

# Kaleidoscope– How we organise our future

Innovations for work and life

# Statements from our project partners



Katja Ploner,  
Global Diversity & Inclusion  
Manager,  
Siemens AG

“I very much appreciate the collaboration with TUM, Charta and the partner companies. It is inspiring to come together with people who are passionately committed to the topic of diversity and inclusion. I am eagerly looking forward to the results of the study.”

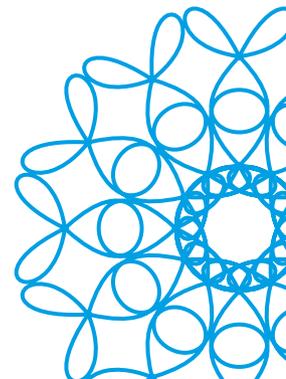


Wendelin Göbel,  
Member of the Board of Management for  
Human Resources and Organization and  
Labor Director, Audi AG

“It’s really our employees’ ideas that make us successful as an innovative company. We see finding a good balance between professional and personal life as a key factor in this. We were glad to take part in the study to continue to improve our offerings as an employer.”

“As Deutsche Bahn, we support our diverse workforce with many innovative offerings that are geared to the phases of working life in order to reconcile professional and personal life. That’s because only in this way will diversity become our strength.”

Martin Seiler,  
Member  
of the Management Board  
for Human  
Resources and  
Legal Affairs,  
DB AG



“Digitalisation, combining family and career, working virtually across country borders in international teams – we at Henkel intend to promote flexible working for all generations in all phases of life so that our employees are able to cope well with their personal and professional challenges. Only in this way can they fully develop their individual potential.”



Sonja Kuch, Global Diversity & Inclusion, Henkel AG & Co KGaA



Dr. Philip Wenzel, Head of HR Policy, HR Strategy, Planning and Steering, BMW Group

“Diversity practiced effectively offers all employees many opportunities to develop professionally as well as personally. We design flexible working environments in which the compatibility of professional and personal life is a given.”



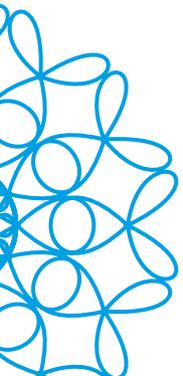
Sebastian Vogel, Head of Diversity Strategy, innogy SE

“The world of work is becoming more diversified and more agile. At innogy we promote the compatibility of work and personal life with flexible and individual working conditions. Kaleidoscope enriches us with ideas and suggestions: thank you very much for the excellent collaboration!”



Dr. Dirk Jakobs, Head of Global Diversity Office, Daimler AG

“We at Daimler attach great importance to supporting our employees so that every one of them can give their best. This also includes creating favourable conditions for work/life balance so that 289,000 employees can fully develop in their specific individual life situations. Participation in the study enabled us to identify those measures which are suitable for us from the great range of creative ideas.”



# Dear readers,

How shall we organise our future to optimally reconcile work and private life? Where can companies and institutions start to address the diverse needs of a diverse workforce?

These questions are increasingly gaining in significance in view of employers' and employees' constantly changing requirements from the world of work. As an employer, you know your own perspective best.

In this study we have given employees room for their ideas to bring both perspectives together. The needs in combining work and private life are just as diverse as our society is – in terms of age, gender, physical and mental ability, ethnic origin and nationality, religion and world view, sexual orientation and identity.

Numerous innovative real-life solutions are presented in this study and the accompanying idea cards. They constitute the beginning of a large collection.

All the ideas, solutions and concepts the study contains are intended to serve as food for thought. We would like to motivate you to depart from your familiar paths and look beyond your own four walls. Connect with each other, learn from other organisations' positive and negative experiences, and at the same time allow others to partake of your

knowledge. Communicate openness as an employer and cultivate a corresponding organisational culture to meet individual challenges and find solutions for the best possible balance between work and private life.

Be creative, share your ideas and in this way expand the pool of innovative solutions for work/life balance!

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the partner companies that supported this study and made it possible: AUDI AG, BMW AG, Daimler AG, Deutsche Bahn AG, innogy SE, Henkel AG & Co. KGaA, Siemens AG.

We hope you enjoy reading it!



Aletta Gräfin von Hardenberg and Frederike Fehsenfeld

# Dear readers,

Our personal lives and the world of work are changing, but the organisation of this “new” life is still often structured using “old” patterns. En route to further technological, economic and societal upheavals, we at long last need creative and new concepts, solutions and models for how we organise the future as a response to these changes: innovations for work and life

Why “**Kaleidoscope**”?

A kaleidoscope with its many colourful facets is always falling into new, original combinations and forms – a kaleidoscope organises the many individual components into one beautiful, coherent image.

With our study we – the chair in Strategy and Organisation of the TUM and the Charta der Vielfalt e.V. – would like to contribute to better combining the diverse colourful facets of work and private life to bring them together in a novel way: for a better and more harmonious organisation of private life and the world of work that offers individual development opportunities.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the

participants and idea providers who enabled this study: we thank all our interview partners and all those who participated in our call for participation for their valuable insights and innovative solution ideas.

Let yourself be inspired by the solution concepts, ideas and challenges that our study presents, and continue expanding on them! With new, innovative ideas we can shape our future personal lives and world of work according to our individual needs, evolving in this way towards a viable and diverse society and economy.

Wishing you informative and inspiring reading,



Lea Strobel (MSc), Dr. Maria Strobel und Prof. Dr. Isabell Welpke

# Executive Summary

The reality of how we work and live has changed extensively and profoundly in recent years – driven primarily by innovations in technology and the economy.

Our private living environment, in contrast, is still largely traditionally organised. This gives rise to a **discrepancy between the demands of the world of work** and the possibilities for the **organisation of personal and family life** that strains people who are working and prevents them from realising their potential in their occupation and personal life. What is lacking are societal and organisational innovations that reflect the new changed reality of how we live. Particularly in order to **acquire and retain top talents**, companies and institutions need as a result to find **new solutions to better reconcile the new world of work and the new personal living environment**. The guiding question of this study is thus:

**How can we organise our private lives and the world of work in an innovative way to respond to current and future changes?**

There are starting points for such **innovations at individual and organisational levels**, as well as at state and societal levels. Past approaches have usually been piecemeal, relating to individual challenges. An overarching perspective that identifies different innovative solutions at all three levels, placing them in relation to each other and integrating them into comprehensive solution concepts, has been lacking thus far, however, and is the subject of this study.

The study identifies **creative ideas and innovative approaches** from all over the world – at the individual, organisational and state or societal level.

In a **cross-industry, multi-perspective** approach, wide-ranging research was conducted online and in social media; salaried employees, managers, human resources experts and original visionaries were called on to submit innovative ideas and were questioned in interviews.

This results in a collection of **specific needs for innovation as well as ideas and practical examples of organisational innovations** in the areas of family, household, sports, self-actualization, care, disability, leisure and flexibility. It is especially evident that a **radical transformation of organisational culture** is necessary to satisfy individual requirements for flexibility and enable innovative work models.

The **short-term, medium-term and long-term ideas and concepts** identified in the study can serve companies and institutions as stimuli to develop and implement their own actions:

At the **individual level**, companies and institutions can provide relief for their employees and top talents. This is possible with offerings that make everyday life easier, such as for instance a cleaning service for an employee's apartment, dinner-to-go from the company canteen or a pick-up service for children and family members requiring care.

At the **organisational level**, companies and institutions can create new work models to reconcile work and private life, such as part-time work on a trial basis, possibilities to realise private interests or projects, as well as intermediate forms between working as a salaried employee and working on a self-employed basis. Original event formats (e.g., CareSlam) bring employees with similar challenges together and can serve as catalysts for developing new

solutions.

In the long term, companies and institutions, in close consultation with the local community, can get involved to create **innovative organisational models as integrated platforms for work and life**. Three overarching basic models are conceivable here:

**Companies as the centre of work and life:** A package of offerings for employees to fulfil their private responsibilities is made available to them at their place of work as a service. In this way, private life is integrated into the infrastructure of the company or institution.

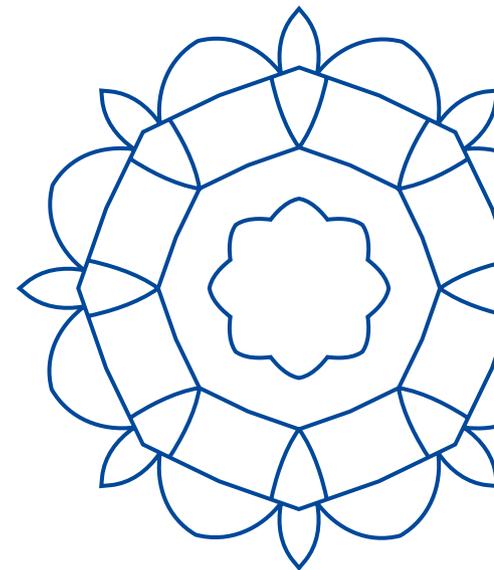
**Integrated housing development systems:** Architectural concepts that envisage the establishment of household-related and personal services in close proximity to one's private apartment (e.g., on the ground floor of an apartment complex). In this way, personal responsibilities can be taken care of practically at one's doorstep and synergy effects can be efficiently utilised within a community of residents.

**Hubs as places of work and meeting places:** "Nodes" consisting of various companies, public institutions and private service providers in which creative spaces and possibilities are offered for professional purposes (e.g., flexible, networked working) and private purposes (e.g., childcare, sports). They bring about a lively, diverse community of people who contribute their varying backgrounds and competencies.

Approaches for **innovations for state and society** are on the one hand the further flexibilisation of existing government support formats (e.g., as regards the individual use

of parental leave and benefits) and the creation of new support formats for families in a broad sense (e.g., grandparents' allowance, pension agreements for "families of choice"). On the other hand, it is time to rethink combining work and personal life in our society in general and to shape it creatively in accordance with individual needs.

In this sense, the study gives companies, institutions and decision makers in politics and business an **opportunity for reflection** and provides **ideas and examples** how reconciling work and personal life can be resolved in an innovative way.



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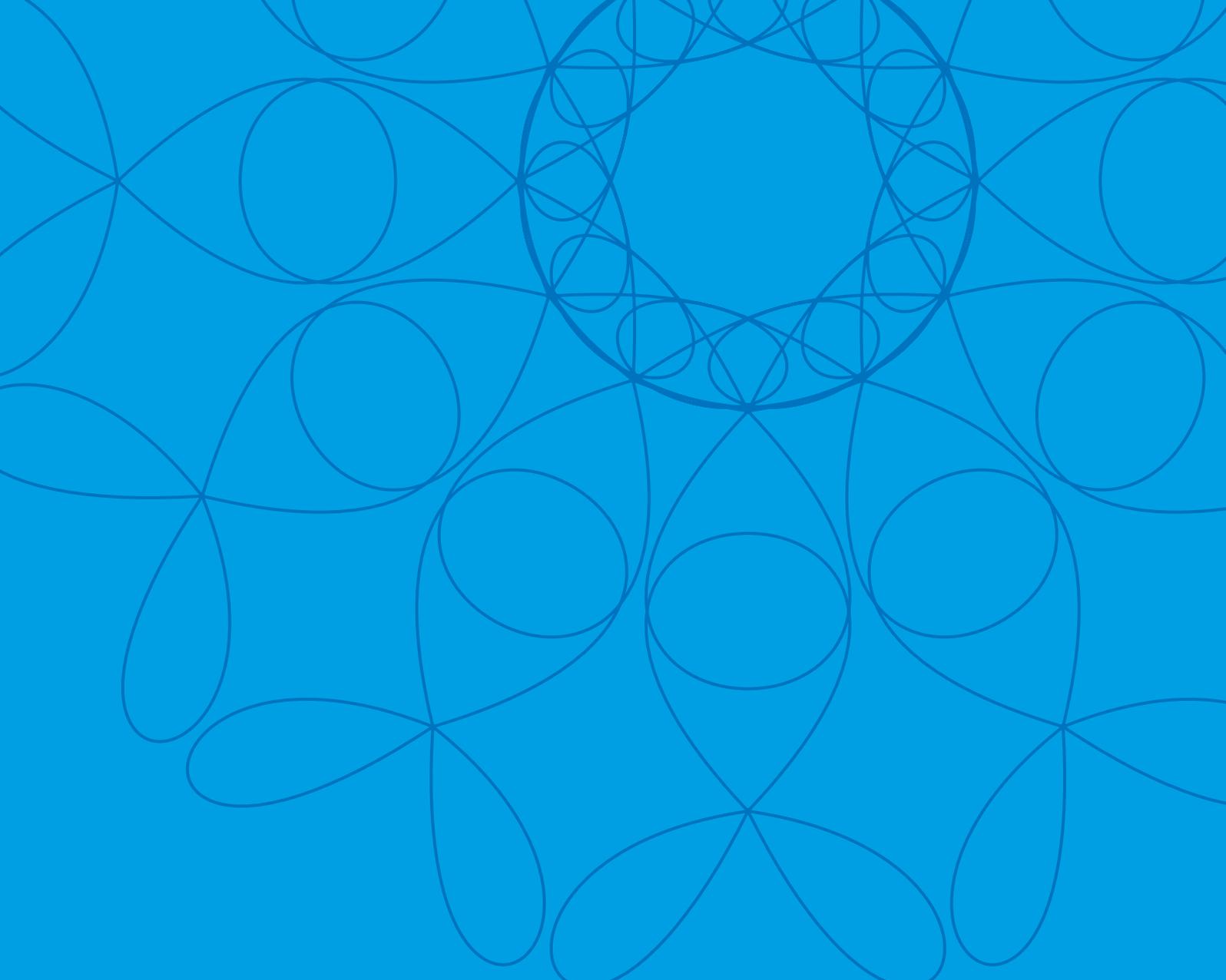
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# 1 Starting point and background – Why we urgently need innovations in business and society

The world, society and the economy are changing. In 2017 approx. 77.3% of Germany's entire population lived in cities.<sup>1</sup> Urbanisation goes hand in hand with increased anonymity and a disappearance of traditional communities. Internationality and mobility prevail in working life in the globalisation context – particularly for top talents.

The requirements for flexibility in terms of time and availability are increasing: 30% of participants in a YouGov survey indicated that they are available outside of working hours "at any time".<sup>2</sup> This development is fostered by increasing digitalisation: more than 80% of employees in Germany use digital information or communication technologies on the job.<sup>3</sup>

Change is the new permanent state: for example, the average duration of employment in a company has fallen for 35-year olds by ca. 30% compared to 50-year olds; it is no longer rare to frequently change jobs.<sup>4</sup>

The changed roles of men and women have profoundly changed our working life: in 2017, job and career are equally important to men and women.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the demographic changes mean there is a shortage of skilled labour and an aging society.

In brief: we live and work these days completely differently than people did just 15 years ago. But the organisation of this "new" life still functions for the most part along "old" lines. If you want to live unconventionally, you often have to see to your own individual solutions.

While the world of work is gaining speed, there are often very fundamental problems of organisation: it is often women who retreat from the world of work because starting a family or caring for seriously ill family members cannot be combined in practical terms with a job. Top talents emigrate because better support offers for family and leisure time are offered abroad.

**How can individual approaches be realised more easily?**

Companies are thus increasingly having difficulties in acquiring and retaining specifically top talents, and in general people with special needs. Productivity is negatively impacted by constant fluctuation; stress and absences due to sickness are increasing, and ultimately, neither employees nor employers are satisfied.

## What new solutions are needed to better reconcile work and family life?

# How can the logistics of balancing private projects, day care, work, school, sports, caring for relatives, one's own time off, the household, one's world view, etc. become easier?

You can't have everything – or can you? Inflexible structures and assumed pressure to compromise often impede personal development and valuable synergies between people, companies or institutions and the community. But nothing is cast in stone! Who says, for instance, that you need to own a car in order to drive it? You can also rent or share one with others using car sharing platforms. Something that is a practical matter of course for us now, was at one point an individual person's or institution's original idea. The crux is thus to tread new paths and try out new lifestyles and rules to be able to better resolve social problems than in the past.

Creative ideas and innovative approaches that are tailored to the new challenges and needs are the key to changes from which everyone profits:

## How can caring for relatives be facilitated?

Individuals gain easier organisation of their requirements and duties, practical relief and greater satisfaction due to better interweaving of their life and work.

Organisations can prevent knowledge and labour force from moving away and further gain new levers to acquire and retain capable employees. Not only is the employer brand strengthened, but also employees' identification with and commitment to the company or institution.

Society creates counterbalances to the challenges of our time such as urbanisation, an aging population, social isolation or recruitment problems.

We want to be a viable society, equipped with a new, positive definition of work and full of original ideas and concepts that are an inspiration – for ourselves and for the international community.

Let us therefore design the living world, the world of work of the future: at the latest now, en route to further upheavals through the fourth industrial revolution, the changes must be followed by creative models for organising day-to-day life and family life!

## How can new and diverse family models be better lived and managed?

## What new and diverse approaches to organising personal life and work are there or should there be?

## Status quo – reconciling work and private life in figures

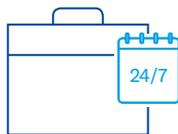
With the changing nature within the world of work, of activities, of technology and of traditional roles, the compatibility of occupation and private life has developed further and to some extent diverged. While classic concepts of working at the office still prevail today, according to recent surveys, there is a desire—first and foremost on the employee side—for adaptation and further development.<sup>6</sup>

# 74%

of employees wish for more flexible working hours.<sup>7</sup>

# 45%

of those surveyed state that they are sometimes or always available outside working hours and answer emails or telephone calls.<sup>10</sup>



From 1994-2014, the proportion of people who work evenings, nights or on the weekend increased by approx. one third.<sup>6</sup>



## Only 11%

of people in Germany work from home<sup>8</sup>

## 85.6%

of Germans want, according to a career-builder survey, better possibilities to work from home.<sup>9</sup>



## 18.4 mil.

German commuters



Average commuting distance

## 16.91 km

More working from home and flexible working time arrangements could also benefit the 18.4 mil. German commuters, who travel an average distance of 16.91 kilometres, which could contribute to reducing the living time lost travelling.<sup>11</sup>

As regards satisfaction, the most recent Global Talent Monitor from CEB painted a gloomy picture:

## Only 35.4% of those surveyed said they were satisfied with their current work/life balance situation.<sup>12</sup>



There is a clear discrepancy between the working situation as it is experienced and personal ideals.<sup>6</sup> In a survey of graduates, 57% also stated that work/life balance is one of the most important attractiveness factors for companies. For top talents, too, work/life balance is one of the most important career aspirations (54%).<sup>13</sup>

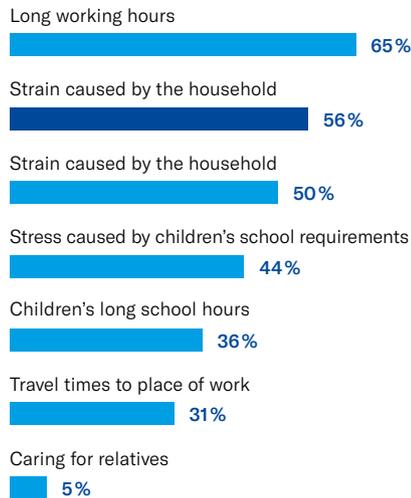
## The reconciliation of work, particularly career and family, is one of the biggest problem areas.

The most critical timeframe for one's career is usually between the ages of 20 and 35; income gain flattens out greatly from 35 onwards.<sup>14</sup>



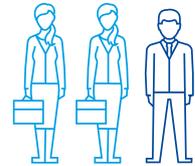
This timeframe is precisely the average age of starting a family in Germany: 31 years of age.<sup>15</sup>

### Reasons for the feeling that one has no time for one's family



18

Only 6% of fathers, but 71% of mothers of minor children work part-time.<sup>19</sup>



If parents have separated, mothers take over looking after the children two thirds of the time. 64% of separated parents perceive this split as not ideal.<sup>20</sup>

30%

of parents are unsatisfied as regards the flexibility of child care services.<sup>16</sup>

In 2017, **293,486** places in day care were missing for children under three years of age.<sup>17</sup>

60+

In 2050, approx. 37.6% of German citizens will be over 60 years of age.<sup>21</sup>

2.9 mil. people

In 2015, 2.9 mil. people were in need of long-time care in Germany. Of these, 1.38 mil. were cared for by relatives.<sup>22</sup>

## Why work/life balance is an important topic for employers

Work/life balance affects all people with occupation. What needs to be balanced with working of course varies greatly: whether it's a hobby, a pet, children of different ages, self-actualisation, health promotion, housekeeping, family members needing care, further training or other private projects – they all need time, coordination and organisation to find space alongside work.

As varied as the personal matters named above are, just as varied are individuals' needs, challenges and specific situations.

If these needs are met, the challenges mastered and the specific conditions respected, not only are the people affected more satisfied and motivated, but they are also more effective and prepared to act in the organisation's interest. This is where it becomes interesting for companies and institutions: satisfied, motivated and high-performing employees are a great benefit, since they bear substantial responsibility for the organisation's success.

Well-trained, competent employees are, however, due to changing demographics and attractive jobs outside Germany, increasingly difficult to get: given a shortage of skilled labour and the "war for talent(s)", it no longer matters solely how much salary is offered, but rather what total package an employer can offer potential employees. In particular since the course of values in our society are transforming, the priorities present themselves less clearly: work and income are no longer top priority for the current and coming generations. Not only because it is no longer rare to change one's job frequently, the company or institution's ability to sustain employees matters increasingly to reduce expenditures for recruiting and training effort and make knowledge management easier.

If we as a society and specifically as a company or institution meet the challenges in competing for skilled workers and want to secure our prosperity, we need to make use of

all available potential and ensure workforce diversity: innovative work models with creative, personalised benefits packages to meet the individual requirements of a diverse society, consisting, for instance, of older people, people with pets, children or relatives who need nursing care, people with disabilities or illnesses, competitive athletes and people with more than one job, so that they can be acquired and sustained in the world of work.

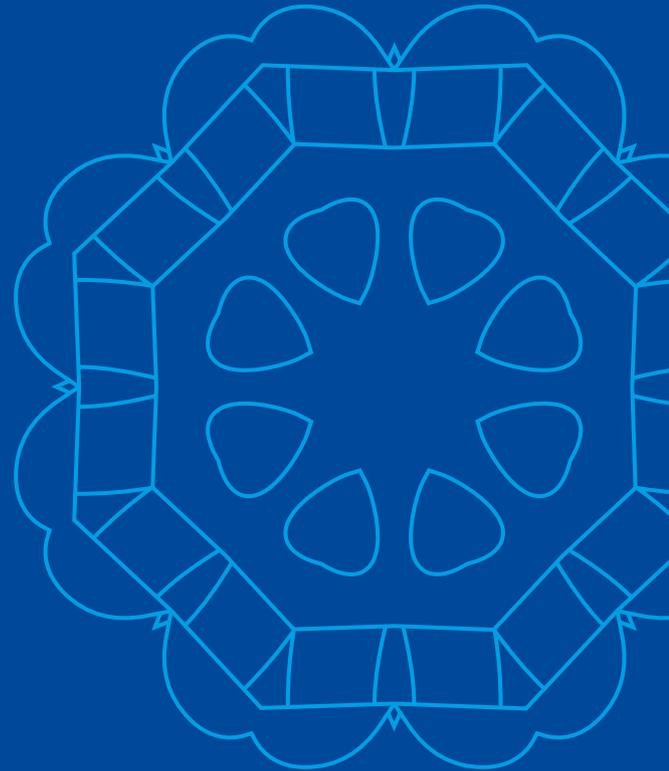
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# 2 Challenges and needs for innovation ... that affect everyone

“I would like to see more understanding for alternative life models – not only from managers, but also from my colleagues.”

Interview participant

To develop innovative solutions in a targeted way, it is necessary to gain a detailed description of the challenges and needs for innovation. In order to identify the needs, we surveyed individuals in the most varied professional and private situations by holding interviews. The most important areas were derived from these interviews.



## There is a lack of real and honest flexibility

Those interviewed rated a lack of flexibility one of the most important challenges in combining private life and work. The need for more flexibility relates to the organisation of working time (duration and location) as well as the place of work.

“If I have the same routine every day from 8 in the morning until 5 p.m., though I’m exhausted and in stress because actually I have many other things to do in precisely this time period, then I get very dissatisfied if I cannot organise it flexibly.”

Interview participant

The difficulty to organise personal needs around defined working times at a predetermined location exists above and beyond specific occupations and age categories in the working population. Although it seems that a flexible allocation of working hours and location has already been contractually implemented in many companies and institutions, the practical application thereof is regarded as difficult. A prevailing culture where it is necessary to be physically present at the office is primarily given as an impediment; this can be seen in a lack of acceptance of flexible working on the part of managers and co-workers.

“If I could say that I can freely allocate a certain number of hours per week, and if for half of those hours I could freely allocate where I spend them—that would be my dream [...]”

Interview participant

In other companies and institutions, in contrast, flexible working was already practiced on the basis of internal team arrangements, but the employees were lacking the security of a contractual agreement.

“Though there are internal team arrangements at our company about working from home, there’s no secure footing contractually.”

Interview participant

Increasing work flexibility would, according to individual interviewees, lead to an increase in motivation, satisfaction, the perceived feeling of belonging to the company and job performance at work.

“[...] that you get on the train every day at the same time, switching trains the same way, check into work with your chip card. You feel a bit like a robot. It makes it difficult to be creative on the job, since you always have the same influences. Nothing changes and it’s just very monotonous.”

Interview participant

## Innovation objectives and demands for organisational change

### Abolishing inflexible working times and a culture where it is necessary to be physically present at the office

- no prescribed daily and weekly working times, but expansion to months or quarters
- establishing genuine part-time models
- implementing models for off-campus and working from home

### Designing flexible contractual structures

- Implementation must be steered from the top, regardless of the wishes of one’s direct supervisor

**But:** When deploying flexible work models, new challenges arise in the domain of organisational culture, as well as needs for solutions related to mobile office structures.



## Organisational culture: management style and company climate don't fit the new work models

According to interviewees, even if there are contractually agreed possibilities for flexible work in a company or an institution, they were often not utilised. It was stressed that being absent from the job and making use of flexible working times are frequently associated with a lack of motivation and poor job performance. Both managers and co-workers imply that utilisation thereof is unacceptable and appropriate at most in extraordinary situations.

At the same time, working part time continues to be, according to the majority of the interviewees, a “career killer”; it is not considered equivalent and is frowned upon by colleagues.

“Many have the notion that a career is bought by working 60, 70 or more hours a week and being available at all times.”

Interview participant

“People turn up their noses: if you leave at 5 pm, aha, he's working part-time, or she's taking maternity leave.”

Interview participant

Taking time off – regardless of the aim – is virtually hardly compatible with a career, one respondent remarked, even though many expressed the wish to make use of such times for reflection, orientation and evaluating what they'd experienced and learned.

“Of course in principle there's a possibility to take a sabbatical, but let's be serious: after 2 months I'd be out.”

Interview participant



## Innovation objectives and demands for organisational change

**Changing the organisational culture so that flexibility, part-time work and alternative models are a matter of course.**

→ Change the “default”

“Working part-time should not be considered an exception.”

Interview participant

“Telework has to be a valid form of work / working from home should be the primary model.”

Interview participant

→ Trust-based and less controlling management style enables autonomous, result-oriented working

“My boss said when I started: ‘I don't care when you work! Do your work, do your hours.’ I liked that!”

Interview participant

→ Assessing employees on the basis of their performance and skill development (and not on their presence and number of hours worked)

“We should shift away from the ‘time for money model’ and instead orient ourselves towards performance and results.”

Interview participant

→ A culture of self-responsibility, freedom and voluntary commitment has to be lived, but also taken into account when selecting personnel (e.g., the fit between the candidate's personal self-management skills and the necessary individual responsibility for the respective work model)

## Structures for mobile working are still inadequate

If employees are working on a mobile basis or from home and at times that can be chosen freely, there is an increased risk that their work and leisure time will merge. Individual respondents stated that this could be seen, for instance, in the fact that it is presumed that one is always accessible, making it difficult to protect personal space. At the same time, flexible working imposes increased requirements for structuring one's own work and personal time management (e.g., observing lunch breaks and the end of the working day), since the time structure of a regular working environment is lacking, as interviewees who are experienced in working from flexible locations noted. By the same token, mobile working is sometimes difficult, they said, because on the one hand social interaction and an exchange among colleagues are lacking, as are, on the other hand basic office structures and/or a suitable place to work.



### Innovation objectives and demands for organisational change

- New definition of the boundaries between work and private life, independent of the location and of regular working hours
- Provision of infrastructure (e.g., office furniture, technology, software)
- Training courses to improve stress and time management skills and support self-management

## The integration of personal needs and balance in daily working life is getting short shrift

“I wish for a society in which it would be completely normal to spend only a portion of your lifetime earning your living. If in this way you can pursue your other interests, then you're more satisfied and you also have more energy and motivation for your job.”

Interview participant

The respondents report an increased need for balance between work and recreation; they would also like to have more attention and time for their private life, promoting their health and having leisure time. Our online research also indicates a need for development regarding organisational offerings to ease the financial burden of health promotion measures; in the long term these would also benefit employers.

In contrast to this, according to some interviewees, there is often a heavy workload that cannot be handled in the available time.

“Anything else the employees do after 8 hours of proper work – you'll need to do it again the next morning anyway.”

Interview participant

Even if an individual were then to decide to reduce their working time, this often does not mean that the workload is less: overwork, stress and dissatisfaction are the consequences, as some interview participants emphasized.

“When I switched to part-time, my tasks didn’t actually change – I had the same responsibilities and had to somehow see how to go about it in in 20% less time.”

Interview participant

In this way, they said, it was also difficult to observe work breaks and actively use them for relaxation, as well as to create a direct counterbalance to work and preserve and foster one’s health with good nutrition and exercise.

Almost all respondents noted that the existing office concepts did not adequately fulfil their individual needs for movement, recreation, creative freedom, access to fresh air and nature.

Due to overtime and long working hours, one respondent criticised, there was often just enough time before and after work to manage the housework – particularly people with double burdens perceived this as an additional challenge.



### Innovation objectives and demands for organisational change:

→ Improving the time balance between work and leisure time

“Work should be structured so that it can be handled in the time given.”

Interview participant

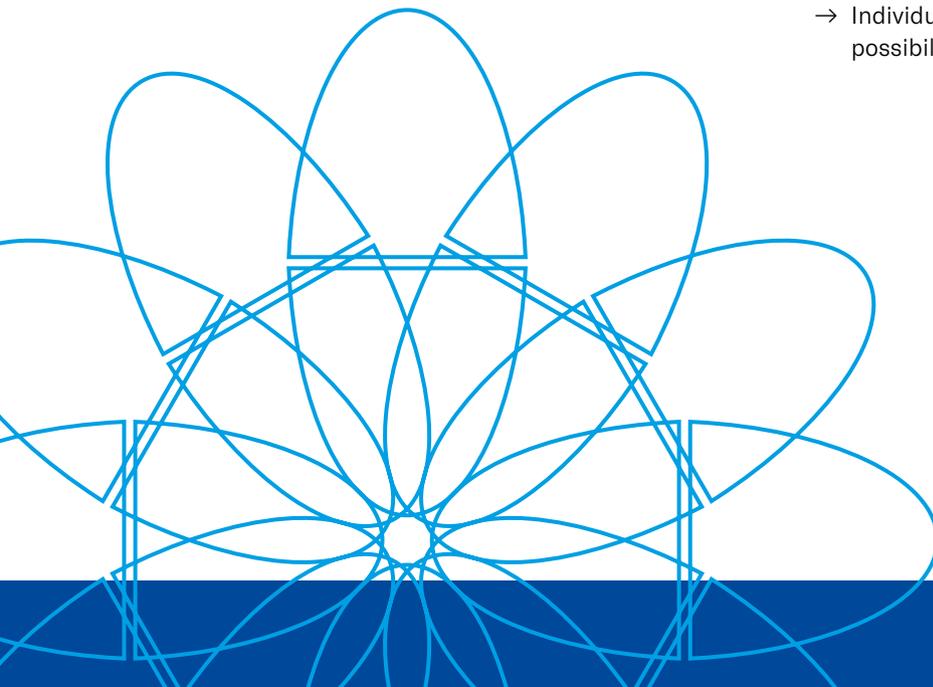
→ Support in promoting health and recreational activities through offerings in the company, institution or financial incentives, as well as integrating measures to improve nutrition, exercise and recreation in everyday working life

→ Reducing the workload for household chores (e.g., with household-related services, adjusting opening hours)

“Opening hours of service companies, doctors, hairdressers should be extended, especially on the weekend.”

Interview participant

→ Individual workplace design, outdoor solutions, possibilities for quiet retreat



## Autonomous, creative and responsible employees need freedom to act and stimulation

“We would like to create a world that pleases us.”

Interview participant

Some of the interview participants reported an unmet need for autonomy and control over their work, as well as a striving for self-realisation. The former includes independently shaping the place and time of work, as well as self-determination in selecting and executing tasks autonomously.

“The employer and employee should act in concert to create a win-win situation: creating something that’s good for both sides in the long term.”

Interview participant

To this effect, individual respondents stressed how important being actively included and participating in the decision making of the organisation is to them.

“After all, I definitely don’t want to be a worker without rights or say!”

Interview participant

Self-realisation describes the possibility when working and beyond work to pursue one’s own interests. Important aspects, according to the interviewees, are in particular possibilities for development outside of the job, the option to engage in several activities at the same time, and the access to resources (e.g., for continuing education, for a course of study, for personal projects, start-up projects or a transition to self-employment).

“I’m a curious person and I like to learn – and not only about topics that are directly related to my job. After all, you do need variety to grow.”

Interview participant

Unfortunately, only a few practical examples could be identified in which these needs were adequately addressed, for instance in the scope of learning opportunities outside of the job. It can be assumed that this is due to possible conflicts, such as the departure of an employee when he or she successfully commences self-employment. For this reason there is a particularly great need for social innovations targeting improvement in the aspects “freedom to act” and “stimulation”.



As regards service offerings from the company or institution, we found different employee attitudes in the scope of our study:

## Type A

- The differentiation between work and leisure time – in terms of both time and space – is very important
- Leisure offerings and services from within the organisation interfere with individuals' privacy
- Preference is given to financial support to be able to make independent use of external services

## Type B

- An active connection or integration between the worlds of working and living is important
- Here, the intertwining of these two areas of life – in terms of both time and space – is not a concern
- Internal leisure offerings and services are welcome to enhance one's personal work/life balance

This is why it is essential to offer individual solutions to serve the needs of both types of employees.

## Divers and tailored solutions are necessary to deal with individually different situations

„One size does not fit all!“

Interview participant

Individuals, their personal situations, challenges and needs differ greatly. The models and support-offers that benefit them and which they would like to use, are equally diverse.

“Breakfast and so forth is all very well and good, but the individual level always gets a raw deal. That’s where they should start—I’m sure it would be worth it.”

Interview participant

Individualised support offerings and working environments would offer the possibility to combine personal needs, interests and values with the world of work, many respondents said. If it is possible in this way to adapt the work to the people, rather than the other way around, a great intrinsic motivation and satisfaction are usually the outcome, one manager who was surveyed stressed.

The more challenges an individual is faced with, the more important tailor-made offers and targeted support are.

“There’s nothing to agree on, other than adding on to.”

Interview participant quoting Iris Radisch

In principle, there are already many innovations addressing the needs of specific target groups. However, until now they have only to a limited extent penetrated the working world. Stumbling blocks could be a lack of interest or insufficient

knowledge of employees’ and specific target groups’ individual needs. In addition, there is a lack of exchange between companies and institutions, as one HR expert highlighted: Innovative approaches are often implemented within an organisation, but not shared with other companies and institutions.



### Innovation objectives and demands for organisational change

- Modular offerings on a modular basis
- Life-phase-oriented work models (see also page 26)
- Increase control and personal responsibility for organising working and living worlds
- Making alternative life concepts visible and communicating them
- Making use of managers’ function as role models

### **There is a clear need for innovation:**

- Practical implementation of flexible (part-time) work models (incl. decrease and increase in working hours) and their acceptance and utilisation. It should be possible to flexibly design the place, time and duration of work.
- Work environments in organisations that meet employees' needs, that are individually designed and selected, as well as flexible work offerings at home or on the road with little administrative effort.
- Range of service offerings, the elements of which can be customised to individuals on an individual basis.
- Results-oriented management style based on trust to increase autonomy and promote clear communication.
- Transparent offering of expert knowledge, resources and a cross-organisational knowledge network to enable personal self-actualisation and continuing education.

# Challenges and needs of innovation ... for specific spheres of life

## Mobility



“To need just 15 minutes to get to work – that’s quality of life for me.”

Interview participant

Most respondents want the shortest possible travel routes from their home to work so as not to waste any unnecessary time en route. As regards travelling for work, individual interviewees stated that they worried about their health and how to balance out their job due to poor nutrition and a lack of exercise. In addition, poor internet access was evaluated as a disturbing factor, as it makes working efficiently while on the road more difficult.

## Disability



“Everything should be designed with barrier-free access from the start. Then there’s no additional effort needed”

Interview participant

The challenges for people with disabilities in the work context are due primarily to two aspects, one interview participant said: a lack of understanding from other people and a lack of adequate equipment. Often, there are prejudices and unclear communication, whereby the obstacles would sometimes be easy to overcome with just a little support from co-workers and managers.

With the right equipment (e.g., barrier-free software solutions, devices and facilities, paperless offices, products which meet the criteria of Universal Design!), people with disabilities could work just as efficiently as others.

Accessibility is indispensable for 10%, helpful for 40% and comfortable for 100%.

Interview participant

## Children



If you're lucky and get a place in day care for your child, things usually go quite well. But the transition to elementary school is a real problem. That's when many switch to part-time because there's no other way."

Interview participant

The parents surveyed consistently judged child care as the greatest challenge: access, quality and flexibility of availability are all considered critical here. The need for support solutions in emergencies, and in general longer and more flexible child care opening hours emerged particularly clearly. The quality of the support needs to be improved as well, according to some parents:

"I'd be happy to sacrifice part of my salary if I knew that in exchange my daughter's care was of high quality."

Interview participant

Logistics was identified by several respondents as a second great challenge: specifically when looking for day care places and in accompanied mobility, particularly in the countryside, many parents wish for better solutions from municipalities, companies, external providers or a network of private individuals.

"It's just a phase that is exhausting and hard – that's inevitable."

Interview participant

Parents would like in particular to be perceived and addressed with their specific needs, as respondents with children indicate. Since the personal and situational challenges depend greatly on the child's phase of life and state of health, the possibility to continuously adapt offerings and work models should become standard.

"For me, the most important support is my employer."

Interview participant

They wished for authentic family friendliness in a company or institution, one not just professed for image reasons.

"It's important to show once in a while that family friendliness and profitability are not mutually exclusive."

Interview participant

Central aspects are the tolerance of the direct and indirect presence of children in the company and the acceptance of family-friendly measures across all hierarchies and genders. In particular perceptible support from management is important, one interviewee said. For formal support to be able to develop its positive effect, informal support is necessary first as a basis.

"I wish that a real 50/50 model [of care] were possible for parents."

Interview participant

Thus far there seem to be few solutions working towards the equality of both parents in the world of work: what would be necessary would be both gender-neutral handling in the organisation and political measures to promote equality, and social strengthening of the role of the man in the family, as one father discussed in his interview.

## Care-giving



“Many people don’t know that you don’t just finish up care-giving overnight. That it at least is not always just a transitional phase of one or two years during which you cut down a bit on the job. In some cases it can last ten, twenty years.”

Interview participant

For working people with family members in need of care, the lack of recognition of care work in society and in their company or institution is a major obstacle, as the results of our research and the statements of individual respondents show. Unlike children, the home care of family members is still considered predominantly a private topic, to some extent even a taboo topic. Availability during work and a “care-sensitive” working environment would be essential here too for a good balance between care work and the job. Particularly for people who themselves had children late, the baby and toddler stage can coincide with the care of one’s own parents, leading to a double burden.

“When I then have to deal with not only the stress and strain of the actual care, but also have to muddle through the labyrinth of offerings from nursing care insurance and other institutions, that really drives me to despair.”

Interview participant

In addition, according to the respondents, there are challenges in getting access to information and counselling for the family members who do the care work and

those who need care (e.g., on support possibilities from the state and organisations, on the structure of the care system) as well as significant bureaucratic burdens (e.g., applying for care allowance, guardianship or places in care facilities). The financial burden should also not be underestimated (e.g., for accompanied mobility, technical aids, installations or necessary retrofitting).

“No one can understand it until they have been in this same situation. It’s not just physically exhausting, but also mentally and emotionally.”

Interview participant

In addition, individual interviewees describe an enormous psychological strain of personally caring for close relatives. They wish for more personal time-off and demand better networking with people in similar situations, in order to share theoretical and practical experience in home care.

“I have a friend who was quite a successful triathlete, and I know he had time issues when he began to work full-time. Ultimately, a 40-hour week gets in the way for someone who’s training for a team.”

Interview participant

Despite outstanding competencies in areas such as team spirit, ambition, discipline or dealing with pressure, it’s difficult for many athletes to find a job that is compatible with the time-consuming training during the week, as well as absence due to training camps and competitions, a former competitive athlete said in his interview. The most important thing, besides a personalised, flexible work model, is clear communication with and understanding for one’s direct colleagues’ personal way of life.

“Colleagues quickly have the impression that you’re getting preferential treatment if you take time off for training camp for a prolonged period. Then the envy factor kicks in. That’s why communication and organisation are key factors to gain acceptance for one’s own way of life.”

Interview participant

## Sports



## Pets



“My dream would be to take my dog along to the office. I’m sure that would also be good for our workplace atmosphere.”

Interview participant

Respondents with pets found themselves confronted in particular with the challenge of finding suitable care options for their charges while they themselves were at work: needs ranged from arranging a dog-sitter or easily accessible horse stables to an understanding for flexible working in cases of emergency and illness. One party affected expressed the wish to bring her pet with her to work, both to facilitate support and care and to create personal balance.

1 International design principle that is geared towards designing objects and environments so that they are, to the greatest extent possible, usable by all people, without further adaptation or additional aids.

# Innovative solutions for reconciling life and work

How can these highly diverse challenges be addressed?

For the study, we researched creative solutions around the world, as well as asking for innovative ideas by means of a call for participation and interviews. We edited, condensed and in some cases supplemented these solutions. The individual ideas, innovations and concepts are specified in the digital appendix to this publication. Some of the solutions are included below as examples in the integrated solution concepts and in the short, medium and long-term implementable actions. They are intended to serve as inspiration and food for thought: by expanding on them, you can design and develop individual, customised solutions.

The solutions identified are just as diverse as the challenges described: some are individuals' future visions; others are commercial business models; some are organisational measures that have already been implemented, while others are government support possibilities. Some are broad approaches to solutions from which almost everyone can profit, others are custom-fitted and show answers for specific problems.

These result in ideas for integrated concepts in which the various solutions and ideas can be combined in a targeted

way to create a world of work that satisfies diverse needs.

## **Integrated solution concepts – combining different innovative solutions and ideas**

Long distances between residence, place of work and service providers, a lack of flexibility and a lack of a network between work and private commitments are currently stressful disturbing factors for most employees. For this reason, we selected spatial organisation as a central starting point for integrated solution concepts for work/life balance. Three organisational forms were defined that make it possible to create synergies in terms of time and content.

### **Note**

You will find the ideas and innovations presented here, as well as additional ones, in the digital appendix: the idea cards. You can download the cards at [www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/)

You will find the specific idea card under the number indicated, e.g., 1 24-hour day care.

## Organisation in and around the company

In this model the company or institution becomes the centre of work and life: job, service providers, leisure activities and personal projects find expression within or in close proximity to the company or institution. Employees receive offers to discharge private responsibilities and maintain a healthy work/life balance at their place of work. These are provided in terms of a service concept that goes beyond salary and insurance benefits to enable optimal working performance. The distance that needs to be travelled is reduced to the commute to work. In this way, private life is integrated into the company's infrastructure. This organisational form has the potential not only to solve the problem of work/life balance, but also to strengthen identification with the company or institution.

### Solution elements within and around the company or institution

#### Service platform

Via a platform, employees can book personal services (e.g., babysitter, craftsperson, cleaner, lawn-mowing, etc.). In this case, they need not take care of selection and communication themselves, nor of the service transaction. Employees no longer need to expend great effort for research, quality assessment and administration. For this purpose, the company cooperates with verified external service providers and assumes the organisational outlay.

→ [68](#) Platform for household services

#### Contact persons for (social) support

There is one contact person per a certain number of employees whom they can contact confidentially to obtain information on support possibilities on specific topics (e.g., on care-giving, children, health, psychological stress), as well as to obtain low-threshold access to internal and external services. Alternatively, there can be employees who are trained, for instance, as care consultants and then provide support as regards certain specific topics.

## Leisure and health offerings within the company

Measures and offerings to improve nutrition and movement, as well as recreation and leisure are integrated into everyday working life. Thus there are, for instance, sports and relaxation workshops, cooking workshops for healthy eating or cultural events during the lunch break or in the evening. In addition, space and communication channels are provided for joint activities: from hobby and interest groups to joint cooking in the team kitchen to offerings for single employees (e.g., speed dating, partnership platforms, lunch break dates) – everything can be organised if there's demand and interest.

- [42](#) Exercise at work
- [46](#) Active lunch break
- [49](#) Interactive lunch break
- [51](#) Stand Up!
- [54](#) Corporate volunteering
- [56](#) Meditation bus
- [57](#) Platform for integrated health promotion

#### Childcare giver who is part of the organisation

This can be flexibly divided up among several parents to be optimally adapted to individual situations (age of the child, particular requirements resulting from the parents' job such as business trips, shift work, etc.) and needs (time, duration, intensity). Through the connection to the company or institution, a long-term perspective is created at the same time for the caregiver.

→ [7](#) Business trip with child

#### Sharing platform

Within the company or institution, a forum for employees is provided by means of which they can exchange ideas (e.g., as regards care-giving, children, leisure, vacation, health, etc.), as well as share and loan out objects (e.g., cars, sports, entertainment and vacation equipment, pets).

## Infrastructure for one's own projects and self-actualisation

Employees get the necessary infrastructure in the organisation to implement their work projects, either work-related or independent ones. This comprises, for instance, working spaces, networks, information (e.g., on the topic of founding start-ups) and resources (e.g., software, devices, materials, as well as financial support). In addition, for a

### Idea Box: Work/life app

A digital platform could be used to announce, organise and integrate the various solution offerings: by means of a work/life app, employees can inform themselves about, for instance, the topics of mobility, leisure time, children, household, care, health, finances and living, exchange ideas with other users and make use of, organise or book offers for care, household services, leisure, health, and much more.

The numerous offerings are thus linked with another, and the digital infrastructure can be jointly used by a combination of organisations in order to create synergy effects. In this way, the work/life app can also be used by smaller organisations that have less capacity and fewer possibilities than large companies and corporations do, since it is jointly maintained by several companies and institutions. Alternatively, small companies can join the established structures of larger companies or external providers.

certain percentage of one's working time, a leave of absence can be applied to develop and implement work-related ideas, or the transition to part-time work in order to implement and bring forth ones' own start-up ideas, or to enable a transition to self-employment. Internships and try-out days within the organisation can create new perspectives and encourage creativity.

→ [62](#) Internal internship

## Long day care opening hours for employees who work shifts

To enable parents who work in shifts to work at all, the day care centre is open between 5.30 a.m. and 9.30 p.m., 365 days a year – a critical advantage when recruiting and retaining employees. Not only are babies and very young children cared for in the crèche, but also kindergarten-age children, as well as schoolchildren, who are provided with homework supervision. This requires a particular spatial and organisational design, since some of the children will also spend sleeping time in the day care centre besides the times when they are awake.

→ [1](#) 24-hour day care centre

## Integration of household errands and tasks

Employees can take care of household errands on site of the company or institution. Examples are:

- Laundry service: Employees deliver their laundry to a collection point in the organisation and pick it up two days later freshly washed and ironed.
- For shopping, a supermarket within the organisation or the necessary infrastructure for delivering online orders (e.g., cold storage room for food, storage space for packages or organic food-crates) can be provided.

→ [64](#) Food shopping

→ [66](#) Reminder service

→ [67](#) Dinner-to-go

→ [71](#) Laundry service

## Organisation around one's place of residence

If you rethink the place of residence with its requirements and needs, the result could offer more and better possibilities to reconcile private life and the world of work – from small improvements like a good home office workspace to innovative housing development systems. In the integrated housing development system model, all private responsibilities can be taken care of right on one's own doorstep by making use of associated service providers. You work either in a well-equipped home office or on site of the organisation. Synergies through new living space concepts enable room- and equipment sharing (e.g., kitchen, play room, fitness rooms, guest rooms, garden, etc.) and services (e.g., child care, apartment cleaning, laundry service, food delivery, etc.) to enrich and make all residents' lives more flexible.

→ [72](#) Cluster apartments

### Solution elements around the place of residence

#### Home office package

A good home office requires, besides a computer, other furnishings and equipment to fully support the individual when working. The employer can support this with home office packages that contain all the necessary materials.

→ [88](#) Home office package

#### Personal services available for sharing

Service providers that are domiciled in the workers' housing environment create real added value for work and private life by reducing driving time. Since residents of the housing development system share craftspeople, cleaners or child care offerings that are close by, it improves the balance between life and work by less complicated organisation and better cost efficiency. For instance, several families can share a babysitter or a cleaner and can place joint orders with a food delivery service.

#### Flexible living space

Rooms that can be flexibly rented expand the possibilities that can be taken advantage of for better work/life balance. For instance, individual guest rooms can be rented to

accommodate grandparents who temporarily take over child care. Also, when the family grows in size, the private living space can be expanded quickly without a move being necessary.

#### Multi-generation house

When various generations come together within one house, it makes it possible for people in various stages of life to interact with each other. Senior citizens can be involved to, for instance, accept packages or supervise children, while younger people can take over heavier shopping or accompany the seniors to doctors' offices.

#### Cooking using your own recipes

For many people, preparing and eating their own meals is a component of a good quality of life (as compared to cafeteria meals prepared in large-scale kitchens). With home help or on lunch breaks while working from home with the time to cook one's own meals, this quality of life can be restored.

→ [70](#) Cooking by following own recipes

#### Modular services in the form of living

If living is considered not just as a living space but also in combination with services (fully serviced living), new paths open up to make it easier to improve work/life balance: modular booking on a central basis via the facility management of organised services such as cleaning, washing dishes, doing the laundry or shopping can provide relief and relaxation.

→ [78](#) Fully Serviced Living

## Organisation in the context of hubs

A hub is a workplace and meeting place that offers mobile users more than just flexibly bookable desktop workstations and services such as answering calls and receiving mail. Private life and work life are combined, since space is also provided for personal matters (e.g., child care, café, canteen, leisure activities, services, sports). In this way, a lively, networked community of people with different backgrounds and competencies is created.

Instead of commuting to the company or working at home, users find here at a well-situated location, combined in one, everything they need to organise their personal and professional life to the greatest extent possible.

### Solution elements in the hub

#### Open co-working space

Co-working spaces can be used by a number of organisations and self-employed people simultaneously. Larger organisations can also rent individual workstations or office rooms for their employees with flexible work models. These enable an expansion and fostering of networking in a relaxed working atmosphere that stimulates the exchange of ideas, advice and services across different professional disciplines, thus encouraging creativity. People who otherwise work at home find here social contact, a change of scene and distance from home. To improve mutual exchange, regular events such as joint lunches or sports events are held.

#### Innovative rooms for various purposes

A hub can be fitted with various rooms to give users the optimal working environment, as well as space for occasional leisure and relaxation. Possible rooms are: quiet rooms, networking rooms, rooms for concentrated work, formal and informal meeting and teamwork rooms, creative

spaces, natural spaces, sports rooms, outdoor working areas, rooms designed for customer meetings and much more.

→ [77](#) Creative spaces

→ [84](#) PITCH - Building

#### Child care in hub 1: day care centre

A day care centre in the hub makes possible synergy effects for parents on their way to work, since children need not be brought additionally to another care facility. It is also possible in this way to see your children on your lunch break, as well as to be with your child quickly in case of illness or other problems.

#### Child care in hub 2: parent-child office

With the parent-child office, trained specialists support parents with care and keep the children busy. Parents and children are “within reach” and parents can establish contact with each other. Besides shared rooms equipped with toys and supplies, there can also be separate working rooms in close proximity that enable concentrated work.

→ [3](#) Co-working space for parents & child

#### Lower prices for apartments and offices

Since hubs can also be outside of cities, it is possible to rent apartment and office space inexpensively, benefiting both the employees and the organisations and counteracting the social issue of urbanisation.

It makes sense for the centres to be situated at an easily accessible location, well connected to public transportation or expressways, to make best use of a hubs advantage.

#### Services and shopping possibilities

A hub can be a centre for other services (e.g., health-care professionals, hairdresser, leisure and sports offerings, shopping possibilities) to reduce travel time and effort for employees.

## Innovative solutions – measures to be implemented in the short, medium and long term

The innovative solution measures presented below were classified using a time perspective: that is, whether they can be implemented in the short, medium or long term. The assessment is for orientation purposes – in day-to-day working life, time and effort may deviate from this estimate.

### Solutions that can be implemented in the short term

#### Bookable room for various target groups

A room can be booked online by individuals or groups for various purposes, such as, for instance, relaxation exercises or yoga, prayers and religious practices, or breast-feeding.

#### Transport service for family members of employees

An independent company offers to accompany and take care of children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. As desired, this can be transported by taxi, using public transport or even on foot. Children can be taken to their sports and music lessons in this way, or picked up from childcare facilities. People needing care can be supported when visiting a doctor or shopping. Trust is built up by means of defined caregivers and longer-term relationships.

→ [10](#) Children's transport service

→ [13](#) Care Driver

#### Monthly best practices with real role models

To exchange about specific challenges and creative, individual solutions, internal and cross-organisational networks are created for various target groups (e.g., for women, fathers, caregivers, etc.). The participants meet at regular events at which networking is encouraged and particularly innovative or useful examples are presented. The practitioners of these original examples who master their challenges in a particular way or are particularly

enthusiastic about a topic, can, with their reports on their experiences, reach a broader target group, beyond their immediate contacts.

#### Innovative health management on business trips

A For better nutrition when on the road, cooking facilities can be offered in hotels in which the employees feed themselves with healthy meals that they have prepared themselves from individual food packages and transportable kitchen sets provided by the organisation for each trip.

B To stay fit while on the road, the time on the train or at the airport can be used to do sports (e.g., making use of sports compartments on an ICE train, fitness studios in an airport building).

#### Original formats for more awareness and appreciation

There are various innovative ways to encourage attention and acceptance for various topics (e.g., care-giving, family, disability, illness): on the one hand, with events like the CareSlam (a mixture of a poetry slam and a ScienceSlam on the topic of care-giving) or talk shows, on the other hand with installations within the organisation such as poster exhibits, company blogs or social media channels and actions. There are no limits to possible creativity: even a song that the company band composed expressly, or a photo wall can enhance awareness and thus strengthen cohesion.

→ [29](#) CareSlam

→ [34](#) Care song

## Solutions that can be implemented in the medium term

### Work/life balance advisory board

An association between workers council, HR department, employee networks and external experts meets several times a year to gather ideas, analyse employee surveys, measure the success of certain actions taken and detect future trends. Regular employee surveys serve to determine requirements and the needs for innovation as well as the attractiveness of the existing service offerings. This is intended to provide support in making decisions regarding implementing or adapting these service offerings.

### Idea Box: Rethink the employment relationship

As a stimulus to design new work models, the employer/employee relationship can be rethought, and the focus can be placed on employees' independence. It is conceivable as a future vision that employees work largely on their own responsibility. In this way, a link between independence and the employment relationship would arise in which, optimally, the advantages of both models would apply. This would mean, for instance, that the individual could freely choose working time and place as well as vacation time and duration. At the same time, they would have to expend less effort on administrative tasks and enjoy greater job safety and professional infrastructure than they would, if selfemployed. What is essential in this case is of course detailed communication of needs on both sides and a precise agreement on objectives.

### Trying out part-time models without risk

Particularly for men, it can be important that they can try out the possibilities and difficulties of part-time work without risk. Formats that enable employees to try out part-time work, for instance for one or two months, with a guarantee to be able to return to full-time later if working on a part-time basis does not suit, can create a real change in perspective.

→ [75](#) Part-time on a trial basis

### Support in special situations

Working students are deployed to support employees in special situations. For instance, parents in management positions are provided with a working student, or people with disabilities are accompanied on a business trip by a working student.

→ [7](#) Business trip with child

### Cooperation with care facility

Like reserving places in crèches or day care centres, companies and institutions enter into co-operations with care facilities. The places thus reserved for employees' family members in need of care enable a quick resolution of surprising and acute nursing cases as well as short-term care, while the caregiving employees are on business trips or on a well-deserved holiday.

→ [33](#) Vacation despite care giving

→ [27](#) Places in senior citizen homes

### Day care with 24-hour on-call service

Flexibly bookable day care (available, e.g., for up-and-coming managers) which you can also inform at short notice, even if overnight care becomes necessary.

→ [1](#) 24-hour day care centre

## Solutions that can be implemented in the long term

### Part-time including holiday days off

Part-time work can be shaped in various ways to meet individual needs: in addition to classical part-time models, it can also be implemented, for instance, with an increased number of holiday days: instead of weekly working hours of 80%, the employee can have, e.g., 12 additional holiday days per quarter. Alternatively, the working time can be compressed to one continuous period (e.g., the employee works full-time for nine months of the year and is released from work for the remaining three months).

### Lifetime-oriented work models

It is possible to adapt your own work model within a company or institution to your current personal situation using lifelong working-time accounts: for instance, you can work more when you're young, in order to work part-time in the phase of starting a family or caring for family members, take some time off during a sabbatical leave, or switch to partial retirement or retire completely earlier. Parts of the salary and bonuses can also be exchanged for time on the account.

### Flexible project work, fixed administrative work

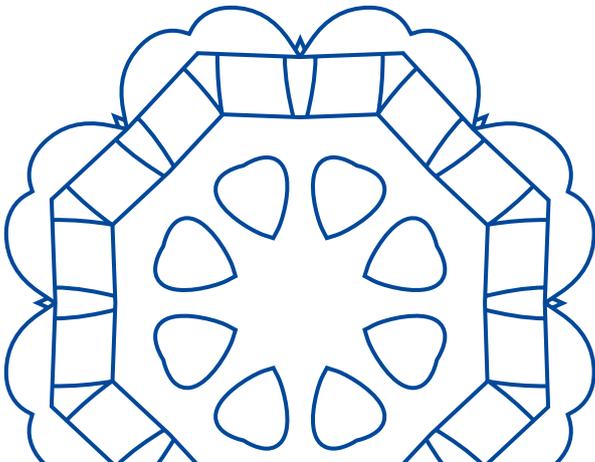
One possibility for companies and institutions to shape flexible working in a way that can be better planned and implemented would be, in the case of an appropriate set of tasks, to consider the knowledge-based share of administrative tasks as a fixed and inflexible volume of work, while the share of project work could be negotiated. For instance, a fixed working time of at least 30% is agreed for administrative tasks, which is supplemented by a flexibly negotiable working time for project work of up to 70%. At the discussions on agreements on objectives for the next 3-6 months it is determined how large the current need for work on the one hand and on the other the employee's capacity and private circumstances is, so that if necessary, the agreements on the time and place of work can be adjusted. This gives companies and institutions planning security and the employee the option to increase or reduce working time in a relatively flexible and uncomplicated manner.

### Parallel activities to balance things out

To balance out an office job, work models can be created to combine work in various sections within one organisation (e.g., four days a week of office work broken up by one day in an area of activity with intensive personal contact, such as, for instance, fitness trainers for co-workers). In this way, one's own objectives and tasks can be oriented towards intrinsic motivation, hobbies and individual needs.

### Hubs within an organisation

Hubs within an organisation (e.g., if situated in the countryside) enable employees to work at a short distance from their residence if the institutional or company campus is far away. If there are several hubs in the proximity, the employee can flexibly decide which one they use (e.g., if this can be practically combined with private appointments). By placing the facilities advantageously, time-consuming commuting and the expense for high office rents in large cities can be reduced.



## Note

You will find the ideas and innovations presented here as well as others in the digital appendix: the idea cards. You can download the cards at [www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/). You can find the specific idea card under the number indicated e.g., [1](#) 24-hour day care centre.

## Info box: What benefits for employees are attractive for top students?

101 top talents<sup>1</sup> were surveyed on their preferences regarding innovative voluntary additional benefits for employees provided by employers.

### Top 5 of the innovative benefits for employees

#### Support for leisure activities:

Employees can get two fully paid additional holiday days to pursue a hobby or their favourite outdoor activity.

→ [58](#) Yay Days

#### Apartment cleaning & household services:

Professional apartment cleaning for employees' apartments as well as household services (e.g., shopping for food).

→ [63](#) Cleaning service

→ [64](#) Food shopping

#### Team holiday:

The whole company flies or drives for a week to a joint destination; the focus is on team building and balance with everyday working life.

→ [50](#) Company holiday

#### Working in nature:

Office design that creates the impression of working in nature (e.g., trees, plants, stream).

→ [73](#) Working in nature

→ [44](#) Office as a regeneration room

#### Organisation babysitter:

Day care support employed by the company or institution; this person takes on the care of the children in case of sickness or work-related absence of the parents.

<sup>1</sup> Above-average students and graduates with a grade point average of < 1.5 (M = 1.27, SD = 0.17; N<sub>female</sub> = 55).

# Needs for action for the state, society and politics

Innovative ideas and solution approaches from individuals and organisations are the key for improving the reconciliation of private life and the world of work. Implementation of these depends, however, on a nation's legal, societal and socio-political realities. Deriving from our interviews, there are several calls for action to the state, society and politics.

## Creating the framework for true flexibility

The interviewees wish that flexible working would be effectively enabled on the part of the state, and thus request a revision of the laws on working time, occupational safety and holidays. Both employees and employers could be helped with reforms, including a life-phase-oriented and personalising employment policy.

**“Flexibility also means for me that I can sometimes work more than 40 hours per week, for instance in the next 6 months.”**

Interview participant

This could, for instance, be comprised in a right to flexibility that refers both to the place of work and working hours.

**“As employee I would prefer not to have to beg if I'd like to change my working hours.”**

Interview participant

It would be intended that this includes a flexibilisation of the daily and weekly working hours, in addition to an entitlement to part-time work and a right to return to full-time for everyone. In coordination with the employer, one could then decide, fundamentally self-determined, when and how much one would like to work. Particularly in times of globalisation, in which it is increasingly normal to hold meetings with teams on the other side of the world, or to go to work jetlagged after a business trip, these changes would be well-received.

**“Home office should be enshrined in law.”**

Interview participant

To enable a true transition to flexibility, according to the interviewees, location-independent working would have to be established by law. Otherwise, there would be enormous administrative expenditure for companies and institutions that are willing to implement an off-campus principle. Even well-intentioned guidelines on workspace design can here become an obstacle for allowing people to work from home:

“[...] and then the company would be obligated to send someone over to my house to check whether I have an adequate workstation. Which strikes me as considerable interference with my privacy.”

Interview participant

Finally, the flexibilisation of work can be supported by improving infrastructure. Comprehensive reliable and quick Internet coverage as well as access to public Wi-Fi hotspots, such as already established, for instance, in Estonia, would, according to the respondents, substantially facilitate the possibilities to work from the most varied of locations. In addition, individual interviewee participants wish that public areas would be equipped by the state with co-working spaces, for instance small, soundproof rooms in train stations, at subway and commuter railway stops and similar places where, if needed, calls could be made or emails answered without being disturbed.

### Idea Box: One at a time ...

In Europe, life expectancy increased by an entire year between just 2010 and 2015.<sup>1</sup> Children who are born in Germany today even have a 50% probability of living to an age of more than 100 years.<sup>2</sup> Our research identified the idea to “disentangle” the “rush hour” of life, in which career, children, self-actualization and the care of family members potentially coincide, and for instance to improve work/life balance so that it is also possible to have a career after concluding the family phase.

## Promoting family-friendly concepts

As regards better reconciling children and profession, the respondents primarily want financial relief from the government: abolishing splitting income taxation between couples, accompanied by tax benefits explicitly for families with children so that even double-income parents are not worse off, is one important demand. Other tax benefits could be a tax-free year for working mothers or the possibility to deduct

### Idea Box: Parental leave as an opportunity for reconsideration ...

... is another of the interviewees' ideas: if parental leave can be taken as flexibly as possible, and if one rethinks it, one could use it in a creative way for reflection and further education. For instance, it would be possible at the same time to begin a Masters of Business Administration (MBA), to professionally reorient or to take a professional break, e.g., with a trip around the world.

Particularly the infant phase could fit very well with a degree course, since you can usually arrange your courses quite flexibly. The Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences has been certified, for instance, as a family-friendly university<sup>3</sup> besides care in the research-oriented day care centre (→ 9) and parent-child rooms, a family office is available as a point of contact and counselling centre for questions relating to reconciling degree courses, profession and family for all members of the university (students and employees) with a child or with family members in need of care. Students also get a family card that can help, if needed, to obtain relief being assigned to seminars and organising examinations, as well as support in organising internships and semesters abroad.

care costs from one's taxes. In addition, many wish that they would still be paid the parental allowance if they are working full-time during their period of parental leave so that they could use it to finance adequate care.

Finally, the respondents request an expansion to the family network: for instance, it should be possible in general for working people to take grandparental leave and, analogously to a parental allowance, receive grandparental allowance. For grandparents who no longer work, there should be tax abatements if they participate substantially in child care so that the child's parents can, in turn, work (→ [26](#) Grandparent time).

In general, there is still a lot of free potential to support parents in comparison to other countries. For instance, Singapore is a beacon in reconciliation policy: the city state gives companies financial assistance so that they can offer, among other things, solutions for work/life balance, thus providing a political incentive in the economy (→ [24](#) Work-Life-Grant). In our interviews too, the idea was mentioned of (financial) support of family-friendly companies and institutions by the state, analogous to that for the inclusion of disabled persons.

## Strengthening family members who provide care-work

Also in the care-giving sector, the respondents consider financial support and improvement in the emergency arrangements the primary task of policy makers. Establishing a care allowance analogous to child benefits would support many families in better handling the challenges of caring for family members. This would in some cases make possible care at home in the first place, thus taking pressure off overstressed care facilities.

Some of the respondents considered the 10 days of paid leave in acute care emergencies as a good step in the right direction. However, it would be preferable to be able to deal

with the administrative handling only afterwards. Likewise, the 10 days are, they pointed out, too short in some situations to appropriately implement care of the family member in need of it. Here too, flexibility could help: the length of the leave could depend directly on the diagnosis that has been made. If the family member decides subsequent to their leave to claim nursing care time, it would also be expedient to make it dependent, at least at the beginning, on the diagnosis that has been given, and not on the care level, because it can take as long as five weeks for this to be issued.

### Idea Box: Week of family members providing care

The "Week of family members providing care"<sup>4</sup> in Berlin is an example of synergy effects: Here the federal government, the municipality and health insurers work together and jointly provide a public culture programme for family members providing care. Events of this type can on the one hand bring the topic of nursing care closer to the public at large, as well as serving as a freely accessible source of information.

### Idea Box: ID card for recognition of family members providing care

Similar to students, trainees or senior citizens, caregivers with the relevant ID card could obtain reduced or free entry to recreational, cultural or sports facilities. This would on the one hand send a clear signal to family members providing care and would pay tribute at the societal, public level to their dedication. On the other hand, such an offer could also contribute a little to providing financial relief (→ [39](#) Care card).

## Actively involving disabled persons with practical measures

“When it comes to accessibility and inclusion, the state has to set standards and themselves only hire companies that comply with these standards.”

Interview participant

In the scope of the interviews, it became clear that there is room for improvement not only as regards architectural accessibility but also as regards software and online services: for instance, the state should be a role model when it comes to paperless administration processes that enable participation for people with visual impairments, and encourage companies and institutions to follow suit.

Likewise, it is important to raise awareness and attention in society through encounters: experience in the scope of simulations of visual impairment and reduced mobility (e.g., wheelchair training, dialogue in the dark) should be part of training and education, particularly for architects, software developers, etc. Integrative schools and (school) internships in the social sector enable children to develop natural interactions with individuals with disabilities from a young age.

One promising idea from our interviews consists in holding regular orientation days for children with disabilities, similar to the “Girls Days” in the natural sciences and technology, to give them an impression of what professions would be worth them considering in the future and establishing contact to possible mentors.

## Idea Box: Enabling telecare

According to some respondents, a major “time killer” is making appointments, travelling to medical clinics and waiting in their reception rooms. The call for action to the policy makers is thus to create the prerequisites for telecare: this could lead to an essential improvement in work/life balance, particularly for people with chronic illnesses.

- [52](#) Telemedical online platform
- [60](#) Online coaching

- 1 WHO (2018) European Health Report 2018: More than numbers – evidence for all.
- 2 Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (2002). Human Mortality Database. <https://www.frankfurt-university.de/de/hochschule/wir-ueber-uns/-familiengerechte-hochschule/>
- 3 <https://www.woche-der-pflegenden-angehoerigen.de/>
- 4

# Outlook – Jointly making innovative solutions visible and developing them creatively

## 1

### **Creating awareness and visibility of innovative solutions and bringing about widespread acceptance (and not just introducing them formally)**

The most innovative flexibility models imaginable may be designed – but if they are not known and, above all, accepted by co-workers and managers, they will hardly help anyone to resolve their work/life balance issues. As revealed in the course of our research and our interviews, failure at the present time is often due to the lack of the most basic possibilities, which, at least formally, ought by now to be widespread (e.g., home office, flexible working times). Superiors should lead by example, thus signalling that making use of reconciliation concepts is legitimate and accepted. An exchange in the scope of networks across organisations, such as for instance the Charta der Vielfalt, can help in spreading and establishing innovative ideas and experiences with them. It is also important to enable an exchange among the employees themselves so that best practice options can be shared as inspirations and for encouragement.<sup>1</sup> What is ultimately important is open and trusting interaction between employers and employees:

A diverse society and workforce have a range of differing needs and challenges in combining their private lives with their worlds of work. There are already some innovative approaches and concepts that need to be developed to the next level and implemented. This results in various areas of action and needs for change for companies and institutions, as well as for the state and society. To address the challenges and implement innovative solution ideas, we would like to convey three key ideas to you:

“Only if you know what employees want, can you as an employer respond to it. And only if the employees understand where operational needs require other solutions, will they be willing to try something new.”

Interview participant

## 2 Entering into co-operations and synergies among diverse participants

Many problems cannot be solved by one party alone. In the cooperation between the state, companies, external service providers, volunteer organisations, private individuals and the social network, social innovations and solution can arise that have advantages for all involved. There is still untapped potential in both vertical and horizontal collaboration, particularly in addressing the needs of various target groups with the same measure in an innovative way. This may range from a prepared school snack box for employees' children that is distributed by volunteers in the schools to “borrowed” grandparents (→ [40](#) [Rent a Grandma/Grandpa](#)) to a comprehensive care concept for children or family members in need of care in cooperation between social network, public institutions and companies.

## 3 Being creative & open for new ideas, along the lines of:

“Work/life balance is a great adventure.”

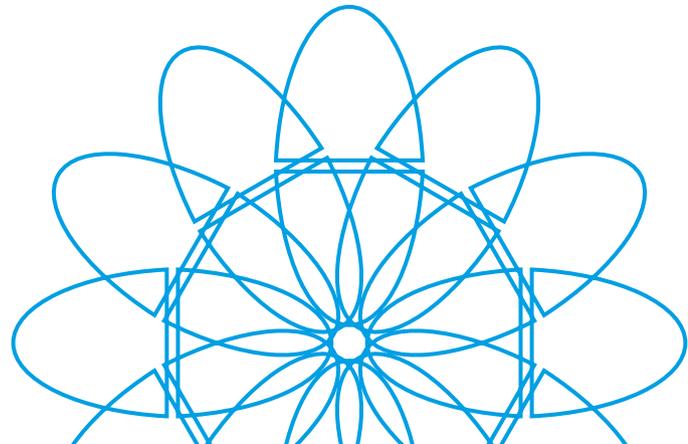
Interview participant

Every company and every institution, just like every individual and every family, is unique and has very specific needs. For this reason it is important to find individual and tailored solutions for each company, each institution and each individual in an original way. What we need to do so is often just the necessary freedom, the possibilities and the responsibility so that everyone can determine and design their personal path. Let's consider it a creative adventure for genuine individuality to become reality.

“If we manage to make use of all the ideas, possibilities and resources that are offered by our social networks, our society, our country, our federal state, then we can accomplish almost everything.”

Interview participant

<sup>1</sup> You will find some of the best practices in diversity management in the Charta der Vielfalt's best practice database at <https://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/diversity-leben/best-practice/>





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# Method

The project combines different sources of knowledge and perspectives. In the process, both national and international sources were taken into account, and solution ideas from individuals, associations, organisations and states gathered and analysed.

## Online research

To obtain a systematic overview of innovative practical examples in the area of reconciling private life and the world of work that have already been implemented, semi-structured, selective online research was conducted, and the data material was evaluated for its innovativeness by means of a rating. The sources were, among others:

- 160 parents' & care blogs
- 420 homepages of companies, start-ups and ministries from
- 30 countries

## Call for participation

Our call for participation to submit innovative ideas on reconciling private life and the world of work was sent to > 100 companies, associations, dis-

seminators. They were asked to submit and describe ideas using an online questionnaire and to evaluate them in terms of innovativeness and implementability. In addition, some demographic data of the submitting individuals or organisation were requested.

## Interviews

In 47 structured interviews, we surveyed various actors on challenges, needs for innovation, approaches and wishes. Human resources experts and individuals (employees and self-employed persons) were interviewed who have mastered particular challenges and have been seen to be particularly innovative in dealing with them. The interviews were rendered anonymous in the analysis process.

In addition, > 60 online accessible interviews with German and international managers, who had been identified in the scope of the online research, were analysed.

- ~ 280 ideas from organisations
- ~ 150 ideas from individuals
- ~ 50 other ideas submitted

were gathered and evaluated in terms of their innovativeness.

The most innovative solutions are presented in the scope of this report or else in the digital appendix.

The digital appendix can be downloaded at [www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de/en/understanding-diversity/media-centre/publications/)

We would like to thank Carolin Köne, Anna Gellert, Alison Stille, Teresa Kiechle, Michael Wisbacher and Jonathan Schönberg for their support in gathering and evaluating data for the study.



### **About the Charta der Vielfalt**

Since 2010, the Charta der Vielfalt e.V. association has been advocating as an employer initiative firmly establishing diversity management in the German economy. More than 3,000 companies and institutions with a total of 12 million employees have so far signed the Charta der Vielfalt voluntary commitment since 2006 and are thus contributing to actively supporting diversity management in Germany. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel is the initiative's patron.



### **About Prof. Isabell Welpé and the Chair of Strategy and Organisation**

Professor Isabell M. Welpé holds the Chair of Strategy and Organization at the Technical University Munich and is the Director of the Bayerisches Staatsinstitut für Hochschulforschung und Hochschulplanung (Bavarian State Institute for Higher Education Research and Planning).

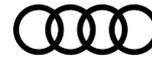
Her research focal areas are in strategy and organization from a behavioural science perspective with a focus on leadership, innovation, human resources management, organisational design and the digitalisation of business and society.

The members of the Charta der Vielfalt e.V.

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