

A Vibrant Network

Alumni of the DPG Program "Leading for Tomorrow" have established an inter-generational network.

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Fig. 1: In June 2022, the 2021 cohort of L4T gathered at Magnus-Haus Berlin for a summer meeting.

"Leading for Tomorrow" (L4T) is a groundbreaking initiative by the German Physical Society (DPG) aimed at further educating young physicists to become future leaders in science, industry, and business. Generously supported by the Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, the program consists of four training modules that provide skills and knowledge to succeed in leadership and management positions. This qualification fills a gap in the preparation for personnel management and leadership, which is rarely covered in basic physics education and is typically

encountered by young physicists only in their professional careers.

Since its launch in 2017, the L4T program has produced seven graduating cohorts. The over 350 graduates represent a broad professional spectrum, ranging from academic researchers to science managers and professionals in industrial research and development. Despite pandemic-related limitations in 2020/2021, the program successfully continued with a mix of in-person and online modules and is now entering its eighth round in 2024.

However, alumni have observed that the connection after program completion tends to diminish. While the digital era provides numerous networking opportunities, they can hardly replace the "vitality" of a personal connection. Additionally, maintaining the trust established in L4T without personal contact is challenging. To address this challenge, the idea of an inter-generational network with an annual summer meeting emerged. This meeting serves not only for further networking but also as an opportunity to deepen and expand on what has been learned so far.

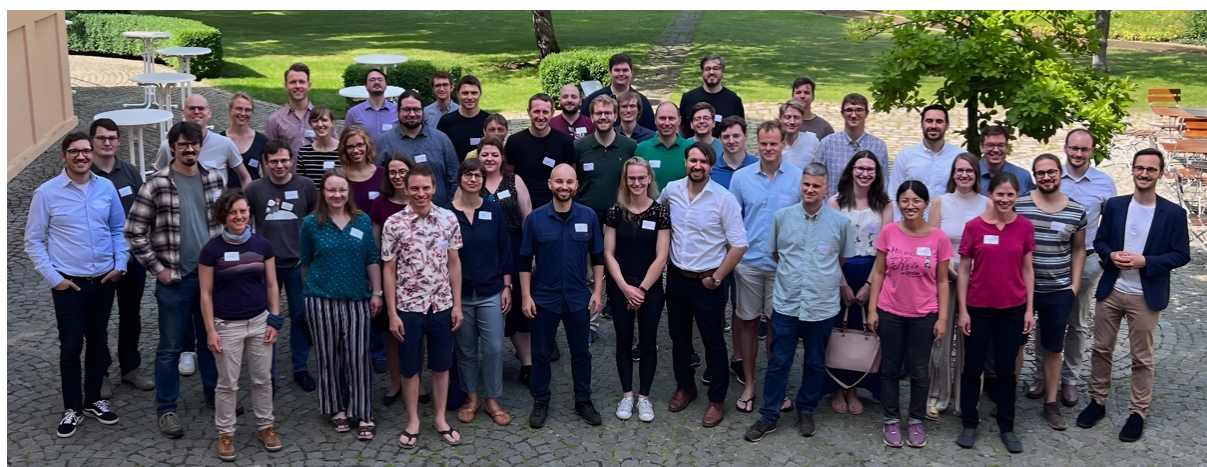


Fig. 2: On July 14, 2023, the first inter-generational summer meeting took place at Magnus-Haus Berlin.

DPG

Various efforts have already been made to continue the momentum of L4T. A reunion at Magnus-Haus in June 2021, organized by the 2020 cohort, allowed participants to reflect on their L4T competencies against the backdrop of pandemic challenges. Inspired by this success, the 2021 cohort organized a workshop on "Building Networks" in June 2022 (see Figure 1), with professional support from Aldona Kihl (osb international, Berlin), an experienced specialist in systemic consulting for organizations and companies, including their leaders. Financially supported by the Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, participants engaged in lively discussions and developed concepts for sustainable networking. These efforts ultimately led to the founding of the L4T Alumni Community following the workshop. The guiding principle of this network is: *"As L4T alumni, we connect in a community to continuously develop our professional skills, with a focus on leadership."*

The inaugural inter-generational L4T Alumni Summer Meeting at Magnus-Haus in July 2023 marked a crucial first step towards long-term networking (see Figure 2). With the professional support of Aldona Kihl and Dr. Bernd Rolinck (osb international, Berlin), the 50 participants from all cohorts collaboratively worked on the topics of "Change Management" and "Hybrid Work." This workshop was not only intellectually stimulating but also provided ample opportunity to exchange experiences on leading others and self-leadership.

The continually growing number of alumni holds enormous potential based on the

diverse experiences of former L4T participants in their individual and undoubtedly very specific professional contexts. A cross-generational exchange of experiences from different stages of one's career not only provides additional orientation but also inspiration for personal development. The next summer meeting (Sept. 5-7, 2024) will, for the first time, offer workshops prepared by alumni for alumni on topics related to personal development.

Our concern goes beyond individual development, as we aim to create sustainable value for the L4T program, the DPG, and future alumni. This value lies in advancing the L4T thematic areas and empowering L4T alumni as mentors in the DPG mentoring program. The summer meeting serves as a central platform for discussing and advancing L4T themes. At the same time, we place great importance on promoting social exchange. Therefore, as in previous years, additional community events are integrated into our program. These supplementary activities form a central part of our efforts to nurture the network.

On behalf of all alumni, we would like to express our gratitude for the support from the DPG, the Wilhelm and Else Heraeus Foundation, osb Berlin, and the staff of Magnus-Haus. L4T alumni who wish to actively participate in the network are invited to register at [Anmeldung.L4T-Network.org!](https://Anmeldung.L4T-Network.org)