# Giving employees a voice: An investigation into Danone's unique employee engagement program as a catalyst for sustainability at work and beyond

Danone's *One Person, One Voice, One Share* employee engagement program

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Thesis for the fulfilment of the
Master of Science in Environmental Management and Policy
Lund, Sweden, June 2021

LUND UNIVERSITY

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# Acknowledgements

The submission of my thesis marks the end of an extraordinary two-year journey at the IIIEE. It has been the most exciting, inspiring, and steep learning experience. First, I would like to acknowledge my fellow classmates – you are what made my time in Lund so wonderful. I appreciate each of you and can't wait to see what the future holds for us. What I do know is that each of you will make the world a better place.

My supervisor, Dr Beatrice Kogg, you are my saving grace. Thank you for your endless feedback, time, mental support and, most importantly, guidance during this thesis process. You were so patient and brilliant, and without you and your confidence in my abilities, this thesis would not be the way it is now.

I am profoundly grateful to Anne-Claire Berg at Danone for trusting me to do this research. In addition, Margot Carenco and Lydiane Ly gave me invaluable help introducing me to Danone employees in North America and Mexico. Finally, to all Danone employees I spoke to, your honesty and integrity shined throughout the entire process. Thank you for sharing your scarce time and energy – your input was vital for my work. It has been an incredible experience working with you.

Dr Brad Gyori, thank you for your advice on research and academic writing - you helped me gain confidence in my methods. Emma Rossi, thank you for reviewing my thesis– you helped finesse my work. Håkan Rhode and Nikolai Borsch, thank you for being my sounding boards while I was looking for a topic.
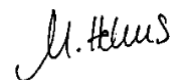
Dr Tatiana Kazakova and Christa Gyori, your leadership and mentorship helped me become a better student. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to work with you and for the lessons I learned at *Leaders on Purpose.*

To all my clever friends who cheered me on when I needed it most - you know who you are. I will be forever grateful to you.

To my siblings - Antonia, you continuously offered fantastic professional advice. Thank you for steering me away from my idea to write about Outer Space! Henry, you, and I were writing a thesis simultaneously – you could relate to my pain, and I love you for that!

To my parents, Danielle, and Christian Helms this thesis is dedicated to you. Thank you for giving me the chance to study my passion for two years. Mum, the chance to live with you in Sydney while writing this thesis was the most special opportunity and privilege. Dad, your continuous feedback, and business advice improved this research.

Congratulations to my classmates in Batch 26 for handling the last year under extraordinarily hard circumstances. Thank you to all the staff at the IIIEE – studying with you was the best decision I ever made.

Lund, 04 June 2021

## Abstract

The survival of our planet is in crisis, and it is affecting society at large. People recognise companies have significantly contributed to the problem, and stakeholders expect and demand businesses to do better. However, doing better means addressing many complex issues at once and most cases will not be solved with simple solutions. As a result, a business's sustainable and social transformation will affect most people within an organisation. Nowadays, there are strong arguments in sustainability for engaging with as many employees as possible to find novel and innovative solutions more quickly. This study investigated how a 'purpose-driven multinational company, Danone, uses an employee engagement program to accelerate sustainable and fair development. The program's goal is to allow employees to co-own the sustainable agenda and foster a deeper ownership mindset. The purpose of this study was to describe the program's design at headquarters, the implementation at Danone in North America and Mexico, its effects on organisational processes, sustainability and social initiatives and employees' behaviour. Lastly, the author will explain which contextual factors influence how employees perceive it. The results show that employee engagement programs can effectively accelerate collective intelligence, company-individual value alignment, and sustainable development. However, internal and external contexts affect the program's success. The program helped increase employees' green abilities, motivation, and opportunities and created some side effects, such as an increase in employees' expectations towards the business. The topic of employee engagement for sustainable development is an emerging topic that may help future practitioners ensure more sustainable practices and support the attempts to save our planet.

**Keywords:** employee engagement, sustainable development, purpose, collective intelligence, sustainable development

# Executive summary

Climate change is a threat to all life on earth and is affecting all regions of the world (Kumar, Nagar & Aanand, 2021). Experts agree that companies have significantly contributed to the problem (Elkington, 2020; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010). Therefore, it is more important than ever for companies to significantly reduce their negative impact on the environment and accelerate their sustainable transformation (Santer et al., 1996; Elkington, 2020, Axelrod, 2019). A fundamental transformation for companies that rely on unsustainable practices is urgent and inevitable, and the alarming observations demand complex changes to existing patterns (e.g., products and services, operations, technologies, partnerships, human resources), creating a new economic perspective for businesses (Elkington, 2020; Tulder et al., 2014). Doing 'better' means addressing complex problems from many different angles. Most issues cannot be solved with simple solutions and will affect many people within an organisation (Elkington, 2020). There are strong arguments in the realm of sustainability and business describing how engaging with as many people as possible in finding possible solutions to enable businesses to transition quicker and more effectively (Chima & Gutman, 2020; Shoaib et al., 2021; Pham, Hoang & Phan, 2019). As a result, researchers and practitioners alike are exploring how companies can engage with their employees to accelerate their sustainable development. For example, Hewapathirana, Opatha and Gamage (2020) described how green human resource management significantly impacts a business's corporate sustainability.

My goal is to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of the human resource department of a multinational company aiming to accelerate its sustainable goals. The research highlights practical tools that increase our understanding of how companies can transform and support the research to generate more effective employee engagement programs that combine an environmental, social, and economic agenda. This thesis aims to address research gaps in the following ways:

· Describe how a 'purpose-driven' business can turn purpose into concrete action
· Provide an attempt to empirically research the mediating role of green human resource management on employee behaviour
· Generate a detailed description of HRM interventions for a company's sustainable development
· Assess the effects of intervention practices on employee's pro-environmental behaviour
· Understand an employee's experience of HR practices and how personal behaviour influences how the employee perceives the company's sustainability
· Understand the relationship between HR interventions on individual behaviour at work and outside of company boundaries

Throughout the research, I intention is to analyse the effects an HRM program has on the following levels:

1. **Company level,** emphasising changes to the organisational processes and their effect on the organisation's environmental initiatives
2. **Individual-level**, how/if it has impacted employee's behaviour and performance at work and outside of company boundaries

I plan to answer the following four research questions:

> **RQ1:** How is the employee engagement program for the sustainable development of Danone designed and implemented?
> **RQ2:** What are the reported outputs and effects of the program?
> **RQ3:** How do employees in North America and Mexico perceive the program?
> **RQ4:** What type of contextual factors influence how employees implemented and perceive the program?

Throughout the literature and practitioner review, I applied four theoretical frameworks to help address and make sense of the research problem. The theories enabled me to focus my attention on potential explanations of the research findings:

- **Ability-motivation-opportunity theory** to increase the understanding of the relationship between HRM practices and employee performance
- **Social exchange theory** helps with the understanding employee's workplace behaviour and the 'rules of exchange' between the company and its employees
- **Contingency theory** is a management theory that helps evaluate what contextual factors impact a managers strategic decision making
- **Goal-framing theory** gives the reader a theoretical understanding of what goals may influence a person's behaviour

The research design follows an exploratory, case-study approach to investigate the design and implementation of a multinational business's (Danone S.A.) employee engagement program that strives to give employees a voice in sharing their ideas on the company's sustainability and social goals. Furthermore, the program's second intention is to enable all eligible employees to co-own the company agenda by receiving one company share. Danone S.A's employee engagement program is valuable to investigate because it is an integral part of the business's governance model and transformation strategy towards a more sustainable and social long-term agenda, harnessing the collective intelligence of its employees at all levels and locations. This study will focus on the design of the program at global level and its implementation and effects in two regions (North America and Mexico).

The empirical basis encompasses data from 14 interviews with the company's employees. They were conducted specifically for this research, other publicly available company documents, websites and videos and online sources were used for the content analysis as well. The interview data was systematically reviewed through qualitative content analysis in NVivo, including an in-depth interview analysis. The initial coding framework for analysing the interviews in NVivo was based on the literature surrounding human resources for sustainable development, HRM practices to enhance employee's green abilities, motivations, and opportunities; research on what is already known about possible contextual factors and what effects and side-effects the interventions may have. The coding framework was further adjusted based on emerging findings of the interviews during the coding process (appendix, p. 91).

Regarding **RQ1**, designing and implementing a MNC's employee engagement program is complicated. In this case, the employee engagement program is designed with two distinct features. First, each employee can share their thoughts and ideas on the company vision in a global survey (OV). The survey's implementation and the analysis are managed by one selected coordinator from the HR department in each region. After that, each coordinator must ensure the findings are analysed locally.

Finally, the results are shared with local and global management, and the company's strategic agenda may be modified. The second feature (OS) is that eligible employees are gifted one company share in combination with access to Danone's annual dividend-based scheme.
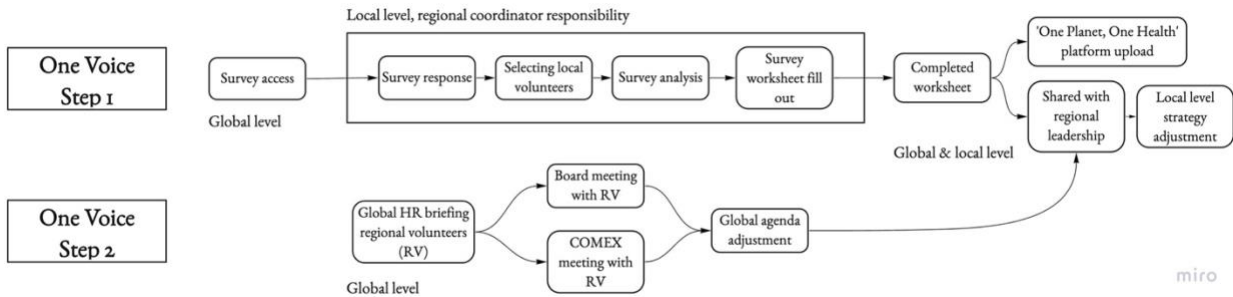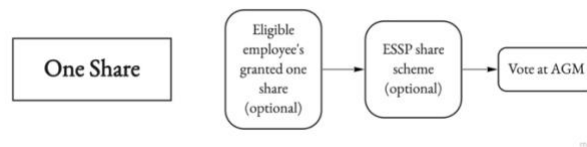


*Figure 4-2. 'One Voice' program process*



*Figure 4-5. 'One Share' program process*

Regarding **RQ2**, there are different effects of the program on the organisational processes, such as improving resource efficiencies, increased communication streams, identifying change agents, and improved digitalisation. The program had helped accelerate Danone's nine pro-social goals by creating different social and sustainability initiatives in response to the program. Lastly, it affected individuals by improving their understanding of the goals, increasing commitment towards Danone and their willingness to engage, and in some cases also increasing their expectations towards the business.

Regarding **RQ3**, employees perceive an employee engagement program as effective in how it enables them to participate in organisational citizenship behaviour. The program gives management one of the first avenues to understand how employees perceive the local agenda in Danone Mexico. In Danone North America, it helped management identify areas where its strategic communication could be improved. In both places, individuals who participated in OPOVOS volunteering considered the program to be more effective than less engaged users. Moreover, the businesses recognition of their extra efforts significantly affected people's intrinsic motivation to continue participating. The second part of the program, the financial incentive, was seen as significant for lower-level employees. For employees higher up, the program fostered appreciation for the company's work of making the lives of low-income households better and increased employee alignment with the business's purpose. On the other hand, One Share hardly affected employees' ownership mindset, and when it did, it increased employees' expectations, which can increase negative behaviour and pressure for managers to respond to employees' requests.

Regarding **RQ4**, many contextual factors influence how a program is implemented and perceived. They can be split into internal organisational drivers, such as strategic dualities and balancing short-term versus long-term goals. Furthermore, employees' individual experience and normative concerns will also affect HRM programs. In addition, external organisational drivers that decrease employees'

available time and resources may affect intervention implementation. For example, at the time of this research, Danone faced huge uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the HRM intervention methods had to be adjusted so that employees were not overwhelmed by HRM programs.

The **contributions of this research include the following:** This study contributes to the research of how a company can turn purpose into concrete action by describing how an employee engagement program of a multinational company can be designed to help accelerate towards the long-term, more sustainable company vision. Secondly, it researched what mediating role an HRM program has on the business's sustainability and identified that complex employee engagement programs are valuable for accelerating a company's sustainability and social goals. Thirdly, there was previously little research on how internal and external contexts interact with a person's behaviour at work and beyond company borders and helped recognise how different contextual factors will influence the design, effects, and outcomes of a program in different ways. Thus, context matters for this information. Additionally, previously little was known about how a person's green awareness and behaviour influences how they perceive a company's sustainability. This research highlights how a person's sustainability expertise can affect a person's belief that the company is genuinely sustainable. However, regardless of this, the person is more likely to continue engaging in sustainability initiatives and programs. Lastly, while previously little was known about the influence of spill over effects of a business's practices on employee's behaviour outside of a company, this research identified that an increased understanding of sustainability and social goals might in fact, influence a person's environmental consciousness and in turn their pro-environmental behaviour at home. Moreover, this thesis contributes to using four theoretical frameworks in empirical research and will discuss the practitioner results against known literature and knowledge, thus contributing to academic theory and what is already known.

Regarding the **practical implications** for future HRM program designers when they want to design an HRM intervention to enable employees to have a voice and engage with a company's strategic development, practitioners may want to include the following topics:

- Future HRM program designers should be aware of trade-offs and strategic dualities when designing and implementing an HRM program. For example, the HRM program's autonomy in the implementation will lead to different results.
- Feedback channels such as surveys must include questions and relevant topics to local employees and leadership teams.
- Barriers to more inclusive procedures must be identified and actively managed at a local level.
- Analytical experience and tools add to the qualitative rigour of surveys.
- Organisational hierarchies and perceived goals may affect what message management finally receives, decreasing the validity of the findings.

For employees to perceive the business as sticking to the 'rules of exchange' (SET theory) and walking the talk, the following aspects can be considered:

- Message clarity and continuous communication helps with employees understanding of company vision, increases motivation to engage and increases perceived organisational purpose.
- Continuous initiative implementation, workshops, communication of results helps employees perceive a program as more valuable and practical.

- · Middle management's inclusion in the design of an HR intervention may ensure they are more willing to engage in the pro-social goals (HRM volunteering) and less likely to dismiss the program.

However, regardless of how effective the design is, not all outcomes are controllable by the different contingencies. They impact outcomes and performance on an organisational and individual level, as highlighted throughout the research (Paauwe, 2004).

Recommendations for **future research** would include more academic research of innovative ways to manage strategic dualities in my study. This would help with how HRM of purpose-driven companies can accelerate the long-term vision versus short-term profit, global versus local autonomy effects on GHRM programs, and efficiency versus the effectiveness of GHRM programs. Secondly, researchers may investigate how symbolic (intrinsic) incentives can foster an ownership mindset. Thirdly, it would be helpful to investigate which methods motivate employees with different skills and interest to engage in the same HRM program. It may be valuable to understand what strategies and human resource managers can apply to incentivise employees from different departments with different skill sets to engage in the same HRM program. Lastly, to gain more generalisability and understanding of the effects of contextual factors, continuing this qualitative research in Danone's other regions, and conducting empirical research on HRM intervention programs on other purpose-driven companies may help build a library of understanding of employee engagement to accelerate the company's purpose-driven agendas.

**In conclusion**, this research helps illuminate the value and complexities of employee engagement practices for sustainability at work and beyond. Additionally, while no vantage point can give us the whole picture, this study shows the complexities of the dual ambition to balance purpose and profit and further our understanding of the topic. It was my goal to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of HR, aiming to accelerate a sustainability agenda, highlight practical tools that help make this a reality, and support businesses to generate more effective employee engagement programs that combine environmental, social, and economic understanding. Lastly, research has emphasised the need for businesses to continue working on effective ways to engage with their employees harnessing their collective intelligence to help society accelerate towards a more sustainable and just world.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CBU | central business unit |
| HRD | human resource department |
| HRM | human resource management |
| POS | perceived organizational support |
| PDL | purpose-driven leadership |
| OPOVOS | *One Person, One Voice, One Share* |
| OPOH | One Planet, One Health |
| OV | One Voice |
| OS | One Share |
| OCBE | organizational citizenship behaviour |
| SET | social exchange theory |
| WFH | work from home |
| GHRM | green human resource management |
| RC | regional coordinators |
| RV | regional volunteers |
| LV | local voluntee |

# 1 Introduction

Climate change is a threat to all life on earth and is affecting all regions of the world (Kumar, Nagar & Aanand, 2021). Experts agree that companies have significantly contributed to the problem (Elkington, 2020; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010). For example, food and beverage companies are major emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG) which are increasing earth's 'greenhouse gas effect' (Axelrod, 2019). The GHG effect is the surge of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxides in earth's atmosphere resulting in continuous warming of earth's surface (Kumar et al., 2021). As a result, our climate is warming, which is increasing extreme weather patterns such as, melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, increasingly extreme storms, heat waves and droughts. These events are expected to increase in the coming decades (Kumar et al., 2021; Elkington, 2020). Therefore, it is more important than ever for businesses to significantly reduce their negative impact on the environment (Santer, Taylor, Wigley et al., 1996; Elkington, 2020, Axelrod, 2019).

Not only do businesses have to change due to their impact on the climate, growing global awareness and societal pressure for business to do better is increasing from several sides at once: regulators, employees, customers, and investors are demanding verifiable sustainability, turning a failure to respond into a business risk (Elkington, 2020; Skoglund & Böhm, 2019; Tulder, Tilburg, Francken & Rosa, 2014; Rey, Velasco & Almandoz, 2019). With increasing complex problems society is moving away from Milton Friedman's belief that the sole function of business is to add value to its shareholders and increase company profits (Elkington, 2020; Friedman, 1970; Drucker, 1994). Organisations can 'go green' and adopt environmental management techniques to accomplish a sustainable agenda (General Assembly resolution 70/1, 2015). A fundamental transformation from the current system is urgent and inevitable (Tulder et al., 2014). Sustainability has achieved strategic importance (Elkington, 2020;), and may flow into each area of corporate strategy and within the strategy-creation processes (Rey, Marimon & Mas-Machuna, 2019; Ehnert, 2009). Alarming observations of climate change effects demand complex changes to existing patterns, creating a new economic perspective for businesses to do better (Elkington, 2020). These are businesses that have a purpose that goes beyond profit, often called 'purpose-driven' companies. Bartlett and Goshal (1994) described purpose as a statement of a company's moral response to its broadly defined responsibilities. In their view, the common role of management should be to instil a common sense of 'purpose' throughout an organisation (Barlett & Goshal, 1994).

Companies doing 'better' are addressing many complex problems at once (Tulder et al., 2014; Lleo, Rey & Chinchilla, 2019) finding multifaceted solutions that will likely influence and effect many people, processes, and strategies within a company (Lleo et al., 2019; Singh, Del Giudice, Chierici & Graziano, 2020). There are strong arguments in the realm of sustainability describing how engaging as many people as possible will be helpful business find more successful solutions (Chima & Gutman, 2020; Shoaib, Abbas, Yousaf et al., 2021; Pham, Hoang & Phan, 2019). Consequently, because the human resource department is an essential strategic partner for managing people (Ulrich, 1998), human resource management (HRM) is an important feature of the formation and implementation of sustainable development (Kelly & Gennard, 2001; Lleo et al., 2019; Paauwe, 2004).

Increasingly, HRM's contribution extends beyond the traditional practice of hiring and firing employees. HRM now creates new areas of people management policies to accelerate the broader corporate environmental agenda such as green human resource management (GHRM) (Sobaih et al., 2020). Opatha (2013) states "green HRM refers to all the activities involved in development,

implementation and on-going maintenance of a system that aims at making employees of an organisation green. It is the side of HRM that is concerned with transforming normal employees into green employees to achieve environmental goals of the organisation and finally to make a significant contribution to environmental sustainability. It refers to the policies, practices and systems that make employees of the organisation green for the benefit of the individual, society, natural environment, and the business" (p. 28).

Not only will the human resource department (HRD) deal with implementing people-management strategies for sustainability, but the human resource (HR) managers' role extends further than that. For example, at the time of this research, coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was raging across the world, affecting, and killing people on every continent (World Health Organization, 2020). The pandemic has had a massive impact on operational processes in most companies (Aitken Fox et al., 2020). During these unprecedented times, HR departments changed their people management practices dramatically, creating a balancing act between responding to changing circumstances and sticking to company compliance and regulation procedures (Russell, 2020). While organisations are preparing for the new normal after COVID-19, some industry leaders tell the tale of human ingenuity and adaptiveness. Businesses and people quickly adopted new technologies to maintain connection and work possibilities (Meister, 2020). In the following chapters, I aim to describe a 'purpose-driven' multinational company, Danone Société Anonyme (S.A), unique employee engagement program. The program was designed by its global human resource department creating a channel for Danone's employees to have a voice and an opportunity to co-create the company agenda and actively participate in bringing Danone's sustainability goals to life (Faber, 2018).

> *To be earth is to live within a finite and restricted environment… The life-support system based on air, earth, and water is delicate, subtly intertwined and remarkably intricate… The tendencies toward the destruction of life cannot be dealt with until there emerges a much stronger sense of the reality of wholeness and oneness, of the wholeness of the earth and the oneness of the human family. (Falk, 1971, as cited in Walton, 2019, p. 53)*

## 1.1 Problem Definition

Society is demanding that business change to become more sustainable and develop new and innovative solutions (Rey, Velasco and Almandoz, 2019). Some companies are finding solutions by adapting their strategies to become 'purpose-driven', "purpose has become a popular term in the field of business management. However, few can unambiguously articulate its multi-faceted conceptual meaning. Even less know how to turn purpose into concrete action in organizations." (Lee, 2019, as cited in Rey, Bastons & Sotok, 2019, p. 2). One of the potential solutions is 'green HRM.' Hewapathirana, Opatha, and Gamage (2020) describe that GHRM would significantly impact a business's corporate sustainability. Moreover, while there is growing literature on green management in general (Hewapathirana et al., 2020; McDonagh & Prothero, 1997), only a few studies have attempted to empirically research the mediating role of GHRM on an organisation's sustainable development (Renwick et al., 2012; Shoaib et al., 2021).

Additionally, the changing role of business means academia and practitioners need a better understanding of how companies use HRM to engage with their employees to further their sustainable development mission (Sobaih et al., 2020). An important step toward this goal is to generate detailed descriptions of human resource management practices that aim to enhance employees' pro-environmental abilities, motivations, and opportunities (Sobaih et al., 2020). There is an additional

dearth of detailed information on the effects of intervention practices on employees' pro-environmental behaviour (Sobaih et al., 2020). Lindenberg and Steg (2007) describe how little is known about which motives (contexts) interact and how they "influence the orientation for the individual toward environmental behaviour" (p. 118). Furthermore, there is a need for more micro-level analyses on employees' experiences of HR practices and how these shape behaviours and performance (Edgar et al., 2019). There are few empirical studies focussing on identifying the influence of green personal behaviour on the perceived green results of a company (Hewapathirana et al., 2020). Hewapathirana et al. (2020) explain that future studies need to be carried out to fill this gap.

Finally, experts agree that the line between work and personal life is blurring (Tudor et al., 2007). However, so far, limited research has been conducted on whether there is any relationship between changes in an individual's behaviour due to work interventions (Tudor et al., 2007). Thus, more research should be conducted to bridge the research gap and help identify the spill-over effects green company practices have on employee behaviour outside of the company (Tudor et al., 2007; Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019).

## 1.2 Aim, research questions and contributions

My goal is to deepen understanding of the dynamics of HR aiming to accelerate a sustainability agenda, highlight practical tools that help make effective HR practices a reality, and support businesses to generate more effective employee engagement programs that combine an environmental, social, and economic agenda.

As noted in the previous section, there are still many research gaps that can be filled regarding the design and the effects of HRM interventions. As a result, I aim to generate a detailed description of **how** a HRM program was designed and implemented by a multinational corporation (MNC) planning to further its sustainable development. I aim to empirically research the effects an HRM bundle has on the following levels:

1. Company level: changes to the organisational processes and their effects on the organisation's environmental initiatives.
2. Individual level: how/if HRM impacted employees; behaviour and performance both at work and outside of company boundaries

Additionally, this research aims to understand which potential motives and contextual factors influence why employees engage in certain behaviours. For example, I intent to describe how the contextual factor of the pandemic affected the HR program's design, implementation, and effects on employees. This thesis aims to address this lack of information in the following ways:

·   Describe how a 'purpose-driven' business can turn purpose into concrete action
·   Provide an attempt to empirically research the mediating role of green human resource management on employee behaviour
·   Generate a detailed description of HRM interventions for a company's sustainable development
·   Assess the effects of intervention practices on employee's pro-environmental behaviour
·   Understand an employee's experience of HR practices and how personal behaviour influences how the employee perceives the company's sustainability

· Understand the relationship between HR interventions on individual behaviour at work and outside of company boundaries

I will conduct an empirical case study analysis which may help practitioners better understand the value of HRMs for sustainable development and increase the knowledge of which factors influence how employees perceive the intervention methods. Studying the effects and outputs of a pioneering HRM employee engagement program may support two groups: First, this research may support the efforts of Danone S.A. (the research case study), and other multinational companies. With more information on perceived effects of HR interventions, architects can make more strategic and conscious decisions and create more tailored management approaches when necessary (Kirkwood, 1997). Second, this research may help managers from other businesses make more informed choices when planning to implement an employee engagement program (Knight et al., 2017). Furthermore, understanding what cause and effects an HR program has on employees' behaviour can increase organisations' understanding of the usefulness of such interventions (Harter & Schmidt, 2002).

Thus, I aim to add value to the academic field of research on employee engagement, HR for sustainability initiatives, and qualitative ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory research. According to Harter and Schmidt (2002), researching how managers can improve their practices may increase engagement programs' effectiveness for sustainability. Furthermore, because most empirical studies have been conducted in a quantitative manner, choosing a qualitative research design will add to the academic literature on sustainability initiatives (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). I intend to interpret the empirical findings in the research literature context (Walser & Trevisan, 2015) and four theories that are suitable to my research. I plan to answer the following four research questions:

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**RQ1:** How is the employee engagement program for a sustainable development of Danone designed and implemented?
**RQ2:** What are the reported outputs and effects of the program?
**RQ3:** How do employees in North America and Mexico perceive the program?
**RQ4:** What type of contextual factors influence how employees implement and perceive the program?

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## 1.3 Scope and delimitations

This section introduces some parameters which I imposed during the collection of data. The empirical study will allow for a sufficient understanding of the contextual factors and effects of Danone's human resource employee engagement program while keeping the time and resource constraints of the thesis project in mind. Therefore, the empirical research will focus on one case study to understand:

· The design of Danone's employee engagement program at the head office level in France.
· The implementation of the program in two regions, North America[1] and Mexico.
· The effects of the program on the organisational structure/processes at the headquarters in France, North America, and Mexico.
· The company's sustainability initiatives at Danone global, North America and Mexico.
· The perceived effect on individuals in Mexico and North America.

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[1] North America includes Canada and the United States.

Central delimitations of the scope are the following. First, this study does not cover the implementation processes and effects of the engagement program in all company regions. Danone conducts business in thirteen regions globally, covering around 60 countries (Danone, 2019a). However, this study focuses on two regions because of time and resource limitations. As a result, looking into two out of the 13 regions will give the reader a less holistic understanding of all the HRM program's effects. However, because the HRM program is incredibly complex, focusing specifically on two areas will allow for a more detailed description of the implementation in the two regions. Second, as an external researcher, obtaining access to data may be challenging (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Therefore, focusing data collection efforts on two regions rather than distributing efforts across several regions may provide deeper insights. Third, I cannot speak with all employees who have used the program in the two regions because of time and resource constraints. Therefore, the sample size is not representative of the entire employee population. Moreover, all conversations and interviews with Danone employees will be conducted online via Zoom because of the limitations of meeting in person in today's uncertain climate (e.g., pandemic and climate change). Finally, I have a limited timeframe; I cannot conduct a longitudinal study. However, because I am speaking to employees about their previous experience of the employee engagement program, my empirical research will have the temporal scope company documents and employees experience from 2018 to 2021. When available, I will use documents and online articles to verify statements made by employees and get a better understanding of their recollection of the events in previous years.

## 1.4 Ethical considerations

This section introduces the ethical considerations that are relevant to this study. The primary ethical concerns of this research are the use and treatment of confidential company documents, as well as program and personal information obtained through interviews. I received research approval from Danon and each interviewee through voluntary participation in the research. I ensured that each participant understood the aim of this study, that interviewees remain anonymous, and details that would help readers identify them are not disclosed. The employees did not influence the analysis or results and had no access to confidential information throughout the research.

All data collected for this thesis are stored securely. All transcripts, contact information, notes and interview recordings are stored on a password- and fingerprint-protected computer and secure cloud service.

Because this research aims to understand an employee engagement program's effects on the business and individuals, there is no reason to believe that the business of this study may suffer any disadvantage or damage from their participation in the research project. However, I decided to protect employees I spoke to at the company by only disclosing their titles explicitly in the methodology chapter. I have refrained from including their official titles in the following practitioner review.

Additionally, because gender imbalances are still rife in science and research globally (Lariviere et al., 2013), when I present the practitioner findings in chapter 5, I use gender-neutral pronouns to reduce gender stereotyping. Therefore, I will not refer to interviewees as *he* or *she* but will use *they, them* or *their*.

The research design has been reviewed against the criteria for research requiring an ethics board review at Lund University and it has found not to require a statement from the ethics committee. My academic supervisor supported me throughout the entire thesis process.

## 1.5 Audience

This research focuses on describing the design of an MNC's employee engagement program that allows employees to voice their opinion and foster an ownership mindset. Therefore, the research may be interesting for multinational HR practitioners building a program to accelerate sustainability goals and agendas. Because I will present examples of how the program was implemented in two regions, it may give the reader a better understanding of how contextual factors influence implementations of HRM programs and how employees perceive them. Furthermore, the conclusions I will highlight may give future practitioners some ideas on what challenges may come up during the design and application of such a program.

Academic researchers may also find this project interesting as it may uncover previously unknown issues. Moreover, I will highlight some areas for future research, giving academia the ability to expand on the knowledge, potentially helping generate new inspiring research fields. Lastly, academic research on the 'how-to' of purpose-driven companies has been increasing over the past several years (e.g., Cardona & Craig, 2019; Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Rey & Bastons, 2019). Therefore, any research focused on the complexities and topics businesses face today may help create a better understanding of potential solutions and future research.

## 1.6 Disposition

This thesis outline is as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the research topic and briefly describes the problem I am researching, comparing it to the relevance of the environmental sustainability agenda. It also introduces the research aim and questions that guide the following chapters and presents the scope and limitations of the empirical study.

Chapter 2 includes the background and theoretical review, where I will introduce three theories to create a simple framework for the research, helping to narrow the research focus so that the literature is relevant to the empirical research.

In Chapter 3 I present the literature review to establish the context for this research, providing a balanced and brief view of the pertinent published literature. The key aim of this chapter is offering the context of the research problem before introducing this study's primary practitioner research.

Chapter 4 introduces the research design: a framework of methods and techniques chosen by me to combine various components of research data so that I can effectively answer the research problem.

Chapter 5 presents the case study findings and provides an account of the materials collected in the project. I deliver the study's application methods of gathering and analysing information. This prepares the reader for the interpretation and evaluation I provide in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 presents the practitioner results against known literature and knowledge. Additionally, this chapter reflects on the results of my study by examining the methodological choices, legitimacy, and generalisability.

Chapter 7 reiterates the problem that I addressed at the beginning of my study. After that, I will present the conclusions that my analysis supports and introduce practical implications and recommendations for non-academic audiences. Lastly, I present recommendations for future research.

# 2 Literature review

Here, I provide a literature review of the existing body of knowledge pertinent to the problems I seek to solve in this thesis. The literature review will lead to the development of a theoretical framework I will use as a guide throughout the research.

## 2.1 Purpose-driven strategy

Companies are embracing an intentional and broader focus on purpose (Hollensbe et al., 2014). The 'purpose' specifies our contribution to this planet and the society in which we live, and it is notably becoming a necessary element to create more meaningful organisations in a competitive environment that is "strongly marked by inconsistency and uncertainty" (Rey, Velasco & Almandoz, 2019, p. 4). Companies with an authentic 'purpose strategy' have recognised the interconnectedness of business and society and accepted that one cannot flourish without the other (Elkington, 2020; Rey, Marimon, & Mas-Machuna, 2019; Rey, Velasco, & Almandoz, 2019). Three examples of coupling purpose with a business's strategy are described below (Rey & Ricart, 2019):

**ANALYTICAL COUPLING OF PURPOSE**
Rey and Ricart (2019) studied analytical coupling and described how purpose becomes concrete in plans and objectives through strategic analysis, planning, and implementation. They found this method can help managers maintain their purpose vision in practice. The authors described, coupling analytical logic and purpose-driven indicators at the beginning of any strategic initiative can help a business fulfil its purpose.

**BUSINESS MODEL COUPLING OF PURPOSE**
According to Rey and Ricart (2019) coupling purpose with a business model ensures a "transformative purpose" (p. 49). They describe it as the intersection of economic interests and social needs showcasing an opportunity for the company and helping eliminate the conflict between purpose and profit.

**INSTITUTIONAL COUPLING OF PURPOSE**
Institutional coupling refers to the way organizations connect institutional logic with strategy through stakeholder management and institutional framing. They develop their business purpose around the principles, beliefs, and values of institutions[2]. Institutional coupling is seen as increasing legitimacy for stakeholders (Rey & Ricart, 2019).

Rey and Ricart (2019) describe how businesses that apply this three-dimensional model of purpose can be considered purpose-driven companies. Ocasia and Radoynovska (2016) recognised multiplicity of logic as a source of strategic diversity and innovation that helps practitioners with the varying contextual contingencies, institutional, and stakeholder pressures that pose sometimes conflicting expectations on managers to develop more effective purpose-driven strategies. Focussing on all three area's is challenging and complex (Rey & Ricart, 2019). The tensions of the multiplicity of logic can be managed better if a company has necessary support systems in place (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). In fact, "support systems are needed to reinforce a company's purpose-related goals" (Birkinshaw et al., 2014, p. 49).

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[2] Institutions are the formal and informal rules that organise social, political, and economic relations (North, 1990). They operate in all areas of life and can affect economic, political, legal, and social rights.

Purpose-driven leadership (PDL) is another important aspect of a purpose-driven business. PDL has traits of shared leadership whereby leadership is distributed among team members instead of focused on one designated person (Carson et al., 2007). Seeking to frame the concept of PDL and distinguish it from other forms of leadership, Cardone et al. (2019) emphasize the collective nature of the goals and argue that PDL should seek to create a system of mutually meaningful interactions at different levels within different roles and departments, to achieve purpose-driven goals (Cardona et al., 2019). According to researchers, PDL is about continuously discovering and rediscovering a shared purpose that already exists within the company; actions cannot be taken by the leader on their own but must be worked on by the group (Cardona et al., 2019).

## 2.2 Introduction into human resource management

Businesses are increasingly aware they need to harness the ideas and solutions of the collective, engaging with people from all areas, departments, and locations to accelerate the transition (Pham, Hoang & Phan, 2019). Experts agree that the HRM department is essential in influencing organisations' success and competitive advantage (Ehnert, 2009; Guest, 2001; Huselid 1995; Wright et al. 2005b). As a designer and implementer of policies and programs affecting employees, the human resource department (HRD) is an essential strategic partner for managing an organisation and implementing its goals (Paauwe, 2004). Strategic human resources (HR) can be defined as focusing on forming a long-term corporate strategy, for example, employee upskilling programs that consider employee's skills and the company's goals now and in future (Truss & Gratton, 1994). HRM areas extend to hiring suitable personnel, the structuring of working conditions, the deployment of HR programs, the development and training of personnel, the support of the executives in their management tasks, and, if necessary, layoffs (Krischten, 2017; Paauwe, 2004; Truss & Gratton, 1994;). HRM also aims to bring the organisation's goals together with the interests and needs of the staff, creating reliable roles and career prospects within the business (Kirschten, 2017; Paauwe, 2004).

HRDs are vital players in exercising power and influence, especially when the department is designed to have a substantial impact on executive group decision-making (Kelly, 2001). Research has shown that if the HR function is present on the executive level, where strategy is formulated and subsequently approved by the board of directors, the HR function is a major player in forming and implementing corporate strategy (Kelly & Gennard, 2001). Becker, Huselid and Ulrich (2007) argue that HR managers can improve the business's bottom line through strategy execution, administrative efficiency, employee contribution systems, and demonstrated ability to change. In addition, HRM supports company communication, promotes knowledge management, and follows the company in its organisational and content-related development (Cohen et al., 2012; Kirschten, 2017; Stahl et al., 2020).

The HRD participates in the formulation, success, and implementation of purpose-driven strategies (Lleo et al., 2019) because "they monitor and control the implementation of corporate policies, put together multi-functional and multi-business project teams, disseminate information and receive feedback, identify talent and engaged in the HR processes of recruitment, training and development, succession planning and rewards to develop a cadre of international managers" (Kelly, 2001, p. 547).

Often, for HRM to succeed and drive a company's strategic agenda forward, the HRD works with internal or external agents to help drive changes within the business (Luneburg, 2010). Internally, change agents are appointed to oversee specific processes and change practices; they often have the know-how and strong relationships within the business, helping the HRM accelerate the changes

(Luneburg, 2010). Externally, HRDs may work with consultants or people working directly with the business's management team to help facilitate change efforts (Luneburg, 2010). According to Ehnert (2009), leaders of purpose-driven companies treat HR areas as a source of competitive advantage and treat employees as assets and agents of change.

It is increasingly clear that disruptive changes to business models transform the employment landscape and impact the role of HRM. Moreover, an added layer of complexity affects multinational companies (MNC) (Mockaitis, Zander & De Cieri, 2018).

## 2.2.1 Strategic HR of a multinational company

There is a dramatic shift in the international business environment with the world more interconnected than ever before (Mockaitis et al., 2018). For multinational company (MNC)[3] managing a global workforce, HRM agendas have become more complex than ever (Ehnert, 2009). Traditional ways of managing people need to adapt to changing times such as shifts in the global landscape, new emerging markets and industries and new ways firms engage with each other (Mockaitis et al., 2018). HR managers face increasing pressures and demands regarding work intensity, work pace and performance, skills, and competencies (Lee et al., 2013; Mockaitis et al., 2018; Paauwe, 2004). For example, HR managers in a globalised company must have the abilities and skills to work with people from different countries, languages, cultures, and time zones, who might have different expectations or ideas of what is fair or just (Mockaitis et al., 2018; Neely, 2015).

In addition, HRM of MNCs deal with the added complexity of creating a perfect balance between global HR control and local autonomy. Traditionally, MNCs' global headquarters (HQ) create company policies such as payment systems, collective bargaining, standardised procedures, union recognition, welfare, and training policies (Ferner et al. 2004; Kelly, 2001; Sageder & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018). Now experts are debating how to manage HR's headquarters policymaking (control) and the subsidiary's autonomy of the policy's implementation (Ferner et al., 2004). Moreover, the alignment of local business goals and investment decisions contributes to the company's global strategy (Cooper & Ezzamel, 2013; Sageder & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018). However, while global corporate control is necessary to achieve a strategic direction in all business subsidiaries, direct control exerted by HQ may depend on the management areas (Sageder & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018). Sageder and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2018) describe certain factors that influence the level of control of a multinational company on its subsidiaries such as the degree of internalisation. Internationalisation contributes to robust HQ control with emphasis on financial and non-financial output controls.

Another reason to differentiate between local autonomy and global control is that HRM is often subject to different laws and regulations in different locations. Often, rules and policies of the HQ office act as guiding principles, whereas party autonomy means giving parties a more significant amount of flexibility to regulate rules and processes (Ferner et al., 2004). One of the most common areas of a subsidiaries autonomy is the implementation of procedure, allowing employees freely shape the activities following their specific needs (Sageder & Feldbauer-Durstmüller, 2018). Some researchers argue that the more flexible the scope to interpret policies, the more successfully they will be implemented considering the local conditions (Ferner et al., 2004). Nonetheless, the less clear the

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[3] MNCs are geographically dispersed business units where headquarters and their subsidiaries are in different countries (Mockaitis et al., 2018).

policies are, and the more managerial freedom implementers have, the more leeway there is to interpret HRM guidelines, consequently influencing what management identifies as relevant (Ferner et al. 2004).

To conclude, HR is an essential business function, and HR managers of MNCs must deal with many complexities and balance the company's needs versus the needs of the employees in the most effective way possible. Including creating a balance between central and local decision making and control versus flexibility of subsidiaries.

### 2.2.2 Human resource management for sustainable development

This section reviews the current academic literature on HRM in the broader push for sustainable corporate development. The competitiveness, viability, and even survival of businesses increasingly depends on the workplace culture's progressiveness in the involvement of employees in sustainability policies (Tulder et al., 2014). A stipulative description by Kirschten (2017) argues those businesses that are considered focussed on sustainable development may have at least the following three components:

- · Products/services that are ecologically compatible and socially just.
- · Processes and activities that are economically efficient and resilient.
- · Appropriately qualified, innovative, and motivated employees.

Therefore, employees are central actors for the sustainable and future-oriented development of the company, since they determine the company's ecological, economic, and social actions and impact (Kirschten, 2017). Staff must not only have excellent technical and task-related qualifications and skills, but they must also be able to apply ecological, economic, social, and innovation-related ideas and cross-sectional knowledge in their respective areas of responsibility. Their knowledge, decisions, and actions have a decisive influence on the successful provision of services (Kirschten, 2017).

While all other departments must focus on the sustainability aspects of their specific fields, HR is one of the only departments that encompasses all operational and strategic tasks that affect employees (Krischten, 2017). Moreover, a study has shown how green HRM systems played a significant role in promoting better sustainability strategies within the organisation and led to better employee well-being and enhanced organisational performance (Gholami et al., 2016).

## 2.3 Theoretical frameworks

This section aims to create a theoretical framework deductively that addresses the topic in question. Before describing green HRM practices and pro-environmental behaviour, I propose four theories to better understand how HR practices (ability-motivation-opportunity theory) can link to various attitudinal and behavioural consequences (social exchange theory and goal framing theory) while focusing on the organisational context (contingency theory). These provide the core theoretical framework for this study, though other theories may be discussed throughout the following sections.

### 2.3.1 Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory

Ability-motivation-opportunity (AMO) theory is one of the most used theoretical frameworks and management tools to understand the relationship between HRM and performance (Alagaraja, 2012). It was first proposed by Bailey (1993), who described the need for three independent components for employees to perform at work: appropriate motivation, necessary abilities, and the opportunity to

participate (*figure 1-1*). All three components can give researchers a performance measure (Keller et al., 2019). It was further developed by Applebaum et al. (2000), resulting in a micro-level AMO framework that became one of the most dominant theories of the effects of human resource initiatives (Ari et al., 2020; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016; Rayner & Morgan, 2017). AMO theory helps describe behaviour through psychological factors (individual dimensions) and situational factors (system dimensions) (*figure 1-1*).

An AMO framework can be an HRM system with three functional components that cover activities to create an opportunity to participate, increase employees' skills, and showcase appropriate incentives (Applebaum et al., 2000; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). Furthermore, Applebaum et al. (2000) identified that a business using AMO models would benefit from increased company-wide discretionary efforts; employees who went the extra mile positively impacted organizational performance. Later researchers built on the findings.

*Figure 1-1. A dynamic model for AMO for HRM research*
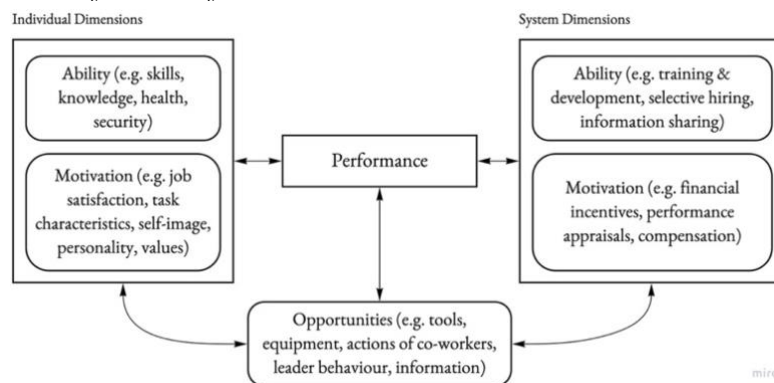


*Source: adjusted from Keller, Cafferkey & Townsend, 2019*

As previously described, linking HRM to the business's sustainability policies is critical to enhance the sustainability success of the organisation (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). Renwick et al. (2013) made a case for integrating environmental and HRM research, calling it green human resource management (GHRM). Their study analysed an industrial plant's productivity and described its current High-Performance-Work System (HPWS). The system has three AMO working components, which implicitly contributed to workers' willingness to engage and increased discretionary efforts (Renwick et al., 2013). An HRMS HPWS can have many different components within the AMO categories, such as employment security, team and decentralised decision-making, training and development, and information sharing (Zacharatos et al., 2005).

Limitations to ability-motivation-opportunity theory include a level of conceptual confusion within the AMO literature (Keller et al., 2019). Firstly, the three components may be too vague and can be open to interpretation when deemed convenient by researchers (Keller et al., 2019). Secondly, Keller et al. (2019) describe context as an important explanatory variable. For example, cross-collaboration may be an ability-enhancing approach in certain circumstances while providing an opportunity in others. As a result, the theory's use relies on specific circumstances (Keller et al, 2019). To address these limitations, I will use additional theories (2.4.2 & 2.4.3) to help guide the research on the contextual factors.

Nonetheless, Rayner and Morgan (2017) were able to capture empirical evidence that the AMO framework can help a company achieve more sustainability. Other researchers also investigated how AMO GHRM interventions drive sustainability through quantitative research (Abbas et al., 2020). For example, Anwar et al. (2020) explored how GRHM interventions significantly drove organisational citizenship behaviour to the environment. Yu et al. (2020) researched how AMO interventions helped foster sustainable cooperation with customers and suppliers. Pham, Hoang, and Phan (2019) identified how they promote environmental protection, and Singh et al. (2020) how AMO interventions promote environmental performance. Thus, these studies show how the AMO framework can also apply to the pro-environmental agenda within a company (Renwick, 2013; Sobaih et al., 2020). The following, social exchange theory, has been linked to AMO theory in the GHRM context by other researchers to explore the indirect and interactive effects of green human resource practices on an employee's commitment (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019).

## 2.3.2 Social exchange theory

The social exchange theory (SET) was developed by Saks (2006) in one of the first empirical studies in managerial psychology, which aimed to understand the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement mechanisms. Engagement refers to "the degree to which an individual is attentive and absorbed in the performance of their roles" (Saks, 2006, p. 602). According to researchers, the SET is one of the most influential conceptual frameworks to understand employees' workplace behaviour (Daily et al., 2008; Paille & Boreal, 2013). One of the SET descriptions are that "obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence" (Saks, 2006, p. 603). These are actions of one party that lead to the response to another such as an employee receiving economic and socioeconomic resources from their organisation, thus making them feel obliged to respond through the level of engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). According to Saks (2006) so long as each party sticks to the "rules of exchange" (p. 603), in theory, relationships shall evolve "into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments" (p. 603). On the other hand, internal forces, such as company culture, and external forces, such as the environment and institutional drivers, can influence the employee's behaviours and attitudes (Paauwe, 2004). It is helpful to understand these contexts before evaluating and analysing interventions. The SET theory helps the researcher understand the potential context effects, for example, that perceived[4] organisational support (POS) "relates positively to organisational commitment regardless of one's feeling of or orientation to obligation" (Wikhamn & Hall, 2021, p. 60).

The SET theory has the limitation that cause-effect relationships between specific HRM practices are challenging to understand due to the feedback loops between HRM and other practices, both internally and externally, which are hard to relate to a particular action (Ehnert, 2009). Nonetheless, some research has previously highlighted cause-effect relationships of specific actions and outcomes, for example, employees who showcase an emotional and intellectual commitment (cause) to the organisations they work for and have an increased effort (effect) exhibited in their jobs (Harter et al., 2002; Khan, 1990; Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006; Saks, 2019; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Furthermore, employees exhibiting a job characteristic with a high level of skill variety also

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[4] A person's perception means collecting information to respond to and understand present information of the environment. Previous researchers differentiate between conscious and unconscious perception (Lewald & Guski, 2003). Conscious perception describes the mostly arbitrarily controlled absorption of information, whereas unconscious perception signifies people pay attention to it without noticing, such as inner body or internal signals (muscles performing actions, smells, or noise). Perceptual sets in psychology influence how people see and act in the world and are heavily influenced by past experiences, motivations, beliefs, expectations, emotions, interests, and culture (Biggs et al., 2015; Hockenbury et al., 2016).

predict a strong level of job engagement (Saks, 2019). These results indicate that businesses can influence an employee's engagement willingness if they focus on intervention practices that drive employee engagement. When focussing on the SET and GHRM, Pham, Hoang, and Phan (2019) discovered that using the AMO and SET theory had the following four impacts of GHRM on employees: firstly, GHRM provokes employee's commitment to environmental activities. Secondly, the mutual interaction of green training and green organisational culture helps release employees' commitment to the environment (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). Thirdly, the commitment increases with a working system with three individual working components (AMO interventions). Lastly, the relationship between green organisational culture and green reward is ineffective in provoking green environmental behaviour (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019).

### 2.3.3 Contingency theory

The third theory suitable to answer my research questions is the contingency approach, a management theory that suggests management styles will depend on the organisational and external environment (Ehnert, 2009). The approach is based on early investigations by Schuler & Jackson (1987) that describe how transferability of practices only works if they are customised to meet the requirement of each context (Ehrnrooth & Björkman, 2012; Harney, 2016; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). Moreover, the contingency approach explains how the relationship between independent variables (HRM policies and practices) and dependent variables (performance) varies due to contexts such as the company size, technology, degree of unionisation, locations, sector, or strategic transformation. Contingency decisions have mainly been understood on the conditions of external and internal contexts (Northouse, 2001). The contingency theory suggests that leadership effectiveness depends on how well the leader adapts to fit the context (Northouse, 2001). A leader's effectiveness can be defined by the following factors:

- · Leadership style: a personality trait effectively balances task motivation and relation motivation in the right situations.
- · Employee-leader relationships: the business atmosphere, degree of loyalty, confidence in leadership, and appreciation towards the leader.
- · Task structure: the level of autonomy or information of how a task should be completed, more clearly explained tasks give the leader more control.
- · Power position: how authoritarian the leader is in certain situations and how much leaders must reward or punish their employees. (Northouse, 2001; Northouse, 2012)

Research shows that companies that can exhibit HRM practices in line with internal strategic fit can communicate and deliver on desired outcomes (Harney, 2016; Schuler & Jackson, 1987; Wood, 1999), such as the purpose-driven strategy or strategic transformations (Ehnert, 2009). Further, the external and internal fit must align with the environmental conditions the organisation moves within, such as climate change (Ehnert, 2009). Therefore, HRM departments will have to continuously update and restructure their HRM strategies with the ever-changing business contexts in mind (Ehnert, 2009). A failure to achieve a balance between internal and external alignment will ultimately lead to suboptimal performance and decrease HRM effectiveness (Harney, 2016; Wood, 1999; Yong et al., 2019).

### 2.3.4 Goal-framing theory

The goal-framing theory is a psychological theory that provides a theoretical understanding of which goals may influence people's behaviour (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). Birkinshaw et al. (2014) describe how employees may be interested in a topic in their work, leading them to neglect others. Tasks that feel

boring or uncertain are called 'hedonic goals'; tasks that interest employees and create more opportunities to earn extra money or company recognition, leading them to neglect the hedonic goals are called 'gain goals' (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). When a business has a significant area of concern to further a common goal, or norm-guided environmental behaviour (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007), it is called a 'pro-social goal' (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). Lindenberg and Steg (2007) describe how values will matter in terms of environmental behaviour. In essence, these are goals that motivate employees to ask themselves what they can do for the company or entire team to succeed, rather than advance their own interests.

### 2.3.5 Research framework

*Figure 1-2: Theoretical research framework*
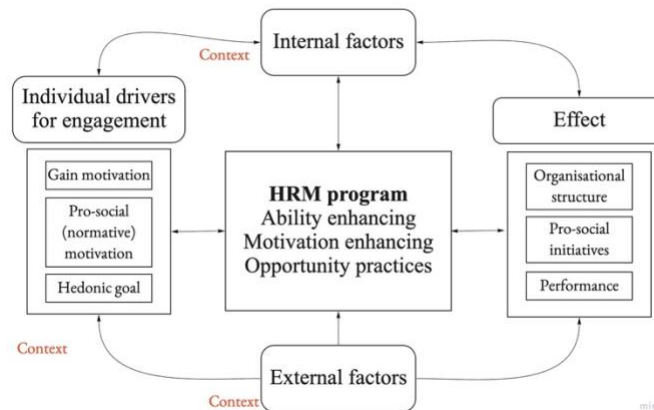


*Source: own design*

*Figure 1-2* shows a tailor-made framework based on the four theories introduced in this chapter. It represents the potential effects of an HRM intervention system while considering the potential causes and contingencies affecting the HRM program, its design, implementation and its effects. Firstly, I use the ability-motivation-opportunity theory to categorise the HRM program and to better understand its potential effects. Secondly, I use the social exchange theory to understand what influences the workplace behaviour, aiming to get a better understanding of the individual drivers of engagement and their effects. The goal-framing theory helps explain how personal goals may influence people's behaviour. Lastly, the contingency theory helps to demonstrate how the contextual factors (inside and outside of company boarders) influence a HRM design, implementation, and perception of a HR program. In the following sections, I will describe some contextual factors that may influence the implementation and effects of a HRM intervention.

## 2.4 Contextual factors that influence HRM

As noted with the contingency and SET theories, understanding contextual factors is important to describe the effects of HRM practices. Such factors can be internal and external corporate environmental factors, business strategy, and the specific human resource management strategy and practices (Kronsbein et al., 2014; Truss & Gratton, 1994). It is challenging to know all contextual factors, but researchers can identify some that may influence a practice's performance (Kronsbein et al., 2014). In previous studies, researchers divided the external environment into two areas: the external environment, and the organisational specific environment (Truss & Gratton, 1994). Furthermore, I

will also highlight some individual drivers that may influence how certain practices are perceived and their effects on the HRM interventions (Rey & Malbašić, 2019).

## 2.4.1 External factors
External factors are environmental and institutional topics such as social, technical, political/legal, and economic factors that likely influence an organisation's immediate environment (Truss & Gratton, 1994). According to Kane and Palmer (1995) some external factors are:

- · International and national economic changes
- · Technological changes
- · Culture and traditions
- · Legislations and regulations
- · Industry characteristics
- · Competitor actions
- · Actions of unions

The outside-in and inside-out viewpoints of economic, cultural, and political forces support an understanding of the relationship between strategy, practices, and the resulting performance (Beer et al., 1984; Paauwe, 2004). Changes in one or all these areas will very likely affect business practices (Kronsbein et al., 2014; Truss & Gratton, 1994). External forces mean that managers will also have to adapt to demands of the specific context when needed and integrate diverse perspectives and demand into company practices (Caligiuri et al., 2020). Furthermore, the external environment changes rapidly: "variation and volatility of contextual factors should not be neglected, and companies are well advised to have this component in contemplation" (Kronsbein et al., 2014, p. 3).

Regarding HRM, external forces must be considered as they impact the HR practices of an organisation (Punia & Sharma, 2015). According to Kane and Palmer (1995), external forces put pressures on HR that cannot be controlled or changed. However, effective HR managers must be able understand how to navigate these pressures to achieve the company's objectives (Kane & Palmer, 1995). The following section will examine aspects of the organisational environment that may influence HRM practices and performance (Truss & Gratton, 1994).

## 2.4.2 Internal factors
Paauwe (2004) describes some internal contextual factors that may influence the different methods and processes within a company. First, researchers discuss the influence that cognitive processes have on HRM design and implementation methods. Because people have different beliefs, values, and experiences, there may be diverging opinions on how a program should and can be implemented and how it is ultimately perceived—potentially resulting in diverging opinions about which HRM measures need to be taken (Paauwe, 2004).

Second, organisational power positions, hierarchies, and available resources may influence an HRM strategy. The type and number of available resources to implement an HRM strategy will influence how well the HR team can assemble and shape practices (Paauwe, 2004). Moreover, as previously mentioned, the collective culture, ideologies, and perspectives of the organisation will influence the shape and possibilities of HRM policies and implementation (Paauwe, 2004). Such factors include how the employees view the HRM team, what values are portrayed by the managers, and what perceptions amongst the organisation's members will influence the effectiveness of HR (Paauwe, 2004). Some

experts believe that differing worldviews is one of the most challenging obstacles to "forging robust, effective solutions and building a secure, sustainable, and flourishing civilisation in our twenty-first-century planetary era" (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017, p. 305).

Additionally, organisational size tends to be related to HRM policies and practices in use (Kane & Palmer, 1995). Business culture, traditions and diversity may support and advance the businesses goals and strategies (Kane & Palmer, 1995; Michelsen et al., 2016). While there are various processes companies can implement for sustainable development, and not all practices are people-focused, it is commonly understood that such practices will have to include as many people as possible, with solutions being inter- and transdisciplinary directly involving relevant social actors (Michelsen et al., 2016). Moreover, the organisation has a role in creating a work culture that fosters and encourages employees' willingness to engage and act in environmentally friendly behaviour (Paille & Boreal, 2013). For example, a workplace that allows employees to learn to change their sustainable behaviour has an influential culture (Klade et al., 2013). Some workplaces may influence employees' ability and motivation to learn by fostering an organisational learning culture, where employees are given the space, tools, resources, and time to learn. Some argue that this may result in higher employee satisfaction, personal development, and willingness to engage. Such cultures result in better performance-based outcomes (Egan et al., 2004). Most importantly, in these kinds of cultures "learning is now a collective experience. The stages of learning may be similar, but learning is now the result of an interactive, interdependent process" (Marsick & Watkins, 2003, p. 135). Similarly, agile cultures are spaces in which employees can learn, adapt, and transform with the business, increasing competitiveness and driving a purpose-driven transformation forward (Yong, 2021).

Furthermore, top management influences the implementation and design of HRM policies (Kane & Palmer, 1995). Because of the power they wield within the organisation, "human resource developers must redefine their relationships to leaders if they wish to influence the conversation taking place among senior leaders about the need to cultivate strategic/informal learning to improve performance and reach strategic goals" (Marsick & Watkins, 2003, p. 132). According to Kramer (1992), a lack of alignment between leadership and HRM may lead to policies being only partially implemented. More effective leadership teams are those who recognise and harness the collective ambition, learning abilities, and intelligence of their employees (Ready & Truelove, 2011; Rey & Malbašić, 2019). Moreover, in line with the contingency theory, leadership effectiveness will depend on the situation. Purpose-driven leadership (PDL) in this case, will have to fulfil the four factors[5] with the contextual obligations that involve being a PDL. Thus, each employee and leader must find their own purpose and work together to achieve common goals. Other researchers have described leadership functions that have traits within PDLs such as transformational leadership (Hall et al., 1969), servant leadership (Senge & Greenleaf, 2002), and situational leadership (Hersey, 1985).

### 2.4.3 Individual drivers

Employees' personal variables may affect how HRM practices are perceived (Truss & Gratton, 1994). Previous empirical research investigated antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Saks (2006; 2019) researched why individuals respond to practices with varying degrees of engagement. Robinson et al. (2004) describe drivers of engagement as a two-way relationship between employer and employee.

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[5] Leadership style, employee-leader relationships, task structure, and power position.

Hockenbury et al. (2016) explained that personality, including unconscious, intuitive, and conscious parts, forms a decision-making framework and may lead to certain behaviours. Many decisions and courses of action correspond differently according to a person's personality, experience in early life, and experiences in later life. A person's personality is also influenced by their worldviews, values, and individual culture. These are essential factors to keep in mind because polarising perspectives can be a barrier to HRM's programs and policies (Hopwood et al., 2003). The perceptions of HRM methods' effectiveness may depend on the person's knowledge, experience, or worldviews (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017). For example, sustainable development can mean different things and does not necessarily present a unitary ideal (Hedlund & De Witt, 2014). How 'development' or 'quality of life' is measured or understood may differ from person to person, and therefore provoke different responses among employees (Hedlund & De Witt, 2014).

According to Ren, Tang and Jackson (2018) effective GHRM policies must recognise employee's attitude and behaviour towards the environment. Organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (OCBE) can be described as the actions that employees are willing to engage in beyond their recommended and required job description (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). OCBE are behaviours "directed toward the natural environment: eco-initiatives, eco-helping, and eco-civid" (Ren et al., 2018, p. 789). According to Ren et al. (2018), a person's willingness to engage in OCBE can be influenced by HRM interventions.

Moreover, in goal-framing theory Lindenberg and Steg (2007) describe how a person's normative concerns play a crucial role in their degree of engagement in pro-environmental behaviours because they tend to base their behaviours more on what is right versus wrong. Furthermore, Birkinshaw et al. (2014) explain that the goal-framing theory "shows how easy it is for 'pro-social goals' to be driven out by 'gain or hedonic goals'," and it is common to see executives "bowing to short-term financial pressures" (Birkinshaw et al., 2014, p. 54). When developing strategies, program designers must recognise that some employees may have different perspectives on what task is most important and therefore the program design must be able to incentivise people with different goals to be willing to continue the pro-social goals (Birkinshaw et al., 2014).

Furthermore, employee tenure, level, and time at a company will affect how processes are perceived and influence whether or how a person decides to engage in specific tasks (Saks, 2006). An employee's job characteristics and, more importantly, skill variety will influence their willingness to engage (Saks, 2019).

Likewise, research shows that the perceived organisational purpose (POS) leads to more employee engagement (van Tuin et al., 2020). POS describes the employee's perception that the business values the work contributions and cares about the person's well-being. Furthermore, studies have shown that POS may result in less stress and employees more inclined to return to work after an injury (Eisenberger et al., 2016). POS can positively impact the individuals within an organisation, increasing their willingness to commit, fostering proactivity and extra-role behaviours (Lleo et al., 2019). In the social exchange theory, Saks (2019) explains how businesses can drive the POS by focussing on skill variety, giving employees the opportunity for social support, having effective rewards, recognition schemes and opportunities for learning and development. At the same time, it is one of the most challenging tasks to create a company purpose that employees "feel proud of being part of the company and leads to shared ambitions" (Rey & Bastons, 2019, p. 30). Lleo et al. describe events where employees perceive a robust organisational purpose in combination with satisfactory economic results; they can exhibit a unique culture (2019).

All these individual drivers present an added layer of complexity for global and local HR teams. Nevertheless, since our planetary issues are interconnected, transcultural, intergenerational, and transdisciplinary, cooperation between all parties, regardless of their values or concerns, is critical (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; Lleo et al., 2019; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010). HR practices that can be considered compelling and legitimate depend on the people affected by the interventions and the HR departments' communication processes (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; O'Brien & Wold, 2010). Still, the solutions, policies, organizational strategies, and perspectives must include cultural diversity and have the capacity for cultural adaptation and transformation (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; Lleo et al., 2019; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010).

## 2.5 HRM interventions for corporate sustainability

HR practices are the activities and interventions of HRM (Truss & Gratton, 1994). Studies have shown that the adoption of HR practices can strongly support businesses' environmental performance (Masri & Jaaron, 2016; Tulder et al., 2014). I will present different HRM and GHRM practices through the AMO framework's categorisation. The following practices are interdependent HR activities and account for how organisations may transform HRM practices into green initiatives that support sustainable development. Furthermore, the intervention strategies strive to enhance positive experiences while decreasing negative ones (Biggs et al., 2014). As the SET theory describes, there may be difficulties identifying causal linkage between HR practices and a particular business or employee performance because of the range of confounding variables (Truss & Gratton, 1994). Due to this research's limited time and scope, it is not possible to list all HR practices and outcomes of interventions for sustainable development. However, I aim to give the reader a good understanding of outcome or influence some practices can have on employees. The following practices are strategic human resource practices, as they ensure that each intervention is compatible with the company strategy (Truss, & Gratton, 1994).

### 2.5.1 Interventions enhancing green abilities

This section will briefly outline some practices that help increase employees' green abilities, attract, and develop talented staff (Renwick et al., 2013), and help contribute to larger organisational goals.

Pro-environmental skills and knowledge can be incentivised through training and development interventions of HRM (Renwick et al., 2013). Thus, a company can apply training and development policies (Ehnert, 2009; Renwick et al., 2012; Roorda & van Son, 2016; Stahl et al., 2007). Such policies are seen as critical "leading to sustained competitive advantage" (Ehnert, 2009) and can be utilised to increase person-specific knowledge around sustainability issues, helping accelerate the sustainability transition to influence an employee pro-environmental or organisational citizenship behaviour (Michelsen et al., 2016; Mierlo & Beers, 2020). Pro-environmental behaviour is the extent to which workers complete job tasks in an environmentally friendly way (Bissing-Olson et al., 2013). Some employees may not explicitly show these traits during the hiring process, they may acquire pro-environmental skills and behaviour traits while working at the company (Polman & Bhattacharya, 2016). Additionally, a sustainable green future needs people with more green employment skills (Pham, Hoang & Phan, 2019; Renwick et al., 2012). Therefore, green education platforms or skill development programs can help increase employees' green abilities (Renwick et al., 2013). Green skills are not the only important aspect of a sustainable future; core/soft skills such as awareness, analytical thinking, teamwork, innovation, and communication abilities are also critical (Mierlo & Beers, 2020; Strietska-Ilina, 2019). Therefore, one of the most significant tasks companies face today is building the companywide 'talent pipeline' to help transition sustainably and effectively (Stahl et al., 2007).

Each training and development intervention can be implemented at different levels (Mierlo & Beers, 2020). For example, collaborative learning platforms, where people learn about a topic as a group, can help people understand complex tasks better, as they can iteratively voice their interpretations and discuss or negotiate them with others (Mierlo & Beers, 2020). Organisational learning cultures can result in in better performance-based outcomes (Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004). "What is most significant at the organisational level is that learning is now a collective experience. The stages of learning may be similar, but learning is now the result of an interactive, interdependent process" (Marsick & Watkins, 2003, p. 135). Moreover, agile cultures are spaces in which employees can learn, adapt, and transform with the business, increasing competitiveness and driving a purpose-driven transformation forward (Yong, 2021). More effective leadership teams are those who recognise and harness the collective ambition, learning abilities and intelligence of their employees (Ready & Truelove, 2011; Rey et al., 2019). Individual learning platforms, interventions that train and develop employees at individual levels, can be more practical or effective for personal development (Mierlo & Beers, 2020).

Edgar et al. (2019) reported that education, training, and manager involvement influenced green organizational performance. Thus, leadership and management development are another necessary ability intervention since leaders must have the ability to navigate the new complex reality and uncertain environment (Chima & Gutman, 2020).

In sum, increasing an employee's abilities and understanding may help them better explain, interpret, apply, and demonstrate different perspectives and be more satisfied at work (Renwick et al., 2013). Furthermore, learning about complex sustainability issues may help the employee display more self-awareness of their pro-environmental behaviour therefore increasing the acceleration towards the business's sustainable goals.

## 2.5.2 Interventions motivating employee's green behaviour

The second element of the AMO framework is motivating employees (Renwick et al., 2013). Mitchell (1982) describes motivation as the psychological process that causes the increased direction, employee engagement, and persistence of certain behaviours. Deci (1975) separates motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsically motivated people get the willingness to act because of an external threat or promise of reward. Intrinsically motivated employees fulfil specific tasks because they want to; they are interested, excited, satisfied, and find it personally challenging (Deci, 1975; Doran & Ryan, 2017). The purpose of the motivation interventions is to motivate employees, align their wants with the employer's needs (Birkinshaw et al., 2014; Laffont & Martimort, 2002), and provide the employee with a reason to follow a particular course of action (Doran & Ryan, 2017).

### *2.5.2.1 Extrinsic motivation interventions*

One extrinsic motivation example is a green performance appraisal (Renwick et al., 2013). It describes the intervention where employees are held accountable for the environmental management performance and the broader management objectives ensuring green management work overtime (Masri & Jaaron, 2016; Renwick et al., 2013). Policies and management systems such as performance appraisals can help send positive signals for the employees to engage in voluntary and otherwise unrewarded organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (Paille & Boreal, 2013).

Green rewards are HRM interventions that may act as positive incentive mechanisms in which sustainable practice outcomes are in line with corporate objectives; reward systems help incentivise the implementation of environmental practices (Masri & Jaaron, 2016; Renwick et al., 2013). The

rewards can be financial or non-financial (Arulrajah et al., 2015). According to Renwick et al. (2013), environmental rewards and recognition systems have "a significant impact on employee willingness to generate eco-initiatives" (p. 6) and encourage green behaviour. The core success of these initiatives depends on the recognition that the rewards are made available to employees at different levels within the organisation (Arulrajah et al., 2015).

### 2.5.2.2 Intrinsic motivation interventions

Intrinsic motivation practices target people's values, beliefs, norms, and tacit knowledge[6]; they are more complex to influence than extrinsic motivation practices (Oxenswärdh, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013). Research shows that intrinsic motivation increases problem-solving, creativity, and innovation (Doran & Ryan, 2017). Moreover, some studies have shown that an employee's commitment to participating in pro-environmental behaviour depends on the individual environmental concern (Daily et al., 2008). The level of personal environmental concern positively impacts organisational citizenship behaviour for the environment (Daily et al., 2008). Thus, the organisation needs to strengthen the alignment between organisational values and goals and employees' values (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018; Tudler et al., 2014).

HR may apply intrinsic motivation practices through a diverse application, diversified, transparent and continuous communication of company policy, and strategy decisions (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; O'Brien & Wold, 2010). Consequently, continuous, and transparent communication of HRM may be a helpful tool to combat the lack of common consensus around large-scale behavioural change and "dynamics that tend to dominate stakeholder negotiations" (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017, p. 322).

Employees may become more intrinsically motivated and engaged when they perceive meaning in their work (Khan, 1990; Kahn & Fellows, 2013; Knight et al., 2016; Wright & Pandey, 2011). This, in turn, can positively impact the financial and competitive performance of the business (Knight et al., 2016). Firstly, each message and process within the business should acknowledge, include, and resonate with the different worldviews of employees (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017). Furthermore, messages can highlight what the company is doing well so that employees recognise that working at the business positively impacts society, thereby increasing the intrinsic motivation to engage further (Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018).

Thus, messages and interventions which influence employees' perception and experience of leadership support, and humility and openness of top management, can help instil trust and give the employees a positive psychological effect, such as increasing the likelihood of the employee's positive job attitudes and their willingness to engage in more sustainable behaviour for the environment (Alagaraja, 2012; Chima & Gutman, 2020; Daily et al., 2008; Paille & Boreal, 2013). Furthermore, message clarity and understanding may influence perceived work-culture support and strategic alignment to motivate employees to engage more in their work tasks (Biggs et al., 2014). Businesses can prove organisational commitment to sustainability by publishing and communicating green performance indicators (Daily et al., 2008). This will allow employees to inform themselves and make better judgements and critical assessments of their environmental performance (Daily et al. 2008).

Additionally, employee recognition and appreciation mechanisms such as company-wide shoutouts may influence workers' intrinsic motivation (Robbins, 2019; Saks, 2019). However, there are limits to

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[6] Tacit knowledge: knowledge that is hard to identify such as personal experience, insight, intuition (Wagner, 1987).

recognition mechanisms. Positive feedback is usually based on results or performance; therefore, it is often conditional, based on the past, and there is a limited amount of recognition the company can share before it has a decreased effect (Robbins, 2019).

Nonetheless, while motivation is inherently necessary for the company to pursue pro-social goals, it is an inherently fragile concept and takes a great deal of effort to maintain (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). Furthermore, pro-social goals can be easily replaced or abandoned by other gain or hedonic goals (Birkinshaw et al., 2014; Fuster & Meier, 2010). Deci (1975) also suggests that extrinsic incentives may destroy intrinsic motivations.

### 2.5.3 Interventions increasing opportunities and employee empowerment

This section describes practices that focus on creating more opportunities to engage in environmental management initiatives. Researchers found that work engagement opportunities significantly influence key individual and organisational outcomes and have become an essential consideration for many organisations (Knight et al., 2019). These practices help encourage innovation and offer systems where creative solutions can be shared and the company can be challenged on their environmental progress.

Firstly, knowledge sharing with employee empowerment[7] and involvement (GEI) systems means involving employees in different decision-making capabilities and providing them with opportunities to engage in environmental management initiatives and activities (Gupta, 2018). These are often digital systems where employees can communicate, express their ideas, and participate in the strategy or policy discourse, letting the employee contribute to the formation of the company vision. The result can help foster a sense of ownership and alignment with the organisational objectives and employees' individual goals and capabilities (Biggs et al., 2014; Gupta, 2018). Moreover, as Meer's (2018) study made clear, a more direct form of empowerment relates more to job satisfaction than a form of empowerment aimed at the collective voice "because of the role trust plays in the employment relation" (Meer, 2018, p. 366). Empowerment and autonomy also increase job satisfaction and trust between employees and management (Meer, 2018). Additionally, GEI systems may support employees in obtaining a clear vision of development policies by fostering mutual learning opportunities. They may increase employee involvement in solving green problems by involving them in, for example, practice sessions and workshops (Gupta, 2018; Masri & Jaaron, 2016).

Moreover, intervention system systems that provide workers with the opportunity to participate in environmental management activities and initiatives may serve both the individuals and the business (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). Employee empowerment contributes to building self-confidence and increased people participation in the business, thus potentially improving efficiency (Turkmenoglu, 2019). Furthermore, businesses implementing empowerment systems may experience improved communication among employees and management (Turkmenoglu, 2019).

Generally, GEI systems must be expressly set up for employees to have the opportunity to engage in environmental management schemes, and there must be an assurance that an engagement does not result in punishment for introducing different ideas (Gupta, 2018). One type of GEI in HRM is a high-performance-working system (HPWS) which creates an environment that allows more involvement and responsibility (Edgar et al. 2020). Previous researchers have examined how an organisation's HPWS and an individual's AMO affected the performance outcomes and behaviours

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[7] Empowerment means that "employees gain decision rights, or influence, over how the organization is managed, which goes beyond autonomy in their own job" (Meer, 2018, p. 364).

(Edgar et al. 2020)—identifying how an individual's AMO positively affects tasks and contextual performance of the HPWS.

Another example of an opportunity intervention is enabling green decision-making opportunities (Renwick et al. 2013). Such interventions can be platforms, programs, or systems that give employees the chance to influence the company's overall decision-making policies, practices, or strategies (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013) by feeding back the ideas and comments of employees to top management. Involving employees provides management the opportunity to tap into employees' tacit knowledge (Renwick et al., 2013), which is valuable because they often have more knowledge of local contexts and can make practical suggestions for environmental improvements (Renwick et al., 2013.) Lastly, employee involvement in the sustainability strategy leads to greater identification with the organisation in times of uncertainty and complexity (Chong, 2009; Tulder et al., 2014).

In the previous section, I introduced HR practices and interventions that may affect the company's sustainability performance. I characterised them into three components. First, ability-enhancing interventions, such as training and development practices, further employees' green employment skills and the creation of individual and collective learning abilities. Second, in the introduction to motivating practices, I described extrinsic and intrinsic motivation mechanisms and highlighted helpful tools (e.g., ongoing communication) that could accelerate employee motivation. Lastly, I described specific interventions that increase employees' opportunities to engage in environmental initiatives such as GEI systems and green decision-making opportunities. In summary, practices and interventions can enhance employees' sustainability and collective capabilities, which are vital to navigate an era of exponential change. Furthermore, if interventions can create behavioural changes at the individual level, in aggregation they can have a more significant impact at the organisational level (Michalek et al., 2019).

## 2.6 Feedback and side effects of HRM interventions

Apart from the positive effects of HRM, Ehnert (2009) has noted potential side- and feedback effects of HRM practices: unintended adverse effects on the company. In fact, one of the biggest HRM challenges is balancing different goals and values to ensure a positive feedback effect (Ehnert, 2009), as feedbacks can be positive (adding a benefit to the company) or negative (cost for the business), internal or external, and tangible and intangible. Paradoxically, strategies that are supposed to ensure organisational success and competitiveness can also reduce the businesses' strategic ability, thus endangering the organisational viability, leading to detrimental feedback loops for the business itself (Ehnert, 2009).

As described in a previous section (section 2.6.3), an increased employee contribution may improve efficiency and business practices (Turkmenoglu, 2019). However, an overly motivated employee may also have more expectations, thus demanding more and contributing to the erosion of trust if higher expectations were not met (Ehnert, 2009).

HRM interventions can be costly, time-consuming, and not directly related to the company's financial goals (Ehnert, 2009). 'Over-designed' interventions can cause a waste of resources (Delery, 1998). According to Andreeva et al. (2017), some HR interventions are more helpful than others when pushing for different types of innovation (radical or incremental). As a result, the HR incentives' level of complexity should align with how innovative the result should be (Andreeva et al., 2017). For example, incremental innovation means more minor changes to already existing products, services,

and technologies. The ambiguity of such innovation is probably lower, and the processes probably include some knowledge about the potential outcome (Kang et al., 2007). Meanwhile, radical innovation is characterised by significant changes to existing products, markets, or services, called 'out of the box' solutions (Andreeva et al., 2017). Generally, outcomes of such interventions are often unknown and may significantly reduce existing organisational rules and expectations (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Tensions and dilemmas will be a continuous process HRM will have to actively manage (Ehnert, 2009). For example, economic HR goals may include increased productivity, reducing personnel costs or increasing performance. Social HR goals include the fulfilment and duty of care towards the employees or behavioural and development goals (Ehnert, 2009). According to Ehnert (2009), goals are in multiple tension between shareholder value, economic efficiency and humanity, environmental sustainability and the balance between company and stakeholder demand. Effective HRM means creating a balance between these different aspects. However, tensions cannot be controlled entirely because different contingencies will impact HRM outcomes and performance on an organisational and individual level (Paauwe, 2004).

An external HRM intervention effect occurs because lines between home and work life are blurring, so HRM practices may affect individual behaviour outside company borders as well (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For example, previous studies show a strong correlation between certain sustainable behaviours at home and similar behaviours at work (Tudor et al., 2007). One of the first works to research this phenomenon helped highlight this matter (Klade et al., 2013). It studied how implementing a behaviour-changing intervention for sustainable consumption within the business contributed towards more pro-environmental behaviour at home. Thus, HRM interventions at work may affect people's lives outside of company borders as well (Klade et al., 2013).

Human resource managers can apply multiple different ability-motivation-opportunity practices aimed at influencing workplace processes and employee behaviours. However, it is up to each HR manager to decide its methods in line with the company strategy and needs. Lastly, the HRM interventions' effectiveness may depend on an employee's perception and external forces shaping the HRM program.

# 3 Research design, materials, and methods

This chapter outlines the overall research design and the methods used to answer the research questions. This research focuses on the phenomenon of a purpose-driven enterprise's human resource management program for sustainable development, delving into its design, implementation, and effects on employees and the business.[8]

RQ1: How is the employee engagement program for a sustainable development of Danone designed and implemented?
RQ2: What are the reported outputs and effects of the program?
RQ3: How do employees in North America and Mexico perceive the program?
RQ4: What type of contextual factors influence how employees implement and perceive the program?

## 3.1 Research design

I used the following phases when conducting the case study research (Rashid et al., 2019):

1) Foundation phase
   a. Philosophical considerations
   b. Technical considerations
   c. Logic considerations
2) Pre-field phase
3) Field phase
4) Reporting phase

Firstly, I decided on the philosophical considerations (ontology, epistemology, and paradigm choices). A qualitative case study approach assumes relativist ontology, which excludes the chance of a 'true' construction, meaning there is no objective world or truth (Rashid et al., 2019). Epistemology affects the choice of research method and objective; in this case, an epistemological perspective provided a framework for the prediction and descriptions of the population-specific worldviews (Merriam, 2009). Paradigm choices are understood as "a basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this case, I chose the views of interpretivism and critical theory, which provided multiple views of the research problems and access to the participants' experiences. Moreover, I aimed to critically review the HRM program and make some commentary or intervention suggestions for future HR program designers that want to create a program for a company's sustainability innovation.

Secondly, I prepared qualitative research in the technical consideration phase, as suitable to my interpretive research stance (Rashid et al., 2019). I followed Verschuren's (2003) description of a case research methodology, in which "one single or a few cases are studied by means of an indiscriminate set of methods and procedures" (p. 137). Similarly, Creswell (1994) defines cases studies as instances where a researcher can explore a single phenomenon (the case), bounded by time and activity (a programme, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data-collecting procedures during a sustained period of time. I conducted a qualitative

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[8] It is necessary to note that the words 'enterprise', 'company', 'business', 'corporation' and 'organisation' are used interchangeably.

exploration of how Danone's specific HRM intervention programs work, thus providing a more detailed conclusion than a purely statistical, quantitative evaluation (Knight et al., 2019). Case studies are instrumental to understanding the specifics of programs or interventions when they are implemented in a new setting, when the outcome warrants further research, or when research is conducted in an uncertain or complex environment (Crowe et al., 2011; Yin, 2014). Thus the case study approach enabled me to answer all four research questions while providing a relatively complete understanding of the nature of complexity and the importance of the context of the specific program (Rashid et al., 2019).

In the logic consideration phase, I used the mixed approach of induction and deduction. First, I identified the research questions and case study object; then, I delved into the background and literature review to fit the themes in question. Afterwards, I coded deductively from a conceptual model that I continuously adapted after the inductive revision of coding categories based on the practitioner review. The following sections will describe the pre-field, field, and reporting phases of the case study research.

## 3.2 Case Study Selection

In the pre-field phase, I conducted more detailed case study research, where I decided on the case study and the protocols to collect the empirical material (Yin, 2009). I had previously been introduced to Danone and their purpose-driven strategy at the Leaders on Purpose summit (Leaders on Purpose, n.d.). Thus, I was aware of some of the internal programs Danone applies to accelerate its sustainable development. After careful consideration, I decided to research its unique employee engagement program, *One Person, One Voice, One Share* (OPOVOS). This program is designed to accelerate Danone's sustainable agenda at the global and local levels and foster the ownership mindset of its employees. The approval from the global HR team turned out to be a vital step in collecting data because they helped connect me with program designers and implementers at the beginning of the research process. After the first interview with one of the program's designers, the program designers and I discussed which locations of the program implementation to focus on, ultimately agreeing on Mexico and North America (the United States and Canada).

## 3.3 Methods used to collect data

In the field phase, I collected empirical data and approached the research participants. I used a range of empirical material collection tools (interviews, document collection, online research) to answer the research questions. The framework (*figure 1-2*) can help readers of the thesis understand how I sorted and organised the data.

Case study approaches usually involve collecting multiple sources of data and evidence (Crowe et al., 2011). Therefore, I used a qualitative research approach with added complementary data from online research and company documents (mixed methods approach) (Verschuren, 2003). At the beginning of the research project, I was introduced to Danone's VP of Culture and Engagement. After briefly outlining the research aim via email to Danone HR, including a one-pager outlining the research framework, I had a video call with them. I described what I intended to do in more detail, and I received a verbal confirmation during the call.

Following confirmation from Danone, I applied several methods for data collection to ensure a triangulation of data and information (Eisenhardt, 2007; Verschuren, 2003). Researchers state that

data from multiple sources can help lead to similar conclusions by approaching the research from different angles, thus creating a more holistic picture (Crowe et al., 2011). Therefore, first, I used purposive samples to ensure specific explanations can appear in the study. For example, some specific documents about the program were discovered via online research, and some were sent to me by Danone. Secondly, convenience samples had to be drawn when other samples were not available, accessible, or easy to locate (chapter 8.1). Most importantly, the case study evaluation was mainly completed through thirteen in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants (Verschuren, 2003). These interviews provided access to the perspectives and experiences of those involved in designing and implementing the program, in contrast to how it was perceived by the program users (appendix, p. 88). Additionally, the qualitative research approach of semi-structured interviews can be conducted at lower cost and less time, the interviewer can clarify if needed, informants can go into greater detail, and observation of verbal and non-verbal behaviour is possible (Groot & Steg, 2010).

Furthermore, this approach allows for comparability and reliability for the researcher and interviewee to stick to the topic at hand (Crowe et al., 2011). My case study research follows linear but iterative processes (Yin, 2014). Through the multiple data collection methods, I aimed to construct a data set appropriate to answer the research questions (Verschuren, 2003). I spoke to the following employees at Danone:

France
· Global HR Engagement Junior Manager (program designer) [A][9]
· Global Benefits and Equity Senior Manager (program designer) [C]
· Global Sustainability Integration – Danone Way (program user) [D]
· Senior Manager, Global Sustainability Performance (program user) [N]

Danone North America (DNA)
· Transformation Manager (regional coordinator) [F]
· Trade Marketing Director – Yogurt (regional volunteer) [G]
· Talent Acquisition Coordinator (local volunteer, studied sustainability) [H]
· Procurement Manager (local volunteer) [K]

Danone Mexico
· Transformation Associate Manager (regional coordinator) [B]
· Growth Hacking, Cost and Procurement (regional volunteer, RV) [I]
· Head of Sustainability (program user and squad member/local volunteer) [L]
· Industrial Production Manager (program user) [G]
· Cycles & Procurement Ingredients Associate Manager (program user) [M]

Not only was I introduced to relevant interviewees by the program designers, but other participants also helped introduce me to study participants who are not directly involved in the program design. Thus, snowball sampling was a critical method of contacting interviewees. Lastly, I messaged people on LinkedIn to get a more general opinion of the program users. I adjusted my questions based on the person's role and how they have been involved in the program. I drafted three different interview structures (appendix, p. 88):

1. The interview questions for the program designers.

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[9] The letters in brackets are the method to identify participants' words in the following findings chapter.

2. The questions for program implementers in North America and Mexico.
3. The program users and volunteers.

Depending on a participant's role and their involvement in the program, I chose a specific framework. Each interview took between 35 and 90 minutes, depending on the participant's availability. When there were time restrictions, I ensured the main questions were answered. Questions were phrased in an objective, non-leading way; for example, instead of asking for "problems" in the program, they were asked to explain "what can be improved." The original set of questions was discussed with the academic supervisor. They were not pre-tested due to time constraints. Before the interview, each person was informed that the interview would be recorded and transcribed for data analysis. I used NVivo to help transcribe the interviews.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

Lastly, in the reporting phase, I conducted the empirical material collection and interpretation methods. I will present the case study in a 'story-like manner' (Rashid et al., 2019). The interview data were analysed with the deductive development of theory-driven codes to answer the research questions. I conducted a content analysis by transcribing the interviews, highlighting patterns, and learning what antecedents created behavioural and attitude changes. Furthermore, I researched whether the program's intended goals were experienced and what other consequences the program may have had on the employee.

The coding structure contained definitions and examples used to set the context before the interviews and analysis (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2010). I next identified additional coding categories inductively during the interview and coding process. These were added to the initial conceptual model (Decuir-Gunby et al., 2010) (appendix, p. 91); I verified or dismissed the information I collected in the literature review. With the coding framework and information, I used NVivo to code the data I had collected to start interpreting the results of the interviews and material such as reports, press releases and videos (appendix, p. 91). I compared the results and findings of the practitioner review with the literature review to holistically answer the research questions. Finally, descriptive coding for qualitative research helped identify the topic within the data, summarised in a word or short phrase (Saldana, 2013) (appendix, p. 92). This helps provide an organisational grasp of the study (Saldana, 2013). The process of labelling, organising, and interpreting the data aims to identify different themes and help the researcher answer RQ's. The coding categories were reviewed iteratively for overlaps, redundancy, or potential restructuring.

## 3.5 Qualitative research limitations

Whilst case study research has many benefits, I would like to highlight some limitations. Firstly, this case study may have benefited from more longitudinal data (Yin, 2009). Because there may be changes to the program over time, it would be beneficial to understand how this affects the program's impact and how employees perceive it.

At the time of this research, like most businesses worldwide, Danone was faced with incredible pressures and challenges to function within the uncertain and challenging environment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there were effects on how the OPOVOS program has been rolled out since 2020. For example, the pandemic affected how the program was implemented, as some aspects were put on hold. Therefore, the following research findings must be understood with the

lens of the current uncertain environment. Additionally, speaking to employees about their experience in the past may affect their ability to describe events that happened, as time can distort people's opinions and perceptions (Kensinger, 2011).

There can also be disadvantages in completing a single case study research, namely, the lack of qualitative rigour, scientific rigour and analytical power through limited pervasiveness and generalizability (Verschuren, 2003; Yin, 2009). Replicability is another potential issue. Because I received approval from Danone headquarters (HQ) to research the employee engagement program, HQ introduced me to many interviewees. Without the approval and interest from HQ, other researchers may find it challenging to replicate the study. I aim to combat these issues through the transparent methodology description about the case study selection, data collection, and justification for selecting methods (Rashid et al., 2019).

Furthermore, I did not have the chance to speak with standard program users in Danone North America (DNA). Therefore, I could not compare how to program users perceive the program in general in DNA versus Mexico. Moreover, the self-reported data from the interviews may be inflated or adjusted based on people's personal bias (Saks, 2019). There must be a distinction between the program's actual consequences and perceived effects (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016). I used online research of Danone's public statements, social media posts by Danone employees, and follow-up emails to employees to ensure the validity of interview respondents' claims and statements. Despite these limitations, the case study approach allows complex events, developments, and program-based services to be studied in detail and a real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011).

# 4 Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings retrieved from Danone's company websites, documents, and information gathered via interviews with Danone employees (see 4.2 for a list of interviewees) unless otherwise stated. The findings are structured and analysed according to the analytical framework presented in chapter 2. First, I provide context by briefly introducing the company's history and sustainability drivers. Then, the employee engaging program of the business will be introduced and the implications of the program will be discussed.

*Figure 4-1. Danone's mission statement*

"BRINGING HEALTH THROUGH FOOD TO AS
MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE."

*Source: Danone, 2019a*

## 4.1 An introduction to Danone

In this section I will provide the reader with a brief intro to the case study company, Danone Société Anonyme (S.A.), and describe some key historical and contextual internal and external factors. It will provide the reader with an understanding of the background and context in which Danone's HR program *One Person, One Voice, One Share* (OPOVOS) was designed and implemented.

Danone S.A. (Société anonyme[10]) is a publicly listed, multinational food and beverage company based in Paris, France. It employs over 102,000 people in more than 57 countries, 70–80 per cent of which are frontline workers. The MNC was founded in Barcelona, Spain, and sells essential dairy and plant-based food products (52 per cent of sales), specialised nutrition (30 per cent of sales), and water (18 per cent of sales). In 2017, Danone initiated a strategic move away from an exclusive focus on dairy and towards plant-based food and drinks, meeting customer demands for more healthy and sustainable food choices. In 2019, Danone's waters business was second highest in packaged water by volume worldwide (Danone, 2019a). For specialised nutrition, products include nutrition for babies, nutrition in times of illness, and nutrition for aging people. Danone is currently listed on Euronext Paris and the OTCQX market via an American Depositary Receipt (ADR). At the time of the research, the company had a market value of around 58€ per share (Yahoo Finance, 2021). Danone competes with other food and beverage powerhouses such as Nestlé and Unilever.

In 2019, Danone products sold in over 120 markets, generating sales of €25.3 billion; its two main regions are Europe and North America (USA and Canada), covering 54 per cent of its global sales. However, the United States, China, and France are the top three countries in sales. Its portfolio includes *Aptamil* (number one brand), *Activia* (number two), *Evian*, *Danone* (number three), *Volvic,* and *Nutricia.* Local market brands include *Aqua, Bonafont, Horizon Organic, Silk,* and *Vega.* The business continuously evolves by selling through the retail landscape and finding new ways to distribute their products such as fast-growing convenience stores, impulse stores, and online shops.

In 2019, Danone products sold in over 120 markets, generating sales of €25.3 billion; its two main regions are Europe and North America (USA and Canada) covering 54 per cent of global sales.

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[10] Société anonyme is a public company in some countries, equivalent to a public limited company in the UK and a public company in the United States.

However, the United States, China and France are the top three countries in sales. Its portfolio includes *Aptamil*, *Activia*, *Evian*, *Danone Volvic* and *Nutricia* and local brands including *Aqua*, *Bonafont*, *Horizon Organic*, *Silk* and *Vega*. The business continuously evolves by selling through the retail landscape and are finding new ways to distribute their products such as through fast-growing convenience stores, impulse stores, and online shops.

Due to its size, Danone faces significant cross-border complexity in a globalised environment with over 100,000 employees spread across 57 countries. Its aim to serve more than its shareholders has been deeply rooted in the company since its first product launch in 1919: After the First World War, people in Spain were suffering from malnutrition. A yogurt factory owner, Isacc Carasso, added lactic ferments to his yoghurts to combat the malnutrition epidemic. In 1927, the company moved from Spain to France, opening a plant in Paris which later became Danone (Danone, 2019e).

To this day, the company publicly celebrates its approach, defined as the 'Dual Project', first expressed in 1972 by Antoine Riboud in Marseille, to create both shareholder and societal value. This dual ambition remains the anchor point of the company's values (Danone, 2019e). In 2017, former CEO Emmanuel Faber declared Danone's re-commitment to its dual ambition and the 'One Planet. One Health' (OPOH) vision (Faber, 2017). The words 'One Planet' and 'One Health' represent the idea that people's health and the health of the planet are interconnected. Danone leadership argued that contemporary unequal wealth concentration is a serious problem and food inequalities are a large aspect of social injustice (Faber, 2017). In a panel in 2020, Danone's Vice President of Culture described how "economic success needs to go hand in hand with social progress" and "that Danone recognised the importance to serve the needs of society" (Berg, 2020). In 2019, Danone became the first company to adopt the French legal framework of 'Enterprise à Mission[11]', a legal framework in which the business can tackle considerable social and environmental issues within their business model. At the time, 99 per cent of the company's shareholders backed the move (Danone, 2021b)

During the time of this research, on 15 March 2021, after more than seven years at the helm, Danone's CEO and chairman Emmanuel Faber was removed by its board of directors primarily because of activist investors[12]. Now Danone's regional CEOs are acting as interim CEOs until the board of directors finds a suitable replacement[13]. Nonetheless, the program designers confirmed the continuation of the employee engagement program *One Person, One Voice, One Share* (OPOVOS), despite the restructuring and uncertainties looming.

### 'LOCAL FIRST' TRANSFORMATION
One of Danone's current strategic changes are its 'local first' initiative and adaptation plan was appointed by Danone leadership in 2020. The strategy aims to transform the Danone into a business that is less centralised and more focussed on local people and strategy: "By unifying the management entities in each country to empower them with greater autonomy to simplify the decision-making process" (Danone, 2021a). As a result of the global pandemic, the business launched the

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[11] "The French 'société à mission' status is defined by Article L.210-10 of the French Commercial Code, introduced by the 22 May 2019 law commonly known as the 'PACTE' Law" (Danone, 2021).

[12] The two shareholders, Bluebell Capital Partners and Artisan Partners, argued Danone's market performance suffered over the last five years compared to its competitors Unilever and Nestlé (Gansbeke, 2021; Gretler, 2021). Furthermore, in 2020, the company lost a quarter of its water sales value for the first time in more than 30 years due to a decrease in out-of-home consumption (Vidalon, 2020).

13 All interviewees showed their strong support for Faber, describing a sense of loss at his departure. Over half described how they worried about the business hiring a new CEO with less ambitious purpose-driven targets.

transformation, aiming to restore value creation in a COVID world and saving €1bn in costs. The company seeks to achieve this goal by reorganising the business into two macro-regions, Danone North America and Danone International. Danone International will be organised into five zones; the zone presidents will report back to the Danone International CEO (Danone, n.d.h).

Faber (2020) describes the full commitment from all teams for the 'local first' initiative, explaining how the project considers some of Danoners' insights from the OPOVOS consultation, especially on ways of working and the need for local empowerment. HR managers described how it is now more key to listen to employees to ensure the business can move forward towards a more sustainable and now, more local direction. Thus, governance programs to engage employees are even more important and will continue to be reinforced in the future. In my study I will look more closely to the implementation of OPOVOS in two regions, below I provide a brief overview of Danone North America and Danone Mexico.

## DANONE NORTH AMERICA

Danone North America is one of Danone's subsidiaries, established in the United States in 1942 as Dannon Milk Product, Inc. Now, it is called Danone North America (DNA), formed after Dannon's acquisition of the purpose-driven company WhiteWave Foods, and consisting of approximately 6000 employees. "The histories of Danone and WhiteWave share common traits as purpose-driven, health-focused category leaders, which make for a perfect match. Danone's ambition is to produce healthful foods that create economic and social value and nurture natural ecosystems through sustainable agriculture. We will accelerate Danone's 2020 sustainable profitable growth journey by offering a wider choice of better-for-you and great tasting food and beverage alternatives for any moment of the day" (WhiteWave Foods, n.d.). The merger was worth over $10 billion, described as a "perfect match of vision, culture and business" (Danone North America, 2016). DNA's brands are distributed across the United States and Canada, and include *Silk, Too Good, Activia, Vega, Danuni, International Delight*, and *DanActive*. In 2018, the business achieved B Corp[15] certification two years ahead of schedule. Currently, the CEO of Danone North America is jointly leading the business with CEO of Danone International; both will oversee Danone together (co-CEO and Chief Executive Officer International).

## GRUPO DANONE MÉXICO

Danone Latin America includes Mexico, Brazil, and the Southern Cone. It has approximately 23,500 employees. Grupo Danone México operates under Danone Latin America and has three areas of expertise: Bonafont[16] (waters for jugs), Bonafont (small bottles) and EDP (essential dairy & plant-based products). Currently, each of these three areas has its own general manager (GM). At the time of this research, due to the 'local first' program the structure of Danone México is changing. It will have one GM, one quality director, one sales director, and one marketing director to cover all three areas instead of separate management groups for each area. They will in turn report to the president of Danone Latin America. The following section will introduce the reader to *Danone's* 'purpose-driven strategy its 'One Planet, One Health' frame of action.

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[15] "Certified B Corporations are businesses that meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy." (B Corporation, n.d.)

[16] Bonafont, its mineral water business unit in Mexico, is an integral part of Danone. It was created in 1992 by Mexican shareholders to accelerate the bottled water industry. It became part of Danone's portfolio in 1996. The main plant is located in Toluca Valley, with other plants strategically located throughout Mexico responding to growing market demands.

## 4.2 Danone's 'One Planet, One Health' frame of action

At an online conference, Danone vice president of culture and engagement explained how they recognise Danone's influence and potential for positive change and that transformation needs to happen within the larger system (Berg, 2020).

### 4.2.1 Danone's environmental impact

The complexity of Danone's transformation towards people's health, preserving the planets resources, entrusting people's futures, and ensuring equal opportunities is highlighted by Danone's areas of environmental impact which cover four topics (Danone, 2019a):

1. Climate change
2. Regenerative agriculture
3. Water stewardship
4. Circular economy

In 2015, Danone's GHG emissions amounted to over 24 million tons (Danone, 2016). Between 2015 and 2030, the company set itself a 30 per cent reduction in absolute emissions on scope one and two[17] (Danone, 2020d). In 2019, the business reached its goal 29 per cent reduction in scope one and two emissions. By 2050 it aims to become carbon neutral across the entire value chain (Danone, 2019a).

Regarding Danone's agricultural practices, they aim to tackle issues such as soil health, loss of biodiversity, animal welfare and water scarcity through action plans such as manure management, feed optimisation and animal welfare assessment tools (Danone, 2019a). Also, the business aims to empower future generations of farms by creating long-term contracts with its producers (Danone, 2019a).

Another environmental impact is its water, where 89 per cent of its water usage is linked to its farming activities. In a study Danone conducted in 2019, they recognised that over 40 per cent of its industrial sites faced the risk of water scarcity and explained how the figure is likely to increase over the next decade. By 2030 they aim for 100 per cent of its production sites to have implemented a "holistic 3R approach, to reduce, reuse and recycle the water" (Danone, 2020e). Both its regenerative agriculture program and water stewardship programs are described as essential in achieving more "secure, adequate and reliable access to water for agricultural production" (Danone, 2020e).

Danone's ability to provide for customers worldwide with food and beverages means some business practices still come at the expense of the environment. In fact, in 2018, Greenpeace reported how Danone is the one of the world's largest plastic polluter (Greenpeace International, 2018). However, according to Danone's website, as of 2017, over 86 per cent of the company's packaging is "reusable, recyclable or compostable, and over 50 per cent of our water volumes are sold in reusable jugs" (Danone, 2019g).

### 4.2.2 Danone's purpose and vision

The complex environmental problems, highlight Danone's need to continue to progress on its social and sustainability goals. In 2017, Faber re-committed the business to its 'One Planet. One Health'

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[17] Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned and controlled sources; Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from electricity purchased by the company (National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting, 2021)

(OPOH) frame of action. Proving its commitment, they established nine long-term goals to reach by 2030 which "respond to the challenges and opportunities of the ongoing food revolution" (Danone, 2019b) (see all nine goals, chapter 8.3). To transform the entire business towards a more sustainable and just business model Faber (2018) explained they must set ambitious goals and anticipate that the solutions will have to be disruptive to some extent: "By being the true actors of the food revolution, with their mix of imperfections and great achievements. By reinventing ways, for us at Danone, to be a meaningful, useful, multicultural, multi-national community of diverse people who together - through trial and error, breakthrough, and failures—share the same passion to co-create new futures, One Planet, One Health."

Danone's mission report (Danone, 2021b) describes how its '*OPOH frame of action*' is aligned with the *United Nation's sustainability development goals (SDGs) and covers the following four topics:*

1. "Impact people's health locally with a portfolio of healthier products, with brands encouraging better nutritional choices, and by promoting better dietary habits."

2. "Preserve and renew the planet's resources by supporting regenerative agriculture, protecting the water cycle, and strengthening the circular economy of packaging, across its entire ecosystem in order to contribute to the fight against climate change."

3. "Entrust Danone's people to create new futures: building on a unique social innovation heritage, give each employee the opportunity to impact the decisions of the Company, both locally and globally."

4. "Foster inclusive growth by ensuring equal opportunities within the Company, supporting the most vulnerable partners in its ecosystem, and developing everyday products accessible to as many people as possible."

### 4.2.3 Danone's culture

This section briefly explores how Danone employees, or 'Danoners'[19], perceive Danone's organizational culture. Danoners described the culture as "very familiar" [C] with employees "devoted to the vision" [C] and a working for a very "human centric company" [G]. There seems to be an understanding throughout the company that the familiar atmosphere makes top management "more approachable and hierarchies aren't as extreme" [I]. According to the eight employees at the regional level interviewed in this study, this managerial culture of openness empowers people to share their voice. However, six managers at the regional level also described barriers of agility and rapid decision-making due to a hierarchical decision-making process directed by global HQ. In the conversations, it became apparent that Danoners are given the ability to be an intrapreneur[20] at the company by taking on further initiatives to excel in other areas. For example, the head of sustainability in Mexico described how there are activists for sustainability within the company and that they do have room to push for change. However, they also described the necessity for the program to be financially lucrative to be successful.

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[19] Danone employees call themselves "Danoners."
[20] Desouza (2011) defines intrapreneuship as an individual's ability to be inventive and entrepreneurial within the parameters of an organization.

Throughout all interviews it became apparent that sustainability and social responsibility are topics continuously highlighted throughout the business:[21] "There are people with very strong convictions on the protection of the planet, that they need resources on supporting inclusive growth and protection of people. All of us are part of Danone because we also fundamentally believe that there is a role for businesses in contributing to that better sustainable development" [N]. Another interviewee explained that "in terms of the culture, I think everyone's really proud to be working for something that's trying to do good" [H]. Likewise, three employees that described themselves as less aware of sustainability before working at Danone experienced a shift in their attitudes towards the social and sustainability issues since becoming a part of the company: "I think in general you would find the Danoners population to be a little bit more educated on these topics because of doing things differently, because of those priorities." [G]. Lastly, not only do employees see their role and responsibilities in acting sustainably and socially responsible within the boundaries of their own tasks, but they also describe their influence and efforts of working alongside partners and suppliers to establish more sustainable practices.

Nonetheless, the conversations also demonstrated that employees were aware of the challenge or even contradiction of balancing true sustainability and business decisions. Four respondents described the need for improvement, regardless of how well the company is already doing. Two employees who are sustainability experts[22] highlighted the problems within the business's sustainability efforts. For example, despite the head of the company HQ pushing for sustainability, one interviewee described a contradictory mindset within some regional managers, a potential barrier for the company to move more quickly towards the company goals.

### 4.2.3.1 HRM at Danone

The human resource department is a vital function in the business, building the business agenda and leading change (Danone, n.d.e). HR supports the company through a range of different activities, including ensuring employee engagement, upskilling, reskilling, and implementing reward, learning, and development policies (Danone, n.d.e; [A]). To reach the 2030 goals, Danone has many ongoing programs and initiatives that feed into the OPOH frame of action which run independently and in synchronicity with each other (appendix, p. 94). Some of these programs and initiatives have received recognition and awards (appendix, p. 93). Many of these programs are implemented and designed by the HR department, for example its pioneering governance and engagement program, called the *One Person, One Voice, One Share* (OPOVOS). This program was designed to help the business accelerate Danone's 2030 goals by empowering all employees to participate in the global and local agenda-setting and give them the ability to play a role in the design and acceleration of purpose-driven innovation. Furthermore, it aims to deepen the ownership mindset of employees. The following chapter will present the reader with a more insightful and detailed look into the design intentions globally and the implementation methods in two Danone regions, North America, and Mexico.

## 4.3 *One Person, One Voice, One Share* Program

The information in the following sections is derived from multiple conversations with Danoners in France, North America, and Mexico, unless an online source or documents is explicitly cited. "The company's goal to trust Danone's people to create new futures. And because OPOVOS itself is about

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[21] Not only is it visible when researching the company online, there was a lot of evidence that sustainability and social responsibility is deeply ingrained in Danone's company culture from an employee's perspective as well.
22 Both have a degree in sustainability.

entrusting Danoners[23] to participate, its involvement in empowering them to share their views, to co-build a future. So that's one that is and that is automatically accelerated with OPOVOS" [A].

As described above (section 4.2.1), in 2017 Emmanuel Faber highlighted the more intense focus of the company on its dual economic and social goals, declaring an intent to continue to pursue their OPOH vision more aggressively. Thus in 2018 they launched a new long-term, ambitious governing program aiming for employees to co-create Danone's future and co-own the agenda and goals (Faber, 2018; Austruy, 2018). In 2018, Danone leadership described how the "participative governance will be a huge competitive advantage to embrace the new paradigms" (Faber, 2018). Furthermore, the head of HR explained "we believe that the *One Person, One Voice, One Share* program will create a very positive dynamic and foster an ownership mindset for all our employees, which is the best way to align everyone's interests for the long-term" (Austruy, 2018). The program contains two distinct features, and now officially connects to the overall governance model of the company. One aspect is called the 'One Voice' program and the other is 'One Share'. When I first started to speak with the program designers, it became clear that employees see the program as two separate entities when it comes to the implementation; therefore, I have split the two aspects into different chapters. The next section will describe how each program were designed by global HR and implemented by local HR.

### 4.3.1 'One Voice' design and implementation
Due to the magnitude of this program, aimed at all 100,000 employees, many different teams and departments were involved in the design and implementation of the program. It is a complex HR program with many operational and responsibility challenges. In fact, 'One Voice' (OV) needed many people from different departments to facilitate and ensure the program could be implemented, participated in, and analysed effectively in each of Danone's business and production facilities.[24] Global HR ensures at least one regional coordinator (RC) is appointed in each of Danone's 14 regions to ensure the program implementation is suitable for the area's needs (language, design, information available). Furthermore, the regional coordinator must ensure each business units local HR team can manage the survey and analysis process. Global HR is in continuous contact with the coordinators to ensure all have the necessary information, material, and resources available to implement the program throughout the entire region. One theme the OV designer described as key for the program's success is the aim to be as transparent as possible to the RCs about program goals and how much work it entails. The regional coordinators work to ensure the program implementation is suitable for their location (language, design, information available) and work with each local HR team to manage the survey and analysis process. The *figure 4-2* below shows simplified outline of the 'One Voice' process.

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[23] What Danone employees call themselves
[24] For example, the HR team in the headquarters in France worked strategically with the communications and IT department to ensure all material, information, and resources were available for regional coordinators (RC) to implement the program locally.

*Figure 4-2. 'One Voice' program process*
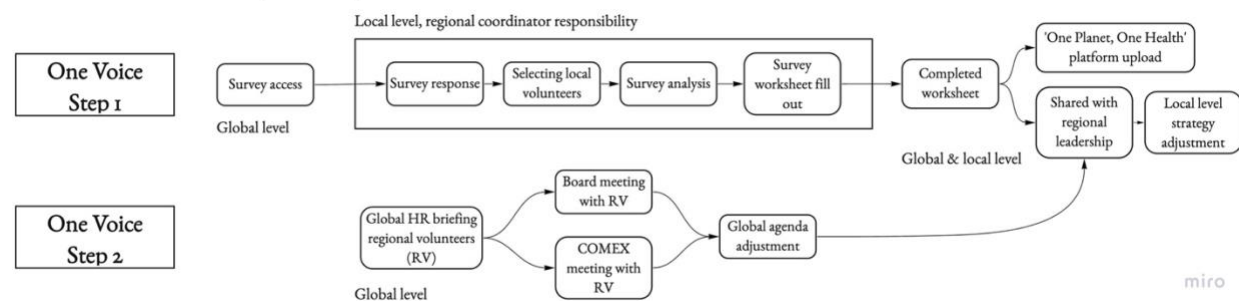


*Source: own design based on conversations with interviewee's*

Step one of the OV program explicitly aims to create an avenue where employees can voice their opinions and help steer the local and global strategic agenda. In the first OV step, all 100,000 Danone employees are given access to the OPOVOS annual survey.[25] The OV survey covers topics such as how employees perceive Danone's local priorities, what Danoners are proud of at the business, and what goals they need to improve on[26]. The content of the survey consists of some quantitative questions they can answer on a scale from one to five (strongly agree to strongly disagree) and some open comment sections. Since 2020 the survey can be answered on a smartphone[27]. In the interviews a few examples were described by some employees:

- Where do we need to accelerate? (Chose between the nine goals)
- Where are we strong? (Chose between the nine goals)
- How to better capture people's changing eating habits?
- Which local products recipes should be reworked as a priority?
- How can we better engage with our customers on our health agenda?
- How to implement our circular economy on packaging locally?
- Who could we partner with to accelerate our circularity?
- How can we embed digital technology in our operations?
- Is blockchain a solution in our country?
- What does regenerative agriculture mean in the local natural ecosystem?
- How well are we progressing towards becoming a 'B Corp'?

At the end of each survey, employees are asked if they would like to participate in One Voice volunteering. The survey is made available to Danoners for three weeks each year. Beginning in 2020 employees could complete the survey on a smartphone[28]. The OV designer described the benefit of the survey process being more deeply anchored within company strategy since its launch and added management now has the benefit of comparing each year's findings to those of previous years. At the

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[25] Initially, they had a Danone's people survey (DPS) which served as the main tool to measure overall employee satisfaction across the business, covering topics such as 'leadership', 'ways of working', 'health' and 'security'. After the first One Voice survey in 2018, management decided to merge the OV and the DPS together. The reason survey designers did that was to enable management to see how they're doing in general with employees while at the same time understanding how they are perceived to be progressing on the nine main goals.

[26] The survey is made available to Danoners for three weeks each year.

[27] A regional coordinator described this method was developed response to feedback that some people at production level did not have access to necessary devices such as computers.

[28] In response to feedback that some people at production level did not have access to necessary devices such as computers.

local level, the regional coordinator must ensure the survey is answered and analysed. The intention is to get many Danoners, called local volunteers (LVs), involved in the analysis process. The survey findings must be organised in each worksheet[29] to present the findings to leadership at four levels: global, regional, national, and local. Then, the OV designers upload the results onto the global One Planet, One Health platform[30] so that Danoners from all locations can see the results of the survey— "what was said during the final consultation, share the results, share commitments, what is taken in action and share the initiative that grow from thereon" [A]. In the words of one interviewee, "the idea is to really share with everyone and then to share not only the results, but also share the briefs and discussions they had with leadership team" [A]. Following the survey, regional leadership teams may adjust their local agenda based on the feedback they received from employees.

In step two of the OV program, two regional volunteers[31] (RV) who are "passionate about one planet one health topics, have the capacity to listen, have a willingness to connect with their peers" [A] are selected to discuss the survey findings at a meeting with the board of directors and Danone's executive committee (COMEX). Before the pandemic in 2020, the RVs presented to the top leadership at Danone regional headquarters, since 2020 the meetings have been conducted online. Global HR helps the volunteers prepare for the meetings. One RV highlighted how global HR never pushed for content change, but rather to identify the most urgent findings. On the other hand, another RV described how the local management tried to adjust the volunteer's presentation content before the meeting. However, the RV ended up presenting their original feedback. This shows that a conflict of interest may act as a barrier for top management to receive authentic feedback from employees.

One RV described the meeting with the board of directors as quite tense at the beginning, and slowly loosened up over time. The meeting with COMEX was described as generally more relaxed and familiar. Regarding timing, one RV said "they are CEOs, they have a lot of things to do, but it will be great if we could spend like one whole day not only with them, but also with the COMEX a chat about life, because that way you can get to know them better as persons not holding like this very official setting" [I]. In 2019, topics discussed ranged from sustainability, areas where Danone is accelerating, where Danone is not accelerating quickly enough, including a potential change in product offerings, and how the business is struggling to change its focus to more long-term goals. Additionally, conversations covered the need to highlight the sustainability and social initiatives in the business's external communication: "like why we are not sharing to the world the things that we do, why we are not sharing to consumers that the things that we are doing, they are not perfect, but consumers are going to accept that because consumers want to see the reality." [I]. Lastly, global HR and regional volunteers may add additional topics, such as Danone's reaction to COVID. According to the program designer, the board of directors and COMEX may adjust its strategic agenda based on each RV's feedback.

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[29] Worksheets to be filled out by RCs are provided by Danone global HR.

[30] One Planet. One Health Platform is an individual learning platform on Facebook where anybody can share ideas and learnings of One Planet, One Health topics, which contributes to Danone's policies on "the diversity culture and transparency for everybody, to have this culture in the company to always be able to share openly" [A]. A plant manager in Mexico described, "workplace has been another way of being able to be more in touch with these global strategies because suddenly you have a video of one of these top managers telling a little bit of what's the idea and what".

[31] In total there were 26 regional volunteers, covering all of Danone's global business. "Every year, we select 26 volunteers to share the voices of Danone's 100,000 employees with members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee. These meetings foster a rich, meaningful discussion to contribute to our strategy" (Danone, 2019a, p. 11).

The following descriptions show the reader how the survey and consultancy process work in two regions. It is important to note that each region's approach to gathering the survey findings is different and autonomy is granted to each regional coordinator to ensure the process fits to its region's requirements and possibilities. Both descriptions will focus on the implementation of the program in 2020, during the global pandemic.

### 4.3.1.1 'One Voice' implementation in North America
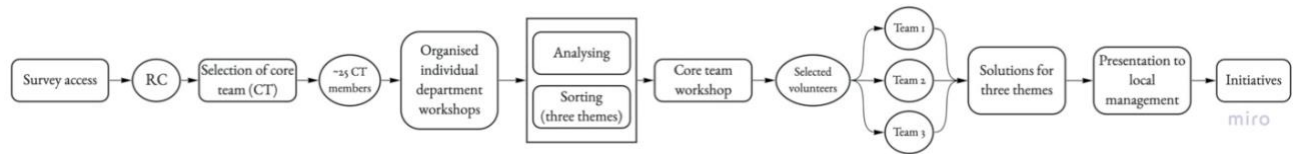


*Figure 4-3. 'One Voice' implementation process, Danone North America, 2020*

In Danone North America (DNA), the RC selected a core team from the Danoners who agreed to continue to volunteer in the OPOVOS program. The core team included two people per department[32] in the regional headquarters.[33] After being briefed by the RC, the teams hosted more than 20 workshops in their own departments to analyse the survey results and to identify recurring themes from the answers. In 2020, around 20 per cent of DNA employees participated in the workshops. Then, the core volunteers reconvened in a workshop, presented the findings from their departments, and agreed on three common categories suitable to each department's findings:

·   zero waste and sustainability
·   volunteering and community impact
·   enable Danoners to tell Danone story

After these themes were identified, the volunteers were split into three working groups to collaborate and work on finding solutions to address them. The findings were presented by some of the core team to DNA's leadership, then some core team members were asked to help implement plans based on the findings. This part of the process—acting on Danoners' opinions, or "walking the talk"—was described as challenging by the DNA RC, who explained how it is still something that Danone will continuously work on improving: "The most challenging thing is, not only is it not about keeping this model continuing, but it is also really doing something after you hear their voice. And I think that's a challenge for every company. And that's the thing we are trying to do to keep improving" [F].

After the local OV analysis, two regional volunteers proceeded to prepare their briefs and present the region's information to the board of directors and Danone's executive committee in France. Additionally, the communication and IT teams posted and shared results on local monitors.

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[32] The regional headquarters contains the following departments: General Secretary, Sales, Research & Innovation, Human Resources, Finance, Information Systems & Technology, Supply Chain, and Procurement & Quality.

[33] No workshops were conducted at production or plant level. The RC described the process of getting people from local plants involved in the workshops as incredibly challenging. Additonally, "getting these workshops done at plant level hasn't really happened, we were planning on getting their voice in 2020; but then the priorities shifted to the key priority being keeping employees safe and keeping operations moving forward" [F]. Thus, the OPOVOS program was not a priority for them.

In 2021, while I was conducting this research, the next survey and consultation process happened at the company, but the consultation process had changed since the previous year. After Danoners filled out the questionnaire, the RC contacted the 2020 core team and asked if they would be interested in supporting the analysis process. Three people from different departments agreed to help analyse over 1800 comments each: "it's a ton of work. [...] reached out to me and said, you know, you did a lot of work on this. I saw your engagement viewed that positively. Would you want to step in? And I was swamped with work at the time. I was like, yeah, absolutely. Like, you know, it's a big initiative for the team" [K]. Meanwhile, the 2021 RC explained, "volunteers were involved in the process, just we haven't had any further brainstorming or cascading sessions yet after that" [F]. They added "as you might have known, Danone is having 'local first' projects in all different regions. We need to adapt our plan and see when and what will be the best way to support the project and engage our people moving forward. There are many changes happening, we are still working with the local OPOH team to define the approach." [F]. Thus, in the context of the current restructuring, the OPOVOS program is not the teams' priority, a stark drop in the level of employee involvement in the analysis and ideation of new initiatives. Whether or not any sustainability or social initiatives will occur due to the OV survey findings was still in the process of discussion at the time of the research.

### 4.3.1.2 'One Voice' implementation in Mexico

In 2020, around 14,000 Danoners in Mexico responded to the OV survey, with around 50,000 comments.[34] After the survey completion, the RC organised four regional workshops (northern, southern, central, and HQ) across Mexico (*figure 4-3*). To host the workshops, a communication brief explaining all the initiatives from the last year was sent to all HR members in Danone Mexico.
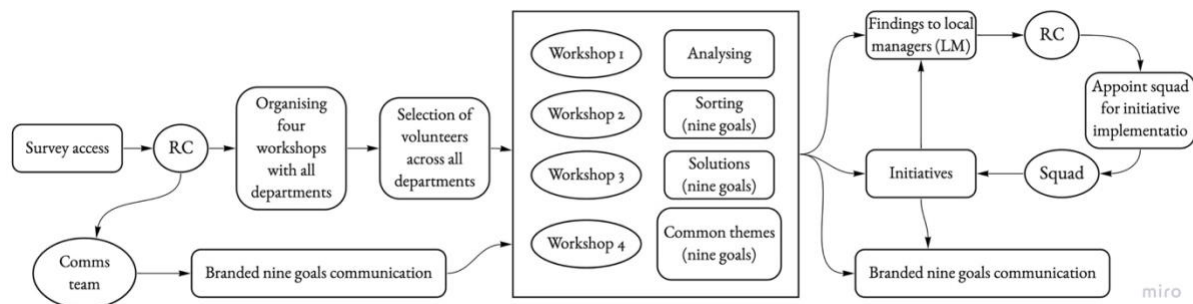


*Figure 4-4. 'One Voice' implementation process, Danone Mexico, 2020*

The RC selected volunteers from the list of over 6500 Danoners that answered the survey to join the workshops in their area. The RC explained the challenge of getting volunteers from every department to participate in the workshops. Depending on personalities, some employees may be willing to participate in the analysis workshops: "So, from that list of volunteers, we have to select. So, what we do is segment to make sure that we have people from all levels, including our operations teams from all areas. So really make sure that because a lot of the time HR loves to get involved. So, make sure that we have people from finance, who don't really like to get involved." [B]. Before 2020, the workshops were held in person at separate locations and business units. In 2020, the workshops shifted to two-hour virtual sessions with "people from the entire northern regions getting together. From Sinaloa, from Monterrey, from Chihuahua, which otherwise would have been hard to combine"

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[34] Unfortunately, I did not receive these figures for DNA.

[B]. Each meeting had a timetable to organise and divide the survey data into Danone's nine goals. After the workshops they have time to discuss the findings and start to come up with initiatives, sharing local examples and initiatives that the different teams and offices were running and brainstorming potential solutions for common themes and problems. The value of the immediate discussion of ideas is that they can receive direct feedback from people who would know if some initiatives would be possible to implement, for example in terms of costs or logistics.

Unique to Mexico, after the 2019 consultancy, Danone Mexico created a multidisciplinary task force, called 'squads', who worked to accelerate change towards the 2030 goals within Mexico.[35] The task force focused on specific pain points within the business such as *sustainability*, *ways of working*, *culture and engagement,* and *healthier lives*. After leadership teams in Mexico receive the survey findings, they use a cyclical process to get some initiatives implemented and designed within the company. The squads work together to design specific action plans, seek approval from management, and start to initiate changes from within the company.

In the regional 'all-hands' meetings survey findings are presented in front of all business units. Therefore, according to the RC, management is quite competitive when it comes to the different departments' performances in the survey. They describe the value for department heads; if the team answers questions negatively, it is a good indicator that the person is likely to move on to another company or that they are not as engaged in the business as they could be. Because findings are transparently disclosed, they act as a motivation for management to adjust processes and focus. Thus, program designers describe that it is up to the local human resource directors or department heads to work with the local management and strategy teams to correct that. Many Danoners can be involved in the process after the survey findings are received. One of the plant managers even described the plant design of their own pre-survey before the official OV consultation, so they could accelerate the process of improving local initiatives and employee perceptions.

After the workshops, Danone Mexico uses the same process as DNA: the results are shared and summarized for heads of department, Mexico leadership, and the leadership team of Latin America. Additionally, the RVs are briefed and continue to communicate with COMEX and the board of directors. Before the pandemic, sustainable growth was seen as the most urgent to accelerate; in 2020 it shifted to taking care of people's health.

### 4.3.2 'One Share' design and implementation



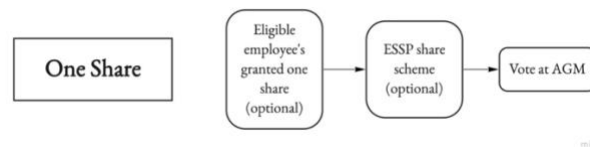*Figure 4-5. 'One Share' Program process*

The second part of the OPOVOS program is the 'One Share' aspect. Its main intended impact is to foster the co-ownership mindset of Danoners, increasing focus on employee engagement and

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35 'Squad' Danoners fulfil the role of squads while completing their day-to-day roles at Danone, so that it is not only the HR teams that are pushing for change within the business.

employee motivation. Under this program, after six months of ensuring the logistics,[36] each eligible employee[37] of foreign entities is granted one share. In terms of OS roles and responsibilities, many Danoners and teams are involved. Nonetheless, only one person, the project lead, is responsible for the successful infrastructure and global implementation of the OS program. They are responsible for strategy, policies, and deployment in different national contexts, managing providers and legal requirements for the program. The project lead is supported by a project team dedicated to facilitating the global implementation of the OS program. Partners were also included in the infrastructure design and support of the program rollout. As in the OV program, communication is vital for this project to work. It is the designer's role to ensure the description of the share is presented in people's native language since levels of financial literacy differs among different people.

Moreover, the gifted share is offered in combination with a combined dividend-based incentive scheme called the Employee Share Subscription Plan (ESSP) where Danoners can subscribe to shares with a 20 per cent discount of the referenced price[38]. In 2019, when the OS program launched, the share price was at around 70€ per share (Yahoo Finance, 2021). According to the OS designer, share schemes have helped encourage Danoners to vote at the annual general meeting, inform themselves about the company's agenda, made them feel like they own a part of the company, and speak up. The senior equity manager and One Share designer said, "In the 'One Voice', we were already asking them to speak up and tell us what they think is best for the company agenda, which I think was already a pretty big step in terms of the co-ownership mindset. But then we have just made this feeling stronger by giving them one share. I mean, monetary wise, it's not a lot in some countries. For some employees, it might mean something, but still, it's not some kind of money that will change your life" [C].

The project lead[39] (2021) described "the main challenge when the one voice program came out was from people in operations. In our warehouses, in our plants, because a lot of people in our operations aren't really that sensitised about shares and the stock markets and it seems very far from them" and "you must give everyone an equal chance", "to make it really familiar and simple so that they were aware of what it is" [C]. Although the company is only legally obliged to convene with its shareholders once per annum, the OS designers and implementers ensured as many people as possible were continuously informed about the program and the company agenda. This access is especially for Danone's non-digital employees, who work in logistics, plants, or operations. Without giving such employees access to digital platforms, they may not be able to participate in the annual shareholder meetings (AGM) or stay up to date with company progress through online platforms.

Lastly, employees in Mexico and North America described how Faber did not receive a golden parachute (exit package) because he[40] gave it up to enable employees to receive the one share. This information had a significantly positive impact on the four employees with whom I spoke about this issue.

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[36] Time to design program: September 2018 to May 2019.

[37] Danoners must be employed for at least eleven months, and they must have a Danone contract. HR keep eligibility criteria exceptionally loose to include as many people as possible.

[38] At the time of the research, the continuation of the global ESSP was confirmed in a press release: "The new shares will be issued under the 23rd resolution approved during today's Shareholders' Meeting shall not exceed a nominal amount of €200,000. The capital increase will be opened to all eligible employees working in all countries that participated in 2019 as well as the eligible employees working in an additional number of countries subject to obtaining necessary authorizations from local authorities" (Danone, 2021c).

[39] 'Project lead' and 'program designer' are used interchangeably

[40] Since Faber is a known person, I decided to use *he* as a pronoun

### 4.3.3 AMO categorisation of the OPOVOS program

*Table 4-1* shows how the OPOVOS program variables (components) can be categorised into the ability-motivation-opportunity scale. Each of the variables were explicitly designed by the program designers and effects either all Danoners or Danone management.

*Table 4-1. AMO categorisation of OPOVOS program*

| Scale | Variables | Component | Exlicit or implicit action | Who it effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ability enhancing practices** | Company shares information | One Share | Explicit | All eligible users |
| | Understanding of employee's values | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | Management |
| **Incentives (Motivation)** | Enabling employee's to voice their opinion | One Voice | Explicit | All users |
| | Vote at AGM enabling employee's to have a say | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | All eligible users |
| | Receiving one share | One Voice | Explicit | All eligible users |
| **Opportunity enhancing practices** | Influence the agenda setting | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | All users |

Although I already hinted at some contextual factors, I will describe them in more detail in the following section.

### 4.3.4 Contextual factors influencing how the program is implemented and how the design is perceived

In this section, I will introduce the reader with some contextual factors that are influencing how the program has been implemented by regional coordinators. I will also describe which factors of the program's design and implementation affect how the program is perceived by Danoners. Firstly, in terms of external drivers, the company faced major challenges because of the influence of the pandemic on business processes. Concerning the OS program, instead of delivering the OS to eligible employees in May 2020, it was pushed back to October 2020 when Danone leadership knew what support they can give its employees during the pandemic. Furthermore, the Employee Share Subscription Plan program was halted completely. These changes can be contributed to:

1. Managerial sensitivity around messaging because of uncertainty how supportive Danone can be to its employees during the pandemic
2. Changing priorities and workload

Just as teams were about to launch the communication campaign for One Share, the confinements around the world began. The project leader described the moment of reflection when they realised what it would look like if they were to promote the share: "when we were going to launch our communication campaign, et cetera, we were like, what kind of message we will be sending because our message is supposed to be a happy message. [...] But then we didn't know how the business would evolve. We didn't know what kind of support we would give our people because Danone supported its people tremendously. Because back then, we didn't know what we were capable of. So, we were like, what if we do this but couldn't support our employees as much as we want on other aspects, then where would that leave us in the eyes of our employees" [C].

It affected Danoners by decreasing the available time and resources because employees had an increase in topics they had to deal with simultaneously (e.g., health and safety topics). HR was required to adjust their demands on regional coordinators and employees. Program designers and implementers were aware of a necessary balance of continuing the program's main features while understanding that employees are faced with many complexities, uncertainties, and changes. The OS program designer

described how "this is a program you're launching to make people's lives more; I'd say better, not worse, or not to complicate people's lives and on a local level as well. It takes a lot of work to implement and to sustain this". Therefore, program designers and implementers described the need to ensure the OPOVOS does not result in an imbalance of resource allocation and parts of it was stopped or adjusted at the most intense and uncertain time of the pandemic. The program's changes and adaptations were essential not to overwhelm people at work.

In addition, some employees described the issue of too little focus on the local factors in the OV survey and not relevant enough for the local businesses. Moreover, the questions are too general, potentially holding management back from implementing more initiatives due to the program since "want to know more, which one they want to accelerate but, it's really difficult to know because it's quite general the survey" [L]. Furthermore, a plant manager described how if they find the survey hard to connect with and understand, it must be even more difficult for operators because the questions are very macro-economic, environmental, and topical (e.g., questions about 'B corp'). The challenge is making the questions relevant every Danoners, because so many Danoners are frontline workers (70-80 per cent) making the questions more relevant and understandable for them is essential.

Due to the sheer number of employees at Danone, not everybody gets the chance to participate in volunteer initiatives with this program. While there is no regulated process on how volunteers are chosen at local or regional level, I would like to highlight an important criterion that may influence leadership to choose the volunteers. A local volunteer Danone North America and a regional volunteer in Mexico described how from their experience people who are generally more outspoken and more charismatic are more included in the volunteering processes, thus personality matters: "I think sometimes management views charisma as the defining thing here" [H]. Furthermore, the results may be lacking "qualitative rigour" during the workshops and analysis processes because they "felt like we were heavy on the public speaking ability and light on the analysis ability" [H]. One RV described "I'm always involved in all kinds of things […] I think the HR business partner called me and told me, OK, you were selected and nominated to be part of the first volunteers of this one voice program, do you want to participate? And I was like, Yeah, I always want to participate!" [I].

While all employees get access to the survey and eligible workers receive a share, including people from all departments and business units in the OV analysis process is a challenge in both regions. Program designers and implementers are still working on making the OPOVOS program more inclusive. Both RCs described how they must work hard to get employees from all levels and areas included in the workshops. Especially reaching non-digital employees and inviting them to participate in the regional workshops still poses a challenge in each area. While Danone's trust model aims to ensure the company can grow inclusively, the program implementation lacks more inclusive methods to collect and collaborate with people from different levels.

Furthermore, according to volunteers, the OV analysis methodology lacks analytical structure and qualitative rigour. Volunteers are given the task to help the RC analyse over a thousand comments in a short amount of time; while they aim to create presentable and representable results, the results may not have the quality that could have been possible with more analytical methods. Consequently, timing and information overload during the analysis workshops may make errors while processing the information and influence the qualitative rigour of the analysis results. One employee suggested, "I think just some improvements could be made on just analysing the data. I mean, we're utilising. [...] And there are much better tools out there. So, I think there are just some improvements that could be made" [K]. Additionally, there are currently no methods in place to track changes or improvements

after the consultancies or findings are shared with top leadership. Therefore "it's tricky to track the impact" [H] of the OPOVOS program.

At global HR they explained how the survey results differ from each other depending on the regions. The OV designer explained how it makes it more challenging for the executive team and the board of directors to decide where to focus their efforts. For example, employees may answer the survey more positively, because a positive response may be typical for that region. Secondly, they described that what area in the business they work for will influence how they answer the survey. For example, if they are working in specialised nutrition, employees answer that company should advance their focus for goal #4 'impact people's health locally', versus a business unit that is currently transforming to becoming a 'B-corp', therefore, seeing more importance in advancing goal #3 'be certified as a b corp'. The following section will highlight what effects the OPOVOS program has on Danone's pro-social initiatives, on the individual's performance as well as on the organisational structure.

## 4.4 Effects of OPOVOS program

*Figure 4-6. OPOVOS effects*
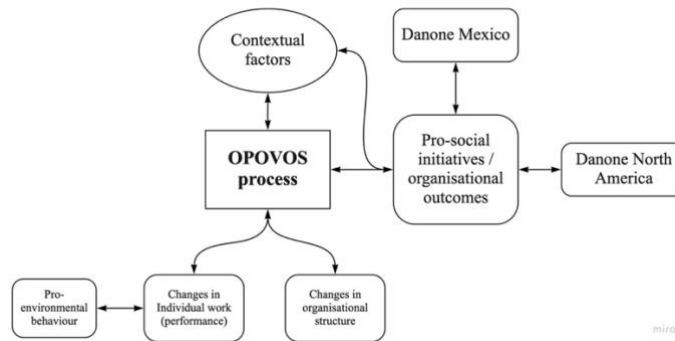


*Source: own design adapted from Crowston, 2000*

*Figure 4-6* above shows a simple bridge between the individual and the organisational level outcomes (Crowston, 2000). I acknowledge that the OPOVOS program itself does not change organisational outcomes and structure; instead, it opens new possibilities for individuals to adjust their work processes. These changes in work have implications for the processes and, therefore, the business in which the individuals participate. The effects of the work and process changes may affect organisational structures and outcomes (pro-social initiatives) and vice versa. Alternatively, as individual Danoners incorporate various forms of pro-environmental behaviour into their work, they alter how they conduct their work and how they participate in the organisation's structure. On the other hand, there are organisational and industrywide contextual factors (contingencies) shaping how individuals do their work. The interactions of these forces shape the use of pro-environmental behaviour, new forms of work, and new ways of organising.

Firstly, I would like to highlight how many Danoners participated in the OPOVOS program (see list below). At the time of the research, the integrated annual report from 2020 was not published. Thus, the following figures are from the 2019 Danone Integrated Annual Report (Danone, 2019a), and the OV and OS designers.

- 90,000 participated in the voluntary consultation and voiced their opinion on the local and global strategy
- 40,000 + offered to volunteer and help analyse the comments
- Globally the survey had 175,700 comments
- 26 volunteers were selected to share the voice to the board of directors and COMEX
- 18 per cent of eligible employee shareholders participated in voting at the AGM[41]
- 22 per cent of people who participated in ESSP voted at the AGM

According to the One Share designer, the market benchmark for employees participating in executive plans is around five percent. Thus the 18 per cent voting participation rate at the annual general meeting was very surprising: "we were so stricken by the results that we had around 18 percent in one share for all and 22 percent in the ESSP. We were like, wow, people really, really do care. It was actually our wakeup call in terms of how people got enrolled into the project" [C].

In the following sections, I describe the subsequent changes in organisational structure and intervention mechanisms since the implementation of the OPOVOS program. Whether the One Voice results and meetings are the real root cause of these changes is challenging to prove with quantifiable data.

### 4.4.1 Changes at organisational level

This section describes the effect of the OPOVOS program on the organisational structure of Danone. The findings are derived from conversations with employees. Significantly, there may be other changes in the organisation's structure because of OPOVOS that are not listed below.

#### *4.4.1.1 Danone Global*

Firstly, because the program's success depends on employees' access to the survey and their ability to vote at the AGM, the program had the implicit effect of increasing digitalisation and technical development throughout the company. Of course, context is important here, as the pandemic also significantly affected the expansion of digital tools.

Secondly, the 'local first' strategic adaptation plan was part of an OPOVOS global meeting result. Now, Faber (2020) describes the full commitment from all teams for the 'local first' initiative, explaining how Danone leadership received feedback from employees globally through to the OPOVOS meetings with RVs that the business would benefit from being less centralised. Program designers explained how it is now more key to listen to employees to ensure the business can move forward towards a more sustainable and more local direction. Because employees understand the local needs and processes better. Thus, governance programs to engage employees are more important and will continue to be reinforced in future.

Further, the global team received feedback that its IT needs to get greener, thus they changed their company search engine to a more sustainable option,  the browser extension and search engine Ecosia, which plants trees when people use their search tool (Ecosia, n.d).

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[41] Eligible employees who received one share.

### 4.4.1.2 Danone North America

DNA increased the communication around Danone's community initiatives. According to the DNA RC, the 2020 survey results showed that many employees are unaware of many community initiatives the company is managing, for example, community support roles and the management of local food banks. Thus, there has been an increase in internal communication on these projects at the regional level. Furthermore, one of the workshops resulted in the idea that Danoners should communicate to people externally about Danone's successful programs. This resulted in an initiative called Danone Day, where a few local volunteers (appendix, p. 93), briefed over 200 employees over a webcast on what Danone's successes, subsequently training employees in communicating about Danone to external parties.

As previously mentioned, in DNA in 2020 the RC selected a core team of volunteers, around two people per department (in regional headquarters) to organise and manage the OPOVOS workshops (where the survey is analysed, and solutions are identified) and in their own departments. This resulted in at least 20 workshops. This process did not occur in 2021, but some of the core team members were selected to help analyse the survey.

### 4.4.1.3 Danone Mexico

HR ensures that squad teams are working on specific topics. As a result, employees outside of HR are pushing for change around the issues derived from survey findings so transformation can happen in all departments. As I spoke to one of the squad members in the sustainability team, it became apparent that having a multidisciplinary task force or squad teams has enormous potential; however, it lacks sustained support by middle managers. Whilst top management wants to push for changes, middle management acts as a barrier to the initiative creation and implementation: "I think the GMs that I've worked with [...] are quite passionate about the One Planet topics and one health, but then at the same time, the middle management is the one that blocks initiatives. So, there is something not flowing yet correctly" [L].

After the first OV survey, Mexico HR recognised people's need to be upskilled on Danone's goals. Thus, since 2019 the business has been branding each piece of communication with one of the company goals: "We work a lot with our internal communications team to launch a communications campaign of what we've done. So, what we do is we work throughout the year and make sure that every piece of communication is branded with one of the goals that it impacts" [B]. This upskilling ensures that employees can "act as true activists towards their point of view" (Danone, 2019e). For example, the survey results are presented within each business unit. Additionally, each central business unit spends 5 to 10 minutes in its monthly town hall updating manager staff on the progress they have made toward the nine goals. They describe ongoing actions, status, and who is involved; this positively impacts employees' intrinsic motivation and perceived organisational purpose (POS).

Each employee I spoke to in Mexico mentioned the ongoing branded communication, how it helps employees connect to and better understand the nine goals. This may be why each of them showcased a strong willingness to commit and proactive and extra-role behaviour. This highlights the how middle management's strategic alignment is necessary to ensure higher employee participation in more organisational citizenship behaviour tasks feel there is consistent leadership support at all levels.

## 4.4.2 Pro-social Initiatives

The following section describes the initiative or sustainability effects of the program and highlights how they contribute to the sustainable development of Danone. A designer described their work in the following way: "really at different levels, you have the global level, with huge commitments, you have another one I would say are quick wins locally" [A]. Thus, I first address the larger, global adjustments that have been made. Then, I will describe some of the local initiatives that were recounted by Danoners.

It is challenging to confirm the causal link between the OPOVOS program and the following initiatives, because there is no method to report when, why, and how certain initiatives were developed: "It's really not about tracking or reporting. We really believe on trusting our employees, trusting local to make it as relevant as possible for them. I mean, at global level we don't need to you to have any reports on that. They do it" [A]. Therefore, it is difficult to describe a direct cause-effect relationship between HRM practices to a particular action.

The following section will present some of the global initiatives that have been implemented since the beginning of OPOVOS, according to the program designer. *Table 4-2* shows the different initiatives and structural changes that were described in the interviews with program designers and volunteers. I have identified which of Danone's nine goals each change, or initiative contributes to Danone's 'One Planet, One Health' frame of action.[42]

*Table 4-2. OPOVOS effects on Danone's 'OPOH' frame of action*

| Location of impact | Initiative | Goal contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Global | Two-billion-euro investment into climate acceleration plan | **#1** 'offer superior food experiences and innovate always' <br> **#2** 'deliver superior sustainable profitable growth' |
| | R&I centre in China | **#1** 'offer superior food experiences and innovate always' <br> **#4** 'impact people's health locally' <br> **#9** 'serve manifesto brands with partners' <br> **#5** 'manifesto brands' |
| | Opportunity to voice opinion on OPOH vision | **#3** 'be certified as a b corp' <br> **#7** 'entrust people to create new futures' <br> **#5** 'grow manifesto brands' |
| | More sustainable search engine (ecosia) | **#6** to 'preserve and renew the planets resources' |
| Danone North America | More volunteering opportunities | **#8** 'foster inclusive growth'. <br> **#5** 'grow manifesto brands' |
| | Core team | **#1** 'offer superior food experiences and innovate always' <br> **#6** to 'preserve and renew the planets resources' <br> **#5** 'grow manifesto brands' <br> **#2** to 'deliver superior and sustainable profitable growth' |
| Mexico | Squad team | **#1** 'offer superior food experiences and innovate always' <br> **#6** 'preserve and renew the planets resources' <br> **#5** 'grow manifesto brands' <br> **#2** 'deliver superior and sustainable profitable growth' |
| | Recycling pilot study | **#6** 'preserve and renew the planets resources'' |
| | Maximising the use of vehicles for delivery, and creating more efficient local strategies | **#6** 'preserve and renew the planets resources' <br> **#2** 'deliver superior sustainable profitable growth' |
| | Hybrid truck fleet | **#6** 'preserve and renew the planets resources' <br> **#2** 'deliver superior sustainable profitable growth' |

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[42] Link to goals from 2030 goals company dashboard 2019 report (Danone, 2019e)

| | Solar panels | #6 'preserve and renew the planets resources" |
| | | #2 'deliver superior sustainable profitable growth' |
| | Local CBU breastfeeding rooms | #8 'foster inclusive growth' |
| | | #5 'grow manifesto brands' |
| | Intrapreneurship opportunities | #9 'serve the food revolution with partners' |
| | | #2 'deliver superior sustainable profitable growth' |
| | | #8 'foster inclusive growth' through the development of "micro-entrepreneurship" (Danone, 2019b) |
| | Branded nine goals communication | # 5 to create purpose-driven 'manifesto brands' |

### 4.4.2.1 Danone Global

From 2020–2022, Danone made a €2-billion investment into a climate acceleration plan aiming to strengthen the climate action of its brands and the climate action around its growth model, "which is really a strong gesture, towards what we're trying to achieve, towards our vision" [A]. Of the €2bn around €900 million is being invested on innovation around its packaging and circularity (Danone, 2019h). Other topics the investment is covering includes, investing in innovative companies, supporting regenerative agriculture through climate-efficient sourcing, and strengthening its digital end-to-end processes by investing in more data, technology, and transformation agility (Danone, 2019h). According to the program designer, the investment has been one of the most significant initiatives so far.

The designer also mentioned that "the research and innovation centre in Shanghai, China, its Open Science Research Centre, was something that came up in the One Voice consultation" [A]. The centre carries out research and innovation (R&I) work for specialised nutrition. Not only is it focussing on nutrition for the young and those with specific medical needs, but the centre will also carry out R&I work with many partners aimed at securing food safety and quality in China (Danone, 2020c).

Further, providing the opportunity for employees to state their opinions in a quantitative manner contributes to goal #3: 'be certified as a B Corp'. Part of the B Corp certification is ensuring employees' ability to give feedback and be included in the company strategy formation. The entire program contributes to this goal by creating a feedback channel from lower employees to top management and including employees from all areas and levels in the agenda-setting.

The following information describes the outputs of the OPOVOS program in Danone North America and Mexico. There may be some missing information since the findings are derived only from comments from employees in the interviews. Therefore, it was sometimes challenging to understand the cause-effect relationship between the program and initiatives.

### 4.4.2.2 Danone North America

Employees wanted to have more opportunities for community volunteering, such as wheelchair programs to support the elders, providing meals and sending of food gift cards. This initiative means the business leaders have listened to their employees and implemented a strategy to help align their employees' worldviews and values with those of the company.

### 4.2.2.3 Danone Mexico

Firstly, the RC described a recycling pilot study that was launched at one Production plant in Mexico due to the OPOVOS program. Collecting bottles, paper, and cardboard from production, is standard practice at Danone plants. However, to help tackle the waste and recycling problem in Mexico, this

specific plant has opened the option for surrounding communities to do the same and drop off their recyclables onsite.

Secondly, in 2020, due to a OV workshops, some Bonafont factories from different areas started sharing its truck fleets during delivery when the different factories were not delivering at maximum capacity. Therefore, maximising the use of vehicles for delivery, and creating more efficient local strategies. Because, at the time of the workshops in 2020, business units in Mexico have separate GMs and management teams, thus the OV workshop is a rare moment where different business unity came together and talk about what they do and how they can work together to improve. In this case, workers realised the business can become more efficient if the business units share some of its vehicles for delivery. For example, the Bonafont Jugs business now shares trucks with the smaller bottle division in the months the trucks are less full.

The RC also mentioned the continuous request of hybrid trucks for delivery in the OV workshops. They now have the first hybrid truck fleet delivering products in Mexico. Furthermore, according to the RC the implementation of are solar panels throughout production facilities are in the pipeline, thus minimising their use of fossil fuels electricity sources, "that came up from the survey and now the workshops. We communicated that to the squad for the relevant squad. So now those quads are going out and analysis with the finance team, with the production team to see the feasibility of that project" [B].

Another program described by a production manager is the implementation of local CBU Lactation Rooms. A plant manager described how they just started offering mother's nursing rooms that can encourage mothers to relax and give them a safe space to pump breast milk. On Danone México's website it describes the business's strong commitment to combating gender inequality in Mexico (Danone, 2019c). They describe the alliance with UN Women, committing to support equal opportunities for men and women.

Generally, the program volunteers also described the opportunity to be intrapreneurs for topics they care about within the company, and work with partners to further these missions. Therefore, this program gives them the space to be project owners and be intrapreneurs.

All in all, the program does influence each of Danone's nine goals, either implicitly or explicitly. Whether or not these goals have been implemented due to the program is up for discussion as the only proof I have is word of mouth from interviewees.

### 4.4.2.4 Contextual factors influencing program initiatives

Like previously described, there are industrywide and organisational forces shaping how employees perceive the program. In the following paragraphs, I will describe some potential organisational forces that shape the outcomes in Danone Mexico and North America.

In DNA the RC explained that the OPOVOS initiatives are usually nothing new but putting more resources into already existing programs "ideas that are not really big idea or big projects, but that's something can be additional on what we are doing and implementing" [F]. There are already many programs happening at DNA. Therefore, this program may not have as much of an effect on creating

pro-social programs compared to Danone Mexico[43]. The RCs statement does contradict Faber's (2018) statement that the program will offer a "huge competitive advantage to embrace new paradigms" (Faber, 2018).

Another potential barrier for the decreased initiatives resulting from the programme is that DNA has undergone tremendous changes within the company in recent years, with changes in top management, the merger with WhiteWave thus undergoing massive strategic transformations "we've been through a lot. There's been a lot of changes" [H].

As previously described, according to volunteers, their personality, interest, and skills matter in the selection procedure to be able to volunteer. The RC in Mexico specifically highlighted how employees from the finance department are not as interested in volunteering as employees from other departments. However, they put a particular focus on selecting people with analytical skills to join the different workshops. In context, merging people from different offices and departments together to analyse and find solutions to the nine goals may have been an effective method to increase the opportunity for people with different skillsets to collaborate and find some immediate results to accelerate towards the nine goals.

Moreover, Mexico's ongoing goals communication may be driving the potential for programs to develop further. In the interviews, three employees in Mexico described how the first-year survey was much harder to answer. Because they did not understand what the goals meant, since then, the communication teams have been branding each internal communication piece with the goals, which helped the employees feel more connected to the goals and understand them better and being able to recall the programs better.

Furthermore, the balancing act between financial returns and sustainability and social initiatives is a continuous balancing act and maybe impacting how much managers are focused on listening to the employees' opinions. "They need to balance because it's important for employees, but not for shareholders, and then you cannot accelerate it. So, I think it's a good exercise, but in the end, I don't know how much impact it has" [L]. Furthermore, despite top management in each location being very focused on the program, some middle managers may be acting as a barrier for the program. Therefore, highlighting how important it is to understand how easy it is for pro-social programs and goals to be counterweighed by individual short-term goals.

A barrier to more effective communication is that organisational hierarchies may filter or obstruct managers and leaders throughout the business to receive the actual results from the survey. For example, one person volunteering and helping analyse the findings explained how employees might distort the data based on their gains and motives. For example, two volunteers explained that it could be a career killer to give management the feedback that employees think a particular product should be discontinued due to its environmental impact. Therefore, the volunteers will protect themselves not to give that feedback to managers. They ensured the ideas and solutions were more in line with what they assumed would be more acceptable to the leadership team. Additionally, an RV described how they were asked to soften the feedback language and increase the "political correctness" (RV) when presenting to the global team.

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[43] In 2020, DNA published 21 initiatives and strategic changes that contribute to the OPOH program's acceleration (Danone North America, n.d.).

Lastly, Danoners in Mexico perceives the program to have such an effect because it offers them a safer space to voice their opinion. Thus, there may be a cultural difference in how people can stand up to management decisions. The RV described how the leadership was "able to see things or to breathe or understand things that they do not normally hear. For example, when we have town halls and they say, oh, someone has a question? No one goes and ask these kinds of things publicly. No one. So having, like, this kind of feedback for them, it was like pretty, shocking" [I] therefore this program has added new avenues for employees to speak up and be heard. Moreover, the program opened avenues for top management to understand where they must accelerate. "So, opening this kind of conversations with the top management was like really interesting" [I].

Regardless of whether these areas showcase many new initiatives, if each office in which Danone is based makes at least one change each year, the program already has a tremendous collective impact pushing the company towards its One Planet, One Health vision. How it affects employees at an individual level will be described in the following section.

### 4.4.3 Individual effects
Here, I will describe what effect the different practices (*table 4-3*) had on the employees' performance or behaviour. Furthermore, the *table 4-3* below shows whether the activity was explicitly outlined by program designers versus an activity that happened during implementation of the program.

*Table 4-3: Updated AMO categorisation of OPOVOS program*

| Scale | Variables | Component | Exlicit or implicit action | Who it effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Skills (Ability) | Informal Training of nine goals | One Voice | Implicit | All users |
| | Company shares information | One Share | Explicit | All eligible users |
| | Understanding of employee's values | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | Management |
| | Increase in sustainability & social incentives & diversity of solutions | One Voice | Implicit | Management & volunteers |
| Incentives (Motivation) | Enabling employee's to voice their opinion | One Voice | Explicit | All users |
| | Vote at AGM enabling employee's to have a say | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | All eligible users |
| | Receiving one share | One Voice | Explicit | All eligible users |
| | Understanding of company goals | One Voice | Implicit | Volunteers |
| | Fostering friendships at work | One Voice | Implicit | Volunteers |
| | Feeling of recognition | One Voice | Implicit | Volunteers |
| Opportunity to participate | Cross-collaboration | One Voice | Implicit | Management & volunteers |
| | Influence the agenda setting | One Voice & One Share | Explicit | All users |
| | OCBE at local level | One Voice | Implicit | Volunteers |
| | OCBE at global level | One Voice | Implicit | Volunteers |

### *4.4.3.1 OPOVOS ability-enhancing effects*
**EXPLICIT ACTION: UNDERSTANDING OF EMPLOYEE'S VALUES – OV & OS**

Firstly, an explicit goal of the program is for local and global management to enhance their knowledge on how Danoners perceive the business and where they should prioritise their efforts in an easy to understand "quantifiable data" [K]. "I think it mobilises teams to know what employees want and put that high in the agenda" [L]. Moreover, one employee explained how it leads to a sense of grounded- and humbleness of management because it helps leaders recognise there are continuous areas to improve on. Furthermore, it also helps management tap into their employee's tacit knowledge, which is essential because a program designer described how employees at different levels know the local

contexts better than top management often does. All in all, the program has increased the level of alignment between the organisation and employees.

**IMPLICIT ACTION: INFORMAL TRAINING OF NINE GOALS – OV**
The increased nine-goal understanding affects employees' green abilities, motivating them to do better. Knowing more about the goals increases their sustainability and social understanding of their impacts and makes them want to align with the nine goals. Therefore, it affects their environmental consciousness and willingness to engage in more sustainability behaviour. "It has impacted the way I work and makes me at least more conscious of what our nine goals are and how our projects are, what we are doing, impact those goals" [K]. Another employee said, "Through one Voice, I become more conscious. With the 'One Share' program. Less, so" [L].

One of the regional volunteers described how it completely changed the way they see sustainability at work "Before this program, I didn't really care at all, and now it has honestly become part of my life. As a result, in my normal role, what I always try to do is, at least with my suppliers, is push for best practices to evaluate those sustainability issues. If something is wrong or I see something that for me shouldn't be there, I don't know bad social practices or something like that, I raise my hand or I even don't close any negotiation with that kind of player" [I].

The increase in environmental consciousness also affected employee's pro-environmental behaviour outside of work. For example, one employee describes how they "generally try to make the conscious decision when shopping" [K], "specifically the 'One Voice' program kind of ties back into that because then it ties back into the nine goals, and you start to think of like how does your behaviour in this matter" [K]. Another employee described, "I always talk about my work, [...] I'm always trying to make it. Specifically, to show my friends that this is the B corp slogan, you can be a force of good as a company. So, I always try to share this, and I'm always trying to recruit people. [...] So I'm always delivering many arguments of why they should join Danone or on how they should start implementing certain kinds of things in their companies and trying to convince the management to do things differently" [L]. Therefore, OPOVOS people are becoming agents of change outside of company borders as well.

**IMPLICIT ACTION: INCREASED SHARES INFORMATION – OS**
In terms of the 'One Share' aspect, the most explicit goal is granting an employee the ability to receive 'One Share' for free and participate in the general annual shareholder meeting. Furthermore, two employees described how they researched the company strategy more because of being able to vote the AGM.

The OPOVOS program helped increase employee and manager abilities to work towards pro-environmental behaviours in many areas. Nonetheless, some employees were more affected by certain activities than others. The following section will delve into what activities enhanced a feeling of motivation for employees.

### 4.4.3.2 OPOVOS Motivation effects
**EXPLICIT ACTION: EMPLOYEES HAVE A SAY IN THE OV SURVEY - OV**
A program that lets employee have a say increases of motivation and feeling of being valued. Employees described how "motivating as a person to know you are part of the company, your voice

counts" [D]; "to me, it's meaningful, and I feel valued as an individual, even if I am, you know, like eight rungs down from, you know, what was Emmanuel Faber" [K]. "Even if you cannot make decisions like you're there, you're important. [...] Danone, it's really a human company, and proximity is one of the values" [L] another program user said, "It's about being valued and being invited to work on this part of the company. And that even if we can't change everything, this is an invitation to make a bigger impact across all Danoners in the company. So, I think it's great" [M].

Likewise, if leadership shows their commitment to OPOVOS, it motivates employees to want to volunteer in it. Moreover, leading by example helps in "building personal pride of Danoners" [D], which also acts as a motivating factor for the employees to engage in pro-environmental behaviour. Likewise, a regional volunteer described how it creates an impact and understanding that the company is trying to accelerate towards the goals "I also think that the deliberation of money to fuel projects linked to the betterment of our planet." [G] "I think everyone is proud to be working for something that's trying to do good" [H].

Furthermore, for those who have taken the chance or opportunity to participate as a local or regional volunteer, recognition systems seem to have strong motivating effect. Especially when employees get recognised by other team members or managers at the company; "I got a companywide call-out at the end of the meeting" and "to be viewed in that light that you did a good job. (...) is a very cool and a great opportunity." [K]. They recognised it makes them feel more valued and vital while recognising their voice may not have the most significant impact, "it is about being valued and being invited to work on this part of the company. And that even if we can't change everything, this is an invitation to make a bigger impact across all Danoners in the company. So, I think it's great." [K].

Additionally, they could get their name out within the company "I would say I think it enabled me to get my name out there within my department in being an advocate [...] I think it helped people see me as someone who is both mission-driven and, you know, that I had a role within my department", "and then again, to just be viewed in that light of like you did, you did a good job. And we want to continue that [...] which is, again, very cool and a great opportunity", "I'm pretty sure I'm [...]one of the only low levels to have presented to the CEO ever. That's very cool, I would say those are kind of the biggest in terms of opportunities" [H].

**EXPLICIT ACTION: VOTE AT THE AGM – OS**
The motivation enhancing factor of OS goes hand in hand with the opportunity it creates. Namely, it allows employees to vote at the annual shareholder meeting, which everybody I spoke to did. Moreover, two did describe how it may help the business reconnect with employees they may be typically out of touch with for example, "I think our plant workers who sometimes do feel disconnected from what is going on, feel like they do have a voice" [K]. Two volunteers said it helps them "feel valued as an individual" [K & L].

**EXPLICIT ACTION: GRANT DANONERS 'ONE SHARE' – OS**
For employees in Mexico at a lower, operational level, it generated a lot of enthusiasm and engagement because they saw it as their gift, "they saw it as their giving me free money for basically for working here [...] in Danone at the operation level [...] working for Danone had very competitive and very competitive compensation structures" [B]. Besides, it made employees believe Danone has a high degree of organisational purpose, "I think it's a beautiful concept and [...] it's a powerful idea in my head. Like your average worker, people were like, oh my God, we're all stakeholders and all shareholders. And that's meaningful, like I do not see a lot of that anywhere else" [H]. Moreover, at

the time of the study, employees received a letter from Faber when he exited the company explaining that Danoners received the free share because he gave up his golden parachute. This had the most profound impact on employees (in DNA and Mexico) I spoke to at the time. It also made employees feel proud to be working for a business, especially working for a leader who cares. "I thought that was super profound" [L]. Faber's letter created a high sense of perceived purpose-driven leadership. A few weeks later, Danone published a press release confirming the employee's OS program will continue.

Four employees in Mexico talked about how the OS program ensured external word of mouth promotion between frontline workers at Danone and other companies. Three employees mentioned Amazon as an example where employees have already received shares and how Danone is catching up with the movement. Each of them described the OS concept as a fair and attractive strategy. Thus, it also affects how others see the business as a more fair and attractive work environment. All the employees in Mexico voted at the AGM.

Interestingly, the role and location of the employee matters in terms of how motivating the OS program is. Managers at Danone North America described how factory workers appreciated the monetary aspect of OS. In comparison, nearly all (except for one) employee in Mexico considered it a valuable gift. Three program users in DNA had the point of view that showcases a difference in effectiveness between locations. They described how the incentive as a monetary incentive itself did not make a big difference to them, but instead, they described it as a nice gift for people in lower-income regions. One of them described how it helped them be more aligned with company values. Two of them said they voted at the AGM but thought their one vote is significant enough. The three employees at DNA and the head of sustainability in Mexico described how the communication about the share that Faber gave up his exit package for the OS program was the most important and meaningful part.

Although the monetary aspect did not have a strong influence on higher levels, it helped align them with the business values and created a more significant commitment to the OPOH frame of action and increases their willingness to stay "because of the purpose of the mission and because of the culture" [I] (Mexico). Another local volunteer described how "just aligns with who I am as a person and still kind of hits it hits a positive chord for me" [K] (DNA).

*Figure 4-7. Side-effect of 'One Share'*
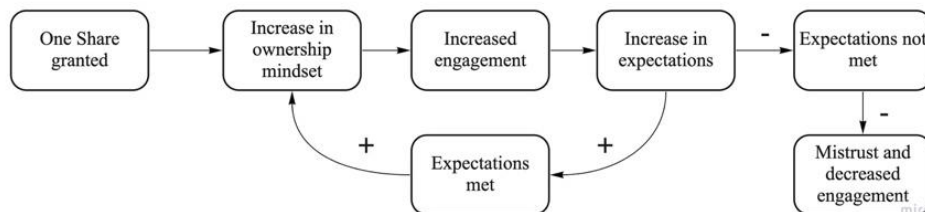


Both regional coordinators explained how it is even more critical than ever to respond to people's motivation and increased engagement, to 'walk the talk' and not leave people hanging. The need for a better response is highlighted by three employees who described how they do not understand the value of being a shareholder if they have no decision-making capabilities when it comes to it. For example, they emphasised their frustration when former CEO Faber was ousted. Another employee explained that they do not understand the benefits of the one share apart from the financial incentive.

They also described, "we organised a small French Revolution in the workplace. And we did like this letter write a letter, talk the board. We're not going to change anything, but let's try to do it. We don't have the money. We know it, but let's try to do something" [I]. Hence, the 'One Share' may have been a fundamental aspect that motivated employees to become more involved in demanding change and creating an internal uproar. Therefore, when employees have a more prominent feeling of ownership, they have higher expectations which may be a more considerable risk for the company if they do not meet the expectations. Because the risks could be mistrust in the company, decrease engagement or increased engagement in non-conform behaviour.

### *4.4.3.3 Opportunity enhancing effects*

**IMPLICIT ACTION: CROSS COLLABORATION ENHANCES HRM & STAFF OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM TASKS BETTER AND FIND SOLUTIONS – OV**

Furthermore, OV workshops increased collaboration between employees from different levels and departments on sustainability and social issues, which resulted in innovative initiative suggestions. What is more, HRM was able to identify change agents - Danoners from different departments who worked as OPOVOS volunteers and now work on multiple tasks outside of their typical role and are vocal about supporting Danone's vision. Firstly, the OV opportunity for management to connect with employees, resulting in better workflow processes and efficiency (see Mexico initiatives). Especially the connection with change agents throughout the business has helped HRM fulfil tasks quicker. Secondly, the OPOVOS program helped the adaption of digital systems (OPOH platform; online survey's; hardware), which has helped RCs and leaders connect with groups of people from different levels, departments, and locations same time.

These change agents, such as the squad team in Mexico or local volunteers in DNA, have already helped further other agenda items, such as promoting the OPOH learning platform. Showing how much value forging stronger relationships between HR employees and people from other departments can be. These change agents may be valuable for implementing different programs, but they also act as internal activists for the OPOVOS program. In Mexico, a program user said the RV promoted the OPOVOS program in their department, which had the result that the department knew of the importance and value of the program "when this started, I work together with […], so I got a lot of information about what was said and discussed at working sessions" [M].

More significant was the effect that the company recognition has on volunteers; when employees are given a chance to participate and manage sustainability and social initiatives. Because it enabled and empowered employee's employees to put extra efforts into the business directly contribute to the quality and agenda of Danone's sustainability and social initiatives. Furthermore, both regional volunteers I spoke to described how impressed they were with global leadership, especially Faber, because of his evident commitment to the employees at the meeting "when I met him, I spoke to him privately on certain things and I was like, whoa, wow. He believes in what he's doing" [I].

How employees perceived the program's opportunity is that it gave them an avenue for their Voice to be recognised, giving them the feeling of recognition and empowerment, and feeling more willing to engage in sustainability and social initiatives.

**EXPLICIT ACTION: VOTING AT AGM – OS**

Furthermore, it allowed the finance and equity department to create more awareness about the ESSP program. However, more often, it was more recognised as a symbolic act that helps showcase how purpose-driven leadership is, thus, impacting how the employees perceive the company.

The following *table 4-4*. highlights the overall effects of the OPOVOS program on employees in Danone North America and Danone Mexico.

*Table 4-4.: OPOVOS effects on Danoners*

| OPOVOS intervention area | Effects on employees |
|---|---|
| **Ability intervention effects** | · Increase in environmental consciousness<br>· Increase understanding and ability to reflect on Danone's nine goals<br>· More focus on sustainability when performing tasks at work and engaging with partners<br>· More motivation to engage in extracurricular activities for social and sustainability topics<br>· Ability to vote at AGM<br>· Increased awareness of company strategy |
| **Motivation intervention effects** | · Feeling valued as an employee and therefore increasing willingness to engage<br>· Perceiving leadership to care about the nine goals<br>· Being recognised by managers and other colleagues<br>· Helps the business reconnect with employees they may be typically out of touch with<br>· Increases perception of organisational purpose and leadership appreciation<br>· Increases business and employee alignment<br>· Creates more significant commitment to the OPOH frame of action<br>· Increases engagement<br>· Increases willingness to stay at Danone |
| **Opportunity intervention effects** | · Increases cross-collaboration between HRM and employee's and increased the quality of solutions for the nine goals<br>· Increases efficiency and workflow processes<br>· Increases connection with HRM and change agents<br>· Empowers employees to put in extra work in pro-social behaviour and activities<br>· Increases awareness about the employee share subscription program (ESSP) |

### 4.4.3.4 Contextual factors influencing employee experience

The following factors are the main contextual factors that influenced how a Danoners perceive the program:

· Level of involvement
· Tenure and organisational hierarchies
· Expertise and normative/environmental concerns
· Feeling of obligation & motivation
· Perceived corporate purpose & leadership
· Effectiveness of communication

How effective they perceive it strongly mediated by how involved they are in the program. For example, those involved in the design, implementation, or volunteering; value the program more than those not directly such as standard program users. SET can help describe why employees would

engage in OCBE at work and describes that an activity will occur if employees receive a return, they deem valuable. In this case employees deem the opportunity to influence the agenda setting (voting at AGM, survey, and volunteering) and be seen by their colleague (volunteering). Additionally, in line with the SET theory, Danone shows that they value the employee's loyalty and extra efforts beyond their task's requirement by doing company-wide shoutouts, posts about the employees and sending them encouraging emails about the good work they have done. Resulting in more motivation of the employee.

Employee tenure and organisational hierarchies also affects how employees perceive the OPOVOS since it effects if they see the program as an opportunity to be seen by other colleagues and management at the company. One employee described how they are at one of the lowest ranks at the company, with little decision-making abilities. However, when those who are of lower ranks or in roles with less power or decision-making ability, these employees have described how the program has influenced them on a personal and more positive level.

Moreover, their expertise, and normative concerns (normative motivation) influences how they perceive the program. For example, the two sustainability experts were more cynical about the impact the program has than others. Thus, their high level of personal environmental concern (normative concern) affected their intrinsic motivation to participate in extracurricular activities, in fact, they are continuing to participate in as local volunteer (DNA) and squad member (Mexico).

Furthermore, in line with the contingency theory, one local volunteer described their commitment to the survey analysis because they felt obliged to their colleagues to ensure their voice is heard, thus not only commitment to the business per say is important for people to engage.

Additionally, the perceived corporate purpose and leadership and walking the talk. Walking the talk is important method to create long-lasting motivation around the program. In the OPOVOS program, the employee and the business did stick to the explicit activities that are expected: business offers an opportunity for the employee to voice their opinion and granting one. The employee participate in the survey, helps analyse the findings and introduces them to leadership and agrees to receive a share. However, the employee's participating in these activities means that the long-term success of this program will depend on how much the organisation responds to the employee's commitment within the relationship (walking the talk). Throughout the conversations it became clear that this was something that the business had to work on especially for those employees who have not had the ability to participate in volunteering.

How motivated they become depends on the following contexts; firstly, whether employees perceive their leaders to be interested in the program will influence their motivation to participate. How leadership communicates about answering the survey, helps push employees to want to participate in it "Everybody on the leadership team does the same thing, 'I've done it have you?' and really pushes us" [K]; this in turn affects how the employee perceives whether the leadership is walking the talk. Furthermore, three volunteers described the value of being recognised by top leadership, these were also the employees who had a very strong, positive, perception of the program, versus those employees who participated and did not receive any ongoing recognition.

Therefore, if employees see there is ongoing communication about the program and especially about the findings and initiatives thereafter, it acts as a sense of motivation to continue answering the survey,

especially the follow-ups and action plans that are communicated after the OV program is what keeps employees motivated to keep answering the surveys honestly.

# 5 Discussion

The following chapter will delve into the implications and reasons of the findings, and I will discuss these results against known from theory. Moreover, at the end of the chapter I will reflect on the results of the study and reflect on my methodological, theoretical, and analytical choices.

## 5.1 RQ1: How is the employee engagement program for a sustainable development of Danone designed and implemented?

Danone's nine goals showcase the multiplicity of logic as a source of strategic diversity and innovation covering social, environmental, and economic pro-social goals, thus proving the aim of a more three-dimensional model of purpose. The OPOVOS program is a GHRM program because it links Danone's sustainability policies to HRM practices and directly contributes to Danone's environmental success (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). The program itself is effective of an empowerment and involvement (GEI) system, designed like an HPWS. It is an incredibly complex HRM intervention that has many moving parts. Moreover, the program has AMO components (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

**ABILITY INTERVENTIONS**
The One Voice volunteering offers avenues for employees to participate in extra-role behaviour, which in turn strongly increased the understanding of the nine goals and increased employees' willingness to participate in discrete actions[44] and OCBE behaviour (Mierlo & Beers, 2020). Furthermore, the OPOVOS program had an inexplicit educational effect on understanding the nine goals which increased employees' green abilities (Masri & Jaaron, 2017; Renwick et al., 2013). Most importantly, the workshops help create a platform for collaborative learning, and the OPOH learning class is a platform for individual learning (Mierlo & Beers, 2020).

**MOTIVATION INTERVENTIONS**
The HRM intervention directly targets employees' individual values and tacit knowledge (Oxenwärdh, 2019; Renwick et al., 2013). The One Share aspect is a financial incentive for green behaviour, but it was not designed to extrinsically motivate people. Instead, the One Share is designed to intrinsically motivate employees to participate in the agenda-setting by giving them a sense of ownership. This was different approach to what I found in previous literature around financial incentives for sustainability behaviour. Moreover, to increase employee motivation, the company applied communication and transparency reporting practices, such as reporting results at companywide meetings and presenting the findings on internal company platforms (De Witt & Hedland, 2017) these act as support systems to further employees' perceived purpose-driven culture (De Witt & Hedland, 2017). Furthermore, the business shows its commitment to the program by publishing about it on their websites and sharing each region's survey performance internally. Additionally, RCs and designers took advantage of some people's pro-environmental concern, as many volunteers showcased a great interest in wanting to make the business accelerate on the goals (40,000 Danoners wanted to volunteer in the OV survey analysis) (Daily et al. 2008).

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[44] 'Discrete action' means activities that go beyond traditional duties and are not necessarily part of the job (Paille & Boreal, 2013).

**OPPORTUNITY INTERVENTIONS**
The OPOVOS program shows factors of an employee empowerment and involvement system (GEI) because it gives all employees digital system access (online survey) for them to communicate and express their ideas and feedback on Danone's agenda (Gupta, 2018). Moreover, the program also has structural similarities to a high-performance-working system like that described by Edgar et al. (2020). Thus, OPOVOS also gives employees a green decision-making opportunity to participate in volunteering (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). The effectiveness of comments in the survey is provided by the survey anonymity, which provides employees the assurance that it is safe to voice an opinion and they will be punished (Gupta, 2018).

**IMPLEMENTATION**
The implementation of OPOVOS depended on the local norms and circumstances (Stahl et al. 2019). However, it is still an ongoing challenge to balance autonomy and regulations for the global HRM as discussed by Ehnert (2009), especially the balance between efficiency (resource allocation) and the focus on program effectiveness.

## 5.2 RQ2: What are the reported outputs and effects of the program?

### 5.2.1 Organisational outcomes

The OPOVOS program shows how Danone's leadership has the understanding that including as many people as possible in their agenda-setting and aligning them to the company's vision is essential for its success (Michelsen et al. 2016).

Moreover, this program shows the HR departments' commitment to the corporate strategy and the vision and mission of the company (Kelly & Gernnard, 2001). While the program may offer avenues for employees to come up with radical new ideas and 'out-of-the-box' solutions, the results and projects displayed a more incremental innovation, such as increased branded communications and shifts in organisational structures (Andreeva et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the research I conducted when looking at the effects in three locations already proved that each of the nine goals was either implicitly or explicitly accelerated due to the OPOVOS program (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; O'Brien & Wold, 2010).

Although the program creates a valuable structure for the collective voice of employees to be carried through the organisation, frontline workers are not included in the workshops. Thus, the businesses miss an essential opinion that could help with the implementation, acceleration, and solutions of the nine goals. Hence, the inclusion of all employees at each level is vital for the program's transformational abilities (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; Lleo et al., 2019; O'Brien & Wolf, 2010). In finding solutions to drive and accelerate towards the nine goals, the most influential part of idea and innovation creation is the survey analysis workshops. Significantly, the workshops are a practical method, as described by Mierlo and Beers (2000); a set of collaborative learning abilities increases employees' ability and helps people understand complex tasks better.

### 5.2.2 Changes in organisational structure

Furthermore, confirming what Turkmenoglu (2019) described, the engagement system has contributed improvements in communication and drove efficiency within the business. However, while efficiency and communication methods were improved, the program also increased the diversity of opinions and ideas. The business created a channel for more fair and equal policies to develop (e.g., breastfeeding rooms at plants in Mexico). At the global level, getting a more comprehensive range of

perspectives from people of different cultures, departments, and levels may offer the COMEX and board of directors' better insights into inter- and transdisciplinary solutions (Michelsen et al., 2016).

Furthermore, as Lundeburg (2010) described, not only did the GHRM help the business accelerate towards the nine goals, but the program also ensured HRM were able to identify change agents within the business who are involved in accelerating change (squads in Danone Mexico and core volunteer team in DNA). Additionally, identifying people with a significant environmental concern has made it easier for HRM to create stronger relationships with people willing to push for changes in the company (Paauwe, 2008).

Concerning the challenges of strategic balance of centralised policy versus subsidiaries' autonomy, the managerial freedom for the RCs influenced how they implement the program. For example, the survey analysis changes and mainly decrease in workshops in DNA in 2021 are in line with comments from Birkinshaw et al. (2014) describing how managers may have to put a stronger focus on one area while neglecting others.

### 5.2.3 Changes in performance

In this case, Danone's GHRM practices provoked employees' commitment to environmental activities (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019). Firstly, the main goal of the program is to create an avenue for Danoners to use their collective voice. In this study, like in previous studies (Meer, 2018), the program does have a substantial impact on empowering the direct voice of volunteers by enabling them to analyse the data, formulate main themes, and speak their opinion at meetings or workshops. Thus, there is a good chance that the information they portray will influence Danone's agenda.

Furthermore, confirming Paille and Boreal (2013), engaging with employees can help increase employees' understanding of a company vision and gives employees the chance to learn and possibilities to act in more pro-environmental behaviours (OV, initiative suggesting, adapting tasks at work, more OCBE). Moreover, the program also increased employees' willingness to engage in pro-environmental behaviour at work and at home, thus confirming Greenhaus & Powell's (2006) conclusion that work and home life boundaries are blurring. Additionally, it shows the correlation between behaviours at work and similar practices at home as seen in Klade et al. (2013).

The continuous information of the OPOH frame of action helped with message clarity and perceived work-culture support (Biggs et al., 2014). According to Desmidt and Prinzie (2018), communicating more effectively about what the business is doing to have a positive impact on the intrinsic motivation of employees potentially creates a more engaged and motivated workforce, in turn having a positive impact on financial and competitive performance (Knight et al. 2016). This was confirmed in this research. Furthermore, Danone's communication around the program and goals has helped strengthen the identification and alignment between the company and employees (De Witt & Hedlund, 2017; O'Brien & Wold, 2010).

The program was also effective in influencing Danoners' intrinsic motivation and alignment with the value of the organisation (Doran & Ryan, 2017), which is a challenging motivation practice (Renwick et al., 2013). On the other hand, when some expectations of the employees were not met, the program affected the employees' willingness to be more vocal about the decision to get rid of the CEO and Chairman.

## 5.3 RQ3: How do employees in North America and Mexico perceive the program?

RV in both DNA and Mexico spoke of the program in the highest regard; in particular, the meetings with RV from other places made them feel even more connected and in alignment with the business. This confirms Meer's (2018) research that a direct voice has a more substantial impact on employees' perceived empowerment and job satisfaction. Moreover, many employees said this program makes them proud to work for Danone, regardless of their level of involvement. As mentioned, trust and intrinsic motivation are some of the hardest tasks for a company, and as Rey and Bastons (2019) explained, they support the strategic alignment between the employees and the company.

At Danone Mexico, OV gave management an avenue to hear what their employees wanted, something that was previously unavailable on a larger scale. The squad members' willingness to participate in more sustainability initiatives is high. However, a squad member described not actually having much to do with many initiatives, as middle management is still acting as a barrier to the success of more programs. In Mexico, the OV program, the communication, and OPOH platform acted as a support system, helping employees discover their personal purpose within the company and achieving a more aligned, collective purpose corresponding to Birkinshaw et al. (2014) and Cardona et al. (2019) findings in previous studies.

In line with Renwick et al. (2013), managers recognition of volunteers' extraordinary efforts and companywide shoutouts significantly influenced the employees' willingness to generate and work on eco-initiatives. Firstly, local, and regional volunteers helped develop and share new practices. As a result, the motivation positively influenced the organisational sustainability performance. However, Arulrajah et al. (2015) described that the recognition systems must be made available to employees at different levels within the organisation to foster a program's success. In the OPOVOS program, the inclusion of frontline workers is still considerably low, therefore decreasing the quality and diversity of ideas and solutions the volunteers could develop. Furthermore, as described by Ehnert (2009), an increase in employee contribution also contributed to employees' expecting more of their business. Thus, while an increased employee contribution may improve efficiency and business practices, an overly motivated employee may also have more expectations, thus demanding more, contributing to the erosion of trust if expectations were not met, which may have a negative effect on a person's job satisfaction consistent to Helliwell and Huang's (2011) study findings.

Furthermore, especially for the One Share aspect, an employee's level in the company will affect how they feel about the OS program, because the share will positively influence those who have a lower income. At DNA the OS aspect was described as nice to have, but those employees recognise it does not have much impact, neither financially nor in terms of their decision-making ability. OS gave two employees more alignment to the company and a bigger appreciation to the top leadership of the company (previous CEO Faber). On the other hand, in Mexico employees recognised the OS as very impactful for frontline workers, because it makes them proud to work for a business that cares for their employees. Additionally, they become more vocal to external people and appreciate the free money. The OS program also influenced how they spoke of the business outside of company borders.

Although the OS program aims to increase employees' ownership mindset, the program did not change employees' decision-making rights beyond their job autonomy. This complex idea of creating a financial incentive as a symbolic gesture to increase a person's intrinsic motivation also created a sense of confusion in employees who did not understand the point of the share if they do not have

any power or influence on company decisions. Therefore, the idea of receiving a share that does not give an employee decision-making ability and offering the chance to answer a companywide survey to empower employees to have a say, did not happen in this case. This aspect had a negative feedback effect of diminished trust in the program. As a result, if management fails to respond according to employee expectations, it will negatively influence morale, engagement, productivity, and trust this finding parallels Mortensen and Gardner's (2021) study finding. Furthermore, in this case, it also led to employees standing up for themselves with an open letter, which means employees are actively going against top management's decisions. Thus, balancing the employees' expectations with what is possible will be even more critical. This study is in line with Biggs et al. (2014) study findings and highlights the importance that message clarity and perceived organisational and leadership support are to help balance contingencies and increase the perceived work culture and strategic alignment between employees and the company.

## 5.4 RQ4: What type of contextual factors influence how employees implement and perceive the program?

In keeping with the framework highlighted in *figure 1-1*, my research suggests that specific HRM interventions influence employees, but their contextual factors (internal and external) will influence how the HRM are implemented, what effects they have, and how they are perceived by individuals. At Danone, HRM faces the continuous challenge to balance their practices with the following contingencies:

- · Internal organisational drivers: multiplicity of logic (OPOH and short-term goals) and balancing strategic dualities (e.g., 'local first' strategy)
- · External organisational drivers (e.g., pandemic)
- · Individuals' experiences, gain motivation, and normative goals
- · Organisational power, hierarchies, and roles
- · Level of involvement in the program

### 5.4.1 Contextual factors influencing the implementation

As previously stated, there is a recognition that the organisation's climate may affect HRM activities to a great extent (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016; Schuler & Jackson, 1987). In the literature review, I introduced Ocasia and Radoynovska's (2016) study that described how multiple logics could be sources of strategic diversity and innovation which may help practitioners with the varying contextual contingencies and institutional and organisational pressures. In this case, Danone's nine goals showcase a multiplicity of logic (OPOH frame of action) which may help the business deal with varying contextual contingencies and pressures in future. At the same time, it also creates some conflicting expectations for managers when focussing on current short-term goals versus fulfilling the long-term vision which corresponds with Ocasia and Radoynovska's (2016) report results. It is a complex balance since, on the one hand, employees need to be more included in the strategic changes ('local first adaptation'); on the other hand, the OPOVOS program is not supposed to overwhelm coordinators and volunteers with too much work outside of their roles. As previously described, a failure to achieve a good balance will lead to suboptimal HRM effectiveness aligned with Harney (2016), Wood (1999) and Yong et al.'s (2019) results.

This research shows how balancing strategic dualities and multiple logics at the global and local levels is challenging for multinational companies (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). HRM will have to continuously

aim to balance them when designing and implementing a HRM intervention for sustainable development (Ehnert, 2009). Furthermore, the goal framing theory helps describe the inherently fragile concept of implementing a program where success depends on the RCs and employees' intrinsic motivation to spend more time working on the program. It showcases how it is easy for the long-term, pro-social goals to be driven out by other, more hedonic goals (Birkinshaw et al., 2014).

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, there is a recognition that the organisation's climate may affect HRM activities to a great extent (Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016; Schuler & Jackson, 1987). For example, some clear external organisational drivers (such as the pandemic) influenced how the program was implemented by RCs, confirming Paauwe (2009) and other researchers that an outside-in perspective is critical.

## 5.4.2 Contextual factors influencing employee experience

Regarding an individual's perception, as mentioned in chapter 2 an employee's perceptions of the program will be influenced by the person's individual experience and understanding of the current environment. For example, Saks (2019) helped highlight how emotional and intellectual commitment to a business can increase efforts people commit to at work. Here it became evident that all employees showcased a solid commitment to supporting Danone's sustainability initiatives, where the only barrier was the time and resources available to create more changes. Therefore, the company has access to vast amounts of people willing to engage in more extracurricular activities to accelerate sustainable development at Danone. In the case of contextual factors that have impacted the OPOVOS program's perceived performance as described by Paauwe (2004b), I would like to highlight the following issues.

In line with the goal-framing theory, an employee's gain motivation may influence how they perceive the program. For example, middle management was described as a barrier to the implementation of more initiatives, indicating that they may perceive the program as a hedonic goal and therefore may be neglecting the value of the OPOVOS program. In contrast, the analysis and workshops may interest employees because they create more opportunities for them, therefore contributing to the 'gain goals'. On the other hand, participating in these additional actions contribute to the acceleration of the pro-social goals, confirming that values matter in terms of environmental behaviour as described by Birkinshaw et al. (2014). I would like to add that some employees may be contributing to the program without aiming to improve the environment; they may be solely led by their personal 'gain goal'.

Additionally, a person's personal (normative goals) environmental concern towards a topic will influence how they perceive an HRM intervention. For example, normative concerns influenced behaviour, as described by Lindenberg and Steg (2007), effecting how an employee perceived the OPOVOS program. Secondly, those with a better understanding of sustainability (sustainability experts) do not perceive the program as effective. However, that did not deter them from volunteering in DNA and Mexico, confirming Daily et al.'s (2008) assertion that an environmental concern can result in more OCBE. When a company program is promoted saying one thing (such as increasing the ownership mindset of employees) but then management fails to respond according to employee expectations, it will not only negatively influence morale, engagement, productivity, and trust as specified by Mortensen and Gardner (2021). In fact, I found that it may even lead to much bigger problems such as internal 'revolutions' within the company, when employees are actively going against top management's decisions. Thus, to balance the employee expectations with what is possible will be even more important than ever. Researchers argue that message clarity and perceived organisational and leadership support are important factors that may help balance the contingencies and increase the

perceived work culture and strategic alignment between employees and the company (Biggs et al., 2014; Desmidt & Prinzie, 2018; Tulder et al. 2014). Therefore, this study confirms Birkinshaw et al. (2014) findings that the strategic implementation of support systems such as continuous communication feedback streams can be useful.

As previously mentioned, organisational power, hierarchies, and role at the company affect how a program is perceived and viewed. For example, the adjustment of messages (personal agenda) may obstruct truthful feedback streams to management, influencing how management perceives the program. Moreover, hierarchies will also affect how a person participates in an HRM program and influence how they value it. For example, middle management may not be as interested in the program because they do not see how it connects or adds value to their area within the business. Lastly, when the workshops and analysis sessions do not include frontline workers, those workers are more likely to misunderstand the OV questions and be less satisfied with the program. Even more importantly, the findings that are presented to local and global management are missing their voice. Thus, every employee's direct voice at the frontline level must be included more in the program (workshops and analysis sessions).

Employees' engagement in the program affects their perceptions of its effectiveness. On one hand, employees who only participate by answering the survey and voting at the AGM will not wield as much influence, since their direct voice is not included in the information leadership receives. Regarding which employees responded—standard program users versus volunteers—the more the employees participated through volunteering, the more they described the strong impact and benefits of the program; moreover, their level of trust in top management to care about and value the OPOH vision increases as well. This trust in leadership has a strong effect on employees' willingness to engage in extracurricular tasks. For example, RVs spend around two hours per week on the program in addition to their standard jobs. The OPOVOS program showcased a series of interactions between the business and Danoners, functioning in a state of mutual interdependence. Saks (2006) describes in the social exchange theory that when both parties stick to their actions (fulfil 'rules of exchange'), the relationship shall evolve over into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. Trust and loyalty are affected mainly by whether employees perceive being heard by the company. If the company does not walk the talk (act in line with the nine goals), this will result in diminished 'rules of exchange', therefore negatively impacting the employee's motivation to participate further. In addition, nearly all Danoners can answer the survey and eligible employees can vote at the AGM.

Additionally, internal communication of the OPOH vision is an essential pillar program and influences staff's perception of OPOVOS and purpose-driven leadership. It helps optimise the organisational processes and increase understanding of the HRM interventions, thus informing and motivating employees to engage with them. However, contradictory, or incomprehensible statements contributed to the uncertainty of employees (OS program effects on employee ownership).

Lastly, when implementing employee engagement programs, it is crucial for the company to listen to and subsequently act upon what employees have to say (walk the talk). This will also take an even greater effort for OPOVOS designers to establish systems and measurements in which the more effective OPOVOS processes cannot decrease.

## 5.5 Methodology reflections

This section will discuss the suitability of the research design, the methodological rigour, and potential limitations. Firstly, the research problem influenced my choice of research design; I investigated how Danone's GHRM intervention program affected Danone's acceleration towards its nine pro-social goals (Hewapathirana et al., 2020). Secondly, there needs to be more understanding of how businesses can engage with employees to further sustainability (Sobaih et al., 2020). Thus, I offered a detailed description of an HRM program. Thirdly, understanding and describing the contextual factors which may influence employee perception was needed to understand how contexts shape behaviours and performance (Edgar et al., 2019). Moreover, I also investigated how employees' behaviour (e.g., charisma or deep environmental concern) may affect how they perceive the company, helping fill the research gap (Hewapathirana et al., 2020). Lastly, I spoke to the employees about how the program affects them outside of company borders, identifying that it increases their pro-environmental behaviour, thus adding to the literature regarding the spill-over effects of green company practices (Pham, Hoang, & Phan, 2019).

Regarding the methodological rigour, Yin (2009) distinguishes between multi-case study and single case study approaches. Single case studies are helpful while testing an extreme or unique case (Yin, 2009). Therefore, creating an empirical study of a single case study was suitable to Danone's OPOVOS program. Throughout the study, I paid careful attention to describing and understanding the OPOVOS process. According to Yin (2009), when the researcher creates a detailed process description, it adds to the quality of the research. Furthermore, validity and reliability are prerequisites for conducting case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009).

In terms of validity, I continuously search for why a person has a particular opinion by understanding the context under which they describe their experience. According to Eisenhardt (1989), understanding the contexts and underlying relationships helps build internal validity. In this study, I used triangulation and logic models to strengthen the validity of the study. In terms of triangulation, I applied 'data source triangulation' and 'methods triangulation' to strengthen the validity of the case study evaluation (Yin, 2013). Additionally, the logic model or research framework helped me understand potential causal relationships between HRM practices and their outcomes on the organisational and the individual (Yin, 2013). I spoke to employees at different levels about the same program to identify potential rival explanations (Yin, 2013). Furthermore, I compared the findings to previous literature and theory, which also helps raise the theoretical quality of the thesis and furthers the validity (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Reliability describes the stability of responses of interviewees. Firstly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the concept of 'trustworthiness': the criteria for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that the credibility of the findings can be increased by applying overlapping or triangulation of methods and examining the process of inquiry, which I did throughout my research. To ensure transferability, I gave the reader a complete description of the program and its implementation in two regions. Furthermore, to increase confirmability, I compared employees' interviews with documents or company statements to attest the findings and interpretations.

Concerning generalisability, the results do not offer a one-size-fits-all manual of integrating an employee engagement program into a business to accelerate sustainable development. As outlined, I did not aim to make it generalisable; qualitative case-based research is not the best approach for

producing universal rules (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Moreover, perceived pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour not necessarily statistically significant (Groot & Steg, 2010). In fact, case studies are "aimed at the description and explanation of complex and entangled group attributes, patterns, structures or processes" (Verschuren, 2003, p. 137). My research followed this approach and analysed the empirical data to extract core elements such as Danone's business aims and visions, the contingencies influencing an employee engagement program's design and implementation, and its effects on the company and employees.

The possible limitations of this research are that, first, a longitude study is a valuable approach to study organisational processes (Street & Ward, 2012), but time and resource constraints hindered the chance for a longitude research method. Secondly, one of the challenges in combating the study's trustworthiness is decreasing the impact of my subjective feeling (researcher bias) on the study findings (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). Some of my strategies included suggestions by Kornbluh (2015) to ensure decreased researcher bias, such as giving the reader a comprehensive understanding of the population (Danone company description), describing the data analysis process (methodology chapter), and incorporating member checks (sending updates, follow-ups, and confirmation emails to interviewee participants). Additionally, because of the program's complexity, not all parts could be discussed, described, analysed, or compared to literature. For example, while I described the implementation process of the OPOVOS program in two regions, the other regions were left out of this empirical study. Lastly, coping with the program's complexity as an external researcher sometimes created a barrier for me to identify the causality links between the OPOVOS program and the outputs and effects.

## 5.6 Recommendations for practitioners

Regarding the implications for practitioners, in a business environment where sustainable development is taken seriously, such as at Danone, the tensions and dilemmas of specific practices become apparent and must be managed by HRM. For HRM programs to be championed by all, the goals of OPOVOS must be part of the company's fabric. Nonetheless, implementing various support systems will help HRM ensure its interventions is effective (Birkinshaw et al., 2014).

### 5.6.1 Practitioners designing an employee engagement program
While HR practices will depend on the perspective of the employees affected, in this case, some interventions can be considered helpful in terms of shifting people's perspective on the value of the program.

- Future HRM program designers should be aware of trade-offs and strategic dualities when designing and implementing an HRM program. For example, the HRM program's autonomy in the implementation will lead to different results.
- Feedback channels such as surveys must include questions and relevant topics to local employees and leadership teams.
- Barriers to more inclusive procedures must be identified and actively managed at a local level.
- Analytical experience and tools add to the qualitative rigour of surveys.
- Organisational hierarchies and individual aims may affect what message management finally receives, decreasing the validity of the findings

### 5.6.2 Walking the talk

For employees to perceive the business as sticking to the 'rules of exchange' (SET theory) and walking the talk, the following aspects can be considered:

- Message clarity and continuous communication helps with employees understanding of company vision, increases motivation to engage and increases perceived organisational purpose.
- Continuous initiative implementation, workshops, communication of results helps employees perceive a program as more valuable and practical.
- Middle management's inclusion in the design of an HR intervention may ensure they are more willing to engage in the pro-social goals (HRM volunteering) and less likely to dismiss the program.

However, regardless of the design's effectiveness, not all outcomes are controllable by the different contingencies. They impact outcomes and performance on organisational and individual levels, as highlighted throughout the research (Paauwe, 2004).

## 5.7 Recommendations for further research

Future research may be valuable in the following ways: Firstly, my study would have benefited from more academic research of innovative ways to manage the strategic dualities, deepening understanding of how the HRM of purpose-driven companies can accelerate the long-term vision versus short-term profit, global versus local autonomy effects on GHRM programs, and efficiency versus the effectiveness of GHRM programs.

Secondly, researchers may investigate how symbolic (intrinsic) incentives can be effective in fostering an ownership mindset. Besides, if such incentives can be effective, does a more symbolic intervention (like Danone's employee share plan) replace the representation that workers used to receive when unions were more prevalent across all industries? Is the employee share plan less efficient at empowering workers' rights and voices within their own companies than traditional unions?

Additionally, further research is required to understand what strategies an HRM can use to incentivise employees with different skills (e.g., analytical skills) and interests to engage in the same HRM program. Such research would help future HRM to identify and incentivise change agents with varying skill sets. These strategies should be embedded throughout the organisation's operating structure, with adequate processes to add high-quality execution and qualitative rigour of the program. This will help leaders, managers, and employees within the organisation gain better value of OPOVOS and navigate the OPOH framework faster.

Lastly, it may be interesting to create a more holistic picture of the OPOVOS program implementation and effects on its employees by conducting a qualitative research on the other regions. Additionally, further research should be conducted on other companies seeking to do similar things—building a library of understanding employee engagement for purpose-driven leadership.

# 6 Conclusion

This thesis investigates how a multinational company uses an innovative employee engagement program for sustainable development and how it affected employees' pro-social behaviour. This study contributes to the HRM literature for sustainable development by investigating the relationship between an MNC's unique employee engagement program, employees' perception of it, and the mechanisms underlying this relationship. The results indicate that the program enhances employees' perception of organisational purpose, thus promoting employee willingness to contribute to the agenda-setting.

For this purpose, qualitative empirical data consisting of interviews with 14 Danone employees, in addition to multiple documents, websites and videos (chapter 7.1). I applied a content analysis to answer the following research questions:

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**RQ1:** How is the employee engagement program for a sustainable development of Danone designed and implemented?

**RQ2:** What are the reported outputs and effects of the program?

**RQ3:** How do employees in North America and Mexico perceive the program?

**RQ4:** What type of contextual factors influence how employees implement and perceive the program?

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Regarding **RQ1**, designing and implementing a MNC's employee engagement program is incredibly complicated. In this case, the employee engagement program is designed with two distinct features. First, each employee can share their thoughts and ideas on the company vision in a global survey (OV). The survey's implementation and the analysis are managed by one selected coordinator from the HR department in each region. After that, each coordinator must ensure the findings are analysed locally. Finally, the results are shared with local and global management, and the company's strategic agenda may be modified. The second feature (OS) is that eligible employees are gifted one company share in combination with access to Danone's annual dividend-based scheme.

Regarding **RQ2**, there are different effects of the program on the organisational processes, such as improving resource efficiencies, increased communication streams, identifying change agents, and improved digitalisation. The program had helped accelerate Danone's nine pro-social goals by creating different social and sustainability initiatives in response to the program. Lastly, it affected individuals by improving their understanding of the goals, increasing commitment towards Danone and their willingness to engage, and in some cases also increasing their expectations towards the business.

Regarding **RQ3**, employees perceive an employee engagement program as effective in how it enables them to participate in organisational citizenship behaviour. The program gives management one of the first avenues to understand how employees perceive the local agenda in Danone Mexico. In Danone North America, it helped management identify areas where its strategic communication could be improved. In both places, individuals who participated in OPOVOS volunteering considered the program to be more effective than less engaged users. Moreover, the businesses recognition of their extra efforts significantly affected people's intrinsic motivation to continue participating. The second part of the program, the financial incentive, was seen as significant for lower-level employees. For employees higher up, the program fostered appreciation for the company's work of making the lives of low-income households better and increased employee alignment with the business's purpose. On

the other hand, One Share hardly affected employees' ownership mindset, and when it did, it increased employees' expectations, which can increase negative behaviour and pressure for managers to respond to employees' requests.

Regarding **RQ4**, many contextual factors influence how a program is implemented and perceived. They can be split into internal organisational drivers, such as strategic dualities and balancing short-term versus long-term goals. Furthermore, employees' individual experience and normative concerns will also affect HRM programs. In addition, external organisational drivers that decrease employees' available time and resources may affect intervention implementation. For example, at the time of this research, Danone was faced with huge uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the HRM intervention methods had to be adjusted so that employees are not overwhelmed by HRM programs.

Furthermore, this research helps contribute to the topic of employee engagement for sustainable development in the following ways. Firstly, Danone's *One Person, One Voice, One Share* program has not been a subject of empirical research. Therefore, this research is new in the context in which it has been applied. Moreover, there is already a tremendous academic understanding of research related to HRM and GHRM, which apply to this study. Still, I would like to emphasise that HRM interventions are significant in accelerating change, but the program's success is affected by many complexities. Therefore, studies that research the design and implementation of HRM programs may help practitioners navigate the complexities and contingencies of their business.

To conclude, this research helped illuminate the value and complexities of employee engagement practices for sustainability at work and beyond. Additionally, while no vantage point can give us the whole picture, this study shows the complexities of the dual ambition of purpose and profit and contributed to further our understanding of the topic. It was my goal to deepen the understanding of the dynamics of HR, aiming to accelerate a sustainability agenda, highlight practical tools that help make this a reality, and support businesses to generate more effective employee engagement programs that combine environmental, social, and economic understanding. Lastly, this research has emphasised the need for businesses to continue working on effective ways to engage with their employees, harnessing their collective intelligence to help society accelerate towards a more sustainable and just world.

*"Resilience is the name of the game. Let's be bold and continue progressing"*

(Berg, 2020)

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# 8 Appendix

## 8.1 Example interview questions

The following list provides a consolidated overview of the interview questions. It is important to note that these questions had to be adapted based on the specific role and location of the employee, experience with remote sensing and interview duration. The question list was adjusted during each interview on emerging topics from previous interviews.

**PROGRAM DESIGNER INTERVIEW QUESTION EXAMPLES**

Program story
1. Please describe your current role at Danone.
2. How would you describe Danone's culture?
3. Implementation story: Please tell me the story about how and why the OPOVOS program was created.
   a. What are the main goals of the program?
4. How has the program evolved since its implementation in 2018?
5. You have the following elements (OV and OS), please briefly describe the main processes of these elements (I have specific questions around the elements)
6. How has the program been implemented globally?
7. Are there any contextual factors that influence how you implement the program in different locations?
8. Can you walk me through an example of something that changed at Danone due to a suggestion of an employee in the survey?
9. What is the nature of the ideas suggested by employees in the survey?
10. What part of the program works particularly well?
11. Has the program created any barriers or problems internally?
12. How do you see the program evolving over time?
13. Has the pandemic affected how this program is applied?
14. Do you have any questions for me?

**REGIONAL COORDINATOR INTERVIEW QUESTION EXAMPLES**

1. Would you mind explaining a little bit what your job entails?
2. Can you tell me a bit about how the structure of Danone North America?
3. Could you tell me the story about how you became involved with the 'One Voice, One Share' program and how you're working with the program?
4. I understand there are lots of departments involved, can you tell me more about who is responsible for implementing the program in Danone North America
5. What is the main goal of the OPOVOS program?
6. What resources does central Danone make available for your office?
7. What kind of communication is between you and the global HR department?
8. How has OPOVOS affected your department?
9. Could you run me through how the program was implemented in North America last year?
10. How do you ensure the inclusion and interest of the program amongst all employees?

11. I'm interested in your opinion; can you tell me about things that worked well
12. In 2018 when the program was implemented, until now, is there anything that has changed in the program design since then? And why?
13. Any topic you would like to include in the program topics? Or goals?
14. What effect do you think the program has had on Danone as a multinational company?
15. Are there any global initiatives that have been implemented because of the program?
16. What impact has the program had on DNA?
17. Have you noticed any changes in behaviour in your local office since the use of the program?
18. Could you give me some examples of initiatives that occurred due to the program?
19. Are these things you've measured?
20. How does the program affect employees?
21. What effect did the program have on you?
    a. Has it influenced your environmental behaviour?
    b. Has it influenced you outside of the company?
    c. Has it influenced your environmental behaviour outside of the company?
22. Has COVID-19 shaped how you implement the program?
23. Has your role evolved over time since implementing the program?

**PROGRAM USERS INTERVIEW QUESTION EXAMPLES**

1. Please describe your current role at Danone
2. How do you perceive Danone's culture?
3. What topics are an important priority to you working in a business?
4. Has sustainability played a role in your life
5. Has Danone changed the way you view sustainability?
6. What sort of organisational support is offered to employees at Danone?
7. How do you perceive Danone's organisational purpose?
8. Can you tell me the story of how you are involved in the 'One Voice, One Share' Program?
9. Can you describe the process after you fill out the survey?
10. What do you think of the survey?
11. Have you participated in a survey analysis?
12. Has the program increased your understanding of the nine Danone goals?
    a. If yes, what part in particular
13. Please describe if the program affects anything in your department
14. Do you know of any initiatives that have been implemented since then?
15. How do you feel about the program?
16. What do you think of the survey?
17. Is there anything that you think can be improved?
18. Have you volunteered your time and energy to analyse the findings?
    a. What impact does the program have on Danone?
19. Has the program changed the way you work?
20. How do you think the program affects Danone as a whole?
21. How do you think the program affects Danone regionally?
22. How does the program affect you? ('One Voice')
    a. Has this program changed the way you act / shop / consume or communicate outside of work?
23. What effect does the 'One Share' aspect have on you?
    a. Do you feel like more ownership towards the business?

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR REGIONAL VOLUNTEERS:**

1. Can you tell me why you decided to take on the role of being a volunteer?
2. How much of your role is taken up by being a volunteer?
3. Can you describe what it's like to be one of the 26 volunteers?
4. How do you prepare for the meetings with the board?
5. Can you describe what it's like at the meetings with the board and COMEX?
6. Can you describe the topics that are discussed at the two annual meetings?
7. What have you learned from participating in the meetings with the board and COMEX?
8. Do you know of any initiatives that have been implemented since then?

## 8.2 Coding framework

This coding framework was developed deductively based on the background and literature review. Besides the main codes (parent codes) subsequent codes were also identified for the data collection. It was adjusted and extended during the reading and coding of documents as well as the coding of interviews.

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Global program design
    Ability interventions
        Recruitment & staffing selection
        Training and development
        Leadership and management development
    Motivation interventions
        Extrinsic motivation interventions
            Performance appraisals (PA)
            Green rewards
        Intrinsic motivation interventions
            Tacit knowledge practices
            Recognition
            Alignment with company values
    Opportunity interventions
        Employee empowerment & engagement (GEI) systems
Global program implementation methods
    Context-dependent
        Organisational drivers
        Job drivers
        Personal drivers
    Clear description methods (top-down communication)
        Channel (Where)
            How do they communicate with HR from local offices?
    Continuous feedback methods (feedback streams)
    Continuous collaboration methods
Direct effects = Organizational effects
    Ability enhancing effects
    Motivation enhancing effects
    Opportunity enhancing effects
    Negative side effects
Indirect effects = Job effects
    Ability enhancing effects
    Opportunity enhancing effects
    Motivation enhancing effects
    Job feedback effects
    Negative side effects
Side effects = Personal effects
Learnings about the effectiveness
Ideas for improvements: (What do people think about the program)

### 8.2.1 Updated coding framework

The following coding framework was developed deductively since I continuously adapted the initial coding framework throughout the practitioner review. The codes below were created in NVivo (the qualitative analysis tool).

| Code | |
|---|---|
| Activities | Internal organisational environment |
| Grant One Share | Culture |
| Cash back | Emmanuel Faber CEO change |
| Inform - Top-down communication | Ideology |
| Challenges | Power & resources |
| Goal | Structure Mexico |
| Message | Structure NORAM |
| Method | Share purpose generation |
| Monthly Sessions Global & Regional | Purpose-driven communication |
| Listen - Feedback opportunities | Purpose-driven leadership |
| Increased responsibility | Purpose-driven strategy |
| Regional Taskforce | Balance between purpose and reality or business |
| Meeting preparation | Company Structure |
| Meetings with Board & Comex | Local First transformation |
| Regional Volunteer role | Purpose-driven systems |
| Survey or consultancy | Danone Way |
| Survey Design | One Planet. One Health |
| Survey Question Examples | Danone Day |
| Workshops | Danone People Survey |
| Local volunteer role | E-learning course |
| Review progress | Employee SSP |
| Danone Day | Workplace |
| Danone Way | Design One Share |
| Causes | Aim of Share |
| Root cause of program | Eligibility Criteria |
| Challenges | How it's done |
| One Share | Who is involved |
| Complexity | Effect of One Share |
| Covid & uncertainty | Global Agenda |
| Financial Literacy | Qualitative Rigour |

| | |
|---|---|
| Non-digital's | Responsibility |
| Understanding of it | Talk no action |
| One Voice | Timing |
| Bureaucracy | Understanding the goals |
| Bias | Contexts |
| Effectiveness decrease due to COVID | External organisational factor |
| Including Plant Level | COVID 19 effect |
| Knowing about OPOVOS | Individual driver |
| Local Contexts | Job characteristic |
| Ownership matters | Job Level |
| | Nature of the job |
| | Skill variety |
| | Tenure |
| | Perceived organisational purpose |
| | Perceived organisational support |
| | Personal culture |
| | Values |
| | Worldviews |

## 8.3 Additional Danone information

**DANONE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

The following programs are initiatives with whom the OPOVOS program fosters synergies. Due to the size and complexity of the business, it leverages different types of events and programs to transmit the company's goals and vision. Furthermore, Danone employees claimed [A & C] that employees and teams from across the world want to play an active role in their communities, that willingness also came across strongly in the interviews with Danoners in NORAM and Mexico.

**SUSTAINABLE DIETS E-LEARNING PLATFORM**

In 2019, UNITAR and Danone launched an e-learning course on sustainable diets. Danoners are encouraged to participate in the course and encourage family, friends, and others to join as well since it is free to access as a non-Danoners. The program shows the recognition that the business can have an influence outside of direct company borders "e-learning, it's about upskilling employees all year round to raise awareness. And it's more than just asking employers and employees. It's also about raising awareness externally [...] And encourage family, friends, people, you know, to join the movement. In a sense, I wouldn't say it only goes into the OPOVOS program, it's way beyond" [A]. According to the interviewees, Danone leadership recognizes the positive influence it can have outside of company borders, through the creation of external programs.

**ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH LEARNING PLATFORM**

The One Planet, One Health internal training is a tool employees can use to understand Danone's nine goals, helping to drive engagement and acting as an aid in gathering more informed information,

ideas, and suggestions. In DNA, the transformation manager used the OPOVOS core team to drive other Danoners to use the platform and learn more about the vision.

**STAY SAFE PULSE SURVEY**
Affecting the short-term agendas, throughout the pandemic, HR sent through many surveys to understand how employees are doing in the time of the global pandemic. It came out in Covid to provide context to managers to be able to support Danoners and to adjust plans in a more short-term manner.

**DANONE DAY**
Once a year, Danoners get together and connect to celebrate what has been done and what achievements have been made at global as well as local level. Further, they have different sessions where they can focus on future objectives together. In 2018 they capitalized on the event to introduce the OPOVOS program.

**DANONE WAY**
Founded in 2001 helping advance the company's contribution to sustainable development with data that feeds into the global strategic decisions. "Because we are a big company and with the size of course comes complexity. [...] So when things are connected and supporting each other and synergizing with each other [...] it can support your strategy. And Danone Way makes it easier to make decisions because you know how it impacts the business on more levels" [D].

**DANONE AWARDS AND EXTERNAL RECOGNITION**
Since the early 2000s the company has launched a multitude of social business projects with the explicit goal of making them a "lever of strategic renewal" (Faivre-Tavignot, 2016). A *HEC University* article described "Danone is seen as a multinational company that takes the subject of social responsibility very seriously" (Faivre-Tavignot, 2016).

ProShare Awards 2021 Danone won best international share plan following major corporate change by Computershare, a major non-profit organisation for management. "The judges praised Danone for having very clear objectives and communications that were translated into 30 different languages to drive understanding and maximise take-up – 'A highly commendable approach the certainly makes a statement. Free shares for all, in 57 countries is very impressive'." (ProShare, 2021).

*Table 8-1. Danone's nine goals and OPOH frame of action*

| Transformation area | Goal | Contribution to SDGs | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| Business Model<br><br>"We will grow as a B CorpTM, innovating to offer superior food experiences"<br><br>(Danone, 2019b) | Offer superior food experiences and innovate, always | 3, 12 | Danone's commitment to offer the "highest quality and food safety standards" (Danone, B, 2019) and sustainably sourced ingredients with strong innovation |
| | Deliver superior sustainable profitable growth | 8, 12 | Provide a health-focused product offering and continue to grow the strategic roadmap towards the future food trends. The business has three priorities, "maximise efficiencies, accelerate growth |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | and allocate resource with discipline" (Danone, B, 2019) |
| | Be certified as a B Corp | 8, 12, 16 | Prove the businesses long-term commitment to sustainability and the dual economic and social ambition, by transitioning to receiving a B Corp certification for the entire business |
| Brand Model "We will grow what we call Manifesto brands to protect and nourish both the health of the people and the health of the planet." (Danone, 2019b) | Impact people's health locally | 2, 3 | Bringing healthy food to as many people as possible means the need to continuously optimise the nutritional profile and accelerate initiatives (programs & services) to help impact dietary habits positively |
| | Grow manifesto brands | 12 | Building purpose-driven brands that "will act as true activists towards their point of view, not only delivering an exciting experience to people, but also committing to create a positive impact on health and planet" (Danone, B, 2019) |
| | Preserve and renew the planet's resources | 2, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15 | Commitment to sustainably source ingredients and enhance the circular economy of packaging |
| Trust Model "We will grow in an inclusive way, empowering our people and working with partners to create and share sustainable value." (Danone, 2019b) | Entrust Danone's people to create new futures | 3, 5, 6, 8, 16 | Allowing each employee to co-own the agenda and goals at global and local level. |
| | Foster inclusive growth | 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 | Foster inclusive growth with partners and suppliers, build sustainable solutions for low-income communities, maximise impact of social innovation "through scale and transformation of business practices" |
| | Serve the food revolution with partners | 17 | Aim to change the way food is growth, produced, marketed, distributed, sold, and consumed. Co-creating solutions with others and their expertise. |

*Source: Danone, 2019e*

### 8.3.1 OPOVOS roles and responsibilities

The following table shows who is involved in the OPOVOS program at Danone. Not all employees and partners are included in this table.

*Table 8-2. Roles and responsibilities for 'One Voice' program*

| Role in OPOVOS program | People / team involvement | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Design & global approval | Board of directors & executive committee (COMEX) | CEO: program idea Approval of program design Ownership of program globally Receiving annual feedback from consultancy Setting up initiatives based on feedback |

| | | Communicating initiatives in annual report |
|---|---|---|
| Design & Implementation | Headquarter Human Resources = HQ HR | Program design<br>Ensuring all regional coordinators (RC) have the information, material, and resources available to implement the program locally<br>Global provides guidelines & templates = so they receive consistent information on the survey sheets |
| Regional approval | Regional General Managers: | Own the program locally and make the decision how the programs are implemented locally<br>Ensure the local leadership teams are informed of the program |
| Coordinator selection | Regional HR Directors | Responsible for appointing One Voice regional coordinators |
| Regional program implementation | 16 Regional OPOVOS Coordinators (RC) | Cross-functional roles of coordinators for local implementation<br>Manifesting local coordinators to implement the program locally at each entity<br>Coordinators help translate consultancy; to make sure it makes sense locally<br>Ensuring the consultancies are completed at local level |
| Local program implementation | 200 + HR local coordinators | worldwide to help implement this program, regional layer of 16 who help coordinate it locally<br>Monthly HR meetings? |
| Implementation | Global and local communications and IT teams | Internal communication in preparation for the consultancy<br>Continuous communication on progress of company goals<br>Ensuring easy access to surveys |
| Participant | 26 Regional OPOVOS Volunteers (RV) | Total of 26 regional volunteers, distributed globally<br>Report back the survey results of their region to board of directors and COMEX annually<br>13 newly appointed employees from different levels & department from each region<br>13 continue from the consultancy of the year before<br>Understand the consultancy findings in their area<br>Time spent working on OPOVOS 2-3 hours per week |
| Participant | Local OPOVOS Volunteers (LV) | Employees from different departments who can sign up to participate in the One Voice workshops<br>Up to regional coordinators to choose who can help analyse the survey's<br>Depends on local implementation strategy |
| Partners | OPOVOS Partners | Survey partners<br>Communication strategy partners<br>Working together with internal communication teams to raise awareness and prepare for the 'One Voice' (OV) consultation; topics around progress, other learning opportunities: sustainable diets [A] |

*Source: Interviews with program designers and implementers*

*Table 8-3. Roles and responsibilities for 'One Share' program*

| Role in OPOVOS program | People / team involvement | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Project Leader | Global benefits & equity senior manager | Responsible for the global benefits strategy and policies and their deployment in each country<br>Role expanded from Global benefits strategy and policies to becoming project lead for 'One Share'<br>Managing the providers implementation process<br>Managing the project team<br>Managing legal requirements with legal team |
| Project team | Within the benefits and equity team | Supporting the project lead in the global implementation<br>Dedicated to implement the project within the company |
| 'One Share' champions | Selected within each region, local benefits teams | For each location, these champions ensure employees can participate in the program.<br>Receiving devices and tools like iPads etc to assist people with their needs, because "because we are aware that not everywhere around the world, everyone would have a smartphone or a data line to support that need, you know, because it might be really expensive for some people." [C] |
| Implementation communication | Internal Communication team | Company Wide communication before and during 'One Share' gifting process |
| Infrastructure design and support | Partners; infrastructure: Computershare, communication: Deloitte Business US - Stich | Support to rollout the program; Communication strategy comes from the project team, internal comms team & external partner. Together they worked to make the share possible for everybody, which is challenging because it is such a diverse and broad group.<br>Working to increase understanding of the one share project. |

*Source: Interviews with program designers and implementers*