

Anna-Riitta Mikkonen (ed.)



**INVEST IN EXPERIENCE –
Expert Perspectives on the Development of Age
Management in the O.W.L Project**

North Karelia University of Applied Sciences

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**INVEST IN EXPERIENCE – Expert Perspectives
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North Karelia University of Applied Sciences
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Improvement of
PERSONAL LIFE QUALITY • WORKING LIFE QUALITY

of OLDER WORKERS

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Foreword

Why community projects? Why partnership? What is a partnership? Why transnationality? What are the benefits of the community projects?

In order to be able to give answers that go beyond the obvious and presumed, it is necessary to make a synthetic reasoning of the political-institutional context in which the community projects are positioned.

First, the EU system is born and lives on the cession of sovereignty that every Member State puts into effect towards the EU system. The originality, its essence, consists exactly in a cession to a subject (EU) of which the transferor state is a part. A cession of sovereignty, therefore, is then shared by all Member States.

Secondly, what purpose do the Community projects serve if not to put into effect the EU policies? They are the main instruments of implementation of the Communitarian program, where the main priority is the Community, an interest that goes beyond the interest of a single Member State, individual citizens, a single economic or social organisation or separate local and regional authorities. The Communitarian interest must answer to the requirements that are born within the Community territory with an action of subsidiarity in a bottom-up approach.

How can the Communitarian interest be striven for if not with connection of tight collaboration between the subject that puts into effect and manages the community policies, European Commission, and the subject that through a project wants to respond to specific needs? Only this tight collaboration allows the Community interest to be such that it can be implemented and does not remain a mere theoretical principle.

But if the project must pursue the Community interest, it is clear that the fundamental and characterising elements in such projects are the partnership and transnationality; the elements that make concrete the requirements diffused on the EU territory. Surely the partnership and particularly the transnational one is in the first place a "formal requirement". If the project does not have the minimum of five partners from five member states it is not permissible. But if we stop to this "formal requirement", as too often happens, the project will not have adequate and effective solutions.

The partnership represents, beyond to the definition of who makes what, a methodology of work where each partner voluntarily decides to put his own resources into common disposition of the project, irrespective of whether these resources are the staff, services, cash or something else. It will be the partnership itself, in the figure of the Lead Partner, which will manage this "common patrimony". As can be seen, there is an obvious assonance between the cession of sovereignty from part of the member States and the giving in disposition of partners' own resources. This assonance must

be emphasised as a factor of success and not seen as a limitation, an intrusion into "mine".

AICCRE, as an European Association of Local and Regional Authorities, aims to the construction of the Europe of the citizens from the bottom up. Through the projects, with the involvement of the territorial collectivities closest to the European citizens and to their common needs, AICCRE wants to strengthen the partnership as a factor of success, making the different actors of the territorial development to work together, to share goals, methodologies and resources.

The O.W.L. project has fully implemented this concept of partnership in several aspects, which are the transnationality, public-private (local authorities and enterprises), the representation of the interests of the workers and the employers. It has been a complex partnership with cultures originally different and often thought to be incompatible. The success of a project, and I would like to say of the O.W.L. project, is exactly the conciliation of totally different cultures and methodologies towards common objectives; a demonstration of the fact that when the partnership is shared it is possible to cross and to pull down barriers that otherwise would be strengthened with the consequent polarity at the expense of the project of European citizenship.

Emanuele Farnetani

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I would like to express my gratitude to all partners and to Ms Beatriz Ruis-Alonso and Ms Laurence Michel responsible of Innovative Measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund Regulation for their support during the Project

INVEST IN EXPERIENCE!

Joensuu, 31st of October, 2007

Anna-Riitta Mikkonen, Head of the O.W.L. Project

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1 Introduction

Anna-Riitta Mikkonen

European transnational cooperation is an important activity promoted by the European Union. Innovative Measures under Article 6 of the European Social Fund Regulation has financed projects where European member states work collaboratively in order to find and develop new solutions that will support ageing work communities. One example of such projects is Older Workers' Life - O.W.L. which is short for the Improvement of Personal Life Quality and Working Life Quality of Older Workers.

The O.W.L. project partners were from Finland and Italy. The Project was further enriched by various actors from a number of different work communities. During the Project the partners have acquired new knowledge on the challenges of ageing work communities and searched for innovative solutions. The main idea of the Project was to enhance the well-being of individual workers in the domains of work and private life which was seen to benefit their work communities. It was considered important to understand that ageing workforce is of value and should be seen as a profit-making investment in every work community.

This report discusses the perspectives and experiences of project partners and experts on the development of ageing work communities. The theoretical framework is created through the articles of Petri Lehtipuu and Galliano Cocco. Raisa Lindroos in her article discusses a more practical approach to the development of ageing work communities. To support ageing work communities, the Project developed a Management Software programme that is introduced by Ivan Sgandurra. Moreover, the report highlights what has been learned and how the Project has been implemented in cooperation between two countries having a different cultural background. Partners working together in a project should always be aware of the cultural differences in management practices and communication so that their cooperation would be both successful and rewarding to all those involved.

2 Profitable Seniors at Work - Systems Thinking Approach to Improve Working Life Quality of Older People and Organisational Performance

Petri Lehtipuu

The aim of the EU-sponsored project “*Improvement of personal life quality and working life quality of older people*” (O.W.L.) in 2005 - 2007 was to find good management practices which can be applied at the European level. This article is an introduction to an approach where individual well-being and productivity are linked with organisational performance. It provides the reader with a theoretical framework and practical, experience-based ideas how to systematically improve performance both at individual and at company levels.

What is Systems Thinking and How Can It Be Used

The *Systems Thinking* approach incorporates several tenets (Wikipedia 2007). It deals with interdependence of objects and their attributes, since independent elements can never constitute a system. Systems Thinking also provides a holistic way to understand a topic. An important factor is that a systemic interaction must result in some goal or final state.

A system consists of inputs, outputs, actors and transformative processes. A method of feedback is necessary for the system to operate predictably. Depending on the system, it can either have alternative ways of attaining the same objectives, or attaining alternative objectives from the same inputs.

Classic scientific methods require two concepts to help to understand a system:

- 1) *Ontology*, which is a study of conceptions of reality and the nature of being. Ontology answers to such questions as “what exists”. In this context we should have common understanding about terms such as “quality of life” or “performance of a company”.
- 2) *Epistemology*, or theory of knowledge, which studies the nature, methods, limitations and validity of knowledge and belief. This means that we have to understand, how we can know that something is “true”, in other words, how is knowledge related to a certain topic acquired. In practice, we speak about measurement or assessment on “well-being” and “performance”.

Symptoms or Causes?

Often managers acquire information which at first sight might seem clear and induce them to start actions. However, it is important to get a deeper analysis of the situation before jumping into problem-solving. In a system, causality may exist between different parts, which means that the following areas can be detected:

- 1) *symptoms* - the visible facts, for example the aged employees have more problems with adequate sleeping than younger employees.
- 2) *probable causes* - there can be dozens of causes which lead to a problem, or a symptom e.g. high occurrence of sick leaves can be due to poor and unhealthy working conditions, due to poor individual health, due to poor management and atmosphere at work, or due to an epidemic disease which just happened to be there.
- 3) *root causes* - using problem solving tools, facilitation methods and research, root causes of problems can be detected. Without knowing the root cause of a problem the company management might try to fix a totally irrelevant matter. But if a problem can be analysed more accurately, a better solution can be found in a more economical and more effective way.

From a Single Target to Multiple Goals Using a Win-Win Principle

According to their definition, for-profit organisations strive for a good financial performance, which is considered the main measure of success as seen by the shareholders, whereas in public and third sector organisations impact on society is probably more important. But even commercial companies have other targets, which can be measured by various indicators and means, such as customer loyalty and the innovativeness of employees.

Organisational performance can be seen as a result of activity chains and of leadership. In this article the interest is to find links between changes which happen at individual level and those changes, which sum up a totality of performance. In order to understand the whole picture, some terms and concepts need to be defined.

The *well-being at work* of an employee is a product of several factors. If any one of these factors equals to zero, the product is consequently zero. The factors typically are categorised in the following four areas: social adaptation, health, psychological conditions and competences, skills and potential.

Organisational performance can also be expressed in several terms, depending on how much the present and the future are weighted. The different perspectives for company performance are e.g. financial performance, customer relationship performance, product/service performance, process performance and human performance.

Different Ways of Understanding the Present

To solve epistemological questions, *survey* is the most important tool to receive data indicating the present status, and to follow up the development in the areas of work ability and work performance. Good management practice requires thinking about the whole process first before jumping to an individual action. The main idea is not to collect data but to obtain and use the results for improvement.

The following checklist is useful for the company management prior to conducting a survey:

- What is the purpose of a survey?

- How should the results be utilised?
- How often should the survey be repeated in order to see effects and trends?
- Who should form the target group to reply to the survey?

A survey gives answers, but what is even more important, it raises important questions about the reasons WHY the answers are as they are.

In the O.W.L. project, a Management Software application with a survey tool was developed. The survey consists of questions, indicators and indices. As exemplified in Table 1, the indicators of working environment may consist of the following data with numerical values:

Table 1. Indicators of working environment in the Management Software application

Sense of belonging
Participation in the corporate processes
Perception of the working environment
Perception of one's individuality
Satisfaction in general
Satisfaction with equals/ peers
Satisfaction with the superior
Satisfaction with the lower rank
Satisfaction in relation to age
Satisfaction relation to gender

A *focus group discussion* can be used as a method of qualitative research. This is because in the sessions cause-effect relationships are often discussed, which makes this method different from quantitative approaches such as surveys. The facilitator can also take into account the influence of the corporate culture on the discussions.

Does Age Matter?

A survey can be used to study the situation among older workers, but to get a realistic picture of the whole, it is typically recommended to carry out a survey among different age groups at the same time. This is because the age of the worker can be seen as a distinctive factor only in some areas. However, several factors affecting individual work ability, satisfaction, well-being, competences and skills, as well as performance are depending on the experience and the age of an employee.

The Management Software is intended to provide the company management with the results of different areas of work ability in different age groups. Therefore it is important to notice, which of the results should be interpreted as "normal" and which require special attention. In simple cases, as in the following example, the solution may be obvious.

"In our survey we found that some areas were at critical level. When we studied the answers by age group, we noticed for example that most people over 55 years fully

or to some extent agreed with the statement that the work is very tiring, whereas most of younger employees disagreed with the statement. In this department many senior employees work in shifts, which is quite wearing for them. We then reorganised the work shifts so that the 2-shift is only carried out by younger employees, and the senior employees mostly work in the dayshift" (Pitkänen 2007).

A survey gives a signal to the employees that the subject is important, which raises expectations of what is going on. A focussed group discussion partly meets the expectations, because the participants may feel that they are part of the development.

According to the systems theory, the participants of the focus group spread the experiences and findings of the discussion into their teams. So even if everyone cannot participate in focus group workshops, the discussions have a wider effect on the work community. Because of that the focus groups should be empowering and solution-focused.

I Know This Approach Works in Practice - But Does It Work in Theory, too?

In this chapter some theories are presented to form a solid background and framework for practical management decisions.

Individual Performance and Well-being

The first framework is based on the model of Harald (1997). As can be seen in Figure 1, the effects of the factors are not unidirectional but they are more or less connected and linked with each other. This is interesting because if the above is true, then changes in any single factor lead to effects on other factors as well. According to Figure 1, the psychological factor seems to have a high indirect contribution to work performance and work well-being, although all other factors have a direct contribution to them. In other words, and for practical terms, company management should at first improve physical and social conditions of the work, offer more motivating benefits and/or invest in training.

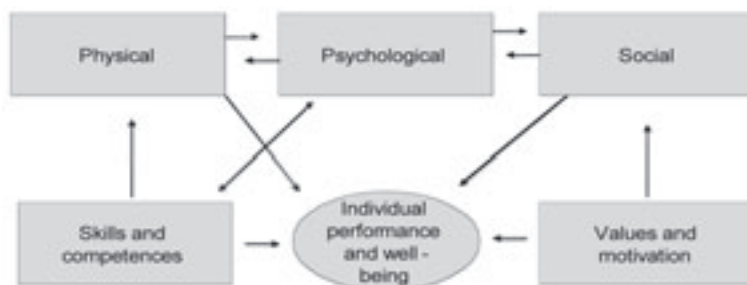


Figure 1. Factors related to individual work performance and well being at work (Harald 1997)

Work Ability

The second framework is a generic model of good work ability: how it is generated at work, and how work ability is related to other important factors outside work (family, community and the whole society). According to the model, the basis of work ability is the entity of personal resources and capabilities which has several layers, starting with physical health and basic operative capability. This part is basically independent of the work itself. The other dimensions at the next layer include work conditions and leadership, and are naturally very tightly dependent on the current real life. Outside work, important support is given by family, community (friends, relatives, local people) and finally society with its systems.

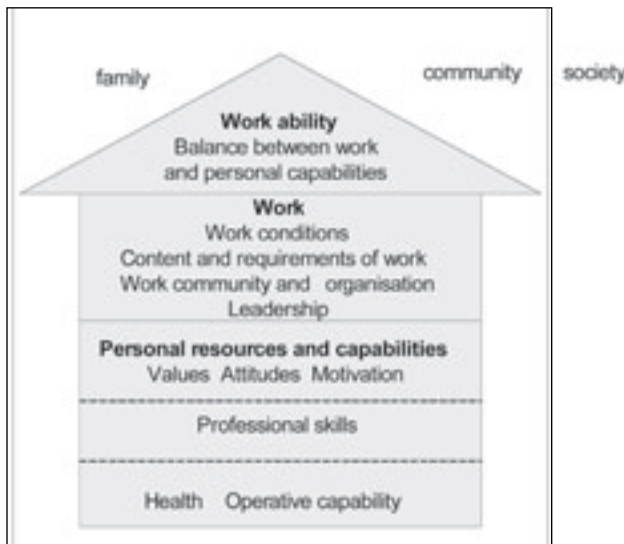


Figure 2. Dimensions of good work ability (Ilmarinen et al. 2003)

From Individual Performance to Company Level Performance

The third framework combines individual well-being to collective well-being at workplace plus gives a relation between workplace well-being and the company's performance and success. Compared to previous models, this framework takes more into account corporate culture, and especially the values which affect how know-how and leadership.

Whether the workplace well-being is sufficient to create success for the company, it depends on the stakeholder expectations and business objectives. This also illustrates the question of balance between high business objectives and care of employees. In best cases, these factors are not considered to be against each other but to be aligned. In a good working environment and with motivated employees, you can expect better business results than in a bad working environment with less motivated employees.



Figure 3. Systems level connections between individual and organisational well-being and the company's performance and success. (Ojala & Ahonen 2003)

How Business Performance Is Generated?

There are well-known studies showing the connection between systematic leadership and excellence in financial and other performance. In this article, two frameworks are presented as examples.

The EFQM Excellence Model (Figure 4) shows how financial and other important results are depending on the "enablers", i.e. how the work is managed in practice. According to the model, the long term success is created by continuously improving leadership, people management, policies and strategies, partnerships and resources and customer-oriented processes.

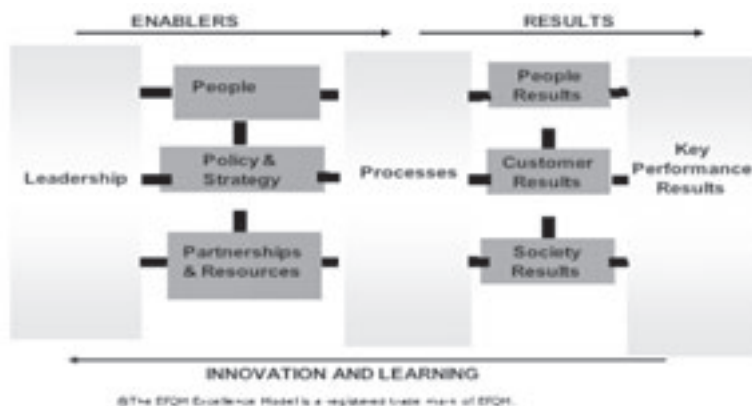


Figure 4. The EFQM Excellence Model

In 1993 Kaplan and Norton launched their idea of implementing strategy with the help of balanced scorecard (BSC). The BSC gives not only financial results for management but it also

takes into account other stakeholders' perspectives.

Strategy maps, also created by Kaplan and Norton (1993) show the cause-effect relationships between factors which are critical for the performance.

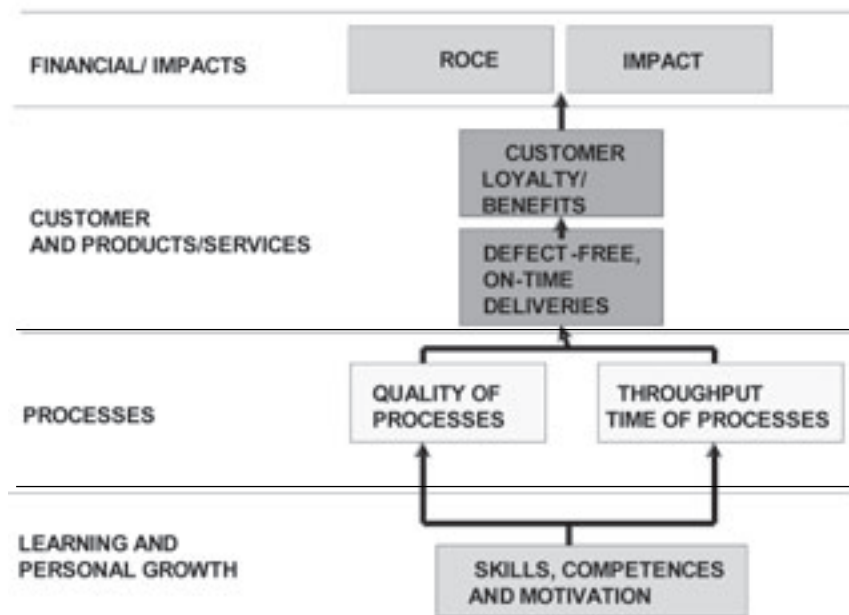


Figure 5. Example of balanced scorecard structure including four perspectives of strategy implementation and measurement (Kaplan & Norton 1993)

The excellence models and balanced scorecards match with each other perfectly, as they both show how the financial success is based on manageable processes and the performance of people who need leadership.

An Integrated Model of the O.W.L. Project

The factors of individual well-being and individual performance affect the company level well-being and company level performance. This is an integrating concept which sums up all above mentioned studies and frameworks in using the survey and in carrying out improvement actions.

The logic is that in the end of the day the investment in improvement actions get realised in business results, provided that the improvement actions are not taken randomly but focus on "root causes".

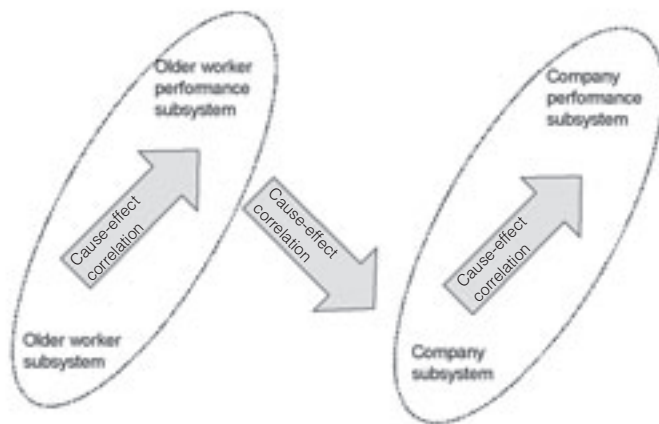


Figure 6. The Management Software structure and logic: from old worker to company performance

Effect of Culture and Corporate Identity to Age Management - the Contexts and Belief Systems of Organisations Vary

Based on Beck's and Cowan's (2003) work Hardjono, van Marrewijk and other researchers found that in order to describe an organisation's strategy, a new dimension needs to be considered. According to them, there are four basic cultural drivers of success, which are based on belief systems as well as on practices and structures:

Shareholder-oriented:

Order - obeying rules and disciplines

Profit - doing what benefits us best in material terms

Stakeholder-oriented:

Care and community - acting upon common values

Synergy and innovation - we strive for success but not at others' cost

The following table shows that different cultural orientations also vary in respect to their understanding of a human being as well as how they could react on age management.

Table 2. Success drivers and their effects (Lehtipuu & Monni 2006)

<i>"Success driver" -></i>	Absolute Order	Success	Care and Community	Synergy and innovation
How a human being is seen?	Subordinate Needs control and fear of punishment to behave correctly.	Resource. If people are treated well, the productivity will be higher and the costs will be lower. People are striving for material benefits, and they should be rewarded for good performance.	Equal and important member of the community. Physical and psychological well-being is important.	A learning and developing individual . People are part of the organisation, local and global community.
Practical approaches to age management (older workers' skills and quality of life)	Guidelines and policies. Practical tools	Tools to help people work at their best throughout their professional life	Best practices in how employees of different age groups interact, learn from each other, and support each other	Innovative ideas on how each person can develop regardless of his or her age

Improving Performance by Supporting Older Workers

"We need to know where we stand to know if we are close to or far from where we want to go!"

The ultimate measure of a company's success is the financial profit, as also shown in systems approaches such as EFQM Excellence model, or in balanced scorecards. The financial performance criteria can be matched with the company's needs and include profitability, financial balance, turnover and several indicators with detailed information. However, the company management can also follow other performance measures which are by nature metrics of what happened, or indicative, what may happen.

Table 3. Examples of other type company level measures

Customer results	market share, sales per customer, profitability per customer, satisfaction, loyalty, customer claims, warranty costs, status at customers' ranking list, reputation, interaction between the company and the clients, etc.
Product/service results	market share per product group, profitability per product, satisfaction per product, manufacturing costs per product, quality costs per product, usability, time-to-market from R&D, etc.
Process	throughput time, inventory cost and circulation, failure rates, rate of delayed deliveries, delivery accuracy etc.
People	sick leaves, turnover, accidents, job satisfaction, training days per person, etc.

For the company management, it is of critical importance to select the measures by which the business is conducted. Often it is not possible to manage dozens of performance measures at the same time with reliability and enough attention to every measure.

In the O.W.L. project one target was to help managers to release the full potential of each employee in order to increase the remaining years at work of senior workers, to improve individual physical, social and psychological work ability, to improve the company's internal learning processes between different age groups, to improve individual and company performance and to improve managers' understanding of causalities between work ability, work satisfaction, customer satisfaction and business results.

The following table lists objectives for short and long-term performance. When choosing areas of improvement, and the corresponding improvement actions, it is possible to influence on one or more of these.

Table 4. A list of objectives for short and long-term performance

1) Reducing negative effects	2) Increasing positive effects	3) Indirect effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sick leaves, short-term - sick leaves, long-term - breaks in production or need for temporary workforce - time loss to train others - higher work load for others - costs of accidents - unwanted turnover of people - costs of too early retirement (e.g. due to work inability) - bad reputation as an employer - too narrow or competences - defects, low quality of products and services - low morale - monotonous work - low customer satisfaction - loss of 'silent', intangible knowledge, loss of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - concentration - high quality of products and services - versatile, up-to-date competences - problem solving - high productivity - high customer satisfaction - process performance - people satisfaction - good reputation as an employer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - innovations, motivation - knowledge sharing - commitment - care and sense of belonging to community - trust - networking - purpose

There is a countless number of potential improvement actions and their applications. The following list in Table 5 can be used for guidance.

Table 5. Improvement actions and their applications

Focus on new work layout	Focus on training and experience sharing	Focus on leadership	Focus on physical work ability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions on the company lay-out - Process redesign - Process clarification (roles and responsibilities) - Work reorganisation: opportunities to partly work at home (remote work) - Job sharing - Turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation courses in a specific area - Formation courses on interpersonal subject matter - Tacit knowledge transfer (experience transfer from older workers to other age groups or vice versa) - Learning from other organisations' good practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of the social sensibility - Motivation actions (economic, benefits, holidays, etc) - TOP/DOWN communication increase - Involvement in the making-decision process - Internal marketing initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intervention on working time (break, etc.) - Programs to support physical condition of employees

In practical cases of the O.W.L. project, interventions were designed based on survey data and focussed group discussions. Several workshops and events were arranged to increase interaction between employees of different age and to improve communication between the leaders and employees.

Based on the experiences, improvement of leadership and communication skills effectively increases employee satisfaction in a short period of time. However, using systems approach, it is likely that in the course of time, more systematic tools are needed to maintain the satisfaction, such as developing processes or changing structures.

Conclusion

For a systemic approach, any improvement may be necessary to be reasoned with a rational cause-effect decision-making process. However, it is also important to take into account what the success driver of the organisation is. It may happen that people within the organisation do not share the same success drivers, which may lead to inconsistent policies and practices. It is therefore important to increase awareness of the systems nature of phenomena around employee well-being as well as individual and organisational performance.

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3 The O.W.L. Project as an Arena for New and Different Perspectives on the Development of Ageing Work Communities

Anna-Riitta Mikkonen

The aim of the present article is to discuss how the core processes of the Project were implemented during the project cycle. After this article some partners share their experiences of the Project. The project partnership was diverse and thus also the perspectives on the topics were very wide-ranging. The journey, which we made together during the Project, included direct routes, bends, up and downhills, breathtaking views and even moments of heavy rain. On our way we have experienced various feelings as well as the pain and joy of learning. The project measures have now become personal experiences and possession of each participant, who can still process them further and transfer the accumulated knowledge to the networks and communities around them.

The Participants

There were altogether 25 partners involved in our Project. Thus the Project was large and challenging in terms of organisation. The administration and project coordination was taken care of by North Karelia University of Applied Sciences (NKUAS). On the way we received two more Italian partners while one Finnish participant resigned the project partnership. In addition to the Finnish administration, there were seven (7) Finnish and 17 Italian partners as well as one (1) observer/ evaluator from Lithuania. The partnership consisted of:

- Private Companies: Abloy Ltd., Karelicenter Ltd., Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), TietoEnator Processing & Network, Brioni Roman Style S.p.a., DMB Solutions s.r.l.

- Health Care Sector: Joint Authority for the Helsinki and Uusimaa Hospital District (HUS), Azienda Unita' Sanitaria Locale N3 (ASL)

- **Education and Training Sector:** North Karelia University of Applied Sciences (NKUAS), Università G. d'Annunzio Chieti e Pescara, Dipartimento di Studi Aziendali (DipSA), Istituto di Ricerca e Formazione (IRFO), Fondazione Nazareno Fonticoli, Fondazione Formoda
- **Associations:** The Finnish Association for Human Resource Management (Henry), Italian Association of the Council for Municipalities and the Regions of Europe (AICCRE), Servizi Industriali Pescara S.r.l. (SIPE), Confartigianato Imprese Catania (CAN Ct), Unione Generale del Lavoro Segreteria Territoriale di Udine (UGL), Associazione per la Direzione del Personale (AIDP)
- **Consulting Companies:** Adult Education Institute of Eastern Finland Ltd (ISAI Consulting), Novetos Oy, Services d'Ingénierie Intégrée S.a.r.l. (S.I.I. Consulting)
- **Municipalities and Provinces:** Municipality of Penne, Province of Pordenone, Regional Province of Catania
- **Observer:** Public Institution NPR

The Project was further enriched by a wide network of experts, who enabled the implementation of improvement actions and development work.

The Increase in Interaction during the O.W.L. Project

One of the aims of the O.W.L. project was to disseminate good practices between the participating countries and to cooperate in the development of work communities consisting of ageing workers. The schedule of the Project was very tight and there was not enough time for partners to get to know each other at the beginning. This would have been very important for the establishment of trust and a solid basis for project interaction. However, interaction improved during the project cycle. At the beginning of the Project, communication included mere coordination. According to Engeström (2004), in coordinative interaction all participants have their own objects, which they focus on. There is not much sharing or exchanging of ideas, but every participant concentrates on presenting his/her points and promoting and serving his/her own interests.

In our Project the communication was greatly influenced by different cultural backgrounds. The theoretical concepts had not been defined together at the outset and some concepts differed greatly due to the differing contexts. For the success of the Project it was crucial to define the core measures, because the practices and methods also varied. We had to find such measures and means through which we could share and transfer knowledge on our own practices to each other. One of the means was company visits and benchmarking. The company visits took place at the time of the two conferences in Finland and in Italy. Benchmarking visits were made in between manufacturing companies and health care organisations. To enhance the collaboration and interaction between the countries we also founded teams around certain topics and project tasks. At last we had two core teams and one group that were to observe the instructions given by the Commission.

Steering Committee was the decision-making body exercising most power in the Project. It included representatives of all partners, altogether 25 people. Often all partners attended the meetings, which took place prior to or during the project conferences. It was very logical also from the financial perspective to have the meetings simultaneously with the conferences. Additionally, some decision-making was also conducted through email.

Preparatory Team was the preparatory organ for the project. It included project administrators, the Italian coordinator and Finnish and Italian evaluators. The team mainly planned the future actions and followed the budget. Sari Jormanainen tells more about the continual project evaluation in her article.

Management Software Group was coordinated by the Italian evaluator. The group included programmers and software experts from Italy, an expert from the administration and several experts on statistics. Additionally other specialists were consulted whenever needed.

At the final stage of the Project we approached real cooperation. According to Engeström's (2004) definition, in cooperation all partners focus their attention to one objective and start

talking to each other and exchanging their ideas about the joint objective. Towards the end of the Project we finally had a joint objective and started to discuss the ideas relevant to our project cooperation.

Good Practices as Operative Methods in Organisations

At first we started to map out the existing good practices in organisations and companies. The good practices were shared between Abloy, TietoEnator, Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), Joint Authority for the Helsinki and Uusimaa Hospital District (HUS), and their Department of Oncology and Department of Heart and Thorax Surgery from Finland and Brioni and Savio Macchine Tessili a partner of the Province of Pordenone from Italy. The good practices were grouped according to the categories created by Alan Walker (1998), which were complemented by an updated report by Naegele & Walker (2006). The good practices were categorised as follows: 1. Job recruitment, 2. Training, development and promotions, 3. Flexible practises, 4. Ergonomics/job design, 5. Attitudes within the organisation and 6. Any other business concerning the work community. The good practices detected in the partner organisations are listed at the end of this article (Tables 1 and 2).

The Cornerstones for the Project Progress

In addition to coordination, evaluation and good practices, there were four more themes, through which we were able to implement the project tasks and contents collaboratively. These were: Management Software, conferences and meetings, improvement actions among the partners, and dissemination and mainstreaming. Figure 1 below illustrates the phases of project implementation. One of the most important project tasks was the development of the Management Software tool. Collaborative programme design required plenty of time, because its objectives were very challenging.

Due to societal differences, the needs of ageing work communities were differently emphasised in Finland and in Italy. In Finland occupational health care is well developed with its health indicators for the follow-up of diseases and workability. In Finland more focus was put on coping at work and on the development of suitable indicators for measuring mental strain and well-being. Meanwhile in Italy the medical perspective on functional ability and social responsibility were emphasised. During the Project we developed a wide series of questions to analyse the work communities consisting of ageing or aged workers. The Management Software programme is more specifically explained in an article written by Ivan Sgandurra.

During the project cycle five transnational and three national conferences were organised. The conference topics supported the overall aims and work of the Project and included:

- Critical Aspect of Functional Capacity, Transnational conference in Penne, Italy 2/2006
- Nuova sfida per le politiche sociali e aziendali, National conference in Catania, Italy, 4/2006
- Voices of Experience in Work Communities, National conference in Joensuu, Finland, 6/2006.

- Functional Capacity and Well-being in Work and Change, Transnational conference in Joensuu, Finland, 9/2006
- The Values of Experience, National conference in Pordenone, Italy, 11/2006
- The Tools, Transnational conference in Pescara, Italy, 2/2007
- I lavoratori over 55: Un patrimonio da valorizzare, Transnational conference in Rome, Italy, 6/2007
- Invest in Experience - Several Faces of Age Management, Transnational conference in Joensuu, 9/2007

The purpose of the conferences was to increase the knowledge on the development of ageing work communities among partners and other participants through the contribution of external experts. The conferences also disseminated the knowledge on the Project and its progress. During the conference weeks, the partners worked on the topics according to the implementation plan. In international projects it is especially important to have face-to-face meetings, which help to deepen the understanding on country-specific measures and to strengthen collaboration. Furthermore, social programme has an important role in improving interaction and the understanding of diversity. The more we discussed face-to-face with each other, the better we also communicated through electronic media.

Improvement Actions in Partner Organisations

Improvement actions that were implemented in partner organisations played an important role in the Project as a whole. Through these actions different working communities became part of the Project and were able to gain enriching and diversified knowledge on age management. The improvement actions were implemented at Abloy, TietoEnator, FMI, HUS, the Province of Pordenone, Brioni and in the Municipality of Penne. The improvement actions related e.g. to working time autonomy, transferring tacit knowledge, promoting physical health and introducing medical services. At the end of this article there is a list of different improvement actions implemented by the partners. Most of the partners noted that the Project made them more aware of the development needs of ageing work communities and initiated some changes in their organisation.

Dissemination and Mainstreaming

One of the main tasks of EU-funded projects is to communicate the accumulated knowledge and disseminate the development practises further. Every EU citizen has a right to know the contents and outcomes of such projects. Both internal and external communication and vertical and horizontal communication are used. Every partner communicated the contents and the progress of the Project within its own organisation and to other partners. Conferences themselves were good forums for disseminating knowledge, but other media were also used simultaneously to share up-to-date information on age management and project contents. The Project had an internet site at www.O.W.L.project.net, which contained information on the Project and current events. The Project additionally published a bulletin, theme magazine, publication and a CD. Two academic theses were also written on the contents of the Project in Finland. During the

project cycle some partners additionally participated in the event of the Employment Week in Brussels. There has been extensive dissemination of results due to the large number of project partners.

The Management Software application is still under product development, but it will be disseminated among the project partners at its final state at the end of the project. The partners can continue developing the programme, if they like. Moreover, some partners have initiated new projects on ageing work communities, e.g. relating to mentoring processes or transfer of tacit knowledge and these projects will continue after the O.W.L. project has come to an end.

The O.W.L. Project as an Arena for Building a Unified Europe Together

A unified Europe can be built only by working together and learning from each other. EU projects are a means of giving different countries a chance to develop common European practices. Ageing workforce is a joint European problem, but is it a real problem? In the final conference of the O.W.L. project, Juhani Ilmarinen (2007) very felicitously pointed out the research on American clothing industry by Spirduson (1995), which showed that ageing workers were actually more productive than young workers and they had less work absenteeism. Should we change our opinions on ageing workforce? An arena for the development of ageing work communities has been opened between Italy and Finland and our slogan is "Invest in Experience".

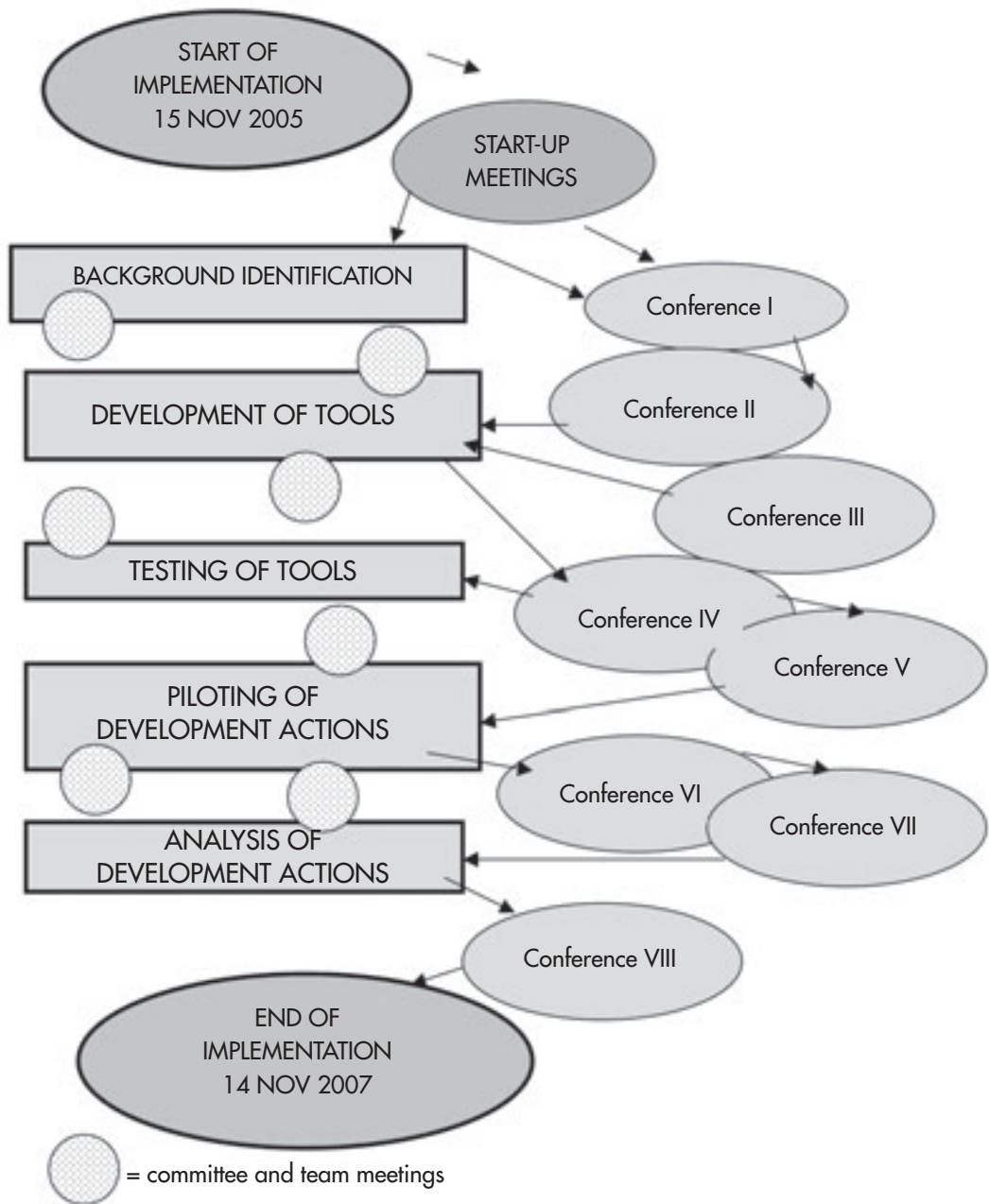


Figure 1. The project cycle

Table 1. Good practices among the partners of the O.W.L. project

1	Recruitment
HUS (Department of Oncology and department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When recruiting personnel, professional competence is the paramount selection criterion, and people of all ages are employed, since work communities need employees with different life situations and backgrounds. Older employees have more experience-based knowledge while younger employees possess skills and knowledge based on renewed educational traditions.
TIETOENATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purpose of recruitment at Processing & Network is both to enable business operations and to support them with appropriate selection of employees. The guideline for the recruitment of new employees is based on a defined recruitment process description, which includes the most important stages of the process as well as the responsibilities of people being involved in the process. The process in short: includes (1) licence for recruitment, (2) drawing up an advertisement, (3) deciding upon the channel of application, (4) processing of application + taking obligation of withdrawal into account, (4) interviews, (5) aptitude/personality tests, (6) safety clarification, and (7) contract of employment.
2	Training, development and promotions
HUS (department of Oncology and department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everybody is entitled to training - Objectivity is valued - Work experience and needs are crucial when deciding upon training - Shared responsibilities; special assignments based on an employee's skills, participation in development teams is supported - Being up-to-date – e.g. age management - Incentives are in use; personal bonus for long-term, skilled employees - Supervision of work - Conditions of qualification for all jobs; vacancies are filled by following normal application procedures - Personnel can deputise their superiors and other personnel in charge of special tasks.
TIETOENATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for training will be discussed at development discussions once a year. Then a personal development plan will be drawn up for each employee. The plan will be monitored and revised regularly. - TietoEnator group provides a number of tailored training sessions, which can be participated with the manager's approval. The training and training methods (e.g. TE Academy and e-learning) are available on intranet. - TietoEnator provides the employees an opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills and, thereby, to find challenging duties. Not only Processing & Network, but the entire management of TietoEnator has valued development of inter-company mobility/ job circulation high in order to be able to face future challenges better, to reach the defined goals, and to cherish the value of mental growth. - The purpose of the inter-company mobility process is to provide an open and efficient labour market within TietoEnator. Therefore, the employee him/herself has the responsibility of taking the first step in changing his/her duties. In addition, each employee can decide him/herself which path to follow. A recruitment system called eMploy, located on the intranet, makes inter-company mobility easier, although new challenges and development opportunities can be found within one's own team/unit, too. - eMploy is a tool which can be used to search for vacancies, applying for them, or for filling in an open application for the company. - "Careers Watch" service can be installed in one's own workstation in order to receive information on vacancies within the company.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dynamic work life (customer needs, technology, competition): TE Talent emplacement & transformation – TE Talent emplacement & transformation is a service provided by HR centre in cooperation with business HR, and targeted to employees (and their managers) threatened to lose their jobs. The purpose of this service is to find as many of these employees as possible a new job within TietoEnator.
FMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work counselling and coaching (aimed both to groups and individuals and are provided by trained specialists) - Careers planning - Mentoring - Education - Long term education and development programs (e.g. a special “academy” for group managers) - In-house mentoring program (increased respect for older workers, who acted as mentors in the program.
SAVIO M.T.	Business course in English
3	Flexible practises
HUS (department of Oncology and department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chance to draw up one’s own roster - Requests will be taken into account - Chance to work part-time - Model of distribution of work: nurse in charge - Chance to take the extra compensation for shift work in form of days-off - Chance to be freed from night shifts for a couple of years before retirement age.
TIETOENATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible working hours, bandwidth +/- 40 h - Part-time retirement - Distance work - Study leaves - Working time reserve (TES).
FMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible working arrangements (generally used among older workers) - Job circulation and possibilities to enrich ones job content.
ABLOY	<p>There is a system of having extra days-off for rest and relaxation for workers who are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - over fifty-eight (58) years old - full-time workers - and have done personal medical check-up and personal fitness test and received a health development plan. <p>The timing of days-off requires the approval of management and days-off cannot be taken in combination with other statutory leaves or holidays. The age of the employee determines the number of days-off per year. The number of days-off increases with age. At first there will be two more days-off every year and after the age of 62 there will be three more days-off per year. The maximum number is twenty days-off per year.</p>
SAVIO M. T.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave remuneration granted in case of: - specialized examinations - death of next of kin - mental indisposition - blood donation - election to public position - work at polling stations - natural catastrophe or calamity - Costs of hospitalisation (2-3 days) - Cellular phone
4	Ergonomics/job design

HUS (Department of Oncology and Department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working place inspection by occupational health care, e.g. ergonomics and training of people in charge of ergonomics - Work is physically hard (about a half of ward patients do not manage on their own, e.g. they need help in moving, washing themselves and turning in bed) and different types of instruments and aids, such as litters, slide sheets, hinged boards, electro-hydraulic beds are used - Work is mentally hard – various interactive relationships among colleagues, patients, patients’ relatives, student trainees, representatives of different occupational groups – team work, different occupational groups have different values
TIETOENATOR	- The company carries out surveys on ergonomics at the work place both regularly and in case needed (e.g. moving, needs for special display glasses).
FMI	- A special focus on ergonomics was possible when FMI moved to a new office building in autumn 2005. Everyone had a possibility to have a consultation session with a physiotherapist on their individual ergonomic needs.
5	Attitudes within the organisation
HUS (department of Oncology and Department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	It has been observed that labour shortage is a real threat and we need to prepare ourselves for it. In addition, new methods need to be developed to prohibit labour shortage, for instance by using flexible working practices. Through the Project people have become more aware of the effects of ageing on people. The number of cancer patients is increasing. Furthermore, more flexible personnel administration would be needed.
TIETOENATOR	ESS, Employee Satisfaction Survey, carried out each year.
SAVIO M. T.	Activity of a supporting association
ó	Any other business concerning the work community
HUS (Department of Oncology and Department of Heart and Thorax Surgery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim of the occupation health care unit at HUS is to promote the comprehensive health and working capacity of employees during the entire career, and to support the work community. - Periodic health checks are carried out for the employees working at risk of getting infected, and for the employees over 40 years of age (e.g. age group health checks). - Working capacity is assessed in relation to the work itself as well as to the encumbering factors if requested by the superior of occupational health care. - Rehabilitation and referral to rehabilitation are an essential part of occupational health care. An employee has the chance to attend a 5 to 7 day "kuntoremontti" (physical redo, i.e. activities in order to improve one's physical condition). Early intervention by rehabilitation includes occupational, medical rehabilitation ASLAK and rehabilitation to maintain working capacity, TYK, aimed at employees with decreased working capacity. - Use of alternation leave; due to labour shortage it is not always possible to get an unemployed person to deputise.
TIETOENATOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventative measures, such as leisure physical activities and club activities, are organised regularly. - Health enhancing physical activities are organised by occupational health care (recommendation of occupational doctor/nurse required). - The personnel have the chance to take part in physical therapy with a referral by an occupational doctor. - Rehabilitation (ASLAK, TYK, AVO-ASLAK) is organised within the company too. - The company works in close cooperation with occupation health care. Each year, a strategy for this field is drawn up.
ABLOY	Agemasters programme includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - medical check-up and personal fitness test - personal fitness programme planning - free use of a special fitness club for older people and also 50 % massage coverage (all Abloy's employees have free use of several fitness clubs, but older workers prefer using their own facilities)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ageing seminars, for example about healthy lifestyle - participating in sporting events, such as hiking and cross-country-skiing - the Agemaster Club for peer interaction.
FMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new building provides good opportunities to physical exercise, e.g. the location is next to the university exercising facilities, and there is also a gym at the office building. At the own gym, professional, individual guidance is provided for a few hours per week. The FMI supports employees to physical health by providing one working hour per week for exercising. - ASLAK is a rehabilitation program provided by KELA (The Social Insurance Institution in Finland), attendants are usually older workers. ASLAK is a long term program. - Free health care services are available for all employees. - Some long term development programs also improve well-being at work community, e.g. developing communication and interaction skills through the in-house group manager program are typical areas of development that work both for individual growth and for work community improvement.
SAVIO M.T.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parking according to the years in service - Grants for difficult situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> family allowance in case of the death of a worker allowance and assistance in difficult situations or serious injuries - Medical allowances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assistance in purchasing drugs and medication grants for special examinations free anti-influenza vaccination

Table 2. Good practices at Brioni

MOTIVATIONS SUMMARY
INTEGRATION/REINTEGRATION OF THE FIFTY-YEAR-OLD WORKERS
1. Widows because of a sudden death of the spouse (or in case of serious accidents)
2. Women left by their husbands (children, different kinds of problems)
3. Disabled or people suffering from a mental illness
4. Integration by upgrading competences after being dismissed
INTEGRATION/REINTEGRATION OF THE WORKERS OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE
1. Preservation of the job after the CCNL period (non-dismissal) and enabling a person to work despite his working precariousness
2. Job sharing within one's family (mothers and daughters, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, etc.)
3. Morning shift to the employees unable to work shifts because of their obligations and family situation
4. Flexible working hours for people who cannot comply with regular shifts because of their bad physical state due to a surgery or intensive medical treatment
5. Special cases grants (integration of immigrants)
6. Hiring of a businessman's family member affected by a bankruptcy or crisis (in order to avoid economic problems)
7. Supporting rural development by hiring a member of a farming family, who thereby find the resources not to forsake the fields
8. Job changes because of the occurrence of particular allergies and physical and psychological problems
9. Reforms for those who are financially worse off
10. Readjustment of some young workers through training

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4 Partner Experiences of the O.W.L Development Project in Their Work Communities

The Project was participated by 25 partners from various fields and sectors. Within the scope of the project, several experiments relating to the O.W.L. work communities were conducted. The most important results relate to the learning outcomes and sharing these outcomes between the project partners. The partners were asked the following three questions pertaining to their experiences of the project:

1. Tell what you have done during the EU-funded project. Describe how the work of the project can be seen in the real life of the company/organisation.
2. What has your company/organisation learned in the O.W.L. project?
3. What knowledge, practices or experience do you want to share with the other partners and with the readers?

The experiences were reflected on by Marita Kaltea and Pia Keijonen, Satu Krohns, Päivi Puusaari, Jarmo Vannemaa, Chiara Barchiesi, Raffaella Pianca and Andrea Satta.

Sense of Commuality and Joint Responsibility - the O.W.L. Project in the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa

Marita Kaltea and Pia Keijonen

The goals of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa in the O.W.L. project have been to increase well-being at work and to promote the transfer of silent (i.e. tacit) knowledge and experience from one worker generation to another. Combination of work and private life and working culture, where sense of commuality and appreciation of different age groups exist, promotes staying and managing at work. These goals are qualitative and the outcomes of improvement measures can be seen only in the future. Improvement actions were started during the O.W.L. project and will still be going on for quite some time.

The Project involved 231 workers, such as directors of nursing, nurse managers, nurses and ward secretaries from the departments of oncology and surgery. Half of the participants were over and another half under 40 years of age. Selected improvement actions were a coaching programme, work time autonomy and mentoring.

Development started with focussed group interviews. It came out that multiprofessional teamwork and working culture, co-operation, management and leadership skills needed development. They all were seen to have great impact on work climate. First, the coaching programme for managers and identified key workers was planned. Themes in coaching included roles, responsibilities, influencing, leadership and promoting sense of commuality. The participants agreed upon

several concrete measures, e.g. introducing new methods and forums for cooperation, information flow, reporting and meetings. Additionally there are plans to organise theme days about new conventions at work.

Work-time-autonomy is a way to combine working time and free time. Workers themselves plan their own shifts in teams on the basis of certain regulations. Skills for planning need to be strengthened still, and ideology and methods need to be disseminated and mainstreamed in other departments.

Mentoring is a fairly long interaction process where experienced worker, mentor, and novice worker, actor, act together to deepen the professional growth and expertise of an inexperienced worker. Mentoring process differs greatly from new employee orientation which often is, for instance, time limited. Professional growth is reciprocal. The goal is to transfer silent knowledge of the aged, experienced worker to the representative of a new worker generation. During autumn 2007, nurse managers and mentors are trained to plan and carry out mentoring processes in their own units. A guidebook for mentoring will be compiled to help their planning. The ideology of mentoring will also be disseminated in other departments.

The O.W.L. project has increased the awareness of the impacts of ageing and the resources of aged workers. It is a great advantage for both the employer and the aged employee to utilise these resources better. There has also been much discussion on how to keep fit and motivated at work. Relevant literature has been acquired and used. Old ideas have been challenged and new fresh ideas searched more actively. For instance, working part time has become a more common practice. Furthermore, meaningful duties and work arrangements for older workers are planned for the future. The existing good practices, such as work time regulations and occupational health care, have been further concretised. Improvement actions will increase well-being at work. They also promote open discussion and responsibility. It will be a long process and changes will take place very slowly but surely. We have also enjoyed a fine opportunity to get to know different practices and culture through our Italian partners.

This process has activated us to evaluate our own practices, learn from the practices of other partners, start improvement actions and develop completely new practices. It has been worthwhile and not only because of new ideas but also because we realised what good practices already exist. We have learned that ageing enriches work. Older workers have deep know-how and an understanding of useful methods and they are in key position in transferring silent, tacit knowledge to other workers. We have also realised that learning new skills or procedures does not depend on age. The most important factor is the employee's possibility to influence his/her own work. At the same time, the employees' feeling of their capabilities increases and they consider themselves important members of a team, and a significant part of the whole organisation. This enhances the sense of communality.

Transferring Tacit Knowledge and IT Training in Abloy

Satu Krohns

Abloy Oy has developed an age management programme called Agemasters. The target group consists of the personnel aged 55 years and over. The background issues for the program have been the need for managing the age structure of employees, maximising the well-being of older workers and harnessing know-how exchanges between employees.

Since November 2005, Abloy has been a partner in the O.W.L. project. In the Project Abloy's implementation actions have included basic information technology training for agemasters and a workshop for supervisors how to transfer tacit knowledge.

Transferring Tacit Knowledge: To ensure that the agemasters pass on their experience to younger workers, Abloy made knowledge transfer a priority for 2007. Early in the year, a Finnish expert Anneli Valpola led a workshop to help supervisors identify the tacit knowledge in their organisation and learn how to capture it and pass it on. "The biggest challenge for us is to transfer tacit knowledge from these very experienced people to the new ones," says Antti Piitulainen, vice president of operations.

IT Training: The need for IT training for agemasters came out through work ability survey made as a part of the O.W.L. project. Agemasters felt they lack basic IT skills compared to their younger colleagues. The IT training was planned together with agemasters to satisfy their needs and expectations. The IT training with thirty participants has been a success. The first course took place in May 2007 and two more courses will be arranged in autumn 2007. There were ten participants in the first course and for eight of them the course is the first IT training ever. However, most participants have already a computer at home and many agemasters use email and the Internet on daily basis.

Agemaster Erkki Piironen, 57 wants to improve his computer skills and has a long-term goal, too. "When I buy a new computer, I would like to be able to install it myself", he says. Piironen has used computer for the first time at work for twenty years ago. He sees the agemaster IT training as an important step towards his goal.

TietoEnator Processing & Network in the Older Workers' Life Project

Päivi Puusaari

TietoEnator Processing & Network is an independent company in TietoEnator family in the ICT industry. ICT companies are considered to represent a modern, young branch of business. The industry is, however, fifty years old and has become more or less normal business. At the moment, the first employees with a full career in TietoEnator are retiring.

In TietoEnator Processing & Network 192 employees of 1300 are over 55 years old. On the other hand, the company recruits younger employees and the average age of employees is 43 years. Older workers have valuable knowledge, especially of customer relations, to be passed to younger employees while young employees often have the latest knowledge of technology. Transfer of both types of knowledge is important.

When we focus on older employees, it is important to maintain their ability and motivation to learn new things as long as they are in working life, which nowadays means until they are 68 years. If not so, they will be forced to retire earlier or become redundant during bigger organisational changes.

Actions in the O.W.L.

At the beginning we delivered a jointly made questionnaire to 60 of 180 employees of 55 and older. Results were published in the O.W.L. project and communicated to the employees participating in the enquiry.

In May 2006 there was a group discussion of eight (8) employees on job satisfaction, which was carried out together with Novetos. In September there was a feedback discussion in the group and the ideas were developed further. The outcome of the group discussion was communicated to the steering group (Country Board of Finland in PN). The steering group set up two actions: Master 56+ and a follow-up of "Mainframe Professionals", which are explained in more detail below.

Mainframe Professionals is a two-year project of transferring tacit knowledge from senior employees to younger people - tacit knowledge of technology which is still used by customers but does not exist in the training programmes of universities and other educational institutions. The project itself is longer than the O.W.L. and the results cannot be reached within the project period so it was decided not to include this programme in the O.W.L. project.

Master 56+ was a programme for employees 56 years and older. Its purpose was to maintain and improve the physical health and motivation of older employees in order to enable them to stay in working life longer. The programme was arranged together with professionals of medicine, physiotherapy, nutrition and psychology. The programme included lectures and physical exercise

once a week within working hours in ten weeks time from January 2007 onwards. In the beginning 28 participants were divided in two groups on the basis of a physical test. At the end of the period they had an interview and in autumn 2007 they will have another physical test where the impact of longer exercise period will be tested. In May 2007, the employees of Master 56+ programme participated in piloting of the Management Software as a test group.

Lessons Learnt

The O.W.L. has reminded the organisation of the importance to maintain work ability and motivation till retirement, which is a challenging project. It is important to study the situation, environment and culture of each organisation: what is general, and what is specific or typical of the organisation. Moreover, employees' life outside their work environment should not be overlooked. It will help us to draw conclusions and see the phenomena in the right perspective. To have two participating EU countries and two cultures with quite different institutions of their own and to have partners from different sectors of the society, makes it possible to compare differences and similarities and find new ideas. All these, we believe, will help us to draw conclusions and see the phenomena in the right perspective in order to help senior employees to remain longer in working life.

Knowledge to Share

Getting old is a physical state but it is as much a state of mind. It was noticed that keeping up good physical condition helps to keep up and improve one's working capability. It is important to maintain the ability to learn, in the first place. We want to believe that motivation is the key word. Motivation will increase if a senior employee notices that s/he can learn new things and share and transfer knowledge with colleagues. At the same time s/he has a strong sense of being an active member of a professional group.

Learning process becomes a self-supporting instrument - the more you learn the better you learn. As the ICT branch undergoes continuous transformation, employees face new technologies and methods all the time. Continual practice of one's learning process helps to absorb new things quicker and with less pain. Long experience in working life makes it easier for senior employees to see new information in a wider perspective and in connection to their existing knowledge.

The O.W.L. at FMI

Jarmo Vannemaa

At the beginning of the Project FMI representative in the O.W.L. was Merja Raassina, who no longer works for FMI. She was followed by me and when I became a project manager the Project was already in full flow. The deputy manager came in later as well, and therefore we are unable to tell exactly what the reasons to take part were in the first place. I can imagine, though, that working with Italians in this area was considered very interesting and challenging. We have had many similar development projects at FMI in the past years, so I think that this international dimension was the main reason to join this particular project. Additionally, many Finns have visited Italy and they have seen with their own eyes how older people are respected there. Family connections seem to be tight and at least from the outsider's point of view all kinds and all ages of people live there in harmony. When Finns have been asked, what is their favourite country, Italy is often on top of the list. So, Italy is interesting - especially, when you are offered an opportunity to dig a little deeper.

We marketed the O.W.L. for FMI staff using this Italian dimension. Of course, we pointed out also the official slogan "Improvement of personal life quality...", but assumably people would not have been interested purely from that perspective because of the similar projects carried out earlier at FMI. We told the staff that now they have a possibility to look how things are done in another culture, which is, however, familiar and close enough to us. We were right - people became very interested.

We were not disappointed in our expectations of the Italians. We heard amazing stories when visiting Italy, e.g. about the history of Penne and Brioni factory. When we told people at FMI how suits are made there like nowhere else in the world, people's eyes started to shine and they wanted to know more. How that kind of top quality is achieved year after year? This is a crucial question also for FMI. We can survive only through quality, because basically weather can be forecasted from any place of the world. Additionally we learned that quality is often guaranteed by experienced, older workers. How can we keep those workers in working life longer?

At FMI we have done almost everything we possibly can what comes to working surroundings. Buildings, ergonomics, equipment - everything is, I must say, very functional and of high quality. This is confirmed by several visiting researchers who have been impressed when they have seen the working environment, although there is no Fontana di Trevi in front of the negotiation room window. Furthermore, occupational healthcare is well organised in Finland. It does not take more than 20 minutes to visit a doctor if needed at FMI. We have also paid attention to inspiring office interior with the best possible furniture and the best possible ergonomics. Employees are equipped with the latest technology, i.e. laptops, cell phones, home internet connections, etc. Gyms, saunas and other facilities are available at Dynamicum building and employees can visit them during their working hours as well as on private time.

What Have We Done - the Experiments

Because physical working environment seems to be fine at FMI, in our pilot projects we concentrated on people. There were some twelve employees who attended Chiball sessions which were organised by Novetos. People were very satisfied with the gentle way how Chiball improved body balance and relaxed their brain. Some continued using the method on their own after the sessions. Chiball could be an ideal relaxation and refreshment technique for work places, because it is suitable for all ages and can be carried out during coffee or lunch breaks and does not necessarily require specific clothing. This first pilot project was carried out in winter 2007. The combination of activity and relaxation gives strength for older people while being gentle at the same time. In conventional sports injuries often occur especially with older people.

Weather observation inspectors (i.e. *Havainnontarkastajat* in Finnish) is a group of eight workers plus their group manager, who are in quite a difficult situation. Most of them are older women with little formal education compared to other FMI employees, who mostly have formal higher education. Their work will be replaced by computers within a year or two. What kind of future will they have at FMI? Do they have any future? To find a solution we started our second experiment for the O.W.L. Some of the workers in the group were very keen on working for the solution, while some others did not. In the beginning, the latter group considered the Project to be waste of time. However, everyone was "forced" to join in. The attitudes of the latter group changed during the Project and everyone was involved at least to certain extent after a couple of meetings.

This second experiment consisted of four learning workshops, of which two concentrated on improving computer skills. Two days were dedicated to participants' development in social skills. One of the four workshops is yet to come when writing this article. To give participants personal support, a company called Kultainen Jaguaari offered a coaching programme for each individual, which was led by Merja Raassina. Everyone had also a so-called "godfather". Godfathers are skilled and appreciated workers at FMI. This process is still going on. Other people involved in the process were myself and Hanna Wasara (deputy manager), a doctor, psychiatrist and NLP-trainer Aini Rautio, as well as IT experts of our own.

The second project resulted in one person finding a completely new career at FMI. Two decided to take a year off, which has not been our purpose in the O.W.L., but in the long term it can help those people to remain healthy and stay longer in working life. One person started to study to become a telecommunications engineer with the support from FMI. She will continue working during her studies. Some participants will retire according to their original plan. However, everyone is more satisfied now regardless of what decisions they made.

Finally, the third experiment was carried out again by Novetos experts. FMI's role was to arrange the place, time and possibilities for anyone willing to take part. The group size was limited to 20 people, according to the wishes of Novetos experts. The participants got an

extraordinary experience, which we could read from the participants' faces as well as from the feedback that was gathered after the three intensive days. During those days everyone taking part was personally challenged. The aim was to test somewhat extreme methods. Taking part in this kind of experiment can be slightly confusing at first, so it could be better to analyse the results later, when participants have more perspective for the things that happened in this experimentation.

Learning Outcomes

Working in an international project dealing with issues such as life quality is challenging. Cultures are different and not always comparable to each other. How to measure quality of life? What is appreciated and considered important in Italy - what in Finland? There are many questions to be answered before even being able to start to work. On the other hand, this diversity is interesting. We can understand and learn about things that we did not even know exist. I think we should give up the aim of exact measuring and rather base our results on people's experiences - their real, authentic life stories.

Every human is an individual. There is no standard way of doing things. Everyone needs to be treated individually. Far too generalised conclusions are not applicable. However, laws should be amended for better and I hope that the O.W.L. results will give some implications for that. A lot has been done by talented people, so I am sure that the results are good, although not all visible yet.

Being on the human side of development, the results from the experiments are not so obvious and immediate as would be the case if the experiments would have been done for example in the area of ergonomics. As previously stated, we have many development actions going on at FMI that are very similar to those of the O.W.L. Therefore the question arises: What is the result of what? This question is not, however, a very important one from our perspective. Most important is that we get results and there is continuous development. One consequence of the O.W.L. is that issues relating to working life are now perceived from older workers' point of view. The perspective is also wider than in many other similar projects because of the international partners' and experts' contribution to the project. FMI as a company is very committed to sustaining the positive changes achieved through our experiments and pilot projects, as well as dedicated to the outcomes of the whole project, although I strongly suspect that most of the results can be seen only in the long run.

Point of Views from IRFO

Chiara Barchiesi

During the O.W.L. project, IRFO's staff worked on four main topics:

1) From the beginning until March 2006, IRFO supported DipSa in the study of economic and financial aspects of old workers' influence on business; surveying the relationship between past production processes and critical aspects for workers; assessing the indicators of economic and financial performances; analysing the typology of critical aspects, compiling a questionnaire for investigating the financial aspects of the firms chosen for the experiment. It identified the typology of critical aspects, i.e. medical and psychological indicators and analysed them together with the indicators of economic and financial performances.

2) From April 2006 to November of the same year IRFO studied the first draft tools and the scheme for software architecture, in which DMB Solutions had the main role. IRFO and DMB Solutions worked in collaboration with SIPE, S.I.I. and DiPSA. Together with the other organisations IFRO studied a system of assets, indicators and indexes more specifically to evaluate the companies' state and performance with the software structure. It defined the economic, financial, profitable and social assets with the experts of Dipsa, DMB Solutions, SIPE and S.I.I. Finally, it participated in drawing up all the indicators (economic and profitability, social, medical and psychological) needed for the software architecture.

3) From November 2006 up to date, IFRO has had many roles: It supported Dipsa in the management and realisation of all the economic documents for the MS, as well as their data entry in the software; it cooperated in creating all the documents for the software design and data entry. In February 2007 it was supposed to organise the conference in Pescara, which was, however, later given to Sipe. In any case, before this change of plans, the whole IRFO staff worked on the organisation of the conference and continued helping Sipe, e.g. by taking care of the agenda, logistics and audience. It realised the general description of the Project and partners' presentations in the e-book and on CD.

4) Finally, IRFO took part in all the national and transnational conferences and meetings in order to implement the Project in the best way.

From a practical point of view, some members of IRFO's staff had to spend time to study the topics and aspects mentioned above (e.g. economic indicators/index, the questionnaire), to enter data in the software and to help SIPE with the conference organisation by drawing up the agenda, getting in touch with the suppliers, etc. Concerning the realisation of CD/E-book, they had to read all the documents of the O.W.L. project to summarise them as well as to research the partners' information collected through the web or through direct contacts. In order to take part in the conferences and meetings, they had to travel, which required some arrangements of their ordinary work in the organisation.

We all consider our work in the Project a great opportunity to grow as an organisation and as

individual experts. We had to refer to the e-mails and O.W.L documentation often to understand the work of all the partners and more importantly to communicate with them in the best way. A big challenge for us has been the fact that we had to work and think in a new way with people having a culture different from ours and to communicate in English. Normally, all the members of IRFO staff, even the ones who were less involved with the Project, met at least once to analyse all the documents of the O.W.L. project to understand them and to cooperate for its improvement.

We all can learn from the Project because it is transnational. It is very useful to understand how to work with various people, who work, act and think in a different way. Therefore, with the help of the O.W.L. process we learned how to cooperate, communicate and understand others. Communication and understanding are, in our opinion, the most important outcomes not only for the O.W.L. project, but also for everyday life. Moreover, we think that the knowledge of English is very important in such collaboration. Everybody must know and study English or otherwise it can be very difficult to communicate, read or write. Finally, a very good coordination is needed in all EU-funded projects. As there are many partners and various organisations from different countries, a coordinating partner with good capacities is absolutely needed.

In conclusion we would like to say to all the partners as well as to the readers that the three points mentioned above - communication, understanding and good coordination - are vital for every type of work, but especially for collaborative EU-funded projects. Finally, we would like to highlight the importance of English skills in transnational projects.

Perspectives of the Province of Pordenone

Raffaella Pianca and Andrea Satta

The Province has taken part in the Project as an intermediary organisation, which has also had the role of monitoring the territory and functioning as a dynamic observatory studying social phenomena. Thus the Province has been involved in the issues and themes suggested by the O.W.L. project.

During the first phases of the Project we organised a national conference in Pordenone and internal seminars with the partners. The event involved local politicians, the University and other educational institutions, employers, the Observatory of Social Politics and trade organisations. Some students of local secondary schools also attended the conference. During the conference we discussed first the survey and its results. Subsequently, we analysed and corrected the produced materials. We met with the Observatory of Social Politics to understand how we could involve the provincial employees. We defined the best strategy and methods to work with human resources. Afterwards we started the experimental phase, chose the focus group and defined improvement actions. In the meantime, we met with trade and employee organisations. The meetings resulted in a very comprehensive list of improvement actions. We met employers and their stakeholders and proposed and discussed some improvement actions. We decided to experiment with only one action in each participating company. The actions included developing a learning method of good practices relating to dietary and ergonomic aspects for the Province and giving a medical support for a private company (Savio MT Spa). We worked hard to involve our SMEs in the experimental phase.

We used Management Software and entered there all the data we had received. Then we started the first and the second cycle with a focus group and with a specified improvement action. In the beginning of June we had all the SMEs entered in the database and at the beginning of September we finished the second cycle, which was followed by the data entry of the conclusive cycle.

Savio MT Spa has been a good sub-partner for us and an excellent experimental company. Besides improvement actions relating to life quality, it is worth keeping in mind that other actions of other projects have at the same time aimed at informing and constantly sensitising the same territory. Encouraged by the O.W.L. experience, the Province has activated a new project *Good Practices for the Improvement of the Living and Professional Conditions of Care Assistants*.

We learned to share best practices with our Finnish (North Karelia and Helsinki) and Italian partners (Abruzzo, Sicily), as well as with our local partners (Savio, Social Mutual Company) and other projects (Ipertools, Equal Occupabile, Equal Ipotesi di Lavoro, Actions against moral and physical harassment in the working environment, Office of the Equal Opportunities Advisor, Good Practices For the Improvement of the Living and Professional Conditions of Care Assistants). We have learned to understand problems, capitalise on experience, encourage relationships

between old and young workers, understand physical and psychological difficulties, and to understand the fear of getting old, the value of economic security and the professionalism of old workers. We learned to involve local stakeholders, such as political decision-makers, the University and other educational institutions, employers, the Observatory of Social Politics and trade organisations.

We also acquired new sensibility to involve more than 500 persons representing different sectors, such as old workers (Savio MT and Provincia of Pordenone), professionals of the social sector (Observatory for Social Politics), trade organisations, companies and social mutual companies. We have learnt something about the modalities of information and accumulated deeper knowledge of various problems concerning workers, e.g. young workers' relation to senior workers. We have been confronted with national and international realities different from ours and with public and private organisations very different from each other. All this has helped us to gain deeper knowledge and thus developed our expertise.

The Project has been very interesting since it generated new modes of thinking as a process of cultural exchange and learning and opened new horizons on increasing mobility in Europe now and in the future. The Project also revealed the need to promote culture and cross-cultural interaction, when it manifested how each participant can contribute to the common good, and how different cultural traditions and patrimony may enrich the final products.

The participation in an European project has allowed us to open a window and start tackling with some of the questions pertaining to senior workers, whose aim is to keep on working for a certain number of years. We would like to introduce a new approach of "being old at work", a method of disseminating knowledge within the territory and a network of various stakeholders. This makes it interesting to focus on the role of the Province and its development until today and on its function as one of the project partners in such an important EU partnership.

In sum, my observations about the Project are the following: To have a place where to reflect on the contents, would have made it easier to step into the next phases of the Project. It would have also helped to avoid misunderstandings caused by the lack of knowledge regarding the Project as a whole (aims, operative process, intermediate results and typologies of involvement of the members) or regarding the participants especially in this case when they come from different realities and represent different interests. We have not been able to incorporate the project aims with social, economic and organisational contents, but have rather focused on the final product.

Nonetheless, I am sure that several of the final products are of high quality. The reasons for the quality are that

- we have started a virtuous cycle making the working population aware of the attention we pay to the quality of their life.
- we have interested private concerns, although differently consistent and important, and have promoted the discussion on the topics.

- we have roused an innovative way of thinking about gender differences in Italian organisations, still very sexist, and we have done this particularly at work places.
- working together (as Finns, Italians, etc.) in the Project has forced us to communicate in a common language and to refresh our school knowledge of English. We also got a deeper knowledge of some systems of welfare and political management of labour and social politics.
- we have spotted out other areas which to research further. These relate to the topic of life quality at work and the local as well as national and international organisation of work. We have been able to gather documentation to support our ideas (forms, interviews, etc.).
- we worked the results of the Project with experts.
- we have acquired new tools to overcome difficulties, e.g. listening against mobbing, attention to life styles, instruments of flexibility.
- we produced a software and tested it, although it is not quite adequate for our public administration.

We intend to have a session in order to reflect on this subject further. In general, we propose that there should be at least one appointment each year. The evaluation of the partnership is relevant and still open. It should be the outcome of a thorough analysis and possibly extensible to future projects of similar kind. Personally I felt that the Project was very large and diversified and it was difficult to manage it, particularly when the management mainly concentrated on the attainment of objects or final product or on cost management. However, the local management was effectively led. Social learning in a group is one of the topics to be investigated in the future.

5 Change of Working Life and Personnel Management

Galliano Cocco

If we focus on social, economic and working sceneries in Europe and in the Western world as a whole, we can notice that they have largely changed and that they are still changing. Undoubtedly, we may assert that during the last twenty years, the most developed societies have been affected by deep changes - from an economic, social and cultural standpoint - causing an increasingly high number of observers and researchers to believe that we are facing the final historical passage from an industrial society to a post-industrial one (Touraine 1970; Toffler 1987). The most evident indicators are certainly the progressive deindustrialisation, the booming of the service sector, the quick development and spreading of technological, social, cultural innovation processes, the complexity of the socioeconomic tissue, the constant decentralisation of production processes in highly flexible medium-small units as well as the increasing importance of company coordination, granted by the setting up of multiple relational networks. All these features usually characterise highly-developed societies and lead us to maintain the view that the industrial societies we have lived with and we are still living with are on the wane.

The decline of the old industrial world, which does not imply the industry disappearance but its decomposition and recomposition according to new shapes, is affected by relevant economic and social phenomena that can be summarised as follows:

- radical change of the qualitative and quantitative nature of employment
- centrality of highly-technological sectors and services which are increasingly leading the economies of highly-developed countries
- international and dynamic economic relations and exchanges
- total unstableness of the markets that questions any rigid and long-term production planning, thus threatening the steadiness of large traditional companies (Crozier 1990; Crozier & Normann 1990).

Socioeconomic Changes and Their Complexity

The above social, political and organisational sceneries - all interrelated and intertwined - lead to specific and unavoidable organisational contexts where complexity paradigms prevail; this means that workers are highly skilled in terms of relational capacity, pliability and negotiation, whereas organisations, rich in information and expertise, are characterised by an open, systemic and "synergetic" culture (Haken 2004).

Complexity implies also a systemic approach and a circular thought: change leads to the gradual overcoming of the linear thought, of the division in disciplinary compartments, of the mono-specialisation with the consequent development and spreading of a culture focused on planning, sharing, communicating and negotiating (Bocchi & Ceruti 1985, Haken 1983; Crozier & Friedberg 1978).

If it is true that other historical periods have gone through radical changes, none of them has undergone so many radical changes, involving so many people at the same time and at any latitude. Never before as during the last decades, have we faced such an increasing functional differentiation inside companies, organisations, groups. "...The number and the variety of social subsystems are on the increase, the autonomy of their codes grows, the functional interrelations and interdependences of the various differentiated subsystems thicken. Companies have no longer a centre, they can no longer be described through the spatial metaphor of the pyramid, nor through the model of the body controlled by one or more vital centres" (AA, VV 1987).

Briefly, the problem of the crisis of institutional and procedural bodies is evident if compared with the need for general consent, pluralism, participation rather than necessary sharing, creativity as well as task and power distribution.

On the basis of the above considerations, M. Crozier and E. Friedberg (1978) set the following question:

How is it possible that from the interaction of a large number of people - each one with personal projects, desires and fancies which are not necessarily consistent with the others' ones - emerges an order that separately seems to be simple and rational?

Here comes the need for organisations to change, since what "keeps the organisation together" cannot be reduced to mere rationality: the latter, whenever present, is only one of the aspects of a complex reality, characterised by other facets and dimensions. In particular, individual and group psychological dynamics participate in the reaction process of collective behaviours and meanings. Furthermore, this process is characterised and supported by a more substantial circularity than the one inherent in the systemic concept of *feedback*.

Individuals/Work/Organisation Relationships

On the basis of the above described changes, what has been so far considered as decisive for any human organised activity - the capacity to communicate and interact - nowadays becomes increasingly necessary with the additional structural requirement for changing, innovating, sharing and delegating. However, all these dimensions are largely connected with the capacity to consider as priority and central revising the role of human resources and of the "intellectual capital" of whatever organisation.

After all, new rationalisation logic has been outlined as opposed to the classical logic based on the interlacement of four fundamental and absolutely new dimensions: innovation capacity, overturn of the quality-quantity ratio (with the latter prevailing over the former), and human resource centrality, listening and learning capacity.

In fact, the selective qualitative criterion prevailing over the "quantitative obsession", typical of production up to recent years, shows deep social and organisational implications, since it requires large and constant investments in intellectual capital, that is in human resources either qualified or to be re-qualified, the only ones capable of making the most of experiences, by

learning from the problems they constantly generate, as well as of granting, through learning, both innovation and reaction.

However, if on the one side organisations are increasingly requested to turn into *learning organisations*, that is organisations characterised by the capacity of learning quickly since it grants a competitive advantage with respects to others, on the other side, we cannot think of organisational learning without effective communication among people and in the context where they interact, characterised by circularity and open-mindedness, rather than inflexibility and dogmatism. Furthermore, as conveniently underlined by many, within a closed and unsuitable environment, learning and consequently changing would be just superficial, thus leading to casual and short-term improvements (Rotondi 1994).

For these reasons, the need for revising the individual/organisation relationship inside working and non-working contexts becomes central. In order to do their utmost, the members of any work team are requested to be *empowered* and involved in their role change with respect to previous times.

We may assume an organisation change outlined as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. The change of organisation

PAST	PRESENT-FUTURE
Pyramid	Circle
Command and control hierarchy	Flexible organisation
Constant rate production	Variable rate production
Attention to one's tasks	Attention to the shared mission
Unidirectional and descending communication	Bidirectional and circular communication
Definite and limited relationships	Direct and extended relationships
Chain	Network
Mass production	Mass « personalisation »
Consolidation	Innovation
Centralised	Decentralised
Sectionalism	Globality
Conflict	Integration
Reactive	Proactive
Efficiency-oriented management	Change-oriented management

Workers belonging to the organisation undertake attitudes and behaviours that can be summarised as in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Human resource participation

YESTERDAY	TODAY/TOMORROW
Carried out	Plans/designs/carries out
Retained information	Shares information
Worked alone	Works in a team
Avoided responsibilities	Searcher for new responsibility
Refused change	Is enthusiastic about changes
Expected detailed directions	Expects esteem and support
Depended	Is autonomous
Always carried out the same tasks	Has always new ideas and initiatives

Work Dimension and Worker's Life

On analysing the scenery changes affecting European workers nowadays and in the next future, we may assert that today's workers are characterised by some dimensions that, indirectly, require psychological and mental skills, not requested in the past.

As already underlined by many researchers, here follows a brief description of the aforesaid dimensions (Chmiel 1998; Drenth et al. 1998).

1. The first features of many working activities nowadays concerns the **distance between the worker and his action results**. In the past, this phenomenon was almost absent, since the worker used to run a sector or a physical space where his/her action ended and over which he/she could exert a total control. Today, the separation between operator and object, operator and computer controlled process is often sharp; the worker has to run an increasingly expanded and symbolised activity, often devoid of physical and sensorial reference points. In order to cope with the system lack of transparency, due to the above described elements, he/she has to resort to complex mental representations and to an increasingly high number of influence processes.

2. The second element characterising today's work concerns the **acceleration of processes**, due to the information technology at work, with a consequent reduction in the operator answering times. The shorter is the time the operator has to give a correct answer, the fewer will be the worker's opportunity to search for information, to assess it, or to forecast the application results. The above said reduces the efficiency of the representation of tasks and social interaction dynamics.

3. A third factor regards the **unstablensness of working processes**. Highly technological work is often subject to variation factors that sometimes are very sudden. This leads to a mental overwork requesting higher attention, forecasting and decision-making capacities. Today's work requires new professional skills and competences where mental work is always in the front line.

4. A fourth factor refers to the **contextual presence of dynamic factors and different cycles**. Information technology systems due their complexity to the high number of subsystems, that is to the different socio-technical components. The latter are characterised by numerous dimensions that, in order to achieve their objects, work with different times: from a few hours to some days or entire weeks. In this context, the operator is requested further attention and diagnostic skills, due to the fact the information technology system require parallel controls, with different starting and finishing times. Due to the contextual presence of dynamic factors and different cycles, operators are requested significant relational and communication skills, since such activities, along with involving different operators, imply also the succession of different work teams.

5. A further feature of today's work is **cooperation**. This dimension is required by the latest information technologies. As a matter of fact, the latter, by increasing the connections among the socio-technical system parts, gives rise to complex communication networks at a company, intercompany, national and even international level. The above considerations confirm interindividual and distance work, enriching at the same time social debates and the number of people involved. Cooperation at work, promoted by information programmes, provides researchers with a field of study where cognitive and social processes are characterised by new features.

To sum up, we may conclude that the socioeconomic scenery where today's companies and organisations act is very different from the one in the recent past. The changes occurred during the '80s and continued throughout the following twenty years; let us forecast that in the early decades of 2000, social economy will undergo a radical change. As to companies, we may forecast the enforcement of a decentralisation process, the need for the diversification of the demand to meet, the compliance with market globalisation, the quick adjustment to technological evolution and to the increasingly high complexity of economic and social systems.

As to working processes that will affect workers' life, further considerations regard the fact that, due to market globalisation, companies will be compelled to find resources (raw materials, semi-finished products, human resources) wherever possible, at the most convenient price. At the same time, also reference targets will largely change: products will be likely to be destined to the markets in south-eastern Asia, as well as in Australia or North America, with a consequent diversification of the demand with reference to the target considered.

Finally, as regards people and groups, increasingly often they will have to experience, throughout their working life, accelerated change phases as a consequence of merging, *reengineering* and *downsizing* processes. Acting in such a complex context becomes a real challenge for the worker, since it requires the revision of consolidated conceptual instruments and management models.

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6 Coaching Approach at Workplaces

Raisa Lindroos

During recent years, there has been lots of talk on drastic changes in leadership. The globalised world sets new challenges to people and organisations. Quite new skills are to be learned in rapidly changing work life. Never before in work life demands of this size have been for set cooperation and utilising the diversity.

The former knowledge of good management and leadership is out of date, because it was collected in very different circumstances. The traditional hierarchical enterprises were successful in stable conditions and their methods can be seen as great obstacles in the complicated business life of today (Juuti 2005).

Modern organisations have low management structure and are based on good networking. There is a growing number of short-term employees to cooperate with. There are also many temporary relationships and occasional encounters in artificial environments, which can make smooth communication difficult. Earlier people had face-to-face meetings, but now they have many daily contacts by networking, Skype, e-mails and phones, which burden the ability to process all incoming information. The fast and continuously changing environment is a challenge to know-how. Furthermore, virtual organisations of this kind need a new management style.

The philosophy of leadership is no longer based on commanding and controlling. Nowadays, the leaders need interaction skills, the ability to create a connection to deeper purposes of human life, the ability to activate imagination of other people and the skill to inquire values and make moral choices (Aaltonen & Junkkari 2000).

Management of Hope

“Good management is able to create an inspiring atmosphere in the organisation, where all the members of the organisation can show their best sides and where all are encouraging each others to aspire to the collective goals,”

Juuti, a consultant and researcher, announces his vision. Furthermore, he claims that even the organisations and groups of ordinary people can reach the top level performance, when they first learn to recognise certain principles relating to work and interaction. He believes that the success of an organisation is always connected with hope (Juuti 2005).

“The hope activates the positive energy of life, joy, humour and inspiration in a person. The hope brings them forth in people in the way that life and action have a purpose. On the contrary, the despair leads into destruction and into the loss of meaningfulness and lust of life.”

The management of hope is based on an idea that people create the world as a consequence of interaction. People reconcile themselves with others and agree on how things should go. In the discussions of everyday life, people share their thoughts and make deals about the goals and destination.

Juuti emphasises the fact that the leadership never depends on one person only, but it is a construction between people and their thinking processes. Leadership does not exist in the leader, but in human relationships. It is not a characteristic of a person but the result of interaction in the work community. Leadership will evolve when the relationships between people improve. To illustrate the improvement process, Juuti created the steps for better interaction as follows:

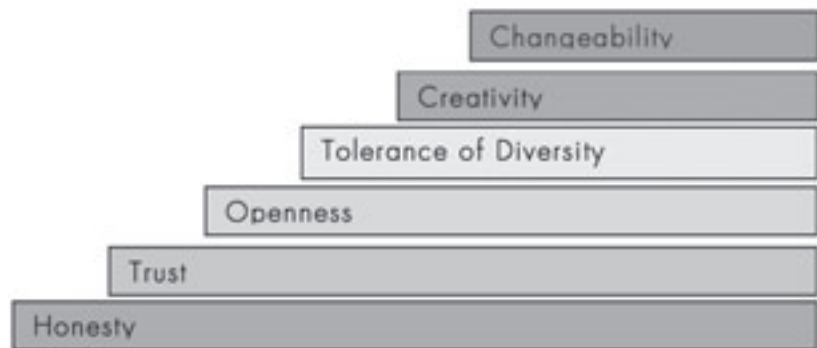


Figure 1. The stairs of functional interaction in communities (Juuti 2005)

Juuti (2005) states that the basis for the development of a work community is truthfulness and honesty. People ought to share their real thoughts, and share them in appropriate forums such as meetings instead of talking behind other people’s backs in the corridors. People should keep their promises and if they can’t, they should inform about the changes in the plan and ask for help. Everyone is responsible for his/her own truthfulness, but s/he is also active in giving corrective or inspiring feedback immediately, not after six months. Trust can grow only if there is enough evidence of fair treatment and behaviour. Trust can be built only by person to person conversations, by talking the relationship through. Forgiveness, which might be occasionally needed, does not take place in loneliness but in relationships with the others.

After taking these two steps, it is possible to have openness in the community. It gives space to create value for people having different backgrounds, personalities, ages and styles of behaviour and action. When a group has much diversity to benefit from, the team can multiply their creativity because there are so many different ideas and point of views to use. Furthermore, the more creative an organisation is, the easier it is to make and adapt to changes. Moreover, people can enjoy the flow of work.

Consequently, it is time move from the era of individualism to the power of communities, to

associated attitudes and to group spirit. Development work is needed to find means of how to help people to co-operate more, how they will first tolerate each other and then be content together and succeed as a team?

How then to manage more virtual organisations working in different countries through modern technology? The research group of virtual companies from Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) has named several loading factors in virtual organisations. When the work is decentralised to different teams, units, communities, countries and continents in this kind of an organisation, workers will have several loading factors of work relating to diversity, travelling, separate work time, short-term shifts and electronic communication (Kokko 2004). There is a great need for the development tools to ease the load of people. Especially, there seems to be a niche for a new method to connect people and sharpen the future visions- it is coaching.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is a development tool spreading faster than any other all over the world in the field of business consulting. Coaching is supplied both to the board and supervisors, communities and teams and to individuals (CEOs, experts, talents, employees in new positions and situations).

The concept of coaching originally comes from sports training methodology. Everyone has seen ice hockey games on television and those tough guys chewing gum, coaches, who give instructions and scream at players trying to make them give their best. Physical coaching originates from a long-lasting history in sports, but after some success stories many athletes have started programs in mental and psychological coaching, as well. Nowadays "coaches" are also used in many other areas of life, for decorating homes, planning gardens, losing weight, winning song contests, styling images, getting to university, to name a few.

Coaching at workplace adapts theories and applied tools on the basis of human potential and growth. It differs from counselling, mentoring and therapy, although they all have many common features. Table 1 gives examples of the differences between traditional training and coaching.

Table 1. Differences between workplace training and coaching

Training	Coaching
Training supplies information. It will increase knowledge and describe principles.	Coaching aims to use of information. It will increase knowledge and capacity.
Training can observe wide and complicated theoretical entities.	Coaching aims to simplify issues so that they can be applied in practise.
Training is based on general theory and it tells possibilities of action.	Coaching is pragmatic and aims at the prearranged goal.
The impact of training occurs afterwards and can be seen as an increase of knowledge.	Coaching impacts on the action of participants and the attitudes already during the coaching process.
Training is one-way information transfer.	Coaching is bidirectional interaction.
In training the participant is able to listen passively.	In coaching everyone takes part in activities.

According to the International Coach Federation (ICF) (2007),

“Professional coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organisations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life”.

Sir Whitmore, who is a globally known business coach from Britain and a former motor racing champion, describes:

“I believe that coaching represents and symbolises the collective societal shift from hierarchy towards self-responsibility and it is vitally important that at this time of environmental, economic and social instability that coaching plays a major role in promoting better forms of leadership and the evolutionary self development in us all upon which our very survival may depend.”

How much of our full potential do we normally use? Whitmore has made many enquires among his clients. The “right” answer to the question is 40 %. Then, what is the principal inner obstacle that prevents us manifesting our full potential? Why don’t we use the full potential or even 80% of it? The main obstacle is fear. We are afraid of doing different things than normally, we are afraid of success, we hear internal belittling voices “you can’t do it”, “it’s not worth to try”, “don’t make a fool out of yourself”, “stay” or “what people might think of you”. We are not ready to take risks and have enough courage (Whitmore 2007).

Spontaneity and Creativity as Forces in Change

The inventor of psychodrama and sociodrama Jacob Moreno wrote in his main book: "Who shall survive". He had one core principle and focus: the passionate attempt to explore and promote the continuum of life in two significations. First, it was important that life has a possibility to continue in the flow of time though all forms of life and individuals are perishable and limited. Secondly, it was essential that life would maintain its vividness. Real life should be felt and tasted. Life should not become mechanical or hidden beneath armour. That is why Moreno spoke very much on spontaneity and creativity.

Creativity is a natural part of human nature and life as a whole. Spontaneity affects it working like a strong catalyst. Creativity is the potential of an individual to act appropriately in new situations or to act in new ways in the old situations. This is possible by increasing spontaneity, which according to Moreno's words means the living *syntonisation*, a "warm-up" process. If the work group can be made relaxed, having open minds and being spontaneous, the individuals will be more creative and find new solutions better than through their usual behaviour.

When using and adapting different action methods, it is important to understand the crucial meaning of warm-up. It is the core of the whole process. Through warm-up one's thoughts and feelings are transferred to a situation that provides shelter, trust, energy, and ability to throw oneself into something what the person can neither know, nor control. If this state and mode is found, the new fresh ideas will be born by themselves. There is no one needs to "do" them, they just happen.

Lindqvist is a sociodrama director, a famous writer and trainer and a docent at the University of Tampere. According to his thinking, the reality has a narrative character. Basically it means that the most authentic way to describe experiences, purposes and processes flowing in a matrix of time and place is to express them by talking, writing, singing and performing drama in the form of narration. Narratives are relevant both in social and collective stories (e.g. history, culture, religion) and in expressing individual faith and situations.

Creative drama is used not only in theatres but also in scaffolding human growth, in education, in counselling, therapy and in organisational development. All adaptations resulting from creative drama emphasize action, expression, physics, interaction and spontaneity. The scope of drama extends from simple mental trainings and role plays to wide and long-term, drama-based group processes.

Moreno had an insight that an efficient tool to enforce changes both in communities and individual lives was to deal with certain social and private questions on a stage by improvised drama. The changes happen because that kind of work enables both deep emotional processing and role-rehearsal in cases of changing life situations.

Lindqvist reminds that Moreno's theory was based on the idea of cosmic drama, which is maintained by timeless and everlasting powers of spontaneity and creation. The seed of creation is hidden in the chaos, where yet so called cultural conserves do not exist, but instead, all is

in the space of potential and yet to be born. Furthermore, God is flexible to take different roles and role-reversals (Lindqvist et al. 2005). He strongly suggests that creativity always entails certain elements of destruction. There is always something old, which ought to vanish, should be broken or just let go. Otherwise, there is no room for new and fresh creations.

The Age and Work

The ageing work force is a global challenge in industrial countries. The Report on Creative and Ageing Societies was recently published by Finnish EVA (Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta) and Japanese Keizai Doyukai. They have gathered together the recent knowledge and best practises relating to the phenomenon from the Finnish and Japanese perspectives (EVA & Keizai Doyukai 2006):

Generally, the European countries, beginning with Austria in 1970, experienced rapidly ageing populations and completed the transition from “ageing” to “aged” societies earlier than Japan. Nevertheless, these transitions were gradual and took place over a span of several decades, in contrast to Japan where the transition was sudden. Finland, however, underwent a rapid (36 years) transition from “ageing” to “aged” society that was similar to Japan’s. Both countries reached the “aged society” index in 1994. (EVA & Keizai Doyukai 2006).

Because of the rapid ageing, Japan and Finland are the pioneers in both dealing with the threats and seizing the opportunities associated with ageing population. Many other countries, which are ageing at slower pace, can perhaps afford to find their way through the ageing process through a policy of trial and error. In contrast, Finnish and Japanese policymakers and business leaders need to operate with sufficient skills and foresight in years to come. Badly managed changes may turn into a crisis.

The report points out that well-managed change may open completely new opportunities and give birth to creative new solutions, practices and concepts that are ahead of their time in an ageing world. *“The best practices of an ageing society have to benefit both the society and the elderly themselves. Elderly people wish to stay connected to the society in numerous ways - but in a schedule which convenes to their wishes”,* as summarised by the international report Creative and Ageing Societies 2006. The momentum here gathers from the willingness of retired company employees to continue participating in the society and leading meaningful lives.

“The activity of the individuals is crucial. Both initiatives would be worthless if citizens and individuals lacked the will to engage in these practices. Elderly persons no longer have a need to strive for status and recognition for career purposes. Rather, what they seek, is to lead good and meaningful lives in the sense that ancient philosophy - both oriental and western - has described it. In this context achievements are valuable in themselves (and not only for example in terms of higher income or better career prospects). Activity - doing, achieving and contributing - bears an intrinsic

value. In having contributed to the economy and society in many ways, the elderly have naturally a desire to realise themselves. From the standpoint of fairness it is also reasonable to set them free to organise their post-career lives in a way most convenient to themselves. It is not unimportant, however, for societies and the economy whether the elderly choose to place their efforts toward leading good and meaningful lives inside or outside the society and economy. Incentives do matter.” (EVA & Keizai Doyukai 2006).

The report gives an example: *“Reversing the strong Finnish culture of early retirement is likely to require further changes to the pension system”*. Still, no systemic reform can replace action at the company and workplace levels. The Finnish example of a company-level practice, Abloy agemasters, shows us that simply paying due attention and respect to the elderly workers makes a big difference. The elderly workers feel both able and proud to be able to continue at work a little longer, benefiting themselves, their company and the society. In an aged society the service needs and demands of the elderly population will increase both quantitatively and qualitatively. - Learning to serve the demands of the elderly population, for example in the realm of health care, through new solutions and concepts might give countries such as Finland and Japan a pioneer position.”

The main goal of the O.W.L. project has been the improvement of the work and life quality of older employees. Because the Finnish partners have had different age-related challenges at their workplaces, the development activities have been slightly different, too.

The improvement actions which Novetos Oy implemented in workplaces utilised both coaching methods and the interactive lectures on age and work among personnel and supervisors. The lectures were given by the executive coaches Aaltonen, Junkkari and a psychologist Heiskanen. These presentations were delivered partly in trans-national conferences and partly through counselling at the work places.

In the end of spring 2006, the research manager Pitkänen executed group interviews on age and work among Finnish partners. She pointed out that most of the problems in the area were related to work delegation, health and well-being at work (cf. Maslach et al. 1996). Pitkänen's aim was to

- Collect good practices of age management
- Share experiences between participants (the O.W.L., young employees, supervisors) and expectations of how to support individual career path)
- Deepen the material collected by quantitative research (O.W.L. internet survey), help to understand and interpret the results.

The former studies have shown that people at different age have different expectations and needs (e.g. Ylikoski 2000). People over 45 years of age value time and space for renewal and processing, dignified behaviour, human contacts, their expertise to be utilised and the feeling of equal belonging to the community.

Table 2. Differing expectations and needs at different phases of life

Phase of life, age (in years):	"Experienced", "instructor" 45-50, (50)	"Supporting", "wise" > 50, (55)
Professional expectations: How to work?	To mentor, to coach and to be for help at work by instructing, to work in entities	To enable, to transfer wisdom and experience, to open new paths and perspectives
Expectations to leadership:	Appreciative, listening, empowering, understanding one's life situation and limitations	Maturing, respecting, providing feedback, utilising connections and viewpoints
Expectations to work community:	Creative interaction, creating ideas together, success of teams	Being part of the community, having own space

Coaching Methods in the O.W.L

The procedure of coaching was carried out in two units of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) and in the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI). The core information of professionals and supervisor groups collected through interviews by Eeva Pitkänen were used when implementing the coaching processes.

Two medical care units of HUS do not have very many older workers, i.e. people 50+, because of the official pension age in the field. One of their interests was to study interaction and motivation: How the employees at different ages can communicate and work together so that the positive co-operational climate increases and the diversity is considered as preferred strength and inspiring resource to solve the problems of the community. For this reason HUS invited Novetos coaches to make an action plan for their supervisors and employees.

A psychologist Heiskanen ran the coaching program for supervisors. They spent four days on reflecting the quality and elements of leadership, change management, active work group, self esteem and cooperation. At the same time, leadership coach Ristikangas with the help of the head nurses gathered the group of so called "change agents". They were those active members of the work community from different departments who were eager to take part in practical and professional development of their community. They had four coaching sessions. They also invited their supervisors to join the process and discuss the most challenging mutual issues. They have proposed many practical ideas for the implementation, which will benefit the whole community and people at different ages and in various life situations (Heiskanen 2007). Part of the process was learning which took place with the help of active methods such as visualisation, symbols and other creative tools. These tools were used to open participants' mind to re-adapt and to find more spontaneous ways to resolve situations at their work and in their career.

At FMI, the employees over 50 years of age were so active to take part in Novetos coaching that the group registration was very quick. The groups formed on a voluntary basis focused on the personal and professional inspiration and empowerment. The use of creative and active methods turned out to be suitable for the top researchers and experts. During their coaching they had a possibility to jump out from their daily routines and experience fresh views of their present life. Methods were both physical (oriental chi ball, outdoor activities, action methods)

and mental (picturing the future, working with symbols). Lectures, films, postcard and mind mapping were used actively, as well.

Some of the participants commented on coaching afterwards:

- I feel refreshed. We have had fun. Now I am able to believe in me again
- I found new sides for myself! Surprising how spontaneous I was
- This forced me to think. I got new dreams in a concrete form
- I was able to take new role identities
- Even the most familiar workmates felt like new, many others became closer. All participants feel more human than usually
- This kind of group coaching feels a very effective way on improving things
- 50-year-old employees should be used more and motivated better at workplace
- The employer should organise more activities for senior employees

Sociodrama was used in the coaching process at FMI, but it was also used in the trans-national conference in Joensuu, September 2006. The first drama stage was an international Model Agency in Milan; the second stage was an international Aid Foundation in Africa. The participants were allowed to test different work roles and ages than usually in their real life. They were allowed to explore the quality of working life, the need of new roles and the personal questions and future possibilities. Sociodrama can be seen as one suitable method for community coaching because it is creative, inspiring and empowering. It gives a lot of information of the community and also many insights and evaluation ideas which can have a very long impact on a person's life (Lindroos 2007).

Novetos as a coaching company has always been interested in activating the learning and working process of the clients. This kind of spurring and encouraging will lead to many positive results. We aim at benefiting both groups and individuals by focusing on motivation and also on the obstacles in order to achieve the desired goals and changes. All this information has been used also in the development process of the Management Software by Lehtipuu, the CEO of Novetos.

If you are able to see the best future of your life in vision, then you can reach it. Just find the tools and take the first steps to follow your goal and dream. The motivated and content employees are good employees who have the energy and reason to produce success for the organisation and the responsibility to care of their own life quality, as well. That is why the managers and leaders of hope need both a personal coach and the skills to be a coach to their employees. Furthermore, they want to benefit from the outside coaches on different levels of their organisation.

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7 The Usability of the Management Software inside Organisations

Ivan Sgandurra

In this article I will answer the questions of *What is MS?* and *How does MS work?*, as well as discuss the utilisation of the Management Software inside a company, the results of the first experimentation and the future uses of MS within the project companies.

What is MS?

MS stands for Management Software that was designed through open source tools in order to cut some of the cost of licences. The MS application is managerial software which in our case helps to identify and manage both a company and its personnel, as shown in Table 1.

Employees/staff	A company
Competences	Personnel pyramids
Physical condition	Professional pyramids
Psychological condition	Company actions and their repercussion for the physical and psychological state of the staff
Interpersonal relationships with staff/employees at different levels (e.g. the relations between employees, line management and managers)	Anticipatory models - it is possible to simulate what it will happen when implementing one action which can change the workers status (the so-called "improvement actions")
Interactions within the working environment	Relation between improvement actions and economic performance of the company (even in this case it is possible to simulate)
Physical and psychological performances	Constant monitoring of the evolution or involution of manufacturing processes and workers' status
Work performances	

Table 1. Two levels of Management Software

In short, MS identifies, manages, monitors and foresees, but, moreover, it is also a tool which provides the inputs it needs to modify itself. It is not software provided with self-learning functions but it allows modifying, adding and deleting functions in order to constantly develop according to the company needs. Next I will explain the architecture of the system in short.

The Architecture of the System

The aim of the Project has been ambitious; to improve the personal and working life quality of senior workers. The experimental background has been wide and included organisations with different aims, geographically far from each other and with different organisational dimensions.

Likewise, the disciplines involved have been numerous ranging from medicine and psychology to business economics and statistics. For these reasons MS is an integrated experimentation and control system that is based on a software platform working over the web. It supports the experts and experimenters in real time in the elaboration of different statistical data coming from different sources, highlights the variables indispensable for understanding the phenomenon and puts them into a reproducible and controllable, statistically valid model. Its aim is to allow the study of correlations and cause-effect relations on the basis of the company changes and the life and working quality of senior workers.

How Does MS Work?

The functioning of the Management Software is simple and intuitive. Through a series of screens, the different defined users (e.g. workers, managers, observatory or management as a whole) have an access to the sections concerning them and can work on input screens that the software proposes depending on what has been decided and entered jointly by the company, human resources and the representatives of other parties. The examination levels are defined by the users and can be different from company to company or vary between different workers groups. The software gives very reliable results if the level of precision of the examination is high. On the contrary, it provides us with more general results of the examination level decreases. A high level of confidentiality can impede the examination, but meanwhile a low level of confidentiality allows us to receive more results for further use. This is surely a limitation in the MS programme. The functioning of such a software typology is like the software for weather forecasts: the greater is the number of data in the examination, the more exact will the forecast be. A detailed description of the functioning of the MS programme can be found in the software user guide and the OWL_MSW.doc file. Below, Figure 1 illustrates the general pattern of MS.

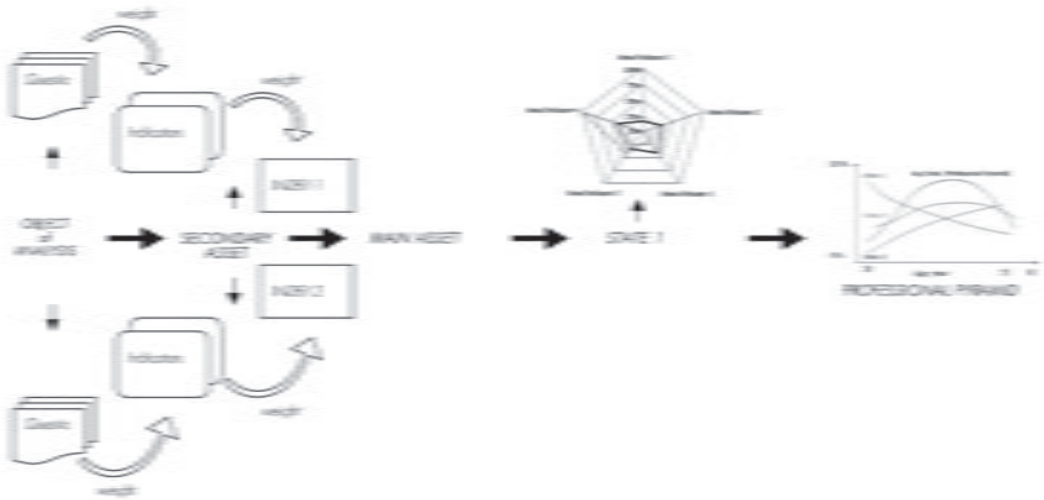


Figure 1. The general pattern of the Management Software application

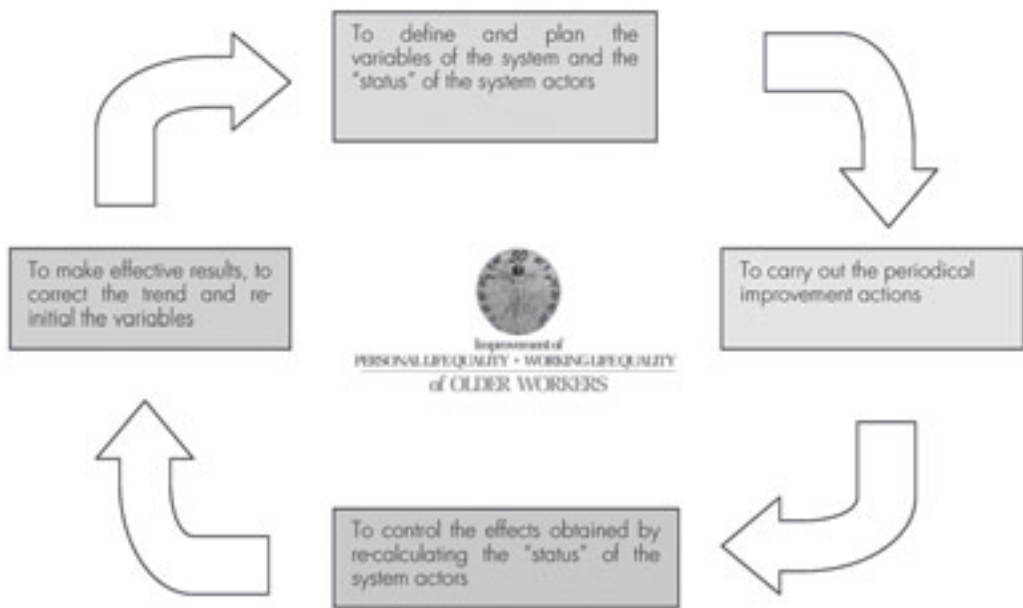


Figure 2. The functioning of MS is cyclic

Utilisation of MS inside a Company

The aim of MS within the O.W.L. project is dual. On one hand it aims at improving senior workers' life, on the other it tries to enhance the company performance. This is because companies will carry out improvement actions among the seniors only if the company performance will simultaneously improve (or at least it should not get any worse). In fact the experiences outside the O.W.L. and the analysis made within the O.W.L. prove that the worker suffering from the symptoms and difficulties related usually to old age, is not only the one who is more than 50-55 years old. All those persons working in a company and performing the same task for more than five years suffer from similar symptoms and difficulties. Thus the concept of old age is no longer related to the worker's physical age only but also to his/her working age.

The first useful function of MS O.W.L. inside a company is the possibility to scan every single worker. MS O.W.L. states the company workers' status giving information to the company on the personnel's health and psychological state and on their patent and hidden competences. It allows mass screening and provides the company with precise data on its workers' status. Moreover, it is able to take stock of the competences, which in some EU countries is a statutory procedure.

The second function of MS O.W.L. is to state the company status through the profiles of its economic and manufacturing process. The third function of MS O.W.L. is to introduce an element of perturbation or change in the existent pattern, which normally means e.g. an improvement action or a change in the manufacturing process. These two actions can be juxtaposed even if with appropriate precautions. However, it is better to let the perturbations act one by one and to evaluate their effects separately. Then, after the first series of data collection and cause-effect relationships, it will be possible to perform two actions at the same time, otherwise an improvement or worsening of the situation cannot be ascribed to a single element of perturbation with certainty.

The fourth function of MS O.W.L. is the establishment of cause-effect relations between improvement actions and/or variation of the manufacturing process and the company performance and the workers' status. In short, it shows if the worker status/company performance status improved after performing a specific action. The fifth function of MS O.W.L. is forecasting. On the basis of at least twenty cycles of improvement actions/process variations (20 for each of the two sectors), it is possible to simulate a new cycle without actually performing it. MS O.W.L. works much like the weather forecast; if we have enough data on the weather in the past, it is possible to say what the weather will be like in the future with sufficient approximation. Obviously these forecasts, i.e. models of study can be useful to better shape an improvement action or entry/change of a manufacturing process.

Summary of the Results of the First Experimentation

For our first experimentation we planned to have two companies with 80 employees. However, the number of both public and private organisations was 10 and the number of employees 811. The numbers tell about the success of the Project and the success of MS O.W.L. The Project has

been successful because it excelled the expectations and obtained results more than satisfactorily. MS O.W.L. has been successful because, thanks to the software, it was possible to conduct much experimentation and analyse the results in a short time. There are some 750 graphs of the results with 20 matrixes of correlation, each of them having about 8000 correlations. After eliminating the secondary or less important ones, there still remain at least 500 correlations per matrix, e.g. 10000 numbers. With the normal statistical means, this work would have required at least three years. Now it was carried out in only seven months, which can easily be cut to four weeks of effective work in the future experimentations.

The Future Uses of MS inside the Companies

As was already mentioned before, the Project allowed the realisation of the MS tool and the verification of its functioning. The results tell us that there is still a lot of work to do; some work with the software and plenty of work with the human side. In many cases the tool has been inappropriately used, in some cases evident mistakes have been made. There have also been incidents when the importance of some questions or investigation tools has not been correctly understood. Many things have to be reviewed and therefore the interested companies should continue using the software in the future and make the necessary changes.

8 Transnational Partnership in the O.W.L. Project

Sirpa Catalano

Older Workers' Life project developed the well-being of ageing workers and age management through Finnish-Italian partnership. All participants and those who were able to observe the project implementation at short range undoubtedly realised that different societal and cultural backgrounds and practices set additional challenges for this cooperation. Although Italian society and culture have been familiar to the author of this article already for more than 20 years due to personal family relations, still the different approaches to various questions and issues came as a surprise.

The promotion of European well-being and competitiveness requires collaboration between the member states, organisations and individual citizens across the national borders. International projects aim not only at developing new procedures and products or at exchanging experiences, knowledge and practices, but also at enhancing collaborative learning and intercultural and interpersonal competence. International cooperation is not possible if the partners barricade themselves behind their own views and truths. On the contrary, they need to try to understand the perspectives of all partners.

Project partners are always steered by the general instructions of the financier. Additionally the partners agree on joint means and practices at the initial stage of the project. However, these instructions and agreements are accepted and interpreted through the partners' own societal and cultural framework. People work and act mainly in compliance with the meanings they give to various issues and phenomena. What we are capable of observing are just mere concrete actions. We are blind and unable to see people's reasons and motivation to act in a certain way unless somebody removes the shadow or blinds for us. In our everyday lives we very seldom reflect upon our self-evident patterns of thought and actions - not till we start working in an environment where other people do not share our certainties. At that point, we start deliberating upon our choices.

An essential objective of the Older Workers' Life project was to make a tool for human resource management, i.e. the Management Software programme. The work was challenging because of the use of a foreign language but also because of the people working together had different "mental programs", or "software of the mind". These concepts are from Mr. Geert Hofstede, professor emeritus of Organisational Anthropology and International Management at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. The concepts refer felicitously to culture. *Culture* is a collective phenomenon and it is learned since the very beginning of the life in one's social environment. According to Hofstede, culture "is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 4).

The partners had very elaborate discussion on cultures and on how much the behaviour of the person results from his/her individual features and gender, and how much from the national or regional cultures. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005: 4-5) emphasise that the culture is not the same as human nature or individual's personality although the borders between these three are

discussed all the time. *Human nature* is common to all human beings and it is inherited and passed in genes, which determine the physical and basic psychological functioning. *Personality* is always unique. It is partly inherited within the unique set of genes and partly learned from the culture and personal life history. Figure 1 shows the concepts of human nature, culture and personality.

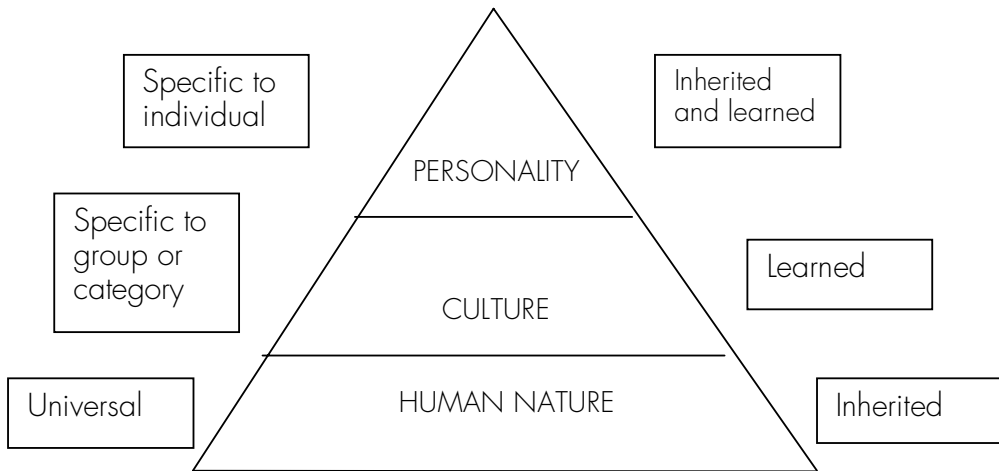


Figure 1. Three levels of uniqueness in mental programming (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 4)

Hofstede reviews national cultures through five dimensions which enable us to understand each other's thinking and activities. These dimensions are: (1) power distance, (2) individualism and collectivism, (3) masculinity and femininity, (4) uncertainty avoidance, and (5) long and short-term orientation (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 39-238). In this article only the first, third and fourth dimensions are shortly discussed from the viewpoint of the transnational partnership in the O.W.L. project. It is important to note that the dimensions describe the culture in each country as a collective phenomenon. For example, an individual can be both masculine and feminine at the same time, but a national culture is predominantly one or the other (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 125).

Power distance refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept power to be distributed unequally. The larger the power distance, the stronger is the need for dependence in the mental software of the people. In the organisations with large power distance, the persons in different hierarchical positions consider each other as existentially unequal, while in the organisations with small power distance people are existentially equal with each other. The ideal boss in the subordinates' eyes in the former case is a benevolent autocrat, a good father, and in the latter a resourceful democrat. Further, typical characteristics in the large power distance organisations are centralised power, extensive supervisory personnel with a responsibility for reporting and wide salary gaps. In the case of small power distance, these features are contrary, and, in addition, privileges for

persons in higher position are undesirable by contrast to the situation in large power distance organisations. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 46 - 59.)

Hofstede has calculated a score to each of the 74 countries he has studied. Pertaining to the power distance index, Italy has the score of 50 and the rank of 51, and Finland the score of 33 and the rank of 66. The highest score is gained by Malaysia (104) and the lowest by Austria (11). (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 43.) In the Project the differences between the Italian and Finnish power distance were evident e.g. in less formal interaction in Finnish organisations, which are considerably flat. The Finnish partners noticed more hierarchical relationships among their Italian colleagues, both at work and on leisure.

Hofstede defines a society *masculine* "when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be asserting, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life". Instead, a society is defined *feminine* "when emotional gender roles overlap; both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life". In working life the difference is seen e.g. in management which is based on intuition and consensus in feminine countries, and decisiveness and aggressive competition in masculine countries. Resolution of conflicts is made by compromising and negotiating in feminine countries, and by letting the strongest win in masculine countries. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 120 - 147.)

The most masculine country according to the study of Hofstede is Slovakia with a score of 110, and most feminine Sweden scoring only 5. The score of Italy is 70 and it is ranked as the seventh highest, while the score of Finland is 26 and it is 68th among the 74 countries. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 120 - 121.) The Italians working in the O.W.L. project were mainly men, and the Finnish participants mainly women. This can be a coincidence, but the voice of men was also heard in the Italian conferences more often than the voice of women. It was not possible to observe or compare how the partner organisations made decisions and solved conflicts in either country, but the Finnish partners noticed a somewhat different communication culture in the e-mails sent between the project partners. The further the viewpoints of the partners were, the harder became to tone in Italian e-mails.

Uncertainty avoidance is defined by Hofstede "as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations". People living in a society with strong uncertainty avoidance have emotional need for rules and structured environments. Therefore, in these societies there are more formal laws and informal rules controlling the employees' and employers' duties and rights. How these rules are respected in reality is less important. The rules in countries with weak uncertainty avoidance are less sacred, but they are often more strictly followed. Uncertainty avoiding cultures have a strong belief in expertise and the organisations count more specialists, whereas uncertainty accepting countries have an equally strong belief in common sense and in general practitioners. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 167 - 184.)

As for uncertainty avoidance, Greece has the rank 1 with a score of 112 (the strongest avoidance) and Singapore has the rank 74 with a score of 8 (the weakest uncertainty avoidance). Italy

has the score of 75 and a ranking of 33, and Finland the score of 59 with the rank of 48 - 49. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 168 - 169.) Hofstede gives an example which describes this specific feature in working life: in uncertainty avoiding countries more money is spent on doctors, who are seen as indispensable experts, and in uncertainty accepting countries on nurses (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 178). This was noticed also in the O.W.L. project where hospital districts from both countries were involved. In Finland the nurses are trainees, not just doctors, are seen as experts.

When studying the correlations between uncertainty avoidance and innovations, Hofstede has made an interesting finding: the weak uncertainty avoidance cultures are better at basic innovations, but they are not very capable of developing their innovations into new products or services because of weaker sense of detail and punctuality, which are more likely to be found in strong uncertainty avoidance cultures. The synergy between innovating and implementing cultures should be discovered; innovating cultures supplying new ideas and implementing ones developing them. (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 186.) By uniting our strengths and considering our difference as richness we can all benefit from our common projects. We learn from each other and from ourselves. Time, work and commitment are worth investing - also because good friendships are created in international projects.

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9 Process Evaluation in the O.W.L.

Sari Jormanainen

A project strategy means that there is a clear aim or an objective towards which the project is steered by the project management team and by the steering committee. In order to follow the project plan and to receive objective feedback from the project partners, it is of utmost importance to include evaluation as an integral part of the project management and implementation. It is very important to identify the critical aspects of project implementation to ensure a successful and balanced project development (Seppänen-Järvelä 2004: 17). In this project, those aspects were identified together with the project management and chosen for closer examination in the evaluation, as well. The chosen aspects included one bigger process inside the Project, the Management Software process, which was examined as an individual process and as a part of the whole development project. Furthermore, the evaluation focused on cooperation and communication, learning, workplace development, dissemination and mainstreaming of results and experiences to ensure their sustainability and transferability.

In the O.W.L. project, the evaluation and monitoring have been coordinated by two partners: SII Consulting in Italy and ISAI Consulting in Finland. Since the Project was transnational, the responsibility of on-going process evaluation and monitoring was divided between the countries in order to ensure the transparency and the diversity of viewpoints on evaluation, as well.

What is Process Evaluation?

Systematic process evaluation examines the processes of change and highlights their main features. The focus of process evaluation is in the examination of action - it will clarify the methods of project implementation and point out the turning points of the project. Process evaluation is grounded on the self-evaluation of project partnership and on the reflection of learning experiences gained during the project (Seppänen-Järvelä 2004: 19).

When discussing a process evaluation, we mean continuous interaction with the project partners and the project management. As stated in the W.K. Kellogg's Evaluation Handbook (1998: 24), the evaluation should focus on examining the core activities undertaken to achieve project goals and intended outcomes. A successful implementation of new project activities involves a process of adapting the ideal plan to local conditions, organisational dynamics, and other uncertainties, therefore even well-planned projects need to be fine-tuned in the first months of operation, and often the chosen methods and processes need to be continuously analysed to make improvements. In the O.W.L. project, there have been repeated evaluation interventions during the project cycle, and all the evaluation data has been gathered and analysed in order to improve the project cycle management and the implementation of the project. Process evaluation is all about learning - the evaluation focuses on the continuous learning of project partners and project managers so that in the end of the project everyone has learnt something new and useful for the future endeavours.

The overall aim of project evaluation is to improve the quality of present and future projects. This objective is well-justified - after all, we are spending the EC funds and we should respect that by performing in an excellent manner.

Evaluation Methods and Data Gathering

The process evaluation model of the O.W.L. is based on the formative evaluation approach, which means that it is mainly concerned with examining ways of improving and enhancing the implementation and management of intervention (Evaluation of EU Activities 2005: 3 - 4). Besides the formative dimension, the evaluation has also focused on the balance between the set objectives and realised goals and results at the last stages of the Project. Certain elements of the O.W.L. project have received more attention than originally planned during the project cycle; therefore, the evaluation has also paid more attention on those activities.

The evaluation data has been gathered through meeting and conference feedback, questionnaires, and interviews. The most important informants have been the partners. The evaluation has also utilised the feedback received from the target group i.e. ageing workers in partner organisations. As there have been repeated interventions during the project cycle, the results have been compared to the earlier ones to find out the development and improvement of project activities and processes.

The evaluation interventions were planned ahead and the partners were informed about the upcoming interventions in advance. Still, one of the biggest challenges was to reach a satisfactory response rate, which shows that whether the partners did not find evaluation important or they did not have enough resources to participate. One of the benefits of the chosen process evaluation model was including the evaluators in the partnership. In many cases, it is easier to gather information and evaluate the progress when the evaluator is able to follow the project continuously.

Learning in Focus

Process evaluation concentrates on the potential within the partnership - we urge all project actors to ask: how do I manage my tasks in this project and have I contributed as much as I could? All of us learn from our own actions, both successes and failures. Successes and challenges are in the core of process evaluation, because in those moments we can ask what is behind this success or what caused the failure of this action - and share the information with each other and learn how to deal with the situation in a better way in future.

Besides examining the learning in the partnership, the process evaluation has also focused on the learning of final beneficiaries, the older workers in partner organisations. The development activities carried out at the workplaces have been documented and the participants have given their feedback on the usefulness and their own learning experiences during the Project. One of the cases to be highlighted in this context are the older employees at Abloy Oy, who were

provided with basic computing courses and they became so interested in their new skills that they continued studying on their free time. Similar kinds of learning experiences were reported in several partner organisations - and it is very important to keep in mind the project logics: project activities are just means to reach the set objectives.

Challenges and Successes of Transnational Projects

When the Project started, there were a variety of definitions of concepts to be used. First, the definition of concepts was not seen as important, because all partners were eager to start the implementation of the project activities. Later on, the importance of common concepts has become evident for the whole partnership - especially, because the cooperation and communication has required the use of participants' non-native language, English. As we learned during the project cycle, the same concepts can mean different things in different contexts and cultures. Therefore, it is very important to take the time in the planning phase or in the kick-off meeting to define all the common terms and concepts together.

Different project cultures of participating countries are often the main sources of conflict in transnational cooperation. Different ways of work and communication have been challenging in this transnational project, as well. However, during the Project we have seen great improvement, as well as increase in multicultural understanding and communication. Already in the beginning of the Project, the vast experience and knowledge of the project partnership were highlighted. The cooperation and information exchange between different experts continued to grow during the Project, and from the evaluator's viewpoint, the network should continue building bridges across the European Union after the Project.

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EUROPEAN UNION
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Article 6 Innovative Measures





INVEST IN EXPERIENCE - Expert Perspectives on the Development of Age Management in the O.W.L. Project

The European Union aims at promoting active ageing. In several member states public policies have attempted to tackle problematic issues caused by an ageing population. The Commission steers work-life changes in the member states also by funding projects which aspire to develop new organisational practices through transnational cooperation. One example of such projects is Older Workers' Life - the O.W.L. which is short for the Improvement of Personal Life Quality and Working Life Quality of Older Workers.

The Project is one of the activities under the theme "Management of Demographic Change". The primary targets are the development of strategies dealing with demographic ageing, investment in human resources, the development and experimentation of alternative work arrangements in enterprises, and awareness raising on the significance and involvement of older workers in working life. The target group of this Project consists of older workers, enterprises and organisations.

The duration of the O.W.L. project is two years: 15 November 2005 - 14 November 2007. The Project is one of ESF funded Innovative Actions carried out under the Article 6. The Promoter of the O.W.L. project is North Karelia University of Applied Sciences from Finland. The Project includes 24 partners, of which eight (8) come from Finland and 15 from Italy. In the project, there has been an observer from one of the new EU member states, NPR Public Institution from Lithuania.

The report contains the description of the project cycle, partners' experiences and project evaluation. Furthermore, the experts involved in the realisation of the Project discuss the theoretical framework and practical tools used in the development of ageing work communities.

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