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***Report of the working group  
Action for diversity***

*Recommended measures to promote academic staff diversity in research  
and higher education*

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**SECTION I INTRODUCTION**

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Research decided to expand the mandate of the Committee for Gender Balance to include ethnic diversity. The Committee's objective was to support and give recommendations regarding measures that promote the integration of gender balance and diversity activities at universities, university colleges and research institutes, thus helping to increase diversity among the staff and in research. The Committee was also called upon to raise the overall level of awareness of problems related to diversity and inclusion in the research system. The Committee's new tasks also cover diversity perspectives, including gender perspectives, in research.

When addressing this new area, the newly appointed Committee found that there was little research and documentation within the area of ethnic diversity within research and higher education institutions in Norway. Such knowledge is a necessary precondition when giving recommendations and raising awareness about the status of ethnic minority scholars and tenured staff.

In 2015, Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (the KIF Committee) commissioned a report on diversity in research. The Committee has a broad range of research on women in academia as a basis for its work. However, there is scarcely any research on academics with ethnic minority background with research careers in Norway. Statistics and empirical research are needed to suggest policies and measures to promote faculty diversity.

The report "*It's not an advantage to be a foreigner*" was written by the Work Research Institute (AFI) and the Nordic Institute for Studies of Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU).<sup>1</sup>

The report was presented in March 2016, and the Committee appointed a working group to follow up the findings of the report with a set of recommendations. According to the mandate, the working group was supposed to primarily focus on proposals for specific measures at various levels in the research system that can contribute to diversity in academia. A secondary purpose of the group was to make suggestions for further research. The working group has consisted of experts with experience and knowledge of diversity and careers in research from a broad range of institutions and organisations. The group discussed some of the main challenges met by researchers with ethnic minority origin, the target group for this work, key concepts and the tasks to be addressed by the group. On the basis of this framework, the group

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<sup>1</sup> 'It's not an advantage to be a foreigner' Career paths and barriers to immigrants in academia in Norway. *Tatiana Maximova-Mentzoni, Cathrine Egeland, Tanja Askvik, Ida Drange, Liv Anne Støren, Trude Røsdal & Agnete Vabø*. Work Research Institute (AFI) Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, 2016

discussed possible measures and strategies for government bodies, institutions and organisations in the sector. It also discussed how the recommendations best can be disseminated and presented to relevant bodies.

The working group has consisted of the following persons:

1. Elisabet Ljunggren, Nordland Research Institute (leader and member of KIF Committee)
2. Liza Reisel, Institute for Social Research
3. Nadarajah Shanmugaratnam, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
4. Warsame Ali, The Norwegian Centre for Minority Health Research (NAKMI)
5. Sevil Sümer, Uni Research Rokkansenteret.
6. Yan Zhao, Nord University
7. Mariann Helen Olsen, Norwegian Association of Researchers (Forskerforbundet)
8. Vibeke Horn, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA)
9. Gunnhild Rønningen, The Research Council of Norway

These recommendations have been formulated in close collaboration with Ella Ghosh og Heidi Holt Zachariassen from the KIF secretariat. They prepared and followed up the work of the working group.

The following section briefly describes some challenges and a discussion of some central concepts, categories and contextual factors. The next section of the document is about diversity measures. It first addresses the rationale for diversity. The bulk of this chapter is about diversity measures for higher education and research institutions, but also for some of the other main actors in this sector, such as the research council and the Ministry of Education and research.

## **SECTION II CHALLENGES, CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT**

### **Main Challenges**

*Recruitment varies by discipline:* The threshold seems lower for ethnic minorities to be recruited at top level within science, technology and medicine, while it is higher within arts and humanities.

*Lack of inclusion:* One of the main findings in the AFI-report is that persons interviewed report a lack of inclusion at the workplace. They also say that little is done at their institutions to create an inclusive environment.

*Lack of networks and systemic knowledge:* Both immigrants and foreign researchers can have problems in gaining information relevant for career development or getting project funding if they do not participate in informal networks where such information is shared. Researchers from outside Norway struggle with understanding their own rights in the system. Not having the right contacts can prevent them from finding out about opportunities, events and research calls. This challenge of access to networks and information is not unique to immigrants or foreign researchers, but the report points to reasons why these groups may be particularly vulnerable to informal exclusion mechanisms.

## Important concepts and categories

### What do we mean by ethnic minority and diversity

A recurring challenge in diversity policies is that both the terms “diversity” and “ethnic minority” have multiple meanings. Diversity can refer to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation/identity or other categories. Antidiscrimination legislation includes a number of grounds for discrimination, while the focus of this working group is primarily ethnic minorities, in accordance with the KIF Committees mandate. The mandate given by the Ministry of Education and Research does not define ethnic diversity, but mentions diversity activities, increasing staff/faculty diversity, raising awareness of problems related to diversity and inclusion and addressing diversity perspectives in research

The Committee’s strategy document defines ethnicity as follows;

*“Ethnicity refers to markers between groups based on differences in origin and culture. These are socially relevant differences, where the perception of origin and difference are central and can be difficult to operationalise and utilise in policy development. Ethnicity is closely tied to identity, and the criterion for what demarcates identity can be history, language, skin colour, religion and culture. In this strategy, “ethnicity” refers to three groups: 1) Persons with immigrant origin 2) International staff and 3) Ethnic minorities with long-term connection to Norway ( Saami, Finns , Jews etc.)”<sup>2</sup>*

However, the term “ethnic minority” can refer to quite different groups in the academic setting. The term “ethnic minority” might encompass 1) “Academic migrants” (who have come to Norway because of an academic position), i.e. qualified scholars from other countries 2) “non-academic migrants” - immigrants or offspring of immigrants who have achieved an academic career. This would also include first generation academics.

3) doctoral or postdoctoral researchers who only are here for the duration of their programme<sup>3</sup> 4) Researchers of Saami or national minority origin, i.e. Norwegian minorities with a distinct cultural and/or linguistic identity.

### What do the numbers indicate?

So far, statistics on research staff have referred to foreign nationals alone, but not Norwegian nationals with immigrant origin. However, foreign nationals make up a heterogeneous group including people from neighbouring countries, marginalised immigrant and refugee groups and academics from the US and Canada. The lack of differentiation makes it difficult to know how institutions, leaders and policymakers should address diversity issues.

Statistics from 2014 provide an overview of recruitment of persons from other countries. In 2014, the proportion of professors from Group 1<sup>4</sup> countries was 19 %; Group 2<sup>5</sup> nations was 4% and the proportion of non-immigrants was 77%.

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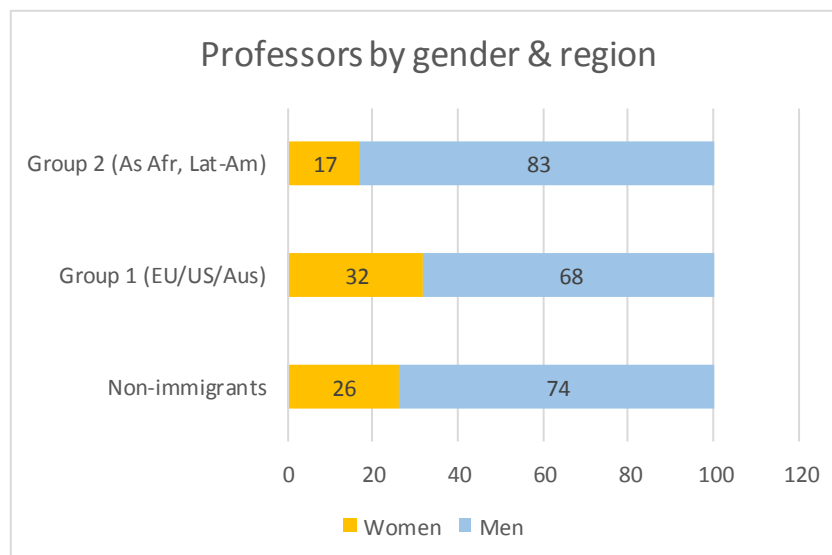
<sup>2</sup> The groups of persons considered to be national minorities in Norway are Jews, Kven (people of Finnish descent living in northern Norway), Roma/Gypsies, the Romani people/Travellers and Skogfinn (people of Finnish descent living in southern Norway).

<sup>3</sup> According to Forskningsbarometeret 2014, half the doctoral candidates in the periode 2000-2007 had left the country two years after completing their doctorate.

<sup>4</sup> EU and European Economic Area, North America and Australia/New Zealand

<sup>5</sup> Africa, Asia and Latin America

If we include gender, we see that women are better represented among professors from western countries than among non-immigrants. However, Norway has few female professors from the Global South.



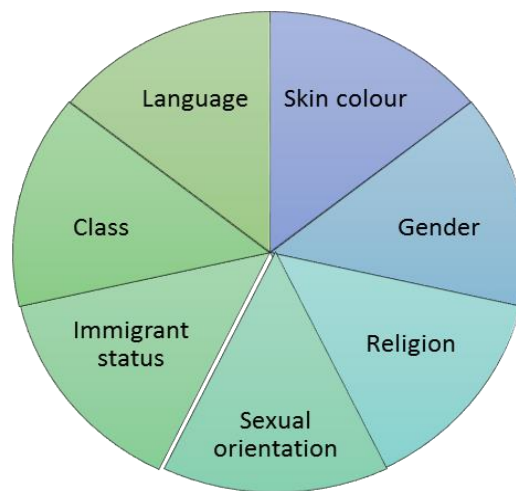
Statistics on research may also include Norwegian citizens with immigrant origin, but they can only give indicators, not completely match the use of categories and concepts in diversity research and policy.

### **Intersectionality**

An intersectional approach highlights the need to take into consideration the interdependencies of various intersecting inequalities – such as age, class, disability, gender, race, and sexuality. Leaders need to be aware of challenges met by research staff, such as disadvantage and discrimination due to several factors in conjunction to each other – e.g. skin colour, immigrant status, religion, gender and class.

Working with internationalisation includes creating inclusive conditions for people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age and language. But international “star researchers” do not experience the same conditions as disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, and they are not perceived in the same way. The question is whether the tenured research staff reflects the ethnic diversity in the population. Do students and young researchers encounter researchers and teachers they can relate to in terms of their own background? Or do they look at the people at the top and think – this is not a place for me. Gender balance, class and visible ethnic minority among current faculty members has to be factored in when considering the pipeline – who goes into research and who leaves academic life. For immigrants, first generation academics, indigenous people or persons with disabilities – not meeting anyone with their background among the teaching staff makes a difference – just as it does for women.

An identity wheel can illustrate that interrelated factors may be at play.



Taking into consideration the relationship between a person's various social identities is important when it comes to implementing policies for inter alia recruitment and career development. Institutional and local leaders need to be aware of the risk of multiple discrimination, cumulative disadvantage or privilege. Though this document has a particular focus on ethnic minorities, irrespective of gender or other identities, it is not meant to encourage the use of undifferentiated categories.

### **Contextual factors**

We have dwelt on individual background as an explanatory factor so far. But individuals from the same country may have widely divergent experiences. It is also important to look at how aspects of the host institution and perceptions there may play a part.

*Nationality vs other factors:* A scholar of Gambian origin may have different challenges and opportunities if she has most of her education from Gambia, France or Norway. A white European scholar might not encounter racism but still feel excluded at meetings. The AFI report indicates that perceived exclusion cuts across several groups. A professor from a given ethnic minority might meet less exclusion than a doctoral candidate simply due to their higher social status in the hierarchy.

*Institutional resources vary:* Institutions in geographical non-central locations may have a different starting point for their diversity policies than a department at a university that can pick and choose among internal and external candidates. An institute in specialised field may have a diverse academic staff, but not have a diversity policy or career development measures for immigrants/foreigners.

*Regions and different ethnic minorities in that region:* There are big difference between regions and towns with regard to which migrant groups and other minorities are in the population. For example NTNU is in a county with a relatively low level of immigration, but attracts many international candidates. Bergen has Vietnamese and Sri Lankan groups in the population. There are many Russians and persons of Finnish origin in the north: Tromsø might recruit more Finnish or Russian staff. Recruitment goals should perhaps reflect local variations in migration.

## SECTION III DIVERSITY MEASURES

### **The rationale for diversity measures**

There are several arguments for why diversity is important in academia. The choice of measures is affected by which arguments are given the highest priority.

#### *Heterogeneity to improve research quality*

This implies that diversity influences the content of research. A diverse group may develop new perspectives and include different knowledge positions, particularly if research leaders create conditions conducive for constructive dialogue. Diversity perspectives in research findings would be better integrated if there were greater diversity among academic staff. If this perspective was emphasised, broad-based recruitment might be given priority.

#### *Non-discrimination/social justice*

The Anti-Discrimination Act forbids direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion or belief. The purpose of the Act is to promote equality, ensure equal opportunities and rights and prevent discrimination. Differential treatment that is necessary in order to achieve a legitimate aim is allowed. Diversity policies are seen as a way to avoid discrimination and enable the research community to be more inclusive. Fairness is the rationale. When this perspective is emphasised recruitment of historically marginalised or vulnerable groups<sup>6</sup> may be given priority.

#### *Utilising talent*

There are a number of highly talented people whose potential is wasted if recruitment to research positions does not draw from all groups, irrespective of ethnicity, parent's education and gender. Relevant/ qualified people may be overlooked because of irrelevant factors. This perspective would involve not just considering persons who have been recruited, but giving more attention to those who are in the talent pool and do not get recruited.

#### *Legitimacy in the population at large*

Researchers and academic leaders give politicians and the media important input and carry great influence. If they do not reflect the diversity within the population at large, this affects institutions legitimacy and image. This perspective would perhaps mean that more emphasis would be given to visibility of persons from ethnic minorities and to role models.

#### *HR and the working environment*

If better equality and diversity policies are adopted, this may benefit the whole staff. If the working culture is more open, flexible and allows greater tolerance for difference, this also benefits people with disabilities, people going through transitions in life (death in the family, divorce, illness) and older employees. This perspective would mean looking at both formal and informal rules and the working culture as such. If the working culture emphasises accommodating difference and promoting equality, this may impact the productivity of non-Norwegian scholars. It may also improve retention.

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<sup>6</sup> The recent establishment of an academic network to assist refugees to enter higher education institutions is a good example of a initiative to promote vulnerable groups.

## **Suggested measures at different levels**

In the following we will present the working groups proposed/ recommended measures organised in accordance with the “receivers” or users of the measures. The working group – and the KIF Committee - believe that measures should be put into practice at different levels or parts of the higher education and research system in Norway.

### *Universities, Colleges and Research Institutes*

Universities, colleges and research institutes should incorporate diversity throughout their organisations. However, it is imperative that each institution has strategies based on the challenges they face, and that their action plan mirrors these challenges. The measures they use should be based on a thorough analysis, so that they are tailored to match the specific context of the institution.

In addition, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) and The Association of Norwegian Research Institutes (FFA) should address diversity issues at a systemic level.

#### A. Recommended measures from gender equality work

##### *Action plans*

Gender equality action plans have been analysed over time and certain common factors have been identified in action plans that function well. Action plans should include clear goals, commitment from top management and resources to undertake the measures; They should address specific local challenges on the basis of analysis; They should be followed up by leaders at regular intervals; They should include benchmarks and a timeframe for meeting targets. Periodic evaluation can help adapt the plan to changing circumstances. Responsibility for reaching the targets should be clearly placed in the organisation.

##### *Promotion measures (opprykkstiltak)*

Several institutions have carried out measures to enable women to achieve promotion to professor level. Some have intensive writing courses and mock evaluations while others have courses and follow up with coaching/writing groups. A necessary backdrop for such measures is full support from the rectors, deans and the administration, acceptance from immediate supervisors and allocations for the follow up of individuals.<sup>7</sup>

##### *Mentoring*

Mentoring programmes exist for persons at doctoral/postdoctoral level, at associate professor level and for postgraduate students.

##### *Systematic career planning together with the closest leader*

Annual appraisal meetings can be used actively for career development, including positive feedback: “Seeing” the invisible academic work (and not only publications in international journals).

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<sup>7</sup> This is also an important factor in the institute sector.

### *Search committees*

The Committee has recommended setting aside funding for search committees that can identify potential female applicants. Some institutions have used this measure at national or international levels with great success.

## B. Other recommended measures

### *Diversity policies/strategies*

Institutions need to develop policies/strategies for diversity and inclusion. The KIF Committee has advocated the role of academic leadership when it comes to gender balance. This also holds true for diversity work. Institutions should recognise the benefits of diversity for teaching, research and international collaboration (i.e. the added value). This should be expressed by leaders/management.

### *Recruitment*

Institutions should formulate merit criteria so as to attract a diverse pool of applicants; Beyond this, they should use diversity promotion, work-place inclusion, and opportunities for academic advancement to attract and retain international candidates and persons of immigrant origin in Norway.

### *Training leaders*

Courses on unconscious bias for leaders and recruiters should be offered. In addition, equality and diversity should be emphasised in research leader and dean training programmes. Managers' and research leaders' responsibility for promoting inclusive working environments and opportunities for further development should be emphasised.

### *Creating an inclusive & dynamic workplace culture*

Institutions should use internal organisation (research clusters, project groups, committees etc.), as well as academic and social activities to promote an inclusive workplace culture. Creating a bilingual (Norwegian/English) working place can also be important for international researchers to function well and gain access to information. Internal courses for academic staff on intercultural communication may be considered.

### *Counteracting racism and discrimination*

Institutions need to recognise that incidents of racial discrimination may occur within the institutions, just as sexism and sexual harassment do. They should have clear routines for handling and registering discrimination and harassment. Unit leaders and Health, safety and environment representatives should be prepared to deal with cases of complaints in a professional manner.

### *Equality/diversity advocates in recruitment and search committees*

One person in each committee should have particular responsibility for making sure the equality and diversity dimension is made explicit when considering the candidates. Institutions should consider training courses for committee members.

### *Supporting career networks*

Facilitating and supporting career promotion networks of academic staff with foreign or immigrant background. Networks might combat isolation for individuals, but there is a risk of



segregation from useful mainstream networks. Networks should encourage sharing systemic knowledge and be supplemented with good links with non-immigrant faculty to avoid segregated enclaves.

### *The Ministry of Education and Research*

The Ministry of Education and Research has regular meetings with institutional leaders: diversity policies can be included in these meetings. The institutions should be measured on how well they handle diversity – e.g. whether they have action plans, targeted career measures etc. Institutions meet different diversity challenges and should develop strategies, policies and goals according to this. The Ministry should ask institutional leaders what these are, and what they do to promote diversity.

It could also be required that diversity measures – and progress in this area - be a part of annual reporting to the Ministry. The European ERA Roadmap 2015-2020, also adopted in Norway, suggests that authorities should reinforce a welcoming culture and reduce obstacles to mobility.<sup>8</sup>

The KIF Committee has discussed diversity measures during site visits, and there are few institutions that have a coherent policy on diversity with clear goals and measures. Evaluating progress requires good criteria regarding reaching goals and achieving results that are tangible. The Ministry of Education and Research should consider whether some form of score cards or a point system might be used as an incentive for change. That would imply that having good action plans with measurable criteria for progress would have consequences for score on the quality of the institution – possibly with financial incentives (analogous to reporting on publications, grants etc). This is a subject that requires dialogue and development in the period ahead. One option is to try out incentives and evaluate how they function after a trial period. This dialogue should take place between the Ministry and institutions, as well as with umbrella organisations such as The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR) and The Association of Norwegian Research Institutes (FFA).

### *Unions*

Unions should be included in diversity efforts. They play an important part locally in recruitment, promotion and conflict resolution.

- Systematic review of cases regarding minority academic staff, including discrimination cases.
- Training courses for union representatives should have greater focus on diversity.
- Trade unions should have seminars for foreign born academics, so that they can learn about their employee rights, leave and promotion.

### *The Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research*

The KIF Committee advocates increased emphasis on diversity strategies in its visits to institutions and where it enquires about the institutions' gender and diversity measures. The

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<sup>8</sup> The European Research Area (ERA) Roadmap 2015-2020 states that: "At European and national levels, authorities should encourage openness and the circulation of international talent by reinforcing a welcoming culture for EU and third-country researchers and reducing obstacles to mobility."

Committees web page Kifinfo.no is used to document best practices, relevant research and debates.

The KIF Committee supports an annual network conference for gender equality. It also arranges events or has activities focused on gender balance and ethnic diversity. Some of these events include both areas, others are primarily about gender or ethnic minorities in research. Seminars/workshops held by the Committee in 2017 will, to a greater extent, draw together the fields of gender equality and ethnic diversity.

So far, there is a well-established gender equality network, but there is no organised network of university employees who work specifically with ethnic diversity. The committee can either recommend that the annual network conference has parallel sessions that include diversity, or that KIF should establish a parallel event or network. This depends on whether we are dealing with separate subsets of responsible leaders and administrative staff, or if there is great overlap in the people who work with these fields. In 2017, the Committee is considering a consultation or survey to explore what institutions would prefer.

The working group has considered the need for also including administrative staff with ethnic minority origin. Though institutions should include this group in its diversity policies, this is not within the KIF Committee's mandate.

#### *A coherent national diversity approach*

Academic migration is a part of the discourse on globalisation within higher education, but it is rarely on the agenda when national integration, inclusion and diversity policies are discussed. The Ministry of Children and Equality has the overall responsibility for equality and non-discrimination, which is the backdrop for the institutions' duties to promote equality and prevent discrimination. The Ministry of Justice deals with policies for integration and migration, which impact recruitment and retainment in academia. The Ministry of Education and Research deals with research mobility and internationalisation. Academic institutions might benefit from a more coherent and cross-sectional approach at national level.

#### *The Research Council of Norway*

The RCN has great impact on the funding of research in Norway and evaluates research projects. It has the possibility to put some demands on these research proposals – as they do on the gender balance of project teams, for example. The working group recommends that the following measures be considered:

- Recognition of the benefits of diversity for research and international networking and collaboration
- Minority perspectives must be included in large national projects, where relevant. Diversity aspects should be captured in these projects.
- RCN should take into account diversity among participants at seminars and panels, giving immigrant researchers increased visibility.
  
- Include ethnic diversity in strategy documents, such as the Researcher Recruitment Strategy.
- Evaluators should be trained regarding implicit bias, and be encouraged to be aware of ethnic diversity.

### **The need for further research**

The working group acknowledges that there is a need for further research on ethnic diversity in Norwegian research institutions. Some topics might be

- Comparative studies of academic institutions regarding diversity/inclusion at the workplace
- Researchers experiences with academic migration
- Which factors encourage recruitment and career development for disadvantaged minorities, which barriers need to be addressed
- Integration, exclusion and discrimination in higher education and research;
- Experimental research on (implicit) bias

The Research Council has a key role in this area. Some topics are proposed above, but the list is only a starting point. The research agenda has to reflect the needs of institutions, but also be enriched by the existing body of research on ethnic minorities in Norway. The working group would suggest that the KIF Committee, institution leaders, diversity/migration researchers and the Research Council engage in a dialogue on the need for research in the coming year.

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