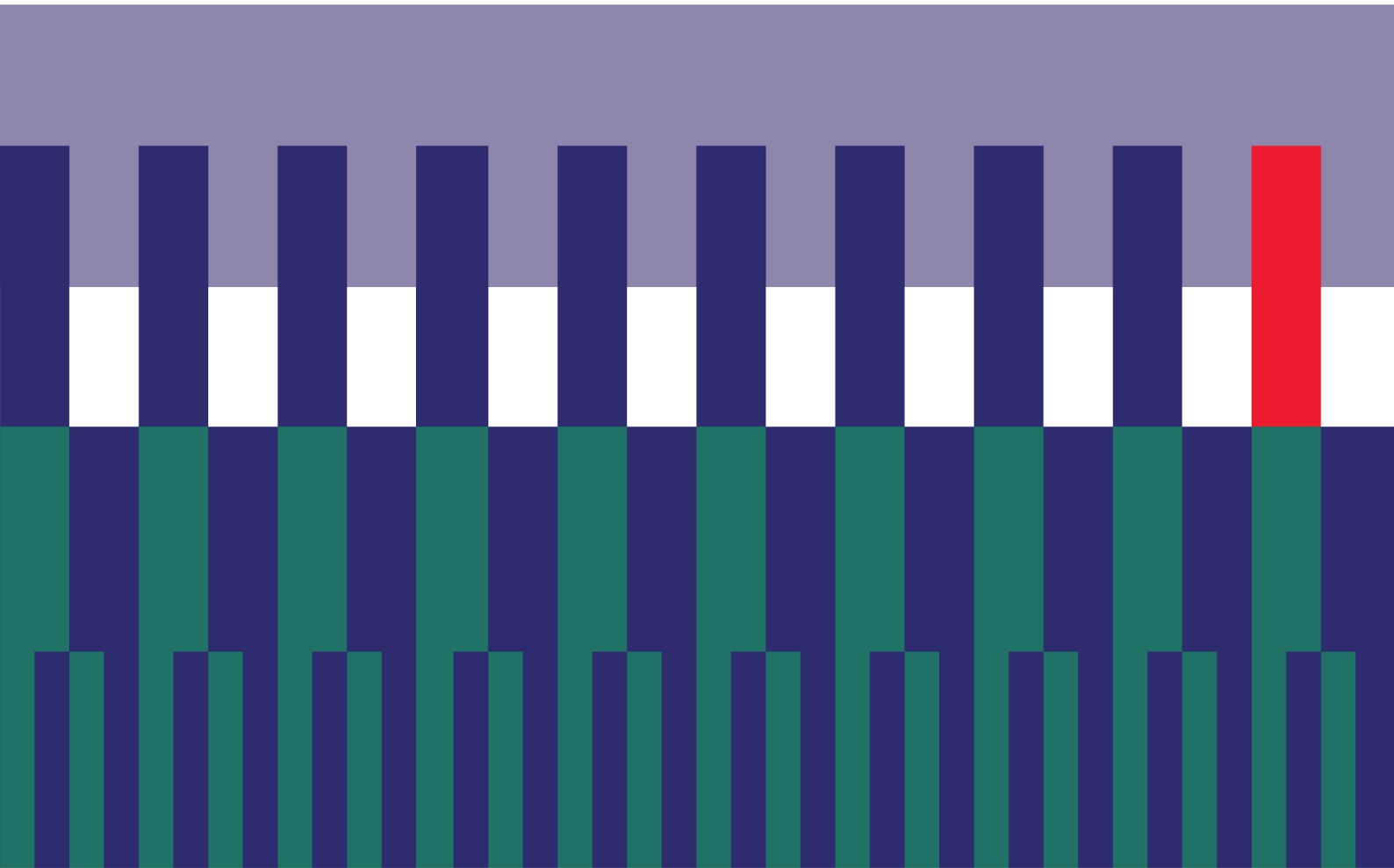
Finnish Institute in Japan
フィンランドセンター

DEI Plan
Finnish Institute in Japan

Updated December 2025



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1. Introduction

Purpose of the plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide up-to-date guidelines to promote equality and equity in the everyday operations of the Finnish Institute in Japan. It supports the team in reflecting on equality and equity from multiple perspectives: structured, point-by-point reflections help to translate those principles into practice in ways that suit our organisation and the Japanese context.

This guideline will be reviewed and updated annually.

Benefits of promoting equality

The benefits of promoting equality and equity extend both internally and externally. Internally, establishing clear standards and creating safe spaces within the Institute is key to a positive working environment and staff wellbeing. It supports motivation and effective teamwork. Externally, being approachable and self-aware in how we communicate the Institute's work strengthens our credibility. Increased sensitivity to equality and equity contributes not only to making the Institute itself more equitable, but also supports staff and collaborators in their development. Recognising our role – and the platform and forum we represent – through a DEI lens enables us to operate more effectively toward these aims.

Connection to the institute's values, mission, vision and goals

The Institute's strategy, updated in 2025, is fully aligned with this DEI plan. According to the Institute's website, the mission is that the Institute "strengthens bilateral partnerships for sustainable futures by fostering mutual understanding and mobility in science, culture and higher education." The vision is to be "the leading facilitator in Finnish-Japanese academic and cultural collaboration." The values include "freedom and independence of science and the arts", and importantly "trust, openness and creativity" as well as "inclusion, diversity and equality". Moreover, the principles mention the Institute is "future-oriented, agile, proactive and persevering." Hence, this DEI plan flows directly from and supports the updated strategic direction of the Institute.

Key definitions

Equality: Treating people the same and ensuring they have the same opportunities.
Equity: Recognising that different people may need different resources or support, to reach an equal outcome.
Diversity: The presence of differences within a given setting — for example cultural background, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, political or social background, differing abilities, languages, and other attributes.
Discrimination: Unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people.
Decolonisation (in the institutional sense): Reflecting on and dismantling ingrained eurocentrism, power imbalances and hierarchical structures that privilege certain knowledge systems and exclude others. In other words: being aware of our positionality, avoiding elitist assumptions (for example suggesting Finnish education is the best or using overly academic or exclusionary language), and striving to be transparent and self-aware of biases.

2. Planning and Process Overview: Roles, Responsibilities, Timeline, Resources

- **Board**: Overall oversight of the DEI plan, endorsement of the strategy, allocation of resources, review of progress annually, and ensuring accountability.
- **Director**: Responsible for championing the DEI plan across the Institute, integrating DEI into institutional strategy, culture and practices, reporting to the Board.

- **Projet Manager**: Embedding DEI considerations into programming, recruitment, partnerships and institutional decision-making. Ensuring team members understand their DEI responsibilities.
- **Staff and interns**: Monitoring progress, collecting feedback, proposing improvements, and compiling annual reports. Engage with DEI training and discussions, participate in weekly DEI reflections, provide feedback, incorporate DEI into daily work (events, communications, recruitment, collaborations).
- **Director and Project Manager**: Include a focus on DEI in their induction, training and participation; bring fresh perspectives to support diversity of ideas.
- **Harassment Contact Person(s) / Safer-Space Officer(s)**: Appointed for each event (or on a permanent basis) to ensure safe, inclusive spaces and accessible reporting mechanisms. An opportunity to give anonymous feedback via e-mail is also provided.

Timeline

- 2025 (Q4): Finalise and approve DEI plan; appoint harassment contact persons; launch an internal online DEI resource on drive; schedule training for all staff.
- 2026 and annually thereafter: Review and update plan each year; conduct DEI survey; integrate DEI into recruitment cycles and event planning; measure progress and report to Board.
- Every event: At the planning stage of each event, designate contact person, set code of conduct, include DEI checklist (accessibility, inclusive language, diverse speakers/participants).

Resources

- Budget allocation: A dedicated small budget for DEI training, consultation, and evaluation resources.
- Staff time: Regular DEI meetings (weekly internal discussion integrated into staff meetings) and dedicated working hours for DEI group.
- Materials and infrastructure: An internal online DEI resource on drive, templates for inclusive recruitment, event checklists, code of conduct, feedback tools.
- External expertise: Occasional external workshops/trainers specialising in equitable practices, cultural competency, inclusive leadership.

3. Situation Assessment: Strengths, Weaknesses, Barriers, Gaps, Focus Areas

Framework

The Institute has opted to approach DEI through the lens of liberatory practices, harm and complicity, reparative and transformative actions, and community accountability.

Liberatory practices are approaches that go beyond surface-level inclusion efforts, by explicitly seeking to shift power, transform systems, and centre those with lived experience of marginalised identities. According to the National Equity Project, for example, "Liberatory Design is … an approach to addressing equity challenges and change efforts in complex systems … to create designs that help interrupt inequity … transform power … generate critical learning and increased agency." Similarly, a liberatory framework "seeks to challenge and dismantle systems of oppression, inequality and injustice … emphasises self-determination, collective action, analysis of structural power, healing and liberation." The SMC Group

Therefore, our assessment focused on how we as an institution might engage with these deeper dimensions of equity and transformation. The discussion was used as a resource for writing this document.

Inclusion practices that work

- Promoting a diverse team through rotation of trainees and recruiting people with a variety of backgrounds.
- The combination of experienced team members and fresh arrivals helps maintain innovation and prevents stagnation.
- Diversity training and internal workshops (including external collaborations) improve the team's competence in equality and equity.
- Internal weekly DEI discussions keep these issues current and visible within the team.

4. Objectives and Actions

FIJ's goals for enhancing equality and equity (short term = ST; long term = LT)

- Identifying discriminatory policies and practices (ST)
- Dismantling discriminatory policies and practices (LT)
- Ensuring fair treatment and safe spaces for staff, board members, collaborators and audiences (LT)
- Securing equal opportunities for people from different ethnic, cultural, generational, political, sexual etc. backgrounds to join Institute activities (ST)
- Eliminating discrimination across all aspects of our institutional life (LT)
- Fostering a culture of respect and understanding (LT)

Concrete Actions

- Appoint a harassment contact person for every event and establish a guideline or code of conduct at the start of our events.
- Give clear responsibilities: the FIJ team, the Board (as a collective) and individuals are responsible for committing to implementing key features of the plan by example and clear communication.
- Ensure the Board actively weighs in on DEI issues and comments on the Institute's DEI plan.
- Timeline: after plan submission, undertake an annual assessment.
- Hold a yearly planning session to ensure the coming year includes enough variety (in recruits, event themes, collaborators).
- Budget and resources: the development and implementation of the plan require human time and financial resource, which means allocating budget. The necessary working hours will be provided by the whole team to ensure continuity and quality of DEI efforts.
- Metrics for success: We will document each event when DEI is discussed (internal or external). We will promote EDI (Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity) and offer initiatives for discussion.

5. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

Effective communication and meaningful engagement are central to the success of the DEI plan.

- The plan will be introduced via an all-staff meeting, followed by written communication and inclusion in onboarding materials for new members.
- An internal online DEI resource will be created on our drive to house relevant documents, training materials and feedback channels. Posters and visual reminders of the DEI principles will be displayed in shared spaces.
- All staff will be invited to participate in DEI workshops, with additional sessions tailored for specific groups (e.g., leadership, interns). Board members and external partners will be informed of the Institute's DEI commitments and invited to align their collaboration accordingly.
- Staff feedback will be collected continuously via surveys, suggestion boxes and anonymous online forms. Feedback will be reviewed by the team and the board and integrated into biannual updates.
- The DEI principles will be communicated internally at regular intervals (during team meetings, development days, board meetings) and at least once a year when new trainees arrive.
- Key DEI messages will be communicated publicly (on our website and at events). Collaborators will be engaged in discussing the principles, goals and action plan during event and activity planning. We recognise that not all stakeholders are familiar with DEI terminology, so we will include clear explanations of the concepts in our communication.
- In our social media marketing we will promote relevant international awareness days stated on our social media calendar.

6. Implementation Strategy

The DEI Plan will be implemented in three phases:

1. Initial Roll-out: Delivery of staff training, establishment of reporting systems and communication materials.
2. Integration: Embedding DEI principles into recruitment, programming and evaluation across the Institute.
3. Normalisation: Annual reviews, ongoing education, and stakeholder accountability to sustain the progress.

Implementation support includes dedicated staff time, modest budget allocations for training and consultation, and leadership endorsement. The team will provide regular updates to management and the Board.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring progress and evaluating impact are essential components of the DEI plan.

Monitoring Tools

- Annual DEI survey across staff and collaborators.
- Analytics from reporting systems (e.g., event contact persons, incident reports, accessibility / inclusion checklists).
- Feedback sessions with staff and partners.
- Inclusion of DEI observations in weekly meetings.
- Annual survey of previous participants (interns, trainees, event participants).

Indicators for Progress

- Participation in DEI training.
- Increased confidence in reporting mechanisms and improved resolution rates.
- Demographic data tracking where appropriate and respectful of privacy.
- Feedback indicating increased sense of inclusion and belonging.

Evaluation Methods

- Yearly DEI impact report submitted to Board.
- Internal review meetings once a year.
- External evaluations (subject to budget).

An accountability framework will be developed to ensure transparent reporting to the Board and action when benchmarks are not met.

8. Updating the Plan

The plan will be reviewed with the team and Board annually and evaluated in light of feedback and observations collected throughout the year.

Feedback will be collected anonymously via questionnaires. Observations relating to DEI are discussed periodically in the FIJ weekly meetings.

Whenever a new staff member arrives, the plan will be introduced and necessary updates will be discussed collectively.