



Flexibility, Discontinuity and the Power of Innovation

Innovative Tools to combat negative impacts and to promote positive impacts of flexibility and discontinuity– Systemic approaches to develop new solutions in the labour market

**Silke Steinberg, Marie Jégu, Romina Wendt
(FIAP e.V.)**



Flexibility, Discontinuity and the Power of Innovation

- I. Challenges and solutions for flexibility in Germany
- II. The FlexiBalance project
- III. Tools and outcomes of the Debbi project

I. Flexibility in the German labour market



Organisational aspects

Organisation of working hours; Variation of working hours; Variation of work intensity; Engagement and dismissal of workers; Fixed-term employment; Temporary work

Functional aspects

Retraining and transfer; Multiple qualification; Job rotation or rotation of tasks; Delegation and Responsibility; Outsourcing; Corporate networks; Service contracts; Freelancing

I. Risks and Potentials of Flexibility

All risks and potentials of flexibility depend on the design of flexibility

Potentials and risks for companies:

- Targeted personnel deployment (+)
- Reduction of labour cost (+)
- Increasing competitiveness (+)
- Image(+/-)
- Staff turnover and commitment of workers (+/-)
- Qualified workers (demographic change) (+/-)
- Innovation potential (+/-)



I. Risks and Potentials of Flexibility



Potentials and risks for employees:

- Higher degree of freedom in balancing work and private life (+)
- More autonomy to plan ones own professional biography (+)
- Advantages of a “colourful” career (social and communication skills which are needed in modern innovation are promoted by discontinuity) (+)
- More diverse experiences (+)
- Mental stress and self-exploitation (-)
- Problems to organize family life and free-time (-)
- Health risks (-)
- Unemployment (-)
- Poor working conditions (precarious employment, discontinuity) (-)
- Lack of security (-)

I. Challenges in Germany

Developments and trends since 2005:

- Increased labour market flexibility with all advantages and risks (Agenda 2010)
- Increasing competitiveness and rising employment rates
- Changes in the age structure of the workforce and skills shortage by population decline, which reinforce negative effects of flexibility
- Fear of enterprises and politics that the economical strength and the potential of innovation of German economy will decrease



I. Possible solutions in a changing labour market

Initiatives for securing skilled personnel and a balance between flexibility and stability:

- Targeted development of skilled manpower
- Family-oriented HR policy
- Work-Life Balance
- Personnel management based on life stages
- Further education
- Health promotion
- Support instruments for active management of biographies

Employees and Enterprises request concepts for solutions which are the subject of research and development projects.



I. Research and Development



FlexiBalance and **Debbi** are two examples of these initiatives, they are both funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research.

Applied research/close cooperation with companies, should be directly integrated.

FlexiBalance: the objective was to design a model of family oriented temporary work as a tool for innovative personnel policy

Debbi: development of the capacity of innovation in discontinuous careers through the design of innovative support systems and coaching

II. FlexiBalance

Results from the FlexiBalance Project



II. FlexiBalance

Initial Situation in Germany:

Loss of employability due to family responsibilities

- number of single parents increased in recent years
 - 1996: 1,3 mil.
 - 2009: 1,6 mil. single parents
 - Upward tendency expected
- Women are particularly affected (87% of single parents are single mothers)
- Insufficient care situation: care rate of 25% for children under 3 years
- Family responsibilities cause problems in combining work and childcare



GEFÖRDERT VOM



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Research and development Project

New model for family oriented temporary work as a tool for innovative personnel policy

- **Target group:** motivated single mothers who had problems combining work and childcare
- **Objective:**
Design a model which is economically sustainable and combines the organisational need for flexibility with individual demands for flexibility

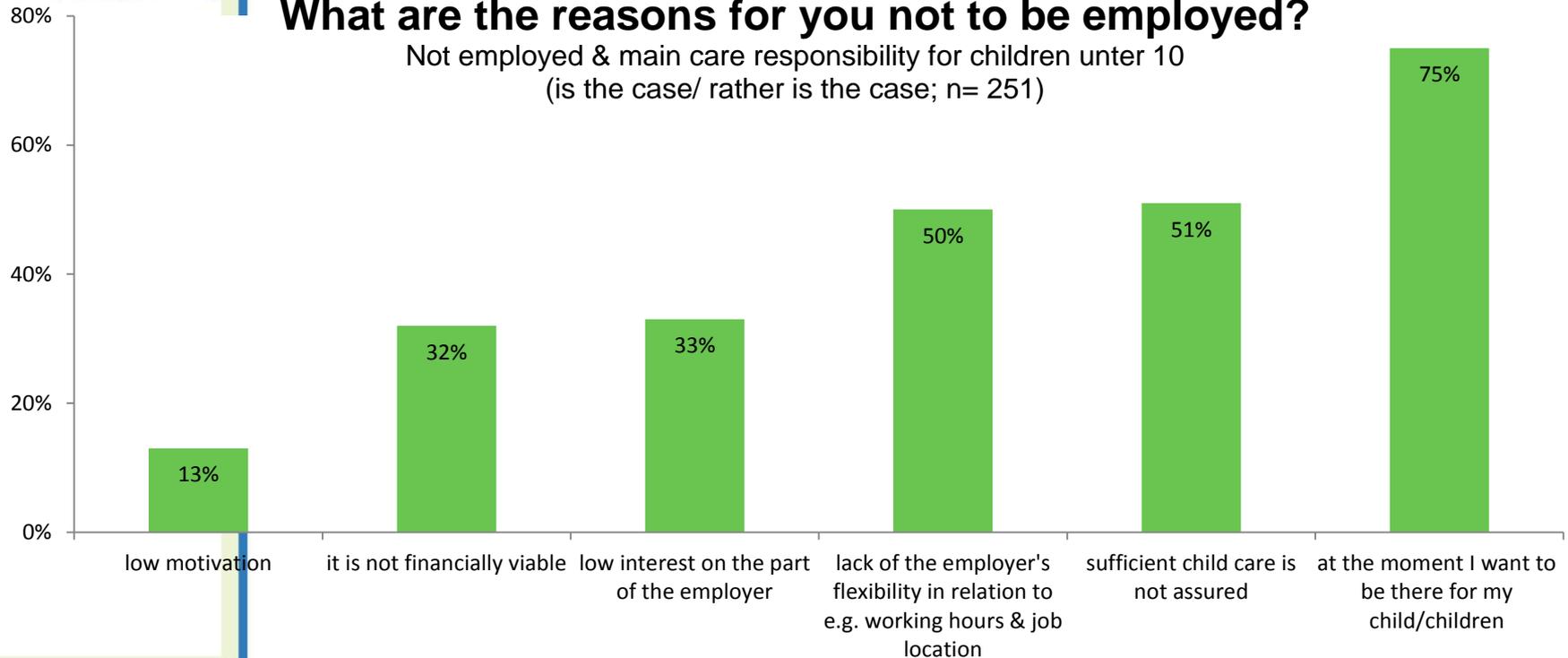
II. FlexiBalance



Existing models of temporary work offer a high degree of flexibility but they only promote economic interests, they do not take into account aspects of work-life balance of the employees.

What are the reasons for you not to be employed?

Not employed & main care responsibility for children under 10
(is the case/ rather is the case; n= 251)



II. FlexiBalance



- To reach the objective we did
 - individual case studies
 - telephone surveys/ written questionnaire

→ **Analyse the needs of women with family responsibilities**
- Development and testing of a family-orientated concept of flexible employment, which provides personnel service for childcare
 - Cooperation of a temporary employment agency (manpower) and a social institution for family service (AWO)

→ **Childcare guaranteed**

II. FlexiBalance

Implementation of the model project:

The objective of the project was to enable employees with family responsibilities to strike a balance between work and family life through an integrated service based on the management of job requirements and the need for care management.



FlexiBalance Office (Berlin)

III. Tools to support and promote Flexibility

Results and inputs from the Debbi Project

debbi

Three Tools

- the Life-planner
- the Profiler
- the Self Care programme



III. Tools to support and promote Flexibility

Fears and resistances toward flexibility

From the company's point of view

- management of skills/competences
- management of teams
- management of careers
- fear of losing control
- employees' commitment
- feedbacks and reviews
- management of the diversity of personalities and experiences

From the employees' point of view

- distrust toward the company or hierarchy
- fear of social seclusion/alienation
- time and deadlines management
- managing expectations
- insecurity and instability

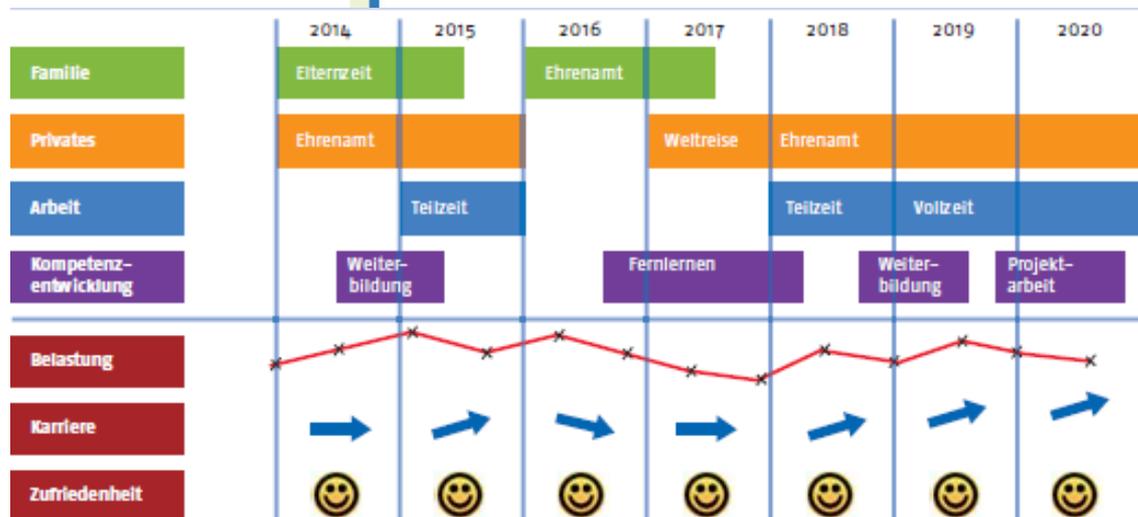


III. Tools to support and promote Flexibility

The Life-planner

Visualisation of different phases of life

- helps to define professional and personal goals
- helps to organize up and down times in life
- defines dependencies between events and phases
- explores various career paths
- bring out the consequences of decisions thus making it easier to anticipate and react



Project Debbi
Kurt-Georg Ciesinger, gaus gmbh

III. Tools to support and promote Flexibility



The Profiler

Managing and developing competences

- knowledge about emerging competence trends
- identification of skills and revelation of hidden competences
- identification of competence needs
- identification of training needs
- overview of the competence profiles of individual for companies
- allows to know distant individuals status on various projects
- and highlights availabilities



Project Debbi
Angela Carell, Viktoria Glasmachers, adesso AG

III. Tools to support and promote Flexibility

The Self Care programme

Programme to analyse experiences and strengthen employability

- summarizes competences
- strengthens potentials
- strengthens individual's profile and avoid social alienation
- strengthening resources, self-efficacy, sense of coherence
- empowerment for discriminated individuals
- help the subject to be psychologically strong enough to overcome the risks of flexibility and gain the advantages of it



*Project Debbi
Helga Dill, Florian Straus, IPP*



Thank you for your attention!

Contact:

FIAP - Forschungsinstitut für innovative Arbeitsgestaltung und Prävention FIAP e.V.

Munscheidstr. 14, 45886 Gelsenkirchen, Germany

Silke Steinberg

+49 (0)2 09 / 31 99 81 74

s.steinberg@fiap-ev.de

www.fiap-ev.de