

Learning from Workplace Development Initiatives: External Evaluations versus Internal Understandings

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In efforts to promote new forms of work organization, the use of exemplary cases and the notion of best practices have played a key role. There are, however, major problems associated with diffusing experience from such sources to new workplaces. To reach out in working life and attain scope in the changes, there is a need for other strategies. To explore options and potentials in this context, workplace development programs have been launched in several countries. The purpose of this article is to look at some of the programs that have emerged in the Scandinavian context, with a view to seeing how the issue of scope has been approached and what can be learnt from the programs. In association with the learning issue, the evaluations done of the programs will be the point of departure. The article will, consequently, highlight questions associated with evaluations: Are they read? What discourses, if any, do they enter? Are they acted upon?

Key words: programs, learning, networks, distributive strategies, regionalisation

Introduction

Change and development in working life can be initiated from many quarters; in most cases the initiative comes from local management and is carried through in processes based on some degree of involvement from the