

# **Teach First Deutschland:**

## **Overcoming Limits to Growth - Maximizing Equity in Education**

### A Roadmap

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>CSG</b>	Core Strategic Group
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>SPR</b>	Springfield State
<b>TFA</b>	Teach for All
<b>TFD</b>	Teach First Germany
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>US</b>	United States of America
<b>AFE</b>	Teacher Union „Association for Education“

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Problem Definition

Teach First Deutschland (TFD) has successfully entered the German educational sector. Since 2007, they have started cooperations with five states, increased the number of fellows from 59 to 118 and received extensive positive evaluations of fellow impact (TFD 2012; Dollase 2011). TFD has successfully imported and adapted the “Teach For America”-concept to the German context. It implements its vision to increase educational equity in the short and long run by bringing highly qualified graduates into difficult school environments, improving the educational experience of the students and turning the fellows into long-term agents of change for the education system. After the first five years, the “start up days are over” (TFD 2012, 3). According to their goals until 2015, TFD aims to become an established NGO in the educational sector, with a diversified funding base that combines public and private funding, and to increase their impact: They want to be “a recognized and substantial part of the solution” to achieve equity in education in Germany (TFD 2012, 15).

However, TFD’s quest for maximum impact on educational equity is challenged by the fact that the demand for fellows is limited. For several reasons, the most important one being that fellows are not legally allowed to substitute teachers, the number of fellows is capped at approximately 30 fellows per federal state (Anon 2013). This limit has already been reached in four of the five states in which TFD is currently active. Even if TFD were to start cooperating with all remaining states and deploy 30 fellows to each of them, this would restrict the number of fellows to 480 per year– much less than in the continuously growing sister organizations in the US (over 9,000 corps members in 2011) and the UK (979 in 2012) (Teach for America 2011; Teach First UK 2013). Most likely the number of fellows in Germany will not be high enough to achieve a critical mass for long-term systemic change towards equity. Thus, TFD faces the challenge of how to increase their impact on equity in education in spite of this constraint.

TFD’s current business model is to turn high potentials into temporary teachers by means of intensive training programs which prepare them for the challenging work in a difficult and stressful environment of lower and medium track secondary schools<sup>1</sup> in socially disadvantaged areas. One potential way to maximize TFD’s impact while drawing on the strengths of the current business model was pitched to us by one of the shareholders of the organization: TFD could multiply its effect by making its expertise in training for difficult teaching situations fertile to regular teacher training.

This case study explores the potential of this idea by developing an ex-ante strategic change roadmap. It assesses how TFD could introduce a second pillar of activity beyond its current approach by contributing to teacher training. For reasons of scope and applicability, we design a process aiming to introduce a pilot project in one of the major TFD partner states, Springfield State (SPR). Both the internal and the external component of the change process are delineated.

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<sup>1</sup> *Haupt- und Realschulen*

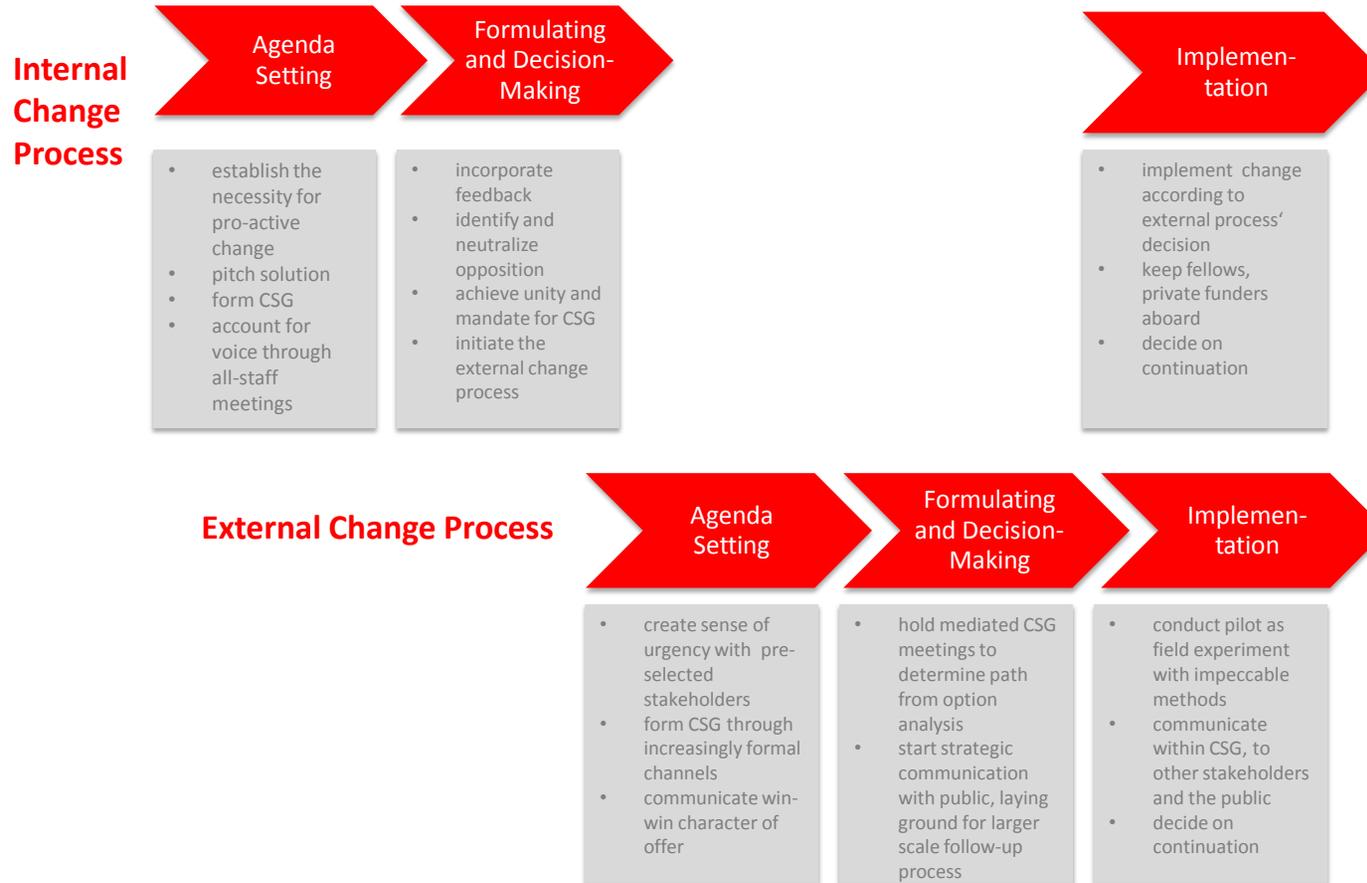
## 1.2 Approach

This case study draws on

- change management literature as discussed in the course,
- the initial blueprint of TFD as explicated in the master's thesis of the initial founding partners,
- current data on TFD's development in the past five years from TFD's 2012 report,
- an in-depth interview with one of TFD's shareholders, and
- desk research on the structure and content of teacher training in SPR and the relevant external stakeholders.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Firstly, a conceptual framework is developed based on the Bertelsmann Strategic Guidelines for Strategic Policy Reform (2011). Secondly, the twofold change model, comprising an external and internal change process, is derived. The external component is described first since its ramifications need to be taken into account by TFD when deciding whether to embark in the undertaking at all. Finally, brief concluding remarks and an assessment of feasibility are given. An overview of the roadmap is given in figure 1.

**Figure 1: Roadmap of the Twofold Change Process**



## 2 Conceptual Framework

For both the internal and the external change process, the Bertelsmann Strategic Policy Guidelines are used. Of the available change management literature, the guidelines provide the most adequate backdrop for the TFD case, since for neither process track a clear bottom-up or top-down model is suited – a “third way” is needed. Moreover, the innovative character of the undertaking - a young and small NGO trying to make its expertise available to highly institutionalized public teacher training - calls for an emphasis on feedback and responsiveness, which is well accounted for in the Bertelsmann model.

The external and internal process designs differ regarding the integration of bottom-up and top-down elements:

**EXTERNAL CHANGE PROCESS.** TFD is not in a position to direct a change in state-organized teacher training authoritatively. Rather, it needs to convince other stakeholder to collaborate and accept their input. This will be reflected in a collaborative, horizontal change process with a large core strategic group (CSG) including all relevant stakeholders.

**INTERNAL CHANGE PROCESS.** After the first two policy phases in which TFD decides to pursue change and kick-start the external change process, the internal change process will have the role of adjusting TFD to the decisions resulting from the external change process. TFD only recently consolidated authority by installing a single CEO to reduce bottom-up structures which have made strategic management difficult in the past (TFD 2012, 30, Anon 2013). Thus, these new management structures should be supported by the internal change process by choosing a more top-down blend of the Bertelsmann model reflected in the CSG selection and a more authoritative exercise of the three Cs<sup>2</sup>.

Since this change roadmap delineates the way to a first pilot, the outlined change process is inherently incremental and needs to be succeeded by a much larger scale process in case of success. During the pilot, the ground can be laid by creating positive facts and a sense of urgency, as will be described below.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bertelsmann Guidelines to Strategic Policy Reform emphasize the need to strategically focus on Competence, Communication and the Capability to Implement.

## 3 The External Change Process

In the following the external change process is outlined. Firstly, key stakeholders are mapped. We then apply the Bertelsmann model by identifying the CSG and the actions needed in the three policy phases, Agenda Setting, Formulation and Decision-Making, and Implementation, according to the three Cs.

### 3.1 Stakeholder Analysis and Selection of Core Strategic Group

#### 3.1.1 Stakeholder Analysis

The following stakeholders were identified:

**Ministry of Education (MoE), SPR:** The MoE is in charge of teacher training policies. Thus, its support is essential for the change project. However, within the ministry there are both, public servants supportive of TFD as well as rather skeptical ones.

**Association for Education:** The teacher union is an influential veto-player who in the past has been skeptical towards TFD, but who has an interest in teacher training and support measures.

**TFD:** TFD is the agenda-setting change agent. It needs to convince all other stakeholders of the value-added by their innovative offer.

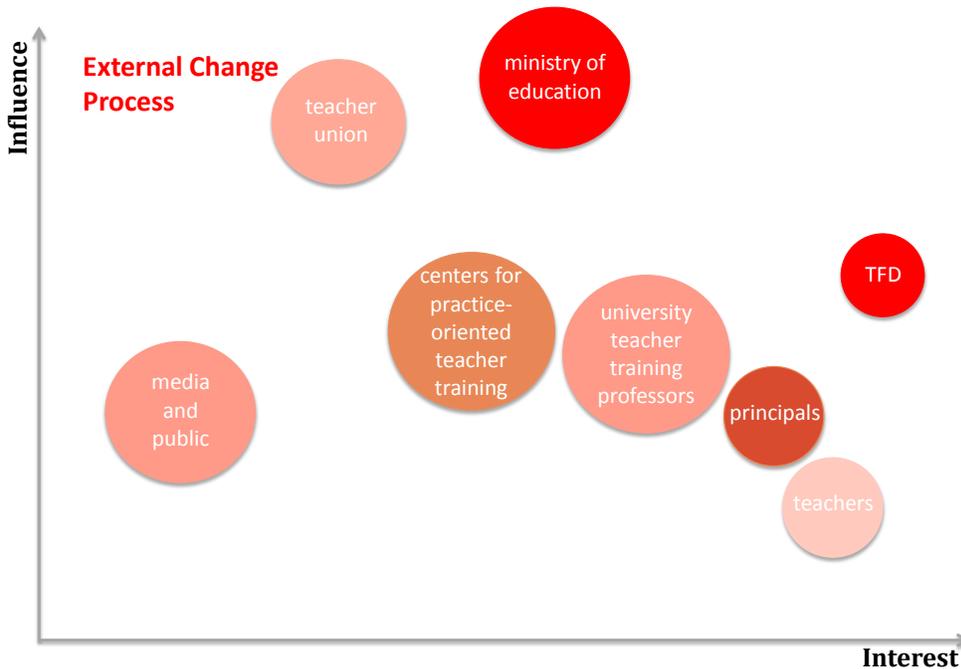
**Center for Practice-Oriented Teacher Training:** The organization in charge of alternate entry teacher training is an implementing agency with hands-on knowledge. So far, there has been no interaction with TFD, thus its position is neutral.

**University Teacher Training Professors:** Academics educating teachers within regular training track. Ideally, they should be open for innovative ideas, and able to judge them objectively.

**Teachers and Principals:** They are the actors most directly affected by the change endeavor. Although they are not as powerful as the MoE and the union, their individual support is needed to ensure legitimacy and success of the project.

**Media and Public:** These actors are very opinionated regarding education. However, since the project is a rather technical pilot not directly targeting students, we think active involvement should only start at the conclusion of the decision phase, shortly before the start of the pilot.

**Figure 2: Stakeholder Analysis - External Change Process**



### 3.1.2 Core Strategic Group

**COMPETENCE.** The CSG should include technical, issue-related as well as administrative and policy process expertise. External, neutral expertise increase competence further.

**COMMUNICATION.** Communication specialists from all agencies should be included from the beginning, in order to develop harmonized messages for the respective internal and external audiences.

**CAPABILITY TO IMPLEMENT.** The CSG needs to establish capability to implement by comprising

- (i) high-ranking officials who have the power to reform public administrative process,
- (ii) working-level staff who create legitimacy for change and have the technical knowledge,
- (iii) all relevant veto-players, most importantly teacher unions, giving them ownership right from the start.

This reasoning leads to approximately 18 CSG members:

- the *Head of the Union in SPR*, since he unites all positions and views within the union and is able to maximize the legitimacy within it;
- the *MoE Division Head of Teacher Training* to include a top-level public administration authority who has agenda-setting and decision-making power as well as a *staff member from the working-level working on teacher training*, to include technical knowledge and to create bottom-up legitimacy;

- the *TFD Head of Training* to include expertise on TFD’s teacher training approach as well as a *staff member responsible for teacher training of SPR fellows*, since s/he has the knowledge on state-specific training issues; further, the *Regional Manager for SPR*, since s/he is connected with all relevant stakeholders for TFD in SPR; most importantly, the *CEO* since s/he has agenda-setting and decision-making power within TFD and represents TFD externally;
- the *Head of the Centers for Practice-Oriented Teacher Training*, to include expertise on alternate entry teacher training;
- a *University Teacher Training Professor*. Ideally, this should be a renowned German teacher training professor, who is familiar with TFD and SPR;
- two to three randomly selected *teachers and principals* from TFD partner schools eligible for the pilot project;
- one *communication expert from each CSG agency* (union, MoE, TFD), since targeted communication within the individual organizations as well as to the differing external audiences is crucial.

### 3.2 Agenda Setting

**COMPETENCE.** It is necessary to raise problem awareness among the pre-selected stakeholders whom we recommend to include into the CSG: Teacher performance in many lower- and medium track secondary schools in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods is deficient due to inadequate preparation of the teachers for challenging teaching situations. This reduces equity in education, since teachers perform worse under the heightened stress and constraint level. Current teacher training does not provide them with tools to cope— a solution needs to be found and TFD has potential to contribute to this solution because of its unique expertise in training its fellows.

**COMMUNICATION.** This is the message to be communicated to the identified stakeholders. Key is that the stakeholders recognize the added, “free” value which TFD offers. Communication should start gradually and carefully: Firstly and informally address those individuals in stakeholder organizations with previous positive TFD experience. After gathering the CSG in informal talks and meetings an official statement of TFD (ideally jointly with the most important actors, the MoE and the union) should be issued to the stakeholders, offering TFD’s willingness to contribute and inviting them into a dialogue. The schools addressed to voluntarily deploy members to the CSG are pre-selected on having had fellows, since they are part of the target group (challenging teaching environment) and have had positive TFD experience. The pilot schools should later be selected from them.

**CAPABILITY TO IMPLEMENT.** Building a joint image of what this undertaking is – an innovative, lab-like joint-venture with no risks for the other actors, low costs and potentially high benefits – is crucial to counter potential mobilization efforts against private involvement in teacher training. TFD is open for a myriad of different ways to contribute, the only constraint being that the fellow program is not threatened and the stakeholders contribute to the funding of the undertaking, steering clear of conflicts with the TFD’s private donors. The still fresh success of TFD fellows in those schools can be seen as a window of opportunity for even more innovative change in an otherwise change and risk-averse environment.

### 3.3 Formulating and Decision-Making

**COMPETENCE.** The CSG will have to decide which components of TFD training would be most effective in helping regular teachers cope with a stressful teaching environment. It will also decide who should be addressed, and how the training would be applied. A multi-criteria option analysis will be necessary that also takes into account costs distribution. The main choice dimensions are summarized below.

#### *Content of TFD Training*

TFD training is post-graduate in character and focused on psychological aspects of teaching. Fellows are trained to acquire the following competencies:

- (i) set ambitious goals and plan meticulously,
- (ii) implement effectively,
- (iii) continuously review and improve via enhanced self-awareness, self-evaluation, and external evaluation,
- (iv) involve and support others, build and use networks of peers for support,
- (v) acquire a mindset of „internal locus of control“ and professionalism: be a constrained optimizer rather than a failing idealist.

These competencies enable fellows to excel in difficult teaching environments. In comparison with the SPR model of teacher training, it can be stated that iii), iv) and v) are qualities which receive more attention in the TFD training than in regular teacher training and thus are the potential “added benefit”.

#### *Process of TFD Training*

Fellows complete an initial six week e-learning phase and another six week intensive summer academy. The lab-like environment allows for applying up-to-date innovations in teacher training, ensuring maximum learning efficacy. During the two years of service, continuous feedback loops with the organization, the peers and several further qualifying camps deepen the fellows’ abilities.

The main differences to regular teacher training, which could be adopted, are:

- the intensive group learning phase set-up which enables the building of a corps spirit and the use of networks in the follow-up rounds of qualification,
- the pre-selection of the fellows on several qualifying characteristics like achievement, but most importantly vision - to contribute to equity in education - which is strengthened and build upon to generate group cohesion and discipline.

It will also be pre-determined how TFD will participate in implementing the change, e.g. by:

- offering teacher training within TFD,
- sending trainers to the public institutions,
- having trainers train trainers,
- issuing a report.

Furthermore, it has to be decided which teacher group(s) should benefit (studied teachers and/or career changers) and at what point of their career (beginning and/or mid-level).

Finally, the CSG will need to specify:

- how schools and teachers should be selected from voluntary applications of eligible schools,
- the period between treatment and assessment,
- how success will be evaluated,
- how costs will be distributed.

To reach a binding decision in the CSG, a mediator is recommended, since level-headed interaction between all those actors will be something new, and external competence is required to make it a collaborative exercise. We suggest that the first two phases consist of one to two years of regular, mediated meetings of the CSG, at the end of which the CSG establishes a final consensual plan.

**COMMUNICATION.** After reaching decision, consolidated communication with the public should start. The parent representatives of the pilot schools as well as the local newspapers should be invited to a meeting with the participating trainers, teachers, headmasters and a TFD representative. Achieving trust by emphasizing the win-win “lab”-nature of the undertaking is key – teachers will receive extra, high-quality training, which will potentially benefit students and raise school quality. The union needs to offer the newspapers a positive, low key statement of support.

**CAPABILITY TO IMPLEMENT.** Capability to implement is ensured within the CSG through the long mediated preparation phase, by selecting voluntary schools and teachers, and by communicating low-key and positively with the public.

### 3.4 Implementation

**COMPETENCE.** In the third phase, the pilot teachers will be given the specified training treatment (e.g. a two-week training on stress-coping mechanisms in small peer groups from their respective schools with follow up weekend-workshops) and then go back into their schools to teach for a pre-defined period (e.g. two school years). They report on their experiences, which will be part of the evaluation of the success.

**COMMUNICATION.** The support of the CSG and the participating schools must be ensured through continued positive communication on progress. The participating teachers and schools need a contact person who is in charge of leading the treatment (probably the TFD head of teacher training SPR) for their issues and feedback.

As soon as results start to show, the CSG should start to consider whether they want to launch a bigger scale process, since this would be the time to start creating a sense of urgency which reaches its tipping point once the official results of the pilot are out – creating a window of opportunity. At the end of the pilot, another mediated meeting of the CSG should reach final consensus on up-scaling, and a well-prepared information package for the public and the media should present the evaluation results as well as personalized narratives from teachers and students.

**CAPABILITY TO IMPLEMENT.** The pilot process itself should be lead by an empowered subset of the CSG as a quite scientific field experiment, from which information will flow to the CSG and stakeholders as described above. Capability to implement is ensured by support of the CSG and the voluntary participation of the teachers and principals in a treatment which is not particularly costly, but potentially very beneficial to them.

### **3.5 Ongoing Evaluation**

The pilot should be subject to continuous evaluation, so that, in case of success, a solid argument can be made for launching larger scale cooperation. Psychologically sound surveys and interviews should be conducted with the pilot teachers, their non-treated peers, and teachers from non-pilot schools, ideally individually and in group settings and several times, to assess the impact of the treatment on coping ability over time. Students should also be surveyed. Stakeholders should have continued contact throughout the process via informal meetings and progress reports. The TFD CEO should assure to acquire continuous feedback from all CSG members.

## 4 The Internal Change Process

The move towards a second pillar of impact has to start internally: TFD will have to go through the first two policy phases, (i) agenda-setting and (ii) formulating and decision-making, to create a sense of urgency within the organization that a second pillar complementing the current approach is necessary, to unite behind the specific idea of contributing to teacher training in a pilot project, and to decide on starting the external change process by reaching out to the other stakeholders.

After this decision, the organization will have to work to bring about the first two external change phases, before, in parallel to the external change process, implementing changes required by the external decision in a top-down fashion. Winning over the whole organization in first the two stages is crucial for the long-run credibility of TFD. Losing interest halfway through, or proving unable to implement, would destroy TFD's reputation.

### 4.1 Stakeholder Analysis and Selection of Core Strategic Group

#### 4.1.1 Stakeholder Analysis

Within TFD, the following stakeholders are identified:

**Board of Directors:** The board is in charge of neutral organizational oversight. It is no active veto-player and very supportive of the organization.

**TFD CEO:** He manages TFD, decides on major operations and might have to speak up against shareholders who were in the former CEO team.

**Shareholders:** The partners are also the founders of TFD. Although they want to reduce their intervention in the active operations, they oversee developments and might request a say in the change process.

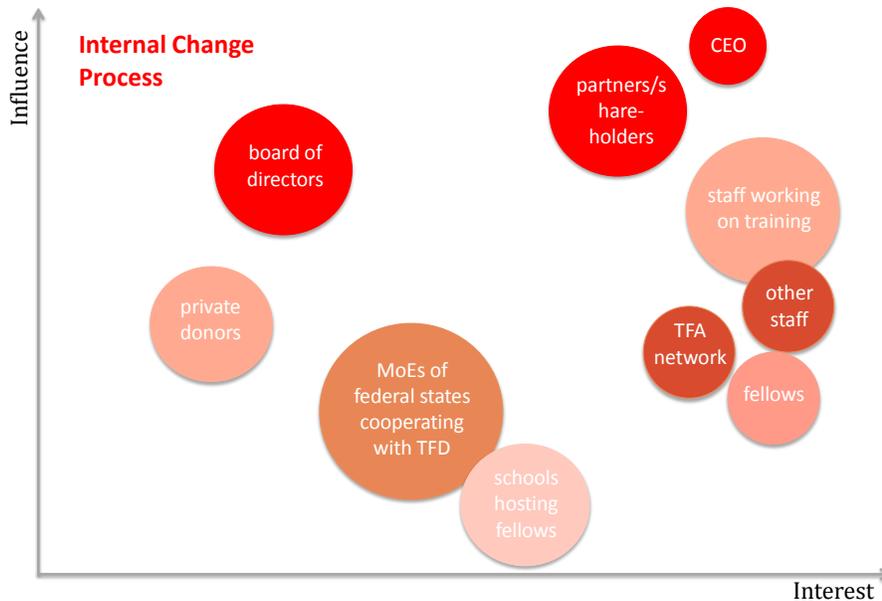
**Staff:** Staff consists of those working on training, executive and supportive staff. Training staff will have to adapt and change most significantly. All staff members have voice due to previous horizontal structures.

**Fellows, Schools hosting Fellows, TFA network:** Their support is very important for successful operations. It will largely depend on communication and the continuing relevance of the first pillar of impact.

**Private Donors:** They sponsor the summer academy for teacher training and are interested in social entrepreneurship and innovation. However, they might be critical of too much public sector involvement.

**MoEs of Federal States hosting fellows:** They pay fellows and will profit from the external change project, but they have no say in the internal organizational change.

**Figure 3: Stakeholder Analysis - Internal Change Process**



#### 4.1.2 Core Strategic Group

**COMPETENCE.** The CSG needs to combine the relevant administrative, technical and executive competencies.

**COMMUNICATION.** Due to the small team, communication with the physically present staff can happen via meetings and direct information by the CSG as a whole. The TFD communication expert should focus on communicating with fellows and private donors, who are not physically present in the office.

**CAPABILITY TO IMPLEMENT.** The CSG needs to consolidate all executive power and gain a mandate for top-down implementation by the organization.

This reasoning leads to approximately eight CSG members:

- the *TFD CEO* to take the lead and head the change process;
- *one board representative* and
- *one shareholder representative* to support the CEO;
- *all staff members who are participating in the external change process* to bridge the two change processes and
- *a TFA representative*, to attune to the network and share information on international best practices.

## **4.2 Agenda Setting**

Firstly, the initiators have to foster a desire for reform in the organization by strongly communicating the inevitable limits to growth and how these hamper TFD's implementation of vision. They should start by addressing the identified members of the CSG, which can then act as multipliers. Communication should start informally according to TFD's size and culture and end in a meeting including all staff and representatives from all other stakeholders. This meeting serves to articulate the urgent need for reform as well as the solution – the second pillar of vision implementation, contributing to better teacher training, is presented officially. It is crucial to make sure that the organization buys into the idea of two pillar vision implementation by stressing that the cost of not doing so would mean staying small, losing the start-up bonus and failing to realize the vision of long-term systemic improvements, while the proposed second pillar would be extremely innovative (even within the TFA network) and, if continued after the pilot phase, could really change the face of education in Germany. The process should be led by the recently strengthened CEO, using the new organizational structure as a window of opportunity in an organization eager to change according to its vision.

## **4.3 Formulating and Decision-Making**

Next, a feedback period should follow. During this period, continuous lobbying by the CSG, and identification and neutralization of strong opponents is necessary. In a second meeting, the CSG presents its detailed plan for initiating the first phase of the external process with adaptations coming from the organization's feedback: Key questions that could be answered with the help of "crowd intelligence" are which people to involve in the external CSG and how to sequence the start of the external agenda phase. The CSG will build trust by framing the pilot as the next big adventure for TFD, while the current fellow-based approach will not be threatened, and honestly admitting to the open end of the process. It needs to assure the support of the large majority of the organization and get a mandate to start the external change process. After this, continuous updates on the progress of the external change process into the organization are necessary, e.g. in the form of a newsletter and (non-mandatory) all-company meetings after milestones in the external process. It must be clear that the CSG subset in the external process has the sole mandate to negotiate for TFD – but also that it will stay true to TFD's vision.

## **4.4 Implementation**

The concrete changes to be implemented result from the external process. It is necessary that the CSG controls the organization to the extent that it can guarantee ex-post implementation of the changes resulting from decisions taken in the external change process. Intra-organizational jamming or a similar group collaboration tool could be used to derive optimal implementation strategies and assure continued support.

## **4.5 Ongoing Evaluation**

It is necessary to keep one ear on the organization throughout the whole process to assure capability to implement or minimize damage by aborting early if this capability seems not given. During the pilot, the CSG needs to reflect and listen to the organization to assess TFD's willingness and capability to make the second pillar permanent. CSG meetings and all-staff meetings are adequate to discuss this, as well as

anonymous surveys to reduce peer pressure and get honest feedback. Additional attention must be paid to the fellows and the private funders to assure the stability of the first pillar of impact.

## **5 Conclusion and Assessment**

Five years after its introduction to the German educational landscape, TFD has institutionalized itself as a small NGO aiming at improving educational equity in Germany. Having started with very ambitious goals, the organization will soon reach limits to growth, and thus impact, due to the cap on fellow placement.

This case study explores the idea to introduce a second pillar of operations in order to maximize impact furthering the vision of equity in education: Making TFD's expertise in training for teaching in particularly stressful environments fertile to the training of regular teachers. The necessary external and internal change process for bringing about this highly innovative notion in a single state temporary pilot have been delineated.

Assessing overall feasibility, we deem the collaborative external change process highly challenging given the overall conservatism of the other stakeholders and the size and influence of the actor TFD. However, TFD's story to this point has shown that astonishingly many obstacles can be overcome by passionate, strategic action – the potential of the organization should thus not be underestimated. Even if the process does not come to a successful end, TFD, through raising awareness for the inadequacies in teacher training, would potentially contribute to progress towards a solution. We thus think that considering this change process with the complete internal CSG is worthwhile.

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