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Transfer Handbook for "SymfoS for Youth Care Methodology"

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Project Information

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Document Information

Title	Transfer Handbook for “SymfoS for Youth Care Methodology”
Description	As we have learnt from prior projects, it’s not enough for a sustainable implementation just to invest in personnel development. This handbook and network of all partners will significantly contribute to ease the implementation process at organisational level. It shall point out strengths and opportunities of <i>SymfoS</i> method to support organisations, when they design new intervention concepts provided to families or young people or they take part in bids for public training measures in Youth Work
Partner organisation	Asociación Caminos
Researcher(s) responsible for filling in this document	Daniel Pittl
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Developer of Symbolwork
 Wilfried Schneider, Germany
info@psychologische-symbolarbeit.de
psychologische-symbolarbeit.de

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1. ABOUT THE *SYMFOS FOR YOUTH CARE* PROJECT

SymfoS for Youth Care is an innovative counselling method based on the approach of Symbol Work. Their implementation in the youth welfare system would significantly improve the integration chances of disadvantaged young people (NEETS) in Europe. They are increasingly excluded from social participation due to lack of integration in many areas of life.

With the methodical approach of Symbol Work (by Wilfried Schneider), an innovative instrument is developed in this project, which enables youth leaders in youth welfare to effectively support disadvantaged young people.

The innovative aspect is the transfer of the previous method from vocational guidance to youth welfare and the extension of the *SymfoS* educational approach with web courses on initial education (Higher Education) at universities.

In youth welfare services, working with symbols offers young people an additional, universal language. In short, symbolic work allows a person to explore themselves and express themselves better. Symbols are helpful in situations that are difficult or impossible to describe using other means of communication.

Primary target groups of the project

- ❖ Youth welfare workers or psychologists and social workers who work with the young people listed above (e.g., social services of youth welfare offices, youth welfare services).
- ❖ Decision makers in youth welfare, VET providers and universities in the field of social welfare.

Indirect target groups of the project

- ❖ Disadvantaged young people (15-25 years) with problems of integration, which are hardly reached by existing methods of youth welfare (young people with multiple problems, NEETS).
- ❖ Educational policy makers responsible for recognition tools for qualifications.

Project partners

The partner community consists of 7 partners from 5 European countries:

Sozialwerk Dürener Christen (Leadpartner) – DE	
Hafelekar – AT	
University of Gloucestershire – GB	
Asociación Caminos – ES	
Colegio ColpolsocA - ES	

Associacao A3S - PT	
Instituto Politecnico Porto - PT	

The mission

The mission of the *SymfoS for Youth Care* project is to make this methodology effective and obtain a great impact in terms of people reached and being counselled with these tools, especially those who are not obtaining a benefit from existing and more traditional approaches. To make *SymfoS* transferable and to facilitate the training process it was developed as a ready to use package of tools that allows many typologies of organizations in the guidance sector to make use of it. The *SymfoS* package includes theoretical basis, a complete training program structured according to the requirements of ECVET and it is equipped with a series of open learning and working tools:

Research paper and National Adaptation Plans for Symbol Work (IO1)

SymfoS for Youth Care Intervention Set (IO2)

SymfoS for Youth Care Blended Learning Approach (IO3)

SymfoS for Youth Distance Training Course Development (IO4)

SymfoS for Youth Care F2F Training Development (IO5)

SymfoS for Youth Guide for Support & Peer Buddy System (IO6)

Transfer Handbook for SymfoS for Youth Care Methodology (IO7)



2. ABOUT THIS TRANSFER HANDBOOK

The objective of this transfer Handbook for the *SymfoS for Youth Care* Methodology is to promote and assure the implementation of the approach in future teaching and learning environments in youth care on the long term.

As we have learnt from prior projects, it's not enough for a sustainable implementation just to invest in personnel development. This handbook is based on the experiences of all partners compiled within the national piloting and application within their organisations and networks as well as the information compiled in IO1, the scientific foundations and national adaption plans. By directly addressing decision makers at the level of service-providers in the youth sector, youth centres and social policy makers, we will significantly contribute to ease the implementation process at organisational level.

Starting point will be a collection of all lessons learnt by implementing *SymfoS* in the own partner organizations. These will be analysed and will lead to a necessary framework of condition on personnel & organizational development of youth care intervention providers, schools, youth centres and necessary resources to be successful. This part will also include a collection of feedback from youth and social workers, school authority and youth work policy makers.

Additionally, interfaces to existing and already used guidance methods in youth work will be described to support the implementation of the symbol work approach.

We also will describe learning outcomes and using existing recognition tools guidelines for recognition and certification processes of the youth worker training curricula in the different partner countries. To assure high quality service delivery guidelines for Quality Assurance based on a continuous improvement process.

3. LESSONS LEARNED BY IMPLEMENTING SYMFOS – GOOD PRACTICES OF APPLICATION OF THE SYMFOS METHODOLOGY

All partners worked with the *SymfoS for Youth Care* approach within their own organisations. Doing so they identified different pre-conditions which showed to be crucial for the successful implementation of this method. Necessary resources for successful implementation of *SymfoS* can be summarized in the following way per country and partner:

Sozialwerk Düren - Germany

In own installations:

- The training of colleagues to become *SFYC* Practitioners in order to try out, apply and establish the method and to teach it to colleagues.
- The creation of sustainable structures and provision of sufficient hourly quotas for the permanent implementation of the method:
 - Conducting internal practice workshops (3 hours) four times a year to make the method accessible to all colleagues; in addition, once or twice a year, day workshops.
 - The offer that the trained *SFYC* Practitioners may support colleagues in their projects by introducing the method to clients or groups, working with the *SFYC* method and supporting colleagues in counselling sessions.

With other organizations:

- Conducting multiplier events for practitioners and stakeholders, universities, etc. to promote and disseminate the method.
- Implementation and establishment of open practical workshops - for all interested external colleagues - four times a year for 3 hours. Here all interested colleagues can get to know and deepen the method; besides practicing, the topic of implementation was also discussed.
- Establishing and maintaining contact with 2 universities: continuous agreements, implementation of information activities or seminars at the universities.
- Continuous reporting on the *SFYC* project on the website and/or in the media.

Hafelekar - Austria

Since the piloting phase of the project, *SymfoS for Youth Care* project partners introduced the new methodology as part of their own counselling services and activities, with the aim to test and improve tools and techniques to work with young, disadvantaged people. Each of these experiences highlights the differences in the implementation according to different aspects such as:

- Background and client's needs.
- Type of organisation.
- Profile of the facilitator/counsellor.
- Nature of the services provided.

These experiences have been collected and presented with the aim to demonstrate how the *SymfoS for Youth Care* method can be adapted to different types of organisations, contexts and conditions with success.

Instituto Politecnico do Porto & A3S - Portugal

Colleagues in Portugal experienced limits in the implementation due to COVID-19 restrictions and based on this limited access to the materials in the suitcases. Overall, they considered as preconditions for implementation:

- Access to suitcases.
- Suitable place for intervention (comfortable, cosy)
- Adequate training of the facilitator
- Appropriate experience with youth institutions (to ensure adequate follow-up).

Colegio Oficial de CCPP y Sociología de Andalucía & Asociación Caminos - Spain

- Collaboration with colleagues with in-depth knowledge of the different tools created by this project.
- Create a pleasant atmosphere and suitable environment for implementation.
- Access to materials.

In Spain we sought collaboration with youth care organizations in order to test the materials in daily youth work. Here the most important topics were also:



- How to involve young people in times of COVID-9. distance and disinfection issues in Symbol Work.
- How to provide the materials /suitcases on distance.

University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom



Own organization direct lecturing and blended learning with students:

- Information regarding the SymfoS method was included in course content for undergraduates studying to qualify within the field of Health and Social Care including future social workers, family support workers, youth support workers, mental health workers, amongst others. Information on the method was provided during lectures that had a focus on creative methods of communication and engagement with service users. This was an appropriate environment to promote the concept of symbol work and coincides with a time whereby services working with young people, particularly youth offending work, is adopting creative methods of engagement and intervention.
- Inclusion in the curriculum of relevant courses can happen on an annual basis at level 4, 5 and 6. This will be on the basis of an introduction to the method and signposting to private training consultancies and organizations that will have undertaken to provide the SymfoS training on a certified basis.

Other organizations:

- Youth Support Team - Leaving care work – the SymfoS method was used as an intervention with young people who have been in the care of the local government and was received positively. The method was perceived as being an opportunity to approach issues with a new and playful approach that could be experienced as fun.
- College for disabled young people – Using the method with those with a learning disability and on the autistic spectrum was experienced positively as a useful process to engage with service users and learn fresh information and gain valuable insights into their world. The method was seen as a possible way of being able communicate for those who struggle to articulate what they are thinking and feeling.
- General youth work – the smaller/minor interventions such as the “Wishmas Tree” were seen as being positive ways of engaging with young people as generic youth work practice and informal education often use creative methods



to engage with young people. As such, the method was seen as being consistent with the youth work approach.

4. SUMMARIZED ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR *SYMFOS* METHODOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

For organisations or schools offering education and career guidance services *SymfoS* proposes an alternative and innovative approach to be adopted and or integrated to existing practices.

Symbolwork is based on a positive pedagogical approach

Which shifts attention from problems to solutions, stimulates self-responsibility and reinforcement of client's personal strengths. This approach is one the most appreciated aspects of Symbol work, both for facilitators and clients. This fundamental pedagogical approach by trainers is crucial for the successful implementation of Symbol work sessions and it has to be learned and used properly.

SymfoS for Youth Care provides additional and less verbal methods to work holistically with the young clients

These methods are especially suitable for young disadvantaged people: "Thanks to the symbols you made me talk" reported a young person being counselled in Austria. The Symbols have the power to reduce communication and emotional barriers and create a direct connection with her/his inner world.

SymfoS for Youth Care methods and techniques have been tested and validated in different countries and in real work situations

All techniques have been improved and further developed. Their use in the piloting phase resulted in good practices.

SymfoS for Youth Care increases the opportunity to extent virtual and real networks of practitioners and organisations

Related to the aims of the project at local, regional, national and EU levels. For example, the *SymfoS* online platform is a virtual space for interaction, knowledge transfer and further training opportunity.

Investing in acquiring the SymfoS for Youth Care methodology

Brings many advantages at organisational level:

- Professional growth.
- Introduction of new and complementary working methods.
- Possibility to support disadvantaged young people.
- Tool for competence assessment for companies.
- Networking and visibility at local and regional level.

Those organisations that are investing time and resources in learning *SymfoS* and in integrating it at organisational level have the possibility of extending the benefits of acquiring the methodology both in the private and public sectors. *SymfoS for Youth Care* can have many further applications that can ensure the use and the dissemination of the knowledge achieved during the acquisition of the methodology and an added value which boosts further developments, to provide some examples, *SymfoS*:

- Can be implemented in a similar field of work.
- Can be part of existing or new trainings for youth and social workers.
- Can be made as part of organisation contract and fixed as a standard.
- Can be offered as a dedicated service to many stakeholders.
- Can be supplied to other counselling organisations with training.

5. AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION – WHERE SYMFOS APPROACH MIGHT BE MEANINGFUL



Target group of young people

Transition from school to work

Successful transition from school to work or secondary education level I and II

Vocational education

Daily structuring

National system of Youth Guarantee and Integral Program of Qualification and Employment of the Chamber of Commerce (Spain)

Red Andalucía Orienta for NEETS and jobseekers (Spain)

Young people who struggle to articulate their goals

Prevention of early school leaving

Youth coaching to advise pupils at risk of exclusion or dropping out of school (Austria)

Counselling as part of "Help for Education" (Germany)

Priority Intervention Educational Areas (Portugal)

Young people with special educational needs

Daily/Weekly structuring needs

With communication issues and problems, low level of literacy, dyslexia

Child and Youth Welfare

Initial assessment with young people in terms of understanding the individual situation, clarifying needs and problems to be worked on

Assessment and clarification of personal history, biography work

General consultation and informal counselling or. Young people and their support system (including significant others, careers, teachers and friends)

Groups focusing on social competence, anti-aggression or media competence training

Care Leavers' Pathway Plans

Those who have experienced trauma/abuse

With behavioral issues

Excluded from mainstream education and those at risk of being excluded

Young offenders

Bereavement work with children and young people

Young refugees and migrants

Assistance with social integration, future planning

Assessment and clarification of personal history, biography work

Those who have experienced trauma/abuse

Excluded from mainstream education and those at risk of being excluded

Open Youth Work

Communication

Emotional regulation and management

Strengths, weaknesses

Personal reflection



Target group of professionals

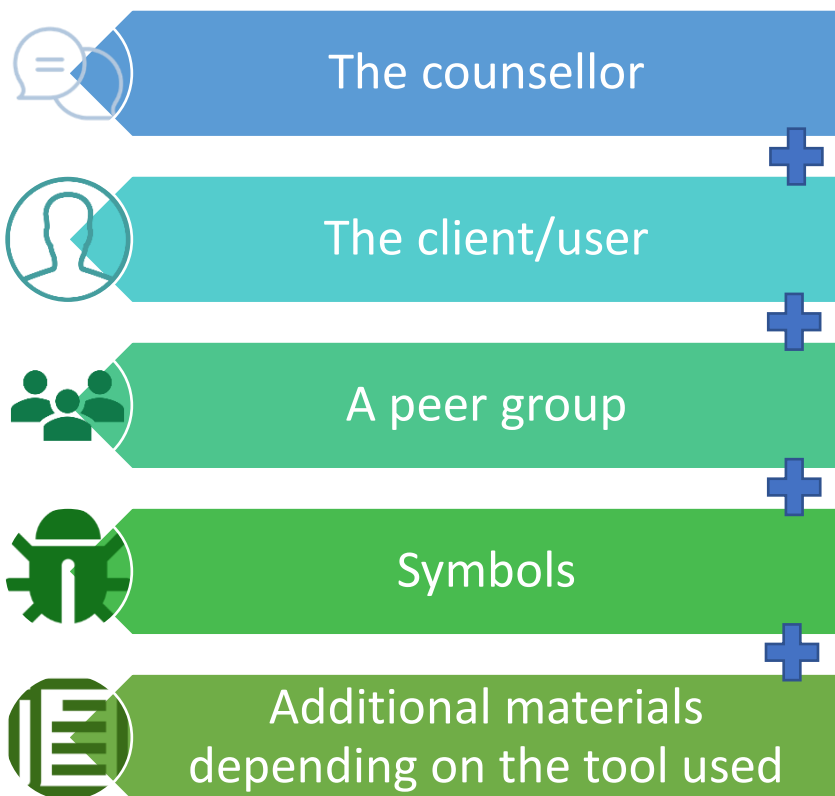
- Mentors.
- Those undertaking “life story” work.
- Career guidance professionals.
- Teachers, or educational staff in schools and higher education.
- Professionals working in Youth Care installations.

Overall, the concept of symbol work was received positively and considered to be an intervention which could be broadly applied throughout services with disadvantaged young people:

- Contribute to engagement of service users and retention of group membership.
- Encourage personal expression and rapport between client and practitioner.
- Provide a contrast to formal educational methods.
- Promote the production of outcomes with regard to identification of future goals.

6. WHAT YOU NEED TO IMPLEMENT SYMFOS FOR YOUTH CARE

The method requires a specific setting and specific tools.



Detailed explanations on how to apply the tools you find in:

- *SymfoS for Youth Care* Blended Learning Approach (IO3).
- *SymfoS for Youth Care* Distance Training Course Development (IO4).
- *SymfoS for Youth Care* F2F Training Development (IO5).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS/ENTITIES WHO WANT TO WORK WITH SYMFOS FOR YOUTH CARE METHOD

Challenges on Structural Level

Implementing *SymfoS* method organizations might face several challenges. Therefore, following aspects must be considered:

Resources:

- Time, personnel and financial resources must be made available.
- For the work with the 'larger' interventions the matrices have to be purchased. The purchase is associated with expenses. Even for the 'smaller' interventions, material must be collected and purchased, whereby the costs are usually low.



Training:

- Practitioners must above all invest in training and then create sufficient space for practice.
- Practitioners must be trained (see IO3): in addition to preparation, face-to-face training and follow-up, training modules on an online platform are also required. Since consulting with the 'larger' interventions requires a high level of security on the part of the consultants, it is advisable to provide *SymfoS* consultants with ample opportunity for their own practice and reflection both during and after their training.

¹ Photo by Nick Morrison on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/photos/FHnnjk1Yj7Y): <https://unsplash.com/photos/FHnnjk1Yj7Y> [Last checked 08.03.2021]

- All interventions should have been actively tried out before application in practice, at least in the roles of the counsellor and the client themselves (see also IO3).



Setting:

- Practitioners must also have an adequate setting for the consultations themselves. The 'larger' interventions require a time frame of at least one hour and premises that allow work on tables or the floor and guarantee trouble-free working.
- Consideration of client and peer-buddy group-atmosphere – open minded and trusting.



Peer Buddy System:

- In order to implement the peer buddy idea of the project, either a group setting in which working with the *SymfoS* interventions is possible or consulting settings that can build peers into the editing process in situations are required (see also IO6: Peer Buddy Concept).

- Consideration of the peer buddy composition.
- Clear differentiation between descriptive and interpretative feedback.
- Need for practical session on effective and respectful peer feedback.
- Peer tactlessness.

Quality assurance:

- It is advisable to set up a kind of intravision group or quality circle several times a year for the trained employees and also for new interested parties.
- Quality of the relationship of the user and the practitioner and the peer buddies.

Steps which may help to implement SymfoS

- ❖ Establish a central reference point in each country.
- ❖ Statement of value and benefits to clients and services, including testimonies.
- ❖ Specify *SymfoS* practitioner training programme.
- ❖ Clarification of *SymfoS* process and duration of sessions.
- ❖ Audio-visual examples of the *SymfoS* method.
- ❖ Service specific (disabled young people, young offenders) focus groups and training.
- ❖ Implementation of a Quality Assurance Process.
- ❖ Clarification that *SymfoS* is a safe intervention.

8. INTERFACES TO EXISTING AND ALREADY USED ACCOMPANYING METHODS IN WORK IN DIFFERENT PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Partners identified different interfaces to existing accompanying methods which are explained here per country:

Germany

The field analysis has shown that three-dimensional and tactile symbols are used in very different work areas. First, the work areas and the application are described and listed here.

- In the systemic approach, for example, time lines and life lines comparable to the life or planning street are used. Images or individual symbols are also used for this purpose. For constellations with a family board anchored in the system, it is usual to place simple wooden figures or animals as representatives for persons with the help of individual symbols. Furthermore, there are versatile forms of systemic constellations with people or life-size figures as substitutes for people.
- In the work with parents and children from adoption families, the question of the search for identity is addressed both with symbols and role-plays on topics such as: 'We play, I came from your belly' or 'What is typical for family xy and what of it belongs to me'.
- In the field of vocational orientation, we came across the use of symbols for the analysis of learning types and the representation of spent energy in different areas of life. Here columns, which stand for different areas of life, are filled with coloured spheres.
- In the anti-aggressiveness training, life streets with symbols are used, however, the previous life time is not set with the help of cards for each year of life, but the participants use crepe paper and determine the length of the street for the life span themselves. The further consulting process does not follow a structured process as in the *SymfoS* method.
- In psychodrama as well as in 'Gestalttherapie', symbols are taken as expressions of feelings and events and used as occasions for scenic play.
- In group work, for example training courses to increase social competence, vocational orientation or the support of young people in the area of the Voluntary Social Year, symbols are used on topics such as getting to know each other, perception of others and oneself, and reflection. To give one example: on

the subject of external and self-perception with symbols. In a first meeting, participants choose symbols for themselves and for another group member that they think describe characteristics of themselves or others. In the exchange it comes then to the alignment of the foreign and self-perception.

In summary, it can be stated that many elements of the *SymfoS* approach can be found in practice, but symbols of our research are not used as a central consulting instrument with similarly structured consulting steps as in the *SymfoS* approach.

Peergroup approaches are well known in pedagogy and counselling. The 'No-Blame-Approach', for example, has been a training module of 'Cool im Konflikt' for years, a training offer for schools in Düren.

Already used accompanying methods in our organization Sozialwerk:

- ⇒ In the project 'Guter Start in die Ausbildung' ('A good start in training') on behalf of jobcom (an agency for supporting job-seeking customers on unemployment benefit II with vocational counselling, qualification measures and placement offers on their way back to work) we worked with 2-dimensional picture cards and timelines.
- ⇒ In the project 'Jugend in Arbeit' - also on behalf of jobcom - and our offer of 'potential analysis' for young people and job seekers, we work with picture cards, terms and time lines in a resource-oriented way.
- ⇒ In our consulting offices 'Just Nord' and 'Lotsenstelle Jülich', individual colleagues have already worked with the family board or individual symbols to illustrate their work.

Feedback from practitioners:

- Practitioners value the quality circles which have been held four times a year for interested external colleagues. There we practice *SFYC* interventions and try out possibilities of adaptation.
- Positive feedback from jobcom colleagues on Basic Clearing, as it is easy to implement in their setting and provides a quick overview of complex life situations.
- Positive feedback from colleagues at the School Psychology Service in Düren on the small interventions: work with paper and glasses and water, as they offer a good introduction to working with symbols with material that is always accessible to everyone.

- Colleagues from counselling centres showed great interest in the so-called large interventions, but even after several visits to the quality circle they were still unable to apply them because either the material is not suitable, the setting is not sufficient or they do not yet have the necessary confidence in handling it.
- Feedback from Prof. Dr. Phil. Genenger Stricker, head of the family study course Social Work at the Catholic University of Aachen after her observation of the 'Train the Practitioner' training in Nideggen and the feedback of the students after the successful completion of a seminar within the framework of their studies: "We have great interest in establishing symbol work as a fixed part of the training in our curriculum. The pedagogical approach corresponds to that of the university and the interventions provide the students with a variety of tools for their future practice.
- Mrs. Hurz from the local Jobcenter (jobcom) spoke positive about the content of the event. She reflects of the use of symbol work as a quality standard at certain counselling settings of the jobcom. She is interested in working with the symbols at the introduction unit with groups with extrinsically motivated participants.
- Mrs. Licher from the school psychology department reported on a project for early school leavers and is interested in the practical methods and cooperation.
- Mrs. Hausmann from the school administration office is thinking of an information event on *SymfoS* for her employees in the area of career guidance. There is also interest in information.
- Participants from a Multiplier Event in Aachen in March 2020 said:
 - The duration of the counselling is flexible and needs-oriented, also in shorter versions and without much material possible, like for example the work with the rose of Jericho. There are creative possibilities to use symbolwork according to need and framework of the setting. Symbolwork is practicable in face-to-face consultations as well as in group sessions.
 - One participant suggests the description of skills and qualification as a counsellor in the presentation of *SFYC*, because of the power and the speed of the material. A trainer of symbolwork should be aware of the possibilities and the borders of the material and see the difficult border between counselling and therapy.
 - The basic prerequisite for participation in a workshop and the application of the method is a pedagogical education as well as basic knowledge in the field of counselling or systemic work.
 - Where is the border between counselling and therapy? There will always be a certain overlap of the two. Trained and competent consultants will only ask as much as the clients allow and client will only tell as much as he is willing

to tell of himself and how is fitting to the setting. Experiences in the work with symbols are, that the counsellor can trust the client in this point. Crucial are the relationship to the client and the approach.

- Participants from a Multiplier Event in Hamburg at 'Sucht Therapie Tage' 21.06.2019:
 - 'I like the fact, that the symbols improve the young people with an additional language and the facilitated access to the emotions. Also, the duration of the counselling is flexible and needs-oriented seem to be practicable for me'.
 - On participant working in the field of addiction therapy: for my work I take with me, besides many suggestions, especially the Rose of Jericho and the multitude of road maps with symbols: I will try out the resource and exit road map.

Austria

Hafelekar Consultancy combines expertise in managerial, social, and educational sciences.

The organisation is mainly engaged in consulting, research, evaluation, training, and curricula design. Customers are companies, non-profit organisations as well as clients in the public sector.

Type of interventions provided: Hafelekar provided train the trainer programmes for Symbol work for various fields of application:

- Career and Educational counselling.
- Basic Education.
- Youth Work.

The organisation also offers individual coaching based on Symbol work and supervision for staff related to several topics. Additional application is the usage of Symbol work for innovation coaching of entrepreneurs and executives of SMEs.

ZeMiT, another implementing partner in Austria (actively involved in the first *SymfoS* project), offers since 1985 confidential, independent and multilingual consultation for migrants regarding legal and social inquiries and labour market integration. Since 2012, ZeMiT additionally offers consultation in form of the AST – Counselling Centre for recognition of qualifications held in foreign countries. Furthermore, ZeMiT regularly develops and works on national and international projects related to the topics of immigration, social integration, labour market, youth, racism, and anti-discrimination.

Type of interventions provided: out of thousands of counselling contacts at ZeMiT every year there are regularly a number of young people, migrants, with migrant background or with refugee status. As soon as they can enter the labour market, they can approach ZeMiT for counselling. Some young people also come with or are sent by their parents. The main aim of ZeMiT counselling is to assess the individual situation, inform about legal framework and possibilities, give information on various matters and help to work out an individual path to job or vocational training. Symbol work is, beside another method of competence checking, a new method, which can be used by ZeMiT counsellors to help young disadvantaged people to work out their own path to a job.

Chance+ provides Youth Coaching in Lower Austria and uses *SymfoS* Method with their clients (young persons between 12-18 years old).

TSD (Tiroler Soziale Dienste) cares for refugees and disadvantaged jobseekers in Tyrol. They also use the *SymfoS* method with their clients (refugees and migrants between 14-26 years old).

The Applied University of St. Pölten (BA programmes for social worker and social pedagogues) and the NGO login in Vienna also act as implementation partner. Using *SymfoS* with: young people (under 25 years old), who are migrants and face several barriers in education, vocational training and getting a job. These young people have either migration background (second or third generation) or have a status as refugee.

Feedback from practitioners:

Symbols can contribute to increased self-awareness, self-esteem, goal definition and entrepreneurship among the beneficiaries, young disadvantaged young people or other groups of clients. Through these methods, the person gains direct access to his/her own feelings, thoughts and desires and is able to deal directly with goals and their own future. There are many benefits that have been identified and even in the short term the young clients recognise the power of the symbols because they feel an immediate change of point of view regarding their past, present and future and regarding their feelings. During the piloting phase of the methodology, Hafelekar collected real time qualitative feedback from the clients on the effectiveness of the various methods:

- “It is about self-empowerment”.
- “It is a very easy way to reflect, through symbols and discussion”.
- “I realised how to start the change”.
- “I saw in a single picture an entire life”.
- “I clarified my emotions regarding a specific situation”.

These quotes demonstrate how powerful and immediate the effect of the Symbol work is on people. While in the long-term, the goal of *SymfoS* counselling interventions is to get young people in general closer to an integration into the labour market or education system. *SymfoS* facilitates and accompanies individual learning but specific tools have been tested to support this process of personal development.

Practitioners in the field of social and youth work and NGO-Manager, also can benefit from *SymfoS for Youth Care*. Firstly, the application of this comprehensive methodology contributes to the professional development of the staff, who can engage with newly developed techniques that benefit clients.

SymfoS for Youth Care methods provide unique ways of responding to the needs of clients and represent a great asset to working with vulnerable clients who have additional barriers, which, for some organisations, represents the majority of the client base.

Portugal

In Portugal, there aren't practices based on methodologies of symbols and physical objects in the interview process with young people. It is possible to affirm that there is a common practice in organizations, but that each technician uses specific strategies / methods / resources. All the interviewees identified creative / symbolic practices in social projects (for example in the evaluation and systematization of learning) or in the monitoring of disadvantaged people regardless of their age group. The use of creative practices, with resources to symbols, images, photographs, puzzles and cards is more used in groups than individually. However, they point out that these experiences are often not systematized or organizations are not willing to share, tending to put themselves in a differentiating position of their services and practices. As a consequence, the methodologies are mainly with their creators and aren't appropriated by others.

Feedback from practitioners:

Stakeholders we interviewed, recognized the importance of learning and incorporating this kind of tools. It was consensual the recognition of the potentialities of this type of methodologies. *Symfos* approach was well welcomed to be introduced, easy to integrate in the practitioners' dynamics and with broad applicability. Symbols were referred to be used to facilitate expressing ideas and feelings, reminiscence and goals. Symbols were also identified to be used in group dynamics, although for one of the interviewees the

introduction of this approach must be contextualized so as not to be seen as "infantilize" or to create hypotheses of "joke" between the peers.

Spain

Asociación Caminos' experienced trainers have been delivering *SymfoS* training programme to other organisations working directly in the field of employment and youth work in Vélez-Málaga, Torre del Mar, Málaga, Almuñécar, Murcia, Gijón and Madrid. They are growing a network of professionals and organisations in Spain and showing an alternative opportunity for the exploitation of *SymfoS* knowhow.

Feedback from practitioners:

Practitioners viewed the methodology quite positively and saw potential in the tools provided. The *SymfoS* approach was viewed as an opportunity, though there was some skepticism around the hazards of misusing the methodology and causing problems for young people that way.

United Kingdom

The *SymfoS* method was used directly with young people within the context of generic youth work, working with care leavers, careers' guidance and working with disabled young people. Using *SymfoS* and doing symbol work was also confirmed as having potential with the following groups of young people:

- those who struggle to articulate their goals
- with behavioural issues
- excluded from mainstream education and those at risk of being excluded;
- with communication issues and problems, low levels of literacy, dyslexia
- young offenders
- bereavement work with children and young people
- those engaged with mentoring work
- students approaching transition stages (end of Secondary education (15year olds)
- those who have experienced trauma/abuse
- young people in supportive environments
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Children in Care as part of the review process
- those undertaking "Life Story" work

- Care Leavers' Pathway Plans
- those receiving careers guidance work
- preliminary work prior to initiation into counselling

Summary of Places for Adoption and Opportunities

Place/Organisation	Activity	Worker	Client group
Careers Guidance Services	Careers orientation, education guidance, careers guidance	Careers Guidance Workers & Coaches, Careers counsellors	NEET young people, pupils, students
Alternative Education Provisions	Careers orientation, Emotional Intelligence, Engagement in education, work with behaviour	Support workers, mentors	Pupils, Students
Youth Offending Teams (YOT)	Future planning, Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Desistance work	YOT Workers, YOT Support Workers	Young offenders under 18 years who are NEET
Probation Service	Future planning, Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Desistance work	Probation Officers	Ex-offenders 18 years plus
Social Services	Pathway Planning	Social Workers, Leaving Care Workers	Care Leavers
Social Services	"Life Story" Work	Social Workers, Leaving Care Workers	Children in Care Care Leavers
Social Services	Child in Care Reviews	Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer	Children in Care
Youth Centres	Future life planning, Self-awareness	Youth workers, Youth support workers	Young people aged 15 plus
Mentoring Organisations	Future life planning, careers orientation	Mentors	Young people aged 15 plus
Specialist schools and colleges	Future life planning, careers orientation Communication		Young people who have Special Educational Needs and

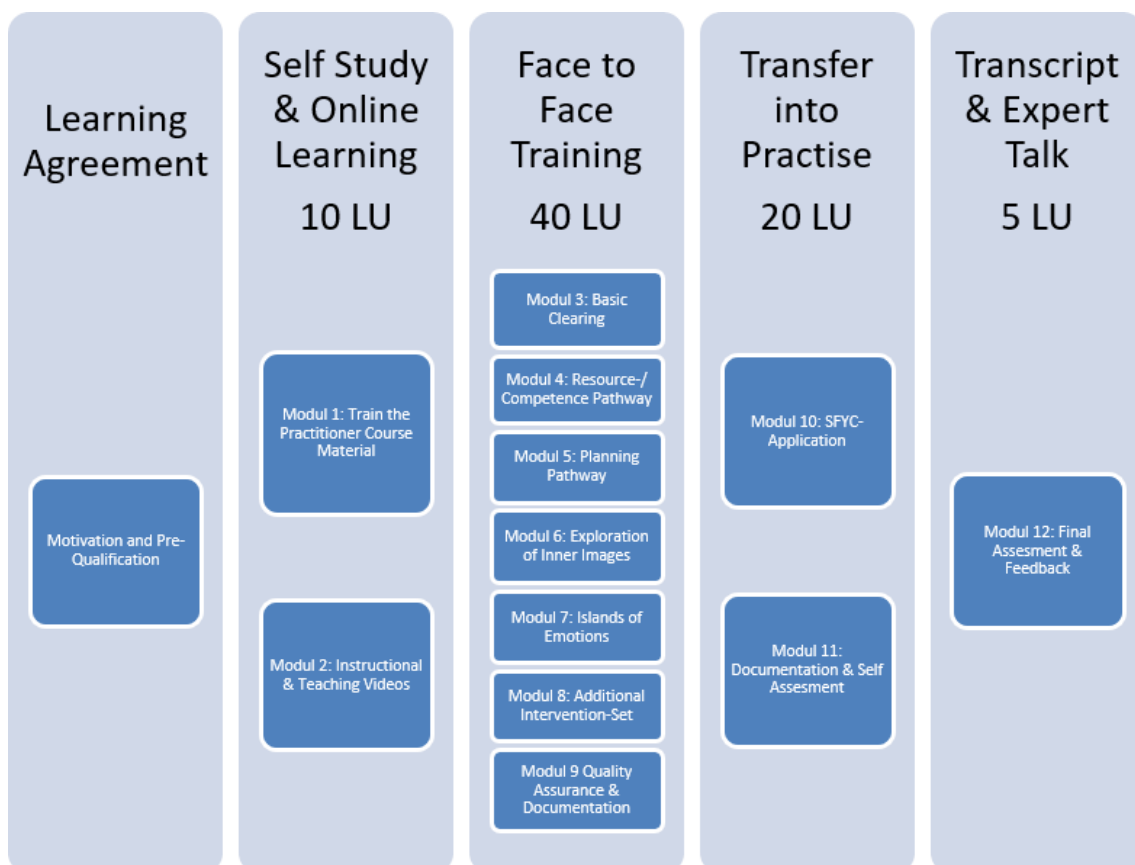


			Disabilities (SEND)
Speech and Language Teams (SALT)	Communication	Speech and Language therapists	Young people with issues with speech and language
Counselling Organisations	Therapeutic work	Counsellors, psychotherapists	Young people
Bereavement organisations	Therapeutic work	Practitioners, therapists	Bereaved young people

9. RECOGNITION TOOLS AND CERTIFICATION

Process of recognition

The current certification process agreed upon by partners envisions the following process (left to right):



This process is facilitated in a blended learning approach combining online and in-class training as formulated in IO3 and incorporating the online platform established as part of IO4.

For incorporation of the certification processes in partner countries' national training programs for youth workers and other potential practitioners, the following was reported:

Germany

"National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training" (BiBB),

According to a binding statement by the German "National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training" (BiBB), a general recognition of the SymfoS Training as a non-formal education programme in Germany is not possible because it is a Key Action 2 (KA 2) project, which belongs to the sector of continuing education and training for adults.

This is currently only possible for educational programmes in the sector of Key Action 1 (KA 1). However, the new Erasmus+ programme holds out the prospect of possibilities in this regard, but these have not yet been further specified. We hope that in the future this will open up the possibility of general recognition of SymfoS Training as a non-formal vocational education.

Accreditation by Universities of Applied Sciences

During the project, SymfoS training was successfully implemented and established at two universities of applied sciences in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and thus receives accreditation within the higher education programme of these universities.

- **Catholic University of Applied Sciences NRW, Aachen (discipline: Social Work)**

"The Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine – Westphalia is Germany's largest church-sponsored university with state certification. It has campuses in Aachen, Cologne, Münster and Paderborn, and it offers over twenty undergraduate and graduate degrees, training students in social services, health science, and practical theology. In addition to its traditional academic programme, the Catholic University of Applied Sciences pursues research projects in each of its disciplines and offers a variety of postgraduate and further education courses."

This University of Applied Sciences has included SymfoS / symbol work as an integral part of its training programme "Techniques of Professional Action".

- **Hochschule Niederrhein in Mönchengladbach – University of Applied Sciences**

"Studying at the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences

Our degree programmes are designed to meet academic and practical demands so that you can achieve the best performance in your working life. Lectures and seminars will provide basic and specific knowledge - based on relevant social science theories and current research findings - as well as methods and didactics so you can perform professionally within the various fields of Social Work, Education and Management in non-profit organisations. Specific training activities in small groups will help you develop your professional role and apply your skills to a variety of different user groups and institutional contexts.

Academic standards are based in social work science, in interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical research and social work principles as well as in a commitment to the joint dissemination of theory and practice."

The seminar 'Symbolic Work in Social Work' will be offered as a regular seminar at this University of Applied Science.

Austria

The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in Austria

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) is an instrument for mapping qualifications from the Austrian education system. The aims are to provide a transparency tool to facilitate the orientation within the Austrian education system and to support the comparability and comprehensibility of Austrian qualifications in Europe.

The objective of the NQF-Act is to use the National Qualifications Framework as a tool for encouraging the transparency and comparability of qualifications in Austria and Europe and to promote lifelong learning, which comprises formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

During further implementation of the NQF, qualifications earned through formal training as well as qualifications acquired outside of the formal qualifications system (for example, through vocational and adult education) can be mapped to one of the eight levels. In the long term all qualifications included in the NQF will also be able to be acquired through validation. The focus on learning outcomes is the link between NQF and validation.

NQF service points are quality assurance sectoral bodies between providers of non-formal qualifications and the Coordination Point for the NQF in Austria. The reason for the establishment of such bodies lies in the variety of non-formal qualifications on offer in adult education, continuing education and out-of-school child and youth work, as well as in the high degree of freedom in organising these offers. NQF service points have two central tasks: On the one hand, they are to perform an evaluation function in the assignment process with regard to the NQF compatibility of the respective qualification and the appropriateness of the assignment proposal, on the other hand, they are to assist the qualification providers in preparing an assignment request.

Specifically, the NQF service points offer various service packages in addition to a free initial consultation - from the basic package (review of the assignment request) to the development package (further development of the qualification to establish NQF compatibility).

The recognition of SymfoS_Youth Training by professional associations

Individual professional associations and public institutions of youth welfare in Austria have an obligation to provide further training, which can be completed in courses at recognized training institutions.

It is possible to apply for recognition from individual associations or institutions.

The recognition of SymfoS_Youth Training as formal education in Austria at University Level

If the SymfoS for Youth Training is provided by an Austrian Full University or Applied University in the framework of existing Bachelor or Master Programme, it can be recognized (as part of the study programme) based on the ECTS System. As the total training programme (self learning, online learning, face to face and transfer into practice equals at least 140 hours, this could be acknowledged as 5 ECTS points.

Portugal

Introducing *SymfoS* into higher education courses as an element of a module in the routes mentioned above could be possible. However, it would not be feasible to include *SymfoS* as a more formal educational element, such as a curricular unit or a degree, due to official and bureaucratic reasons. Developing short training certification courses for practitioners and graduates provided by public or private institutions may offer a way of introducing *SymfoS*.

Application for recognition of *SymfoS* as a professional or training qualification in the National Catalogue of Qualifications by the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education or the Employment and Vocational Training Institute would be of value, but hard to achieve.

Spain

To train university students according to the current study plan, the *SymfoS* method could be introduced at the University keeping in mind the regulations for their degrees ("título propio" - University-Specific Degree) of postgraduate training at the University. The most appropriate way for the unofficial certification of *SymfoS* training would be through a specialization or expert diploma, which must have clearly defined teaching plans, structured in modules and subjects. They will have at least 30 ECTS and it will be recommended, but not mandatory, the preparation and defense of a Final Project of Specialization Studies, or another alternative could be offered, the Postgraduate

Diploma of the University of Granada. They consist of a course at least 10 ECTS. They must have clearly defined teaching plans, structured in modules and subjects. It also has a description of the teaching methodology, training activities and evaluation systems. Furthermore, on the other hand, Royal Decree 861/2010, of July 2, which modifies the above, establishes that the number of credits that are subject to recognition from unofficial university education may be up to 15 percent of the total credits that constitute the curriculum. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the credits from their qualifications (títulos propios) may, exceptionally, be subject to recognition in a higher percentage than indicated or, where appropriate, be subject to recognition in its entirety provided that the corresponding own title has been extinguished and replaced by an official title.

To apply for a training project such as a Specialization Diploma or Postgraduate Diploma, the following steps:

1. Register the proposal to receive a course code.
2. The proposal will be reviewed by the International Graduate School to verify that the application has been made correctly and all the necessary documentation has been attached.
3. Once reviewed, it will be evaluated by two academic and professional specialists.
4. Subsequently, an allegation process will be carried out after the public presentation of the training proposal.
5. Finally, the evaluation and / or approval will be conduct by the different manage groups (Advisory Council for Postgraduate Education, Government Council and Social Council).

In the case of Specialization Diplomas, the application must be submitted on certain dates determined by the university. In the case of Postgraduate Diplomas, the application is open throughout the academic year, although it is recommended that the standardized project be submitted at least three months before the start of the full-year course.

The Head of the Youth Service of the Provincial Directorate of Granada (Jefe de Servicio de Juventud de la Dirección Provincial de Granada) was also consulted. As a result of this meeting, we concluded that a proposal on the implementation of *SymfoS* can be proposed through the Andalusian Youth Institute in schools, high schools and other spaces aimed at young people. There are the following two:

- **ACTIVATE YOURSELF PROGRAMME (Programa ACTÍVATE):** It offers the possibility of conduct activities with informational, training and awareness sessions with young people in education centres, leisure centres or any other centre or place aimed at young people created by public and private entities, as long as it is keeping in mind a further of lines of action, which in the last call were:
 - Line 1: Entrepreneurship, youth employability and innovation.
 - Line 2: Equality, diversity-LGTBI, tolerance, inclusion of youth with disabilities and prevention of gender violence.
 - Line 3: Culture, creativity, art and youth talent.
 - Line 4: Healthy life, knowledge of the natural environment and sustainability
- **YOUNG TRAINING PROGRAMME (Programa Forma Joven):** It is a strategy to offer activities to promote healthy environments and behaviours among young people in Andalusia. The development of this programme focuses on the training of a number of young mediators, promoting annual training activities to provide them with the necessary skills, therefore they can take charge of bringing the youth of their educational environment, information healthy habits and risk prevention, as well as use as a bridge or link between their classmates and the team of professionals, these young people, preferably between 2nd year of ESO and 1st year of Baccalaureate, must be registered as mediators in their respective school or high school. Regarding the *SymfoS* project, training workshops could be conduct for young mediators, with the aim of informing their classmate about the methodology, therefore they understand that these resources are at their disposal to participate in counselling and guidance interventions based to the *SymfoS* methodology with the prior authorization of the legal guardian, if they are minors.

United Kingdom

The SymfoS method can be incorporated into undergraduate education for those studying to work in health and social care and this would be solely on the basis of providing information regarding the method as a form of creative engagement.

For SymfoS to be offered as a certified qualification to those working in the youth care sector would require the involvement of a private consultancy/training provider. This would enable SymfoS to be implemented in its entirety as an intervention by



practitioners who can demonstrate that they have successfully completed a validated course.