

Webinar

Wednesday, 13 November 2019

11:30 – 13:30 CET

Webinar on Happiness and Engagement in the workplace for quality services

Report

Participants

Agnese Koha	Social Integration State Agency
Aija Viluma	Social Integration State Agency
Alicia Gomez Campos	EPR
Barbara Wyffels	GTB
Clair Whiteside	Cedar Foundation
Cristina Rodrigues	CRPG
Daiga Reinberga	Social Integration State Agency
Diana Cuncule	Social Integration State Agency
Isabel Barbosa	CRPG
Katrina Sevruka	Social Integration State Agency
Laura Jones	EPR
Liene Saukuma	Social Integration State Agency
Martina Talbot	Rehab Group
Ola Eloranta	EPR
Olga Larionova	Social Integration State Agency
Carol Redican	Rehab Group
Santa Egmina	Social Integration State Agency
Therese Saeberg	OrbitArena AS
Pablo Sanchez	INTRAS Foundation
Natalie Schurmann	Independent

Summary of the Webinar

Attending the webinar were twenty persons from eight different organisations (EPR members GTB, CRPG, CEDAR, SIVA, Rehab, INTRAS), OrbitArena AS from Norway and Natalie Schurmann, expert psychologist, introducing some of their projects.

- **Welcome and introduction, introductions to participants**

Laura Jones, Secretary General of EPR, welcomed participants to the webinar and introduced the topic of Happiness and engagement in the work place for quality services. She stressed the objective of the webinar was to increase understanding of the concept of happiness and wellbeing in the workplace among staff and better understanding of good practices to promote staff wellbeing and engagement.

- **Compendium of good practices in staff engagement, motivation and retention**

Laura Jones, EPR, presented EPR mini study of Good Practices on Staff Engagement, Motivation and Retention from 2018. The study gathers good practices and outlines tips and proposals for organisations.

On her presentation, Laura Jones highlighted that EPR has supported its members in identifying factors to increase the quality of rehabilitation services. A 2017 report by Social Services Europe (SSE) identified factors associated with better performance on staff motivation and retention. These factors are access to training and lifelong learning, a successful employer brand presence, making the jobs more accessible, and the introduction of more engaging leadership practices. She stressed the report also identified challenges to recruitment and retention such as social services often lacking the resources to provide a response to the growing needs in society. The mini study goes on to present success factors from five organisations working with people with disabilities:

- ❖ *APPACDM de Coimbra (Portugal):*

A success factor from APPACDM was to have a results-based management style rather than an hours-based. This also included offering extra vacation days for those who have exceeded their performance goals. The organisation identified blind spots in employee satisfaction by using a quality culture survey. [You can read more about APPACDM de Coimbra's success factors in the study.](#)

- ❖ *CEDAR Foundation (Northern Ireland):*

CEDAR involves staff engagement from the beginning of a new employee's career. They have a very strong focus on coaching their staff for planning and dealing with challenging behaviour, and engages in benchmarking activities to understand how their policies affect staff wellbeing. [Read more about CEDAR in the mini study.](#)

- ❖ *Fundación INTRAS (Spain):*

INTRAS permits their staff to work from home whenever the role allows it, which provides working flexibility for the staff. The organisation is also able to withstand the economic crisis while prioritising staff retention, and thus achieving greater loyalty from thereof. The foundation frequently sends staff to attend EU projects and international meetings, as well as hosting regular trainings and other various wellbeing activities. [Read more about INTRAS in the mini study.](#)

- ❖ *JG Benediktushof (Germany):*

The German organisation has a great focus on employee wellbeing such as promoting sports to avoid stress and absenteeism. They practice an open-door work culture, and promote a more inclusive management style. [Read more about JG Benediktushof in the mini study.](#)

- ❖ *REA College Pluryn (the Netherlands):*

REA has a substantial training budget which allows for many staff development opportunities. They use innovative recruiting techniques for hard-to-fill positions, and has self-directed teams which allows for greater staff autonomy in fulfilling objectives. [Read more about REA College in the mini study.](#)

- **EPR members presenting current practices/services developed in their own organisation**
Pablo Sanchez from **Fundación INTRAS** (Spain) shared INTRAS' good practice on happiness in the workplace. He shared that it is common for INTRAS to send staff to attend EU project's meetings. He pointed out that by doing so they discovered staff was more motivated in their work. It increases their language competency/proficiency and it brings new ideas for INTRAS to apply to their organisation and future projects. The organisation started sending staff to EU project nearly twenty years ago and it is a practice that continues today. They invest in infrastructure and their staff, which ensured staff retention and loyalty through the economic crisis in Europe and Spain.

The Social Integration State Agency - SIVA (Latvia):

SIVA presented their practice of having several different training programmes to train different skills in staff, as well as having cornucopia of wellbeing activities, sports activities, social events and teambuilding events for their staff. The organisation believes it is important that everyone of their staff should feel important, no matter what their position in the organisation is. Also, knowing why you are doing the job you are doing, contributes to your own wellbeing in the workplace.

Claire Whiteside from **CEDAR Foundation** (Northern Ireland) share with participants their view that happiness in the workplace is also wellbeing in the workplace. It is important to welcome new staff in a good way. At CEDAR Foundation, they teach new staff ways to do risk assessment in job situations, including following of the employee in their first six months. The follow-up includes mental health awareness, employee stress levels, suicide prevention and more.

Wellbeing in the workplace is everyone's responsibility as CEDAR because social care roles are one of the most stressful jobs to have. Therefore, it is important to build resilience in order to make employees feel comfortable and secure, as well as helping people to return to the job after different difficult situations.

In 2018, over twenty managers at CEDAR went through training to ensure mental health awareness and happiness in the workplace, and learning coaching in the correct way. The organisation pays for healthcare for their employees, a service which includes counselling. This is because they strive to have a happy environment at work and the measures are showing results. The focus on mental health wellbeing have decreased the sickness absence and helps building resilience for the future. With open relationships between the staff and the management helps build awareness on wellbeing for both groups.

- **Presentation from Natalie Schurmann, trainer, leadership coach and psychologist**
Natalie Schurmann, executive coach and consultant specialised in Leadership and Well-Being and Founder of Badiliko (a company that offers customised leadership coaching and development solutions to promote leadership excellence, positivity, well-being and fulfilment) joined the webinar and shared her own practice presenting participants principles related to psychological and emotional well-being at work and being resilient at work. She focused on what causes stress and what's the cost of stress for companies. As such, she explained wellbeing at work is a two-way street. She added there are prevention measures one can perform themselves and measures companies and organisations can perform as well. With the financial cost of stress to organisational health being 3.5 million US Dollars-per-year, Schurmann raised the question, 'To what extent are we sure about how we feel about ourselves?' 'What things raise your stress level?' The answers from the participants were time management and prioritising tasks. The CoEE (the Cost of Employee Engagement) is important to keep in mind, she appointed; 'Are you happy at work and with your tasks?' She shared with participants the top stress factors for employees, which are:
 - Lack of psychological safety.
 - Lack of autonomy, mastery and purpose. Under this category falls change at work/home, job transition, personality and conflict, navigating political complexity and ambiguity and having too many demands.

The expert pointed out that we can measure our own stress levels in simple ways, no matter our position, through a *quick pulse diagnosis* to avoid or battle stress in occupational coaching/counselling. 'A learning mind-set helps one better cope with stress', she stated. 'To be a good employee or a good manager, we need to take care of our own stress levels and mental health. The more in control of ourselves we are, the better we feel', affirms the expert.

- **The Economy of Wellbeing (subject not initially included on the program)**

After the practices shared by EPR members, **Ola Eloranta** from the **European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)** presented the Finnish EU presidency's position on the Economy of Wellbeing. Wellbeing is one of the cornerstones of the EU and a common European value. In the economy of wellbeing, public resources are allocated for improving people's wellbeing. Wellbeing means that people are healthier, more innovative and productive, and they work and pay taxes.

A wellbeing ageing population curbs the growth of costs in healthcare and social welfare. The European Commission estimates that the share of people aged 65 or over in the population will increase from the current 17.4% to 29.5% by 2060, while at the same time the population of working age is decreasing in the EU.

The *economy of wellbeing approach* is a comprehensive tool for developing policy-making in the EU and its member states. Wellbeing policy and economic policy are not exclusive but are, in fact, interlinked. The Finnish presidency argues that the EU should also strengthen the links between gender equality policy and economic policy. Promoting gender equality, reducing inequalities, creating more employment opportunities for women and helping people reconcile work and private life are all key objectives in terms of sustainable economic growth within the EU and member states in the future.

The economy of wellbeing approach aims to ensure inclusion and equal opportunities for all. Investing in wellbeing makes sense in economic terms even in times of economic downturn. Studies indicate that investing in education and training gives a significant boost to economic growth. There is also evidence that efficient preventive health services pay for themselves many times over. Yet, right now, preventive services account for only 3% of health budgets in the EU, while curative services account for 97%.

That is why Finland proposed that the [European Council](#) adopt conclusions on the economy of wellbeing in October. These were the recommendations:

- *It is important that we improve the wellbeing of EU citizens at the same time as we strengthen the social, economic and ecological sustainability of our societies;*
- *Within its competence, the EU must do more to promote occupational health and safety and gender equality, among other policies;*
- *The EU must ensure that other policies have positive impacts on the health, social protection, employment and education of EU citizens;*
- *The European Semester monitors the member states' budgetary stability, and the Council should adopt recommendations requiring member states to take action to correct identified imbalances;*
- *We need to identify the importance of policies and schemes that promote people's wellbeing to achieve sustainable economic growth and stability;*
- *It is essential that decision-makers in the EU and the member states collaborate horizontally across policies. Recognising people's wellbeing as a clear, long-term priority in the EU will increase the EU's legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.*

Different European organisations and institutions EPR is partner of also have positions on the Economy of Wellbeing:

Social Platform (EPR is a member of this network) – On the 6-18th of September the SP held its second “Building Social Europe” flagship conference on the economy of wellbeing. Central to this event was how to put people at the centre of the economy. SP calls for decision-makers to stop looking at social affairs in isolation from other policies.

European Commission – Published illustrative examples of economic wellbeing of people on the “Beyond GDP” section on its website. The page contains two charts, the first of which shows the disposable income of households per capita across Europe in 2009 and shows a general decrease from 2008 onwards. The second graph covers life satisfaction with results from the Gallup World Poll. The inclusion of the latter shows a recognition from the Commission that wellbeing can be measured through more “subjective” means.

Eurodiaconia – Together with its members, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Deaconess Foundation, issued a joint statement on November 5th in which it emphasised the importance of providing social and healthcare services for all as well as promoting participation and equality.

European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) – Issued a statement on the Finnish Presidency’s concept of the “economy of wellbeing” in which the organisation supported it and will use the concept to inspire and strengthen its policy work at the European level.

Solidar – Organised a workshop with CECOP on “Decent Work as precondition for economy of well-being”. Key influencers insisted on setting up structured dialogue between the EU and NGOs over the basic element of people and planet, not profit, at the core of the economic system.

OECD – Secretary General Angel Gurría published a report on “The Economy of Wellbeing” at the European Council. In the report, the Gurría emphasised the need to introduce an economy of wellbeing, citing statistics such as nearly 50% of middle-income households struggling to make ends meet. She also defined an economy of wellbeing as a “virtuous circle in which citizens’ wellbeing drives economic prosperity, and vice-versa, with macroeconomic outcomes able to sustain wellbeing investments over time.” In methods to achieve this form of economy, she outlined four pillars as essential to thereof: Education and Skills, Health, Social Protection and Redistribution, and Gender Equality.

- **Update on Mental Health Working Group on the topic**

Alicia Gomez Campos from the **European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)** briefed participants on the current work the Mental Health Working Group is carrying out in 2019 on rehabilitation and well-being at the work place. EPR members of the WG meet once per year in a designated location at one EPR member to share their work and establish the topics of focus of the WG. The working group also has from 2 to 3 online meetings throughout the year to coordinate their work and activities. In 2019 the WG is compiling practices related to well-being at work and putting them together in an online public format that will be publicly accessible and available through EPR website.

- **Wrap up and conclusions**

The webinar came to closure by **Alicia Gomez Campos** from the **European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)** who asked participants to share ideas or suggestions about what they would like EPR to focus on to follow this topic.

- Participants welcomed very positively the expert presentation and the information about the economy of well-being and asked to be updated on any further policies or information from the EU or European actors on this topic.

- Sharing of more good practices on happiness and wellbeing in the workplace.

For more information, presentations are available on the EPR website [here](#).

Evaluation Report

The topic of the webinar was greatly welcomed by participants. The format and the running of the webinar was marked 4.5. The content was also welcomed by a 4.5 out of 5 on gaining relevant content.

The collaboration of the expert contacted by EPR and the exchange of practices proved to be successful.