



Youth Employment Support

A service for companies



Coaching Guidelines



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1. Starting Point

Effective working with “difficult” young people depends on several premises, amongst others specific knowledge, social competences and skills are necessary. Recruiters, mentors and other employees of SME working with young people often could use their potential to deal with youngsters more effectively. In order to enlarge those competences it is necessary to reflect the way of behaviour and interaction with young people.

By coaching responsible persons of the job insertion process in SME will be professionally accompanied. The achievement of the coaching process becomes visible to the clients, and even more to the companies that increase their competences of leadership and human resource management.

These coaching guidelines are addressed to the YES partners and aim to serve as a common working base for the YES coaches. They give information about the general coaching approach applied commonly and describe the coaching process during the YES pilots conducted in the partner countries.



2. Theoretical Background and Basic Conditions of Systemic Coaching

Social constructivism views each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds. The learner is also seen as complex and multidimensional. Social constructivism not only acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually encourages, utilises and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process (Wertsch 1997).

Basing on this view we comprehend coaching as an active learning process in which individuals evaluate, adapt and insert the offered information and into their individual knowledge structure rather than independently save it as originally gained knowledge. This encourages to construct a new view of truth and to extend their behaviour patterns. Thus the coaching clients are in the centre of a learning process by discovering new ways of solution methods. During this process cognitive and social skills are going to be enriched and self-efficacy (to set a goal and develop interests) will be strengthened.

While the learning clients are in the centre of this process coaches play the role of facilitators. They help their clients to find their personal attitude by systematic questioning and well directed support, so that the clients are enabled to draw own conclusions. This is achieved by adopting a systemic style of coaching.

Summarizing we can say that systemic coaching is client-centred, solution-focused and success oriented. Further attributes of a systemic coaching style are outcome oriented, examining visions, action plans, inspiration and feedback. Systemic coaching provides process expertise, rather than content oriented knowledge.

The clients extract two essential issues from the coaching:

- they discover a solution to solve a certain problem and
- at the same time they find a way to work on solutions.



Thus they become able to identify, locate, acquire and assimilate missing resources.

Coaching processes need to be based on binding rules. It is usual to discuss and agree on the individual coaching conditions with the client. Following we describe some crucial and helpful rules for a systemic oriented coaching process.

- **Equality.** In difference to NLP based coaching, the systemic coaching process does not prefer a leading part of neither the coach nor the client.
- **Let the client work.** The client is still the expert to find a solution for his/her problems. The coach's task is to guide the client to his/her resources by asking the right questions and to abstract the clients' thoughts.
- **The client is right.** It does not make any sense to quarrel with the client. To concede his/her opinion means to accept, that the client has his/her own truth.
- **A coaching process is not a small talk.** The task of a coach is to guide the client to a targeted and solution-oriented achievement.
- **Take the client seriously.** The systemic–constructivist approach bases on regarding the clients and their problems.
- **Discretion.** Discretion is a consequential commitment for coaches. In this context we are speaking about discretion against chiefs that ordered the coaching assignment.

In order to attain good coaching achievements, systemic coaches should consider basic attitudes.

1. Systemic coaches regard the client and his or her situation.

- a. to accept the clients difficulty to solve a problem
- b. to be aware of the impact and consequences of the problem
- c. to appreciate the trials that the client previously made to solve the problem
- d. to acclaim the fact that the client is willing to engage in a coaching process



2. Systemic coaches are experts of active listening.

Active listening describes a method that helps systemic coaches to notice the solution or the hints to find the solution mentioned by the client.

3. Systemic coaches prevent suggestions and keep their own opinion to themselves.

Well meant pieces of advice frequently cause intrapersonal conflicts. On the one hand the client would not like to reject the advice; on the other hand the suggested solution may not be appropriate to solve the problem. Therefore systemic coaches keep their opinion and favours in order to identify a tailor made solution appropriate to the client.

4. Systemic coaches ask creative questions.

Open questions allow for alternative thinking processes. This makes new solution methods possible for the client. The specific kind of questioning gives the responsibility to the answering client. Thereby the coaches can focus on process steering. Coaches should avoid looking for answers, because this puts them at risk to lose the necessary distance to the process.

5. Systemic coaches survey complex contexts.

The presentation of problematic situations by clients is often rather unstructured and unclear. The coach supports the client to recognize the substantial elements of the problem and its structure. It is useful to not important facts that should be considered for the problem solution afterwards.



3. Basic Parameters of YES Coaching

With the help of coaching we are going to support the pilot participants to transfer the knowledge they gathered in YES trainings to professional life and empower them to interact with “difficult” young people practically.

The term coaching – in the YES context – comprises the following aspects:

- to reflect the own behaviour,
- to find solutions for specific problems,
- to “strengthen own strengths” and
- to recognise own weaknesses.

The intention of offering coaching is to empower employees of SME working with young people to overlook their situation and to think about and realise ways of improvement

In difference to external consulting offers YES coaching does not include the collection and suitable preparation of information. Instead of that the YES coaches foster the use of relevant services

In addition to coaching the YES coaches will assist as mediators in specific situations that make such concrete support inevitable, e.g. a conflict situation between mentor/instructor and young person, which is going to escalate, can be supported by a coach. However, in those cases it should be considered to call an expert that helps to endure this serious situation.

3.1. Target Group

YES coaching addresses staff members in SME that recruit and insert “difficult” young employees and apprentices, especially

- recruiters selecting job applicants and introduce them into the company,
- Mentors, in-company trainers of apprentices, instructors and other senior members of staff who supervise young people at work.

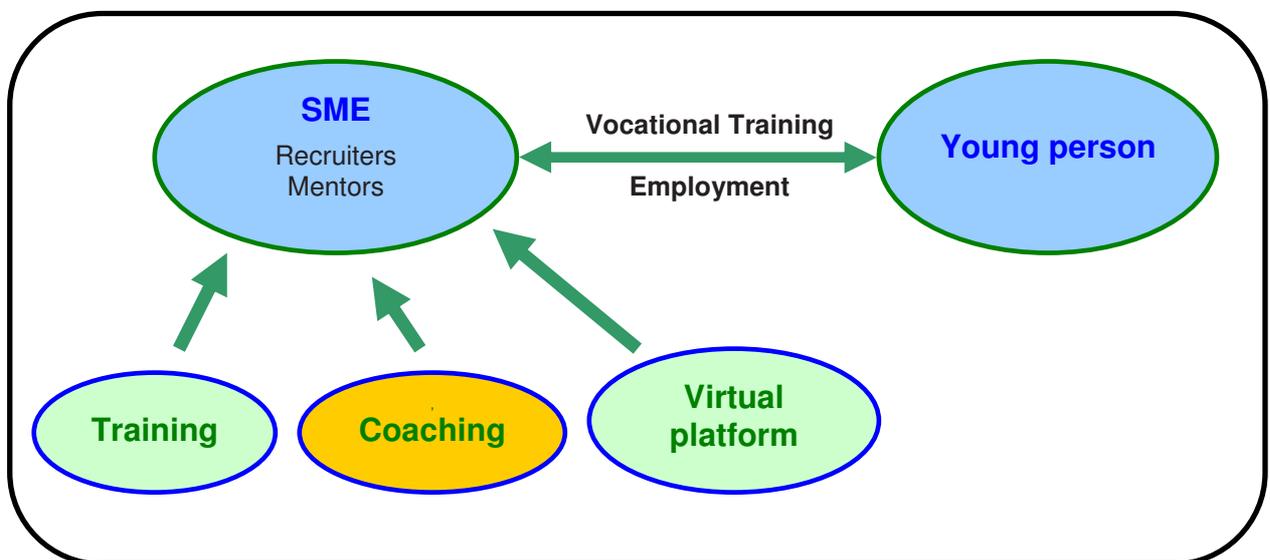


“Difficult” young people are those who have difficulties to get placed into the labour market because they

- have a low level of education and training,
- are early school leavers,
- failed to complete vocational training,
- are socio-economically disadvantaged (e.g. don't have a professional network needed or don't have sufficient work experience)

or are for other reasons perceived as potentially “difficult” by potential SME employers. They are not directly targeted but finally benefitting from the coaching offer.

YES coaches should avoid the contact to contacting the youngsters directly. The YES support is aiming at the responsible persons in the enterprises with the intention to enable them for appropriate dealing with the young person self.



3.2. Objectives

It is conjecturable that only a few clients have still got experiences with coaching, we assume that the YES coaches will have to suggest coaching requests at the beginning.



Possible topics could be

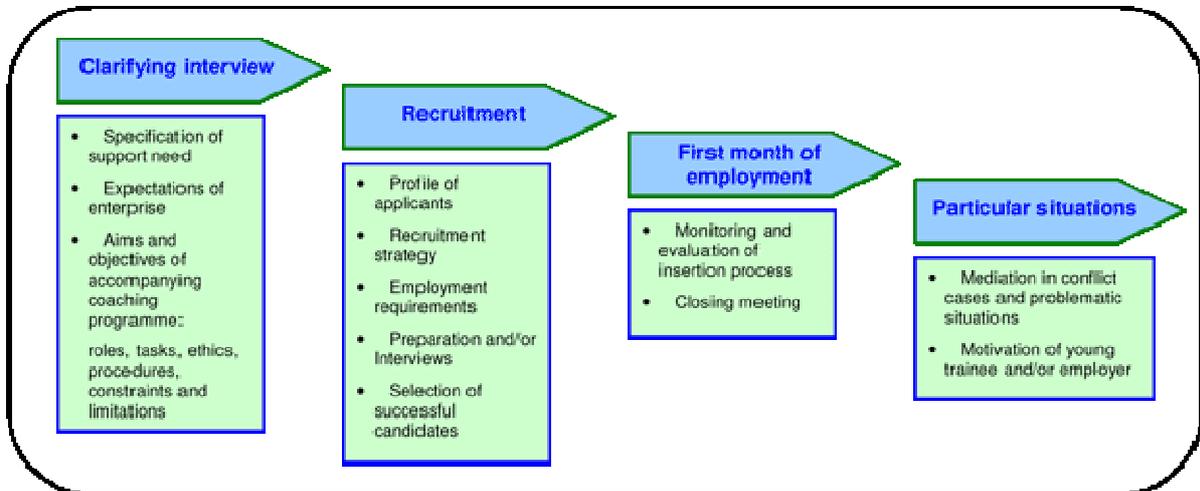
- role perception of mentors, in-company trainings, instructors,
- leadership – reflection on the own style of leadership,
- the way of delegating work orders,
- behaviour in conflict situation,
- self perception as instructor, mentor,
- expectations/demands on the young people.

3.3. Coaching Course and organisational aspects of YES pilots

The YES coaching offer will be tested during July 2008 and March 2009 by die Berater (AT), Mission Locale de l'Agen (FR), Glotta Nova (SI), BSW (DE), Transfer Slovensko (SK), Stichting Reflexion (NL) and Meter Silesia (CZ) in each at least 8 SME.

Generally the coaching offer is designed very flexible in terms of time and number of sessions. In order to respect available project resources (30 staff days per partner) as a frame we suggest approximately 10 sessions per SME, where a coaching session takes 30 – 60 minutes. At least the initial and the closing session are obligatory to be conducted as face-to-face sessions, all other sessions can be conducted as appropriate for both the coaches and the clients face-to-face or on phone. Additionally we recommend using virtual communication if needed. For the session documentation we suggest to use the form in annex 2.

The coaching process follows a structured course as described in the graphic below.



The graphic above describes how the YES coaching attendance could be embedded into the processes of the enterprise. It shows the support of an enterprise during the recruitment and insertion of a young employee or apprentice.

1. Clarifying interview with the responsible persons of the SME
 - Interview guideline (see annex 1) according to the participation
 - Clarification of expectations, roles and tasks
 - Needs analyses and coaching assignment
 - Planning of the coaching course

2. Recruitment of young employees/apprentices
 - Expectations on the applicants, selection criteria (MUST-requirements, SHOULD-requirements)
 - Strategy for the selection of personnel
 - Preparation of interviews
 - Evaluation of interviews

3. First month employment
 - Employment in the enterprise
 - Trust building



- Definition of a base for future cooperation

4. Particular situations

- Reflection of critical situations
- Solution finding for problematic situations
- Possibilities for alternative patterns of action
- Mediation

At the interpersonal level between coach and client the coaching process can be described as follows:

1. **Come together** - get in contact, warm up.

This process is important for the client to check if he/she feels open for something new or wants to deal with something.

On the other hand the coach sets the conditional framework as a fundament for further coaching.

2. **Orientation** - regarding the coaching content, to afford assurance and arrangement, strengthen the interpersonal relation between coach and client.

With the support of the coach the client is able to focus the actual problem he/she wants to solve.

3. **Analyses** – details of client's requests, elaboration of intention.

With the help of different methods the client is able to analyse the problem.

4. **Change** – core phase of coaching on the top of the previous phases.

In this process the problem is being reflected and where the client is supported through coaching in order to develop possible procedures to solve his/her problem.

5. **Harbour** - target achievement and conclusion.

Together with the client the coach summarises the coaching process and repeats the steps the client has to make.

This scheme can be applied for both the process of the whole coaching duration and one coaching session.



4. Selected Coaching Tools

There are numerous tools and methods of coaching. Which of them are applied by the coaches depends on their development and on the aim of the client.

In this chapter we present an overview of the most important coaching tools.

4.1. *Building trust*

These are the key points of building trust:

- **Establish rapport.** Access the state of curiosity and listen with a desire to know about the deeper structure of the learner's experience.
- **Be real.** You may try to have answers but they probably won't be the right ones. Allow yourself to believe that your learners have the right answers for themselves.
- **Be honest.** Tell the whole truth as you see it. Choose to be gentle and honest, not gentle instead of honest. Not speaking the truth does not make it go away, it will probably still be a truth to be addressed by the learner in a month or a year.
- **Be congruent.** The more internally conflicted you are, the less available to your learners you will be. Conversely, the more matters you have resolved in your own personal history, the less likely they are to cloud your understanding of your learner's issues.
- **Be self-compassionate.** Accept that it is fine not to know all the answers. How can your learners accept all of who they are, with imperfections and faults if you can't. Remember, while you are not providing answers for your learner on issues they are dealing with, you are serving as an example.
- **Lighten up.** Invite your learners to enter the place of perspective that you access through humour. Use humour and learn to laugh at yourself and with others.



4.2. Discussion Techniques

Coaches place carefully formulated questions, which help the client to reflect to learn and develop (instead of giving answers). There are many question types, and all are suitable for the coaching. The following overview points out which questions are helpfully and which are less useful.¹

Problem context questions

(focussing on problems and faults)

- What is your problem?
- How long have you had it?
- Whose fault is it?
- What's the matter with you?
- What's wrong?
- Why haven't you solve it yet?

AVOID!

Outcome context questions

(thinking positive and forward)

- What do you want?
- Have you ever achieved something similar?
- What resources do you have?
- What kind of plan do you want to make?
- What's next?

USE!

Meta-model questions

(being specific and 'chunking down')

- What exactly do you mean by ...?
- When specifically do you want to...?
- What, precisely do you see, hear and feel when... ?

Use if necessary!

¹ Cf. ADEC Training manual pages 61 ff.



Milton-model questions

(being vague, suggestive and 'chunking up')

Use if necessary!

- What will that bring to you?
- What is important (about it)?
- How can you do it easily?
- Anything else?

Questions for forwarding the action

Use if necessary!

- What's next?
- How will you do that?
- What will get you started?
- What kind of plan do you want to make?
- What action could you take to improve the situation?

Questions for accountability

Use if necessary!

- What will you do?
- When will you do it?
- How will I know?

If the learner does not do what they set out to do, a good response might be:

- Isn't that interesting?
- Would you like to reschedule it for next time?
- Is there another way of making sure you do it?

Acknowledgement questions

Use if necessary!

- What was it in you that enabled you to do that?
- What does it tell you about yourself that you achieved that goal.
- What do you believe about yourself, now that you have accomplished this?



4.3. Active Listening

By actively listening one understands an appreciating attitude and a appropriate discussion technique. Thus the coach creates an atmosphere that is free of fear, in which the client opens and can state his/her problem. Active listening raises the client's awareness for personal responsibility.

The coach acts on three levels:

1. Esteeming interest

The basic message "I am all ears." is intensified by body language and linguistic signals is. ("yes", "hm", "understand"..)

2. Content understanding

The coach summarizes the core statements of what's being said with own words. Thus it is checked to what extent the client is understood.

- I summarize....
- If I understand you correctly ...

If the client agrees on the summary given, the coaching process continues. If this is not the case, the understanding is not correct yet. The client can adjust the things, which is particularly helpful when problems were presented rather vague and chaotic.

3. Emotional understanding

The coach shows empathy by putting itself into the client's position and trying thus to reveal his/her felt situation.

Even if the client has already addressed the feelings it may be that he/she is not aware it. In this case he/she expresses these by facial expression, gestures and voice.

- "... at the moment you show the tendency...?"



4.4. Feedback

Feedback² is a way of learning – without it, we would never learn anything.

As children when learning to walk, we used all the feedback we got without thinking about failure and embarrassment. As adults we often think we are supposed to be competent at everything and know how to do it the first time we try. Therefore, giving feedback requires sensitivity, good rapport, calibration skills and appropriate use of language patterns. This creates something the receiver can purposefully respond to and use as reference and as motivation for a better future performance.

What is effective feedback?

Effective feedback is information that:

- can be heard by the learner without the learner becoming defensive.
- usually results in cooperation and movement toward change.
- keeps the relationship open and intact.
- validates the feedback process in future interactions

How can we give effective feedback?

One of the ways of giving effective feedback based on the NLP principles (Seymour, 1990) is the so-called “sandwich” feedback. It is called so because it consists of three layers, of which the top and the bottom are based on praise and in the middle we add constructive suggestions or observations, supported by actual examples:

- Praise: Sensory specific, positive feedback based on strengths, supported by actual examples.
- Possible improvements, changes, modifications: Sensory specific feedback based on weaknesses, supported by actual examples.
- Praise: General impression, a positive direction ahead.

The receiver accepts the feedback by saying “Thank you” without clarifying or commenting on the feedback received.

² Cf. ADEC manual pages 84 ff.



In order to maximise the use of the feedback for the learner, it is important to consider the following guidelines:

- Be positive.
- Be specific.
- Do it soon.
- Be sincere.
- Use “I” message.
- Emphasize that it is your subjective view.
- Give no more than 7+/-2 pieces of information.
- Focus on what will help learners improve their learning.

Why give feedback?

Helping people learn from their ‘mistakes’ is an important aspect of building and maintaining motivational climate, a prerequisite for successful learning process. Accurate, timely and genuine feedback that can effect change is therefore one of the keystones of being an effective trainer.

However, feedback is not only limited to the feedback you give consciously about how the learners are doing at a given activity. When we are presenting or training, feedback from the group allows us to monitor how they are at any time during the session – if we pay attention to it, of course. Similarly, also learners receive feedback from us during the learning process. In addition, learners also receive feedback from one another, which is a wonderful source of learning. On the basis of feedback we can evaluate the learning process in terms of achieving learning objectives and of course, help learners see their growing edge.

A method to give useful feedback to somebody is the “sandwich – feedback“

1. step: positive comments to what I have seen
2. step: my opinion to what I have missed and what I would change
- 3 step: give a positive impression



4.5. Goal Seeking

The optimal condition in the Coaching is that a client sees a clear goal in his/her mind's eye. Most of the clients desire for change of other people, or believe that problems will be solved when the situation is different. In this case it is the task of the coaching process to bring the client from this unrealistic goal to a realistic one.

However, it is not enough to name a goal – the goal term in the systemic coaching requires a comprehensive definition.

Attributes a goal should have

- a. It should be clearly selected in content, degree and time
 - i. What does the client do
 - ii. when (till which time) does he do that
 - iii. to what extent?
- b. The client should be able to reach the goal up to a level of 100%,
 - i. What could he/she do to reach the goal?
 - ii. Does he/she have the might to reach the goal?
- c. The aim should be better small than to big
 - i. Is the goal is too large the client should divide it into partial goals
- d. The goal should be described positively and with concrete words
 - i. "...when I have time I will do..." better concrete: "...each Monday from 17:00 to 18:00 I will do..."
 - ii. "...the work is good ..." better specific: "...the work was done carefully
 - iii. "...it will come to..." better based on behaviour: "...I will do"
- e. The goal should capture the beginning of something
 - i. "I do not want to do ... anymore"
but
 - ii. What do you want to do instead of that?



4.6. Decision Making

A challenging step in the coaching process is the introduction of changing steps. Often the clients want to keep the current/actual situation and even starts to defend it - "... actually the things are not so bad...".

This behaviour is based on the theory that individuals who have a problem are caught between two stools. On the one hand there is a problem which he/she wants to solve/get rid of. On the other hand the current situation also has good aspects and he/she does not know which effects the found problems the solution will include.

<p>2</p> <p>Courage to change the situation</p> <p>What concedes the case for the fact that the client changes his/her behaviour in the way he/she just aspired?</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Courage to combine the advantages of the old and the desired solution.</p> <p>How can the good aspects of the old situation be connected with the new situation?</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Courage to a new situation.</p> <p>What could the client do, what he/she did not think about/considered so far?</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Courage to retain the situation</p> <p>What are the positive aspects of the current situation?</p> <p>What arguments support not changing the situation?</p>

During the coaching process it is the aim to find the appropriate action alternative that enables the client to solve his /her problem. Therefore the coach responds to the four fields objectively, until the adequate solution has been found.

1 Sometimes it is sufficient to regard an existing situation from different points of view.



- ② In the case that the client does not see a solution in retaining his/her situation, we continue to work with the second field.
- ③ For those clients, who do not find a suitable solution in both change and retaining the current situation, field three represents a possibility.
- ④ Field four represents the biggest challenge for the client. The work in this field requires much time and patience.

4.7. Solution organisation

After the decision which solution method the client wants to select is done, the coach works with him/her on the organisation of the problem solution.

This concerns a description of the solution that clearly lights up all possible effects on the working and everyday life and gives the client the chance to take leave of his/her problem afflicted behaviour.

The key questions are:

- What indicates that you found the solution?
- By which behaviour you recognize that the solution is realised?
- What are the criteria for a good solution?
- What aspects the solution should not contain in any circumstance?

After he/she has focussed on a solution the client usually knows which steps he/she would like to set in the future. It is, however, advisable to grip the problem solution concretely.

1. Who ...
2. does what (concrete and specifically) ...
3. within which time (exact time, start and end or duration)
4. aiming at what?
5. Who will check when whether the planned results were realised?



5. Literature

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6. Annex 1

YES Guide for Clarifying Interview

Company	
Address	
Telephone number	
Contact / Function	
Participant Staff	
Function	
Telephone number	
e-mail	

Training impact	
Modul 1	Date
Modul 2	Date
Modul 3	Date
Modul	Date
Modul 5	Date
Coaching	Date
Others	Date



1	How many staff members work in your enterprise?	
2	Who is responsible for apprenticeships?	
	Owner	
	Training supervisor	
	Other	
3	Which criteria are applied for the selection staff members responsible for apprenticeships and insertion of young people in your enterprise?	
	Education (Vocational Training, Master)	
	Vocational experience/duration of employment in your enterprise	
	Experience in training of young people	
	Other	
4	Did the responsible staff members pass any further training in the area of apprenticeship training?	
	Yes	
	No	
5	If yes, which	
	Trainer exam officially certified in your country (e.g. by chamber of commerce)	
	Other	
6	Do you think that further education would support the staff members responsible for training and insertion of “difficult“ young people in the future?	
	Yes	
	No	
7	If yes, which topics would be specifically interesting?	
	Role of staff members responsible for apprenticeship and in-company training <i>tasks, function, competences</i>	



	<p>Legal basis of apprenticeship and employment of young people</p> <p><i>Basics of apprenticeship, working time regulations, support by public and non-profit organisations</i></p>	
	<p>Aspects of youth behaviour</p> <p><i>Youth culture, social behaviour of young people and challenges when interacting with them</i></p>	
	<p>Social competence of Trainer, Mentor</p> <p><i>communication, conflict management, motivation</i></p>	
	<p>Pedagogical Basics</p> <p><i>Knowledge transfer, learning process, learning types, intergenerational learning</i></p>	
8	If not, why not?	
9	Where can you see an advantage of the following types of further education?	
	Face-to-face training of trainer, mentor (several modules, complete topic area, training in a group)	
	e-learning (self studying for repetition and extension of training contents, between the face-to-face training sessions)	
	Individual coaching for the trainers, mentors	
	Peer support (exchange with trainers/mentors of other enterprises via e-platform)	



10	For which staff member would you like to engage the YES further education offer?	
11	Which duration should the further education have in your opinion?	
	Less than 5 hours per month	
	5 – 10 hours per month	
	10 – 15 hours per month	
	More than 15 hours per month	
12	Which expectations do you have towards such further education?	
13	Which aims would you like to achieve through such further education?	



7. Annex 2

YES Documentation Coaching Session

Coach	Client
Coaching date	
Time/Duration:	
Actual situation <i>Describes the initial position- status quo</i>	
Aim of client for this coaching session <i>Describes requests of the client. What is it all about? What's the theme of this coaching session? Which goal does the client want to achieve?</i>	
Steps to get the goal <i>Describes the concrete measures that must be done by the client to arrive the goal.</i>	



Notes

*Used methods by the coach to work out the solution.
Important observations during the coaching process.*

Agreements/conclusion

Describes concrete agreements with the client what he/she will do till the next session (a certain date)