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(Not) everybody is invited?

Theoretical and practical considerations for evaluating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Social Innovation Initiatives in the case of the BLAST Project

vorgelegt von

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## Abstract

Social innovation initiatives develop new social practices to address urgent societal problems like social inequality and climate change. Recently, the three dimensions framework has been developed to assess to what extent social innovation initiatives contribute to a profound, transformative change of a society towards sustainability and social justice. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion can improve the transformative impact of a social innovation initiative. However, the three dimensions framework is lacking a clear conceptualisation of these constructs. This study investigated how Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion can be conceptualised as a part of the three dimensions framework. The question was investigated in the context of a social innovation project using an action research design. Data from various sources throughout the research process were analysed with a thematic analysis. Resulting from that, six patterns describe the conditions and skills for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work found in the social innovation project. Based on the patterns, the three dimensions framework was refined to cover Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Potential general implications for the framework were discussed. Further research is needed to make assumptions about the applicability of the findings to other contexts.

## Zusammenfassung

Soziale Innovations-Initiativen experimentieren mit neuen sozialen Praktiken, womit sie dringenden gesellschaftlichen Probleme wie soziale Ungleichheiten oder Klimawandel begegnen. Kürzlich wurde das *three dimensions framework* entwickelt, um zu erfassen, in welchem Ausmaß soziale Innovations-Initiativen zu einem tiefgreifenden, transformativen Wandel der Gesellschaft beitragen. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* können die transformative Wirkung einer sozialen Innovationsinitiative erhöhen. Allerdings fehlt im *three dimensions framework* eine klare Konzeptualisierung dieser Konstrukte. Diese Studie untersucht die Frage, wie *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* als Teil des *three dimensions framework* konzeptualisiert werden kann. Die Forschungsfrage wurde mithilfe eines Aktionsforschungsdesigns im Kontext eines sozialen Innovations-Projekts untersucht. Daten aus verschiedenen Quellen während des Forschungsprozesses wurden mithilfe einer thematischen Analyse untersucht. Daraus resultierend beschreiben sechs Muster Bedingungen und Fähigkeiten für das Angehen von *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* im besagten sozialen Innovations-Projekt. Auf der Basis dieser Muster wurde das *three dimensions framework* angepasst, um *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* abzudecken. Potenzielle Implikationen für das framework im Allgemeinen werden diskutiert. Weitere Forschung ist nötig, um Annahmen über die Anwendbarkeit der Ergebnisse auf andere Kontexte treffen zu können.

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# List of abbreviations

- BLAST.....Blended Adult Learning for the Socio-ecological Transition
- blt.....blended transformative learning
- EDI.....Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- SI.....social innovation
- ECOLISE.....European Network for Community-Led Initiatives on Climate Change and Sustainability

# 1 Introductory chapter

## 1.1. Introduction

Over the last decades it has become increasingly visible that the world is facing severe crises. Exploitation and pollution of natural resources are causing climate change (Meadows et al, 2007). Planetary boundaries are gradually exceeded resulting in natural disasters and scarcity over resources (Sachs et al., 2005, pp. 30–34). In our progressively globalized world inequality is increasing globally and within nations (Sachs et al., 2005, pp. 23–26). The rise of awareness of these problems has led to the emergence of the movement of socio-ecological transition. This movement promotes a fundamental change of the existing societal system as a solution for these crises (Göpel, 2014). Altering the current society's underlying paradigm of neoliberalism and permanent economic growth is expected to trigger change in all parts of society, rendering it more sustainable and just (Boddenberg, 2018).

Research on such societal transformation has shown that profound change is achieved by the development and diffusion of social innovations (Rammert, 2010, p. 43). Transformative social innovations are new ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Kemp, et al., 2017). Strasser et al. (2019) have recently developed a framework which serves to assess the degree to which social innovations contribute to societal transformation. The three dimensions framework assesses width, length, and depth of transformative impact and defines widening, deepening, and lengthening capacities. It can be used for self-evaluation by social innovation initiatives.

As described above, the central goal of the socio-ecological transition movement is to create a society which is characterized by sustainability. The term sustainability combines ecological, social and economic problems (Neckel, 2018). While the social dimension of sustainability has often been treated rather vaguely in the past, attention towards this dimension is now increasing among practitioners and researchers (Dillard et al., 2013, p. 1). In accordance with this emerging focus, social innovation actors start to investigate their own innovating practices to learn how they challenge or reproduce oppressive systems producing inequalities (Fisk et al., 2019). However, although social justice can be considered to be an essential part of socio-ecological transition, a profound investigation of how to assess social justice in transformative efforts is still pending.

This applies to the context of this research project, the two year EU-funded BLAST project (ECOLISE, 2020), which can be characterized as a social innovation initiative. In compliance with the argumentation above, project members identified a lack of attention to social justice issues in their work. This lack was perceived as negatively impacting the initiative's transformative impact. The BLAST project used the three dimensions framework to tailor an evaluation approach adapted to their



purposes. Alongside with the adaptation of the general three dimensions framework to the BLAST context, it was investigated how to include social justice in the framework. This investigation was conducted by research team formed by me<sup>1</sup> as a researcher and the project members. The research team used a combination of the terms Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to specify their account of social justice in the project context. This term describes an atmosphere which enables every member of the team to thrive while celebrating their uniqueness. It acknowledges the socially constructed natures of identity categories and their roots in historic systems of oppression, which are perpetuated in individual, institutional, and cultural interactions and norms. Based on this context specific inclusion of EDI in the 3D framework, this research project answered the following research question: How can Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion be conceptualized as a part of the three dimensions framework?

The research project simultaneously addressed this research question and the underlying practical problem by using an action research approach. Action research produces practical knowledge through studying effects of practical interventions in real-life situations. Action research studies are collaboratively conducted by researchers and research participants in a participatory manner (Eikeland, 2015, pp. 6, 11). It is employed to produce actionable knowledge in favor of solving wicked problems in real settings (Gergen & Gergen, 2015).

Following Gary Anderson's (Dick, 1993) recommendations about how to write an action research thesis, this thesis will have the following structure. The introductory chapter will set the scene by describing the research context, as well as connecting it to relevant theory and clarifying the research question. Subsequently, the methodology chapter will explain the epistemological assumptions the research project is based on. Further, data collection methods and analysis tools will be explained. The chapter on findings will introduce the results of the process of analysis and discuss how they were used to adapt the three dimensions framework to the EDI ambitions of the BLAST context. Finally, the concluding chapter will derive implications for practitioners and future research and examine the quality of the research results.

## 1.2. Research context

This chapter will provide an introduction to the scene of the research project. The research project was conducted in the context of the BLAST(Blended Adult Learning for Social-Ecological Transition) project (ECOLISE, 2020). BLAST is funded by the European Union as part of the ERASMUS+ programme for a duration of 2 years and has kicked off in October 2019. It is led by ECOLISE- a European

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the subjectivity stemming from my own involvement in the research project I deliberately use the first person. See chapter 2.3.2 for further explanation.

network of community-based initiatives on climate change and sustainability which connects different actors and initiatives involved in social-ecological transition (ECOLISE, 2018). The project consortium consists of NGOs which are based in different parts of Europe and are all engaged with transformative adult education working towards social-ecological change. The collaboration mostly happens online. The project will also launch an international community of practice that will connect transformative educators in the long term. BLAST is planning to produce four outputs, a guide for communities of practice, a catalyst toolkit, a competence framework, and a training of trainers curriculum (ECOLISE, 2020).

The project members share the common aim to contribute to a socio-ecological transition. This refers to a fundamental change of the current society to make it more just and sustainable (see chapter 1.3.2.). The BLAST project wants to contribute to the socio-ecological transition by enabling the creation of blended transformative learning opportunities to support change-makers in working towards social-ecological transition (ECOLISE, 2020). Transformative learning refers to learning experiences that transform the learner's behaviour and consciousness. These changes are achieved through reflecting, discussing their own assumptions and beliefs through numerous creative techniques (Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009, pp. 3–4). Blended learning combines offline and online learning and sharing. It is supposed to scale local innovations to geographically distributed transformative networks (ECOLISE, 2020).

### 1.3 Theoretical context

According to its project objective, the BLAST project can be characterized a social innovation initiative. A social innovation initiative is a collective of people working on ideas, objects, or activities that are socially innovative (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017). The definition of social innovations and their relation to societal transformation will be dealt with in the following two chapters.

#### 1.3.1. Social innovation

Different understandings of innovation exist amongst different disciplines. In current discourses the term innovation is often used in an economic sense, as coined by Joseph Schumpeter (as cited in Rammert, 2010, p. 21). In this sense, an innovation is the development of new products and processes and their introduction to a market (Rammert, 2010, p. 21). Differing from this technologically oriented perspective, social innovations refer to new social practices (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, pp. 89–90). They can be described as new qualities in ways of doing, organizing, framing and knowing (Haxeltine et al., 2017). The novelty of innovations is determined by a time, a factual, and a social dimension. This means that the social practice has not been experienced before, that it combines elements in a different way than before, and that it deviates from old routines, standards, or

norms (Rammert, 2010, pp. 31–33). New social practices become meaningful innovations when they are increasingly adopted by and adapted to wider parts of society, eventually replacing old institutions as the new normal (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, pp. 89–90). The term institution refers to implicit or explicit social agreements and rules that structure social interactions. They can be both formal and informal and manifest in laws, social practices, customs, norms, values or religious, professional, educational, or other organisations. Institutions shape mindsets, cognitive models, roles, identities, and social arrangements of those socialized with them (Haxeltine et al., 2017, p. 10). Therefore, the term social innovation refers both to the new quality of doing things, as well as to the process of spreading the innovation in society (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017).

Social innovations are created by pioneering social actors or groups of actors in societal niches (Blättel-Mink et al., 2017), in order to establish social practices which are able to solve societal problems and to satisfy needs in a better way than the old practices did (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, p. 89). To achieve that, social innovation actors search for those solutions in collective, reflexive, and continuous experiments with new social practices (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2016). Innovative experiments happen in numerous different contexts and on different levels, involving experiments in networking and collaboration, e.g. in communities of practice (Luederitz et al., 2017). Social innovation actors reflect critically on what is considered the norm and seek to acquire specific technological and social skills needed for the social innovation (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, pp. 89–91). The term social innovation actor can refer to individuals, initiatives, networks, social innovation fields etc. (Haxeltine et al., 2017, p. 18)

The BLAST project works on blended transformative learning (blt), as an innovative set of social practices for adult education that aims at building capacities for a socio-ecological transition. Further, the project creates a new community of practice of blt practitioners. This community of practice experiments with new ways of relating to each other and actively seeks to acquire skills and capacities relevant to learning for transformation. Their innovative efforts are directed towards a vision of a transformed sustainable and just society. Thus, BLAST brings together social innovation actors, who work on social innovations in the field of adult education and networking and can therefore be classified as social innovation.

The next chapter will take a closer look at the relationship between social innovations and transformative change.

### 1.3.2. Social innovation and transformation

The ambitions of social innovation actors are directed towards the societal vision they want to achieve (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, p. 89). Social innovations are developed to intentionally

navigate towards societal transformation (Howaldt et al., 2014, pp. 57–58). Transformation means a profound change in dominant worldviews, paradigms and visions and social relationships of a society (Göpel, 2016, p. 31). Transformative change happens with sufficient depth and width to shift any social and material situation in the changed society. These changes need to occur simultaneously in several dimensions and places in a socio-material context (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017). An example for a historic social transformation is the industrial revolution and the emergence of market economy as described by Karl Polanyi (2001).

Here, transformation refers to socio-ecological transition. Alongside a growing number of SI actors, the BLAST project wants to contribute to a socio-ecological transition to solve major problems like climate change and social injustices (ECOLISE, 2020; Howaldt et al., 2014, pp. 57–58). The term socio-ecological transition summarizes approaches to achieve sustainability which challenge the neoliberal system of economic growth (Boddenberg, 2018). Those approaches see the dominant societal paradigm of neoliberalist capitalism as root cause for global social and climate injustice (Boddenberg, 2018). Shifting this paradigm is believed to substantially impact all other elements of the system resulting in a deep structural change resulting in a more sustainable and just society (Göpel, 2016, pp. 150–158; Meadows, 1999).

Social innovations can be considered the driving force for bringing about the transformative change described above (Howaldt & Schwarz, 2010, p. 92). However, social innovations have an ambiguous relationship to dominant institutions. As they are internalized by every member of society and often operate unnoticed, social innovation actors can unintentionally reproduce the dominant institutions they actually want to challenge (see chapter 1.4). This in turn impacts their ability to contribute to transformative change (Strasser 2020). Interactions between social innovations and dominant institutions were investigated by the EU funded TRANSIT project between 2014 and 2017 (DRIFT, 2017). The TRANSIT project's conceptualisation of social transformation as institutionalisation of social innovations enlightens when social innovations contribute to transformative change (Strasser et al., 2019). Social innovations are transformative when they alter, challenge and finally replace dominant institutions in a socio-material context with a certain durability and on a certain scale (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2014). If this process is successful, the innovative social practice becomes institutionalized as the new dominant institution of a transformed society (Haxeltine et al., 2017).

Strasser et al. (in press, 2019) concretized this notion in the three dimensions framework, making it possible to assess the contribution of social innovations to transformative change. By doing this, they attempted to address the lack of valid measurement instruments for social impact (Kemp et al., 2017). The framework was developed in 2019 and is continuously empirically tested and refined

with the latest version being published expectedly in 2020 (Strasser et al., in press, 2019). It operationalizes the transformative impact of a social innovation as the degree to which the innovative ways of doing, organizing, knowing, framing, and relating have become institutionalised. Institutionalisation is subdivided into a width, a length and depth dimension (Strasser et al., 2019).

Width refers to the wide-spread influence of innovative social practices and relations across diverse societal and geographical sectors, while maintaining coherence across these diverse social and geographic contexts (Strasser et al., 2019). Innovations which fail to score high on the width dimension remain for example limited to groups of certain geographic or demographic backgrounds, or compromise on their core values while diffusing (Strasser et al., in press). Length describes the persistent and evolving reproduction of innovative practices and relations. Institutions scoring high on length remain unchallenged even in times of crisis or internal conflict when original founders are replaced. They have a continuous and secure source of resources and legitimation. Depth entails the cultural embeddedness of social relations and practices in worldviews, identities, and norms, as well as their structural embeddedness in legal, economic, and organisational structures. Institutions with a high level of depth are difficult to challenge as there is often little awareness of their existence or strong self-protection measures. They are rarely addressed explicitly and are usually taken for granted or accepted as the norm (Strasser et al., 2019).

Strasser et al. further define skills, knowledge, and attitudes social innovation actors require to move towards institutionalisation (Strasser et al., 2019). They are summarized as transformative capacity and subdivided in deepening, widening, and lengthening capacities (Strasser et al., in press). Combined, they form the transformative capacity of an SI initiative. This can be defined as the ability to turn transformative potential into transformative impact. Transformative potential means the innovative qualities of new social practices, which can potentially challenge dominant institutions (Strasser et al., 2019).

*Table 1*  
*Transformative capacities of the three dimensions framework.*

<b>Widening capacities</b>	
Spreading & adapting SI approaches to diverse contexts	SI actors are able to communicate and spread their solutions to others in an attracting way. These solutions are replicable in different contexts while maintaining core values.
Engaging a variety of people & perspectives	SI actors are able to attract and engage a wide radius of participants, members and ambassadors. They produce accessible and inclusive solutions which they communicate in a widely resonating language.
Cross-movement collaboration	SI actors are able to collaborate and synergize with actors or networks with similar visions. They are able to build trust-based

relationships and bridges across different movements which share complementing core values.

Building coherence across diversity

SI actors are able to support coherence building among practitioners of their solutions by assisting them with applying and practicing the core principles.

### **Lengthening capacities**

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Generating continuity of resources & activities

SI actors are able to ensure persistence of their solutions by finding continuous funding, securing ongoing motivation among staff and volunteers, capturing learnings, and ensuring the transfer of knowledge, experience, and relationships across cycles.

Ensuring resilience in the face of challenges  
Evolving goals & strategies

SI actors are able to deal with internal conflict, continuous support from external decision makers and external crises.

SI actors are able to further develop their core principles, theories of change, and narratives. They are to navigate complex change processes in order to exchange what is not effective. They are flexible and responsive and therefore adapt and learn over time.

Re-organizing & decentralizing governance structures

SI actors are able to re-organize their organizational structures and processes when they grow and mature over time. They are able to decentralize governance structures in order to achieve faster and better decision making while aligning the needs of a higher diversity of people and becoming more inclusive to more diverse people.

Maturing along developmental stages

SI actors are able to grow and evolve their initiatives, networks, or organisations along subsequent developmental phases. They are also able to support individuals to mature within an organization or initiative and build the capacities needed for further maturation.

### **Deepening capacities**

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Understanding & problematizing root causes

SI actors are able to understand systemic root causes of problems in established systems. They go beyond surface issues to a deeper level by identifying systemic leverage points.

Identifying & practicing effective solutions

SI actors are able to offer concrete solutions or alternatives to current problems in a constructive and pragmatic way (instead of criticizing or demanding the powerful decision makers to act). Solutions are identified and practiced at an individual level, a collective level and a systemic level. SI actors embed the solutions in a compelling theory of change or vision of the future.

Clarifying & enacting core principles & values

SI actors are able to distil the essence of their solutions into core principles or essential ingredients. SI actors are able to articulate their shared values among their networks. They are able to operationalize and enact those values.

Cooperating strategically & reflexively across sectors

SI actors are able to cooperate with high level decision makers in government, business or academia in terms of funding and collaborative action. They are able to bridge cross-sector gaps to private

and public actors with trust, understanding and willingness to cooperate. While doing that SI actors are able to maintain their radicality and core principles and avoid reproducing dominant institutions.

Challenging dominant power-structures	SI actors are able to deal with issues of power and create conditions for inclusivity, equity and diversity. This refers to external and internalized power structures.
Reconciliation and healing of trauma	SI actors are able to address issues of reconciliation and restorative justice in relation to historically oppressed communities. They are able to undergo psychological and cultural change while avoiding burnout and nurturing personal and planetary well-being.

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*Based on (Strasser et al., in press)*

The three dimensions framework is useful to both researchers and practitioners, providing them with a concrete and differentiated lens to assess in which ways social innovations contribute to transformative change. This supports practitioners in learning and self-reflection, which functions as an essential element of innovative practices. Further, it can be used to design evaluation tools tailored to specific contexts such as communities of practice, workshops, or projects (Strasser et al., 2019). The BLAST project used the three dimensions framework to create a project specific self-evaluation strategy based on the three dimensions framework, supported by Tim Strasser as outside researcher. The next chapter will look at evaluation in the context of social innovations.

#### 1.4. Evaluation and social innovations

As explained in the previous chapter, transformative change is driven by social innovations which are developed in collective experiments. However, social innovations do not always succeed to unfold their transformative potential. This chapter explains the risks of failure of social innovations and how this risk can be reduced by evaluation.

Social change happens over a long period of time and takes effect on multiple fronts. Accordingly, social innovations often develop in a nonlinear and unpredictable way due to the uncertainty and unforeseen dynamics which are naturally involved in social experimentation (Niedzwiecki, 2011). Moreover, innovators operate within structures and power dynamics of the system they intend to challenge (Luederitz et al., 2017). These structures shape their mindsets, roles, identities and social arrangements, as well as the laws, customs and organisations providing the context for the innovative experiment (Haxeltine et al., 2017, p. 10). Consequently, it is often difficult for social innovation actors to understand how deep the transformative impact of their social innovation initiative is (Kemp et al., 2017). Resulting from those difficulties, social innovations can become co-opted or diluted while diffusing into wider society. They may end up reproducing the old paradigm and not provoking change at a systemic level (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017).

Evaluating the innovation process can help to enhance the transformative potential of social innovations by enabling reflexive learning and thus improving the innovation's design (Kemp et al., 2017). The term evaluation describes a systematic inquiry which informs the judgement of policies, programs or projects in relation to their worth and significance (Milley et al., 2018). Evaluative practices explore the structures, assumptions and values which guide the work of social innovation initiatives. This way they help to unhide to which extent the work of innovators is impacted by the systems they actually want to challenge (Luederitz et al., 2017). They support innovators in reflecting on their work and their interactions in a critical and constructive way. Evaluation practices allow them to grow individually and collectively through individual and organisational learning (Preskill, 2004, pp. 345, 348). Successful evaluation further informs decision making, which helps a social innovation initiative to navigate towards their vision of a sustainable and just future (Preskill, 2004, p. 345). Hence, evaluation can be highly beneficial for social innovation efforts (Kemp et al., 2017).

There is a big variety of approaches to evaluation (Alkin, 2004, pp. 12–13), different stages and contexts of social innovations require different approaches to evaluation (Kemp et al., 2017). All approaches to evaluation are rooted in the desire for accountability, aiming at the improvement of programs and society. Evaluation combines the search for accountability with a justifiable and systematic set of methods for social inquiry. These foundations inform the three aspects of evaluation. First, there are evaluative methods, which are derived from research methods and used for the creation of possibly generalizable knowledge. A second aspect of evaluation is the attribution of value to the obtained data. Last but not least, the use of data to inform decision making is the third aspect of evaluation (Alkin & Christie, 2004, 12-13).

It is further possible to differentiate between summative, formative, and developmental evaluation. Summative approaches to evaluation conduct an overall rating at the end of a project in relation to predefined indicators (Gamble, 2006, p. 15). They are e.g. useful when the social innovation actors want to choose between different variants (Kemp et al., 2017). Formative evaluation approaches help to determine possibilities for midterm corrections and improvements and create a baseline for a planned summative evaluation (Gamble, 2006, p. 15). However, summative and formative evaluation approaches can even impede experimentation and adaptation in social innovative processes, if they are conducted too early (Milley et al., 2018).

Developmental approaches to evaluation are useful for social innovations at an early stage of exploration and experimentation (Gamble, 2006, p. 17). They help social innovators to reflect on their conceptualization of problems and of change, as well as on chances and dangers emerging around their work (Kemp et al., 2017). Developmental evaluation approaches have a prospective facet and aim at facilitating social innovation processes (Milley et al., 2018). They continuously evaluate the



program or initiative in multiple iterations of action and reflection in which the innovation is adapted and learning takes place (Milley et al., 2018). Those cycles can be understood as learning loops, which link planning, action, and evaluation. In a learning loop, SI actors identify the area of practice, imagine a solution, implement a solution, evaluate the solution, and change the practice in the light of the evaluation (Symes & Jasser, 2011). Establishing and improving those evaluation cycles facilitates learning and helps social innovation initiatives to adapt and extend towards their common vision (Luederitz et al., 2017).

During the research project, the BLAST project was in an early developmental stage, thus using evaluation in a developmental sense. During this phase they intended to adapt the three dimensions framework to the project context, so that it could be used for a mid-term formative evaluation and a final summative evaluation.

Positive impact of evaluation on social innovation initiatives is more likely, when the evaluands maintain an open mind towards the evaluation. This means that they start with a strong intention to use the findings of the evaluation. Further, integrating evaluation activities in the regular work facilitates the conduction of evaluative practices and the integration of their findings in decision making (Preskill, 2004, pp. 345–346). Involving a high number of stakeholders will also benefit the success of the evaluation project (Preskill, 2004, p. 346). These conditions are likely to be found in a self-evaluation approach, in which participants also tend to be more critical than external evaluators (D. Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). The BLAST project used such self-evaluation approach. Project members received support from researchers during the development of the evaluation approach but conducted the evaluation on their own.

### 1.5. The gap in theory and practice

The previous chapters situated the BLAST project in the field of transformative social innovations. To enhance its transformative potential the project uses the 3D framework to evaluate their innovation efforts. During the initial project phase and design process of the evaluation approach concerns about a blind spot emerged. Some project members problematized the homogeneity of the group, which they claimed would negatively impact the transformative potential of the group. To them addressing these blind spots was critical for increasing the project's chances to achieve its objectives. Consequently, the need was identified to include the evaluation of diversity and related concepts in the project's evaluation strategy. In the next chapter I will define the blind spot and subsequently explain how it is related to transformative potential.

### 1.5.1. EDI

The identified blind spot in the BLAST project subsumed a number of different but related phenomena, like equity, diversity, power, oppression, inclusion etc. The project team chose the terms Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) to describe their aspirations. However, there is no uniform definition and operationalization of these constructs across scientific and contexts of practice (Rodriguez & Morrison, 2019). Terms like diversity and equity are often used interchangeably (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 1) Indeed, the constructs are inseparable and sometimes hard to distinguish (Rodriguez & Morrison, 2019), although referring to different phenomena (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 1) Nevertheless, conceptual clarity is important to successfully put the concepts into practice (Hyttén & Bettez, 2011). In the following paragraph I will therefore explain the concepts that were subsumed under the term EDI in this context and develop a working definition.

#### Diversity

The term diversity as used in mainstream diversity research, has its origins in the late 1980s, when social scientists of Hudson institute predicted changes in the demographics of the US workforce to becoming increasingly heterogeneous. This forecast was succeeded by numerous studies researching the effects of organizational diversity on business outcomes (Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003, pp. 125–126). The emerging field of diversity research viewed diversity as a competitive advantage for companies if managed correctly (Zanoni et al., 2010) and as a hindering work performance if failed to do so (Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003, pp. 127–128). From this perspective diversity consists of all possible differences between members of a social group. Which dimensions of difference are significant in a particular context is determined by their theoretical relevance for the research topic- e.g. pay-ment diversity or job level diversity (Harrison & Sin, 2006, pp. 181–182).

However, in the 1990s a differing perspective of diversity emerged in the field of critical diversity studies (Zanoni et al., 2010). In contrast to the mainstream conceptualization, it values diversity independently of business outcomes. Doing so, it draws back on a notion of diversity that was brought up by social justice movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, emphasizing equality and fairness (Aho-nen et al., 2014). Critical diversity studies challenge the mainstream understanding of diversity in numerous ways.

The critical diversity studies' main point of criticism against the mainstream understanding of the term diversity is that by treating all kinds of differences equally, power relations and historical systems of oppression behind these categories are obscured (Ragins & Gonzalez, 2003, p. 129). Social categories like race, class, or gender, etc. are each associated with certain forms of oppression- like racism, classism, sexism etc. (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 6). Those historically developed systems

of oppression produce dominant and subordinate groups in society (Tatum, 2010, p. 7). Dominant groups are defined by their experience of privilege. These are unearned advantages and assets which work both ubiquitously and mostly unnoticed in favour of the privileged (McIntosh, 1988, p. 148). Their privilege allows them to mainly operate within a comfort zone, grants them a certain amount of acceptance, respect and inclusion, an which allows them to set agendas and standards of judgement and to experience the absence of being marked as the other because of their social group membership (Johnson, 2010, pp. 19–20). In general, dominant groups hold more power over decision-making processes and control more resources (Jones et al., 2014, p. 305). The flipside of this coin is oppression experienced by subordinate groups (Johnson, 2010, p. 20). Systems of oppression create social, cultural, and economic boundaries to members of oppressed groups, limiting their opportunities for self-fulfilment and thriving (Frye, 1983, p. 14;20). Their roots lie in historically established systems of inequality, like neo-colonialist structures or institutionalized racism (Rodriguez & Morrison, 2019). Oppression takes the forms of exploitation, marginalization, exclusion from decision-making processes and opportunities of development, cultural imperialism, and physical or structural violence (Young, 1990, pp. 48–63). The forms of oppression occur on an individual, institutional, and cultural level of society and are enacted both consciously and unconsciously (Hardiman et al., 2010, pp. 26–28). Pervading the whole society, oppressive systems are internalized by oppressing and oppressed members of a society alike (Bell, 2010, pp. 21–23). To put it in a nutshell, socially constructed categories have been historically used to justify and maintain oppressive systems (Adams, 2010, p. 1), which is obscured by the mainstream use of the term diversity.

The limiting use of the term diversity is related to the way how difference is conceptualized in mainstream diversity research. Differences are treated as clear-cut, fix and easily operationalizable categories (Zanoni et al., 2010). This view neglects how social categories are socially constructed within a specific historic context and become meaningful in social contexts and situations (Ahonen et al., 2014). By doing this, it falsely essentializes differences and can therefore even contribute to the justification and consequently the consolidation of inequalities (Adams, 2010, p. 1).

This essentialist approach is further not able to capture the complex reality of human identities. Thereby, it silences all experiences that do not fit into supposedly clear-cut social categories (Young, 2002, pp. 87–88). This refers to identities at the intersection of different oppressive systems - e.g. a female working class PoC (Crenshaw, 1989; West & Fenstermaker, 1995). Likewise neglected are individuals who position themselves on the border between two social categories-e.g. a child of an Asian and a PoC parent- or those who are affiliated with a group without belonging to it -e.g. parents of a handicapped child (Hardiman et al., 2010, pp. 30–31).

Last but not least, the mainstream understanding of diversity often implicitly assumes the group characteristics white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, and middle class to be standard, while marking differing characteristics as 'other' (Zanoni et al., 2010). This way diversity turns into an exclusive feature of the 'other groups', which therefore are to be managed and compared to the standards of the dominant group. In consequence, this view perpetuates relations of domination between the oppressors and the oppressed (Ahonen et al., 2014). Summed up, the mainstream use of diversity tends to neglect oppressive dynamics, therefore contributing to their perpetuation (Rodriguez & Morrison, 2019).

In this work, diversity is understood as inseparable from historical oppressive systems inherent in socially constructed and dynamic social categories. In many cases the term diversity tends to replace and erase related constructs like equal opportunities or equity (Ahmed, 2012, pp. 1; 66–68). In order to avoid the risk of obscuring inevitably related power dynamics, in this work the term diversity will be used in combination with the terms equity and inclusion (EDI). These will be explained in the following paragraph.

### Inclusion

The term inclusion is used with differing meanings over a wide range of academic and practical disciplines (Dobusch, 2015, p. 24). Following the critical understanding of diversity laid out in the previous chapter, I will use a definition of inclusion which understands exclusion as an effect of power dynamics, and in turn inclusion as eliminating those in an organizational setting (Dobusch, 2015, pp. 70–71). From this perspective, inclusion refers to environments of a diverse socio-demographic composition, in which oppressive power dynamics are countered and altered (Dobusch, 2015; Lima et al., 2015, p. 70). In this sense, inclusion can be simultaneously understood as normative objective, as object of analysis, and as behavioural processes (Dobusch, 2015, p. 70; Vrooman & Coenders, 2020).

The normative objective of an inclusive environment envisions fair treatment of all members of a social context who are supposed to be valued for their true selves (Nishii, 2013). In this sense, social inclusion can be understood as opposed to social exclusion, which entails external and internal exclusion. (Dobusch, 2015, pp. 71–72). External exclusion refers to a lack of physical access to decision-making spaces. Internal exclusion describes a lack of influence on decision-making beyond physical presence or the need to comply with dominant norms and preferences to be heard (Nishii, 2013; Young, 2002, pp. 52–55). This can be due to discursive dynamics that dismiss or ignore statements of subordinate group members, e.g. preferences for certain styles of expressions, not taking individuals with certain characteristics seriously, patronizing, silencing etc (Young, 2002, pp. 52–

55). Consequently, an inclusive workforce satisfies the need for belongingness at the same time as the need for being valued for one's uniqueness for every single member of a team (Barak, 2015). This way every member of a group is enabled to be part of decision-making processes and make contributions to their full potential (Fisk et al., 2019).

Beyond this, the term inclusion also refers to behavioural processes on an institutional and an individual level (Vrooman & Coenders, 2020). On an institutional level this means institutionalized practices and policies in an organisation, which are supposed to ensure equal access to and participation in formal and informal organizational activities. Additionally, those practices and policies aim at reducing organizational bias - e.g. non-discrimination hiring policies (Brimhall & Barak, 2018). On an individual level inclusion describes the openness of individuals to move beyond stereotypes, to embrace differing opinions and appreciate the diversity of identities (Nishii, 2013). Summed up inclusion focuses on building an environment in which every individual can thrive while being valued for its individual characteristics. The term equity is closely related to this concept.

### Equity

Equity describes the aim to remove social and economic disadvantages stemming from historic systems of oppression for subordinate groups (Solis, 2020). Equity can be improved by trying to identify and alter oppressive and discriminatory dynamics in an institution's policies and practices (Falkenberg & Boland, 1997). In practice, this means that individuals are not treated the same, but treated fairly, namely as according to their needs, based on structural inequalities (Jones et al., 2014, pp. 301–302). This focus on systemic barriers to members of marginalized groups is essential for the understanding of EDI as used in this paper.

The previous paragraphs explained the meanings of the terms Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Although being closely related, all three terms bring a specific focus. I consider all foci mentioned above to be essential for a comprehensive understanding of the blind spot that was identified in the BLAST project. Thus, I will use a combination of all three terms in this paper -namely EDI. Here, EDI describes a vision of project work which enables every member of the team to thrive celebrating their uniqueness, while acknowledging the socially constructed natures of categories of difference. The roots of oppressive dynamics in historic systems of oppression are to be made explicit and tackled. This refers also to the way in which oppressive dynamics are perpetuated in individual, institutional and cultural interactions, and norms. Efforts to achieve this visionary aim are referred to as EDI work.

### 1.5.2 EDI and transformative impact

Social innovation actors in the BLAST project identified the problem of a lack of concern with EDI. This is likely to be impacting the transformative impact of innovative practices developed in the BLAST project. As laid out in the previous chapters, the transformative impact of social innovations can be operationalized through their degree of institutionalisation on a width, depth, and length dimension (see chapter 1.5.1.). The following chapter will explore how Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are theoretically related to these three dimensions of institutionalisation.

#### Depth

Like many social innovations initiatives the BLAST project strives for socio-ecological transition in a sense of challenging dominant institutions characterized by neoliberal capitalist economic development (Strasser et al., 2019). The neoliberal capitalist paradigm is present in every element in current society (Voß et al., 2019, p. 10). Sexism, racism, classism, and other systems of oppression are historically connected to the rise of this paradigm (Voß et al., 2019, pp. 13–14). Oppressive systems are used to define and legitimize inequalities between people as inherent in capitalist societies (Morgenstern, 2005, p. 163). To give one example, neoliberal capitalism relies on assumptions about differences between sexes, ethnical and cultural backgrounds, religion, age, or ability to legitimise existing hierarchies in resources and social power (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 11; Voß et al., 2019, pp. 11–13). Therefore, all dominant institutions are shaped by and reproduce the interlocking and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression and capitalist neoliberalism (Hardiman et al., 2010, p. 30; Morgenstern, 2005, p. 163).

Institutions shape mindsets, cognitive models, roles, identities, and social arrangements of those socialized with them, including those of social innovation actors (Haxeltine et al., 2017, p. 10). Views created by a group are shaped by the group member's worldviews. Especially members of privileged groups often remain oblivious about the struggles of marginalized ones (Bolden et al., 2019). Accordingly, oppressive systems are likely to be reproduced in new practices, resulting in exclusive and inequitable spaces, if not explicitly challenged (Telles, 2019). This way oppressive institutions can unwittingly remain unchallenged and in place (Bolden et al., 2019). As the old dominant institutions are both shaped by the neoliberalist paradigm of capitalism, oppressive systems, which are intrinsically connected, not addressing systems of oppression will result in lesser depth of a social innovation initiative.

#### Width

Width refers to how widely accepted and adapted a social innovation is across diverse geographical and socio-cultural contexts. Members of marginalized groups face a number of systemic barriers to

participation. Challenging those barriers can attract previously marginalised perspectives into social innovation initiatives (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017). The more diverse a social innovation initiative becomes, the more ideas and perspectives can influence the social innovation (Haxeltine, Pel, Dumitru, Avelino, et al., 2017). Accordingly, innovation efforts will appeal to a more diverse audience (Jones et al., 2014, pp. 14–15; Olzak & Ryo, 2007). Further, high diversity of social innovation actors increases the language and images used to transmit innovative ideas, further benefiting acceptance across diverse groups (Corner & Clarke, 2017, pp. 89, 103–105). Thus, dealing with Equity, Diversity and inclusion can help the social innovation to more socio-cultural contexts, significantly impacting the width dimension of institutionalisation.

### Length

Institutions scoring high on a length dimension are able to persist and evolve even in the face of challenges and crisis. This involves dealing with internal conflicts, as well as external challenges, like societal developments or crisis (Strasser et al., in press).

Social exclusion and oppressive dynamics can create divisions and conflicts in all areas of society. Those include social innovation initiatives in which unequal power dynamics potentially disturb communication, consequently producing conflicts and misunderstandings (Weldon, 2006). Such problems can result in internal conflicts within a social innovation initiative which can negatively impact the lengths dimension.

External impacts and societal crisis challenge and social innovation to adapt and evolve (Strasser et al., in press). Following a mainstream conceptualisation of diversity, high diversity can increase a group's ability to solve problems and to develop creative solutions (Jones et al., 2014, pp. 14–15). Interaction between people with differing backgrounds, skills, and perspectives creates new ideas and solutions (Barak, 2015). Consequently, social practices which are practised by a diverse groups, are potentially more capable of adapting to changes and challenges. However, if diverse teams show a high level of social exclusion (see chapter 1.5.1.), these effects can be cancelled out. People who face social exclusion often experience psychological problems, like a lowered self-esteem, sadness and rumination and concentration difficulties. (Scott & Thau, 2013, pp. 66–67). This way perspectives of some members remain unseen impacting their ability to contribute (Telles, 2019). Thus, social innovations which are adopted by diverse groups and at the same time produce an inclusive culture that enhances everybody's voices, perspectives, and skills are likely to be more resilient and adaptable. They therefore should score higher on a length dimension of institutionalisation.

## 1.6. Research question

The previous chapters explained that social innovations drive transformative change. According to the 3D framework, the contribution of social innovations to transformative change can be measured through the width, depth, and length of their institutionalisation. Combined, these three dimensions indicate the innovation's transformative impact (see chapter 1.3.2.). Evaluative practices help social innovation initiatives to assess and improve their transformative impact (see chapter 1.4.). The three dimensions framework of transformative impact can be used as a tool to inform such evaluative practices, as it is practiced in the BLAST project (see chapter 1.3.2.).

Project members of the BLAST project team identified the concern with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as a needed addition to the project's evaluation approach. In fact, successfully addressing issues of EDI can enhance the transformative impact of social innovations (see chapter 1.5.2.). The three dimensions framework entails assumptions about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to a limited extent. It understands power dynamics and social domination as parts of the "old institutions" (Strasser et al., 2019). In 2020 Strasser et al. (in press) updated their framework after extensive empirical testing. The updated version was extended by the additional capacity "challenging dominant power-structures". Social innovation actors who master this capacity are able to deal with issues of internal and external power structures and create conditions for inclusivity, equity and diversity (Strasser et al., in press).

Yet, evaluating and improving EDI entails specific problems. Dominant institutions operate hidden and implicitly, which makes it difficult to become aware of them (Haxeltine et al., 2017, pp. 15–16). Also, oppressive systems related to diversity often function unconsciously and are therefore hard to detect (Bolden et al., 2019). Additionally, oppressive systems are accompanied by strong safeguards to keep them in place. People in dominant positions are likely to show strong and emotional defensive reactions when confronted with power dynamics (DiAngelo, 2011). Those in subordinate positions are more likely to notice power dynamics in forms of microaggressions or discrimination. Resistances to acknowledge their claims by the dominant often prevent subordinates from being heard and can result in emotional fatigue (Heidelberg, 2019). Due to these dynamics, power structures are especially challenging to identify. Consequently, the capacity "challenging dominant power structures" is likely to consist of a set of different skills. Without specifying those skills the capacity will supposedly be of little use to evaluate a social innovation initiative's transformative capacity.

To put it in a nutshell, weaving skills to improve EDI into the three dimensions framework is likely to improve the framework's theoretical and practical value. This work will therefore explore the



question: How can Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion be conceptualized as a part of the three dimensions framework of transformative impact?

This question will be answered in two steps. Project members decided to first develop the project objectives and according indicators. At a later stage in the process they used the three dimensions framework to comprise these into a BLAST evaluation tool. As the research project was embedded in the project structures and co-owned by the project members (see chapter 2.1), it followed this two-step approach. In a first step, I address the specific challenges of assessing EDI by answering the auxiliary research question: which conditions and capacities for EDI work can be identified for EDI work needed in the BLAST project? This question will be discussed in the chapter about practical considerations (chapter 3.1). In the second step the results of this exploration will be integrated into the three dimensions framework as additional capacities to answer the research question. This will be discussed in the chapter theoretical considerations (chapter 3.2).

## 2. Methodology chapter

As explained in the previous chapter, the study explored which conditions and capacities can be identified as beneficial for working on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the BLAST project in order to adapt the three dimensions framework accordingly. This research question and the BLAST project as the setting of the research project bring certain methodological challenges. First, social innovation actors- like the BLAST project members- operate in unpredictable contexts with uncertain outcomes (Niedzwiecki, 2011). Further, many previous attempts to reduce inequity in relationships in working teams on the basis of theoretical knowledge have failed, showing the insufficiency of general theoretical knowledge to bring about change (Zanoni et al., 2010). Consequently, this study sought to conduct research in a way that is responsive to the changeable dynamics of the researched context. It further intended to produce knowledge that is practically usable in the specific context of BLAST. To address these challenges an action research approach was employed. In the following chapter I will introduce the research paradigm of action research and derive the study's research design.

### 2.1. The Principles of action research

The historical roots of action research can be traced back to a group of social psychologists around Kurt Lewin in the USA in the 1940s. They sought for ways of doing research in order to find solutions to social problems (Kagan et al., 2017). Guided by the belief in democratic and participatory practices, as well as the ambition to increase validity of their results, they moved their research from the laboratory to real-life communities. In those real-life situations, they induced change to study the resulting effect. Doing this, they coined the term action research (Eikeland, 2015, p. 6,11). Since

then, action research developed into a research paradigm subsuming numerous approaches, methodologies, and methods, influenced by different academic traditions (Kagan et al., 2017). In the following paragraphs I will introduce the main principles of action research to capture the essence of the action research paradigm.

The action research paradigm does not want to compete with other research paradigms, but is suitable for specific types of problems (Eden & Ackermann, 2018). Instead of developing a general theory, action research pursues the goal to solve problems of everyday life (Gergen & Gergen, 2015). Action research is generally conducted with the purpose of solving problems experienced due to systemic injustice. This way its purpose is to contribute to a broader goal of social change (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; New Paradigm Research Group London, 2011). Depending on the context, change can refer to replacing systems of social exclusion (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Cornwall, 2011), creating opportunities for voice, and participation of marginalized groups (Cornwall, 2011). It can also mean enhancing the political, psychological, spiritual, and economic well-being of human beings and their relation to the ecology of planet earth (Gergen & Gergen, 2015, p. 5).

In addition to this ideological agenda, the action research paradigm employs a different epistemological conceptualisation of knowledge than conventional research (Coleman, 2015, p. 2). Conventional research is mostly concerned with scientific, theoretical, factual knowledge which aspires to be objective (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, pp. 103–104). Michael Polanyi (1966) introduced the concept of tacit knowledge, which describes tacit, process and context bound knowledge. This kind of knowledge operates implicitly and becomes measurable in human narratives, actions, and reflections on action (“Tacit Knowledge,” 2014). The action research paradigm focuses on practical knowledge which can be situated in conjunction of both types of knowledge. Tacit knowledge is brought together with theoretical knowledge to produce knowledge that is actionable (Coleman, 2015, pp. 5–6). As tacit knowledge is always tied to a specific context, practical knowledge emerging in action research is contextual, too.

The ideological roots of action research and its conceptualisation of knowledge shape the ways how action research produces knowledge. Action research employs non-hierarchical processes of knowledge creation (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, pp. 115–119). Researchers and participants collaborate as co-researchers who share power over the design and conduction of the research project and engage in a reciprocal learning experience (New Paradigm Research Group London, 2011, pp. 92–94). Further, knowledge creation usually happens in subsequent iterations of action-reflection cycles (“Cycles of Action and Reflection,” 2014). Each cycle entails an assessment of the problem, an action focused intervention and reflection, while each step is informed by and influences theory

(Eden & Ackermann, 2018). Each cycle produces new actionable knowledge that contributes to the solution of the problem (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

2.2. The principles of empowerment evaluation

As explained above, this study aims at refining the three dimension’s framework as an evaluation tool. Following an action research approach, the research question was investigated in practice in order to produce actionable knowledge. In practice this meant engaging in cycles of evaluation of EDI, planning and conducting according actions on EDI, and by doing this producing practically relevant knowledge. Doing this, the process was guided by an empowerment evaluation approach. Both in empowerment evaluation and in action research data is collected with similar methods, but with distinct, yet overlapping foci. While action research uses data to generate practical and theoretical knowledge, empowerment evaluation intends to assess specific parts of e.g. a project (Gertler et al., 2010, p. 403). Thus, the combination of empowerment evaluation with an action research approach is promising to catalyse social change (D. M. Fetterman, 2015, 88-89). In the following paragraph I will describe the principles of empowerment evaluation and why it was suitable for this context.

Empowerment evaluation is an evaluation approach developed by David Fetterman in 1996. Since then it has been further developed in two subsequent publications and is now an established approach to evaluation, defined by 10 guiding principles (see table 2). It is based on the notion to assist communities in empowering themselves to critically understand their environment and to gain the necessary resources to obtain control over their lives and perspectives. Thereby, empowerment is not limited to disenfranchised or marginalized groups (D. M. Fetterman, 2004, p. 306). The approach uses a wide range of different methods, all aiming at accountable improvement of a program while enhancing self-determination of the participants of the evaluation and working towards social justice (D. Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007).

Table 2  
*Guiding Principles of empowerment evaluation*

Empowerment	Empowerment evaluation helps groups to improve program performance.
Community ownership	The community has ownership and control over the evaluation project
Inclusion	Empowerment evaluation strives for involvement and participation of a maximum diversity of backgrounds.
Democratic participation	Participation and decision making is designed to be open and fair.

Social justice	Empowerment evaluation wants to address social inequities in society.
Community knowledge	Empowerment evaluation respect and values community knowledge.
Evidence-based strategies	Empowerment evaluation respects and uses the knowledge bases of scholars and combines it with community knowledge.
Capacity building	Empowerment evaluation wants to enhance participants' ability to conduct an evaluation and by doing this to improve their program planning and implementation.
Organizational learning	Empowerment evaluation helps organisations to learn from their experiences and based on that to adjust their practices or implement new ones.
Accountability	Empowerment evaluation focuses on outcomes and accountability.

*Based on: (D. M. Fetterman, 2015)*

Due to their complex nature, changes in social justice issues are slow and require long term involvement, that goes beyond the scope of an evaluation project (Niedzwiecki, 2011). Therefore, the assessment of oppression and privilege needs to be continued by the participants at an ongoing basis also after the research project has ended. Empowerment evaluation builds evaluation capacities among the participants, making it possible for them to monitor social justice and plan according actions after the researcher has left. Also, power relationships are often difficult to detect without specific knowledge, because of their hidden and internalized nature and defence mechanisms triggered by confrontation with privilege (Sherry, 2017). Consequently, evaluative capacity must include knowledge and capacity building in certain areas related to working on and evaluating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Capacity building is a central component of empowerment evaluation, which makes the approach suitable for this context. It wants to enable participants or members of projects, communities, or organizations to develop and conduct their own evaluations about themselves as individuals and their program. Participants are enabled to obtain a critical understanding of their social environment and therefore understand how to enhance self-determination and improve their practice. As a resource of information and provider of outside perspectives, the researcher co-facilitates the evaluation process collaboratively with the participants themselves. As a result, the co-developed dynamic and responsive self-evaluation strategy can be internalized and shape the development of the program, community, individual etc. (D. M. Fetterman, 1996).

In practice, the process of empowerment evaluation is owned by the participants and supported by empowerment evaluators through input or facilitation (Wandersman et al., 2004, p. 49). In the

first step participants establish a collective vision or purpose. The second step entails taking stock in form of self-assessment or collection of relevant data. In the third step participants plan for the future by developing strategies to advance towards their mission (D. Fetterman & Wandersman, 2007). Evaluative activities are repeated in various micro cycles forming an ongoing process (D. M. Fetterman, 2004, pp. 309–310).

### 2.3. Research design

The research design of this study is derived from the underlying epistemological and methodological principles of action research (AR) and empowerment evaluation (EE) as described above. Both approaches use similar methods and want to contribute to improving social justice issues. They differ in their focus on improvement through understanding (AR) and improvement through judgment (EE). David Fetterman stresses the potential for catalysing social change that lies in the combination of both (D. M. Fetterman, 2015, 88-89). Indeed, Hobson et al. (2016) show that action research can successfully be used to develop evaluation designs. The research design which was employed in this study will be described in more detail in the next chapters.

#### 2.3.1. Setting

The BLAST project team mainly collaborated remotely, using online collaboration tools like Slack, Zoom, Trello and Google Docs. Accordingly, all interaction in relation to the research project happened entirely online. Usually, action research takes place in a face to face context. Moving the research process to a virtual environment brings about certain advantages and challenges (Embury, 2015, pp. 534–535). On one hand side, online research reduces barriers for participation for participants with restricted time schedules - e.g. because of child care responsibilities (Embury, 2015, pp. 530–531). This way the empowerment evaluation principle of inclusion is taken account for by making it possible to integrate a higher diversity of voices. On the other hand side, the lack of physical contact, in addition to technological or connectivity issues can pose challenges to collaboration (Embury, 2015, pp. 534–535). To counteract those dynamics, research tools were carefully chosen to include diverse ways of communication, as well as to enhance trust between participants.

The participants of the research project consisted of the BLAST project members and sporadically other practitioners affiliated to BLAST member organisations. There were around 30 project members who engaged with BLAST with varying frequency. Another eight participants from the ECOLISE network joined for one session during a networking event in April 2020. Almost all project members had limited time resources, because they were simultaneously involved in different projects beyond the BLAST project. All actions were planned by an EDI task force, which was a self-organized group of people who aspired to improve EDI in BLAST. The wider project team was asked for input and consent on every step. This consulting approach is recommended for groups with limited time

resources (Bradbury et al., 2017, 61). The EDI task force consisted of five participants in changing constellations and me as the researcher. Simultaneously to this research project, another action researcher was engaged in the BLAST project through the generation of the general BLAST evaluation tool based on the 3D framework. Both research projects coordinated their actions with each other and exchanged ideas and feedback.

As the personal positioning in systems of oppression and privilege impacts the way Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is perceived and approached (see chapter 1.5.1), I will provide an overview of the participants' backgrounds. The overview is based on a diversity survey conducted by the EDI core group between February and March 2020, in which 19 project members took part. The member organisations were based in various parts of Europe (see appendix A). All of them were concerned with transformative education for socio-ecological transition. With 16 participants, the majority of the participants classified themselves as cis-gendered, while achieving a balanced distribution between male and female. One participant identified themselves as nonbinary. The most frequently ticked sexuality was heterosexual which applied to 14 participants, against five participants identifying as pansexual or preferring not to say. A physical disability was reported by three participants, while no participant indicated to have a mental health condition. With 14 mentions, most of the participants were able-bodied or did not respond to the question. The age of the participants was distributed approximately equally between 26 and 65 years. Thirteen project members had an academic background, whereas four members said their background was informal or other, not specified. Except one person, who reported to be of mixed white and indigenous background, all project members had white background. There were five English native speakers in the project of whom the working language was English.

### 2.3.2. Excursus: The "I" in action research

According to the action research principle of cooperation and the empowerment evaluation principle of community ownership, the EDI core group in the BLAST project and the researcher planned and conducted all steps of the research process collaboratively. In contrast to conventional research, the boundaries between researcher and practitioners become blurred in these kinds of projects (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 25). The positioning of the researcher in relation to the research setting is relevant for the research's validity (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p. 29). The following chapter will briefly deal with the implications of this special relationship between researcher and field.

Action researchers can position themselves on a wide spectrum between insider research- practitioners researching their own practice- and outsider research- researchers researching practitioners' practices (Anderson & Herr, 2005, pp. 36–37). In this research project, I was actively involved in the research field before the beginning of the research project. Yet, I do not consider myself as

an inside practitioner, due to the temporarily limited nature of my engagement and my role as a learning intern. Therefore, I locate myself between an insider and an outsider position. Action researchers who act at least partly as a practitioner in their own research field; create theories out of stories about their own learning in practice. Doing this, their practice is guided by their personal values, which need to be made explicit (Jean McNiff, 2007, pp. 308, 319). As this work presents my personal story about the learnings of a group that I was part of, I use the first person in my writing.

Action researchers who are to some extent insiders to the field are not only guided by their personal values in doing their research, but also draw back on their own tacit knowledge (see chapter 2.1). This way, the interpretations are always biased by the researcher's personal background, experiences and positioning in the field (Anderson & Herr, 2005, pp. 35, 44). Indeed, my perception of the research field was influenced by my own experiences as an environmental justice activist. Likewise, the way I perceived and interpreted social dynamics in the BLAST project was biased by my identity, which placed me simultaneously in subordinate groups (e.g. as a woman), as well as dominant groups (e.g. as a white person with academic background). Further, the way I related to and acted in the field was impacted by my position as the youngest, least experienced project member and my role as an intern.

To maintain validity in this biased context, self-reflection needs to be built into the action research practice (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p. 34). I used a research diary as recommended by Altrichter et al. (2018, p. 25 ff) to record and examine my thought processes. Through writing and continuously rereading this journal I attempted to cultivate action research skills as described by Greenwood and Levin (2007, p. 120 ff). Those include exploring the counterintuitive, questioning explanations and approaching issues from different perspectives, amongst others. This way, I acknowledged and reacted to the subjectivity that is inherent in action research.

### 2.3.2. Procedures

The study was conducted between December 2019 and May 2020. The research process was structured by the three steps of empowerment evaluation (see chapter 2.2.). The first step was to establish a collective mission and to agree on goals for the collaborative process, which reflected both the interests of the whole project team, the EDI task force, and the researcher. First conversation around the issue was initiated by a new project member in December, simultaneously to preparatory background research of me as the researcher. These early ambitions were joined in the newly founded EDI task force. In several EDI task force meetings, a small survey, and two focus group sessions with participants from the wider project team, EDI was integrated in the project goals and the research question was clarified.

Overlapping with establishing the mission, the process of taking stock was started. It was driven by the EDI task force who gathered data about the diversity of backgrounds in the project team, collected information about prevailing experience with EDI in the project team and beyond, and took stock of financial, time and personal resources for achieving their mission.

In the third phase, plans for the future were made and enacted. This included the recruitment of EDI champions from the project team to support the EDI task force and their training, the creation of learning materials around EDI, and the adaptation of governance and co-working rules and habits within the project. This action phase continued beyond the involvement of the researcher.

In each phase the research team run through multiple iterations of planning, action, and reflection. Adhering to the action research paradigm (see chapter 2.1.) each cycle tested knowledge and assumptions in action, thus producing actionable knowledge. During the first and second phase those cycles contained planning meetings in the EDI task force, which produced ideas how to assess which data. The data was then asynchronously collected from the project team and subsequently reflected in the EDI task force meetings as well as in focus groups composed by members of the wider project team. Based on those reflections ensuing cycles were initiated. During the third phase, action elements were introduced so that the research cycles moved forth and back between planning, action, and reflection. Planning and reflection happened in the EDI task force, as well as in collaboration with the EDI champions, while actions took place on various levels within the project. Following Maguire and Berge (2009), this included written inputs and training on EDI issues, but also decisions on changing governance structures and facilitation rules etc.

### 2.3.3. Methods

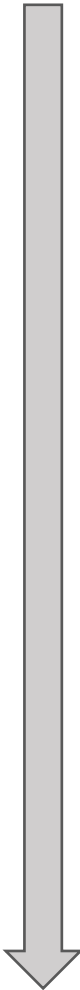
Action research in general gathers data from a high number of data sources, which can range from observations about structured and unstructured interactions to descriptions of the physical and social context, as well as texts produced on the field, self-reflection of the researcher, noticing what is not happening etc. (Patton, 2002, pp. 301–302). Data collection modes vary between- experiencing, enquiring, and examining. Experiencing is based on the researcher's own involvement with the practice, enquiring refers to the collection of new information from the context, and examining means the creation and use of records (Kagan et al., 2017, p. 12). This research draws from all three modes of data collection based on pragmatic and theoretical considerations, while focusing on examining and enquiring. While data collection took place throughout the whole research project, it could be divided into two phases. In the first part, I planned and conducted all data collection in collaboration with the EDI task force. Towards the end of my involvement as researcher, I gradually withdrew from the research context to analyse the process from a wider, more comprehensive angle. Having identified patterns across all data I went back to the field to test, validate,



and refine those patterns through individual interviews. See also table 3 for a chronological overview. In this chapter I will explain the methods of data collection and analysis used in this study in both phases.

Table 3

Research process and data collection



	Activity	Type of data
Establishing the mission	EDI group meetings	Minutes and field notes
	Asking for statements about reach and access and EDI from all member organisations	Survey with three open questions.
	Two focus group discussions on the project goals and the evaluation approach	Transcripts of the focus group sessions.
Taking stock	EDI group meetings (some with external guests)	Minutes and field notes
	Assessing the socio-demographic backgrounds of the group	Quantitative survey
Planning for the future	EDI group meetings	Minutes and field notes
	EDI champion training	Field notes and written feedback
	Development of an EDI learning and reflection guide as input	
	EDI reflective session at the ECOLISE general assembly*	Field notes and written feedback
	EDI champion reflective session and decision on first actions on EDI	Field notes and written feedback
	First analysis	
Validation interviews	Validation of first results: -interviews with four participants -written feedback	Transcripts of the interviews Written feedback
	Second analysis	

Visualisation of action steps of the research project and data collection.

\*Annual meeting of all ECOLISE network members. Took place in a virtual format.

2.3.3.1. Data collection during the research process

According to action research principles (see chapter 2.1.), conditions and skills for evaluating and improving EDI were studied in action. Thus, I collected the data that was produced in relation to EDI related activities in the field. Due to the intimacy of the topic in most cases no audio records of those activities could be taken. Therefore, I collected minutes and field notes from EDI related project meetings, trainings, and reflective sessions. When I could not manage to take field notes

because of my own active participation in meetings, I constructed minutes from my memory right after the meetings, capturing my observations and first reflections.

Additionally, actions to trigger learning and reflection around EDI were an essential element of the research project. These actions produced data that informed subsequent action-reflection cycles, but also fed into the final comprehensive analysis. This data was enquired through focus groups, questionnaires, feedback forms, and interviews. Due to the high diversity of research methods used in this study I will provide only a brief introduction to each of them.

#### Minutes and field notes

Minutes in the project team or working group meetings were taken either by myself as researcher, by participants of the meeting or collaboratively by all participants of the meeting. The minutes were taken in a shared google document, so that each team member had access to the notes and was able to edit them. I saved the minutes of each meeting in a separate word document.

Additionally, I used my own personal observations of the field as data source, which I documented in field notes. The role of the researcher does not always allow for simultaneous note taking (Lamnek, 2005, p. 615) I therefore took down the field notes either during or right after the meetings, depending on my personal involvement in the specific meeting. Following Patton's (2002, pp. 302–304) recommendation, I included descriptive aspects of the contexts and situations, meaningful quotes, as well as my own feelings and preliminary observations in the field notes. A reconstructed template containing different columns helped me to mark different kinds of observations (see appendix G).

#### Focus group discussions

Focus groups are moderated group discussions in which participants produce qualitative data through sharing and comparing their viewpoints. Other than in individual interviews, focus groups make dynamics between different perspectives observable (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018, p. 251). As working on EDI issues is a collective process (Bell, Goodman, & Ouellet, 2016, p. 91), this method was useful to make discursive processes within the project team visible. Focus groups are structured to different extents by the researcher by providing an initial impulse and guiding questions (Schulz, 2012, pp. 9–10). In this study two focus group sessions were used to discuss the project objectives in relation to EDI. The initiating impulse consisted of summaries of the participants' differing viewpoints, extracted from previous surveys. The sessions were further guided by a script (see appendices H and I) and included warm-up exercises as recommended for online focus groups by Morgan and Hoffman (2018, p. 260). They took place via Zoom in January and February 2020 with five participants from the wider project team and each lasted for about 2 hours. They were

recorded and subsequently transcribed<sup>2</sup>. Both focus group sessions were organized in collaboration with the general evaluation research project which was conducted simultaneously in BLAST. The sessions covered both research projects proportionately.

### Questionnaire

Throughout the research project various kinds of questionnaires were used, including quantitative and qualitative ones. A quantitative questionnaire with close-ended questions provided data about the diversity of socio-demographic backgrounds of the BLAST project team. It was conducted in March 2020 using the website [www.soscisurvey.de](http://www.soscisurvey.de). It was chosen by the research team as an easy to answer and time efficient assessment instrument (Kumar, 2005, p. 135). More in-depth information was gained through qualitative questionnaires with open-ended questions in different forms (Kumar, 2005, pp. 134–135). These include questions about aspirations or understandings of the project member organisations, whose answers were submitted in a shared google document, and feedback forms, which were filled out either in a shared format right after meetings or in private documents.

#### 2.3.3.2. Data Analysis and Validation

Towards the end of my involvement with the research project, I conducted a thematic analysis to make sense of the data I had collected during the research process. A thematic analysis is a set of procedures that are used to identify overarching themes inductively, yet rigorously from textual data. This data analysis method uses explicit, as well as implicit notions within the data to capture the experiences of a group of participants in a comprehensive way (Guest et al., 2012, pp. 15–16, 18). As the research project wanted to capture dynamics on a group level building on diverse data sources, thematic analysis is a suitable approach in this study. Further, thematic analysis acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher during the process of coding and interpretation (Terry et al., 2017, p. 25). As by design of the study the data analysis can only be conducted through a subjective lens, this feature meets the reality of the research project. Moreover thematic analysis is able to include a wide range of ways to collect data, enabling the comprehensive analysis of all data collected during the research project (M. Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). While thematic analysis can approach data in an inductive or deductive way (Terry et al., 2017, pp. 29–30), this study follows an inductive approach which means developing themes from the data. Doing thematic analysis the researcher can consider the semantic, surface meaning of the data, or the latent level of meanings and assumptions underlying the data (M. Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). As the participants' feelings,

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<sup>2</sup> Transcript of the second focus group session got lost due to technical difficulties.

worldviews, biases, and assumptions are relevant for answering the research question, this analysis includes the latent meaning of the data.

Analysing the data, I followed the phases of thematic analysis, while moving back and forth between the phases in an iterative and recursive way as described by Terry et al. (2017, p. 27). The first step of conducting a thematic analysis is becoming familiarised with the data, by thoroughly reading the data and taking notes of first impressions. In the second step the material is reread and each segment is marked with a code that captures the meaning that is attached to the segment by the researcher (Terry et al., 2017, pp. 25–26). I used the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to code all data in several iterations, in which I recurrently checked back code names against the data, reconsidered coded segments, and merged or subdivided codes. Subsequently, I clustered all codes to different versions of patterns to then again compare these different versions to the data. As recommended by Maguire and Delahunt (2017), I chose the version of themes that was best supported by the data, produced the most distinct version of themes, while still being practically and theoretically manageable. In the fifth step, I named the themes and created summaries of each theme. The last step of thematic analysis consists of writing up a report which tells the story of the identified themes (Terry et al., 2017, p. 31). Before conducting the last step, I validated and refined the themes in a last iteration of data collection in the field for two reasons. First, I acknowledged the subjective biases in the creation of the codes and themes due to my personal background and involvement in the field. Second, due to the relative short duration of the research project the data saturation for some aspects of the themes was insufficient. A purposeful re-immersion in the field helped to address those issues (James et al., 2012, p. 219)

Action research tries to create a shared language of the researcher and the field (J. McNiff & Whitehead, 2011, pp. 193–194). Thus, I used the term “patterns”, which was customary to the field, to reflect the themes back to the participants for validation and refinement. I conducted semi-structured interviews based on interview guides with four volunteering participants. Each of the interviewees was involved in working with EDI in BLAST either as an EDI task force member or an EDI champion<sup>3</sup>. Interview guide based interviews can be used to collect data to answer a relatively narrow research question but still provide space for free expression of the interviewee (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, pp. 126–127). The interview guide is generally derived from a previously devised thematic structure (Flick, 2018, pp. 99–100). Thus, such interviews are suitable to assess the participants’ answers to the narrow question of the validity of the patterns, while still giving them

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<sup>3</sup> To ensure anonymity of the interviewees I will not provide any further personal information. As identified patterns in form of narratives that can be found across all data, I do not expect this to negatively impact the analysis.

the opportunity to express diverging and contradicting interpretations of EDI work in the BLAST project. I developed the interview questions in four steps as recommended by Helfferich (2011, pp. 182–184). Those involve collecting potential questions, examining the quality and relevance of each question, sorting the questions by specificity and thematic aspects, and finally subsuming the questions to question blocks. Each question block treated one pattern, starting with an open stimulus and then moving to more specific questions as recommended by Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr (2014, pp. 127–128). All interviews started with warm-up small talk and an explanation of the purpose and anonymity of the collected data. An open invitation to speak started the interview situation (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 74). The questions in the interview-guide were used to trigger speaking about any aspect of the themes that was not already spontaneously mentioned by the interviewee (Helfferich, 2011, pp. 182–184). See appendix B for the full interview guide. The interviews took place between April and May 2020 via Zoom and lasted between 25 and 45 minutes. They were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Each participants' consent to do that was acquired at the beginning of the interview.

The last step of the analysis was to integrate the data collected in the interviews with the data which was previously collected in the research process. To do that, I translated the patterns into codes. Themes developed through a thematic analysis are more than a simple aggregation of codes, but also contain assumptions about connections and interactions between the codes (M. Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). For this reason, the additional step of translating the patterns back into codes was necessary for the validation and refinement of the patterns (see appendix E). Subsequently, I coded the interviews with these codes while iteratively and recursively adapting the codes, following the procedures of a thematic analysis. After coding the interviews, I checked back the adapted codes with the whole data corpus, again adapting the codes when necessary and this way refining the patterns. The final version of the patterns is described in chapter 3.1.

### 3. Chapters on findings

In this chapter I will first answer the auxiliary research question of which conditions and capacities for EDI work can be identified in the BLAST project. To do that I will explain the patterns of EDI work identified in the research project (chapter 3.1 practical considerations). In the subchapter on theoretical considerations (see chapter 3.2) I will integrate the patterns into the three dimensions framework. See also appendix F for the final list of codes.

#### 3.1. Practical considerations

This chapter contains the descriptions of the six patterns of EDI work in BLAST which were the result of the thematic analysis as previously described. I dedicated one chapter to each pattern. Each

chapter provides first summary and subsequently a comprehensive description referring back to the data.

### 3.1.1. Integrating EDI in the theory of change

#### Summary

The pattern is organized around the question how EDI was framed in the context of social ecological transition and the implications of that framing.

At the beginning of the research project members of the BLAST project team expressed a range of different positions on EDI, which varied in degree of prior involvement, knowledge about EDI, ambition about EDI and the degree to which EDI was integrated in their theory of change. Creating a common vision of EDI and integrating it in the collective theory of change seemed to be fundamental to mobilise resources to engage with EDI in the BLAST project. Having these discussions as early as possible was identified to avoid tension around resources.

#### Description

The first action of the EDI task force group was to ask for statements from each participating organisation on their understanding of reach and access- as stated in the BLAST project objectives. Further they were asked about their prior involvement with EDI. The statements showed a wide range of positions on how EDI can be defined and on its relevance for social innovation work. The differences in the understandings of EDI became even clearer in the following focus group discussions in which the project objectives were clarified.

Some organisations had priorly engaged in work on EDI which ranged removing from financial and time barriers e.g. *“by offering scholarships and exchange possibilities, recording the classes and then sharing those recordings”* (Reach and access statements<sup>4</sup>) to self-reflective practices around power e.g. by developing *“an anti-oppression toolkit for their trainers.”* (Reach and access statements). Further, the organisations differed in the degree and clarity to which EDI was included in their organisations’ official objectives and value statements. Whereas some organisations are officially *“committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination”* (Reach and access statements), others have *“no official charta on diversity and inclusion or no official statements on the website about this topic.”* (Reach and access statements). Meanwhile, other organisations stated that *“most of our vision and mission touches on reach, but we do not define it per se, and we do not speak or focus on access in our overall organisational objectives”* (Reach and access statements). The differences in prior

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<sup>4</sup>A list of all documents containing data can be found in appendix C for reference.

engagement with EDI also manifested in unclarities about the meanings of EDI related terms in the project objectives. The BLAST project application stated increasing reach and improving access, attractiveness, and coordination of educational delivery as one project objective. The differing understandings of these terms become clear in the following quote.

*“Bringing it in even though accessibility was written into the BLAST project, It turned out that the team members even thought the word accessibility meant different. So some people thought accessibility meant reach and the use of the tools. And other people thought that accessibility is a huge area, that means, diversity, equity, also accessibility of tools and all my resources so there was a separate understanding of just the word itself.”* (Interview D)

The project members’ position on whether to officially include EDI in the objectives of the BLAST project were correspondingly diverse. Some part of the project members understood EDI as an add-on to their work which would be *“really shifting something in the project”* (First focus group). These project members were hesitant to include EDI in the project objectives. In contrast, in some member organisations’ view *“working on diversity and inclusion and equality is deeply embedded in transition work”* (First focus group). To those members increasing diversity was a necessary condition for achieving social change, as shown in the following statement.

*“We cannot transition on our own. There is no transition as a very homogenised group.”* (First focus group)

Further they state that leaving out work on EDI would reproduce unjust structures in their practices and therefore prevent them from being transformative.

*“We're crazy to think that we can do it without. And [...] as a predominantly white middle class [...] group who tend to be the ones to occupy these space [...] our ways of living and our ways of being and our ways of thinking [...] continue to perpetuate a system of inequality.”* (First focus group)

Consequently, those members wanted to explicitly include EDI in the project objectives. Yet, other project members perceived EDI as a topic of general importance, but were concerned that *“this project has the resources and the focus, to cater for all dimensions of diversity.”* (First focus group).

Their position was to limit the efforts on enhancing EDI to the small available resources.

*“And the other thing is to look at what we can do practically. And I'm absolutely against [...] over committing my time [...] say we do things that we actually can't do.”* (First focus group)

After two focus group sessions it was agreed that EDI was to be included into the project objectives. From later reflections of project members in this process, I concluded that explicitly integrating EDI in the collective theory of change helps to reach consensus about EDI as a project objective. Project members who saw EDI and socio-ecological transition as separate issues were more resistant to including EDI in the project objectives.

*“...there were also perceptions about whether it was a priority, whether it was key for output development, whether it was a key aspect from a theory of change point of view. I felt some resistance, some ambivalence.”* (Written feedback on patterns)

Another factor influencing commitment to EDI work were scarce resources. Most of the member organisations struggled with limitations in time, financial, and staff resources. E.g. one organization stated that they were *“already overwhelmed trying to keep our organization viable”* (Reach and access statements). Correspondingly, the resources in the BLAST project were limited. Therefore, the value of EDI work in achieving social transformation needed to be made clear to motivate the project members to commit to EDI work.

*“So, if I didn't see the value of this EDI work in adding value to the other things I'm working on at those different levels, I think it'd be harder to make the commitment and the time for engagement.”* (Interview C)

Understanding how EDI is connected to transformative change shed light on the importance of EDI work and motivated some of the project members to engage with EDI despite time limitations.

*So for me it's not an add on. [...] this kind of aha effect was really [that] it wasn't in the concept from the beginning, so it felt like someone adding it on the topic. [...] But from what I've experienced now [...] I think I got to two or three meetings with EDI- I feel that this fundamental work needs to be done.”* (Interview A)

Moreover, some participants stressed that the timing of collective discussions about EDI was important. To avoid conflicts about the distribution of resources between EDI and other tasks it should be clarified as early as possible if and how EDI is part of the collective theory of change.

*“Coming [...] late into the project, after it started, after the kick-off meetings, after all the documents have been set out and the IOs been development. At that point, starting to have this conversation has created tension within the group because there's only so many resources. So it's got to be done at the very beginning of every project.”*(Interview D)

However, although most of the data supported this pattern, there were some contradictory statements. One team member stated that his *“motivation comes from personal relationships, not from other general ideas.”* (Interview B). This member's energy for EDI did not stem from a theory of change which entails EDI. Instead the member *“was just responding to other team members.”* (Interview B). Further, the following statements suggest that the project members might not have fully agreed on a collective theory of change which includes EDI.

*“[...]it is interesting how different the views still are. For some of us – EDI is not something you add, it is an integral part of the contextual, historical, social, political and economic analysis on which our change project needs to be based which has not been thought through as part of this project.”* (Written feedback on patterns)

This indicates that a part of the project members has agreed to include EDI work in the project without sharing assumptions about EDI being essential for transformative change. Thus, the motivation to engage with EDI work in BLAST does not exclusively stem from a collective theory of



change. I thus understand the integration of EDI in the theory of change as one condition for successful EDI work amongst others. Other sources of energy will become clear in the next pattern.

### 3.1.2. The EDI group as engine and its fuel

#### Summary

The organising concept of this pattern was the question which project members participated in EDI work and how the relationships between those members were shaped.

A core group of project members who felt dedicated to EDI initiated the EDI work in BLAST and kept the process alive. They were supported by voluntary EDI champions. The core group functioned as an engine for EDI in BLAST but needed to be nurtured with the necessary emotional, time and financial resources from the project team. This support was necessary to sustain and enable their efforts despite challenges. Strong links to the project team were needed to enable the core group to have an impact on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the project.

#### Description

Discussion about EDI was started by a small group of “*committed people*” (Interview A) who had the aspiration to improve EDI in BLAST. Input by this group provided the energy to initiate an EDI learning process in the project. One project member illustrated the flow of energy in the following way:

*“I was actually on the one side [...] pretty much.: “Whoa. Okay. Okay?!”. And then very grateful for this input. And then the energy from the group actually was very strong and I think [...] [they] did a lot of work [on] [...] EDI and pulled it together... (Interview A)*

This process was further driven by these “*people who are actually burning for the subject*” (Interview A) who appeared as “*a strong group that holds the EDI space*” who “*can bring this energy to the group*” (Interview A). First, the commitment and input of the EDI group helped project members to explore the topic, as illustrated in the following statement.

*“[...] It seems to me that there is some energy in the space for this topic and issue and I think that people who are passionate around that could bring also input.” (First focus group)*

The EDI core group was able to attract different project members to EDI work by transmitting that they are “*motivated or interested*” so that others “*respond to their invitations.*” (Interview B). The core group further shaped and facilitated the learning process around EDI “*facilitating a really good educational process, [...] that was really, really helpful.*” (Interview D).

Summed up, the EDI task force provided the energy for all work and learning in relation to EDI. However, to be able to deliver this, the core group itself was dependent on several different resources.

First, EDI work required time to create learning materials, to plan and facilitate the learning process, and to prepare practical suggestions for the project team. One task force member had to step back from the EDI task force, because of time constraints (Minutes EDI meeting 13.03). Another task force member perceived the allocation of time to EDI work as difficult, as shown in the following statement.

*“Time was the biggest thing. [...] It's hard to commit that time, and I did actually have to take some time out [...] of my other BLAST roles to do it. Time- time sacrifice of time. (Interview D)*

Time for EDI work was liberated by compromising on other project tasks- as shown in the above quote- or by allocating project budget to EDI work. Allocation of budget was under the constraint that *“whatever is done on this needs to be embedded in the IO<sup>5</sup> works as there is no additional funding.”* (Minutes EDI meeting 19.12.). This shows how the project team needed to support the EDI group by freeing time and financial resources.

Beyond the time that was invested in EDI work by the core group, they also needed emotional resources to sustain their work. Reflective sessions on EDI revealed the emotional challenges the EDI group had to face. EDI work elicited negative feelings among many project members (see chapter 3.1.4.). Related to this, participants of the first EDI champion training session reported to have felt *“[...] a tension, if openness is there to tackle this in BLAST”* (Written feedback on EDI training session). Due to challenging emotions and resistances members of the core group reported that *“emotional labour [...] went into this”* and that it therefore *“needs energy to hold the space”* (Written feedback on EDI training session). Thus, to maintain the energy that kept the EDI learning process alive, the driving core group needed to be provided with the emotional, time and financial resources. It needed to be backed up by the whole project team *“to be steered by that”* (First focus group).

Once the EDI work advanced to putting ideas into practice, it became clear that having an energetic core group was not sufficient to provoke change. The core group had invited one volunteer from each working group to support them as EDI champions and to establish a link to the rest of the project. A participant describes this set-up in the following statement.

*“So we have those IOs that are pretty working for themselves [...] And then you have this coordination meeting and then you are working in the circles. So, [...] the EDI circle and those kind of EDI champions are kind of linked to [...] all of those circles”* (Interview A)

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<sup>5</sup> IO= intellectual output. The project produces three major intellectual outputs. The project funding is mainly attached to these intellectual outputs.

The champions participated in training, reflection and planning sessions on EDI facilitated by the core group. They were also supposed to “give us [the EDI group] more power by because we are more people bringing this to the coordination group” (Field notes EDI meeting 08.04).

However, the EDI team still perceived “a poor connection” (Interview D) between the EDI group and the rest of the project, so that the EDI team was not fully able to transmit their energy to the project team, as illustrated in the following quote:

*“I’ve not seen the results of the [...] champions[...]. I’ve not seen anything really come from that. [...] I don’t hear it come back at me through the communication loops.”* (Interview D)

This gave rise to the question “How can suggestions from the EDI group get to the coordinator meeting?” (Field notes EDI meeting 08.04.) and lead to the conclusion that strong links between the core group and the rest of the project team were essential to trigger change on EDI.

### 3.1.3. Balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work

#### Summary

The codes were clustered around the question of how to maintain continuity in EDI work, despite intrapersonal, and interpersonal difficulties and organisational challenges.

The pattern describes how a close connection of reflection (self-evaluation, sharing) with action (e.g. provide solidarity funding, change facilitation techniques) energized the process and helped to deal with frustration or other negative emotions triggered by EDI. Nevertheless, it was necessary to balance this out by providing spaces for reflection. Reflections and actions needed to be followed up within a brief period of time and with continuity to keep the momentum. Eventually, reflections and actions related to EDI needed to be institutionalized in the project to guarantee long term engagement with it. Further, to enable EDI work in the project a healthy project needed to be built. This means clear, decentralized decision-making processes and clarity about project roles and tasks.

#### Description

One participant emphasized the importance of planning concrete action steps for improving EDI in the BLAST project to not lose the momentum:

*“So my take on this would be that it is quite common that in groups where people are dominantly, white, middle class privileged, there is this general intention about being open [...] to diversity. And then just [...] saying we cannot really do anything about this So [...] maybe we can be specific about what we will do about this.”* (First focus group)

Indeed, planning concrete action steps were generally perceived as energizing and engaging. EDI task force members found that they could “engage people with finding action steps” as this would

*“give them more ownership”* (Field noted EDI meeting 08.04.). In fact, concrete action planning evoked positive and optimistic emotions, as well as motivation.

*“[...] [In] one meeting [...] we did some concrete actions. [...] You know, [...] how to action this kind of stuff. I really liked that. I had a really good energy after the meeting, because I thought okay there's something that can be done and can be changed.”* (Interview A)

Nevertheless, improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion could not be reduced to *“‘tasks’ and concrete and definable outputs rather than the messier work of doing the inner work to make attitudinal shifts”* (Written feedback on patterns). Skipping time for reflection would simplify work on EDI and obstruct the project members to deeply challenge their internalizations of oppressive systems. One participant summarized this the following way:

*“And often as an activist we were so out there, and we forget about the reflection, and the inner development.”* (Interview C)

In conclusion, despite the energizing and mobilising effect of concrete EDI tasks, these needed to be balanced out by reflective work.

Further, the need was expressed to have a close follow-up to all activities related to EDI. One project member observed that if *“there is no [...] follow up on that [EDI activities] there is no integration”* (Interview A). Consequently, the momentum would be lost and the efforts on challenging oppressive systems would seep away.

*“So, and then actually... I don't know what happened. [...] it dropped from my focus [...]”* (Interview A)

Several conditions were identified by project members that would help the continuity of work on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. On a short-term basis, this entailed a *“clear idea [of] what now [is] supposed to happen”* to make sure that *“everyone is on [...] board”* (Interview A). On a long-term basis, this meant institutionalising EDI work in the project structure on various levels. On a governance level, the general infrastructure to engage with EDI needed to be created by allocating time and resources to the topic, as illustrated in the following quote.

*“[...] [as a bigger system in coordination we make sure that there's space and time for it [EDI].”* (Interview C)

Then, each working group needed to fill these EDI spaces to life in their everyday working practice, *“by embedding it into its culture and making sure everyone's aware of the processes”* (Interview C).

This way the efforts to improve EDI become *“reflected everywhere”* (Field notes EDI meeting 08.04) and finally become a natural part of collaborative practices.

*“[So] that it is not [...] [a] very huge difference between: “Okay, now we have EDI zooms, so let's share and now we [...] have the agenda”* (Interview A)

Project members further strived for institutionalisation of EDI efforts by connecting EDI with their general practice. On one hand, they explored how the innovative practices they were working with could be used to foster EDI. For example, they asked how they could *“apply experiences from deep transformation work to EDI?”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions). On the other hand, they were decided to integrate guiding materials around EDI into the project outputs:

*“For BLAST it is important [...]to ensure that the resources we produce also guide and support people to make broad reach and engagement a core strategy within any new transformational learning programmes.”* (Reach and access statements)

Last but not least, a healthy project was identified as enabling a continuous flow of EDI work. In healthy project, every team member has clarity about tasks, roles and decision mechanisms, as described by a participant the following way:

*“For me, also, more in general committed to the project. So, it's not about the EDI itself it's [...] where I'm standing in a project, [...] Do I know my goal, do I know what I'm doing, do I know what I'm supposed to do? So, this is really strictly connected for me. [...] It's just part of the whole project structure.”* (Interview A)

The BLAST project did not live up this idea in several ways. Connected to unclarity about roles, there were *“challenges to engage the group in everything, from getting the easiest thing done to setting up a basic meeting.”* (Interview C). One project member attributed the low engagement to *“this remote collaboration context”* (Interview B). The participant describes challenges of remote contexts as followed:

*“It's one thing to schedule a conversation about this with one person or more people on video. And it's completely different thing if we are together, and there's some [...] emotional charge, to just [...] have a walk together and talk about stuff. Or sit down with a with a beer and talk about stuff. Or even have a structured session in some form around this. [...] So this is, this is two different contexts, all the challenges I relate to remote.”* (Interview B)

Another project member named hierarchical project structures as causing low engagement with the project tasks. This participant said the *“BLAST project shouldn't be hierarchical. And then if it wasn't, this wouldn't be an issue.”* (Interview D). I integrate those perceptions into the notion of a healthy project, which creates clear and non-hierarchical decision making mechanisms, provides a clear role and tasks for everybody and has vivid interpersonal relationships.

#### 3.1.4. Supportive and engaging group climate

##### Summary

This pattern emerged around reports of negative emotions experienced during engagement with EDI and observations around the group climate that supported the project members to deal with those emotions and to open up to the topic of EDI.

The pattern describes how dealing with EDI involved a range of negative and unpleasant emotions, including defensive reactions, resignation, and frustration. It describes the significance of emotional labour and stresses the amount of energy that was necessary to fuel the EDI work. Allies, mutual support and communicational, as well as emotional skills are identified as means to deal with emotional burdens. It further describes aspects of a safe group atmosphere and organisational considerations that facilitate openness and mutual sharing (see chapter 3.1.6.). In a safe group culture, everybody is listened to and everybody is given the opportunity, as well is encouraged to speak.

### Description

Emotional challenges were a recurrent topic during each activity related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. In general, project members perceived EDI as a *“huge issue [which] is overwhelming”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions), stating to be *“overwhelmed with the subject in BLAST and in the world”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions). The topic predominantly evoked feelings of frustration and resignation or anxiety.

*“But generally, as soon as I’m connecting into this topic I feel frustration and heaviness and it is regardless of whom I talk to cause for me the topic is just emotionally loaded and I have this feeling of resignation”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions)

During group discussions or collective reflection sessions these general feelings manifested in anxiousness about speaking and sharing openly. Participants felt *“nervous to cover gender”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions) and *“overwhelmed, kind of scared, weird, [and] uncomfortable”* (Interview A) to share their own experiences and thoughts. People also experienced shame about their privileged positions.

*“We were also discussing about the feeling that we have, when we tap into this topic...and there [was] much shame, blame..”*. (Written feedback on EDI training sessions).

On the same time, it was challenging for them to recall hurtful experiences of discrimination.

*“It’s always difficult going back to underpowered moments [...]. Even though it’s in the past, even though it is handled, it is uncomfortable”*. (Written feedback on EDI training sessions)

Further, some project members expressed that they first were reluctant to acknowledge the oppressive dynamics playing out in the group, because of their positive image of such social innovation initiatives.

*“And I want to believe that I work with people who actually have [...] not the label but see me as a human being.”* (Interview A)

Those negative emotions produced tensions in the group’s interactions.

*“I feel tension in this space, although facial expressions look the same as in every meeting.”* (Field notes champion training 20.03.20)

Consequently, negative emotions around oppressive dynamics made it *“not easy to bring it [power dynamics] into the consciousness.”* (Written feedback on EDI training sessions) and hindered the involvement with EDI.

The project members identified several strategies to manage challenging emotions in order to enable engaging with EDI. When negative emotions threaten to decrease motivation and cause psychological drain, mutual support, and allies were mentioned as coping strategies. Allies could be internal or external to project.

*“So I would, I would often get quite riled up about the meeting. And then spend a lot of time talking to my [ally]<sup>6</sup> about it.”* (Interview D)

The negative effects of unpleasant emotions could also pre-emptively be counterbalanced by creating a supportive group culture.

*“So obviously there is uncomfortableness, in a way. But I didn't really feel that potential uncomfortableness. [...] I felt I was being listened to, I had space to raise these things [...], so I didn't feel unsafe, [...] it was a good environment.”* (Interview C)

The following aspects of a safe group culture were identified for the BLAST working team. First, a safe group culture allows to show feelings openly and honestly, as explained by a participant:

*“So this kind of space: that it's allowed to share, that's allowed maybe to cry or allowed to feel overwhelmed.”* (Interview A)

Further, in a safe group culture every group member's personal experiences and perspectives in relation to oppressive dynamics are actively listened to. That means that *“people are present and listening”* (Interview B) but also that they seek out for unheard voices within their team. A project participant described this the following way:

*“And then in a bigger thing like BLAST and making sure that there's spaces and safety for people bringing in tensions or concerns. And they can be heard and for me a learning is to hear those.”* (Interview C).

In a safe group culture, every voice is not only heard, but also accepted and valued.

*“It is not only about space but also about trusting that your points will be valued and not dismissed”* (Field notes champion training session 20.04.20)

This involves the readiness of members of the dominant groups to engage with the topic in a constructive way, as shown in this statement:

*“I feel like when I'm male attendee is happy to tackle straight on their position within gender equality and is really open, it creates a safe space for women to talk honestly about their experiences.”* (Interview D)

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<sup>6</sup> I replaced the original word by the word ally to ensure anonymity.

This way trust is built in between the group members and “*conversations and explorations*” that are “*honest and deep*” emerge (First focus group).

This kind of culture can be catalysed by the creating regular, numerous, and diverse channels and opportunities to share experiences which are related to EDI. Those channels should cater for different preferred modes of sharing. They can vary between formal, informal, facilitated, online, in person, embedded in a meeting, as a separate meeting, synchronous, and asynchronous sharing.

However, one person didn’t “*need anything*” to be able to share. The participant stated that “it’s only me who determines if I am sharing” (Interview B). Although a supportive and engaging group culture seems not necessary for everyone to address EDI, I still consider it as necessary for many and useful for most.

Last but not least, some group members reflected that emotional and communication supported them in developing a safe group culture. In the following quote a project member describes how the skill to understand and communicate one’s emotions helps honest and deep sharing.

*“So that when they do feel triggered, and they notice it, they can then tell it to other people so they can explain it.”* (Interview D)

### 3.1.5. EDI knowledge

#### Summary

This pattern evolved from the areas in which the participants noticed learning or identified the need for learning. It answers the question which knowledge was acquired for working on EDI in the BLAST project.

These skills involved knowledge about oppressive systems and how they operate, as well as practical training in how to apply this knowledge.

#### Description

During reflective sessions on EDI participants often acknowledged the complexity of the topic. First, intersectionality of different systems of oppression increased complexity because project members “*need to have in mind also other isms*” e.g. in order “*to deal with gender properly*” (Field notes EDI training sessions 20.03). Further layers of complexity are added by “*the unconscious stuff*” (Field notes EDI training sessions 20.04.) and the specific ways power dynamics play out in different contexts.

*“There is complexity and there is the specificity of the BLAST project”* (Minutes EDI meeting 19.12.)

A lack of understanding of the complex topic negatively impacted ability and motivation to specifically engage with improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within the social innovation initiative.



This happened because of a lack of consideration of power dynamics, barriers and biases that exclude members of subordinate groups from participation, as shown in the following quote.

*“We deeply trust that people who are ready and willing to go through transformation [...], will feel attracted by our offer, regardless of race, gender, age, background.”* (Statements on reach and access)

Different levels of knowledge about EDI lead to the insight that efforts to improve EDI in BLAST required *“a group that actually understands the problem”* (Interview D). EDI task force members realized that EDI champions *“themselves were the ‘target’ of our efforts”* (Written feedback on patterns). They acknowledged that they need to acquire profound knowledge through *“materials and regular pulses of taking this perspective”* (Interview C). Otherwise they would not be able to *“do as much championing as I initially thought.”* (Written feedback on patterns).

The knowledge required for EDI work had a theoretical and a practical dimension. Theoretical knowledge needed to evolve *“from just stating general phenomena to the more specific issues prevalent in transition initiatives”* (Written Feedback on EDI training sessions). Even if a person has theoretical knowledge about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion the person *“can be confused in a particular situation”* and challenged about how *“to apply that principle in that particular situation”* (Interview B). Recurrent questions like *“Diversity, but how can we do that in a very concrete way?”* (First focus group) or *“How do we make ourselves accountable?”* (Minutes EDI meeting 08.04.) showed the need for learning how to practically apply theoretical knowledge around oppressive systems.

### 3.1.6. Ongoing exploration

#### Summary

This pattern is organized around the question how the learning process of EDI related skills looked like.

The learning process around EDI in BLAST was guided by exploring blind spots in skills, knowledge, and power, as well as the lack of representation of voices. In practice, learning took place as inner reflection on an individual level, and as building consciousness and awareness on a group level. Collective learning through sharing, discussing, and listening to other perspectives was a crucial element in the process. Learning happened in iterative loops which were characterized by action and reflection. The learning process happened and will happen over a long period of time. It was supported by the cultivation of a committed and brave attitude towards engagement with EDI work.

#### Description

The core of the learning process around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion was the critical involvement with own viewpoints and knowledge and the search for related blind spots. One EDI core group

member named *“self awareness”* or *“understanding my own limitations”* as the goal of the learning process (Interview D) Accordingly, the process began with acknowledging that *“we have all our shadows and blind spots”* (Interview A). Some project members reported an initial resistance to realizing the blind spots in the BLAST project which they had previously pictured as a non-oppressive transformative group.

*“This assumption [...] that we all know about the topic, [...] that we all are very open and can talk openly about it. [...] As I said, I felt uncomfortable because it [...] became those kind of ideas [...]: Yeah I know we maybe have some issues [...] but it's probably just [...], nothing badly! [...] So this is kind of thinking of: No, not in this context, [...] It's not that bad! So [...] playing it down a bit.* (Interview A)

Other project members were *“not surprised that we have to deal with this in BLAST”* (Field notes EDI training session 20.04.).

Having accepted the existence of blind spots in the project work, project members identified several areas for critical exploration. One blind spot referred to how most transition initiatives grow on the soil of old oppressive systems, as described in the following quote.

*“We're standing on the shoulders of people who have gone before us for centuries, with a struggle of enclosure and dominance.”* (Interview C)

One project member described exploring this blind spot as *“deepening our understanding and acknowledgement of our part in the systems of power.”* (Written feedback on patterns). Indeed, many project members were not fully aware of their own privileges. Project members reported being *“much more aware [...] through this process”* (Interview C), as well as being surprised about the initial silence around privilege in BLAST, as *“there wasn't a word of that other than from a selected team”* (Interview D). Further, critical exploration was necessary to understand how the project members' ideas, language, and outputs were influenced by their social positioning as *“there are lots of implicit bias within the network (due to its largely white demographic)”* (Reach and access statements).

Blind spots prevail not only in relation to their own positions of privilege, but also in relation to socially exclusive barriers. BLAST members expressed that they *“need to better understand the barriers to attracting people of colour, migrants and other underrepresented groups”* (Reach and access statements). Additionally, the project members lacked insights about how *“blended approaches support justice and inclusion”* and *“in which respects [...] they create new barriers or fragmentations”* (Field notes EDI training 20.03). Even during activities that aimed at improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion exploitative dynamics can be reproduced by putting the pressure of *“unpaid work”* and *“additional work of educating”* the dominant ones on marginalized groups (Minutes EDI meeting 19.12.). To put it in a nutshell, as *“there is always something that we do not see, there is always something that we miss”* (Interview A), learning on EDI in BLAST meant to continuously

explore the blind spots about how oppressive systems played out in the project members' actions and thinking.

The process of exploration of these blind spots happened on two levels. On one level, each individual in the group engaged in inner work. This meant to engage into a *"discussion with myself"* learning to understand *"Why do you feel uncomfortable?"* (Interview A) and to be *"more aware what triggers me or patterns I tend to fall into"* (Interview C). Accordingly, inner work meant an ongoing inner exploration of personal blind spots about and interactions with oppressive systems. The following quote describes this inner exploration:

*"It needs a commitment to probably other practices [...] in your life, I think [...] in that sphere of your inner practice and work, [...], physical and mental and, [...] focusing and seeing blind spots"* (Interview C)

Reflecting on their own positions in oppressive systems, biases and blind spots needed to be accompanied by building consciousness and awareness on a group level. One project member expressed that *"first of we needed understanding in the group that there was a problem."* (Interview D). This could be achieved *"by making it [power dynamics] explicit and having conversations about this stuff"* (Interview B).

Despite the informative function of making issues explicit, several insights about the process of building consciousness and awareness surfaced during EDI work in BLAST. Bringing issues into the group consciousness- or sharing- supported reflection in various ways.

First hearing other voices appeared as a means for learning on EDI. Other voices were both experts who have engaged with EDI work for a longer time, as well as marginalized voices which usually remain unheard. While experts were used to achieve informational input;

*"It is important for us to share knowledge and to use education that already have been developed by the partners for inspiration in our project implementation"* (Reach and access statements).

marginalized or underrepresented voices help to become aware of own biases;

*"[...] we are still [a] pretty non diverse group of people, within the project, Right? So whatever we do is our best wishes. But that doesn't change the fact that we are all in, you know, the Western cultures"* (Interview B)

and to understand other groups' barriers:

*"[...] in this project, we've made sure that we have for instance Croatian and Romanian partners [...] that come in and can tell us, you know, what are the conditions they need to see put in place so that they can appropriately participate at all in a project like this and can deliver what this project creates and enables to the participants from their countries"* (First focus group)

Last but not least, other voices are needed to determine *"whether change is happening in the eye of those who are marginalized "* (Field notes EDI meeting 08.04) and therefore to assess if change has actually happened.

Second, sharing thoughts and experiences in relation to EDI assured project members in their reflective process. Some project members felt encouraged to participate in discussions around EDI by hearing other project members speak.

*“I’m struggling to talk about those issues [...]. So, I feel encouraged when other people, let’s say, also share.”* (Interview A)

Others sensed something to be wrong but were afraid to attribute this feeling to power dynamics rather than to personal failure. The following quote shows how hearing similar experiences validated perceptions of oppressive dynamics. This enabled us to understand how project members were impacted by power dynamics.

*“I didn’t realize how much gender inequality was bothering me in the group. I was under the perception that it was maybe either flaw in my intelligence or in my experience, that was leading to my sort of experience within the group”* (Interview D)

Third, sharing experiences with oppressive dynamics helped to bolster difficult emotions (see chapter 3.1.4.). Exchanging personal stories elicited feelings of connectedness because *“people resonated”* and it felt *“also good to hear and read from other viewpoints that are similar to oneself”* (Field notes EDI training 20.04). This quote of a participant in a reflective session illustrates the uplifting and encouraging effect of sharing:

*“That there is a community within Ecolise that wants to look into this dynamics, which is great. Thank you [...]!”* (Written Feedback EDI trainings)

I will finish the pattern description with some observations about practical aspects of the learning process. Learning happened in iterative loops which moved forth and back between planning phases, action phases, and reflective phases. A project participant described those iterations in the following way:

*“Or clear, let’s say, okay next week we’ll have a decision [...] then this is the implementation part and then we pull it into the implementation and we kind of think back on this implementation. So you have a clear process everyone is on the board and you are looping it, let’s say with feedback.”* (Interview A)

The strategy of approaching EDI was refined after every learning loop, so that it evolved gradually over time. This responsive approach manifested e.g. in the following decision, taken in a meeting of the EDI core group.

*“Collect all statements then decide what to do next”* (Minutes EDI meeting 19.12)

Accordingly, project members moved towards change with small steps in a long and ongoing process. They perceived working on EDI as *“ongoing work”* (Written Feedback EDI trainings) which entails *“learning opportunity after learning opportunity”* (Interview B).

The learning process was supported by having an adventurous mindset. This describes a specific attitude or way how to deal with insecurities and challenges that often occur when engaging with EDI which I will describe in the subsequent paragraphs.

Those project members who were or became committed to EDI work in the BLAST were “*open, intrigued, willing to explore it [EDI]*” (Written feedback on patterns). Their curiosity was not stopped by uncomfortable feelings or insecurities.

*“Grateful of opportunity to dive into something I am highly uncomfortable and frustrated with”* (Field notes EDI training session 20.04.)

Instead, they perceived challenges as learning opportunities:

*“Will have its challenges, but that’s where the learning and change comes from”* (Written Feedback on EDI training sessions)

They developed an attitude of exploring the uncomfortable spots despite frustration and failures.

*“And I’m going to be up and I’m going to be on set, I’m going to tackle it I’m going to try and change [...] And so a very brave person [...] it’s got to be. Brave people can admit that they’ve been stupid. Because brave people can admit that they’ve been wrong.”* (Interview D)

This way they engaged with EDI work “*committed, despite resistance, and value led.*” (Written feedback on patterns). Another element of the ‘adventurous mindset’ was the ability to “*persevere*” (Interview c) the engagement with EDI in which included “*to be able to hold tensions*” (First focus group) and to “*let the frustration in and feel maybe the blame etc.*” (Written Feedback on EdI training sessions).

### 3.2. Theoretical considerations

The patterns described in the previous chapter showed main insights about what was important in BLAST for enhancing Equity Diversity, and Inclusion (See table 4 for a summary). As a second part of the findings, I will describe the context specific integration of the pattern with the deepening, lengthening, and widening capacities as specified in the three dimensions framework. These results were achieved by comparing the patterns to the capacities. I explored points contained in the patterns that were explicitly, implicitly, or not mentioned in the 3D transformative capacities. I adapted the framework either by making explicit the points that were missing or by adding new capacities. The following paragraphs explains the adjustments of the original capacities to fit the context. Table five provides an overview about the adapted capacities and their descriptions.

Table 4

*Overview of patterns and summary of pattern insights*

#### **Integrating EDI in the theory of change**

- EDI needs to be understood as an essential part of socio-ecological transition to ensure resources and motivation for EDI work.
- This connection should to be clarified as early as possible.

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#### **The EDI group as engine and its fuel**

- A group of dedicated people to drove the process.
- Emotional support and provision of sufficient resources to this group was important.
- Strong communication links between the group and the project team should be established.
- Balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work.

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#### **Energize the process through concrete actions.**

- Create enough spaces for reflection.
- Create balance between action and reflection because both is important.
- Have quick follow-ups for both.
- Institutionalise both EDI actions and reflective activities in the project structures and outputs.

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#### **Supportive and engaging group climate**

- Find and give mutual support.
- Find and be an ally.
- Train communicational and emotional skills.
- Facilitate sharing.
- Create culture in which everybody is listened to and everybody is given opportunity to speak and is encouraged to speak.

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#### **EDI knowledge**

- Understand how oppressive systems operate.
- Understand how own and group's thinking and acting is influenced by that
- Act upon this understanding in different situations

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#### **Ongoing exploration**

- Learn through exploring blind spots in own and group's skills, knowledge and power
- Seek out for voices that are not represented
- Inner work on own biases and power positions
- Cultivate a brave and committed attitude towards learning on EDI

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*The table summarizes the patterns of EDI work in BLAST as described in chapter 3.1.*

#### Widening capacities

To begin with, the 3D framework includes the widening capacities “*spreading and adapting SI approaches to diverse contexts*” and “*engaging a variety of people and perspectives*”. The pattern “*ongoing exploration*” relates to these capacities’ aspects of communication and replicability of the innovative solutions in diverse contexts. It brings in the notion of exploring blind spots within the BLAST actors’ practices- e.g. in relation to biases, barriers created or reproduced by new solutions,

or a lack of representation of diverse voices. The pattern suggests that to be able to engage diverse audiences and spread new practices to them, BLAST actors need to proactively search for blind spots in their own thinking and the design of their project outputs and adapt them accordingly. The pattern *“balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work”* stressed the need to capture learnings from reflective sessions around EDI and integrate them into the project outputs. To adjust the 3D framework to those considerations I added the capacity *“adapting SI to blind spots”*. It describes the ability to identify and explore blind spots in how the SI solutions work. and to adapt the solutions based on this exploration.

The widening capacity *“cross-movement collaboration”* describes the ability to collaborate and synergize with actors across different movements which share the same core values. Similarly, the pattern *“ongoing exploration”* stresses the importance to collaborate with experts on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The pattern *“EDI in theory of change”* specifies potential movements for cross-movement collaboration. Understanding EDI as a part of a socio-economic transition expands the pool of partners for collaboration from the environmental justice movements to social justice movements, like anti-racist, or anti- colonialism movements. The original capacity of *“cross-movement collaboration”* can be interpreted in a way that includes movements related to EDI. To make those explicit I adapted the capacity by adding the ability to identify connections between the core values of different (EDI-related) movements and to collaborate with them.

### Lengthening

*“Generating continuity of resources and activities”* is a lengthening capacity which helps to ensure continuity of resources like funding and motivation. The pattern *“EDI group as engine and its fuel”* adds the perspective of the distribution of those resources within the SI initiative. It showed how the EDI group, as a new impulse to the initiative, needed resources in the form of time resources and emotional support to be able to influence how the SI developed. To integrate this idea in the 3D framework I added the lengthening capacity *“Distribution of resources”*. This capacity means to be able to create a balanced distribution of resources within the SI initiative, which allows new impulses (like EDI) to emerge and to influence the SI.

As another aspect of the capacity *“generating continuity of resources and activities”* is securing ongoing motivation of staff and volunteers. This connects to the pattern *“supportive and engaging group climate”*. Dealing with EDI evoked a range of negative emotions, like frustration and resignation. A safe, engaging, and supportive group culture can help to ensure ongoing motivation despite those emotional challenges. A safe group also adds to the lengthening capacity *“ensuring resilience in the face of challenges”*. The safe groups in which each group member is listened to, feelings are

shared, and challenging emotions are addressed collectively to assist in solving internal conflicts that arise from oppressive and socially exclusive dynamics. Alongside with the group culture, individual emotional and communicational skills further improve conflict solving skills. Thus, the described pattern insights can be used to enhance resilience and increase persistence of the SI initiative. The added capacity “*creating a supportive and engaging group culture*” captures these notions. This safe group climate, alongside with emotional skills of the members of the social initiative, help to address internal conflicts that arise from oppressive and socially exclusive dynamics. Therefore, they enhance resilience and increase persistence of the SI initiative.

Further, the capacity to ensure resilience in the face of challenges is related to the *pattern “adventurous mindset”*, as described in the pattern “*ongoing exploration*”. An adventurous mindset means to stay committed and to keep exploring despite difficulties. SI actors within this mindset see challenges as learning opportunities and stay committed to exploring, despite crises. Cultivating such a mindset helps to stay engaged despite the frustration and resignation often connected to EDI work. To emphasize these insights in the 3D framework, I added the lengthening capacity “*cultivate a mindset of embracing and learning from conflict and blind spots*”. It describes the ability of SI actors to maintain their commitment to explore blind spots around EDI despite challenging emotions, difficulties, and inner resistances.

Another lengthening capacity- “*evolving goals and strategies*”- was complemented by two patterns. It describes how SI actors develop their core principles and theories of change while adapting and replacing their practices over time. The capacity can be interpreted in a way that involves EDI implicitly. However, the pattern “*ongoing exploration*” adds more specificity to the learning process behind “*evolving goals and strategies*”. In BLAST learning around EDI happened in multiple iterative loops, which were characterized by sharing, discussing, and seeking out for other perspectives. These EDI learning processes are important to incorporate EDI concerns into goals and strategies in a responsive manner. This goes hand-in-hand with the creation and progressive institutionalisation of a variety of opportunities for collective reflection as described in the pattern “*balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work*”. For a more explicit idea of how to evolve the SI initiative’s goals and strategies towards Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, I added the lengthening capacity “*enabling a learning process around EDI*”. It describes how SI actors create regular spaces for reflection, sharing and discussion, which inform the evolution of their goals and strategies to better address EDI. They are able to continuously learn from other perspectives.

The lengthening capacity “*re-organising and decentralising governance structures*” was adapted to include EDI based on two patterns. It describes the capacity to improve governance structures in order to make decision making processes more inclusive to a high number of people. This idea is



concretised by the *pattern “balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work”*. The pattern emphasizes the need for clarity about roles and tasks, as well as an undisturbed flow of communication. This clarity made decision making processes and work practices more inclusive in the BLAST project. Further, the pattern *“EDI group as engine and its fuel”* clarifies how the governance structures needed to be adjusted in the BLAST project to make room for EDI efforts. The driving EDI group needed a strong connection to the rest of the project team to influence the development of the SI. These notions could be included in the original capacity of *“re-organizing and decentralizing governance structures”* by adding two sentences about integrating EDI as a new entity in the governance structure, as well as maintaining clarity about governance structures for every project member.

Also, the lengthening capacity *“maturing along developmental stages”* could be refined through the integration of the pattern *“supportive and engaging group climate”*. The original capacity means the SI initiative’s capacity to support individual SI actors to mature. Maturing could be specified as developing good communication and emotional skills. This means the ability to understand one’s own and others’ emotions and their origin. It also entails being able to share personal experiences and feelings honestly. I specified the original capacity *“maturing along developmental stages”* by including *“emotional and communication skills”* and *“honest sharing”* as individual skills that need to be developed to enhance EDI.

### Deepening

The deepening capacity *“understanding and problematizing root causes”* depicts that social innovation actors are able to understand the systemic root causes of the problems they want to address. This enables them to identify systemic leverage points for change. The pattern *“EDI in the theory of change”* expands that capacity. It describes how BLAST actors explored the connection between EDI and sustainability. Based on this, they saw the integration of EDI in the collective theory of change as a key step. Conclusively, the interactions between different unsustainable systems need to be understood to be able to address root causes to a full extent. I embedded this insight into the 3D framework by adding the deepening capacity *“understand connections between different problematic systems and root causes”*. It means that BLAST actors are able to understand interactions between different root causes or unsustainable systems (e.g. racism, neo-colonialism and capitalism). They make the inseparable connection between those systems a part of their theory of change.

Next, I used the pattern *“EDI knowledge”* to refine several deepening capacities. This pattern describes that profound knowledge which is needed to improve EDI. BLAST actors needed to know what EDI is and how oppressive systems and power dynamics play out. First, the capacity

“understanding and problematising root causes” was extended by explicitly naming oppressive systems and power structures as problematic established systems. The pattern “EDI knowledge” further describes the relevance of practical knowledge about EDI. Addressing EDI required to learn and practice how to apply EDI knowledge in real life situations. I used this insight to refine the deepening capacities “identifying and practicing effective solutions” and “clarifying and enacting core principles and values”, by again adding explicit mentions of problems around EDI and values in relation to EDI.

“Reconciliation and healing of trauma”, as another deepening capacity was related to the pattern “supportive and engaging group climate”. The original capacity can be understood as reconciliation in relation to historically oppressed communities. Further, it meant being able to undergo psychological and cultural change while avoiding burnout and maintaining personal and planetary well-being. On one hand side, a safe and supportive group climate provides a healing space within the initiative for people being negatively impacted by oppressive power dynamics. On the other hand, it contributes to the prevention of burnout or psychological drain in EDI work. The capacity to “create a supportive and engaging group culture” was already described above as a lengthening capacity. As this capacity refers to a lengthening and a deepening capacity, I consider it to enhance both-length and depth of transformative impact.

Last but not least, I examined the deepening capacity “challenging dominant power structures”. This capacity means that SI actors are able to deal with issues of power and create conditions for inclusivity, equity, and diversity and both external and internalized power structures. All aspects of this capacity are specified in other adapted or added deepening, lengthening and widening capacities. This makes the capacity “challenging dominant power structures” obsolete for this specific context.

Table 5

Adapted transformative capacities

Original Capacity	Adapted or added capacity
<b>Widening</b>	
Spreading & adapting SI approaches to diverse contexts	<b>Adapting SI to blind spots</b> BLAST actors are able to identify and explore blind spots in how their SI solutions work (e.g. biases). They adapt their solutions on the basis of this exploration. They integrate their learning around EDI in the project outputs.
Engaging a variety of people & perspectives	
Cross-movement collaboration	<b>Cross-movement collaboration</b> BLAST actors are able to collaborate and synergize with actors or networks with similar visions. They are able to build trust-based

	relationships and bridges across different movements which share the compatible core values. <i>They are able to identify connections between main core values of different movements and collaborate with them (e.g. anti-racist movements and socio-ecological transition movements)</i>
SI actors are able to support coherence	
<b>Lengthening</b>	
Generating continuity of resources & activities	<b>Distribution of resources</b> BLAST actors are able to create a balanced distribution of resources within the SI initiative which allows new impulses (like EDI) to emerge and to influence the SI.
	<b>Creating a supportive and engaging group culture</b> BLAST actors are able to create a group culture which allows and encourages everybody to share their feelings. They are able to surface disruptive dynamics and challenge those. Doing this, they increase attachment to the project for the project members.
Ensuring resilience in the face of challenges	<b>Cultivate a mindset of embracing and learning from conflict and blind spots.</b> BLAST actors are able to maintain their commitment to exploring blind spots around EDI despite challenging emotions, difficulties and inner resistances.
Evolving goals & strategies	<b>Enabling a learning process around EDI</b> BLAST actors create regular spaces for reflection, sharing and discussion, which inform the evolution of their goals and strategies to better address EDI. They integrate multiple feedback loops for iterative learning into their work plan and continuously learn from perspectives.
Re-organizing & decentralizing governance structures	<b>Re-organizing &amp; decentralizing governance structures</b> BLAST actors are able to re-organize their organizational structures and processes when they grow and mature over time. <i>They are able to maintain clarity about the governance structures for every project member. They are able to integrate EDI as a new working group in the governance structure.</i> They are able to decentralize governance structures in order to achieve faster and better decision making while aligning the needs of a higher diversity of people and becoming more inclusive to more diverse people.
Maturing along developmental stages	<b>Maturing along developmental stages</b> BLAST actors are able to build on and learn from past efforts by capturing and transferring knowledge and experiences. This supports SI actors to move through different developmental phases. They are also able to support individuals to mature within an organization or initiative. <i>This includes emotional and communicational skills and transparent and honest sharing.</i>
<b>Deepening</b>	
Understanding & problematizing root causes	<b>Understand connections between different problematic systems/ root causes</b>

	BLAST actors are able to understand interactions between different root causes/ unsustainable systems. (e.g. racism, neo-colonialism and capitalism. They make the inseparable connection between those systems a part of their theory of change.
	<b>Understanding &amp; problematizing root causes</b> BLAST actors are able to understand systemic root causes of problems in established systems <i>including oppressive systems and power structures</i> . They go beyond surface issues to a deeper level by identifying systemic leverage points.
Identifying & practicing effective solutions	<b>Identifying &amp; practicing effective solutions</b> SI actors are able to offer concrete solutions or alternatives to current problems, <i>including problems around EDI</i> , in a constructive and pragmatic way (instead of criticizing or demanding the powerful decision makers to act). Solutions are identified and practiced at an individual level, a collective level and a systemic level. SI actors embed the solutions in a compelling theory of change or vision of the future.
Clarifying & enacting core principles & values	<b>Clarifying and enacting core principles and values</b> SI actors are able to distil the essence of their solutions into core principles or essential ingredients. SI actors are able to articulate their shared values among their networks. They are able to operationalize and enact those values, <i>including values in relation to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</i> .
Cooperating strategically & reflexively across sectors	
Challenging dominant power-structures	Was specified in the remaining adapted and added capacity.
Reconciliation and healing of trauma	* See added capacity “creating a supportive and engaging group culture” in lengthening capacities.

*The table shows the updated capacities based on the patterns of EDI work in BLAST.*

*Adapted parts are written in italics.*

*New capacities are written in bold letters.*

*Capacities which extend over two columns were not changed.*

*Descriptions of the original capacities can be found in chapter 1.3.2.*

## 4. Concluding chapter

In the previous chapters I have shown how the research project generated practical knowledge about EDI work in the context of the BLAST project. To make this knowledge available for the evaluation of transformative capacity, I integrated it into the three dimensions framework. The result of the theoretical integration was an adapted version of the three dimensions framework which is rooted in the specific context of the BLAST project. I will conclude this work by discussing these findings to answer the research question: how can EDI be conceptualised as a part of the 3D framework? Subsequently, I will examine the quality of the results and derive implications for future research and practitioners.

## 4.1. Discussion

Action research produces context specific, actionable knowledge. It tells stories about specific learning processes on which other practitioners and researchers can draw upon (Anderson & Herr, 2005, pp. 62–63). However, action research also has the goal to contribute to the growth of the body of theoretical knowledge. It enriches and refines theory through practice based research (Eden & Ackermann, 2018). Doing that, it shapes theories out of lived experience (Coleman, 2015, pp. 4–5). To meet that purpose, I will now discuss potential theoretical implications of the findings for the three dimensions framework.

The results of applying the 3D framework to EDI work in BLAST were laid out in chapter 3.2. To integrate EDI, I identified several additions and adaptations to the original widening, deepening, and lengthening capacities. Different conclusions can be drawn from these results for the conceptualisation of EDI in the 3D framework. While some added capacities are potentially relevant to SI actors in general, others are rather specific to a certain type of contexts. I will examine the adaptations to the 3D framework made in the BLAST project in relation to their potential level of abstraction.

I will first look at the added widening capacity “*adapting to blind spots*”, which is concerned with the identification and exploration of blind spots around oppressive dynamics. It claims that the adaptation of SI solutions in order to counteract oppressive dynamics can widen the spread of innovative solutions. Indeed, Patricia Hill Collins (1991) outlines how power hierarchies in knowledge production result in external definition of marginalized groups by dominant groups. However, an autonomous self-definition is necessary to escape the constant struggle for acknowledgment. Only by leaving behind this struggle, marginalized groups can fully engage in meaningful coalitions with dominant groups (Collins, 1991, pp. 34–35). Further, experiences and opinions of externally defined marginalized groups tend to receive less credence from dominant groups. This limits the extent to which experiences of marginalized groups contribute to the creation of visions for the future (Romm, 2010, p. 10). Within these exclusive dynamics, the experiences, world views and opinions of marginalized groups will not be included in the design of a social innovation. In consequence, innovative solutions created by predominantly dominant groups are likely to lack relevance and appeal for marginalized groups, thus hindering their spread. Similar to the capacity “*adapting to blind spots*”, Norma Room (2010, pp. 13–17) advocates for exploration of blind spots through critical reflexivity. Romm also laid out the relevance of taking different perspectives. Extending one’s horizon through discovering new perspectives was considered important for learning about and changing discriminatory dynamics (Romm, 2010, pp. 327–329).

The process of socialisation in which oppressive systems are internalized begins at childhood and lasts over a whole lifespan (Adams & Zúñiga, 2016, pp. 105–106). Similarly, critical self-examination of personal and group dynamics is an open-ended task (Bell, Goodman, & Varghese, 2016, pp. 403, 416). Moreover, each individual holds a number of different facets of identities, placing the person simultaneously in dominant and subordinate social positions (Bell, 2010, pp. 28–29). The socialisation within oppressive systems affects every member of a society with every identity constellation (Adams & Zúñiga, 2016, p. 106). Hence, blind spots about how oppressive systems are reproduced within innovative practices are likely to be found in every social innovation initiative of every constellation and in every developmental stage. Due to the ubiquitous nature of those blind spots and their negative consequences for the spread of social innovations, I conclude that the capacity *“adapting to blind spots”* is possibly generally relevant for transformative impact. Including it in a general version of the three dimensions framework seems promising to make the assessment of transformative capacity more comprehensive. It should therefore be further investigated.

As reported in the pattern *“supportive and engaging group culture”* BLAST project members experienced a variety of challenging emotions during the exploration of blind spots. Such negative emotions are typical when working with EDI (Frey, 2020; Heidelberg, 2019). They negatively impact endurance and motivation to be involved in a social innovation initiative and even produce conflicts between SI actors (Weldon, 2006). Further they inhibit learning processes around EDI (Bolden et al., 2019). Thus, the capacity *“adapting to blind spots”* might exacerbate positive effects on width, but negative effects on the length dimension of transformative impact.

The added lengthening capacities *“creating a supportive and engaging group culture”*, as well as *“cultivating a mindset of embracing and learning from blind spots and conflict”* can bolster the negative impacts on the length dimension of transformative impact. Helping to deal with emotions and conflicts, as well as fostering endurance, they enhance ongoing motivation and resilience in face of intra- and interpersonal crises. These capacities therefore lengthen transformative impact.

Apart from that, SI initiatives must deal with internal conflicts, losses of momentum, and other challenges also beyond Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Additionally, blind spots can also occur in relation to other dominant institutions, other than oppressive systems that are reproduced within innovative practices (Strasser et al., 2019). The lengthening impact of the capacities *“creating a supportive and engaging group culture”*, as well as *“cultivating a mindset of embracing and learning from blind spots and conflict”* are therefore likely to enhance the length of institutionalization also beyond the topics which were discussed in relation to EDI. Earlier I argued that the capacity *“adapting to blind spots”*, might be potentially relevant across contexts. As it is so closely connected to the capacities discussed in this paragraph, I suspect them to improve the assessment of transformative

capacity in general, as well. This assumption is further supported by the beneficial impact of these capacities on length also beyond EDI.

In the next step I will examine the deepening, lengthening, and widening capacities *“understanding the connection between different problematic systems/root causes”*, *“identifying and practicing effective solutions”*, and *“clarifying and enacting core principle values”*, *“cross-movement collaboration”* and *“maturing along developmental stages”*. All five capacities were either adaptations or extensions to the original deepening capacities. They were constructed by applying the original deepening capacities to the topic of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. To judge if these adaptations might be generally applicable to SI contexts, I will draw back on quality criteria of evaluation approaches.

Successful evaluation approaches necessitate to be feasible to conduct (Miller, 2016). Feasible evaluation approaches are sufficiently compact to be conducted in contexts with limited resources (Zandniapour & Deterding, 2018). Adding too many additional aspects to the single capacities could overwhelm practitioners and researchers. Users of the framework would have to consider too many aspects to be manageable.

Good evaluation approaches also require to meet the criteria of replicability in different contexts (Miller, 2010). Learning how to enhance Equity, Diversity and Inclusion can take many different forms in different contexts, requiring different skills (Adams & Zúñiga, 2016, p. 113). Thus, different capacities in relation to EDI will be of different relevance for different initiatives at different developmental stages. Integrating the above-mentioned capacities into the 3D framework, despite their supposed specificity, could make it inapplicable in other contexts.

Another option to integrate EDI in the deepening capacities of the 3D framework would be to use the original capacity *“Challenging dominant power-structures”* to cover all aspects that were specified in different capacities in this context. However, this would lack specificity as criticized in chapter 1.6. It would therefore fail the requirement of good evaluation approaches to be able flexibly adapt to the specificity of different social and material situations (Zandniapour & Deterding, 2018), as well as to build capacities that are relevant to specific contexts (Preskill, 2004, pp. 345–348). A way to meet all three criteria would be using the capacity *“challenging dominant power-structures”* in the general framework. Adaptations of the deepening capacities as shown in this work could function as a plug-in to the general framework as needed.

Last but not least, I will deal with the remaining capacities of *“enabling a learning process around EDI”*, *“evolving goals and strategies”*, *“cross movement collaboration”*, *“distribution of resources”*, *“re-organizing & decentralizing governance structures”*, and *“maturing along developmental*

*stages*". I consider those capacities to be specific to the context of BLAST. First, in the BLAST project, the capacity "*distribution of resources*" ensured the EDI core group's capacity for action. While the search for resources is universal to all SI initiatives, the sources of resources vary among initiatives (Weaver et al., 2017, pp. 5, 22). The BLAST project is an externally funded, temporary impermanent project. Its project members make their livelihood partly from the BLAST project, partly from several other temporary and continuous sources of income. The capacity was constructed out of the specificity of this situation. Thus, it cannot be applied to all SI initiatives in general, without further examining different models of ensuring resources.

Organisational structures of social innovation initiatives can be as diverse as their resourcing strategies (Avelino & Wittmayer, 2014, pp. 7–8). In consequence, the adaptation to the capacity "*re-organizing and de-centralizing governances structures*" is equally context specific. It emerged from the need to integrate the newly founded EDI working group into the project's sociocratic<sup>7</sup> governance structure. Further, the capacity reacts to special communication and co-working requirements of remote collaborations through creating clarity about roles (Sundin, 2010). Again, this capacity cannot be integrated into a general version of the 3D framework without any further comparison of different forms of organisation across SI initiatives.

Similar considerations apply to the added lengthening capacity "*Enabling a learning process around EDI*". Its main points are collective reflection, sharing and discussion, as well as iterative learning cycles around EDI. Adams and Zúñiga (2016, pp. 114–115) support the idea of collective reflection. Also, the continuous character of learning on EDI is recommended in literature (Bolden et al., 2019). Although this might point towards potential generalisation of the capacity to the three dimensions framework, I interpret the capacity to be context specific. The learning process on EDI in BLAST was designed to happen in dedicated spaces and in learning loops which fit into the project structures. Thus, the capacity "*enabling a learning process around EDI*" emerged from this specific context with its specific challenges. However, the learning process could vary across different contexts. When designing a learning process, it is essential to pay attention to the identities of the participants, their individual localisation within matrices of oppression, dynamics within dominant and marginalized group members, previous experiences etc. (Bell, Goodman, & Ouellet, 2016, pp. 55–57). A group consisting of European PoC of mixed genders with no prior education on EDI will have other emotional and cognitive needs in the learning process than an a group of exclusively white -European participants of mixed genders with prior education on EDI to name one example. In

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<sup>7</sup> Sociocracy is a form of organization of collaboration. The sociocratic governance structure of BLAST consisted of a coordination circle and several working groups. Each project member could be part of any and of as many organizational entities as they wanted to. See <https://sociocracy30.org/> for more information.



conclusion, although the core ideas of this capacity seem promising for the general 3D framework, further examination is necessary to justifiably raise it to a more general level of abstraction.

I will conclude these discussions with a paragraph on how to interpret these considerations. Knowledge produced in action research studies cannot be accumulated to one bigger universal picture. Instead, action research studies contribute to continuity between research by opening up future possibilities for practice and research and providing impulses for other scientists (Gergen & Gergen, 2015, p. 7). Based on this epistemological perspective I understand the capacities discussed in this last paragraph as the story of a practical application of a theory to a specific context. They can serve other practitioners and researchers as a source of insight, without making a direct claim for generalisation. Further examinations are needed to judge how the capacities are applicable to which contexts.

#### 4.2. Strengths and limitations

Action research is based on epistemological assumptions that differ from conventional research traditions. Ergo, it is judged against different quality criteria than conventional research (Eden & Ackermann, 2018). In this chapter I will briefly explain relevant quality criteria and evaluate this work according to them.

The primary purpose of action research is to bring about change that improves human situations (Feldman, 2007). The quality of an action research project can therefore be judged partly through advances towards the solution of this problem (James et al., 2012, p. 212). The secondary purpose of action research is to contribute to the refinement of theoretical knowledge (Eden & Ackermann, 2018).

The practical problem addressed in this research context was the lack of concern with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the BLAST project, which was considered to negatively impact the transformative of the BLAST project. The practical purpose of this research project was to improve the project members' skills of addressing EDI. Further it wanted to ensure the ongoing improvement of these skills by building the capacity to self-evaluate EDI and EDI skills in the project team. Whether this purpose was achieved or not determines the outcome validity of the research project (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p. 55). EDI specific capacities were generated and included in a version of the 3D framework tailored to the BLAST context. However, due to temporary constraints the framework was not tested in practice during the duration of the research project. No statements about the workability and the effects of this adapted version are possible at this moment. In relation to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the BLAST project, first achievements were noticed by the project members. Nonetheless, a long learning process was still outstanding. I interpret these observations as

the initiation of process towards the stated goal which is still at an early stage. According to James (2012, p. 214) this can be considered a small success of the research project.

As the methodological nature of action research does not allow to assume causality, a number of criteria need to be met to ensure the rightfulness of both attributing changes to the conducted interventions, as well as drawing conclusions for theory (Feldman, 2007). Assumptions about the relationship between actions and their potential results need to be underpinned with theoretical explanations (Feldman, 2007). Further, a clear and comprehensible explanation of the research process, and a description of the role of the researcher and its self-reflection mechanisms needs to be provided. Combined this enables the readers of the research report to make their own judgments about the appropriateness of the conclusions drawn in the study (Turnock & Gibson, 2001). I attempted to ensure my reflexivity by writing, re-reading a research diary while continuously questioning my practice. Having tried to make any decisions taken during the research project explicit and to draw all conclusions in all conscience, while still acknowledging my inevitable biases, I leave the further judgement of the validity of my conclusions to each recipient of this work.

Stemming from the principles of inclusion and advocacy for marginalized voices in action research, the quality of a research project is further determined by the question to whom the results are successful (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p. 55). Conclusions about the outcome validity of an action research project depend on the question if the voices of all actors who are potentially impacted by the problem are included in the research process (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher, 2007). In this research project, the voices of marginalized groups were missing. The need to invite voices of those who are not represented within the project or affiliated communities was identified early in the process and first ideas were collected how to address this need. However, during the project cycle the team did not succeed in inviting those voices who were not represented yet. Therefore, outcome validity as described above can only be assumed for certain demographics.

Last but not least, just as in traditional research paradigms, the validity of the research methods chosen- or process validity- needs to be evaluated (Anderson & Herr, 2005, p. 56). First, I collected observational data and data that was naturally produced in the project (e.g. minutes). This data was appropriate to reflect the process (James et al., 2012, pp. 105–107). As the analysis of this process data was subject to my personal biases, I collected reflective data from the participants from several sources, including focus groups, open questionnaires, and final interviews. Complementing the body of data from different sources increased the robustness of the following analysis (Eden & Ackermann, 2018). Still, the participants' reflections were assessed only punctually. The validity could have improved by ongoing assessment of reflections, e.g. in reflective diaries or Wiki pages created collectively or by individual participants (Embury, 2015, pp. 532–534). However, limited

time resources made this too difficult. The final reflective interviews served to capture meta reflections of the participants and thereby to validate my interpretation of the data. By developing the interview questions out of my analysis of the data I took the risk to influence the interviewees. In order to prevent that, I designed the interview questions in a way that allowed contradicting opinions. Further, the quality of my personal relationship with the participants allowed disagreement to be voiced. Although some ideas for improvement in future projects could be identified, I assume the research methods used to be valid.

As described above, action research projects want to contribute to the body of theoretical knowledge. The results were embedded in theory in chapter 4.1. The positive evaluation of the process validity is supporting these implications. Still, the study's results emerged out of a specific context, limiting their potential for generalisation. Therefore, in the next chapter I will discuss possible starting points for future research.

### 4.3. Future research

The study created several open questions, which can be taken up by future research. First, a serious pitfall of the research project was, that it failed to include marginalized voices, that were not represented in the BLAST context so far. Future studies can investigate that problem by focusing specifically on interactions between groups that are dominating such social innovation initiatives and those who tend to be included. This could be done by conducting an action research study that accompanies members of marginalized groups in contact with social innovation initiatives that are dominated by dominant groups. Such approach would provide the opportunity to affected groups to voice the specific excluding barriers they experience. The results could again be integrated in further versions of the 3D framework.

Second, this research project could not test the adapted 3D framework in practice due to time limitations. Further research projects could investigate if it is practicable. This entails the questions if the adapted capacities are understandable and workable, if the capacities are too complex or numerous, or if any important points are missing. To do this, the learning process around EDI should be accompanied over a longer period of time.

Last but not least, EDI related adaptation should be tested in other contexts. On one hand this refers to social innovation initiatives whose organisational structures differ from project contexts- e.g. permanent volunteer organisations. On the other hand, this refers to the socio-demographic composition and geographic localisation of the SI initiative. This study was conducted in a European context. Participants were almost exclusively white and had predominantly an academic, middle-class background. To make the 3D framework useful to more people, it should be tested also in

groups with other socio-demographic backgrounds and in other geographical areas around the world. Future research should explore how the framework has to be adapted to incorporate EDI, and how EDI can be conceptualized and addressed in those contexts. Additionally, this research project subsumed all oppressive systems under the term EDI. Thus, it treated different systems like sexism, racism, heterocentrism, classism etc. as one thing, without acknowledging their specificities. Further research should explore EDI in relation to transformative impact by focusing on specific axes of oppression. Insights from that can further refine the conceptualisation of EDI as part of the three dimensions framework.

#### 4.4. Conclusion

The purpose of the research project was to shed light on how to address the lack of attention of and skills to address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in social innovation initiatives. In a first step, six patterns were identified, which described skills and conditions needed to address EDI in the social innovation context of the BLAST project. The pattern *“Integrating EDI in the theory of change”* was concerned with understanding the connection between social Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and socio-ecological transition. *“EDI knowledge”* further entailed practical and theoretical knowledge to be attained to improve EDI. Organisational conditions that enabled dealing with EDI work were specified in the pattern *“EDI group as engine and its fuel”* and *“Balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work”*. Finally, the patterns *“Supportive and engaging group culture”* and *“Ongoing exploration”* described individual and collective mindsets and skills needed for EDI work.

Based on these patterns, an adapted framework of 3D was created for the BLAST context by adapting the original widening, lengthening, and deepening capacities, as well as developing additional ones. Theoretical discussion of the new capacities pointed to the potential for general integration in the three dimensions framework for some capacities, whilst I considered others to be context specific. The capacity *“adapting to blind spots”*, alongside with *“creating a supportive and engaging group culture”* and *“cultivating a mindset of embracing and learning from blind spots and conflict”* focus on identifying and removing internalized and institutionalised oppressive systems. Due to the ubiquitous nature of those oppressive systems I consider them to be potentially generally relevant.

Practical and theoretical knowledge that needed to be obtained around EDI was integrated into numerous deepening, widening, and lengthening capacities. As the feasibility of the 3D framework as an evaluation tool has to be considered, taking this over to a general version would make the framework too complex. I therefore recommend maintaining the original capacity *“challenging dominant power structures”* for the general version of the 3D framework and adding considerations about power structures to the other capacities as needed in specific contexts. Similarly, I assume the remaining capacities, which are concerned with organisational and strategic questions around

resources, allies, governance structures etc., to be context specific. Investigations of other contexts would be needed to draw any further conclusions about them.

Summed up, the research project provides significant insights, how EDI can be addressed in social innovation contexts and how it can be integrated into the three dimensions framework. Social innovation practitioners who want to address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within their social innovation initiatives can draw upon these insights to inspire and inform their own efforts. Future researchers can use this work as a starting point for further exploration of the evaluation of EDI in relation to transformative impact in other social innovation contexts.

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## Appendix A- Member organisations

Organisation	Country
<b>Official member organisations</b>	
Asociatia Romania in Tranzitie	Romania
Croatian Permaculture	Croatia
ECOLISE	Belgium
Global Ecovillage Network	UK
Intitute for Global Integral Competence	Germany
Gaia Education	UK
Permaculture Association	UK
Sustainable Ireland Cooperative Society	Ireland
ULEC Project. Col lectiu	Spain
Visionautik	Germany
<b>Other affiliated organisations</b>	
Ireland Permaculture & Transition Networks	Ireland
Carraig Dulra	Ireland
Romanian Permaculture Research Institute	Romania
Whyte Wynd /Integral PDC	Canary Islands

## Appendix B- Interview Guide

<p><b>General introduction:</b> Hello and thank you for taking the time to be part of this interview.</p> <p>In this interview I want to crosscheck and adapt my interpretations of the data I have gathered about EDI work in the BLAST project. I will ask you a couple of questions, starting with a more general ones and then get into more detail. I will ask for your personal perception so there are no right or wrong answers. Please say whatever comes to your mind and as much as you think is important. We have up to one hour for this interview. I will record, transcribe and analyze the interview and use the findings in my thesis and to refine the general BLAST evaluation tool. The collected data will be made anonymous and deleted after the end of the research project. I need your consent for that. You can pull back your consent at any time during or after the interview.</p> <p>Do I have your consent to do that? Yes-&gt; start recording.</p>			
Erzählaufforderung	Checkliste	Obligatorische Fragen (if not mentioned before)	Aufrechterhaltungs- und Steuerungsfragen
			<p><b>General:</b> How was that for you? Can you tell me more about this? Can you describe this in more detail? What happened next? What did this mean (to you)? Can you tell me an example?</p>
<p><b>General</b> When you look back at the process of working on EDI in the BLAST project so far: How was it for you to work on EDI in BLAST? Can you describe your perceptions?</p>			<p>Which challenges did you perceive? Did you have any insights about yourself? Did you have any insights about the group? Did you have any insights about EDI? Did you have any insights about working on EDI? Did you have any new thoughts or ideas about EDI? Was any perception you had about EDI before proofed?</p>

<p><b>Learning about yourself and your work</b> My perception was that reflecting on EDI needs a long learning process. This learning involves inner work and reflection, unlearning accustomed thoughts and practices, etc. How did you experience learning in relation to EDI work in BLAST?</p>	Importance of learning	What role did learning play for you in your EDI work?	: Which competences did you build during EDI work? Which ones would you like to learn? -as a person? -as a group?
	Type of learning	When, where, how did you learn?	-On which level? Personal? as a group?  What was difficult?
	Difficulties of learning	Was learning about EDI different than learning about other things that you have learned before?(e.g. how to do permaculture)	Did inner resistances play a role?
<p><b>EDI know-how required</b>  EDI was perceived as complex and difficult to address. Did you need to learn any special knowledge or skills that helped you to address this complexity?</p>	Special skills or knowledge learned?		Did your knowledge about EDI deepen during your time with BLAST? What did you learn about EDI?
	Any skills or knowledge missing?	What would you still like to learn to improve how you are working on EDI?	What do you think does the project team need to learn about EDI? Did learning about EDI evoke something in you? (feelings, thoughts, change of perspective) What?
	Unhiding hidden oppressive dynamics?	Did any hidden power dynamics in BLAST come to the surface so far? When and how did this happen?	
<p><b>Connecting evaluation to action planning closely</b> BLAST members often expressed the need to find concrete action steps on EDI. How did you perceive the balance between planning concrete actions and taking time for reflection?</p>	Emotional importance of action planning	What importance does it have for you to find concrete action steps?	Did planning concrete action steps about EDI evoke any particular emotions feelings or thoughts for you?
	Balance between reflection and action	How was the balance between action and reflection for you?	How did planning concrete action steps impact your motivation, energy, emotions, thoughts?
<p><b>Being brave</b> EDI work can be very challenging. Scarce resources,</p>	Attitude towards EDI		Would you say you need to be brave to conduct EDI work?



not knowing how to do EDI work, strong emotions about challenges like scarce time resources, strong emotions and not knowing how to do EDI work can make committing to EDI work difficult. What did you need to commit to working on EDI in BLAST?	Deal with uncertainties	How did you deal with uncertainties, like scarce resources or lack of skills?	
<b>Emotional work</b> Working on EDI triggered a range of negative emotions. How did you deal with negative emotions coming up?	Need for emotional work		What makes it difficult and what makes it easy for you to reflect on how the BLAST project and you as an individual contribute to unjust and oppressive dynamics?
<b>Safe Space</b> Reflection on oppressive dynamics need open sharing and mutual support. What do you need to work on EDI and reflect on your own involvement with it?	Safe space	What conditions do you need to be able to reflect on yourself, individually and as a group?	What do you need to feel safe to share personal stories and reflections? What do you need from the group? Have you experienced a safe space? What constitutes a safe space in your perception?
	Mutual support	What role did other people in BLAST play for the safe space?	Did you feel supported? What role did allies play for you?
<b>Core group as engine + connection to the whole group</b> In BLAST there is the core group- the EDI task force, the champions team and the wider project team. They are involved with EDI to a different extent. How do you perceive the relationship between those groups?	Involvement of the whole group	What challenges are there to involve the whole group?	What gave you the energy to work on EDI?
	Resistances/ Power dynamics in the group	Did you notice any dynamics within BLAST that made it difficult to work on EDI?	Did power dynamics in the project team impact your work on EDI?  Do you perceive any resistances against EdI work?

<p><b>Integrating in the-ory of change</b>  EDI can be seen as an add-on to social-ecological transition or as an essential part of it.  What relevance does the question: Is EDI work a part of social-ecological transition ? have for you?</p>	<p>Integration in theory of change</p>		<p>Does it change something about your motivation for EDI work to understand EDI as a part of transition?</p>
<p><b>Unsorted questions:</b>  I have a few/ one last question that probably are quick to answer.</p>	<p>Wording of evaluation</p> <p>Characteristics of EDI worker</p> <p>Is there anything you want to add?</p>	<p>Is the word self.evaluation suitable while working on EDI?  What other word would you use instead?</p> <p>What word would you use to describe evaluation of EDI in the BLAST project?</p> <p>Can you describe the perfect EDI task force member or champion from your point of view?</p> <p>I</p>	
<p><b>Is there anything you want to add.</b></p>			
<p><b>Thanks and bye</b>  We have finished the interview now.  Do you have any questions?  Thank you a lot for your time – bye!</p>			

## Appendix C- List of data

Transcripts, minutes, field notes, and other data can be found in the accompanying digital document to save paper.

Names were replaced by xx. Information about notetakers and people present in the meetings were erased.

<b>Data for the first analysis</b>
Reach and Access Statements
Field notes EDI meeting 20.03
Minutes EDI meeting 19.12
Minutes EDI meeting 08.04.
Field notes EDI meeting 08.04.
First Focus group
Written Feedback on first focus group
Written feedback on second focus group
Field notes Edi champion training 20.03
Field notes EDI champion training 20.04.
Written Feedback on EDI training sessions (Summarized for anonymity)
Written Feedback on Patterns
Field notes GA EDI session
Interview A
Interview B
Interview C
Interview D
Data set diversity survey

**Appendix D- Codes of first analysis arranged by themes including descriptions**

<p>Theme (working) title: <b>Be brave</b></p>
<p>Organizing concept and theme description:</p> <p>The codes were organized around the experience of overwhelmingness and that the EDI is impossible and the feeling of insecurity about the process and how participants dealt with it.</p> <p>The theme describes how participants tended to be ambitious about their EDI intentions. They jumped into it, although many concerns around time, resources and skills were expressed. They set ambitious goals although they were afraid they could not actually achieve them. I summarized this as being brave as a competence for EDI work.</p>
<p>Codes with code descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step 1 convene conversation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Start with having an open conversation about the topic</li> <li>○</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Holding risk of failure and tension             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Doing EDI work despite the insecurities that come along with it which are                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-high risk of failure because of the complexity of the topic</li> <li>-group tension</li> <li>-negative feelings</li> <li>-being ok with not knowing how to do EDI work</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Being ambitious             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wanting to set ambitious goals and aiming at a ripple effect</li> </ul> </li> <li>• EDI requires time and resources             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acknowledging that tackling EDI requires a lot of time and resources. This means:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time slots for EDI need to be created</li> <li>-Involvement with EDI has to last for a long time. It's not a one time activity.</li> <li>-Conflict between general time requirements and EDI time requirements is perceived.</li> <li>-Not enough funding for EDI work.</li> <li>-Not enough staff or volunteers for EDI work.</li> <li>-Not enough headspace for EDI work because so many other important things to do.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expressed openness for process             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Openness to engage with EDI and start the journey was expressed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Energized after meeting             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ After a meeting around EDI feelings to be energized were expressed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Glad we have done it             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expressed positive feelings towards having talked about EDI</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Theme (working) title: <b>EDI know-how required</b>
Theme description and organizing concept:  I clustered the codes around what people said in relation to skills needed for Edi work and evaluation.  The theme describes how the participants identified the need to conduct EDI work and evaluation carefully and that this requires special skills and knowledge about EDI topics. Deeper understanding of EDI and how it is connected to transition often seemed to trigger ambition, a feeling of urgency, more energy and more dedication for EDI work.
Codes with code descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI is complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acknowledging the complexity of the EDI (EDI as wicked problem?)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• specific work on EDI is needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General practices will not be sufficient to tackle EDI</li> </ul> </li> <li>• risk of reproducing oppressive dynamics in EDI work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acknowledging that even in EDI work oppressive dynamics can be replicated. This can be e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-putting the pressure of educating on marginalized</li> <li>-own biases</li> <li>-speaking on the behalf of marginalized instead of creating spaces for them to speak</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• lack of skills to address EDI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ says skills lack to properly address EDI are missing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expressions of deeper understanding of EDI issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sentences, statements, opinions that are based on some deeper understanding of EDI and how oppressive dynamics work.</li> <li>○ This includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ -knowledge about the interconnectednes of oppressive systems</li> <li>○ -knowledge how oppressive systems are reproduce</li> <li>○ -Knowledge about the interconnectedness of EDI and socio-ecological transition</li> <li>○ -Forms of oppression and where and how they are present.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Check if who engages with this is involved more actively?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Theme (working) title: <b>Core group as engine and their connection to whole group</b>
Theme description and organizing concept:  I clustered the codes around the questions who does EDI evaluation and work.  The theme describes how a dedicated group of people functioned as the engine for the whole effort. But to work successfully (=evaluate and trigger change) they needed the connection to the whole group (moving the group but also being fuelled by it).
Codes with code descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate group can drive the process</li> </ul>

- One group of dedicated people can drive the process which means:
  - coming up with suggestions
  - giving energy to the rest
  - facilitating the learning and evaluation process
  - provide opportunities for learning
- make Edi a collective effort of the whole group
  - Statements about the interaction between the EDI task force and the whole project team
    - About:
      - How to involve the whole group? overcome the island thing?
      - How to establish communication with the whole group?
      - How have impact beyond the EDi task force?
- proposal: collective reflection
  - Proposal to engage in collective self-reflection

Theme (working) title: <b>Connect evaluation to action closely</b>
Theme description and organizing concept
<p>I clustered the codes around the question how self /evaluation/ reflection can actually trigger change.</p> <p>The theme describes how a close connection of action and reflection energizes the process, helps to deal with frustration and other negative emotions triggered by EDI and favors the institutionalization of EDI evaluation and actions. This theme is connected to EDI to address emotions (as one way to deal with frustration) and to learn about yourself (as a precondition for feedback loops). It also connects to be brave as the practical consequence of being brave?</p>
Codes with code descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify concrete actions and practices           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Statements in which               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the need for clear action steps was expressed</li> <li>-lack of clear action steps was expressed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Clear action statements developed           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ examples of clear action statements that were developed</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Close connection of reflection with action           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ situations when action planning was connected closely to reflection.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Create guiding materials on EDI within BLAST           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ambition expressed to include EDi in BLAST materials to guide others and CoP on EDI issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Theme (working) title: <b>(integrate EDI in theory of change?) Agree on beliefs and definitions around EDI and EDI and transition and officialise</b>
Theme description and organizing concept:
<p>The codes were clustered around the question who people understood EDI and the connection of EDI to transition and how this impacted their engagement with the topic.</p>

There is a spectrum of different positions on EDI in the group , which differ in terms of ambition, scope, personal engagement, amount of energy. The project team spent a lot of time with clarifying the theory of change and the degree to which it entailed EDI. To come to a common position the participants expressed that it was/would be helpful/ important to define EDI together and to explore how EDI and transition are connected. It was seen as essential to manifest/officialise these agreements in goals, indicators and strategies.

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#### Codes with code descriptions

- Spectrum of positions on EDI
  - Expression that there is a range of different positions on EDI in BLAST. Ranging from having skills and knowledge and ambition to not having skills or knowledge and not having a lot of ambition on this topic.
  
- Fear that EDI impacts transformativity
  - Fear that work on EDI will impact transformatice capacities.
  - -Either by taking away resources and time needed to work on transformative work.
  - -Or that too much diversity reduces the ability to cooperate/collaborate.
  
- Theory of change does not entail Edi
  - Theory of change of the participant does not entail EDI as essential part of transformation. That means that from this viewpoint transformation can happen without explicitly addressing EDI.
  
- Expression of shallow understanding of EDI
  - Sentences, statements, opinions that are based superficial/ shallow understanding of EDI and how oppressive dynamics work.
  - This includes
    - -colour blindness
    - -not recognizing biases
    - -not recognizing privileges
    - -not recognizing barriers or only superficial barriers
    - -confusion of marginalisation and minority
    - -tokenism
  
- Theory of change does entail EDI
  - Theory of change of the participant does not entail EDI as essential part of transformation. That means that from this viewpoint transformation can happen without explicitly addressing EDI.
  
- EDI is everywhere
  - Acknowledging that EDI is an issue in all areas of life always
  
- Establish understanding of connection between EDI and transition
  - participant observed lack of understanding of how EDI and transition are inter-connected.
  - or
  - Express need for collectively working out this connection.
  
- Officially agreeing on tackling EDI

- Officially and explicitly agreeing to tackle EDI in
  - a common intention
  - agreed goals
  - agreed indicators
  - agreed strategy papers
- Want to deepen understanding of EDI
  - Expressing the lack of a common understanding of EDI:
  - This includes:
    - -The definition of terms around EDI (like reach, access, equity, diversity)
    - -Understanding of root causes and dynamics of these terms

**Theme (working) title: learn about yourself and your work as a person and as a group**

Theme description and organizing concept:

Codes were clustered around learning on EDI work and evaluation.

Theme describes the type of learning that happens around EDI. Learning happened in iterations of action and reflection which involved inner self reflection on an individual and group level, reflection about own practices and their relation to EDI. Learning was perceived as an ongoing and long process which involved open exploration and experimentation and critical engagement with own and the group's viewpoints.

Codes with code descriptions

- Question if BL helps or hinders EDI
  - Expressions of need to test the hypothesis that blended learning enhances accessibility and enhances EDI
- Iterative learning circles
  - Acknowledge that tackling EDI is a long learning process.
  - The process happens in iterative cycles of learning. They involve testing, experimenting, and reflecting on what was learned and what not, exploration, not knowing where it goes etc.
- EDI requires inner work
  - Statements about the need for
  - -inner reflection
  - -inner work
  - -on an individual and on a group level.
  - -Or the encouragement or expression of inner work
- Explore how transformative practices can help EDI
  - Descriptions of how general practices (like facilitation or self-reflection techniques) usually used in transformative work of the organisations can be used to tackle issues around EDI or of intentions to do so.
- (critical) reflexivity about own skills/ knowledge related to EDI



- critically reflects own performance, skills and knowledge around EDI
- In contrast to stating: we are doing fine in terms of diversity. Acknowledging that it is a path and not a state
  - maybe important for engaging with EDI in a constructive way?
- Accountability to marginalized
  - Check for results of your actions with those who are supposed to be impacted by those

Theme (working) title: <b>Create safe and open atmosphere</b>
Theme description and central organizing concept:  The codes were cluster around observations around the group climate and atmosphere that support sharing and reflection (connected to learn about yourself as a person and as a group)  The theme describes the groups' efforts and aspirations to create a safe atmosphere that would allow to share openly, self-reflect and support each other mutually. It also helped to deal with negative feelings. It also involved finding allies and support amongst own networks and beyond.
Codes with code descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helpful to approach EDI together</li> <li>● Expressions of the benefits of collaboration around EDI in terms of           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ -mutual confirmation of experiences</li> <li>○ -sharing knowledge and resources</li> <li>○ -mutual support</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Smaller groups useful for self-reflection           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Smaller break-out groups facilitate sharing and self-reflection</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Efforts to create a safe space pay off           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Efforts to create a safe space (like sharing exercises that break the ice, are fun or are practice exposure to the group) pay off in terms of</li> <li>○ -people share their thoughts and feelings</li> <li>○ -people are self-reflective</li> <li>○ -people report trust</li> <li>○ -people are energized</li> <li>○ -actively engage (independently of there positions as dominating or dominated ones)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Step 2 find allies           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find partners who have knowledge and expertise in the topic and build partnerships with them</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Successful group and self-reflection           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ this code was present in sessions where trust was reported?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Experienced safe space           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participants reported experiencing trust and an open group atmosphere.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Theme (working) title: <b>need to address emotions (deal with negative emotions)</b>
<p>Theme description and central organizing concept:</p> <p>Codes were clustered about negative emotions experienced during the process.</p> <p>The theme describes how dealing with EDI involved a range of negative and unpleasant emotions, including defensive reactions, resignation and frustration. It describes the significance of emotional labor and stresses the amount of energy that was necessary to fuel the EDI work.</p>
Codes with code descriptions
<p>Emotional work needs to be done Expressions of emotional labour put into EDI work or needed for EDI work</p> <p>Capacity to address internal group tensions needed lack of capacity to address internal group tensions mentioned</p> <p>Defensive reactions Defensive reactions like -distracting from the topic, -leading conversation to other, less delicate issues, -microaggressions, - refusal of personal contribution to biases and privileges, -but men/ but white people are also discriminated against reactions</p> <p>Edi is emotionally challenging It triggers emotions like overwhelmendness, frustration, anxiety, fear, shame etc.</p>

Theme (working) title: <b>Context</b>
<p>Central organizing concept and description:</p> <p>The codes were clustered around what the question how the context looked like.</p> <p>The theme describes the context and its specificities. This is useful to describe the context in the final report to help readers locate the insights and to make conclusions about generalizability. It is also a kind of baseline?</p>
Codes with code descriptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems around EDI identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Barriers and problems around EDI that were identified by the participants</li> <li>○ -&gt;could check if problem statement are more superficial or based on a deeper knowledge or understanding</li> <li>○ -&gt;could check which kinds of barriers were mentioned most often</li> </ul> </li> <li>• General openness of the context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ general openness to and value for EDI in the BLAST project. In general people are pro diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Want to reach a more diverse audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ express desire to reach groups beyond the usual suspects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Want to remove barriers for others</li> </ul>

- Express desire to remove barriers that keep certain groups from participating
- Reported existent practice
  - practices that are currently used to work on EDI issues by organisations

## **Appendix E- Codes for analysis of interviews**

### **Codes**

#### **Pattern 1 : Be brave:**

- dealing with insecurities

- ambitious in EDI intentions
- commit despite concerns
- ambitious goals
- holding tensions

#### **Pattern 2: EDI know-how required**

-skills needed for EDI work

- deeper understanding of EDI required
- EDI is complex and difficult to address
- connecting EDI to transition triggers ambition and dedication
- work on EDI carefully and reflexively (not reproduce old patterns)

#### **Pattern 3 Core group as engine and their connection to whole group**

- who is how involved in EDI work

- core group as engine
- connection to whole group needed
- core group needs support from whole group

#### **Pattern 4: Integrate EDI in theory of change**

- implications of integrating EDI in theory of change

- different positions on EDI as add on or essential part
- Understanding of relation between transition and EDI builds motivation to work on it
- manifesting this understanding in objectives

#### **Pattern 5: Learn about yourself**

- learning on EDI

- learning happens in iterative loops
- involves inner work
- long and ongoing process
- exploration and experimentation
- involves critical involvement with own viewpoints and knowledge

#### **Pattern 6 : Safe space and open atmosphere**

- group climate and atmosphere which supports sharing and reflection

- importance of safe space
- implications of safe space
- Aspects of a safe space
- mutual support and allies

### **Pattern 7: Emotional work**

- negative emotions around EDI

- unpleasant emotions around EdI
- importance of emotional work
- how to deal with emotions?

### **Pattern 8: Connecting evaluation to action planning closely**

- Evaluation that triggers change?

- energize through action planning after reflection
- institutionalization of EDI evaluation and actions

## Appendix F- Final codes arranged by patterns

<b>Ongoing exploration</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Code description</b>
<b>Building Consciousness and awareness in the group</b>	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-make issues explicit</li> <li>-awareness building in the group</li> </ul> <p>Delineation from other codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-“explore what you don't know” is about critically exploring your position in power systems, while this is about making issues in and of the group explicit</li> <li>-“inner work” is about understanding you own emotions, reactions and thoughts, while consciousness and awareness is about making any of the latter explicit</li> </ul>
<b>Inner work</b>	<p>EDI work involves inner work/ on oneself</p> <p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-understand what triggers you</li> <li>-why you behave in which way</li> <li>-doublecheck what you think it is</li> <li>-see if you are downplaying stuff</li> <li>-understand patterns of self in relation to others(e.g. what triggers you in relationships/ interactions)</li> <li>-awareness about oneself</li> <li>-understand that a lot of things happen unconsciously and explore that</li> </ul> <p>Delineation from “exploring what you don't know”: inner work is critically observing and understanding own behavior thoughts and emotions and exploring what you don't know is more about reflecting on your own power position and the blindspots that come along with it</p>
<b>Explore blind spots</b>	<p>EDI work involves critical involvement with own viewpoints and knowledge name of code might need to be changed</p> <p>That means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-understanding what are own blind spots and shadows</li> <li>-reflecting on assumptions you have around your own skills (e.g. assume that people in transition are open and inclusive etc.-&gt; critically investigate that)</li> <li>-acknowledging that power issues are everywhere and no one is just beyond it</li> <li>-understanding where you are positioned in terms of power and privilege</li> <li>-Be critical about what you know and what you don't know</li> <li>-how you reproduce exploitative and oppressive dynamics even in EDI work</li> <li>-hearing the voices you haven't heard before</li> <li>-also how your language is biased</li> </ul>
<b>Learning happens in iterative loops</b>	Learning happens in iterative loops of action and reflection
<b>Long and on-going process</b>	Learning on EDI is a long process, that needs ongoing engagement and moves forward in little steps

<b>Need other voices to learn on EDI</b>	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-voices of marginalized people you want to reach</li> <li>-voices of people who are experienced in this work</li> <li>-to proactively engage them from the beginning</li> <li>-understanding other people's barriers</li> <li>-to collaborate with them as partners</li> </ul>
<b>Why Sharing</b>	<p>Why is sharing helpful for EDI work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sharing triggers reflection with oneself</li> <li>- other voices reassure own observations (otherwise people think it is their own failure)</li> <li>-encouraged to speak up if others share as well</li> <li>-sharing and talking is needed to pull unconscious into consciousness</li> <li>-encourages and makes people feel good</li> </ul>
<b>Adventurer mindset</b>	<p>About dealing with insecurities          People have to commit, stick to it even when it's difficult (like do the difficult, take the risk, let go of things how you do them normally)          Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-commit despite concerns</li> <li>-commit to the challenging</li> <li>-commit to the overwhelming</li> <li>-to be open about own failures</li> <li>-and be open about what own involvement in EDI stuff --and be able to admit to others what you do bad</li> <li>-holding tension</li> <li>-commit to the challenging</li> <li>-get out of regular patterns</li> </ul>
<b>The EDI group as engine and its fuel</b>	
<b>Connection to the whole group needed</b>	<p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ways of communication/ exchange/ influence between EDI group and whole group</li> <li>-transfer of knowledge to the whole group (in trainings, feedback etc)</li> <li>-hearing back from the group to assess how things work</li> </ul> <p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-champions need to be established as good links between EDI task force and wider team</li> </ul> <p>Applies when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-champions are identified as links between core team and group</li> <li>-lack of this link is identified</li> <li>-create clear links between project circles and EDI</li> </ul>
<b>Core group as engine</b>	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-energy comes from one person or a couple of persons at the EDI group</li> <li>-not aware of the topic before core group raised it</li> <li>-energy, knowledge, and process proposals come from core group</li> <li>-core group facilitates the learning process</li> </ul>
<b>Core group needs support from whole group</b>	<p>Core group needs support in terms of appreciation, emotional support, but also dedicated time resources</p>
<b>Resistances</b>	<p>The core group needs to work against resistances sometimes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-at the beginning of the process and later</li> <li>-referring to emotional resistances</li> </ul>
<b>Balanced and ongoing flow of EDI work</b>	

<b>Balance sharing and agenda work</b>	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-both sharing and collective reflection is needed, as well as getting things done</li> <li>-&gt; over planning can overwhelm and reflection is needed</li> <li>-Tasks are needed but not a total priority</li> </ul> <p>Delineation from “make room for reflection”</p> <p>This here means need to balance it out because both is needed-&gt; need to find a good balance. “Make room for reflection” is about that sharing space does not just happen but needs to be created intentionally</p>
<b>Planning concrete action steps</b>	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-energize through doing something</li> <li>-energize through action planning after reflection</li> </ul>
<b>Continuity</b>	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Need for follow-ups on meetings etc.</li> <li>-Pull through what you have decided to do = really see that actions decided upon are actually carried out</li> <li>-Follow-up needs to be timely</li> <li>-Create clear idea what is supposed to happen</li> </ul>
<b>Institutionalisation of EDI evaluation and actions</b>	<p>EDI work needs to be embedded in the project structure:</p> <p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To have time and space for EDI</li> <li>-Roles need to be defined</li> <li>-Clarity about project structures and roles in BLAST in general project needed to do EDI work</li> <li>-Embed EDI work into IOs</li> <li>-Use facilitation etc. practices and skills that are already there to work on EDI e.g. sociocracy to build a healthy group</li> <li>-Embed EDI in general practices and find connection between them (e.g. deep transformation + EDI)</li> <li>-Embed EDI work into project structure (EDI work in terms of reflection, sharing, information etc)</li> <li>-Adjust EDI work structure to the project structure (then everybody is involved, EDI group is has less pressure continuity is more likely)</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy project</b>	<p>Project issues impact EDI/ can be an obstacle for EDI work</p> <p>Project issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-low commitment in project</li> <li>-hierarchical organisational structure</li> <li>-agenda culture</li> <li>-remote collaboration</li> <li>-no informal face to face reflection possible</li> <li>-no clarity about roles in the project</li> <li>-no clarity about organizational structure in project</li> <li>-project moves slowly</li> <li>-project does not allow other ideas to come up and flourish</li> <li>-hierarchical/ power structures in the project itself</li> </ul>
<b>Supportive and engaging group climate</b>	
<b>Aspects of safe space</b>	<p>Describes what kind of climate is needed for sharing and support:</p> <p>Description of what a safe space is:</p> <p>Aspects of a safe space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-allowed to share personal stories and thoughts</li> <li>-allowed to show feelings honestly</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-transparency</li> <li>-trust</li> <li>-acceptance</li> <li>-collecting opinions and feelings from everyone (making sure everyone is heard)</li> <li>-people who are listening</li> <li>-feeling accepted in the group</li> <li>-Being available for talking (make sure there always is a person for talking)</li> </ul>
<b>Make room for sharing and reflection</b>	<p>Need to have different channels/ create different opportunities for sharing-&gt; personal, asynchronous, synchronous, anonymous , in group meetings, formal, informal</p> <p>-&gt;So that each person with different sharing preferences has the opportunity to share</p> <p>Mentions about modes/ channels of sharing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) make space officially in dedicated times</li> <li>2) make space on a regular basis</li> <li>3) create informal spaces to talk (like going for a walk or having a beer)</li> </ol> <p>needs to be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-open</li> <li>-easy</li> <li>- transparent</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) slowing down the process is also a way of making space</li> <li>5) less task oriented</li> <li>6)Not only written sharing but also in person sharing</li> <li>7) facilitating a group session around this</li> <li>8) having break out groups</li> <li>9) prompt people to speak</li> <li>10) use facilitation techniques which help with sharing</li> <li>11) easily accessible for everyone</li> <li>12) be clear about purpose etc. of the sharing space</li> </ol>
<b>Allies and mutual support</b>	<p>Find allies for mutual support around EDI work.</p> <p>This includes personal contact and 1 to 1 conversations to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-people to talk to who help you get clarity about what you think and deal with your emotions in 1on1 conversations</li> <li>-allies can be in team but also outside of the team</li> <li>-or a group of people who enhances your efforts (instead of blocking it)</li> <li>-allies can also just listen</li> <li>-share resources and ideas</li> </ul> <p>Delineation from” make room for sharing”:</p> <p>This code is about individual who are allies and can help to deal with emotional burdens of EDI work. “Make room for sharing“ is about the conditions in a group that enable sharing.</p>
<b>Emotional and communicational skills</b>	<p>About emotional skills in psychological terms</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-open sharing</li> <li>-notice emotions and have conversations about it if necessary</li> <li>-being able to share</li> <li>-openness about feelings</li> <li>-awareness of feelings</li> <li>-ability to express feelings</li> </ul>

	<p>-honesty</p> <p><b>Communicational skills:</b> To communicate emotions, concerns, opinions etc. to others.</p>
<b>Unpleasant Emptions around EDI</b>	<p>Unpleasant emotions which were experienced in relation to EDI were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-feeling uncomfortable to share</li> <li>-not wanting to be a label</li> <li>-collective shadows</li> <li>-disappointment in group</li> <li>-feeling frustration about society you live in</li> <li>-not wanting to believe that group is involved</li> </ul>
<b>EDI knowledge</b>	
<b>Deeper understanding of EDI re-quired</b>	<p>Involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-theoretical knowledge</li> </ul> <p>Involves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-biases and lack of awareness</li> <li>-awareness of how inequalities are reproduced</li> </ul> <p>Applies when people are not acknowledging power structures in BLAST bias or other lack of understanding of EDI topics or are unaware of reproduction of inequalities.</p> <p>Delineation from “consciousness and awareness”, which is about making stuff explicit and discussing it in the group. This code is about individuals having knowledge .</p>
<b>EDI is complex and difficult to address</b>	EDI is a complex topic and is not easy to address
<b>Learn how to practically apply knowledge</b>	<p>Means:</p> <p>even if knowledge is there, people need to learn how to practically apply this in real life situations.</p> <p>And although knowledge is clear this needs to be relearned from situation to situation</p> <p>Involves accountability: how to hold yourself accountable when you understood what is happening, and can you act against it</p>

**Appendix G- Template for Field notes**

Event and date \_\_\_\_\_

Participants \_\_\_\_\_

Note taker of meeting if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Special conditions/ observations: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic	Observations (Completed by minutes if necessary)	Interpretations
Check -In		
X		
Xy		

## Appendix H -Script First focus group session

Time (min)	Activity	Description
5	<b>Introduction</b>	<p><u>Recap:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The approach to evaluation we take and how evaluation is part of the BLAST project.</li> <li>-The researchers' and the BLAST members' roles in the evaluation process.</li> <li>-How the session is embedded in the overall creation of the evaluation tool (see <a href="#">timeline</a>).</li> <li>-We record this session. Ok?</li> </ul> <p><u>Goals for this session:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gain clarity about BLAST objectives and derive indicators for evaluation.</li> </ul>
20	<b>Reaching shared understanding of BLAST objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Present the BLAST objectives as stated in the BLAST application.</li> <li>-Take one minute to note your thoughts about where you see a need for further clarification in the harvest document.</li> <li>-Discuss each objective and check for a shared understanding. If there is no shared understanding, try to find a consent-based agreement that's workable for now.</li> <li>-Specifically, make explicit &amp; seek agreement about the discrepancies between different understandings about "reach and access", based on the <a href="#">organisations' statements</a>:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Synthesizing existing material and making it easily available online, at multiplier events, etc</li> <li>2. Being more proactive in identifying barriers and designing processes, events &amp; outputs to overcome those.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><u>Back-up</u></p> <p>If discussion gets stuck, focus on indicators for those objectives with agreement and suggest to have follow-up discussions on objectives needing agreement on shared understanding.</p>
25	<b>Creating draft indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-10 min: Break-out groups: define indicators for each objective that allow operationalizing and measuring the attainment of the objectives. (Break out groups if at least 8 people are present. If not 5 minutes to write individually.)</li> <li>-15 min: Plenary round for feedback, additions and consenting to indicators. If the discussion gets stuck, offer the <a href="#">pre-developed indicators</a> based on the 3D framework, or theoretical input on the relationship between EDI and transformative change, as inspiration.</li> </ul>
10	<b>Wrap up and check-out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recap &amp; reflection round: If less than 8 people are present 1 minute per person. If more than 8 people 3 minutes to write in the harvest document. Who wants to share something else can do so after writing.</li> </ul>

		What have we achieved, and what is still lacking and reflection on how the process worked & how we felt -Agree on next steps.
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## Appendix I- Script Second focus group session

Time (min)	Activity	Description
5	<b>Introduction</b>	<p><u>Check-In</u></p> <p><u>We record this session. Ok?</u></p> <p><u>Goals for this session:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gain clarity about BLAST objectives and derive indicators for evaluation.</li> </ul>
40	<b>Reaching shared understanding of BLAST objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-We want to focus on indicators. Let's find a good enough for now solution.</li> <li>-Go through the objectives and see comments. Please think if they are really important or not.</li> </ul> <p><u>Objective 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Present the adapted BLAST objective 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-creating or different wording?</li> <li>• Paula's proposal on transformative learning (-&gt; IO3)</li> <li>• Collect more thoughts on the transition from what to what?/ On the definition of social-ecological transition. (-&gt; IO3)</li> <li>• Explicitly agree on objective 1 (for now, will ask for objections from the whole team asynchronously).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Objective 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Present the adapted BLAST objective 2 and open question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration instead of coordination?</li> <li>• Does quality in the first objective capture what Markus wants to be captured?</li> <li>• Take two minutes to <a href="#">vote on barriers</a> for those who haven't.</li> <li>• Discuss if the ones with the highest rating can be chosen. Objections, concerns?</li> <li>• Explicitly agree in objective 2 (for now, will ask for objections from the whole team asynchronously).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Objective 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Present objective 3 as stated in the application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review what has been shared previously. If nothing has been shared, take two minutes to write your understanding.</li> <li>• Discuss the meaning of the objective and if any adaptations are needed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicitly agree on objective 3 (for now, will ask for objections from the whole team asynchronously).</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Objective 4</a></p> <p>-Present objective 4 as stated in the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review what has been shared previously. If nothing has been shared, take two minutes to write your understanding.</li> <li>Discuss the meaning of the objective and if any adaptations are needed.</li> <li>Explicitly agree on objective 3 (for now, will ask for objections from the whole team asynchronously).</li> </ul> <p><i>Back-up</i></p> <p>Create a task force. The task force convenes the discussions into a proposal and asks for objections asynchronously.</p>
40	<b>Creating draft indicators</b>	<p>-15min: Break-out groups: define indicators for each objective that allow operationalizing and measuring the attainment of the objectives. Two breakout groups. If not 10 minutes to write individually.</p> <p>-25 min: Plenary round for feedback, additions and consenting to indicators. If the discussion gets stuck, offer the <a href="#">pre-developed indicators</a> based on the 3D framework.</p> <p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to keep in mind that we dont have budget for evaluation and measuring. Often measure what’s easy to measure, not what’s important.</li> <li>Need to be parsimonious, which one will we actually measure.</li> <li>Indicators not targets. “Neutral indicators” (number of participants), not up/down, compared to baseline.</li> <li>2 levels: project level vs IOs / ongoing (FOLLOW-UP)</li> </ul> <p><i>Back-up:</i></p> <p>-Develop indicators asynchronously via written input.</p>
5	<b>Wrap up and check-out</b>	<p>- Recap &amp; reflection round: If less than 8 people are present 1 minute per person. If more than 8 people 3 minutes to write in the <a href="#">harvest document</a>. Who wants to share something else can do so after writing.</p> <p>- What have we achieved, and what is still lacking and reflection on how the process worked &amp; how we felt</p> <p>-Agree on next steps.</p>