



Call for Participation in the Community Challenge: How can we foster diversity in German think tanks?

Why launch a community challenge on diversity in think tanks

Think tanks are far from being reflective of the diversity in our societies, both when it comes to [their workforce](#) and [conference panels](#) as these studies and [resources](#) have shown with regard to gender equality. The lack of diversity in German think tanks in terms of gender, educational, socio-economic and cultural or ethnic background has been of great concern to the think-tankers who participated in our focus group workshops – and it puts into question our industry’s relevance and legitimacy. The homogeneity and group dynamic within the policy expert bubble lead to a phenomenon called ‘groupthink’ or [confirmation bias](#): The likelihood that we will think ‘outside the box’ when it comes to solving complex policy problems is diminished compared to more diverse group settings. Moreover, as key influencers of public policy and public opinion, think-tanks should counter the [danger of a single story](#) for policy. Moreover, if think tanks do not reflect the diversity of the society they are part of, they run the risk of being seen as elitist and out of touch, and might not be able to reach the decision-makers of the future, who will most certainly look different than today.

Aim of the community challenge

The Think Tank Lab is bringing together dedicated think-tankers and think-tank stakeholders who care about diversity for a 4-months community challenge.

In monthly working sessions, we will analyze

- what stands in the way of more diversity in German think tanks,
- what good practices are out there,
- what can be done to move ahead on this, together.

Beyond analysis, the goal of the challenge is to prototype and test approaches to contribute to a more inclusive think tank landscape in Germany.

We are aware that fostering diversity in institutions is a long-term challenge that we won't solve once and for all within five months. But we are curious to see what difference we can make in such a limited time-frame if we bring colleagues from different think-tanks together for a sprint.

Why join the Community Challenge

By joining this working group, you will have the chance to work with an exciting group of peers, expand your knowledge about diversity management, and make a difference for your organization and the German think tank landscape at large. All work produced by participants of the community challenge will be duly publicly acknowledged.

For whom is it

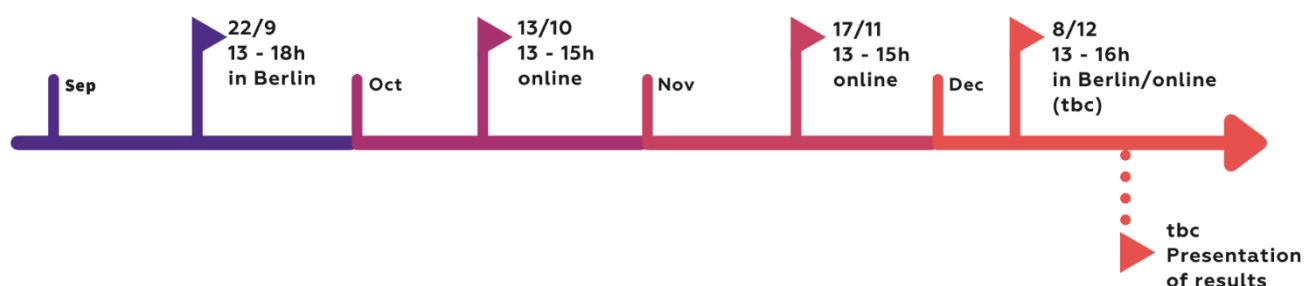
This challenge is for think-tankers and think-tank stakeholders (e.g. funders, policy-makers, members) who care about diversity and inclusion and work in or with German think-tanks. Prior engagement with the topic of diversity or the methodology is helpful but not required. More important is openness to engage with and reflect diversity in your own work environment. All levels of experience are welcome. We explicitly encourage people with minority backgrounds or discrimination experience to apply.

How we will work

We will use elements from design sprint methodology as well as systems thinking and systems change and combine them with expertise from diversity management. We will combine analysis of the system with personal reflection and experiential learning.

The working group will meet once a month for 2-3 hours. Inbetween meetings, participants develop and test prototypes according to their interest and capacities. The results of our group work will be presented to the wider think-tank community.

Timeline



Your commitment

Participants commit to

- attend all working sessions indicated in the timeline;
- contribute to the prototypes between meetings according to interest and capacities

How to participate

To apply for participation in this challenge, please fill in the [application form](#) by **August 8, 2021**. You will be notified by August 16, 2021.

Facilitation

The challenge will be facilitated by Maria Prahla and Claire Luzia Leifert.



Maria Prahl studied Cultural Sciences, Eastern European Studies (M.A.) and Human Resource Development. (M.A.) She was trained as facilitator and works since 2004 in the field of societal change and diversity. She completed trainings in systems thinking and systems change and is certified consultant in this field (Master of Systemic Interventions). She is also Innovation Coach.

Her main focus lies in the work with civil society, public administration, higher education institutions and research institutions. 2021 she founded the social enterprise [Working Between Cultures](#), which helps teams and institutions to include diversity in their organizations through Human Resource and Organizational Development approaches.



Claire Luzia Leifert heads the [Think Tank Lab](#), a community of practice for think tankers throughout Germany. She also founded and heads the German Council on Foreign Relations' [Impact & Innovation Lab](#), a learning and experimentation space for new approaches to policy advice and public engagement with international politics. In this role, she offers support on process and service design, develops trainings, facilitates strategy workshops, and hosts DGAP's internal knowledge exchange format "Method Breakfast." Before that, she headed a professional development program and network for public intrapreneurs from Eastern Europe and worked at the Heinrich Böll Foundation as a project manager. Since 2006, she has been a freelance trainer and facilitator in Germany and abroad. Claire studied European studies and international relations in Maastricht, Montreal, Berlin, and Vancouver. She graduated from the HPI School of Design Thinking, is a certified adult education trainer, and completed further training in Participatory Leadership (Art of Hosting), gender-oriented project management and Active Witnessing.

Contact

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