

October 2016

RECONCILING WORK AND LIFE

Experiences from Germany

WWS Series 6





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INTRODUCTION

When the US government started to develop the *National Plan on Responsible Business Conduct*, we at WWS Worldwide suggested policies that address the reconciliation between work and family life (see attachment 1). The National Plan—which was initiated by request of the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*—made many suggestions focused on important issues such as low minimum salary, the work situation of farm workers and Native Americans, human trafficking in the supply chain, and work conditions in the supply chain overseas. However, a broader reflection on the work culture in the US, with its expectation of 24/7 availability, was missing.

At the same time, many eloquently written books and a huge number of newspaper articles were being published that described the same big problem with having it all: workplaces are still designed for a breadwinner-homemaker model that is no longer an ideal or an option for most of us. But how can the paradigm shift happen to change this design—to allow real choices for women and men regarding work and family life? What ideas need to be transformed? What workplace policies are needed? What would work best?

Low birthrates in Europe created a situation that brought the relevant actors together: businesses, unions, governments, and civil society started to create initiatives and policies to adjust workplaces to today's realities. But this has not happened in the U.S.

The following paper describes the long history of women as food providers, and the very short history of women as housewives and mothers. It discusses the downside of the traditional family model, and the current challenges of “having it all”—and it presents the successes and challenges Germany has experienced in its efforts to reconcile work and family life.

WORK AND LIFE OVER TIMES AND CULTURES

From Breadwinning Mothers and Involved Fathers to Homemakers and Absent Fathers

Women in many different cultures and times of history mostly worked in fields and gardens, collecting food; in other words, their charge was to “win the bread” for their family. In hunter-gatherer societies, women collected up to 80% of the food for the family, while men provided only 20% through hunting, which guaranteed a simple lifestyle with a lot of leisure time for both men and women.

With the shift to agriculture, the family as a single economic unit shared work outside and inside the house. Women had an active role in food production, preparation and sales; meanwhile, men in the family farm or the artisan workshop had an important role to play as fathers, as they worked in close proximity to their children. They introduced their sons and sometimes their daughters to their craft, and they exercised authority over household relations. Childhood as a carefree time is a recent Western concept; traditionally, children were required to make important contributions to the household as helpers and workers. They hung out in multi-age groups, where they learned skills from many different people, and were raised by multiple caretakers (elder siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and even neighbors).

With industrialization came the end of these household arrangements and the rise of the role of the male breadwinner—and the absent father. Here, with the decline of fatherhood, rose the importance of motherhood. This male breadwinner-female homemaker model is a new concept that gained wide acceptance in the 1950s due to economic gains and medical advances¹. But even as this family model was

being accepted as an ideal, middle class women began to feel isolated in their new roles and tired of the endless, repetitive housework—a feeling best captured in Betty Friedan’s famous book *The Feminine Mystique*.

In the fifties and sixties, women who stayed at home defined their role primarily as housewives—but today, they see themselves primarily as stay-at-home mothers, with their life arranged around the needs of their children. They are on duty 24/7, and are expected to provide constant availability, fostering, nurturing, understanding, and encouraging their children. On any given day they are busy finishing baking projects, tutoring homework, volunteering at school, organizing elaborated themed birthday parties, driving their kids to soccer or ballet practices, and chaperoning educational visits to museums or theaters. Instead of being with multiple persons, each child is constantly with his or her mother; she is now solely responsible for her children’s success in life².

“It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night – she was afraid to ask even herself the silent question-“Is that all?”

Betty Friedan *The Feminine Mystique*

“Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition: the clean becomes soiled, the soiled is made clean, over and over, day after day. The housewife wears herself out marking time: she makes nothing, simply perpetuate the present...Eating, sleeping, cleaning—the years no longer rise up towards heaven, they lie spread out ahead, grey and identical. The battle against dust and dirt is never won.”

Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*

“...- my wife’s anger toward me seemed barely contained. ‘You only think about yourself,’ she would tell me. ‘I have never thought I’d to raise a family alone.’”

Barack Obama *The Audacity of Hope*

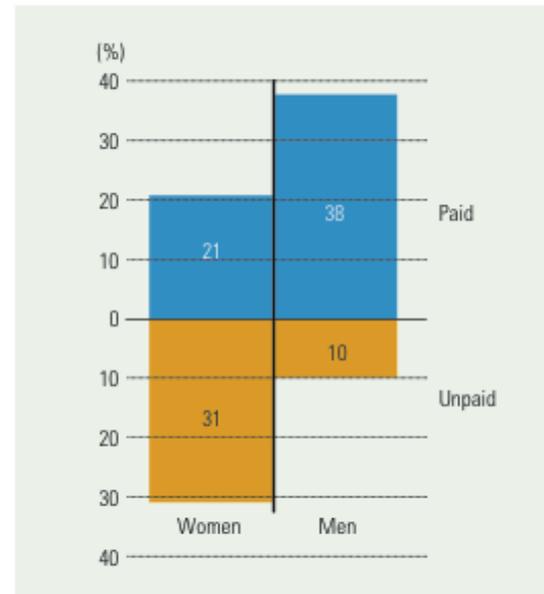
Dependent Stay-at-Home Mom vs. Overtired Working Mother?

The downsides are obvious. The male breadwinner -female homemaker model creates a power asymmetry in the relationship between husband and wife. Wives often depend on their husbands' benevolence, because unpaid activities are not acknowledged in the same way as paid activities—even though society as a whole would not function without the unpaid contributions of women. Many men could not pursue a demanding career without a wife at home who takes care of their children and/or elderly or sick family members, not to mention the household itself, with all its different tasks. Globally, in fact, women contribute 52% of total (paid and unpaid) hours worked, while men contribute 48%³.

If those non-monetized activities were treated as market transactions at prevailing wages, they would yield an annual income of \$115,000 US, according a survey by the human resource consultancy Kenexa⁴. This sum may seem high, but it's important to consider the professionalization of domestic tasks in the US today; high-quality childcare, for example, is often as expensive as a college education—and is therefore not an option for everybody.

When women earn less than their partners do, they are more likely to stay at home when their children are young—and when they come back after two or more years, they frequently have trouble

Men dominate the world of paid work, and women the world of unpaid work



Note: Data are a female and male population-weighted average of 63 countries representing 69 percent of the world's adult (ages 15 and older) population. Source: Human Development Report Office calculations based on Chammes (2015).

Source: UNDP 2015: 107

finding anything similar to their prior job or salary. Women who drop out of the workforce, even for a short time, pay a large long-term economic penalty. In the US, the wage gap is mainly between mothers and everybody else, as there is a fatherhood bonus of roughly \$5,000 US⁵.

Manisha Thakor (2011), Director of Wealth Strategies for Women at Buckingham, depicts the economic disadvantages that women have due to lower pay and taking time off for care giving with what she calls the “77/11 effect”: women earn 77% of what men earn, and typically spend 11 years out of the work force because they quit their jobs to look after their children.

In her book *The Feminine Mistake* (2007), Leslie Bennetts describes how women give up their careers, and when their kids eventually leave, there is nothing left for them to do (especially as life expectancy has increased from 51 one hundred years ago to 80 years today). Stay-at-home-moms are very vulnerable to divorce, because they risk falling into a poverty trap without their husbands—especially because, due to alimony reform in many US states, stay-at-home-moms get only temporary alimony and are expected to find a job (which, as we’ve already discussed, can prove difficult after being out of the work force for many years)⁶.

How can society create an enabling environment where women can make empowered choice?

Paid parental leave is one of the most important benefits of flexibility extended to working parents, especially when mandatory paternity leave policies are implemented. The correct mix of policies can help ensure high rates of female labour force participation and motivated, satisfied workers with a good work–life balance.

Paid maternity leave benefits are essential for women to return to work after child bearing. About 85 percent of countries provide at least 12 weeks of maternity leave. Of 185 countries surveyed by the International Labour Organization, all but 2 (Papua New Guinea and the United States) allow mothers to receive at least some leave — paid for by the state, by employers or by some combination of both. Though only a third of countries meet the recommended minimum of at least 14 weeks off for new mothers, paid at least at two-thirds their salary and funded publicly, the picture is broadly good in developed countries and is improving in developing countries.

UNDP’s Report on *Rethinking Work for Human Development* (2015: 123)

The truth is, women who opt out are rather *pushed* out in actuality; in other words, in most cases they do not have a choice. The work world in the United States is structured around a worker who is available 24/7—and as mothers are expected to be available for their kids 24/7, it is hard for mothers to combine work with family life. If a parent has a partner at home who takes care of the kids, the choice is working 24/7 and not spending enough time with the family, but the choice is made knowing that at least one caring parent will be present to compensate for the other's absence. If two parents have a challenging career, in contrast, the choice seems more like sacrificing the well-being of your kids for your career.

Although working mothers suffer less from social isolation, depression, and anxiety and typically have higher self-esteem than stay-at-home-moms, when they come home, most of them have a “second shift,” as the sociologist Arlie Hochschild labeled it. On average, a working mother works an extra month more per year than her working husband does, because she feels more responsible for the home; she is far more likely to check on the nanny during the day, look for a Halloween costume for her child, make doctor's appointments, write holiday cards, organize birthday parties, sign her children up for summer camp, and more. In general, women take over the daily tasks that need to be done, such as cooking, washing up, and helping their children with homework, while men take over the tasks that can be done “when they have time.”

Not only do men have control over when they contribute to household work, they also tend to take on the more desirable chores, such as taking kids to the football game rather than cleaning the house. In general, working mothers spend less quality time with their kids than do working dads. They also engage in much more multitasking, such as unloading the dishwasher, thinking out the shopping list, and keeping an eye on their three-year-old all at the same time. As a result, women are overtired, sick, emotionally drained, and overwhelmed by all their different duties.

Further, while educated working women have the choice to stay at home or hire a nanny, housekeeper, and tutors and continue to work, mothers from low-income families and single parents do not have this choice at all. Their workplaces are often less family friendly; they cannot afford quality childcare; and they are sometimes working in a low-paid nanny or housekeeper position to help the middle-class working mothers get out of the house. This leaves many with a bitter taste, knowing that the liberation of the predominantly white middle-class woman has been achieved on the backs of low-income women.

‘Early life lasts a lifetime’ says Stephen Bezruchka. He argues that the refusal to pay parental leave when infants are small and need their parents the most, costs more later in poor health and other problems. Further, children from poorer households lag behind their wealthier peers, because their parents cannot provide them with the same educational, athletic, social, or cultural activities — even for free or low-cost activities. For single parents the situation is, in many cases, even more challenging. A study of the OECD links the economic vulnerability of families to the parents’ incapacity to reconcile employment and parenthood, which applies even more for families whose salaries are not enough to provide housing, healthcare, nutritious food, transportation, and clothing. The missing legal framework to combine work and family life contributes even more to the disadvantages poor families face and perpetuates social inequality for future generations⁷.

“Fatigue and two jobs had ruined who both my parents used to be, and I began to value the little time I had with my mother more than ever before... This little time could not make up for the time I spent alone, however, nor could it assuage the envy I had of the little girl my mom looked after. She, though not my mother’s daughter, had the privilege of having my mother and her delicious cooking all to herself; I would always get the leftovers. She also had the privilege of having my mother pin her silk blonde hair into a pretty bun before ballet classes while my dad wrestled with the hairbrush to pull my thick brown hair into lopsided ponytails before dropping me off at the bus stop. But I couldn’t blame the girl for depriving me of my mother; her parents had also been consumed by their jobs.” (Martina Piñeiros cited in Lieber 2015)

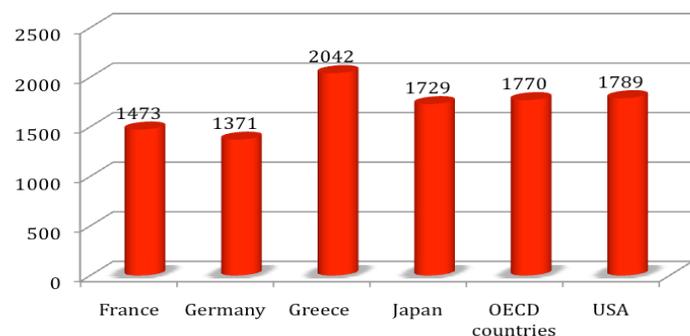
How Many Working Hours Are Enough?

For Sheryl Sandberg, author of *Lean In* (2013), the single most important career decision a woman can make is picking a partner who is willing to share responsibilities 50/50. However, she also remarks that even with spousal support today's long working hours in the US—especially for managers and highly qualified professionals—make the reconciliation between work and family challenging. In 2009, married middle-income couples worked 8.5 hours more than they did in 1979. In addition, a suburban housewife today spends more time on housework than farm wives without electricity did in 1920. This may be surprising, but every new “time-saving” machine comes with more expectations; vacuum cleaners, for example, have raised people cleanliness standards.

But how much work is enough? Are we hardwired to work 24/7? If we look at human history, we might learn what adequate human work condition looks like. Look at the last hunter-gatherer societies today—the Kapauku of Papua, the Dobe in Australia, or the !Kung of southern Africa—for whom two and a half days per week are enough to feed the family. The shift to plow cultivation with feeding animals around 10,000 BC required 25–30 hours of work a week; people were hard-working, but also had a lot of leisure time. In the middle ages in Europe,

there were around 115 holidays, and still today, poorer countries have more holidays than richer countries⁸. Compared with the richest countries in the world, especially those in Europe, few people work as much as the average American or Japanese does.

Average annual hours actually worked per worker



Source: OECD Stats 2015

Labor productivity in countries with fewer worker hours, meanwhile, is often higher; their national economies and companies are still competitive, while their workers and employees have a more satisfying work *and* family life.

In Sweden, a 30-hour-week was introduced for some employees as a pilot project. Although it a model for every type of business, the results have been promising. The Gothenburg Sahlgrenska University Hospital, one of the biggest in Europe, switched to a six-hour-work day. To make up for the lost time, it hired 15 new staff members at the cost of \$123,000 per month. Today, the employee sick leave decreased significantly, the rate of performed surgery increased by 20% and the hospital was able to offer new types of services. The hospital was inspired by Toyota Sweden that had introduced a six-hour-work day 13 years ago with remarkable results: their garages were opened for longer hours, Toyota generated more business and more profit, customer satisfaction rose and the burn-out rate of the employees dropped⁹.

“What we can see today is that employees are at the very least doing the same amount in the six-hour workday, often more than they did in the eight-hour workday. It’s heavy work—drilling, building engine blocks—but they have stamina, and we have more profit and customers because cars get fixed faster.”

Martin Banck, Director of the Toyota Service Center in Gothenburg, cit. in Alderman 2016

“I think the 8-hour work day is not as effective as one would think. To stay focused on a specific work task for 8 hours is a huge challenge. In order to cope we mix in things and pauses to make the work more endurable. At the same time, we are having it hard to manage our life outside of work.”

Linus Feldt, CEO of Filimundus, Stockholm that switched to a six-hour work week last year, cit. in Matharu 2016

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN EUROPE AND THE RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND LIFE

There are several possible reasons why the European Union and its member states—especially France, UK, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries—started to adjust their work culture to the fact that the family model no longer consists of a male breadwinner and female homemaker. Unlike in the US, where the fertility rate is still high, the average European fertility rate is below the replacement rate, which puts pressure on the health care and retirement systems, as fewer workers have to sustain more non-working populations. Another consequence of this lower birth rate is an increasing shortage of qualified workers



Source: European Union

EUROPEAN RECONCILIATION PACKAGE 2014: YEAR OF RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE IN EUROPE

RECONCILING FOR CARERS

13% of Europeans aged 50-64 care for a disabled or elderly family member every day or several times a week.

RECOMMENDATION

The European Commission should initiate a Recommendation on the recognition of family and informal carers and for the adoption of provisions recognizing their legal status in Member States.

80% of care work in Europe is provided by informal carers.

RECONCILING AT THE WORKPLACE

Less than half of the European workforce has flexibility in working hours (Eurofound EQLS 2012).

43%

In order to create a reconciliation friendly environment, all stakeholders must be involved in shaping legislative and practical initiatives.

WORKERS, EMPLOYERS, PUBLIC AUTHORITIES, FAMILIES

Average gender pay gap in the EU **16%**.
Average gender pension gap in the EU **39%**.

WOMEN AT WORK

The unequal share of unpaid work in the family has a direct impact on gender segregation, because women still adjust their working arrangements considering their caring responsibilities. They are more likely to take leaves, work part time or withdraw from the labour market.

Nearly 60% of EU university graduates are women, but they account for less than 33% of scientists and engineers across Europe, yet represent nearly 80% of the total workforce in the health, education and welfare sectors.

RECOMMENDATION

The EU should adopt a coherent legislative package including maternity, paternity, parental and carers' leaves, to promote a more equal share of care responsibilities between women and men.

RECOMMENDATION

CHILDCARE, EDUCATION AND PARENTING

Almost **60%** of parents identifies availability (waiting lists, lack of services) as a difficulty concerning the usage of childcare in the EU27.

Across the EU, women reported that they do not work or work part-time because...

15% CHILDCARE IS OF INSUFFICIENT QUALITY
25% LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF CHILDCARE SERVICES
55% CHILDCARE IS TOO EXPENSIVE

RECOMMENDATION

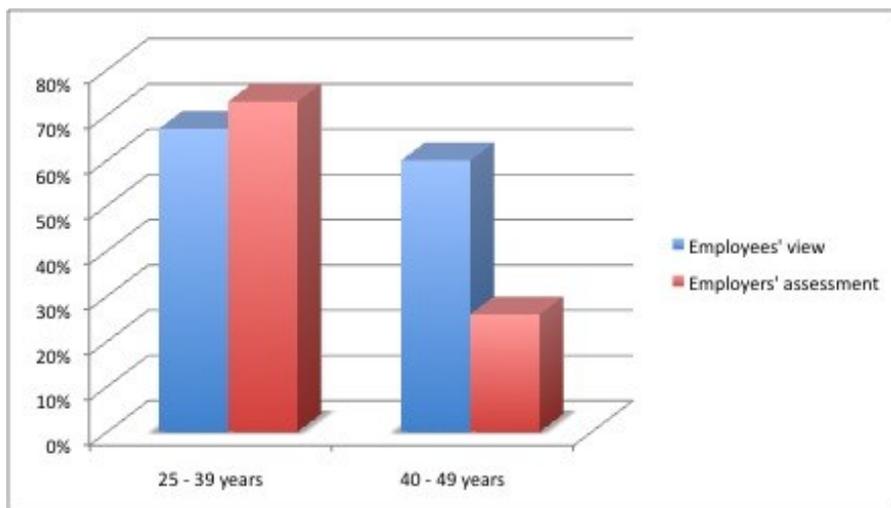
In addition to guaranteeing a legal right to a childcare place for all children after the end of the Leave period, there is the need for a childcare policy that supports the diversity of types of provision and is flexible enough to be able to reflect the real lives of the families who rely on these services locally.

and employees. To even the playing field for European companies, the European Union has started several legislative initiatives in recent years—the latest beginning in 2015—to create a common framework of family-friendly policies¹⁰.

Source: European Union

In Germany, for example, the ideal family consists of a working couple that combines work and family life. In the younger generation (21–34 years old), 93% of women and 76% of men adhere to this new model, and 93% of men and women expect that their partners will support them in their careers. This new family model offers the opportunity for both a rewarding career and the ability to fulfill family obligations.

Employees would change their jobs for a better reconciliation between work and family life



Source: BMFSFJ

It is considered beneficial for children, and for the partnership between parents, if both parents care for the children. In addition, mother-child relationships benefit from more father involvement, as mothers with involved partners are more relaxed. For mothers, the perfect amount of time worked per

week is between 25 and 35 hours, and for fathers it is between 30 and 35 hours. Adjusting work life to this ideal results in increasing the active working population and tackling the shortage of skilled workers.

In Germany there is a societal understanding, referred to as a generational contract (*Generationenvertrag*), where the working population pays for retirees' pensions. In recent years, this concept has also started to include care of the generation that is not yet active in the work force—children, apprentices, and students. As workers and employees finance these non-active populations, they receive governmental benefits and tax reductions.

Germany's fertility rate is 1.4%, which is below the replacement rate. The working population is decreasing between 250,000 and 350,000 people each year; it is estimated that five million qualified

employees will be missing in 2030. Even immigration cannot fill this gap. To address these challenges, the German government began to amplify the existing legal family framework with parent leave (since 2001 renamed “Parental leave”) and other cash benefits in the eighties.

Germany’s powerful centralized business associations and unions have a long tradition of negotiating and compromising, as demonstrated by the successful rollout of “codetermination” policies in the workplace, which gives the representatives of employees and workers a considerable part in companies’ decision-making processes. At the turn of the millennium, they agreed to enhance German work productivity and competitiveness by creating a work environment that reflects the professional ambitions and family ideals of the younger well-educated generation. This paradigm shift was a result of decades of public social discourse—many of which included passionate, ferocious debates—and led to a comprehensive legal framework, multiple private sector initiatives, and new best business practices.

The German government took various steps to promote the move toward an inclusive work place for parents, as well as toward increasing female leadership. For example, a mandatory women’s quota of 30% was introduced for the board of directors of all listed companies in Germany—and now the German government has more female federal ministers than any other government before it. Ursula von der Leyen, for example—a mother of seven—became Germany’s first female defense minister in 2013.



Ursula von der Leyen, Germany’s first female Defense Minister and a mother of seven, introduced during her previous mandate as Minister for Family Affairs, 14 month paid parental leave out of which two months reserved for fathers, increased the childcare infrastructure and supported gay marriage. As Chancellor Angela Merkel, she is a member of the conservative Christian Democratic Union.

In 2015, the “New Reconciliation of Work and Family Life,” an agreement between the government, business associations, and unions, was put into place to further enhance adequate work-life balance. The agreement’s guiding principles, which are to be implemented until 2020, focus on high-quality childcare, better inclusion of fathers, care for the elderly, and an increase of flexible time models, and include a general commitment to reconciliation of work and family life as a mainstream trend toward Germany’s sustainable economic development¹¹.

A coalition of government, unions, business associations and civil society announced in 2015 ten guidelines for the *New Reconciliation of Work and Family Life*. Third from left: The Minister of Family Affairs, Manuela Schwesig.

Photo: BMFSFJ



LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

The German legal framework includes 100 laws regulating family-related areas of life that can be divided into three parts: cash benefits, time benefits, and infrastructure. These benefits amount to 122 billion euros: 95 billion euros (88%) for cash and time benefits, and 27 billion euros (22%) for infrastructure such as daycare centers and playgrounds. German families receive more cash benefits compared to other European countries that prioritize financing infrastructure. The total sum of the benefits seems enormous. However, the government calculates that over their lifetime, each citizen pays more in taxes than he or she receives in benefits¹².

Time Benefits

*Experiences*¹³

My husband and I decided that I take parental leave for one year. First, I had my six weeks of maternity leave until the birth. My employer granted my request for a 50% reduced work schedule. My year at home was a luxury for me! Overall, I really enjoyed this year, but I also had a very easy-going child. For me, it was a great time, in which I was able to bond with my child. I attended many courses to deal with "loneliness" of a stay-at-home parent, which provided the opportunity to meet many mothers. During this year, I opted to receive the 63% of my former monthly salary. My parental leave ended with the first birthday of my daughter. The next day, I had to start to work again part-time. It was hard for me to leave the child; she seemed much too small for child-care. Given the option, my preference would be to work 10 hours a week. However, for financial reasons, this was not possible since my husband had been laid off two weeks before my daughter was born, and had started an advanced training. Therefore, we had to rely on the salary of my 20 hours. My husband wanted to take his four weeks parental leave. However, due to the termination of his contract this was no longer possible. Finding child-care was challenging but with many efforts (direct contact to the directors of the day care centers and multiple requests), a place in my desired day care center was located. Overall, everything worked very well. In retrospect, I really had a great start.

Martina, psychologist, one daughter

Parents value most the time benefits Germany's policies offer, as they allow them to spend crucial years with their young children. Paid maternity leave is from six weeks before until eight weeks after giving birth, and parental leave can last up to three years for one parent within the first eight years of a child's life. After taking parental leave, the employee has the right to return to work—not necessarily to the same but to an equivalent workplace—and to work part-time. During pregnancy and for four months after giving birth, an employee cannot be terminated. A partnership bonus promotes the involvement of fathers: for four months, a couple can reduce both their working time and receive a cash bonus. One-third of fathers in Germany take some kind of paternity leave.

In addition, an employee has the right to take time off for the care of close relatives (parents, grandparents, partners, siblings, children, and grandchildren). He or she can choose between ten days—with or without pay, depending the work contract—or six months without pay.

On average, German employees have nearly thirty days of paid leave each year, plus between nine and thirteen mandatory holidays. Companies also give preferential treatment to leave requests of employees with young children to facilitate family vacation in the summer time.

Experiences

“After the birth of our first son, we both stayed at home because my partner was writing his master's thesis. This was very beautiful because we could share responsibility for one child and at the same time we each could have some leisure time doing other things. Now after the birth of our second child only I am staying at home. My first son is already in childcare. My partner works part-time now and he would not take parental leave, although he certainly would have the opportunity. Currently I am applying for a job. I hope when my second son turns one he will be in childcare so that I may find a job quickly. As my partner works only 25 hours per week, I can also imagine a full-time job. My mother has also offered to help out in the afternoons.”

Annabelle, social worker, two sons

Cash Benefits

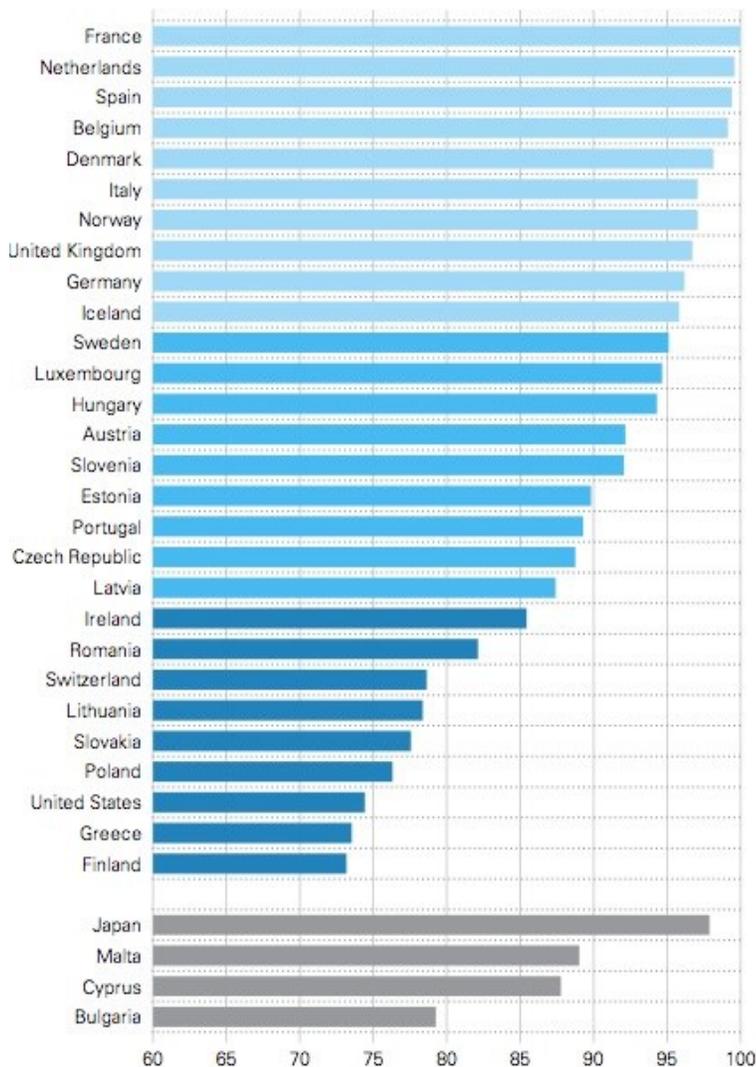
Cash benefits in Germany are designed to compensate for the loss of income of the parent who takes care of the child. Federal funds finance various benefits, such as child support or spousal-splitting parental allowance, care allowance, maternity allowance, and domestic help. In the first fourteen months after birth, both parents may select parental benefits, which is 300–1,800 euros per month (*Elterngeld*). If a parent decides to return earlier to work, he or she receives half of the parent allowance (150–900 euros) for 28 months (*ElterngeldPlus*). During parental leave, parents are health insured, and the federal state pays into the federal pension fund for the stay-at-home parent. Parents also receive for their children, from birth to the child's eighteenth or even twenty-fifth birthday, 190-221 euros in child benefits every month, or tax-free allowances. Any costs for childcare, domestic help, or tuition fees are tax-deductible up to certain limits. Children and adolescents up to twenty years of age are non-contributory insured in the statutory health insurance. When the children start vocational training or study at one of the free public universities, the student can receive student loans to pay for their livelihood, if the family income is below a certain limit.

We are convinced that the daily work being done by our employees can only be productive if we ... assist every single employee in their personal and individual development.” (A.C.A Riegelsberger 2009: 1)

In addition, there are family-friendly benefits for specific groups, such as for low-income families and unemployed or single parents.

Infrastructure

In Germany, high-quality childcare is regarded beneficial for children, boosting their social competence and independence. Because of this, Germans believe childcare as a collective good should be available for everybody. Almost 94% of all children aged three to six years in Germany are in daycare. Every child from the age of two is entitled to a place in a daycare facility—however, only 35% of children under three years old are in childcare. The public sector finances about 80% of the cost of daycare, while the parents pay the rest. Some of the federal states provide free daycare for children at the age of three. Businesses that offer childcare in their facilities for their employees' children receive financial subsidies from the federal states.



Although early childhood education is widely acknowledged as the foundation of further educational success, fewer German children are enrolled in preschools compared to their peers in other European countries with excellent family policies.

Percentage of children age 4 and the start of compulsory education who are enrolled in preschool.

Source: UNICEF 2013

Experiences

“Although, I appreciate many policies here, I do not think it is easy to combine work and family in Germany. Mostly it is still very traditional, the husband goes to work and the wife stays at home for one year. The husband does not take more than the two partner months. Then the wife returns to work part-time, if at all, and she suffers a substantial loss of income. She no longer has a career. My husband and I are more the exception, since we split parental leave and, because I work more than he does. That has more to do with our personal attitude towards life than with any assistance from the state or employer. Similar to a growing number of employees here in Germany I have a temporary contract and therefore can only dream of a three-year parental leave, (which as a matter of principle, I would not have taken anyway.) Temporary contract also results in constant willingness and little opportunity to negotiate any part-time opportunities, because you have to be lucky, if you can continue the employment.

Regarding the taxes, in Germany you are still punished if both parents work. The German tax splitting for a married couple is beneficial for the traditional family. It aims that one (the husband) works full-time and the woman earns some extra money. Compared to people without children, families have more expenses and need a larger living space. We also cannot work as much, because you have to pick up the children at 5pm from the day care center, which is considered already very late.

In Germany, real wages are falling, while expenditures are rising. Nevertheless, in a good neighborhood, we can afford only 83 m² apartment for us four, while the large 130 m² apartments in our house (or neighborhood) are all inhabited by couples without children because they can afford it. Moreover, it is not easy to find an apartment in Berlin when you have more than one or two children. The landlords prefer dogs over (especially small) children and many rent very large flats preferably to people without children. .

What I would hope would be a general child-friendly climate in Germany: real tax benefits (so you can actually spend more time with the kids and have to go to work less), - or something like family apartments or financial assistance for the rent. Among our friends the question whether to have a second or a third child, depends mainly from the living space, especially here in Berlin, where rents increased dramatically in the last years. This is the biggest topic among young families.”

Rebecca, project manager, two children

GERMAN BUSINESSES CREATING FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE CULTURES

Many German businesses no longer regard the reconciliation between work and personal life as variables in a zero-sum game; they don't buy into the idea that the gain of one side (personal life) entails a corresponding loss for the other side (work life). Rather, they acknowledge that a satisfying personal life enhances a person's work, and vice-versa. To attract qualified professionals, companies advertise in detail their family-friendly policies. Businesses that offer family-friendly workplaces have an advantage over those that merely comply with the laws. Moreover, there are other gains from flexible work models: During the financial crisis of 2008, businesses did not lay off employees; instead, they used family-friendly work models, such as reduced work time and job-sharing, to save costs. This meant that after the financial crisis, there was no need to hire and train new employees¹⁴.

How to implement family-friendly policies differs depending upon the sector, market environment, competitive position, and staff composition of a business. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; every business has to develop its own individual strategy. But these strategies should all include the following components:

- The policies take into account the employees' and workers' different stages (phases) of life and lifestyles.
- The company tests and establishes flexible work structures.
- The company develops a cultural framework for flexibility¹⁵.

Flexible Working Hours

One of the most efficient ways to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life is to offer flexible working hours. There are different flexibility models: flextime, part-time, part-time retirement, flexible shift schedules, job sharing, and individualized work schedules.

Especially large companies have schemes that allow employees to accumulate overtime at certain periods and later use that overtime to offset their working hours, such as a working time exchange market (*Arbeitszeittauschbörse*), an annual and lifetime working account, and time assets schemes (*Zeitwertpapier*). For example, at the machine tool provider Trumpf, employees can work full time and save a part of their salary on a special account that can be used later for taking time for childcare, eldercare, a sabbatical, or studying. In addition, every employee has a working time account in which he or she can save overtime in periods of high workload to be redeemed later—something that gave the company maximum flexibility during the economic crisis. The retailer Globus, which has 13,600 employees at forty locations, has installed a special software program where employees can agree far ahead of time on a flexible work schedule between 17 and 37.5 hours, allowing for the schedule of the employee's partner or availability of the family car to be taken into consideration. The public transportation company Hannover Üstra allows employees to choose between two forms of shift work (early and middle or middle and late), helping to prevent health problems related to constantly changing sleep schedules. The employee can choose the type of shift they wish to work one year ahead to guarantee childcare. One bus driver at Üstra, for example—a single father—chose the late-night shift so he could be there when his child came home from school¹⁶.

“The decisive factor when it comes to filling a vacancy is not the gender, but competence. If one of our female employees is capable and willing to take a leading position, the door is open for her. If she says no to internal promotion because there are no adequate care facilities for her children, then there is something wrong.” (Sybill Storz, CEO, in: Karl Storz 2009: 7)

Family-Friendly Work Organization

A family-friendly work organization includes flexible work assignments, multifunctional employment of staff, employee participation, and a different way to measure business success. A successful manager defines business success by goals rather than by processes and procedures. Managers and staff plan time more carefully, with more focused meetings, less and shorter reports, and specific core working hours when meetings are to be held to allow flexible work times.

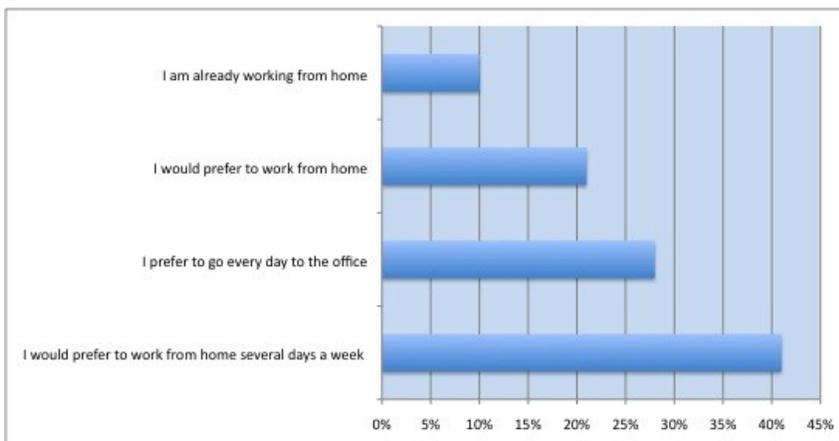
For example, the full-time employees of the construction company Krieger&Schramm are away on the job only four days a week, and they stay at home for three days a week. In addition, they can choose different part-time models. Hotel Excelsior in Berlin, with its around-the-clock shift work and irregular schedule, informs its employees two weeks in advance of their new schedule to allow them to plan for childcare, and it offers morning shifts to single mothers and fathers. The Chemical company NNE Pharmaplan provides up to 80% of a full-time salary for a family-related reduction of working time for three—and in some cases up to six—months. This salary is financed through the collective agreement “Working Life and Demography” (“*Lebensarbeitszeit und Demographie*”), which was formulated by the employer association of the chemical companies and the chemical workers’ union. Employers pay a certain amount into a collective fund, and a company can use that money to finance the reduction of work time with a full salary. Together with its worker representatives, the employer decides about the appropriate type of working time reduction¹⁷.

Flexible Work Location

Today's information and communication technologies allow for flexible work locations, such as working from a home office full-time or for few days a week. Besides reconciling work and family life, remote work also makes the important community and environmental contribution of reducing traffic and pollution. 93 percent of parents with minor children say working facilitates the reconciliation of work and family life as they save 4.4 hours a week which allows more family time. Survey show that 30 percent of parents wish to work from home, but only six percent are already doing it. The reason lies in the widespread German corporate culture that focuses on the employees' presence and avoids discussing existing possibilities.

One example of a company that takes advantage of remote work is Vodafone; they introduced a flexible work location program at their headquarters that allows employees to work from home and on the road, or to share an office desk with others. Small enterprises or agencies with a reduced staff can also allow for flexible work locations: the goldsmith Thomas Becker, for example, allows his employees to work from home if they do not need to use the machinery at their office. The State Forestry office of Rhineland Palatinate also offers alternating telework, full telework, or work from a satellite office that is closer to home than the central office¹⁸.

Percentage of employees who prefer to work from home



Source: Bitcom

Family-Friendly Human Resources Development

Familial changes are part of every life path. If a business considers a potential employee's family situation during recruitment and career management, it is better able to attract and retain qualified staff. A human resources plan needs to take into account the actualized information about its employees' different phases of life. The human resources department has to establish procedures on a regular basis to collect the needs and wishes of its staff concerning compatibility of work and family.

One outstanding example is the engineering and electronics company Bosch, which assists couples through trainings and joint duty missions to help them pursue their careers and care for their families at the same time ¹⁹.

Leadership as Role Models

Executives are role models. If they accept responsibility for their company and their own family at the same time, they contribute to a corporate culture where the compatibility of work and family life is acceptable.

How to best implement and manage family-friendly policies is a continuous discussion process within the management team or board. For example, the software company Gaertner Datensysteme offers flexible work hours for all its fourteen employees, and all of its leadership team work part time. The Commerzbank allows its branch managers to share their jobs, and Bosch, through its program "MORE," incentivizes leaders to work part time. The Bremen police encourage their leadership to work part time to fulfill their family obligations, and reconciliation between work and life is a part of the organization's leadership trainings²⁰.

Services for Families

Ensuring suitable care for children and elderly or sick family members is an indispensable requisite for a family-friendly work place. If these services are not available in the area where the company is located, the business needs to create complementary solutions. Today, every third company in Germany supports its employees with childcare.

Especially important is a company's support in the case of a childcare emergency. Some businesses allow employees, in a case where childcare is not available on a short-term notice, to take their child to an office with a play corner. Another child-friendly policy is to include family members in and offer special activities for children during the annual company party. Especially when employees have to work long hours, a company can (partly) finance household-related services such as laundry, grocery shopping, cooked meals etc.

One example of this is the German Coca-Cola, which has installed a parent room in its German headquarters. Another is Baumhaus, a family-run business with nearly thirty employees that allows its employees to bring their children to play in the greenhouses in case of childcare emergency. Wulff Textil Service, a rental service for working clothes, provides home-cooked, healthy, affordable meals for its employees and family members to take at home. In its headquarters, McDonald's Germany has its own childcare facilities, offers part-time jobs (even for leading positions), and receives consultancy services from *pme familienservice* to create an even more family-friendly workplace. The hospital Charité provides twenty-four-hour childcare for the medicinal staff. The rehabilitation centre (Reha Zentrum) in Lübben takes care of elderly sick family member for two weeks, during their employees' holidays ²¹.

Information and Communication on Family-Friendly Policies

It is crucial for a company to inform and communicate continuously about their family-supporting measures—and the effectiveness of those measures. This reinforces the acceptance of those policies internally, and contributes to a positive image of the company externally. It is equally important to establish a feedback channel to evaluate whether the policies meet the needs of the employees, or whether some modifications can add to a better acceptance. Newsletters, intranet, brochures, and information services can present and discuss best practices, introduce new policies, and encourage employees and workers to utilize them to their benefit.

The chemical company Wacker, for example, offers seminars for employees coming back from parental leave, as well as information guidelines on how to get updates from the company and ideas about how to organize work and family life. The mechanical engineering company Voith organizes information events around work and life reconciliation, and health and environment for their employees. German Telekom launched a network program called “Stay in Contact” where parents receive regular updates via e-mail and through teleconferences, and where they can share their experiences with parental leave with their company²².

Experiences

“We both work independently as graphic designers. Together, we took 14 months of parental leave. My partner has taken twelve months and I took the two months parental leave for fathers. During this time, we received 67 percent of the average net income.”

Thomas, graphic designer, one son

Monetary Benefits and Other In-Kind Contributions

Financial or non-financial benefits can support employees with families in various ways. Individual benefits contribute directly to a specific need. Some companies offer “baby cash” when an employee welcomes a new family member; others subsidizes childcare.

Stainless steel tube manufacturer Dockweiler, for instance, pays its employees 2,000 euros of welcome money for a newborn. Besides the legally proscribed parental leave, the American company Kentucky Fried Chicken offers at its German headquarters extra paid leave for fathers and a wide range of free counseling services for everything from care for the elderly to psychological issues, as well as assistance in the case of childcare emergency. Siemens pays 100 euros per month for childcare during its employees’ thirty-six months of parental leave, and 500 euros per month if the employee returns within fourteen months after the birth of their child ²³.

Experiences

“Parental leave gives us a financial security to start a small family. During the first year, as a mother, I am going to stay at home. Thanks to the parent allowance plus, I return to work part-time thereafter. Thus, the transition phase in the Kita is a little more relaxed and the family does not suffer from the double burden having a small child and full-time work stress. During this time, the governmental benefits increase my part-time salary.

Meanwhile, it is also quite normal that fathers take parental leave. We have a two-month joint parental leave which we plan to spend traveling and therefore growing together even closer as a family. Our decision to have a child despite temporary contracts would be very difficult without the parent allowance, which has certainly helped.”

Monika, marketing manager, one son

COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES: THE EXAMPLE OF BASF AND FRAPORT

Family-friendly laws apply in most cases equally to small or large businesses in Germany. For example, no matter the size of a business, an employee has the right to maternity leave, parental leave, and part-time employment. In the case of care for the elderly, though, the right to leave for up to six months without pay applies only to businesses with more than sixteen employees. In small businesses, the owner has a closer relationship with his/her employees and can respond quickly to family-related needs; a large company, however, has more leeway to accommodate flexible time arrangements and more financial resources for services.

BASF

BASF, the largest chemical company in the world, offers at its German headquarters outstanding family-friendly benefits for its 35,000 employees. BASF claims to promote work-life balance in its worldwide operations as well (although the benefits abroad are not the same as in its headquarters). BASF regards reconciliation of work and private life vital to boosting employees' motivation and performance, and provides targeted solutions for their employees' needs in their different phases of life. At the Employee Center for Work-Life Management, LuMit, more than 600 employees a



BASF 's Employee Center offers a variety of service to promote work-life balance.

day receive advice on family and work, and more than 160 sport classes are offered as well, along with individual health checks and social counseling for addiction, psychological crisis, indebtedness, and other life challenges.

In consultation with their supervisors, employees at BASF can organize their work around their family needs, from flexible work hours to working from home. Various forms of working hours, such as part-time or exemption options, provide the necessary space for childcare or care for relatives. Regarding care for relatives, BASF also offers caregiver counseling, theme-based events, and information exchanges. Employees can take two years of unpaid leave for the care of an elderly family member, or up to six years with an interest-free loan. The BASF childcare center, LuKids, accommodates 250 children between the age of 6 months and 3 years. It provides a bilingual service in English and German language, long opening times, few closing days, and the option to customize the service hours according to an employee's working time. In addition, LuKids Adhoc provides flexible emergency childcare for employees' children between the ages of 6 months and 11 years; children of BASF's staff between the ages of 6 and 14 can participate in Kids and Teens on Tour, open during summer and autumn vacation; and there is an international exchange for employees' children between the ages of 15 and 19, BASF Global Family, which gives teens the chance to gain their first international experience and knowledge of a foreign country in a BASF host family abroad²⁴.

Fraport

Fraport operates the Frankfurt Airport and holds interests in the operation of several other airports around the world. With 21,000 employees, it is one of Germany's biggest employers, and one of the company's most important goals is the development of new policies to avoid potential conflicts between personal obligations and the requirements at work. Whereas the legal framework requires a maximum duration of parental leave of three years, at Fraport, employees can extend this period to five years. During parental leave, all employees and workers have the opportunity to participate regularly in trainings and seminars to remain in touch with the company and follow recent developments in their field. During these seminars, childcare is available. All employees and workers can utilize Fraport's Family Service, which assists parents in finding the appropriate childcare for children of all ages—providing information on childcare facilities, organizing au pairs, babysitters, or tutors to help with homework, arranges for vacations, and gives information on suitable care for elderly family members. As many employees work in shifts, Fraport also offers ad hoc childcare, for unusual hours of the day, as well as on Sundays and on public holidays.

Fraport uses a wide range of flexible work models—part-time, telecommuting, flextime, and shift work. They also have a long-term time account, which gives employees and workers who decide to utilize it the opportunity to save hours for future use. It also means that they receive overtime pay; however, the overtime hours are accumulated in an account that can be used in different ways; for example, they can choose to work part-time at full pay for a limited time, or for a longer paid leave. Prior to retirement, it can serve to gradually decrease working hours, or even to reduce an employee's working life and make early retirement an option. Another possibility is part-time retirement for employees and workers fifty-five years and older (in that case with a reduced salary)²⁵.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY LOCAL POLICIES:

LOCAL ALLIANCES FOR FAMILIES

Municipalities play an important role in creating a family-friendly environment through urban planning and a variety of family-related services. Under the auspice of the German government, more than 650 Local Alliances for Families (*Lokale Bündnisse für Familie*) create and implement local policies that enable a better work and family life. These local alliances are multi-stakeholder forums with businesses, local chambers of commerce, municipal administrations, and parents' associations.

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Das Magazin der Lokalen Bündnisse



Familie leben.



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Im Fokus
Ständiger Familienfranchising:
Lokale Bündnisse unterstützen
Eltern und Firmen bei der
Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf



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NEUE Vereinbarkeit
Politik, Gewerkschaften und
Wirtschaft sollen gemeinsam
Wirkeln, für eine familienbewusste
Arbeitswelt der Zukunft

The monthly magazine *Family Living* of the Local Alliances for Families

A family-friendly town is a town of short distances. It provides in the different neighborhoods the necessary infrastructure—affordable housing, family services, childcare, schools, workplaces, stores, parks with playgrounds, no-car zones, multigenerational houses, nursing homes, and affordable cultural and recreational activities. Highways do not cut through neighborhoods and do not create no-go areas. Family-friendly towns establish family time policies to synchronize working hours, with opening hours of childcare facilities, stores, and the timetables of public transportation all coinciding. The town and its neighborhoods are connected via public transportation, and the streets offer bike lanes. If municipalities do not provide family-friendly infrastructure, they risk losing their working population, as well as potential investors who fear a lack of qualified labor. If municipalities close schools and kindergartens, the remaining families might move away, leading the town into a downward spiral, with primarily elderly citizens remaining and less taxes being paid, as is seen in many rural areas²⁶.

INITIATIVES, SERVICES, AND A FAMILY-FRIENDLY AUDIT

Various German initiatives dedicate personal and financial resources to promote family-friendly policies with publications, conferences, workshops, and consulting:



Recognition for family-friendly policies
Source: BMFSFJ

Recognition for family-friendly policies in three categories—small, medium, and large company—awarding them for having family-friendly working hours, work and care for elderly, and more. The competition is under the direction of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who presents these prestigious awards.

Success Factor Family (*Erfolgsfaktor Familie*), a network for companies that is a joint initiative of the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Seniors Citizens Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (*Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag*), promotes family-friendly human resource management. Membership for



Chancellor Angela Merkel awards the finalists of the 2012 competition for family friendly companies. Source: BMFSFJ

The audit *berufundfamilie* is a strategic management tool that supports employers on their medium- and long-term strategies regarding family-oriented corporate policies. *Berufundfamilie*—founded by the Hertie Foundation, one of Germany’s biggest foundations—offers these audits and provides guidance and consultancy services to reach specific goals. The Hertie Foundation was established by the former owner of the department store Hertie, but today a board of directors—each of whom has a high position in a large German company—administers it. The current president of the board is the director of the Federal Agency for Labor (*Bundesagentur fuer Arbeit*).



One of the three main issues addressed by the Hertie Foundation is the reconciliation between work and family. The audit certificate they offer is not a recognition of an achieved status, but it does certify that the company that receives it is working on the implementation of a framework for family-friendly policies by reviewing regularly the agreed objectives. Every three years, auditors visit the companies and issue a certificate, which confirms the organization’s efforts to create a family-friendly corporate culture.



Another seal, called *familienfreundlicher Arbeitgeber* (=Family-Friendly Employer,) is issued by the Bertelsmann Foundation. During a six step process, the auditors survey the employer and the employees regarding the family-friendly policies and procedures in five areas: leadership, communication, work culture, support, and long-term sustainability.

Besides these networks, various initiatives in the federal states have established programs to promote family-friendly work places.

- The Employer Association of the State Baden-Württemberg (*Landesvereinigung Baden-Württembergischer Arbeitgeberverbände e.V.*), through its “familynet” project, has set up twelve service centers to provide trainings for businesses, municipalities, and private initiatives.



- The platform *Mittelstand und Familie* offers specific information for small and medium-sized enterprises.



- The Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry in North Rhine-Westphalia (*Metall und Elektroindustrie NRW*) provides a free-of-charge platform that allows companies to check on their family-friendly policies.



- And the German Union Confederation (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund*), through its program Shaping Reconciliation of Family and Work (*Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf gestalten*), offers information for workers and employees on how to negotiate family-friendly work policies without giving up workers’ rights ²⁷.



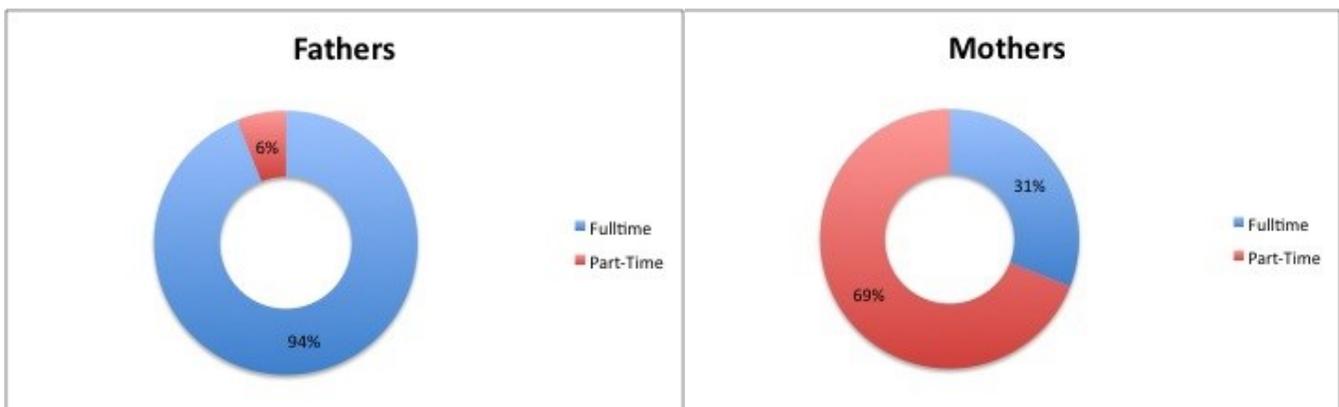
- And more...

OUTLOOK: WORK, FAMILY, AND THE GOOD LIFE

Demographic changes and the resulting shortage of qualified workers in Germany has contributed to the transformation of the traditional family ideal into a modern, two-breadwinner model, and it has created general acceptance for family-friendly policies. A broad coalition of private actors, including businesses, unions, governmental agencies, and non-profits, has tackled the reconciliation between life and family with new laws, policies, and initiatives. Early on, the government took the lead in inviting relevant actors to shape the new policies, and in providing many free resources designed to help businesses create family-friendly workplaces. Powerful centralized business associations supported the introduction of family-friendly laws to even the playfield for corporate players. Businesses implemented policies that helped their employees to stay engaged, even when family needs arise. Unions supported family-friendly policies, as it is in their members' genuine interests, and they made sure that these policies would not have damaging long-term side effects.

Has Germany found the golden road to combining work and life? Well, surveys show that although progress has been made, there is still a long way to go. Today, two-thirds of mothers in Germany are working—however, half of them are in part-time positions, which is one of the lowest rates compared to

Few fathers work part-time



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt

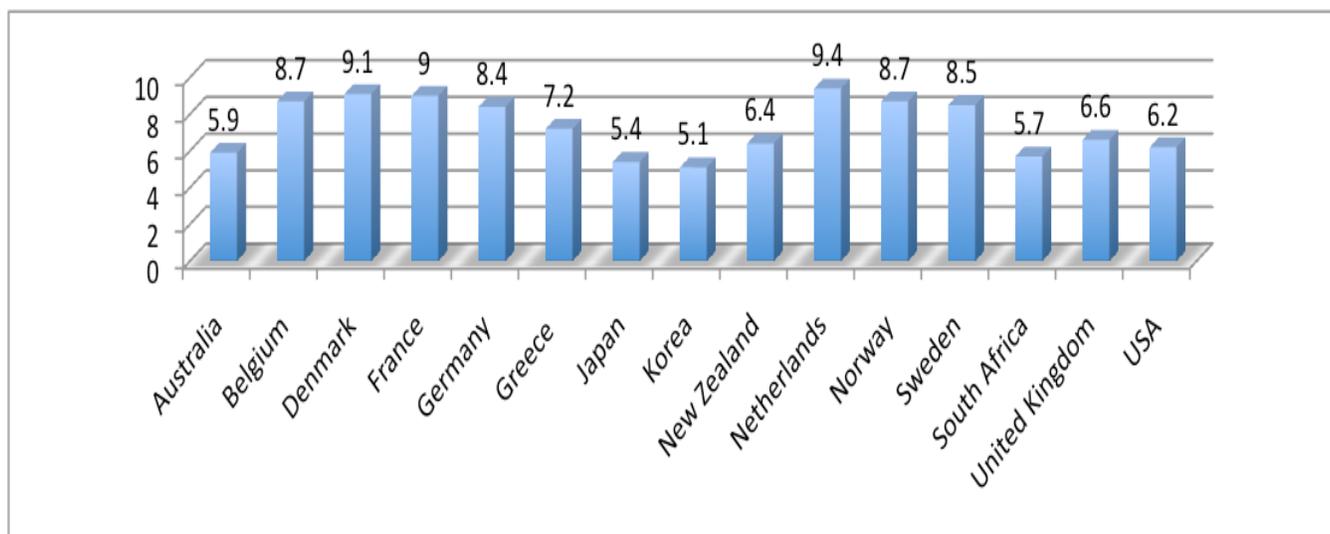
other EU countries. Many mothers who are working part time wish to work more hours, but that's only possible if childcare, flexible hours, and a supportive spouse are available. Recent research shows that instead of transferring money to families, as Germany predominantly does, more women would participate in the workforce if more money were spent on child care infrastructure.

Ultimately, however, government policies cannot replace the paradigm shift needed to transform the antiquated household models into a fair, equitable family ideal. And the same applies to work life. There are still husbands who, once their wives end their parental leave and return to their workplaces, still expect their partner to carry sole responsibility for domestic tasks and childcare. There are still German "time machos," as Ann-Marie Slaughter labeled those who work relentlessly harder, stay later, and think that only 24/7 workers qualify for promotion—though their numbers are decreasing. Women still earn less than men, especially when they temporarily drop out of the workforce. There is still a motherhood penalty, as women on the mommy track are receiving fewer promotions, and there are still very few women in the top leading positions. Women no longer have to decide whether they want to have children or work, but they do often have to decide whether they want to pursue a *challenging* career or have children.

These gaps are gradually closing. But childcare is still not valued enough, and although preschool teachers have to undergo professional training for two to five years, the overall pay is low and the training is not considered thorough enough. In recent years, universities have started to offer a degree in this area with the aim to raise the competencies (and the pay) of preschool teachers, but the effects aren't really being seen yet.

The other downside of Germany's policies are that these benefits come at a cost. In general, Germans' average salaries are lower than those of workers in the US; however, in many cases this is compensated for through lower living costs, access to free education from kindergarten to university, affordable health care (mandatory for everybody), a pension provided by the government rather than individual employers, and many other social benefits.

Work-Life Balance Indicators for Selected Countries



Source: OECD Better Life Index 2016

In the US, with its different political culture, corporate policies, and traditions, there are many discussions and legal initiatives, and a lot of private resourcefulness, around family-friendly workplace policies. In recent months, workplaces such as Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Microsoft, Accenture, Netflix, Hilton, East Coast Bank, AstraZeneca, and Amazon have begun to offer expanded parental leave. Family Responsibilities Discrimination lawsuits can address the most outrageous family-unfriendly corporate policies and cultures. On a city level, Seattle recently voted in Best Start for Kids—the most comprehensive approach in the nation to fund early child development and prevention strategies—and San Francisco is planning to make parental leave mandatory for companies with more than twenty employees. California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island have paid leave programs, and the Family and Medical Leave Act gives workers an unpaid twelve weeks of leave—but only half of them are eligible, the act is only enforceable on companies with more than fifty employees. President Obama suggested six weeks of parental leave in his 2015 state of the union address, and the Pentagon recently extended paid maternity leave from six to eighteen weeks and paternity leave from 10 to 14 days for family military family²⁸. But without a legal framework to even the playing field for businesses, companies that do not have family-

friendly policies might have competitive advantages over those that do. The result is that companies competing for qualified workers offer benefits, and those that can rely on an abundance of unqualified workers do not.

On-and-off careers, a high-powered career in only some phases of life, opting out for a while to care for family members or pursue training and education, working for different employers and having unstable jobs . . . this is the new work reality. And this reality needs some kind of government protection to ensure that those who perform important tasks for society, such as caring for elderly family members and parenting their children, are not left without choices. A well-lived life is about being a good worker, good parent, and good daughter or son—about being able to fulfill many different responsibilities and pursue various talents, so that the individual, the family, the workplace, and all of society benefit. A fair and just society is one that gives everybody a chance and appreciates those who are performing vital tasks.

**Most countries with a better
OECD Work-Life Rating perform well in the *UNICEF Child Well-Being in Rich Countries*
Ranking**

1. Netherlands
2. Norway
3. Iceland
4. Finland
5. Sweden
6. Germany
7. Luxembourg
8. Switzerland
9. Belgium
10. Ireland
11. Denmark
12. Slovenia
13. France
14. Czech Republic
15. Portugal
16. United Kingdom
17. Canada
18. Austria
19. Spain
20. Hungary
21. Poland
22. Italy
23. Estonia
- 23 Slovakia
- 25 Greece
- 26 United States
- 27 Lithuania
- 28 Latvia
- 29 Romania

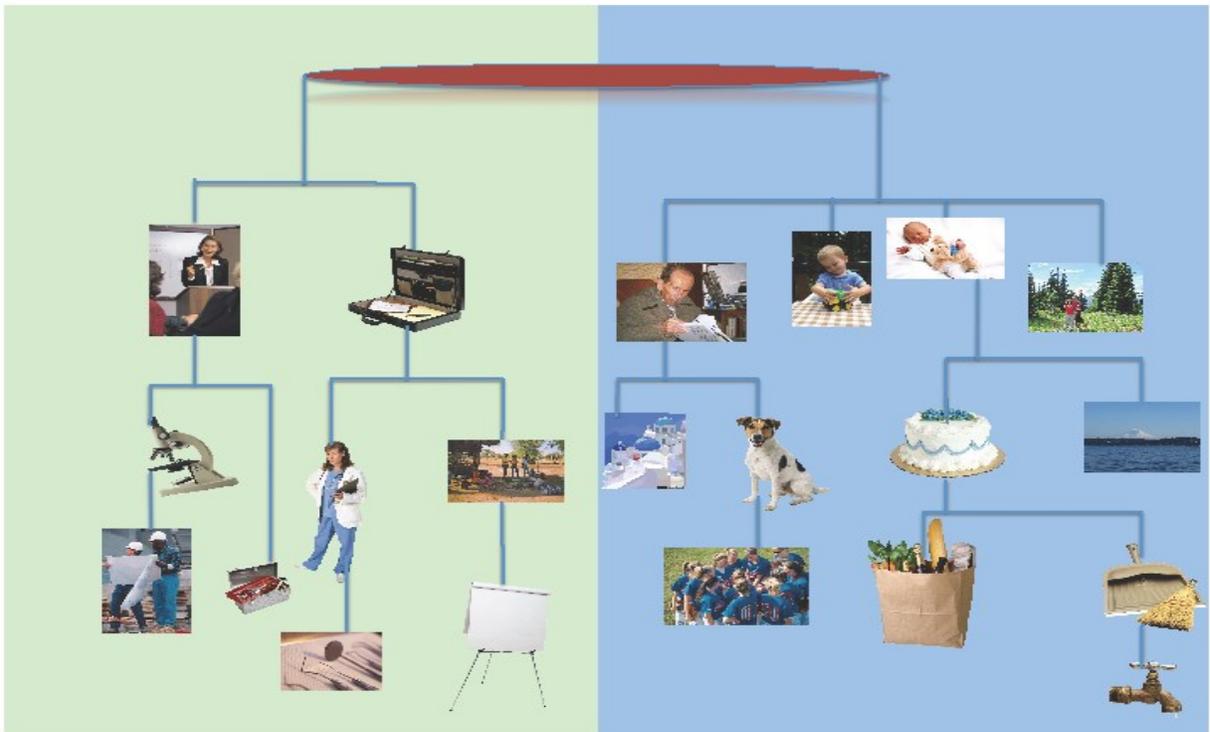
Source: Unicef 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the interviewees, who found time between their work and newborn babies to answer the questions. Their feedback provided real-life insights into the daily struggles working parents are facing in Germany. Thanks also to Jacqueline Hoeltge from *Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth*, for her thoughtful and thorough comments. A big thank you to Krissa Lagos from *Warner Coaching* for editing. And last but not least, with deep felt thanks to Neva Buyco Kulp, Emily Allen and Lara Simmons for their encouragements, comments, and suggestions that helped me in writing this paper on a very relevant and important topic for today's families living and working in our current business culture.

ATTACHMENTS

- Letter from WWS Worldwide (former: Walla Walla Solutions) to President Obama Regarding the National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct
- Initiatives on Work and Life Reconciliation in the U.S. and Germany (selection)
- Footnotes
- References





Walla Walla Solutions

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20500

Seattle, April 12, 2015

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Re: Submission to the U.S. Government regarding the consultation on the *National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct*

Dear President Obama,

We applaud the consultation process on the *U.S. National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct (NAP)* and its opportunity to highlight important issues that this plan should include.

Walla Walla Solutions is a consulting company based in Seattle with expertise in business and human rights, sustainability, regulatory compliance, logistics, treasury and risk management.

Supplementary to the other civil society's submissions, we propose to include issues related to economic and social rights, as outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Art 22 – 27).

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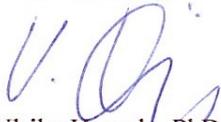
Mr. President, in your 2015 State of the Union address you eloquently stated that these issues are important to create a fair, safe, and decent work environment for everyone. As the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* determine the duty of the state to protect human rights in their jurisdiction, we suggest these economic and social rights should be part of the *National Action Plan for Responsible Business Conduct*:

- Equal pay for equal work without any discrimination (see Art 23.2),
- Increase in the minimum wage, to guarantee a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of the individual worker and his/her family and worthy of human dignity (Art 23.3),
- Universal access to health care, to follow standard of living increases and to include medical care and other necessary social services (Art. 25.1),
- Paid sick leave as a right, to provide security in the event of circumstances beyond one's control (Art. 25.1),
- Paid maternity leave, paid parent leave and affordable high quality child care, and recognition that motherhood and childhood are economically vulnerable conditions that are entitled to special care and assistance (Art. 25.1 and 25.2), and
- Improved job training systems and avenues for access to higher education, particularly in entry-level positions and technical training at professional and higher education institutions (Art. 26).

We are delighted that the Government is developing a National Action Plan focused on responsible business conduct. The NAP is a positive start to the process of creating a social and inclusive economy. It can provide valuable tools to ensure every citizen possesses the opportunity to earn a dignified living.

Mr. President, your consideration of incorporating these additional issues is welcomed.

Yours sincerely,



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INITIATIVES ON WORK AND LIFE RECONCILIATION IN THE U.S. (SELECTION)

- ✦ A Better Balance (www.abetterbalance.org)
- ✦ Center for WorkLife Law – UC Hastings College of Law (www.worklifelaw.org)
- ✦ Center for Work and Family—Boston College (<http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/>)
- ✦ Economic Opportunity Institute (www.eoionline.org)
- ✦ Family Values @ Work (www.familyvaluesatwork.org)
- ✦ Families and Work Institute (<http://www.familiesandwork.org>)
- ✦ Jobs with Justice (www.jwj.org)
- ✦ Labor Project for Working Families (www.working-families.org)
- ✦ Lean In (www.leanin.org)
- ✦ Mom’s Rising (www.momsrising.org)
- ✦ National Organization of Women (www.now.org)
- ✦ National Partnership for Women and Families (www.nationalpartnerships.org)
- ✦ Open Work (www.openwork.org)
- ✦ Take back your time (www.takebackyourtime.org)
- ✦ Women’s Empowerment Principles (<http://www.weprinciples.org>)
- ✦ Work and Family Researchers Network (<http://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu>)
- ✦ Working Mother (<http://www.workingmother.com/>)

INITIATIVES ON WORK AND LIFE RECONCILIATION IN GERMANY (SELECTION)

- ✦ Audit Beruf und Familie (=audit work and family) <http://www.berufundfamilie.de/audit/berufundfamilie.html>
- ✦ Bertelsmann Foundation (<http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/unsere-projekte/qualitaetsiegel-familienfreundlicher-arbeitgeber/>)
- ✦ Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (=Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth: Erfolgsfaktor Familie) (<https://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/>);
- ✦ Bundesvereinigung der deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA) (=Confederation of German Employers' Associations): Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf (http://www.arbeitgeber.de/www/arbeitgeber.nsf/id/9CZDGQ-de_vereinbarkeit-von-familie-und-beruf)
- ✦ Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (=German Union Confederation): Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf gestalten (<http://familie.dgb.de>)
- ✦ Familienbewusste Personalpolitik (=Family Friendly Human Resources Policies) (<http://www.familienbewusste-personalpolitik.de/>)
- ✦ Familienfreundlicher Arbeitgeber (Family-Friendly Employer (www.familienfreundlicher-arbeitgeber.de))
- ✦ Familienfreundliche Kommune (=Family-Friendly Municipalities) (<http://www.familienfreundliche-kommune.de>)
- ✦ Hertie Foundation (www.ghst.de/beruf-und-familie/)
- ✦ Landesvereinigung Baden-Württembergischer Arbeitgeberverbände. e.V. (=Employer Association of the State Baden-Württemberg) (www.familynet-bw.de)
- ✦ Lokale Bündnisse für Familie (=Local Alliances for Families/) (<https://lokale-buendnisse-fuer-familie.de/>)
- ✦ Mittelstand und Familie (=SMEs and Family) (<http://www.mittelstand-und-familie.de/startseite/>)
- ✦ Verband der Metall und Elektroindustrie Nordrhein-Westfalen (=association of the metal and electrical industry in North Rhine-Westphalia) (www.familienfreundlichebetriebe.metallnrw.de);

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Griswold 1993: 13ff; Coontz 2000: 24; Fels 2006: 300; Martin 2015: 59- 61; Ehrenreich/English 2005; Mitscherlich 1992.
- 2 Martin 2015: 177; Warner 2006; Senior 2014.
- 3 UNDP 2015
- 4 Goudreau 2011
- 5 Marans 2015; Schulte 2015: 80f; see Martin 2015: 161,171; Bennetts 2007: 311; Hekker 2009; Crittenden 2001; Budig 2014; Correll 2007; Budig/Misra/Boeckmann 2012.
- 6 Gerson 2011: 132, 309; Landers 2014; Twenge 2006: 229; Goldin 2014.
- 7 see Slaughter 2015: 12, 95; Wolf 2013; Poo 2015; Steinem 1994; Williams/Dempsey 2014: 127f; Stone 2007: 19, 69, 82, 112; Warner 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, Schulte 2015; Hochschild 2012: 9, Graaf 2015: 19, OECD 2011: 38.
- 8 Levine 1997: 14, 120.
- 9 Greenfield 2016; Alderman 2016.
- 10 European Union 2015
- 11 BMFSFJ 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; BMFSFJ/Erfolgsfaktor Familie 2015a.
- 12 All information in this chapter is from BMFSFJ 2015a, Spiess 2014; Bujard 2014, BMFSFJ/Erfolgsfaktor Familie 2015b, Berger Strategy 2006: 10.
- 13 The randomly selected interviewees answered the following questions: How did you organized your parental leave with your partner? How did the employers contribute? How was your return to the work place?
- 14 BDA 2013: 2013.
- 15 Berger 2014. The description of these issues follows the eight areas of the audit berufundfamilie (2011).
- 16 BDA 2013: 25; DGB 2015.
- 17 BDA 2013: 20, 24; DGB 2015; IG BCE 2015, BAVC 2015.
- 18 BMFSFJ 2016, BDA 2013: 33, BMFSFJ/Erfolgsfaktor Familie 2015a: 21; DGB 2015.
- 19 BDA 2013: 14, 16, 32.
- 20 DIHK et al. 2010: 11, BDA 2013: 13, 19; DGB 2015.
- 21 DIHK et al. 2010: 17, 23; BDA 2013: 18, 40; DGB 2015.
- 22 BDA 2013: 19.
- 23 DIHK et al. 2010: 24; BDA 2013: 22, 45.
- 24 BASF 2015; BDA 2013: 12.
- 25 Fraport 2015.
- 26 BMFSFJ 2009: 26; Arbeitskreis Kommunalpolitik 2009.
- 27 Erfolgsfaktor Familie <http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/>; Audit Beruf und Familie (<http://www.beruf-und-familie.de/>); Hertie Foundation (<http://www.ghst.de/beruf-und-familie/>); Verband der Metall und Elektroindustrie Nordrhein-Westfalen (www.familienfreundlichebetriebe.metallnrw.de); Landesvereinigung Baden-Württembergischer Arbeitgeberverbände. e.V. (www.familynet-bw.de). Mittelstand und Familie (<http://www.mittelstand-und-familie.de/startseite/>) Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (familie.dgb.de).
- 28 Stone 2007: 230, 232; Miller 2016a, Ryan 2016.

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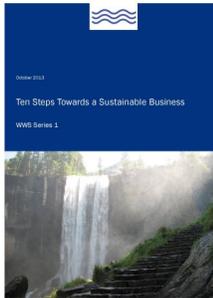
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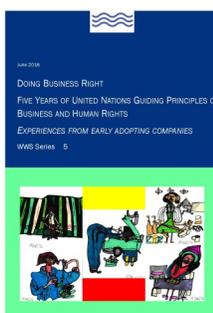
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