



9:00 a.m.

Regular meeting of the International Education team: Karin Karlsson (left) leads the meeting and discusses the tasks related to the issue at hand.

Photos: M. Fuchs

# More responsibility for experts

The Robert Bosch Stiftung is transferring decision-making powers to its teams. Karin Karlsson appreciates the change.

The kitchen is Karin Karlsson's first stop after she arrives at her desk in the open-plan office in the morning. The linguist and cultural theory expert always enjoys a hot cup of coffee when she gets in to work at around 8 a.m. With the warm mug in her hand, she starts her day by reading e-mails. Most of them are related to the projects she oversees as part of the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Nothing about Karin Karlsson's morning routine has recently changed, but many other aspects of the 44-year-old's day-to-day work are different as of late - since October, she has been responsible for the content and budget of the International Education focus area. "To put it more specifically, that means I now have much broader leeway for decision-making, I can set specialized strategies, and I can

independently approve projects within the scope of my responsibility," Karlsson explains. "This allows us to react much more quickly and flexibly as a team, and to position our issues more effectively in our society."

### Cultural change at the foundation

Her new role as the head of this focus area was made possible by the ongoing cultural change being carried out at the Robert Bosch Stiftung. In combination with a new strategic focus, this change is intended to improve the sustainable impact of the foundation's work. This involves changes in the organization, work processes, and cooperation. The goal is to strengthen associates' competencies and independence. "Decisions on specialized issues should be made by those with the greatest expertise," says Roland Bender, Head of Human Resources, describing management's position on the subject. This is why specialized responsibility and approval powers were delegated to the associates. Since then, teams have been managing their projects largely independently, from initial discussions about applications and approval to implementation and wrap-up.

"We are now able to react much more quickly and flexibly as a team."

Karin Karlsson on the changes



11:30 a.m.

Many coordinated decisions are made on short notice throughout the day.

"That's the greatest achievement," Karlsson says. "We get to decide who does what best and delegate tasks accordingly."

### Talking and listening

The five-person International Education team discusses its current plans at weekly Tuesday meetings - for example, who is organizing the next dialogue meeting for the Mobility of Mind in School Exchange initiative, one of the foundation's programs for supporting cultural exchange among schoolchildren and young people. As the head of this focus area, Karlsson asks questions, listens, and summarizes. "Naturally, we're also in constant communication with our managers, who provide us with content-related support and feedback," Karlsson explains. If the new meeting areas and conference rooms are occupied, her team sometimes meets in the coffee lounge or out in the yard - weather permitting, of course.

"There are days where I basically just talk. I hardly do anything else," says Karlsson, a mother of two who added 25 percent more hours to her work week to handle the new workload. In exchange, she frequently has to abdicate responsibility to her family - in the form of house keys. "My sons often get home before I do," she says. But she loves working from home whenever she can. Karlsson usually does

it for two days a week. The other three days, she is on-site at the foundation. "It works wonderfully, because everyone in our team moves forward with their own projects and takes the necessary responsibility." *aw*

## International Education

International experience broadens our horizons and teaches us how to act responsibly in a globalized world. This is greatly beneficial to individuals as well as to society in general, which is why the Robert Bosch Stiftung has launched the **Going Abroad Makes a Difference initiative**. The goal is to provide as many schoolchildren and young people as possible with international education in the form of actual practical experience. The initiative is part of the International Education focus area.



Learn more about this issue: [www.bosch-stiftung.de/ib](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/ib)



3:00 p.m.

How are things going for you? Karin Karlsson talks with other teams at the foundation.