

### A capability perspective on health, work and health and sustainable employability

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#### A CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE ON HEALTH, WORK AND HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY

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The capability concept, as formulated by Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen, brings the individual's capacity or ability (what a person can do or is able to) in relation to the possibilities that the environment offers (to which an individual is enabled). The CA emphasises the real opportunities we have to do what we want to do and to live the life that we want to live. This can be regarded as very relevant for health, disability management and sustainable employability. At present employability is an important and dominant concept in the field of work and health in which it is the responsibility of the employee to be employable. In the capability approach (CA) there is also an environmental (societal or organisational) responsibility to be inclusive for people with a disability. The CA has been applied to and is operationalised in many fields a.o. the field of health and disability. In the symposium we display the applicability of the capability approach with respect to health, work and health and sustainable employability in four contributions. 1) a capability perspective on health (S. Venkatapuram); 2) a capability perspective on disability (P. Saleebey) 3) a capability perspective on sustainable employability (J. van der Klink) and 4) Development of a capability set for sustainable employability (F. Abma) pability set for sustainable employability.

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#### THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH AND HEALTH

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The capabilities approach is a conceptual framework and ethical theory developed by the philosopher and economist Amartya Sen. The approach is significantly influencing a variety of academic disciplines and professions such as economics, social statistics, public policy, development programmes, and increasingly health related professions. This paper will present some of the central ideas of the capabilities approach, and how it can be applied to human health. In particular, an argument will be presented for how health should be conceptualized as an inter-related cluster of basic capabilities to be and do certain things that constitute a life with equal human dignity. Such a view of health is contrasted with purely biological approaches or utility related approaches such as QALYs in identifying the aims, implementation, and evaluation of health and social care programmes.

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#### A CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE ON DISABILITY

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Introduction: Disability has become increasingly recognized as the dynamic interaction of the individual and his/her environment - specifically, the demands of an impairment, society's interpretation of it, and the broader societal context of disability. Sen's capability approach enables

to better understand the impact of impairment on individual functioning. Rather than focusing solely on individual capacity measured in clinical settings, capabilities represent real opportunities - the combination of individual ability, environment, and life situation.

Method: This study operationalized the Welch Saleebey schematic representation of the capability approach using the WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. The ICF provides a comprehensive classification of body structures and functions, activities and participation, and the environment. Students and clinicians across disciplines used the ICF to code various case studies that addressed functioning in major life areas (e.g. education and employment) both pre and post intervention.

Result: Cases provided information articulating individual goals (rehabilitation, treatment) indicating that coders were able to determine both potential (capabilities) and actualized (functioning) outcomes.

Conclusion: Findings indicate the utility of the ICF for addressing interventions and outcomes as well as emphasizing the importance of moving beyond functioning to address capabilities as a more effective measure of disability.

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#### A CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY

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Introduction: Due to demographic and social developments sustainable employability of workers is an important issue. Work and the valuation of work changed substantially in recent decades. Our conceptualisation of health changed too. The capability concept of Amartya Sen is helpful to understand the complexity of sustainable employability in relation with the new concepts of work and health.

Methods: Based on literature and expert opinions, a definition and a model of sustainable employability were developed. Based on the model a questionnaire was constructed that was completed by more than 1000 employees. The hypothesised centrality of the capability items was tested with a.o. regression analyses.

Results: The capability items are associated with antecedents and consequents in the model and add unique variance in explaining outcomes when controlling for work function (a behavioral measure) and engagement (an affective-cognitive measure).

Conclusions: The hypothesised centrality and unique contribution of the capability concept was confirmed in the analyses.

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#### DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPABILITY SET FOR SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYABILITY

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Introduction. Studies show that individual capabilities, work-related factors, and health status profoundly impact workers' abilities to be actively engaged in paid employment and to prolong their meaningful contribution to a productive society. Instruments are needed to identify an