

Abstract

The paper refers to four main issues which are of major concern to the workplace in the context of urban sustainability: commuter travel, economic growth, sustainability in employment and sustainable employment in a green economy.

According to a review of available data on the Israeli economy, it is not currently on a path to achieving a sustainable economy. Some of the features are:

- Levels of advanced technologies and digital capability are relatively low particularly in the ultra-orthodox and Arab sectors
- Commuter levels are very high, with an increasing number of people working in a different town than their home location.
- The reduced length of the working week is primarily the result of new work union agreements. Concurrently gaps in working hours between the central and the peripheral areas of the country have been increasing, probably owing to differences in earning capacity.
- A green economy could generate a potential for new jobs in Israel.

The research identifies several points where change and intervention could enable employment to be more sustainable:

- Increasing internet access, particularly for the ultra-orthodox and Arab sectors, through reducing costs and by obtaining the cooperation of the leaders of the communities towards the importance of being connected to the digital world.
- Making courses available to enable the weaker sectors of the population to be digitally competent in general and particularly for professional training.
- Providing support to the business sector to develop digital employment which could replace employment in non-digital sectors likely to disappear with further automation
- Encouraging close proximity of home and workplace through enabling mixed uses in the revitalization of older town centers
- Discouraging the provision of a company car both to employers and employees
- Encouraging journey to work by public transport, cycling and by foot
- Transforming the employment market to reduce the length of the working week and raise the level of employment through agreements between the government, employers and workers unions. Employment should be more flexible to enable parents to look after their children.
- Encouraging green industry as both beneficial to the economy and as a provider of new employment opportunities

Interventions designed to transform the employment market to be more sustainable as proposed above should be implemented through agreements between the government, the business sector and the unions; the imposition of change without attaining prior agreement is likely to be less effective.