

The Benefits of Encore Careers for Elders, Organisations, Society

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Introduction: Positive Ageing Research Project

- **Context:** Population ageing and societal change
- **Our current research programme**
 - Organisational focus: Ageism in elders' interactions with organisations
 - Encore careers: positive ageing and meaningful work

Encore Careers Project

- **“Encore”**: call back for performance or repetition of item
- **“Encore Career”**: pursuit of meaningful work in the second half of life
- **Focus**: investigates how Encore Careers
 - are perceived & experienced
 - contribute to positive ageing for individuals
 - benefit current and future generations

The Study: What We Did

- Advertised for participants
- Approached organisations for participants
- **Conducted interviews** with 27 people (so far)
 - 24 workers: 12 men + 12 women
 - Age range 55-84
 - 3 organisational representatives
- **This presentation** uses 19 interviews
 - 16 workers and 3 org reps

Groups of Key Findings

- Benefits for individuals
- Benefits for organisations
- Benefits for society
- As expressed by the participants

Benefits for Individuals

- **Encore careers offer opportunities to –**
 - Be engaged in purposeful activity (15)
 - Experience satisfaction/enjoyment (13)
 - Do something you *want* to do rather than something you *have* to (7)

 - Be in social contact with others (9)
 - Learn/grow/develop (8)
 - Be challenged/stimulated (8)

 - Earn supplementary income (5)

 - Challenge accepted life scripts/prescribed roles (2)

Benefits for Individuals: Stories

“I see this job as being useful. I’m helping other people...As you get older you like to see that what you’re doing is contributing something, somewhere, not just making money for yourself.”

“Earlier on [in your career] you may have ended up in something that you didn’t particularly want to do. Always make sure that you finish this life doing something that you really feel good about so you end your life saying I had a good time when I was there on earth.”

“The friendship and camaraderie of working with others is a real bonus.”

“It keeps my brain active and it keeps me on my toes.”

“One of the reasons I have continued to work is because I feel that I need to accumulate a bit more money...to have some of the niceties of life”

“To get a career that you like to do is something that I was never scripted into doing...[I] married very young...I worked, but I never really did any kind of work that was satisfying...it was an income”

Benefits for Organisations & Society

Encore career workers offer opportunities for organisations to -

- Engage committed, reliable, settled workers with considerable life experience (7)
- Enable older people to mentor others (5)

Encore career workers offer opportunities for society to -

- Observe new models/ways of being (4)

Benefits for Organisations & Society: Stories

“Our organisation would be lost without them.”

“These people have fantastic life skills...and they make a difference in a very practical way...They bring the gift of time to our organisation.”

“My 23 year old daughter started studying because she was so impressed with what I was doing...She was telling everyone, all her friends, ‘My mum is over 50 and she has gone back to school.’”

“Women in particular are not encouraged to have a big life...I am not talking about going for president or prime minister, I am just talking about, like, ‘What do you want to do, what do you really want to do, what is your dream, you know, big or small?’ I didn’t have any rights...I didn’t really have a life. I was, you know, I belonged to somebody else.”

Overall Themes of Benefits

- Self-oriented benefits
 - Personal growth
- Other-oriented benefits
 - Service
 - Contribution
- Unexpected consequences
 - Modelling
- (Re)Negotiation of the black-hole of retirement
 - “Still contribute”

Key Things to Take Away

- Individual actions
 - “Go get it”
- Organisational actions
 - Learn from other organisations
- Everyday life
 - “What can I do?”