



UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

Work-Life Balance & Social Sustainability

Adult education promoting sustainable development – Module 3



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Content:

1. Introduction to modern work and work/life balance
2. Causes of mental drain from work
3. Detriments of poor work life/balance on individual
4. Detriments of poor work life/balance on society
5. Link to sustainable development goals 3 & 8
6. Possible solutions to improve work/life balance
7. Key points of presentation



Working life and the new work paradigm

- **Industrialization** and industrial labor thoroughly impacted societies around the world with processes such as urbanization, nuclearization of the family as well as the factory work model
- **The new work paradigm** is linked with the emergence **information society** and **megatrends** which influence working life, such as development of information and communications technologies, aging population, rapid technological advancements, urbanization, individualization, increased role of media, as well as increased interaction and mobility in society (Heinonen 2004).
- Increasingly significant with the increasingly multimodal and multi-location working conditions and **remote work** already common in specific workplaces and made more common by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"New and old work"

Top search result for "work" on a stock image website



Top search result for "labour" on a stock image website



NB! The english words for "work" and "labour"
classically have had a very similar meaning.
(e.g. Italian: lavoro, Russian: работа)



Work life in the network society

- The contemporary **network society** requires **self-programmable labor**, where knowledge is produced and applied to different tasks by finding, searching and recombining information in increasingly complex information systems.
- In addition to appropriate education and training, self-programmable labor requires **creative capacity**. The other category of labor, **generic labor**, is increasingly subject to machine replacement or shift to lower-cost production sites.
- Castells writes that the division of labor in the network society is **gendered** in a dynamic way, with labor market segregation and the **gender pay gap**, but also reversing some dominant structural trends and patriarchalism.

(Castells 1996, 2009)



Introduction to work/life balance

- A work/life balance refers to balancing time and energy between demands in the workplace and demands at home.
- A poor work/life balance refers to lack of resources (e.g., time, energy, or support) to complete work or homelife commitments.
- Economic growth, and company development depends on committed employees.
- Increasing speed in the work force, due to better resources and increasing demands
- Aims of a good work life balance:
 - Improve employee's morale
 - Lower turnover in the workforce
 - Keep up with trends and demands
 - Employees balancing work and home responsibilities
 - Employers creating an environment where employees can concentrate on work





Why it's crucial to emphasize work/life balance?

- Research highlights that increased employee well-being...
 - can be seen as a goal per se because firms are responsible of their employees
 - has direct and indirect effects on organizational performance
 - contributes to organizational commitment, work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior
 - leads to lower absence and lower labor turnover

(Hauff et al. 2020, 4.)



Work/life balance models:

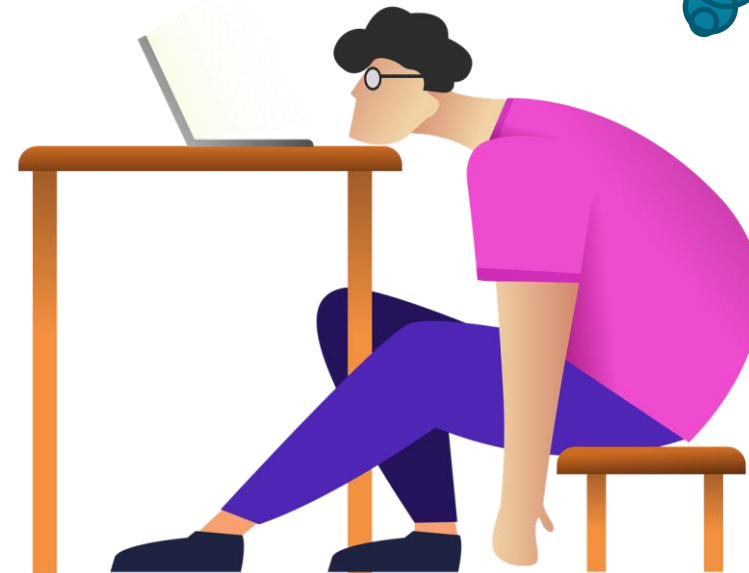
- Segmentation model:
 - If an individual worries about work related problems while at home this can lead to excess stress and deteriorating homelife. Segmentation model suggests a clear boundary between work and home life using a cognitive-emotional strategies. (Michel, Bosch, & Rexroth, 2014.)
- Spill over model:
 - This model suggests that work life and home life can either positively or negatively affect each other. This can include a transition of moods, attitudes or skills and behaviours between domains. (Muster, & Schrader, 2011.)
- Compensation model
 - This model suggests that an individual does not need to have their demands for satisfaction met by one domain. Meaning that even though they may not enjoy their work life enormously, a fulfilling homelife can compensate for it. (Guest, 2002.)
- Instrumental model
 - This model suggests that success in one domain can help in the other. For example, having a less satisfying job to earn enough to buy a house. (Guest, 2002.)
- Conflict model
 - This model suggests with increasing demands in work life, and large demands in home life, the individual will be overloaded with demands. This leads to a deterioration of effectiveness in both domains. (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012.)



Causes of mental drain in working life?

- Increasing productivity demands
- Demands in personal life, e.g., family
- Unequal treatment and discrimination
- Management issues
- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Need for quick responses and constant availability at work
- Cognitive strain from need to handle a large information load (eg. policies, instructions, technological tools) and changes

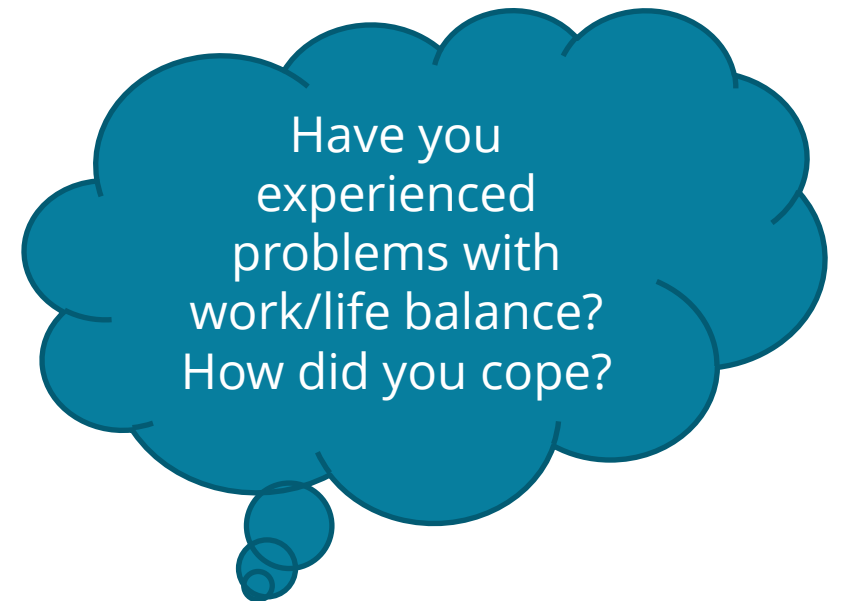
What other things can cause mental drain?





Detriments of poor work life/balance on individual

- Poor work/life balance can lead to:
 - Stress and uncertainty related to performance at work and at home
 - Difficulty in completing and prioritising different tasks
 - Lower satisfaction and confidence
- Poor work/life balance can lead to larger problems:
 - Burnout
 - Socio-economic issues
 - Poor coping mechanisms





Detriments of poor work life/balance on society

- Family members working long hours can lead to less time for family commitments which can lead to
 - Decrease in social cohesion among generations
 - Stress and stress-related symptoms, depression
 - Less time and commitment to elderly care
 - Less participation in community activities
- Poor work/life balance decreases engagement to workplace as well as job satisfaction, may increase turnover rate



Possible solutions to improve work/life balance

- **Family friendly benefits:** allowing flexibility in work tasks to address family commitments. E.g., taking time to take the children to school in the mornings
- **Work/life programs:** Can be either time or work allowances to address family obligations
- **Work/life initiatives:** policies and procedures in an organization that allow flexibility in work responsibilities to meet family needs
- **Work/family culture:** the acceptance and understanding of a company to promote management and employees to work together to meet both family and work demands.



Link to sustainable development goals 3 & 8

- **Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
 - **3.4** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.
 - **3.5** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.
- **Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**
 - **8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
 - **8.8** Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment





SDG related open access articles

- The Relevance of Circular Economy Practices to the Sustainable Development Goals
- https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jiec.12732?casa_token=24yZuA5vzL4AAAAA:33IH01tUEIAs2qjWznecHbgOVObtjbM9CK3VbSOkJFHxnfl_5wQ980U-0EP8qp0ciZ-2kXqGaiHvKw
- A Human Rights Lens on Full Employment and Decent Work in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244016649580>
- Mental health and wellbeing in the Sustainable Development Goals
- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Harry-Minas/publication/284811647_Mental_health_and_wellbeing_in_the_Sustainable_Development_Goals/links/569032eb08aee91f69a16a87/Mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals.pdf



Key points:

- Causes for mental drain at work come from an increased work speed, development of new technologies, and increasing work demands.
- An individual's work/life balance can have a large effect on their mental health.
- Poor work/life balance can lead to burn out, substance abuse, lower motivation, lower productivity at work, and other health issues.
- Promoting policies that allow for flexibility with work obligations, can significantly improve an individual's mental health.
- An inclusive, and supportive workplace will promote sustainable economic growth.





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Images

Slide 5: Tractor Photo by Jackmac34 on pixabay <https://pixabay.com/photos/tractor-labour-agricultural-machine-1732144/> (accessed 11/22/2022)

Slide 5: Man reading touchscreen blog Photo by kaboompics on pixabay <https://pixabay.com/photos/man-reading-touchscreen-blog-791049/> (accessed 11/22/2022)

Slide 6: Familie Arbeit Balance: Anrita 1705 on pixabay <https://pixabay.com/fi/photos/ty%C3%B6el%C3%A4m%C3%A4n-tasapainoa-tehd%C3%A4-ty%C3%B6t%C3%A4-5333818/> (accessed 2.12.2022)

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Work, family & social sustainability

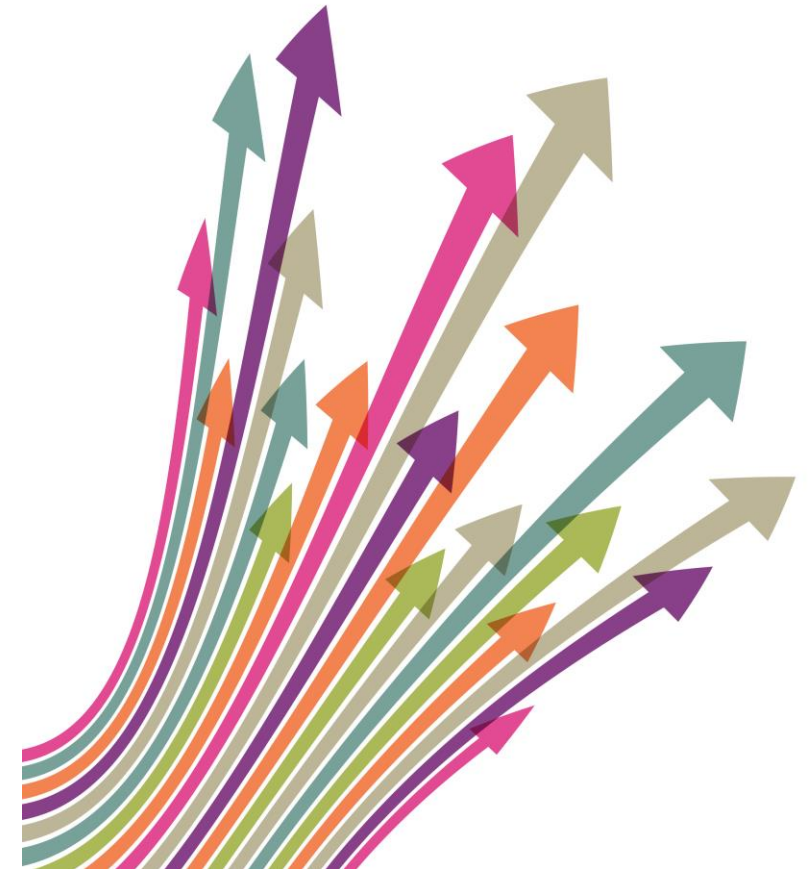
Adult education promoting sustainable development – Module 3





Content:

1. A short recap from module 1
2. A brief review of social sustainability & issues at work
3. An introduction to the concept of work-family conflict (WFC)
4. Different contexts of WFC
5. Possible solutions for WFC
6. Future insights of sustainability, work & family
7. Key points of the slideshow





Social sustainability & work

- **Social sustainability** can refer to...
 - Equity
 - Safety
 - Community
- Social sustainability in work is manifested e.g., in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 23):
 - "Everyone has the right to get protection against unemployment"
 - "Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection"





Issues at work that threaten social sustainability

■ **Uncertainty**

- Covid-19: layoffs for a certain period of time or a total layoff -> unemployment
- Aging workforce, increasingly competitive labor market, information technology, rising benefit costs (Vyas & Shrivastava 2017).

■ **Inequality & social injustice**

- Parents may have difficulties to balance between work and family
 - For example, after the maternity leave, women may have difficulties to get back to working life
- Women living in poorer countries: in addition to paid work, they usually need to take care of the household / children

■ **Today's working life**

- Working time and leisure time are intertwined together -> especially now, due to the pandemic, when many people are working from home
- Difficulties to separate working time and leisure time may have a negative impact on (mental) well-being, family-life and other social relationships



Work-family conflict – an introduction

- **Work-family conflict (WFC)** = lack of time, missed work or family activities and stress coming from work to home or vice versa (Kelly, Moen & Tranby 2011, 265)
- **Three types of WFC** (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985)
 - time-based conflict = “time devoted to one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role”
 - strain-based conflict = “strain from one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role”
 - behavior-based conflict = “behaviors required in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another role”





What kind of real-life examples of Work-Family Conflicts (WFC) could you identify?



Work-family conflict – parents

Parents & WFC

- Families may not have enough resources to balance between childcare and work (Huffman, Culbertson, Henning & Goh 2013)
 - Long working hours reduce the time spent with the family (König & Cesinge 2015, 544)
- Parents may feel loss of energy and time while trying to balance between work and family (Mansour & Tremblay 2016, 1795)
 - instead of enjoying family life, the employees use up their energy to meet family responsibilities -> parents do not have enough energy and time to manage their professional role -> they feel more overload & stress at work
- If the mother experiences high work–family conflict ->colder relationship & negative interaction with the child (Cooklin, Westrupp, Strazdins, Giallo, Martin & Nicholson 2015, 272)
- If the mother experiences satisfaction at work -> better interaction with children. (Cooklin et al. 2015, 272)



Work-family balance: parental leave (1/2)

Eerola et al. 2015:

- Finland, along with Norway, was the first country in the world to introduce paternity leave in the late 1970s, and the second country after Sweden to introduce sharable parental leave in the mid-1980s. The current Finnish scheme*, introduced in 2013, provides fathers with three alternative leave packages
- **Types of paternity leave in Finland**
 - “Use it or lose it”: paternity leave of 9 weeks, comprising post birth leave of 3 weeks simultaneously with the mother + individual paternity leave of 6 weeks. With high compensation for loss of earnings, until the child’s 2nd birthday
 - Parental leave of 26 weeks, which is a family right and shareable between the parents, with high compensation for loss of income, starts after maternity leave;
 - Care leave, which can be shared between the parents, up to the child’s third birthday, with flat-rate compensation 2

Finnish leave scheme can be perceived as overcomplex and difficult to understand. The use of fathers’ leave is also strictly regulated and lacks the flexibility needed to accommodate the diversity that exists in family situations and care arrangements. Also, sharable parental leave is often culturally understood as an extension of maternity leave, which further reduces fathers’ take-up. This research shows that the two most common barriers to leave mentioned by fathers reflect their roles as breadwinners, indicating that the father is culturally understood as the primary provider

* Parental leave scheme was reformed. As from 2022, both parents can receive paid leave of 158 days (KELA, 2022)



Work-family balance: parental leave (2/2)

- Motivation of fathers to take a leave:
 - father's personal desire to take care of the child
 - wish to take a break from work
 - the mother's wish that the father take leave
 - the father's desire to facilitate the mother's return to work
 - Only a few fathers in this research mentioned unemployment or facilitating the mother's studies
- Father's barriers to take a leave:
 - the family's economic situation
 - The family's economic situation
 - being too busy at work
 - the mother having no job to return to
 - father's job insecurity
 - father's perception of leave as unnecessary

(Eerola et al. 2015)



Work-family conflict - A case from India

Zaidi and Chigateri 2017:

- Women take care of their household / children same way even if they have a job
 - They need to rush and multitask
 - Taking care of the household / children had a negative impact on their ability to manage their paid work responsibilities (p. 16)
- Women did not try to reduce their caring tasks -> they stretched their time, for example resting less so they had more time to take care all their responsibilities (p. 16)
- Women experienced lack of rest, pain in various parts of the body, physical weakness and mental stress because of multitasking and managing their responsibilities (p. 17)
- Through adult education it could be possible to improve people's lives in poorer countries (e.g., literacy, vocational education & community development) (Veen & Preece, 2005)



Companies supporting work-life balance

- Social support, organizational factors, stress factors, and IT factors have a significant effect to the work-life balance of an individual.
- Due to both employers and employees being under pressure, it's fundamental to find practices to promote quality working life.
- Today, companies have been starting to internalize the importance of the work life balance and aim to set up policies to support this goal.
- Companies are innovating methods that would promote happiness and satisfaction among the employees.
- This development work supports more positive working atmosphere, and additionally has a positive impact on the productivity of employees.



(Vyas & Shrivastava 2017)



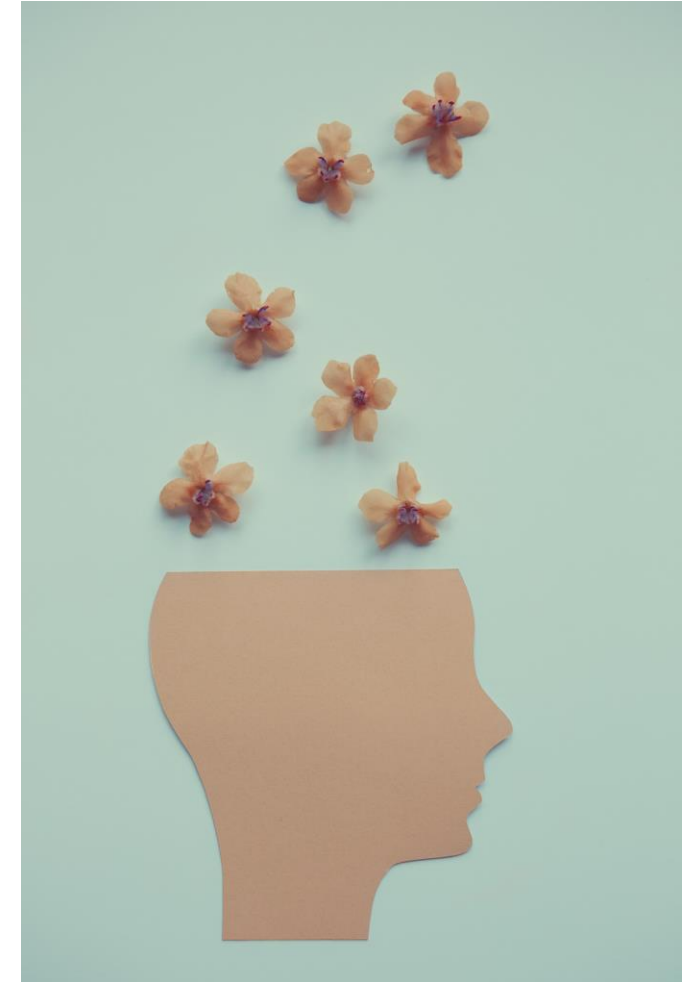
From work-life conflict to work-life balance

- It has been noted that relatively low-cost company policies have a potential to promote well-being of employees (e.g. flexible work schedules, workplace support and supervisory support) (Jang 2009).
- **Changing organisational cultures => role of adult education: knowledge to managers & employers**
 - Aim to improve work-life balance may require reviewing managerial expectations, training and development, coaching and level of accountability (Gibson 2015).
 - Supervisors have a crucial role -> shaping views of support and its impact on solving the work-family conflict (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner & Hammer 2011, 304).
 - Organisations can make their work arrangements flexible for their employees-> decreasing work-life conflict increasing employees' well-being (König & Cesinge 2015, 543).
 - Organisations should make their employees to feel being cared for & give opportunities to direct or indirect help (Kossek et al. 2011, 291-292).
 - Assistance programs that provide professional human support services can also increase supportive work-life atmosphere (Jang 2009).
 - Moreover, colleague supportiveness affect positively to work life balance (Vyas & Shrivastava 2017).
- All in all, social support at work and at home is a critical resource for work-life balance => helps to cope with the different responsibilities in working life and family life (Kossek et al. 2011, 291-292).



Ways to support well-being at work

- 1. Interconnectedness:** humans as "social beings", affective involvement, organization as social communities, high-quality relationships, social support....
- 2. Participation:** autonomy, empowerment, self-organization, social inclusion...
- 3. Trust:** between workers and management, relevance for safety culture...
- 4. Justice:** lack of justice can lead to stress and feelings of burnout
- 5. Responsibility:** business ethics, open communication, transparency, stakeholder involvement....
- 6. Development and growth:** both organization and individual development and growth are important...
- 7. Resilience:** ability to survive under adverse conditions, adaptivity, "managing the unexpected"... (Zwetsloot, van Scheppingen, Bos, Dijkman & Starren 2013.)





The future of work, family & social sustainability

- **Remote work is probably here to stay after the pandemic is over**
 - For employees' well-being it will be important to find practices for separating working time and leisure time -> for example, flexible work-schedules (König & Cesinge 2015, 543)
 - Remote work can enhance work-family balance
 - Working hours can become independent from time and physical place because of utilization of ITC -> employees can manage their working time more effectively in order to have more time with their families
- **Adult education is needed even more in the future**
 - new technologies and working practices -> employees and employers need to keep up with the development and changes



Key points: work, family & social sustainability

- **Possible issues with work that threaten social sustainability**
 - Uncertainty
 - Inequality (gender) & social injustice
 - Today's working life (difficulties to separate working time and leisure time)
- **Work-family conflict (WFC)** = time strains, missed work or family activities and stress coming from work to home or vice versa
 - **Parents**
 - Lack of resources to balance between childcare and work -> stress -> negative feelings at work have a negative effect on interaction with family
 - **People (especially women) in poorer countries**
 - Taking care of children / household & managing with job responsibilities -> multitasking -> inequality, stress & lack of rest



Key points: sustainability, working life & adult education

■ Adult education & sustainability at work

- Adult education can offer knowledge to managers -> possibilities to change organizational culture to meet the needs of the employees
- Remote work is here to stay (probably) -> flexible working hours / working places
- Adult education is needed even more in the future
 - new technologies and working practices -> employees and employers need to keep up with the development and changes
 - In poorer countries adult education can enhance e.g., community development through vocational education -> improving people's lives & employability





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