Pathways to Employment

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Employment or Work - Is there a difference?
One Hour Per Week in the Reference week.

The expectation of an exchange of labour for a basic wage or salary.
What is not clear within the accepted definitions of employment is the notion that “work”, a term interchanged with employment and considered the same, may have a different meaning.
Many people undertake work of a volunteer nature with no expectation of remuneration.

Not be classified in the strictest sense as employment, but it does provide a return to the individual and society that could be defined as social capital, along with intrinsic benefits such as social inclusion, meaning and ideals around social justice.
Meaningful employment should encapsulate personal values if it assists an individual to achieve their personal ambitions, supported by notions of personal health, security, well-being, self-image and self-actualisation.
My question to you!
Do we have an effective measure of employment or work that actually measures the benefit of employment or work for an individual other than simple financial gain?
Schmid (1995) introduced the concept of Transitional Labour Markets (TLM) that proposed a different approach to how we view employment.
Proposed that our view of employment, and in particular full employment, should change to reflect a more sustainable view of employment that included domestic and voluntary work and that people are always in transition that also included training or the accumulation of competencies during these transitions.
Policy and Historical Drivers

- Repatriation Commission (WW1) Rebadging of military hospitals to rehabilitation hospitals in 1921 to serve 170,000 returning service personnel. Medical model dominates policy.
1941. Federal Govt. amends 1908 Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act to allow the government to offer vocational training to invalid pensioners, then known as The Vocational Training and Invalid Pensioners scheme and administered by the Department of Social Security.
1948 - Social Security Act amended to create CRS. Formalising Commonwealth role in rehabilitation and disability.

- CRS based on RAAF rehab model for airmen - focus on convalescence and vocational retraining.

- 1948 - Fed Govt and ACTU reach agreement to call it “work therapy scheme” to relieve employers from having to pay wages for work experience.
Traditional Pathways

- ADE (Sheltered Workshop)
- Open Employment
- No Work
Sheltered workshops or disability entreprises as they are known today, began being established by family, voluntary and private groups to provide employment for people with a disability who couldn’t find work in the open employment market.

At that time, options for people with significant disabilities were limited to attending congregate day activities or finding your own path in the community, which essentially meant sitting at home (Symonds & Luecking, 2013).
Sheltered workshops largely operated outside of general employment legislation with employees receiving minimal financial reward for their efforts, with little incentive for workshops to provide vocational training that would allow a participant to move to open employment, despite many being established on the premise of teaching farm skills to people with intellectual and developmental disability.

In this sense the participants were seen as unemployable in the open market, which seemed to reinforce the long held view of low expectation of any real capacity to work.
Sheltered workshops at that time operated mainly as day activity programs that focused on daily living skills and recreational activities.

I would argue that they also functioned as custodial settings that provided respite to carers and family.

In the nineteen seventies, evidence began to accumulate that with appropriate supports people with disabilities could develop skills that could be transferred to open employment.
Open Employment

- Disability Services Act (1986) and Employment Services.

- Sheltered workshops continued as the main employment outlet for people with a disability until the release of the New Directions report in 1985, which outlined a range of improved services that should be provided to people with disability.
The New Directions (1985) report was followed shortly after by the introduction of the Disability Services Act (1986) (DSA) by the Commonwealth government that established the rights of people with a disability to full and open employment and laid the scene for the integration of employment, training, rehabilitation and accommodation as pre-cursors to the promotion of self determination amongst people with a disability (Ford, 1998).
Disability Service Standards were introduced in 1992 that set standards for access, compliance, policy and procedure amongst other things that service providers were required to meet in order to secure funding (Symonds & Luecking, 2013).

Compliance against the standards ensured funding, it did not prescribe quality of service and I would argue that whilst organisations made compliance with the standards an audit priority, it did nothing to prescribe how organisations would actually demonstrate respect for their clients wishes.
DEN and VRS morph into DES (ESS & DMS). Shuffle the whole lot around various departments, CRS disappears to the god of free markets. Another iteration happening now, but have outcomes changed?

TTW programs start to late and are simply feeders to DES. Outcome measures false, as transition to DES or another program count as employment outcomes. Again, what has changed?
Nothing!
What’s Driving Change Today?
The National Disability Insurance Scheme
Real Jobs, Real Expectations, Self Determination and Self Advocacy.
Where are we going?
- Open Employment - micro entreprise and customised employment approaches.
- Social Entreprise - real social entreprise.
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