

Building Better Programmes: Learning Networks in the Promotion of Workplace Innovation

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This paper starts by providing a generic conceptual framework to improve understanding of critical success factors for the social effectiveness of programmes that promote workplace innovation. Thereafter, the paper shows how this framework can be applied in making choices about the content of projects in the programmes. A distinction is made between user-oriented, method-based, and learning network types of project. The three types are examined and compared, in terms of their ability to provide four kinds of outcomes, programme learning and policy learning. The paper also shows how learning networks can be applied to overcome some of the problems involved in the two other types of project. In elaborating the argument, the author makes use of the experiences gained from the implementation of learning network projects in the Finnish Workplace Development Programme TYKES.

Key words: Development programme, learning network, reflexive benchmarking, work organization, workplace innovation

1. Introduction

The growth of knowledge-intensive work and the transition to an increasingly knowledge-based economy have increased the need for businesses to be innovative. Their search for continuous productivity improvements and new sources of competitive advantage has led to a growing interest among policy-