



Finnish Institute of
Occupational Health

Does the economic crisis affect on OSH strategies?

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...to be discussed in 15 September...

Presentation contents

1. Needs and demands on OSH strategies in economic crisis
2. Key target groups of OSH strategies in economic crisis
3. Main activities for the assurance of OSH in economic recession
4. Where are we going to?

1. Needs and demands on OSH strategies in economic crisis

(Kieselbach et al (HIRES) 2009; Kasvio 2009; Vahtera & Kivimäki 2007; Burke & Cooper 2000)

1. Unemployment, downsizings and temporary dismissals have detrimental effects to health, safety and well – being.
 - ..not only among redundants, but among survivors, too
2. Outsourcings, farm outs, fusions and restructurings emerge needs on OSH training and education among recipients.
 - ...and on OSH supervision policies, too
3. So does intensification of production, new energy forms and efforts in management under growing ecological pressures.
 - Need for ecoresponsible and sustainable OSH solutions increases
 - achievements in the high quality risk assessment practices falter due to organizational changes and lost "tacit knowledge".
 - some people may accept even hazardous work conditions because of insecurity.
 - New energy and water saving technologies in premises with reduced heating and ventilation in plants and workshops, e.g.

Needs and demands on OSH strategies in economic crisis II

(Kieselbach & Mader 2006 (SOCOSE); Vahtera & Kivimäki & Pentti 2004; Ylikoski 1993)

4. Downsizing can result in stressful changes at work, such as:
 - reduced job control, increased work demands and job insecurity.
5. Deleterious effects of restructuring on productivity and psycho - social well being and thus on health and safety have been shown due to:
 - tensions in leadership and management, inaccurate decisions and obscure goals,
 - loss of fairness and loss of the sense of trust and
 - conflicts among personnel
6. The challenge is also the possible reduction of OSH experts and authorities.
7. Crisis offers an "opportunity" for OSH strategies, too:
 - new innovations may emerge in economic shortage, social capital and communal joint responsibility may increase,
 - multiprofessionality and understanding about well – being at work may strengthen.

2. Key target groups of OSH strategies in economic crisis

- vulnerable groups -

(Ylikoski & Vainio 2009)

Companies in economic difficulties

- Regions and trades in production problems
- Entrepreneurs



Young workers

- Work life skills
- Engagement support
- Prevention of alienation



Redundants, unemployed, furloughed and those avoiding them

- Professions with high unemployment risk, immigrants
- Hard to serve job seekers



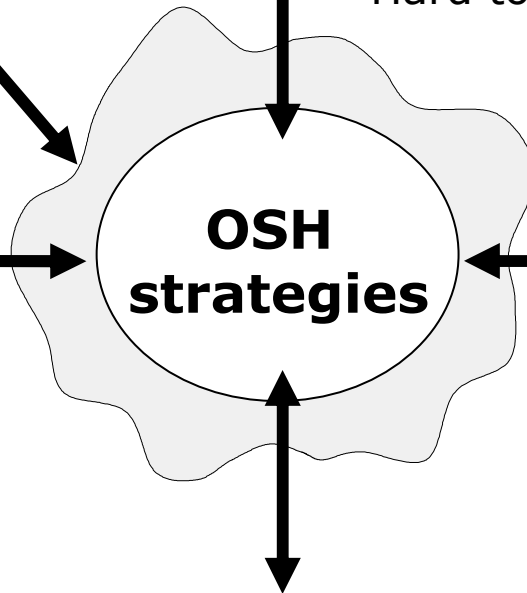
Aged workers

- In discrimination risk,
- Limited functional capacity
- In tailoring need



Disabled, restricted work ability

- Needing early intervention and support for return to work
- Mental depression, MSDs



3. Main activities for the assurance of OSH in economic recession

1. Support for most vulnerable risk groups and organizations

1. Redundants and unemployed:

- Event debriefing to prevent PTSD (emotional support)
- Competence maintenance and skills updating programmes
- Peer group working models for job seeking and empowerment
- Occupational health counselling to maintain health and work ability

2. Furloughed (temporary dismissed)

- Competence maintenance and enrichment "on the job – learning"
 - STX Europe: Training Programme in OSH, environment protection, welding, leadership, transfer of tacit knowledge; competence increase ("from welder to assembler" – model)

3. Young ones

- Peer groups for work life skills and recruitment
 - Success in both cases is based on the decreased mental depression due to sharing participants' experiences

4. Aged workers

- Adjustment of tasks and work conditions ("Age Management")

5. Disabled and restricted work ability; unskilled workers

- Disability Prevention Programmes ("Early rehabilitation", "Early Intervention", "Return To Work")
- Further training programmes

(Ylikoski 2009, 1993; Saarelma-Thiel 2009)

3. Main activities for the assurance of OSH in economic recession II

2. Preventing the development of deleterious health and safety consequences:

- 1. Strengthening the sense of coherence (SOC) due to the insecure world of work**
 - Comprehensibility through transparency and information.
 - Manageability through participative planning processes.
 - Training and education programmes focused on the development of new technologies should be used when the reduced production leaves time resources for this.
- 2. People staying on the job (survivors)**
 - Control of loading due to the intensification of work
 - Support for coping of emotional responses
- 3. Training of supervisors in difficult interaction situations.**
 - Humanity in discharges increases the employability of dismissed
 - The stress of line managers and OHS personnel will increase and still they should be prepared for early health prevention.
 - Social support given by supervisor increases empowerment and job engagement among the staff

3. Main activities for the assurance of OSH in economic recession III

3. Increasing the empowerment of individuals through strengthening the promotion of health in enterprises

1. Positive psychology and resource oriented "salutogenetic" models support work engagement and reduces the risk of a burn out.
 - Solution based counselling and support should be adapted in employer – employee negotiations.
 - Workers strengths need emphasis.
2. Work Place Health Promotion models offer tools for maintenance of work ability and health
 - "Healthy Enterprise", Finnish "Promotion of Work Ability" are system oriented holistic models for companies to maintain health and work ability of the staff.
3. Reconciling work life and family life increases empowerment, too.
 - "Family Friendly Corporate Culture" brings flexibility.
 - The same idea should be "reformulated" towards a "Change Understanding Corporate Culture"

3. Main activities for the assurance of OSH in economic recession IV

4. OSH authorities and experts need reorientation

1. The role of the OSH experts and authorities changes
 - Towards advice and solution based good practices
 - Restructuring events need "risk assessment" approach, too
 - Tools for predictive evaluation of the situation and demonstrating the economic benefits of OSH activities in crisis situation.
2. Simultaneous development of productivity and quality of work life will be in the focus.
 - Efforts to increase productivity are more often integrated with the evaluation of its effects on the well – being of the staff.
 - "Socially sensitive" restructuring is based on economic win – win principle

Development of the OSH and well-being concepts on international level in general

(Hämäläinen 2008, Hanson 2007, Ylikoski ym. 2006, Kickbusch 2004, Whitelaw ym. 2001)

1. From pathogenic approach towards "salutogenic" view
 - from causality (hazards, diseases), towards comprehensiveness
 - what is dangerous to health → what is good for health and well-being
 - health as a resource in meeting life (conditions/environment)
2. From prevention towards promotion
 - risk factors/ groups → determinants/population
 - exposure, environment → setting, context, "system" itself in action
 - protect and avoid → strengthen, support
 - reactive → predictive (proactive)
3. From objects of expert actions towards participation of the empowered people
 - individual lifestyle → population & organisational (setting) partnership strategies with empowered actors
 - general models and Good Practices → locally tailored solutions
 - specialized campaigns → continuous strategic integration and processes with committed actors
4. (Re)integration of well-being and productivity

Recommendations for healthier enterprise restructuring in EU

(Kieselbach et al (HIRES) 2009)

- Monitoring and evaluating of health effects and causalities at all levels (e.g.: ESENER-PR);
 - ...and linked with risk assessment.
- Maintenance of psychosocial health of dismissed
 - ... and of those in the risk of to be dismissed.
- Survivor reactions and health should be taken into account in regard of the success of the organisation and
 - thus preventive actions and transparency are needed.
- Middle managers are key players, who need support and training on a "sandwich position" in a new situation for them.
- Increase of the "comprehensibility" of the event, skills to meet the situation and future tasks in a flexible way among the staff
 - e.g.: learning representatives/UK.
- Fairness and, justice and trust should be stressed in treating the staff.

Recommendations for healthier enterprise restructuring in EU II

(Kieselbach et al (HIRES) 2009)

- A communication plan, with transparency and actuality, in enterprises (and in all other levels, too)
 - is needed due to the uncertainty and alienation.
- Contingent (subcontractors) and temporary workers should be seen as vulnerable group and
 - thus as important as those directly employed.
- Labour Inspectorates should take these events into account
 - ...alongside stress, harassment and bullying and discrimination – with relevant competencies.
- OHS should take these situations as priority (before, after and during restructuring) in cooperation inside companies and SMEs.
- SMEs need special arrangements through local or branch counselling services, e.g.
- CSR, HR (career counselling) and normalising career change in the discourse are initiatives which should be supported.

4. Qua Vadis?:

Towards a comprehensive well-being at work

(Ylikoski ym. 2006, Kirsten 2003)

1. OSH, OHS and HRD and Management recognize the common goal:
 - identify factors and issues that promote health and well-being
 - "healthy worker is productive → factors promoting health, promote productivity, too"→ balance between job demands and resources of a worker
2. Emphasis on the dependency of productivity, quality of work life and well-being at work (win – win - win):
 - simultaneous development (= co – configuration) and tailoring in settings
 - integrated to the strategic management and collaboration
 - from **OCCUPATIONAL** (H&S) towards **WORKERS** (H&S) (WHO, CSR))
3. From multiprofessional approach towards interdisciplinary:
 - holistic approach will be linked to all continuous development
 - management systems and human resource development
 - organisational and team development and interactive communication

Thank You for Your attention !

