

Approach

The gender contract lies beneath the social contract. In other words, the current gender relations and structural discrimination against women are a fundamental element in the constitution of societies, state structures and political systems, labor markets, economic and scientific sectors. However, people are never just female or male or non-binary. We all carry within us an individual mix of diverse personal and social characteristics that form the basis of our identities and our social opportunities. An intersectional gender equality approach enables the identification of differences in a gender-homogeneous group and can help to identify and prevent multiple discrimination.

Origin

The relationship of gender equality politics and diversity equality is not a new topic. As early as 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw created the term "intersectionality" - the intertwining of two or more oppression relations. As a legal expert at the time, she analyzed various discrimination lawsuits and the associated Supreme Court proceedings. She showed that it is not enough to add racism and sexism, but that there is a specific "intersectio-nal" discrimination against black women in which the two mechanisms of discrimination confirm and reinforce each other. Based on her findings, she called for a structural revision of both anti-racist and feminist work.

Strategy

An intersectional gender equality strategy considers societal inequalities in a differentiated and diversity-focused way. Thus, plural ways of access and spaces for reflection can be created and more people can be reached and supported. In addition, the concept opens up possibilities for collaboration and alliances with other anti-discrimination actors. Last but not least, a consistent intersectional understanding is an effective tool for the quality management of gender equality work, as it can make the gaps, lacks and underrepresentations of one's own activities visible.

Implementation

While the added value of an intersectional approach for effective gender equality policy in Germany is now theoretically undisputed, the actual state of implementation still lags far behind this realization and there is little experience with corresponding gender equality goals and measures. (cf. Pusch, Weber 2023). As a network of gender equality actors in international and diverse German research organizations, the AGbaF supports the implementation of intersectional gender equality strategies in science.

Good Practice

Intersectional gender equality work does not address

- gender diversity: focus on privileges and discrimination not "only" due to binary or non-binary gender identities, but the linkage with further inequality categories.
- diversity equality: Measures do not target individual categories of inequality, but rather their linkages.

Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989): Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Anti-discrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics; Pusch, Corinna; Weber, Ulla (2023): How to Turn Words into Action? Status of the Implementation of Intersectionality in Gender Equality Work in German Research Organizations, in: Conference Proceedings - STS Graz 2023.