DIVERSITY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

BASIC PRINCIPLES AND QUALITY INDICATORS

Guidelines for Action by RAA Berlin

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DIVERSITY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The starting point for the following basic principles of Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development is the conclusion that incorporating a diversity and equity orientation can be a strategy for state institutions and non-government organizations to increase equal opportunity, act against discrimination and, additionally, get better results.

Working towards diversity, inclusion and equity in the workplace makes good sense for organizations of all kinds, but it is essential for institutions such as nurseries, schools, youth and family centres, and for political education organizations. Institutions that work with children and young people have a mandate from society not only to propagate democratic plurality but also to actively model it.

Beyond this, Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development can also provide economic benefits for the organizations in question in the medium and long term. These advantages include happier and healthier staff, increased appeal as an employer, and reaching wider target groups.

In the following three pages, we explain the theoretical basis for our approach. These **six basic principles** are based on a common-sense, best-practice organizational development framework. We have delineated them in order to clarify the different dimensions of work required to make positive change in an organization.

To make the principles easier to use in practice, we have drawn up quality indicators for each of them. Together, the basic principles and the **quality indicators** are designed as the basis for a process of organizational development that involves organizational, cognitive and emotional dimensions.

Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development can be understood as a comprehensive and preventive strategy to stop discrimination and disadvantaging in all areas before it sets in and to promote inclusion and equity.

DIVERSITY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THEORETICAL BASIS

Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development is designed to reflect societal diversity and differing life situations and life styles within organizations. Its aim is to simultaneously enable both difference and equality of opportunity within organizations.

“Diversity-oriented organizational development”, “diversity management”, “intercultural opening” – what is the difference between these approaches? Conventional diversity management takes into account the six core dimensions of age, dis/ability, ethnicity/origin, gender, religion/worldview, and sexual orientation. The so-called intercultural opening approach focuses on only one of these dimensions, concentrating on the characteristics of origin and nationality. In this approach, characteristics based on migration and culture are ascribed to certain groups, and organizations are then supposed to develop sensitivity towards these characteristics.

By contrast, Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development is based on a more holistic understanding of diversity. This includes multi-layered dimensions with differing significance within society, also taking into account the areas where they intersect (intersectionality) and the fact that they can change over time. Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development can also be understood as a process of Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming with a strong race-equity focus – in other words, a comprehensive and preventive strategy to stop discrimination and disadvantaging in all areas before it sets in, and to promote inclusion and equity.

The personality dimensions depicted in the diagram below reflect the holistic approach of Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development. The depiction is based on the system developed by pioneers of Diversity Management, Lee Gardenswartz, Marilyn Loden, Judy Rosener, and Anita Rowe (see: Loden/Rosener 1991 and Gardenswartz/Rowe 1998). We have extended and expanded it in an attempt to systematize complex factors in order to enable its use as a working tool for implementing Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development.

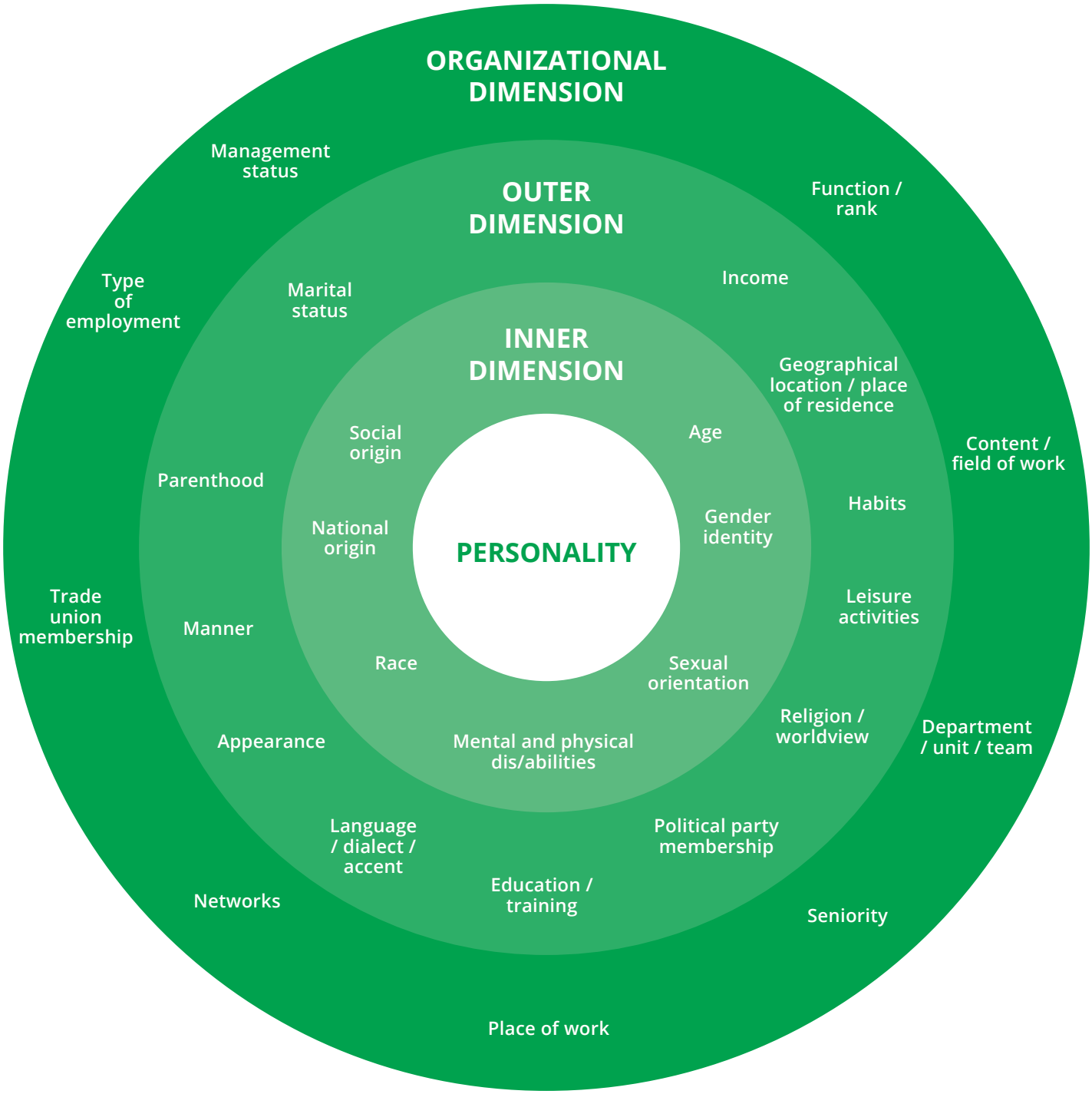

Fig. 1: Personality dimensions within an organization

The characteristics that describe an individual's personality and status in the context of an organization are structured into three dimensions in this diagram:

- The "inner dimension" lists the characteristics that are (mainly) unchanging.
- The "outer dimension" contains characteristics that generally can change over time.
- The "organizational dimension" refers to characteristics of the job within the organization.

The basic principles and quality criteria of Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development are based on the **anti-discrimination paradigm** and the **learning and effectiveness paradigm**.

The **anti-discrimination paradigm** takes into account the ethical and – in line with the German federal law implemented in the General Equal Treatment Act (GETA) – legal aspects of organizations and projects. This approach focuses on structures within an organization that are barriers to access or lead to discrimination against individuals with certain histories and characteristics. The anti-discrimination paradigm enables measures for perceiving and breaking down such barriers.

The **learning and effectiveness paradigm** regards the organization as a flexible, learning structure. This approach takes the actual conditions within an organization as its starting point and focuses on development processes that help support and develop individuals and teams. When a systematic development process enables individuals with diverse and differing experiences, skills, talents, priorities, values, views, and ways of life to develop further, this encourages them to take more responsibility and participate more fully in the organization.

When individuals with diverse and differing experiences, skills, talents, priorities, values, views, and ways of life can fully participate and further develop in the context of a systematic development process, individual responsibility-taking and active involvement increase.

Linking these two approaches creates an integrated framework for sustainable further development of organizations that take diversity seriously, want to act against discrimination, and perceive this development as a positive opportunity.

The following basic principles and quality criteria are intended as suggestions. As a rule, they cannot be completely implemented at the same time, in every organization. Putting them into practice may call for significant financial and personnel resources and may take several years. It may therefore make sense to initially implement certain sub-sections or practices only, and to expand from there. Note that the Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development approach can be integrated into previously initiated organizational development processes.

1. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development is understood as a commitment of the organization at all levels of leadership and operation (with a clear rationale) and as a process within which existing potential is fostered and conflicts are taken seriously. The process as a whole requires resources and external support such as coaching and advising.

2. ORGANIZATION CULTURE

Management staff have a responsibility to model respectful and appreciative interpersonal interactions through their own behaviour. Together with the non-managerial staff, they thus create a working atmosphere that supports and develops individuals in their difference and diversity, encourages reflection processes, and acts against societal disadvantages.

3. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

While taking its own goals into account, the organization also creates possibilities for the flexible structuring of working hours and workplaces according to individual needs. Its processes, physical premises and technical equipment ensure participation and autonomy for all individuals working in the organization.

4. PERSONNEL

The selection and development of staff serves to establish and secure personnel diversity and inclusion on all levels. Those working in the organization are trained to work in a manner that centres diversity.

5. COMMUNICATION

The collective knowledge of a diverse workforce enables respectful communication with diverse target groups. Texts and images are designed to be appreciative and inviting, and centre diversity, equity and inclusion. This also applies to the use of appropriate and respectful terms and symbols, especially when referring to or addressing marginalized groups.

6. PROJECT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Projects and services for specific target groups are based on the principles of fair and equitable treatment. This is particularly relevant when the target group is socially marginalized. Individuals and organizations from the relevant target group are involved in the development and configuration of these projects and services from the outset.

THE 6 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DIVERSITY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR QUALITY INDICATORS

1. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Basic principle

Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development is understood as a commitment of the organization at all levels of leadership and operation (with a clear rationale) and as a process within which existing potential is fostered and conflicts are taken seriously. The process as a whole requires resources and external support such as coaching and advising.

Quality indicators

1. The organization management commits to the Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development process.
2. The organization management involves all staff in implementing the process.
3. Diversity orientation is understood as an interdisciplinary issue affecting all staff and all working areas.
4. The organisation provides financial, personnel, and time resources for the process.
5. The entire process is supported by external advisers.
6. The process creates room for reflection and dialogue on the importance and implementation of diversity orientation.
7. The organization implements a mission statement and/or management concept with a on diversity and equity orientation.

2. ORGANIZATION CULTURE

Basic principle

Management staff have a responsibility to model respectful and appreciative interpersonal interactions through their own behaviour. Together with the non-managerial staff, they thus create a working atmosphere that supports and develops individuals in their difference and diversity, encourages reflection processes, and acts against societal disadvantages.

Quality indicators

MANAGEMENT

1. Management staff practice diversity-sensitive and anti-discriminatory management behaviour.
2. Management staff have instruments to support them in taking the development potential and needs of all staff into account.
3. The management structure is clear for all staff within the organization.
4. Decision-making processes take place in a transparent and participative way.

WORKING ATMOSPHERE

5. Management and non-managerial staff take a asset-oriented and respectful approach to differences in biographies, languages, appearance, experience of discrimination, ways of working, etc.
6. Management and non-managerial staff are sensitized to the discriminatory potential of stereotyping and stigmatization, and act against them.
7. There is a culture of constructive criticism that treats “mistakes” as learning opportunities and establishes positive procedures for dealing with them.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

8. There is a predetermined approach for dealing with conflicts.
9. Processes and structures for dealing with conflicts also take into account the balance of power between the parties involved.
10. Possible strategies for finding solutions to conflicts are, as required: moderated dialogues, supervision, and further training.
11. In cases in which discrimination seems to be a possible factor, staff are referred to appropriate independent advice services and complaint bodies (in line with GETA).

3. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Basic principle

While taking its own goals into account, the organization also creates possibilities for the flexible structuring of working hours and workplaces according to individual needs. Its processes, physical premises and technical equipment ensure participation and autonomy for all individuals working in the organization.

Quality indicators

STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION

1. The organization structure is clear and understandable to all staff.
2. There are qualified individuals responsible for diversity-sensitive and discrimination-relevant issues, who the staff can contact confidentially.

WORK ORGANIZATION AND CONFIGURATION

3. The forms and conditions of the work can be configured according to staff members' individual needs to the extent possible, while taking into account organizational goals.
4. The arrangement of working hours and mobile working are flexible, while taking into account the requirements of the job.
5. Salaries, wages, and fees are set according to transparent and understandable criteria and are based on principles of equitable treatment.
6. There are suitable provisions or spaces to accommodate a variety of individual needs and requirements.
7. The organization provides appropriate health and wellness activities for staff.

ACCESSIBILITY

8. Communication and information sharing are designed to be accessible for all.
9. The technology used in the organization is set up accessibly and is updated regularly.
10. All spaces are accessible for people with restricted mobility.

4. PERSONNEL

Basic principle

The selection and development of staff serves to establish and secure personnel diversity and inclusion on all levels. Those working in the organization are trained to work in a manner that centres diversity.

Quality indicators

STAFF SELECTION

1. Under-represented diversity dimensions are named in job advertisements and assessed positively (this is also possible in anonymous recruitment procedures).
2. Job advertisements are published in diverse media and distribution channels, so as to specifically address socially marginalized target groups.
3. With the aim of increasing diversity within the organization, vacancies in all areas are filled in an anti-discriminatory manner — including on the management level.
4. Staff are employed with equal rights with regard to conditions and features of a job (pay, requirement for social insurance contributions, etc.).

PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

5. The personnel management supports staff in developing their potentials and skills.
6. Staff have access to individual and requirement-oriented training and supervision.
7. Management and non-managerial staff take part in qualified training courses on diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-discrimination issues.

5. COMMUNICATION

Basic principle

The collective knowledge of a diverse workforce enables respectful communication with diverse target groups. Texts and images are designed to be appreciative and inviting, and centre diversity, equity and inclusion. This also applies to the use of appropriate and respectful terms and symbols, especially when referring to or addressing marginalized groups.

Quality indicators

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

1. Management and non-managerial staff take a diversity, equity and inclusion-sensitive approach to individuals inside and outside the organization.
2. The organization formulates guidelines for using language and images in an anti-discriminatory way.
3. Socially marginalized perspectives play a significant role in formulating these guidelines.
4. All media and communications use diversity-sensitive language and images.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

5. The organization develops an inclusive concept to secure organizational knowledge.
6. The selection processes for knowledge sources are checked and configured for an appropriate and relevant diversity orientation by management and non-managerial staff.
7. The organization's knowledge base (also) includes knowledge and expertise from socially marginalized groups.

6. PROJECT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Basic principle

Projects and services for specific target groups are based on the principles of fair and equitable treatment. This is particularly relevant when the target group is socially marginalized. Individuals and organizations from the relevant target group are involved in the development and configuration of these projects and services from the outset.

Quality indicators

1. The development of content for projects and services aimed at specific target groups involves members of the relevant target group in the conception.
2. Cooperation with individuals and organizations from the target groups is (financially) rewarded.
3. When selecting cooperating organizations, the representation of the relevant target group(s) is as heterogeneous as possible.
4. Project-based vacancies are also filled with suitably qualified individuals from the relevant target group(s).

Diversity-Oriented Organizational Development starts from the insight that incorporating a diversity and equity orientation can be a strategy for state institutions and non-government organizations alike to increase equal opportunity, act against discrimination, work more professionally and get better results.

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