Innovating Healthcare Delivery for Newly Arrived Migrants through Community Participation, Visual Expressions of People's Stories and Learning Alliance.

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Migratory experiences often exacerbate the mental health care needs of vulnerable migrants and refugees. Mental health services access and provision, therefore, need to be adaptive to the specific needs of these populations. Thus, development and promotion of these type of services require that migants be not only at the heart of physical and mental health delivery models but also be able to influence them.

MyHealth project, a thirty-six months initiative oriented to identify health needs of newly arrived migrants –women and children-- in various European cities, is implementing innovative participatory methodological strategies. This with the aim of moving from a consultative process to a more participatory and inclusive one in the access/provision of health services.

Preliminary findings regarding the innovative strategies used by MyHealth, namely community participation activities, visual expressions of people's stories and a stakeholder Learning Alliance, show that professionals involved are increasingly aware of a) the need to develop better networks with diverse communities, b) the importance of conscious participatory design that moves beyond consultation with migrants through research, and c) the need to recognise and bolster the role of migrant professionals. Furthermore, by using pictograms health and mental health professionals are mastering new ways to communicate effectively using images, reducing a high reliance on verbal language. Lastly through the Learning Alliance professionals and researchers are becoming aware of how involving a more comprehensive network can increase the impact of their work on a broader range of stakeholders.

Overall both the intended and unintended results of the innovative strategies used by MyHealth—an initiative supported by the European Commission -- so far are demonstrating creative ways to be used when engaging with mental and physical service delivery for newly arrived migrants.