

**CHEFSACHE**



**NEW  
WORK**

**Fair Chances**



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Allianz

BASF  
We create chemistry

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# Preface

Dear readers,

We are currently experiencing an unprecedented change in our working environment. Digitization, automation, global networking, and the associated fast pace of everyday working life are challenging us – but they are also creating new design possibilities. New job profiles are emerging and for more and more employees, various “future skills” such as adaptability, digital learning, or user-centered design are becoming relevant. The emergence of new forms of work and organizational formats allows employees to be increasingly flexible. This is all the more important as a change in values is taking place in our society – a change of perspective from a work–life balance to a “life–work balance.” These trends, summarized under the term “New Work,” have recently been given an additional boost by the COVID-19 crisis: Working from home, flexible working hours, and new arrangements for child-care have accompanied many of us through the crisis.

How will these trends affect equal opportunities for women and men? 75 percent of women still believe that they have worse career opportunities than men. Changes in the world of work could counteract this – or possibly create additional risks for women. This is why the Chefsache initiative has dedicated itself to this topic in its 2020 Annual Report. As a network of 26 members from business, academia, media, and public and social sectors, we have set ourselves the goal of promoting a balanced gender ratio in management positions and driving social change towards greater gender equality. This also includes shaping the changes in the world of work in a way that creates opportunities.

This report examines how this can be achieved in more detail. It analyzes the effects New Work has on equal opportunities and draws on two recent surveys of senior management. In both January and April 2020 – at the height of the COVID-19 crisis – we interviewed more than 1,000 German employees online on this subject, thus gaining initial insights into how the measures to contain the pandemic affect New Work and gender equality. The report focuses on concrete measures and new ideas provided by Chefsache members: What can companies, educational institutions, and policy do to make New Work a driver for more equal opportunities?

We hope you find inspiration in this report.

Yours,

**Dr. Julia Sperling**

Convener of *Initiative Chefsache*



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# New Work – Fair Chances

## At a glance

There is no doubt that the working world of tomorrow will be different. The relevant developments are gaining momentum: Digitization is changing job profiles more rapidly, technological skills are increasingly required, and new working models and forms of cooperation are gradually replacing traditional organizational structures. Last but not least, people's expectations are also changing: The younger generation in particular is becoming more flexible and self-determined, and meaningful life and purpose-driven work are becoming increasingly important. The COVID-19 crisis has boosted these developments: Due to the exceptional circumstances, many companies were forced to find flexible and creative solutions that are potentially also sustainable in the longer term.

The question is: How will all of these trends – summarized under the catchall term "New Work" – influence the distribution of opportunities between men and women? This report answers this question.

In recent years, Germany has made progress in the area of equal opportunities, but there is still a long way to go: According to a representative survey conducted by the Chefsache initiative, two-thirds of German workers believe that women still have worse career opportunities. The data confirms this, as

highlighted in the example that men occupy 70 percent of middle and top management positions.

If the pace of change of recent years continues, it would take 30 years<sup>1</sup> before as many women as men sit on DAX boards.

## Women are threatened with falling even further behind

Will the situation change significantly with New Work? Not necessarily – our analysis indicates that the many new opportunities offered by New Work are countered by risks that could be disadvantageous for women. First and foremost, the growing importance of technological knowledge should be mentioned here. Women choose scientific and technical professions much less frequently than men – only 30 percent of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students are female – and are less likely to be trained in digital and technical skills. If this trend continues, they risk falling behind – not only in this important future field, but also in other areas where digital knowledge is increasingly in demand.

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<sup>1</sup> 2015 to 2019.

However, some other aspects of our analysis provide hope. For example, the current shortage of skilled workers – especially in STEM occupations – is forcing companies to recruit more women for these occupations. At the same time, the rapid changes in the labor market, the dismantling of rigid hierarchies, and the increase in flexible working formats are opening up new opportunities for women (and of course men)

**If the trend of recent years continues, it would take 80 years<sup>2</sup> for as many women to work in STEM occupations as men.**

to reposition themselves professionally and leave behind outdated job profiles. The prerequisite for this: Further training in future skills.

Modern forms of collaboration, for example, virtual teams and more flexible working time models, also favor a fairer distribution of opportunities. Those who are flexible in terms of space and time can more easily reconcile everyday duties with professional life – regardless of how roles in partnerships and families are distributed. The new technologies, in turn, support seamless collaboration with colleagues. The COVID-19 crisis has made new forms of work and the increased use of new technologies a reality in many companies. The proportion of employees working from home rose to 49 percent in a very short period, almost to the limit of technical feasibility. According to our COVID-19 Survey, 24 percent of employees were thinking more about changing to part-time work during the crisis, while 17 percent said that their interest in flexible working hours had increased.

**If the trend of recent years continues, it would take over 100 years<sup>3</sup> for as many men to work part-time as women.**

The greatest potential for equal opportunities associated with New Work is likely to be found in the change in social values: It is increasingly important for young fathers to have more time for the family and to become more involved in bringing up their children – while more young women take a professional career for granted. Thus, the change in priorities alone favors a more balanced and fairer distribution of tasks in partnerships – and a more balanced distribution of career opportunities for both partners as result. This development also appears to have gained momentum during the COVID-19 crisis: 42 percent of parents in our COVID-19 Survey stated that both partners cared for their children equally during the crisis – the most common model. The distribution of other household and care activities was not surveyed. However, the desire to become more involved in domestic tasks in the future prompted 50 percent of fathers to state that they are considering reducing working hours.

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2 2015 to 2019.

3 2015 to 2018.



This change in priorities is certainly not a foregone conclusion. New, agile forms of work such as “sprints” – self-contained work blocks in which goals and tasks are distributed at short notice and for a limited period of time – may offer new opportunities for women but can also promote a culture of presence which makes part-time work more difficult. And, since part-time work and parental leave are more widely used by women, their shortfall in terms of career and pay could become even greater if no consistent countermeasures are taken. According to studies, flexible working hours and home office often mean extra workload and overtime, especially for mothers. In the COVID-19 crisis, the loss of childcare services added to the burden, and the pressure of combining private and professional life became clear for some women – at least that is what 36 percent of mothers working from home stated in our COVID-19 Survey.

## All sectors of society can contribute more to equal opportunities

Offers such as flexible working models, job sharing, and part-time work in management positions increase the attractiveness of companies, for both women and men. Such offers must be expanded and promoted while ensuring flexibility does not come at the expense of women. In light of the promising changes that have emerged during the COVID-19 crisis, the hope is that many companies will stay the course and continue to offer their employees more flexibility. It is also important to promote the further training of women in future skills and thus make it easier for them to pursue careers in promising professional fields.

Educational institutions, including schools, universities, and adult education institutions, are required to actively refute role stereotypes and offer women more needs-based training in technical skills, for example, in STEM subjects.

Policymakers can further pave the way to equal opportunities: For example, by providing legal protection for the right to remote working or even more incentives to promote a better distributed use of parental leave.

The following conclusion can be drawn: New Work alone will not promote equal opportunities: it could even have the opposite effect. It is therefore the responsibility of all parties to prevent this and to use the opportunities of the new world of work in a targeted way for further development of society towards more equal opportunities. This report shows possible approaches for action.

# Key findings: Chefsache Surveys, January 2020

**31%**

of the working population believe that men and women have equal career opportunities ...

**2x**

... as many men as women take equal opportunities for granted (40 percent versus 20 percent)

**36%**

of those in employment feel well or very well prepared for the changes brought about by digitalization and automation: this is made up of 40 percent of men and 30 percent of women

**-23%**

fewer women than men work more than 35 hours per week (58 percent versus 81 percent)

**3x**

more men than women indicate that they are willing to spend their free time studying at their own expense (9.5 percent versus 3.3 percent)

**60%**

of the workforce would, in principle, consider changing employers to take up a new job where the work seems more meaningful

**71%**

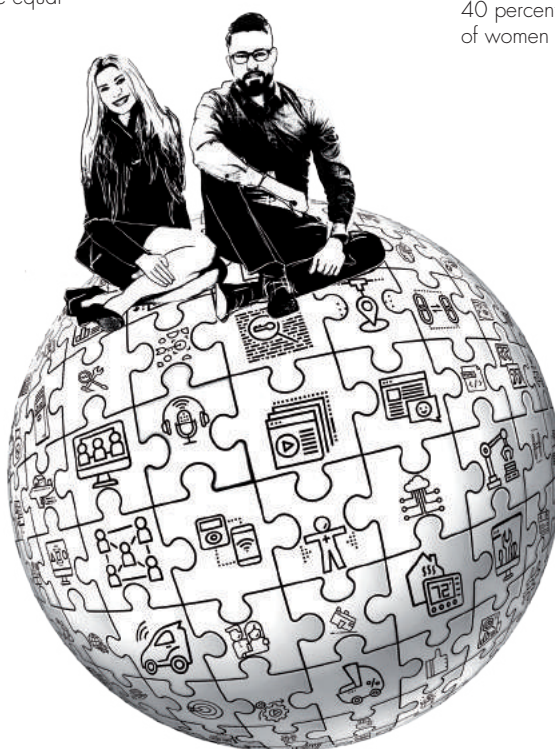
of women see flexible overtime arrangements and work schedules as important or very important offers from companies

**38%**

would like to reduce their working hours

**57%**

of workers say that their company offers innovative organizational models and forms of work<sup>1</sup>, 33 percent of workers would like to see more of this



Source: Chefsache Surveys I/2020

<sup>1</sup> For example, agile forms of work, spatially and/or temporally flexible work models, flat departmental hierarchies.

# Chefsache Surveys, April 2020

New Work



**38%**

of mothers feel that their employers have offered them more benefits for their participation in the workplace during the COVID-19 crisis – twice as many as the overall average (17 percent)

**>50%**

indicated that during the crisis they had improved each digital competence asked about in a survey

**15%**

more women than men have strongly or very strongly improved their most important skills while in home office<sup>2</sup>

**39%**

of the respondents experienced an increased sense of community in their company during the crisis

**46%**

of managers show an increased acceptance of remote working

**60%**

of fathers see increasing support in their own household as one of the main reasons to consider flexible working hours

**35%**

of managers show an increased acceptance of flexible working time models

**42%**

of parents state that they shared child-care equally during the crisis

**75%**

of the interviewees would like to get back to their normal working day. The main reason: Personal contact with colleagues is missing

**72%**

of employees are more satisfied with their performance in home office than with working hours – every second manager feels the same way



Source: Chefsache Surveys II/2020  
 2 Remote work, digital interaction, digital learning.

# Perspectives of Chefsache executives

Chefsache initiative companies and organizations in alphabetical order



"Equal opportunities also have a lot to do with inclusion – our core topic. We want a natural coexistence in a society in which differences are normal. As a family-friendly organization, we offer individual part-time models for managers as well."

Armin von Buttlar, Managing Director, Aktion Mensch



"In the COVID-19 crisis, we are experiencing a digital push. We are also using this as an opportunity to strengthen modern and flexible working, increase our resilience, and promote equality of opportunity!"

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Minister of Defence, BMWg



"We assume that in the future there will be some kind of hybrid culture. Ideally, the new normal will combine the best of both."

Renate Wagner, Board of Management, Human Resources, Legal, Compliance, Mergers & Acquisitions, Allianz



"New Work and equal opportunities belong together for me because making working hours and locations more flexible enables people with the most diverse lives to take up positions at all levels of management."

Martin Seiler, Member of the Management Board for Human Resources and Legal Affairs, Deutsche Bahn



"More than ever, diversity and participation are at the heart of our society. We are aware of our similarities and differences and value them."

Stefan Oelrich, Board of Management, Bayer AG



"Strength comes from the diversity and creativity of us all. This requires fair opportunities for participation and codesign. New ways of working help with this – especially in times of COVID-19."

Dr. Thomas Ogilvie, Board of Management, Human Resources, Corporate Incubations, Deutsche Post DHL Group



"Companies need to be more agile and promote the empowerment of employees – and this is not only true of BASF. Just how important flexible solutions for remote working are is very clearly demonstrated by the COVID-19 crisis. In my experience, leadership with empathy and trust leads to more independent action by employees and faster decisions – this is a lesson that we should also use after the COVID-19 period."

Michael Heinz, Board of Executive Directors, BASF



"The new ways of working make many things possible on the way to good diversity in the company – it is our responsibility to use this potential."

Ute Wolf, Member of the Executive Board (CFO), Evonik



"With 'New Work@Fraunhofer' as an innovation driver for applied research, we are tackling the rapid changes in the world of work proactively and with visionary thinking in order to anchor equal opportunities in the structures, processes, and culture of Fraunhofer through flexible working, agile structures, transparency, cooperation, and strategic human resources development."

Prof. Dr. Alexander Kurz, Executive Vice President Human Resources, Legal Affairs and IP Management, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V.



"Mobile and flexible working has become the new normal over night. Now it is important to ensure that flexibility at the workplace is also something permanent, thus, can ensure equal opportunities."

Philipp Justus, Managing Director Google Germany GmbH and VP CE, Google



"Independent and task-related work is increasingly demanded of employees – regardless of gender. And COVID-19 has clearly shown: It works! Independent of time and place!"

Katja van Doren, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer, RWE



"Followers of the old familiar culture of presence have learned during the COVID-19 crisis that there is another way. This will lead to a major rethink in the working world."

Peter Fieser, Member of the Executive Committee and Management Board, Head of HR, HENSOLDT



"An essential lever for me lies in 'empowerment': I want women and men to form strong networks and alliances, to promote and challenge each other, and to pull together."

Dr. Roland Busch, Deputy CEO, CTO, CHRO and Member of the Managing Board, Siemens AG



"Modern technologies create previously unimaginable opportunities for New Work. It is up to us to design the structures to open up new opportunities for all employees. This will offer added value for individuals and in particular, lead to the identification of hidden potential for companies and the economy as a whole."

Norbert Janzen, Managing Director HR, Germany, Austria & Switzerland, IBM



"It is an important part of our Volkswagen personnel strategy to further promote and increase diversity within the company. This also applies in times of crisis, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, and will continue to have an impact beyond that. Therefore, let us also work for more equal opportunities in the new normal of the working world."

Gunnar Kilian, Board Member for Human Resources, Volkswagen AG



"Digitalization makes us even more flexible and clearly shows that cooperation and leadership also work well digitally. Coupled with an open, collaborative mindset, there are many opportunities – for women and men alike."

Dr. Eike Böhm, CTO, KION



"The current crisis is acting as an accelerator in the field of digitization and demands more flexibility, but also courage from all of us. And at the same time, this is also an opportunity to set the right course for the future based on these new experiences. We must be careful not to fall back into the old gender roles because in times of crisis, old role patterns come through again all too quickly."

Angelique Renkhoff-Mücke, Chief Executive Officer, Warema Renkhoff SE



"Employer attractiveness hardly changes in times of New Work: If you want to be attractive to talent, you must ensure equal opportunities in the competition for top positions and be prepared to invest in high-performing female employees – with time, training, and real support. At LBBW, we support ambitious women through targeted promotion and mentoring programs designed to ensure a good work-life balance."

Marcus Recher, CHRO, LBBW



"The COVID-19 crisis will bring us – in addition to painful losses – a significant boost in innovation and digitization. Through more agile forms of cooperation and, above all, significantly more remote work, I also expect a big step towards more equal opportunities."

Dr. Rainer Esser, Managing Director, ZEIT



"COVID-19 has triggered a real push in digitization. The increased acceptance of flexible working models and hybrid solutions with video and work from home facilitate equal opportunities for talent and diversity in management teams."

Dr. Cornelius Baur, Managing Director Germany and Austria, McKinsey & Company



# Introduction:

## Equal opportunities through New Work – not a given

For decades, Germany has been discussing gender equality<sup>4</sup> (see text box, p.16). However, only incremental successes have been achieved in the German labor market – although companies with a high proportion of women in management are not only economically more successful but also sought-after employers.

So why are the opportunities still so unequally distributed? One explanation could be that only around 39 percent of male and female managers believe that more women in management or teams would also be an advantage for themselves (Chefsache I/2020).

At the same time, a new development is shaping the labor market: For some years now, the concept of New Work has been on everyone's lips (see info box, p. 17). Many people see it as a departure for more creative, democratic, and nonhierarchical work. In our dynamic society, which is characterized by automation, digitalization, and globalization, the concept stands for new job profiles and requirement profiles, new skills, and new organizational models. In this context, there is also a frequent demand for companies to offer their employees a "purpose", or a convincing reason to get involved.

This report examines the role New Work plays in promoting gender equality in the world of work. Our findings are based on a representative survey of 1,047 employees in Germany in January 2020, which provided us with information on how New Work affects their working reality and what is particularly important to them – both as men and women. The COVID-19 pandemic broke out while this report was still being prepared. So, in April, we followed up with another survey to understand how the COVID-19 crisis has affected New Work and equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace.

Apart from the enormous health and macroeconomic consequences, the COVID-19 crisis also had a very special side effect with regard to New Work, turning the past few weeks into a pilot project that would not have been possible under any other circumstances. Working from the home office suddenly became a (forced) reality for many. Digital channels and tools have quickly become the standard for interaction in professional and private everyday life. Flexible working time models had to compensate for the closure of external childcare facilities and, as a result, many traditional role relationships were reversed. Partners of women in essential occupations, in particular, now had to assume the main responsibility for the household and family.

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<sup>4</sup> Since a large part of the scientific findings can only be applied to men and women on the basis of empirical data, we refer in this report only to these two gender identities; other gender identities are thus explicitly not to be excluded.

The central finding of our research: In addition to offering a number of new opportunities, New Work is not without entails risks – especially for women. This report thus confirms the gap that still exists between desire and reality. However, it can also inspire and offer suggestions: Using successful practical examples, it shows a number of ways in which companies, educational institutions, and politicians can promote equal opportunities especially in times of New Work. The COVID-19 crisis can serve as a catalyst in because in recent weeks, acceptance of the relevant solutions and measures has grown at a rapid pace and generated significant positive momentum that should definitely be capitalized on.

## Terminology: Equal opportunities

For the purposes of this report, we define the term equal opportunities as follows:

Employees of both genders have the same opportunities to develop professionally. This includes the choice of occupation (sector and job), opportunities for professional advancement, or the freedom to take advantage of offers from the employer as desired.

The report thus focuses on gender-related equality of opportunity. Other relevant aspects of diversity (such as origin, religion, and age) were not the subject of the investigations.

## Methodology

This report is based on two representative surveys of German employees: In the January 2020 Chefsache New Work Survey (Chefsache I/2020), 1,047 employees were questioned on the topics of equal opportunities and New Work. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the Chefsache COVID-19 Survey (Chefsache II/2020) was conducted in April 2020, in which 1,029 employees were asked about the impact of the crisis on equal opportunities and New Work.

The two surveys are supplemented by numerous expert discussions, an extensive analysis of secondary data, and practical examples from the companies involved in the Chefsache COVID-19 Survey (Chefsache II/2020).





## New Work: Moving towards a New Work culture

*“Digitalization brings humankind back to humanity. [...] If machines can do certain jobs better than humans in the future, we will begin to think about the meaning of work. If work no longer needs us, what do we need work for? New Work describes an epochal upheaval that begins with the question of meaning and transforms the world of work from the ground up.”*

[www.zukunftsinstitut.de](http://www.zukunftsinstitut.de)

The term New Work was coined by the social philosopher Prof. Frithjof Bergmann in the mid-1970s. His work focused on the question of human freedom and self-determination, especially in the context of work.

Bergmann’s vision: The emergence of a new economic form as a counter model to capitalism. In the future, work and the fulfillment of tasks should no longer be ends in themselves with humans as a means of fulfillment but should become a means of human self-development. According to Bergmann, new technologies would create the prerequisites for this, as they could be used in a very confined space, thus extending personal autonomy; as a result, the work culture would also change. In the future, people will divide their labor into three areas: Work in companies that use radically new technologies, the joint production of goods for everyday needs, and work that “gives them vitality and strength” and which they “feel as a calling.” Monetary aspects, on the other hand, would lose importance ([Bergmann, 2004](#)).

Over the course of time, the term has undergone a change of meaning. Today, when we speak of New Work, we specifically mean the shift in work organizations – towards more self-determination, flexibility, creativity, and participation. New Work is also often simply used as a synonym for innovative work approaches ([Fraunhofer IAO, 2019](#)).

In its definition, the Chefsache Report links central elements of Bergmann’s model with the modern understanding of the term. We include three elements under New Work: The new technologies and the knowledge and skills required for them (future skills), the flexibilization and modernization of work organizations, and, finally, the change in values that gives higher priority to personal freedom.



# 1. The situation:

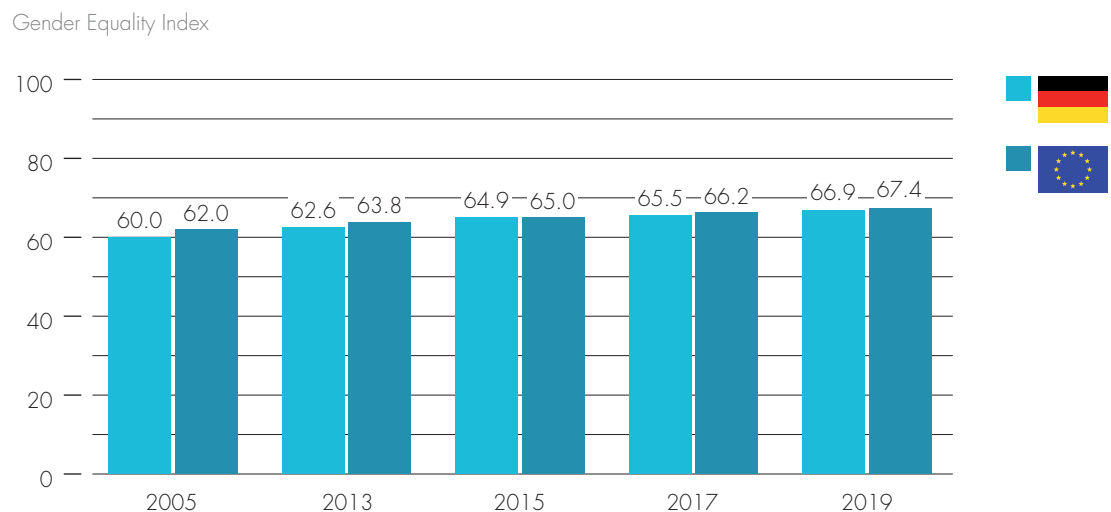
## Still worse chances for women – despite better education

In recent years, the Federal Republic of Germany has made progress in terms of equal opportunities – for example, this can be seen in the Gender Equality Index<sup>5</sup>, which rose by seven percentage points between 2005 and 2019 (see Figure 1). However, at 67 points, Germany is still below the European average and, when compared to other European countries, its position is not improving. In comparison, the leader, Sweden, has 83.6 points. The general public is also aware of the fact that there is a need to catch up, especially in the workplace: According to our survey, 65 percent of German employees believe that women in Germany still have worse job and career opportunities compared to men (Chefsache I/2020).

<sup>5</sup> The Gender Equality Index is an indicator of gender equality in countries, which is made up of the categories work, money, education, time, power, and health. These are each ranked on a scale from 0 to 100 (eige.europa.eu).

Figure 1

### Development of the Gender Equality Index in Germany and the EU, 2005-19



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019, Gender Equality Index 2019: Germany

## Different interests – different wages

Although women still have worse career opportunities – in terms of education they have long since caught up and, in some cases, even overtaken men. Half of all university graduates today are female and even more women than men take the Abitur ([German Federal Statistical Office, 2019a](#)). Participation in the labor market is also constantly improving: 20 years ago the employment rate of women was 57 percent – today it is 77 percent ([Eurostat, 2020](#)). Over three-quarters of all women in Germany are therefore employed.

However, the distribution of subjects, and occupations is still very unbalanced. Here, gender stereotypes still seem to play a major role ([Ehmann, Franzke, Tröger, Blickle, 2019](#)). Men tend to opt for analytical and technical occupations and women for jobs in the care sector, such as education or nursing ([IAB, 2014a](#)). If young people are asked about their interests before studying, men are six times more likely than women to want to take up a technical-research career (17 percent versus 3 percent – [Ehmann, Franzke, Tröger, Blickle, 2019](#)). It is therefore hardly surprising that the proportion of men in engineering professions, production, economics and finance, and IT is between 76 and 83 percent ([McKinsey, 2018](#)). In health and social care occupations, by contrast, 78 percent of employees are female ([McKinsey, 2018](#)).

This is probably one explanation for the much-discussed gender pay gap (the difference in wages and salaries based on gender). Calculated per hour, and not taking structural factors into account, it currently stands at 21 percent ([WSI, 2020a](#)) – which is probably also due to the fact that scientific and technical occupations are on average better paid. The Federal Statistical Office has put this correlation into concrete figures: 30 percent of the salary difference can be attributed to the different occupational focus ([Federal Statistical Office, 2017](#)). But this also means that even if there were a balanced gender ratio in every occupation, more than two-thirds of the gender pay gap of 21 percent would still remain.

Of course, the pay gap also reflects other gender-related differences, such as the amount and duration of employment or time in hierarchical positions. But even if these structural factors are excluded, the gender pay gap is still around 6 percent, albeit with a slight downward trend ([IWW, 2019a](#)).

## Management still dominated by men

There has recently been a lot of debate on the issue of the proportion of women in management positions – at least on supervisory boards: Among the 185 companies listed on the DAX, MDAX, SDAX, and the regulated market, it reached a peak of 31 percent in 2019. A strong impetus was certainly provided by the “Act for Equal Participation of Women and Men in Management Positions”: Since 2016, at least 30 percent of the new supervisory board positions to be filled in around 100 large companies must be occupied by women. Before the law came into effect, the proportion of women in the aforementioned group of companies was 21 percent ([FidAR, 2019](#)).

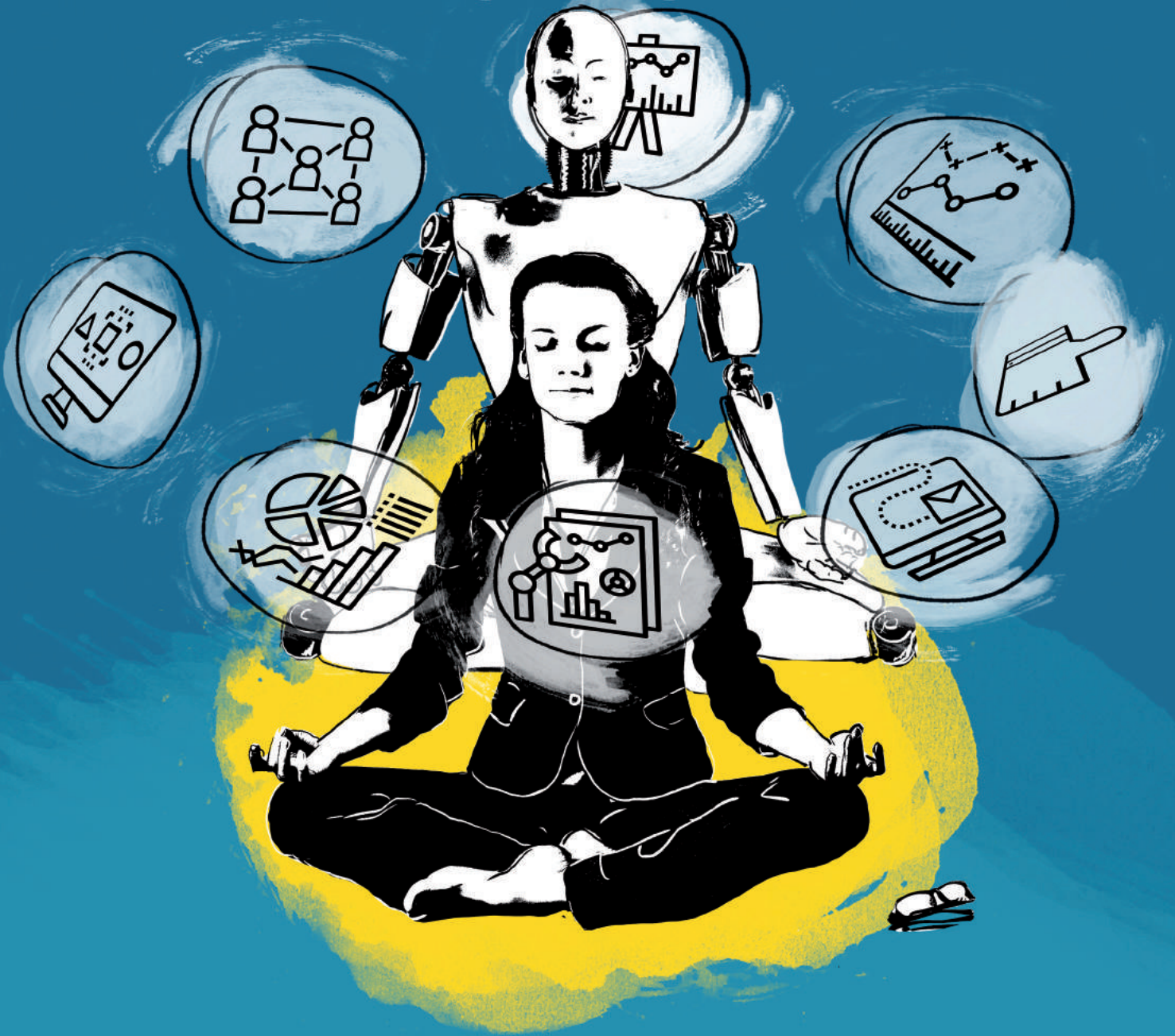
In contrast, the situation on the executive floors has not changed much. At the 185 companies mentioned, only 9 percent of the board members are women. A similar picture emerges for the entire German private sector. Men occupy more than 75 percent of all executive positions at the middle and upper management levels ([DIVV, 2017](#)) – and this despite the fact that women strive for executive posi-

tions almost as often as men (men: 40 percent, women: 34 percent – Chefsache I/2020). No wonder men are more confident that they will be awarded the positions they are aiming for (men: 46 percent, women: 34 percent – Chefsache I/2020). Nevertheless, companies have been able to greatly expand their pool of female management talent in recent years.

The different entry and promotion opportunities manifest themselves in all industries and company sizes – even in the start-up landscape otherwise considered as innovative. Only about 16 percent of all companies in Germany are founded by women. Even as cofounders, women are represented in only about 31 percent of cases (Bundesverband Deutsche Startups, 2019), which roughly corresponds to the overall share of women in start-ups of 32 percent (Chefsache I/2020).

### Unused potential for companies

These figures are all the more surprising because studies suggest that teams and companies with a more balanced gender ratio in both staff and management are more efficient and generate more sales and/or profits (Turban, Wu, Zhang, 2019; McKinsey, 2020) – an observation that 62 percent of survey participants agreed with. Last but not least, companies with high diversity, especially in Western Europe, are perceived as more attractive employers by highly qualified candidates and as more valuable investments by investors (Turban, Wu, Zhang, 2019).



# 2. The trends:

## New Work substantially disrupts our work realities

With the advancement of automation and digitalization, human work is increasingly being supplemented or replaced by machine processes and artificial intelligence (AI); global networking has become taken for granted. The scope of global business relationships is constantly growing and the volume of data circulated on a daily basis is increasing rapidly. Changes commence at great speed: What is standard today may be outdated tomorrow. This volatility that goes hand in hand with dynamic change unsettles many people: In our New Work Survey, 39 percent of participants stated that even before the COVID-19 crisis their working environment was already strongly or very strongly marked by volatility and unpredictability (Chefsache I/2020).

At the same time, together with technological developments, a change in values can be observed at a societal level: Self-determination and self-realization are becoming more important, and the boundaries between work and private life are becoming blurred ([Fraunhofer IAO, 2019](#)). As a result, new, more flexible, and responsive (agile) forms of work and organizations are gaining importance. The skills profile expected of employees is also changing: Digitization and automation not only create scope for meaningful work, they also require new skills (future skills).

Future skills, new forms of work and organizational formats, and a comprehensive change in values are, to our understanding, the three essential elements of New Work that influence modern society on an individual, corporate, and social level (see Figure 2). The basic prerequisite for the use and further dissemination of New Work elements is a robust digital infrastructure.

Figure 2

## New Work – trends and their effects



Source: The Chefsache initiative

## Future skills

Automation and digitization are already changing demand in the labor market. Classical manufacturing occupations and simpler office jobs are increasingly being displaced. Conversely, STEM occupations that require in-depth mathematical, scientific, or technical skills are becoming increasingly in demand ([Federal Employment Agency, 2019a](#)). Demographics are also influencing current trends. With the aging of society, the demand for certain activities in the health and social sectors is increasing. The COVID-19 crisis has made it particularly apparent just how essential these occupations are.

At the same time, the requirements for almost all occupations are changing. Within the next five years, a whole range of skills that make it easier to deal with digitization/automation and globalization are likely to become more important. The Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft divides these future skills into three categories: traditional skills, basic digital skills, and technological skills (see Figure 3).

While traditional and basic digital skills are already needed or will be needed for almost every activity in the near future, technological skills are part of the requirements for experts responsible for creative tasks. The Stifterverband estimates that the German economy will need about 700,000 more of these in the next five years than today ([Stifterverband, 2018](#)). By far the most sought-after are specialists for complex data analysis: They account for more than half of the additional profiles required in the third category. However, knowledge of user-centered design (UX), web development, conception, and administration of networked IT systems is also increasingly in demand.



Figure 3

## The 18 future skills

<b>Traditional skills:</b> Nontechnical skills, which will increase in importance in upcoming years	<b>Basic digital skills:</b> Necessary for orientation and active participation in a digital environment	<b>Technological skills:</b> Necessary for the design of transformative technologies
	Digital interaction	Complex data analysis
Problem-solving ability	Collaboration	Smart hardware/robotics development
Creativity	Agile work	Web development
Entrepreneurship and initiative	Digital learning	UX
Adaptability	Digital ethics	Conception and administration of networked IT systems
Perseverance		Blockchain technology development
		Technical translation

Source: Stifterverband, 2018, Future Skills: What skills are missing in Germany

In addition, the need for social and emotional skills is increasing. While basic cognitive performance can in principle be automated, machines are still far from mastering the interpersonal skills of communication, leadership, or empathy. Tomorrow's working population will therefore spend a growing proportion of their working time on corresponding activities. The McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) estimates this additional demand for working hours at 24 percent for the period between 2016 and 2030 (MGI, 2018).

Finally, the rapid changes in the world of work mean that employees in all sectors have to undergo continuous upskilling or retrain for completely new job profiles. In addition to further training (upskilling), retraining (reskilling) is also important (Ashoka, McKinsey, 2018). One focus is on digital retraining as digitization is creating new demands on various occupational groups. In addition, aspects of human reskilling includes, for example, agile coaching or learning how to communicate in a respectful manner (Ashoka, McKinsey, 2018). The willingness to do so is there. According to our January 2020 New Work Survey, almost 80 percent of respondents believe that in the face of technological change, it is necessary to develop one's own skills (see also BDA, 2017).

## New ways of working and organizational formats

Technological developments not only present major challenges – they also open up completely new opportunities for companies to benefit from. These opportunities are changing people’s attitudes to work and their expectations of the job (see Figure 4). As a result, new and sometimes innovative forms of work, collaboration, organization, and leadership are emerging that are fundamentally changing our everyday working lives (IAB, 2019).

- **More flexible organizations.** As technical, economic, and social conditions change ever more rapidly, companies must also be able to react and make decisions more quickly. New organizational solutions can contribute to this. In addition to flatter hierarchies and cross-functional teams, for some years now the focus has also been on empowerment – in other words, efforts to give employees more autonomy and to involve them more closely in company decision-making processes (Fraunhofer IAO, 2019). For example, the concept of self-organization envisages transferring some of the decisions that would otherwise be made by a manager to individual employees or a team. One organizational format based on this principle is the so-called holocracy.<sup>6</sup> Instead of rigid job descriptions, it assigns each person a role that is constantly adapted to the needs of the company. Employees are organized into circles that can make decisions together on a decentralized basis. These forms of organization enable decisions to be made quickly despite the involvement of many employees.
- **Agile work.** The core elements of agile working, which is intended to make the company more agile and responsive, are elimination of knowledge silos, faster and more flexible working in interdisciplinary teams, and continuous learning. These should be embedded in a corporate culture in which trust, open feedback, and a positive approach to mistakes are fundamental values. The agile mentality is complemented by an agile methodology, for example, Scrum, design thinking, or Kanban. As plausible as the principle may sound, it has not yet become established. In the Chefsache New Work Survey, only 4 percent of the nonexecutive employees and 13 percent of the managers surveyed said they use agile working. Overall, agile working is often perceived as positive: For example, in the Haufe agility barometer, 70 percent of those who had already had experience with agile working noticed positive effects on efficiency (Weckmüller, 2017). Our COVID-19 Survey showed that during the COVID-19 crisis, agile working did not work as usual for everyone – mainly because joint on-premise work is not as possible. But, 79 percent of users reported that they were able to work agilely from their home office.
- **More flexible workplace arrangements.** Digitization has made remote working – for example, from the home office – possible or at least easier. The COVID-19 crisis has made home offices a sudden reality for many employees. While 34 percent had worked partly or completely in their home office before the crisis, in the first weeks of the crisis, this figure had already risen to 49 percent according to our COVID-19 Survey (Chefsache II/2020). Only recently, the Bundesverband

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<sup>6</sup> Holocracy (ancient Greek holos – complete, whole plus kratía – rule) is an organizational format that the entrepreneur Brian Robertson first used in 2007 in his company Ternary Software Corporation. In 2010, he laid down the principles of holocracy in the “Holocracy Constitution.” In short, holocracy distributes decision-making power across the entire organization – employees are involved in decisions as transparently as possible. This should enable them to react more dynamically to changes in the outside world than if decisions were made exclusively from above. Agile working methods are also used here.

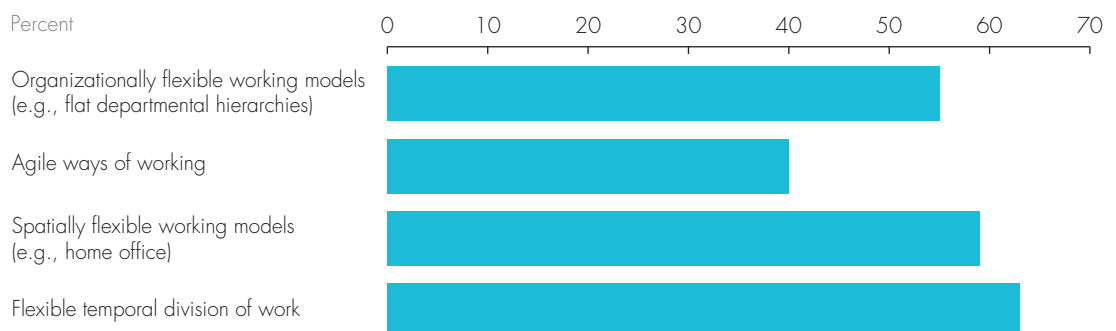
Digitale Wirtschaft estimated the percentage of jobs for which working from home is technically feasible at 54 percent (BVDW, 2020). According to this survey, the opportunity was used extensively during the crisis. The proportion of employees who spend at least 80 percent of their working time in a home office has tripled from 9 to 28 percent. In January 2020, the availability of flexible working arrangements still varied widely according to company type and size. In start-ups, 47 percent of employees were able to work from home, in established companies, the proportion was only 33 percent. Of the large companies, 44 percent offered this option, whereas only 27 percent of SMEs and small companies did (Chefsache I/2020). During the crisis this difference has decreased: According to the Chefsache COVID-19 Survey, small companies even tended to use more home offices more during this period. In addition to making workplaces more flexible, more flexible working schedules are also becoming increasingly important. We will address these in the section on changing values, as they are closely linked to it.

- **Leading as a coach.** When collaboration takes place in virtual, spatially separated teams, the demands on managers and systems also change – those who organize themselves proficiently can also be more effective and efficient in a remote workplace. With the COVID-19 crisis, these skills have become more important than ever. In our COVID-19 Survey, two-thirds of the managers surveyed stated that they had improved their digital leadership skills during the crisis – one-quarter even observed a strong or very strong improvement. Also, because of the generally growing importance of self-determination, the trend is moving away from fixed hierarchical structures and towards a coaching, lateral, and supportive concept of leadership (Fraunhofer IAO, 2019). This is not only relevant for remote teams, but also for the new organizational formats of on-premise work such as holocracy.

Figure 4

### Use of innovative working and organizational models

Which of the offers do you yourself use?



Source: Chefsache Surveys I/2020, N = 1,047

## Changing values

Parallel to the change in the working environment, we are also observing a significant change in values and priorities in the way we shape our lives. In fact, as Bergmann had hoped, the monetary aspect seems to be receding into the background – younger generations are setting their priorities differently. Two aspects are becoming increasingly important:

- **Work with purpose.** Those who feel that their work is useful are more satisfied with their job. “Useful” can be seen as a positive contribution to society, but also to their employer ([Personalmagazin](#), 2018). 59 percent of employees would be willing to change jobs for a task they perceive as more meaningful – among the under-30s the figure is as high as 68 percent (Chefsache I/2020). These figures are likely to rise even further in the future because for young people meaningfulness is already a decisive criterion when choosing a career. 91 percent would like a job that fulfills them personally and/or that they find socially meaningful ([Hurrelmann et. al.](#), 2019). Quite a few of them perform, for example, a social service because self-realization is increasingly shifting to nonprofessional areas such as family, leisure, health, and voluntary work ([Rump, Eilers](#), 2017). For example, the number of young people who complete a Voluntary Social Year or a Voluntary Ecological Year rose by 16 percent between 2012 and 2018 ([Nier](#), 2019). In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the past few weeks have not only seen the emergence of numerous crisis management initiatives, often set up and driven by volunteers – but the sense of community within companies has also increased for 39 percent of respondents, according to the Chefsache COVID-19 Survey.
- **Life–work balance.** For the younger generations, family and leisure time are of equal importance to career ([RHI](#), 2017). This applies to both genders: More young men are also expressing the desire to have time for family and private commitments ([BMFSFJ](#), 2018). A more active role in bringing up children is also important to them – the proportion of men taking parental leave has risen steadily in recent years. At 37 percent in 2016, however, they are still well behind women, 90 percent of whom take parental leave ([DIW](#), 2019). In addition, the length of parental leave differs markedly: Women stay at home for 10 to 12 months on average – men only 2 months ([Spiegel](#), 2017). Moreover, in the report on fathers by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Youth, just under 20 percent of fathers state that they would have liked to take parental leave but decided against it for fear of a loss of income, organizational difficulties in the company, or professional disadvantages. However, no evidence of occupational disadvantages due to parental leave could be found – so here the perception still seems to lag behind developments in practice ([BMFSFJ](#), 2018).

With changed priorities, part-time models are also becoming more interesting. Still, only 11 percent of men use them, compared with 46 percent of women ([VWSI](#), 2018). But interest is growing and reservations – especially fears that part-time work could reduce career opportunities – are diminishing ([BMFSFJ](#), 2016). In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, part-time models have become even more relevant for employees. In our COVID-19 Survey, almost one-third of respondents who had previously not made use of part-time work stated that they had increasingly considered the possibility of part-time work in recent weeks. Only 10 percent still see poorer career opportunities as an obstacle (Chefsache II/2020).

Other options for flexible working time arrangements, such as flextime, trust-based working hours, optional working hours, long-term accounts, or even involving employees in shift planning, are also being offered more frequently (IAB, 2018 and BAuA, 2018)<sup>7</sup>. Nevertheless, the offer currently still falls short of employees' wishes. In our New Work Survey only 24 percent stated that their employer offers sufficiently innovative working time arrangements (Chefsache I/2020).

Companies could increase their attractiveness for highly qualified workers by responding to the increased need for flexibility and innovative forms of work. According to the January 2020 Chefsache Survey, these aspects are still more important to women than men – but at the same time, men are making greater use of new forms of work than before. The April 2020 Chefsache COVID-19 Survey not only confirmed the increasing relevance of these models, but also a growing acceptance on the part of managers (see Figure 5). Thus, as a positive side effect of the COVID-19 crisis, a unique opportunity has arisen to establish New Work methods on a broader basis.

In the next chapter, we will examine how New Work impacts equal opportunities in more detail.

<sup>7</sup> For this report, we define flexible working time models as the self-chosen flexible distribution of the contractually agreed working time. In this report, we do not consider a reduction in working hours in the sense of part-time or short-time work to be part of the flexible working time models.

Figure 5

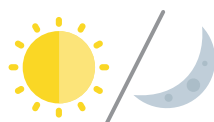
### Increase in the acceptance of and willingness to work with spatially and temporally flexible work models among managers

For which of these actions/initiatives do you feel that acceptance and willingness has increased?  
Evaluation includes only executives, multiple choice, percent



**46%**

Remote working



**35%**

Flexible working time models



**22%**

Part-time models



# 3. The challenge:

## Use New Work – but do it right

The world of work is undergoing comprehensive change; however, at the same time equal opportunities for men and women have not yet been achieved. This raises the question: Will New Work change this? Will the new world of work offer women more opportunities to catch up to men, or will it slow down development?

Basically both are conceivable. What will ultimately be decisive will depend on how consistently the new opportunities are applied.

### Future skills: Women must not lose touch

The changing requirements of job profiles and the redefinition of entire occupational profiles creates a unique opportunity: The possibility of pursuing new and “atypical” career paths and breaking with traditional roles. This is supported by the fact that job changes are no longer unusual – especially in Generations Y and Z – and linear careers are no longer expected ([IAB 2014b](#)). All in all, this creates a great potential for more equal opportunities – for men and women alike.

Another factor that plays a particularly important role for women is the growing need for social-emotional skills such as empathy and communication and negotiation skills in the labor market ([MGI, 2018](#)). Women are slightly better positioned than men in this respect. In Western Europe, 50 percent of the jobs in which these skills are particularly advantageous are currently in women’s hands – this share is slightly higher than the overall share of female employees in the labor market at 47 percent ([McKinsey, 2018](#)). So this could create a promotion opportunity for women, that might also address the gender pay gap. In general, women tend to have a leadership style that is geared towards making decisions democratically, encouraging creativity, and developing employee skills – characteristics that fall under the term “coaching leadership” ([Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, van Engen, 2003](#)).

This is also evident at the top management level. According to observations by the MGI, companies with a high proportion of women on their board of directors use supportive and advisory management approaches more often ([McKinsey, 2018](#)). These competencies could help women better position themselves for leadership roles, especially with regard to the new ways of working and organizational formats (see next subchapter).

## More women in technological fields

Women are already well positioned in terms of basic digital skills, the second step of the future skills staircase (see Figure 3). In fact, 56 percent of the jobs requiring basic digital skills are performed by women – that’s even more jobs than those requiring social-emotional skills (McKinsey, 2019). Therefore, if in the future employees need to be trained in digital skills across the board, women will have a head start.

A different picture emerges in the case of technological expertise, the third level of future skills: Far fewer women than men feel that learning these skills is important for their professional future (32 percent versus 42 percent, Chefsache I/2020). If this does not change, then in the New Work scenario it could be mainly men who meet the growing demand for technological future skills.

A look at the gender distribution of university students confirms this impression. It is true that significant progress has been made in some STEM areas; in mathematics and science, for example, the share of female students rose from 36 percent to 48 percent between 1997 and 2017 (Federal Statistical Office, 2020). However, in technically oriented subjects – especially those that are particularly in demand in the course of digitization and automation – female students are still clearly in the minority. In 2017 they accounted for a full 14 percent of students in electrical engineering and information technology, and 21 percent in computer science (Federal Statistical Office, 2019b). If the trend continues, women risk falling behind in future fields.

The same applies to professional development. Professional development, especially in the area of digital skills, will be even more important in the new working world than before – and here there is the risk that women will miss out on opportunities. Admittedly, women tend to place even more importance on professional development than men: 44 percent of women and 39 percent of men named professional development as one of the most important characteristics of a job for them.<sup>8</sup> Also, the willingness to take part in professional development on technical and digital topics is equally high for both genders (around 94 percent – Chefsache I/2020). There is, however, an important hurdle in implementation: Almost 10 percent of male employees would be willing to invest their free time and own resources in professional development in the technical field, but only 3 percent of women would do the same.

The fact that women spend more time on unpaid work (childcare, care of relatives, household) and thus have less free time and also less money at their disposal is likely to play a decisive role in this discrepancy in professional development (BMFSFJ, 2018b). The gender care gap currently stands at 52.0 percent: This means that on average women perform 52.0 percent more unpaid care work than men – that is 1.5 hours per day (BMFSFJ, 2018b). The January 2020 Chefsache Survey also provides an indication of this, as more women than men are willing to voluntarily participate in technical training courses, provided that they take place during working hours (56 versus 50 percent).

An important factor is therefore the variety of professional development on offer in the workplace. However in the January 2020 Chefsache Survey, 64 percent of men but only 53 percent of women stated that they were able to take advantage of professional development measures their employer offered to prepare them for the new requirements of digitization and automation (Chefsache I/2020).

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<sup>8</sup> The figures relate to the mention of continuing education as one of the three most important characteristics from the following selection: Team atmosphere that promotes togetherness; open corporate culture (e.g., opportunities for critical feedback and freedom of expression); visibility and impact of one’s own work results; further training measures; fair promotion opportunities for men and women; value-creating or intrinsically motivating content.



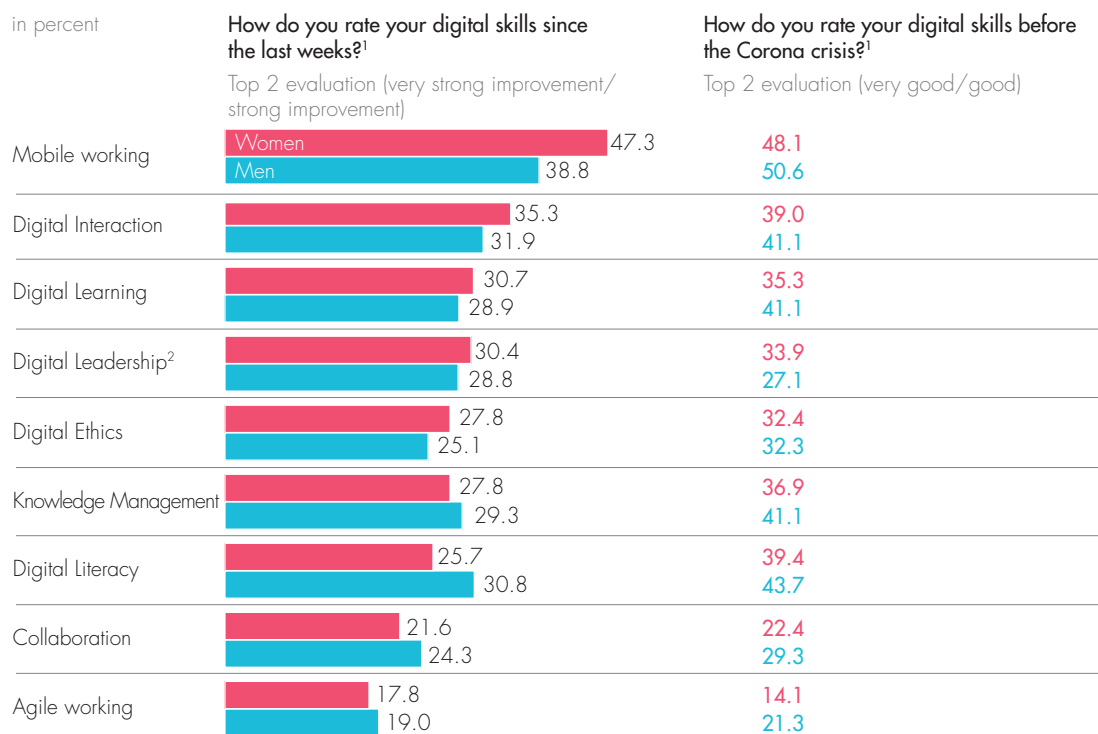
There is an opportunity here to provide better support for women in the future and to facilitate access to professional development and reskilling both financially and organizationally (McKinsey, 2019). A reason for the limited professional development and reskilling offers to date could be that women mainly work in fields in which the importance of these skills has yet to be established.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought about unexpected improvements in this area. Our January 2020 New Work Survey revealed considerable skills gaps when asked about a range of basic digital skills, no more than 35 percent of respondents said they had a good or very good command of them. This self-assessment – among both female and male respondents – has now improved significantly in almost all areas. For each individual skill, over 50 percent of respondents see an improvement in their competency, which they attribute to crisis-related adjustments to their working methods (see Figure 6).

Overall, men rate their digital skills slightly better than women, something that has not changed during the crisis. However, the “overconfidence bias” could also play a role here. Studies show that men tend to overestimate themselves when assessing their own skills, while women tend to underestimate themselves – even though objectively no differences can be observed (Hargittai, Shafer, 2006). If we look at how the home-office-relevant core skills (remote working, digital interaction, digital learning) have developed since the initial restrictions, women are ahead even without the correction of the bias effect. On average, 15 percent more women than men in our COVID-19 Survey stated that they had improved strongly or very strongly in these skills during the crisis. In five out of nine skills surveyed, they were ahead.

Therefore, there is much to suggest that digital skills can be acquired on the job. The general willingness to learn and deepen these skills is also likely to have increased during the crisis, according to at least 21 percent of our survey participants. If companies specifically support learning on the job, it could particularly benefit women whose family commitments prevent them from participating in further training outside working hours.

## Development of digital skills in the home office during the COVID 19 crisis in April 2020



<sup>1</sup> Only to respondents who indicated that they worked in the home office during the COVID 19 crisis

<sup>2</sup> To managers only

Source: Chefsache, II/2020

### More family-friendly working conditions

When women decide to study a technical subject, it is by no means certain that they will subsequently pursue this profession. Here we also see a clear discrepancy between the sexes: In OECD countries 71 percent of male STEM graduates are employed in their field, but only 43 percent of female graduates are (McKinsey, 2018). One possible reason might be that these jobs are particularly difficult to reconcile with family: Part-time work, for example, is much less common in STEM occupations. While part-time rates in 2018 totaled 46 percent for women and 11 percent for men – across all occupations – they were only 28 percent and 5 percent, respectively, in STEM occupations (WWSI, 2019 and Federal Employment Agency, 2019a). Given the growing importance of these occupational fields, full-time jobs seem to be more common here, and women are particularly disadvantaged as they continue to perform the lion's share of domestic care work. As long as this is the case, mothers in particular need more flexible working conditions, especially in technical fields.

The environment even seems to be less female-friendly in a field that is otherwise considered innovative and future-oriented, namely start-ups. Here, too, women are clearly underrepresented (Bundesverband Deutsche Startups, 2019), but at the same time many digital technologies and jobs of the future are emerging in this field in particular. According to some studies, a reason for this could be the tendency of women to be less willing to take risks or, on the other hand, the greater tendency of men to be overconfident (Brindley, 2005 and Kuppuswamy, Mollick, 2015).

Furthermore, female-unfriendly working conditions are also likely to play a role here. For example, the safety net of regulated maternity and parental leave does not apply to self-employed people who become mothers (BMFSFJ, 2020). Another study identified a bias in potential investors against female entrepreneurs (Kanze, Huang, Conley, Higgins, 2018). Moreover, Silicon Valley – one of the centers of innovation and digitization – even reports a culture of growing sexism (Portmann 2017; Elephant in the Valley). In such an environment, the danger that women will not be able to play an equal role in shaping the digital future will increase rather than decrease (Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2018).

Businesses are thus called upon to create more family-friendly working conditions, especially in digital and innovative technical professions, in order to achieve equal opportunities.

### More men in female-dominated professions – with equal opportunities for advancement

The working conditions in health and social care professions – in particular remuneration, number of supervisors, and development opportunities – are often perceived as unsatisfactory. In the longer term, however, the shortage of skilled workers could lead to an improvement in these occupations (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2018b). The COVID-19 pandemic has emphatically demonstrated the essential importance of these professions while, simultaneously, highlighting the need for action once again. In the Chefsache COVID-19 Survey, however, only 15 percent of the respondents thought that essential occupations had improved in terms of increased financial or social recognition during the crisis. Since 60 percent of these jobs are in the hands of women, financial and social improvements in these occupations would presumably also promote equal opportunities (DIW, 2020). As a further side effect, this could also further incentivize men to choose a social profession.

Here, the risk is that as the proportion of men increases, widespread patterns observed in other industries could be transferred to the existing “women's occupations.” In large parts of the working world, men are promoted more frequently than women – according to studies, this is due to the higher proportion of full-time workers, but also due to the subconscious prejudices (the so-called unconscious bias<sup>9</sup>) of decision-makers: Many seem to underestimate the abilities and leadership qualities of women (Hoffman, Musch, 2018 and Charlesworth, Banaji, 2019). Leadership may also find it difficult to identify with the often different career paths of women and therefore prefer candidates similar to them – a phenomenon known as mini-me bias (Kanter, 1977).<sup>10</sup>

If these patterns were to be adopted, women's chances of advancement would also be reduced in social professions. In some occupations with a high proportion of women, leadership positions are already disproportionately occupied by men – for example, in the elementary school teaching profession, although the overall proportion of men has halved to 12 percent within 20 years (GEW, 2018). It is therefore important to counteract these trends and ensure an unprejudiced promotion process.

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9 On the Chefsache website a test is available with which one can test one's own unconscious biases: <https://initiative-chefsache.de/chefsache-test/>.

10 The article “Debiasing in Action” by D’Silva, Huber, Sperling-Magro, and Smith (2019) shows how different forms of bias can be mitigated using data analysis and findings from behavioral science.

If health and social professions could be upgraded, and if more women were to take on technical professions, not only would the current gender imbalance be reduced, but the average pay gap between men and women would also decrease (see also DIW, 2020). After all, as much as 30 percent of the total gender pay gap can be attributed to differences in occupational affiliation (Federal Statistical Office, 2017).

## New ways of working and organizational formats: Women want more of them

The new organizational formats that New Work introduces break up hierarchical structures and offer new opportunities, especially for women. If roles are continually redefined and responsibility is distributed among more people, as in a holocracy, team members – including young mothers or part-time women – can also take on leadership roles that would hardly have been possible in old structures. Their tendency to be more inclined towards coaching leadership is likely to benefit women (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, van Engen, 2003).

However, more creative freedom also means more responsibility and a greater need for coordination in the team, which requires a corresponding cultural change – certainly a challenge for some companies. This may explain why 43 percent of employees in our January 2020 New Work Survey stated that their company does not use new organizational models or does not use them sufficiently (Chefsache I/2020).

A further reservation applies here: Flowing team structures presuppose that everyone involved is constantly redefining themselves and finding their role. In this more volatile environment, people often help themselves by using familiar stereotypes to classify situations and people (Heintz, 2001), possibly even more than would be the case in traditional teams. In other words, innovative models such as agile working practices and flexible working time must be embedded in an unprejudiced corporate culture if they are to promote equal opportunities.

### Agile forms of work, implemented in a family-friendly manner

Many people apparently expect more equal opportunities from agile forms of work. According to our New Work Survey, 73 percent expect a positive to very positive influence (Chefsache I/2020). And indeed, communication and teamwork are particularly in demand in agile work – both strengths that are more likely to be associated with women's preferences and leadership styles (Radu, Deaconu, Frasineanu, 2017). A cooperative team atmosphere is important to both genders, albeit slightly more so for women (76 percent versus 70 percent – Chefsache I/2020). In addition, agile forms of work also promise more flexibility for careers. Flexible schedules and a clear focus on relevant skills can help remove the typical hurdles of a conventional career and make it easier to return after family-related interruptions.

However, this potential remains largely untapped since agile working practices have only been implemented to a limited extent so far. Moreover, they seem to be distributed very unevenly to date. Originally conceived for software development, they are now also used in many other sectors, for example, in the financial sector and in management consultancy (GPM, 2015). But, especially in the health and social sector or in administrative functions – i.e., fields typically dominated by women – agile forms of work have hardly become established yet (McKinsey, 2018). Even in our January 2020 New Work Survey, only 12 percent of women stated that their company uses agile working methods; of the men, 20 percent did so (Chefsache I/2020).

In our view, agile working practices are likely to become more widespread in the next few years, as they offer companies a wide range of opportunities for flexibility. However, this may also pose challenges for female employees in terms of work–life balance, should be protected. Agile methods rely on rapid, mostly personal interaction to move ideas forward and remove obstacles – in the worst case, this could lead to a new “culture of presence” (or even a culture of virtual availability), which would increase the pressure to meet deadlines and perform. It will therefore be important to ensure the greatest possible flexibility for employees when switching to agile working methods. It can be helpful in families if both parents work in an agile manner and coordinate their respective working hours – this way they can rotate childcare and make greater use of virtual work.

The developments in this regard during the COVID-19 crisis give reason for hope. Despite the widespread use of the home office during this period, agile working still continued in many areas. 79 percent of the people who had already used agile methods before the crisis and were now working from home could continue to use methods such as Scrum<sup>11</sup> or Kanban<sup>12</sup> as usual or with the support of virtual tools, 16 percent with limitations. Only 4 percent stated that they had to give up agile methods during the crisis (Chefsache II/2020). At the same time, 13 percent of respondents who had never worked agilely before started doing so during the COVID-19 crisis, demonstrating that agile working methods often seem to work virtually as well. If, during the introduction phase, it is guaranteed that employees’ flexibility needs will not be neglected, agile working can provide a great opportunity for women with family responsibilities in particular.

### More home office and co. – but without additional burdens

As explained above, women still generally bear the main responsibility for the household and family: They handle almost two-thirds of the tasks involved, such as housework and caring for children and other family members (OECD, 2017). In order to make it easier for them to work, spatial flexibility – above all the possibility of working at least partly from home – is likely to play a decisive role.

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11 Scrum is a framework for agile project management. It divides project time into “sprints” – individual stages in which work is done on a single product functionality. At the end of a sprint is an improved version of the product, which is iteratively enhanced in the next rounds. The team works in a self-organized way; there is no project manager in the classic sense. A Scrum Master acts as the moderator (Source: Tran).

12 Kanban is a work management method that originated from the Toyota production system in the context of just-in-time production. Originally developed for manufacturing, Kanban is now used in software development and other areas. The goal is to achieve an increase in value for the customer by optimizing the workflow without additional costs. This works, for example, via a Kanban board which, in its simplest form, comprises the columns “requested,” “in process,” and “completed” (Source: Kanbanize).

Working in virtual teams is no longer a problem in the digital age, but women benefit less from it at present. In our January 2020 New Work Survey, only 30 percent of women stated that they were able to use spatially flexible working models in their companies, compared to 36 percent of men (Chefsache I/2020). Home office work is also more common for men (22 percent versus 11 percent of women) – even though they are less involved in family tasks. One possible explanation could be that home office arrangements are now easier for managers to use – and according to our representative survey, 71 percent of these are men.

Dr. Yvonne Lott of the Hans Böckler Foundation also suspects that women are generally less likely to be allowed to work from home.<sup>13</sup> In a 2019 study on working from home, 22 percent of women, but only 12 percent of men, stated that they were not allowed to work from home although it was technically possible. One possible explanation: Men use the extra time that is created by working from home and not commuting more often for paid work, whereas women use it for more care work (VWSI, 2020b).

With the COVID-19 crisis, working from home has not only increased strongly, it has also become almost equally used by men and women. While in January twice as many men as women were working from home, the difference was only six percentage points in April – 52 percent of men versus 46 percent of women (Chefsache II/2020). The crisis has also confirmed that working from home can be a viable model for the future. 55 percent of managers now rate the work performance of their employees working from home as better than previously in the office – among the employees themselves the figure was as high as 72 percent (Chefsache I/2020, Chefsache II/2020). In our April 2020 survey, 46 percent of managers also stated that acceptance of remote working had increased as a result of the crisis. Women in particular could benefit from these developments. 54 percent of women with children to look after see working from home as conducive to equal opportunities (Chefsache II/2020). This belief is supported by a recent study that came to the conclusion that home office for mothers not only reduces the conflict between work and family, but under certain circumstances can even increase their productivity – more so than for all other employees (Sherman, 2019).

In order to promote equal opportunities, greater flexibility of the workplace will be essential. At the same time, however, companies must ensure that flexible arrangements do not become an additional burden, especially for women – which could happen if superiors and colleagues expect constant availability while the family demands attention. Many people currently seem to be confronted with precisely this problem. Almost half of those who work from home claim that it is difficult to separate work and private life (IAB, 2019). This was confirmed by our April 2020 COVID-19 Survey: As a hurdle to working from home, employees cited distraction from household and children – women especially felt an increased psychological pressure due to the mixing of work and private life. For mothers in particular, home office solutions often mean overtime. On average, they work at home for their employer a good one hour longer per week than mothers with on-premise jobs, and at the also invest three hours more in childcare per week (VWSI, 2019b).

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<sup>13</sup> Link to the quote:

<https://www.zeit.de/news/2019-12/05/frauen-duerfen-oefter-als-maenner-nicht-ins-homeoffice-wechseln>

On the other hand, the crisis showed how important personal exchange with colleagues is for personal satisfaction. In our April 2020 COVID-19 Survey, the lack of personal contact was named as the main reason respondents wanting to return to the usual working day (Chefsache II/2020). Women had this wish somewhat less often than men (64 percent versus 70 percent). All in all, the figures seem to speak in favor of mixed models of remote and on-premise work, which in turn could promote equal opportunities.

## Changing values and new priorities: Role patterns fade

If the distribution of tasks in couples changes – for example, if fathers become more involved in household tasks and childrearing and if both women and men attach more importance to fulfilling tasks and organizing their professional and private lives in line with their needs – this will be reflected in working time arrangements. Flexibility is the motto of the future, and part-time work is set to become increasingly more important.

It depends on the conditions whether all this really strengthens equal opportunities: Businesses and policy must ensure that flexible solutions really do benefit both genders and that they do not have any disadvantages for career advancement. If flexible working time models and part-time work become more widespread, this can create opportunities for women in particular. If everyone works part-time<sup>14</sup>, more people in total will have to work – providing an opportunity for all those who cannot participate in the labor market today.

### More flexible working time solutions – but without additional burdens

Although part-time rates for men are still low, this seems to be changing rapidly: Between 2008 and 2018 the overall rate across all sectors almost doubled (from 6 percent to 11 percent – [Federal Employment Agency](#), 2019b). The same applies to parental leave: Men still take it much less frequently than women (37 percent versus 90 percent), but their share is rising steadily ([DIW](#), 2019). In our January 2020 New Work Survey, just as many men as women – 38 percent – stated that they would like to reduce their weekly working hours (Chefsache I/2020).

It would be problematic if the increasing demand for part-time solutions were to continue to be at the expense of women, as is the case today. The fact that far more women than men work part-time is detrimental to their career advancement. According to studies, part-time work is associated with lower salaries (and thus pensions) and poorer career prospects in the long run ([WSJ](#), 2019c). This is particularly true when the return to full-time work is hindered – women are also especially affected by this as they make agreements with their employers about a right to return to work much less frequently than men ([Fraunhofer IAO](#), 2017). In other words, the wider spread of flexible solutions should promote a more equal distribution between the sexes.

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<sup>14</sup> The concept of enhanced part-time or “double part-time” for couples was presented by Prof. Dr. Jutta Allmendinger at the Chefsache conference 2019 ([Chefsache](#), 2019; <https://initiative-chefsache.de/chefsache-konferenz-2019-dual-career-wie-paare-gleichberechtigt-karriere-machen-koennen/>).

Over the course of the COVID-19 crisis, things seem to have started to progress: In our COVID-19 Survey, 34 percent of women and 27 percent of men among full-time employees with children of child-care age said that the crisis had led them to think more about the future use of part-time models – a step forward when you consider that 46 percent of women but only 11 percent of men have worked part-time to date (VWSI, 2019a). Fathers in particular cite an increased role in their own household (50 percent) and their greater participation in childcare as the main reasons (32 percent – Chefsache II/2020).

Flexible, individualized working schedules are a further solution for a better work–life balance. In contrast to conventional part-time solutions, working hours are spread over the day, week, or even year by individual agreement. As with remote working, the COVID-19 crisis also accelerated developments here. According to our COVID-19 Survey, 33 percent of fathers who do not yet use flexible working hours have given this more thought over the course of the crisis (Chefsache II/2020). The reason given was as stated above, namely the desire to become more involved in childcare or to take on more tasks in their own household.

According to studies – on among other things, on trust-based working hours – this increased flexibility can raise the risk of additional pressure (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2018a); once again, mothers are particularly hard hit (VWSI, 2019b). As with working from home, there is the risk that boundaries will become blurred if one's own working hours differ from those of colleagues and availability is still expected. To avoid such additional burdens, clear rules and close coordination within the team and with managers are essential. Under these conditions, women can also benefit (VWSI, 2019c).

Overall, New Work methods thus offer numerous starting points for distributing family work more equally between women and men. This could be observed during the COVID-19 crisis. The April 2020 Chefsache COVID-19 Survey shows that childcare – which often had to run parallel to working from home due to the restrictions imposed by the crisis – was in many cases arranged in partnership. Among the respondents who looked after their own children during the crisis, 42 percent said that both partners were equally involved. However, having said that, women stated far more often than men that they had provided a significant amount of childcare. Old gender roles are therefore still firmly embedded and will not disappear overnight – but the crisis has at least been able to provide a strong impetus for change.

### Rethinking management – life–work balance without career disadvantages

The fact that work–life balance is becoming increasingly important to young people is a further sign of the departure from traditional roles. Basically, this is a welcome development that gives rise to hopes for more equal opportunities – if companies provide appropriate offers and take measures to limit risks.

Managers play another important part when it comes to role models. It is still a challenge, especially for women, to find suitable role models with whom they can identify. The low proportion of women in management positions and in technical professions certainly contributes to this, but fundamental differences in life and family planning can also be a factor that makes this identification difficult. The same applies to men in part-time positions. It is up to companies to reflect the needs of younger generations more prominently in their career development offers and to communicate that there are alternative ways of reaching a managerial position, for example, via part-time jobs or job sharing.



At present, the widespread implementation of flexible working time models is still faltering, partly due to reservations about part-time offers, among other things (BMFSFJ, 2016). According to studies, 38 percent of all managers also consider flexible working hours as damaging to their careers (Chefsache, 2017). Employees in dependent employment – including fathers – still fear career disadvantages as a result of a break for parental leave (BMFSFJ, 2018). Over the course of the COVID-19 crisis, an improvement in acceptance can be observed among managers: 35 percent indicate an increased acceptance of flexible working time models, 22 percent for part-time models (Chefsache II/2020). Nevertheless, concerns about reduced career opportunities – right behind the financial dependence on full-time jobs – are still one of the biggest implementation hurdles. A rethink is also necessary at management level: Companies are called upon to consider the changing demands – especially those of younger generations – and to create structures that enable women and men to organize their working lives more flexibly and individually. The goal is a good life–work balance without professional disadvantages.

# *“Opportunities and risks – including those of digitization – must be distributed irrespective of gender.”*

Interview with Prof. Dr. Aysel Yollu-Tok

## **How are equal chances of self-fulfillment and digitalization connected?**

Equality-oriented measures, including those in the context of technological change, must go beyond equal treatment and, first and foremost, reduce structural disadvantages. For politics, business, and civil society, gender equality in the sense of equal opportunities means ensuring that all people, regardless of gender, have the opportunity to realize their decisions and wishes. Opportunities and risks – including those of digitization – must be distributed irrespective of gender. The right conditions must be in place to ensure that people not only have formal, but also actual choices in life. This is the approach taken by the Expert Commission for the Third Equality Report of the German Federal Government.

Unfortunately, numerous national and international studies confirm that the chances of realization in Germany depend on gender – this is also evident in the context of technological changes. The digital transformation process is not only changing the organization and structure of the world of work, but is also affecting private life. The blurring of boundaries naturally creates opportunities as well as risks. The topic of equality in the age of digitalization can be described as old wine in “faster” bottles, as commonly gendered patterns of the analogue world can often be found again in the digital world.

The example of working from home, which has become increasingly important as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, shows that a digital workplace alone is not sufficient for a fair distribution of paid employment and care work. On the contrary, we are witnessing a re-traditionalization of gender roles. However, transformation processes are also always an opportunity to question and change exist-

ing structures. To this end, the gender-related effects of the digital transformation process must be closely examined and shaped in terms of equal chances of realization – not only tacitly considered but explicitly, and as a matter of course.

## **In your opinion, what are the cornerstones for more chances of self-fulfillment in the age of digitalization?**

On the one hand, access to resources that enable participation in the digital transformation process is necessary. However, access alone is not a guarantee that existing resources will be used to achieve gender equality goals. In other words, it is not enough to focus on the distribution of resources to individuals, like computers and smartphones, or to simply provide the opportunity of acquiring IT skills. This assumption would carry the danger of drawing the conclusion that those who, despite having access, do not participate in the digital transformation process as they simply do not “want” to. Taking this stance ignores the fact that the use of resources can be restricted due to structural barriers, for example, the corporate culture in the ICT sector; insufficient social security for platform work or a lack of codetermination structures. In addition, social norms and values can restrict individual choices the sociologist Cecilia L. Ridgeway pointed out that social transformation processes can reproduce gender stereotypes, because change creates a feeling of insecurity that can be reduced by falling back on familiar models. In addition to individual access to resources, the second cornerstone is therefore to examine whether discriminatory structures or social values and norms restrict the actual use of these resources and thus hinder the realization of gender equality goals. If this is the case, these barriers must be removed.

The third cornerstone is the power to shape digital transformation processes with regard to the design of technology and also political orientations. The current development here shows that women are less frequently involved in decision-making processes. In 1999, MacKenzie and Wajcman stated that every new technology has an impetus to renegotiate gender relations and to question and abolish power relations. This includes gender-sensitive technology design, which not only encompasses technical developments but also enables participation and co-determination from various parties and always considers technical developments in the context of social consequences. Currently, the digital world is a reflection of analogous power relations, as can be seen in the fact that the active shaping of digital change is still a “man’s job.”

### What role can New Work play in creating equality? What are the risks?

When looking at the digital economy, for example, we once again come across the common argument that women are less represented in digital employment fields because they are supposedly less competent in digital or STEM industries. Although it may be true that women are still less likely to have technical skills and choose computer science courses, among others, the reasons for this must be identified and eliminated. But what happens if women are working in STEM companies and happen upon New Work?

They often leave the company shortly thereafter. This high fluctuation rate of women in the digital economy is problematic; it shows that state-sponsored measures are not sustainable. This is not only an economic problem but also a gender equality problem. The goal of independent economic security through the equal integration of all employees into paid employment also seems to be difficult to achieve in this industry.

Studies investigating the reasons for this indicate that women are excluded in traditionally male industries, which leads to women leaving companies. So it appears to be a problem of work culture. Flat hierarchies as a component of New Work can promote gender-equitable structures, but only if the associated roles, practices, values, and principles are critically challenged. If this does not happen, formally dismantled hierarchies can be informally revived through gender stereotypes. Dominant role models in companies play a particularly important role here, because if gender-specific role expectations of employees and superiors dominate, there is a danger that the agile division of labor will also be based on gender: Women are Scrum masters and men make the code. Here, too, the following applies: Unequal treatment from the analog world is reproduced in the “new” corporate culture, especially if, like in flat hierarchies, it is supposedly gender-neutral.



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Taylor Mill Institute for Economics and Gender Studies. Her research focuses on labor market and social policies and gender equality. She is Chair of the Expert Commission for the Third Equality Report of the German Federal Government.



# 4. Approaches:

## Paving the way to more equal opportunities

New Work presents us with challenges, but also offers opportunities to strengthen equal opportunities. In this chapter, we show how these opportunities can be used and how risks can be mitigated. It will be important to look at the implications of New Work in context – not as a patchwork of individual measures. In principle, equal opportunities must be understood as a basic requirement and integral part of all future innovations at all levels of society. Only in this manner can a world of work be created under the guiding principle of “Fair Chances.”

The following subchapters concentrate on starting points for the major institutional players – companies, educational institutions, and governments – to promote equal opportunities in interaction with the three New Work elements (future skills, new forms of work and organizations, and changing values). Although individuals are not addressed separately, they too, especially managers, have an important role to play: They are called upon to lead by example and to shape change through personal examples, so that collectively the culture of their company supports this change.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has required all of the above-mentioned parties to implement crisis management measures quickly and in a targeted manner. However, long-term initiatives in the areas of New Work and equal opportunities will remain relevant even after the crisis ends.

## All approaches at a glance

Future skills	
	<b>"move" learning program:</b> The digital development program for managers and talents is tailored to RWE's existing competence model and uses language diagnostics as a starting point for individual learning journeys
	<b>Mobile learning:</b> Digital learning format that allows trainees to build knowledge in a community and at their own pace
	<b>Women's promotion networks MyWay and GLOW@Technology and Innovation (GLOW@TI):</b> Networks for prospective female managers with networking and coaching offers
	<b>Computer science studies for women:</b> Degree in computer science specifically for women in cooperation with the Hochschule Bremen
	<b>Job rotation:</b> Insights into other occupational fields in the company within the framework of job rotation
	<b>Other international examples:</b> Training female employees in nontechnical roles to become software developers through Disney's CODE: Rosie program; connecting young women interested in STEM with company representatives through the Million Women Mentors initiative (STEMconnector)
New forms of work and organization	
	<b>New WorkDay:</b> Employee day to present new working methods
	<b>Digital Campus:</b> Corporate campus for trying out, learning about, and working with agile methods
	<b>BarCamp:</b> A new format – an "unconference" especially for women in production and technology
	<b>Remote working:</b> Comprehensive implementation of the possibility of remote working
	<b>Evonik Spirit:</b> Internal competition for the development of projects in the field of agile, sustainable work
	<b>Working Out Loud:</b> Agile learning method for the development of female managers
	<b>Other international examples:</b> Shift towards a fully agile organization (Spotify and ING-DiBa)
Changing values	
	<b>Job sharing:</b> Employees share a full-time job
	<b>80/20 initiative:</b> 20 percent of working time can be used by employees for their own projects within the framework of the 80/20 initiative
	<b>Parent-child offices:</b> Provision of parent-child offices so that employees can care for their children in the workplace
	<b>Other international examples:</b> Individual working hours can be redefined every two years (trump card); all management positions are advertised as part time (SAP); part-time management positions (AOK); 12-month parental leave with full pay and extensive training on reentry (Toronto Hydro)
Overarching measures	
	<b>Diversity Werkstatt:</b> Creation of gender-appropriate job advertisements in cooperation with the diversity team
	<b>"Culture is not magic":</b> A cultural change with the help of a package of diversity measures
	<b>Google Future Workshop:</b> Offline and online digital training courses to promote equal opportunities #IamRemarkable is one such initiative
	<b>All In:</b> Companywide diversity and inclusion program, which includes unconscious bias training
	<b>Other international examples:</b> Workforce 2020 career platform to identify skills gaps and new internal career opportunities (AT&T)



Reference to detailed best-practice box

## Companies: Promoting future skills; using innovative methods

In this subchapter we describe, using practical examples, how companies can creatively and profitably use the opportunities of the new working world and, at the same time, promote equal opportunities.

### Future skills: A wide range of offers for women

A prerequisite for a future world of work based on equal opportunities is that women in particular learn future skills with a focus on the field of digital technology. Their need to catch up in continuing education and retraining has already been pointed out. In the following, we describe corresponding programs in the areas of further education, mentoring, coaching, and on-the-job training.



**New opportunities through digital learning formats.** Innovative learning formats can help make further training in future skills accessible in a creative, networked way. [RWWE, for example offers the online learning platform "move" for managers and talented individuals](#), which is tailored to the organization's existing skills model. Diagnostics test speech samples for patterns and competence levels, which can then be improved upon through an online learning platform – with supplementary in-person training sessions also available.



[Audi uses digital learning formats in its training programs to impart future skills to apprentices in various industrial/technical occupations](#) – it has been shown that this format is particularly attractive for female apprentices.

**Reskilling concepts for future skills.** A vivid example of reskilling women in technological skills comes from Disney: With its 15-month CODE. Rosie program, the company offers female employees – especially from nontechnical areas – the opportunity to reinvent themselves as software engineers. In fact, only one of the participants in the first wave returned to her original job; the others moved on to new areas where they could apply their future skills. The nonprofit organization Ashoka has developed a roadmap for companies on how up- and reskilling can work on a broad basis – not only in the area of digital and technological skills, but also in social skills ([Ashoka](#), McKinsey, 2018).

**Mentoring initiatives for young women.** Some companies are working hard to get female secondary and postsecondary students interested in STEM subjects. One successful example is the US company STEMconnector. Its Million Women Mentors initiative connects mentors from numerous companies and mentees – young women interested in careers in future-oriented fields. The participating companies demonstrate not only social responsibility but also the importance they attach to women in STEM subjects. In addition to cross-company networks, the establishment of internal networks is also an opportunity, e.g., [Airbus' MyWay network, which specifically promotes female junior managers in the company, and the GLOW@TI women's network at Siemens](#).



**Stronger leaders through coaching.** In addition, women can be promoted even more strongly in areas that studies show tend to be among their strengths – especially in roles with high social and emotional demands (MGI, 2019, see also Chapter 3, Egaly, Johannesen-Schmidt, van Engen, 2003). In concrete terms, this means that if coaching and cooperative leadership become more important in the course of New Work, it is logical to focus more strongly than before on female talents. Offers on strengthening leadership competencies can further pave their way to leadership positions. The Federal Ministry of Defence offers Referenta, a coaching program for this purpose: Professional coaches accompany the women in their daily work to analyze and jointly reflect on their behavior from an external perspective and support them in their life and career planning.

**On-the-job training offers.** In addition to training and coaching, there is another important option: Employees can learn directly on the job, e.g., through job rotation programs. NDR, for example, offers two models for this: Employees can spend several months as interns in a new department and are trained in such a way that a permanent change is possible afterwards. Alternatively, Jobrotation 2.0 allows them to get to know another department for a few weeks and expand their network. Job rotation in areas with an unbalanced gender ratio is expressly desired. [At Allianz, the rotation program #WidenYourHorizons offers insight into other job profiles and promotion opportunities.](#)

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### New forms of work and organization: Higher proportions of women through agility

Motivating employees to learn and practice innovative forms of work through agility, creating a higher proportion of women, encouraging flexible workplaces, and reducing hierarchies – these are the aims of a number of diverse approaches that people are encouraged to emulate.

**Formats for trying out new methods.** As mentioned above, the collaborative methods of New Work offer opportunities for employees, especially women, to distinguish themselves as coaching executives. Companies can provide specific input here to encourage employees to familiarize themselves with these new forms of work. [How this can work has been demonstrated by NDR, among others, with its New Work Day.](#)

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[56 The KION Group uses a specially established KION Digital Campus to introduce new forms of work.](#) This is where strategists, designers, and developers work on new digital solutions in their everyday lives with the help of various innovative approaches. They use methods such as design thinking<sup>15</sup> and project sprints to create the first functional product prototypes (minimum viable products) in a very short time. [Evonik also promotes the use of promising working methods, e.g., through an international idea competition on innovative working methods among company employees.](#)

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[The BarCamp for women in production and technology at BASF shows that new agile forms of work can also promote equal opportunities. The Deutsche Post DHL Group also uses an agile learning method – Working Out Loud – to specifically promote female talent.](#)

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<sup>15</sup> Design thinking is an approach and method to support the creative innovation process. The iterative development process focuses on the customer's perspective, which must be actively integrated. On this basis and following the motto "fail often and early," increasingly detailed prototypes are designed, discarded, and improved until an innovative end product is created. ([Die Glühbirne](#))





# “‘move’ is movement that can change”

## Learning agility in the RWE Group through digital training

**Continuously, independently, and skillfully:** This is how managers and talent learn with “move”, a digital development program. Jeannine Wienand and Sebastian Vogel, executive/personnel developers, see great potential at all levels – and above all for equal opportunities.

“Everything begins with a phone call. A call to a sympathetic, automated voice belonging to an actor. In this conversation, standardized questions regarding professional and private subjects are answered, so that at the end of the conversation, 15 minutes of audio track are available for the analysis of language, voice, and competencies. The analysis is based on our RWE competence model, the leadership DNA. The analysis provides information about strengths and areas of development such as language complexity, relativizing formulations or filler words, and individual characteristics of RWE competencies, for example making decisions, staying healthy, and making teams successful,” says Wienand, describing the program.



### Audio guides, workshops, online training – “move” makes learning flexible and individual

In addition to language diagnostics, “move” offers two further modules: Developmental journeys and supplementary in-person learning. Language diagnostics form the basis of the individual learning journey. In the first step it provides information about strengths and areas of development. In the subsequent development discussion, two topics are identified on which the manager would like to work.

In order to promote equal opportunities, the focus is on identifying gender-specific behavior patterns, e.g., how women and men use language in everyday work. For example, it has been shown that both women and men make little use of pauses when speaking. Men, however, show an interesting combination of a tendency towards steering/authoritarian formulations with a desire for harmony and cooperation,” says Vogel.

### Talents and managers learn a lot about themselves and how to interact with others

Wienand herself gave her own speech sample via phone. Was she surprised by the result? “The reflection of my results on the RWE competencies opened my eyes. I often use relativizing phrases like ‘actually’ or ‘maybe.’ This insight has helped me work on my way of positioning myself. You can only benefit from it.”

Rolf Martin Schmitz, RWE CEO and patron of the project, is also convinced of the program’s potential. For him, “move” is literally movement that can change the company.



[Click here or scan for more information](#)



# “The girls give it everything” they’ve got”

## Mobile learning for trainees at Audi

Two young co-trainers are instructing technical talents at Audi. With the innovative “mobile learning” digital training format, they support apprentices in planning their training more independently as well as creatively shaping its content. This concept benefits everyone involved.



“I immediately seized the opportunity to become an assistant coach,” says Josepha Kwaka, who has been looking after prospective production mechanics at the Audi site in Ingolstadt since the beginning of 2018. “It’s just wonderful seeing young people grow and being able to support them.” What was it like to start off in a predominantly male environment? “I’ve always received a lot of support,” says Josepha, “and now I like to be a role model for young people as well. At the moment, the proportion of women among the trainees is 25.5 percent, and the target rate by 2021 in the industrial-technical

sector is 30.0 percent.” Co-trainer Anna Schlegel, who instructs future automotive mechatronics technicians at the Ingolstadt plant, sums it up in a nutshell: “The current transformation starts here with us.”

Generation Z is particularly attracted to innovative, digital learning concepts such as mobile learning, or “m-learning” for short, which has been supplementing traditional training for around five years. Trainees can create learning content themselves, share knowledge online, call up virtual courses individually, and network internationally. “Much has changed for the better since the start of m-learning,” says Schlegel. “Our trainees have become more independent, can assess themselves better, and, if necessary, can obtain knowledge at any time and from any location. The connection to the trainees has also become even closer.” The exchange of information is easier via tablet. Virtual courses show complex technical processes clearly and at their own pace.

It is not unusual for female trainees to be ahead of the rest: “When the girls first come into contact with the world of technology, they are usually very ambitious. They are particularly focused and quickly assume responsibility,” says Schlegel. Kwaka agrees: “The girls give it everything they’ve got.” The next step in their development is also already in sight for both co-trainers. After three years in their current positions, they will move on to become group leaders in production.



# “Increase corporate and management visibility”

## The Airbus women’s network MyWay as a career launcher

MyWay, a female leadership program at Airbus, aims to promote highly qualified women in their careers. The basic idea: Strong, self-organized women’s communities that network with each other and exchange ideas with company management. The goal: A better perception of female executives, including in top management, throughout the company.

A network of like-minded people is a strong support. In a protected space, women find it easier to build up self-confidence. In addition, selected development coaches help improve self- and outside perception and strengthen professional identity, i.e., personal branding.

MyWay was initiated by Elvire Meier-Comte, Head of HR at Airbus Defence and Space Operations. As a mother of three, she knows from her own experience the problems women face in being accepted as managers – despite top qualifications and broad experience. It was important to her to focus not only on diversity and inclusion but also on innovation and excellence. “Women should not be promoted on the basis of their gender,” says Meier-Comte, “but because of their creativity and their impact in the company.” To move the project forward, she has enlisted board members as sponsors.



*Dr. Elvire Meier-Comte, Vice President, Head of HR, Airbus Defence and Space Operations*



“MyWay is not just any development program – it is exactly what I wanted! It starts with us as people: We work on our communication and self-confidence, improve our personal brand, and develop an effective elevator pitch. All this benefits us as managers. We not only have a great women’s network here, where we get to know other exciting members, but we also meet former board members at our management talks. The individual coaching sessions are also great: We get guidance and tools to help us understand ourselves more and make better decisions.”

*Laura Otondo Navas, Procurement Programs Manager*

“At first I just thought I would learn something through MyWay and meet interesting colleagues. But this year has brought me so much more: I have learned and experienced a lot of things that I use in my daily life – both professionally and personally. I can now understand situations better and also influence them because I am better at self-reflection and analyzing the behavior of others.”

*Tanja Nemetzade, Aerospace Engineer*



# *“I have learned to strengthen my potential and use it effectively”*

## At Siemens, GLOW@TI offers ambitious women opportunities for networking and personal development

GLOW@TI was created for women who want to take on leadership responsibilities. The Siemens network by and for women with a scientific background was founded in 2010 and aims to promote the careers of women. The leadership programs for talented women, GLOW+ and Energize Experienced Professional (EEP), are the core elements of the network. The goal is to build a “pipeline” of self-aware and strong women.

In addition, numerous activities are organized by the network itself: Mentoring and coaching hours support personal development, and business lunches and colloquia promote mutual exchange and interdisciplinary cooperation. In addition, cross-company meetings take place within the framework of after-work events – these are opportunities to find inspiration on topics such as innovation or the future of mobility. During the COVID-19 crisis, many of these offers were continued virtually.

Glow@TI also actively supports Siemens on the path of digital transformation, offering numerous employees the opportunity to learn about new working methods and experience them firsthand at symposia on the topic of digital leadership.

Overall, GLOW@TI offers committed women the opportunity to contribute ideas and independently carry them out. They can find support and sparring partners, gain more self-confidence, broaden their horizons, and develop further.



## GLOW@TI – a success story

Marion Gornik started the EEP program in spring 2017. As a senior financial expert with global responsibility, she was already able to take her next career step during the one-year program. In 2018, she took over the position of Financial Director for the Simulation and Digital Twin technology field, moving from Germany to the US. Less than a year later, Gornik was appointed Head of Finance of Corporate Technology in the US.

She says: “The EEP program was a very valuable and wonderful time for me. It taught me how to strengthen my potential and, at the same time, use it more effectively. It will continue to help me on my future career path.”



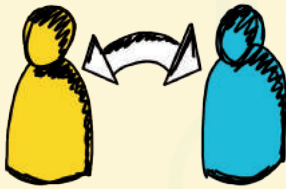
# “A glimpse into other working worlds broadens our horizons”

Allianz’s #WidenYourHorizons program offers job swaps, job rotation, and job shadowing

Allianz offers its employees exciting opportunities for personal and professional development in this program. By immersing themselves in areas that are unfamiliar, they can broaden their own horizons, try out unfamiliar topics, and expand their network within the company – like Nicola Kopf, who was able to learn more about IT as an HR expert (see below). There are three models to choose from:

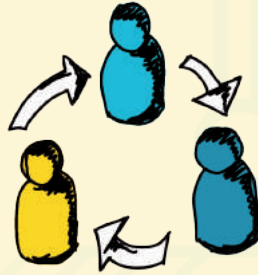
### Job swap

Exchange of roles between two people for one to six months



### Job rotation

Multilateral exchange between three people for one to six months



### Job shadowing

Shadowing an experienced person in another field on daily tasks



Participation is based on personal initiative; anyone can join as long as there is an exchange partner. Exchange partners can be found on the Allianz Job Portal, through an employee's own contacts, or at specially organized “speed dating” events. Cost and performance management remain tied to the original job, and reentry is guaranteed. Agreement of the managers involved is required.



#### About me

Nicola Kopf, 32  
 Company: Allianz SE  
 Position: People Sourcing and Development Consultant  
 Background: Human resources

I took part in a job-shadowing experience in the area of IT business organization at Allianz Germany. In August 2019, I spent a week shadowing a colleague who is Head of Sales Systems.

#### What I learned

I was able to accompany an impressive female manager who made her way in the male-dominated sector of IT. In the process, I was able to expand my network and identify cultural differences. Furthermore, the agile project structures in IT gave me many ideas to implement in my own working environment. I was allowed to test new software tools for sales and thereby expand my range of insurance know-how.

#### I would recommend job shadowing to anyone because ...

- >> I was able to broaden my horizons by gaining new skills and knowledge in other business functions, such as IT.
- >> This was a different kind of development opportunity for me in which I was able to gather many new ideas, get impressions from other fields, and meet great colleagues.

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**Offers for workplace flexibility.** If workplace flexibility for employees is to be enabled, appropriate framework conditions must be created. This includes technical infrastructure on one hand and creation of company wide acceptance for individual models by managers and colleagues on the other. The spread of the work-from-home model during the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated this process; political and social debate is increasingly calling for the right to work from home to be strengthened. Training for leading (partially) virtual teams can help the implementation of remote working. **In addition, uniform regulations and early information offers create security for all employees – as at LBBV.** This makes it easier for employees to combine work and family life, which still particularly benefits women given the current distribution of responsibilities.

**Implementation of flat hierarchies.** Organizational structures with flat hierarchies and increased self-organization enable employees, even in more unique working situations, such as women who work part time, to gain leadership experience. In an international context, Spotify is a pioneer developing a fully agile organization. Based on this concept, ING-DiBa switched its entire organization to agile working in teams with minimal hierarchies by summer 2015, in order to be able to react flexibly to the ever-changing demands of the market. This was accompanied by a necessary change in management styles focused on enabling and coaching teams. This created many new opportunities for women in particular, who are especially fond of leadership coaching, to take on leadership responsibilities.

### Changing values: Rethinking leadership roles

Companies can also react to the change in values with targeted measures. Not only do they distinguish themselves as attractive employers, but the measures often also send a strong signal to the outside world as they touch on convictions and ideas that are rooted in society. The following approaches can help: The introduction of flexible working hours, sharing management responsibilities, offering part-time management positions, and providing special support for parents and encouraging meaningful work.

**Flexibly adaptable elective working hours.** During the COVID-19 crisis in particular, many employees had to make their working hours more flexible to be able to look after their children, for example. Some companies had already laid the foundation for such flexibility before the crisis, including the machine manufacturer Trumpf. The company offers a forward-looking working time solution: Employees can change their working hours every two years and – within a range of 15 to 40 hours – deviate from their contractually agreed (base) working hours. This makes the shift between part-time and full-time employment the norm, and employees can immediately react to changing life circumstances. The distribution of tasks within the family can be arranged with corresponding flexibility.



# “New answers to the challenges of the digital world”

NDR’s New Work Day brings attention to agile working in the digital age

**New Work Day at NDR: More than 200 participants came together in September to learn about agile working and New Work.**

“New answers to the challenges of the digital world” was the slogan. External presenter Anja Mahlstedt led NDR through the program and management was very invested in the topic. The lead director and four of the managing directors emphasized that it was both an opportunity and a challenge to open up the world of thought to a new approach.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Andreas Brill, Managing Director of Business4Brands and expert on digital transformation processes, explained why this is becoming increasingly important. “Companies were not made for the radical developments of the digital revolution; companies have to reorganize themselves,” said Brill. “Agile work is new, i.e., different, because employees make a different value contribution. Work used to be a matter of following instructions; it now depends on nonconformity, i.e., creativity.”



Radical customer focus is important. This means understanding customers better than they understand themselves. In doing so, it is important to go beyond the limits of one’s own knowledge. “The knowledge outside a company is always greater than the knowledge inside,” said Brill. Another change is that decisions will be made in independent teams in the future. Until now, the wrong people have made the wrong decisions at the wrong time, namely at the beginning of a process.

With Dr. Brill’s words in mind, the participants of the New Work Day went into workshops. In Workshop 1, “Quickly improving entrenched work processes with work hacks,” the focus was on methods of changing fixed structures with minimal intervention to make them more effective. Workshop 2 provided information on how to achieve new solutions with design thinking. A third workshop taught participants “What we can learn from Scrum, Kanban, and co.” Thus, participants were able to not only experience New Work but also learn to make it everyday practice.





# “New ways of working and thinking towards digital solutions”

## The KION Digital Campus for digital transformation

The digital transformation of industry and trade is not a thing of the future. It is already a living reality and demands not only new business models, but also new ways of working and thinking. The KION Digital Campus was established near the Frankfurt headquarters in order to actively develop these in a targeted manner. Together with employees from all over the world, strategists, user experience designers, and developers work on new digital solutions and, within a very short time, shape them into a minimum viable product, i.e., the first, minimally functional version of a product. In this way, teams develop future-proof digital solutions that offer real added value for customers of the KION Group and its global subsidiaries. New working methods are experienced by everyone and become part of everyday life.

Approaches such as co-creation, design thinking, agile working, and project sprints provide the appropriate framework for rethinking processes. The aim is to develop ideas as creatively as possible – but also to test them as quickly as possible under real conditions. Among the first solutions developed in the KION Digital Campus were a chatbot app for service technicians and an application for data-based fleet optimization.

Events and training courses are also organized on the campus. The aim is not only to develop and teach digital skills, but also to anchor a digital mindset of openness, collaboration, and flexibility in the minds of employees.



## The KION Digital Campus

“Diversity is a core component of our mindset and thus of the way we work at the Digital Campus. Different perspectives enrich our approach by providing new food for thought, helping us find innovative solutions and implement them successfully.”



— Maren Raupach, Director of Business Development & Operations at the KION Digital Campus





# “Develop strategies to make your own competence more visible”

The BASF BarCamp enables exchange for women in production and technology

“We women in production and technology: REAL. STRONG. VISIBLE.” This invitation from my colleagues Nicole Meier, Natalie Gelder, and Heike Brueser made me curious. The three of them had set up a BarCamp. A BarCamp is an “unconference,” meaning (almost) no agenda and no set topics or goals. Everything can, nothing must. That was a refreshing, new approach. Only women took part – an unusual situation at BASF, especially when it comes to production and technology!

Topics discussed included the visibility of female talent, the compatibility of work and family life, career leaders, and networks.

Anyone picturing a bunch of wild women ranting about men and especially bosses is completely wrong. We developed strategies to increase visibility and be heard. “After all, it’s up to us to convince the bosses. Don’t hide away and just complain about injustice, but take action yourself,” said Nicole Meier, who manages a production plant at our Ludwigshafen site, summarizing the approach. And I fully agree.



*Melanie Maas-Brunner,  
President, Nutrition & Health,  
BASF SE*



## BarCamp – the concept

A BarCamp is a conference format in which the participants create the content ad hoc – often in the form of workshops.

At the BASF BarCamp, participants came together in small groups to exchange and develop project ideas on women’s advancement.

This resulted in several initiatives, such as peer coaching among female colleagues, visits to schools on the subject of women in male-dominated careers, and BASF’s XDays, where female post-secondary students are invited to take part in a go-and-see day.



# “Set clear priorities and provide backup”

## How remote working is successful at LBBW

LBBW has introduced the possibility of applying for remoteworking across the whole organization. Employees were equipped with the technical requirements, and a service agreement established uniform and binding regulations for the entire bank. An information fair was held at the start of the new regulations, and comprehensive information material was made available to reduce possible reservations from managers and employees themselves.

**Ms. Jantarska-Stasch, you played a key role in the initiation and companywide introduction of remote working at LBBW. In your opinion, why has remote working now become an integral part of LBBW’s corporate culture?**

The reason was the way in which remote working was introduced at LBBW. Together with my colleague Bettina Ellmer, we launched an initiative and initially introduced remote working as a pilot for all interested employees in the IT area. An important premise was that the responsibility for testing personal and professional suitability for remote working lay with the employees themselves. A negative response from the manager had to be justified. The clear guidelines created transparency and increased acceptance among managers. The mere possibility of being able to work remotely encouraged employees and contributed to a cultural change. The pilot was a complete success and thus became the blueprint for remote working throughout the bank.

**With two children aged six and eight, you personally know the challenge of balancing work and private life. What role does remote working play for you?**

Above all, remote working gives me freedom and security. I know that I can organize care for my children in any situation, even at short notice. This does not necessarily mean that I always have to switch to working from home. My

husband’s employer also offers remote working. This means that we can flexibly decide who will take over care in case of an emergency.

**What are your three most important tips for drawing clear boundaries between work and private life despite working remotely?**

The most important thing is to keep both in balance. On the one hand, it helps to set clear priorities and goals for the available working time, so as not to extend working hours unnecessarily. On the other hand, it is valuable, especially for women, to provide support in family emergencies. Remote working can be used by both partners.



Ms. Jantarska-Stasch



## “Bringing ideas to life”

### Evonik Spirit: A competition of ideas for a more dynamic corporate culture

Performance, trust, openness, speed – this is what Evonik is committed to. The specialty chemicals producer is aiming to make its corporate culture more dynamic: The company not only wants to be able to react more flexibly to rapid changes in its environment, it also wants to play a role in shaping them. To this end, Evonik has launched the groupwide initiative Evonik Spirit. The focus is expressly on the “how” of daily cooperation: It should be varied, offer exciting challenges, and be fun.

Since every change is based on everyone’s commitment, there is a common thread running through everything: The employees are the center of attention.

First, all employees were invited to contribute their ideas in an online brainstorming session: How can Evonik become more decisive? Where can processes be sped up? Where can collaboration be made easier? What new forms of work are conceivable? Within four weeks, no fewer than 309 ideas came together, from which the workforce selected the 60 best, also using an online tool. The Spirit team then went on tour with these ideas throughout Europe, Asia, and North America: The approaches were presented at “speed-up conferences,” and five were selected for implementation in each region.

The creative minds behind the top projects are now working in networked, agile teams to further develop their ideas and a concept or business plan.



# “Develop yourself, become visible, and network”



The agile learning method Working Out Loud offers new development opportunities for female executives of the Deutsche Post DHL Group

Last year, the Deutsche Post DHL Group introduced Working Out Loud for female managers. This learning method, developed by John Stepper, has the advantage of enabling interactive learning and collaboration both face-to-face and virtually. Using structured guidelines, the participants work together to develop solutions to previously defined individual goals and benefit from the diversity of experiences.

The peer groups, also known as circles, consist of about five participants from different divisions and locations. The circles deal with the very specific topics of women in male-dominated professions/women in the workplace, and returning to work after a break. A further circle is devoted to international, cross-divisional cooperation and takes place exclusively on a virtual basis.

With this agile method of cooperation, female managers are given the opportunity to develop themselves, become visible, and network.

**Job advertisements for part-time management roles.** SAP has another way to make it easier to reconcile family and career by adjusting working hours: All its job postings for management positions are now only advertised as part time. This offers optimal conditions for women who are bound to part-time working models to take on a leadership role. The model also has the advantage for men that they can take on a leadership role and, at the same time, contribute to the household. The previously limiting factor, namely the fear of restricting career paths through part-time work, is thus eliminated.

**Sharing leadership responsibility.** A similar measure that gives women in particular better access to management positions is the sharing of management responsibility. At AOK Baden-Württemberg, groups of two managers – primarily from middle and upper management, but also at team leader level – can share leadership positions. Each can be allocated a maximum of 60 percent of their work volume. The resulting overlap of up to 20 percent enables them to coordinate their work in day-to-day business. This results in more flexible management positions that leave both parties with more time for their other duties. *At Deutsche Bahn, employees – especially managers – can also benefit from “job sharing.”* This is also offered at the Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology (IME), which is currently led by a mixed-gender management duo.

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Interview with the Fraunhofer IME's management duo

**Support for young parents.** Although companies can support changing values by simply offering more room for private life through more flexible working hours, they can also provide targeted support, especially for young parents. Taking inspiration from abroad: Toronto Hydro offers 12-month parental leave with full salary payment. Regular updates from the company and extensive training on reentry are included. To ensure a smooth reentry into the workforce, childcare is also essential; the COVID-19

crisis has once again shown how challenging everyday working life can be when external childcare is taken away. Companies can help their employees in this respect, e.g., by providing financial and organizational support for private childcare arrangements or company childcare facilities such as those offered by Allianz, Deutsche Telekom, and Siemens. Returning to work after parental leave can also be made easier [in a parent-child office, like those offered by HENSOLDT](#).

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**Promoting meaningful work.** In order to give employees the opportunity to take part in projects that they feel are meaningful for themselves, the company, or society, companies can release part of employees' working time for such projects. This gives employees the opportunity to contribute their ideas, particularly on issues such as equal opportunities. One example of how this can work is at [Deutsche Telekom, whose employees can use 20 percent of their working time to set up and support new projects as part of the 80/20 initiative](#).

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**Anchor the purpose.** The feeling of meaningful work is not only created through one's own everyday tasks, but also through the company's purpose, reason for existence, or overriding goal. This "why" should be clearly defined, articulated, and embedded in the corporate culture. If employees are familiarized with the purpose from the outset, it not only serves as an orientation but can also increase commitment.

#### Comprehensive offers: Additional support for measures

There are clear benefits for equal opportunities from the above-mentioned measures in the areas of future skills, new forms of work and organization, and changes in values. To ensure that these are also taken advantage of, special programs can create supportive framework conditions for all three areas.

**Interactive career platforms.** A prerequisite for the successful promotion of employees in times of New Work is transparency on the constantly changing skill needs in companies – and the opportunity for employees to adapt to these needs. An initiative by American telecom giant AT&T promotes flexibility with regard to the field of work: via the Workforce 2020 career platform, employees can determine their own skills gap, discover new internal career opportunities, and, if interested, organize their further training and/or retraining ([Donovan, Benko, 2016](#)). This offers the chance to identify and seize opportunities early on and to close knowledge gaps. The model also benefits the company as a whole: It is a very effective tool for equipping the workforce for the challenges of tomorrow without pressure.

**Creative formats for gender-sensitive communication.** Internal and external communication can make a decisive contribution to the perception of a company as gender equitable. Creative, collaborative formats can help shape such communication – [like the DiversityWerkstatt at Volkswagen, where experience from diversity teams is used to create gender-sensitive job advertisements](#). Volkswagen also makes explicit use of female imagery, like in the Software is Female recruiting campaign.

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# “The chemistry in job sharing must be right”

Deutsche Bahn shares six tips on making job sharing a success

- 1 Job sharing – one model for many target groups**

There are many reasons to try out job sharing, e.g., part-time upskilling, more family time, or the transition to retirement. For senior management, reasons also include the desire for sparring partners or strategic alliances. The job-sharing model should therefore not be marketed to only one specific target group.
- 2 Job sharing as an opportunity for personnel planning, not only as a boost to employer attractiveness**

Job-sharing models can help companies better balance the life phases of employees with their workload. Job sharing can create an elegant transition to/from parental leave or retirement. The onboarding phase is facilitated by a direct contact person and knowledge transfer is ensured.
- 3 Job sharing as an offer, not a regulation**

Job sharing can only be successful if both participating employees volunteer to work in the job-sharing tandem. The model should be available in principle and should be proposed by management as, e.g., a solution to the desire for work flexibility. However, the final decision should be made by the potential participants in the tandem.
- 4 Job-sharing tandems even without a matching program**

For a successful tandem, the chemistry between the partners must be right. Therefore, matching programs are nice to have, but many tandems can be arranged through professional networks or personal contacts.
- 5 Flexibility in design**

The regulations for the division of tasks and areas of responsibility as well as working hours in job-sharing tandems can be as varied as the reasons for job sharing. It is important to be flexible. The job-sharing tandem participants should decide for themselves what works best for them and their team. In this way, the different skills of the job-sharing partners can be used most successfully.
- 6 Staying power in the initial phase**

Job sharing is not a sure thing. As with every personnel change, it takes time and understanding, especially in the beginning, until new rules of cooperation have been established. Good communication within the team and the support of the responsible manager are important.



Anna Schak and Julia Staudt manage an area of work at DB Training in tandem



## “Pursue projects of the heart and learn new things on the side”

### Deutsche Telekom creates freedom for employees' own interests with 80/20 – like DigiCamp

80/20 – the name says it all: In this pilot project, employees can spend 20 percent of their working time on groupwide initiatives – whether they launch their own projects or support those already underway. The exciting thing about it is that while they work on issues close to their heart, they can also acquire new skills. Current projects can be easily presented and viewed by interested employees via an internal online platform.

One project that emerged from this is DigiCamp – an innovative training program that teaches sales employees in Telekom's business customer area how to efficiently handle new digital work tools. They not only gain the necessary know-how but also learn how to use the right mindset: Don't shy away from new, unfamiliar tools! It's worth trying them out because they make it easier and better to work with customers and colleagues alike.

The DigiCamp was primarily designed for Telekom Deutschland's B2B sales department, with the corresponding tools, but the program can also be adapted for other business areas. The program was also designed with specific target groups within the sales department itself in mind: Each event was preceded by a briefing with the manager, where the use cases were discussed individually for the team.

The 80/20 platform was in turn helpful for further disseminating DigiCamp within the company: Employees who were interested in working in DigiCamp were invited to a kick-off event for which they had to prepare. Afterwards, they either led some sessions themselves or took over co-moderation.



*Katja Weber, Co-Initiator  
of DigiCamp*



*“Don’t measure performance by presence,  
measure it by accomplishment.”*

Michael Schlüpmann, Head of People Operations and Development,  
on flexibility at HENSOLDT



**What does New Work mean to you?**

For me, New Work is an overarching concept that includes all models for making working conditions more flexible. At HENSOLDT this ranges from flextime, remote working, and

cross-location teams to agile methods and digitization in communication. These are all essential basics for me to be able to balance my work and private life well.

**Why are New Work models important to you?**

I work full time at our HENSOLDT headquarters in Taufkirchen near Munich and lead three teams in the People Operations & Development department. My team members are almost exclusively based at our Ulm site. Therefore, I often commute between the two locations. I also have a nine-year-old son. In order to do justice to my role as a father and my leadership role, I have to be able to organize my workload very flexibly.

**Have you already encountered prejudices about the way you organize your work?**

Of course there are still some supporters of the culture of being present in the office. They always want to have their employees around them. But I also have the feeling that my model is more accepted than it is for some mothers. So I asked myself why: Is it considered more revolutionary for fathers? With mothers, is the double job essentially normal? Or should mothers not work at all, especially not full time? It surprises me again and again how often I still encounter such views.

**What are the company’s requirements for your work model?**

For me, everything depends on a boss who does not measure performance by presence, but by what is achieved. I also lead my colleagues in this way. This only works if I trust them, empower them to be independent, and give them control.

I find it incredibly important to train managers in this mentality. It is also clearly a question of culture: Everyone in the company must respect different life models and their requirements. We need flexibility in our minds. It’s not just a matter of reconciling family and career but of ensuring that everyone can live their individual lifestyle without experiencing any form of discrimination. The models of New Work form the basis, but it is acceptance that makes these models successful.

**What are your tips for working parents?**

I think transparency, standing up for one’s needs, and demanding things clearly is very important. Of course it is always a give and take. Clear expectation management on both sides is absolutely necessary. If more and more managers exemplify these working models, all employees will become more and more open to them. Then New Work will at some point become the new normal, so we will no longer need to talk about it.





## The parent-child office: Provision for the “care emergency” – flexibility for parents



HENSOLDT would like to give its employees – and especially parents – a great deal of flexibility in organizing their

work, because only then is it possible to combine family and career. This is why parent-child offices were created. They are separate rooms divided into work areas for the parents and an area equipped with toys for the children. For example, meetings can be held in the event of a care emergency while the child is playing in sight.

HENSOLDT opened the first parent-child offices in winter 2019. Fathers, in particular, immediately began to take advantage of the offer, and the feedback from the workforce was extremely positive: Parent-child offices enable parents to actively participate in working life without having to struggle to balance family and career. Further parent-child offices are planned for the future.

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**Diversity measures for cultural change.** In order to achieve a profound cultural shift towards more diversity, [the Fraunhofer Institute for Intelligent Analysis and Information Systems \(IAIS\) has implemented a whole suite of diversity measures.](#) Initiatives in the areas of communication, recruiting, training, management development, and support for parents have increased diversity at the institute; almost half of new hires are now female.

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[The Google Future Workshop is open to all interested parties to impart knowledge for living and working in the digital world and thus actively promote equal opportunities.](#) The training courses and workshops are partly based on internal courses at Google. For example, they teach the basics of personal career planning or personal development. In the #IamRemarkable initiative, participants are encouraged to speak openly about their professional and personal successes. This also includes critically questioning certain social norms (like modesty).

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Elements of the training program have now become common practice and are also being implemented in other companies. [At McKinsey, too, an unconscious bias training is offered – as part of the All In diversity and inclusion program.](#) It is important that the insights gained from the training courses are also anchored in a company's processes, e.g., in the areas of recruiting and promotion.

**Tools for tracking progress.** The risk of falling back on stereotypes when implementing measures in the areas of equal opportunities and New Work can be countered by using special IT tools, among other things. Google, for example uses advanced analytics to effectively support transformation processes within the company: The company has added a software tool to the HR systems in all areas that makes structural disadvantages for women concrete and visible. Targeted countermeasures were defined on this basis.



# “Language is the key to gender-sensitive job ads”

Terms with feminine or neutral connotations

Content-related, relational, and community-oriented “communal” formulations

Terms with masculine connotations

Words associated with male stereotypes



## Recommendations for creating job advertisements

- Focus on the merits of the function rather than the requirements of the job. This helps create interest in the position and the employer
- Use female-friendly or neutral terms
- Give clear explanations about the effects of unconscious prejudices, with examples if possible
- Focus on specific skills that are essential, rather than on an all-in-one solution
- Create increased interest by mentioning certain factors, in particular:
  - Information on work–life balance
  - Specifics on the team and its atmosphere, the premises, or the department’s situation
  - An overview of part-time or job-sharing opportunities (e.g., two part-time workers instead of one full-time worker)
- Reflect the desired diversity of applicants in the photos used
- Conceptualize and design advertising campaigns specifically for women



# “The number of applicants increased almost tenfold”

Gender-inclusive job advertisements are created in Volkswagen’s DiversityWerkstatt

Volkswagen is working to increase the diversity of its applicants and employees with the Hello Possible recruiting campaign and the DiversityWerkstatt for redesigning job advertisements.

The Diversity Team convenes to create job ads in two-hour DiversityWerkstatt meetings.

The aim is to increase the number of applicants through different design and wording. The participants in the DiversityWerkstatt jointly select which upcoming job postings they want to create ads for. We found that these newly designed job advertisements increased the number of applicants in general, and in particular for female job seekers, which is an important step for increasing diversity among candidates and employees within the Volkswagen Group.

“Having multiple viewpoints plus the joint exchange of information on wording sharpen the focus, uncover unconscious biases, and bring in different perspectives,” explains Elke Heitmüller. In a direct comparison of advertisements for a single position, the number of applicants increased tenfold after using the wording developed in the DiversityWerkstatt.



Ads were run specifically for women as part of the Hello Possible campaign, which targets IT and digitization experts. Real female Volkswagen employees star in the ads with the slogan “Software is Female.”

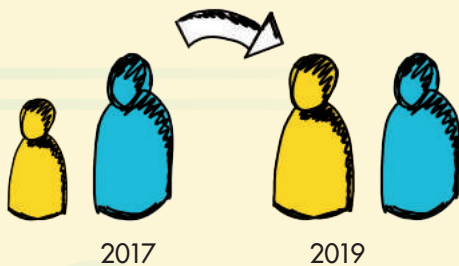


# “Culture is not magic”

## Fraunhofer IAIS sets new standards with its diversity initiative

Flexible, agile, digital, and diverse: To meet the demands of the new working world, the Fraunhofer Institute for Intelligent Analysis and Information Systems (IAIS) has committed itself to cultural change. Numerous diversity measures have been developed and implemented based on the slogan “Culture is not magic.”

In three years, the number of female scientists hired at Fraunhofer IAIS has more than doubled. In 2019, almost half of the IAIS’s new hires were female. This is remarkable for a research institute specializing in AI, as the proportion of female graduates in these particular subject areas is low. As of April 2020, 35 percent of the institute’s members were female.



Development of the employment rate of women compared to men at Fraunhofer IAIS

**Imagery:** Applicants look for representation. Female imagery and the conscious use of gender-inclusive job titles ensures a clear positioning: The institute wants to show female scientists that they are in the right place.

### Key elements of the cultural change at Fraunhofer IAIS

- **Recruiting:** Standardized but approachable – personal contact quickly established
- **Evidence of equal opportunities:** Mandatory diversity and inclusion training for all, consistent gender-neutral language, and feminine imagery
- **Leadership development:** Equal opportunities as an important guiding principle in leadership training
- **Kids-are-welcome culture:** A mobile “kids’ box” for the office with toys, diaper-changing supplies, etc. and clear communication that children are always welcome
- **Parental leave opportunities:** Up-and-coming talent are testing this program ; no career interruption due to parental leave
- **TALENTA program:** Targeted and generous support for individual female scientists; 20 percent of their working time is dedicated to developing greater visibility in science and the institute
- **Targeted external and internal communication:** Social media campaigns on all relevant channels as well as intranet and internal e-mails



“Our culture and equal-opportunity activities are truly dear to all of our hearts.”

— Prof. Stefan Wrobel,  
Director of the Fraunhofer IAIS



“We turn over every stone and see where there’s still room for improvement. Culture is not magic – but it might work a little magic.”

— Luise Schneider, Head of Human Resources Development at Fraunhofer IAIS



# “New opportunities for equal opportunities”

The goal of the Google Future Workshop initiative is to enable more equal opportunities through digital training, both offline and online.

In the Google Future Workshop, anyone can further their digital education – regardless of gender or whether they’re employed, self-employed, or in training – because sharing knowledge also means creating more equal opportunities.



Fostering the individual skills of employees is an important part of Google’s philosophy. In order to contribute to society and provide more equal opportunities, Google makes this knowledge available to everyone.



In the summer of 2017, Google and various partners founded the Google Future Workshop. The goal of this initiative is to make the opportunities of digitization visible and to make digital education available to everyone.



Currently, Google is offering its free courses – which would normally take place in training centers in Hamburg, Berlin, and Munich – as webinars. These and other online training courses can be found at [zukunftswerkstatt.de](http://zukunftswerkstatt.de). The spectrum of topics ranges from the basics of online marketing, to more visibility on the net, agile working, problem solving with design thinking, and the optimal use of YouTube.

The portfolio is constantly being expanded with courses to cover knowledge that will be particularly important in the future. In doing so, the Google Future Workshop also consistently uses insights from its own work – e.g., in training courses on the changing way of working within the framework of New Work. The courses also address the issue of equal opportunities and the great potential that digitization offers.



A good example is the #IamRemarkable training. Originally developed internally primarily for Google’s employees, these sessions are now accessible to everyone worldwide. Participants are encouraged to speak openly about their professional and personal successes. After all, being aware of one’s own successes and proudly communicating them is not only good for well-being but can also be a powerful engine for one’s career.

How women can take advantage of attractive career opportunities is the topic of the one-day workshop Women Will, to which Google regularly invites young talent from its customers and partners. Women are encouraged to actively shape their careers through group exercises and unfiltered exchange with role models and experts. In order to support even more up-and-coming female managers, Women Will plans to host short webinars on the topics of female leadership and entrepreneurship.

This is exactly what the Google Future Workshop is all about: Working together to improve the professional world and make it a better, fairer place.

# “We know from experience that diversity makes teams more effective”



McKinsey’s All In initiative has greatly increased the proportion of women in the firm



Diversity and integration are part of McKinsey’s core business. The power that diverse teams can have is backed by research and many years of experience: Client teams are usually made up of people from different backgrounds because the exchange of perspectives creates tangible added value.

The company-wide All In initiative, launched in 2014, has once again given the topic of diversity new momentum. Employees of all genders – organized in a global center of excellence and regional teams – are developing approaches to promoting equal opportunities. In close cooperation with

the divisions, the teams exchange best practices and develop strategies and solutions. Managers at all levels are involved in the implementation process: In this way, responsibility for equal opportunities is established throughout the organization.

All In’s work topics cover the entire path through the company – from the recruitment and integration of new talents to the promotion and development of employees and internal networking. McKinsey’s overarching corporate culture is not forgotten either: The team develops approaches to strengthen inclusive thinking within the company. Concrete examples of initiatives include learning programs on the topics of unconscious bias and inclusive leadership, sponsorship models, support at the start and end of parental leave, the conscious reduction of travel, and improved support for dual careers. Many approaches are initially tested in pilot trials and, if they prove successful, scaled up.

All firm locations, Germany included, have a local team that drives the All In initiative. The German team’s primary aim is to develop interesting solutions for parents and people with family care responsibilities, enabling them to pursue a viable and fulfilling career in the company. Previous approaches include a flexibility program with a corresponding community and the Female Sponsorship Award. The All In team itself exemplifies a flexible way of working: Members work together part time and across locations. In addition, they repeatedly receive temporary support from colleagues who, in addition to their consulting activities, are committed to an inclusive and diverse working environment at McKinsey – e.g., as local champions or parent coaches.

The concerted efforts to promote diversity are paying off: In Germany, McKinsey now has a 49 percent share of women among newly hired employees.



“Diversity makes us stronger and more successful as a company, both in our work with clients and in internal functions such as recruiting or knowledge development.”

— Martin Huber, Senior Partner, McKinsey & Company



— Dr. Julia Sperling, Partner,  
McKinsey & Company

Global Leader of All In

## Educational institutions: Supplementing curricula with future-oriented offerings

Educational institutions – including primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and adult education facilities – are especially important for strengthening equal opportunities. Specifically, they are responsible for providing the skills and working methods that will be increasingly in demand in the future and thus prepare people for the working world of tomorrow. With special offers for girls and young women, they can and should contribute to closing the technical skills gap between genders. Additionally they can also help encourage boys to take a greater interest in care professions, for example.

### Future skills: Closing skills gaps

Future skills should be an integral part of training. This can be achieved for all genders through more practice-oriented teaching methods at universities and schools, STEM courses for women, and targeted continuing education.

**More practical orientation in education.** Technical future skills can be integrated into school lessons in a fun way to bring children into contact with them at an early age. This can help normalize these skills for all genders from the beginning and prevent them from being perceived as masculine. This is already the case in countries such as France and the UK: Programming is taught in primary school ([Euractiv, 2015](#)) together with basic skills such as reading and writing. There are already various programming tools that teachers can use, such as the Fraunhofer IAIS Open Roberta Lab, which allows children to program a robot. However, there is still a lack of awareness of these offers. Other opportunities include cooperation with industry or future employers. Google, for example, offers a program called Code with Google for US schools. Socioemotional future skills can also be promoted at an early stage across the gender divide as part of, e.g., an optional “social learning” subject. Children could take part in social projects together with people with disabilities, for example.

Project-based forms of learning are particularly suitable for integrating the practical application of digital skills in universities and other educational institutions; experience from the US and Finland shows this ([World Government Summit, McKinsey, 2019](#)). If digital projects are also carried out in nontechnical areas, this can help reduce trepidation in the face of technology. As a side effect, project-based learning strengthens not only specialist knowledge but also socioemotional skills such as the ability to cooperate. Some universities even offer special courses for learning such competencies, like the University of Augsburg as part of its computer science program.

Such courses require that teachers are regularly trained in future skills and new methods of cooperation. This is supported by an improved technical infrastructure at educational institutions, the provision of appropriate teaching materials, and an exchange of best practices ([World Government Summit, McKinsey, 2019](#)). The recent COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the urgency of these aspects, which are also the basis for effective digital learning formats.

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**Women-specific STEM offers.** In order to get women interested in STEM topics at an early stage, some secondary schools and universities offer special curricula or programs of study: e.g., OTH Amberg-Weiden's STEM Girls combines research workshops, excursions, and STEM company visits with training in soft skills (OTH). The zdi-Campus – Girls Try STEM program at the Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences is also breaking down barriers: Even before deciding on a course of study, young women can attend courses in various STEM subjects and complete a technical internship at the same time. Orientation semesters ("zero semesters"), in which participants can already collect credit points, also make the decision to study easier. Some universities even offer special courses for women, especially in computer science and technical fields. [The Bremen University of Applied Sciences](#), has established a dual study program for women, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry of Defence.

Mentoring programs can support the subsequent step from postsecondary education into a STEM career. One example is Mentoring Hessen, a joint project of Hessian universities and institutes of technology. As part of its ProCareer. MINT initiative, female STEM students are assigned a mentor for one year who is already successfully working in the respective professional field. This mentor provides support and advice on all issues relating to the transition to further studies or a career and helps the student build up a network.

**Further training in future skills.** Further training – especially in the fast-moving technology sector – is offered to help people keep up with developments in their own fields of expertise. For women, further training can be a decisive qualification, especially when they have had a break in their career. One example of this is Perspektive MINT – a cooperation between Göttingen's adult education center (VHS Göttingen Osterode) and the University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HAWK). It offers women the opportunity to obtain relevant qualifications for STEM occupations after a longer career break, thus increasing their chances of success when applying for jobs. Agile working methods can also be practiced in this context. Another example is the cooperation between UK tech skills organization QA and Stemettes, a socially oriented company. The cooperation's free Agile Academy for young women teaches agile project management in combination with relevant technical skills, thus increasing interest in STEM topics.

### **New working methods: Using all forms of education to practice**

The agile work forms and methods that will determine tomorrow's work routine can be learned today, practiced, and regularly updated over time. All forms of education can contribute to this.

**Agile methods in education.** Women must be trained in agile methods if they are to benefit from them. The foundations for this can already be laid in schools and universities. For example, the Agile Alliance has developed a framework, the Agile-Based Learning Environment (ABLE), that can be used in everyday school life. It combines various agile methods such as Scrum and Kanban, which can already be used by primary school classes to learn in self-organized teams. An online handbook supports teachers in implementing these methods ([Agile Alliance](#)). Agile methods can also be taught at universities – and not only in the field of software development, where they are quite common. More and more business schools are offering special modules in which students learn agile frameworks and apply them to their own contexts ([Cubric, 2013](#)).





# “With double qualifications in male-dominated domains”

## The Federal Ministry of Defence and the Bremen University of Applied Sciences offer dual study programs for women

More women in civil defense technology – more women in STEM: A cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Defence (“BMVg”) and the Bremen University of Applied Sciences aims to pave the way for this. Thanks to the practical portion of the international dual computer science program for women, female civil servants can acquire two qualifications at the same time: A Bachelor of Computer Science at the university, and a career qualification for an upper technical administration position in the Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr). Ten applicants per year are admitted: The Bundeswehr takes them on as civil servants in training on a temporary basis, and their studies run in parallel.

The two parts of the course of study are closely inter-linked: Between semesters at the university, the women go through various modules of career training, e.g. Bundeswehr-specific courses or internships in Bundeswehr offices. The seventh and final semester includes an internship lasting several weeks, also in the

“The world of technology, and thus of information technology, is still dominated by men. I experienced this in both my advanced computer science course in secondary school and my apprenticeship. So one reason I decided to pursue this degree was that it gave me the possibility to explore the topic of computer science in a strictly female environment.



I am often asked why this program is for women only. This serves to introduce women to STEM fields, giving them the chance to acquire sound, basic knowledge without being intimidated by men who are already technology-oriented.”

— Lorena D'Auria, student at the Bremen University of Applied Sciences

Bundeswehr. With their on-site presence in a predominantly male environment, the young women are also sending out clear signals of a departure from old gender roles.

The bachelor's degree program ends with the submission of a thesis and an examination at the university; the career training concludes with an internal examination at the Bundeswehr.

For talented and interested young women, the cooperation between the BMVg and the Bremen University of Applied Sciences combines two advantages: A state-of-the-art course of study in computer science and, thanks to the upper-track civil servant training, the chance of a future leadership role in the Bundeswehr.



“There is a high demand for qualified specialists and management personnel in the Bundeswehr, particularly in technical professions, putting it in considerable competition with other employers. We cannot afford to – and must not – pass up the potential of women interested in technology! It is therefore right and

important that we also discover and develop female talents in the technical field at an early stage. The international dual computer science program for women at the Bremen University of Applied Sciences provides attractive, comprehensive, and modern training, making a significant contribution to gradually increasing the proportion of women in civilian military-technology roles in the Bundeswehr. This enables qualified women to be recruited for future leadership roles.

— Lieutenant General Klaus von Heimendahl, Head of the Personnel Department at the BMVg

## Changing values: Moving away from gender stereotypes

**More gender competence for teachers.** True equal opportunities training requires overcoming outdated gender roles – focus on this goal should get stronger going forward. Educational institutions can make corresponding efforts in several areas. Interests and strengths that are perceived as gender-untypical should also be promoted.

Anyone who wants to educate and train different genders in a way that is appropriate for equal opportunities needs a strong awareness of and sensitivity to unconscious role stereotypes – this applies to teachers at all levels of education. The universities of Bielefeld, Giessen, and Hamburg have developed a module for this purpose that teaches gender competence in the teacher training program for mathematics ([University of Bielefeld](#)). Gender sensitivity in everyday teaching requires awareness that gender relations are socially constructed – teachers must reflect on and question their own ideas on gender. This concept can also be applied to other subjects and areas of education. It will also be important to revise teaching and study materials: The elimination of hidden clichés and the creation of positive role models will promote a change in the basic attitudes of society (Council of Europe).

## Politics: Networking, funding, creating a legal framework

Whether discussing future skills, new ways of working, or changed priorities – political frameworks determine what is feasible. However, it is not easy to design them in such a way that exploits new opportunities and avoids potentially undesirable consequences. The following overview shows how other countries have succeeded and what possible solutions experts see.

### Future skills: Preparing experts

In recent years, policymakers have created initiatives on equal opportunities for women and men. In particular, the Komm, mach MINT program (funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research) offers a range of resources, e.g., taster courses, orientation studies, intersession classes, teaching materials, brochures, job exchanges, and STEM slams. Since the start of the program in 2008, there has been a small increase in the proportion of women in STEM courses. This was an important step, and additional offerings should follow.

**Support for continuing education in technology.** Continuing vocational training offers in enterprises are a central approach to imparting digital and technical skills to women, benefiting from financial and content-related support from the government. In Australia, this is done through the Women's Leadership and Development program launched by the Australian prime minister: The government grants subsidies for projects such as continuing education that bring more women into professional fields – and even into management positions – in which they have previously been poorly represented.<sup>16</sup> In Germany, too, further training opportunities are promoted and supported by the Qualification Opportunities Act.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding>

**Proactive education on future trends in the labor market.** An essential prerequisite for more equal opportunities is that people are thoroughly informed about developments in the labor market and future challenges. Politics has a key role to play here: Citizens must have all the information they need to be able to take advantage of new opportunities. Canada provides an example of this. The user-friendly Job Bank website identifies the skills that are particularly in demand in the labor market and prepares job profiles for numerous professions. For women in particular, it is important to understand where the best and most promising career options lie in the future and what skills will be needed for them.

### New forms of work and organization: Broadening the legal framework

There are also many policy approaches to modern forms of work organization. In particular, the legal framework for learning and practicing flexible solutions needs to be strengthened.

**The right to work from home.** In the Netherlands, employees have been entitled to advice on working from home and to a serious examination of the possibilities since the beginning of 2016. Although this is not yet considered the full right to work from home, the obligatory examination of this option can lead to both sides taking a closer look at possible options. The Federal Republic of Germany does not yet have any legal provisions regulating location-independent working.

**The right to further training in new forms of work and organization.** In Sweden, incentives for further training are specifically set and legally anchored: According to the legal provisions on further training leave, employees in the public and private sectors are entitled to leaves of absence for the purpose of further training.<sup>17</sup> In Germany, many federal states offer the possibility of taking educational leave under certain conditions – these regulations are, however, less clearly laid out compared to the Swedish example. It will continue to be important for employers to encourage their employees to take advantage of further training opportunities and help them choose the right options. This could particularly benefit women who still have a digital/technology skills gap to close and also employees who want to train in new forms of work and organizational models (e.g., agile working, Scrum).

### Changing values and priorities: Facilitating individual life planning

The desire of the younger generation to seek meaningful tasks in and outside work, plus the needs-based division of professional and family commitments – and thus also a modern distribution of tasks in relationships – can be supported by politics in several areas, as the examples listed here show.

**Simplified application processes for parental allowance.** In Sweden, the application process for parental allowance has been made particularly simple. Parents can apply for parental allowance via an internet platform and flexibly determine how many parental allowance days they are entitled to, how they are divided, and how they are transferred.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/459040/8acbd3ae69d88a308f09a39b6895a/WD-6-084-16-pdf-data.pdf>

In Germany, on the other hand, the complex application process makes it even more difficult to use parental allowance – especially ElterngeldPlus,<sup>18</sup>, which actually favors equal opportunities through the possibility of more part-time work. The results of an Allensbach survey support this: Many respondents cited the high complexity of the design options and the application process itself as a major hurdle (IW, 2018a; [IfD Allensbach](#), 2017).

The nationwide digitization of administrative services is already planned in Germany and, in many cases, is already being implemented. A simplification of the process could lead to greater use of ElterngeldPlus – which in turn would open up opportunities for women to have part-time roles without financial disadvantage compared to the basic parental allowance. Overall, this development should also encourage employers to respond more strongly to the new life priorities of young parents and offer more attractive part-time employment models.

**Financial incentives for better distribution of parental leave.** Another approach comes from Sweden: A financial bonus is used to encourage both parents to take parental leave more equally. Couples can take a total of 480 days of paid parental leave per child, which is divided equally between the two parents. They are paid 80 percent of their previous salary, with the monthly amount capped at the equivalent of approximately EUR 2,800 – around EUR 1,000 more than in Germany. In order to best promote equal opportunities, 90 of the 240 days per parent cannot be transferred to the partner (“[Forsäkringskassan](#)”). The concept is proving successful: At least one year of parental leave is now nothing unusual in Sweden for both women and men ([Collins](#), 2020). If parental leave is also the norm for fathers, it lessens the concern that parental leave will reduce their chances of achieving a leadership position.

In Germany, the “partner months” model is similar. The maximum length of parental allowance increases from 12 to 14 months if both parents each take at least two months’ parental leave ([IW](#), 2018b).<sup>19</sup>

**Entitlement to part-time work.** Those who can continue to work part-time after the birth of a child find it easier to reconcile work and family life. In the Netherlands, there is already a solution to promote part-time work for employees at all hierarchy levels, including management positions. Since 2000, employees have been able to increase or reduce their working hours, unless the employer can prove that there are serious economic reasons for not doing so. In Sweden, parents of children under the age of eight can reduce their working time to 30 hours a week ([Collins](#), 2020).

In Germany, the law on temporary part-time work offers many employees the opportunity to shorten their working hours, at least temporarily, and thus carry out their desired life and partnership model. In combination with the right to return to full time, which has been in force since the beginning of 2019, this prevents employees from unintentionally and unwantedly remaining in part-time employment.

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18 ElterngeldPlus allows part-time work of up to 30 hours a week. One basic parental allowance month corresponds to two ElterngeldPlus months, i.e., the possible period of entitlement is doubled and the monthly parental allowance is halved.

19 <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/678118/fe6786d7febcf160b2ddbdbc34d40ce1/WD-9-089-19-pdf-data.pdf>

**Individual taxation with a transferable basic allowance.** Besides Switzerland, France, and the US, Germany is one of the few countries that enables spouses to have their taxes assessed jointly. Due to the progressive tax rates, this can significantly reduce the combined tax burden, but the effect is most significant in couples with widespread salary differences (DIW, 2014). Since male partners often earn more, when splitting taxation between spouses, it tends to be more favorable for women to reduce the combined tax burden via their lower earnings. But this also means that women have no tax incentive to work and earn more (DIW, 2014). All in all, this favors a distribution of tasks in which, in times of greater family burdens – such as after the birth of a child or when care is needed – the woman can reduce her working hours.

In other European countries like Sweden (since 1971), the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, and Austria, there is an alternative model to splitting taxation between spouses – individual taxation (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2011). In individual taxation, each spouse is assessed separately for income tax, but in many models the basic tax-free allowance can be transferred to the higher-earning spouse. Depending on the design of the model and the amount of the transferable basic tax-free allowance, individual taxation is considered to be conducive to gender equality, the participation of married women in working life, and a better work–life balance (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2012).

**More childcare facilities.** It is not necessary to emphasize the central role that childcare plays in equal opportunities. With the change in values in the younger generation of parents, it is becoming even more important. In Germany, however, there are still considerable gaps in childcare provision, especially in large cities, despite the legal entitlement to childcare spots. Currently there is a shortage of about 320,000 daycare spots (IW, 2019b). The German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) proposes investing more public funds in improving the quality of daycare and expanding daycare according to demand. Furthermore, a nationwide standardization has been proposed, since childcare is often very differently organized by each states and municipality (DIW, 2017b). The DIW also expressly supports the expansion of all-day care for primary school children, especially since this could have a positive effect on job opportunities for the parents. According to the DIW, this would lead to an increase in their employment and thus in the gross family income, so that the “self-financing share,” based on the additional costs for the tax authorities, could be estimated at up to 72 percent (DIW, 2020b).



# Outlook:

## Taking advantage of the positive effects of the crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a crisis that would have been unthinkable a few months ago. Our entire social and economic life, including our everyday working life, has been turned upside down. But this crisis has also had positive consequences, especially with regard to New Work: The whole country went through (and is still going through) a kind of involuntary pilot project; overnight, New Work had to become the new normal for many. Elements such as remote working (primarily from the home office) or the flexibilization of working hours became an inevitable part of everyday life for large parts of the working population, companies, and educational institutions.

In the course of this pilot project, numerous initiatives emerged – people made a virtue of necessity, and, in many cases, the crisis stimulated new creative forces. Many of these initiatives are worth retaining as they serve as models of New Work and equal opportunities. To name just a few examples from Chefsache companies: Spontaneously founded parent networks, which could continue to exist in the future, organized emergency childcare; women’s networks were maintained in virtual spaces; new digital learning opportunities were created to teach employees future skills; and virtual coffee breaks helped maintain personal exchange. Managers were supported in developing their digital leadership skills, which in the long term will help young parents, in particular, successfully lead teams from their home offices. New digital formats have also been developed in cooperation with politicians to use future skills to overcome the crisis – including the German government’s #wirvsvirus hackathon.

As positive as all these changes are – in the context of the COVID-19 crisis – fears were repeatedly expressed that women could now be even more disadvantaged and be forced back into traditional roles. Based on the previous distribution of responsibilities, the main fear is that the additional domestic and childcare needs in the crisis are more likely to be met by mothers – who, if required to choose between childcare or work, may be forced to cut back on their careers. In addition, more women than men are employed in many sectors that have been particularly hit hard economically – such as the hotel and catering industry.

In the long term, however, women, and especially mothers, could possibly even benefit from the crisis: In Chefsache’s April 2020 survey, 38 percent of mothers stated that they had received benefits for their participation in the workplace through offers from their employer during the COVID-19 crisis – twice as many as the overall average (17 percent). Some possible reasons: During the crisis, remote workers have enhanced their digital skills, and employers have accepted and enabled more flexible working. Women in particular have been able to benefit from the new flexibility and have significantly improved these skills – thus creating a foundation on which they can build and use future-oriented qualifications.

In addition, the crisis has shown that working flexibly is sustainable on a broader basis. The increased acceptance of such models – especially among managers – means that women will also be able to use them in the future with greater ease to reconcile family and career. Last but not least, the crisis could also accelerate the change in values. Many men have become more involved in childcare as a result of the crisis – and our survey shows that this was also a reason why they want to take on more responsibility in the family in the future.

So there were certainly many positive changes for New Work and equal opportunities. Now it is important to ensure that this momentum is not lost after the crisis. The Chefsache initiative has identified four key areas for action:

1. **Promote and strengthen competencies.** The crisis has shown that digital skills can be learned on the job. This is a wake-up call for companies to promote them in the future with practice-oriented training courses during working hours, and also for educational institutions to place these skills at the forefront in the future.
2. **Make flexible working the standard.** Wherever possible, companies should enable employees to integrate remote working and flexible working hours into their regular working lives. Policymakers can create the legal framework for this.
3. **Expand digital infrastructure.** Companies must guarantee the technical prerequisites for flexible working – and schools must also expand their digital infrastructure. Political support is needed here.
4. **Strengthen diversity and inclusion.** The crisis has far-reaching consequences for the German economy. At the same time, a recent study shows a clear correlation between diversity and business success (McKinsey, 2020). In order to survive in today's working world and tackle current challenges, diversity is more in demand than ever. Homogeneous management teams find it more difficult to find suitable answers to an ever-changing world. This makes it all the more important for the promotion of inclusion and diversity to not fall by the wayside in the current crisis mode and in the future next normal.

In terms of New Work and equal opportunities, the crisis has opened up a wide range of new opportunities in a very short time. It is up to us to make use of these and, by promoting new forms of work and initiatives, support a fairer distribution of tasks within families. Let's tackle these tasks so that after the crisis, we can say that we brought about noticeable improvements and that we can go into the future stronger.



# List of sources

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