

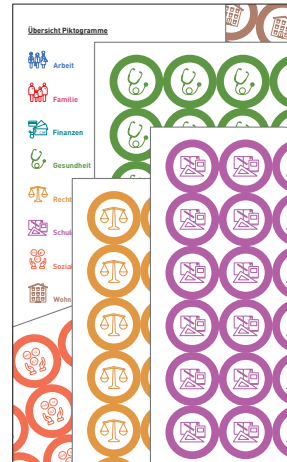
Category: Social Affairs

Project: Visual Communication in Social Welfare

What was the challenge?

Communication in the context of social welfare is very challenging: A great variety of complex procedures need to be explained to a wide variety of clients who find themselves in a situation of great distress. Social workers have to attend to many cases, which leaves them with very limited time for each client, while the processes they have to explain are complex and heterogeneous in terminology and procedures. In this complex situation, much time is invested in repeatedly explaining the same

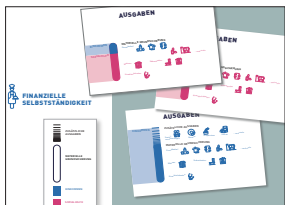
processes. Well-informed and precise explanations could facilitate this process considerably, especially if they use visual communication strategies. Our research project "Durchblick – Visual Communication in Social Welfare" aimed to analyze this situation in detail and provide solutions to support social workers' practices in Switzerland. The project is based at the FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland and is funded by the Christoph Merian Stiftung.



What was the solution?

In the first phase, through interviews with social workers and clients, and observations gathered from shadowing their meetings, we determined the most common communication problems they face in their exchanges and discussed our findings with them. In the second phase, we started an iterative design process. We gathered feedback on early-stage sketches and variants in group discussions and implemented our insights into the design of more detailed

prototypes. We delivered approximately 40 sets with a variety of visual aids to the participating social workers from Basel-Stadt and Dietikon, who then tested them in their daily practice. Finally, we collected feedback from clients and social workers on the prototypes through questionnaires, group discussions, and one-by-one interviews. The findings of the last feedback allowed us to revise some final details of the prototypes and successfully complete them.

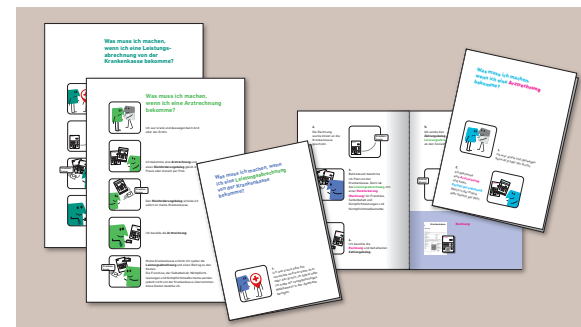


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What was the effect?

The participating social workers have stated that the visual aids developed in the project help them save time (by clarifying instructions), improve the quality of their meetings with clients (by structuring), and to contextualize the help they are providing (by supporting their explanation visually) among others.

The resulting set of visual aids of this research will be published and distributed by SKOS (Swiss Conference of Welfare Organizations) to ensure that all interested persons can access them at a production-cost price. They should be available for purchase or download from Autumn 2023 on their website and under www.mehrdurchblick.ch.



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