



S♀EMPRE

Making Latin Women Visible

**VII International Congress  
on Migration & Mental Health**

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### ***Representations and Migration path of Latin American women in Belgium.***

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***SIEMPRE.***

SIEMPRE is an NGO formed in Belgium (Flemish Region) since May 11th., 2017, founded by two Mexican residents' women: Thamara Cruz and Ana Valenzuela. The aim of our organization is to make visibility Latinas women from the minorities. This research begins to identify the paths where Latinas migrant women must have to follow, how is this process and when they need solutions. We analyze in both directions which problematic situations exists such as: representations, associations and institutions who are linked to look at their problems, what kind of specific solutions are oriented to Latin American migrant women and their families? And how can they access to these services? One of the most important indicators that we constantly found was that statistics doesn't exist. We identify pattern of behavior that constantly are repeated by migrant on health and during their integration. Wellbeing and Mental health problems linked to isolation, depression and lack of equity during their integration period with programs as peer-to-peer perspective. Here we present our results of one year of studies.

### **Objective**

Where are the Latin American migrant women (Latinas) in Belgium associations working in mental health and psychosocial effects?

### **Methodology**

The methods used for this research were: open interviews, personal study cases, recollect testimonies, reviews material from organizations, participation on congress and debates concerned to migration, women, violence and equity, follow information in social networks and co-participations in conferences, seminars and focus groups from May 2017 to May 2018.

### **Results**

Being migrant minority, we discovered that the help is almost invisible, mental health services and organizations, refuges around latina migrant women in Belgium are not adequate addressed to their needs and troubles. We have identified different activities, facts and the great struggles for migrant women living in Belgium. All these issues are in areas as: employment discrimination, housing, conjugal and domestic violence, in this context we carry out routes of violence, discrimination and depression. We have identified different ways to

prevent problems based in workshops, groups of help and peer-to-peer experiences. We identify informal and diverse groups sharing in social media in range from: cooking recipes, advice on migration procedures, asking for legal assistance or asking for recommendations in cases of conjugal violence. This latter issue has taken us more time to analyze, we have been focused on creating networks with victims and organizations involved in all these issues. There are non-governmental organizations denouncing a growing wave of violence in Europe against women and Latin American women as one of the most vulnerable migrant groups. To this end, to date we have held two talks with the participation of Latina women based in Europe and specialists in jurisprudence, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and victims of violence. We have realized that an important distinction of our organization is to maintain an exchange network and consolidate actions and research with the participation of different specialists, without discrimination without religious tendencies, policies, marital status and / or sexual preference that allows the integration of demands for equality, equity and social and participatory education.

**Keywords:**

**Latin American Women, Mental Health, Migration, Violence**

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