WHO and wellbeing at work

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WHO and wellbeing

**Wellbeing** is a keyword in the WHO definition of health:

“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

*WHO constitution, signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States and entered into force on 7 April 1948*
Objective and mandates of WHO

- Authority to direct and coordinate health within the UN system
- Objective set in the Constitution:
  - Attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health
- Mandates:
  - provide leadership on global health matters
  - shape the public health research agenda
Why health, safety, and wellbeing at work?

- Workers are half of the whole population
- Healthy workforce is a prerequisite for sustainable development and social wellbeing
- Risks at stake
  - Workers: loss of health and wellbeing
  - Company: loss of productivity and profit
  - Community: loss of solidarity and equity
  - Country: loss of 4-5% of GDP
- Prevention can make “win-win-win-win”.
Resolutions of WHO governing body on wellbeing at work

- WHO Global strategy on occupational health for all, 1996

- World Health Assembly *Worker's health: Global plan of action 2008-2017*
Evolution of wellbeing at work

Labour Approach
Occupational Health

- Action at workplace
- Work-related health issues only
- Work under labour contract
- Employers' responsibility
- Negotiation between workers and employers

Public Health Approach
Workers' Health

- Action to include workers' families & communities
- Include all health determinants
- Include all workers (self-employed, informal workers)
- All stakeholders' responsible (insurance, health, environm. authorities, a.o.)
- Health protection not subject to collective negotiation

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60th World Health Assembly, May 2007

Resolution 60.26 "Workers' Health: Global Plan of Action"

• The Global Plan of Action developed by the Member States for the Member States
• WHA60 endorsed the global plan of action on workers' health (2008-2017)
• WHA60 urged Member States to take an number of measures on workers' health
Global Plan of Action on Workers’ Health, 2008-2017

Protect and promote health at the workplace

Develop & implement policy instruments on workers’ health

Incorporate workers’ health into other policies

Improve the performance of and access to OH services

Provide & communicate evidence for action and practice

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WHO Model of Healthy Workplaces

Combining health protection & health promotion

- Developed by leading occupational health experts out of systematic review of literature
- October 2009 workshop involving 56 experts from 22 countries, international worker & employer representatives
WHO Global Framework of Healthy Workplaces

http://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications/healthy_workplaces_model.pdf
"Capacities should be built for primary prevention of occupational hazards, diseases and injuries, including

– strengthening of human, methodological & technological resources,
– training of workers and employers,
– introduction of healthy work practices and work organization and of a health-promoting & protecting culture at the workplace.

Mechanisms need to be established to stimulate the development of healthy workplaces, including consultation with, and participation of, workers and employers."
WHO Definition of a Healthy Workplace

A healthy workplace is one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs:

- Health & safety concerns in the PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT;
- Health, safety & well-being concerns in the PSYCHOSOCIAL WORK ENVIRONMENT including organization of work and workplace culture;
- PERSONAL HEALTH RESOURCES in the workplace; and,
- WAYS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE COMMUNITY to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.
Core Principles and Values

- Commitment, based on core values
- Involve workers
- Learn from others
- Work towards sustainability
Continual Improvement

= Plan – Do – Check – Act - Verify

Sustainability
Continuous learning

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Eliminate a toxic chemical or substitute with one less hazardous
Install machine guards or local exhaust ventilation
Train workers on safe operating procedures

Reallocate work to reduce workload
Zero tolerance for harassment, violence, discrimination
Respect work-family balance
Recognize & reward good performance
Meaningful worker involvement decisions that affect them

Psychosocial Work Environment

Physical Work Environment

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Partners of the WHO initiative for Healthy Workplaces

WHO Regional Partners of the WHO initiative for Healthy Workplaces

ILO

WHO

UN Agencies

WHO Regional Offices

ISSA

Healthcare Ministries of Health

Businesses

Trade Unions - ETUC

Employers – Int'l Employers Association

OHS Institutes

Academia & Research Institutions

Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health

International
Development
Agencies

International
Partners in
The Healthy
Workplaces
Initiative

Multi-disciplinary experts

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NGOs

GIZ

WEF

IOHA

IEA

ICOH

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Wellbeing at work through healthy workplaces: a comprehensive approach

- Traditional occupational health – minimizing workers' exposure to job-related physical & psychosocial risks
- Health promotion – promoting healthy behaviours among workers, both job- and lifestyle-related
- Enterprise involvement in community – to address broader social & environmental determinants of workers’ health

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Investments in workplace wellness programs are also profitable!

For every $ spent:

– Medical costs fall by $3.27
– Absenteeism costs fall by $2.73

“The wide adoption of such programs could prove beneficial for budgets and productivity as well as health outcomes”

(Baicker K, et al. Workplace wellness programs can generate savings. Health Affairs, 2010)
Success factors of wellbeing at work initiative

- Linking programmes to business objectives
- Top management support
- Employee advisory boards
- Effective communication
- Supportive environment
- Use of incentives
- Goal setting
- Tailored programmes
- Building effective programmes across the individual to environment continuum
WHO’s holistic framework for action

Physical work environment

Psychosocial work environment

Leadership engagement

ETHICS & VALUES

Worker involvement

Enterprise community involvement

Personal health resources

Mobilize

Improve

Evaluate

Do

Plan

Prioritize

Assess

Assemble
Thank you for your attention!

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