



# Generic Framework for Symbol work

Ireland

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IRELAND



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## Annex 3 - National Report IE (Summary)



## Aim of the SymfoS Project

“SymfoS – Symbols for success” aims to trigger substantial improvements in the education and career guidance system for disadvantaged youth in Europe by implementing an innovative counselling method using sets of symbols. Based on the experiences of the ESF-Project “Perspektiven BildungÖsterreich”, in which Hafelekar developed this method, we see high potential of Symbol work as an additional language for young people to express themselves.

Youth unemployment in Europe is rising alarming as a result of deep economic crisis. Based on the long standing experience of the involved partners, we know that existing Education & Career Guidance works well with “regular” clients, but often fails when disadvantaged persons are involved. This is especially the case if we consider that methods are mainly based on advanced reading and writing skills, which are not always sufficient.

### Why do we work with Symbols?

With the help of symbols we are able to provide people  
with an additional language  
**when they cannot find the right words.**

Wilfried Schneider

In this context, symbols work similar to an interpreter. Furthermore, they transmit information one cannot or does not want to share. Working with symbols is a good way of identifying the current personal attitude towards a selected topic. Furthermore, it helps to identify problems, barriers and fears. As soon as these difficulties have been properly identified, the trainers can begin with the development of possible solutions. Therefore **it is important that trainers are aware of the “power of symbols”**.

Symbolic consciousness is a way of working with symbols that allows  
their meaning and energy into our consciousness.

**It is like a key that is needed**  
to unlock the real potential, the energy of a symbol.

Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

Similar to Schneider, Vaughan-Lee accentuates the holistic approach of Symbol work: "Today we are taught to think in an analytic, linear manner, using words to explain our self. But symbolic consciousness is holistic rather than analytic, and rather than thinking in words it thinks in symbols and images. It can be seen at work most often in our dreams, in the way our psyche communicates to us through images. Symbolic consciousness was central to human consciousness for thousands of years [...] Symbols can connect us directly to the interior world of the soul, and symbolic consciousness can enable us to realize the sacred meaning that underlies our physical existence. There is a pressing need to reclaim this forgotten language."

(Vaughan-Lee Llewellyn. Why we need to work with Symbols.  
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com>, Nov 17, 2011)

Following the approach of Wilfried Schneider, Symbol work supports all participants to sharpen their senses and perception. They will learn how to carefully observe a person and how to put gestures, mimicry, posture, language etc. in context. It is important for young people and trainers to learn that body language, in addition to written and verbal communication, needs to be considered, too. Even though a person can make a statement through the use of language, he or she may send different signals with their body language.

Opportunities and resources can be visualised with the use of materials. If a situation is only verbally discussed, a young person may get easily distracted or consider only problems or barriers as these weigh more. If she or he has placed some objects before, the trainer can work with these symbols; an obstacle, for instance, can be identified or removed.

If a trainer would like to work on resources it is important that they are "realistic" ones. It is better if there are only a few realistic resources that can be highlighted and strengthened instead of describing "false" resources, which are less likely to lead to success.

**As a symbol may have infinite meanings and is interconnected with multiple feelings, the key of our SymfoS project is an individual coaching and guiding process to support clients in their goal setting process. In the field of sustainable career education and guidance, symbols can create a tremendous contribution to self-awareness, self-esteem, goal setting and entrepreneurship.**



## The SymfoS Target Groups

SymfoS implements a systemic approach that focuses on the following target groups at four different levels:

- 1) Young people (15-25 years) facing problems in school or labour market (low qualified, job seeker, drop-outs, NEETS). To achieve inclusion, this definition is consciously kept broad, but will be specified according to regional needs. Objectives pursued are effective support in motivation and goal-setting, discovering “hidden” resources, increasing self-responsibility and strengthening their social net by implementing a peer “buddy system”. The use of the universal language of symbols instead of writing will help to overcome resistance in active participation of individual problem solving.
- 2) Career guidance officers in VET-providers, NGOs, youth centres and schools: Due to missing compulsory curricula there is often a lack of methodological knowledge and tools for dealing with disadvantaged youth. SymfoS aims to support them with a holistic approach, centred on the individual needs and goals of young people and strengthening the self-help potential of clients and peer groups. This leads to improved quality and higher success rates of counselling processes.
- 3) Decision makers in VET providers, NGO, youth centres and schools: The key lesson learnt from prior projects is to involve them in an early stage of implementation. Career officers need a suitable framework (mandate, resources, QA, commitment from management) to work properly; this has to be included in the planning of new services by organisations and proposals for public funding. SymfoS will create an intense dialogue with management and provide them with checklists and business models (how to “sell” this approach to funding bodies).
- 4) Education policy makers in charge of recognition tools for skills and qualification will be involved at two different levels: Accreditation or certification of train-the-trainer curricula and recognition of learning outcomes for young people. As there are currently many initiatives in partner countries (like “Ausbildungsgarantie” in AT, “Youth Guarantee” in IE and GR, “Job Act” in IT, “Strategy on Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment” in ES) we see the necessity to focus on the individual support of disadvantaged youth. These strategies often do not work for clients who face multiple barriers to labour market participation and require more individual support.



SymfoS intends to elaborate, improve and mainstream Symbol work in all partner countries as an effective way to support young people in finding their own pathway within the education system and labour market. Solutions in privileged regions (AT, DE) will be exported to and adapted in areas with severe challenges (ES, IT, IE).

**It is our main aim to convince Policy Makers in Education and VET-providers to make use of the SymfoS Counselling Process in order to get to know this powerful method and to help young people to find their way. Please find a list of institutions and person we will involve in our project in the Stakeholder Analysis.**



## Youth Unemployment – the European Challenge

To face youth unemployment is not a national, but an important European challenge. Strengths and weaknesses in guidance systems are similar, even if labour market conditions are different. Common issues are low opportunities for low qualified, resistance, lack of motivation and self-help activities. Regular guidance processes focus on short and simple interventions for simple problems and limited flexibility for individual solution finding. Widespread complex text-based methods are not suitable for disadvantaged young people and there is an urgent need of alternatives like Symbol work in all areas.

This project set up a highly experienced partnership from different countries with different preconditions, but huge potential to share different experiences and knowledge in the various career education systems in Europe. Sharing best practice will improve the quality of services delivered in all partner countries.

Our primary target group are young people (15-25 years) facing problems in school or labour market (low qualified, job seeker, drop-outs, NEETS). To achieve inclusion, this definition is consciously set broad, but will be specified according to regional needs. Objectives pursued are effective support in motivation and goal-setting, discovering “hidden” resources, increasing self-responsibility and strengthening their social net by implementing a peer “buddy system”. The use of the universal language of symbols instead of writing will help to overcome resistance in active participation of individual problem solving.

### **Definition of NEET rate and Unemployment rate by Eurofund:**

“The NEET rate is computed as the share of young people who are not in employment, education or training of the total population of young people. In this it differs from the youth unemployment rate, which measures the share of young people who are unemployed among the population of young people who are economically active. For this reason, while in relative terms the youth unemployment rate is higher than the NEET rate, in absolute terms the overall number of NEETs is generally higher than the overall number of young unemployed people.”

(Eurofound 2016, Exploring the diversity of NEETs,  
Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.)





Since its inception, and more notably since its inclusion in important policy documents from 2012 onwards, the NEET concept has been a popular addition to the most important policy documents referring to youth unemployment. NEETs are now regularly referred to in the documents of the European Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO). In June 2015, for example, the Council stated that

“Youth unemployment and the high number of young people neither in employment, education, nor training (NEETs), should be comprehensively addressed, through **a structural improvement in the school-to-work transition**, including through the full implementation of the youth guarantee.”

(Council of the European Union, 2015)



### Unemployment rate and NEET rate, 15–24 years, EU28 (2015) by Eurofund

Partner Countries in the project are highlighted

Country	NEETs		UNEMPLOYED	
	Rate (%)	Number (thousands)	Rate (%)	Number (thousands)
<b>EU28</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6,604</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>4,641</b>
Belgium	12.2	161	22.1	87
Bulgaria	19.3	136	21.6	40
Czech Republic	7.5	80	12.6	44
Denmark	6.2	45	10.8	49
<b>Germany</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>296</b>
Estonia	10.8	15	13.1	7
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>39</b>
Greece	17.2	185	49.8	139
<b>Spain</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>751</b>
France	11.9	889	24.7	681
Croatia	18.5	90	43	70
<b>Italy</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>626</b>
Cyprus	15.2	16	32.8	13
Latvia	10.5	21	16.3	14
Lithuania	9.2	34	16.3	20
Luxembourg	6.2	4	16.3	4
Hungary	11.6	127	17.3	59
Malta	10.4	5	11.8	3
Netherlands	4.7	96	11.3	158
<b>Austria</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>59</b>
Poland	11	460	20.8	285
Portugal	11.3	125	32	118
Romania	18.1	396	21.7	148
Slovenia	9.5	19	16.3	12
Slovakia	13.7	90	26.5	55
Finland	10.6	66	22.4	73
Sweden	6.7	80	20.4	133
UK	11.1	852	14.6	658



## The SymfoS Method

In this section we provide a baseline understanding of the work with Symbols and the innovative SymfoS Method. We will describe the basic approach of our SymfoS work with symbols, specify aims and outcomes of our guiding method and the specific approach that has to be used and focus on different obstacles and barriers for career and education guidance, on different strategies used in this approach to strengthen competences and resilience of clients.

This project is a combination of transfer and further development of the basic products of the ESF project “Perspektiven Bildung Österreich”. There we developed a counselling method to identify and formulate personal goals. For best use in education and career counselling we classify and localize this method in the broad field of different guidance methods and tools. Our fundamental principles are described in this document, the “Generic framework”, which builds the base for the implementation of the SymfoS method in all project countries.

Based on this groundwork we developed four essential career guidance tools:

### The 4 essential career guidance tools

- 1) Basic clearing tools for Symbol work, the “entrance door” into our work. It is important to have a short case history to be clear that the method fits to the client.
- 2) At the heart of SymfoS is the Symbol work with young people. We will further develop symbol counselling scenarios like “Life Road Map”, “Planning Map”, “Exploration of inner images” and “Islands of Emotions”, all of them helping clients to identify hidden resources and potentials, to gain clarity about their goals and to plan concrete next steps in education or access to labour market.
- 3) To transfer results from counselling (e.g. career choice) into real live, we will create individual pathways, where we create a concrete roadmap with the next steps to be carried out and resources of support needed.
- 4) Finally, our “Peer Buddy System” makes full use of resources from a peer group. Often the support from peers and from their social network is at least as important as professional guidance. Chosen from the supporting group, which will be constituted in a counselling session, peers are nominated and trained as “buddies” to support their colleagues in their challenging adventures of finding their right place in education system or job market.

## Accompanying measures & tools

For professional development of trainers we will define prerequisites and skills needed and describe all requirements in a competence profile for SymfoS trainers. For high quality delivery of service we will develop a compulsory train the trainer curricula that has to be followed by all organisations.

To ensure sustainable implementation of SymfoS methodology, we will share all experiences of our own organisations and develop a “Transfer Handbook for SymfoS Method”. Therein we will describe all requirements on an organisational level, like personnel & organisational development, resources, embedding in existing curricula, commitment of management, needed Quality Assurance (continuing improvement process) and the interplay with existing instruments for the recognition of prior learning.

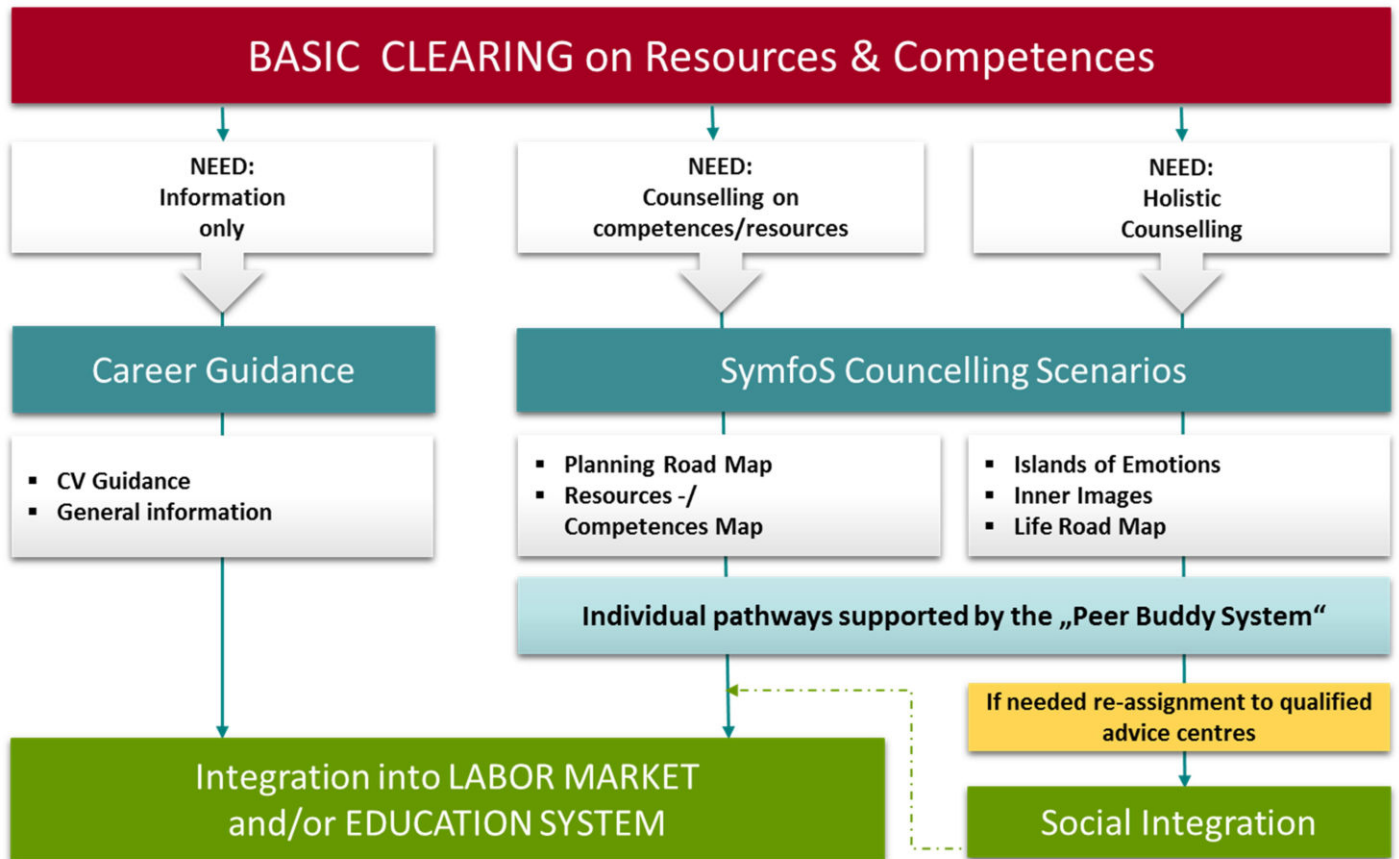
For trainers and buddies we will establish an online trainer platform and a virtual trainer network. All materials for SymfoS methodology will be available as well as case studies for training the trainers and application. To facilitate coherence between SymfoS and different EU and national transparency and recognition tools we will clarify interfaces and synergies with the help of concrete case studies provided by project partners.

To bring the SymfoS approach into practice, we are organising two short-term staff trainings and around 12 national train-the-trainer workshops. For different stakeholders in general 6 multiplier events will happen in all partner countries.

External evaluation will focus on product development and provides us with a report and suggestions for improvement.



## The SymfoS Counselling Process



### Inputs for the Counselling Process:

- IO 1 – Generic Framework
- IO 3 – Curriculum and Profile for Trainers
- IO 6 – Training Platform
- IO 7 – Transfer Handbook

The SymfoS Counselling Process is mainly based on 3 different kinds of counselling tools:

- Basic Clearing
- SymfoS Counselling Scenarios
- Individual Pathways supported by a Peer Buddy System

## Basic Clearing

The Basic Clearing is the starting point of the SymfoS counselling approach and is a simple, short and smart assessment tool to decide, whether a client only needs some practical information (which has to be provided by each organisation outside the project), or if there is a need for counselling on competences and resources or if there is a demand for a more intense guiding process.

Basic Clearing will be used as part of the train the trainer course as well as a tool to help identify the target group that fits best to the SymfoS Method. Therefore we will split up all participants into the following three groups:

- Young people who only need information will be provided with CV-training and regular job seeking instruments like databases, etc.
- Young people with need for counselling in the field of resources and competences will be supported by Symbol scenarios such as Planning Road map, Resources-/Competences map or life Road map.
- For all others, who need additional support on different topics, we will start to work with the whole SymfoS toolkit e.g. exploration of inner images and islands of emotions in order to find out if the participants need re-assignment to qualified advice centres.



## SymfoS Counselling Scenarios

The (further) development of the SymfoS Counselling - based on the results of prior ESF- project and results of IO1 (generic framework, contextualised for new countries and new fields of application) is the key element of SymfoS project. The counselling scenarios will be chosen according to specific needs, aims and objectives of our clients. To assure a successful learning transfer, the outcomes from the counselling process (e.g. job application, choice of high school, etc.) will be defined in a roadmap. This allows the clients to reach their targets more easily and in a structured way.

We will mainly focus on four different counselling scenarios with different objectives:

- Planning road map: can be used when starting a counselling process towards training, planning towards apprenticeship and during the application period and job interview stages.
- Life road map: career counselling on interests and strengths (resources and competences); work on resilience, retrospectively looking at learning experiences.
- Exploring the islands of emotions: feelings regarding upcoming months, motivation for application process, planning for the future and career choices.
- Exploration of inner images: display and reflection of inner images connected to a specific topic, identify fears and blockades as well as development of coping strategies.

In order to guarantee for a high quality, all scenarios follow a predefined sequence of counselling:

First the clients start with the selection of their symbols, then they have to present them to a supporting group (peers) and their peers can ask factual questions. Next the supporting group gives feedback about their perception of the presentation and work done. This leads to interpretations from the whole group, which is guided by a Career Officer. Finally the client and the Career Officer agree on concrete actions.

Finally our SymfoS Counselling Method is accompanied by a Peer Buddy System that delivers additional support for the difficult transfer from training into daily life.

## Individual Pathways supported by a Peer Buddy System

A methodology for individual learning and exploring career pathways will be developed within the SymfoS project. As peers already have a crucial role in the counselling session, this very valuable resource for young people has to be maintained by a systematic approach to support the youngsters in the long run.

From our experience in previous projects, a direct approach utilising a peer network increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the career guidance process. We will systematically use this resource and empower members of the support group to assist their colleagues and vice versa. Being a peer buddy also helps to develop social and leadership competences.

This IO will be used in the train the trainer course as well as a tool to develop individual learning and career pathways. It will be contextualized in National Education and Career guidance systems in order to find connectivity to existing tools and approaches already used by VET-Providers and Career guidance officers.





## The SymfoS Train the Trainer Programme

Transnational training for partner organisations is essential to acquire the needed know how for using Symbol work. Hafelekar, supported by Sozialwerk Düren and by an experienced external coach will train partners on work with symbols. In the first training we convey the basic concepts of the prior ESF-project, carried out in Austria. At least two trainers from all partner organisations will take part in these training activities.

The training process starts in Month 7 with a six day short term training in Germany, where two trainers per partner country get a basic training on Symbol work. After this first transnational training, we start the pilot phase for all tools to be developed. The overall training process is therefore a kind of "learning by doing" approach, as we will keep very close contact to our Career Guides when we develop our new tools and guiding scenarios.

In Month 14 we start a second Short term training in Spain. Already trained Career Guides will support the train the trainer sessions in the role of Co-Trainers and it's also a good opportunity to train new Guides for the partner organisations. This is an important step for sustainability, as it takes some time in each organisation to convince a critical mass of Guides to use innovative methods.

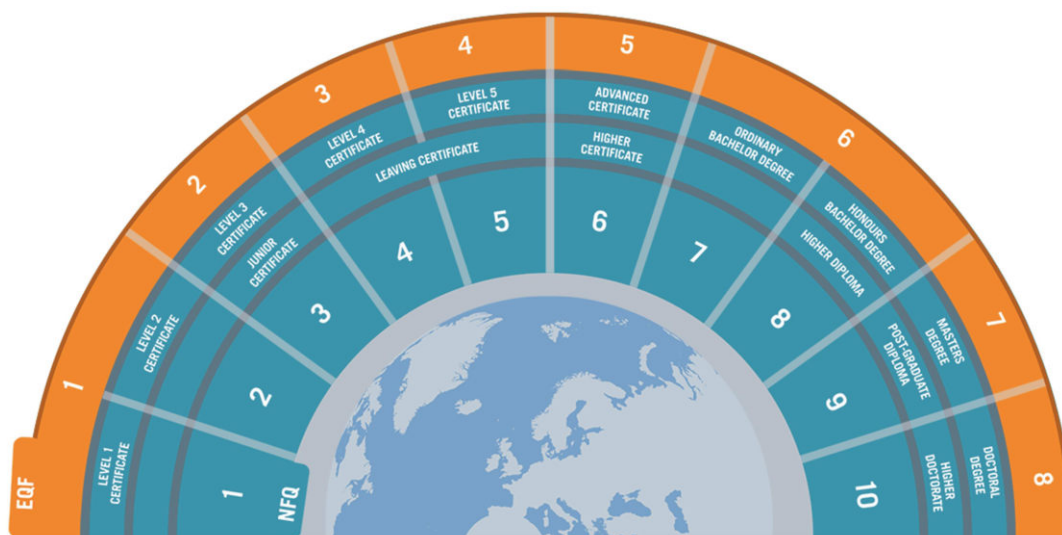
All training sessions are based on the framework of Symbol work by using our main tools: Basic Clearing, SymfoS Work Methodology, Individual Pathways and the Peer Buddy System. All participants get acquainted to the train the trainer curriculum and the systemic approach of the SymfoS method.

After the second transnational training, all participants will provide National Train the Trainer Courses in their own countries to support other organisations to work with the SymfoS Method and in order to create a "National Trainer Community".

We know that the key for sustainability will be the "organisational learning" about the SymfoS Method. This is, why we create tense networks to training providers and schools and we also deliver a transfer handbook where we present all lessons learnt in implementation in order to convince decision makers of the advantages of the SymfoS Method.

## Validation of the Symfos Learning Outcomes

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a tool for transparency, comparability, and translation that makes it possible to compare and understand the various national qualifications throughout Europe. It covers the entire education and training system, from general and vocational training and continuing education to higher education and non-formal and informal learning. The purpose of the EQF and its classification into eight reference levels is to serve as a reference framework for the education systems of member states for mapping their national qualifications. This framework defines eight levels which aim to cover the entire range of educational qualifications. Every level is defined by 'descriptors'. These descriptors do not refer to aspects such as the training duration or the location of training but to the outcomes of learning processes, that is: what a learner knows, understands and is able to do at the end of his/her education or training programme.



The Irish example of the implementation of EQF

“The EQF defines learning outcomes as knowledge, skills and competence. Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual. Skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments). In the context of the EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy. As the level increases, the description of the required knowledge-, skills- and competence-related aspects becomes more and more demanding, comprehensive and complex. Whereas Level 1 is characterised by basic knowledge and skills and a low degree of autonomy and responsibility, Level 8 comprises specialist knowledge, highly specialist skills and a high degree of autonomy and responsibility.”

(Linking of ECVET – EQF/NQF – Europass: [www.ecvet-info.at](http://www.ecvet-info.at))

Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF): Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications. Here you can find the entire table of descriptors:

<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>

The national implementation of the Qualification Framework (often called NQR) is inevitably complex because they have to be based on social and cultural traditions and the institutions of the respective country. The EQF Recommendation requires that the link between the levels of national qualifications and the levels of the EQF is defined based on learning outcomes. It is widely acknowledged that there is not a common approach in using learning outcomes; however, a common understanding of the main concepts and principles would facilitate the implementation of common European tools such as the EQF, ECVET, and ECTS, which are all based on learning outcomes.

“The European and national level discussions have also highlighted the need for some common ground with respect to learning outcomes so that European level tools (EQF, ECVET, the developing taxonomies of knowledge, skills and competences) can function efficiently. This does not imply that there should be a common approach to defining and using learning outcomes across countries. As explained above, such a restrictive approach would not account for important differences in the ways in which learning can be described within national systems.”

USING LEARNING OUTCOMES, European Qualifications Framework Series: Note 4,  
[https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-efq/files/EQF\\_note4\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-efq/files/EQF_note4_en.pdf)

The SymfoS consortium follows a plan for recognition and validation of the learning outcomes at two different levels by using various tools:

## Level 1: Validation of the train-the-trainer course

- The train-the-trainer course for career guidance officers in VET providers, NGOs, Youth Centres and schools will be structured following the principles of ECVET as one coherent unit of learning outcomes that can be recognised, transferred and accumulated in the framework of ECVET.
- The train-the-trainer course will be assigned ECVET credits, after comparison with qualifications and training programmes, existing in the partners countries.
- For facilitating the process of recognition of the learning outcomes of the train-the-trainer course, SymfoS will produce a Europass Certificate Supplement that will accompany the training certificate, specifying the learning outcomes acquired in the course.
- Moreover, the participants of the training course will get a Europass Mobility document.



- The possibilities for validation via the “EQF” (European Qualification Framework) and the respective “NQF” (National Qualification Framework) will be checked by each partner.

## Level 2: Validation for the Young People taking part in the SymfoS training

The use of SymfoS method for career guidance and counselling will lead to the identification of skills and competences that the young people possess through non-formal and informal learning.

The SymfoS project will produce an implementation and recognition plan with concrete guidelines on how these learning outcomes that have been acquired through non-formal and informal learning can be recognised in the different countries involved.

The recognition will be achieved by established tools in the partners’ countries (e.g. Europass, ECVET, Youthpass) and will be proposed to include into action plans of national strategies in this field like

- “Ausbildungsgarantie” in Austria
- “Youth Guarantee” in Ireland
- “Job Act” in Italy and
- “Strategy on Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment” in Spain



## Further main results of the SymfoS project

### Transfer Handbook

To meet the demand of a systemic approach, SymfoS will provide stakeholders (particularly VET managers and education policy makers) with a transfer handbook. This handbook describes all requirements for a successful and sustainable implementation of the SymfoS method as well at organisational and systemic level.

This handbook will be made available to the broad network of all partners and will significantly contribute to ease the implementation process in all participating countries. We will focus on strengths and opportunities of the SymfoS method to support organisations, when designing new training concepts.

#### Methodology:

- 1) Starting point will be a collection of all lessons learnt by implementing SymfoS in own partner organisations.
- 2) These will be analysed and will lead to a framework of condition on personnel & organisational development of VET-providers, schools, youth centres in order to guarantee for a successful implementation.
- 3) Interfaces to existing and already used Education and Career guidance methods will be identified to support the implementation process.
- 4) Guidelines for the recognition and certification processes of train the trainer curricula will be developed and the use of existing recognition tools for recognition of learner outcomes will be described.
- 5) Guidelines for Quality Assurance (CIP – continuing improvement processes) will be implemented to assure a high quality service delivery.
- 6) Feedback from VET-Managers, school authorities and education policy makers will be analysed and the outcomes will lead to a review and further improvement of the transfer handbook.

## SymfoS Website and Platform

Visit us on: [www.symfos.eu](http://www.symfos.eu)



The SymfoS website is freely accessible and aims to inform a broad public on the Symfos Method. On the website we also provide relevant content for

- Career Guidance officers who want to learn more about the SymfoS method
- VET-Manager and Education policy makers in order to facilitate the implementation of our method into their various Guidance Systems.
- The Peer Buddy Network aims to exchange authentic information on the peer system and to share SymfoS outcomes with all participants involved in the training and counselling sessions.

The Symfos Training Platform is the key instrument for promotion of the SymfoS method, for training and quality assurance. Final content will include the generic framework, tools for basic clearing, counselling scenarios and individual pathways as well as different methods for the recognition of non-formal and

informal learning (e.g. Europass, Youthpass, ECVET) to create interfaces from SymfoS learning outcomes to existing tools.

For use as a training platform, we will include various case studies and concrete guidelines how to implement SymfoS counselling scenarios and will describe additional possibilities to work with symbols. For certified SymfoS trainers we will provide different tools for networking and additional training material. This platform will be linked to various other platforms for Career and Educational guiding and will support the sustainable implementation of SymfoS Method by announcing training and supervision opportunities in all partner countries.

After the project's lifetime, it will be used for QA and CIP issues and for all project-partner as a marketing platform to sell train the trainer courses and individual coaching sessions for the target groups. This platform will be a sustainable competence centre for the Symfos Methodology.

## SymfoS & Social Media

Join us on the following channels and contribute in order to make our sites livelier! Take the chance to get in touch with us and contribute to the further development of the project:



[www.facebook.com/SymfoS](https://www.facebook.com/SymfoS)



[www.linkedin.com/groups/13502960](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13502960)





## Project Consortium



Coordinator of the project:  
Hafelekar Unternehmensberatung Schober GmbH, Austria  
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ZeMiT, Austria  
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Sozialwerk Düren, Germany  
[www.sozialwerk-dueren.de](http://www.sozialwerk-dueren.de)



Ballymun Job Centre, Ireland  
[www.bmunjob.ie](http://www.bmunjob.ie)



CESIE, Italy  
[www.cesie.org](http://www.cesie.org)



Asociación Caminos, Spain  
[www.asoccaminos.org](http://www.asoccaminos.org)

Please refer to the annexed National Reports in order to learn more about the current situation in all partner countries.





2014  
**HÄFELEKAR**

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# Summary National Report

Ireland

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## IRELAND



## Traditions and understanding of Symbols

Symbols are a rich part of cultural life in Ireland, a tradition which can be traced back to 8000BC. The appearance of emblems such as the Harp or Claddagh Ring are both examples of the various ways in which symbols from previous generations continue to be used within modern Irish society.

Psychoanalysis, developed by Freud, details the importance of events while young in impacting on the human condition, as well as examining the role of the conscious versus unconscious. Psychoanalysis was introduced to Ireland in the 1980's but is not widely used and has had minor cultural impacts.

The use of symbols in career guidance practice in Ireland is similarly limited in Ireland. The SymfoS project represents an exciting opportunity to introduce an innovative method to work with young people who present with difficulty when accessing the labour market.

## Our primary target group of young people

In Ireland we aim to work with young people aged 15-24 years who face barriers when trying to entering into the labour market. These young people could be low skilled, early school leavers, NEET young people. We will engage them through the guidance practitioners in our organisation working with clients who fit the criteria. We will also link with our extensive network of local youth organisations in order for them to refer appropriate young people to the programme.

## Similar methods and possible Synergies

The Ballymun Jobs Centre currently utilizes an extensive profiling assessment when establishing the needs of clients. This allows the guidance practitioners to tailor the use of specialised methods with the young person to address their specific barriers, whether through intensive client centred career guidance process and developing action plans, referring them to counselling, personal development courses/programmes or basic skills training etc.

Peer Buddy Support Programmes are not used in a formalised way in Ireland but there have been some successful elements of the model apparent in the Ballyrunners programme. The programme highlighted the importance of peer encouragement for young people and underscores the potential for a Peer Buddy Support Programme to work very well in a guidance setting.

## Validation of the SymfoS Learning Outcomes

Léargas, a not for profit organisation, is the national contact for ECVET in Ireland. It is responsible for the cooperation between national and international partners in education and training programmes. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) are responsible for the validation of all learning activities and this is mapped onto the National Qualifications Framework (NFQ), creating a comparable listing of qualifications earned in a variety of contexts. The NFQ system has also been designed to be compatible with ECVET. Gaining validation for a vocational programme through this system can be very expensive and time consuming and so it is felt that it would be preferable to incorporate the SymfoS project into an already accredited guidance training course.

A systematic validation of learning outside of formal education settings is a goal of Europe at the moment. This is currently referred to in Ireland as Recognition of Prior Learning. It is facilitated through QQI but can be a very tedious process to go through, requiring extensive evidence of learning. Europass is not overly popular in Ireland at the moment but has potential to be a useful forum to collect details of the informal and formal learning of clients taking part in the project. Similarly Youthpass in Ireland has some limitations. It would be advised that a full assessment of its impact be conducted and presented to policy makers as a suggestion for inclusion when implementing the Youth Guarantee in Ireland.



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