

2. FRAUNHOFER-GESELLSCHAFT, GERMANY

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The organisational context

Fraunhofer is Europe's largest application-oriented research organisation. Research of practical utility lies at the heart of all activities pursued by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. Founded in 1949, the research organisation undertakes applied research that drives economic development and serves the wider benefit of society. Its services are solicited by customers and contractual partners in industry, the service sector and public administration. At present, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft maintains 67 institutes and research units. The majority of the more than 23,000 staff are qualified scientists and engineers, who work with an annual research budget of 2 billion euros.

One centre of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is located in Stuttgart. The centre consists of five institutes. One of them is the Fraunhofer-Institut für Arbeitswirtschaft und Organisation IAO. The STAGES project team is working at Fraunhofer IAO.

The Fraunhofer IAO was founded in 1981. More than 10,200 m² of offices, laboratories and technical installations are available to carry out contracted research. The activities of the Fraunhofer IAO focus on investigation of current topics in the field of technology management. Research projects are conducted in close collaboration with small and medium-sized companies and industrial corporations under direct contract. Through its close cooperation with the Institute for Human Factors and Technology Management (IAT) of the University of Stuttgart, Fraunhofer IAO unites basic university research with applied science and business practice. Both Institutes employ a staff of over 400. Amongst them are mainly engineers, computer specialists, economists and social scientists.

When recruiting talented young scientists, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is also driven by its commitment to take on more women and to support their career development. In 2014, the proportion of female researchers without leadership responsibility increased and reached 21.8 percent³. In 2012, the share of female researches was under 21 percent⁴.

The organisation already put together and launched a whole draft of measures in this regard in 2012, and these were augmented by the "Fraunhofer TALENTA" support programme, which got underway in 2013. The latter is a centrally coordinated programme whose purpose is to achieve a significant increase in the proportion of female scientists and female managers at Fraunhofer. Initially set to run until 2017 (and with support measures continuing until 2019), the programme provides additional funding for the institutes to finance personnel growth and win over female scientists. TALENTA targets a number of different stages in the careers and development of the women concerned, thus doing justice to the underlying idea of fostering them in particular phases of their lives⁵.

Emerging issues and the design process

Early in 2003, the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft stated its support for the application of the principles of "gender mainstreaming" and equal opportunities standards and committed itself to increasing the involvement of women in the domain of science and their access to executive positions. In accordance with its decentralised structure, which consists of around 60 separate institutes, Equal Opportunities officers (BfC) have been established at each of the institutes, who cooperate with an Equal Opportunities commissioner (GB) and the central Human Resources Development Department.

But there was no systematic overview and assessment of the activities in the various Fraunhofer institutes and no systematic exchange about good or successful initiatives. This is why an internal market for gender diversity in science and innovation was to be built within the STAGES project. Given the decentralised structure, it was important to establish good relations to the BfCs in the institutes and the Equal Opportunities commissioner (GB) who coordinates all the BfCs. But to be able to initiate activities on a higher level, cooperation with the central Human Resources Development Department was necessary.

General approach to implementation

The first idea to get in contact with the BfCs and to motivate them to establish deeper relations with each other was to organise a monthly BfC group meeting for the BfCs located at the different institutes in Stuttgart. This concept should then later be transferred to other locations. But in the meanwhile, the BfCs organised themselves into “regional groups”: BfCs from several locations (for example in the south-west of Germany, or in the north) founded groups. As the distances between their single locations were still too far to meet once a month, they just met about twice a year.

The project team searched for another way to support exchange among the BfCs and, together with the Equal Opportunities commissioner (GB), devised the idea of the BfC Report (see Main results below). Another instrument to inform the institutes about successful activities in other institutes is the Toolbox (see Main results below). As these two instruments do not involve personal contact but only indirect contact via texts (like the examples in the online Toolbox or the BfC Report), an exchange workshop for BfC was organised. In this workshop they had the opportunity to meet face to face in a small group and to talk about their experiences on a concrete topic (in the first workshop, the topic was the implementation of different child care facilities). This workshop was important to strengthen personal contact among BfCs.

Main results

One of the main results of the Fraunhofer Action Plan is the development of the Toolbox. The Toolbox is a collection of good practice examples. All examples are described in a short text and are structured in the same way:

- Name of the example;
- Aims of the example;
- Description of the example;
- Procedure of implementation;
- Formal requirements;
- Success factors and obstacles.

The examples are illustrated by photos if available. The examples are categorised in six categories:

- Gender-aware organisational culture;
- Work-life balance;

- Career support for women;
- Recruiting young talent;
- Gender-aware research;
- Visibility of women in science.

In order to collect the good examples, a form with the above-mentioned structure was sent several times to the Equal Opportunity officers (BfCs) in the institutes. All the examples are published on the Fraunhofer STAGES website⁶ in a member's area, the Toolbox. This area is visible for registered persons. Apart from Fraunhofer staff, anyone from other research organisations or companies who are interested can also register. So far, the toolbox contains 46 examples.

Another main result and highlight of the Fraunhofer Action Plan is the development of the “BfC Report”⁷. The Report became a sustainable instrument. It contains data and information about the share of women in different wage groups and leadership levels and about the use of different measures for equal opportunities. With this Report, the institutes can compare their situation with other institutes and monitor developments in their own institute over the years.

The topics in the Report are the following:

- Details of the Fraunhofer institute;
- Participation of women at the institute;
- Information on the position and work environment at the Institute relating to the BfC;
- Highlights at the institute in the field of equal opportunities;
- Support programs, career development programs, support of young talents;
- Measures for work-life balance at the institute;
- Other measures for supporting female employees;
- The BfC's opinion considering the equal opportunities at their institute;
- Further support for the BfC;
- Praise and criticism of the process of the report.

The data collection for first BfC Report (pilot) was collected in 2013. The data was collected via an online questionnaire which was filled in by the BfC's. The questionnaire was developed by the Fraunhofer STAGES team and the central BfC. In the end, each BfC had their own data. In addition, the Fraunhofer STAGES team created a general report by analysing the data from all institutes. The results were presented at the annual BfC meeting in November 2013.

For the second and third report, the process was slightly adapted. Now, a part of the data is delivered by the headquarters. This reduces the effort for the BfC's. The central BfC is very keen on continuing the reports. As she gets a budget, she can charge a small team of Fraunhofer researchers to do the general analysis and to produce the general report.

Conclusion

To summarise the results and the dynamic developments in the project in order to reach the aim of implementing more diversity ideas and concepts in the different institutes, the STAGES project team developed, in cooperation with the project partner from the Radboud university in Nijmegen, a model with the Group Model Building technique (see Part 1, Section 5). Some comments and explanations about the model are provided below.

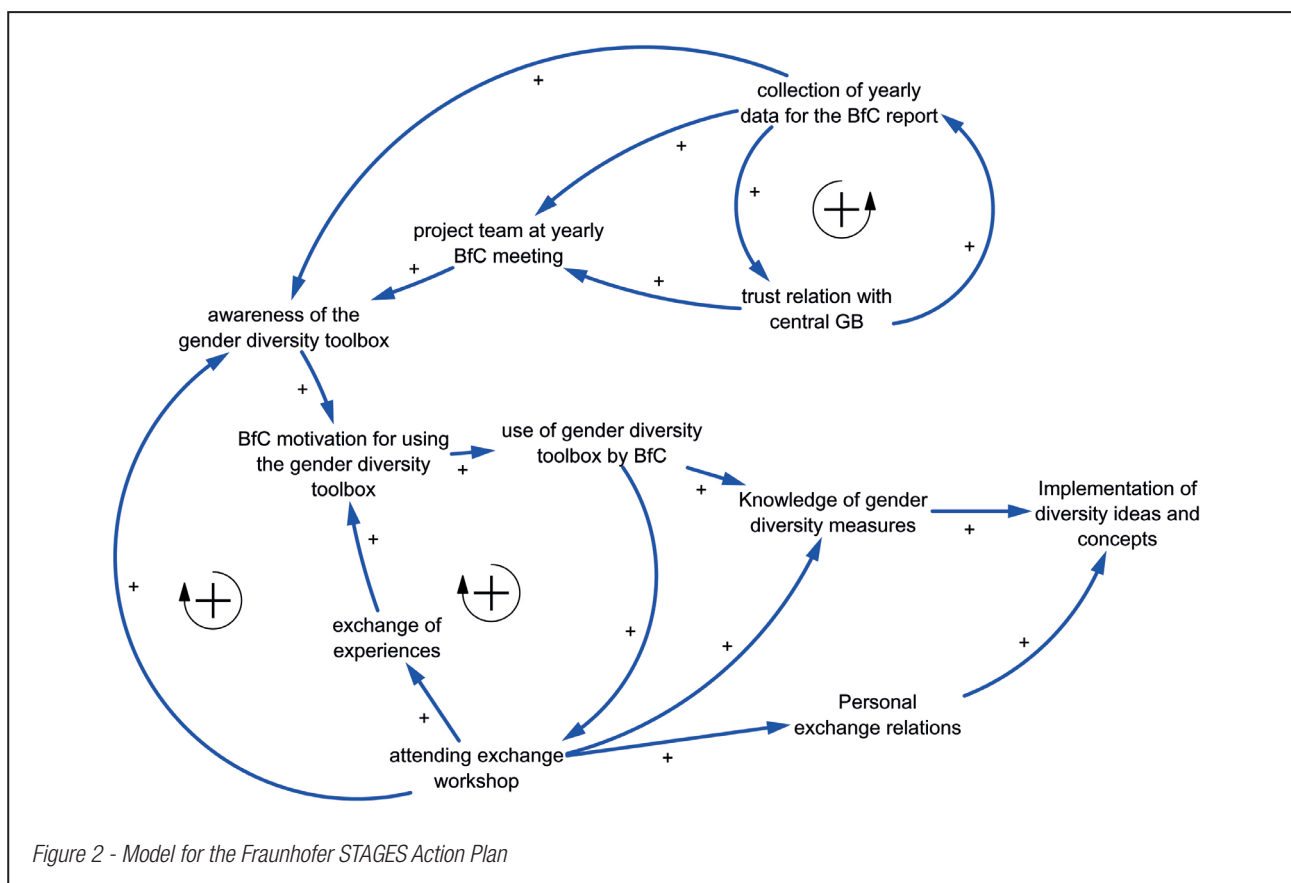
The BfC Report and the gender diversity Toolbox are crucial instruments for supporting the implementation of diversity ideas and concepts.

The yearly collection of the data for the BfC Report has had a positive effect on the good relations between the Equal Opportunities commissioner (GB) and the team, and vice versa.

Both the good relations and the data collection for the Report lead to the fact that the project team is invited every year to the annual BfC meeting to assist at the presentation of the Report.

The Report by itself and the presence at the annual meeting can improve the BfC's awareness of the gender diversity Toolbox because the toolbox is also presented by the team at the annual meeting, and there are questions about the use of the Toolbox in the BfC report.

The awareness of the gender diversity Toolbox leads to the motivation to use it, which means submitting good practice examples or learning from the examples from others. Because of their practice examples in the toolbox, some BfCs were invited to an exchange workshop and asked to present there this practice example. Other interested BfCs attended the workshop because they were interested in some examples they found in the toolbox.



Through the exchange workshop, the BfC started to exchange their experiences with some gender measures, and therefore were again motivated to use the Toolbox by submitting their experiences as good practice examples or by searching for other experiences. Again, the exchange workshop raised the awareness of the Toolbox for those who had not yet used or only rarely used the Toolbox. Additionally, the exchange workshop strengthened the personal exchange relations between some BfCs. They found out that they have similar interests and can support each other. This is an important step on the way to implementing diversity ideas and concepts.

In general, the workshops, but also the use of the Toolbox foster the knowledge of gender diversity measures which is also crucial for the implementation of diversity ideas and concepts.

The model shows clearly the impact of the Toolbox and the BfC Report and how they strengthen different activities, which, finally, are important for more implementation of new concepts.