



**VII International Congress on Migration & Mental Health
Youth & Families Wellbeing matters in the context of Migration**

20th October 2018 – Brussels

Familles du Monde, asbl & The Athena Network



**“LOST IN INTEGRATION” –
A PREVENTION COURSE FOR THE
MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION IN MIGRATION: A PILOT PROJECT**

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Migration is a natural human process, which offer individuals the opportunity to find a better place and context to improve their living conditions. Nevertheless, international migration can also be experienced as a difficult phase full of challenges and setbacks and can be the trigger for a deep identity conflict, increasing vulnerability and the development of serious psychological difficulties. Cultural and language barriers, the loss of the social network and status, or experiencing discrimination and stigmatisation, can all lead to isolation, stress, frustration, fear, shame and lack of assurance, among other negative processes and emotions.

On the other hand, there are around 35.900 Spanish or Portuguese-speaking people living in Berlin. (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 02/15). Currently, there is a considerable demand among this community for psychotherapeutic counselling and treatment after suffering from anxiety and depression episodes. Unfortunately, the current public health system does not have enough resources to cover this high demand, the long waiting lists and the difficulty in finding a therapist are a risk factor for promoting stability and for the promotion of mental health in migration.

Lost in Integration is a pilot project developed by the working group of Spanish and Portuguese-Speaking (Berlin Psychotherapist Chamber) as a reaction to this problematic. The aim of the project is to offer a psychological intervention in the form of a prevention course, where different topics related to the emotional implications of migration can be discussed, explored and elaborated in a group setting. The content is organized into 8 different modules in the form of workshops, which cover topics such as: life and migration story and phases, acculturation stress, migration mourning, psychoeducation about depression and anxiety disorders, intercultural competences or social network.

During 2018 there have been 8 different groups running (5 in Spanish and 3 in Portuguese). Each group was run by 2 psychologists or psychotherapists, with the same native language as the participants, who may also have experienced the migratory process themselves or have a migratory background. The project has been supported by a great German public health insurance and, with its results, aims to get a place in the public health agenda, in order to offer a pertinent mental health intervention covered by a public health programme, open and adapted to all diverse migrant communities.



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About the author

Noemí Alcalá studied Psychology at the University of Barcelona. Currently she works as a social counsellor at Xochicuicatl, a Latin American Women's Association based in Berlin, in the framework of the project "Ankommen", financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). She is a **member of the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking working group at the Psychotherapist Chamber of Berlin**. She contributed to establishing the Prevention Group "Lost in Integration" and has offered workshops and psychological counselling to the Spanish-speaking community in Berlin. The promotion of the mental health in the migration process is the primary focus of her work. She was in charge of the organisation of the VI Congress on Migration and Mental Health in October 2017, Berlin.