

Social changes in Europe and their impacts on vocational rehabilitation

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Workshop 1

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Economical recession – challenges of vocational rehabilitation and well-being at work



Changes in Economy

Economy

- globalisation
- volatility of capital
- increasing competition
- changed role of basic and material production
- separating the real and symbolic economy
- changed relationship between shareholders and company management



Changes in the Companies' Actions

Company

- reorganisation
- networking
- flattening, slimming
- fragmenting
- constant change
- new technology
- fast production
- mobility
- subcontracting, outsourcing
- social responsibility



Changes in the Labour Force

Labour force

- short-term contracts
- self-employment
- Mobility
- ageing, young workers
- feminisation
- increasing competition
- ethnic heterogeneity
- entrepreneurship
- lack of work force
- low level of organization
- combining work and family



Changes in the Work Requirements

Paid labour

- the significance of knowing one profession diminishes
- acquiring other qualifications is emphasized
- the duration of the knowledge base of qualifications shortens, constant learning of new knowledge is emphasized
- social skills, interaction and innovation skills are required as criteria of recruitment, group work and project work skills are demanded
- adapting to qualitative and quantitative flexibility demands
 - working hour demands
 - assignment demands
 - workload demands
 - being on call and working when called
- tolerance of work pressure and work stress
- adapting to changes
- the accentuation of the information society civic skills

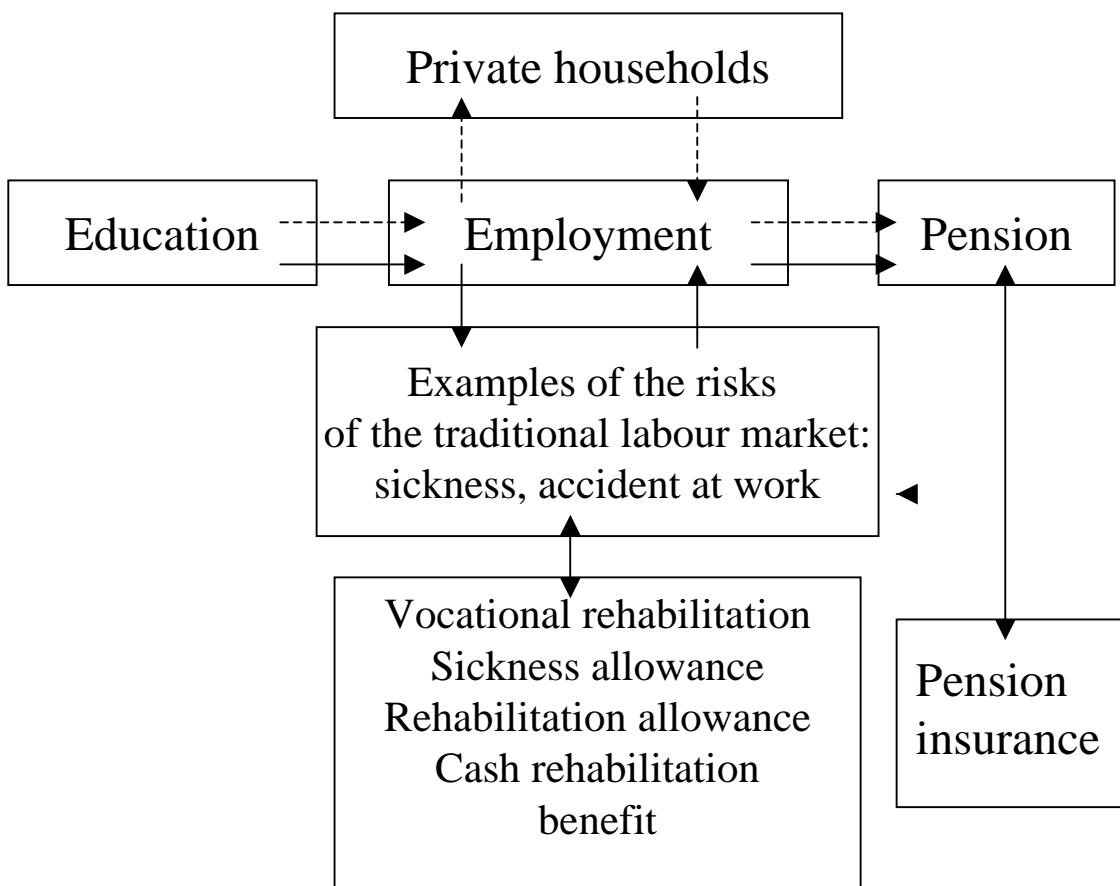


Changes in Work Content

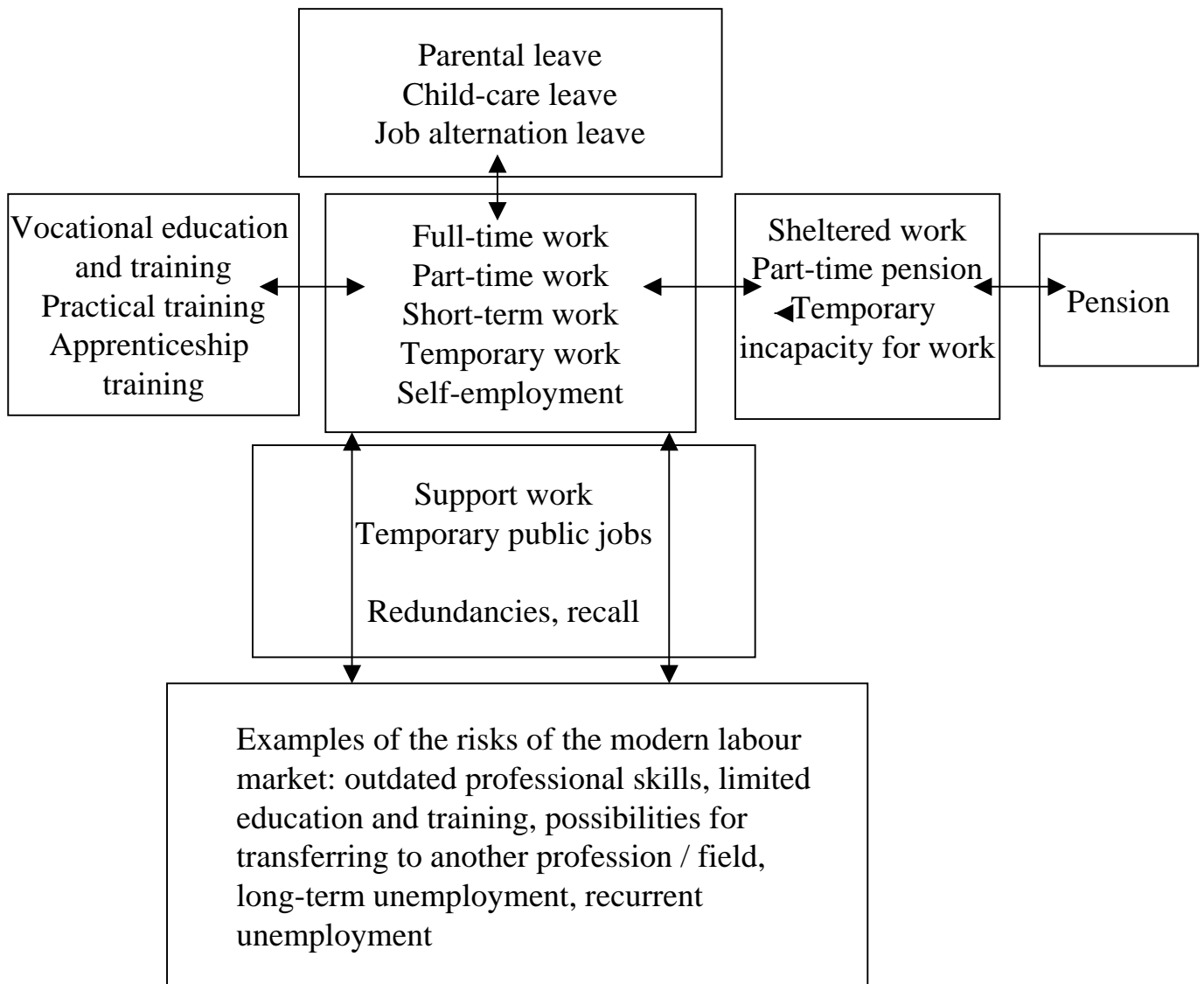
Paid labour

- ongoing employment turning into project work
- constant, recurrent work to work transitions and job to job transitions
- interruptions and, on the other hand, work accumulation
- combination of planning, arranging, organising and manual work
- constant changes in assignments and work organisations
- changing and increasing time and performance pressures
- problematisation of the feelings of controlling the work
- new contents of work alienation

The Traditional Labour Market



The Modern Labour Market





The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (1)

- the key methods and principles of vocational rehabilitation have applied for the past 30-40 years without major changes to the content
- the services have been developed and the legislation reformed to suit the challenges of the period
- the basic conception in the determination of rehabilitation (impairment, sickness, handicap) has, however, remained somewhat the same and thus rehabilitation still begins quite late
- the problems of rehabilitation have been recognised for long but no innovative solutions have been accomplished



The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (2)

- the key challenge for the future of rehabilitation is how a relevant and modern relationship can be formed to the above-described social change ongoing especially in the working life
- the change problematises particularly the chances of those who are ill or whose capacity has deteriorated to remain in the labour market and get there
- wellbeing at work, its realisation and increasing demands of work are shaping to be the critical and strategic development tendencies of the working life of the early 21st century
- these development tendencies concern different groups of workers in different ways
- the questions of diminished capacity, incapacity for work and health can even be said to have culminated
- in texts on the subject, the breach has been seen to signify a new definition for the meaning of capacity for work and the content of the concept of capacity for work



The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (3)

- according to this view, completely new challenges are posed for people's survival in the working life and their capacity
- changes in work and its contents also affect the capacity for work, wellbeing at work and a new kind of workload
- all fields have their own problematics, also the pace of the change is different
- knowledge work entering the contents and skills requirements penetrates many fields
- how have the changes in the work contents and production environment and their effects been taken into account in vocational rehabilitation and its service products
- the change on the contents of work is clearly seen especially in the projectisation of the working life



The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (4)

- the determination of the capacity for work has changed contextually
- traditionally the capacity for work has been linked with the individual's characteristics and managing in the working life has been linked to a particular profession and work related to it
- essential in the change of the working life is that it emphasises the social facilities of the working life and factors related to cooperation and networking
- in working and managing the assignments we are more and more dependent on other people and organisations
- the term 'socio-technical ergonomics of work' can be used, in which both the individual and work community characteristic of the worker and technological change are ever tighter intertwined
- this, then, causes that the problems related to the capacity for work and wellbeing at work can no longer be influenced solely by repairing and rehabilitating the individual like traditional vocational training has done



The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (5)

- working requires qualities that previously were only included in the everyday life and the so-called citizen status
- this refers to the personal qualities of an individual, social and communicative skills
- these skills are more and more needed in the working life
- the modern working life is manifested as a constant need to demonstrate, maintain and renew the capacity for work
- we live under a new regime of the society of the capacity for work
- people's lives are more and more constantly maintaining, demonstrating and developing their capacity for work where the laid responsibility for one's own wellbeing and health is an ever more integral characteristic



The Changing Relationship between Labour Market Citizenship and Vocational Rehabilitation (6)

- the capacity for work society harnesses and utilises all dimensions of people: abilities, skills and knowledge to its own use and needs
- another characteristic that influences the labour market citizenship is specialisation, i.e. ever deeper specialisation is required from the workers and their skills
- a third development factor influencing the labour market citizenship is renewing the skills, i.e. the worker must be able to update and renew his/her capacity for work in an increasing speed
- a key question is how vocational rehabilitation and its products can respond to these challenges of the labour market citizenship and capacity for work
- are e.g. the problems of the Finnish rehabilitation system brought up by the OECD (2008) relevant and adequate in this situation



OECD's comments on Finnish labour market and vocational rehabilitation system (1)

- Finland's labour market does not look very strong compared to the other Nordic countries
- The overall employment rate at 70% in 2007 is still lower than in these countries, while the unemployment rate is much higher, at almost 7%
- However, the benefit system also seems to contribute to high inactivity
- Sickness absence is also high in Finland, with 5,5% of all workdays lost for this reason, and it has been increasing gradually during the past decade
- Despite the continuously high level of unemployment and health-related inactivity, however, labour shortages are arising in certain branches of the economy



OECD's comments on Finnish labour market and vocational rehabilitation system (2)

- Changes are needed in a number of areas, including the following in particular:
 - The fragmentation of the system of vocational rehabilitation
 - The limited focus of the mainstreamed Public Employment Service on the participation and integration of people with long-term health problems or disability
 - The widespread use of disability benefits as an early retirement tool
 - The potential, and the remaining challenges, of the strong employer responsibilities



OECD's comments on Finnish labour market and vocational rehabilitation system (3)

- The following measures would improve the situation:
 - Raise the accountability of actors. The current system of rehabilitation service provision has to be simplified
 - Improve the co-operation of rehabilitation authorities
 - Introduce a mutual responsibilities framework. People with disability should be obliged to take part in rehabilitation activities as a condition of benefit receipt if an improvement in work capacity is likely
 - Streamline the rehabilitation benefit system
 - Modernise work capacity assessments
 - Bring labour market flexibility in line with capacity assessment
 - Make work pay