**Applying the Capabilities Approach to Career Development to Work to Retirement**

**Transitions**

**Innovation Groups Protocol for Researchers**

**Phase I: Initial meeting with HR and senior managers**

Prior to the initial meeting, we will conduct an online-based worker survey assessing employees’ work and retirement plans; skills and knowledge; awareness of HR policies in relation to retirement, training, working hours and healthy working; and quality of life. On completion of the survey, we will produce a report summarising the findings of the survey, and how employees of the company compare with national datasets, including the European Social Survey, National Adult Learning Survey, HSBC Retirement Survey and others. The report will highlight findings which we as the research team find significant and feedback findings which managers are interested in.

Through discussion of the findings, the two sides will agree a broad topic which the innovation group will investigate. Examples might include: How do we encourage older workers to participate in training?; How can flexible working retirement work for certain jobs?; Can healthy working be promoted in the workplace?

Next, we will discuss recruitment of participants. Ideally, we are looking for participation of an equal number of older workers and managers. Employee representatives such as trade union workplace representatives or employee network representatives may also be invited to participate as they have experience or knowledge of good practice in other organisations. In total, we expect 10-15 participants, but recognise that numbers will be adjusted according to workplace size.

Finally, we will discuss facility time arrangements for group participants. We are seeking the following support for group participants:

 Four three-hour meeting times with participants (12 hours total)

 Eight hours time in between the three meetings to enable the group participants to carry out investigations

 Facilities such as computer access, access to breakout rooms, etc.

In return, the research team will attend all three meetings, and provide on-call support via telephone and email for the participants as they conduct their investigations.

**Phase II: Planning (approximately 3 hours, with breaks in between)**

At the beginning of the innovation group, we will provide a summary of our project aims and objectives:

a) We’re interested in how good practice emerges within organisations and is shared between different constituencies. We know that some of the best ideas on how to manage work and retirement come about through dialogue

between workers and their managers, and we want to explore that process.

b) We are aiming to share good practice and innovative ideas with the organisation as a whole (via HR managers) All dissemination will be carried out on a **confidential and anonymous** basis, without directly naming participants or the organisation, unless they wish to do so.

c) We are approaching the research using a well-establish research philosophy of **co-researching with participants.** We as the Lingnan/ Middlesex research team bring certain skills and knowledge to the group, which we hope to share, but we recognise that other participants are authorities in their own right, for example, on what works and what doesn’t in their own workplaces. The overriding ethos of the group is therefore that this is **research with, not research on** workers and managers. As co-researchers, we also aim to disseminate findings on a mutual basis.

Next, we will ask the questions below following the presentation of the survey findings and the key issue identified as salient. This can be in a focus group format or in breakout groups.

Questions which we will pose to the group include:

1. Please tell us more about [the issue] in your workplace and within the organisation as a whole.

2. Please tell us about what you think the organisation is doing well on this

issue.

3. What would you like to change about this issue? What are the problems you would like to address?

4. Please discuss some ideas of good practice in relation to this issue. Ideas

could be based on something that has been done in the past or on something that you have heard has worked in other places. [We will write these down on a board as a table – see below]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Idea** | **This idea might work**  **here because…**  **[strengths of the organization]** | **But it might not work**  **here because…**  **[barriers]** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

5. Individually, please rank these ideas, from the most to the least desirable to you (not to the organization or anyone else – this is through your lens as a member of this organisation as an employee/a manager).

6. Next, please rank them from the most to the least achievable. Again, this is based on your view.

Using these two sets of ranking taken from each member, we will then contrast preferences of what is perceived to be desirable and what is perceived to be achievable between older workers’ lenses and managers’ lenses. Our job is to facilitate a group discussion around the contrast between the two lenses (if there are any) and to also compare similarities in preferences between the two stakeholders. This is similar to CIAR’s micro-interventions, a technique developed by the MIT Workplace Center ([http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/publications.html)](http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/publications.html).

7. As a group, let’s now work together to agree on one of the ideas as a goal for change, based on desirability and achievability. (We will facilitate this negotiation process of elimination of ideas, based on the dual agenda – modified from the CIAR’s dual agenda)

8. What do you think it will take to make this idea work?

9. Who do you need to get on board (who are the stakeholders)?

10. How do you convince them?

11. What evidence would you need to present your case? How would you obtain this evidence? How can we help? What do we need to bring to the next meeting?

We will wrap up this session by asking each member to reflect on the next four questions)

12. What would you like to see in terms of outcomes at these different levels?

 For yourself as an individual?

 For your workplace?

 For the organisation as a whole?

 For the wider benefit of your community (of fellow older workers, future older workers, etc.)?

Group participants will be asked to mutually agree a small amount of investigation, which they will do to answer question 12. This may include talking to 3-4 colleagues or investing good practice in other organisations. Group participants will also discuss with the Lingnan/ Middlesex research team what support they would like from them, such as further analysis of the company survey.

**Phase II: Piloting (approximately 3 hours, with breaks in between)**

There are three aims for Phase II:

1. To enable our co-researchers to pilot their chosen methods of collecting data and for them to share any preliminary findings

2. To guide our co-researchers in refining their methods in light of the pilot

3. To work with instances of resistance (key in CIAR) that have emerged so far

We will begin the meeting with group participants feeding back on their reflections of question 12 above. Participants will be asked to discuss:

1. Have your views on the issue changed since our earlier meeting?

2. Have you identified any good practice? Potential barriers?

3. Are you more optimistic or pessimistic about the project than before?

We will then explore a discreet action research project which co-researchers could conduct. This could be, for example, investigating whether flexible working could work with a certain type of jobs or what would incentivise older workers to train. All participants will agree the following:

4. What is the question the group as a whole wants to investigate?

5. What information do you need to gather and how will this be done?

6. What support do you need from the Lingnan/ Middlesex team?

**Phase III: Interpretation and dissemination (3 hours including breaks)**

Co-researchers, rather than the Lingnan/Middlesex team, will lead this session. The group will begin with a presentation of their findings. The Lingnan/Middlesex researchers may ask questions, provide insight, and explore issues with the group as well.

We will also share our interpretation of the evidence that our co-researchers have collected. This will be contrasted to our co-researchers’ interpretation. This will enable us to pose the following questions to our co-researchers:

1. Now that you know how this issue can be changed, how can you convince the different stakeholders (identified in Phase I meeting)?

2. What do we, as a group, need to present to these stakeholders? How can this

be packaged?

Participants will agree a dissemination strategy which may include the Lingnan

/Middlesex team. This can include presentations, short articles, and online publications.

**Phase IV: Evaluation (not more than 3 hours including breaks)**

The aim of this phase is to follow-up on what has worked and what has not worked in light of Phase III. This can be in a form of a focus group. The evaluation session will occur at an agreed time, but at least one month after the end of Phase III. We want enough time for participants to reflect on their participation in the group and the impact which it has had on themselves, their workplaces, their organisations and the wider body of knowledge. Questions which we wish to explore:

1. First, please tell us about your experience in disseminating your findings to the stakeholders we identified earlier. What were the main messages you gave? How did they receive your findings? What was the feedback you received? (Presentational knowledge)

2. Has your participation in the group changed how you think about work and

retirement? Have you adapted how you work and manage? (Experiential knowledge)

3. Have you seen how others have changed their approaches? What impact do you think your work has had on the organisation as a whole? Has it been

positive, negative or neutral? (Practical knowledge)

4. What messages do you have for organisations like your employer; workers;

managers; government and other stakeholders on how better to manage work to retirement transitions? What feedback would you give us as you co- researchers? (Propositional knowledge)

Phase IV would conclude our involvement with the group. However, in keeping with the philosophy of co-researching, we would explore whether and how the group would like to maintain a “community of practice” which can share ideas and experiences.