long	10
Despair: receives little information about issues. life here and how things work	10

What do/could...(refugees)...people do in order to cope with such problems?	n
Attend more regular german courses	16
RELIGION/PRAYERS/READ KORAN- gives hope and strength & 'Religion hilft bei Stark bleiben'	11
TALKING TO OTHERS/FRIENDS/ASK ADVICE/"zusammensetzen" & reden mit Personell oder mit anderen Flüchtlingen	9
Intergration- Deutsch anbieten und Arbeit anbieten	7
INTEGRATION- to integrate with the locals	4
In CONTAINER HABEN SIE PRIVATSPAHERE UM PRIVAT ZU TRAUEN; NEED PRIVATE SPACE (retreat to his small space)	4
Halten Abstand von Andere; halten sie nur mit ihre eigeegen Leute	3
WEINEN HAEUFIG (aber die Kinder sehen es auch und werden traurig)	3
FAMILIE UNTERSTUTZT EINANDER	2
HEIMLEITER IST SEHR HILFREICH	2
KONFLIKT IN CAMP VERMEIDEN, LIEBER SCHWEIGEN. REDEN STATT GEWALT	2
REMAIN POSITIVE	1
GLAUBT WUNDEN HEILEN MIT DER ZEIT	1
NEED MORE SPORT ACTIVITY	1
Beschaeftigung/to KEEP BUSY, EVEN FOR NO MONEY	1
wollen mehr Information wie es weiter geht	1

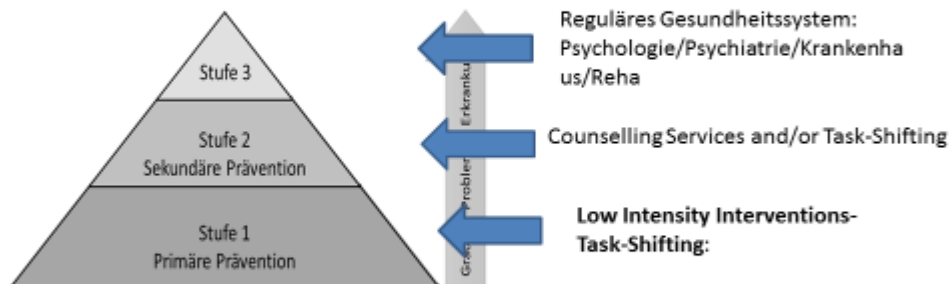
Length of time taken to perform the Needs assessment (due to staff capacity).

Individual Interviews inadvertently often ended up as group interview (people curious and influence each others answers)

Performed by students that had limited training in unbiased interview methods. (received 2 hour basic training session)

Often the answers of the asylum seekers will be influenced by the student's perceptions of what they think the problem is.

The interview was translated by the interviewer into their language while interviewing. In back translation to german, some content could be lost, or 'germanized'.



Modified: from <https://www.nice.org.uk>

Enzkreis MIND- SPRING HOLLAND

A program by and for refugees and asylum seekers

"Mind-Spring" 2009

drs. Paul Sterk
drs. Barbara Kieft

www.mind-spring.org

our sponsors: menzis, COZ Dijke, and a European Union logo.

Mind-Spring © P. Sterk & B. Kieft 2002-2009

Enzkreis MIND SPRING DENMARK & BELGIUM

MindSpring
DANSK FLYGTNINGE

Home | Search | Help | Contact | GAW Oost-Vlaanderen

Mind-Spring
Mind-Spring sessions in Oost-Vlaanderen

Mind-Spring Junior (6-18) Dani Oost
Plaats: Overloop, Dabodstraat 12, 3000 Gent
Data
Inhoud: 3 april 2019 om 15u
Sessions:
03.04.2019 dondag 15u00 - 17u00
06.04.2019 dondag 15u00 - 17u00
09.04.2019 vrijdag 15u00 - 17u00
12.04.2019 zaterdag 15u00 - 17u00
15.04.2019 zaterdag 15u00 - 17u00
18.04.2019 dondag 15u00 - 17u00

Maryam Tawfik Elwan, CAW Oost-Vlaanderen
maryam.tawfik@cwawoostvlaanderen.be
0948 20 08 32

Zeynep Erincak, CAW Oost-Vlaanderen
zeynep.erincak@cwawoostvlaanderen.be
0948 20 08 32

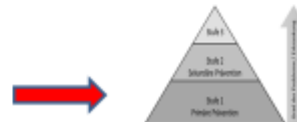
Mind-Spring Junior (6-18) Fennek Oost
Plaats: Overloop, Dabodstraat 12, 3000 Gent

www.mindspring-grupper.dk
<https://solidair.stad.gent/kalender/works...>
<http://www.cawoostvlaanderen.be/mind-spring>

STEP 1: PSYCHOEDUKATION AS GROUP INTERVENTION FOR REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS: „MIND-SPRING“

- ‘Psychoeducation in own language(Own Cultural understanding & “Idioms of Distress”)
- Led in Tandem:
 - Refugee ‘Trainer’
 - Support by presence of ‘local co-Trainer’ (Field of Social Work, People with experience in Refugee Work, ‘Psychological Minded’ Persons)
- Supervision fortnightly with psychologist

- Aim: As a support system for refugees- Building on Resilience
- Themes: Normal Response to an abnormal situation, Stress, Grounding Techniques, Mourning, Change of social Identity, Coping strategies, Substance Abuse
- Act as a Filter and Catalyst- Services can be ,scaled up’ as necessary
- Trainer and Co-Trainer supervised fortnightly by a psychologist



Co-Trainer Training :16-18 October 2017

Train the Trainer:Jan 2018; 8-19 October 2019

First groups May 2018 (Persian and Arabic speaking)

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Mind-Spring

اعمال في ألمانيا ولكن منذ مدة قصيرة فقط
شعر الجهاد أن في شريف أصبح أكبر من طاقته
أخيراً أن في شريف أصبح أكبر من طاقته
أريد القيام بأي عمل حتى أحسن وضعيتي
برنامج Mind-Spring يمكن أن يساعدك
برنامج Mind-Spring يمكن أن يساعدك



من خلال هذا البرنامج ، التلاميذ تكون في إطار
مجموعته.
الضيق يكون بمثابة الصلابة عن المواضيع التي
تهمكم.
الضيق مع الأشخاص يعرفون وضعيتك جيداً
تحدث مع آخرين ذوي خبرة يطمون لك
المعلومات والدعم لازم تحدث عن:
الإجهاد أو التوتر وكيفية التحكم فيه
حالات العزلة
التحديات المتعلقة حول موضوع الهوية
الأقارب والمشاريع الخاصة.

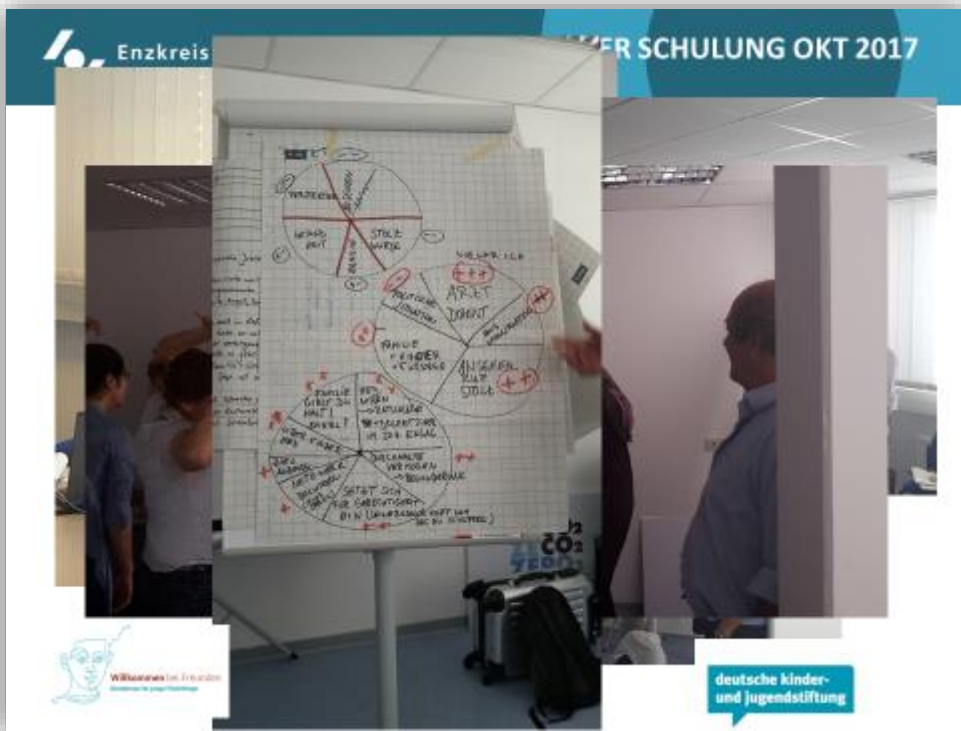
من خلال هذا البرنامج
ومثلك المشاركة بجانبك الإيجابية
والشكلية مع المجموعة
تعلم فهم حالتك الخاصة بشكل أفضل
أعمل معاً مع بقية أعضاء المجموعة
إيجاد طرق التعامل مع الصعوبات بشكل
أفضل
تقوم بالتعريف المناسبة التي تمتلك من
تحسين حالتك .



103

Böblingen District Administration. 1st International Mind-Spring Conference – Group-oriented health prevention project by refugees for refugees

67

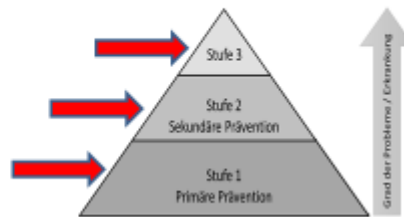




Enzkreis

TRAUMA TAPPING TECHNIQUE (TTT)

- „Grounding Technique“/Beruhigung
- Mind-Body Intervention– Rhythmic tapping of important acupuncture points
- Einfach einzusetzen
- Workshop in March 2017- 60 Leute, Waiting List 35



Besten Dank!

Art by Heike Theilmann

Heike.Theilmann@enzkreis.de



Dr. med. Janine Benson-Martin
Janine.Benson.Martin@enzkreis.de



UniversitätsKlinikum Heidelberg

Interview with Nazanin Lakkamari by Mariam Hijazi

What was for you especially important in the groups?

The good atmosphere, and the team spirit of the group, as well as the fact that it was a women's group. It was also great to work with the co-trainer.

Which subjects were the most difficult to explain and which those that most interested the participants?

Mourning and loss were the most difficult subjects. Those that arose most interest were subjects concerning German culture and what possibilities the participants have in Germany. An important issue was also the role and function of the Youth Welfare Office; the participants were worried that the Office could "take away" their children and wanted to know under which circumstances and for which reasons this action can be taken.

How could you see that the group was working well?

From the fact that many women took part and that the group met again after the end of the project.

Did the content of the sessions preoccupy you also afterwards? Did you take some of that home?

Yes, because a lot of it reflected my own experiences.

Did you have contact with the participants after the end of the workshops? How was it for you? Where there any retrospective comments?

Yes, the group had many queries and a lot of questions arose as well as activities, like, for instance, cooking together.

Discussion Summary

In the closing debate with the audience the development of Mind-Spring was discussed. There was a conversation concerning the possibility to include migrants as trainers for Mind-Spring. Another subject approached was the trainers' competences: they should not only speak the target language but also possess a certain psychological stability and be responsible and caring individuals.

The discussion covered also the different organisational challenges, especially those in connection with financing, recruiting and policy. Some potential approaches, network partners and strategies were mentioned, like for instance:

- The enhanced use of social media (following the example of Belgium with videos on recruitment) should help in recruitment and adherence⁵.
- For recruitment, the involvement of schools, family and migrant associations, especially for Mind-Spring Junior and Co-Parenting (following the example of Denmark), but also school psychology services, language courses and counselling services were suggested.

⁵ Adherence denotes the extent to which the behaviour of a person, for instance the change of life style, corresponds to the agreed recommendations with a therapist (in this case, with the Mind-Spring approach to dealing with problems arising in the migration setting).

- Language schools should also be involved (in Germany Mind-Spring Workshops take place in integration courses in the same facilities as the language courses).
- Concerning financing, the possibility to involve the public health services was mentioned: acknowledge and integrate Mind-Spring as a prevention programme promoted by the public health service (as is the case already in the Netherlands and in Enzkreis).

Podium discussion with representatives from the 4 countries: Aspirations for the future



From left to right: Heiko Römmele, Laila Wahab, Dr. Janine Benson-Martin, Mariam Hijazi, Nazanin Lakamari, Mahmoud Jaber, Maryam Tawfiq Marwan in the final Podium discussion.

All participants were of the same opinion that the future of Mind-Spring should be internationally-oriented. Collaboration should make certain that the project is further made known and secured, so as to reach and support as many refugees and migrants as possible and to help them develop the competences needed to “take their lives back in their own hands”.

Cooperation and today’s exchange on a national and international level, both help promote the project and its implementation. A common international quality control and evaluation for all Mind-Spring coordination teams would also bring several advantages, especially with the view to embed the project to the national prevention programmes of each respective country. Indeed the biggest challenges are the institutional anchoring and the preservation of the project’s essence, as well as its quality attributes. Different countries have different approaches and organisation models. Mind-Spring is a flexible conception that can be adjusted to different conditions without losing its character. Mind-Spring is in essence (and it should also remain that way) a peer-group project, suitable for all people with a migration background.

The bigger the Mind-Spring community, the more important it is to preserve the baseline and the spirit of Mind-Spring. For this to be made possible, constant trainings, intervision, supervision and other group-dynamic possibilities that promote exchange should be available.

A common international website, where every country can have its own link to its homepage, can facilitate a closer collaboration between countries and make the Mind-Spring concept internationally known. This website could also include a variety of material, like, for instance, experience reports from Mind-Spring group participants.

It is also important for the further development of Mind-Spring to be ready to adapt the project to new needs or eventually also new target groups. This means, among other things, a constant recruitment of trainers with additional language knowledge, as well as potential revision and adaptation of the modules, when, for instance, they are being addressed to a group of migrants of the second or third generation. At the same time, the work with asylum applicants in the initial arrival centres should continue and the integration agents in the communities should be supported and reinforced in their work. The offer of the Mind-Spring programme should be completely independent from the participant's resident status.

For recruitment, it is recommended to seek creative approaches including social media: video, Facebook, WhatsApp groups, SMS reminders, etc.

The cooperation between European countries should be supported in an effort to promote the project and ensure its anchoring in other countries (i.e., in Iceland, who has shown interest in Mind-Spring and whose representatives were present at the conference).

Different countries have different approaches and different organisation models that are in line with the coordination of the institutions in which the project is embedded. In this context, it is important to preserve the original spirit and identity of Mind-Spring that, after 20 years, remains effective.

As Paul Stark aptly expressed it: "you don't have to change what we have been thinking about for 20 years".

Experts' exchange

Results from the experts' work groups

Work group 1. – Recruiting



Work Group Recruiting

1. How can we present Mind-Spring more effectively?

It is very important to explain to the participants from the beginning the project's aims and benefits.

The name of the project itself, "Mind-Spring", is a good starting point: "Mind" pertains to both thoughts and emotions. The second part of the name, "Spring", has different meanings that come into play. It can be understood as the time of the year, that is, as the beginning of a new phase in life, or as a mental spring that needs to be accomplished so as to overcome difficult situations and problems. It is better to avoid the word "psychology" and its derivatives, because of the many prejudices and misunderstandings that are connected to it. It is better in this context to speak of well-being and resources. The metaphor of the body as a car, that one needs to care for, but that needs, above all, a driver who is mentally fit to steer it, can be used as a simple example.

We should bear in mind that refugees have been through a lot of tribulations. As a result, they often lack the strength and the courage to confront their new life situation. That is why we need to win them over to the programme with extra incentives. Mind-Spring offers a protected private space, in which the participants can create personal social relations and improve their general well-being.

The trainers, who have themselves fled from their country in the past, function as role models and can give courage and hope to others. Sometimes people don't need much more than that

to find their own path. Friends and family can also be involved in this. At the first meeting, it is very important for the trainer and co-trainer to present themselves in order to create a trusting atmosphere.

2. Make Mind-Spring known through networking

Visualisation plays also an important role in the dissemination of Mind-Spring. Videos in the mother tongue of the target group presenting the Mind-Spring approach, the use of Facebook and WhatsApp groups as information and exchange platforms, or the supply of flyers with little text and goal-oriented simple phrases, are effective means to promote Mind-Spring.

However, nothing works better than live human interaction. That is why it is important to also find key individuals, such as people who do voluntary work and who are well connected with refugees, and can reach a lot of people and invite them to participate in the project. Networking with organisations such as the Public Centre of Social Wellbeing (i.e. in contact points or health promotion consultation), Social Integration (social workers, integration managers, and other integration participants), etc. can also contribute to promote the project and make it widely-known.

A workshop held twice a year should also guarantee that all network partners and disseminators are informed about the latest developments. Institutions like the Employment Agency, Job Centre or language Schools are important parties for the promotion of Mind-Spring. In their counselling function all parties involved in the integration process can present Mind-Spring to their clients and recommend participants to the programme. For this to happen, the organisations should be persuaded of Mind-Spring's effectiveness and incorporate the programme in their advisory process.

The general education schools (preparatory language classes for refugee children) are also a place where Mind-Spring could be implemented. In Belgium Mind-Spring has already been implemented in schools with good results. It is offered as an open programme and the children then explain Mind-Spring to their parents (parent groups can be conducted in parallel). A prior information event can be quite effective in this context.

Mouth-to-mouth propaganda plays also a significant role, because the participants themselves are the most effective promoters of the Mind-Spring concept. They can easier persuade potential participants who are coming from their own country.

For Mind-Spring to be a success, it is also important to stay flexible and oriented towards the needs of the group. For instance, to offer women's courses or a group in German, when there are potential participants who do not feel comfortable talking about personal experiences and expose themselves in the presence of other people coming from their own country.

Sometimes refugees think that they have bigger and more pressing problems than to talk about their potential resources, i.e. to look for a job or a place to live. It is then important to explain that Mind-Spring can help them also with those issues indirectly. The discovery of their own resources and capabilities will also give them better chances to organise their new life more effectively and with more confidence.

It is also helpful to start a waiting list for potential participants, so that those interested can be contacted whenever there are enough participants for a new group to be organised in their language.

3. Motivation in the groups

Motivated trainers are those who will guarantee that the participants come out of the course inspired. The participants can then, after the end of the class and in their own time, work on the new information and thoughts and use them in their own lives. Persuasion and enthusiasm are contagious.

Information should be explained and discussed by and with the entire group; all voices should be heard. The participants should feel free and secure to express their opinion. They should also make a binding agreement that they will respect the opinions of the other participants. Respectful discussions are always more effective, even when they only bring a better understanding of how a person with a different opinion thinks.

Flexibility in terms of content can also contribute to motivate the participants. Additional important subjects that preoccupy them (i.e. how can I improve my chances of finding a job) can either be discussed in the context of the subjects that are part of the Mind-Spring curriculum or be assigned a specific timeframe within the sessions (for instance 15 minutes before the end of class, or in an extra session). Explaining how Mind-Spring can help the participants to cope with more general problems is also an important part of the programme. Mind-Spring's aim is to give the participants the feeling and the possibility to get their life back in their own hands.

At the end of the course the participants obtain a certificate. This is an opportunity to explain to them how important it is, in German society, to have official documents for what one has learnt or is committed to.

To ensure that the participation remains high, it is important to have the participants' phone numbers and to invite them personally either by calling or by sending an SMS with a group invitation. It is also important to ask them about the most convenient times for the sessions and about their requests and needs.

Group 2. – Evaluation



Work group Evaluation

1. Evaluating Mind-Spring - Denmark

The Mind-Spring coordination team from Denmark presented their evaluation method in this work group session. This includes qualitative and quantitative criteria as well as the collection of Good-Practice examples.

Presentation by Tove Madsen and Anna Mathilde Jensen, Mind-Spring Competency Center, The Danish Refugee Council, Denmark

Evaluation Goals:

Through the years, we have worked with different kinds of evaluation with the following goals:

- To adjust the Mind-Spring method so as to increase its effect ;
- To adjust the planning and processing of TOT (Training of Trainers) and Mind-Spring group courses etc. in view of a better project management process ;
- To provide proof of the effects of the method so as to acquire state funds and support.

Future evaluation goals include:

- To detect and identify the effects of Mind-Spring in the host institution, and thereby acquire knowledge on how the Mind-Spring method can affect the public integration process;
- To investigate in detail the importance of Mind-Spring for the participants in order to obtain further knowledge on what Mind-Spring actually can bring to the participants, and thereby gain deeper knowledge on refugee life in exile.

Experience with different kinds of evaluation

Until now we have initiated the following types of evaluation: 1. qualitative evaluation; 2. quantitative research; 3. "Best practice"; 4. Participants' testimonies.

We are also running an ongoing internal evaluation through our personal contact with the Mind-Spring trainers and co-trainers.

Qualitative evaluation

On the whole, we have been implementing 6 qualitative evaluations on the Mind-Spring method for parents, youth and children. These evaluations have been conducted by the following internal and external companies:

- Als Research – a social research company (3 evaluations on parents and youth);
- Center for Development in Social Housing (CFBU) (1 evaluation on parents);
- Center for Vulnerable Refugees in the Danish Refugee Council (2 evaluations on parents and children).

The purpose of these evaluations is multifold:

- To describe the effects of Mind-Spring from the perspective of the participants;
- To adjust method, themes and set-up (if relevant and/or possible);
- To better the processes and project managing, i.e. recruiting of Mind-Spring trainers, information regarding the method and collaboration, TOT, supervision and evaluation of the group course, the manual, etc.

Methods used in the qualitative evaluations:

- Interviews with trainers and co-trainers
- Focus groups with participants
- Surveys for participants
- Observation in group meetings
- Interviews with project managers

Overall conclusions on better processes and managing:

- Language barriers – both for Mind-Spring trainers and co-trainers

For the Mind-Spring trainer it can be a challenge, depending on his level of Danish, to understand and use the manual and to participate in the TOT. A further challenge is to translate into the participants' mother tongue certain concepts such as, for instance, trauma. The co-trainer faces also challenges due to the language barrier during the group sessions and there are often problems in finding a professional translator for the simultaneous interpretation task.

- Illiteracy and level of reflection – developing suiting material/manual

The level of literacy and education of the participants within a group can widely differ. This sets certain demands regarding both the material in the manual and the skills of the Mind-Spring trainers, who have to use their creativity to communicate the content accordingly.

- Solid introduction to the role of the co-trainer

Our experience in introducing the co-trainer to their role and tasks has shown that there are a significant number of new tasks for the co-trainer to handle and that their role can be difficult to understand and to perform. In Denmark the co-trainers participate two days in the TOT (Training of Trainers).

- A flexible peer-to-peer method

To secure the concept of Mind-Spring and the result of the group courses we wish to maintain the following criteria: mother tongue, group-based work, peer-to-peer, facilitation. The method therefore often causes logistic challenges, such as to form a matching group, assign the group to the most appropriate Mind-Spring trainer, set the time schedule, the location, etc. Our experience shows that it is necessary to remain flexible concerning the frequency of the meetings, the order of the group meetings, the time schedule, etc.

- Challenge: to keep Mind-Spring trainers as active volunteers

Mind-Spring trainers are volunteers with both Mind-Spring and the host institution. This means that they are located all over Denmark and are often the only trainer in their town. It therefore takes a great deal of effort to continuously make trainers feel as part of a Mind-Spring network. To this effect we hold annual conferences, maintain a Facebook-page, a newsletter, etc.

Conclusions on adjusting the method

- Two hours per meeting is too little!

In almost all groups the participants express the view that two hours is not enough to cover the subjects discussed. The trainers are free to plan longer meetings, but we also know, that it can be difficult to find both time and energy to participate for more than two hours.

- The preparation of the translator is crucial

Evaluation and numerous experiences show that introducing the translator to the method, topics and facilitation form is crucial to a successful translation, which will then, in its turn, ensure the co-trainer's successful participation.

- Adjusting each group course to local conditions is important

To secure the best possible outcome for each group, it is important to adjust elements like time schedule, frequency of meetings, catering during meetings, child care, etc. *Conclusions on the effects of Mind-Spring*

- Great benefit for participants and trainers

Evaluation shows that all participants, i.e. the members of the group, the Mind-Spring trainer and the co-trainer, gain new knowledge and insights while implementing the Mind-Spring method. Participants gain mainly knowledge concerning the topics discussed, learn from one another and develop new ways of thinking about their own life. Mind-Spring trainers gain primarily from the TOT (Training of Trainers) where they themselves undergo a group course with the other trainers, but acquire also skills in assisting the group. Co-trainers achieve a more resource-related perspective on participants during the course and many talk about acquiring a whole new approach to the target group.

- First time to share important experiences and thoughts with others

Evaluation also shows that participants in the group often share experiences, thoughts or feelings that they have never before shared with others. This indicates the relevance of clarifying the topics of Mind-Spring.

- New insight in important exile-related issues

Many participants do not have the time, energy or resources to handle topics such as child rearing, stress or loneliness in everyday life. Mind-Spring gives them the opportunity to talk, explore their feelings and reflect on these issues.

- Renewed perspectives and practices in child rearing

Many parents state that they have changed their approach to child rearing and have learned new methods such as how to teach a child a skill, how to handle worries concerning children, how to involve the child's point of view in certain cases, etc.

- Better communication with children and respect in the family

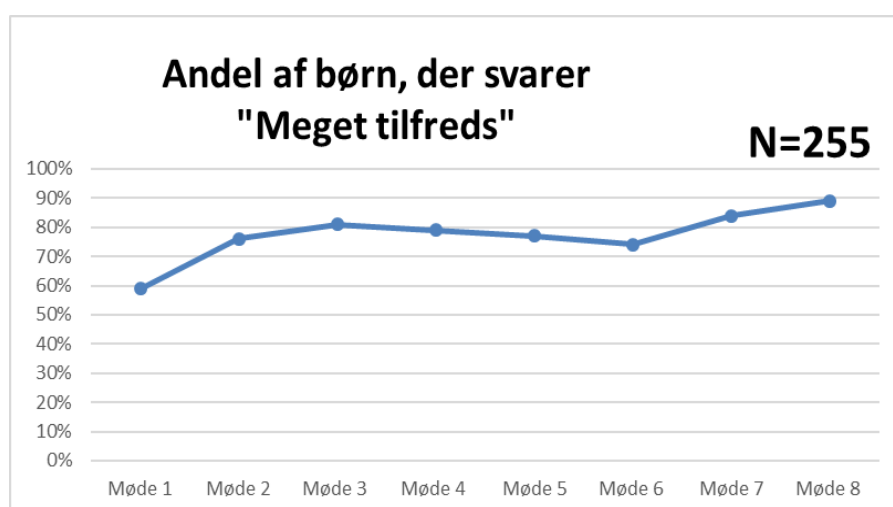
Many parents report that they have changed their approach in communicating with their children, i.e. they listen more (active listening), talk more with them, and take their children's issues seriously.

- Empowerment, self-confidence and social network

All in all, evaluation shows that the creation of a social network within the group, in combination with them being asked about their opinion and acknowledged for their responses, boosts the participants' self-confidence and that they feel empowered regarding exile-related issues addressed in the course.

Children's satisfaction factor

The children's satisfaction with the group meetings was investigated by a "barometer of satisfaction". The results show that children's satisfaction varies from 60 % to 90 % and rises steadily throughout the course. The greatest satisfaction was measured in the 7th and 8th group-meetings (2017 version of the manual), corresponding to the session where children talk about worries and how to handle them, and to the final celebration with the parents, where they obtain their certificate.



Selection of statements from interviews with trainers and participants

“Before I thought that I was just a refugee and that everything was hopeless. But after participating in Mind-Spring, I believe that I can change my own future.”

- Group participant, parents’ group

“We got all the negative out of us.”

- Group participant, children’s group

“It was a bit boring at first, but then it became better because we got to know each other.”

- Group participant, children’s group

“It's the community that made me happy - and playing together.”

- Group participant, children’s group

“I feel I've got a better life now.”

- Group participant, children’s group

“If I had taken part in such a program when I first came to Denmark, it would have made it all a bit easier for me.”

- Mind-Spring trainer for parents

“I have realized what kind of resources exist in the target group. Those are resources that can be difficult to get in touch with in day-to-day work.”

- Social worker and co-trainer

Quantitative research

Research on the effects of Mind-Spring on adult participants

Since 2016 we have been conducting a greater research project in cooperation with the Competence Center for Transcultural Psychiatry (CTP). The main researcher in this project is Dr. Charlotte Kærgaard Sonne. The project is primarily funded by The Obel Family Foundation and the project period runs from 2016 to approximately 2022.

The purpose of the project is to examine the preventive effects on psychological symptoms (trauma symptoms) and the effects in quality of life for adult Mind-Spring participants (18+). The method of the study is to identify a control group that resembles the Mind-Spring participants on certain criteria (length of stay in Denmark, age, home country), but who have not been offered a Mind-Spring group course. The questionnaires filled by the control group are compared to those of the group of Mind-Spring participants in order to qualify the effects of Mind-Spring. The goal is to include 100 Mind-Spring participants and 100 control-participants in the study.

The data of the study includes questionnaires at baseline (group meeting 1 or 2) and upon completion, plus 1-2 follow ups, years after Mind-Spring. The questionnaires used are:

- Refugee Health Screener (on symptoms)
- WHO 5 (on quality of life)
- Mind-Spring specific questions

In 2016 a pilot study was conducted only with Mind-Spring participants. The results show that there was a high satisfaction rate between participants and a 25 % increase in quality of life (WHO 5 scale) during the group course. Moreover, there were positive outcomes concerning the following Mind-Spring specific goals: family life, mental difficulties, feeling prepared for a life in Denmark, general satisfaction, and life choices.

Children’s groups - questionnaire results

In the evaluation in collaboration with Dignity – Danish Center against Torture, the children in Mind-Spring groups in 2017 were asked to answer the “Strengths and difficulties Questionnaire” (SDQ).

The results show that the “pro-social-score” was on average higher upon completion of the group course. This finding is however not statistically significant. In addition, the “total-difficulties-score” was on average lower by the end of the group course, though not statistically significant either. However, for the children with the highest scores in “total difficulties” and the lowest in “pro-social score” at baseline, there was a statistically significant progression throughout the group course.

To date, we use the SDQ Questionnaire with children participants as an on-going evaluation.

“Best practice”

Another way of defining the effects of the Mind-Spring method is to compare it with other practices. This was how The Danish Crime Prevention Council chose to assess the effect of Mind-Spring. In collaboration with the University of Aalborg they identified several evident prime preventive practices. They found that these practices were all based on a number of elements listed below. They then conducted observations and interviews within a Mind-Spring group and analyzed data in relation to the eight central elements on the prime preventive practices.

Here follows the list of the central elements in preventing criminality when looking at a number of evidence-based methods in crime prevention and the assessment of Mind-Spring:

Element	Mind-Spring parent group
Early Intervention	√
Family-based	√
Local	√
Cross-sectoral	√
Intercultural	√
Relational	√
Individual focus	(√)
Long-term focus	√

What we hear from participants

Through trainers' supervision and our own group evaluation we also gain knowledge on the possible effects of Mind-Spring that are not (yet) assessed by the evaluations or research. These are some of our central experiences:

- Mind-Spring as democratic injection

Some Mind-Spring trainers state that after participating in Mind-Spring they really get a better understanding of the Danish society, the democratic system and the welfare model that is based on trust. After Mind-Spring they feel that they have "met" the real Denmark which they could not see before.

- "I've learned that it is okay not to agree with other people"

This sentence is very common among participants and it is clear that this recognition is a basic prerequisite for the understanding of, as well as the participation in, a democratic society and its discussions. The acknowledgement of being in a community with people not agreeing with you is very central to the Danish labor market, unions and democratic participation.

- Mind-Spring's contribution to building trust in the system

Many co-trainers and trainers describe how Mind-Spring participants are more likely to trust the system, e.g. the municipality, and seek or accept help from the system. The trust relation that develops between the participant and the co-trainer during the course is often referred to as the reason for this change.

- Rebuilds trust in others

We are also often told that Mind-Spring can rebuild trust in other people, trust that many refugees lost during life in restricted societies, war zones and during fleeing.

- "I've changed personally since Mind-Spring"

Some trainers talk about personal change after Mind-Spring. This can include, for example, having more patience with one's self and others, having more trust in life and follow one's dreams, trust one's self – strengthened self-confidence.

2. Discussion

The subjects below were mentioned in the discussion that followed:

Mind-Spring does not only have an effect on stabilising mental health, it also has important "side-effects", such as the promotion of a better understanding of democracy and the further development of the capacity to handle problems, speed up integration and actively contribute to social participation processes.

Illiteracy was mentioned as a major challenge for the evaluation and collection of data in all "Mind-Spring countries", since it makes form-filling extremely difficult, or even impossible.

A long-term evaluation (in regular intervals) that would allow to determine, process and present the participants' course of development and the lasting effects the programme has had on them has proven to be complex and difficult. It is however to be noted that the evaluation of prevention programmes is a general problem; the groups of participants do not remain constant, they are not available for a longer evaluation period and data for comparison

and for process monitoring cannot be collected. This was confirmed by all representatives in this work group.

All four countries use the WHO 5 form to evaluate Mind-Spring groups. This internationally validated and recognized questionnaire can be used as a minimum common basis for the comparison of the programme's results on an international scale. This cross-national knowledge on the project's results could have a strong impact on the discussions concerning its further financing and establishment.

3. Qualitative Evaluation in Pforzheim: "Promoting and inhibiting factors of the participation of refugees in a peer-group intervention promoting psychological health in a communal setting"⁶

The implementation of Mind-Spring in Pforzheim and the Enzkreis district was supported by an evaluation process, in which eight guided interviews with refugees were conducted, analysed and evaluated in terms of content. The evaluation aimed to identify promoting and inhibiting factors for the participation in Mind-Spring.

In connection with the recruitment of participants, the results show that a mixed strategy, consisting of systematic written invitation or use of flyers in different languages together with a personal discussion, is particularly effective. Refugees with no social network or reading skills can be reached by means of a visit at their accommodation environment. Moreover, direct contact makes it easier for refugees to take notice of the Mind-Spring offer and the relevance it can have to their own lives. Acquaintances and trustworthy people from the sector of social workers, integration managers or people from their personal environment are best suited to work as disseminators for the project (i.e. voluntarily committed citizens and/or refugees of the neighbourhood).

A low-threshold organisation of place and time can also facilitate participation: the possibility to conduct the course at a place that is already known to the refugees and is close to their accommodation, such as neighbourhood centres, works also supportively; timetable overlaps with language or integrations courses has been noted to work obstructively.

The conception of a combination of a trainer who speaks the language and comes from the same cultural background as the participants and a professional coming from the area of psychological health with knowledge of the public health system in Germany and the social structures that are bound to it, as well as with a network of relevant representatives, raises the project's expectations. During the workshop it is possible that, due to different expectations concerning target setting and structure of the project, some participants are disappointed. High expectations from the co-trainers, individual needs and various life situations, as well as the importance of a trustful atmosphere require high sensibility, reflectivity and communication competences from both the peer-trainer and the co-trainer.

⁶ Clara Perplies, "Promoting and inhibiting factors of the participation of refugees in a peer-group intervention promoting psychological health in a communal setting", MA thesis, the Berlin School of Public Health, in connection with the research project RESPOND of the Department of General Medicine and Healthcare Research of the University Clinic of Heidelberg.

Group 3. – Training



Work group Training

1. Mind-Spring Training in The Netherlands

In the Netherlands the courses are taking place mainly in the arrival centres (the equivalent of “Erstaufnahmestellen” in Germany) and function very well. In the communities it is more difficult to find enough participants to form groups. The usual courses consist of eight 2-hour teaching sessions. The groups consist of 8 to 15 participants (minimum 4). Teenage groups have maximum 12 participants. Difficulties in organisation are encountered in time scheduling since other refugee organisations work also with the same target group.

The training of the trainers, conducted by Paul Sterk and two other trainers, is spread along 7 days (2+2+3). The training of the co-trainers (also called “mental health trainers”) is shorter, and takes place in only 2 days because the participants come from professional fields (i.e. pedagogues, psychologists, or they have studies in similar fields). The coordinator, Miranda Dabboubi-Broersen, strives to get to know all trainers personally, so as to find the best possible “matching” co-trainer for them. Interpreters are also made available for all groups; they facilitate the collaboration work between the co-trainer and the trainer.

So as to guarantee the trustworthiness and the qualification of new trainers, some specific characteristics are expected. With the means of a personal interview it is determined if the candidate possesses the soft skills required: on the personal level this includes self-confidence, self-observation, self-discipline; on the social level, empathy, as well as knowledge of human nature; and on the professional level, among other capacities, knowledge in motivation techniques.

Another important factor is emotional intelligence. This is the basic prerequisite for the above mentioned competences. Emotional intelligence determines how a person deals with their own feelings and the emotions of others. The more pronounced the emotional intelligence,

the better the capacity to perceive the sensations of the other and to deal with them accordingly.

Despite the above described procedure and selection, the difficulty to find suitable trainers for this position still remains.

Currently the courses in refugee accommodation are financed by the social insurance agency. Nevertheless, negotiations for future financing remain a high priority. The difficulty to provide calculable and provable results remains a problem in this context.

2. Challenges

Organisation:

It is important to build a stable and reliable relationship with the arrival centres, so as to be able to offer the courses of the Mind-spring programme there. The long-term financing and stabilisation of the programme is unfortunately not yet guaranteed. Intervention and supervision for the trainers are often difficult to organise, due to the additional time required and to distance problems. Last but not least, the referral to special treatment of people in need of therapy and a more intensive support is not always feasible due to the long waiting for patient placement.

Staff:

It is difficult to find new suitable trainers. Since not only the same cultural background is required, but also a knowledge of Dutch and a personal experience as a refugee. Moreover, the relation between trainer and co-trainer (eventually also with the interpreter) is an important part of the work and must be established and nurtured.

Evaluation:

The evaluation of the work is complex and difficult, because often both trainers and participants do not yet have sufficient language knowledge and are not used to the method of questionnaires. Moreover, the participants in the arrival centres are relocated after a short period of time making long-term surveys very difficult.

Public outreach:

It is clear that Mind-Spring needs a better network structure and embedding in society. It must be “marketed” more explicitly and concretely as a positive, promoting and preventing action concept for the development of society as a whole. This requires a constant opening of the programme to new target groups.

Contacts to health insurances, social organisations, foundations, companies, political decision-makers, EU-representatives etc. should be strategically cultivated. A secure financing of the programme would act as a more stable basis for all participants and would open further possibilities for the development of the programme and its establishment.

Conclusion and outlook – Katharina Pfister



Group photo at the end of the international conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honoured international experts,

Dear colleagues,

I would like to start by thanking you all for your intensive and stimulating debates and discussions. The work groups on recruitment, training and evaluation worked intensively to present and exchange a broad variety of experiences and approaches. Different aspects were examined and mentioned regarding the successful implementation, dissemination and long-term establishment of Mind-Spring.

The outcome of the day confirms us in our initiative to organise this conference with your support. It was truly impressive to see, through the description of experiences, how Mind-Spring can affect individuals, how the attitude towards life can change, how confidence can be generated and energy released to develop coping competences. Thereby, the knowledge is confirmed that individuals can develop optimal coping strategies with their own existent resources; the more resources they have, the better they can manage and respond to the challenging situations in their new life. Mind-Spring's core element and main goal is to enable them to do so.

In the Podium discussions it was repeatedly confirmed how important and decisive it is to implement the Mind-Spring approach as early as possible. Thus, in The Netherlands, groups are formed and conducted already at the arrival centres for refugees soon after their arrival. There, the support staff, the equivalent to our social workers and integration managers, offer Mind-Spring among other suitable support to the newcomers. The training sessions conducted by trainers in their mother tongue create a feeling of trust and optimism, courage, and a "real sense of arriving". The implementation of the programme in their mother tongue, the cultural background and the knowledge concerning the experience of fleeing that the trainers possess, are all crucial elements for a more direct and binding access to the target group. Concerning this aspect of the programme, important requirements for the role of the trainers were repeatedly mentioned: empathy, prior knowledge in psycho-social context, self-reflection,

authentic behaviour, flexible time management, etc. Ideally, the trainers remain then available and in contact with the project and the training process for a long period. Continuity is an important aspect of the project, it gives stability and nurtures a trusting relation between the group members. Moreover, networks and initiatives can originate from within the groups, which can then help consolidate the newly acquired knowledge and allow for more understanding of past experiences. Constant change of trainers, group constellations or possible dropouts hinder this process.

A broad network of disseminators and partners can contribute to implement and spread the Mind-Spring approach also in other areas. Together with the typical integration agents such as welfare organisations, public support and counselling and pedagogical institutions, it is also important to broaden the circle of participants. Health agencies and insurance companies can and should include Mind-Spring in their portfolios and offer the programme as a preventive health module. The aim is to reach a long-term implementation of the programme and a financial security for all those involved. The Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark are in this context pioneers who give us reasons to be optimistic, since they have secured financial support from national health agencies; Enzkreis has also received the first financial support from the public health services. However, these are temporary support measures and do not guarantee the implementation of Mind-Spring in the future.

Educational institutions, migrant organisations, as well as job market institutions are potential partners that could be involved in the dissemination of the Mind-Spring approach, as well as in the recruitment for the project. They also have access to further target groups beside refugees, who could also profit from the project's concept: school groups, migrants, job seekers, etc.

Today it was also stressed that the group of migrants of 2nd and 3rd generation should be included as a target group; their participation in health prevention measures that are available should be particularly supported (feedback from the experts' work groups). The so-called "established" migrant groups should therefore be brought more into focus as part of the target groups.

Another central subject discussed was the evaluation of the Mind-Spring programme. Which measurable outcomes are transferable and which "before-and-after effects" can be proven? For this it is necessary to collect data, reports, questionnaires (WHO 5), long-term observations, evaluation discussions, etc. Cross-national comparative investigations are important for the presentation of combined knowledge and results, systematic evaluations and impact analysis. An area that needs further development.

As a last point, I would like to pick up on the note that the social and digital networks, as well as the general media channels, should be used and taken into consideration. In addition to the customary presentation of the Mind-Spring approach, personal stories can be narrated, which would show what effect Mind-Spring has as a training concept, which competences are developed and acquired by its participants, and which effects it has on "health wellbeing". Approaches that cater for a wider, more open interest and for the expansion of the information and exchange platform.

With this final suggestion I would like to close today's review and summary.

My thanks go to ALL of you, who made possible today's first international Mind-Spring conference: our European guests and input providers, our praxis experts as well as trainers and interpreters, participants from our district, from neighbouring districts, from Baden-

Württemberg and the federal territory. And a special thank you to Paul Sterk, who made it possible for us to meet and exchange our professional experiences and opinions. Without his commitment this meeting would not have been possible.

As head of Office for Migration and Refugees I would like to thank my colleagues, especially the integration team and the social workers' team, who propagate, conduct and support the Mind-Spring approach and programme in our district, and organised today's conference with great commitment. As representatives for all of them, I would like to mention Dr. Elena Anastasaki, Mariam Hijazi and Cristina Visiers Würth.

For today's conference we will produce a documentation and will send it to you this coming winter. This will contain all your contributions.

We are very happy to hear that the Mind-Spring experts from Denmark will organise another Mind-Spring conference next year. We welcome this invitation to continue today's European thought-exchange, share knowledge and support each other.

I wish you all further success with "Mind-Springing", and I hope that today's Böblingen impressions will have an effect and encourage you in your further work.

Thank you very much.

Katharina Pfister

Head of Office for Migration and Refugees

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