

Introduction to Cultural Diversity

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EKVALITA
& friends

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EKVALITA

Expertise on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

Ekvalita consist of a team of experts on gender equality, inclusion and diversity issues.

We deconstruct power and norms since 2008

We offer

training, supervision and consulting
for enterprises, state and municipal authorities,
organizations and groups

We produce

texts, videos, web portals, reports and hand books



EKVALITA



Malin Gustavsson

Malin Gustavsson

- founder and CEO of Ekvälita (2008), obtain a master in gender studies
- multi-skilled professional DEI-trainer, a forerunner with more than 20 years of unique cross-sector experience in DEI work.
- An award-winning DEI hands-on specialist that provide training and strategic support, development of concrete tools, impact assessments, material and handbooks on DEI

More: www.ekvalita.fi




Kamilla Sultanova

Kamilla Sultanova

- Award-winning DEI consultant, moderator, podcast host
- keynotes on DEI, training on inclusive recruitment and retention, intergenerational culturally-diverse talent pipeline, diverse talent access to Finnish labor market, linguistic inclusion
- Previous career in Scandinavian shipping companies incl. Chemical tankers; supply chain, container trading (EMEA), safety and cultural diversity related-projects.

More: [Kamillasultanova.com](https://kamillasultanova.com)

WEBINAR AGENDA

- What is Cultural Diversity?
- Current Situation for Cultural Diversity at Workplaces in Finland
- Who are the obstacles?
 - Unconscious bias
 - Privileges
 - Racism
- Put theory into practice
- Case: Cultural Diversity at Lindström Group

What?

CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Refers to

- cultures,
- ethnicities,
- religions,
- languages, and
- traditions

are present within a particular group or society.

It involves recognising, respecting, and valuing the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions of individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

FIBS: Sustainability in Finland Survey 2025

Supporting DEI and Eliminating Discrimination

2025 (n=174)

■ Yes

■ No

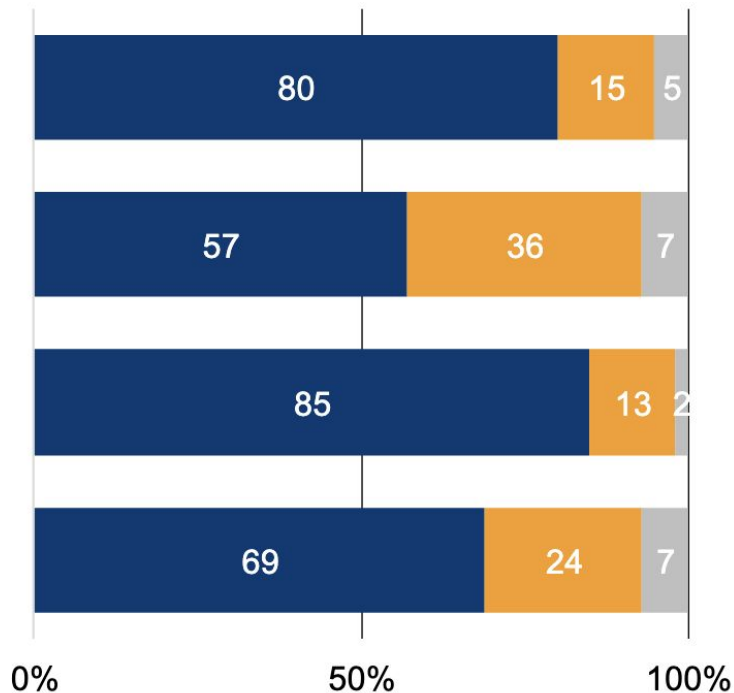
■ Don't know

Has your top leadership publicly committed to promoting these themes?

Has your company set quantitative or qualitative goals for this work?

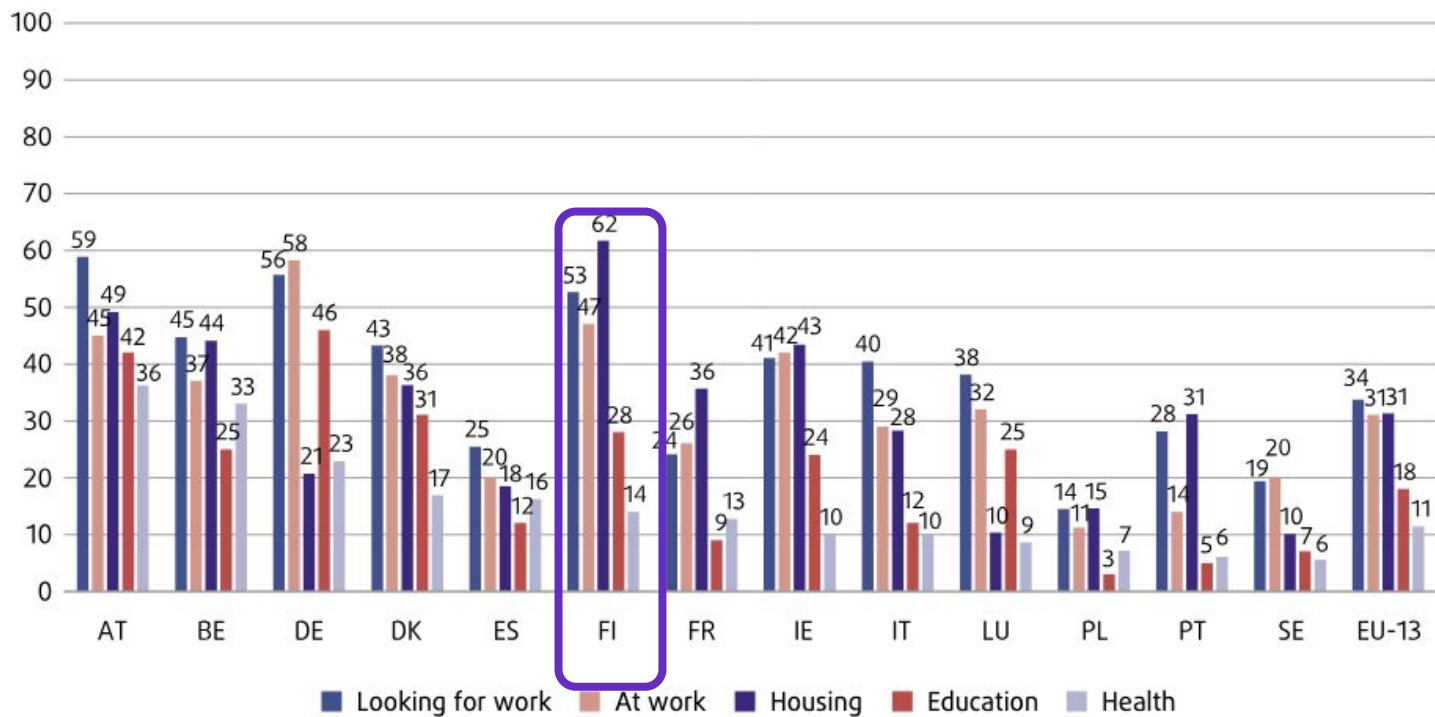
Have you taken concrete actions to achieve these goals?

Does the company report on its progress in a standardized format annually?



Current Situation for Cultural Diversity at Workplaces in Finland

FIGURE 13: PREVALENCE OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF LIFE IN THE 5 YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)^{a,b,c}



Source: FRA's EU Survey on Immigrants and Descendants of Immigrants, 2022.

What's in a name? Study confirms foreigners face persistent discrimination in Finnish jobs market

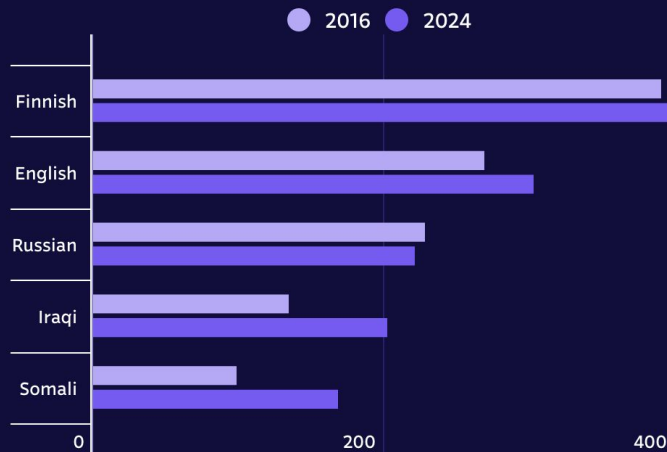
An update to a 2016 study found a slight improvement in the number of people with foreign-sounding names being called to interviews – but that discriminatory practices remain in place.



Akhlaq Ahmad, a Docent of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, once again investigated whether an applicant's name affects their chances of being called for a job interview. Image:

The number of invitations to interviews increased

Number of interview invitations received by job seekers per thousand applications in 2016 and 2024.



Source: A Comparative Analysis of the Reception of Immigrants into Finnish Working Life in 2016 and 2024, Akhlaq Ahmad. Graphic: Karoliina Juntunen / Yle

Thank you Finland – and goodbye

Finland invested half a million euros in Pezhman Baran's education, but says he he can't even get a job at Lidl. Many educated immigrants say they have no option but to leave the country.



Pictured here from L to R: Georgiana Forsang, Esteve Pannetier, Claudia Lorca, Joanna Samona and Pezhman Baran are considering leaving Finland. Image: Kari Manninen / Yle, kuvankäsittely: Asmo Raimoaho / Yle

YLE NEWS

26.2. 14:03 · Updated 27.2. 10:57

"Somali, n-word, you've come here to steal!"



MUUTOS- TÖISSÄ



Työntekijöiden erilaiset kulttuuritaustat yrityksen kilpailukyvyyn vahvistajina



Muutostöissä

Tänään • 29 min



Miten yritys tai organisaatio voi hyötyä kulttuurisesta moninaisuudesta? Millainen vaikutus sillä voi olla tuloksellisuuden näkökulmasta? Entä miten työyhteisön erilaiset kulttuuritaustat voivat parantaa päätöksentekoa ja lisätä innovatiivisuutta?

Jakson vieraina DEI-konsultti ja yritysjohtajan valmentaja Pia Kähärä sekä menestyneen hoiva-alan yrityksen, Hoiwan, perustaja ja toimitusjohtaja Fadumo Ali.

Who are the obstacles?

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

**We all have
unconscious biases**

They are results of mental processes (shortcuts for processing information) and affect our behaviour

We are a product of our society and have conceptions of “how things are”

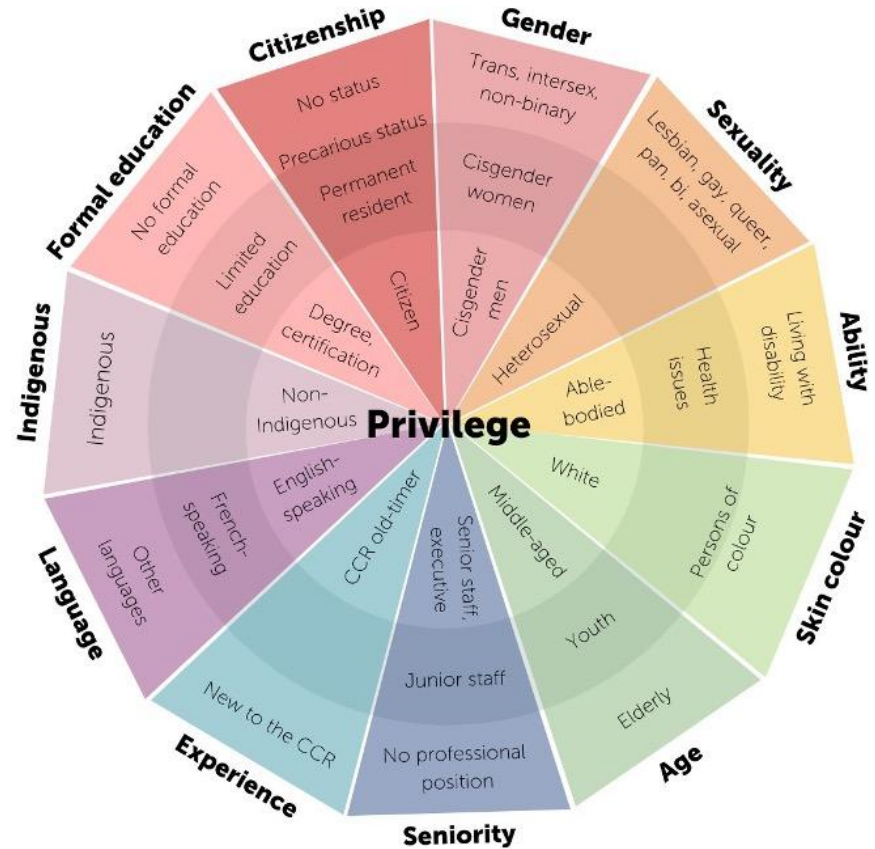
Biases are connected to power structures and norms in our society

We need to
1. become aware of our unconscious biases
2. learn not to act upon them

Further reading:
Daniel Kahneman
Thinking, fast and slow

PRIVILEGES

- Refers to the **unearned advantages** individuals receive from belonging to a dominant social group, often without realizing it.
- These benefits **aren't based on merit but** are inherent to **one's identity**. In an organisation it is showing up as easier access to
 - resources,
 - opportunities,
 - recognition, and
 - Influence



Cred: Canadian Refugee Council

PRIVILEGE AS FRAMEWORK TO LINK TO ESG

- Risk management framework
- Efficiency, scalability, inclusion
- Not about social activism, business effectiveness
- Not about identity, but about qualifications
- Not about guilt - asking better questions when fixing structural systems of decision making:
Think recruitment barriers, innovation blind spots and stakeholder engagement failures

Global North centered i.e

- Unequal access to networks and mentorship
- Race segregation in the labour market
- Language

Policies, practices, and procedures i.e.

- Biased hiring algorithms/criteria
- "Professionalism" policies

Structural racism

Intentionally and unintentionally i.e.

- Racist jokes
- Racist questions or statements
- Mistaking Identities

Interpersonal racism

Institutional racism

Internalize the stigma of racism, i.e.

- Self-doubt and over-performance
- Adopting dominant norms
- Minority stress

Internalised racism

Individual racism

Conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals i.e

- Conscious bias (overt discrimination)
- Unconscious bias (implicit bias)
- Exclusion from projects

RACISM

Put theory into practice

Bridging Cultural Gaps

Two frameworks for understanding cultural differences and communication styles between different countries

Geert Hofstede: Six Dimensions of Culture (1970s)

- helps in understanding cultural differences at a national level. It's a cross-cultural model that identifies key dimensions along which cultures vary.

Erin Meyer: The Culture Map (2014)

- focuses on understanding how cultures differ in their approach to various aspects of communication and work. It illustrates how cultural values and intercultural differences influence behaviors in different contexts.

“Cross-cultural differences are variations in communication styles, behaviors, values, and norms that exist between different cultures.”

- Erin Meyer



CAN WE AFFORD TO MISS OUT ON THIS?

- Access to diverse pool of talents
- Employee retention
- 36% more profitable
- 75% reduction in employee turnover
- 87% better decision making
- 56% increase in job performance
- 75% reduction in sick days

Sources: Inclusify: The power of belonging to build innovative teams by Stefanie K. Johnson
HR Blog: Achievers Canada 2020, BetterUp 2019

WHAT DOES YOUR ORGANISATION DO AND COULD DO MORE?

1. Leadership Accountability & Critical Self-Reflection

- Beyond "nice to have" — Contribute to belongingness
- Audit leadership diversity
- Challenge privilege

2. Deconstructing Finnish Norms & "Silent Knowledge"

- Reflect explicit vs. Implicit norms, jargon and practices
- Note If "The Finnish way" is as default
- Note the language barrier as exclusion

3. Equitable Communication & Power Dynamics

- Create space for everyone to speak and to be heard
- Take care of the feedback loop equity

4. Interrogating Systemic Biases in HR Processes

- Regard recruitment filters causing inequality
- Reflect if performance & promotion favors certain factors
- Invest in onboarding & integration

5. Building Authentic Inclusion & Psychological Safety

- Beyond friendliness — create genuine safety
- Address microaggressions
- Host inclusive events

6. Challenging "Tokenism" & Fostering Progression

- Beyond representation — empower diverse individuals
- Grant mentorships & sponsorships for diverse talents
- Address "proof of value"

7. Global Operations & Regional Nuances

- Reflect power balances between headquarters and local
- Consider the time zone equity
- Remember the appreciation and integration of local expertise

Thank you for your attention!



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