



e-LARA, e-LEARNING, ALPHABETIZATION OF RURAL AREAS

JUNE 2007 NEWSLETTER

“WORK-FAMILY CONCILIATION”

1) Background

Conciliation measures are considered essential not only to the people life quality increase, but also to the economical growth. That's why themes like the work market feminisation, the domestic tasks masculinisation and the elimination of the non-quality concerning the genre are more and more object of study and public debate, having in mind the identification of solutions that contribute a pretended equal and inclusive society.

Terminology like the bellow mentioned are often used in the denomination of the ensemble of questions that circle around the Human (as worker and member of a familiar and social nucleus) life quality and time schedule organisation:

- » Conciliate
- » Reconciliate
- » Harmonize
- » Articulate
- » Balance
- » Integrate

Beyond the words and, independently of the used strategies, the measures to the conciliation of work with life must bring advantages to the workers as well as to the employees.

2) Involved Dimensions

Given the variability of the involved factors, work and familiar life conciliation doesn't have a specific indicator. If we take in account only two dimensions, (work/familiar life), the "familiar life" seems to be the most predictable variable fraction, because it depends of the human been natural evolution: teenager, adult, potential parent, retired...

It would be desirable the creation of structures associated with "work" that contribute and not constrain the worker "life" evolution.

Are taken as potentially positive to conciliation the following measures:

- » Schedule flexibility
- » Part-time job
- » Telework
- » Plain use of the maternal and paternal licence
- » Assistance to children, elders or dependents care
- » Good accessibility to the work place
- » Articulation of the work and services schedules

The adequacy of one or more measures, that can better serve everyone interests, can change, not only in the work place, according with the individual characteristics of each one involved but also, according with cultural and legal factors.



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3) E-LARA for work-family conciliation

An object that the E-LARA project proposed is referred to the conciliation between private life and working life.

The instruments of the new technologies proposed and experimented in the project, in particular with free information point, learning center, blog but also the workshops for digital alphabetisation, they contribute to the dissemination of information and they facilitate their access that can be carried out from whichever PC also from own house, allowing therefore a better planning and management of the private and work times.

In particular the project previews the creation of a part on the Learning Center I ICT and Rural Areas dedicated to the on-line services (bank, mail, e-shopping, etc) that they can help to conciliate the work and familiar engagements, doing more accessible the services also to the marginal areas and therefore allowing to reduce the social exclusion that still weighs on these territories.

4) European Policies

Work-life balance is a consistent theme in Commission proposals on the future of European social policy which promote a shift away from a work/leisure dichotomy towards more complex patterns of time use. In fact, the European Commission recognise the need for further actions to improve work-life balance, including areas and means for improvement, modification of Community legislation, and the most effective balance between costs and benefits.

Some Steps:

June 1996: European Framework Agreement on parental leave

June 1997: European Framework Agreement on part-time work

April 2004: directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

March 2006: European Pact for Gender Equality. The pact has as one of its three main objectives "to meet the demographic challenges by promoting better work-life balance for women and men."

October 2006: first-stage consultation of European social partners on reconciliation of professional, private and family life.

Reconciliation policies, together with other factors, have contributed to a relatively strong increase in female employment in recent years. The employment rate of women in the EU-25 rose from 52.9% in 1999 to 55.7% in 2004, and the target of 60% by 2010 could be reached if trends continue at the same pace.

5) Telework

The Telework it's mean for workers to improve their work-life balance and achieve greater autonomy in the workplace

Telework is a form of organising and/or performing work using information technology, in the context of an employment contract, where the work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises, on a regular basis. The characteristic feature of telework is the use of computers and telecommunications to change the accepted location of work. It is estimated that approximately 4.5 million employees are currently employed in telework in the European Union and this is forecast to rise to more than 17 million employees by 2010.



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6) Reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas

<http://www.groenkennisnet.nl/new-neighbours/france.pdf>

Women working in a rural context have to cope with additional difficulties concerning the access to jobs and training, to urban services and more specifically social and cultural services. The lack of, or restricted access to, means of transport is yet another problem. Nevertheless, most women try to reconcile their professional activities with children's education, in spite of difficulties which are only partly compensated.

Generally speaking, the reconciliation of work with family life in a rural environment is hindered by the distance between the dwelling place, the workplace and the different services.

It should be added that the situation is not as bad in cities. Mobility has become inevitable, and people are constantly looking for individual or collective solutions which could result in better organisation of their activities.

7) Useful links

Documents

Manual Work-Family Conciliation

http://www.viver.org/versao_inglesa/conciliacao.html

Reconciliation of work and family life in rural areas

<http://www.groenkennisnet.nl/new-neighbours/france.pdf>

Resources Center for Equal Opportunities – Region of Piedmont

http://www.provincia.torino.it/pari_opportunita/crspo/index.htm

Insitutions

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

www.eurofound.europa.eu

European Commission – DG for Employment and Social Affairs

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social

8) Events and Conferences

Key Competencies: Skills for Life 2007

12 - 13 July 2007

Country: United Kingdom

<http://events.eife-l.org/kc2007/kc2007>

IADIS International Conference e-Learning 2007

6 - 8 July 2007

Country: Portugal

<http://www.elearning-conf.org/>

Melting Box – International fair of equal opportunities and rights for everybody

22-24 October 2007

Country: Italy - Turin

<http://www.meltingbox.it/index.htm>